



Complete Works of
Anatole France

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Complete Works of
Anatole France

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The Complete Works of

ANATOLE FRANCE

(1844-1924)



Contents

The Novels

THE CRIME OF SYLVESTRE BONNARD

THE ASPIRATIONS OF JEAN SERVIEN

HONEY-BEE

THAÏS

AT THE SIGN OF THE REINE PÉDAUQUE

THE OPINIONS OF JEROME COIGNARD

THE RED LILY

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES I: THE ELM-TREE ON THE MALL

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES II: THE WICKER-WORK WOMAN

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES III: THE AMETHYST RING

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES IV: MONSIEUR BERGERET IN
PARIS

A MUMMER'S TALE

THE WHITE STONE

PENGUIN ISLAND

THE GODS ARE ATHIRST

THE REVOLT OF THE ANGELS

The Shorter Fiction

JOCASTA AND THE FAMISHED CAT

BALTHASAR AND OTHER WORKS

MOTHER OF PEARL

[THE WELL OF SAINT CLARE](#)

[CLIO](#)

[CRAINQUEBILLE, PUTOIS, RIQUET AND OTHER PROFITABLE TALES](#)

[THE MERRIE TALES OF JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE](#)

[THE SEVEN WIVES OF BLUEBEARD AND OTHER MARVELLOUS TALES](#)

[CHILD LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY](#)

[MISCELLANEOUS STORIES](#)

[The Short Stories](#)

[LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER](#)

[LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER](#)

[The Plays](#)

[CRAINQUEBILLE](#)

[THE COMEDY OF A MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE](#)

[COME WHAT MAY](#)

[The Poetry](#)

[LIST OF POETICAL WORKS](#)

[The Non-Fiction](#)

[THE LIFE OF JOAN OF ARC](#)

[The Criticism](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE — 1904 by Joseph Conrad](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE by Arnold Bennett](#)

[HOMAGE TO ANATOLE FRANCE by John Galsworthy](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE by John Cowper Powys](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE by Robert Lynd](#)

[THE WISDOM OF ANATOLE FRANCE by John Middleton Murry](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE by George Brandes](#)

[ANATOLE FRANCE by Winifred Stephens](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anatole France". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first name "Anatole" written in a smaller, more compact style than the last name "France", which is more expansive and features a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

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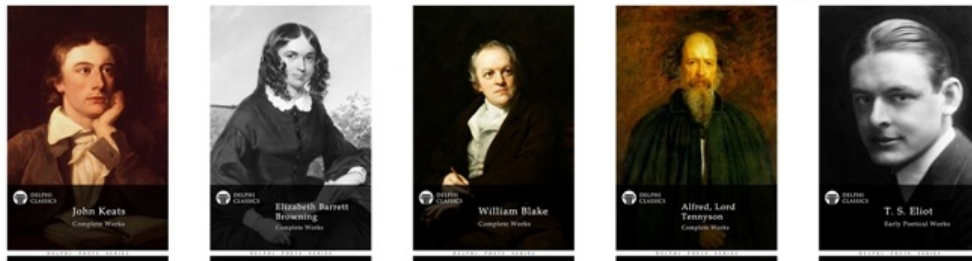
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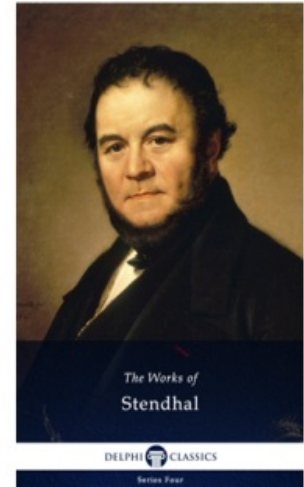
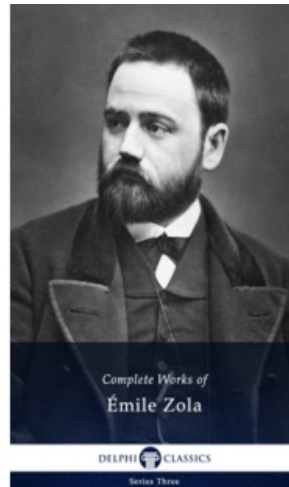
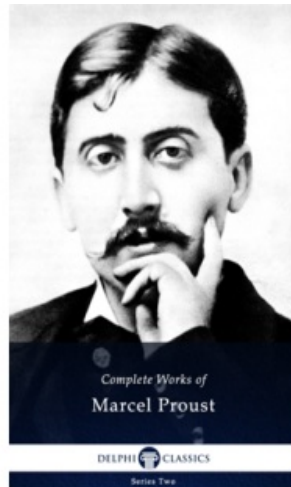
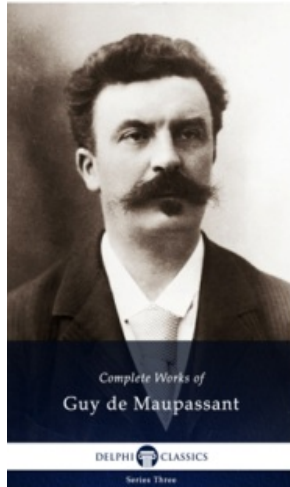
The Complete Works of
ANATOLE FRANCE



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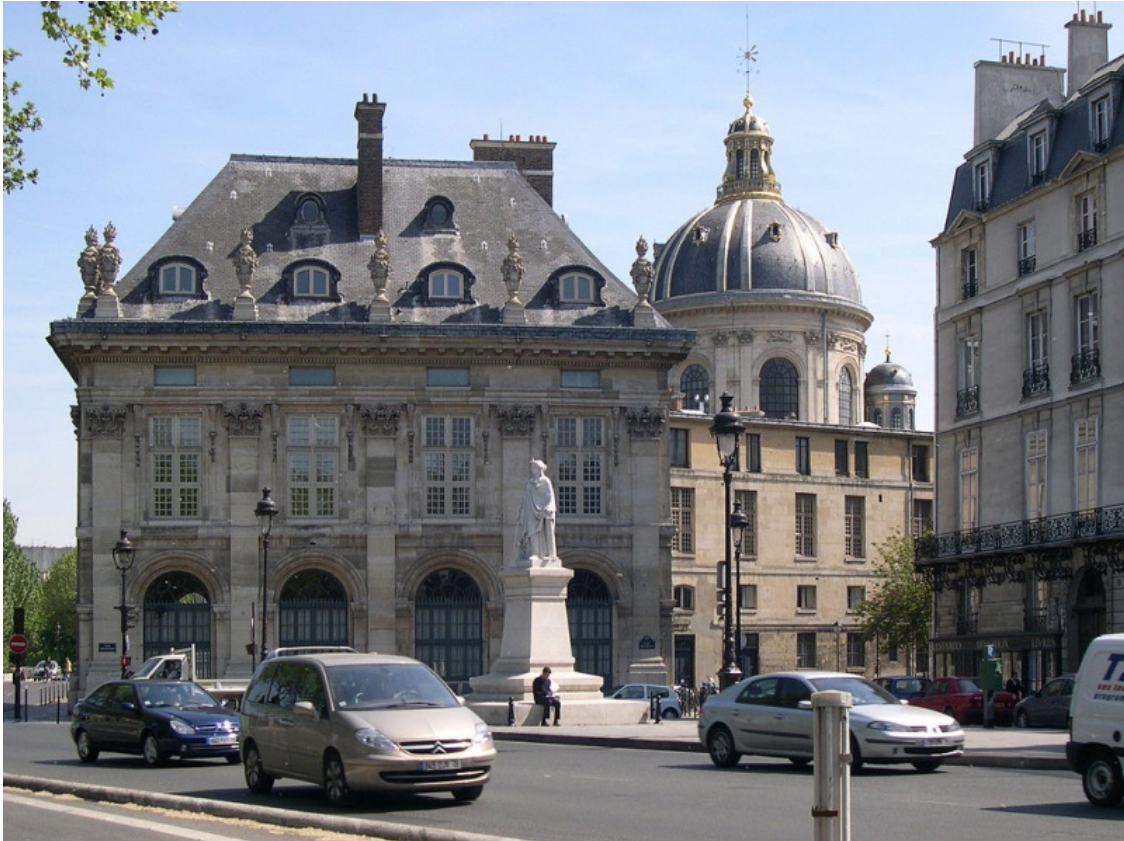
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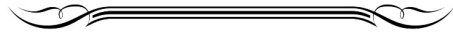


François Anatole (known in English speaking countries as Anatole France) was born in 1844 at 15 Quai Malaquais, Paris



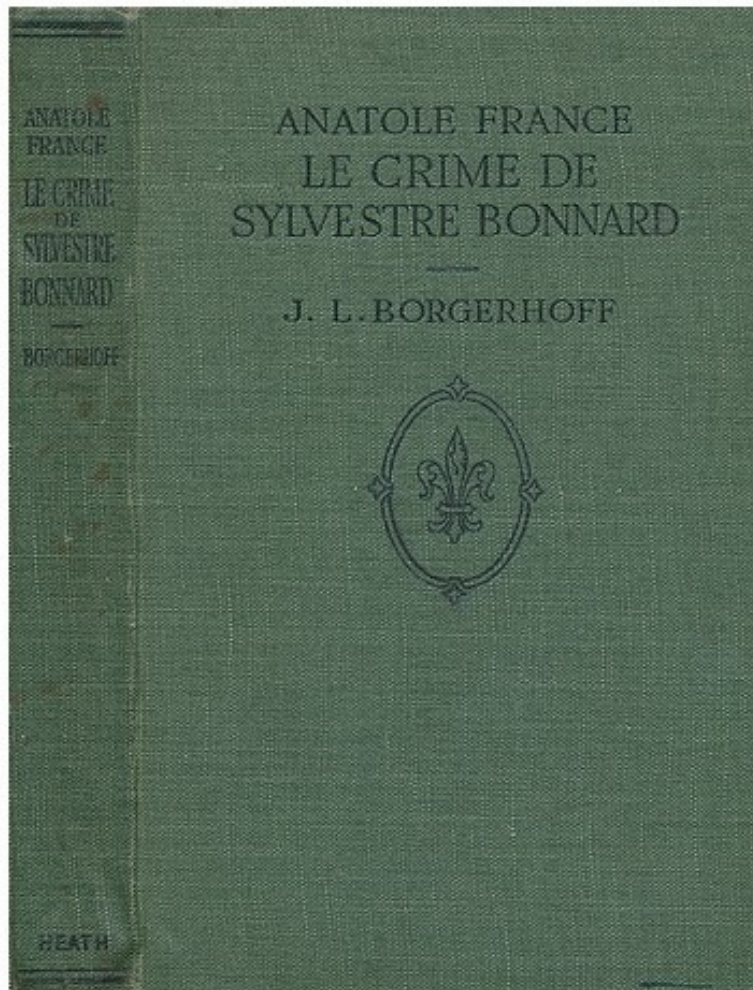
Quai Malaquais, 1910

THE CRIME OF SYLVESTRE BONNARD



Translated by Lafcadio Hearn *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* was published in 1881 and helped to establish France as a novelist of considerable interest. He had previously been known as a poet and was associated with Parnassianism, a French literary style developed during the 19th century which was greatly influenced by the poet, dramatist and critic Theophile Gautier, and German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The novel was well received and won a prize from the *Academie francaise*, the oldest of the five *academies* of the Instiut de France. The *Academie francaise* was founded in 1635, and is tasked with being the official authority on the French language. France would later become a member of the *academie* in January 1896, but entered into a dispute with his fellow members regarding their refusal to support Émile Zola over his famous open letter 'J'accuse', accusing the government of anti-Semitism over the imprisonment of Alfred Dreyfus.

France's first novel centres on the eponymous Sylvestre Bonnard; a historian and philologist, and a man of great intellect. He is a scholar that devotes himself to books and research, allowing little else into his world. When he learns that the manuscript of a great work he wishes to obtain is in Sicily he sets off on a mission to find and purchase the book. During his attempts to acquire the work he encounters the daughter (later revised to be the granddaughter) of a woman he once loved. It is at this point that the issue of Bonnard's possible 'crime' comes into focus, although precisely which of his actions is the 'crime' of the title remains a topic for debate.



The first edition of the novel

CONTENTS

PART I — THE LOG

December 24, 1849.

August 30, 1850

May 7, 1851

July 8, 1852.

August 20, 1859.

October 10, 1859.

October 25, 1859.

Naples, November 10, 1859.

Monte-Allegro, November 30, 1859.

Girgenti. Same day.

Girgenti, November 30, 1859.

Paris, December 8, 1859.

December 30, 1859.

PART II — THE DAUGHTER OF CLEMENTINE

Chapter I — The Fairy

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV — The Little Saint-George

April 16.

April 17.

From May 2 to May 5.

June 3.

June 4.

June 6.

July 6.

August 12.

September-December.

December 15.

December 20.

February 186-.

April-June

August, September.

[October 3.](#)

[December 28.](#)

[December 29.](#)

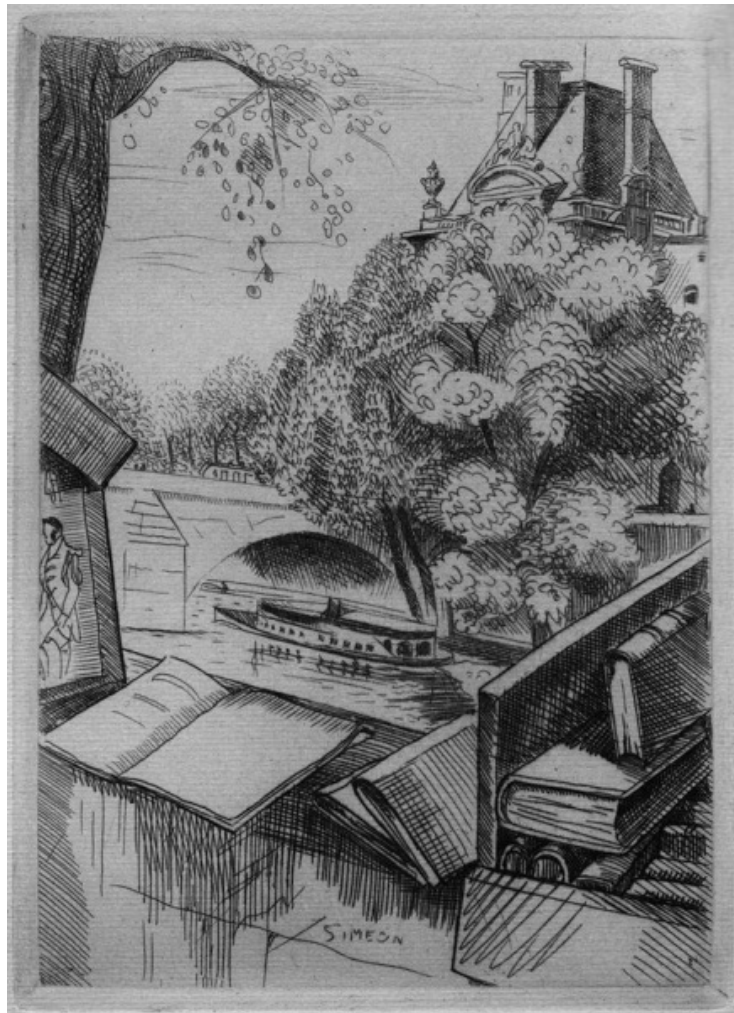
[January 15, 186-.](#)

[May.](#)

[September 20.](#)

[The Last Page](#)

[August 21, 1869.](#)



The original frontispiece



France as a young man

PART I — THE LOG

December 24, 1849.

I had put on my slippers and my dressing-gown. I wiped away a tear with which the north wind blowing over the quay had obscured my vision. A bright fire was leaping in the chimney of my study. Ice-crystals, shaped like fern-leaves, were sprouting over the windowpanes and concealed from me the Seine with its bridges and the Louvre of the Valois.

I drew up my easy-chair to the hearth, and my table-volante, and took up so much of my place by the fire as Hamilcar deigned to allow me. Hamilcar was lying in front of the andirons, curled up on a cushion, with his nose between his paws. His thick fur rose and fell with his regular breathing. At my coming, he slowly slipped a glance of his agate eyes at me from between his half-opened lids, which he closed again almost at once, thinking to himself, "It is nothing; it is only my friend."

"Hamilcar," I said to him, as I stretched my legs— "Hamilcar, somnolent Prince of the City of Books — thou guardian nocturnal! Like that Divine Cat who combated the impious in Heliopolis — in the night of the great combat — thou dost defend from vile nibblers those books which the old savant acquired at the cost of his slender savings and indefatigable zeal. Sleep, Hamilcar, softly as a sultana, in this library, that shelters thy military virtues; for verily in thy person are united the formidable aspect of a Tatar warrior and the slumbrous grace of a woman of the Orient. Sleep, thou heroic and voluptuous Hamilcar, while awaiting the moonlight hour in which the mice will come forth to dance before the Acta Sanctorum of the learned Bolandists!"

The beginning of this discourse pleased Hamilcar, who accompanied it with a throat-sound like the song of a kettle on the fire. But as my voice waxed louder, Hamilcar notified me by lowering his ears and by wrinkling the striped skin of his brow that it was bad taste on my part so to declaim.

"This old-book man," evidently thought Hamilcar, "talks to no purpose at all while our housekeeper never utters a word which is not full of good sense, full of significance — containing either the announcement of a meal or the promise of a whipping. One knows what she says. But this old man puts together a lot of sounds signifying nothing."

So thought Hamilcar to himself. Leaving him to his reflections, I opened a book, which I began to read with interest; for it was a catalogue of manuscripts. I do not know any reading more easy, more fascinating, more delightful than that of a catalogue. The one which I was reading — edited in 1824 by Mr.

Thompson, librarian to Sir Thomas Raleigh — sins, it is true, by excess of brevity, and does not offer that character of exactitude which the archivists of my own generation were the first to introduce into works upon diplomatics and paleography. It leaves a good deal to be desired and to be divined. This is perhaps why I find myself aware, while reading it, of a state of mind which in nature more imaginative than mine might be called reverie. I had allowed myself to drift away this gently upon the current of my thoughts, when my housekeeper announced, in a tone of ill-humor, that Monsieur Coccoz desired to speak with me.

In fact, some one had slipped into the library after her. He was a little man — a poor little man of puny appearance, wearing a thin jacket. He approached me with a number of little bows and smiles. But he was very pale, and, although still young and alert, he looked ill. I thought as I looked at him, of a wounded squirrel. He carried under his arm a green toilette, which he put upon a chair; then unfastening the four corners of the toilette, he uncovered a heap of little yellow books.

“Monsieur,” he then said to me, “I have not the honour to be known to you. I am a book-agent, Monsieur. I represent the leading houses of the capital, and in the hope that you will kindly honour me with your confidence, I take the liberty to offer you a few novelties.”

Kind gods! just gods! such novelties as the homunculus Coccoz showed me! The first volume that he put in my hand was “L’Histoire de la Tour de Nesle,” with the amours of Marguerite de Bourgogne and the Captain Buridan.

“It is a historical book,” he said to me, with a smile— “a book of real history.”

“In that case,” I replied, “it must be very tiresome; for all the historical books which contain no lies are extremely tedious. I write some authentic ones myself; and if you were unlucky enough to carry a copy of any of them from door to door you would run the risk of keeping it all your life in that green baize of yours, without ever finding even a cook foolish enough to buy it from you.”

“Certainly Monsieur,” the little man answered, out of pure good-nature.

And, all smiling again, he offered me the “Amours d’Heloise et d’Abeilard”; but I made him understand that, at my age, I had no use for love-stories.

Still smiling, he proposed me the “Regle des Jeux de la Societe” — piquet, bezique, ecarte, whist, dice, draughts, and chess.

“Alas!” I said to him, “if you want to make me remember the rules of bezique, give me back my old friend Bignan, with whom I used to play cards every evening before the Five Academies solemnly escorted him to the cemetery; or else bring down to the frivolous level of human amusements the

grave intelligence of Hamilcar, whom you see on that cushion, for he is the sole companion of my evenings.”

The little man’s smile became vague and uneasy.

“Here,” he said, “is a new collection of society amusements — jokes and puns — with a receipt for changing a red rose to a white rose.”

I told him that I had fallen out with the roses for a long time, and that, as to jokes, I was satisfied with those which I unconsciously permitted myself to make in the course of my scientific labours.

The homunculus offered me his last book, with his last smile. He said to me:

“Here is the *Clef des Songes* — the ‘Key of Dreams’ — with the explanation of any dreams that anybody can have; dreams of gold, dreams of robbers, dreams of death, dreams of falling from the top of a tower.... It is exhaustive.”

I had taken hold of the tongs, and, brandishing them energetically, I replied to my commercial visitor:

“Yes, my friend; but those dreams and a thousand others, joyous or tragic, are all summed up in one — the Dream of Life; is your little yellow book able to give me the key to that?”

“Yes, Monsieur,” answered the homunculus; “the book is complete, and it is not dear — one franc twenty-five centimes, Monsieur.”

I called my housekeeper — for there is no bell in my room — and said to her:

“Therese, Monsieur Coccoz — whom I am going to ask you to show out — has a book here which might interest you: the ‘Key of Dreams.’ I shall be very glad to buy it for you.”

My housekeeper responded:

“Monsieur, when one has not even time to dream awake, one has still less time to dream asleep. Thank God, my days are just enough for my work and my work for my days, and I am able to say every night, ‘Lord, bless Thou the rest which I am going to take.’ I never dream, either on my feet or in bed; and I never mistake my eider-down coverlet for a devil, as my cousin did; and, if you will allow me to give my opinion about it, I think you have books enough here now. Monsieur has thousands and thousands of books, which simply turn his head; and as for me, I have just tow, which are quite enough for all my wants and purposes — my Catholic prayer-book and my *Cuisiniere Bourgeoise*.”

And with those words my housekeeper helped the little man to fasten up his stock again within the green toilette.

The homunculus Coccoz had ceased to smile. His relaxed features took such an expression of suffering that I felt sorry to have made fun of so unhappy a man. I called him back, and told him that I had caught a glimpse of a copy of the “*Histoire d’Estelle et de Nemorin*,” which he had among his books; that I was

very fond of shepherds and shepherdesses, and that I would be quite willing to purchase, at a reasonable price, the story of these two perfect lovers.

"I will sell you that book for one franc twenty-five centimes, Monsieur," replied Coccoz, whose face at once beamed with joy. "It is historical; and you will be pleased with it. I know now just what suits you. I see that you are a connoisseur. To-morrow I will bring you the Crimes des Papes. It is a good book. I will bring you the edition d'amateur, with coloured plates."

I begged him not to do anything of the sort, and sent him away happy. When the green toilette and the agent had disappeared in the shadow of the corridor I asked my housekeeper whence this little man had dropped upon us.

"Dropped is the word," she answered; "he dropped on us from the roof, Monsieur, where he lives with his wife."

"You say he has a wife, Therese? That is marvelous! Women are very strange creatures! This one must be a very unfortunate little woman."

"I don't really know what she is," answered Therese; "but every morning I see her trailing a silk dress covered with grease-spots over the stairs. She makes soft eyes at people. And, in the name of common sense! does it become a woman that has been received here out of charity to make eyes and to wear dresses like that? For they allowed the couple to occupy the attic during the time the roof was being repaired, in consideration of the fact that the husband is sick and the wife in an interesting condition. The concierge even says that the pain came on her this morning, and that she is now confined. They must have been very badly off for a child!"

"Therese," I replied, "they had no need of a child, doubtless. But Nature had decided that they should bring one into the world; Nature made them fall into her snare. One must have exceptional prudence to defeat Nature's schemes. Let us be sorry for them and not blame them! As for silk dresses, there is no young woman who does not like them. The daughters of Eve adore adornment. You yourself, Therese — who are so serious and sensible — what a fuss you make when you have no white apron to wait at table in! But, tell me, have they got everything necessary in their attic?"

"How could they have it, Monsieur?" my housekeeper made answer. "The husband, whom you have just seen, used to be a jewellery-peddler — at least, so the concierge tells me — and nobody knows why he stopped selling watches, you have just seen that his is now selling almanacs. That is no way to make an honest living, and I never will believe that God's blessing can come to an almanac-peddler. Between ourselves, the wife looks to me for all the world like a good-for-nothing — a Marie-couche toi-la. I think she would be just as capable of bringing up a child as I should be of playing the guitar. Nobody seems to

know where they came from; but I am sure they must have come by Misery's coach from the country of Sans-souci."

"Wherever they have come from, Therese, they are unfortunate; and their attic is cold."

"Pardi! — the roof is broken in several places and the rain comes through in streams. They have neither furniture nor clothing. I don't think cabinet-makers and weavers work much for Christians of that sect!"

"That is very sad, Therese; a Christian woman much less well provided for than this pagan, Hamilcar here! — what does she have to say?"

"Monsieur, I never speak to those people; I don't know what she says or what she sings. But she sings all day long; I hear her from the stairway whenever I am going out or coming in."

"Well! the heir of the Coccoz family will be able to say, like the Egg in the village riddle: *Ma mere me fit en chantant*. ["My mother sang when she brought me into the world."] The like happened in the case of Henry IV. When Jeanne d'Albret felt herself about to be confined she began to sing an old Bearnaise canticle:

"Notre-Dame du bout du pont,
Venez a mon aide en cette heure!
Priez le Dieu du ciel
Qu'il me delivre vite,
Qu'il me donne un garçon!"

"It is certainly unreasonable to bring little unfortunates into the world. But the thing is done every day, my dear Therese and all the philosophers on earth will never be able to reform the silly custom. Madame Coccoz has followed it, and she sings. This is creditable at all events! But, tell me, Therese, have you not put the soup to boil to-day?"

"Yes, Monsieur; and it is time for me to go and skim it."

"Good! but don't forget, Therese, to take a good bowl of soup out of the pot and carry it to Madame Coccoz, our attic neighbor."

My housekeeper was on the point of leaving the room when I added, just in time:

"Therese, before you do anything else, please call your friend the porter, and tell him to take a good bundle of wood out of our stock and carry it up to the attic of those Coccoz folks. See, above all, that he puts a first-class log in the lot — a real Christmas log. As for the homunculus, if he comes back again, do not allow either himself or any of his yellow books to come in here."

Having taken all these little precautions with the refined egotism of an old bachelor, I returned to my catalogue again.

With what surprise, with what emotion, with what anxiety did I therein discover the following mention, which I cannot even now copy without feeling my hand tremble:

“LA LEGENDE DOREE DE JACQUES DE GENES (Jacques de Voragine); — traduction française, petit in-4.

“This MS. of the fourteenth century contains, besides the tolerably complete translation of the celebrated work of Jacques de Voragine, 1. The Legends of Saints Ferreol, Ferrution, Germain, Vincent, and Droctoveus; 2. A poem ‘On the Miraculous Burial of Monsieur Saint-Germain of Auxerre.’ This translation, as well as the legends and the poem, are due to the Clerk Alexander.

“This MS. is written upon vellum. It contains a great number of illuminated letters, and two finely executed miniatures, in a rather imperfect state of preservation: — one represents the Purification of the Virgin, and the other the Coronation of Proserpine.”

What a discovery! Perspiration moistened my forehead, and a veil seemed to come before my eyes. I trembled; I flushed; and, without being able to speak, I felt a sudden impulse to cry out at the top of my voice.

What a treasure! For more than forty years I had been making a special study of the history of Christian Gaul, and particularly of that glorious Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, whence issued forth those King-Monks who founded our national dynasty. Now, despite the culpable insufficiency of the description given, it was evident to me that the MS. of the Clerk Alexander must have come from the great Abbey. Everything proved this fact. All the legends added by the translator related to the pious foundation of the Abbey by King Childebert. Then the legend of Saint-Droctoveus was particularly significant; being the legend of the first abbot of my dear Abbey. The poem in French verse on the burial of Saint-Germain led me actually into the nave of that venerable basilica which was the umbilicus of Christian Gaul.

The “Golden Legend” is in itself a vast and gracious work. Jacques de Voragine, Definitor of the Order of Saint-Dominic, and Archbishop of Genoa, collected in the thirteenth century the various legends of Catholic saints, and formed so rich a compilation that from all the monasteries and castles of the time there arose the cry: “This is the ‘Golden Legend.’” The “Legende Doree” was especially opulent in Roman hagiography. Edited by an Italian monk, it reveals its best merits in the treatment of matters relating to the terrestrial domains of Saint Peter. Voragine can only perceive the greater saints of the Occident as through a cold mist. For this reason the Aquitanian and Saxon translators of the good legend-writer were careful to add to his recital the lives of their own national saints.

I have read and collated a great many manuscripts of the "Golden Legend." I know all those described by my learned colleague, M. Paulin Paris, in his handsome catalogue of the MSS. of the Biblotheque du Roi. There were two among them which especially drew my attention. One is of the fourteenth century and contains a translation by Jean Belet; the other, younger by a century, presents the version of Jacques Vignay. Both come from the Colbert collection, and were placed on the shelves of that glorious Colbertine library by the Librarian Baluze — whose name I can never pronounce without uncovering my head; for even in the century of the giants of erudition, Baluze astounds by his greatness. I know also a very curious codex in the Bigot collection; I know seventy-four printed editions of the work, commencing with the venerable ancestor of all — the Gothic of Strasburg, begun in 1471, and finished in 1475. But no one of those MSS., no one of those editions, contains the legends of Saints Ferreol, Ferrution, Germain, Vincent, and Droctoveus; no one bears the name of the Clerk Alexander; no one, in find, came from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Pres. Compared with the MS. described by Mr. Thompson, they are only as straw to gold. I have seen with my eyes, I have touched with my fingers, an incontrovertible testimony to the existence of this document. But the document itself — what has become of it? Sir Thomas Raleigh went to end his days by the shores of the Lake of Como, whither he carried with him a part of his literary wealth. Where did the books go after the death of that aristocratic collector? Where could the manuscript of the Clerk Alexander have gone?

"And why," I asked myself, "why should I have learned that this precious book exists, if I am never to possess it — never even to see it? I would go to seek it in the burning heart of Africa, or in the icy regions of the Pole if I knew it were there. But I do not know where it is. I do not know if it be guarded in a triple-locked iron case by some jealous biblomaniac. I do not know if it be growing mouldy in the attic of some ignoramus. I shudder at the thought that perhaps its tore-out leaves may have been used to cover the pickle-jars of some housekeeper."

August 30, 1850

The heavy heat compelled me to walk slowly. I kept close to the walls of the north quays; and, in the lukewarm shade, the shops of the dealers in old books, engravings, and antiquated furniture drew my eyes and appealed to my fancy. Rummaging and idling among these, I hastily enjoyed some verses spiritedly thrown off by a poet of the Pleiad. I examined an elegant *Masquerade* by Watteau. I felt, with my eye, the weight of a two-handed sword, a steel gorgerin, a morion. What a thick helmet! What a ponderous breastplate — *Seigneur!* A giant's garb? No — the carapace of an insect. The men of those days were cuirassed like beetles; their weakness was within them. To-day, on the contrary, our strength is interior, and our armed souls dwell in feeble bodies.

...Here is a pastel-portrait of a lady of the old time — the face, vague like a shadow, smiles; and a hand, gloved with an openwork mitten, retains upon her satiny knees a lap-dog, with a ribbon about its neck. That picture fills me with a sort of charming melancholy. Let those who have no half-effaced pastels in their own hearts laugh at me! Like the horse that scents the stable, I hasten my pace as I near my lodgings. There it is — that great human hive, in which I have a cell, for the purpose of therein distilling the somewhat acrid honey of erudition. I climb the stairs with slow effort. Only a few steps more, and I shall be at my own door. But I divine, rather than see, a robe descending with a sound of rustling silk. I stop, and press myself against the balustrade to make room. The lady who is coming down is bareheaded; she is young; she sings; her eyes and teeth gleam in the shadow, for she laughs with lips and eyes at the same time. She is certainly a neighbor, and a very familiar one. She holds in her arms a pretty child, a little boy — quite naked, like the son of a goddess; he has a medal hung round his neck by a little silver chain. I see him sucking his thumb and looking at me with those big eyes so newly opened on this old universe. The mother simultaneously looks at me in a sly, mysterious way; she stops — I think blushes a little — and holds out the little creature to me. The baby has a pretty wrinkle between wrist and arm, a pretty wrinkle about his neck, and all over him, from head to foot, the daintiest dimples laugh in his rosy flesh.

The mamma shows him to me with pride.

"Monsieur," she says, "don't you think he is very pretty — my little boy?"

She takes one tiny hand, lifts it to the child's own lips, and, drawing out the darling pink fingers again towards me, says, "Baby, throw the gentleman a kiss."

Then, folding the little being in her arms, she flees away with the agility of a cat, and is lost to sight in a corridor which, judging by the odour, must lead to some kitchen.

I enter my own quarters.

“Therese, who can that young mother be whom I saw bareheaded on the stairs just now, with a pretty little boy?”

And Therese replies that it was Madame Coccoz.

I stare up at the ceiling, as if trying to obtain some further illumination. Therese then recalls to me the little book-peddler who tried to sell me almanacs last year, while his wife was lying in.

“And Coccoz himself?” I asked.

I was answered that I would never see him again. The poor little man had been laid away underground, without my knowledge, and, indeed, with the knowledge of very few people, on a short time after the happy delivery of Madame Coccoz. I learned that his wife had been able to console herself: I did likewise.

“But, Therese,” I asked, “has Madame Coccoz got everything she needs in that attic of hers?”

“You would be a great dupe, Monsieur,” replied my housekeeper, “if you should bother yourself about that creature. They gave her notice to quit the attic when the roof was repaired. But she stays there yet — in spite of the proprietor, the agent, the concierge, and the bailiffs. I think she has bewitched every one of them. She will leave the attic when she pleases, Monsieur; but she is going to leave in her own carriage. Let me tell you that!”

Therese reflected for a moment; and then uttered these words: “A pretty face is a curse from Heaven.”

“Then I ought to thank Heaven for having spared me that curse. But here! put my hat and cane away. I am going to amuse myself with a few pages of Moreri. If I can trust my old fox-nose, we are going to have a nicely flavoured pullet for dinner. Look after that estimable fowl, my girl, and spare your neighbors, so that you and your old master may be spared by them in turn.”

Having thus spoken, I proceeded to follow out the tufted ramifications of a princely genealogy.

May 7, 1851

I have passed the winter according to the ideal of the sages, in *angelo cum libello*; and now the swallows of the Quai Malaquais find me on their return about as when they left me. He who lives little, changes little; and it is scarcely living at all to use up one's days over old texts.

Yet I feel myself to-day a little more deeply impregnated than ever before with that vague melancholy which life distils. The economy of my intelligence (I dare scarcely confess it to myself!) has remained disturbed ever since that momentous hour in which the existence of the manuscript of the Clerk Alexander was first revealed to me.

It is strange that I should have lost my rest simply on account of a few old sheets of parchment; but it is unquestionably true. The poor man who has no desires possesses the greatest of riches; he possesses himself. The rich man who desires something is only a wretched slave. I am just such a slave. The sweetest pleasures — those of converse with some one of a delicate and well-balanced mind, or dining out with a friend — are insufficient to enable me to forget the manuscript which I know that I want, and have been wanting from the moment I knew of its existence. I feel the want of it by day and by night: I feel the want of it in all my joys and pains; I feel the want of it while at work or asleep.

I recall my desires as a child. How well I can now comprehend the intense wishes of my early years!

I can see once more, with astonishing vividness, a certain doll which, when I was eight years old, used to be displayed in the window of an ugly little shop of the Rue de Seine. I cannot tell how it happened that this doll attracted me. I was very proud of being a boy; I despised little girls; and I longed impatiently for the day (which alas! has come) when a strong beard should bristle on my chin. I played at being a soldier; and, under the pretext of obtaining forage for my rocking-horse, I used to make sad havoc among the plants my poor mother delighted to keep on her window-sill. Manly amusements those, I should say! And, nevertheless, I was consumed with longing for a doll. Characters like Hercules have such weaknesses occasionally. Was the one I had fallen in love with at all beautiful? No. I can see her now. She had a splotch of vermilion on either cheek, short soft arms, horrible wooden hands, and long sprawling legs. Her flowered petticoat was fastened at the waist with two pins. Even now I can see the black heads of those two pins. It was a decidedly vulgar doll — smelt of the faubourg. I remember perfectly well that, child as I was then, before I had

put on my first pair of trousers, I was quite conscious in my own way that this doll lacked grace and style — that she was gross, that she was coarse. But I loved her in spite of that; I loved her just for that; I loved her only; I wanted her. My soldiers and my drums had become as nothing in my eyes, I ceased to stick sprigs of heliotrope and veronica into the mouth of my rocking-horse. That doll was all the world to me. I invented ruses worthy of a savage to oblige Virginie, my nurse, to take me by the little shop in the Rue de Seine. I would press my nose against the window until my nurse had to take my arm and drag me away. “Monsieur Sylvestre, it is late, and your mamma will scold you.” Monsieur Sylvestre in those days made very little of either scoldings or whippings. But his nurse lifted him up like a feather, and Monsieur Sylvestre yielded to force. In after-years, with age, he degenerated, and sometimes yielded to fear. But at that time he used to fear nothing.

I was unhappy. An unreasoning but irresistible shame prevented me from telling my mother about the object of my love. Thence all my sufferings. For many days that doll, incessantly present in fancy, danced before my eyes, stared at me fixedly, opened her arms to me, assuming in my imagination a sort of life which made her appear at once mysterious and weird, and thereby all the more charming and desirable.

Finally, one day — a day I shall never forget — my nurse took me to see my uncle, Captain Victor, who had invited me to lunch. I admired my uncle a great deal, as much because he had fired the last French cartridge at Waterloo, as because he used to prepare with his own hands, at my mother’s table, certain *chapons-a-l’ail* [Crust on which garlic has been rubbed], which he afterwards put in the chicory salad. I thought that was very fine! My Uncle Victor also inspired me with much respect by his frogged coat, and still more by his way of turning the whole house upside down from the moment he came into it. Even now I cannot tell just how he managed it, but I can affirm that whenever my Uncle Victor found himself in any assembly of twenty persons, it was impossible to see or to hear anybody but him. My excellent father, I have reason to believe, never shared my admiration for Uncle Victor, who used to sicken him with his pipe, give him great thumps in the back by way of friendliness, and accuse him of lacking energy. My mother, though always showing a sister’s indulgence to the Captain, sometimes advised him to fold the brandy-bottle a little less frequently. But I had no part either in these repugnances or these reproaches, and Uncle Victor inspired me with the purest enthusiasm. It was therefore with a feeling of pride that I entered into the little lodging he occupied in the Rue Guenegaud. The entire lunch, served on a small table close to the fireplace, consisted of cold meats and confectionery.

The Captain stuffed me with cakes and undiluted wine. He told me of numberless injustices to which he had been a victim. He complained particularly of the Bourbons; and as he neglected to tell me who the Bourbons were, I got the idea — I can't tell how — that the Bourbons were horse-dealers established at Waterloo. The Captain, who never interrupted his talk except for the purpose of pouring out wine, furthermore made charges against a number of dirty scoundrels, blackguards, and good-for-nothings whom I did not know anything about, but whom I hated from the bottom of my heart. At dessert I thought I heard the Captain say my father was a man who could be led anywhere by the nose; but I am not quite sure that I understood him. I had a buzzing in my ears; and it seemed to me that the table was dancing.

My uncle put on his frogged coat, took his bell shaped hat, and we descended to the street, which seemed to me singularly changed. It looked to me as if I had not been in it before for ever so long a time. Nevertheless, when we came to the Rue de Seine, the idea of my doll suddenly returned to my mind and excited me in an extraordinary way. My head was on fire. I resolved upon a desperate expedient. We were passing before the window. She was there, behind the glass — with her red checks, and her flowered petticoat, and her long legs.

"Uncle," I said, with a great effort, "will you buy that doll for me?"

And I waited.

"Buy a doll for a boy — sacrebleu!" cried my uncle, in a voice of thunder. "Do you wish to dishonour yourself? And it is that old Mag there that you want! Well, I must compliment you, my young fellow! If you grow up with such tastes as that, you will never have any pleasure in life; and your comrades will call you a precious ninny. If you asked me for a sword or a gun, my boy, I would buy them for you with the last silver crown of my pension. But to buy a doll for you — by all that's holy! — to disgrace you! Never in the world! Why, if I were ever to see you playing with a puppet rigged out like that, Monsieur, my sister's son, I would disown you for my nephew!"

On hearing these words, I felt my heart so wrung that nothing but pride — a diabolical pride — kept me from crying.

My uncle, suddenly calming down, returned to his ideas about the Bourbons; but I, still smarting under the weight of his indignation, felt an unspeakable shame. My resolve was quickly made. I promised myself never to disgrace myself — I firmly and for ever renounced that red-cheeked doll.

I felt that day, for the first time, the austere sweetness of sacrifice.

Captain, though it be true that all your life you swore like a pagan, smoked like a beadle, and drank like a bell-ringer, be your memory nevertheless honoured — not merely because you were a brave soldier, but also because you

revealed to your little nephew in petticoats the sentiment of heroism! Pride and laziness had made you almost insupportable, Uncle Victor! — but a great heart used to beat under those frogs upon your coat. You always used to wear, I now remember, a rose in your button-hole. That rose which you offered so readily to the shop-girls — that large, open-hearted flower, scattering its petals to all the winds, was the symbol of your glorious youth. You despised neither wine nor tobacco; but you despised life. Neither delicacy nor common sense could have been learned from you, Captain; but you taught me, even at an age when my nurse had to wipe my nose, a lesson of honour and self-abrogation that I shall never forget.

You have now been sleeping for many years in the Cemetery of Mont-Parnasse, under a plain slab bearing the epitaph:

CI-GIT
ARISTIDE VICTOR MALDENT,
Capitaine d'Infanterie,
Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur.

But such, Captain, was not the inscription devised by yourself to be placed above those old bones of yours — knocked about so long on fields of battle and in haunts of pleasure. Among your papers was found this proud and bitter epitaph, which, despite your last will none could have ventured to put upon your tomb:

CI-GIT
UN BRIGAND DE LA LOIRE

“Therese, we will get a wreath of immortelles to-morrow, and lay them on the tomb of the Brigand of the Loire.”...

But Therese is not here. And how, indeed, could she be near me, seeing that I am at the rondpoint of the Champs-Elysees? There, at the termination of the avenue, the Arc de Triomphe, which bears under its vaults the names of Uncle Victor's companions-in-arms, opens its giant gate against the sky. The trees of the avenue are unfolding to the sun of spring their first leaves, still all pale and chilly. Beside me the carriages keep rolling by to the Bois de Boulogne. Unconsciously I have wandered into this fashionable avenue on my promenade, and halted, quite stupidly, in front of a booth stocked with gingerbread and decanters of liquorice-water, each topped by a lemon. A miserable little boy, covered with rags, which expose his chapped skin, stares with widely opened eyes at those sumptuous sweets which are not for such as he. With the shamelessness of innocence he betrays his longing. His round, fixed eyes contemplate a certain gingerbread man of lofty stature. It is a general, and it looks a little like Uncle Victor. I take it, I pay for it, and present it to the little

pauper, who dares not extend his hand to receive it — for, by reason of precocious experience, he cannot believe in luck; he looks at me, in the same way that certain big dogs do, with the air of one saying, “You are cruel to make fun of me like that!”

“Come, little stupid,” I say to him, in that rough tone I am accustomed to use, “take it — take it, and eat it; for you, happier than I was at your age, you can satisfy your tastes without disgracing yourself.”...And you, Uncle Victor — you, whose manly figure has been recalled to me by that gingerbread general, come, glorious Shadow, help me to forget my new doll. We remain for ever children, and are always running after new toys.

Same day.

In the oddest way that Coccoz family has become associated in my mind with the Clerk Alexander.

“Therese,” I said, as I threw myself into my easy-chair, “tell me if the little Coccoz is well, and whether he has got his first teeth yet — and bring me my slippers.”

“He ought to have them by this time, Monsieur,” replied Therese; “but I never saw them. The very first fine day of spring the mother disappeared with the child, leaving furniture and clothes and everything behind her. They found thirty-eight empty pomade-pots in the attic. It passes all belief! She had visitors latterly; and you may be quite sure she is not now in a convent of nuns. The niece of the concierge says she saw her driving about in a carriage on the boulevards. I always told you she would end badly.”

“Therese,” I replied, “that young woman has not ended either badly or well as yet. Wait until the term of her life is over before you judge her. And be careful not to talk too much with that concierge. It seemed to me — though I only saw her for a moment on the stairs — that Madame Coccoz was very fond of her child. For that mother’s love at least, she deserves credit.”

“As far as that goes, Monsieur, certainly the little one never wanted for anything. In all the Quarter one could not have found a child better kept, or better nourished, or more petted and coddled. Every day that God makes she puts a clean bib on him, and sings to him to make him laugh from morning till night.”

“Therese, a poet has said, ‘That child whose mother has never smiled upon him is worthy neither of the table of the gods nor of the couch of the goddesses.’”

July 8, 1852.

Having been informed that the Chapel of the Virgin at Saint-Germain-des-Pres was being repaved, I entered the church with the hope of discovering some old inscriptions, possibly exposed by the labours of the workmen. I was not disappointed. The architect kindly showed me a stone which he had just had raised up against the wall. I knelt down to look at the inscription engraved upon that stone; and then, half aloud, I read in the shadow of the old apsis these words, which made my heart leap:

“Cy-gist Alexandre, moyne de ceste eglise, qui fist mettre en argent le menton de Saint-Vincent et de Saint-Amant et le pie des Innocens; qui toujours en son vivant fut preud’homme et vayllant. Priez pour l’ame de lui.”

I wiped gently away with my handkerchief the dust covering that gravestone; I could have kissed it.

“It is he! it is Alexander!” I cried out; and from the height of the vaults the name fell back upon me with a clang, as if broken.

The silent severity of the beadle, whom I saw advancing towards me, made me ashamed of my enthusiasm; and I fled between the two holy water sprinklers with which tow rival “rats d’eglise” seemed desirous of barring my way.

At all events it was certainly my own Alexander! there could be no more doubt possible; the translator of the “Golden Legend,” the author of the saints lives of Saints Germain, Vincent, Ferreol, Ferrution, and Droctoveus was, just as I had supposed, a monk of Saint-Germain-des-Pres. And what a monk, too — pious and generous! He had a silver chin, a silver head, and a silver foot made, that certain precious remains should be covered with an incorruptible envelope! But shall I never be able to view his handiwork? or is this new discovery only destined to increase my regrets?

August 20, 1859.

“I, that please some, try all; both joy and terror
Of good and bad; that make and unfold error —
Now take upon me, in the name of Time
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage, that I slide
O’er years.”

Who speaks thus? ’Tis an old man whom I know too well. It is Time.

Shakespeare, after having terminated the third act of the “Winter’s Tale,” pauses in order to leave time for little Perdita to grow up in wisdom and in beauty; and when he raises the curtain again he evokes the ancient Scythe-bearer upon the stage to render account to the audience of those many long days which have weighted down upon the head of the jealous Leontes.

Like Shakespeare in his play, I have left in this diary of mine a long interval to oblivion; and after the fashion of the poet, I make Time himself intervene to explain the omission of ten whole years. Ten whole years, indeed, have passed since I wrote one single line in this diary; and now that I take up the pen again, I have not the pleasure, alas! to describe a Perdita “now grown in grace.” Youth and beauty are the faithful companions of poets; but those charming phantoms scarcely visit the rest of us, even for the space of a season. We do not know how to retain them with us. If the fair shade of some Perdita should ever, through some inconceivable whim, take a notion to traverse my brain, she would hurt herself horribly against heaps of dog-eared parchments. Happy the poets! — their white hairs never scare away the hovering shades of Helens, Francescas, Juliets, Julias, and Dorotheas! But the nose alone of Sylvestre Bonnard would put to flight the whole swarm of love’s heroines.

Yet I, like others, have felt beauty; I have known that mysterious charm which Nature has lent to animate form; and the clay which lives has given to me that shudder of delight which makes the lover and the poet. But I have never known either how to love or how to sing. Now in my memory — all encumbered as it is with the rubbish of old texts — I can discern again, like a miniature forgotten in some attic, a certain bright young face, with violet eyes.... Why, Bonnard, my friend, what an old fool you are becoming! Read that catalogue which a Florentine bookseller sent you this very morning. It is a catalogue of Manuscripts; and he promises you a description of several famous ones, long

preserved by the collectors of Italy and Sicily. There is something better suited to you, something more in keeping with your present appearance.

I read; I cry out! Hamilcar, who has assumed with the approach of age an air of gravity that intimidates me, looks at me reproachfully, and seems to ask me whether there is any rest in this world, since he cannot enjoy it beside me, who am old also like himself.

In the sudden joy of my discovery, I need a confidant; and it is to the sceptic Hamilcar that I address myself with all the effusion of a happy man.

“No, Hamilcar! no,” I said to him; “there is no rest in this world, and the quietude which you long for is incompatible with the duties of life. And you say that we are old, indeed! Listen to what I read in this catalogue, and then tell me whether this is a time to be reposing:

“LA LEGENDE DOREE DE JACQUES DE VORAGINE; — traduction francaise du quatorzieme sicle, par le Clerc Alexandre.

“Superb MS., ornamented with two miniatures, wonderfully executed, and in a perfect state of preservation: — one representing the Purification of the Virgin; the other the Coronation of Proserpine.

“At the termination of the “Legende Doree” are the Legends of Saints Ferreol, Ferrution, Germain, and Droctoveus (xxxviii pp.) and the Miraculous Sepulture of Monsieur Saint-Germain d’Auxerre (xii pp.).

“This rare manuscript, which formed part of the collection of Sir Thomas Raleigh, is now in the private study of Signor Michel-Angelo Polizzi, of Girgenti.”

“You hear that, Hamilcar? The manuscript of the Clerk Alexander is in Sicily, at the house of Michel-Angelo Polizzi. Heaven grant he may be a friend of learned men! I am going to write him!”

Which I did forthwith. In my letter I requested Signor Polizzi to allow me to examine the manuscript of Clerk Alexander, stating on what grounds I ventured to consider myself worthy of so great a favour. I offered at the same time to put at his disposal several unpublished texts in my own possession, not devoid of interest. I begged him to favour me with a prompt reply, and below my signature I wrote down all my honorary titles.

“Monsieur! Monsieur! where are you running like that?” cried Therese, quite alarmed, coming down the stairs in pursuit of me, four steps at a time, with my hat in her hand.

“I am going to post a letter, Therese.”

“Good God! is that a way to run out in the street, bareheaded, like a crazy man?”

“I am crazy, I know, Therese. But who is not? Give me my hat, quick!”

“And your gloves, Monsieur! and your umbrella!”

I had reached the bottom of the stairs, but still heard her protesting and lamenting.

October 10, 1859.

I awaited Signor Polizzi's reply with ill-contained impatience. I could not even remain quiet; I would make sudden nervous gestures — open books and violently close them again. One day I happened to upset a book with my elbow — a volume of Moreri. Hamilcar, who was washing himself, suddenly stopped, and looked angrily at me, with his paw over his ear. Was this the tumultuous existence he must expect under my roof? Had there not been a tacit understanding between us that we should live a peaceful life? I had broken the covenant.

"My poor dear comrade," I made answer, "I am the victim of a violent passion, which agitates and masters me. The passions are enemies of peace and quiet, I acknowledge; but without them there would be no arts or industries in the world. Everybody would sleep naked on a dung-heap; and you would not be able, Hamilcar, to repose all day on a silken cushion, in the City of Books."

I expatiated no further to Hamilcar on the theory of the passions, however, because my housekeeper brought me a letter. It bore the postmark of Naples and read as follows: "Most Illustrious Sir, — I do indeed possess that incomparable manuscript of the 'Golden Legend' which could not escape your keen observation. All-important reasons, however, forbid me, imperiously, tyrannically, to let the manuscript go out of my possession for a single day, for even a single minute. It will be a joy and pride for me to have you examine it in my humble home in Girgenti, which will be embellished and illuminated by your presence. It is with the most anxious expectation of your visit that I presume to sign myself, Seigneur Academician, "Your humble and devoted servant
"Michel-Angelo Polizzi,

"Wine-merchant and Archaeologist at Girgenti, Sicily."

Well, then! I will go to Sicily: "Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem."

October 25, 1859.

My resolve had been taken and my preparations made; it only remained for me to notify my housekeeper. I must acknowledge it was a long time before I could make up my mind to tell her I was going away. I feared her remonstrances, her railleries, her objurgations, her tears. "She is a good, kind girl," I said to myself; "she is attached to me; she will want to prevent me from going; and the Lord knows that when she has her mind set upon anything, gestures and cries cost her no effort. In this instance she will be sure to call the concierge, the scrubber, the mattress-maker, and the seven sons of the fruit-seller; they will all kneel down in a circle around me; they will begin to cry, and then they will look so ugly that I shall be obliged to yield, so as not to have the pain of seeing them any more."

Such were the awful images, the sick dreams, which fear marshaled before my imagination. Yes, fear— "fecund Fear," as the poet says — gave birth to these monstrosities in my brain. For — I may as well make the confession in these private pages — I am afraid of my housekeeper. I am aware that she knows I am weak; and this fact alone is sufficient to dispel all my courage in any contest with her. Contests are of frequent occurrence; and I invariably succumb.

But for all that, I had to announce my departure to Therese. She came into the library with an armful of wood to make a little fire— "une flambe," she said. For the mornings are chilly. I watched her out of the corner of my eye while she crouched down at the hearth, with her head in the opening of the fireplace. I do not know how I then found the courage to speak, but I did so without much hesitation. I got up, and, walking up and down the room, observed in a careless tone, with that swaggering manner characteristic of cowards,

"By the way, Therese, I am going to Sicily."

Having thus spoken, I awaited the consequence with great anxiety. Therese did not reply. Her head and her vast cap remained buried in the fireplace; and nothing in her person, which I closely watched, betrayed the least emotion. She poked some paper under the wood, and blew up the fire. That was all!

Finally I saw her face again; — it was calm — so calm that it made me vexed. "Surely," I thought to myself, "this old maid has no heart. She lets me go away without saying so much as AH! Can the absence of her old master really affect her so little?"

"Well, then go, Monsieur," she answered at last, "only be back here by six o'clock! There is a dish for dinner to-day which will not wait for anybody."

Naples, November 10, 1859.

“Co tra calle vive, magna, e lave a faccia.”

I understand, my friend — for three centimes I can eat, drink, and wash my face, all by means of one of those slices of watermelon you display there on a little table. But Occidental prejudices would prevent me from enjoying that simple pleasure freely and frankly. And how could I suck a watermelon? I have enough to do merely to keep on my feet in this crowd. What a luminous, noisy night in the Strada di Porto! Mountains of fruit tower up in the shops, illuminated by multicoloured lanterns. Upon charcoal furnaces lighted in the open air water boils and steams, and ragouts are singing in frying-pans. The smell of fried fish and hot meats tickles my nose and makes me sneeze. At this moment I find that my handkerchief has left the pocket of my frock-coat. I am pushed, lifted up, and turned about in every direction by the gayest, the most talkative, the most animated and the most adroit populace possible to imagine; and suddenly a young woman of the people, while I am admiring her magnificent hair, with a single shock of her powerful elastic shoulder, pushes me staggering three paces back at least, without injury, into the arms of a macaroni-eater, who receives me with a smile.

I am in Naples. How I ever managed to arrive here, with a few mutilated and shapeless remains of baggage, I cannot tell, because I am no longer myself. I have been travelling in a condition of perpetual fright; and I think that I must have looked awhile ago in this bright city like an owl bewildered by sunshine. To-night it is much worse! Wishing to obtain a glimpse of popular manners, I went to the Strada di Porto, where I now am. All about me animated throngs of people crowd and press before the eating-places; and I float like a waif among these living surges, which, even while they submerge you, still caress. For this Neopolitan people has, in its very vivacity, something indescribably gentle and polite. I am not roughly jostled, I am merely swayed about; and I think that by dint of thus rocking me to and fro, these good folks want to lull me asleep on my feet. I admire, as I tread the lava pavements of the strada, those porters and fishermen who move by me chatting, singing, smoking, gesticulating, quarrelling, and embracing each other the next moment with astonishing versatility of mood. They live through all their sense at the same time; and, being philosophers without knowing it, keep the measure of their desires in accordance with the brevity of life. I approach a much-patronised tavern, and see inscribed above the entrance this quatrain in Neopolitan patois:

“Amice, alliegge magnammo e bevimmo
N fin che n’ce stace noglio a la lucerna:
Chi sa s’a l’autro munno n’ce verdimmo?
Chi sa s’a l’autro munno n’ce taverna?”
[“Friends, let us merrily eat and drink
as long as oil remains in the lamp:
Who knows if we shall meet again in another world?
Who knows if in the other world there will be a tavern?”]

Even such counsels was Horace wont to give to his friends. You received them, Posthumus; you heard them also, Leuconoe, perverse beauty who wished to know the secrets of the future. That future is now the past, and we know it well. Of a truth you were foolish to worry yourselves about so small a matter; and your friend showed his good sense when he told you to take life wisely and to filter your Greek wines— “Sapias, vina liques.” Even thus the sight of a fair land under a spotless sky urges to the pursuit of quiet pleasures, but there are souls for ever harassed by some sublime discontent; those are the noblest. You were of such, Leuconoe; and I, visiting for the first time, in my declining years, that city where your beauty was famed of old, I salute with deep respect your melancholy memory. Those souls of kin to your own who appeared in the age of Christianity were souls of saints; and the “Golden Legend” is full of the miracles they wrought. Your friend Horace left a less noble posterity, and I see one of his descendants in the person of that tavern poet, who at this moment is serving out wine in cups under the epicurean motto of his sign.

And yet life decides in favour of friend Flaccus, and his philosophy is the only one which adapts itself to the course of events. There is a fellow leaning against that trellis-work covered with vine-leaves, and eating an ice, while watching the stars. He would not stoop even to pick up the old manuscript I am going to seek with so much trouble and fatigue. And in truth man is made rather to eat ices than to pore over old texts.

I continued to wander about among the drinkers and the singers. There were lovers biting into beautiful fruit, each with an arm about the other’s waist. Man must be naturally bad; for all this strange joy only evoked in me a feeling of uttermost despondency. That thronging populace displayed such artless delight in the simple act of living, that all the shynesses begotten by my old habits as an author awoke and intensified into something like fright. Furthermore, I found myself much discouraged by my inability to understand a word of all the storm of chatter about me. It was a humiliating experience for a philologist. Thus I had begun to feel quite sulky, when I was startled to hear someone behind me observe:

“Dimitri, that old man is certainly a Frenchman. He looks so bewildered that I really fell sorry for him. Shall I speak to him? ...He has such a goo-natured look, with that round back of his — do you not think so, Dimitri?”

It was said in French by a woman’s voice. For the moment it was disagreeable to hear myself spoken of as an old man. Is a man old at sixty-two? Only the other day, on the Pont des Arts, my colleague Perrot d’Avrignac complimented me on my youthful appearance; and I should think him a better authority about one’s age than that young chatterbox who has taken it on herself to make remarks about my back. My back is round, she says. Ah! ah! I had some suspicion myself to that effect, but I am not going now to believe it at all, since it is the opinion of a giddy-headed young woman. Certainly I will not turn my head round to see who it was that spoke; but I am sure it was a pretty woman. Why? Because she talks like a capricious person and like a spoiled child. Ugly women may be naturally quite as capricious as pretty ones; but as they are never petted and spoiled, and as no allowances are made for them, they soon find themselves obliged either to suppress their whims or to hide them. On the other hand, the pretty women can be just as fantastical as they please. My neighbour is evidently one of the latter.... But, after all, coming to think it over, she really did nothing worse than to express, in her own way, a kindly thought about me, for which I ought to feel grateful.

These reflections — include the last and decisive one — passed through my mind in less than a second; and if I have taken a whole minute to tell them, it is characteristic of most philologists. In less than a second, therefore, after the voice had ceased, I did turn round, and saw a pretty little woman — a sprightly brunette.

“Madame,” I said, with a bow, “excuse my involuntary indiscretion. I could not help overhearing what you have just said. You would like to be of service to a poor old man. And the wish, Madame, has already been fulfilled — the mere sound of a French voice has given me such pleasure that I must thank you.”

I bowed again, and turned to go away; but my foot slipped upon a melon-rind, and I should certainly have embraced the Parthenopean soil had not the young lady put out her hand and caught me.

There is a force in circumstances — even in the very smallest circumstances — against which resistance is vain. I resigned myself to remain the protege of the fair unknown.

“It is late,” she said; “do you not wish to go back to your hotel, which must be quite close to ours — unless it be the same one?”

“Madame,” I replied, “I do not know what time it is, because somebody has stolen my watch; but I think, as you say, that it must be time to retire; and I shall

be very glad to regain my hotel in the company of such courteous compatriots.”

So saying, I bowed once more to the young lady, and also saluted her companion, a silent colossus with a gentle and melancholy face.

After having gone a little way with them, I learned, among other matters, that my new acquaintances were the Prince and Princess Trepof, and that they were making a trip round the world for the purpose of finding match-boxes, of which they were making a collection.

We proceeded along a narrow, tortuous vicoletto, lighted only by a single lamp burning in the niche of a Madonna. The purity and transparency of the air gave a celestial softness and clearness to the very darkness itself; and one could find one's way without difficulty under such a limpid night. But in a little while we began to pass through a “venella,” or, in Neopolitan parlance, a sottoportico, which led under so many archways and so many far-projecting balconies that no gleam of light from the sky could reach us. My young guide had made us take this route as a short cut, she assured us; but I think she did so quite as much simply in order to show that she felt at home in Naples, and knew the city thoroughly. Indeed, she needed to know it very thoroughly to venture by night into that labyrinth of subterranean alleys and flights of steps. If ever any man showed absolute docility in allowing himself to be guided, that man was myself. Dante never followed the steps of Beatrice with more confidence than I felt in following those of Princess Trepof.

The lady appeared to find some pleasure in my conversation, for she invited me to take a carriage-drive with her on the morrow to visit the grotto of Posilippo and the tomb of Virgil. She declared she had seen me somewhere before; but she could not remember if it had been a Stockholm or at Canton. In the former event I was a very celebrated professor of geology; in the latter, a provision-merchant whose courtesy and kindness had been much appreciated. One thing certain was that she had seen my back somewhere before.

“Excuse me,” she added; “we are continually travelling, my husband and I, to collect match-boxes and to change our ennui by changing country. Perhaps it would be more reasonable to content ourselves with a single variety of ennui. But we have made all our preparations and arrangements for travelling: all our plans have been laid out in advance, and it gives us no trouble, whereas it would be very troublesome for us to stop anywhere in particular. I tell you all this so that you may not be surprised if my recollections have become a little mixed up. But from the moment I first saw you at a distance this evening, I felt — in fact I knew — that I had seen you before. Now the question is, ‘Where was it that I saw you?’ You are not then, either the geologist or the provision-merchant?”

“No, Madame,” I replied, “I am neither the one nor the other; and I am sorry for it — since you have had reason to esteem them. There is really nothing about me worthy of your interest. I have spent all my life poring over books, and I have never traveled: you might have known that from my bewilderment, which excited your compassion. I am a member of the Institute.”

“You are a member of the Institute! How nice! Will you not write something for me in my album? Do you know Chinese? I would like so much to have you write something in Chinese or Persian in my album. I will introduce you to my friend, Miss Fergusson, who travels everywhere to see all the famous people in the world. She will be delighted.... Dimitri, did you hear that? — this gentleman is a member of the Institute, and he has passed all his life over books.”

The prince nodded approval.

“Monsieur,” I said, trying to engage him in our conversation, “it is true that something can be learned from books; but a great deal more can be learned by travelling, and I regret that I have not been able to go round the world like you. I have lived in the same house for thirty years and I scarcely ever go out.”

“Lived in the same house for thirty years!” cried Madame Trepof; “is it possible?”

“Yes, Madame,” I answered. “But you must know the house is situated on the bank of the Seine, and in the very handsomest and most famous part of the world. From my window I can see the Tuileries and the Louvre, the Pont-Neuf, the towers of Notre-Dame, the turrets of the Palais de Justice, and the spire of the Sainte-Chapelle. All those stones speak to me; they tell me stories about the days of Saint-Louis, of the Valois, of Henri IV., and of Louis XIV. I understand them, and I love them all. It is only a very small corner of the world, but honestly, Madame, where is there a more glorious spot?”

At this moment we found ourselves upon a public square — a largo steeped in the soft glow of the night. Madame Trepof looked at me in an uneasy manner; her lifted eyebrows almost touched the black curls about her forehead.

“Where do you live then?” she demanded brusquely.

“On the Quai Malaquais, Madame, and my name is Bonnard. It is not a name very widely known, but I am contented if my friends do not forget it.”

This revelation, unimportant as it was, produced an extraordinary effect upon Madame Trepof. She immediately turned her back upon me and caught her husband’s arm.

“Come, Dimitri!” she exclaimed, “do walk a little faster. I am horribly tired, and you will not hurry yourself in the least. We shall never get home.... As for you, monsieur, your way lies over there!”

She made a vague gesture in the direction of some dark vicolo, pushed her husband the opposite way, and called to me, without even turning her head.

“Adieu, Monsieur! We shall not go to Posilippo to-morrow, nor the day after, either. I have a frightful headache!... Dimitri, you are unendurable! will you not walk faster?”

I remained for the moment stupefied, vainly trying to think what I could have done to offend Madame Trepof. I had also lost my way, and seemed doomed to wander about all night. In order to ask my way, I would have to see somebody; and it did not seem likely that I should find a single human being who could understand me. In my despair I entered a street at random — a street, or rather a horrible alley that had the look of a murderous place. It proved so in fact, for I had not been two minutes in it before I saw two men fighting with knives. They were attacking each other more fiercely with their tongues than with their weapons; and I concluded from the nature of the abuse they were showering upon each other that it was a love affair. I prudently made my way into a side alley while those two good fellows were still much too busy with their own affairs to think about mine. I wandered hopelessly about for a while, and at last sat down, completely discouraged, on a stone bench, inwardly cursing the strange caprices of Madame Trepof.

“How are you, Signor? Are you back from San Carlo? Did you hear the diva sing? It is only at Naples you can hear singing like hers.”

Monte-Allegro, November 30, 1859.

We were all resting — myself, my guides, and their mules — on a road from Sciacca to Girgenti, at a tavern in the miserable village of Monte-Allegro, whose inhabitants, consumed by the mal aria, continually shiver in the sun. But nevertheless they are Greeks, and their gaiety triumphs over all circumstances. A few gather about the tavern, full of smiling curiosity. One good story would have sufficed, had I known how to tell it to them, to make them forget all the woes of life. They had all a look of intelligence! and their women, although tanned and faded, wore their long black cloaks with much grace.

Before me I could see old ruins whitened by the sea-wind — ruins about which no grass ever grows. The dismal melancholy of deserts prevails over this arid land, whose cracked surface can barely nourish a few shriveled mimosas, cacti, and dwarf palms. Twenty yards away, along the course of a ravine, stones were gleaming whitely like a long line of scattered bones. They told me that was the bed of a stream.

I had been fifteen days in Sicily. On coming into the Bay of Palermo — which opens between the two mighty naked masses of the Pelligrino and the Catalfano, and extends inward along the “Golden Conch” — the view inspired me with such admiration that I resolved to travel a little in this island, so ennobled by historic memories, and rendered so beautiful by the outlines of its hills, which reveal the principles of Greek art. Old pilgrim though I was, grown hoary in the Gothic Occident — I dared to venture upon that classic soil; and, securing a guide, I went from Palermo to Trapani, from Trapani to Selinonte, from Selinonte to Sciacca — which I left this morning to go to Girgenti, where I am to find the MS. of Clerk Alexander. The beautiful things I have seen are still so vivid in my mind that I feel the task of writing them would be a useless fatigue. Why spoil my pleasure-trip by collecting notes? Lovers who love truly do not write down their happiness.

Wholly absorbed by the melancholy of the present and the poetry of the past, my thoughts people with beautiful shapes, and my eyes ever gratified by the pure and harmonious lines of the landscape, I was resting in the tavern at Monte-Allegro, sipping a glass of heavy, fiery wine, when I saw two persons enter the waiting-room, whom, after a moment's hesitation, I recognised as the Prince and Princess Trepof.

This time I saw the princess in the light — and what a light! He who has known that of Sicily can better comprehend the words of Sophocles: “Oh holy

light!... Eye of the Golden Day!" Madame Trepof, dressed in a brown-holland and wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat, appeared to me a very pretty woman of about twenty-eight. Her eyes were luminous as a child's; but her slightly plump chin indicated the age of plenitude. She is, I must confess it, quite an attractive person. She is supple and changeable; her mood is like water itself — and, thank Heaven! I am no navigator. I thought I discerned in her manner a sort of ill-humour, which I attributed presently, by reason of some observations she uttered at random, to the fact that she had met no brigands upon her route.

"Such things only happen to us!" she exclaimed, with a gesture of discouragement.

She called for a glass of iced water, which the landlord presented to her with a gesture that recalled to me those scenes of funeral offerings painted upon Greek vases.

I was in no hurry to introduce myself to a lady who had so abruptly dropped my acquaintance in the public square at Naples; but she perceived me in my corner, and her frown notified me very plainly that our accidental meeting was disagreeable to her.

After she had sipper her ice-water for a few moments — whether because her whim had suddenly changed, or because my loneliness aroused her pity, I did not know — she walked directly to me.

"Good-day, Monsieur Bonnard," she said. "How do you do? What strange chance enables us to meet again in this frightful country?"

"This country is not frightful, Madame," I replied. "Beauty is so great and so august a quality that centuries of barbarism cannot efface it so completely that adorable vestiges of it will not always remain. The majesty of the antique Ceres still overshadows these arid valleys; and that Greek Muse who made Arethusa and Maenalus ring with her divine accents, still sings for my ears upon the barren mountain and in the place of the dried-up spring. Yes, Madame, when our globe, no longer inhabited, shall, like the moon, roll a wan corpse through space, the soil which bears the ruins of Selinonte will still keep the seal of beauty in the midst of universal death; and then, then, at least there will be no frivolous mouth to blaspheme the grandeur of these solitudes."

I knew well enough that my words were beyond the comprehension of the pretty little empty-head which heard them. But an old fellow like myself who has worn out his life over books does not know how to adapt his tone to circumstances. Besides I wished to give Madame Trepof a lesson in politeness. She received it with so much submission, and with such an air of comprehension, that I hastened to add, as good-naturedly as possible,

“As to whether the chance which has enabled me to meet you again be lucky or unlucky, I cannot decide the question until I am sure that my presence be not disagreeable to you. You appeared to become weary of my company very suddenly at Naples the other day. I can only attribute that misfortune to my naturally unpleasant manner — since, on that occasion, I had had the honour of meeting you for the first time in my life.”

These words seem to cause her inexplicable joy. She smiled upon me in the most gracious, mischievous way, and said very earnestly, holding out her hand, which I touched with my lips,

“Monsieur Bonnard, do not refuse to accept a seat in my carriage. You can chat with me on the way about antiquity, and that will amuse me ever so much.”

“My dear,” exclaimed the prince, “you can do just as you please; but you ought to remember that one is horribly cramped in that carriage of yours; and I fear that you are only offering Monsieur Bonnard the chance of getting a frightful attack of lumbago.”

Madame Trepof simply shook her head by way of explaining that such considerations had no weight with her whatever; then she untied her hat. The darkness of her black curls descended over her eyes, and bathed them in velvety shadow. She remained a little while quite motionless, and her face assumed a surprising expression of reverie. But all of a sudden she darted at some oranges which the tavern-keeper had brought in a basket, and began to throw them, one by one, into a fold of her dress.

“These will be nice on the road,” she said. “We are going just where you are going — to Girgenti. I must tell you all about it; you know that my husband is making a collection of match-boxes. We bought thirteen hundred match-boxes at Marseilles. But we heard there was a factory of them at Girgenti. According to what we were told, it is a very small factory, and its products — which are very ugly — never go outside the city and its suburbs. So we are going to Girgenti just to buy match-boxes. Dimitri has been a collector of all sorts of things; but the only kind of collection which can now interest him is a collection of match-boxes. He has already got five thousand two hundred and fourteen different kinds. Some of them gave us frightful trouble to find. For instance, we knew that at Naples boxes were once made with the portraits of Mazzini and Garibaldi on them; and that the police had seized the plates from which the portraits were printed, and put the manufacturer in gaol. Well, by dint of searching and inquiring for ever so long a while, we found one of those boxes at last for sale at one hundred francs, instead of two sous. It was not really too dear at that price; but we were denounced for buying it. We were taken for conspirators. All our baggage was searched; they could not find the box, because I had hidden it so

well; but they found my jewels, and carried them off. They have them still. The incident made quite a sensation, and we were going to get arrested. But the king was displeased about it, and he ordered them to leave us alone. Up to that time, I used to think it was very stupid to collect match-boxes; but when I found that there were risks of losing liberty, and perhaps even life, by doing it, I began to feel a taste for it. Now I am an absolute fanatic on the subject. We are going to Sweden next summer to complete our series.... Are we not, Dimitri?"

I felt — must I confess it? — a thorough sympathy with these intrepid collectors. No doubt I would rather have found Monsieur and Madame Trepof engaged in collecting antique marbles or painted vases in Sicily. I should have like to have found them interested in the ruins of Syracuse, or the poetical traditions of the Eryx. But at all events, they were making some sort of a collection — they belonged to the great confraternity — and I could not possibly make fun of them without making fun of myself. Besides, Madame Trepof had spoken of her collection with such an odd mingling of irony and enthusiasm that I could not help finding the idea a very good one.

We were getting ready to leave the tavern, when we noticed some people coming downstairs from the upper room, carrying carbines under their dark cloaks, to me they had the look of thorough bandits; and after they were gone I told Monsieur Trepof my opinion of them. He answered me, very quietly, that he also thought they were regular bandits; and the guides begged us to apply for an escort of gendarmes, but Madame Trepof besought us not to do anything of the kind. She declared that we must not "spoil her journey."

Then, turning her persuasive eyes upon me, she asked,

"Do you not believe, Monsieur Bonnard, that there is nothing in life worth having except sensations?"

"Why, certainly, Madame," I answered; "but then we must take into consideration the nature of the sensations themselves. Those which a noble memory or a grand spectacle creates within us certainly represent what is best in human life; but those merely resulting from the menace of danger seem to me sensations which one should be very careful to avoid as much as possible. For example, would you think it a very pleasant thing, Madame, while travelling over the mountains at midnight, to find the muzzle of a carbine suddenly pressed against your forehead?"

"Oh, no!" she replied; "the comic-operas have made carbines absolutely ridiculous, and it would be a great misfortune to any young woman to find herself in danger from an absurd weapon. But it would be quite different with a knife — a very cold and very bright knife blade, which makes a cold shudder go right through one's heart."

She shuddered even as she spoke; closed her eyes, and threw her head back. Then she resumed:

“People like you are so happy! You can interest yourselves in all sorts of things!”

She gave a sidelong look at her husband, who was talking with the innkeeper. Then she leaned towards me, and murmured very low:

“You see, Dimitri and I, we are both suffering from ennui! We have still the match-boxes. But at last one gets tired even of match-boxes. Besides, our collection will soon be complete. And then what are we going to do?”

“Oh, Madame!” I exclaimed, touched by the moral unhappiness of this pretty person, “if you only had a son, then you would know what to do. You would then learn the purpose of your life, and your thoughts would become at once more serious and yet more cheerful.”

“But I have a son,” she replied. “He is a big boy; he is eleven years old, and he suffers from ennui like the rest of us. Yes, my George has ennui, too; he is tired of everything. It is very wretched.”

She glanced again towards her husband, who was superintending the harnessing of the mules on the road outside — testing the condition of girths and straps. Then she asked me whether there had been many changes on the Quai Malaquais during the past ten years. She declared she never visited that neighbourhood because it was too far way.

“Too far from Monte Allegro?” I queried.

“Why, no!” she replied. “Too far from the Avenue des Champs Elysees, where we live.”

And she murmured over again, as if talking to herself, “Too far! — too far!” in a tone of reverie which I could not possibly account for. All at once she smiled again, and said to me,

“I like you, Monsieur Bonnard! — I like you very, very much!”

The mules had been harnessed. The young woman hastily picked up a few oranges which had rolled off her lap; rose up; looked at me, and burst out laughing.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “how I should like to see you grappling with the brigands! You would say such extraordinary things to them!... Please take my hat, and hold my umbrella for me, Monsieur Bonnard.”

“What a strange little mind!” I thought to myself, as I followed her. “It could only have been in a moment of inexcusable thoughtlessness that Nature gave a child to such a giddy little woman!”

Girgenti. Same day.

Her manners had shocked me. I left her to arrange herself in her lettica, and I made myself as comfortable as I could in my own. These vehicles, which have no wheels, are carried by two mules — one before and one behind. This kind of litter, or chaise, is of ancient origin. I had often seen representations of similar ones in the French MSS. of the fourteenth century. I had no idea then that one of those vehicles would be at a future day placed at my own disposal. We must never be too sure of anything.

For three hours the mules sounded their little bells, and thumped the calcined ground with their hoofs. On either hand there slowly defiled by us the barren monstrous shapes of a nature totally African.

Half-way we made a halt to allow our animals to recover breath.

Madame Trepof came to me on the road, took my arm, and drew me a little away from the party. Then, very suddenly, she said to me in a tone of voice I had never heard before: “Do not think that I am a wicked woman. My George knows that I am a good mother.”

We walked side by side for a moment in silence. She looked up, and I saw that she was crying.

“Madame,” I said to her, “look at this soil which has been burned and cracked by five long months of fiery heat. A little white lily has sprung up from it.”

And I pointed with my cane to the frail stalk, tipped by a double blossom.

“Your heart,” I said, “however arid it be, bears also its white lily; and that is reason enough why I do not believe that you are what you say — a wicked woman.”

“Yes, yes, yes!” she cried, with the obstinacy of a child— “I am a wicked woman. But I am ashamed to appear so before you who are so good — so very, very good.”

“You do not know anything at all about it,” I said to her.

“I know it! I know all about you, Monsieur Bonnard!” she declared, with a smile.

And she jumped back into her lettica.

Girgenti, November 30, 1859.

I awoke the following morning in the House of Gellias. Gellias was a rich citizen of ancient Agrigentum. He was equally celebrated for his generosity and for his wealth; and he endowed his native city with a great number of free inns. Gellias has been dead for thirteen hundred years; and nowadays there is no gratuitous hospitality among civilised peoples. But the name of Gellias has become that of a hotel in which, by reason of fatigue, I was able to obtain one good night's sleep.

The modern Girgenti lifts its high, narrow, solid streets, dominated by a sombre Spanish cathedral, upon the side of the acropolis of the antique Agrigentum. I can see from my windows, half-way on the hillside towards the sea, the white range of temples partially destroyed. The ruins alone have some aspect of coolness. All the rest is arid. Water and life have forsaken Agrigentine. Water — the divine Nestis of the Agrigentine Empedocles — is so necessary to animated beings that nothing can live far from the rivers and the springs. But the port of Girgenti, situated at a distance of three kilometres from the city, has a great commerce. "And it is in this dismal city," I said to myself, "upon this precipitous rock, that the manuscript of Clerk Alexander is to be found!" I asked my way to the house of Signor Michel-Angelo Polizzi, and proceeded thither.

I found Signor Polizzi, dressed all in white from head to feet, busy cooking sausages in a frying-pan. At the sight of me, he let go the frying-pan, threw up his arms in the air, and uttered shrieks of enthusiasm. He was a little man whose pimply features, aquiline nose, round eyes, and projecting chin formed a very expressive physiognomy.

He called me "Excellence," said he was going to mark the day with a white stone, and made me sit down. The hall in which we were represented the union of the kitchen, reception-room, bedchamber, studio, and wine-cellar. There were charcoal furnaces visible, a bed, paintings, an easel, bottles, strings of onions, and a magnificent lustre of coloured glass pendants. I glanced at the paintings on the wall.

"The arts! the arts!" cried Signor Polizzi, throwing up his arms again to heaven— "the arts! What dignity! what consolation! Excellence, I am a painter!"

And he showed me an unfinished Saint-Francis, which indeed could very well remain unfinished for ever without any loss to religion or to art. Next he showed me some old paintings of a better style, but apparently restored after a decidedly reckless manner.

"I repair," he said— "I repair old paintings. Oh, the Old Masters! What genius, what soul!"

"Why, then," I said to him, "you must be a painter, an archaeologist, and a wine-merchant all in one?"

"At your service, Excellence," he answered. "I have a zucco here at this very moment — a zucco of which every single drop is a pearl of fire. I want your Lordship to taste of it."

"I esteem the wines of Sicily," I responded, "but it was not for the sake of your flagons that I came to see you, Signor Polizzi."

He: "Then you have come to see me about paintings. You are an amateur. It is an immense delight for me to receive amateurs. I am going to show you the chef-d'oeuvre of Monrealese; yes, Excellence, his chef-d'oeuvre! An Adoration of Shepherds! It is the pearl of the whole Sicilian school!"

I: "Later on I will be glad to see the chef-d'oeuvre; but let us first talk about the business which brings me here."

His little quick bright eyes watched my face curiously; and I perceived, with anguish, that he had not the least suspicion of the purpose of my visit.

A cold sweat broke out over my forehead; and in the bewilderment of my anxiety I stammered out something to this effect:

"I have come from Paris expressly to look at a manuscript of the *Legende Doree*, which you informed me was in your possession."

At these words he threw up his arms, opened his mouth and eyes to the widest possible extent, and betrayed every sign of extreme nervousness.

"Oh! the manuscript of the 'Golden Legend!' A pearl, Excellence! a ruby, a diamond! Two miniatures so perfect that they give one the feeling of glimpses of Paradise! What suavity! Those colours ravished from the corollas of flowers make a honey for the eyes! Even a Sicilian could have done no better!"

"Let me see it, then," I asked; unable to conceal either my anxiety or my hope.

"Let you see it!" cried Polizzi. "But how can I, Excellence? I have not got it any longer! I have not got it!"

And he seemed determined to tear out his hair. He might indeed have pulled every hair in his head out of his hide before I should have tried to prevent him. But he stopped of his own accord, before he had done himself any grievous harm.

"What!" I cried out in anger— "what! you make me come all the way from Paris to Girgenti, by promising to show me a manuscript, and now, when I come, you tell me you have not got it! It is simply infamous, Monsieur! I shall leave your conduct to be judged by all honest men!"

Anybody who could have seen me at that moment would have been able to form a good idea of the aspect of a furious sheep.

"It is infamous! it is infamous!" I repeated, waving my arms, which trembled from anger.

Then Michel-Angelo Polizzi let himself fall into a chair in the attitude of a dying hero. I saw his eyes fill with tears, and his hair — until then flamboyant and erect upon his head — fall down in limp disorder over his brow.

"I am a father, Excellence! I am a father!" he groaned, wringing his hands.

He continued, sobbing:

"My son Rafael — the son of my poor wife, for whose death I have been mourning fifteen years — Rafael, Excellence, wanted to settle at Paris; he hired a shop in the Rue Lafitte for the sale of curiosities. I gave him everything precious which I had — I gave him my finest majolicas; my most beautiful Urbino ware; my masterpieces of art; what paintings, Signor! Even now they dazzle me with I see them only in imagination! And all of them signed! Finally, I gave him the manuscript of the 'Golden Legend'! I would have given him my flesh and my blood! An only son, Signor! the son of my poor saintly wife!"

"So," I said, "while I — relying on your written word, Monsieur — was travelling to the very heart of Sicily to find the manuscript of the Clerk Alexander, the same manuscript was actually exposed for sale in a window in the Rue Lafitte, only fifteen hundred yards from my house?"

"Yes, it was there! that is positively true!" exclaimed Signor Polizzi, suddenly growing calm again; "and it is there still — at least I hope it is, Excellence."

He took a card from a shelf as he spoke, and offered it to me, saying,

"Here is the address of my son. Make it known to your friends, and you will oblige me. Faience and enameled wares; hangings; pictures. He has a complete stock of objects of art — all at the fairest possible prices — and everything authentic, I can vouch for it, upon my honour! Go and see him. He will show you the manuscript of the 'Golden Legend.' Two miniatures miraculously fresh in colour!"

I was feeble enough to take the card he held out to me.

The fellow was taking further advantage of my weakness to make me circulate the name of Rafael Polizzi among the Societies of the learned!

My hand was already on the door-knob, when the Sicilian caught me by the arm; he had a look as of sudden inspiration.

"Ah! Excellence!" he cried, "what a city is this city of ours! It gave birth to Empedocles! Empedocles! What a great man what a great citizen! What audacity of thought! what virtue! what soul! At the port over there is a statue of Empedocles, before which I bare my head each time that I pass by! When

Rafael, my son, was going away to found an establishment of antiquities in the Rue Lafitte, at Paris, I took him to the port, and there, at the foot of that statue of Empedocles, I bestowed upon him my paternal benediction! ‘Always remember Empedocles!’ I said to him. Ah! Signor, what our unhappy country needs to-day is a new Empedocles! Would you not like me to show you the way to his statue, Excellence? I will be your guide among the ruins here. I will show you the temple of Castor and Pollux, the temple of the Olympian Jupiter, the temple of the Lucinian Juno, the antique well, the tomb of Theron, and the Gate of Gold! All the professional guides are asses; but we — we shall make excavations, if you are willing — and we shall discover treasures! I know the science of discovering hidden treasures — the secret art of finding their whereabouts — a gift from Heaven!”

I succeeded in tearing myself away from his grasp. But he ran after me again, stopped me at the foot of the stairs, and said in my ear,

“Listen, Excellence. I will conduct you about the city; I will introduce you to some Girgentines! What a race! what types! what forms! Sicilian girls, Signor! — the antique beauty itself!”

“Go to the devil!” I cried at last, in anger, and rushed into the street, leaving him still writhing in the loftiness of his enthusiasm.

When I had got out of his sight, I sank down upon a stone, and began to think, with my face in my hands.

“And it was for this,” I said to myself— “it was to hear such propositions as this that I came to Sicily! That Polizzi is simply a scoundrel, and his son another; and they made a plan together to ruin me.” But what was their scheme? I could not unravel it. Meanwhile, it may be imagined how discouraged and humiliated I felt.

A merry burst of laughter caused me to turn my head, and I saw Madame Trepof running in advance of her husband, and holding up something which I could not distinguish clearly.

She sat down beside me, and showed me — laughing more merrily all the while — an abominable little paste-board box, on which was printed a red and blue face, which the inscription declared to be the face of Empedocles.

“Yes, Madame,” I said, “but that abominable Polizzi, to whom I advise you not to send Monsieur Trepof, has made me fall out for ever with Empedocles; and this portrait is not at all of a nature to make me feel more kindly to the ancient philosopher.”

“Oh!” declared Madame Trepof, “it is ugly, but it is rare! These boxes are not exported at all; you can buy them only where they are made. Dimitri has six others just like this in his pocket. We got them so as to exchange with other

collectors. You understand? At none o'clock this morning we were at the factory. You see we did not waste our time."

"So I certainly perceive, Madame," I replied, bitterly; "but I have lost mine."

I then saw that she was a naturally good-hearted woman. All her merriment vanished.

"Poor Monsieur Bonnard! poor Monsieur Bonnard!" she murmured.

And, taking my hand in hers, she added:

"Tell me about your troubles."

I told her about them. My story was long; but she was evidently touched by it, for she asked me quite a number of circumstantial questions, which I took for proof of her friendly interest. She wanted to know the exact title of the manuscript, its shape, its appearance, and its age; she asked me for the address of Signor Rafael Polizzi.

And I gave it to her; thus doing (O destiny!) precisely what the abominable Polizzi had told me to do.

It is sometimes difficult to check oneself. I recommenced my complaints and my imprecations. But this time Madame Trepof only burst out laughing.

"Why do you laugh?" I asked her.

"Because I am a wicked woman," she answered.

And she fled away, leaving me all disheartened on my stone.

Paris, December 8, 1859.

My unpacked trunks still encumbered the hall. I was seated at a table covered with all those good things which the land of France produces for the delectation of gourmets. I was eating a *pate le Chartres*, which is alone sufficient to make one love one's country. Therese, standing before me with her hands joined over her white apron, was looking at me with benignity, with anxiety, and with pity. Hamilcar was rubbing himself against my legs, wild with delight.

These words of an old poet came back to my memory:

"Happy is he who, like Ulysses, hath made a goodly journey."

..."Well," I thought to myself, "I travelled to no purpose; I have come back with empty hands; but, like Ulysses, I made a goodly journey."

And having taken my last sip of coffee, I asked Therese for my hat and cane, which she gave me not without dire suspicions; she feared I might be going upon another journey. But I reassured her by telling her to have dinner ready at six o'clock.

It had always been a keen pleasure for me to breathe the air in those Parisian streets whose every paving-slab and every stone I love devotedly. But I had an end in view, and I took my way straight to the Rue Lafitte. I was not long in finding the establishment of Signor Rafael Polizzi. It was distinguishable by a great display of old paintings which, although all bearing the signature of some illustrious artist, had a certain family air of resemblance that might have suggested some touching idea about the fraternity of genius, had it not still more forcibly suggested the professional tricks of Polizzi senior. Enriched by these doubtful works of art, the shop was further rendered attractive by various petty curiosities: poniards, drinking-vessels, goblets, figulines, brass *guadrons*, and Hispano-Arabian wares of metallic lustre.

Upon a Portuguese arm-chair, decorated with an escutcheon, lay a copy of the "*Heures*" of Simon Vostre, open at the page which has an astrological figure on it; and an old Vitruvius, placed upon a quaint chest, displayed its masterly engravings of caryatides and telamones. This apparent disorder which only masked cunning arrangement, this factitious hazard which had placed the best objects in the most favourable light, would have increased my distrust of the place, but that the distrust which the mere name of Polizzi had already inspired could not have been increased by any circumstances — being already infinite.

Signor Rafael, who sat there as the presiding genius of all these vague and incongruous shapes, impressed me as a phlegmatic young man, with a sort of

English character, he betrayed no sign whatever of those transcendent faculties displayed by his father in the arts of mimicry and declamation.

I told him what I had come for; he opened a cabinet and drew from it a manuscript, which he placed on a table that I might examine it at my leisure.

Never in my life did I experience such an emotion — except, indeed, during some few brief months of my youth, months whose memories, though I should live a hundred years, would remain as fresh at my last hour as in the first day they came to me.

It was, indeed, the very manuscript described by the librarian of Sir Thomas Raleigh; it was, indeed, the manuscript of the Clerk Alexander which I saw, which I touched! The work of Voragine himself had been perceptibly abridged; but that made little difference to me. All the inestimable additions of the monk of Saint-Germain-des-Pres were there. That was the main point! I tried to read the Legend of Saint Droctoveus; but I could not — all the lines of the page quivered before my eyes, and there was a sound in my ears like the noise of a windmill in the country at night. Nevertheless, I was able to see that the manuscript offered every evidence of indubitable authenticity. The two drawings of the Purification of the Virgin and the Coronation of Proserpine were meagre in design and vulgar in violence of colouring. Considerably damaged in 1824, as attested by the catalogue of Sir Thomas, they had obtained during the interval a new aspect of freshness. But this miracle did not surprise me at all. And, besides, what did I care about the two miniatures? The legends and the poem of Alexander — those alone formed the treasure I desired. My eyes devoured as much of it as they had the power to absorb.

I affected indifference while asking Signor Polizzi the price of the manuscript; and, while awaiting his reply, I offered up a secret prayer that the price might not exceed the amount of ready money at my disposal — already much diminished by the cost of my expensive voyage. Signor Polizzi, however, informed me that he was not at liberty to dispose of the article, inasmuch as it did not belong to him, and was to be sold at auction shortly, at the Hotel des Ventes, with a number of other MSS. and several incunabula.

This was a severe blow to me. It tried to preserve my calmness, notwithstanding, and replied somewhat to this effect:

“You surprise me, Monsieur! Your father, whom I talked with recently at Girgenti, told me positively that the manuscript was yours. You cannot now attempt to make me discredit your father’s word.”

“I DID own the manuscript, indeed,” answered Signor Rafael with absolute frankness; “but I do not own it any longer. I sold that manuscript — the remarkable interest of which you have not failed to perceive — to an amateur

whom I am forbidden to name, and who, for reasons which I am not at liberty to mention, finds himself obliged to sell his collection. I am honoured with the confidence of my customer, and was commissioned by him to draw up the catalogue and manage the sale, which takes place the 24th of December. Now, if you will be kind enough to give me your address, I shall have the pleasure of sending you the catalogue, which is already in the press; you will find the 'Legende Doree' described in it as 'No. 42.'"

I gave my address, and left the shop.

The polite gravity of the son impressed me quite as disagreeably as the impudent buffoonery of the father. I hated, from the bottom of my heart, the tricks of the vile hagglers! It was perfectly evident that the two rascals had a secret understanding, and had only devised this auction-sale, with the aid of a professional appraiser, to force the bidding on the manuscript I wanted so much up to an outrageous figure. I was completely at their mercy. There is one evil in all passionate desires, even the noblest — namely, that they leave us subject to the will of others, and in so far dependent. This reflection made me suffer cruelly; but it did not conquer my longing to win the work of Clerk Alexander. While I was thus meditating, I heard a coachman swear. And I discovered it was I whom he was swearing at only when I felt the pole of a carriage poke me in the ribs. I started aside, barely in time to save myself from being run over; and whom did I perceive through the windows of the coupe? Madame Trepof, being taken by two beautiful horses, and a coachman all wrapped up in furs like a Russian Boyard, into the very street I had just left. She did not notice me; she was laughing to herself with that artless grace of expression which still preserved for her, at thirty years, all the charm of her early youth.

"Well, well!" I said to myself, "she is laughing! I suppose she must have just found another match-box."

And I made my way back to the Ponts, feeling very miserable.

Nature, eternally indifferent, neither hastened nor hurried the twenty-fourth day of December. I went to the Hotel Bullion, and took my place in Salle No. 4, immediately below the high desk at which the auctioneer Boulouze and the expert Polizzi were to sit. I saw the hall gradually fill with familiar faces. I shook hands with several old booksellers of the quays; but that prudence which any large interest inspires in even the most self-assured caused me to keep silence in regard to the reason of my unaccustomed presence in the halls of the Hotel Bullion. On the other hand, I questioned those gentlemen at the auction sale; and I had the satisfaction of finding them all interested about matters in no wise related to my affair.

Little by little the hall became thronged with interested or merely curious spectators; and, after half an hour's delay, the auctioneer with his ivory hammer, the clerk with his bundle of memorandum-papers, and the crier, carrying his collection-box fixed to the end of a pole, all took their places on the platform in the most solemn business manner. The attendants ranged themselves at the foot of the desk. The presiding officer having declared the sale open, a partial hush followed.

A commonplace series of *Preces dia*, with miniatures, were first sold off at mediocre prices. Needless to say, the illuminations of these books were in perfect condition!

The lowness of the bids gave courage to the gathering of second-hand booksellers present, who began to mingle with us, and become more familiar. The dealers in old brass and bric-a-brac pressed forward in their tun, waiting for the doors of an adjoining room to be opened; and the voice of the auctioneer was drowned by the jests of the Auvergnats.

A magnificent codex of the "Guerre des Juifs" revived attention. It was long disputed for. "Five thousand francs! five thousand!" called the crier, while the bric-a-brac dealers remained silent with admiration. Then seven or eight antiphonaries brought us back again to low prices. A fat old woman, in a loose gown, bareheaded — a dealer in second-hand goods — encouraged by the size of the books and the low prices bidden, had one of the antiphonaries knocked down to her for thirty francs.

At last the expert Polizzi announced No. 42: "The 'Golden Legend'; French MS.; unpublished; two superb miniatures, with a starting bid of three thousand francs."

"Three thousand! three thousand bid!" yelled the crier.

"Three thousand!" dryly repeated the auctioneer.

There was a buzzing in my head, and, as through a cloud, I saw a host of curious faces all turning towards the manuscript, which a boy was carrying open through the audience.

"Three thousand and fifty!" I said.

I was frightened by the sound of my own voice, and further confused by seeing, or thinking that I saw, all eyes turned on me.

"Three thousand and fifty on the right!" called the crier, taking up my bid.

"Three thousand one hundred!" responded Signor Polizzi.

Then began a heroic duel between the expert and myself.

"Three thousand five hundred!"

"Six hundred!"

"Seven hundred!"

“Four thousand!”

“Four thousand five hundred.”

Then by a sudden bold stroke, Signor Polizzi raised the bid at once to six thousand.

Six thousand francs was all the money I could dispose of. It represented the possible. I risked the impossible.

“Six thousand one hundred!”

Alas! even the impossible did not suffice.

“Six thousand five hundred!” replied Signor Polizzi, with calm.

I bowed my head and sat there stupefied, unable to answer either yes or no to the crier, who called to me:

“Six thousand five hundred, by me — not by you on the right there! — it is my bid — no mistake! Six thousand five hundred!”

“Perfectly understood!” declared the auctioneer. “Six thousand five hundred. Perfectly clear; perfectly plain.... Any more bids? The last bid is six thousand five hundred francs.”

A solemn silence prevailed. Suddenly I felt as if my head had burst open. It was the hammer of the officiant, who, with a loud blow on the platform, adjudged No. 42 irrevocably to Signor Polizzi. Forthwith the pen of the clerk, coursing over the papier-timbre, registered that great fact in a single line.

I was absolutely prostrated, and I felt the utmost need of rest and quiet. Nevertheless, I did not leave my seat. My powers of reflection slowly returned. Hope is tenacious. I had one more hope. It occurred to me that the new owner of the “Legende Doree” might be some intelligent and liberal bibliophile who would allow me to examine the MS., and perhaps even to publish the more important parts. And, with this idea, as soon as the sale was over I approached the expert as he was leaving the platform.

“Monsieur,” I asked him, “did you buy in No. 42 on your own account, or on commission?”

“On commission. I was instructed not to let it go at any price.”

“Can you tell me the name of the purchaser?”

“Monsieur, I regret that I cannot serve you in that respect. I have been strictly forbidden to mention the name.”

I went home in despair.

December 30, 1859.

“Therese! don’t you hear the bell? Somebody has been ringing at the door for the last quarter of an hour?”

Therese does not answer. She is chattering downstairs with the concierge, for sure. So that is the way you observe your old master’s birthday? You desert me even on the eve of Saint-Sylvestre! Alas! if I am to hear any kind wishes to-day, they must come up from the ground; for all who love me have long been buried. I really don’t know what I am still living for. There is the bell again!... I get up slowly from my seat at the fire, with my shoulders still bent from stooping over it, and go to the door myself. Whom do I see at the threshold? It is not a dripping love, and I am not an old Anacreon; but it is a very pretty little boy of about ten years old. He is alone; he raises his face to look at me. His cheeks are blushing; but his little pert nose gives one an idea of mischievous pleasantry. He has feathers in his cap, and a great lace-ruff on his jacket. The pretty little fellow! He holds in both arms a bundle as big as himself, and asks me if I am Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard. I tell him yes; he gives me the bundle, tells me his mamma sent it to me, and then he runs downstairs.

I go down a few steps; I lean over the balustrade, and see the little cap whirling down the spiral of the stairway like a feather in the wind. “Good-bye, my little boy!” I should have liked so much to question him. But what, after all, could I have asked? It is not polite to question children. Besides, the package itself will probably give me more information than the messenger could.

It is a very big bundle, but not very heavy. I take it into my library, and there untie the ribbons and unfasten the paper wrappings; and I see — what? a log! a first-class log! a real Christmas log, but so light that I know it must be hollow. Then I find that it is indeed composed of two separate pieces, opening on hinges, and fastened with hooks. I slip the hooks back, and find myself inundated with violets! Violets! they pour over my table, over my knees, over the carpet. They tumble into my vest, into my sleeves. I am all perfumed with them.

“Therese! Therese! fill me some vases with water, and bring them here, quick! Here are violets sent to us I know not from what country nor by what hand; but it must be from a perfumed country, and by a very gracious hand.... Do you hear me, old crow?”

I have put all the violets on my table — now completely covered by the odorous mass. But there is still something in the log...a book — a manuscript. It is...I cannot believe it, and yet I cannot doubt it.... It is the “Legende Doree”! —

It is the manuscript of the Clerk Alexander! Here is the “Purification of the Virgin” and the “Coronation of Proserpine”; — here is the legend of Saint Droctoveus. I contemplate this violet-perfumed relic. I turn the leaves of it — between which the dark rich blossoms have slipped in here and there; and, right opposite the legend of Saint-Cecilia, I find a card bearing this name:

“Princess Trepof.”

Princess Trepof! — you who laughed and wept by turns so sweetly under the fair sky of Agrigentum! — you, whom a cross old man believed to be only a foolish little woman! — to-day I am convinced of your rare and beautiful folly; and the old fellow whom you now overwhelm with happiness will go to kiss your hand, and give you back, in another form, this precious manuscript, of which both he and science owe you an exact and sumptuous publication!

Therese entered my study just at that moment; she seemed to be very much excited.

“Monsieur!” she cried, “guess whom I saw just now in a carriage, with a coat-of-arms painted on it, that was stopping before the door?”

“Parbleu! — Madame Trepof,” I exclaimed.

“I don’t know anything about any Madame Trepof,” answered my housekeeper. “The woman I saw just now was dressed like a duchess, and had a little boy with her, with lace-frills all along the seams of his clothes. And it was that same little Madame Coccoz you once sent a log to, when she was lying-in here about eleven years ago. I recognized her at once.”

“What!” I exclaimed, “you mean to say it was Madame Coccoz, the widow of the almanac-peddler?”

“Herself, Monsieur! The carriage-door was open for a minute to let her little boy, who had just come from I don’t know where, get in. She hasn’t changed scarcely at all. Well, why should those women change? — they never worry themselves about anything. Only the Coccoz woman looks a little fatter than she used to be. And the idea of a woman that was taken in here out of pure charity coming to show off her velvets and diamonds in a carriage with a crest painted on it! Isn’t it shameful!”

“Therese!” I cried, in a terrible voice, “if you ever speak to me again about that lady except in terms of the deepest respect, you and I will fall out!...Bring me the Sevres vases to put those violets in, which now give the City of Books a charm it never had before.”

While Therese went off with a sigh to get the Sevres vases, I continued to contemplate those beautiful scattered violets, whose odour spread all about me like the perfume of some sweet presence, some charming soul; and I asked myself how it had been possible for me never to recognise Madame Coccoz in

the person of the Princess Trepof. But that vision of the young widow, showing me her little child on the stairs, had been a very rapid one. I had much more reason to reproach myself for having passed by a gracious and lovely soul without knowing it.

“Bonnard,” I said to myself, “thou knowest how to decipher old texts; but thou dost not know how to read in the Book of Life. That giddy little Madame Trepof, whom thou once believed to possess no more soul than a bird, has expended, in pure gratitude, more zeal and finer tact than thou didst ever show for anybody’s sake. Right royally hath she repaid thee for the log-fire of her churching-day!

“Therese! Awhile ago you were a magpie; now you are becoming a tortoise! Come and give some water to these Parmese violets.”

PART II — THE DAUGHTER OF CLEMENTINE

Chapter I — The Fairy

When I left the train at the Melun station, night had already spread its peace over the silent country. The soil, heated through all the long day by a strong sun — by a “gros soleil,” as the harvesters of the Val de Vire say — still exhaled a warm heavy smell. Lush dense odours of grass passed over the level of the fields. I brushed away the dust of the railway carriage, and joyfully inhaled the pure air. My travelling-bag — filled by my housekeeper with linen and various small toilet articles, munditiis, seemed so light in my hand that I swung it about just as a schoolboy swings his strapped package of rudimentary books when the class is let out.

Would to Heaven that I were again a little urchin at school! But it is fully fifty years since my good dead mother made me some tartines of bread and preserves, and placed them in a basket of which she slipped the handle over my arm, and then led me, thus prepared, to the school kept by Monsieur Douloir, at a corner of the Passage du Commerce well known to the sparrows, between a court and a garden. The enormous Monsieur Douloir smiled upon us genially, and patted my cheek to show, no doubt, the affectionate interest which my first appearance had inspired. But when my mother had passed out of the court, startling the sparrows as she went, Monsieur Douloir ceased to smile — he showed no more affectionate interest; he appeared, on the contrary, to consider me as a very troublesome little fellow. I discovered, later on, that he entertained the same feelings towards all his pupils. He distributed whacks of his ferule with an agility no one could have expected on the part of so corpulent a person. But his first aspect of tender interest invariably reappeared when he spoke to any of our mothers in our presence; and always at such times, while warmly praising our remarkable aptitudes, he would cast down upon us a look of intense affection. Still, those were happy days which I passed on the benches of the Monsieur Couloir with my little playfellows, who, like myself, cried and laughed by turns with all their might, from morning till evening.

After a whole half-century these souvenirs float up again, fresh and bright as ever, to the surface of memory, under this starry sky, whose face has in no wise changed since then, and whose serene and immutable lights will doubtless see many other schoolboys such as I was slowly turn into grey-headed servants, afflicted with catarrh.

Stars, who have shown down upon each wise or foolish head among all my forgotten ancestors, it is under your soft light that I now feel stir within me a

certain poignant regret! I would that I could have a son who might be able to see you when I shall see you no more. How I should love him! Ah! such a son would — what am I saying? — why, he would be no just twenty years old if you had only been willing, Clementine — you whose cheeks used to look so ruddy under your pink hood! But you are married to that young bank clerk, Noel Alexandre, who made so many millions afterwards! I never met you again after your marriage, Clementine, but I can see you now, with your bright curls and your pink hood.

A looking-glass! a looking-glass! a looking-glass! Really, it would be curious to see what I look like now, with my white hair, sighing Clementine's name to the stars! Still, it is not right to end with sterile irony the thought begun in the spirit of faith and love. No, Clementine, if your name came to my lips by chance this beautiful night, be it for ever blessed, your dear name! and may you ever, as a happy mother, a happy grandmother, enjoy to the very end of life with your rich husband the utmost degree of that happiness which you had the right to believe you could not win with the poor young scholar who loved you! If — though I cannot even now imagine it — if your beautiful hair has become white, Clementine, bear worthily the bundle of keys confided to you by Noel Alexandre, and impart to your grandchildren the knowledge of all domestic virtues!

Ah! beautiful Night! She rules, with such noble repose, over men and animals alike, kindly loosed by her from the yoke of daily toil; and even I feel her beneficent influence, although my habits of sixty years have so changed me that I can feel most things only through the signs which represent them. My world is wholly formed of words — so much of a philologist I have become! Each one dreams the dream of life in his own way. I have dreamed it in my library; and when the hour shall come in which I must leave this world, may it please God to take me from my ladder — from before my shelves of books!...

“Well, well! it is really himself, pardieu! How are you, Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard? And where have you been travelling to all this time, over the country, while I was waiting for you at the station with my cabriolet? You missed me when the train came in, and I was driving back, quite disappointed, to Lusance. Give me your valise, and get up here beside me in the carriage. Why, do you know it is fully seven kilometres from here to the chateau?”

Who addresses me thus, at the very top of his voice from the height of his cabriolet? Monsieur Paul de Gabry, nephew and heir of Monsieur Honore de Gabry, peer of France in 1842, who recently died at Monaco. And it was precisely to Monsieur Paul de Gabry's house that I was going with that valise of mine, so carefully strapped by my housekeeper. This excellent young man has

just inherited, conjointly with his two brothers-in-law, the property of his uncle, who, belonging to a very ancient family of distinguished lawyers, had accumulated in his chateau at Lusance a library rich in MSS., some dating back to the fourteenth century. It was for the purpose of making an inventory and catalogue of these MSS. that I had come to Lusance at the urgent request of Monsieur Paul de Gabry, whose father, a perfect gentleman and distinguished bibliophile, had maintained the most pleasant relations with me during his lifetime. To tell the truth, Monsieur Paul has not inherited the fine tastes of his father. Monsieur Paul likes sporting; he is a great authority on horses and dogs; and I much fear that of all the sciences capable of satisfying or of duping the inexhaustible curiosity of mankind, those of the stable and the dog-kennel are the only ones thoroughly mastered by him.

I cannot say I was surprised to meet him, since we had made a rendezvous; but I acknowledge that I had become so preoccupied with my own thoughts that I had forgotten all about the Chateau de Lusance and its inhabitants, and that the voice of the gentleman calling out to me as I started to follow the country road winding away before me— “un bon ruban de queue,” as they say — had given me quite a start.

I fear my face must have betrayed my incongruous distraction by a certain stupid expression which it is apt to assume in most of my social transactions. My valise was pulled up into the carriage, and I followed my valise. My host pleased me by his straightforward simplicity.

“I don’t know anything myself about your old parchments,” he said; “but I think you will find some folks to talk to at the house. Besides the cure, who writes books himself, and the doctor, who is a very good fellow — although a radical — you will meet somebody able to keep your company. I mean my wife. She is not a very learned woman, but there are few things which she can’t divine pretty well. Then I count upon being able to keep you with us long enough to make you acquainted with Mademoiselle Jeanne, who has the fingers of a magician and the soul of an angel.”

“And is this delightfully gifted young lady one of your family?” I asked.

“Not at all,” replied Monsieur Paul.

“Then she is just a friend of yours?” I persisted, rather stupidly.

“She has lost both her father and mother,” answered Monsieur de Gabry, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ears of his horse, whose hoofs rang loudly over the road blue-tinted by the moonshine. “Her father managed to get us into some very serious trouble; and we did not get off with a fright either!”

Then he shook his head, and changed the subject. He gave me due warning of the ruinous condition in which I should find the chateau and the park; they had

been absolutely deserted for thirty-two years.

I learned from him that Monsieur Honore de Gabry, his uncle, had been on very bad terms with some poachers, whom he used to shoot at like rabbits. One of them, a vindictive peasant, who had received a whole charge of shot in his face, lay in wait for the Seigneur one evening behind the trees of the mall, and very nearly succeeded in killing him, for the ball took off the tip of his ear.

“My uncle,” Monsieur Paul continued, “tried to discover who had fired the shot; but he could not see any one, and he walked back slowly to the house. The day after he called his steward and ordered him to close up the manor and the park, and allow no living soul to enter. He expressly forbade that anything should be touched, or looked after, or any repairs made on the estate during his absence. He added, between his teeth, that he would return at Easter, or Trinity Sunday, as they say in the song; and, just as the song has it, Trinity Sunday passed without a sign of him. He died last year at Monaco; my brother-in-law and myself were the first to enter the chateau after it had been abandoned for thirty-two years. We found a chestnut-tree growing in the middle of the parlour. As for the park, it was useless trying to visit it, because there were no longer any paths or alleys.”

My companion ceased to speak; and only the regular hoof-beat of the trotting horse, and the chirping of insects in the grass, broke the silence. On either hand, the sheaves standing in the fields took, in the vague moonlight, the appearance of tall white women kneeling down; and I abandoned myself awhile to those wonderful childish fancies which the charm of night always suggests. After driving under the heavy shadows of the mall, we turned to the right and rolled up a lordly avenue at the end of which the chateau suddenly rose into view — a black mass, with turrets en poivriere. We followed a sort of causeway, which gave access to the court-of-honor, and which, passing over a moat full of running water, doubtless replaced a long-vanished drawbridge. The loss of that drawbridge must have been, I think, the first of various humiliations to which the warlike manor had been subjected ere being reduced to that pacific aspect with which it received me. The stars reflected themselves with marvelous clearness in the dark water. Monsieur Paul, like a courteous host, escorted me to my chamber at the very top of the building, at the end of a long corridor; and then, excusing himself for not presenting me at once to his wife by reason of the lateness of the hour, bade me good-night.

My apartment, painted in white and hung with chintz, seemed to keep some traces of the elegant gallantry of the eighteenth century. A heap of still-glowing ashes — which testified to the pains taken to dispel humidity — filled the fireplace, whose marble mantelpiece supported a bust of Marie Antoinette in

bisuit. Attached to the frame of the tarnished and discoloured mirror, two brass hooks, that had once doubtless served the ladies of old-fashioned days to hang their chatelaines on, seemed to offer a very opportune means of suspending my watch, which I took care to wind up beforehand; for, contrary to the opinion of the Thelemites, I hold that man is only master of time, which is Life itself, when he has divided it into hours, minutes and seconds — that is to say, into parts proportioned to the brevity of human existence.

And I thought to myself that life really seems short to us only because we measure it irrationally by our own mad hopes. We have all of us, like the old man in the fable, a new wing to add to our building. I want, for example, before I die, to finish my “History of the Abbots of Saint-Germain-de-Pres.” The time God allots to each one of us is like a precious tissue which we embroider as we best know how. I had begun my woof with all sorts of philological illustrations.... So my thoughts wandered on; and at last, as I bound my foulard about my head, the notion of Time led me back to the past; and for the second time within the same round of the dial I thought of you, Clementine — to bless you again in your prosperity, if you have any, before blowing out my candle and falling asleep amid the chanting of the frogs.

Chapter II

During breakfast I had many opportunities to appreciate the good taste, tact, and intelligence of Madame de Gabry, who told me that the chateau had its ghosts, and was especially haunted by the “Lady-with-three-wrinkles-in-her-back,” a prisoner during her lifetime, and thereafter a Soul-in-pain. I could never describe how much wit and animation she gave to this old nurse’s tale. We took out, coffee on the terrace, whose balusters, clasped and forcibly torn away from their stone coping by a vigorous growth of ivy, remained suspended in the grasp of the amorous plant like bewildered Athenian women in the arms of ravishing Centaurs.

The chateau, shaped something like a four-wheeled wagon, with a turret at each of the four angles, had lost all original character by reason of repeated remodellings. It was merely a fine spacious building, nothing more. It did not appear to me to have suffered much damage during its abandonment of thirty-two years. But when Madame de Gabry conducted me into the great salon of the ground-floor, I saw that the planking was bulged in and out, the plinths rotten, the wainscotings split apart, the paintings of the piers turned black and hanging more than half out of their settings. A chestnut-tree, after forcing up the planks of the floor, had grown tall under the ceiling, and was reaching out its large-leaved branches towards the glassless windows.

This spectacle was not devoid of charm; but I could not look at it without anxiety as I remembered that the rich library of Monsieur Honore de Gabry, in an adjoining apartment, must have been exposed for the same length of time to the same forces of decay. Yet, as I looked at the young chestnut-tree in the salon, I could not but admire the magnificent vigour of Nature, and that resistless power which forces every germ to develop into life. On the other hand I felt saddened to think that, whatever effort we scholars may make to preserve dead things from passing away, we are labouring painfully in vain. Whatever has lived becomes the necessary food of new existences. And the Arab who builds himself a hut out of the marble fragments of a Palmyra temple is really more of a philosopher than all the guardians of museums at London, Munich, or Paris.

August 11.

All day long I have been classifying MSS.... The sun came in through the loft uncurtained windows; and, during my reading, often very interesting, I could hear the languid bumblebees bump heavily against the windows, and the flies intoxicated with light and heat, making their wings hum in circles around my

head. So loud became their humming about three o'clock that I looked up from the document I was reading — a document containing very precious materials for the history of Melun in the thirteenth century — to watch the concentric movements of those tiny creatures. "Bestions," Lafontaine calls them: he found this form of the word in the old popular speech, whence also the term, *tapisserie-a-bestions*, applied to figured tapestry. I was compelled to confess that the effect of heat upon the wings of a fly is totally different from that it exerts upon the brain of a paleographical archivist; for I found it very difficult to think, and a rather pleasant languor weighing upon me, from which I could rouse myself only by a very determined effort. The dinner-bell then startled me in the midst of my labours; and I had barely time to put on my new dress-coat, so as to make a respectable appearance before Madame de Gabry.

The repast, generously served, seemed to prolong itself for my benefit. I am more than a fair judge of wine; and my hostess, who discovered my knowledge in this regard, was friendly enough to open a certain bottle of *Chateau-Margaux* in my honour. With deep respect I drank of this famous and knightly old wine, which comes from the slopes of Bordeaux, and of which the flavour and exhilarating power are beyond praise. The ardour of it spread gently through my veins, and filled me with an almost juvenile animation. Seated beside Madame de Gabry on the terrace, in the gloaming which gave a charming melancholy to the park, and lent to every object an air of mystery, I took pleasure in communicating my impression of the scene to my hostess. I discoursed with a vivacity quite remarkable on the part of a man so devoid of imagination as I am. I described to her spontaneously, without quoting from an old text, the caressing melancholy of the evening, and the beauty of that natal earth which feeds us, not only with bread and wine, but also with ideas, sentiments, and beliefs, and which will at last take us all back to her maternal breast again, like so many tired little children at the close of a long day.

"Monsieur," said the kind lady, "you see these old towers, those trees, that sky; is it not quite natural that the personage of the popular tales and folk-songs should have been evoked by such scenes? Why, over there is the very path which Little Red Riding-hood followed when she went to the woods to pick nuts. Across this changeful and always vapoury sky the fairy chariots used to roll; and the north tower might have sheltered under its pointed roof that same old spinning woman whose distaff picked the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood."

I continued to muse upon her pretty fancies, while Monsieur Paul related to me, as he puffed a very strong cigar, the history of some suit he had brought against the commune about a water-right. Madame de Gabry, feeling the chill night air, began to shiver under the shawl her husband had wrapped about her,

and left us to go to her room. I then decided, instead of going to my own, to return to the library and continue my examination of the manuscripts. In spite of the protests of Monsieur Paul, I entered what I may call, in old-fashioned phrase, "the book-room," and started to work by the light of a lamp.

After having read fifteen pages, evidently written by some ignorant and careless scribe, for I could scarcely discern their meaning, I plunged my hand into the pocket of my coat to get my snuff-box; but this movement, usually so natural and almost instinctive, this time cost me some effort and even fatigue. Nevertheless, I got out the silver box, and took from it a pinch of the odorous powder, which, somehow or other, I managed to spill all over my shirt-bosom under my baffled nose. I am sure my nose must have expressed its disappointment, for it is a very expressive nose. More than once it has betrayed my secret thoughts, and especially upon a certain occasion at the public library of Coutances, where I discovered, right in front of my colleague Brioux, the "Cartulary of Notre-Dame-des-Anges."

What a delight! My little eyes remained as dull and expressionless as ever behind my spectacles. But at the mere sight of my thick pug-nose, which quivered with joy and pride, Brioux knew that I had found something. He noted the volume I was looking at, observed the place where I put it back, pounced upon it as soon as I turned my heel, copied it secretly, and published in haste, for the sake of playing me a trick. But his edition swarms with errors, and I had the satisfaction of afterwards criticising some of the gross blunders he made.

But to come back to the point at which I left off: I began to suspect that I was getting very sleepy indeed. I was looking at a chart of which the interest may be divined from the fact that it contained mention of a hutch sold to Jehan d'Estonville, priest, in 1312. But although, even then, I could recognise the importance of the document, I did not give it that attention it so strongly invited. My eyes would keep turning, against my will, towards a certain corner of the table where there was nothing whatever interesting to a learned mind. There was only a big German book there, bound in pigskin, with brass studs on the sides, and very thick cording upon the back. It was a fine copy of a compilation which has little to recommend it except the wood engravings it contains, and which is known as the "Cosmography of Munster." This volume, with its covers slightly open, was placed upon edge with the back upwards.

I could not say for how long I had been staring causelessly at the sixteenth-century folio, when my eyes were captivated by a sight so extraordinary that even a person as devoid of imagination as I could not but have been greatly astonished by it.

I perceived, all of a sudden, without having noticed her coming into the room, a little creature seated on the back of the book, with one knee bent and one leg hanging down — somewhat in the attitude of the amazons of Hyde Park or the Bois de Boulogne on horseback. She was so small that her swinging foot did not reach the table, over which the trail of her dress extended in a serpentine line. But her face and figure were those of an adult. The fulness of her corsage and the roundness of her waist could leave no doubt of that, even for an old savant like myself. I will venture to add that she was very handsome, with a proud mien; for my iconographic studies have long accustomed me to recognise at once the perfection of a type and the character of a physiognomy. The countenance of this lady who had seated herself inopportunately on the back of “Cosmography of Munster” expressed a mingling of haughtiness and mischievousness. She had the air of a queen, but a capricious queen; and I judged, from the mere expression of her eyes, that she was accustomed to wield great authority somewhere, in a very whimsical manner. Her mouth was imperious and mocking, and those blue eyes of hers seemed to laugh in a disquieting way under her finely arched black eyebrows. I have always heard that black eyebrows are very becoming to blondes; but this lady was very blonde. On the whole, the impression she gave me was one of greatness.

It may seem odd to say that a person who was no taller than a wine-bottle, and who might have been hidden in my coat pocket — but that it would have been very disrespectful to put her in it — gave me precisely an idea of greatness. But in the fine proportions of the lady seated upon the “Cosmography of Munster” there was such a proud elegance, such a harmonious majesty, and she maintained an attitude at once so easy and so noble, that she really seemed to me a very great person. Although my ink-bottle, which she examined with an expression of such mockery as appeared to indicate that she knew in advance every word that would come out of it at the end of my pen, was for her a deep basin in which she would have blackened her gold-clocked pink stockings up to the garter, I can assure you that she was great, and imposing even in her sprightliness.

Her costume, worthy of her face, was extremely magnificent; it consisted of a robe of gold-and-silver brocade, and a mantle of nacarat velvet, lined with vair. Her head-dress was a sort of hennin, with two high points; and pearls of splendid lustre made it bright and luminous as a crescent moon. Her little white hand held a wand. That wand drew my attention very strongly, because my archaeological studies had taught me to recognise with certainty every sign by which the notable personages of legend and of history are distinguished. This knowledge came to my aid during various very queer conjectures with which I was

labouring. I examined the wand, and saw that it appeared to have been cut from a branch of hazel.

“Then its a fairy’s wand,” I said to myself; “consequently the lady who carries it is a fairy.”

Happy at thus discovering what sort of a person was before me, I tried to collect my mind sufficiently to make her a graceful compliment. It would have given me much satisfaction, I confess, if I could have talked to her about the part taken by her people, not less in the life of the Saxon and Germanic races, than in that of the Latin Occident. Such a dissertation, it appeared to me, would have been an ingenious method of thanking the lady for having thus appeared to an old scholar, contrary to the invariable custom of her kindred, who never show themselves but to innocent children or ignorant village-folk.

Because one happens to be a fairy, one is none the less a woman, I said to myself; and since Madame Recamier, according to what I heard J. J. Ampere say, used to blush with pleasure when the little chimney-sweeps opened their eyes as wide as they could to look at her, surely the supernatural lady seated upon the “Cosmography of Munster” might feel flattered to hear an erudite man discourse learnedly about her, as about a medal, a seal, a fibula, or a token. But such an undertaking, which would have cost my timidity a great deal, became totally out of the question when I observed the Lady of the Cosmography suddenly take from an alms purse hanging at her girdle the very smallest of nuts I had ever seen, crack the shells between her teeth, and throw them at my nose, while she nibbled the kernels with the gravity of a sucking child.

At this conjuncture, I did what the dignity of science demanded of me — I remained silent. But the nutshells caused such a painful tickling that I put up my hand to my nose, and found, to my great surprise, that my spectacles were straddling the very end of it — so that I was actually looking at the lady, not through my spectacles, but over them. This was incomprehensible, because my eyes, worn out over old texts, cannot ordinarily distinguish anything without glasses — could not tell a melon from a decanter, though the two were placed close up to my nose.

That nose of mine, remarkable for its size, its shape, and its coloration, legitimately attracted the attention of the fairy; for she seized my goose-quill pen, which was sticking up from the ink-bottle like a plume, and she began to pass the feather-end of that pen over my nose. I had had more than once, in company, occasion to suffer cheerfully from the innocent mischief of young ladies, who made me join their games, and would offer me their cheeks to kiss through the back of a chair, or invite me to blow out a candle which they would lift suddenly above the range of my breath. But until that moment no person of

the fair sex had ever subjected me to such a whimsical piece of familiarity as that of tickling my nose with my own feather pen. Happily I remembered the maxim of my late grandfather, who was accustomed to say that everything was permissible on the part of ladies, and that whatever they do to us is to be regarded as a grace and a favour. Therefore, as a grace and a favour I received the nutshells and the titillations with my own pen, and I tried to smile. Much more! — I even found speech.

“Madame,” I said, with dignified politeness, “you accord the honour of a visit not to a silly child, not to a boor, but to a bibliophile who is very happy to make your acquaintance, and who knows that long ago you used to make elf-knots in the manes of mares at the crib, drink the milk from the skimming-pails, slip graines-a-gratter down the backs of our great-grandmothers, make the hearth sputter in the faces of the old folks, and, in short, fill the house with disorder and gaiety. You can also boast of giving the nicest frights in the world to lovers who stayed out in the woods too late of evenings. But I thought you had vanished out of existence at least three centuries ago. Can it really be, Madame, that you are still to be seen in this age of railways and telegraphs? My concierge, who used to be a nurse in her young days, does not know your story; and my little boy-neighbour, whose nose is still wiped for him by his *bonne*, declares that you do not exist.”

“What do you yourself think about it?” she cried, in a silvery voice, straightening up her royal little figure in a very haughty fashion, and whipping the back of the “*Cosmography of Munster*” as though it were a hippogriff.

“I don’t really know,” I answered rubbing my eyes.

This reply, indicating a deeply scientific scepticism, had the most deplorable effect upon my questioner.

“*Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard*,” she said to me, “you are nothing but an old pedant. I always suspected as much. The smallest little ragamuffin who goes along the road with his shirt-tail sticking out through a hole in his pantaloons knows more about me than all the old spectacled folks in your Institutes and your Academies. To know is nothing at all; to imagine is everything. Nothing exists except that which is imagined. I am imaginary. That is what it is to exist, I should think! I am dreamed of, and I appear. Everything is only dream; and as nobody ever dreams about you, *Sylvestre Bonnard*, it is YOU who do not exist. I charm the world; I am everywhere — on a moon-beam, in the trembling of a hidden spring, in the moving of leaves that murmur, in the white vapours that rise each morning from the hollow meadow, in the thickets of pink brier — everywhere!... I am seen; I am loved. There are sighs uttered, weird thrills of pleasure felt by those who follow the light print of my feet, as I make the dead

leaves whisper. I make the little children smile; I give wit to the dullest-minded nurses. Leaning above the cradles, I play, I comfort, I lull to sleep — and you doubt whether I exist! Sylvestre Bonnard, your warm coat covers the hide of an ass!”

She ceased speaking; her delicate nostrils swelled with indignation; and while I admired, despite my vexation, the heroic anger of this little person, she pushed my pen about in the ink-bottle, backward and forward, like an oar, and then suddenly threw it at my nose, point first.

I rubbed my face, and felt it all covered with ink. She had disappeared. My lamp was extinguished. A ray of moonlight streamed down through a window and descended upon the “Cosmography of Munster.” A strong cool wind, which had arisen very suddenly without my knowledge, was blowing my papers, pens, and wafers about. My table was all stained with ink. I had left my window open during the storm. What an imprudence!

Chapter III

I wrote to my housekeeper, as I promised, that I was safe and sound. But I took good care not to tell her that I had caught a cold from going to sleep in the library at night with the window open; for the good woman would have been as unsparing in her remonstrances to me as parliaments to kings. "At your age, Monsieur," she would have been sure to say, "one ought to have more sense." She is simple enough to believe that sense grows with age. I seem to her an exception to this rule.

Not having any similar motive for concealing my experiences from Madame de Gabry, I told her all about my vision, which she seemed to enjoy very much.

"Why, that was a charming dream of yours," she said; "and one must have real genius to dream such a dream."

"Then I am a real genius when I am asleep," I responded.

"When you dream," she replied; "and you are always dreaming."

I know that Madame de Gabry, in making this remark, only wished to please me; but that intention alone deserves my utmost gratitude; and it is therefore in a spirit of thankfulness and kindest remembrance that I write down her words, which I will read over and over again until my dying day, and which will never be read by any one save myself.

I passed the next few days in completing the inventory of the manuscripts in the Lusance library. Certain confidential observations dropped by Monsieur Paul de Gabry, however, caused me some painful surprise, and made me decide to pursue the work after a different manner from that in which I had begun it. From those few words I learned that the fortune of Monsieur Honore de Gabry, which had been badly managed for many years, and subsequently swept away to a large extent through the failure of a banker whose name I do not know, had been transmitted to the heirs of the old French nobleman only under the form of mortgaged real estate and irrecoverable assets.

Monsieur Paul, by agreement with his joint heirs, had decided to sell the library, and I was intrusted with the task of making arrangements to have the sale effected upon advantageous terms. But totally ignorant as I was of all the business methods and trade-customs, I thought it best to get the advice of a publisher who was one of my private friends. I wrote him at once to come and join me at Lusance; and while waiting for his arrival I took my hat and cane and made visits to the different churches of the diocese, in several of which I knew

there were certain mortuary inscriptions to be found which had never been correctly copied.

So I left my hosts and departed my pilgrimage. Exploring the churches and the cemeteries every day, visiting the parish priests and the village notaries, supping at the public inns with peddlers and cattle-dealers, sleeping at night between sheets scented with lavender, I passed one whole week in the quiet but profound enjoyment of observing the living engaged in their various daily occupations even while I was thinking of the dead. As for the purpose of my researches, I made only a few mediocre discoveries, which caused me only a mediocre joy, and one therefore salubrious and not at all fatiguing. I copied a few interesting epitaphs; and I added to this little collection a few recipes for cooking country dishes, which a certain good priest kindly gave me.

With these riches, I returned to Lusance; and I crossed the court-of-honour with such secret satisfaction as a bourgeois feels on entering his own home. This was the effect of the kindness of my hosts; and the impression I received on crossing their threshold proves, better than any reasoning could do, the excellence of their hospitality.

I entered the great parlour without meeting anybody; and the young chestnut-tree there spreading out its broad leaves seemed to me like an old friend. But the next thing which I saw — on the pier-table — caused me such a shock of surprise that I readjusted my glasses upon my nose with both hands at once, and then felt myself over so as to get at least some superficial proof of my own existence. In less than one second there thronged from my mind twenty different conjectures — the most rational of which was that I had suddenly become crazy. It seemed to me absolutely impossible that what I was looking at could exist; yet it was equally impossible for me not to see it as a thing actually existing. What caused my surprise was resting on the pier-table, above which rose a great dull speckled mirror.

I saw myself in that mirror; and I can say that I saw for once in my life the perfect image of stupefaction. But I made proper allowance for myself; I approved myself for being so stupefied by a really stupefying thing.

The object I was thus examining with a degree of astonishment that all my reasoning power failed to lessen, obtruded itself on my attention though quite motionless. The persistence and fixity of the phenomenon excluded any idea of hallucination. I am totally exempt from all nervous disorders capable of influencing the sense of sight. The cause of such visual disturbance is, I think, generally due to stomach trouble; and, thank God! I have an excellent stomach. Moreover, visual illusions are accompanied with special abnormal conditions which impress the victims of hallucination themselves, and inspire them with a

sort of terror. Now, I felt nothing of this kind; the object which I saw, although seemingly impossible in itself, appeared to me under all the natural conditions of reality. I observed that it had three dimensions, and colours, and that it cast a shadow. Ah! how I stared at it! The water came into my eyes so that I had to wipe the glasses of my spectacles.

Finally I found myself obliged to yield to the evidence, and to affirm that I had really before my eyes the Fairy, the very same Fairy I had been dreaming of in the library a few evenings before. It was she, it was her very self, I assure you! She had the same air of child-queen, the same proud supple poise; she held the same hazel wand in her hand; she still wore her double-peaked head-dress, and the train of her long brocade robe undulated about her little feet. Same face, same figure. It was she indeed; and to prevent any possible doubt of it, she was seated on the back of a huge old-fashioned book strongly resembling the "Cosmography of Munster." Her immobility but half reassured me; I was really afraid that she was going to take some more nuts out of her alms-purse and throw the shells at my face.

I was standing there, waving my hands and gaping, when the musical and laughing voice of Madame de Gabry suddenly rang in my ears.

"So you are examining your fairy, Monsieur Bonnard!" said my hostess. "Well, do you think the resemblance good?"

It was very quickly said; but even while hearing it I had time to perceive that my fairy was a statuette in coloured wax, modeled with much taste and spirit by some novice hand. But the phenomenon, even thus reduced by a rational explanation, did not cease to excite my surprise. How, and by whom, had the Lady of the Cosmography been enabled to assume plastic existence? That was what remained for me to learn.

Turning towards Madame de Gabry, I perceived that she was not alone. A young girl dressed in black was standing beside her. She had large intelligent eyes, of a grey as sweet as that of the sky of the Isle of France, and at once artless and characteristic in their expression. At the extremities of her rather thin arms were fidgeting uneasily two slender hands, supple but slightly red, as it becomes the hands of young girls to be. Sheathed in her closely fitting merino robe, she had the slim grace of a young tree; and her large mouth bespoke frankness. I could not describe how much the child pleased me at first sight! She was not beautiful; but the three dimples of her cheeks and chin seemed to laugh, and her whole person, which revealed the awkwardness of innocence, had something in it indescribably good and sincere.

My gaze alternated from the statuette to the young girl; and I saw her blush — so frankly and fully! — the crimson passing over her face as by waves.

“Well,” said my hostess, who had become sufficiently accustomed to my distracted moods to put the same question to me twice, “is that the very same lady who came in to see you through the window that you left open? She was very saucy, but then you were quite imprudent! Anyhow, do you recognise her?”

“It is her very self,” I replied; “I see her now on that pier-table precisely as I saw her on the table in the library.”

“Then, if that be so,” replied Madame de Gabry, “you have to blame for it, in the first place, yourself, as a man who, although devoid of all imagination, to use your own words, knew how to depict your dream in such vivid colours; in the second place, me, who was able to remember and repeat faithfully all your dream; and lastly, Mademoiselle Jeanne, whom I now introduce to you, for she herself modeled that wax figure precisely according to my instructions.”

Madame de Gabry had taken the young girl’s hand as she spoke; but the latter had suddenly broken away from her, and was already running through the park with the speed of a bird.

“Little crazy creature!” Madame de Gabry cried after her. “How can one be so shy? Come back here to be scolded and kissed!”

But it was all of no avail; the frightened child disappeared among the shrubbery. Madame de Gabry seated herself in the only chair remaining in the dilapidated parlour.

“I should be much surprised,” she said, “If my husband had not already spoken to you of Jeanne. She is a sweet child, and we both love her very much. Tell me the plain truth; what do you think of her statuette?”

I replied that the work was full of good taste and spirit, but that it showed some want of study and practice on the author’s part; otherwise I had been extremely touched to think that those young fingers should have thus embroidered an old man’s rough sketch of fancy, and given form so brilliantly to the dreams of a dotard like myself.

“The reason I ask your opinion,” replied Madame de Gabry, seriously, “is that Jeanne is a poor orphan. Do you think she could earn her living by modelling statuettes like this one?”

“As for that, no!” I replied; “and I think there is no reason to regret the fact. You say the girl is affectionate and sensitive; I can well believe you; I could believe it from her face alone. There are excitements in artist-life which impel generous hearts to act out of all rule and measure. This young creature is made to love; keep her for the domestic hearth. There only is real happiness.”

“But she has no dowry!” replied Madame de Gabry.

Then, extending her hand to me, she continued:

“You are our friend; I can tell you everything. The father of this child was a banker, and one of our friends. He went into a colossal speculation, and it ruined him. He survived only a few months after his failure, in which, as Paul must have told you, three-fourths of my uncle’s fortune were lost, and more than half of our own.

“We had made his acquaintance at Manaco, during the winter we passed there at my uncle’s house. He had an adventurous disposition, but such an engaging manner! He deceived himself before ever he deceived others. After all, it is in the ability to deceive oneself that the greatest talent is shown, is it not? Well, we were captured — my husband, my uncle, and I; and we risked much more than a reasonable amount in a very hazardous undertaking. But, bah! as Paul says, since we have no children we need not worry about it. Besides, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the friend in whom we trusted was an honest man.... You must know his name, it was so often in the papers and on public placards — Noel Alexandre. His wife was a very sweet person. I knew her only when she was already past her prime, with traces of having once been very pretty, and a taste for fashionable style and display which seemed quite becoming to her. She was naturally fond of social excitement; but she showed a great deal of courage and dignity after the death of her husband. She died a year after him, leaving Jeanne alone in the world.”

“Clementine!” I cried out.

And on thus learning what I had never imagined — the mere idea of which would have set all the forces of my soul in revolt — upon hearing that Clementine was no longer in this world, something like a great silence came upon me; and the feeling which flooded my whole being was not a keen, strong pain, but a quiet and solemn sorrow. Yet I was conscious of some incomprehensible sense of alleviation, and my thought rose suddenly to heights before unknown.

“From wheresoever thou art at this moment, Clementine,” I said to myself, “look down upon this old heart now indeed cooled by age, yet whose blood once boiled for thy sake, and say whether it is not reanimated by the mere thought of being able to love all that remains of thee on earth. Everything passes away since thou thyself hast passed away; but Life is immortal; it is that Life we must love in its forms eternally renewed. All the rest is child’s play; and I myself, with all my books, am only like a child playing with marbles. The purpose of life — it is thou, Clementine, who has revealed it to me!”...

Madame de Gabry aroused me from my thoughts by murmuring,

“The child is poor.”

“The daughter of Clementine is poor!” I exclaimed aloud; “how fortunate that is so! I would not wish that any one by myself should provide for her and dower her! No! the daughter of Clementine must not have her dowry from any one but me.”

And, approaching Madame de Gabry as she rose from her chair, I took her right hand; I kissed that hand, and placed it on my arm, and said:

“You will conduct me to the grave of the widow of Noel Alexandre.”

And I heard Madame de Gabry asking me:

“Why are you crying?”

Chapter IV — The Little Saint-George

April 16.

Saint Drocoveus and the early abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Pres have been occupying me for the past forty years; but I do not know if I shall be able to write their history before I go to join them. It is already quite a long time since I became an old man. One day last year, on the Pont des Arts, one of my fellow members at the Institute was lamenting before me over the ennui of becoming old.

“Still,” Saint-Beuve replied to him, “it is the only way that has yet been found of living a long time.”

I have tried this way, and I know just what it is worth. The trouble of it is not that one lasts too long, but that one sees all about him pass away — mother, wife, friends, children. Nature makes and unmakes all these divine treasures with gloomy indifference, and at last we find that we have not loved, we have only been embracing shadows. But how sweet some shadows are! If ever creature glided like a shadow through the life of a man, it was certainly that young girl whom I fell in love with when — incredible though it now seems — I was myself a youth.

A Christian sarcophagus from the catacombs of Rome bears a formula of imprecation, the whole terrible meaning of which I only learned with time. It says: “Whatsoever impious man violates this sepulchre, may he die the last of his own people!” In my capacity of archaeologist, I have opened tombs and disturbed ashes in order to collect the shreds of apparel, metal ornaments, or gems that were mingled with those ashes. But I did it only through that scientific curiosity which does not exclude feelings of reverence and of piety. May that malediction graven by some one of the first followers of the apostles upon a martyr’s tomb never fall upon me! I ought not to fear to survive my own people so long as there are men in the world; for there are always some whom one can love.

But the power of love itself weakens and gradually becomes lost with age, like all the other energies of man. Example proves it; and it is this which terrifies me. Am I sure that I have not myself already suffered this great loss? I should surely have felt it, but for the happy meeting which has rejuvenated me. Poets speak of the Fountain of Youth; it does exist; it gushes up from the earth at every step we take. And one passes by without drinking of it!

The young girl I loved, married of her own choice to a rival, passed, all grey-haired, into the eternal rest. I have found her daughter — so that my life, which

before seemed to me without utility, now once more finds a purpose and a reason for being.

To-day I "take the sun," as they say in Provence; I take it on the terrace of the Luxembourg, at the foot of the statue of Marguerite de Navarre. It is a spring sun, intoxicating as young wine. I sit and dream. My thoughts escape from my head like the foam from a bottle of beer. They are light, and their fizzing amuses me. I dream; such a pastime is certainly permissible to an old fellow who has published thirty volumes of texts, and contributed to the 'Journal des Savants' for twenty-six years. I have the satisfaction of feeling that I performed my task as well as it was possible for me to do, and that I utilised to their fullest extent those mediocre faculties with which Nature endowed me. My efforts were not all in vain, and I have contributed, in my own modest way, to that renaissance of historical labours which will remain the honour of this restless century. I shall certainly be counted among those ten or twelve who revealed to France her own literary antiquities. My publication of the poetical works of Gautier de Coincy inaugurated a judicious system and fixed a date. It is in the austere calm of old age that I decree to myself this deserved credit, and God, who sees my heart, knows whether pride or vanity have aught to do with this self-award of justice.

But I am tired; my eyes are dim; my hand trembles, and I see an image of myself in those old men of Homer, whose weakness excluded them from the battle, and who, seated upon the ramparts, lifted up their voices like crickets among the leaves.

So my thoughts were wandering when three young men seated themselves near me. I do not know whether each one of them had come in three boats, like the monkey of Lafontaine, but the three certainly displayed themselves over the space of twelve chairs. I took pleasure in watching them, not because they had anything very extraordinary about them, but because I discerned in them that brave joyous manner which is natural to youth. They were from the schools. I was less assured of it by the books they were carrying than by the character of their physiognomy. For all who busy themselves with the things of the mind can be at once recognised by an indescribably something which is common to all of them. I am very fond of young people; and these pleased me, in spite of a certain provoking wild manner which recalled to me my own college days with marvellous vividness. But they did not wear velvet doublets and long hair, as we used to do; they did not walk about, as we used to do, "Hell and malediction!" They were quite properly dressed, and neither their costume nor their language had anything suggestive of the Middle Ages. I must also add that they paid considerable attention to the women passing on the terrace, and expressed their admiration of some of them in very animated language. But their reflections,

even on this subject, were not of a character to oblige me to flee from my seat. Besides, so long as youth is studious, I think it has a right to its gaieties.

One of them, having made some gallant pleasantry which I forget, the smallest and darkest of the three exclaimed, with a slight Gascon accent,

“What a thing to say! Only physiologists like us have any right to occupy ourselves about living matter. As for you, Gelis, who only live in the past — like all your fellow archivists and paleographers — you will do better to confine yourself to those stone women over there, who are your contemporaries.”

And he pointed to the statues of the Ladies of Ancient France which towered up, all white, in a half-circle under the trees of the terrace. This joke, though in itself trifling, enabled me to know that the young man called Gelis was a student at the Ecole des Chartes. From the conversation which followed I was able to learn that his neighbor, blond and wan almost to diaphaneity, taciturn and sarcastic was Boulmier, a fellow student. Gelis and the future doctor (I hope he will become one some day) discoursed together with much fantasy and spirit. In the midst of the loftiest speculations they would play upon words, and make jokes after the peculiar fashion of really witty persons — that is to say, in a style of enormous absurdity. I need hardly say, I suppose, that they only deigned to maintain the most monstrous kind of paradoxes. They employed all their powers of imagination to make themselves as ludicrous as possible, and all their powers of reasoning to assert the contrary of common sense. All the better for them! I do not like to see young folks too rational.

The student of medicine, after glancing at the title of the book that Boulmier held in his hand, exclaimed,

“What! — you read Michelet — you?”

“Yes,” replied Boulmier, very gravely. “I like novels.”

Gelis, who dominated both by his fine stature, imperious gestures, and ready wit, took the book, turned over a few pages rapidly, and said,

“Michelet always had a great propensity to emotional tenderness. He wept sweet tears over Maillard, that nice little man introduced la paperasserie into the September massacres. But as emotional tenderness leads to fury, he becomes all at once furious against the victims. There was no help for it. It is the sentimentality of the age. The assassin is pitied, but the victim is considered quite unpardonable. In his later manner Michelet is more Michelet than ever before. There is no common sense in it; it is simply wonderful! Neither art nor science, neither criticism nor narrative; only furies and fainting-spells and epileptic fits over matters which he never deigns to explain. Childish outcries — *envies de femme grosse!* — and a style, my friends! — not a single finished phrase! It is astounding!”

And he handed the book back to his comrade. "This is amusing madness," I thought to myself, "and not quite so devoid of common sense as it appears. This young man, though only playing has sharply touched the defect in the cuirass."

But the Provencal student declared that history was a thoroughly despicable exercise of rhetoric. According to him, the only true history was the natural history of man. Michelet was in the right path when he came in contact with the fistula of Louis XIV., but he fell back into the old rut almost immediately afterwards.

After this judicious expression of opinion, the young physiologist went to join a party of passing friends. The two archivists, less well acquainted in the neighbourhood of a garden so far from the Rue Paradis-au-Maraais, remained together, and began to chat about their studies. Gelis, who had completed his third class-year, was preparing a thesis on the subject of which he expatiated with youthful enthusiasm. Indeed, I thought the subject a very good one, particularly because I had recently thought myself called upon to treat a notable part of it. It was the *Monasticon Gallicanum*. The young erudite (I give him the name as a presage) wanted to describe all the engravings made about 1690 for the work which Dom Michel Germain would have had printed but for the one irremediable hindrance which is rarely foreseen and never avoided. Dom Michel Germain would have had printed but for the one irremediable hindrance which is rarely foreseen and never avoided. Dom Michel Germain left his manuscript complete, however, and in good order when he died. Shall I be able to do as much with mine? — but that is not the present question. So far as I am able to understand, Monsieur Gelis intends to devote a brief archaeological notice to each of the abbeys pictured by the humble engravers of Dom Michel Germain.

His friend asked him whether he was acquainted with all the manuscripts and printed documents relating to the subject. It was then that I pricked up my ears. They spoke at first of original sources; and I must confess they did so in a satisfactory manner, despite their innumerable and detestable puns. Then they began to speak about contemporary studies on the subject.

"Have you read," asked Boulmier, "the notice of Courajod?"

"Good!" I thought to myself.

"Yes," replied Gelis; "it is accurate."

"Have you read," said Boulmier, "the article of Tamisey de Larroque in the '*Revue des Questions Historiques*'?"

"Good!" I thought to myself, for the second time.

"Yes," replied Gelis, "it is full of things."...

"Have you read," said Boulmier, "the '*Tableau des Abbayes Benedictines en 1600*,' by Sylvestre Bonnard?"

“Good!” I said to myself, for the third time.

“Mai foi! no!” replied Gelis. “Bonnard is an idiot!” Turning my head, I perceived that the shadow had reached the place where I was sitting. It was growing chilly, and I thought to myself what a fool I was to have remained sitting there, at the risk of getting rheumatism, just to listen to the impertinence of those two young fellows!

“Well! well!” I said to myself as I got up. “Let this prattling fledgling write his thesis and sustain it! He will find my colleague, Quicherat, or some other professor at the school, to show him what an ignoramus he is. I consider him neither more nor less than a rascal; and really, now that I come to think of it, what he said about Michelet awhile ago was quite insufferable, outrageous! To talk in that way about an old master replete with genius! It was simply abominable!”

April 17.

“Therese, give me my new hat, my best frock-coat, and my silver-headed cane.”

But Therese is deaf as a sack of charcoal and slow as Justice. Years have made her so. The worst is that she thinks she can hear well and move about well; and, proud of her sixty years of upright domesticity, she serves her old master with the most vigilant despotism.

“What did I tell you?”...And now she will not give me my silver-headed cane, for fear that I might lose it! It is true that I often forget umbrellas and walking-sticks in the omnibuses and booksellers’ shops. But I have a special reason for wanting to take out with me to-day my old cane with the engraved silver head representing Don Quixote charging a windmill, lance in rest, while Sancho Panza, with uplifted arms, vainly conjures him to a stop. That cane is all that came to me from the heritage of my uncle, Captain Victor, who in his lifetime resembled Don Quixote much more than Sancho Panza, and who loved blows quite as much as most people fear them.

For thirty years I have been in the habit of carrying this cane upon all memorable or solemn visits which I make; and those two figures of knight and squire give me inspiration and counsel. I imagine I can hear them speak. Don Quixote says,

“Think well about great things; and know that thought is the only reality in this world. Lift up Nature to thine own stature; and let the whole universe be for thee no more than the reflection of thine own heroic soul. Combat for honour’s sake: that alone is worthy of a man! and if it should fall thee to receive wounds, shed thy blood as a beneficent dew, and smile.”

And Sancho Panza says to me in his turn,

“Remain just what heaven made thee, comrade! Prefer the bread-crust which has become dry in thy wallet to all the partridges that roast in the kitchen of lords. Obey thy master, whether he be a wise man or a fool, and do not cumber thy brain with too many useless things. Fear blows; ’tis verily tempting God to seek after danger!”

But if the incomparable knight and his matchless squire are imagined only upon this cane of mine, they are realities to my inner conscience. Within every one of us there lives both a Don Quixote and a Sancho Panza to whom we hearken by turns; and though Sancho most persuades us, it is Don Quixote that we find ourselves obliged to admire.... But a truce to this dotage! — and let us

go to see Madame de Gabry about some matters more important than the everyday details of life....

Same day.

I found Madame de Gabry dressed in black, just buttoning her gloves.

"I am ready," she said.

Ready! — so I have always found her upon any occasion of doing a kindness.

After some compliments about the good health of her husband, who was taking a walk at the time, we descended the stairs and got into the carriage.

I do not know what secret influence I feared to dissipate by breaking silence, but we followed the great deserted drives without speaking, looking at the crosses, the monumental columns, and the mortuary wreaths awaiting sad purchasers.

The vehicle at last halted at the extreme verge of the land of the living, before the gate upon which words of hope are graven.

"Follow me," said Madame de Gabry, whose tall stature I noticed then for the first time. She first walked down an alley of cypresses, and then took a very narrow path contrived between the tombs. Finally, halting before a plain slab, she said to me,

"It is here."

And she knelt down. I could not help noticing the beautiful and easy manner in which this Christian woman fell upon her knees, leaving the folds of her robe to spread themselves at random about her. I had never before seen any lady kneel down with such frankness and such forgetfulness of self, except two fair Polish exiles, one evening long ago, in a deserted church in Paris.

This image passed like a flash; and I saw only the sloping stone on which was graven the name of Clementine. What I then felt was something so deep and vague that only the sound of some rich music could convey the idea of it. I seemed to hear instruments of celestial sweetness make harmony in my old heart. With the solemn accords of a funeral chant there seemed to mingle the subdued melody of a song of love; for my soul blended into one feeling the grave sadness of the present with the familiar graces of the past.

I cannot tell whether we had remained a long time at the tomb of Clementine before Madame de Gabry arose. We passed through the cemetery again without speaking to each other. Only when we found ourselves among the living once more did I feel able to speak.

"While following you there," I said to Madame de Gabry, "I could not help thinking of those angels with whom we are said to meet on the mysterious confines of life and death. That tomb you led me to, of which I knew nothing — as I know nothing, or scarcely anything, concerning her whom it covers —

brought back to me emotions which were unique in my life, and which seem in the dullness of that life like some light gleaming upon a dark road. The light recedes farther and farther away as the journey lengthens; I have now almost reached the bottom of the last slope; and, nevertheless, each time I turn to look back I see the glow as bright as ever.

“You, Madame, who knew Clementine as a young wife and mother after her hair had become grey, you cannot imagine her as I see her still; a young fair girl, all pink and white. Since you have been so kind as to be my guide, dear Madame, I ought to tell you what feelings were awakened in me by the sight of that grave to which you led me. Memories throng back upon me. I feel myself like some old gnarled and mossy oak which awakens a nestling world of birds by shaking its branches. Unfortunately the song my birds sing is old as the world, and can amuse no one but myself.”

“Tell me your souvenirs,” said Madame de Gabry. “I cannot read your books, because they are written only for scholars; but I like very much to have you talk to me, because you know how to give interest to the most ordinary things in life. And talk to me just as you would talk to an old woman. This morning I found three grey threads in my hair.”

“Let them come without regret, Madame,” I replied. “Time deals gently only with those who take it gently. And when in some years more you will have a silvery fringe under your black fillet, you will be reclothed with a new beauty, less vivid but more touching than the first; and you will find your husband admiring your grey tresses as much as he did that black curl which you gave him when about to be married, and which he preserves in a locket as a thing sacred.... These boulevards are broad and very quiet. We can talk at our ease as we walk along. I will tell you, to begin with, how I first made the acquaintance of Clementine’s father. But you must not expect anything extraordinary, or anything even remarkable; you would be greatly deceived.

“Monsieur de Lessay used to live in the second storey of an old house in the Avenue de l’Observatoire, having a stuccoed front, ornamented with antique busts, and a large unkept garden attached to it. That facade and that garden were the first images my child-eyes perceived; and they will be the last, no doubt, which I still see through my closed eyelids when the Inevitable Day comes. For it was in that house that I was born; it was in that garden I first learned, while playing, to feel and know some particles of this old universe. Magical hours! — sacred hours! — when the soul, all fresh from the making, first discovers the world, which for its sake seems to assume such caressing brightness, such mysterious charm! And that, Madame, is indeed because the universe itself is only the reflection of our soul.

“My mother was being very happily constituted. She rose with the sun, like the birds; and she herself resembled the birds by her domestic industry, by her maternal instinct, by her perpetual desire to sing, and by a sort of brusque grace, which I could feel the of very well even as a child. She was the soul of the house, which she filled with her systematic and joyous activity. My father was just as slow as she was brisk. I can recall very well that placid face of his, over which at times an ironical smile used to flit. He was fatigued with active life; and he loved his fatigue. Seated beside the fire in his big arm-chair, he used to read from morning till night; and it is from him that I inherit my love of books. I have in my library a Mably and a Raynal, which he annotated with his own hand from beginning to end. But it was utterly useless attempting to interest him in anything practical whatever. When my mother would try, by all kinds of gracious little ruses, to lure him out of his retirement, he would simply shake his head with that inexorable gentleness which is the force of weak characters. He used in this way greatly to worry the poor woman, who could not enter at all into his own sphere of meditative wisdom, and could understand nothing of life except its daily duties and the merry labour of each hour. She thought him sick, and feared he was going to become still more so. But his apathy had a different cause.

“My father, entering the Naval office under Monsieur Decres, in 1801, gave early proof of high administrative talent. There was a great deal of activity in the marine department in those times; and in 1805 my father was appointed chief of the Second Administrative Division. That same year, the Emperor, whose attention had been called to him by the Minister, ordered him to make a report upon the organisation of the English navy. This work, which reflected a profoundly liberal and philosophic spirit, of which the editor himself was unconscious, was only finished in 1807 — about eighteen months after the defeat of Admiral Villeneuve at Trafalgar. Napoleon, who, from that disastrous day, never wanted to hear the word ship mentioned in his presence, angrily glanced over a few pages of the memoir, and then threw it in the fire, vociferating, ‘Words! — words! I said once before that I hated ideologists.’ My father was told afterwards that the Emperor’s anger was so intense at the moment that he stamped the manuscript down into the fire with his boot-heels. At all events, it was his habit, when very much irritated, to poke down the fire with his boot-soles. My father never fully recovered from this disgrace; and the fruitlessness of all his efforts towards reform was certainly the cause of the apathy which came upon him at a later day. Nevertheless, Napoleon, after his return from Elba, sent for him, and ordered him to prepare some liberal and patriotic bulletins and proclamations for the fleet. After Waterloo, my father,

whom the event had rather saddened than surprised, retired into private life, and was not interfered with — except that it was generally averred of him that he was a Jacobin, a buveur-de-sang — one of those men with whom no one could afford to be on intimate terms. My mother's eldest brother, Victor Maldent, and infantry captain — retired on half-pay in 1814, and disbanded in 1815 — aggravated by his bad attitude the situation in which the fall of the Empire had placed my father. Captain Victor used to shout in the cafes and the public balls that the Bourbons had sold France to the Cossacks. He used to show everybody a tricoloured cockade hidden in the lining of his hat; and carried with much ostentation a walking-stick, the handle of which had been so carved that the shadow thrown by it made the silhouette of the Emperor.

“Unless you have seen certain lithographs by Charlet, Madame, you could form no idea of the physiognomy of my Uncle Victor, when he used to stride about the garden of the Tuileries with a fiercely elegant manner of his own — buttoned up in his frogged coat, with his cross-of-honour upon his breast, and a bouquet of violets in his button-hole.

“Idleness and intemperance greatly intensified the vulgar recklessness of his political passions. He used to insult people whom he happened to see reading the ‘Quotidienne,’ or the ‘Drapeau Blanc,’ and compel them to fight with him. In this way he had the pain and the shame of wounding a boy of sixteen in a duel. In short, my Uncle Victor was the very reverse of a well-behaved person; and as he came to lunch and dine at our house every blessed day in the year, his bad reputation became attached to our family. My poor father suffered cruelly from some of his guest's pranks; but being very good-natured, he never made any remarks, and continued to give the freedom of his house to the captain, who only despised him for it.

“All this which I have told you, Madame, was explained to me afterwards. But at the time in question, my uncle the captain filled me with the very enthusiasm of admiration, and I promised myself to try to become some day as like him as possible. So one fine morning, in order to begin the likeness, I put my arms akimbo, and swore like a trooper. My excellent mother at once gave me such a box on the ear that I remained half stupefied for some little while before I could even burst out crying. I can still see the old arm-chair, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, behind which I wept innumerable tears that day.

“I was a very little fellow then. One morning my father, lifting me upon his knees, as he was in the habit of doing, smiled at me with that slightly ironical smile which gave a certain piquancy to his perpetual gentleness of manner. As I sat on his knee, playing with his long white hair, he told me something which I did not understand very well, but which interested me very much, for the simple

reason that it was mysterious to me. I think but am not quite sure, that he related to me that morning the story of the little King of Yvetot, according to the song. All of a sudden we heard a great report; and the windows rattled. My father slipped me down gently on the floor at his feet; he threw up his trembling arms, with a strange gesture; his face became all inert and white, and his eyes seemed enormous. He tried to speak, but his teeth were chattering. At last he murmured, 'They have shot him!' I did not know what he meant, and felt only a vague terror. I knew afterwards, however, that he was speaking of Marshal Ney, who fell on the 7th of December, 1815, under the wall enclosing some waste ground beside our house.

"About that time I used often to meet on the stairway an old man (or, perhaps, not exactly an old man) with little black eyes which flashed with extraordinary vivacity, and an impassive, swarthy face. He did not seem to me alive — or at least he did not seem to me alive in the same way that other men are alive. I had once seen, at the residence of Monsieur Denon, where my father had taken me with him on a visit, a mummy brought from Egypt; and I believed in good faith that Monsieur Denon's mummy used to get up when no one was looking, leave its gilded case, put on a brown coat and powdered wig, and become transformed into Monsieur de Lessay. And even to-day, dear Madame, while I reject that opinion as being without foundation, I must confess that Monsieur de Lessay bore a very strong resemblance to Monsieur Denon's mummy. The fact is enough to explain why this person inspired me with fantastic terror.

"In reality, Monsieur de Lessay was a small gentleman and a great philosopher. As a disciple of Mably and Rousseau, he flattered himself on being a man without any prejudices; and this pretension itself is a very great prejudice.

"He professed to hate fanaticism, yet was himself a fanatic on the topic of toleration. I am telling you, Madame, about a character belonging to an age that is past. I fear I may not be able to make you understand, and I am sure I shall not be able to interest you. It was so long ago! But I will abridge as much as possible: besides, I did not promise you anything interesting; and you could not have expected to hear of remarkable adventures in the life of Sylvestre Bonnard."

Madame de Gabry encouraged me to proceed, and I resumed:

"Monsieur de Lessay was brusque with men and courteous to ladies. He used to kiss the hand of my mother, whom the customs of the Republic and the Empire had not habituated to such gallantry. In him, I touched the age of Louis XVI. Monsieur de Lessay was a geographer; and nobody, I believe, ever showed more pride than he in occupying himself with the face of the earth. Under the Old Regime he had attempted philosophical agriculture, and thus squandered his

estates to the very last acre. When he had ceased to own one square foot of ground, he took possession of the whole globe, and prepared an extraordinary number of maps, based upon the narratives of travellers. But as he had been mentally nourished with the very marrow of the "Encyclopedie," he was not satisfied with merely parking off human beings within so many degrees, minutes, and seconds of latitude and longitude, he also occupied himself, alas! with the question of their happiness. It is worthy of remark, Madame, that those who have given themselves the most concern about the happiness of peoples have made their neighbors very miserable. Monsieur de Lessay, who was more of a geometrician than D'Alembert, and more of a philosopher than Jean Jacques, was also more of a royalist than Louis XVIII. But his love for the King was nothing to his hate for the Emperor. He had joined the conspiracy of Georges against the First Consul; but in the framing of the indictment he was not included among the inculpated parties, having been either ignored or despised, and this injury he never could forgive Bonaparte, whom he called the Ogre of Corsica, and to whom he used to say he would never have confided even the command of a regiment, so pitiful a soldier he judged him to be.

"In 1820, Monsieur de Lessay, who had then been a widower for many years, married again, at the age of sixty, a very young woman, whom he pitilessly kept at work preparing maps for him, and who gave him a daughter some years after their marriage, and died in childbed. My mother had nursed her during her brief illness, and had taken care of the child. The name of that child was Clementine.

"It was from the time of that birth and that death that the relations between our family and Monsieur de Lessay began. In the meanwhile I had been growing dull as I began to leave my true childhood behind me. I had lost the charming power of being able to see and feel; and things no longer caused me those delicious surprises which form the enchantment of the more tender age. For the same reason, perhaps, I have no distinct remembrance of the period following the birth of Clementine; I only know that a few months afterwards I had a misfortune, the mere thought of which still wrings my heart. I lost my mother. A great silence, a great coldness, and a great darkness seemed all at once to fill the house.

"I fell into a sort of torpor. My father sent me to the lycee, but I could only arouse myself from my lethargy with the greatest of effort.

"Still, I was not altogether a dullard, and my professors were able to teach me almost everything they wanted, namely, a little Greek and a great deal of Latin. My acquaintances were confined to the ancients. I learned to esteem Miltiades, and to admire Themistocles. I became familiar with Quintus Fabius, as far, at least, as it was possible to become familiar with so great a Consul. Proud of

these lofty acquaintances, I scarcely ever condescended to notice little Clementine and her old father, who, in any event, went away to Normandy one fine morning without my having deigned to give a moment's thought to their possible return.

"They came back, however, Madame, they came back! Influences of Heaven, forces of nature, all ye mysterious powers which vouchsafe to man the ability to love, you know how I again beheld Clementine! They re-entered our melancholy home. Monsieur de Lessay no longer wore a wig. Bald, with a few grey locks about his ruddy temples, he had all the aspect of robust old age. But that divine being whom I saw all resplendent, as she leaned upon his arm — she whose presence illuminated the old faded parlour — she was not an apparition! It was Clementine herself! I am speaking the simple truth: her violet eyes seemed to me in that moment supernatural, and even to-day I cannot imagine how those two living jewels could have endured the fatigues of life, or become subjected to the corruption of death.

"She betrayed a little shyness in greeting my father, whom she did not remember. Her complexion was slightly pink, and her half-open lips smiled with that smile which makes one think of the Infinite — perhaps because it betrays no particular thought, and expresses only the joy of living and the bliss of being beautiful. Under a pink hood her face shone like a gem in an open casket; she wore a cashmere scarf over a robe of white muslin plaited at the waist, from beneath which protruded the tip of a little Morocco shoe.... Oh! you must not make fun of me, dear Madame, that was the fashion of the time; and I do not know whether our new fashions have nearly so much simplicity, brightness, and decorous grace.

"Monsieur de Lessay informed us that, in consequence of having undertaken the publication of a historical atlas, he had come back to live in Paris, and that he would be pleased to occupy his former apartment, if it was still vacant. My father asked Mademoiselle de Lessay whether she was pleased to visit the capital. She appeared to be, for her smile blossomed out in reply. She smiled at the windows that looked out upon the green and luminous garden; she smiled at the bronze Marius seated among the ruins of Carthage above the dial of the clock; she smiled at the old yellow-velveted arm-chairs, and at the poor student who was afraid to lift his eyes to look at her. From that day — how I loved her!

"But here we are already at the Rue de Severs, and in a little while we shall be in sight of your windows. I am a very bad story-teller; and if I were — by some impossible chance — to take it into my head to compose a novel, I know I should never succeed. I have been drawing out to tiresome length a narrative which I must finish briefly; for there is a certain delicacy, a certain grace of soul,

which an old man could not help offending by an complacent expatiation upon the sentiments of even the purest love. Let us take a short turn on this boulevard, lined with convents; and my recital will be easily finished within the distance separating us from that little spire you see over there....

“Monsieur de Lessay, on finding that I had graduated at the Ecole des Chartes, judged me worthy to assist him in preparing his historical atlas. The plan was to illustrate, by a series of maps, what the old philosopher termed the Vicissitudes of Empires from the time of Noah down to that of Charlemagne. Monsieur de Lessay had stored up in his head all the errors of the eighteenth century in regard to antiquity. I belonged, so far as my historical studies were concerned, to the new school; and I was just at that age when one does not know how to dissemble. The manner in which the old man understood, or, rather, misunderstood, the epoch of the Barbarians — his obstinate determination to find in remote antiquity only ambitious princes, hypocritical and avaricious prelates, virtuous citizens, poet-philosophers, and other personages who never existed outside of the novels of Marmontel, — made me dreadfully unhappy, and at first used to excite me into attempts at argument, — rational enough, but perfectly useless and sometimes dangerous, for Monsieur de Lessay was very irascible, and Clementine was very beautiful. Between her and him I passed many hours of torment and of delight. I was in love; I was a coward, and I granted to him all that he demanded of me in regard to the political and historical aspect which the Earth — that was at a later day to bear Clementine — presented in the time of Abraham, of Menes, and of Deucalion.

“As fast as we drew our maps, Mademoiselle de Lessay tinted them in water-colours. Bending over the table, she held the brush lightly between two fingers; the shadow of her eyelashes descended upon her cheeks, and bather her half-closed eyes in a delicious penumbra. Sometimes she would lift her head, and I would see her lips pout. There was so much expression in her beauty that she could not breathe without seeming to sigh; and her most ordinary poses used to throw me into the deepest ecstasies of admiration. Whenever I gazed at her I fully agreed with Monsieur de Lessay that Jupiter had once reigned as a despot-king over the mountainous regions of Thessaly, and that Orpheus had committed the imprudence of leaving the teaching of philosophy to the clergy. I am not now quite sure whether I was a coward or a hero when I accorded al this to the obstinate old man.

“Mademoiselle de Lessay, I must acknowledge, paid very little attention to me. But this indifference seemed to me so just and so natural that I never even dreamed of thinking I had a right to complain about it; it made me unhappy, but

without my knowing that I was unhappy at the time. I was hopeful; — we had then only got as far as the First Assyrian Empire.

“Monsieur de Lessay came every evening to take coffee with my father. I do not know how they became such friends; for it would have been difficult to find two characters more oppositely constituted. My father was a man who admired very few things, but was still capable of excusing a great many. Still, as he grew older, he evinced more and more dislike of everything in the shape of exaggeration. He clothed his ideas with a thousand delicate shades of expression, and never pronounced an opinion without all sorts of reservations. These conversational habits, natural to a finely trained mind, used greatly to irritate the dry, terse old aristocrat, who was never in the least disarmed by the moderation of an adversary — quite the contrary! I always foresaw one danger. That danger was Bonaparte. My father had not himself retained an particular affection for his memory; but, having worked under his direction, he did not like to hear him abused, especially in favour of the Bourbons, against whom he had serious reason to feel resentment. Monsieur de Lessay, more of a Voltairean and a Legitimist than ever, now traced back to Bonaparte the origin of every social, political, and religious evil. Such being the situation, the idea of Uncle Victor made me feel particularly uneasy. This terrible uncle had become absolutely unsufferable now that his sister was no longer there to calm him down. The harp of David was broken, and Saul was wholly delivered over to the spirit of madness. The fall of Charles X. had increased the audacity of the old Napoleonic veteran, who uttered all imaginable bravadoes. He no longer frequented our house, which had become too silent for him. But sometimes, at the dinner-hour, we would see him suddenly make his appearance, all covered with flowers, like a mausoleum. Ordinarily he would sit down to table with an oath, growled out from the very bottom of his chest, and brag, between every two mouthfuls, of his good fortune with the ladies as a vieux brave. Then, when the dinner was over, he would fold up his napkin in the shape of a bishop’s mitre, gulp down half a decanter of brandy, and rush away with the hurried air of a man terrified at the mere idea of remaining for any length of time, without drinking, in conversation with an old philosopher and a young scholar. I felt perfectly sure that, if ever he and Monsieur de Lessay should come together, all would be lost. But that day came, Madame!

“The captain was almost hidden by flowers that day, and seemed so much like a monument commemorating the glories of the Empire that one would have liked to pass a garland of immortelles over each of his arms. He was in an extraordinarily good humour; and the first person to profit by that good humour

was our cook — for he put his arm around her waist while she was placing the roast on the table.

“After dinner he pushed away the decanter presented to him, observing that he was going to burn some brandy in his coffee later on. I asked him tremblingly whether he would not prefer to have his coffee at once. He was very suspicious, and not at all dull of comprehension — my Uncle Victor. My precipitation seemed to him in very bad taste; for he looked at me in a peculiar way, and said,

“‘Patience! my nephew. It isn’t the business of the baby of the regiment to sound the retreat! Devil take it! You must be in a great hurry, Master Pedant, to see if I’ve got spurs on my boots!’

“It was evident the captain had divined that I wanted him to go. And I knew him well enough to be sure that he was going to stay. He stayed. The least circumstances of that evening remain impressed on my memory. My uncle was extremely jovial. The mere idea of being in somebody’s way was enough to keep him in good humour. He told us, in regular barrack style, *ma foi!* a certain story about a monk, a trumpet, and five bottles of Chambertin, which must have been much enjoyed in the garrison society, but which I would not venture to repeat to you, Madame, even if I could remember it. When we passed into the parlour, the captain called attention to the bad condition of our andirons, and learnedly discoursed on the merits of rotten-stone as a brass-polisher. Not a word on the subject of politics. He was husbanding his forces. Eight o’clock sounded from the ruins of Carthage on the mantelpiece. It was Monsieur de Lessay’s hour. A few moments later he entered the parlour with his daughter. The ordinary evening chat began. Clementine sat down and began to work on some embroidery beside the lamp, whose shade left her pretty head in a soft shadow, and threw down upon her fingers a radiance that made them seem almost self-luminous. Monsieur de Lessay spoke of a comet announced by the astronomers, and developed some theories in relation to the subject, which, however audacious, betrayed at least a certain degree of intellectual culture. My father, who knew a good deal about astronomy, advanced some sound ideas of his own, which he ended up with his eternal, ‘But what do we know about it, after all?’ In my turn I cited the opinion of our neighbour of the Observatory — the great Arago. My Uncle Victor declared that comets had a peculiar influence on the quality of wines, and related in support of this view a jolly tavern-story. I was so delighted with the turn the conversation had taken that I did all in my power to maintain it in the same groove, with the help of my most recent studies, by a long exposition of the chemical composition of those nebulous bodies which, although extending over a length of billions of leagues, could be contained in a small bottle. My father, a little surprised at my unusual eloquence, watched me

with his peculiar, placid, ironical smile. But one cannot always remain in heaven. I spoke, as I looked at Clementine, of a certain comete of diamonds, which I had been admiring in a jeweller's window the evening before. It was a most unfortunate inspiration of mine.

“‘Ah! my nephew,’ cried Uncle Victor, that “comete” of yours was nothing to the one which the Empress Josephine wore in her hair when she came to Strasburg to distribute crosses to the army.’

“‘That little Josephine was very fond of finery and display,’ observed Monsieur de Lessay, between two sips of coffee. ‘I do not blame her for it; she had good qualities, though rather frivolous in character. She was a Tascher, and she conferred a great honour on Bonaparte by marrying him. To say a Tascher does not, of course, mean a great deal; but to say a Bonaparte simply means nothing at all.’

“‘What do you mean by that, Monsieur the Marquis?’ demanded Captain Victor.

“‘I am not a marquis,’ dryly responded Monsieur de Lessay; ‘and I mean simply that Bonaparte would have been very well suited had he married one of those cannibal women described by Captain Cook in his voyages — naked, tattooed, with a ring in her nose — devouring with delight putrefied human flesh.’

“‘I had foreseen it, and in my anguish (O pitiful human heart!) my first idea was about the remarkable exactness of my anticipations. I must say that the captain's reply belonged to the sublime order. He put his arms akimbo, eyed Monsieur de Lessay contemptuously from head to foot, and said,

“‘Napoleon, Monsieur the Vidame, had another spouse besides Josephine, another spouse besides Marie-Louise, that companion you know nothing of; but I have seen her, close to me. She wears a mantle of azure gemmed with stars; she is crowned with laurels; the Cross-of-Honour flames upon her breast. Her name is GLORY!’

“‘Monsieur de Lessay set his cup on the mantelpiece and quietly observed,

“‘Your Bonaparte was a blackguard!’

“‘My father rose up calmly, extended his arm, and said very softly to Monsieur de Lessay,

“‘Whatever the man was who died at St. Helena, I worked for ten years in his government, and my brother-in-law was three times wounded under his eagles. I beg of you, dear sir and friend, never to forget these facts in future.’

“‘What the sublime and burlesque insolence of the captain could not do, the courteous remonstrance of my father effected immediately, throwing Monsieur de Lessay into a furious passion.

“‘I did forget,’ he exclaimed, between his set teeth, livid in his rage, and fairly foaming at the mouth; ‘the herring-cask always smells of herring and when one has been in the service of rascals—’

“As he uttered the word, the Captain sprang at his throat; I am sure he would have strangled him upon the spot but for his daughter and me.

“My father, a little paler than his wont, stood there with his arms folded, and watched the scene with a look of inexpressible pity. What followed was still more lamentable — but why dwell further upon the folly of two old men. Finally I succeeded in separating them. Monsieur de Lessay made a sign to his daughter and left the room. As she was following him, I ran out into the stairway after her.

“‘Mademoiselle,’ I said to her, wildly, taking her hand as I spoke, ‘I love you! I love you!’

“For a moment she pressed my hand; her lips opened. What was it that she was going to say to me? But suddenly, lifting her eyes towards her father ascending the stairs, she drew her hand away, and made me a gesture of farewell.

“I never saw her again. Her father went to live in the neighbourhood of the Pantheon, in an apartment which he had rented for the sale of his historical atlas. He died in a few months afterward of an apoplectic stroke. His daughter, I was told, retired to Caen to live with some aged relative. It was there that, later on, she married a bank-clerk, the same Noel Alexandre who became so rich and died so poor.

“As for me, Madame, I have lived alone, at peace with myself; my existence, equally exempt from great pains and great joys, has been tolerably happy. But for many years I could never see an empty chair beside my own of a winter’s evening without feeling a sudden painful sinking at my heart. Last year I learned from you, who had known her, the story of her old age and death. I saw her daughter at your house. I have seen her; but I cannot yet say like the aged mad of Scripture, ‘And now, O Lord, let thy servant depart in peace!’ For if an old fellow like me can be of any use to anybody, I would wish, with your help, to devote my last energies and abilities to the care of this orphan.”

I had uttered these last words in Madame de Gabry’s own vestibule; and I was about to take leave of my kind guide when she said to me,

“My dear Monsieur, I cannot help you in this matter as much as I would like to do. Jeanne is an orphan and a minor. You cannot do anything for her without the authorisation of her guardian.”

“Ah!” I exclaimed, “I had not the least idea in the world that Jeanne had a guardian!”

Madame de Gabry looked at me with visible surprise. She had not expected to find the old man quite so simple.

She resumed:

“The guardian of Jeanne Alexandre is Maitre Mouche, notary at Levallois-Perret. I am afraid you will not be able to come to any understanding with him; for he is a very serious person.”

“Why! good God!” I cried, “with what kind of people can you expect me to have any sort of understanding at my age, except serious persons.”

She smiled with a sweet mischievousness — just as my father used to smile — and answered:

“With those who are like you — the innocent folks who wear their hearts on their sleeves. Monsieur Mouche is not exactly that kind. He is cunning and light-fingered. But although I have very little liking for him, we will go together and see him, if you wish, and ask his permission to visit Jeanne, whom he has sent to a boarding-school at Les Ternes, where she is very unhappy.”

We agreed at once upon a day; I kissed Madame de Gabry’s hands, and we bade each other good-bye.

From May 2 to May 5.

I have seen him in his office, Maitre Mouche, the guardian of Jeanne. Small, thin, and dry; his complexion looks as if it was made out of the dust of his pigeon-holes. He is a spectaclad animal; for to imagine him without his spectacles would be impossible. I have heard him speak, this Maitre Mouche; he has a voice like a tin rattle, and he uses choice phrases; but I should have been better pleased if he had not chosen his phrases so carefully. I have observed him, this Maitre Mouche; he is very ceremonious, and watches his visitors slyly out of the corner of his eye.

Maitre Mouche is quite pleased, he informs us; he is delighted to find we have taken such an interest in his ward. But he does not think we are placed in this world just to amuse ourselves. No: he does not believe it; and I am free to acknowledge that anybody in his company is likely to reach the same conclusion, so little is he capable of inspiring joyfulness. He fears that it would be giving his dear ward a false and pernicious idea of life to allow her too much enjoyment. It is for this reason that he requests Madame de Gabry not to invite the young girl to her house except at very long intervals.

We left the dusty notary and his dusty study with a permit in due form (everything which issues from the office of Maitre Mouche is in due form) to visit Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre on the first Thursday of each month at Mademoiselle Prefere's private school, Rue Demours, Aux Ternes.

The first Thursday in May I set out to pay a visit to Mademoiselle Prefere, whose establishment I discerned from afar off by a big sign, painted with blue letters. That blue tint was the first indication I received of Mademoiselle Prefere's character, which I was able to see more of later on. A scared-looking servant took my card, and abandoned me without one word of hope at the door of a chilly parlour full of that stale odour peculiar to the dining-rooms of educational establishments. The floor of this parlour had been waxed with such pitiless energy, that I remained for awhile in distress upon the threshold. But happily observing that little strips of woollen carpet had been scattered over the floor in front of each horse-hair chair, I succeeded, by cautiously stepping from one carpet-island to another in reaching the angle of the mantelpiece, where I sat down quite out of breath.

Over the mantelpiece, in a large gilded frame, was a written document, entitled in flamboyant Gothic lettering, *Tableau d'Honneur*, with a long array of names underneath, among which I did not have the pleasure of finding that of

Jeanne Alexandre. After having read over several times the names of those girl-pupils who had thus made themselves honoured in the eyes of Mademoiselle Prefere, I began to feel uneasy at not hearing any one coming. Mademoiselle Prefere would certainly have succeeded in establishing the absolute silence of interstellar spaces throughout her pedagogical domains, had it not been that the sparrows had chosen her yard to assemble in by legions, and chirp at the top of their voices. It was a pleasure to hear them. But there was no way of seeing them — through the ground-glass windows. I had to content myself with the sights of the parlour, decorated from floor to ceiling, on all of its four walls, with drawings executed by the pupils of the institution. There were Vestals, flowers, thatched cottages, column-capitals, and an enormous head of Tatius, King of the Sabines, bearing the signature Estelle Mouton.

I had already passed some time in admiring the energy with which Mademoiselle Mouton had delineated the bushy eyebrows and the fierce gaze of the antique warrior, when a sound, faint like the rustling of a dead leaf moved by the wind, caused me to turn my head. It was not a dead leaf at all — it was Mademoiselle Prefere. With hands jointed before her, she came gliding over the mirror-polish of that wonderful floor as the Saints of the Golden Legend were wont to glide over the crystal surface of the waters. But upon any other occasion, I am sure, Mademoiselle Prefere would not have made me think in the least about those virgins dear to mystical fancy. Her face rather gave me the idea of a russet-apple preserved or a whole winter in an attic by some economical housekeeper. Her shoulders were covered with a fringed pelerine, which had nothing at all remarkable about it, but which she wore as if it were a sacerdotal vestment, or the symbol of some high civic function.

I explained to her the purpose of my visit, and gave her my letter of introduction.

“Ah! — so you are Monsieur Mouche!” she exclaimed. “Is his health VERY good? He is the most upright of men, the most—”

She did not finish the phrase, but raised her eyes to the ceiling. My own followed the direction of their gaze, and observed a little spiral of paper lace, suspended from the place of the chandelier, which was apparently destined, so far as I could discover, to attract the flies away from the gilded mirror-frames and the Tableau d’Honneur.

“I have met Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre,” I observed, “at the residence of Madame de Gabry and had reason to appreciate the excellent character and quick intelligence of the young girl. As I used to know her parents very well, the friendship which I felt for them naturally inclines me to take an interest in her.”

Mademoiselle Prefere, in lieu of making any reply, sighed profoundly, pressed her mysterious pelerine to her heart, and again contemplated the paper spiral.

At last she observed,

“Since you were once the friend of Monsieur and Madame Alexandre, I hope and trust that, like Monsieur Mouche and myself, you deplore those crazy speculations which led them to ruin, and reduced their daughter to absolute poverty!”

I thought to myself, on hearing these words, how very wrong it is to be unlucky, and how unpardonable such an error on the part of those previously in a position worthy of envy. Their fall at once avenges and flatters us; and we are wholly pitiless.

After having answered, very frankly, that I knew nothing whatever about the history of the bank, I asked the schoolmistress if she was satisfied with Mademoiselle Alexandre.

“That child is indomitable!” cried Mademoiselle Prefere.

And she assumed an attitude of lofty resignation, to symbolise the difficult situation she was placed in by a pupil so hard to train. Then, with more calmness of manner, she added:

“The young person is not unintelligent. But she cannot resign herself to learn things by rule.”

What a strange old maid was this Mademoiselle Prefere! She walked without lifting her legs, and spoke without moving her lips! Without, however, considering her peculiarities for more than a reasonable instant, I replied that principles were, no doubt, very excellent things, and that I could trust myself to her judgement in regard to their value; but that, after all, when one had learned something, it very little difference what method had been followed in the learning of it.

Mademoiselle made a slow gesture of dissent. Then with a sigh, she declared,

“Ah, Monsieur! those who do not understand educational methods are apt to have very false ideas on these subjects. I am certain they express their opinions with the best intentions in the world; but they would do better, a great deal better, to leave all such questions to competent people.”

I did not attempt to argue further; and simply asked her whether I could see Mademoiselle Alexandre at once.

She looked at her pelerine, as if trying to read in the entanglements of its fringes, as in a conjuring book, what sort of answer she ought to make; then said,

“Mademoiselle Alexandre has a penance to perform, and a class-lesson to give; but I should be very sorry to let you put yourself to the trouble of coming

here all to no purpose. I am going to send for her. Only first allow me, Monsieur — as is our custom — to put your name on the visitors' register."

She sat down at the table, opened a large copybook, and, taking out Maitre Mouche's letter again from under her pelerine, where she had placed it, looked at it, and began to write.

"'Bonnard' — with a 'd,' is it not?" she asked. "Excuse me for being so particular; but my opinion is that proper names have an orthography. We have dictation-lessons in proper names, Monsieur, at this school — historical proper names, of course!"

After I had written down my name in a running hand, she inquired whether she should not put down after it my profession, title, quality — such as "retired merchant," "employe," "independent gentleman," or something else. There was a column in her register expressly for that purpose.

"My goodness, Madame!" I said, "if you must absolutely fill that column of yours, put down 'Member of the Institute.'"

It was still Mademoiselle Prefere's pelerine I saw before me; but it was not Mademoiselle Prefere who wore it; it was a totally different person, obliging, gracious, caressing, radiant, happy. Her eyes, smiled; the little wrinkles of her face (there were a vast number of them!) also smiled; her mouth smiled likewise, but only on one side. I discovered afterwards that was her best side. She spoke: her voice had also changed with her manner; it was now sweet as honey.

"You said, Monsieur, that our dear Jeanne was very intelligent. I discovered the same thing myself, and I am proud of being able to agree with you. This young girl has really made me feel a great deal of interest in her. She has what I call a happy disposition.... But excuse me for thus drawing upon your valuable time."

She summoned the servant-girl, who looked much more hurried and scared than before, and who vanished with the order to go and tell Mademoiselle Alexandre that Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard, Member of the Institute, was waiting to see her in the parlour.

Mademoiselle Prefere had barely time to confide in me that she had the most profound respect for all decisions of the Institute — whatever they might be — when Jeanne appeared, out of breath, red as a poppy, with her eyes very wide open, and her arms dangling helplessly at her sides — charming in her artless awkwardness.

"What a state you are in, my dear child!" murmured Mademoiselle Prefere, with maternal sweetness, as she arranged the girl's collar.

Jeanne certainly did present an odd aspect. Her hair combed back, and imperfectly held by a net from which loose curls were escaping; her slender

arms, sheathed down to the elbows in lustring sleeves; her hands, which she did not seem to know what to do with, all red with chillblains; her dress, much too short, revealing that she had on stockings much too large for her, and shoes worn down at the heel; and a skipping-rope tied round her waist in lieu of a belt, — all combined to lend Mademoiselle Jeanne an appearance the reverse of presentable.

“Oh, you crazy girl!” sighed Mademoiselle Prefere, who now seemed no longer like a mother, but rather like an elder sister.

Then she suddenly left the room, gliding like a shadow over the polished floor.

I said to Jeanne,

“Sit down, Jeanne, and talk to me as you would to a friend. Are you not better satisfied here now than you were last year?”

She hesitated; then answered with a good-natured smile of resignation,

“Not much better.”

I asked her to tell me about her school life. She began at once to enumerate all her different studies — piano, style, chronology of the Kings of France, sewing, drawing, catechism, deportment... I could never remember them all! She still held in her hands, all unconsciously, the two ends of her skipping-rope, and she raised and lowered them regularly while making her enumeration. Then all at once she became conscious of what she was doing, blushed, stammered, and became so confused that I had to renounce my desire to know the full programme of study adopted in the Prefere Institution.

After having questioned Jeanne on various matters, and obtained only the vaguest of answers, I perceived that her young mind was totally absorbed by the skipping-rope, and I entered bravely into that grave subject.

“So you have been skipping?” I said. “It is a very nice amusement, but one that you must not exert yourself too much at; for any excessive exercise of that kind might seriously injure your health, and I should be very much grieved about it Jeanne — I should be very much grieved, indeed!”

“You are very kind, Monsieur,” the young girl said, “to have come to see me and talk to me like this. I did not think about thanking you when I came in, because I was too much surprised. Have you seen Madame de Gabry? Please tell me something about her, Monsieur.”

“Madame de Gabry,” I answered, “is very well. I can only tell you about her, Jeanne, what an old gardener once said of the lady of the castle, his mistress, when somebody anxiously inquired about her: ‘Madame is in her road.’ Yes, Madame de Gabry is in her own road; and you know, Jeanne, what a good road it is, and how steadily she can walk upon it. I went out with her the other day,

very, very far away from the house; and we talked about you. We talked about you, my child, at your mother's grave."

"I am very glad," said Jeanne.

And then, all at once, she began to cry.

I felt too much reverence for those generous tears to attempt in any way to check the emotion that had evoked them. But in a little while, as the girl wiped her eyes, I asked her,

"Will you not tell me, Jeanne, why you were thinking so much about that skipping-rope a little while ago?"

"Why, indeed I will, Monsieur. It was only because I had no right to come into the parlour with a skipping-rope. You know, of course, that I am past the age for playing at skipping. But when the servant said there was an old gentleman... oh!... I mean... that a gentleman was waiting for me in the parlour, I was making the little girls jump. Then I tied the rope round my waist in a hurry, so that it might not get lost. It was wrong. But I have not been in the habit of having many people come to see me. And Mademoiselle Prefere never lets us off if we commit any breach of deportment: so I know she is going to punish me, and I am very sorry about it."...

"That is too bad, Jeanne!"

She became very grave, and said,

"Yes, Monsieur, it is too bad; because when I am punished myself, I have no more authority over the little girls."

I did not at once fully understand the nature of this unpleasantness; but Jeanne explained to me that, as she was charged by Mademoiselle Prefere with the duties of taking care of the youngest class, of washing and dressing the children, of teaching them how to behave, how to sew, how to say the alphabet, of showing them how to play, and, finally, of putting them to bed at the close of the day, she could not make herself obeyed by those turbulent little folks on the days she was condemned to wear a night-cap in the class-room, or to eat her meals standing up, from a plate turned upside down.

Having secretly admired the punishments devised by the Lady of the Enchanted Pelerine, I responded:

"Then, if I understand you rightly, Jeanne, you are at once a pupil here and a mistress? It is a condition of existence very common in the world. You are punished, and you punish?"

"Oh, Monsieur!" she exclaimed. "No! I never punish!"

"Then, I suspect," said I, "that your indulgence gets you many scoldings from Mademoiselle Prefere?"

She smiled, and blinked.

Then I said to her that the troubles in which we often involve ourselves, by trying to act according to our conscience and to do the best we can, are never of the sort that totally dishearten and weary us, but are, on the contrary, wholesome trials. This sort of philosophy touched her very little. She even appeared totally unmoved by my moral exhortations. But was not this quite natural on her part? — and ought I not to have remembered that it is only those no longer innocent who can find pleasure in the systems of moralists?... I had at least good sense enough to cut short my sermonising.

“Jeanne,” I said, “you were asking a moment ago about Madame de Gabry. Let us talk about that Fairy of yours She was very prettily made. Do you do any modelling in wax now?”

“I have not a bit of wax,” she exclaimed, wringing her hands— “no wax at all!”

“No wax!” I cried— “in a republic of busy bees?”

She laughed.

“And, then, you see, Monsieur, my FIGURINES, as you call them, are not in Mademoiselle Prefere’s programme. But I had begun to make a very small Saint-George for Madame de Gabry — a tiny little Saint-George, with a golden cuirass. Is not that right, Monsieur Bonnard — to give Saint-George a gold cuirass?”

“Quite right, Jeanne; but what became of it?”

“I am going to tell you, I kept it in my pocket because I had no other place to put it, and — and I sat down on it by mistake.”

She drew out of her pocket a little wax figure, which had been squeezed out of all resemblance to human form, and of which the dislocated limbs were only attached to the body by their wire framework. At the sight of her hero thus marred, she was seized at once with compassion and gaiety. The latter feeling obtained the mastery, and she burst into a clear laugh, which, however, stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

Mademoiselle Prefere stood at the parlour door, smiling.

“That dear child!” sighed the schoolmistress in her tenderest tone. “I am afraid she will tire you. And, then, your time is so precious!”

I begged Mademoiselle Prefere to dismiss that illusion, and, rising to take my leave, I took from my pocket some chocolate-cakes and sweets which I had brought with me.

“That is so nice!” said Jeanne; “there will be enough to go round the whole school.”

The lady of the pelerine intervened.

“Mademoiselle Alexandre,” she said, “thank Monsieur for his generosity.”

Jeanne looked at her for an instant in a sullen way; then, turning to me, said with remarkable firmness,

“Monsieur, I thank you for your kindness in coming to see me.”

“Jeanne,” I said, pressing both her hands, “remain always a good, truthful, brave girl. Good-bye.”

As she left the room with her packages of chocolate and confectionery, she happened to strike the handles of her skipping-rope against the back of a chair. Mademoiselle Prefere, full of indignation, pressed both hands over her heart, under her pelerine; and I almost expected to see her give up her scholastic ghost.

When we found ourselves alone, she recovered her composure; and I must say, without considering myself thereby flattered, that she smiled upon me with one whole side of her face.

“Mademoiselle,” I said, taking advantage of her good humour, “I noticed that Jeanne Alexandre looks a little pale. You know better than I how much consideration and care a young girl requires at her age. It would only be doing you an injustice by implication to recommend her still more earnestly to your vigilance.”

These words seemed to ravish her with delight. She lifted her eyes, as in ecstasy, to the paper spirals of the ceiling, and, clasping her hands exclaimed,

“How well these eminent men know the art of considering the most trifling details!”

I called her attention to the fact that the health of a young girl was not a trifling detail, and made my farewell bow. But she stopped me on the threshold to say to me, very confidentially,

“You must excuse me, Monsieur. I am a woman, and I love glory. I cannot conceal from you the fact that I feel myself greatly honoured by the presence of a Member of the Institute in my humble institution.”

I duly excused the weakness of Mademoiselle Prefere; and, thinking only of Jeanne, with the blindness of egotism, kept asking myself all along the road, “What are we going to do with this child?”

June 3.

I had escorted to the Cimetiere de Marnes that day a very aged colleague of mine who, to use the words of Goethe, had consented to die. The great Goethe, whose own vital force was something extraordinary, actually believed that one never dies until one really wants to die — that is to say, when all those energies which resist dissolution, and the sum of which make up life itself, have been totally destroyed. In other words, he believed that people only die when it is no longer possible for them to live. Good! it is merely a question of properly understanding one another; and when fully comprehended, the magnificent idea of Goethe only brings us quietly back to the song of La Palisse.

Well, my excellent colleague had consented to die — thanks to several successive attacks of extremely persuasive apoplexy — the last of which proved unanswerable. I had been very little acquainted with him during his lifetime; but it seems that I became his friend the moment he was dead, for our colleagues assured me in a most serious manner, with deeply sympathetic countenances, that I should act as one of the pall-bearers, and deliver an address over the tomb.

After having read very badly a short address I had written as well as I could — which is not saying much for it — I started out for a walk in the woods of Ville-d'Avray, and followed, without leaning too much on the Captain's cane, a shaded path on which the sunlight fell, through foliage, in little discs of gold. Never had the scent of grass and fresh leaves, — never had the beauty of the sky over the trees, and the serene might of noble tree contours, so deeply affected my senses and all my being; and the pleasure I felt in that silence, broken only by faintest tinkling sounds, was at once of the senses and of the soul.

I sat down in the shade of the roadside under a clump of young oaks. And there I made a promise to myself not to die, or at least not to consent to die, before I should be again able to sit down under an oak, where — in the great peace of the open country — I could meditate on the nature of the soul and the ultimate destiny of man. A bee, whose brown breast-plate gleamed in the sun like armour of old gold, came to light upon a mallow-flower close by me — darkly rich in colour, and fully opened upon its tufted stalk. It was certainly not the first time I had witnessed so common an incident; but it was the first time that I had watched it with such comprehensive and friendly curiosity. I could discern that there were all sorts of sympathies between the insect and the flower — a thousand singular little relationships which I had never before even suspected.

Satiated with nectar, the insect rose and buzzed away in a straight line, while I lifted myself up as best I could, and readjusted myself upon my legs.

“Adieu!” I said to the flower and to the bee. “Adieu! Heaven grant I may live long enough to discover the secret of your harmonies. I am very tired. But man is so made that he can only find relaxation from one kind of labour by taking up another. The flowers and insects will give me that relaxation, with God’s will, after my long researches in philology and diplomatics. How full of meaning is that old myth of Antaeus! I have touched the Earth and I am a new man; and now at seventy years of age, new feelings of curiosity take birth in my mind, even as young shoots sometimes spring up from the hollow trunk of an aged oak!”

June 4.

I like to look out of my window at the Seine and its quays on those soft grey mornings which give such an infinite tenderness of tint to everything. I have seen that azure sky which flings so luminous a calm over the Bay of Naples. But our Parisian sky is more animated, more kindly, more spiritual. It smiles, threatens, caresses — takes an aspect of melancholy or a look of merriment like a human gaze. At this moment it is pouring down a very gentle light on the men and beasts of the city as they accomplish their daily tasks. Over there, on the opposite bank, the stevedores of the Port Saint-Nicholas are unloading a cargo of cow's horns; while two men standing on a gangway are tossing sugar-loaves from one to the other, and thence to somebody in the hold of a steamer. On the north quay, the cab-horses, standing in a line under the shade of the plane-trees each with its head in a nose-bag, are quietly munching their oats, while the rubicund drivers are drinking at the counter of the wine-seller opposite, but all the while keeping a sharp lookout for early customers.

The dealers in second-hand books put their boxes on the parapet. These good retailers of Mind, who are always in the open air, with blouses loose to the breeze, have become so weatherbeaten by the wind, the rain, the frost, the snow, the fog, and the great sun, that they end by looking very much like the old statues of cathedrals. They are all friends of mine, and I scarcely ever pass by their boxes without picking out of one of them some old book which I had always been in need of up to that very moment, without any suspicion of the fact on my part.

Then on my return home I have to endure the outcries of my housekeeper, who accuses me of bursting all my pockets and filling the house with waste paper to attract the rats. Therese is wise about that, and it is because she is wise that I do not listen to her; for in spite of my tranquil mien, I have always preferred the folly of the passions to the wisdom of indifference. But just because my own passions are not of that sort which burst out with violence to devastate and kill, the common mind is not aware of their existence. Nevertheless, I am greatly moved by them at times, and it has more than once been my fate to lose my sleep for the sake of a few pages written by some forgotten monk or printed by some humble apprentice of Peter Schaeffer. And if these fierce enthusiasms are slowly being quenched in me, it is only because I am being slowly quenched myself. Our passions are ourselves. My old books are Me. I am just as old and thumb-worn as they are.

A light breeze sweeps away, along with the dust of the pavements, the winged seeds of the plane trees, and the fragments of hay dropped from the mouths of the horses. The dust is nothing remarkable in itself; but as I watch it flying, I remember a moment in my childhood when I watched just such a swirl of dust; and my old Parisian soul is much affected by that sudden recollection. All that I see from my window — that horizon which extends to the left as far as the hills of Chaillot, and enables me to distinguish the Arc de Triomphe like a die of stone, the Seine, river of glory, and its bridges, the ash-trees of the terrace of the Tuileries, the Louvre of the Renaissance, cut and graven like goldsmith-work; and on my right, towards the Pont-Neuf (pons Lutetiae Novus dictus, as it is named on old engravings), all the old and venerable part of Paris, with its towers and spires: — all that is my life, it is myself; and I should be nothing but for all those things which are thus reflected in me through my thousand varying shades of thought, inspiring me and animating me. That is why I love Paris with an immense love.

And nevertheless I am weary, and I know that there can be no rest for me in the heart of this great city which thinks so much, which has taught me to think, and which for ever urges me to think more. And how avoid being excited among all these books which incessantly tempt my curiosity without ever satisfying it? At one moment it is a date I have to look for; at another it is the name of a place I have to make sure of, or some quaint term of which it is important to determine the exact meaning. Words? — why, yes! words. As a philologist, I am their sovereign; they are my subjects, and, like a good king, I devote my whole life to them. But shall I not be able to abdicate some day? I have an idea that there is somewhere or other, quite far from here, a certain little cottage where I could enjoy the quiet I so much need, while awaiting that day in which a greater quiet — that which can be never broken — shall come to wrap me all about. I dream of a bench before the threshold, and of fields spreading away out of sight. But I must have a fresh smiling young face beside me, to reflect and concentrate all that freshness of nature. I could then imagine myself a grandfather, and all the long void of my life would be filled....

I am not a violent man, and yet I become easily vexed, and all my works have caused me quite as much pain as pleasure. And I do not know how it is that I still keep thinking about that very conceited and very inconsiderate impertinence which my young friend of the Luxembourg took the liberty to utter about me some three months ago. I do not call him “friend” in irony, for I love studious youth with all its temerities and imaginative eccentricities. Still, my young friend certainly went beyond all bounds. Master Ambroise Pare, who was the first to attempt the ligature of arteries, and who, having commenced his profession at a

time when surgery was only performed by quack barbers, nevertheless succeeded in lifting the science to the high place it now occupies, was assailed in his old age by all the young sawbones' apprentices. Being grossly abused during a discussion by some young addlehead who might have been the best son in the world, but who certainly lacked all sense of respect, the old master answered him in his treatise *De la Mumie, de la Licorne, des Venins et de la Peste*. "I pray him," said the great man— "I pray him, that if he desire to make any contradictions to my reply, he abandon all animosities, and treat the good old man with gentleness." This answer seems admirable from the pen of Ambroise Pare; but even had it been written by a village bonesetter, grown grey in his calling, and mocked by some young stripling, it would still be worthy of all praise.

It might perhaps seem that my memory of the incident had been kept alive only by a base feeling of resentment. I thought so myself at first, and reproached myself for thus dwelling on the saying of a boy who could not yet know the meaning of his own words. But my reflections on this subject subsequently took a better course: that is why I now note them down in my diary. I remembered that one day when I was twenty years old (that was more than half a century ago) I was walking about in that very same garden of the Luxembourg with some comrades. We were talking about our old professors; and one of us happened to name Monsieur Petit-Radel, an estimable and learned man, who was the first to throw some light upon the origins of early Etruscan civilisation, but who had been unfortunate enough to prepare a chronological table of the lovers of Helen. We all laughed a great deal about that chronological table; and I cried out, "Petit-Radel is an ass, not in three letters, but in twelve whole volumes!"

This foolish speech of my adolescence was uttered too lightly to be a weight on my conscience as an old man. May God kindly prove to me some day that I never used an less innocent shaft of speech in the battle of life! But I now ask myself whether I really never wrote, at any time in my life, something quite as unconsciously absurd as the chronological table of the lovers of Helen. The progress of science renders useless the very books which have been the greatest aids to that progress. As those works are no longer useful, modern youth is naturally inclined to believe they never had any value; it despises them, and ridicules them if they happen to contain any superannuated opinion whatever. That is why, in my twentieth year, I amused myself at the expense of Monsieur Petit-Radel and his chronological table; and that was why, the other day, at the Luxembourg, my young and irreverent friend...

"Rentre en toi-meme, Octave, et cesse de te plaindre. Quoi! tu veux qu'on t'epargne et n'as rien epargne!" ["Look into thyself, Octavius, and cease

complaining. What! thou wouldst be spared, and thou thyself hast spared none!”]

June 6.

It was the first Thursday in June. I shut up my books and took my leave of the holy abbot Droctoveus, who, being now in the enjoyment of celestial bliss, cannot feel very impatient to behold his name and works glorified on earth through the humble compilation being prepared by my hands. Must I confess it? That mallow-plant I saw visited by a bee the other day has been occupying my thoughts much more than all the ancient abbots who ever bore croisers or wore mitres. There is in one of Sprengel's books which I read in my youth, at that time when I used to read in my youth, at that time when I used to read anything and everything, some ideas about "the loves of flowers" which now return to memory after having been forgotten for half a century, and which to-day interest me so much that I regret not to have devoted the humble capacities of my mind to the study of insects and of plants.

And only awhile ago my housekeeper surprised me at the kitchen window, in the act of examining some wallflowers through a magnifying-glass....

It was while looking for my cravat that I made these reflections. But after searching to no purpose in a great number of drawers, I found myself obliged, after all, to have recourse to my housekeeper. Therese came limping in.

"Monsieur," she said, "you ought to have told me you were going out, and I would have given you your cravat!"

"But Therese," I replied, "would it not be a great deal better to put in some place where I could find it without your help?"

Therese did not deign to answer me.

Therese no longer allows me to arrange anything. I cannot even have a handkerchief without asking her for it; and as she is deaf, crippled, and, what is worse, beginning to lose her memory, I languish in perpetual destitution. But she exercises her domestic authority with such quiet pride that I do not feel the courage to attempt a coup d'etat against her government.

"My cravat! Therese! — do you hear? — my cravat! if you drive me wild like this with your slow ways, it will not be a cravat I shall need, but a rope to hang myself!"

"You must be in a very great hurry, Monsieur," replied Therese. "Your cravat is not lost. Nothing is ever lost in this house, because I have charge of everything. But please allow me the time at least to find it."

"Yet here," I thought to myself— "here is the result of half a century of devotedness and self-sacrifice!... Ah! if by any happy chance this inexorable

Therese had once in her whole life, only once, failed in her duty as a servant — if she had ever been at fault for one single instant, she could never have assumed this inflexible authority over me, and I should at least have the courage to resist her. But how can one resist virtue? The people who have no weaknesses are terrible; there is no way of taking advantage of them. Just look at Therese, for example; she has not a single fault for which you can blame her! She has no doubt of herself; nor of God, nor of the world. She is the valiant woman, the wise virgin of Scripture; others may know nothing about her, but I know her worth. In my fancy I always see her carrying a lamp, a humble kitchen lamp, illuminating the beams of some rustic roof — a lamp which will never go out while suspended from that meagre arm of hers, scraggy and strong as a vine-branch.

“Therese, my cravat! Don’t you know, wretched woman, that to-day is the first Thursday in June, and that Mademoiselle Jeanne will be waiting for me? The schoolmistress has certainly had the parlour floor vigorously waxed: I am sure one can look at oneself in it now; and it will be quite a consolation for me when I slip and break my old bones upon it — which is sure to happen sooner or later — to see my rueful countenance reflected in it as in a looking-glass. Then taking for my model that amiable and admirable hero whose image is carved upon the handle of Uncle Victor’s walking-stick, I will control myself so as not to make too ugly a grimace.... See what a splendid sun! The quays are all gilded by it, and the Seine smiles in countless little flashing wrinkles. The city is gold: a dust-haze, blonde and gold-toned as a woman’s hair, floats above its beautiful contours.... Therese, my cravat!... Ah! I can now comprehend the wisdom of that old Chrysal who used to keep his neckbands in a big Plutarch. Hereafter I shall follow his example by laying all my neckties away between the leaves of the *Acta Sanctorum*.”

Therese let me talk on, and keeps looking for the necktie in silence. I hear a gentle ringing at our door-bell.

“Therese,” I exclaim; “there is somebody ringing the bell! Give me my cravat, and go to the door; or, rather, go to the door first, and then, with the help of Heaven, you will give me my cravat. But please do not stand there between the clothes-press and the door like an old hack-horse between two saddles.”

Therese marched to the door as if advancing upon the enemy. My excellent housekeeper becomes more inhospitable the older she grows. Every stranger is an object of suspicion to her. According to her own assertion, this disposition is the result of a long experience with human nature. I had not the time to consider whether the same experience on the part of another experimenter would produce the same results. Maitre Mouche was waiting to see me in the ante-room.

Maitre Mouche is still more yellow than I had believed him to be. He wears blue glasses, and his eyes keep moving uneasily behind them, like mice running about behind a screen.

Maitre Mouche excuses himself for having intruded upon me at a moment when.... He does not characterise the moment; but I think he means to say a moment in which I happen to be without my cravat. It is not my fault, as you very well know. Maitre Mouche, who does not know, does not appear to be at all shocked, however. He is only afraid that he might have dropped in at the wrong moment. I succeeded in partially reassuring him at once upon that point. He then tells me it is as guardian of Mademoiselle Alexandre that he has come to talk with me. First of all, he desires that I shall not hereafter pay any heed to those restrictions he had at first deemed necessary to put upon the permit given to visit Mademoiselle Jeanne at the boarding-school. Henceforth the establishment of Mademoiselle Prefere will be open to me any day that I might choose to call — between the hours of midday and four o'clock. Knowing the interest I have taken in the young girl, he considers it his duty to give me some information about the person to whom he has confided his ward. Mademoiselle Prefere, whom he has known for many years, is in possession of his utmost confidence. Mademoiselle Prefere is, in his estimation, an enlightened person, of excellent morals, and capable of giving excellent counsel.

“Mademoiselle Prefer,” he said to me, “has principles; and principles are rare these days, Monsieur. Everything has been totally changed; and this epoch of ours cannot compare with the preceding ones.”

“My stairway is a good example, Monsieur,” I replied; “twenty-five years ago it used to allow me to climb it without any trouble, and now it takes my breath away, and wears my legs out before I have climbed half a dozen steps. It has had its character spoiled. Then there are those journals and books I used once to devour without difficulty by moonlight: to-day, even in the brightest sunlight, they mock my curiosity, and exhibit nothing but a blur of white and black when I have not got my spectacles on. Then the gout has got into my limbs. That is another malicious trick of the times!”

“Not only that, Monsieur,” gravely replied Maitre Mouche, “but what is really unfortunate in our epoch is that no one is satisfied with his position. From the top of society to the bottom, in every class, there prevails a discontent, a restlessness, a love of comfort....”

“Mon Dieu, Monsieur!” I exclaimed. “You think this love of comfort is a sign of the times? Men have never had at any epoch a love of discomfort. They have always tried to better their condition. This constant effort produces constant changes, and the effort is always going on — that is all there is about it!”

“Ah! Monsieur,” replied Maitre Mouche, “it is easy to see that you live in your books — out of the business world altogether. You do not see, as I see them, the conflicts of interest, the struggle for money. It is the same effervescence in all minds, great or small. The wildest speculations are being everywhere indulged in. What I see around me simply terrifies me!”

I wondered within myself whether Maitre Mouche had called upon me only for the purpose of expressing his virtuous misanthropy; but all at once I heard words of a more consoling character issue from his lips. Maitre Mouche began to speak to me of Virginie Prefere as a person worthy of respect, of esteem, and of sympathy, — highly honourable, capable of great devotedness, cultivated, discreet, — able to read aloud remarkably well, extremely modest, and skillful in the art of applying blisters. Then I began to understand that he had only been painting that dismal picture of universal corruption in order the better to bring out, by contrast, the virtues of the schoolmistress. I was further informed that the institution in the Rue Demours was well patronised, prosperous, and enjoyed a high reputation with the public. Maitre Mouche lifted up his hand — with a black woollen glove on it — as if making oath to the truth of these statements. Then he added:

“I am enabled, by the very character of my profession, to know a great deal about people. A notary is, to a certain extent, a father-confessor.

“I deemed it my duty, Monsieur, to give you this agreeable information at the moment when a lucky chance enabled you to meet Mademoiselle Prefere. There is only one thing more which I would like to say. This lady — who is, of course, quite unaware of my action in the matter — spoke to me of you the other day in terms of deepest sympathy. I could only weaken their expression by repeating them to you; and furthermore, I could not repeat them without betraying, to a certain extent, the confidence of Mademoiselle Prefere.”

“Do not betray it, Monsieur; do not betray it!” I responded. “To tell you the truth, I had no idea that Mademoiselle Prefere knew anything whatever about me. But since you have the influence of an old friend with her, I will take advantage of your good will, Monsieur, to ask you to exercise that influence in behalf of Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre. The child — for she is still a child — is overloaded with work. She is at once a pupil and a mistress — she is overtasked. Besides, she is punished in petty disgusting ways; and hers is one of those generous natures which will be forced into revolt by such continual humiliation.”

“Alas!” replied Maitre Mouche, “she must be trained to take her part in the struggle of life. One does not come into this world simply to amuse oneself, and to do just what one pleases.”

“One comes into this world,” I responded, rather warmly, “to enjoy what is beautiful and what is good, and to do as one pleases, when the things one wants to do are noble, intelligent, and generous. An education which does not cultivate the will, is an education that depraves the mind. It is a teacher’s duty to teach the pupil HOW to will.”

I perceived that Maitre Mouche began to think me a rather silly man. With a great deal of quiet self-assurance, he proceeded:

“You must remember, Monsieur, that the education of the poor has to be conducted with a great deal of circumspection, and with a view to that future state of dependence they must occupy in society. Perhaps you are not aware that the late Noel Alexandre died a bankrupt, and that his daughter is being educated almost by charity?”

“Oh! Monsieur!” I exclaimed, “do not say it! To say it is to pay oneself back, and then the statement ceases to be true.”

“The liabilities of the estate,” continued the notary, “exceeded the assets. But I was able to effect a settlement with the creditors in favour of the minor.”

He undertook to explain matters in detail. I declined to listen to these explanations, being incapable of understanding business methods in general, and those of Maitre Mouche in particular. The notary then took it upon himself to justify Mademoiselle Prefere’s educational system, and observed by way of conclusion,

“It is not by amusing oneself that one can learn.”

“It is only by amusing oneself that one can learn,” I replied. “The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards; and curiosity itself can be vivid and wholesome only in proportion as the mind is contented and happy. Those acquirements crammed by force into the minds of children simply clog and stifle intelligence. In order that knowledge be properly digested, it must have been swallowed with a good appetite. I know Jeanne! If that child were intrusted to my care, I should make of her — not a learned woman, for I would look to her future happiness only — but a child full of bright intelligence and full of life, in whom everything beautiful in art or nature would awaken some gentle responsive thrill. I would teach her to live in sympathy with all that is beautiful — comely landscapes, the ideal scenes of poetry and history, the emotional charm of noble music. I would make lovable to her everything I would wish her to love. Even her needlework I would make pleasurable to her, by a proper choice of fabrics, the style of embroideries, the designs of lace. I would give her a beautiful dog, and a pony to teach her how to manage animals; I would give her birds to take care of, so that she could learn the value of even a drop of water

and a crumb of bread. And in order that she should have a still higher pleasure, I would train her to find delight in exercising charity. And inasmuch as none of us may escape pain, I should teach her that Christian wisdom which elevates us above all suffering, and gives a beauty even to grief itself. That is my idea of the right way to educate a young girl.”

“I yield, Monsieur,” replied Maitre Mouche, joining his black-gloved hands together.

And he rose.

“Of course you understand,” I remarked, as I went to the door with him, “that I do not pretend for a moment to impose my educational system upon Mademoiselle Prefere; it is necessarily a private one, and quite incompatible with the organisation of even the best-managed boarding schools. I only ask you to persuade her to give Jeanne less work and more play, and not to punish her except in case of absolute necessity, and to let her have as much freedom of mind and body as the regulations of the institution permit.”

It was with a pale and mysterious smile that Maitre Mouche informed me that my observations would be taken in good part, and should receive all possible consideration.

Therewith he made me a little bow, and took his departure, leaving me with a peculiar feeling of discomfort and uneasiness. I have met a great many strange characters in my time, but never any at all resembling either this notary or this schoolmistress.

July 6.

Maitre Mouche has so much delayed me by his visit that I gave up going to see Jeanne that day. Professional duties kept me very busy for the rest of the week. Although at the age when most men retire altogether from active life, I am still attached by a thousand ties to the society in which I have lived. I have to reside at meetings of academies, scientific congresses, assemblies of various learned bodies. I am overburdened with honorary functions; I have seven of these in one governmental department alone. The bureaux would be very glad to get rid of them. But habit is stronger than both of us together, and I continue to hobble up the stairs of various government buildings. Old clerks point me out to each other as I go by like a ghost wandering through the corridors. When one has become very old one finds it extremely difficult to disappear. Nevertheless, it is time, as the old song says, “de prendre ma retraite et de songer a faire un fin” — to retire on my pension and prepare myself to die a good death.

An old marchioness, who used to be a friend of Hevetius in her youth, and whom I once met at my father’s house when a very old woman, was visited during her last sickness by the priest of her parish, who wanted to prepare her to die.

“Is that really necessary?” she asked. “I see everybody else manage it perfectly well the first time.”

My father went to see her very soon afterwards and found her extremely ill.

“Good-evening, my friend!” she said, pressing his hand. “I am going to see whether God improves upon acquaintance.”

So were wont to die the belles amies of the philosophers. Such an end is certainly not vulgar nor impertinent, and such levities are not of the sort that emanate from dull minds. Nevertheless, they shock me. Neither my fears nor my hopes could accommodate themselves to such a mode of departure. I would like to make mine with a perfectly collected mind; and that is why I must begin to think, in a year or two, about some way of belonging to myself; otherwise, I should certainly risk.... But, hush! let Him not hear His name and turn to look as He passes by! I can still lift my fagot without His aid.

... I found Jeanne very happy indeed. She told me that, on the Thursday previous, after the visit of her guardian, Mademoiselle Prefere had set her free from the ordinary regulations and lightened her tasks in several ways. Since that lucky Thursday she could walk in the garden — which only lacked leaves and

flowers — as much as she liked; and she had been given facilities to work at her unfortunate little figure of Saint-George.

She said to me, with a smile,

“I know very well that I owe all of this to you.”

I tried to talk with her about other matters, but I remarked that she could not attend to what I was saying, in spite of her effort to do so.

“I see you are thinking about something else,” I said. “Well, tell me what it is; for, if you do not, we shall not be able to talk to each other at all, which would be very unworthy of both of us.”

She answered,

“Oh! I was really listening to you, Monsieur; but it is true that I was thinking about something else. You will excuse me, won’t you? I could not help thinking that Mademoiselle Prefere must like you very, very much indeed, to have become so good to me all of a sudden.”

Then she looked at me in an odd, smiling, frightened way, which made me laugh.

“Does that surprise you?” I asked.

“Very much,” she replied.

“Please tell me why?”

“Because I can see no reason, no reason at all... but there!... no reason at all why you should please Mademoiselle Prefere so much.”

“So, then, you think I am very displeasing, Jeanne?”

She bit her lips, as if to punish them for having made a mistake; and then, in a coaxing way, looking at me with great soft eyes, gentle and beautiful as a spaniel’s, she said,

“I know I said a foolish thing; but, still, I do not see any reason why you should be so pleasing to Mademoiselle Prefere. And, nevertheless, you seem to please her a great deal — a very great deal. She called me one day, and asked me all sorts of questions about you.”

“Really?”

“Yes; she wanted to find out all about your house. Just think! she even asked me how old your servant was!”

And Jeanne burst out laughing.

“Well, what do you think about it?” I asked.

She remained a long while with her eyes fixed on the worn-out cloth of her shoes, and seemed to be thinking very deeply. Finally, looking up again, she answered,

“I am distrustful. Isn’t it very natural to feel uneasy about what one cannot understand; I know I am foolish; but you won’t be offended with me, will you?”

“Why, certainly not, Jeanne. I am not a bit offended with you.”

I must acknowledge that I was beginning to share her surprise; and I began to turn over in my old head the singular thought of this young girl— “One is uneasy about what one cannot understand.”

But, with a fresh burst of merriment, she cried out,

“She asked me...guess! I will give you a hundred guesses — a thousand guesses. You give it up?... She asked me if you liked good eating.”

“And how did you receive this shower of interrogations, Jeanne?”

“I replied, ‘I don’t know, Mademoiselle.’ And Mademoiselle then said to me, ‘You are a little fool. The least details of the life of an eminent man ought to be observed. Please to know, Mademoiselle, that Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard is one of the glories of France!’”

“Stuff!” I exclaimed. “And what did YOU think about it, Mademoiselle?”

“I thought that Mademoiselle Prefere was right. But I don’t care at all...(I know it is naughty what I am going to say)...I don’t care a bit, not a bit, whether Mademoiselle Prefere is or is not right about anything.”

“Well, then, content yourself, Jeanne, Mademoiselle Prefere was not right.”

“Yes, yes, she was quite right that time; but I wanted to love everybody who loved you — everybody without exception — and I cannot do it, because it would never be possible for me to love Mademoiselle Prefere.”

“Listen, Jeanne,” I answered, very seriously, “Mademoiselle Prefere has become good to you; try now to be good to her.”

She answered sharply,

“It is very easy for Mademoiselle Prefere to be good to me, and it would be very difficult indeed for me to be good to her.”

I then said, in a still more serious tone:

“My child, the authority of a teacher is sacred. You must consider your schoolmistress as occupying the place to you of the mother whom you lost.”

I had scarcely uttered this solemn stupidity when I bitterly regretted it. The child turned pale, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

“Oh, Monsieur!” she cried, “how could you say such a thing — YOU? You never knew mamma!”

Ay, just Heaven! I did know her mamma. And how indeed could I have been foolish enough to have said what I did?

She repeated, as if to herself:

“Mamma! my dear mamma! my poor mamma!”

A lucky chance prevented me from playing the fool any further. I do not know how it happened at that moment I looked as if I was going to cry. At my age one does not cry. It must have been a bad cough which brought the tears into

my eyes. But, anyhow, appearances were in my favour. Jeanne was deceived by them. Oh! what a pure and radiant smile suddenly shone out under her beautiful wet eyelashes — like sunshine among branches after a summer shower! We took each other by the hand and sat a long while without saying a word — absolutely happy. Those celestial harmonies which I once thought I heard thrilling through my soul while I knelt before that tomb to which a saintly woman had guided me, suddenly awoke again in my heart, slow-swelling through the blissful moments with infinite softness. Doubtless the child whose hand pressed my own also heard them; and then, elevated by their enchantment above the material world, the poor old man and the artless young girl both knew that a tender ghostly Presence was making sweetness all about them.

“My child,” I said at last, “I am very old, and many secrets of life, which you will only learn little by little, have been revealed to me. Believe me, the future is shaped out of the past. Whatever you can do to live contentedly here, without impatience and without fretting, will help you live some future day in peace and joy in your own home. Be gentle, and learn how to suffer. When one suffers patiently one suffers less. If you should be badly treated, Madame de Gabry and I would both consider ourselves badly treated in your person.”...

“Is your health very good indeed, dear Monsieur?”

It was Mademoiselle Prefere, approaching stealthily behind us, who had asked the question with a peculiar smile. My first idea was to tell her to go to the devil; my second, that her mouth was as little suited for smiling as a frying-pan for musical purposes; my third was to answer her politely and assure her that I hoped she was very well.

She sent the young girl out to take a walk in the garden; then, pressing one hand upon her pelerine and extending the other towards the Tableau d’Honneur, she showed me the name of Jeanne Alexandre written at the head of the list in large text.

“I am very much pleased,” I said to her, “to find that you are satisfied with the behaviour of that child. Nothing could delight me more; and I am inclined to attribute this happy result to your affectionate vigilance. I have taken the liberty to send you a few books which I think may serve both to instruct and to amuse young girls. You will be able to judge by glancing over them whether they are adapted to the perusal of Mademoiselle Alexandre and her companions.”

The gratitude of the schoolmistress not only overflowed in words, but seemed about to take the form of tearful sensibility. In order to change the subject I observed,

“What a beautiful day this is!”

“Yes,” she replied; “and if this weather continues, those dear children will have a nice time for their enjoyment.”

“I suppose you are referring to the holidays. But Mademoiselle Alexandre, who has no relatives, cannot go away. What in the world is she going to do all alone in this great big house?”

“Oh, we will do everything we can to amuse her.... I will take her to the museums and—”

She hesitated, blushed, and continued,

“ — and to your house, if you will permit me.”

“Why of course!” I exclaimed. “That is a first-rate idea.”

We separated very good friends with one another. I with her, because I had been able to obtain what I desired; she with me, for no appreciable motive — which fact, according to Plato, elevated her into the highest rank of the Hierarchy of Souls.

... And nevertheless it is not without a presentiment of evil that I find myself on the point of introducing this person into my house. And I would be very glad indeed to see Jeanne in charge of anybody else rather than of her. Maitre Mouche and Mademoiselle Prefere are characters whom I cannot at all understand. I never can imagine why they say what they do say, nor why they do what they do; they have a mysterious something in common which makes me feel uneasy. As Jeanne said to me a little while ago: “One is uneasy about what one cannot understand.”

Alas! at my age one has learned only too well how little sincerity there is in life; one has learned only too well how much one loses by living a long time in this world; and one feels that one can no longer trust any except the young.

August 12.

I waited for them. In fact, I waited for them very impatiently. I exerted all my powers of insinuation and of coaxing to induce Therese to receive them kindly; but my powers in this direction are very limited. They came. Jeanne was neater and prettier than I had ever expected to see her. She has not, it is true, anything approaching the charm of her mother. But to-day, for the first time, I observed that she has a pleasing face; and a pleasing face is of great advantage to a woman in this world. I think that her hat was a little on one side; but she smiled, and the City of Books was all illuminated by that smile.

I watched Therese to see whether the rigid manners of the old housekeeper would soften a little at the sight of the young girl. I saw her turning her lustreless eyes upon Jeanne; I saw her long wrinkled face, her toothless mouth, and that pointed chin of hers — like the chin of some puissant old fairy. And that was all I could see.

Mademoiselle Prefere made her appearance all in blue — advanced, retreated, skipped, tripped, cried out, sighed, cast her eyes down, rolled her eyes up, bewildered herself with excuses — said she dared not, and nevertheless dared — said she would never dare again, and nevertheless dared again — made courtesies innumerable — made, in short, all the fuss she could.

“What a lot of books!” she screamed. “And have you really read them all, Monsieur Bonnard?”

“Alas! I have,” I replied, “and that is just the reason that I do not know anything; for there is not a single one of those books which does not contradict some other book; so that by the time one has read them all one does not know what to think about anything. That is just my condition, Madame.”

Thereupon she called Jeanne for the purpose of communicating her impressions. But Jeanne was looking out of the window.

“How beautiful it is!” she said to us. “How I love to see the river flowing! It makes you think about all kinds of things.”

Mademoiselle Prefere having removed her hat and exhibited a forehead tricked out with blonde curls, my housekeeper sturdily snatched up the hat at once, with the observation that she did not like to see people’s clothes scattered over the furniture. Then she approached Jeanne and asked her for her “things,” calling her “my little lady!” Where-upon the little lady, giving up her cloak and hat, exposed to view a very graceful neck and a lithe figure, whose outlines were beautifully relieved against the great glow of the open window; and I could have

wished that some one else might have seen her at that moment — some one very different from an aged housekeeper, a schoolmistress frizzled like a sheep, and this old humbug of an archivist and paleographer.

“So you are looking at the Seine,” I said to her. “See how it sparkles in the sun!”

“Yes,” she replied, leaning over the windowbar, “it looks like a flowing of fire. But see how nice and cool it looks on the other side over there under the shadow of the willows! That little spot there pleases me better than all the rest.”

“Good!” I answered. “I see that the river has a charm for you. How would you like, with Mademoiselle Prefere’s permission, to make a trip to Saint-Cloud? We should certainly be in time to catch the steamboat just below the Pont-Royal.”

Jeanne was delighted with my suggestion, and Mademoiselle Prefere willing to make any sacrifice. But my housekeeper was not at all willing to let us go off so unconcernedly. She summoned me into the dining-room, whither I followed her in fear and trembling.

“Monsieur,” she said to me as soon as we found ourselves alone, “you never think about anything, and it is always I who have to think about everything. Luckily for you I have a good memory.”

I did not think that it was a favourable moment for any attempt to dispel this wild illusion. She continued:

“So you were going off without saying a word to me about what this little lady likes to eat? At her age one does not know anything, one does not care about anything in particular, one eats like a bird. You yourself, Monsieur, are very difficult to please; but at least you know what is good: it is very different with these young people — they do not know anything about cooking. It is often the very best thing which they think the worst, and what is bad seems to them good, because their stomachs are not quite formed yet — so that one never knows just what to do for them. Tell me if the little lady would like a pigeon cooked with green peas, and whether she is fond of vanilla ice-cream.”

“My good Therese,” I answered, “just do whatever you think best, and whatever that may be I am sure it will be very nice. Those ladies will be quite contented with our humble ordinary fare.”

Therese replied, very dryly,

“Monsieur, I am asking you about the little lady: she must not leave this house without having enjoyed herself a little. As for that old frizzle-headed thing, if she doesn’t like my dinner she can suck her thumbs. I don’t care what she likes!”

My mind being thus set at rest, I returned to the City of Books, where Mademoiselle Prefere was crocheting as calmly as if she were at home. I almost felt inclined myself to think she was. She did not take up much room, it is true, in the angle of the window. But she had chosen her chair and her footstool so well that those articles of furniture seemed to have been made expressly for her.

Jeanne, on the other hand, devoted her attention to the books and pictures — gazing at them in a kindly, expressive, half-sad way, as if she were bidding them an affectionate farewell.

“Here,” I said to her, “amuse yourself with this book, which I am sure you cannot help liking, because it is full of beautiful engravings.” And I threw open before her Vecellio’s collection of costume-designs — not the commonplace edition, by your leave, so meagrely reproduced by modern artists, but in truth a magnificent and venerable copy of that editio princeps which is noble as those noble dames who figure upon its yellowed leaves, made beautiful by time.

While turning over the engravings with artless curiosity, Jeanne said to me,

“We were talking about taking a walk; but this is a great journey you are making me take. And I would like to travel very, very far away!”

“In that case, Mademoiselle,” I said to her, “you must arrange yourself as comfortably as possible for travelling. But you are now sitting on one corner of your chair, so that the chair is standing upon only one leg, and that Vecellio must tire your knees. Sit down comfortably; put your chair on its four feet, and put your book on the table.”

She obeyed me with a laugh.

I watched her. She cried out suddenly,

“Oh, come look at this beautiful costume!” (It was that of the wife of a Doge of Venice.) “How noble it is! What magnificent ideas it gives one of that life! Oh, I must tell you — I adore luxury!”

“You must not express such thoughts as those, Mademoiselle,” said the schoolmistress, lifting up her little shapeless nose from her work.

“Nevertheless, it was a very innocent utterance,” I replied. “There are splendid souls in whom the love of splendid things is natural and inborn.”

The little shapeless nose went down again.

“Mademoiselle Prefere likes luxury too,” said Jeanne; “she cuts out paper trimmings and shades for the lamps. It is economical luxury; but it is luxury all the same.”

Having returned to the subject of Venice, we were just about to make the acquaintance of a certain patrician lady attired in an embroidered dalmatic, when I heard the bell ring. I thought it was some peddler with his basket; but the gate of the City of Books opened, and... Well, Master Sylvestre Bonnard, you were

wishing awhile ago that the grace of your protegee might be observed by some other eyes than old withered ones behind spectacles. Your wishes have been fulfilled in a most unexpected manner, and a voice cries out to you as to the imprudent Theseus,

“Craignez, Seigneur, craignez que le
Ciel rigoureux Ne vous Haisse assez pour exaucer vos vœux!
Souvent dans sa colere il recoit nos victimes,
Ses presents sont souvent la peine de nos crimes.”

[“Beware my lord! Beware lest stern
Heaven hate you enough to hear your prayers!
Often 'tis in wrath that Heaven receives our sacrifices:
its gifts are often the punishment of our crimes.”]

The gate of the City of Books had opened, and a handsome young man made his appearance, ushered in by Therese. That good old soul only knows how to open the door for people and to shut it behind them; she has no idea whatever of the tact requisite for the waiting-room and for the parlour. It is not in her nature either to make any announcements or to make anybody wait. She either throws people out on the lobby, or simply pitches them at your head.

And here is this handsome young man already inside; and I cannot really take the girl at once and hide her like a secret treasure in the next room. I wait for him to explain himself; he does it without the least embarrassment; but it seems to me that he has already observed the young girl who is still bending over the table looking at Vecellio. As I observe the young man it occurs to me that I have seen him somewhere before, or else I must be very much mistaken. His name is Gelis. That is a name which I have heard somewhere, — I can't remember where. At all events, Monsieur Gelis (since there is a Gelis) is a fine-looking young fellow. He tells me that this is his third class-year at the Ecole des Chartes, and that he has been working for the past fifteen or eighteen months upon his graduation thesis, the subject of which is the Condition of the Benedictine Abbeys in 1700. He has just read my works upon the “Monasticon”; and he is convinced that he cannot terminate this thesis successfully without my advice, to begin with, and in the second place without a certain manuscript which I possess, and which is nothing less than the “Register of the Accounts of the Abbey of Citeaux from 1683 to 1704.”

Having thus explained himself, he hands me a letter of introduction bearing the signature of one of the most illustrious of my colleagues.

Good! Now I know who he is! Monsieur Gelis is the very same young man who last year under the chestnut-trees called me an idiot! And while unfolding

his letter of introduction I think to myself:

“Aha! my unlucky youth, you are very far from suspecting that I overheard what you said, and that I know what you think of me — or, at least, what you did think of me that day, for these young minds are so fickle? I have got you now, my friend! You have fallen into the lion’s den, and so unexpectedly, in good sooth, that the astonished old lion does not know what to do with his prey. But come now, old lion! do not act like an idiot! Is it not possible that you were an idiot? If you are not one now, you certainly were one! You were a fool to have been listening to Monsieur Gelis at the foot of the statue of Marguerite de Valois; you were doubly a fool to have heard what he said; and you were trebly a fool not to have forgotten what it would have been much better never to have heard.”

Having thus scolded the old lion, I exhorted him to show clemency. He did not appear to require much coaxing, and gradually became so good-natured that he had some difficulty in restraining himself from bursting out into joyous roarings. From the way in which I had read my colleague’s letter one might have supposed me a man who did not know his alphabet. I took a long while to read it; and Monsieur Gelis might have become very tired under different circumstances; but he was watching Jeanne, and endured the trial with exemplary patience. Jeanne occasionally turned her face in our direction. Well you could not expect a person to remain perfectly motionless, could you? Mademoiselle Prefere was arranging her curls, and her bosom occasionally swelled with little sighs. It may be observed that I have myself often been honoured with those little sighs.

“Monsieur,” I said, as I folded up the letter, “I shall be very happy to be of any service to you. You are occupied with researches in which I myself have always felt a very lively interest. I have done all that lay in my power. I know, as you do — and still better than you can know — how much there remains to do. The manuscript you asked for is at your disposal; you may take it home with you, but it is not a manuscript of the smallest kind, and I am afraid—”

“Oh, Monsieur,” said Gelis, “big books have never been able to make me afraid of them.”

I begged the young man to wait for me, and I went into the next room to get the Register, which I could not find at first, and which I almost despaired of finding, as I discerned, from certain familiar signs, that Therese had been setting the room in order. But the Register was so big and so heavy that, luckily for me, Therese had not been able to put it in order as she had doubtless wished to do. I could scarcely lift it up myself; and I had the pleasure of finding it quite as heavy as I could have hoped.

“Wait, my boy,” I said, with a smile which must have been very sarcastic— “wait! I am going to give you something to do which will break your arms first, and afterwards your head. That will be the first vengeance of Sylvestre Bonnard. Later on we shall see what else there is to be done.”

When I returned to the City of Books I heard Monsieur Gelis and Mademoiselle Jeanne chatting — chatting together, if you please! as if they were the best friends in the world. Mademoiselle Prefere, being full of decorum, did not say anything; but the other two were chatting like birds. And what about? About the blond tint used by Venetian painters! Yes, about the “Venetian blond.” That little serpent of a Gelis was telling Jeanne the secret of the dye with which, according to the best authorities, the women of Titian and of Veronese tinted their hair. And Mademoiselle Jeanne was expressing her opinion very prettily about the honey tint and the golden tint. I understood that that scamp of a Vecellio was responsible — that they had been bending over the book together, and that they had been admiring either that Doge’s wife we had been looking at awhile before, or some other patrician woman of Venice.

Never mind! I appeared with my enormous old book, thinking that Gelis was going to make a grimace. It was as much as one could have asked a porter to carry, and my arms were stiff merely with lifting it. But the young man caught it up like a feather, and slipped it under his arm with a smile. Then he thanked me with that sort of brevity which I like, reminded me that he had need of my advice, and, having made an appointment to meet me another day, took his departure after bowing to us with the most perfect self-possession conceivable.

“He seems quite a decent lad,” I said.

Jeanne turned over a few more pages of Vecellio, and made no answer.

“Aha!” I thought to myself.... And then we went to Saint-Cloud.

September-December.

The regularity with which visit succeeded visit to the old man's house thereafter made me feel very grateful to Mademoiselle Prefere, who succeeded at last in winning her right to occupy a special corner in the City of Books. She now says "MY chair," "MY footstool," "MY pigeon hole." Her pigeon hole is really a small shelf properly belonging to the poets of La Champagne, whom she expelled therefrom in order to obtain a lodging for her work-bag. She is very amiable, and I must really be a monster not to like her. I can only endure her — in the severest signification of the word. But what would one not endure for Jeanne's sake? Her presence lends to the City of Books a charm which seems to hover about it even after she has gone. She is very ignorant; but she is so finely gifted that whenever I show her anything beautiful I am astounded to find that I had never really seen it before, and that it is she who makes me see it. I have found it impossible so far to make her follow some of my ideas, but I have often found pleasure in following the whimsical and delicate course of her own.

A more practical man than I would attempt to teach her to make herself useful; but is not the capacity of being amiable a useful thing in life? Without being pretty, she charms; and the power to charm is perhaps, after all, worth quite as much as the ability to darn stockings. Furthermore, I am not immortal; and I doubt whether she will have become very old when my notary (who is not Maitre Mouche) shall read to her a certain paper which I signed a little while ago.

I do not wish that any one except myself should provide for her, and give her her dowry. I am not, however, very rich, and the paternal inheritance did not gain bulk in my hands. One does not accumulate money by poring over old texts. But my books — at the price which such noble merchandise fetches to-day — are worth something. Why, on that shelf there are some poets of the sixteenth century for which bankers would bid against princes! And I think that those "Heures" of Simon Vostre would not be readily overlooked at the Hotel Sylvestre any more than would those *Preces Piae* compiled for the use of Queen Claude. I have taken great pains to collect and to preserve all those rare and curious editions which people the City of Books; and for a long time I used to believe that they were as necessary to my life as air and light. I have loved them well, and even now I cannot prevent myself from smiling at them and caressing them. Those morocco bindings are so delightful to the eye! These old vellums are so soft to the touch! There is not a single one among those books which is

not worthy, by reason of some special merit, to command the respect of an honourable man. What other owner would ever know how to dip into hem in the proper way? Can I be even sure that another owner would not leave them to decay in neglect, or mutilate them at the prompting of some ignorant whim? Into whose hands will fall that incomparable copy of the "Histoire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Pres," on the margins of which the author himself, in the person of Jacques Bouillard, made such substantial notes in his own handwriting?... Master Bonnard, you are an old fool! Your housekeeper — poor soul! — is nailed down upon her bed with a merciless attack of rheumatism. Jeanne is to come with her chaperon, and, instead of thinking how you are going to receive them, you are thinking about a thousand stupidities. Sylvestre Bonnard, you will never succeed at anything in this world, and it is I myself who tell you so!

And at this very moment I catch sight of them from my window, as they get out of the omnibus. Jeanne leaps down like a kitten; but Mademoiselle Prefere intrusts herself to the strong arm of the conductor, with the shy grace of a Virginia recovering after the shipwreck, and this time quite resigned to being saved. Jeanne looks up, sees me, laughs, and Mademoiselle Prefere has to prevent her from waving her umbrella at me as a friendly signal. There is a certain stage of civilisation to which Mademoiselle Jeanne never can be brought. You can teach her all the arts if you like (it is not exactly to Mademoiselle Prefere that I am now speaking); but you will never be able to teach her perfect manners. As a charming child she makes the mistake of being charming only in her own way. Only an old fool like myself could forgive her pranks. As for young fools — and there are several of them still to be found — I do not know what they would think about it; and what they might think is none of my business. Just look at her running along the pavement, wrapped in her cloak, with her hat tilted back on her head, and her feather fluttering in the wind, like a schooner in full rig! And really she has a grace of poise and motion which suggests a fine sailing-vessel — so much so, indeed, that she makes me remember seeing one day, when I was at Havre.... But, Bonnard, my friend, how many times is it necessary to tell you that your housekeeper is in bed, and that you must go and open the door yourself?

Open, Old Man Winter! 'tis Spring who rings the bell.

It is Jeanne herself — Jeanne is all flushed like a rose. Mademoiselle Prefere, indignant and out of breath, has still another whole flight to climb before reaching our lobby.

I explained the condition of my housekeeper, and proposed that we should dine at a restaurant. But Therese — all-powerful still, even upon her sick-bed —

decided that we should dine at home, whether we wanted to or no. Respectable people, in her opinion, never dined at restaurants. Moreover, she had made all necessary arrangements — the dinner had been bought; the concierge would cook it.

The audacious Jeanne insisted upon going to see whether the old woman wanted anything. As you might suppose, she was sent back to the parlour with short shrift, but not so harshly as I had feared.

“If I want anybody to do anything for me, which, thank God, I do not,” Therese had replied, “I would get somebody less delicate and dainty than you are. What I want is rest. That is a merchandise which is not sold at fairs under the sign of ‘Motus with finger on lip.’ Go and have your fun, and don’t stay here — for old age might be catching.”

Jeanne, after telling us what she had said, added that she liked very much to hear old Therese talk. Whereupon Mademoiselle Prefere reproached her for expressing such unladylike tastes.

I tried to excuse her by citing the example of Moliere. Just at that moment it came to pass that, while climbing the ladder to get a book, she upset a whole shelf-row. There was a heavy crash; and Mademoiselle Prefere, being, of course, a very delicate person, almost fainted. Jeanne quickly followed the books to the foot of the ladder. She made one think of a kitten suddenly transformed into a woman, catching mice which had been transformed into old books. While picking them up, she found one which happened to interest her, and she began to read it, squatting down upon her heels. It was the “Prince Grenouille,” she told us. Mademoiselle Prefere took occasion to complain that Jeanne had so little taste for poetry. It was impossible to get her to recite Casimir Delavigne’s poem on the death of Joan of Arc without mistakes. It was the very most she could do to learn “Le Petit Savoyard.” The schoolmistress did not think that any one should read the “Prince Grenouille” before learning by heart the stanzas to Duperrier; and, carried away by her enthusiasm, she began to recite them in a voice sweeter than the bleating of a sheep:

“Ta douleur, Duperrier, sera donc eternelle,
Et les tristes discours
Que te met en l’esprit l’amitie paternelle
L’augmenteront toujours;

.

“Je sais de quels appas son enfance etait pleine,
Et n’ai pas entrepris,

Injurieux ami, de consoler ta peine
Avecque son mepris.”

Then in ecstasy, she exclaimed,

“How beautiful that is! What harmony! How is it possible for any one not to admire such exquisite, such touching verses! But why did Malherbe call that poor Monsieur Duperrier his injurieux ami at a time when he had been so severely tied by the death of his daughter? Injurieux ami — you must acknowledge that the term is very harsh.”

I explained to this poetical person that the phrase “Injurieux ami,” which shocked her so much, was in apposition, *etc. etc.* What I said, however, had so little effect towards clearing her head that she was seized with a severe and prolonged fit of sneezing. Meanwhile it was evident that the history of “Prince Grenouille” had proved extremely funny; for it was all that Jeanne could do, as she crouched down there on the carpet, to keep herself from bursting into a wild fit of laughter. But when she had finished with the prince and princess of the story, and the multitude of their children, she assumed a very suppliant expression, and begged me as a great favour to allow her to put on a white apron and go to the kitchen to help in getting the dinner ready.

“Jeanne,” I replied, with the gravity of a master, “I think that if it is a question of breaking plates, knocking off the edges of dishes, denting all the pans, and smashing all the skimmers, the person whom Therese has set to work in the kitchen already will be able to perform her task without assistance; for it seems to me at this very moment I can hear disastrous noises in that kitchen. But anyhow, Jeanne, I will charge you with the duty of preparing the dessert. So go and get your white apron; I will tie it on for you.”

Accordingly, I solemnly knotted the linen apron about her waist; and she rushed into the kitchen, where she proceeded at once — as we discovered later on — to prepare various dishes unknown to Vatel, unknown even to that great Careme who began his treatise upon pieces montees with these words: “The Fine Arts are five in number: Painting, Music, Poetry, Sculpture, and Architecture — whereof the principal branch is Confectionery.” But I had no reason to be pleased with this little arrangement — for Mademoiselle Prefere, on finding herself alone with me, began to act after a fashion which filled me with frightful anxiety. She gazed upon me with eyes full of tears and flames, and uttered enormous sighs.

“Oh, how I pity you!” she said. “A man like you — a man so superior as you are — having to live alone with a coarse servant (for she is certainly coarse, that is incontestable)! How cruel such a life must be! You have need of repose — you have need of comfort, of care, of every kind of attention; you might fall sick.

And yet there is no woman who would not deem it an honour to bear your name, and to share your existence. No, there is none; my own heart tells me so.”

And she squeezed both hands over that heart of hers — always so ready to fly away.

I was driven almost to distraction. I tried to make Mademoiselle Prefere comprehend that I had no intention whatever of changing my habits at so advanced an age, and that I found just as much happiness in life as my character and my circumstances rendered possible.

“No, you are not happy!” she cried. “You need to have always beside you a mind capable of comprehending your own. Shake off your lethargy, and cast your eyes about you. Your professional connections are of the most extended character, and you must have charming acquaintances. One cannot be a Member of the Institute without going into society. See, judge, compare. No sensible woman would refuse you her hand. I am a woman, Monsieur; my instinct never deceives me — there is something within me which assures me that you would find happiness in marriage. Women are so devoted, so loving (not all, of course, but some)! And, then, they are so sensitive to glory. Remember that at your age one has need, like Oedipus, of an Egeria! Your cook is no longer able — she is deaf, she is infirm. If anything should happen to you at night! Oh! it makes me shudder even to think of it!”

And she really shuddered — she closed her eyes, clenched her hands, stamped on the floor. Great was my dismay. With awful intensity she resumed,

“Your health — your dear health! The health of a Member of the Institute! How joyfully I would shed the very last drop of my blood to preserve the life of a scholar, of a litterateur, of a man of worth. And any woman who would not do as much, I should despise her! Let me tell you, Monsieur — I used to know the wife of a great mathematician, a man who used to fill whole note-books with calculations — so many note-books that they filled all the cupboards in the house. He had heart-disease, and he was visibly pining away. And I saw that wife of his, sitting there beside him, perfectly calm! I could not endure it. I said to her one day, ‘My dear, you have no heart! If I were in your place I should...I should...I do not know what I should do!’”

She paused for want of breath. My situation was terrible. As for telling Mademoiselle Prefere what I really thought about her advice — that was something which I could not even dream of daring to do. For to fall out with her was to lose the chance of seeing Jeanne. So I resolved to take the matter quietly. In any case, she was in my house: that consideration helped me to treat her with something of courtesy.

“I am very old, Mademoiselle,” I answered her, “and I am very much afraid that your advice comes to me rather late in life. Still, I will think about it. In the meanwhile let me beg of you to be calm. I think a glass of eau sucrée would do you good!”

To my great surprise, these words calmed her at once; and I saw her sit down very quietly in HER corner, close to HER pigeon-hole, upon HER chair, with her feet upon HER footstool.

The dinner was a complete failure. Mademoiselle Prefere, who seemed lost in a brown study, never noticed the fact. As a rule I am very sensitive about such misfortunes; but this one caused Jeanne so much delight that at last I could not help enjoying it myself. Even at my age I had not been able to learn before that a chicken, raw on one side and burned on the other, was a funny thing; but Jeanne’s bursts of laughter taught me that it was. That chicken caused us to say a thousand very witty things, which I have forgotten; and I was enchanted that it had not been properly cooked. Jeanne put it back to roast again; then she broiled it; then she stewed it with butter. And every time it came back to the table it was much less appetising and much more mirth-provoking than before. When we did eat it, at last, it had become a thing for which there is no name in any cuisine.

The almond cake was much more extraordinary. It was brought to the table in the pan, because it never could have got out of it. I invited Jeanne to help us all to a piece thinking that I was going to embarrass her; but she broke the pan and gave each of us a fragment. To think that anybody at my age could eat such things was an idea possible only to the very artless mind. Mademoiselle Prefere, suddenly awakened from her dream, indignantly pushed away the sugary splinter of earthenware, and deemed it opportune to inform me that she herself was exceedingly skilful in making confectionery.

“Ah!” exclaimed Jeanne, with an air of surprise not altogether without malice. Then she wrapped all the fragments of the pan in a piece of paper, for the purpose of giving them to her little playmates — especially to the three little Mouton girls, who are naturally inclined to gluttony.

Secretly, however, I was beginning to feel very uneasy. It did not now seem in any way possible to keep much longer upon good terms with Mademoiselle Prefere since her matrimonial fury had this burst forth. And that lady affronted, good-bye to Jeanne! I took advantage of a moment while the sweet soul was busy putting on her cloak, in order to ask Jeanne to tell me exactly what her own age was. She was eighteen years and one month old. I counted on my fingers, and found she would not come of age for another two years and eleven months. And how should we be able to manage during all that time?

At the door Mademoiselle Prefere squeezed my hand with so much meaning that I fairly shook from head to foot.

“Good-bye,” I said very gravely to the young girl. “But listen to me a moment: your friend is very old, and might perhaps fail you when you need him most. Promise me never to fail in your duty to yourself, and then I shall have no fear. God keep you, my child!”

After closing the door behind them, I opened the window to get a last look at her as she was going away. But the night was dark, and I could see only two vague shadows flitting across the quay. I heard the vast deep hum of the city rising up about me; and I suddenly felt a great sinking at my heart.

Poor child!

December 15.

The King of Thule kept a goblet of gold which his dying mistress had bequeathed him as a souvenir. When about to die himself, after having drunk from it for the last time, he threw the goblet into the sea. And I keep this diary of memories even as that old prince of the mist-haunted seas kept his carven goblet; and even as he flung away at last his love-pledge, so will I burn this book of souvenirs. Assuredly it is not through any arrogant avarice nor through any egotistical pride, that I shall destroy this record of a humble life — it is only because I fear lest those things which are dear and sacred to me might appear before others, because of my inartistic manner of expression, either commonplace or absurd.

I do not say this in view of what is going to follow. Absurd I certainly must have been when, having been invited to dinner by Mademoiselle Prefere, I took my seat in a bergere (it was really a bergere) at the right hand of that alarming person. The table had been set in a little parlour; and I could observe from the poor way in which it was set out that the schoolmistress was one of those ethereal souls who soar above terrestrial things. Chipped plates, unmatched glasses, knives with loose handles, forks with yellow prongs — there was absolutely nothing wanting to spoil the appetite of an honest man.

I was assured that the dinner had been cooked for me — for me alone — although Maitre Mouche had also been invited. Mademoiselle Prefere must have imagined that I had Sarmatian tastes on the subject of butter; for that which she offered me, served up in little thin pats, was excessively rancid.

The roast very nearly poisoned me. But I had the pleasure of hearing Maitre Mouche and Mademoiselle Prefere discourse upon virtue. I said the pleasure — I ought to have said the shame; for the sentiments to which they gave expression soared far beyond the range of my vulgar nature.

What they said proved to me as clear as day that devotedness was their daily bread, and that self-sacrifice was not less necessary to their existence than air and water. Observing that I was not eating, Mademoiselle Prefere made a thousand efforts to overcome that which she was good enough to term my “discretion.” Jeanne was not of the party, because, I was told, her presence at it would have been contrary to the rules, and would have wounded the feelings of the other school-children, among whom it was necessary to maintain a certain equality. I secretly congratulated her upon having escaped from the Merovingian butter; from the huge radishes, empty as funeral-urns; from the leathery roast,

and from various other curiosities of diet to which I had exposed myself for the love of her.

The extremely disconsolate-looking servant served up some liquid to which they gave the name of cream — I do not know why — and vanished away like a ghost.

Then Mademoiselle Prefere related to Maitre Mouche, with extraordinary transports of emotion, all that she had said to me in the City of Books, during the time that my housekeeper was sick in bed. Her admiration for a Member of the Institute, her terror lest I should be taken ill while unattended, and the certainty she felt that any intelligent woman would be proud and happy to share my existence — she concealed nothing, but, on the contrary, added many fresh follies to the recital. Maitre Mouche kept nodding his head in approval while cracking nuts. Then, after all this verbiage, he demanded, with an agreeable smile, what my answer had been.

Mademoiselle Prefere, pressing her hand upon her heart and extending the other towards me, cried out,

“He is so affectionate, so superior, so good, and so great! He answered... But I could never, because I am only a humble woman — I could never repeat the words of a Member of the Institute. I can only utter the substance of them. He answered, ‘Yes, I understand you — yes.’”

And with these words she reached out and seized one of my hands. Then Maitre Mouche, also overwhelmed with emotion, arose and seized my other hand.

“Monsieur,” he said, “permit me to offer my congratulations.”

Several times in my life I have known fear; but never before had I experienced any fright of so nauseating a character. A sickening terror came upon me.

I disengaged by two hands, and, rising to my feet, so as to give all possible seriousness to my words, I said,

“Madame, either I explained myself very badly when you were at my house, or I have totally misunderstood you here in your own. In either case, a positive declaration is absolutely necessary. Permit me, Madame, to make it now, very plainly. No — I never did understand you; I am totally ignorant of the nature of this marriage project that you have been planning for me — if you really have been planning one. In any event, I should not think of marrying. It would be unpardonable folly at my age, and even now, at this moment, I cannot conceive how a sensible person like you could ever have advised me to marry. Indeed, I am strongly inclined to believe that I must have been mistaken, and that you never said anything of the kind before. In the latter case, please excuse an old

man totally unfamiliar with the usages of society, unaccustomed to the conversation of ladies, and very contrite for his mistake.”

Maitre Mouche went back very softly to his place, where, not finding any more nuts to crack, he began to whittle a cork.

Mademoiselle Prefere, after staring at me for a few moments with an expression in her little round dry eyes which I had never seen there before, suddenly resumed her customary sweetness and graciousness. Then she cried out in honeyed tones,

“Oh! these learned men! — these studious men! They are like children. Yes, Monsieur Bonnard, you are a real child!”

Then, turning to the notary, who still sat very quietly in his corner, with his nose over his cork, she exclaimed, in beseeching tones,

“Oh, do not accuse him! Do not accuse him! Do not think any evil of him, I beg of you! Do not think it at all! Must I ask you upon my knees?”

Maitre Mouche continued to examine all the various aspects and surfaces of his cork without making any further manifestation.

I was very indignant; and I know that my cheeks must have been extremely red, if I could judge by the flush of heat which I felt rise to my face. This would enable me to explain the words I heard through all the buzzing in my ears:

“I am frightened about him! our poor friend!... Monsieur Mouche, be kind enough to open a window! It seems to me that a compress of arnica would do him some good.”

I rushed out into the street with an unspeakable feeling of shame.

“My poor Jeanne!”

December 20.

I passed eight days without hearing anything further in regard to the Prefere establishment. Then, feeling myself unable to remain any longer without some news of Clementine's daughter, and feeling furthermore that I owed it as a duty to myself not to cease my visits with the school without more serious cause, I took my way to Les Ternes.

The parlour seemed to me more cold, more damp, more inhospitable, and more insidious than ever before; and the servant much more silent and much more scared. I asked to see Mademoiselle Jeanne; but, after a very considerable time, it was Mademoiselle Prefere who made her appearance instead — severe and pale, with lips compressed and a hard look in her eyes.

"Monsieur," she said, folding her arms over her pelerine, "I regret very much that I cannot allow you to see Mademoiselle Alexandre to-day; but I cannot possibly do it."

"Why not?" I asked in astonishment.

"Monsieur," she replied, "the reasons which compel me to request that your visits shall be less frequent hereafter are of an excessively delicate nature; and I must beg you to spare me the unpleasantness of mentioning them."

"Madame," I replied, "I have been authorized by Jeanne's guardian to see his ward every day. Will you please to inform me of your reasons for opposing the will of Monsieur Mouche?"

"The guardian of Mademoiselle Alexandre," she replied (and she dwelt upon that word "guardian" as upon a solid support), "desires, quite as strongly as I myself do, that your assiduities may come to an end as soon as possible."

"Then, if that be the case," I said, "be kind enough to let me know his reasons and your own."

She looked up at the little spiral of paper on the ceiling, and then replied, with stern composure,

"You insist upon it? Well, although such explanations are very painful for a woman to make, I will yield to your exaction. This house, Monsieur is an honourable house. I have my responsibility. I have to watch like a mother over each one of my pupils. Your assiduities in regard to Mademoiselle Alexandre could not possibly be continued without serious injury to the young girl herself; and it is my duty to insist that they shall cease."

"I do not really understand you," I replied — and I was telling the plain truth. Then she deliberately resumed:

“Your assiduities in this house are being interpreted, by the most respectable and the least suspicious persons, in such a manner that I find myself obliged, both in the interest of my establishment and in the interest of Mademoiselle Alexandre, to see that they end at once.”

“Madame,” I cried, “I have heard a great many silly things in my life, but never anything so silly as what you have just said!”

She answered me quietly,

“Your words of abuse will not affect me in the slightest. When one has a duty to accomplish, one is strong enough to endure all.”

And she pressed her pelerine over her heart once more — not perhaps on this occasion to restrain, but doubtless only to caress that generous heart.

“Madame,” I said, shaking my finger at her, “you have wantonly aroused the indignation of an aged man. Be good enough to act in such a fashion that the old man may be able at least to forget your existence, and do not add fresh insults to those which I have already sustained from your lips. I give you fair warning that I shall never cease to look after Mademoiselle Alexandre; and that should you attempt to do her any harm, in any manner whatsoever, you will have serious reason to regret it!”

The more I became excited, the more she became cool; and she answered in a tone of superb indifference:

“Monsieur, I am much too well informed in regard to the nature of the interest which you take in this young girl, not to withdraw her immediately from that very surveillance with which you threaten me. After observing the more than equivocal intimacy in which you are living with your housekeeper, I ought to have taken measures at once to render it impossible for you ever to come into contact with an innocent child. In the future I shall certainly do it. If up to this time I have been too trustful, it is for Mademoiselle Alexandre, and not for you, to reproach me with it. But she is too artless and too pure — thanks to me! — ever to have suspected the nature of that danger into which you were trying to lead her. I scarcely suppose that you will place me under the necessity of enlightening her upon the subject.”

“Come, my poor old Bonnard,” I said to myself, as I shrugged my shoulders — “so you had to live as long as this in order to learn for the first time exactly what a wicked woman is. And now your knowledge of the subject is complete.”

I went out without replying; and I had the pleasure of observing, from the sudden flush which overspread the face of the schoolmistress, that my silence had wounded her far more than my words.

As I passed through the court I looked about me in every direction for Jeanne. She was watching for me, and she ran to me.

“If anybody touches one little hair of your head, Jeanne, write to me! Good-bye!”

“No, not good-bye.”

I replied,

“Well, no — not good-bye! Write to me!”

I went straight to Madame de Gabry’s residence.

“Madame is at Rome with Monsieur. Did not Monsieur know it?”

“Why, yes,” I replied. “Madame wrote to me.”...

She had indeed written to me in regard to her leaving home; but my head must have become very much confused, so that I had forgotten all about it. The servant seemed to be of the same opinion, for he looked at me in a way that seemed to signify, “Monsieur Bonnard is doting” — and he leaned down over the balustrade of the stairway to see if I was not going to do something extraordinary before I got to the bottom. But I descended the stairs rationally enough; and then he drew back his head in disappointment.

On returning home I was informed that Monsieur Gelis was waiting for me in the parlour. (This young man has become a constant visitor. His judgement is at fault at times; but his mind is not at all commonplace.) On this occasion, however, his usually welcome visit only embarrassed me. “Alas!” I thought to myself, “I shall be sure to say something very stupid to my young friend to-day, and he also will think that my facilities are becoming impaired. But still I cannot really explain to him that I had first been demanded in wedlock, and subsequently traduced as a man wholly devoid of morals — that even Therese had become an object of suspicion — and that Jeanne remains in the power of the most rascally woman on the face of the earth. I am certainly in an admirable state of mind for conversing about Cistercian abbeys with a young and mischievously minded man. Nevertheless, we shall see — we shall try.”...

But Therese stopped me:

“How red you are, Monsieur!” she exclaimed, in a tone of reproach.

“It must be the spring,” I answered.

She cried out,

“The spring! — in the month of December?”

That is a fact! this is December. Ah! what is the matter with my head? what a fine help I am going to be to poor Jeanne!

“Therese, take my cane; and put it, if you possibly can, in some place where I shall be able to find it again.

“Good-day, Monsieur Gelis. How are you?”

Undated.

Next morning the old boy wanted to get up; but the old boy could not get up. A merciless invisible hand kept him down upon his bed. Finding himself immovably riveted there, the old boy resigned himself to remain motionless; but his thoughts kept running in all directions.

He must have had a very violent fever; for Mademoiselle Prefere, the Abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, and the servant of Madame de Gabry appeared to him in divers fantastic shapes. The figure of the servant in particular lengthened weirdly over his head, grimacing like some gargoyle of a cathedral. Then it seemed to me that there were a great many people, much too many people, in my bedroom.

This bedroom of mine is furnished after the antiquated fashion. The portrait of my father in full uniform, and the portrait of my mother in her cashmere dress, are suspended on the wall. The wall-paper is covered with green foliage designs. I am aware of all this, and I am even conscious that everything is faded, very much faded. But an old man's room does not require to be pretty; it is enough that it should be clean, and Therese sees to that. At all events my room is sufficiently decorated to please a mind like mine, which has always remained somewhat childish and dreamy. There are things hanging on the wall or scattered over the tables and shelves which usually please my fancy and amuse me. But to-day it would seem as if all those objects had suddenly conceived some kind of ill-will against me. They have all become garish, grimacing, menacing. That statuette, modelled after one of the Theological Virtues of Notre-Dame de Brou, always so ingenuously graceful in its natural condition, is now making contortions and putting out its tongue at me. And that beautiful miniature — in which one of the most skilful pupils of Jehan Fouquet depicted himself, girdled with the cord-girdle of the Sons of St. Francis, offering his book, on bended knee, to the good Duc d'Angouleme — who has taken it out of its frame and put in its place a great ugly cat's head, which stares at me with phosphorescent eyes. And the designs on the wall-paper have also turned into heads — hideous green heads.... But no — I am sure that wall-paper must have foliage-designs upon it at this moment just as it had twenty years ago, and nothing else.... But no, again — I was right before — they are heads, with eyes, noses, mouths — they are heads!... Ah! now I understand! they are both heads and foliage-designs at the same time. I wish I could not see them at all.

And there, on my right, the pretty miniature of the Franciscan has come back again; but it seems to me as if I can only keep it in its frame by a tremendous effort of will, and that the moment I get tired the ugly cat-head will appear in its place. Certainly I am not delirious; I can see Therese very plainly, standing at the foot of my bed; I can hear her speaking to me perfectly well, and I should be

able to answer her quite satisfactorily if I were not kept so busy in trying to compel the various objects about me to maintain their natural aspect.

Here is the doctor coming. I never sent for him, but it gives me pleasure to see him. He is an old neighbor of mine; I have never been of much service to him, but I like him very much. Even if I do not say much to him, I have at least full possession of all my faculties, and I even find myself extraordinarily crafty and observant to-day, for I note all his gestures, his every look, the least wrinkling of his face. But the doctor is very cunning, too, and I cannot really tell what he thinks about me. The deep thought of Goethe suddenly comes to my mind and I exclaim,

“Doctor, the old man has consented to allow himself to become sick; but he does not intend, this time at least, to make any further concessions to nature.”

Neither the doctor nor Therese laughs at my little joke. I suppose they cannot have understood it.

The doctor goes away; evening comes; and all sorts of strange shadows begin to shape themselves about my bed-curtains, forming and dissolving by turns. And other shadows — ghosts — throng by before me; and through them I can see distinctively the impassive face of my faithful servant. And suddenly a cry, a shrill cry, a great cry of distress, rends my ears. Was it you who called me Jeanne?

The day is over; and the shadows take their places at my bedside to remain with me all through the long night.

Then morning comes — I feel a peace, a vast peace, wrapping me all about.

Art Thou about to take me into Thy rest, my dear Lord God?

February 186-.

The doctor is quite jovial. It seems that I am doing him a great deal of credit by being able to get out of bed. If I must believe him, innumerable disorders must have pounced down upon my poor old body all at the same time.

These disorders, which are the terror of ordinary mankind, have names which are the terror of philologists. They are hybrid names, half Greek, half Latin, with terminations in “itis,” indicating the inflammatory condition, and in “algia,” indicating pain. The doctor gives me all their names, together with a corresponding number of adjectives ending in “ic,” which serve to characterise their detestable qualities. In short, they represent a good half of that most perfect copy of the Dictionary of Medicine contained in the too-authentic box of Pandora.

“Doctor, what an excellent common-sense story the story of Pandora is! — if I were a poet I would put it into French verse. Shake hands, doctor! You have brought me back to life; I forgive you for it. You have given me back to my friends; I thank you for it. You say I am quite strong. That may be, that may be; but I have lasted a very long time. I am a very old article of furniture; I might be very satisfactorily compared to my father’s arm-chair. It was an arm-chair which the good man had inherited, and in which he used to lounge from morning until evening. Twenty times a day, when I was quite a baby, I used to climb up and seat myself on one of the arms of that old-fashioned chair. So long as the chair remained intact, nobody paid any particular attention to it. But it began to limp on one foot and then folks began to say that it was a very good chair. Afterwards it became lame in three legs, squeaked with the fourth leg, and lost nearly half of both arms. Then everybody would exclaim, ‘What a strong chair!’ They wondered how it was that after its arms had been worn off and all its legs knocked out of perpendicular, it could yet preserve the recognisable shape of a chair, remains nearly erect, and still be of some service. The horse-hair came out of its body at last, and it gave up the ghost. And when Cyprien, our servant, sawed up its mutilated members for fire-wood, everybody redoubled their cries of admiration. Oh! what an excellent — what a marvellous chair! It was the chair of Pierre Sylvestre Bonnard, the cloth merchant — of Epimenide Bonnard, his son — of Jean-Baptiste Bonnard, the Pyrrhonian philosopher and Chief of the Third Maritime Division. Oh! what a robust and venerable chair!’ In reality it was a dead chair. Well, doctor, I am that chair. You think I am solid because I have been able to resist an attack which would have killed many people, and

which only three-fourths killed me. Much obliged! I feel none the less that I am something which has been irremediably damaged.”

The doctor tries to prove to me, with the help of enormous Greek and Latin words, that I am really in a very good condition. It would, of course, be useless to attempt any demonstration of this kind in so lucid a language as French. However, I allow him to persuade me at last; and I see him to the door.

“Good! good!” exclaimed Therese; “that is the way to put the doctor out of the house! Just do the same thing once or twice again, and he will not come to see you any more — and so much the better?”

“Well, Therese, now that I have become such a hearty man again, do not refuse to give me my letters. I am sure there must be quite a big bundle of letters, and it would be very wicked to keep me any longer from reading them.”

Therese, after some little grumbling, gave me my letters. But what did it matter? — I looked at all the envelopes, and saw that no one of them had been addressed by the little hand which I so much wish I could see here now, turning over the pages of the Vecellio. I pushed the whole bundle of letters away: they had no more interest for me.

April-June

It was a hotly contested engagement.

“Wait, Monsieur, until I have put on my clean things,” exclaimed Therese, “and I will go out with you this time also; I will carry your folding-stool as I have been doing these last few days, and we will go and sit down somewhere in the sun.”

Therese actually thinks me infirm. I have been sick, it is true, but there is an end to all things! Madame Malady has taken her departure quite awhile ago, and it is now more than three months since her pale and gracious-visaged handmaid, Dame Convalescence, politely bade me farewell. If I were to listen to my housekeeper, I should become a veritable Monsieur Argant, and I should wear a nightcap with ribbons for the rest of my life.... No more of this! — I propose to go out by myself! Therese will not hear of it. She takes my folding-stool, and wants to follow me.

“Therese, to-morrow, if you like, we will take our seats on the sunny side of the wall of La Petite Provence and stay there just as long as you please. But to-day I have some very important affairs to attend to.”

“So much the better! But your affairs are not the only affairs in this world.”

I beg; I scold; I make my escape.

It is quite a pleasant day. With the aid of a cab and the help of almighty God, I trust to be able to fulfil my purpose.

There is the wall on which is painted in great blue letters the words “Pensionnat de Demoiselles tenu par Mademoiselle Virginie Prefere.” There is the iron gate which would give free entrance into the court-yard if it were ever opened. But the lock is rusty, and sheets of zinc put up behind the bars protect the indiscreet observation those dear little souls to whom Mademoiselle Prefere doubtless teaches modesty, sincerity, justice, and disinterestedness. There is a window, with iron bars before it, and panes daubed over with white paint — the window of the domestic offices, like a glazed eye — the only aperture of the building opening upon the exterior world. As for the house-door, through which I entered so often, but which is now closed against me for ever, it is just as I saw it the last time, with its little iron-grated wicket. The single stone step in front of it is deeply worn, and, without having very good eyes behind my spectacles, I can see the little white scratches on the stone which have been made by the nails in the shoes of the girls going in and out. And why cannot I also go in? I have a feeling that Jeanne must be suffering a great deal in this dismal house, and that

she calls my name in secret. I cannot go away from the gate! A strange anxiety takes hold of me. I pull the bell. The scared-looking servant comes to the door, even more scared-looking than when I saw her the last time. Strict orders have been given; I am not to be allowed to see Mademoiselle Jeanne. I beg the servant to be so kind as to tell me how the child is. The servant, after looking to her right and then to her left, tells me that Mademoiselle Jeanne is well, and then shuts the door in my face. And I am all alone in the street again.

How many times since then have I wandered in the same way under that wall, and passed before the little door, — full of shame and despair to find myself even weaker than that poor child, who has no other help of friend except myself in the world!

Finally I overcame my repugnance sufficiently to call upon Maitre Mouche. The first thing I remarked was that his office is much more dusty and much more mouldy this year than it was last year. The notary made his appearance after a moment, with his familiar stiff gestures, and his restless eyes quivering behind his eye-glasses. I made my complaints to him. He answered me.... But why should I write down, even in a notebook which I am going to burn, my recollections of a downright scoundrel? He takes sides with Mademoiselle Prefere, whose intelligent mind and irreproachable character he has long appreciated. He does not feel himself in a position to decide the nature of the question at issue; but he must assure me that appearances have been greatly against me. That of course makes no difference to me. He adds — (and this does make some sense to me) — that the small sum which had been placed in his hands to defray the expenses of the education of his ward has been expended, and that, in view of the circumstances, he cannot but gently admire the disinterestedness of Mademoiselle Prefere in consenting to allow Mademoiselle Jeanne to remain with her.

A magnificent light, the light of a perfect day, floods the sordid place with its incorruptible torrent, and illuminates the person of that man!

And outside it pours down its splendour upon all the wretchedness of a populous quarter.

How sweet it is, — this light with which my eyes have so long been filled, and which ere long I must for ever cease to enjoy! I wander out with my hands behind me, dreaming as I go, following the line of the fortifications; and I find myself after awhile, I know not how, in an out-of-the-way suburb full of miserable little gardens. By the dusty roadside I observe a plant whose flower, at once dark and splendid, seems worthy of association with the noblest and purest mourning for the dead. It is a columbine. Our fathers called it “Our Lady’s Glove” — le gant de Notre-Dame. Only such a “Notre-Dame” as might make

herself very, very small, for the sake of appearing to little children, could ever slip her dainty fingers into the narrow capsule of that flower.

And there is a big bumble-bee who tries to force himself into the flower, brutally; but his mouth cannot reach the nectar, and the poor glutton strives and strives in vain. He has to give up the attempt, and comes out of the flower all smeared over with pollen. He flies off in his own heavy lumbering way; but there are not many flowers in this portion of the suburbs, which has been defiled by the soot and smoke of factories. So he comes back to the columbine again, and this time he pierces the corolla and sucks the honey through the little hole which he has made; I should never have thought that a bumble-bee had so much sense! Why, that is admirable! The more I observe, them, the more do insects and flowers fill me with astonishment. I am like that good Rollin who went wild with delight over the flowers of his peach-trees. I wish I could have a fine garden, and live at the verge of a wood.

August, September.

It occurred to me one Sunday morning to watch for the moment when Mademoiselle Prefere's pupils were leaving the school in procession to attend Mass at the parish church. I watched them passing two by two, — the little ones first with very serious faces. There were three of them all dressed exactly alike — dumpy, plump, important-looking little creatures, whom I recognized at once as the Mouton girls. Their elder sister is the artist who drew that terrible head of Tatius, King of the Sabines. Beside the column, the assistant school-teacher, with her prayer-book in her hand, was gesturing and frowning. Then came the next oldest class, and finally the big girls, all whispering to each other, as they went by. But I did not see Jeanne.

I went to police-headquarters and inquired whether they chanced to have, filed away somewhere or other, any information regarding the establishment in the Rue Demours. I succeeded in inducing them to send some female inspectors there. These returned bringing with them the most favourable reports about the establishment. In their opinion the Prefere School was a model school. It is evident that if I were to force an investigation, Mademoiselle Prefere would receive academic honours.

October 3.

This Thursday being a school-holiday I had the chance of meeting the three little Mouton girls in the vicinity of the Rue Demours. After bowing to their mother, I asked the eldest who appears to be about ten years old, how was her playmate, Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre.

The little Mouton girl answered me, all in a breath,

“Jeanne Alexandre is not my playmate. She is only kept in the school for charity — so they make her sweep the class-rooms. It was Mademoiselle who said so. And Jeanne Alexandre is a bad girl; so they lock her up in the dark room — and it serves her right — and I am a good girl — and I am never locked up in the dark room.”

The three little girls resumed their walk, and Madame Mouton followed close behind them, looking back over her broad shoulder at me, in a very suspicious manner.

Alas! I find myself reduced to expedients of a questionable character. Madame de Gabry will not come back to Paris for at least three months more, at the very soonest. Without her, I have no tact, I have no common sense — I am nothing but a cumbersome, clumsy, mischief-making machine.

Nevertheless, I cannot possibly permit them to make Jeanne a boarding-school servant!

December 28.

The idea that Jeanne was obliged to sweep the rooms had become absolutely unbearable.

The weather was dark and cold. Night had already begun. I rang the school-door bell with the tranquillity of a resolute man. The moment that the timid servant opened the door, I slipped a gold piece into her hand, and promised her another if she would arrange matters so that I could see Mademoiselle Alexandre. Her answer was,

“In one hour from now, at the grated window.”

And she slammed the door in my face so rudely that she knocked my hat into the gutter. I waited for one very long hour in a violent snow-storm; then I approached the window. Nothing! The wind raged, and the snow fell heavily. Workmen passing by with their implements on their shoulders, and their heads bent down to keep the snow from coming in their faces, rudely jostled me. Still nothing. I began to fear I had been observed. I knew that I had done wrong in bribing a servant, but I was not a bit sorry for it. Woe to the man who does not know how to break through social regulations in case of necessity! Another quarter of an hour passed. Nothing. At last the window was partly opened.

“Is that you, Monsieur Bonnard?”

“Is that you, Jeanne? — tell me at once what has become of you.”

“I am well — very well.”

“But what else!”

“They have put me in the kitchen, and I have to sweep the school-rooms.”

“In the kitchen! Sweeping — you! Gracious goodness!”

“Yes, because my guardian does not pay for my schooling any longer.”

“Gracious goodness! Your guardian seems to me to be a thorough scoundrel.”

“Then you know—”

“What?”

“Oh! don’t ask me to tell you that! — but I would rather die than find myself alone with him again.”

“And why did you not write to me?”

“I was watched.”

At this instant I formed a resolve which nothing in this world could have induced me to change. I did, indeed, have some idea that I might be acting contrary to law; but I did not give myself the least concern about that idea. And,

being firmly resolved, I was able to be prudent. I acted with remarkable coolness.

"Jeanne," I asked, "tell me! does that room you are in open into the courtyard?"

"Yes."

"Can you open the street-door from the inside yourself?"

"Yes, — if there is nobody in the porter's lodge."

"Go and see if there is any one there, and be careful that nobody observes you."

Then I waited, keeping a watch on the door and window.

In six or seven seconds Jeanne reappeared behind the bars, and said,

"The servant is in the porter's lodge."

"Very well," I said, "have you a pen and ink?"

"No."

"A pencil?"

"Yes."

"Pass it out here."

I took an old newspaper out of my pocket, and — in a wind which blew almost hard enough to put the street-lamps out, in a downpour of snow which almost blinded me — I managed to wrap up and address that paper to Mademoiselle Prefere.

While I was writing I asked Jeanne,

"When the postman passes he puts the papers and letters in the box, doesn't he? He rings the bell and goes away? Then the servant opens the letter-box and takes whatever she finds there to Mademoiselle Prefere immediately; is not that about the way the thing is managed whenever anything comes by post?"

Jeanne thought it was.

"Then we shall soon see. Jeanne, go and watch again; and, as soon as the servant leaves the lodge, open the door and come out here to me."

Having said this, I put my newspaper in the box, gave the bell a tremendous pull, and then hid myself in the embrasure of a neighbouring door.

I might have been there several minutes, when the little door quivered, then opened, and a young girl's head made its appearance through the opening. I took hold of it; I pulled it towards me.

"Come, Jeanne! come!"

She stared at me uneasily. Certainly she must have been afraid that I had gone mad; but, on the contrary, I was very rational indeed.

"Come, my child! come!"

"Where?"

“To Madame de Gabry’s.”

Then she took my arm. For some time we ran like a couple of thieves. But running is an exercise ill-suited to one as corpulent as I am, and, finding myself out of breath at last, I stopped and leaned upon something which turned out to be the stove of a dealer in roasted chestnuts, who was doing business at the corner of a wine-seller’s shop, where a number of cabmen were drinking. One of them asked us if we did not want a cab. Most assuredly we wanted a cab! The driver, after setting down his glass on the zinc counter, climbed upon his seat and urged his horse forward. We were saved.

“Phew!” I panted, wiping my forehead. For, in spite of the cold, I was perspiring profusely.

What seemed very odd was that Jeanne appeared to be much more conscious than I was of the enormity which we had committed. She looked very serious indeed, and was visibly uneasy.

“In the kitchen!” I cried out, with indignation.

She shook her head, as if to say, “Well, there or anywhere else, what does it matter to me?” And by the light of the street-lamps, I observed with pain that her face was very thin and her features all pinched. I did not find in her any of that vivacity, any of those bright impulses, any of that quickness of expression, which used to please me so much. Her gaze had become timid, her gestures constrained, her whole attitude melancholy. I took her hand — a little cold hand, which had become all hardened and bruised. The poor child must have suffered very much. I questioned her. She told me very quietly that Mademoiselle Prefere had summoned her one day, and called her a little monster and a little viper, for some reason which she had never been able to learn.

She had added, “You shall not see Monsieur Bonnard any more; for he has been giving you bad advice, and he has conducted himself in a most shameful manner towards me.” “I then said to her, ‘That, Mademoiselle, you will never be able to make me believe.’ Then Mademoiselle slapped my face and sent me back to the school-room. The announcement that I should never be allowed to see you again made me feel as if night had come down upon me. Don’t you know those evenings when one feels so sad to see the darkness come? — well, just imagine such a moment stretched out into weeks — into whole months! Don’t you remember my little Saint-George? Up to that time I had worked at it as well as I could — just simply to work at it — just to amuse myself. But when I lost all hope of ever seeing you again I took my little wax figure, and I began to work at it in quite another way. I did not try to model it with wooden matches any more, as I had been doing, but with hair pins. I even made use of epingles a la neige. But perhaps you do not know what epingles a la neige are? Well, I became more

particular about than you can possibly imagine. I put a dragon on Saint-George's helmet; and I passed hours and hours in making a head and eyes and tail for the dragon. Oh the eyes! the eyes, above all! I never stopped working at them till I got them so that they had red pupils and white eye-lids and eye-brows and everything! I know I am very silly; I had an idea that I was going to die as soon as my little Saint-George would be finished. I worked at it during recreation-hours, and Mademoiselle Prefere used to let me alone. One day I learned that you were in the parlour with the schoolmistress; I watched for you; we said 'Au revoir!' that day to each other. I was a little consoled by seeing you. But, some time after that, my guardian came and wanted to make me go to his house, — but please don't ask me why, Monsieur. He answered me, quite gently, that I was a very whimsical little girl. And then he left me alone. But the next day Mademoiselle Prefere came to me with such a wicked look on her face that I was really afraid. She had a letter in her hand. 'Mademoiselle,' she said to me, 'I am informed by your guardian that he has spent all the money which belonged to you. Don't be afraid! I do not intend to abandon you; but, you must acknowledge yourself, it is only right that you should earn your own livelihood.' Then she put me to work house-cleaning; and whenever I made a mistake she would lock me up in the garet for days together. And that is what has happened to me since I saw you last. Even if I had been able to write to you I do not know whether I should have done it, because I did not think you could possibly take me away from the school; and, as Maitre Mouche did not come back to see me, there was no hurry. I thought I could wait for awhile in the garret and the kitchen.

"Jeanne," I cried, "even if we should have to flee to Oceania, the abominable Prefere shall never get hold of you again. I will take a great oath on that! And why should we not go to Oceania? The climate is very healthy; and I read in a newspaper the other day that they have pianos there. But, in the meantime, let us go to the house of Madame de Gabry, who returned to Paris, as luck would have it, some three or four days ago; for you and I are two innocent fools, and we have great need of some one to help us."

Even as I was speaking Jeanne's features suddenly became pale, and seemed to shrink into lifelessness; her eyes became all dim; her lips, half open, contracted with an expression of pain. Then her head sank sideways on her shoulder; — she had fainted.

I lifter her in my arms, and carried her up Madame de Gabry's staircase like a little baby asleep. But I was myself on the point of fainting from emotional excitement and fatigue together, when she came to herself again.

"Ah! it is you," she said: "so much the better!"

Such was our condition when we rang our friend's door-bell.

Same day.

It was eight o'clock. Madame de Gabry, as might be supposed, was very much surprised by our unexpected appearance. But she welcomed the old man and the child with that glad kindness which always expresses itself in her beautiful gestures. It seems to me, — if I might use the language of devotion so familiar to her, — it seems to me as though some heavenly grace streams from her hands when ever she opens them; and even the perfume which impregnates her robes seems to inspire the sweet calm zeal of charity and good works. Surprised she certainly was; but she asked us no question, — and that silence seemed to me admirable.

"Madame," I said to her, "we have both come to place ourselves under your protection. And, first of all, we are going to ask you to give us some super — or to give Jeanne some, at least; for a moment ago, in the carriage, she fainted from weakness. As for myself, I could not eat a bite at this late hour without passing a night of agony in consequence. I hope that Monsieur de Gabry is well."

"Oh, he is here!" she said.

And she called him immediately.

"Come in here, Paul! Come and see Monsieur Bonnard and Mademoiselle Alexandre."

He came. It was a pleasure for me to see his frank broad face, and to press his strong square hand. Then we went, all four of us, into the dining-room; and while some cold meat was being cut for Jeanne — which she never touched notwithstanding — I related our adventure. Paul de Gabry asked me permission to smoke his pipe, after which he listened to me in silence. When I had finished my recital he scratched the short, stiff beard upon his chin, and uttered a tremendous "Sacrebleu!" But, seeing Jeanne stare at each of us in turn, with a frightened look in her face, he added:

"We will talk about this matter to-morrow morning. Come into my study for a moment; I have an old book to show you that I want you to tell me something about."

I followed him into his study, where the steel of guns and hunting knives, suspended against the dark hangings, glimmered in the lamp-light. There, pulling me down beside him upon a leather-covered sofa, he exclaimed,

"What have you done? Great God! Do you know what you have done? Corruption of a minor, abduction, kidnapping! You have got yourself into a nice mess! You have simply rendered yourself liable to a sentence of imprisonment of not less than five nor more than ten years."

"Mercy on us!" I cried; "ten years imprisonment for having saved an innocent child."

“That is the law!” answered Monsieur de Gabry. “You see, my dear Monsieur Bonnard, I happen to know the Code pretty well — not because I ever studied law as a profession, but because, as mayor of Lusance, I was obliged to teach myself something about it in order to be able to give information to my subordinates. Mouche is a rascal; that woman Prefere is a vile hussy; and you are a...Well! I really cannot find a word strong enough to signify what you are!”

After opening his bookcase, where dog-collars, riding-whips, stirrups, spurs, cigar-boxes, and a few books of reference were indiscriminately stowed away, he took out of it a copy of the Code, and began to turn over the leaves.

“‘CRIMES AND MISDEMEANOURS’...’SEQUESTRATION OF PERSONS’ — that is not your case.... ‘ABDUCTION OF MINORS’ — here we are...’ARTICLE 354’:— ‘Whosoever shall, either by fraud or violence, have abducted or have caused to be abducted any minor or minors, or shall have enticed them, or turned them away from, or forcibly removed them, or shall have caused them to be enticed, or turned away from or forcibly removed from the places in which they have been placed by those to whose authority or direction they have been submitted or confided, shall be liable to the penalty of imprisonment. See PENAL CODE, 21 and 28.’ Here is 21:— ‘The term of imprisonment shall not be less than five years.’ 28. ‘The sentence of imprisonment shall be considered as involving a loss of civil rights.’ Now all that is very plain, is it not, Monsieur Bonnard?”

“Perfectly plain.”

“Now let us go on: ‘ARTICLE 356’:— ‘In case the abductor be under the age of 21 years at the time of the offense, he shall only be punished with’...But we certainly cannot invoke this article in your favour. ‘ARTICLE 357’:— ‘In case the abductor shall have married the girl by him abducted, he can only be prosecuted at the insistence of such persons as, according to the Civil Code, may have the right to demand that the marriage shall be declared null; nor can he be condemned until after the nullity of the marriage shall have been pronounced.’ I do not know whether it is a part of your plans to marry Mademoiselle Alexandre! You can see that the code is good-natured about it; it leaves you one door of escape. But no — I ought not to joke with you, because really you have put yourself in a very unfortunate position! And how could a man like you imagine that here in Paris, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a young girl can be abducted with absolute impunity? We are not living in the Middle Ages now; and such things are no longer permitted by law.”

“You need not imagine,” I replied, “that abduction was lawful under the ancient Code. You will find in Baluze a decree issued by King Cheldebart at Cologne, either in 593 or 594, on the subject: moreover, everybody knows that

the famous ‘Ordonance de Blois,’ of May 1579, formally enacted that any persons convicted of having suborned any son or daughter under the age of twenty-five years, whether under promise of marriage or otherwise, without the full knowledge, will, or consent of the father, mother, and guardians, should be punished with death; and the ordinance adds: ‘Et pareillement seront punis extraordinairement tous ceux qui auront participe audit rapt, et qui auront prete conseil, confort, et aide en aucune maniere que ce soit.’ (And in like manner shall be extraordinarily punished all persons whomsoever, who shall have participated in the said abduction, and who shall have given thereunto counsel, succor, or aid in any manner whatsoever.) Those are the exact, or very nearly the exact, terms of the ordinance. As for that article of the Code-Napoleon which you have just told me of, and which excepts from liability to prosecution the abductor who marries the young girl abducted by him, it reminds me that according to the laws of Bretagne, forcible abduction, followed by marriage, was not punished. But this usage, which involved various abuses, was suppressed in 1720 — at least I give you the date within ten years. My memory is not very good now, and the time is long passed when I could repeat by heart without even stopping to take breath, fifteen hundred verses of Girart de Rousillon.

“As far as regards the Capitulary of Charlemagne, which fixes the compensation for abduction, I have not mentioned it because I am sure that you must remember it. So, my dear Monsieur de Gabry, you see abduction was considered as decidedly a punishable offense under the three dynasties of Old France. It is a very great mistake to suppose that the Middle Ages represent a period of social chaos. You must remember, on the contrary—”

Monsieur de Gabry here interrupted me:

“So,” he exclaimed, “you know of the Ordonnace de Blois, you know Baluze, you know Childebert, you know the Capitularies — and you don’t know anything about the Code-Napoleon!”

I replied that, as a matter of fact, I never had read the Code; and he looked very much surprised.

“And now do you understand,” he asked, “the extreme gravity of the action you have committed?”

I had not indeed been yet able to understand it fully. But little by little, with the aid of Monsieur Paul’s very sensible explanations, I reached the conviction at last that I should not be judged in regard to my motives, which were innocent, but only according to my action, which was punishable. Thereupon I began to feel very despondent, and to utter divers lamentations.

“What am I to do?” I cried out, “what am I to do? Am I then irretrievably ruined? — and have I also ruined the poor child whom I wanted to save?”

Monsieur de Gabry silently filled his pipe, and lighted it so slowly that his kind broad face remained for at least three or four minutes glowing red behind the light, like a blacksmith's in the gleam of his forge-fire. Then he said,

"You want to know what to do? Why, don't do anything, my dear Monsieur Bonnard! For God's sake, and for your own sake, don't do anything at all! Your situation is bad enough as it is; don't try to meddle with it now, unless you want to create new difficulties for yourself. But you must promise me to sustain me in any action that I may take. I shall go to see Monsieur Mouche the very first thing to-morrow morning; and if he turns out to be what I think he is — that is to say, a consummate rascal — I shall very soon find means of making him harmless, even if the devil himself should take sides with him. For everything depends on him. As it is too late this evening to take Mademoiselle Jeanne back to her boarding-school, my wife will keep the young lady here to-night. This of course plainly constitutes the misdemeanour of complicity; but it saves the girl from anything like an equivocal position. As for you, my dear Monsieur, you just go back to the Quai Malaquais as quickly as you can; and if they come to look for Jeanne there, it will be very easy for you to prove she is not in your house."

While we were thus talking, Madame de Gabry was preparing to make her young lodger comfortable for the night. When she bade me good-bye at the door, she was carrying a pair of clean sheets, scented with lavender, thrown over her arm.

"That," I said, "is a sweet honest smell."

"Well, of course," answered Madame de Gabry, "you must remember we are peasants."

"Ah!" I answered her, "heaven grant that I also may be able one of these days to become a peasant! Heaven grant that one of these days I may be able, as you are at Lusance, to inhale the sweet fresh odour of the country, and live in some little house all hidden among trees; and if this wish of mine be too ambitious on the part of an old man whose life is nearly closed, then I will only wish that my winding-sheet may be as sweetly scented with lavender as that linen you have on your arm."

It was agreed that I should come to lunch the following morning. But I was positively forbidden to show myself at the house before midday. Jeanne, as she kissed me good-bye, begged me not to take her back to the school any more. We felt much affected at parting, and very anxious.

I found Therese waiting for me on the landing, in such a condition of worry about me that it had made her furious. She talked of nothing less than keeping me under lock and key in the future.

What a night I passed! I never closed my eyes for one single instant. From time to time I could not help laughing like a boy at the success of my prank; and then again, an inexpressible feeling of horror would come upon me at the thought of being dragged before some magistrate, and having to take my place upon the prisoner's bench, to answer for the crime which I had so naturally committed. I was very much afraid; and nevertheless I felt no remorse or regret whatever. The sun, coming into my room at last, merrily lighted upon the foot of my bed, and then I made this prayer:

“My God, Thou who didst make the sky and the dew, as it is said in ‘Tristan,’ judge me in Thine equity, not indeed according unto my acts, but according only to my motives, which Thou knowest have been upright and pure; and I will say: Glory to Thee in heaven, and peace on earth to men of good-will. I give into Thy hands the child I stole away. Do that for her which I have not known how to do; guard for her from all her enemies; — and blessed for ever be Thy name!”

December 29.

When I arrived at Madame de Gabry's, I found Jeanne completely transfigured.

Had she also, like myself, at the very first light of dawn, called upon Him who made the sky and the dew? She smiled with such a sweet calm smile!

Madame de Gabry called her away to arrange her hair for the amiable lady had insisted upon combing and plaiting, with her own hands, the hair of the child confided to her care. As I had come a little before the hour agreed upon, I had interrupted this charming toilet. By way of punishment I was told to go and wait in the parlour all by myself. Monsieur de Gabry joined me there in a little while. He had evidently just come in, for I could see on his forehead the mark left by the lining of his hat. His frank face wore an expression of joyful excitement. I thought I had better not ask him any questions; and we all went to lunch. When the servants had finished waiting at table, Monsieur Paul, who had been keeping his good story for the dessert, said to us, "Well! I went to Levallois."

"Did you see Maitre Mouche?" excitedly inquired Madame de Gabry.

"No," he replied, curiously watching the expression of disappointment upon our faces.

After having amused himself with our anxiety for a reasonable time, the good fellow added: "Maitre Mouche is no longer at Levallois. Maitre Mouche has gone away from France. The day after to-morrow will make just eight days since he decamped, taking with him all the money of his clients — a tolerably large sum. I found the office closed. A woman who lived close by told me all about it with an abundance of curses and imprecations. The notary did not take the 7:55 train all by himself; he took with him the daughter of the hairdresser of Levallois, a young person quite famous in that part of the country for her beauty and her accomplishments; — they say she could shave better than her father. Well, anyhow Mouche has run away with her; the Commissaire de Police confirmed the fact for me. Now, really, could it have been possible for Maitre Mouche to have left the country at a more opportune moment? If he had only deferred his escapade one week longer, he would have been still the representative of society, and would have had you dragged off to gaol, Monsieur Bonnard, like a criminal. At present we have nothing whatever to fear from him. Here is to the health of Maitre Mouche!" he cried, pouring out a glass of white wine.

I would like to live a long time if it were only to remember that delightful morning. We four were all assembled in the big white dining-room around the

waxed oak table. Monsieur Paul's mirth was' of the hearty kind, — even perhaps a little riotous; and the good man quaffed deeply. Madame de Gabry smiled at me, with a smile so sweet, so perfect, and so noble, that I thought such a woman ought to keep smiles like that simply as a reward for good actions, and thus make everybody who knew her do all the good of which they were capable. Then, to reward us for our pains, Jeanne, who had regained something of her former vivacity, asked us in less than a quarter of an hour one dozen questions, to answer which would have required an exhaustive exposition on the nature of man, the nature of the universe, the science of physics and of metaphysics, the Macrocosm and the Microcosm — not to speak of the Ineffable and the Unknowable. Then she drew out of her pocket her little Saint-George, who had suffered most cruelly during our flight. His legs and arms were gone; but he still had his gold helmet with the green dragon on it. Jeanne solemnly pledged herself to make a restoration of him in honour of Madame de Gabry.

Delightful friends! I left them at last overwhelmed with fatigue and joy.

On re-entering my lodgings I had to endure the very sharpest remonstrances from Therese, who said she had given up trying to understand my new way of living. In her opinion Monsieur had really lost his mind.

“Yes, Therese, I am a mad old man and you are a mad old woman. That is certain! May the good God bless us both, Therese, and give us new strength; for we now have new duties to perform, but let me lie down upon the sofa; for I really cannot keep myself on my feet any longer.”

January 15, 186-.

“Good-morning, Monsieur,” said Jeanne, letting herself in; while Therese remained grumbling in the corridor because she had not been able to get to the door in time.

“Mademoiselle, I beg you will be kind enough to address me very solemnly by my title, and to say to me, ‘Good-morning, my guardian.’”

“Then it has all been settled? Oh, how nice!” cried the child, clapping her hands.

“It has all been arranged, Mademoiselle, in the Salle-commune and before the Justice of the Peace; and from to-day you are under my authority.... What are you laughing about, my ward? I see it in your eyes. You have some crazy idea in your head this very moment — some more nonsense, eh?”

“Oh, no! Monsieur.... I mean, my guardian. I was looking at your white hair. It curls out from under the edge of your hat like honeysuckle on a balcony. It is very handsome, and I like it very much!”

“Be good enough to sit down, my ward, and, if you can possibly help it, stop saying ridiculous things, because I have some very serious things to say to you. Listen. I suppose you are not going to insist upon being sent back to the establishment of Mademoiselle Prefere?... No. Well, then, what would you say if I should take you here to live with me, and to finish your education, and keep you here until... what shall I say? — for ever, as the song has it?”

“Oh, Monsieur!” she cried, flushing crimson with pleasure.

I continued,

“Behind there we have a nice little room, which my housekeeper has cleaned up and furnished for you. You are going to take the place of the books which used to be in it; you will succeed them as the day succeeds night. Go with Therese and look at it, and see if you think you will be able to live in it. Madame de Gabry and I have made up our minds that you can sleep there to-night.”

She had already started to run; I called her back for a moment.

“Jeanne, listen to me a moment longer! You have always until now made yourself a favourite with my housekeeper, who, like all very old people, is apt to be cross at times. Be gentle and forebearing. Make every allowance for her. I have thought it my duty to make every allowance for her myself, and to put up with all her fits of impatience. Now, let me tell you, Jeanne: — Respect her! And when I say that, I do not forget that she is my servant and yours; neither will she ever allow herself to forget it for a moment. But what I want you to respect in

her is her great age and her great heart. She is a humble woman who has lived a very, very long time in the habit of doing good; and she has become hardened and stiffened in that habit. Bear patiently with the harsh ways of that upright soul. If you know how to command, she will know how to obey. Go now, my child; arrange your room in whatever way may seem to you best suited for your studies and for your repose.”

Having started Jeanne, with this viaticum, upon her domestic career, I began to read a Review, which, although conducted by very young men, is excellent. The tone of it is somewhat unpolished, but the spirit is zealous. The article I read was certainly far superior, in point of precision and positiveness, to anything of the sort ever written when I was a young man. The author of the article, Monsieur Paul Meyer, points out every error with a remarkably lucid power of incisive criticism.

We used not in my time to criticise with such strict justice. Our indulgence was vast. It went even so far as to confuse the scholar and the ignoramus in the same burst of praise. And nevertheless one must learn how to find fault; and it is even an imperative duty to blame when the blame is deserved.

I remember little Raymond (that was the name we gave him); he did not know anything, and his mind was not a mind capable of absorbing any solid learning; but he was very fond of his mother. We took very good care never to utter a hint of the ignorance of so perfect a son; and, thanks, to our forbearance, little Raymond made his way to the highest positions. He had lost his mother then; but honours of all kinds were showered upon him. He became omnipotent — to the grievous injury of his colleagues and of science.... But here comes my young fiend of the Luxembourg.

“Good-evening, Gelis. You look very happy to-day. What good fortune has come to you, my dear lad?”

His good fortune is that he has been able to sustain his thesis very credibly, and that he has taken high rank in his class. He tells me this with the additional information that my own words, which were incidentally referred to in the course of the examination, had been spoken of by the college professors in terms of the most unqualified praise.

“That is very nice,” I replied; “and it makes me very happy, Gelis, to find my old reputation thus associated with your own youthful honours. I was very much interested, you know, in that thesis of yours; — but some domestic arrangements have been keeping me so busy lately that I quite forgot this was the day on which you were to sustain it.”

Mademoiselle Jeanne made her appearance very opportunely, as if in order to suggest to him something about the nature of those very domestic arrangements.

The giddy girl burst into the City of Books like a fresh breeze, crying at the top of her voice that her room was a perfect little wonder; then she became very red indeed on seeing Monsieur Gelis there. But none of us can escape our destiny.

Monsieur Gelis asked her how she was with the tone of a young fellow who resumes upon a previous acquaintance, and who proposes to put himself forward as an old friend. Oh, never fear! — she had not forgotten him at all; that was very evident from the fact that then and there, right under my nose, they resumed their last year's conversation on the subject of the "Venetian blond"! They continued the discussion after quite an animated fashion. I began to ask myself what right I had to be in the room at all. The only thing I could do in order to make myself heard was to cough. As for getting in a word, they never even gave me a chance. Gelis discoursed enthusiastically, not only about the Venetian colourists, but also upon all other matters relating to nature or to mankind. And Jeanne kept answering him, "Yes, Monsieur, you are right.".... "That is just what I supposed, Monsieur.".... "Monsieur, you express so beautifully just what I feel."... "I am going to think a great deal about what you have just told me, Monsieur."

When I speak, Mademoiselle never answers me in that tone. It is only with the very tip of her tongue that she will even taste any intellectual food which I set before her. Usually she will not touch it at all. But Monsieur Gelis seems to be in her opinion the supreme authority upon all subjects. It was always, "Oh, yes!" — "Oh, of course!" — to all his empty chatter. And, then, the eyes of Jeanne! I had never seen them look so large before; I had never before observed in them such fixity of expression; but her gaze otherwise remained what it always is — artless, frank, and brave. Gelis evidently pleased her; she like Gelis, and her eyes betrayed the fact. They would have published it to the entire universe! All very fine, Master Bonnard! — you have been so deeply interested in observing your ward, that you have been forgetting you are her guardian! You began only this morning to exercise that function; and you can already see that it involves some very delicate and difficult duties. Bonnard, you must really try to devise some means of keeping that young man away from her; you really ought.... Eh! how am I to know what I am to do?...

I have picked up a book at random from the nearest shelf; I open it, and I enter respectfully into the middle of a drama of Sophocles. The older I grow, the more I learn to love the two civilisations of the antique world; and now I always keep the poets of Italy and of Greece on a shelf within easy reach of my arm in the City of Books.

Monsieur and Mademoiselle finally condescend to take some notice of me, now that I seem too busy to take any notice of them. I really think that

Mademoiselle Jeanne has even asked me what I am reading. No, indeed, I will not tell her what it is. What I am reading, between ourselves, is the change of that smooth and luminous Chorus which rolls out its magnificent tunefulness through a scene of passionate violence — the Chorus of the Old Men of Thebes — ‘Erws avixate...’ “Invincible Love, O thou who descendest upon rich houses, — Thou who dost rest upon the delicate cheek of the maiden, — Thou who dost traverse all seas, — surely none among the Immortals can escape Thee, nor indeed any among men who live but for a little space; and he who is possessed by Thee, there is a madness upon him.” And when I had re-read that delicious chant, the face of Antigone appeared before me in all its passionless purity. What images! Gods and goddesses who hover in the highest heights of Heaven! The blind old man, the long-wandering beggar-king, led by Antigone, has now been buried with holy rites; and his daughter, fair as the fairest dream ever conceived by human soul, resists the will of the tyrant and gives pious sepulture to her brother. She loves the son of the tyrant, and that son loves her also. And as she goes on her way to execution, the victim of her own sweet piety, the old men sing, “Invincible Love, O Thou who dost descend upon rich houses, — Thou who dost rest upon the delicate cheek of the maiden.”...

“Mademoiselle Jeanne, are you really very anxious to know what I am reading? I am reading, Mademoiselle — I am reading that Antigone, having buried the blind old man, wove a fair tapestry embroidered with images in the likeness of laughing faces.”

“Ah!” said Gelis, as he burs out laughing “that is not in the text.”

“It is a scholium,” I said.

“Unpublished,” he added, getting up.

I am not an egotist. But I am prudent. I have to bring up this child; she is much too young to be married now. No! I am not an egotist, but I must certainly keep her with me for a few years more — keep her alone with me. She can surely wait until I am dead! Fear not, Antigone, old Oedipus will find holy burial soon enough.

In the meanwhile, Antigone is helping our housekeeper to scrape the carrots. She says she like to do it — that it is in her line, being related to the art of sculpture.

May.

Who would recognise the City of Books now? There are flowers everywhere — even upon all the articles of furniture. Jeanne was right: those roses do look very nice in that blue china vase. She goes to market every day with Therese, under the pretext of helping the old servant to make her purchases, but she never brings anything back with her except flowers. Flowers are really very charming creatures. And one of these days, I must certainly carry out my plan, and devote myself to the study of them, in their own natural domain, in the country — with all the science and earnestness which I possess.

For what have I to do here? Why should I burn my eyes out over these old parchments which cannot now tell me anything worth knowing? I used to study them, these old texts, with the most ardent enjoyment. What was it which I was then so anxious to find in them? The date of a pious foundation — the name of some monkish imagier or copyist — the price of a loaf, of an ox, or of a field — some judicial or administrative enactment — all that, and yet something more, a Something vaguely mysterious and sublime which excited my enthusiasm. But for sixty years I have been searching in vain for that Something. Better men than I — the masters, the truly great, the Fauriels, the Thierrys, who found so many things — died at their task without having been able, any more than I have been, to find that Something which, being incorporeal, has no name, and without which, nevertheless, no great mental work would ever be undertaken in this world. And now that I am only looking for what I should certainly be able to find, I cannot find anything at all; and it is probable that I shall never be able to finish the history of the Abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Pres.

“Guardian, just guess what I have in my handkerchief.”

“Judging from appearances, Jeanne, I should say flowers.”

“Oh, no — not flowers. Look!”

I look, and I see a little grey head poking itself out of the handkerchief. It is the head of a little grey cat. The handkerchief opens; the animal leaps down upon the carpet, shakes itself, pricks up first one ear and then the other, and begins to examine with due caution the locality and the inhabitants thereof.

Therese, out of breath, with her basket on her arm, suddenly makes her appearance in time to take an objective part in this examination, which does not appear to result altogether in her favour; for the young cat moves slowly away from her, without, however, venturing near my legs, or approaching Jeanne, who displays extraordinary volubility in the use of caressing appellations. Therese,

whose chief fault is her inability to hide her feelings, thereupon vehemently reproaches Mademoiselle for bringing home a cat that she did not know anything about. Jeanne, in order to justify herself, tells the whole story. While she was passing with Therese before a chemist's shop, she saw the assistant kick a little cat into the street. The cat, astonished and frightened, seemed to be asking itself whether to remain in the street where it was being terrified and knocked about by the people passing by, or whether to go back into the chemist's even at the risk of being kicked out a second time. Jeanne thought it was in a very critical position, and understood its hesitation. It looked so stupid; and she knew it looked stupid only because it could not decide what to do. So she took it up in her arms. And as it had not been able to obtain any rest either indoors or out-of-doors, it allowed her to hold it. Then she stroked and petted it to keep it from being afraid, and boldly went to the chemist's assistant and said,

"If you don't like that animal, you mustn't beat it; you must give it to me."

"Take it," said the assistant.

... "Now there!" adds Jeanne, by way of conclusion; and then she changes her voice again to a flute-tone in order to say all kinds of sweet things to the cat.

"He is horribly thin," I observe, looking at the wretched animal;—"moreover, he is horribly ugly." Jeanne thinks he is not ugly at all, but she acknowledges that he looks even more stupid than he looked at first: this time she thinks it not indecision, but surprise, which gives that unfortunate aspect to his countenance. She asks us to imagine ourselves in his place; — then we are obliged to acknowledge that he cannot possibly understand what has happened to him. And then we all burst out laughing in the face of the poor little beast, which maintains the most comical look of gravity. Jeanne wants to take him up; but he hides himself under the table, and cannot even be tempted to come out by the lure of a saucer of milk.

We all turn our backs and promise not to look; when we inspect the saucer again, we find it empty.

"Jeanne," I observe, "your protege has a decidedly tristful aspect of countenance; he is of sly and suspicious disposition; I trust he is not going to commit in the City of Books any such misdemeanours as might render it necessary for us to send him back to his chemist's shop. In the meantime we must give him a name. Suppose we call him 'Don Gris de Gouttiere'; but perhaps that is too long. 'Pill,' 'Drug,' or 'Castor-oil' would be short enough, and would further serve to recall his early condition in life. What do you think about it?"

"'Pill' would not sound bad," answers Jeanne, "but it would be very unkind to give him a name which would be always reminding him of the misery from

which we saved him. It would be making him pay too dearly for our hospitality. Let us be more generous, and give him a pretty name, in hopes that he is going to deserve it. See how he looks at us! He knows that we are talking about him. And now that he is no longer unhappy, he is beginning to look a great deal less stupid. I am not joking! Unhappiness does make people look stupid, — I am perfectly sure it does.”

“Well, Jeanne, if you like, we will call your protege Hannibal. The appropriateness of that name does not seem to strike you at once. But the Angora cat who preceded him here as an intimate of the City of Books, and to whom I was in the habit of telling all my secrets — for he was a very wise and discreet person — used to be called Hamilcar. It is natural that this name should beget the other, and that Hannibal should succeed Hamilcar.”

We all agreed upon this point.

“Hannibal!” cried Jeanne, “come here!”

Hannibal, greatly frightened by the strange sonority of his own name, ran to hid himself under a bookcase in an orifice so small that a rat could not have squeezed himself into it.

A nice way of doing credit to so great a name!

I was in a good humour for working that day, and I had just dipped the nib of my pen into the ink-bottle when I heard some one ring. Should any one ever read these pages written by an unimaginative old man, he will be sure to laugh at the way that bell keeps ringing through my narrative, without ever announcing the arrival of a new personage or introducing any unexpected incident. On the stage things are managed on the reverse principle. Monsieur Scribe never has the curtain raised without good reason, and for the greater enjoyment of ladies and young misses. That is art! I would rather hang myself than write a play, — not that I despise life, but because I should never be able to invent anything amusing. Invent! In order to do that one must have received the gift of inspiration. It would be a very unfortunate thing for me to possess such a gift. Suppose I were to invent some monkling in my history of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Pres! What would our young erudites say? What a scandal for the School! As for the Institute, it would say nothing and probably not even think about the matter either. Even if my colleagues still write a little sometimes, they never read. They are of the opinion of Parny, who said,

“Une paisible indifference

Est la plus sage des vertus.”

[“The most wise of the virtues is a calm indifference.”]

To be the least wise in order to become the most wise — this is precisely what those Buddhists are aiming at without knowing it. If there is any wiser

wisdom than that I will go to Rome to report upon it.... And all this because Monsieur Gelis happened to ring the bell!

This young man has latterly changed his manner completely with Jeanne. He is now quite as serious as he used to be frivolous, and quite as silent as he used to be chatty. And Jeanne follows his example. We have reached the phase of passionate love under constraint. For, old as I am, I cannot be deceived about it: these two children are violently and sincerely in love with each other. Jeanne now avoids him — she hides herself in her room when he comes into the library — but how well she knows how to reach him when she is alone! alone at her piano! Every evening she talks to him through the music she plays with a rich thrill of passional feeling which is the new utterance of her new soul.

Well, why should I not confess it? Why should I not avow my weakness? Surely my egotism would not become any less blameworthy by keeping it hidden from myself? So I will write it. Yes! I was hoping for something else; — yes! I thought I was going to keep her all to myself, as my own child, as my own daughter — not always, of course, not even perhaps for very long, but just for a few short years more. I am so old! Could she not wait? And, who knows? With the help of the gout, I would not have imposed upon her patience too much. That was my wish; that was my hope. I had made my plans — I had not reckoned upon the coming of this wild young man. But the mistake is none the less cruel because my reckoning happened to be wrong. And yet it seems to me that you are condemning yourself very rashly, friend Sylvestre Bonnard: if you did want to keep this young girl a few years longer, it was quite as much in her own interest as in yours. She has a great deal to learn yet, and you are not a master to be despised. When that miserable notary Mouche — who subsequently committed his rascalities at so opportune a moment — paid you the honour of a visit, you explained to him your ideas of education with all the fervour of high enthusiasm. Then you attempted to put that system of yours into practice; — Jeanne is certainly an ungrateful girl, and Gelis a much too seductive young man!

But still, — unless I put him out of the house, which would be a detestably ill-mannered and ill-natured thing to do, — I must continue to receive him. He has been waiting ever so long in my little parlour, in front of those Sevres vases with which King Louis Philippe so graciously presented me. The Moissonneurs and the Pecheurs of Leopold Robert are painted upon those porcelain vases, which Gelis nevertheless dares to call frightfully ugly, with the warm approval of Jeanne, whom he has absolutely bewitched.

“My dear lad, excuse me for having kept you waiting so long. I had a little bit of work to finish.”

I am telling the truth. Meditation is work, but of course Gelis does not know what I mean; he thinks I am referring to something archaeological, and, his question in regard to the health of Mademoiselle Jeanne having been answered by a "Very well indeed," uttered in that extremely dry tone which reveals my moral authority as guardian, we begin to converse about historical subjects. We first enter upon generalities. Generalities are sometimes extremely serviceable. I try to inculcate into Monsieur Gelis some respect for that generation of historians to which I belong. I say to him,

"History, which was formerly an art, and which afforded place for the fullest exercise of the imagination, has in our time become a science, the study of which demands absolute exactness of knowledge."

Gelis asks leave to differ from me on this subject. He tells me he does not believe that history is a science, or that it could possibly ever become a science.

"In the first place," he says to me, "what is history? The written representation of past events. But what is an event? Is it merely a commonplace fact? It is any fact? No! You say yourself it is a noteworthy fact. Now, how is the historian to tell whether a fact is noteworthy or not? He judges it arbitrarily, according to his tastes and his caprices and his ideas — in short, as an artist? For facts cannot by reason of their own intrinsic character be divided into historical facts and non-historical facts. But any fact is something exceedingly complex. Will the historian represent facts in all their complexity? No, that is impossible. Then he will represent them stripped of the greater part of the peculiarities which constituted them, and consequently lopped, mutilated, different from what they really were. As for the inter-relation of facts, needless to speak of it! If a so-called historical fact be brought into notice — as is very possible — by one or more facts which are not historical at all, and are for that very reason unknown, how is the historian going to establish the relation of these facts one to another? And in saying this, Monsieur Bonnard, I am supposing that the historian has positive evidence before him, whereas in reality he feels confidence only in such or such a witness for sympathetic reasons. History is not a science; it is an art, and one can succeed in that art only through the exercise of his faculty of imagination."

Monsieur Gelis reminds me very much at this moment of a certain young fool whom I heard talking wildly one day in the garden of the Luxembourg, under the statue of Marguerite of Navarre. But at another turn of the conversation we find ourselves face to face with Walter Scott, whose work my disdainful young friend pleases to term "rococo, troubadourish, and only fit to inspire somebody engaged in making designs for cheap bronze clocks." Those are his very words!

“Why!” I exclaim, zealous to defend the magnificent creator of ‘The Bride of Lammermoor’ and ‘The Fair Maid of Perth,’ “the whole past lives in those admirable novels of his; — that is history, that is epic!”

“It is frippery,” Gelis answers me.

And, — will you believe it? — this crazy boy actually tells me that no matter how learned one may be, one cannot possibly know just how men used to live five or ten centuries ago, because it is only with the very greatest difficulty that one can picture them to oneself even as they were only ten or fifteen years ago. In his opinion, the historical poem, the historical novel, the historical painting, are all, according to their kind, abominably false as branches of art.

“In all the arts,” he adds, “the artist can only reflect his own soul. His work, no matter how it may be dressed up, is of necessity contemporary with himself, being the reflection of his own mind. What do we admire in the ‘Divine Comedy’ unless it be the great soul of Dante? And the marbles of Michael Angelo, what do they represent to us that is at all extraordinary unless it be Michael Angelo himself? The artist either communicates his own life to his creations, or else merely whittles out puppets and dresses up dolls.”

What a torrent of paradoxes and irreverences! But boldness in a young man is not displeasing to me. Gelis gets up from his chair and sits down again. I know perfectly well what is worrying him, and whom he is waiting for. And now he begins to talk to me about his being able to make fifteen hundred francs a year, to which he can add the revenue he derives from a little property that he has inherited — two thousand francs a year more. And I am not in the least deceived as to the purpose of these confidences on his part. I know perfectly well that he is only making his little financial statements in order to persuade me that he is comfortably circumstanced, steady, fond of home, comparatively independent — or, to put the matter in the fewest words possible, able to marry. Quod erat demonstrandum, — as the geometers say.

He has got up and sat down just twenty times. He now rises for the twenty-first time; and, as he has not been able to see Jeanne, he goes away feeling as unhappy as possible.

The moment he has gone, Jeanne comes into the City of Books, under the pretext of looking for Hannibal. She is also quite unhappy; and her voice becomes singularly plaintive as she calls her pet to give him some milk. Look at that sad little face, Bonnard! Tyrant, gaze upon thy work! Thou hast been able to keep them from seeing each other; but they have now both of them the same expression of countenance, and thou mayest discern from that similarity of expression that in spite of thee they are united in thought. Cassandra, be happy!

Bartholo, rejoice! This is what it means to be a guardian! Just see her kneeling down there on the carpet with Hannibal's head between her hands!

Yes, caress the stupid animal! — pity him! — moan over him! — we know very well, you little rogue, the real cause of all these sighs and complaints! Nevertheless, it makes a very pretty picture. I look at it for a long time; then, throwing a glance around my library, I exclaim,

“Jeanne, I am tired of all those books; we must sell them.”

September 20.

It is done! — they are betrothed. Gelis, who is an orphan, as Jeanne is, did not make his proposal to me in person. He got one of his professors, an old colleague of mine, highly esteemed for his learning and character, to come to me on his behalf. But what a love messenger! Great Heavens! A bear — neat a bear of the Pyrenees, but a literary bear, and this latter variety of bear is much more ferocious than the former.

“Right or wrong (in my opinion wrong) Gelis says that he does not want any dowry; he takes your ward with nothing but her chemise. Say yes, and the thing is settled! Make haste about it! I want to show you two or three very curious old tokens from Lorraine which I am sure you never saw before.”

That is literally what he said to me. I answered him that I would consult Jeanne, and I found no small pleasure in telling him that my ward had a dowry.

Her dowry — there it is in front of me! It is my library. Henri and Jeanne have not even the faintest suspicion about it; and the fact is I am commonly believed to be much richer than I am. I have the face of an old miser. It is certainly a lying face; but its untruthfulness has often won for me a great deal of consideration. There is nobody so much respected in this world as a stingy rich man.

I have consulted Jeanne, — but what was the need of listening for her answer? It is done! They are betrothed.

It would ill become my character as well as my face to watch these young people any longer for the mere purpose of noting down their words and gestures. *Noli me tangere*: — that is the maxim for all charming love affairs. I know my duty. It is to respect all the little secrets of that innocent soul intrusted to me. Let these children love each other all they can! Never a word of their fervent outpouring of mutual confidences, never a hint of their artless self-betrays, will be set down in this diary by the old guardian whose authority was so gentle and so brief.

At all events, I am not going to remain with my arms folded; and if they have their business to attend to, I have mine also. I am preparing a catalogue of my books, with a view to having them all sold at auction. It is a task which saddens and amuses me at the same time. I linger over it, perhaps a good deal longer than I ought to do; turning the leaves of all those works which have become so familiar to my thought, to my touch, to my sight — even out of all necessity and

reason. But it is a farewell; and it has ever been in the nature of man to prolong a farewell.

This ponderous volume here, which has served me so much for thirty long years, how can I leave it without according it every kindness that a faithful servant deserves? And this one again, which has so often consoled me by its wholesome doctrines, must I not bow down before it for the last time, as to a Master? But each time that I meet with a volume which led me into error, which ever afflicted me with false dates, omissions, lies, and other plagues of the archaeologist, I say to it with bitter joy: "Go! imposter, traitor, false-witness! flee thou far away from me for ever; — vade retro! all absurdly covered with gold as thou art! and I pray it may befall thee — thanks to thy usurped reputation and thy comely morocco attire — to take thy place in the cabinet of some banker-bibliomaniac, whom thou wilt never be able to seduce as thou has seduced me, because he will never read one single line of thee."

I laid aside some books I must always keep — those books which were given to me as souvenirs. As I placed among them the manuscript of the "Golden Legend," I could not but kiss it in memory of Madame Trepof, who remained grateful to me in spite of her high position and all her wealth, and who became my benefactress merely to prove to me that she felt I had once done her a kindness.... Thus I had made a reserve. It was then that, for the first time, I felt myself inclined to commit a deliberate crime. All through that night I was strongly tempted; by morning the temptation had become irresistible. Everybody else in the house was still asleep. I got out of bed and stole softly from my room.

Ye powers of darkness! ye phantoms of the night! if while lingering within my home after the crowing of the cock, you saw me stealing about on tiptoe in the City of Books, you certainly never cried out, as Madame Trepof did at Naples, "That old man has a good-natured round back!" I entered the library; Hannibal, with his tail perpendicularly erected, came to rub himself against my legs and purr. I seized a volume from its shelf, some venerable Gothic text or some noble poet of the Renaissance — the jewel, the treasure which I had been dreaming about all night, I seized it and slipped it away into the very bottom of the closet which I had reserved for those books I intended to retain, and which soon became full almost to bursting. It is horrible to relate: I was stealing from the dowry of Jeanne! And when the crime had been consummated I set myself again sturdily to the task of cataloguing, until Jeanne came to consult me in regard to something about a dress or a trousseau. I could not possibly understand just what she was talking about, through my total ignorance of the current vocabulary of dress-making and linen-drapery. Ah! if a bride of the fourteenth century had come to talk to me about the apparel of her epoch, then, indeed, I

should have been able to understand her language! But Jeanne does not belong to my time, and I have to send her to Madame de Gabry, who on this important occasion will take the place of her mother.

... Night has come! Leaning from the window, we gaze at the vast sombre stretch of the city below us, pierced with multitudinous points of light. Jeanne presses her hand to her forehead as she leans upon the window-bar, and seems a little sad. And I say to myself as I watch her: All changes even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves: we must die to one life before we can enter into another!

And as if answering my thought, the young girl murmurs to me,
“My guardian, I am so happy; and still I feel as if I wanted to cry!”

The Last Page

August 21, 1869.

Page eighty-seven.... Only twenty lines more and I shall have finished my book about insects and flowers. Page eighty-seventh and last.... "As we have already seen, the visits of insects are of the utmost importance to plants; since their duty is to carry to the pistils the pollen of the stamens. It seems also that the flower itself is arranged and made attractive for the purpose of inviting this nuptial visit. I think I have been able to show that the nectary of the plant distils a sugary liquid which attracts the insects and obliges it to aid unconsciously in the work of direct or cross fertilisation. The last method of fertilisation is the more common. I have shown that flowers are coloured and perfumed so as to attract insects, and interiorly so constructed as to offer those visitors such a mode of access that they cannot penetrate into the corolla without depositing upon the stigma the pollen with which they have been covered. My most venerated master Sprengel observes in regard to that fine down which lines the corolla of the wood-geranium: 'The wise Author of Nature has never created a single useless hair!' I say in my turn: If that Lily of the Valley whereof the Gospel makes mention is more richly clad than King Solomon in all his glory, its mantle of purple is a wedding-garment, and that rich apparel is necessary to the perpetuation of the species."

"Brolles, August 21, 1869."

[Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard was not aware that several very illustrious naturalists were making researches at the same time as he in regard to the relation between insects and plants. He was not acquainted with the labours of Darwin, with those of Dr. Hermann Muller, nor with the observations of Sir John Lubbock. It is worthy of note that the conclusions of Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard are very nearly similar to those reached by the three scientists above mentioned. Less important, but perhaps equally interesting, is the fact that Sir John Lubbock is, like Monsieur Bonnard, an archaeologist who began to devote himself only late in life to the natural sciences. — Note by the French Editor.]

Brolles! My house is the last one you pass in the single street of the village, as you go to the woods. It is a gabled house with a slate roof, which takes iridescent tints in the sun like a pigeon's breast. The weather-vane above that roof has won more consideration for me among the country people than all my works upon history and philology. There is not a single child who does not know Monsieur Bonnard's weather-vane. It is rusty, and squeaks very sharply in the wind. Sometimes it refuses to do any work at all — just like Therese, who now allows

herself to be assisted by a young peasant girl — though she grumbles a good deal about it. The house is not large, but I am very comfortable in it. My room has two windows, and gets the sun in the morning. The children's room is upstairs. Jeanne and Henri come twice a year to occupy it.

Little Sylvestre's cradle used to be in it. He was a very pretty child, but very pale. When he used to play on the grass, his mother would watch him very anxiously; and every little while she would stop her sewing in order to take him upon her lap. The poor little fellow never wanted to go to sleep. He used to say that when he was asleep he would go away, very far away, to some place where it was all dark, and where he saw things that made him afraid — things he never wanted to see again.

Then his mother would call me, and I would sit down beside his cradle. He would take one of my fingers in his little dry warm hand, and say to me,

“Godfather, you must tell me a story.”

Then I would tell him all kinds of stories, which he would listen to very seriously. They all interested him, but there was one especially which filled his little soul with delight. It was “The Blue Bird.” Whenever I finished that, he would say to me, “Tell it again! tell it again!” And I would tell it again until his little pale blue-veined head sank back upon the pillow in slumber.

The doctor used to answer all our questions by saying,

“There is nothing extraordinary the matter with him!”

No! There was nothing extraordinary the matter with little Sylvestre. One evening last year his father called me.

“Come,” he said, “the little one is still worse.”

I approached the cradle over which the mother hung motionless, as if tied down above it by all the powers of her soul.

Little Sylvestre turned his eyes towards me; their pupils had already rolled up beneath his eyelids, and could not descend again.

“Godfather,” he said, “you are not to tell me any more stories.”

No, I was not to tell him any more stories!

Poor Jeanne! — poor mother!

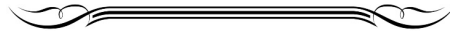
I am too old now to feel very deeply; but how strangely painful a mystery is the death of a child!

To-day, the father and mother have come to pass six weeks under the old man's roof. I see them now returning from the woods, walking arm-in-arm. Jeanne is closely wrapped in her black shawl, and Henri wears a crape band on his straw hat; but they are both of them radiant with youth, and they smile very sweetly at each other. They smile at the earth which sustains them; they smile at the air which bathes them; they smile at the light which each one sees in the eyes

of the other. From my window I wave my handkerchief at them, — and they smile at my old age.

Jeanne comes running lightly up the stairs; she kisses me, and then whispers in my ear something which I divine rather than hear. And I make answer to her: “May God’s blessing be with you, Jeanne, and with your husband, and with your children, and with your children’s children for ever!”... Et nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine!

THE ASPIRATIONS OF JEAN SERVIEN



Translated by Alfred Allinson *The Aspirations of Jean Servien* was published in French in 1882, but was only first translated into English in 1912 by Alfred Allinson and published by John Lane of London. In contrast to the overwhelmingly positive reception of *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, France's second novel was met with a mixed reaction by the literary establishment. The work contains aspects of the Bildungsroman genre: a coming of age story, where the novel traces the development and growth of a young and naïve child into adulthood. These novels focus on the lessons learned by the youthful protagonist from their mistakes and foolish decisions. There is a great importance placed on the moral and psychological development of the youth as they manage to control their less admirable traits, while becoming fine and respectable members of society. It was a popular genre in 19th century British novels: Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Thackeray's *History of Pendennis* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, all possess features of the Bildungsroman genre.

The Aspirations of Jean Servien differs significantly from the standard Bildungsroman novel, harshly satirising aspects of the genre. The novel begins by describing Jean's background; his father is a bookbinder, and he is a weak child, strongly attached to his mother. Before her death, Jean's mother dreams of a great future for him, and makes her husband promise to teach their son Latin. However, despite his father's best efforts to help him find a good career, Jean spends his time obsessing about an actress, failing to engage with any type of work. The protagonist does not develop psychologically or morally, coming to a comically pathetic end.

ANATOLE FRANCE

DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

LES DÉSIRS
DE
JEAN SERVIEN

QUARANTE-QUATRIÈME ÉDITION



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Prix provisoire : 4 fr. 90 c

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CONTENTS

[I](#)
[II](#)
[III](#)
[IV](#)
[V](#)
[VI](#)
[VII](#)
[VIII](#)
[IX](#)
[X](#)
[XI](#)
[XII](#)
[XIII](#)
[XIV](#)
[XV](#)
[XVI](#)
[XVII](#)
[XVIII](#)
[XIX](#)
[XX](#)
[XXI](#)
[XXII](#)
[XXIII](#)
[XXIV](#)
[XXV](#)
[XXVI](#)
[XXVII](#)
[XXVIII](#)
[XXIX](#)
[XXX](#)
[XXXI](#)
[XXXII](#)
[XXXIII](#)
[XXXIV](#)

XXXV

I

Jean Servien was born in a back-shop in the *Rue Notre-Dame des Champs* . His father was a bookbinder and worked for the Religious Houses. Jean was a little weakling child, and his mother nursed him at her breast as she sewed the books, sheet by sheet, with the curved needle of the trade. One day as she was crossing the shop, humming a song, in the words of which she found expression for the vague, splendid visions of her maternal ambition, her foot slipped on the boards, which were moist with paste.

Instinctively she threw up her arm to guard the child she held clasped to her bosom, and struck her breast, thus exposed, a severe blow against the corner of the iron press. She felt no very acute pain at the time, but later on an abscess formed, which got well, but presently reopened, and a low fever supervened that confined her to her bed.

There, in the long, long evenings, she would fold her little one in her one sound arm and croon over him in a hot, feverish whisper bits of her favourite ditty:

The fisherman, when dawn is nigh,
Peers forth to greet the kindling sky....

Above all, she loved the refrain that recurred at the end of each verse with only the change of a word. It was her little Jean's lullaby, who became, at the caprice of the words, turn and turn about, General, Lawyer, and ministrant at the altar in her fond hopes.

A woman of the people, knowing nothing of the circumstances of fashionable life, save from a few peeps at their outward pomp and the vague tales of *concierges* , footmen, and cooks, she pictured her boy at twenty more beautiful than an archangel, his breast glittering with decorations, in a drawing-room full of flowers, amid a bevy of fashionable ladies with manners every whit as genteel as had the actresses at the *Gymnase* :

But for the nonce, on mother's breast, Sweet wee gallant, take thy rest.

Presently the vision changed; now her boy was standing up gowned in Court, by his eloquence saving the life and honour of some illustrious client:

But for the nonce, on mother's breast, Sweet wee pleader, take thy rest.

Presently again he was an officer under fire, in a brilliant uniform, on a prancing charger, victorious in battle, like the great Generals whose portraits she had seen one Sunday at Versailles:

But for the nonce, on mother's breast, Sweet wee general, take thy rest.

But when night was creeping into the room, a new picture would dazzle her eyes, a picture this of other and incomparably greater glories.

Proud in her motherhood, yet humble too at heart, she was gazing from the dim recesses of a sanctuary at her son, her Jean, clad in sacerdotal vestments, lifting the monstrance in the vaulted choir censed by the beating wings of half-seen Cherubim. And she would tremble awestruck as if she were the mother of a god, this poor sick work-woman whose puling child lay beside her drooping in the poisoned air of a back-shop:

*But for the nonce, on mother's breast,
My sweet boy-bishop, take thy rest.*

One evening, as her husband handed her a cooling drink, she said to him in a tone of regret:

“Why did you disturb me? I could see the Holy Virgin among flowers and precious stones and lights. It was so beautiful! so beautiful!”

She said she was no longer in pain, that she wished her Jean to learn Latin. And she passed away.

II

The widower, who from the Beauce country, sent his son to his native village in the Eure-et-Loir to be brought up by kinsfolk there. As for himself, he was a strong man, and soon learned to be resigned; he was of a saving habit by instinct in both business and family matters, and never put off the green serge apron from week's end to week's end save for a Sunday visit to the cemetery. He would hang a wreath on the arm of the black cross, and, if it was a hot day, take a chair on the way back along the boulevard outside the door of a wine-shop. There, as he sat slowly emptying his glass, his eye would rest on the mothers and their youngsters going by on the sidewalk.

These young wives, as he watched them approach and pass on, were so many passing reminders of his Clotilde and made him feel sad without his quite understanding why, for he was not much given to thinking.

Time slipped by, and little by little his dead wife grew to be a tender, vague memory in the bookbinder's mind. One night he tried in vain to recall Clotilde's features; after this experience, he told himself that perhaps he might be able to discover the mother's lineaments in the child's face, and he was seized with a great longing to see this relic of the lost one once more, to have the child home again.

In the morning he wrote a letter to his old sister, Mademoiselle Servien, begging her to come and take up her abode with the little one in the *Rue Notre-Dame des Champs*. The sister, who had lived for many years in Paris at her brother's expense, for indolence was her ruling passion, agreed to resume her life in a city where, she used to say, folks are free and need not depend on their neighbours.

One autumn evening she arrived at the *Gare de l'Ouest* with Jean and her boxes and baskets, an upright, hard-featured, fierce-eyed figure, all ready to defend the child against all sorts of imaginary perils. The bookbinder kissed the lad and expressed his satisfaction in two words.

Then he lifted him pickaback on his shoulders, and bidding him hold on tight to his father's hair, carried him off proudly to the house.

Jean was seven. Soon existence settled down to a settled routine. At midday the old dame would don her shawl and set off with the child in the direction of Grenelle.

The pair followed the broad thoroughfares that ran between shabby walls and red-fronted drinking-shops. Generally speaking, a sky of a dappled grey like the

great cart-horses that plodded past, invested the quiet suburb with a gentle melancholy. Establishing herself on a bench, while the child played under a tree, she would knit her stocking and chat with an old soldier and tell him her troubles — what a hard life it was in other people's houses.

One day, one of the last fine days of the season, Jean, squatted on the ground, was busy sticking up bits of plane-tree bark in the fine wet sand. That faculty of "pretending," by which children are able to make their lives one unending miracle, transformed a handful of soil and a few bits of wood into wondrous galleries and fairy castles to the lad's imagination; he clapped his hands and leapt for joy. Then suddenly he felt himself wrapped in something soft and scented. It was a lady's gown; he saw nothing except that she smiled as she put him gently out of her way and walked on. He ran to tell his aunt:

"How good she smells, that lady!"

Mademoiselle Servien only muttered that great ladies were no better than others, and that she thought more of herself with her merino skirt than all those set-up minxes in their flounces and finery, adding:

"Better a good name than a gilt girdle."

But this talk was beyond little Jean's comprehension. The perfumed silk that had swept his face left behind a vague sweetness, a memory as of a gentle, ghostly caress.

III

One evening in summer the bookbinder was enjoying the fresh air before his door when a big man with a red nose, past middle age and wearing a scarlet waistcoat stained with grease-spots, appeared, bowing politely and confidentially, and addressed him in a sing-song voice in which even Monsieur Servien could detect an Italian accent:

“Sir, I have translated the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the immortal masterpiece of Torquato Tasso” — and a bulging packet of manuscript under his arm confirmed the statement.

“Yes, sir, I have devoted sleepless nights to this glorious and ungrateful task. Without family or fatherland, I have written my translation in dark, ice-cold garrets, on chandlers’ wrappers, snuff papers, the backs of playing cards! Such has been the exile’s task! You, sir, you live in your own land, in the bosom of a happy family — at least I hope so.”

This speech, which impressed him by its magniloquence and its strangeness, set the bookbinder dreaming of the dead woman he had loved, and he saw her in his mind’s eye coiling her beautiful hair as in the early days of their married life.

The big man proceeded:

“Man is like a plant which perishes when the storms uproot it.

“Here is your son, is it not so? He is like you” — and laying his hand on Jean’s head, who clung to his father’s coat-tails in wonder at the red waistcoat and the sing-song voice, he asked if the child learned his lessons well, if he was growing up to be a clever man, if he would not soon be beginning Latin.

“That noble language,” he added, “whose inimitable monuments have often made me forget my misfortunes.

“Yes, sir, I have often breakfasted on a page of Tacitus and supped on a satire of Juvenal.”

As he said the words, a look of sadness over-spread his shining red face, and dropping his voice:

“Forgive me, sir, if I hold out to you the casque of Belisarius. I am the Marquis Tudesco, of Venice. When I have received from the bookseller the price of my labour, I will not forget that you succoured me with a small coin in the time of my sharpest trial.”

The bookbinder, case-hardened as he was against beggars, who on winter evenings drifted into his shop with the east wind, nevertheless experienced a

certain sympathy and respect for the Marquis Tudesco. He slipped a franc-piece into his hand.

Thereupon the old Italian, like a man inspired, exclaimed:

“One Nation there is that is unhappy — Italy, one generous People — France; and one bond that unites the twain — humanity. Ah! chiefest of the virtues, humanity, humanity!”

Meantime the bookbinder was pondering his wife’s last words: “I wish my Jean to learn Latin.” He hesitated, till seeing Monsieur Tudesco bowing and smiling to go:

“Sir,” he said, “if you are ready, two or three times a week, to give the boy lessons in French and Latin, we might come to terms.”

The Marquis Tudesco expressed no surprise. He smiled and said:

“Certainly, sir, as you wish it, I shall find it a delightful task to initiate your son in the mysteries of the Latin rudiments.

“We will make a man of him and a good citizen, and God knows what heights my pupil will scale in this noble land of freedom and generosity. He may one day be ambassador, my dear sir. I say it: knowledge is power.”

“You will know the shop again,” said the bookbinder; “there is my name on the signboard.”

The Marquis Tudesco, after tweaking the son’s ear amicably and bowing to the father with a dignified familiarity, walked away with a step that was still jaunty.

IV

The Marquis Tudesco returned in due course, smiled at Mademoiselle Servien, who darted poisonous looks at him, greeted the bookbinder with a discreet air of patronage, and had a supply of grammars and dictionaries bought.

At first he gave his lessons with exemplary regularity. He had taken a liking to these repetitions of nouns and verbs, which he listened to with a dignified, condescending air, slowly unrolling his screw of snuff the while; he only interrupted to interject little playful remarks with a geniality just touched with a trace of ferocity, that bespoke his real nature as an unctuous, cringing bully. He was jocular and pompous at the same time, and always made a pretence of being a long time in seeing the glass of wine put on the table for his refreshment.

The bookbinder, regarding him as a clever man of ill-regulated life, always treated him with great consideration, for faults of behaviour almost cease to shock us except among neighbours, or at most fellow-countrymen. Without knowing it, Jean found a fund of amusement in the witticisms and harangues of his old teacher, who united in himself the contradictory attributes of high-priest and buffoon. He was great at telling a story, and though his tales were beyond the child's intelligence, they did not fail to leave behind a confused impression of recklessness, irony, and cynicism. Mademoiselle Servien alone never relaxed her attitude of uncompromising dislike and disdain. She said nothing against him, but her face was a rigid mask of disapproval, her eyes two flames of fire, in answer to the courteous greeting the tutor never failed to offer her with a special roll of his little grey eyes.

One day the Marquis Tudesco walked into the shop with a staggering gait; his eyes glittered and his mouth hung half open in anticipation of racy talk and self-indulgence, while his great nose, his pink cheeks, his fat, loose hands and his big belly, gallantly carried, gave him, beneath his jacket and felt hat, a perfect likeness to a little rustic god his ancestors worshipped, the old Silenus.

Lessons that day were fitful and haphazard. Jean was repeating in a drawling voice: *moneo, mones, monet ... monebam, monebas, monebat...* Suddenly Monsieur Tudesco sprang forward, dragging his chair along the floor with a horrid screech, and clapping his hand on his pupil's shoulder:

"Child," he said, "to-day I am going to give you a more profitable lesson than all the pitiful teaching I have confined myself to up to now.

"It is a lesson of transcendental philosophy. Hearken carefully, child. If one day you rise above your station and come to know yourself and the world about

you, you will discover this, that men act only out of regard for the opinion of their fellows — and *per Bacco!* they are consummate fools for their pains. They dread other folks' blame and crave their approval.

“The idiots fail to see that the world does not care a straw for them, and that their dearest friends will see them glorified or disgraced without missing one mouthful of their dinner. This is my lesson, *caro figliuolo*, that the world's opinion is not worth the sacrifice of a single one of our desires. If you get this into your pate, you will be a strong man and can boast you were once the pupil of the Marquis Tudesco, of Venice, the exile who has translated in a freezing garret, on scraps of refuse paper, the immortal poem of Torquato Tasso. What a task!”

The child listened to the tipsy philosopher without understanding one word of his rigmarole; only Monsieur Tudesco struck him as a strange and alarming personage, and taller by a hundred feet than anybody he had ever seen before.

The professor warmed to his subject:

“Ah!” he cried, springing from his seat, “and what profit did the immortal and ill-starred Torquato Tasso win from all his genius? A few stolen kisses on the steps of a palace. And he died of famine in a madhouse. I say it: the world's opinion, that empress of humankind, I will tear from her crown and sceptre. Opinion tyrannizes over unhappy Italy, as over all the earth. Italy! what flaming sword will one day come to break her fetters, as now I break this chair?”

In fact, he had seized his chair by the back and was pounding it fiercely on the floor.

But suddenly he stopped, gave a knowing smile, and said in a low voice:

“No, no, Marquis Tudesco, let be, let Venice be a prey to Teuton savagery. The fetters of the fatherland are daily bread to the exiled patriot.”

His chin buried in his cravat, he stood chuckling to himself, and his red waistcoat rose and fell in jerks.

Mademoiselle Servien, who sat by at the lesson knitting a stocking and for some moments had been watching the tutor, her spectacles pushed half-way up her forehead, with a look of amazement and suspicion, exclaimed, as if talking to herself:

“If it isn't abominable to come to people's houses in drink!”

Monsieur Tudesco did not seem to hear her. His manner was quiet and jocular again.

“Child,” he ordered, “write down the theme for an essay. Write down: ‘The worst thing... yes, the worst thing of all,’ write it down... ‘is an old woman with a spiteful temper.’”

And rising with the gracious dignity of a Prince of the Church, he bowed low to the aunt, gave the nephew's cheek a friendly tap, and marched out of the room.

However, beginning with the very next lesson, he lavished every mark of respect on the old lady, and treated her to all his choicest airs and graces, rounding his elbows, pursing his lips, strutting and swaggering. She would not relax a muscle, and sat there as silent and sulky as an owl.

But one day when she was hunting for her spectacles, as she was always doing, Monsieur Tudesco offered her his and persuaded her to try them; she found they suited her sight and felt a trifle less unamiable towards him. The Italian, pursuing his advantage, got into talk with her, and artfully turned the conversation upon the vices of the rich. The old lady approved his sentiments, and an exchange of petty confidences ensued. Tudesco knew a sovereign remedy for catarrh, and this too was well received. He redoubled his attentions, and the *concierge*, who saw him smiling to himself on the doorstep, told Aunt Servien: "The man's in love with you." Of course she declared: "At my time of life a woman doesn't want lovers," but her vanity was tickled all the same. Monsieur Tudesco got what he wanted — to have his glass filled to the brim every lesson. Out of politeness they would even leave him the pint jug only half empty, which he was indiscreet enough to drain dry.

One day he asked for a taste of cheese— "just enough to make a mouse's dinner," was his expression. "Mice are like me, they love the dark and a quiet life and books; and like me they live on crumbs."

This pose of the wise man fallen on evil days made a bad impression, and the old lady became silent and sombre as before.

When springtime came Monsieur Tudesco vanished.

V

The bookbinder, for all his scanty earnings, was resolved to enter Jean at a school where the boy could enjoy a regular and complete course of instruction. He selected a day-school not far from the Luxembourg, because he could see the top branches of an acacia overtopping the wall, and the house had a cheerful look.

Jean, as a little new boy (he was now eleven), was some weeks before he shook off the shyness with which his schoolfellows' loud voices and rough ways and his masters' ponderous gravity had at first overwhelmed him. Little by little he grew used to the work, and learned some of the tricks by means of which punishments were avoided; his schoolfellows found him so inoffensive they left off stealing his cap and initiated him in the game of marbles. But he had little love for school-life, and when five o'clock came, prayers were over and his satchel strapped, it was with unfeigned delight he dashed out into the street basking in the golden rays of the setting sun. In the intoxication of freedom, he danced and leapt, seeing everything, men and horses, carriages and shops, in a charmed light, and out of sheer joy of life mumbling at his Aunt Servien's hand and arm, as she walked home with him carrying the satchel and lunch-basket.

The evening was a peaceful time. Jean would sit drawing pictures or dreaming over his copy-books at one end of the table where Mademoiselle Servien had just cleared away the meal. His father would be busy with a book. As age advanced he had acquired a taste for reading, his favourites being La Fontaine's *Fables*, Anquetil's *History of France*, and Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, "to get the hang of things," as he put it. His sister made fruitless efforts to distract his attention with some stinging criticism of the neighbours or a question about "our fat friend who had not come back," for she made a point of never remembering the Marquis Tudesco's name.

VI

Before long Jean's whole mind was given over to the catechizings and sermons and hymns preparatory to the First Communion. Intoxication with the music of chants and organ, drowned in the scent of incense and flowers, hung about with scapularies, rosaries, consecrated medals, and holy images, he, like his companions, assumed a certain air of self-importance and wore a smug, sanctified look. He was cold and unbending towards his aunt, who spoke with far too much unconcern about the "great day." Though she had long been in the habit of taking her nephew to Mass every Sunday, she was not "pious." Most likely she confounded in one common detestation the luxury of the rich and the pomps of the Church service. She had more than once been overheard informing one of the cronies she used to meet on the boulevards that she was a religious woman, *but* she could not abide priests, that she said her prayers at home, and these were every bit as good as the fine ladies' who flaunted their crinolines in church. His father was more in sympathy with the lad's new-found zeal; he was interested and even a little impressed. He undertook to bind a missal with his own hands against the ceremony.

When the days arrived for retreats and general confessions, Jean swelled with pride and vague aspirations. He looked for something out of the ordinary to happen. Coming out at evening from Saint-Sulpice with two or three of his schoolfellows, he would feel an atmosphere of miracle about him; some divine interposition *must* be forthcoming. The lads used to tell each other strange stories, pious legends they had read in one of their little books of devotion. Now it was a phantom monk who had stepped out of the grave, showing the stigmata on hands and feet and the pierced side; now a nun, beautiful as the veiled figures in the Church pictures, expiating in the fires of hell mysterious sins. Jean had *his* favourite tale. Shuddering, he would relate how St. Francis Borgia, after the death of Queen Isabella, who was lovely beyond compare, must have the coffin opened wherein she lay at rest in her robe embroidered with pearls; in imagination he pictured the dead Queen, invested her form with all the magic hues of the unknown, traced in her lineaments the enchantments of a woman's beauty in the dark gulf of death. And as he told the tale, he could hear, in the twilight gloom, a murmur of soft voices sighing in the plane trees of the Luxembourg.

The great day arrived. The bookbinder, who attended the ceremony with his sister, thought of his wife and wept.

He was most favourably impressed by the *curé*'s homily, in which a young man without faith was compared to an unbridled charger that plunges over precipices. The simile struck his fancy, and he would quote it years after with approbation. He made up his mind to read the Bible, as he had read Voltaire, "to get the hang of things."

Jean withdrew from the houselling cloth, wondering to be just the same as ever and already disillusioned. He was never again to recover the first fervent rapture.

VII

The holidays were near. An noon of a blazing hot day Jean was seated in the shade on the dwarf-wall that bounded the school count towards the headmaster's garden, He was playing languidly at shovel-board with a schoolfellow, a lad as pretty as a girl with his curls and his jacket of white duck.

"Ewans," said Jean, as he pushed a pebble along one of the lines drawn in charcoal on the stone coping, "Ewans, you must find it tiresome to be a boarder?"

"Mother cannot have me with her at home," replied the boy.

Servien asked why.

"Oh! Because — —" stammered Ewans.

He stared a long time at the white pebble he held in his hand ready to play, before he added:

"My mother goes travelling."

"And your father?"

"He is in America. I have never seen him. You've lost. Let's begin again."

Servien, who felt interested in Madame Ewans because of the superb boxes of chocolates she used to bring to school for her boy, put another question:

"You love her very much, your mother I mean?"

"Of course I do!" cried the other, adding presently:

"You must come and see me one day in the holidays at home. You'll find our house is very pretty, there's sofas and cushions no end. But you must not put off, for we shall be off to the seaside soon."

At this moment a servant, a tall, thin man, appeared in the playground and called out something which the shrill cries of their companions at play prevented the two seated on the wall from hearing. A fat boy, standing by himself with his face to the wall with the unconcern born of long familiarity with this form of punishment, clapped his two hands to his mouth trumpetwise and shrieked:

"Ewans, you're wanted in the parlour."

The usher marched up:

"Garneret," he ordered, "you will stand half an hour this evening at preparation speaking when you were forbidden to. Ewans, go to the parlour."

The latter clapped his hands and danced for joy, telling his friend:

"It's my mother! I'll tell her you are coming to our house."

Servien reddened with pleasure, and stammered out that he would ask his father's leave. But Ewans had already scampered across the yard, leaving a dusty

furrow behind him.

Leave was readily granted by Monsieur Servien, who was fully persuaded that all boys admitted to so expensive a school born of well-to-do parents, whose society could not but prove advantageous to his son's manners and morals and to his future success in life.

Such information as Jean could give him about Madame Ewans was extremely vague, but the bookbinder was well used to contemplating the ways of rich folks through a veil of impenetrable mystery.

Aunt Servien indulged in sundry observations on the occasion of a very general kind touching people who ride in carriages. Then she repeated a story about a great lady who, just like Madame Ewans, had put her son to boarding-school, and who was mixed up in a case of illicit commissions, in the time of Louis-Philippe.

She added, to clinch the matter, that the cowl does not make the monk, that she thought herself, for all she did not wear flowers in her hat, a more honest woman than your society ladies, false jades everyone, concluding with her pet proverb: Better a good name than a gilt girdle!

Jean had never seen a gilt girdle, but he thought in a vague way he would very much like to have one.

The holidays came, and one Thursday after breakfast his aunt produced a white waistcoat from the wardrobe, and Jean, dressed in his Sunday best, climbed on an omnibus which took him to the Rue de Rivoli. He mounted four flights of a staircase, the carpet and polished brass stair-rods of which filled him with surprise and admiration.

On reaching the landing, he could hear the tinkling of a piano. He rang the bell, blushed hotly and was sorry he had rung. He would have given worlds to run away. A maid-servant opened the door, and behind her stood Edgar Ewans, wearing a brown holland suit, in which he looked entirely at his ease.

"Come along," he cried, and dragged him into a drawing-room, into which the half-drawn curtains admitted shafts of sunlight that were flashed back in countless broken reflections from mirrors and gilt cornices. A sweet, stimulating perfume hung about the room, which was crowded with a superabundance of padded chairs and couches and piles of cushions.

In the half-light Jean beheld a lady so different from all he had ever set eyes on till that moment that he could form no notion of what she was, no idea of her beauty or her age. Never had he seen eyes that flashed so vividly in a face of such pale fairness, or lips so red, smiling with such an unvarying almost tired-looking smile. She was sitting at a piano, idly strumming on the keys without

playing any definite tune. What drew Jean's eyes above all was her hair, arranged in some fashion that struck him with a sense of mystery and beauty.

She looked round, and smoothing the lace of her *peignoir* with one hand:

"You are Edgar's friend?" she asked, in a cordial tone, though her voice struck Jean as harsh in this beautiful room that was perfumed like a church.

"Yes, Madame."

"You like being at school?"

"Yes, madame."

"The masters are not too strict?"

"No, Madame."

"You have no mother?"

As she put the question Madame Evans' voice softened.

"No, Madame."

"What is your father?"

"A bookbinder, Madame" — and the bookbinder's son blushed as he gave the answer. At that moment he would gladly have consented never to see his father more, his father whom he loved, if by the sacrifice he could have passed for the son of a Captain in the Navy or a Secretary of Embassy. He suddenly remembered that one of his fellow-pupils was the son of a celebrated physician whose portrait was displayed in the stationers' windows.

If only he had had a father like that to tell Madame Ewans of!
But that was out of the question — and how cruelly unjust it was!
He felt ashamed of himself, as if he had said something shocking.

But his friend's mother seemed quite unaffected by the dreadful avowal. She was still moving her hands at random up and down the keyboard. Then presently:

"You must enjoy yourself finely to-day, boys," she cried. "We will all go out. Shall I take you to the fair at Saint-Cloud?"

Yes, Edgar was all for going, because of the roundabouts.

Madame Ewans rose from the piano, patted her pale flaxen hair in place with a pretty gesture, and gave a sidelong look in the mirror as she passed.

"I'm going to dress," she told them; "I shall not be long."

While she was dressing, Edgar sat at the piano trying to pick out a tune from an opera bouffe, and Jean, perched uncomfortably on the edge of his chair, stared about the room at a host of strange and sumptuous objects that seemed in some mysterious way to be part and parcel of their beautiful owner, and affected him almost as strangely as she herself had done.

Preceded by a faint waft of scent and a rustle of silk, she reappeared, tying the strings of the hat that made a dainty diadem above her smiling eyes.

Edgar looked at her curiously:

“Why, mother, there’s something... I don’t know what. . . something that alters you.”

She glanced in the mirror, examining her hair, which showed pale violet shadows amid the flaxen plaits.

“Oh! it’s nothing,” she said; “only I have put some powder in my hair. Like the Empress,” she added, and broke into another smile.

As she was drawing on her gloves, a ring was heard, and the maid came in to tell her mistress that Monsieur Delbèque was waiting to see her.

Madame Ewans pouted and declared she could not receive him, whereupon the maid spoke a few words in a very peremptory whisper. Madame Ewans shrugged her shoulders.

“Stay where you are!” she told the boys, and passed into the dining-room, whence the murmur of two voices could presently be heard.

Jean asked Edgar, under his breath, who the gentleman was.

“Monsieur Delbèque,” Edgar informed him. “He keeps horses and a carriage. He deals in pigs. One evening he took us to the theatre, mother and me.”

Jean was surprised and rather shocked to find Monsieur Delbèque dealt in pigs. But he hid his surprise and asked if he was a relation.

“Oh! no,” said Edgar, “he’s one of our friends. It’s a long time... at least a year we have known him.”

Jean, harking back to his first idea, put the question:

“Have you ever seen him selling his pigs?”

“How stupid you are!” retorted Edgar; “he deals in them wholesale. Mother says it’s a famous trade. He has a cigar-holder with an amber mouthpiece and a woman all naked carved in meerschaum. Just think, the other day he came and told mother his wife was making him atrocious scenes.”

Madame Ewans put in her head at the half-open door:

“Come along,” she said, and they set out. No sooner were they in the street than a man, who was smoking, greeted Madame with a friendly wave of his gloved hand. She muttered between her teeth:

“Shall we never be done with them?”

The man began in a guttural voice:

“I was just going to your place, my dear, to offer you a box of Turkish cigarettes. But I see you are taking a boarding-school out for a walk — a regular boarding-school, ‘pon my word! You take pupils, eh? I congratulate you. Make men of ‘em, my dear, make men of ‘em.”

Madame Ewans frowned and replied with a curl of the lips:

“I am with my son and one of my son’s friends.”

The gentleman threw a careless look at one of the lads — Jean Servien as it happened.

“Capital, capital!” he exclaimed. “Is that one your son?”

“Not he, indeed!” she cried hotly.

Jean felt he was looked down upon, and as she laid her hand on her son’s shoulder with a proud gesture, he could not help noticing his schoolfellow’s easy air and elegant costume, at the same time casting a glance of disgust at his own jacket, which had been cut down for him by his aunt out of an overcoat of his father’s.

“Shall we be honoured by your presence to-night at the *Bouffes* ?” asked the gentleman.

“No!” replied Madame Ewans, and pushed the two children forward with the tip of her sunshade.

Stepping out gaily, they soon arrive under the chestnuts of the Tuileries, cross the bridge, then down the river-bank, over the shaky gangway, and so on to the steamer pontoon.

Now they are aboard the boat, which exhales a strong, healthy smell of tar under the hot sun. The long grey walls of the embankments slip by, to be succeeded presently by wooded slopes.

Saint-Cloud! The moment the ropes are made fast, Madame Ewans springs on to the landing-stage and makes straight for the shrilling of the clarinettes and thunder of the big drums, steering her little charges through the press with the handle of her sunshade.

Jean was mightily surprised when Madame Ewans made him “try his luck” in a lottery. He had before now gone with his aunt to sundry suburban fairs, but she had always dissuaded him so peremptorily from spending anything that he was firmly persuaded revolving-tables and shooting-galleries were amusements only permitted to a class of people to which he did not belong. Madame Ewans showed the greatest interest in her son’s success, urging him to give the handle a good vigorous turn.

She was very superstitious about luck, “invoking” the big prizes, clapping her hands in ecstasy whenever Edgar won a halfpenny egg-cup, falling into the depths of despair at every bad shot. Perhaps she saw an omen in his failure; perhaps she was just blindly eager to have her darling succeed. After he had lost two or three times, she pulled the boy away and gave the wooden disk such a violent push round as set its cargo of crockery-ware and glass rattling, and proceeded to play on her own account — once, twice, twenty times, thirty times,

with frantic eagerness. Then followed quite a business about exchanging the small prizes for one big one, as is commonly done. Finally, she decided for a set of beer jugs and glasses, half of which she gave to each of the two friends to carry.

But this was only a beginning. She halted the children before every stall. She made them play for macaroons at *rouge et noir*. She had them try their skill at every sort of shooting-game, with crossbows loaded with little clay pellets, with pistols and carbines, old-fashioned weapons with caps and leaden bullets, at all sorts of distances, and at all kinds of targets — plaster images, revolving pipes, dolls, balls bobbing up and down on top of a jet of water.

Never in his life had Jean Servien been so busy or done so many different things in so short a space of time.

His eyes dazzled with uncouth shapes and startling colours, his throat parched with dust, elbowed, crushed, mauled, hustled by the crowd, he was intoxicated with this debauch of diversions.

He watched Madame Ewans for ever opening her little purse of Russia leather, and a new power was revealed to him. Nor was this all. There was the Dutch top to be set twirling, the wooden horses of the merry-go-round to be mounted; they had to dash down the great chute and take a turn in the Venetian gondolas, to be weighed in the machine and touch the arm of the “human torpedo.”

But Madame Ewans could not help returning again and again to stand before the booth of a hypnotist from Paris, a clairvoyante boasting a certificate signed by the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce and by three Doctors of the Faculty. She gazed enviously at the servant-girls as they trooped up blushing into the van meagrely furnished with a bed and a couple of chairs; but she could not pluck up courage to follow their example.

She recalled to mind how a hypnotist had once helped a friend of hers to recover some stolen forks and spoons. She had even gone so far as to consult a fortune-teller shortly before Edgar’s birth, and the cards had foretold a boy.

All three were tired out and overloaded with crockery, glass, reed-pipes, sticks of sugar-candy, cakes of ginger-bread and macaroons. For all that, they paid a visit to the wax-works, where they saw Monseigneur Sibour’s body lying in state at the Archbishop’s Palace, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, models of people’s legs and arms disfigured by various hideous diseases, and a Circassian maiden stepping out of the bath— “the purest type of female beauty,” as a placard duly informed the public. Madame Ewans examined this last exhibit with a curiosity that very soon became critical.

“People may say what they please,” she muttered; “if you offered me the whole world, *I* wouldn’t have such big feet and such a thick waist. And then, your regular features aren’t one bit attractive. Men like a face that says something.”

When they left the tent, the sun was low and the dust hovered in golden clouds over the throng of women, working-men, and soldiers.

It was time for dinner; but as they passed the monkey-cage, Madame Ewans noticed such a crush of eager spectators squeezing in between the baize curtains on the platform in front that she could not resist the temptation to follow suit. Besides which, she was drawn by a motive of curiosity, having been told that monkeys were not insensible to female charms. But the performance diverted her thoughts in another direction. She saw an unhappy poodle in red breeches shot as a deserter in spite of his honest looks. Tears rose to her eyes, she was so sensitive, so susceptible to the glamour of the stage!

“Yes, it’s quite true,” she sobbed; “yes, poor soldiers have been shot before now just for going off without leave to stand by their mother’s death-bed or for smacking a bullying officer’s face.”

Some old refrain of Béranger she had heard working folks sing in her plebeian childhood rose to her memory and intensified her emotion. She told the children the lamentable tale of the canine deserter’s pitiful doom, and made them feel quite sad.

No sooner were they outside the place, however, than an itinerant toy-seller with a paper helmet on his head set them splitting with laughter.

Dinner must be thought of. She knew of a tavern by the river-side where you could eat a fry of fish in the harbour, and thither they betook themselves.

The lady from Paris and the landlady of the inn greeted each other with a wink of the eye. It was a long time since she had seen Madame; she had no idea who the two young gentlemen were, but anyway they were dear little angels. Madame Ewans ordered the meal like a connoisseur, with a knowing air and all the proper restaurant tricks of phrase. All three sat silent, agreeably tired and enjoying the sensation, she with her bonnet-strings flying loose, the boys leaning back against the trellis. They could see the river and its grassy banks through an archway of wild vine. Their thoughts flowed softly on like the current before their eyes, while the dusk and cool of the evening wrapped them in a soft caress. For the first time Jean Servien, as he gazed at Madame Ewans, felt the thrill of a woman’s sweet proximity.

Presently, warmed by a trifle of wine and water he had drunk, he became wholly lost in his dreams — visions of all sorts of elegant, preposterous, chivalrous things. His head was still full of these fancies when he was dragged

back to the fair-ground by Madame Ewans, who could never have enough of sight-seeing and noise. Illuminated arches spanned at regular intervals the broad-walk, lined on either side by stalls and trestle-tables, but the lateral avenues gloomed dark and deserted under the tall black trees. Loving couples paced them slowly, while the music from the shows sounded muffled by the distance. They were still there when a band of fifes, trombones, and trumpets struck up close by, playing a popular polka tune. The very first bar put Madame Ewans on her mettle. She drew Jean to her, settled his hands in hers and lifting him off the ground with a jerk of the hip, began dancing with him. She swung and swayed to the lilt of the music; but the boy was awkward and embarrassed, and only hindered his partner, dragging back and bumping against her. She threw him off roughly and impatiently, saying sharply:

“You don’t know how to dance, eh? You come here, Edgar.”

She danced a while with him in the semi-darkness. Then, rosy and smiling:

“Bravo!” she laughed; “we’ll stop now.”

Servien stood by in gloomy silence, conscious of his own inefficiency. His heart swelled with a sullen anger. He was hurt, and longed for somebody or something to vent his hate upon.

The drive home was a silent one. Jean nearly gave himself cramp in his determined efforts not to touch with his own the knees of Madame Ewans’ who dozed on the back seat of the conveyance. She hardly awoke enough to bid him good-bye when he alighted at his father’s door.

As he entered, he was struck for the first time by a smell of paste that seemed past bearing. The room where he had slept for years, happy in himself and loved by others, seemed a wretched hole. He sat down on his bed and looked round gloomily and morosely at the holy-water stoup of gilt porcelain, the print commemorating his First Communion, the toilet basin on the chest of drawers, and stacked in the corners piles of pasteboard and ornamental paper for binding.

Everything about him seemed animated by a hostile, malevolent, unjust spirit. In the next room he could hear his father moving. He pictured him at his work-bench, with his serge apron, calm and content. What a humiliation! and for the second time in a dozen hours he blushed for his parentage.

His slumbers were broken and uneasy; he dreamed he was turning, turning unendingly in complicated figures, and it was impossible always to avoid touching Madame Evans’ knee, though all the time he was horribly afraid of doing it. Then there was a great field full of thousands and thousands of marble pigs stuck up on stone pedestals, among which he could see Monsieur Delbèque promenading slowly up and down.

VIII

Next morning he awoke feeling sour-tempered and low-spirited.

"Well, my boy," his father asked him, blowing noisily at each spoonful of soup he absorbed, "well, did you enjoy yourself yesterday?"

He answered curtly and crossly. Everything stirred his gorge. His aunt's print gown filled him with a sort of rage.

His father propounded a hundred minute inquiries; he would fain have pictured the whole expedition to himself as he consumed his bowl of soup. He had seen Saint-Cloud in his soldiering days; but he had never been there since. He had a bright idea; they would go to Versailles, the three of them; his sister would see to having a bit of veal cooked overnight, and they could take it with them. They would have a look at the pictures, eat their snack on the great lawn, and have a fine time generally.

Jean, who was horrified at the whole project, opened his exercise-books and buried his head in his lessons, to avoid the necessity of hearing any more and answering questions. He did not as a rule show such alacrity about setting to work. His father remarked on the fact, commending him for his zeal.

"We should play," he announced, "when it is play-time, and work when it is the time to work," and *he* set to work flattening a piece of shagreen.

Jean fell into a brown study. He had caught a glimpse of a world he knew to be for ever closed against him, but towards which all the forces of his young heart drew him irresistibly. He did not dream Madame Ewans could ever be different from what he had seen her. He could not imagine her otherwise dressed or amid any other surroundings. He knew nothing whatever of women; this one had seemed motherly to him, and it was a mother such as Madame Ewans he would have liked to have. But how his heart beat and his brow burned as he pictured this imaginary mother a reality!

Dating from the day at Saint-Cloud, Jean thought himself unhappy, and unhappy he became in fact. He was wilfully, deliberately insubordinate, proud of breaking rules and defying punishments.

He and his school-mates attended the classes of a *Lycée* in the *Quartier Latin*. Directly he had taken his place on the remotest bench in the well-warmed lecture-room, he would become absorbed in some sentimental novel concealed under piles of Latin and Greek authors. Sometimes the master, short-sighted as he was, would catch the culprit in the act.

Still, Jean had his hours of triumph. His translations were remarkable, not for accuracy, but at any rate for elegance. So, too, his compositions sometimes contained happy phrases that earned him high praise. On the theme, "The maiden Theano defending Alcibiades against the incensed Athenians," he wrote a Latin oration that was warmly commended by Monsieur Duruy, the then Inspector of Public Instruction, and gained the young author some weeks of scholastic fame.

On holidays he would roam the boulevards and gaze with greedy eyes at the jewels, the silks and satins, the bronzes, the photographs of women, displayed in the shop-windows — the thousand and one gewgaws and frivolities of fashion that seemed to him to sum up the necessary conditions of happiness.

His entry into the philosophy class was a red-letter day; he sported his first tall hat and smoked his first non-surreptitious cigarettes. He possessed a certain brilliancy of mind and a keen wit that amused his companions, whose superior he was in gifts of imagination.

His last vacation was passed in tolerable content. His father, thinking him looking pale, sent him on a visit to relatives living in a village near Chartres. Jean, the tedious farm dinner ended, would go and sit under a tree and bury himself in a novel. Occasionally he would ride to the city in the miller's cart. Often he would be drenched all the way by the rain that fell drearily at nightfall. Then he would enjoy the fun of drying himself before the huge fireplace of some inn on the outskirts of the town, beside the savoury roast on the turning spit. He even had a day's shooting with an old flint-lock fowling-piece under the auspices of his cousin the miller. In short, he could boast on his return of having had a country holiday.

IX

At eighteen he took his bachelor's degree. The evening after the examination Monsieur Servien uncorked a bottle with a special seal, which he had hoarded for years in anticipation of this domestic solemnity, and the contents of which had turned from red to pink as they slowly fined.

"A young man who carries his diploma in his pocket can enter every door," Monsieur Servien observed, as he imbibed the wine with fitting respect; it had been good stuff once, but was past its prime.

Jean polished off the family repast rapidly and hurried away to the theatre. His only ideas as yet of what a play was like were derived from the posters he had seen. He selected for tonight one of the big theatres where a tragedy was on the bill. He took his ticket for the pit with a vague idea it would be the talisman admitting him to a new wonder-world of passion and emotion. Every trifle is disconcerting to a troubled spirit, and on his entrance he was surprised and sobered to see how few spectators there were in the stalls and boxes. But at the first scraping of the violins as the orchestra tuned up, he glued his eyes to the curtain, which rose at last.

Then, then he saw, in a Roman palace, leaning on the back of a chair of antique shape, a woman who wore over her robe of white woollen the saffron-hued *palla*. Amid the trampling of feet, the rustle of dresses and the shifting of stools, she was reciting a long soliloquy, accompanied by slow, deliberate gestures. He felt, as he gazed, a strange, unknown pleasure, that grew more and more acute till it was almost pain. As scene followed scene, there entered a confidante, then a hero, then a crowd of supers. But he saw nothing but the apparition that had first fascinated him. His eyes fastened greedily on her beauty, caressing the two bare arms, encircled with rings of metal, gliding along the curve of the hips below the high girdle, plunging amid the brown locks that waved above the brow and were tied back with three white fillets; they clung to the moving lips and the white, moist teeth that ever and anon flashed in the glare of the footlights. He longed to feel, to seize, to hold this lovely, living thing that moved before his eyes; in imagination he enfolded and embraced the beautiful vision.

The wait between the acts (for the tragedy involved a change of scenery) was intolerably tedious. His neighbours were talking politics and passing one another quarters of orange across him; the newspaper boy and the man who hired out

opera-glasses deafened him with their bawling. He was in terror of some sudden catastrophe that might interrupt the play.

The curtain rose once more, on a succession of scenes of political intrigue à la Corneille which had no meaning for Servien. To his joy the lovely being in the white robe came on again. But he had strained his sight too hard; he could see nothing; by dint of riveting his gaze on the long gold pendants that hung from the actress's ears, he was dazzled; his eyes swam and closed involuntarily, and he could hear no sound but the beating of the blood in his temples.

By a supreme effort, in the last scene, he saw and heard her again clearly and distinctly, yet not as with his ordinary senses, for she wore for him the elemental guise of a supernatural vision. When the prompter's bell tinkled and the curtain descended for the last time, he had a feeling as though the universe had collapsed in irretrievable ruin.

Tartuffe was the after-piece; but neither the spirit and perfection of the acting, nor the pretty face and plump shoulders of Elmire, nor the *soubrette*'s dimpled arms, nor the *ingénue*'s innocent eyes, nor the noble, witty lines that filled the theatre and roused the audience to fresh attention, could stir his spirit that hung entranced on the lips of a tragic heroine.

As he stepped out into the street, the first breath of the cool night air on his face blew away his intoxication. His senses came back to him and he could think again; but his thoughts never left the object of his infatuation, and her image was the only thing he saw distinctly. He was entranced, possessed; but the feeling was delicious, and he roamed far and wide in the dark streets, making long detours by the river-side quays to lengthen out his reveries, his heart full, overfull of passionate, voluptuous imaginings. He was content because he was weary; his soul lay drowned in a delicious languor that no pang of desire troubled; to look and long was more than sufficient as yet to still the cravings of his virgin appetites.

He threw himself half dressed on his bed, overjoyed to cherish the picture of her beauty in his heart. All he wanted was to lose himself in the enchanted sleep that weighed down his boyish lids.

On waking, he gazed about him for something — he knew not what. Was he in love? He could not tell, but there was a void somewhere. Still, he felt no overmastering impulse, except to read the verses he had heard the actress declaim. He took down from his shelves a volume of Corneille and read through *Émilie*'s part. Every line enchanted him, one as much as another, for did they not all evoke the same memory for him?

His father and his aunt, with whom he passed his days, had grown to be only vague, meaningless shapes to him. Their broadest pleasantries failed to raise a

smile, and the coarse realities of a narrow, penurious existence had no power to disturb his happy serenity. All day long, in the back-shop where the penetrating smell of paste mingled with the fumes of the cabbage-soup, he lived a life of his own, a life of incomparable splendours. His little Corneille, scored thickly with thumb-nail marks at every couplet of Émilie's, was all he needed to foster the fairest of illusions. A face and the tones of a voice were his world.

In a few days he knew the whole tragedy by heart. He would declaim the lines in a slow, pompous voice, and his aunt would remark after each speech, as she shredded the vegetables for dinner:

“So you're for being a *curé*, are you, that you preach like they do in church?”

But in the main she approved of these exercises, and when Monsieur Servien scratched his head doubtfully and complained that his son would not make up his mind to any way of earning a living, she always took up the cudgels for the “little lad” and silenced the bookbinder by telling him roundly he knew nothing about it — or about anything else.

So the worthy man went back to his calf-skins. All the same, albeit he could form no very clear idea of what was in his son's head, for the latter having become a “gentleman” was beyond his purview, he felt some disquietude to see a holiday, legitimate enough no doubt after a successful examination, dragging out to such a length. He was anxious to see his son earning money in some department of administration or other. He had heard speak of the *Hôtel de Ville* and the Government Offices, and he racked his brains to think of someone among his customers who might interest himself in his son's future. But he was not the man to act precipitately.

One day, when Jean Servien was out on one of the long walks he had got into the habit of taking, he read on a poster that his Émilie, Mademoiselle Gabrielle T — , was appearing in that evening's piece. This time, ignoring his aunt's disapproval, he donned his Sunday clothes, had his hair frizzed and curled, and took his seat in the orchestra stalls.

He saw her again! For the first few moments she did not seem so beautiful as he had pictured her. So long had he laboured and lain awake over the first image he had carried away of her that the impression had become blurred, and the type that had originally imprinted it on his heart no longer corresponded with the result created by his mind's unconscious working. Then he was disconcerted to see neither the white *stola* and saffron mantle nor the bracelets and fillets that had seemed to him part and parcel of the beauty they adorned. Now she wore the turban of Roxana and the wide muslin trousers caught in at the ankle. It was only by degrees he could grow reconciled to the change. He realized that her arms were a trifle thin, and that a tooth stood back behind the rest in the row of pearls.

But in the end her very defects pleased him, because they were hers, and he loved her the better for them. This time, by the law of change which is of the very essence of life, and by virtue of the imperfection that characterizes all living creatures, she made a physical appeal to his senses and called up the idea of a human being of flesh and blood, a creature you could cling to and make one with yourself. His admiration was lost in a flood of tenderness and infinite sadness — and he burst into tears.

The next day he conceived a great desire to see her as she was in everyday life, dressed for the streets. It would be a sort of intimacy merely to pass her on the pavement. One evening, when she was playing, he watched for her at the stage-door, through which emerged one after the other scene-shifters, actors, constables, firemen, dressers, and actresses. At last she appeared, muffled in her fur cloak, a bouquet in her hand, tall and pale — so pale in the dusk her face seemed to him as if illumined by an inward light. She stood waiting on the doorstep till a carriage was called.

He clasped both hands on his breast and thought he was going to die.

When he found himself alone on the deserted *Quai*, he plucked a leaf from the overhanging bough of a plane tree. Then, setting his elbows on the parapet of the bridge, he tossed the leaf into the river and watched it borne away by the current of the stream that lay silvery in the moonlight, spangled with quivering lights. He watched it till he could see it no longer. Was it not the emblem of himself? He, too, was abandoning himself to the waters of a passion that shone bright and which he thought profound.

X

That year the *Champs de Mars* was occupied by one of the series of *Expositions Universelles* . Under the trees, in the heat and dust, crowds were swarming towards the entrance. Jean passed the turnstiles and entered the palace of glass and iron. He was still pursuing his passion, for he associated the being he loved with all manifestations of art and luxury. He made for the park and went straight to the Egyptian pavilion. Egypt had filled his dreams from the day when all his thoughts had been centred on one woman. In the avenue of sphinxes and before the painted temple he fell under the glamour that women of olden days and strange lands exercise on the senses, — on those of lovers with especial force. The sanctuary was venerable in his eyes, despite the vulgar use it was put to as part of the Exhibition. Looking at the jewels of Queen Aahotep, who lived and was lovely in the days of the Patriarchs, he pondered sadly over all that had been in the world and was no more. He pictured in fancy the black locks that had scented this diadem with the sphinx's head, the slim brown arms these, beads of gold and lapis lazuli had touched, the shoulders that had worn these vulture's wings, the peaked bosoms these chains and gorgets had confined, the breast that had once communicated its warmth to yonder gold scarabæus with the blue wing-cases, the little royal hand that once held that poniard by the hilt wrought over with flowers and women's faces. He could not conceive how what was a dream to him had been a reality for other men. Vainly he tried to follow the lapse of ages. He told himself that another living shape would vanish in its turn, and it would be for nothing then that it had been so passionately desired. The thought saddened and calmed him. He thought, as he stood before these gewgaws from the tomb, of all these men who, in the abyss of bygone time, had in turn loved, coveted, enjoyed, suffered, whom death had taken, hungry or satiated, and made an end of the appetites of all alike. A placid melancholy swept over him and held him motionless, his face buried in his hands.

XI

It was at breakfast the next morning that Jean noticed, for the first time, the venerable, kindly look of his father's face. In truth, advancing years had invested the bookbinder's appearance with a sort of beauty. The smooth forehead under the curling white locks betokened a habit of peaceful and honest thoughts. Old age, while rendering the play of the muscles less active, veiled the distortion of the limbs due to long hours of labour at the bench under the more affecting disfigurements which life and *its* long-drawn labours impress on all men alike. The old man had read, thought, striven honestly to do his best, and won the saving grace a simple faith bestows on the humble of heart; for he had become a religious man and a regular attendant at the church of his parish. Jean told himself it would be an easy and a grateful task to cherish such a father, and he resolved to inaugurate a life of toil and sacrifice. But he had no employment and no notion what to do.

Shut up in his room, he was filled with a great pity for himself and longed to recover the peace of mind, the calm of the senses, the happy life that had vanished along with the leaf he had abandoned that evening to the drifting current. He opened a novel, but at the first mention of love he pitched the volume down, and fell to reading a book of travel, following the steps of an English explorer into the reed palace of the King of Uganda. He ascended the Upper Nile to Urondogami; hippopotamuses snorted in the swamps, waders and guinea-fowl rose in flight, while a herd of antelopes sped flying through the tall grasses. He was recalled from far, far away by his aunt shouting up the stairs:

"Jean! Jean! come down into the shop; your father wants you."

A stout, red-faced man, with the bent shoulders that come of much stooping over the desk, sat beside the counter. Monsieur Servien's eyes rested on his face with a deprecating air.

When the boy appeared, the stranger asked if this was the young man in question, adding in a scolding voice:

"You are all the same. You work and sweat and wear yourselves out to make your sons bachelors of arts, and you think the day after the examination the fine fellows will be posted Ambassadors. For God's sake! no more graduates, if you please! We can't tell what to do with 'em.... Graduates indeed! Why, they block the road; they are cab-drivers, they distribute handbills in the streets. You have 'em dying in hospital, rotting in the hulks! Why didn't you teach your son your own trade? Why didn't you make a bookbinder of him? ... Oh! I know why; you

needn't tell me, — out of ambition! Well, then! some day your son will die of starvation, blushing for your folly — and a good job too! The State! you say, the State! it's the only word you can put your tongues to. But it's cluttered up, the State is! Take the Treasury; you send us graduates who can't spell; what d'ye expect us to do with all these loafers?"

He drew his hand across his hot forehead. Then pointing a finger to show he was addressing Jane:

"At any rate, you write a good hand?"

Monsieur Servien answered for his son, saying it was legible.

"Legible! Legible!" repeated the great man — throwing his fat hands about. "A copying clerk must write an even hand. Young man, do you write an even hand?"

Jean said he did not know, his handwriting might have been spoilt, he had never thought very much about it. His questioner frowned:

"That's very wrong," he blustered; "and I dare swear you young fellows make a silly affectation of not writing decently.... I may have a bit of influence at the Ministry, but you mustn't ask me to do impossibilities."

The bookbinder shrunk back with a scared glance. *He* certainly did not look the man to ask impossibilities.

The other got up:

"You will take lessons," he said, turning to Jean, "in writing and ciphering. You have eight months before you. Eight months from now the Minister will hold an examination. I will put your name down. Do you set to work without losing a minute!"

So saying, he pulled out his watch, as though to see if his protégé was actually going to waste a single minute before beginning his studies. He directed Monsieur Servien to get to work without delay on the books he was giving him to bind, and walked out of the shop. After the bookbinder had seen him to his carriage:

"Jean, my boy," said he, "that is Monsieur Bargemont; I have spoken to him about you and you have heard what he had to say; he is going to help you to get into the Treasury Office, where he holds a high post. You understand what he told you about the examinations; you know more about such things, praise God! than I do. I am only an ignoramus, my lad, but I am your father. Now listen; I want to have a word of explanation with you, so that from this day on till I go to where your dear mother is we can look each other calmly in the face and understand one another at the first glance. Your mother loved you right well, Jean. There's not a gold mine in the world could give a notion of the wealth of affection that woman possessed. From the first moment you saw the light, she

lived, so to say, more in you than in herself. Her love was stronger than she could bear. Well, well, she is dead. It was nobody's fault."

The old man turned his eyes involuntarily towards the darkest corner of the shop, and Jean, looking in the same direction, caught sight of the sharp angles of the hand-press in the gloom.

Monsieur Servien went on:

"On her death-bed your mother asked me to make an educated man of you, for well she knew that education is the key that opens every door.

"I have done what she wished. She was no longer with us, Jean, and when a voice comes back to you from the grave and bids you do a thing 'that a blessing may come,' why, one must needs obey. I did my best; and no doubt God was with me, for I have succeeded. You have your education; so far so good, but we must not have a blessing turn into a curse. And idleness is a curse. I have worked like a packhorse, and given many a hard pull at the collar, in harness from morning to night. I remember in particular one lot of cloth covers for the firm of Pigoreau that kept me on the job for thirty-six hours running. And then there was the year when your examination fees had to be paid and I accepted an order in the English style; it was a terrible bit of work, for it's not in my way at all, and at my time of life a man is not good at new methods. They wanted a light sort of binding, with flexible boards as flimsy as paper almost. I shed tears over it, but I learned the trick! Ah! it is a famous tool, is a workman's hand! But an educated man's brain is a far more wonderful thing still, and that tool you have, thanks to God in the first place, and to your mother in the second. It was she had the notion of educating you, I only followed her lead. Your work will be lighter than mine, but you must do it. I am a poor man, as you know; but, were I rich, I would not give you the means to lead an idle life, because that would be tempting you to vices and shaming you. Ah! if I thought your education had given you a taste for idleness, I should be sorry not to have made you a working man like myself. But then, I know you have a good heart; you have not got into your stride yet, that's all! The first steps will be uphill work; Monsieur Bargemont said so. The State services are overcrowded; there are over many graduates — though it is well enough to be one. Besides, I shall be at your back; I will help you, I will work for you; I have a pair of stout arms still. You shall have pocket-money, never fear; you will want it among the folks you will live with. We will save and pinch. But you must help yourself, lad; never be afraid of hard work, hit out from the shoulder and strike home. Good work never spoiled play yet. Your job done, laugh and sing and amuse yourself to your heart's content; you won't find me interfere. And, when you are a great man, if I am still in this world, don't you be afraid; I shall not get in your way. I am not a fellow

to make a noise. We will hide away in some quiet hole, your aunt and I, and nobody will hear one word said of the old father.”

Aunt Servien, who had slipped into the shop and been listening for the last few moments, broke into sobs; she was quite ready to follow her brother and hide away in a corner; but when her nephew had risen to greatness, she would insist on going every day to keep things straight in his grand house. She was not going to leave “the little lad” to be a prey to housekeepers — housekeepers, indeed, she called them housebreakers!

“The creatures keep great hampers,” she declared, “that swallow up bottles of wine, cold chickens, and other titbits, fine linen, old clothes, oil, sugar, and candles — the best pickings from a rich man’s house. No, I’ll not let my little Jean be sucked to death by such vampires. *I mean to keep your house in order.* No one will ever know I am your aunt. And if they did know, there’s nobody, I should hope, could object. I don’t know why anyone should be ashamed of me. They can lay my whole life bare, I have nothing to blush for. And there’s many a Duchess can’t say as much. As for forsaking the lad for fear of doing him a hurt, well, the notion is just what I expected of you, Servien; you’ve always been a bit simple-minded. *I mean to stay all my life with Jean.* No, little lad, you’ll never drive your old aunt out of your house, will you? And who could ever make your bed the way I can, my lamb?”

Jean promised his father faithfully, oh! most faithfully, he would lead a hardworking life. Then he shut himself up in his room and pictured the future to himself — long years of austere and methodical labour.

He mapped out his days systematically. In the morning he wrote copies to improve his handwriting, seated at a corner of the workbench. After breakfast he did sums in his bedroom. Every evening he went to the *Rue Soufflot* by way of the Luxembourg gardens to a private tutor’s, and the old man would set him dictations and explain the rules of simple interest. On reaching the gate adjoining the *Fontaine Médicis* the boy always turned round for a look at the statues of women he could discern standing like white ghosts along the terrace. He had left behind on the path of life another fascinating vision.

He never read a theatrical poster now, and deliberately forgot his favorite poets for fear of renewing his pain.

XII

This new life pleased him; it slipped by with a soothing monotony, and he found it healthful and to his taste. One evening, as he was coming downstairs at his old tutor's, a stout man offered him, with a sweep of the arm, the bill of fare advertising a neighbouring cook-shop; he carried a huge bundle of them under his left arm. Then stopping abruptly:

"*Per Bacco!*" cried the fellow; "it is my old pupil. Tall and straight as a young poplar, here stands Monsieur Jean Servien!"

It was no other than the Marquis Tudesco. His red waistcoat was gone; instead he wore a sort of sleeved vest of coarse ticking, but his shining face, with the little round eyes and hooked nose, still wore the same look of merry, mischievous alertness that was so like an old parrot's.

Jean was surprised to see him, and not ill-pleased after all. He greeted him affectionately and asked what he was doing now.

"Behold!" replied the Marquis, "my business is to distribute in the streets these advertisements of a local poisoner, and thereby to earn a place at the assassin's table to spread the fame of which I labour. Camoens held out his hand for charity in the streets of Lisbon. Tudesco stretches forth his in the byways of the modern Babylon, but it is to give and not to receive — lunches at 1 fr. 25, dinners at 1 fr. 75," and he offered one of his bills to a passer-by, who strode on, hands in pockets, without taking it.

Thereupon the Marquis Tudesco heaved a sigh and exclaimed:

"And yet I have translated the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the masterpiece of the immortal Torquato Tasso! But the brutal-minded booksellers scorn the fruit of my vigils, and in the empyrean the Muse veils her face so as not to witness the humiliation inflicted on her nursling."

"And what has become of you all the time since we last saw you?" asked the young man frankly.

"God only knows, and 'pon my word! I think He has forgotten."

Such was the Marquis Tudesco's oracular answer.

He tied up his bundle of papers in a cloth, and taking his pupil by the arm, urged him in the direction of the *Rue Saint-Jacques*.

"See, my young friend," he said, "the dome of the Panthéon is half hidden by the fog. The School of Salerno teaches that the damp air of evening is inimical to the human stomach. There is near by a decent establishment where we can

converse as two philosophers should, and I feel sure your unavowed desire is to conduct your old instructor thither, the master who initiated you in the Latin rudiments.”

They entered a drinking-shop perfumed with so strong a reek of kirsch and absinthe as took Servien’s breath away. The room was long and narrow, while against the walls varnished barrels with copper taps were ranged in a long-drawn perspective that was lost in the thick haze of tobacco-smoke hanging in the air under the gas-jets. At little tables of painted deal a number of men were drinking; dressed in black and wearing tall silk hats, broken-brimmed and shiny from exposure to the rain, they sat and smoked in silence. Before the door of the stove several pairs of thin legs were extended to catch the heat, and a thread of steam curled up from the toes of the owners’ boots. A heavy torpor seemed to weigh upon all this assemblage of pallid, impassive faces.

While Monsieur Tudesco was distributing hand-shakes to sundry old acquaintances, Jean caught scraps of the conversation of those about him that filled him with a despairing melancholy — school ushers railing at the cookery of cheap eating-houses, tipplers maundering contentedly to one another, enchanted at the profundity of their own wisdom, schemers planning to make a fortune, politicians arguing, amateurs of the fair sex telling highly-spiced anecdotes of love and women — and amongst it all this sentence:

“The harmony of the spheres fills the spaces of infinity, and if we hear it not, it is because, as Plato says, our ears are stopped with earth.”

Monsieur Tudesco consumed brandy-cherries in a very elegant way. Then the waiter served two dantzigs in little glass cups. Jean admired the translucent liquor dotted with golden sparkles, and Monsieur Tudesco demanded two more. Then, raising his cup on high:

“I drink to the health of Monsieur Servien, your venerable father,” he cried. “He enjoys a green and flourishing old age, at least I hope so; he is a man superior to his mechanic and mercantile condition by the benevolence of his behaviour to needy men of letters. And your respected aunt? She still knits stockings with the same zeal as of yore? At least I hope so. A lady of an austere virtue. I conjecture you are wishing to order another dantzig, my young friend.”

Jean looked about him. The dram-shop was transfigured; the casks looked enormous with their taps splendidly glittering, and seemed to stretch into infinity in a quivering, golden mist. But one object was more monstrously magnified than all the rest, and that was the Marquis Tudesco; the old man positively towered as huge as the giant of a fairy-tale, and Jean looked for him to do wonders.

Tudesco was smiling.

“You do not drink, my young friend,” he resumed. “I conjecture you are in love. Ah! love! love is at once the sweetest and the bitterest thing on earth. I too have felt my heart beat for a woman. But it is long years ago since I outlived that passion. I am now an old man crushed under adverse fortune; but in happier days there was at Rome a *diva* of a beauty so magnificent and a genius so enthralling that cardinals fought to the death at the door of her box; well, sir, that sublime creature I have pressed to my bosom, and I have been informed since that with her last sigh she breathed my name. I am like an old ruined temple, degraded by the passage of time and the violence of men’s hands, yet sanctified for ever by the goddess.”

This tale, whether it recalled in exaggerated terms some commonplace intrigue of his young days in Italy, or more likely was a pure fiction based on romantic episodes he had read in novels, was accepted by Jean as authentic and vastly impressive. The effect was startling, amazing. In an instant he beheld, with all the miraculous clearness of a vision, there, standing between the tables, the queen of tragedy he adored; he saw the locks braided in antique fashion, the long gold pendants drooping from either ear, the bare arms and the white face with scarlet lips. And he cried aloud:

“I too love an actress.”

He was drinking, never heeding what the liquor was; but lo! it was a philtre he swallowed that revived his passion. Then a torrent of words rose flooding to his lips. The plays he had seen, *Cinna*, *Bajazet*, the stern beauty of Émilie, the sweet ferocity of Roxana, the sight of the actress cloaked in velvet, her face shining so pale and clear in the darkness, his longings, his hopes, his undying love, he recounted everything with cries and tears.

Monsieur Tudesco heard him out, lapping up a glass of Chartreuse drop by drop the while, and taking snuff from a screw of paper. At times he would nod his head in approval and go on listening with the air of a man watching and waiting his opportunity. When he judged that at last, after tedious repetitions and numberless fresh starts, the other’s confidences were exhausted, he assumed a look of gravity, and laying his fine hand with a gesture as of priestly benediction on the young man’s shoulder:

“Ah! my young friend,” he said, “if I thought that what you feel were true love... but I do not,” and he shook his head and let his hand drop.

Jean protested. To suffer so, and not to be really in love?

Monsieur Tudesco repeated:

“If I thought that this were true love... but I do not, so far.”

Jean answered with great vehemence; he talked of death and plunging a dagger in his heart.

Monsieur Tudesco reiterated for the third time:

“I do not believe it is true love.”

Then Jean fell into a fury and began to rumple and tear at his waistcoat as if he would bare his heart for inspection. Monsieur Tudesco took his hands and addressed him soothingly:

“Well, well, my young friend, since it *is* true love you feel, I will help you. I am a great tactician, and if King Carlo Alberto had read a certain memorial I sent him on military matters he would have won the battle of Novara. He did not read my memorial, and the battle was lost, but it was a glorious defeat. How happy the sons of Italy who died for their mother in that thrice holy battle! The hymns of poets and the tears of women made enviable their obsequies. I say it: what a noble, what a heroic thing is youth! What flames divine escape from young bosoms to rise to the Creator! I admire above everything young folk who throw themselves into ventures of war and sentiment with the impetuosity natural to their age.”

Tasso, Novara, and the *diva* so beloved of cardinals mingled confusedly in Jean Servien’s heated brain, and in a burst of sublime if fuddled enthusiasm he wrung the old villain’s hand. Everything had grown indistinct; he seemed to be swimming in an element of molten metal.

Monsieur Tudesco, who at the moment was imbibing a glass of kummel, pointed to his waistcoat of ticking.

“The misfortune is,” he observed, “that I am garbed like a philosopher. How show myself in such a costume among elegant females? ’Tis a sad pity! for it would be an easy matter for me to pay my respects to an actress at an important theatre. I have translated the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, that masterpiece of Torquato Tasso’s. I could propose to the great actress whom you love and who is worthy of your love, at least I hope so, a French adaptation of the *Myrrha* of the celebrated Alfieri. What eloquence, what fire in that tragedy! The part of *Myrrha* is sublime and terrible; she will be eager to play it. Meantime, you translate *Myrrha* into French verse; then I introduce you with your manuscript into the sanctuary of Melpomene, when you bring with you a double gift — fame and love! What a dream, oh! fortunate young man!... But alas! ’tis but a dream, for how should I enter a lady’s boudoir in this rude and sordid guise?”

But the tavern was closing and they had to leave. Jean felt so giddy in the open air he could not tell how he had come to lose Monsieur Tudesco, after emptying the contents of his purse into the latter’s hand.

He wandered about all night in the rain, stumbling through the puddles which splashed up the mud in his face. His brains buzzed with the maddest schemes,

that took shape, jostled one another, and tumbled to pieces in his head. Sometimes he would stop to wipe the sweat from his forehead, then start off again on his wild way. Fatigue calmed his nerves, and a clear purpose emerged. He went straight to the house where the actress lived, and from the street gazed up at her dark, shuttered windows; then, stepping up to the *porte-cochère* , he kissed the great doors.

XIII

Dating from that night Jean Servien spent his days in translating *Myrrha* bit by bit, with an infinity of pains. The task having taught him something of verse-making, he composed an ode, which he sent by post to his mistress. The poem was writ in tears of blood, yet it was as cold and insipid as a schoolboy's exercise. Still, he did get something said of the fair vision of a woman that hovered for ever before his eyes, and of the door he had kissed in a night of frenzy.

Monsieur Servien was disturbed to note how his son had grown heedless, absent-minded, and hollow-eyed, coming back late at night, and hardly up before noon. Before the mute reproach in his father's eyes the boy hung his head. But his home-life was nothing now; his whole thoughts were abroad, hovering around the unknown, in regions he pictured as resplendent with poetry, wealth and pleasure.

Occasionally, at a street corner, he would meet the Marquis Tudesco again. He had found it impossible to replace his waistcoat of ticking. Moreover, he now advised Jean to pay his addresses to shop-girls.

When the summer came, the theatrical posters announced in quick succession *Mithridate*, *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *Rodogune*, *les Enfants d'Edouard*, *la Fiammina*. Jean, having secured the money to pay for a seat by hook or by crook, by some bit of trickery or falsehood, by cajoling his aunt or by a surreptitious raid on the cash-box, would watch from an orchestra stall the startling metamorphoses of the woman he loved. He saw her now girt with the white fillet of the virgins of Hellas, like those figures carved with such an exquisite purity in the marble of the Greek bas-reliefs that they seem clad in inviolate innocence, now in a flowered gown, with powdered ringlets sweeping her naked shoulders, that had an inexpressible charm in their spare outlines suggestive of the bitter-sweet taste of an unripe fruit. She reminded him in this attire of some old-time pastel of gallant ladies such as the bookbinder's son had pored over in the dealers' shops on the *Quai Voltaire*. Anon she would be crowned with a hawk's crest, girdled with plaques of gold on which were traced magic symbols in clustered rubies, clad in the barbaric splendour of an Eastern queen; presently she would be wearing the black hood, pointed above the brow, and the dusky velvet robe of a Royal widow, like the portraits to be seen guarded as holy relics in a chamber of the Louvre; last travesty of all (and it was in this guise he found her most adorable), as a modern horsewoman, clothed from neck

to heel in a close-fitting habit, a man's hat set rakishly on her dainty head. He would fain spend his life in these romantic dreams, and devoured Racine, the Greek tragedians, Corneille, Shakespeare, Voltaire's verses on the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur, and whatever in modern literature appealed to him as elegant or fraught with passion. But in all these creations it was one image, and one only, that he saw.

Going one evening to the dram-shop with the Marquis Tudesco, who had given up all idea of discarding his checked waistcoat, he made the acquaintance of an old man whose white hair lay in ringlets on his shoulders and who still had the blue eyes of a child. He was an architect fallen to ruin along with the little Gothic erections he had raised at great expense in the Paris suburbs about 1840. His name was Théroulde, and the old fellow, whose smiling face belied his wretched condition, overflowed with anecdotes of artists and pretty women.

In his prosperous days he had built country villas for actresses and attended many a joyous house-warming, the fun and frolic of which were still fresh in the light-hearted veteran's memory. He had long ceased to care who heard him, and primed with maraschino, he would unfold his reminiscences like some sumptuous tapestry gone to tatters. The bookseller's son, meeting an artist for the first time, listened to the old Bohemian with rapt enthusiasm. All these forgotten celebrities, or half-celebrities, all these old young beauties of whom Théroulde spoke, came to life again for him, fascinated him with an unexpected charm and a piquant sense of familiarity. Servien pictured them as he had seen them represented in the old foxed lithographs that litter the second-hand bookstalls along the *Quais*, wearing the hair in flat bandeaux with a jewel on a gold chain in the middle of the forehead, or else in heavy ringlets à l'Anglaise brushing the cheeks. Obsessed by his one idea, he endeavoured to recall one who seemed so well acquainted with ladies of the stage to the present day. He spoke of tragedy, but Théroulde said he thought that sort of plays ridiculous, and repeated a number of parodies. Jean mentioned Gabrielle T — .

"T — ,” exclaimed the artist-architect; “I knew her mother well.”

Never in all his life had Jean heard a sentence that interested him so profoundly.

“I knew her in 1842,” Théroulde went on, “at Nantes, where she created fourteen rôles in six weeks. And folks imagine actresses have nothing to do! A fine thing, the stage! But the mischief is, there's not a single architect capable of building a playhouse with any sense. As to scenery, it is simply puerile, even at the Opera — so childish it might make a South Sea Islander blush. I have thought out a system of rollers in the flies so as to get rid of those long top-cloths that represent the sky without a pretence at deceiving anyone. I have likewise

invented an arrangement of lamps and reflectors so placed as to light the characters on the stage from above downwards, as the sun does, which is the rational way, and not from below upwards, as the footlights do, which is absurd.”

“Of course it is,” agreed Servien. “But you were speaking of Gabrielle T — — ‘s mother.”

“She was a fine woman,” replied the architect; “tall, dark, with a little moustache that became her to perfection.... You see the effect of my roller contrivance — a vast sky shedding an equal illumination over the actors and giving every object its natural shadows. *La Muette* is being played, we will say; the famous *cavatina*, the slumber-song, is heard beneath a transparent sky, vaulted like the real thing and giving the impression of boundless space. The effect of the music is doubled! Fenella wakes, crosses the boards with cadenced tread; her shadow, which follows her on the floor, is cadenced like her steps; it is nature and art both together. That is my invention! As for putting it in execution, why, the means are childishly simple.”

Thereupon he entered upon endless explanations, using technical terms and illustrating his meaning with everything he could lay hands on — glasses, saucers, matches. His frayed sleeves, as they swept to and fro, wiped the marble top of the table and set the glasses rattling. Disturbed by the noise, the Marquis Tudesco, who was asleep, half opened his eyes mechanically.

Servien kept nodding his approval and repeating that he quite understood, to stop the old man’s babble. Then he advised the architect to try and put his invention in practice; but he only shrugged his shoulders — it was years since he had left off trying anything. After all, what did it matter to him whether his system was applied or no? He was an inventor!

Recalled for the third time by his young listener to Gabrielle T — — ‘s mother:

“She never had any great success on the stage,” he declared; “but she was a careful woman and saved money. She was near on fifty when I came upon her again in Paris living with Adolphe, a very handsome young fellow of twenty-five or twenty-six, nephew of a stockbroker. It was the most loving couple, the merriest, happiest household in the world. Never once did I breakfast at their little flat, fifth floor of a house in the *Rue Taitbout*, without being melted to tears. ‘Eat, my kitten,’ ‘Drink, my lamb!’ and such looks and endearments, and

each so pleased with the other! One day he said to her: 'My kitten, your money does not bring you in what it ought; give me your scrip and in forty-eight hours I shall have doubled your capital.' She went softly to her cupboard and opening the glass doors, handed him her securities one by one with hands that trembled a little.

"He took them unconcernedly and brought her a receipt the same evening bearing his uncle's signature. Three months after she was pocketing a very handsome income. The sixth month Adolphe disappeared. The old girl goes straight to the uncle with her screed of paper. 'I never signed that,' says the stockbroker, 'and my nephew never deposited any securities with me.' She flies like a mad-woman to the Commissary of Police, to learn that Adolphe, hammered at the Bourse, is off to Belgium, carrying with him a hundred and twenty thousand francs he had done another old woman out of. She never got over the blow; but we must say this of her, she brought up her daughter mighty strictly, and showed herself a very dragon of virtue. Poor Gabrielle must feel her cheeks burn to this day only to think of her years at the Conservatoire; for in those days her mother used to smack them soundly for her, morning and evening. Gabrielle, why I can see her now, in her sky-blue frock, running to lessons nibbling coffee-berries between her teeth. She was a good girl, that."

"You knew her!" cried Jean, for whom these confidences formed the most exciting love adventure he had ever known.

The old man assured him:

"We used to have fine rides with her and a lot of artists in old days on horseback and donkey-back in the woods of Ville d'Avray; she used to dress as a man, and I remember one day..." He finished his story in a whisper, — it was just as well. He went on to say he hardly ever saw her now that she was with Monsieur Didier, of the Crédit Bourguignon. The financier had sent the artists to the right-about; he was a conceited, narrow-minded fellow, a dull, tiresome prig.

Jean was neither surprised nor excessively shocked to hear that she had a lover, because having studied the ways of the ladies of the theatre in the proverbs in verse of Alfred de Musset, he pictured the life of Parisian actresses without exception as one continual feast of wit and gallantry. He loved her; with or without Didier, he loved her. She might have had three hundred lovers, like Lesbia, — he would have loved her just as much. Is it not always so with men's passions? They are in love because they are in love, and in spite of everything.

As for feeling jealousy of Monsieur Didier, he never so much as thought of it. The infatuation of the lad! He was jealous of the men and women who saw her pass to and fro in the street, of the scene-shifters and workmen whom the business of the stage brought into contact with her. For the present these were

his only rivals. For the rest, he trusted to the future, the ineffable future big whether with bliss or torment. Indeed, the literature of romance had inspired him with no small esteem of courtesans, if only their attitude was as it should be — leaning pensively on the balcony-rail of their marble palace.

What did shock him in the rapsallion architect's stories, what wounded his love without weakening it, was all the rather squalid elements these narratives implied in the actress's young days. Of all things in the world he thought anything sordid the most repugnant.

Monsieur Tudesco, feeling sure his brandy-cherries would be paid for, did not trouble himself to talk, and the conversation was languishing when the architect remarked casually:

“By-the-by! As I was going to Bellevue yesterday on business of my own, I came upon that actress of yours, young man, at her gate... oh! a rubbishy little villa, run up to last through a love affair, standing in six square yards of garden, meant to give a stockbroker some sort of notion what the country's like. She invited me in — but what was the use?”...

She was at Bellevue! Jean forgot all the humiliating details the old man had told him, retaining the one fact only, that she was at Bellevue and it was possible to see her there in the sweet intimacy of the country.

He got up to go. Monsieur Tudesco caught him by the skirt of his jacket to detain him:

“My young friend, you have my admiration; for I see you rise on daring pinions above the hindrances of a lowly station to the realms of beauty, fame and wealth. You will yet cull the splendid blossom that fascinates you, at least I hope so. But how much better had you loved a simple work-girl, whose affections you could have beguiled by offering her a penn'orth of fried potatoes and a seat among the gods to see a melodrama. I fear you are a dupe of men's opinion, for one woman is not very different from another, and it is opinion, that mistress of the world, and nothing else, which sets a high price on some and a low one on others. Do you profit, my young and very dear friend, by the experience afforded me by the vicissitudes of fortune, which are such that I am obliged at this present moment to borrow of you the modest sum of two and a half francs.”

So spake the Marquis Tudesco.

XIV

Jean had trudged afoot up the hill of Bellevue. Evening was falling. The village street ran upwards between low walls, brambles and thistles lining the roadway on either side. In front the woods melted into a far-off blue haze; below him stretched the city, with its river, its roofs, its towers and domes, the vast, smoky town which had kindled Servien's aspirations at the flaring lights of its theatres and nurtured his feverish longings in the dust of its streets. In the west a broad streak of purple lay between heaven and earth. A sweet sense of peace descended on the landscape as the first stars twinkled faintly in the sky. But it was not peace Jean Servien had come to find.

A few more paces on the stony high road and there stood the gate festooned with the tendrils of a wild vine, just as it had been described to him.

He gazed long, in a trance of adoration. Peering through the bars, between the sombre boughs of a Judas tree, he saw a pretty little white house with a flight of stone steps before the front door, flanked by two blue vases. Everything was still, nobody at the windows, nobody stirring on the gravel of the drive; not a voice, not a whisper, not a footfall. And yet, after a long, long look, he turned away almost happy, his heart filled with satisfaction.

He waited under the old walnut trees of the avenue till the windows lighted up one by one in the darkness, and then retraced his steps. As he passed the railway station, to which people were hurrying to catch an incoming train, he saw amid the confusion a tall woman in a mantilla kiss a young girl who was taking her leave. The pale face under the mantilla, the long, delicate hands, that seemed ungloved out of a voluptuous caprice, how well he knew them! How he saw the woman from head to foot in a flash! His knees bent under him. He felt an exquisite languor, as if he would die there and then! No, he never believed she was so beautiful, so beyond price! And he had thought to forget her! He had imagined he could live without her, as if she did not sum up in herself the world and life and everything!

She turned into the lane leading to her house, walking at a smart pace, with her dress trailing and catching on the brambles, from which with a backward sweep of the hand and a rough pull she would twitch it clear.

Jean followed her, pushing his way deliberately through the same bramble bushes and exulting to feel the thorns scratch and tear his flesh.

She stopped at the gate, and Jean saw her profile, in its purity and dignity, clearly defined in the pale moonlight. She was a long time in turning the key,

and Jean could watch her face, the more enthralling to the senses for the absence of any tokens of disturbing intellectual effort. He groaned in grief and rage to think how in another second the iron bars would be close between her and him.

No, he would not have it so; he darted forward, seized her by the hand, which he pressed in his own and kissed.

She gave a loud cry of terror, the cry of a frightened animal. Jean was on his knees on the stone step, chafing the hand he held against his teeth, forcing the rings into the flesh of his lips.

A servant, a lady's maid, came running up, holding a candle that had blown out.

"What is all this?" she asked breathlessly.

Jean released the hand, which bore the mark of his violence in a drop of blood, and got to his feet.

Gabrielle, panting and holding the wounded hand against her bosom, leant against the gate for support.

"I want to speak to you; I must," cried Jean.

"Here's pretty manners!" shrilled the maid-servant. "Go your ways," and she pointed with her candlestick first to one end, then to the other of the street.

The actress's face was still convulsed with the shock of her terror. Her lips were trembling and drawn back so as to show the teeth glittering. But she realized that she had nothing to fear.

"What do you want with me?" she demanded.

He had lost his temerity since he had dropped her hand. It was in a very gentle voice he said:

"Madame, I beg and beseech you, let me say one word to you alone."

"Rosalie," she ordered, after a moment's hesitation, "take a turn or two in the garden. Now speak, sir," and she remained standing on the step, leaving the gate half-way open, as it had been at the moment he had kissed her hand.

He spoke in all the sincerity of his inmost heart:

"All I have to say to you, Madame, is that you must not, you ought not, to repulse me, for I love you too well to live without you."

She appeared to be searching in her memory.

"Was it not you," she asked, "who sent me some verses?"

He said it was, and she resumed:

"You followed me one evening. It is not right, sir, not the right thing, to follow ladies in the street."

"I only followed *you*, and that was because I could not help it."

"You are very young."

"Yes, but it was long ago I began to love you."

“It came upon you all in a moment, did it not?”

“Yes, when I saw you.”

“That is what I thought. You are inflammable, so it seems.”

“I do not know, Madame. I love you and I am very unhappy. I have lost the heart to live, and I cannot bear to die, for then I should not see you any more. Let me be near you sometimes. It must be so heavenly!”

“But, sir, I know nothing about you.”

“That is my misfortune. But how *can* I be a stranger for you? You are no stranger, no stranger in my eyes. I do not know any woman, for me there is no other woman in the world but you.”

And again he took her hand, which she let him kiss. Then:

“It is all very pretty,” she said, “but it is not an occupation, being in love. What are you? What do you do?”

He answered frankly enough:

“My father is in trade; he is looking out for a post for me.”

The actress understood the truth; here was a little bourgeois, living contentedly on next to nothing, reared in habits of penuriousness, a hidebound, mean creature, like the petty tradesmen who used to come to her whining for their bills, and whom she encountered of a Sunday in smart new coats in the Meudon woods. She could feel no interest in him, such as he might have inspired, whether as a rich man with bouquets and jewels to offer her, or a poor wretch so hungry and miserable as to bring tears to her eyes. Dazzle her eyes or stir her compassion, it must be one or the other! Then she was used to young fellows of a more enterprising mettle. She thought of a young violinist at the Conservatoire who, one evening, when she was entertaining company, had pretended to leave with the rest and concealed himself in her dressing-room; as she was undressing, thinking herself alone, he burst from his hiding-place, a bottle of champagne in either hand and laughing like a mad-man. The new lover was less diverting. However, she asked him his name.

“Jean Servien.”

“Well, Monsieur Jean Servien, I am sorry, very sorry, to have made you unhappy, as you say you are.”

At the bottom of her heart she was more flattered than grieved at the mischief she had done, so she repeated several times over how very sorry she was.

She added:

“I cannot bear to hurt people. Every time a young man is unhappy because of me, I am so distressed; but, honour bright, what do you want me to do for you? Take yourself off, and be sensible. It’s no use your coming back to see me.

Besides, it would be ridiculous. I have a life of my own to live, quite private, and it is out of the question for me to receive strange visitors.”

He assured her between his sobs:

“Oh! how I wish you were poor and forsaken. I would come to you then and we should be happy.”

She was a good deal surprised he did not take her by the waist or think of dragging her into the garden under the clump of trees where there was a bench. She was a trifle disappointed and in a way embarrassed not to have to defend her virtue. Finding the conclusion of the interview did not match the beginning and the young man was getting tedious, she slammed the gate in his face and slipped back into the garden, where he saw her vanish in the darkness.

She bore on her hand, beside a sapphire on her ring finger, a drop of blood. In her chamber, as she emptied a jug of water over her hands to wash away the stain, she could not help reflecting how every drop of blood in this young man’s veins would be shed for her whenever she should give the word. And the thought made her smile. At that moment, if he had been there, in that room, at her side, it may be she would not have sent him away.

XV

Jean hurried down the lane and started off across country in such a state of high exaltation as robbed him of all senses of realities and banished all consciousness whether of joy or pain. He had no remembrance of what he had been before the moment when he kissed the actress's hand; he seemed a stranger to himself. On his lips lingered a taste that stirred voluptuous fancies, and grew stronger as he pressed them one against the other.

Next morning his intoxication was dissipated and he relapsed into profound depression. He told himself that his last chance was gone. He realized that the gate overhung with wild vine and ivy was shut against him by that careless, capricious hand more firmly and more inexorably than ever it could have been by the bolts and bars of the most prudish virtue. He felt instinctively that his kiss had stirred no promptings of desire, that he had been powerless to win any hold on his mistress's senses.

He had forgotten what he said, but he knew that he had spoken out in all the frank sincerity of his heart. He had exposed his ignorance of the world, his contemptible candour. The mischief was irreparable. Could anyone be more unfortunate? He had lost even the one advantage he possessed, of being unknown to her.

Though he entertained no very high opinion of himself, he certainly held fate responsible for his natural deficiencies. He was poor, he reasoned, and therefore had no right to fall in love. Ah! if only he were wealthy and familiar with all the things idle, prosperous people know, how entirely the splendour of his material surroundings would be in harmony with the splendour of his passion! What blundering, ferocious god of cruelty had immured in the dungeon of poverty this soul of his that so overflowed with desires?

He opened his window and caught sight of his father's apprentice on his way back to the workshop. The lad stood there on the pavement talking with naive effrontery to a little book-stitcher of his acquaintance. He was kissing the girl, without a thought of the passers-by, and whistling a tune between his teeth. The pretty, sickly-looking slattern carried her rags with an air, and wore a pair of smart, well-made boots; she was pretending to push her admirer away, while really doing just the opposite, for the slim yet broad-shouldered stripling in his blue blouse had a certain townified elegance and the "conquering hero" air of the suburban dancing-saloons. When he left her, she looked back repeatedly; but he

was examining the saveloys in a pork-butcher's window, never giving another thought to the girl.

Jean, as he looked on at the little scene, found himself envying his father's apprentice.

XVI

He read the same morning on the posters that *she* was playing that evening. He watched for her after the performance and saw her distributing hand-shakes to sundry acquaintances before driving off. He was suddenly struck with something hard and cruel in her, which he had not observed in the interview of the night before. Then he discovered that he hated her, abominated her with all the force of his mind and muscles and nerves. He longed to tear her to pieces, to rend and crush her. It made him furious to think she was moving, talking, laughing, — in a word, that she was alive. At least it was only fair she should suffer, that life should wound her and make her heart bleed. He was rejoiced at the thought that she must die one day, and then nothing of her would be left, of her rounded shape and the warmth of her flesh; none would ever again see the superb play of light in her hair and eyes, the reflections, now pale, now pearly, of her dead-white skin. But her body, that filled him with such rage, would be young and warm and supple for long years yet, and lover after lover would feel it quiver and awake to passion. She would exist for other men, but not for him. Was that to be borne? Ah! the deliciousness of plunging a dagger in that warm, living bosom! Ah! the bliss, the voluptuousness of holding her pinned beneath one knee and demanding between two stabs:

“Am I ridiculous now?”

He was still muttering suchlike maledictions when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. Wheeling round, he saw a quaint figure — a huge nose like a pothook, high, massive shoulders, enormous, well-shaped hands, a general impression of uncouthness combined with vigour and geniality. He thought for a moment where this strange monster could have come from; then he shouted: “Garneret!”

Instantly his memory flew back to the court-yard and class-rooms of the school in the *Rue d’Assas*, and he saw a heavily built lad, for ever under punishment, standing out face to the wall during playtime, getting and giving mighty fisticuffs, a terrible fellow for plain speaking and hard hitting, industrious, yet a thorn in the side of masters, always in ill-luck, yet ever and anon electrifying the class with some stroke of genius.

He was glad enough to see his old school-fellow again, who struck him as looking almost old with his puckered lids and heavy features. They set off arm in arm along the deserted *Quai*, and to the accompaniment of the faint lapping of the water against the retaining walls, told each other the history of their past —

which was succinct enough, their present ideas, and their hopes for the future — which were boundless.

The same ill-luck still pursued Garneret; from morn to eve he was engaged on prodigiously laborious hack-work for a map-maker, who paid him the wages of one of his office boys; but his big head was crammed with projects. He was working at philosophy and getting up before the sun to make experiments on the susceptibility to light of the invertebrates; by way of studying English and politics at the same time, he was translating Mr. Disraeli's speeches; then every Sunday he accompanied Monsieur Hébert's pupils on their geological excursions in the environs of Paris, while at night he gave lectures to working men on Italian painting and political economy. There was never a week passed but he was bowled over for twenty-four or forty-eight hours with an agonizing sick-headache. He spent long hours too with his fiancée, a girl with no dowry and no looks, but of a loving, sensitive temper, whom he adored and fully intended to marry the moment he had five hundred francs to call his own.

Servien could make nothing of the other's temperament, one that looks upon the world as an immense factory where the good workman labours, coat off and sleeves rolled up, the sweat pouring from his brow and a song on his lips. He found it harder still to conceive a love with which the glamour of the stage or the splendours of luxurious living had nothing to do. Yet he felt there was something strong and sensible and true about it all, and craving sympathy he made Garneret the confidant of his passion, telling the tale in accents of despair and bitterness, though secretly proud to be the tortured victim of such fine emotions.

But Garneret expressed no admiration.

"My dear fellow," said he, "you have got all these romantic notions out of trashy novels. How can you love the woman when you don't know her?"

How, indeed? Jean Servien did not know; but his nights and days, the throbbings of his heart, the thoughts that possessed his mind to the exclusion of all else, everything convinced him that it was so. He defended himself, talking of mystic influences, natural affinities, emanations, a divine unity of essence.

Garneret only buried his face between his hands. It was above his comprehension.

"But come," he said, "the woman is no differently constituted from other women!"

Obvious as it was, this consideration filled Jean Servien with amazement. It shocked him so much that, rather than admit its truth, he racked his brains in desperation to find arguments to controvert the blasphemy.

Garneret gave his views on women. He had a judicial mind, had Garneret, and could account for everything in the relations of the sexes; *but* he could not

tell Jean why one face glimpsed among a thousand gives joy and grief more than life itself seemed able to contain. Still, he tried to explain the problem, for he was of an eminently ratiocinative temper.

“The thing is quite simple,” he declared. “There are a dozen violins for sale at a dealer’s. I pass that way, common scraper of catgut that I am, I tune them and try them, and play over on each of them in turn, with false notes galore, some catchy tune — *Au clair de la lune* or *J’ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière* — stuff fit to kill the old cow. Then Paganini comes along; with one sweep of the bow he explores the deepest depths of the vibrating instruments. The first is flat, the second sharp, the third almost dumb, the fourth is hoarse, five others have neither power nor truth of tone; but lo! the twelfth gives forth under the master’s hand a mighty music of sweet, deep-voiced harmonies. It is a Stradivarius; Paganini knows it, takes it home with him, guards it as the apple of his eye; from an instrument that for me would never have been more than a resonant wooden box he draws chords that make men weep, and love, and fall into a very ecstasy; he directs in his will that they bury this violin with him in his coffin. Well, Paganini is the lover, the instrument with its strings and tuning-pegs is the woman. The instrument must be beautifully made and come from the workshop of a right skilful maker; more than that, it must fall into the hands of an accomplished player. But, my poor lad, granting your actress is a divine instrument of amorous music, I don’t believe you capable of drawing from it one single note of passion’s fugue.... Just consider. I don’t spend my nights supping with ladies of the theatre; but we all know what an actress is. It is an animal generally agreeable to see and hear, always badly brought up, spoilt first by poverty and afterwards by luxury. Very busy into the bargain, which makes her as unromantic as anybody can well be. Something like a *concierge* turned princess, and combining the petty spite of the porter’s lodge with the caprices of the boudoir and the fagged nerves of the student.

“You can hardly expect to dazzle T — with the munificence and tastefulness of your presents. Your father gives you a hundred sous a week to spend; a great deal for a bookbinder, but very little for a woman whose gowns cost from five hundred to three thousand francs apiece. And, as you are neither a Manager to sign agreements, nor a Dramatic Author to apportion rôles, nor a Journalist to write notices, nor a young man from the draper’s to take advantage of a moment’s caprice as opportunity offers when delivering a new frock, I don’t see in the least how you are to make her favour you, and I think your tragedy queen did quite right to slam her gate in your face.”

“Ah, well!” sighed Jean Servien, “I told you just now I loved her. It is not true. I hate her! I hate her for all the torments she has made me suffer, I hate her

because she is adorable and men love her. And I hate all women, because they all love someone, and that someone is not I!”

Garneret burst out laughing.

“Candidly,” he grinned, “they are not so far wrong. Your love has no spark of anything affectionate, kindly, useful in it. Since the day you fell in love with Mademoiselle T —— , have you once thought of sparing her pain? Have you once dreamed of making a sacrifice for her sake? Has any touch of human kindness ever entered into your passion? Can it show one mark of manliness or goodness? Not it. Well, being the poor devils we are, with our own way to push in life and nothing to help us on, we must be brave and good. It is half-past one, and I have to get up at five. Good night. Cultivate a quiet mind, and come and see me.”

XVII

Jean had only three days left to prepare for his examination for admission to the Ministry of Finance. These he spent at home, where the faces of father, aunt, and apprentice seemed strange and unfamiliar, so completely had they disappeared from his thoughts. Monsieur Servien was displeased with his son, but was too timid as well as too tactful to make any overt reproaches. His aunt overwhelmed him with garrulous expressions of doting affection; at night she would creep into his room to see if he was sound asleep, while all day long she wearied him with the tale of her petty grievances and dislikes.

Once she had caught the apprentice with her spectacles, her sacred spectacles, perched on his nose, and the profanation had left a kind of religious horror in her mind.

“That boy is capable of anything,” she used to say. One of the boy’s pet diversions was to execute behind the old lady’s back a war-dance of the Cannibal Islanders he had seen once at a theatre. Sticking feathers he had plucked from a feather-broom in his hair, and holding a big knife without a handle between his teeth, he would creep nearer and nearer, crouching low and advancing by little leaps and bounds, with ferocious grimaces which gradually gave place to a look of disappointed appetite, as a closer scrutiny showed how tough and leathery his victim was. Jean could not help laughing at this buffoonery, trivial and ill-bred as it was. His aunt had never got clearly to the bottom of the little farce that dogged her heels, but more than once, turning her head sharply, she had found reason to suspect something disrespectful was going on. Nevertheless, she put up with the lad because of his lowly origin. The only folks she really hated were the rich. She was furious because the butcher’s wife had gone to a wedding in a silk dress.

At the upper end of the *Rue de Rennes*, beside a plot of waste and, was a stall where an old woman sold dusty ginger-bread and sticks of stale barley-sugar. She had a face the colour of brick dust under a striped cotton sun-bonnet, and eyes of a pale, steely blue. Her whole stock-in-trade had not cost a couple of francs, and on windy days the white dust from houses building in the neighbourhood covered it like a coat of whitewash. Nurses and mothers would anxiously pull away their little ones who were casting sheep’s eyes at the sweetstuff:

“Dirty!” they would say dissuasively; “dirty!”

But the woman never seemed to hear; perhaps she was past feeling anything. She did not beg. Mademoiselle Servien used to bid her good-day in passing, address her by name and fall into talk with her before the stall, sometimes for a quarter of an hour at a time. The staple of conversation with them both was the neighbours, accidents that had occurred in the public thoroughfares, cases of coachmen ill-using their horses, the troubles and trials of life and the ways of Providence, “which are not always just.”

Jean happened to be present at one of these colloquies. He was a plebeian himself, and this glimpse of the petty lives of the poor, this peep into sordid existences of idle sloth and spiritless resignation, stirred all the blood in his veins. In an instant, as he stood between the two old crones, with their drab faces and no outlook on life save that of the streets, now gloomy and empty, now full of sunshine and crowded traffic, the young man learned more of human conditions than he had ever been taught at school. His thoughts flew from this woman to that other, who was so beautiful and whom he loved, and he saw life before him as a whole — a melancholy panorama. He told himself they must die both of them, and a hideous old woman, squatted before a few sodden sweetmeats, gave him the same impression of solemn serenity he had experienced at sight of the jewels from the Queen of Egypt’s sepulchre.

XVIII

After sitting all day over little problems in arithmetic, he set off in the evening in working clothes for the *Avenue de l'Observatoire*. There, between two tallow candles, in front of a hoarding covered with ballads in illustrated covers, a fellow was singing in a cracked voice to the accompaniment of a guitar. A number of workmen and work-girls stood round listening to the music. Jean slipped into the circle, urged by the instinct that draws a stroller with nothing to do to the neighbourhood of light and noise and that love of a crowd which is characteristic of your Parisian. More isolated in the press, more alone than ever, he stood dreaming of the splendour and passion of some noble tragedy of Euripides or Shakespeare. It was some time before he noticed something soft touching and pressing against him from behind. He turned round and saw a work-girl in a little black hat with blue ribbons. She was young and pretty enough, but his mind was fixed on the awe-inspiring and superhuman graces of an Electra or a Lady Macbeth. She went on nuzzling against his back till he looked round again.

"Monsieur," she said then; "will you just let me slip in front of you? I am so little; I shan't stop your seeing."

She had a nice voice. The poise of her head, lifted and thrown back on a plump neck, showed a pair of bright eyes and good teeth between pouting lips. She glided, merry and alert, into the place Jean made for her without a word.

The man with the guitar sang a ballad about caged birds and blossoms in flower-pots.

"*Mine*," observed the work-girl to Jean, "are carnations, and I have birds too — canaries they are."

At the moment he was thinking of some fair-faced châtelaine roaming under the battlements of a donjon.

The work-girl went on:

"I have a pair, — you understand, to keep each other company. Two is a nice number, don't you think so?"

He marched off with his visions under the old trees of the Avenue. After a turn or two up and down, he espied the little work-girl hanging on the arm of a handsome young fellow, fashionably dressed, wearing a heavy gold watch-chain. Her admirer was catching her by the waist in the dusk of the trees, and she was laughing.

Then Jean Servien felt sorry he had scorned her advances.

XIX

Jean was called up for examination, but with his insufficient preparation he got hopelessly fogged in the intricacies of a difficult, tricky piece of dictation and sums that were too long to be worked in the time allowed the candidates. He came home in despair. His father tried in his good-nature to reassure him. But a fortnight after came an unstamped letter summoning him to the Ministry, and after a three hours' wait he was shown into Monsieur Bargemont's private room. He recognized his own dictation in the big man's hand.

"I am sorry," the functionary began, "to inform you that you have entirely failed to pass the tests set you. You do not know the language of your own country, sir; you write *Maisons-Lafitte* without an 's' to *Maisons*. You cannot spell! and what is more, you do not cross your 't's.' You *must* know at your age that a 't' ought to be crossed. It's past understanding, sir!"

And striking fiercely at the sheet of foolscap on which the mistakes were marked in red ink, he kept muttering: "It's past understanding, past understanding!" His face grew purple, and a swollen vein stood out on his forehead. A queer look in Jean's face gave him pause:

"Young man," he resumed in a calmer voice, "whatever I can do for you, I will do, be sure of that; but you must not ask me to do impossibilities. We cannot enlist in the service of the State young men who spell so badly they write *Maisons-Lafitte* without an 's' to the *Maisons*. It is in a way a patriotic duty for a Frenchman to know his own language. A year hence, the Ministry will hold another examination, and I will enter your name. You have a year before you; work hard, sir, and learn your mother-tongue."

Jean stood there scarlet with rage, hate in his heart, his eyes aflame, his throat dry, his teeth clenched, unable to articulate a word; then he swung round like an automaton and darted from the room, banging the door after him with a noise of thunder; piles of books and papers rolled on to the floor of the Chief's office at the shock.

Monsieur Bargemont was left alone to digest his stupefaction; even so his first thought was to save the honour of his Department. He reopened the door and shouted, "Leave the room!" after Jean, who, mastered once more by his natural timidity, was flying like a thief down the corridors.

XX

In the court, which was enlivened by a parterre of roses, Jean, carrying a letter in his hand, was trying to find his bearings according to the directions given him in a low voice, as if it were a secret, by the lay-brother who acted as doorkeeper. He was wandering uncertainly from door to door along the walls of the old silent buildings when a little boy noticed his plight and accosted him:

“Do you want to see the Director? He is in his study with mamma. Go and wait in the parlour.”

This was a large hall with bare walls, a noble enough apartment in its unadorned simplicity, in spite of the mean horsehair chairs that stood round it. Above the fire-place, instead of a mirror, was a *Mater dolorosa* that caught the eye by its dazzling whiteness. Big marble tears stood arrested in mid-career down the cheeks, while the features expressed the pious absorption of the Divine Mother's grief. Jean Servien read the inscription cut in red letters on the pedestal, which ran thus:

PRESENTED TO THE REVEREND ABBE BORDIER, IN MEMORY OF
PHILIPPE-GUY DE THIERERCHE, WHO DIED AT PAU, NOVEMBER 11,
1867, IN THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, BY THE COUNTESS
VALENTINE DE THIERERCHE, NÉE DE BRUILLE DE SAINT-AMAND.
LAUDATE PUERI DOMINUM

Then he forgot his anxieties, forgot he was there to beg for employment, shook off the instinctive dread that had seized him on the threshold of the great silent house. He forgot his fears and hopes — hopes of being promoted usher! He was absorbed by this cruel domestic drama revealed to him in the inscription. A scion of one of the greatest families of France, a pupil of the Abbé Bordier, attacked by phthisis in the midst of his now profitless studies and leaving school, not to enjoy life and taste the glorious pleasures only those condemn who have drained them to the dregs, but to die at a southern town in the arms of his mother whose overwhelming, but still self-conscious grief was symbolized by this pompous memorial of her sorrow. He could feel, he could see it all. The three Latin words that represent the stricken mother saying: “Children, praise ye the Lord who hath taken away my child,” astonished him by their austere piety, while at the same

time he admired the aristocratic bearing that was preserved even in the presence of death.

He was still lost in these day-dreams when an old priest beckoned him to walk into an inner room. The worthy man took the letter of recommendation which Jean handed him, set on his big nose a pair of spectacles with round glasses for all the world like the two wheels of a miniature silver chariot, and proceeded to read the letter, holding it out at the full stretch of his arm. The windows giving on the garden stood open, and a tendril of wild vine hung down on to the desk at the foot of a crucifix of old ivory, while a light breeze set the papers on it fluttering like white wings.

The Abbé Bordier, his reading concluded, turned to the young man, showing a deeply lined countenance and a forehead beautifully polished by age. He took off his spectacles and rubbed his eyes. Then the worn eyelids lifted slowly and discovered a pair of grey eyes of a shade that somehow reminded you of an autumn morning. He lay back in his armchair, his legs stretched out in front of him, displaying his silver-buckled shoes and black stockings.

“It seems then, my dear boy,” he began, “you wish, so my venerable friend the Abbé Marguerite informs me, to devote yourself to teaching; and your idea would be to prepare for your degree while at the same time performing the duties of an assistant master to supervise the boys at their work. It is a humble office; but it will depend entirely on yourself, my dear young friend, to dignify it by a heartfelt zeal and a determination to succeed. I shall entrust the studies of the *Remove* to your care. Our bursar will inform you of the conditions attaching to the post.”

Jean bowed and made to leave the room; but suddenly the Abbé Bordier beckoned him to stop and asked abruptly:

“You understand the rules of verse?”

“Latin verse?” queried Jean.

“No, no! French verse. Now, would you rhyme *trône* with *couronne* ? The rhyme is not, it must be allowed, quite satisfactory to the ear, yet the usage of the great writers authorizes it.”

So saying, the old fellow laid hold of a bulky manuscript book.

“Listen,” he cried, “listen. It is St. Fabricius addressing the Proconsul Flavius:

*Achève, fais dresser l'appareil souhaité
De ma mort, ou plutôt de ma félicité.*

*Le Roi des Rois, du haut de son céleste trône,
Déjà me tend la palme et tresse ma couronne.*

“Do you think it would be better if he said:

*Achève, fais dresser l'appareil souhaité
De ma mort, ou plutôt de ma félicité.
Je vois le Roi des Rois me tendre la couronne,
Quel n'en est le prix quand c'est Dieu qui la donne!*

“Doubtless these latter lines are more correct than the others, but they are less vigorous, and a poet should never sacrifice meaning to metre.

*Le Roi des Rois, du haut de son céleste trône,
Déjà me tend la palme et tresse ma couronne.”*

This time, as he declaimed the verses, he went through the corresponding gestures of tendering a gift and plaiting a garland.

“It is better so,” he added, “better so!”

Jean, in some surprise, said yes, it was certainly better.

“Certainly better, yes,” cried the old poet, smiling with the happy innocence of a little child.

Then he confided in Jean that it was a very difficult thing indeed to write poetry. You must get the cæsura in the right place, bring in the rhyme naturally, make your rhythm run in divers cadences, now strong, now sweet, sometimes onomatopoetic, use only words either elevated in themselves or dignified by the circumstances.

He read one passage of his Tragedy because he had his doubts about the number of feet in the line, another because he thought it contained some bold strokes happily conceived, then a third to elucidate the two first, eventually the whole five acts from start to finish. He acted the words as he read, modulating his voice to suit the various characters, stamping and storming, and to adjust his black skullcap — it *would* tumble off at the pathetic parts — dealing himself a succession of sounding slaps on the crown of his head.

This sacred drama, in which no woman appeared, was to be played by the pupils of the Institution at a forthcoming function. The previous year he had staged his first tragedy, *le Baptême de Clovis*, in the same approved style. A regular, Monsieur Schuver, had arranged garlands of paper roses to represent the battlefield of Tolbiac and the basilica at Rheims. To give a wild, barbaric look to

the boys who represented Clovis' henchmen, the sister superintendent of the wardrobe had tacked up their white trousers to the knee. But the Abbé Bordier hoped greater things still for his new piece.

Jean applauded and improved upon these ambitious projects. His suggestions for scenery and costumes were admirable. He would have the ruthless Flavius seated on a curule chair of ivory, draped with purple, erected before a portico painted on the back cloth. The costumes of the Roman soldiers, he insisted, must be copied from those on Trajan's Column.

His words opened superb vistas before the old priest's eyes; he was enchanted, ravished, yet full of doubts and fears. Alas! Monsieur Schuver was quite helpless if it came to designing anything more ambitious than his paper roses. Then Jean must needs take a look round in the shed where the properties were stored, and the two discussed together how the stage must be set and the side-scenes worked. Jean took measurements, drew up a plan, worked out an estimate. He manifested a passionate eagerness that was surprising, albeit the old priest took it all as a matter of course. A batten would come here, a practicable door there. The actor would enter there...

But the worthy priest checked him:

"Say the reciter, my dear boy; *actor* is not a word for self-respecting people."

Barring this trifling misunderstanding, they were in perfect accord. The sun was setting by this time and the Abbé Bordier's shadow, grotesquely elongated, danced up and down the sandy floor of the shed, while the old, broken voice declaimed tags of verse that echoed to the furthest recesses of the court. But Jean Servien was smiling at the vision only *his* eyes could see of Gabrielle, the inspirer of all his enthusiasm.

XXI

It was nearly the end of the long evening preparation and absolute quiet reigned in the schoolroom. The broad lamp-shades concentrated the light on the tangled heads of the boys, who were working at their lessons or sitting in a brown study with their noses on the desks. The only sounds were the crackling of paper, the lads' breathing and the scratch, scratch of steel pens. The youngest there, his cheeks still browned by the sea-breezes, was dreaming over his half-finished exercise of a beach on the Normandy coast and the sand-castles he and his friends used to build, to see them swept away presently by the waves of the rising tide.

At the top of the great room, at the high desk where the Superintendent of Studies had solemnly installed him underneath the great ebony crucifix, Jean Servien, his head between his two hands, was reading a Latin poet.

He felt utterly sad and lonely; but he had not realized yet that his new life was an actual fact, and from moment to moment he expected the schoolroom would suddenly vanish and the desks with their litter of dictionaries and grammars and the young heads gilded by the lamp-light melt into thin air.

Suddenly a paper pellet, shot from the far end of the hall, struck him on the cheek. He turned pale and cried in a voice shaking with anger:

"Monsieur de Grizolles, leave the room!"

There was some whispering and stifled laughter, then peace was restored. The scratching of pens began again, and exercises were passed surreptitiously from hand to hand for cribbing purposes.

He was an usher.

His father had come to this decision by the advice of Monsieur Marguerite, the *vicaire* of his parish and a friend of the Abbé Bordier. The bookbinder, having a high respect for knowledge, entertained a correspondingly high idea of the status of all its ministers. Assistant master struck him as an imposing title, and he was delighted to have his son connected with an aristocratic and religious foundation.

"Your son," the Abbé Marguerite told him, "will read for his Master's degree in the intervals of his duties, and the title of Licencié-ès-Lettres will open the door to the higher walks of teaching. We have known assistants rise to high positions in the University and even occupy Monsieur de Fontanes' chair."

These considerations had clenched the bookbinder's resolution, and this was now the third day of Jean's ushership.

XXII

Three months had dragged by. It was a Friday; a hot, nauseating smell of fried fish filled the refectory; a strong drought blew cold about feet encased in wet boots; the walls dripped with moisture, and outside the barred windows a fine rain was falling from a grey sky. The boys, seated at marble-topped tables, were making a hideous rattle with their forks and tin cups, while one of their schoolfellows, seated at the desk in the middle of the great room, was reading aloud, as the regulations direct, a passage from Rollin's *Ancient History* .

Jean, at the head of a table, his nose in his ill-washed earthenware plate, had cold feet and a sore heart. Something resembling rotten wood formed a deposit at the bottom of his glass, while the servers were handing round dishes of prunes with their thumbs washing in the juice. Now and again, amid the rattle of plates, the rasping voice of the reader, a lad of seventeen, reached the usher's ears. He caught the name of Cleopatra and some scraps of sentences: "*She was about to appear before Antony at an age when women unite with the flower of their beauty every charm of wit and intellect... her person more compelling than any magnificence of adornment... Her galley entered the Cydnus... the poop of the vessel shone resplendent with gold, the sails were of Tyrian purple, the oars of silver.* "

Then the seductive names of *Nereids, flutes, perfumes* . The hot blood flooded his cheeks. The woman who for him was the sole and only incarnation of the whole race of womankind throughout the ages rose before his mental sight with a surprising clearness; every hair of his body stood on end in an agonizing spasm of desire, and he dug his nails into the palms of his hands. The vision caused him an unspeakable yet delicious pain — Gabrielle in a loose *peignoir* at a small, daintily ordered table gay with flowers and glasses. He saw it all quite clearly; his gaze searched every fold of the soft material that covered her bosom and rose and fell at each breath she drew. Face and neck and lively hands had a surprisingly brilliant yet so natural a sheen that they exhaled amorous invitation as if they had been verily of flesh and blood. The superb moulding of the lips, pouting like a ripe mulberry, and the exquisite grain of the skin were manifest — treasures such as men risk death and crime to win. It was the actress, in fine, seen by the two eyes which of all eyes in the whole world had learned to see her best. She was not alone; a man was looking at her with a penetrating intensity as he filled her glass. They were straining one towards the other. Jean could not

restrain his sobs. Suddenly he seemed to be falling from the top of a high tower. The Superintendent of Studies was standing in front of him and saying:

“Monsieur Servien, will you see about punishing that boy Laboriette, who is emptying his leavings in his neighbour’s pocket?”

XXIII

The Superintendent, with his large, flat face and the sly ways of a peasant turned monk, was a constant thorn in Jean's side. "*Be firm, be firm, sir*," was his parable every day, and he never missed an opportunity of doing the usher an ill turn with the Director.

The early days of Jean's servitude had slipped by in an enervating monotony. With his quiet ways, tactful temper and air of kindly aloofness, he was popular with the more sensible boys, while the others left him in peace, as he did them. But there was one exception; Henri de Grizolles, a handsome young savage, proud of his aristocratic name, which he scribbled in big letters on his light trousers, and overjoyed at the chance of hurting an inferior's feelings, had from the very first day declared war against the poor usher. He used to empty ink-bottles into his desk, stick cobbler's wax on his chair, and let off crackers in the middle of school.

Hearing the disturbance, the Superintendent would march in with the airs of a Police Inspector and bid Jean: "*Be firm, sir! be firm!*"

Far from taking his advice, Jean affected an excessive easiness of temper. One day he caught a boy in the act of drawing a caricature of himself; he picked it up and glanced at it, then handed it back to the artist with a shrug of the shoulders.

Such mildness was misconstrued and only weakened his authority. The usher's miseries grew acute, and he lost the patience that alleviated his sufferings. He could not put up with the lads' restlessness, their happy laughter and light-hearted enjoyment of life. He showed temper, venting his spite on mere acts of thoughtlessness or simple ebullitions of high spirits. Then he would fall into a sort of torpor. He had long fits of absentmindedness, during which he was deaf to every noise. It became the fashion to keep birds, plait nets, shoot arrows, and crow like a cock in Monsieur Jean Servien's classroom. Even the boys from other divisions would slip out of their own classrooms to peep in at the windows of this one, about which such amazing stories were told, and the ceiling of which was decorated with little figures swinging at the end of a string stuck to the plaster with chewed paper.

De Grizolles had installed a regular Roman catapult for shooting kidney-beans at the usher's head.

Jean would drive the young gentleman out of the room. The Superintendent of Studies would reinstate him, only to be turned out again. And each time meant

a fresh report to the Director. The Abbé Bordier, who never found patience to hear the worthy Superintendent out to the end, could only throw up his hands to heaven and declare they would be the death of him between them. But the impression became fixed in his mind that the Assistant in charge of the *Remove* was a source of trouble.

XXIV

Sunday was a day of cheerful indolence, devoted to attending the services in the Chapel, which was filled with the scent of incense all day long. At Vespers, while the clear, boyish voices intoned the long-drawn canticles, Jean would be gazing at some woman's face half seen in the dusk of the galleries where the pupils' mothers and sisters knelt during the office, their haughty air contradicting the humble attitude. At the sound of the *Ave maris stella*, the lowly bookbinder's son would lift his eyes to these ladies of high degree, the plainest of whom feels herself a jewel of price and cherishes a natural and unaffected pride of birth. The chants and incense, the flowers and sacred images, whatever troubles the imagination and stimulates to prayer, all these things united to enervate his spirit and deliver him a trembling victim to the glamour of these patrician dames.

But it was Gabrielle he worshipped in them, Gabrielle to whom he offered up his prayers, his supplications. All that element in religion which gives to love the fascination of forbidden fruit appealed powerfully to his imagination. Unbeliever though he was, he loved the Magdalen's God and savoured the creed that has bestowed on lovers one amorous bliss the more — the bliss of losing their immortal souls.

XXV

Little by little the boys wearied of this insubordination, their imaginations proving unequal to the invention of any new forms of mischief. Even de Grizolles himself left off shooting beans. Instead, he conceived the notion of brewing chocolate inside his desk with a spirit-lamp and a silver patty-pan. Jean left him in peace and reopened his Sophocles with a sigh of relief. But the Superintendent, going by in the court, caught a smell of cooking, searched the desks and unearthed the patty-pan, which he offered, still warm, for the Reverend the Director's inspection, with the words: "There! that's what goes on in Monsieur Servien's class-room." The Director slapped his forehead, declared they would be the death of him and ordered the patty-pan to be restored to its owner. Then he sent for the Assistant in charge and administered a severe reprimand, because he believed it to be his bounden duty to do so.

The next day was a whole holiday, and Jean went to spend the day at his father's. The latter asked him if he was ready for his professorial examination.

"My lad," he adjured him, "be quick and find a good post if you want me to see you in it. One of these days your aunt and I will be going out at yonder door feet foremost. The old lady had a fit of dizziness last week on the stairs. *I* am not ill, but I can feel I am worn out. I have done a hard life's work in the world."

He looked at his tools, and walked away, a bent old man!

Then Jean gathered up in both hands the old work-worn tools, all polished with use, scissors, punches, knives, folders, scrapers, and kissed them, the tears running down his cheeks.

At that moment his aunt came in, looking for her spectacles. Furtively, in a whisper, she asked him for a little money. In old days she used to save the halfpence to slip them into the "little lad's" hand; now, grown feebler than the child, she trembled at the idea of destitution; she hoarded, and asked charity of the priests. The fact is, her wits were weakening. Very often she would inform her brother that she did not mean to let the week pass without going to see the Brideaus. Now the Brideaus, jobbing tailors at Montrouge in their lifetime, had been dead, both husband and wife, for the last two years. Jean gave her a louis, which she took with a delight so ugly to see that the poor lad took refuge out of doors.

Presently, without quite knowing how, he found himself on the *Quai* near the *Pont d'Iéna*. It was a bright day, but the gloomy walls of the houses and the grey look of the river banks seemed to proclaim that life is hard and cruel. Out in

the stream a dredger, all drab with marl, was discharging one after the other its bucketfuls of miry gravel. By the waterside a stout oaken crane was unloading millstones, wheeling backwards and forwards on its axis. Under the parapet, near the bridge, an old dame with a copper-red face sat knitting stockings as she waited for customers to buy her apple-puffs.

Jean Servien thought of his childhood; many a time had his aunt taken him to the same spot, many a time had they watched together the dredger hauling aboard, bucketful by bucketful, the muddy dregs of the river. Very often his aunt had stopped to exchange ideas with the old stallkeeper, while he examined the counter which was spread with a napkin, the carafe of liquorice-water that stood on it, and the lemon that served as stopper. Nothing was changed, neither the dredger, nor the rafts of timber, nor the old woman, nor the four ponderous stallions at either end of the *Pont d'Iéna* .

Yes, Jean Servien could hear the trees along the *Quai* , the waters of the river, the very stones of the parapet calling to him:

“We know you; you are the little boy his aunt, in a peasant’s cap, used to bring here to see us in former days. But we shall never see your aunt again, nor her print shawl, nor her umbrella which she opened against the sun; for she is old now and does not take her nephew walks any more, for he is a grown man now. Yes, the child is grown into a man and has been hurt by life, while he was running after shadows.”

XXVI

One day, in the midday interval, he was informed that a visitor was asking for him in the parlour; the news filled him with delight, for he was very young and still counted on the possibilities of the unknown. In the parlour he found Monsieur Tudesco, wearing his waistcoat of ticking and holding a peaked hat in one hand.

“My young friend,” began the Italian, “I learned from your respected father’s apprentice that you were confined in this sanctuary of studious learning. I venture to say your fortune is overcast with clouds, at least I fear it is. The lowliness of your estate is not gilded like that of the Latin poet, and you are struggling with a valiant heart against adverse fortune. That is why I am come to offer you the hand of friendship, and I venture to say you will regard as a mark of my amity and my esteem the request I proffer for a crown-piece, which I find needful to sustain an existence consecrated to learned studies.”

The parlour was filling with pupils and their friends and relations. Mothers and sons were exchanging sounding kisses, followed by exclamations of “How hot you are, dear!” and prolonged whisperings. Girls in light summer frocks were making sheep’s eyes on the sly at their brothers’ friends, while fathers were pulling cakes of chocolate out of their pockets.

Monsieur Tudesco, entirely at his ease among these fine people, did not seem at all aware of the young usher’s hideous embarrassment. To the latter’s “Come outside; we can talk better there,” the old man replied unconcernedly, “Oh, no, I don’t think so.”

He welcomed each lady who came in with a profound bow, and distributed friendly taps on the cheek among the young aristocrats around him.

Lying back in an arm-chair and displaying his famous waistcoat to the very best advantage, he enlarged on such episodes of his life as he thought most impressive:

“The fates were vanquished,” he was telling Servien, “my livelihood was assured. The landlord of an inn had entrusted his books to me, and under his roof I was devoting my attention to mathematical calculations, not, like the illustrious and ill-starred Galileo, to measure the stars, but to establish with exactitude the profits and losses of a trader. After two days’ performance of these honourable duties, the Commissary of Police made a descent upon the inn, arrested the landlord and landlady and carried away my account books with him. No, I had not vanquished the fates!”

Every head was turned, every eye directed in amazement towards this extraordinary personage. There was much whispering and some half-suppressed laughter. Jean, seeing himself the centre of mocking glances and looks of annoyance, drew Tudesco towards the door. But just as the Marquis was making a series of sweeping bows by way of farewell to the ladies, Jean found himself face to face with the Superintendent of Studies, who said to him:

“Oh! Monsieur Servien, will you go and take detention in Monsieur Schuwer’s absence?”

The Marquis pressed his young friend’s hand, watched him depart to his duties, and then, turning back to the groups gathered in the parlour, he waved his hand with a gesture at once dignified and appealing to call for silence.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he began, “I have translated into the French tongue, which Brunetto Latini declared to be the most delectable of all, the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the glorious masterpiece of the divine Torquato Tasso. This great work I wrote in a garret without fire, on candle wrappers, on snuff papers — —”

At this point, from one corner of the parlour, a crow of childish laughter went off like a rocket.

Monsieur Tudesco stopped short and smiled, his hair flying, his eye moist, his arms thrown open as if to embrace and bless; then he resumed:

“I say it: the laugh of innocence is the ill-starred veteran’s joy. I see from where I stand groups worthy of Correggio’s brush, and I say: Happy the families that meet together in peace in the heart of their fatherland! Ladies and gentlemen, pardon me if I hold out to you the casque of Belisarius. I am an old tree riven by the levin-bolt.”

And he went from group to group holding out his peaked felt hat, into which, amid an icy silence, fell coin by coin a dribble of small silver.

But suddenly the Superintendent of Studies seized the hat and pushed the old man outside.

“Give me back my hat,” bawled Monsieur Tudesco to the Superintendent, who was doing his best to restore the coins to the donors; “give back the old man’s hat, the hat of one who has grown grey in learned studies.”

The Superintendent, scarlet with rage, tossed the felt into the court, shouting:

“Be off, or I will call the police.”

The Marquis Tudesco took to his heels with great agility.

The same evening the new Assistant was summoned to the Director’s presence and received his dismissal.

“Unhappy boy! unhappy boy!” said the Abbé Bordier, beating his brow; “you have been the cause of an intolerable scandal, of a sort unheard of in this house, and that just when I had so much to do.”

And as he spoke, the scattered papers fluttered like white birds on the Director’s table.

Making his way through the parlour, Jean saw the *Mater dolorosa* as before, and read again the names of Philippe-Guy Thiererche and the Countess Valentine.

“I hate them,” he muttered through clenched teeth, “I hate them all.”

Meantime, the good priest felt a stir of pity. Every day they had badgered him with reports against Jean Servien. This time he had given way; he had sacrificed the young usher; but he really could make nothing of this tale about a beggar. He changed his mind, ran to the door and called to the young man to come back.

Jean turned and faced him:

“No!” he cried, “no! I can bear the life no longer; I am unhappy, I am full of misery — and hate.”

“Poor lad!” sight the Director, letting his arms drop by his side. That evening he did not write a single line of his Tragedy.

XXVII

The kind-hearted bookbinder harassed his son with no reproaches.

After dinner he went and sat at his shop-door, and looked at the first star that peeped out in the evening sky.

“My boy,” said he, “I am not a man of learning like you; but I have a notion — and you must not rob me of it, because it is a comfort to me — that, when I have finished binding books, I shall go to that star. The idea occurred to me from what I have read in the paper that the stars are all worlds. What is that star called?”

“Venus, father.”

“In my part of the world, they say it is the shepherd’s star. It’s a beautiful star, and I think your mother is there. That is why I should like to go there.”

The old man passed his knotted fingers across his brow, murmuring:

“God forgive me, how one forgets those who are gone!”

Jean sought balm for his wounded spirit in reading poetry and in long, dreamy walks. His head was filled with visions — a welter of sublime imaginings, in which floated such figures as Ophelia and Cassandra, Gretchen, Delia, Phædra, Manon Lescaut, and Virginia, and hovering amid these, shadows still nameless, still almost formless, and yet full of seduction! Holding bowls and daggers and trailing long veils, they came and went, faded and grew vivid with colour. And Jean could hear them calling to him; “If ever we win to life, it will be through you. And what a bliss it will be for you, Jean Servien, to have created us. How you will love us!” And Jean Servien would answer them; “Come back, come back, or rather do not leave me. But I cannot tell how to make you visible; you vanish away when I gaze at you, and I cannot net you in the meshes of beautiful verse!”

Again and again he tried to write poems, tragedies, romances; but his indolence, his lack of ideas, his fastidiousness brought him to a standstill before half a dozen lines were written, and he would toss the all but virgin page into the fire. Quickly discouraged, he turned his attention to politics. The funeral of Victor Noir, the Belleville risings, the *plébiscite*, filled his thoughts; he read the papers, joined the groups that gathered on the boulevards, followed the yelping pack of white blouses, and was one of the crowd that hooted the Commissary of Police as he read the Riot Act. Disorder and uproar intoxicated him; his heart beat as if it would burst his bosom, his enthusiasm rose to fever pitch, amid these stupid exhibitions of mob violence. Then to end up, after tramping the streets

with other gaping idlers till late at night, he would make his way back, with weary limbs and aching ribs, his head whirling confusedly with bombast and loud talk, through the sleeping city to the Faubourg Saint-Germain. There, as he strode past some aristocratic mansion and saw the scutcheon blazoned on its façade and the two lions lying white in the moonlight on guard before its closed portal, he would cast a look of hatred at the building. Presently, as he resumed his march, he would picture himself standing, musket in hand, on a barricade, in the smoke of insurrection, along with workmen and young fellows from the schools, as we see it all represented in lithographs.

One day in July, he saw a troop of white blouses moving along the boulevard and shouting: "To Berlin!" Ragamuffin street-boys ran yelping round. Respectable citizens lined the sidewalks, staring in wonder, and saying nothing; but one of them, a stout, tall, red-faced man, waved his hat and shouted:

"To Berlin! long live the Emperor!"

Jean recognized Monsieur Bargemont.

XXVIII

On top of the ramparts. Bivouac huts and stacked rifles guarded by a sentinel. National Guards are playing shove ha'-penny. The autumn sunshine lies clear and soft and splendid on the roofs of the beleaguered city. Outside the fortifications, the bare, grey fields; in the distance the barracks of the outlying forts, over which fleecy puffs of smoke sail upwards; on the horizon the hills whence the Prussian batteries are firing on Paris, leaving long trails of white smoke. The guns thunder. They have been thundering for a month, and no one so much as hears them now. Servien and Garneret, wearing the red-piped *képi* and the tunic with brass buttons, are seated side by side on sand-bags, bending over the same book.

It was a Virgil, and Jean was reading out loud the delicious episode of Silenus. Two youths have discovered the old god lying in a drunken sleep — he is always drunk and it makes men mock at him, albeit they still revere him — and have bound him in chains of flowers to force him to sing. Æglé, the fairest of the Naiads, has stained his cheeks scarlet with juice of the mulberry, and lo! he sings.

“He sings how from out the mighty void were drawn together the germs of earth and air and sea and of the subtle fire likewise; how of these beginnings came all the elements, and the fluid globe of the firmament grew into solid being; how presently the ground began to harden and to imprison Nereus in the ocean, and little by little to take on the shapes of things. He sings how anon continents marvelled to behold a new-emerging sun; how the clouds broke up in the welkin and the rains descended, what time the woods put forth their first green and beasts first prowled by ones and twos over the unnamed mountain-tops.”

Jean broke off to observe:

“How admirably it all brings out Virgil’s spirit, so serious and tender! The poet has put a cosmogony in an idyll. Antiquity called him the Virgin. The name well befits his Muse, and we should picture her as a Mnemosyne pondering over the works of men and the causes of things!”

Meanwhile Garneret, with a more concentrated attention and his finger on the lines, was marshalling his ideas. The players were still at their game, and the little copper discs they used for throwing kept rolling close to his feet, and the canteen-woman passed backwards and forwards with her little barrel.

“See this, Servien,” he said presently; “in these lines Virgil, or rather the poet of the Alexandrine age who was his model, has anticipated Laplace’s great hypothesis and Charles Lyell’s theories. He shows cosmic matter, that negative something from which everything must come, condensing to make worlds, the plastic rind of the globe consolidating; then the formation of islands and continents; then the rains ceasing and first appearance of the sun, heretofore veiled by opaque clouds; then vegetable life manifesting itself before animal, because the latter cannot maintain itself and endure save by absorbing the elements of the former — —”

At that moment a stir was apparent along the ramparts. The players broke off their game and the two friends lifted their heads. It was a train of wounded going by. Under the curtains of the lumbering ambulance-waggon marked with the Geneva red cross could be seen livid faces tied up in bloodstained bandages. Linesmen and *mobiles* tramped behind, their arms hanging in slings. The Nationals proffered them handfuls of tobacco and asked for news. But the wounded men only shook their heads and trudged stolidly on their way.

“Aren’t we to have some fighting soon as well as other fellows?” cried Garneret.

To which Servien growled back:

“We must first put down the traitors and incapables who govern us, proclaim the Commune and march all together against the Prussians.”

XXIX

Hatred of the Empire which had left him to rot in a back-shop and a school class-room, love of the Republic that was to bring every blessing in its train had, since the proclamation of September 4, raised Jean Servien's warlike enthusiasm to fever heat. But he soon wearied of the long drills in the Luxembourg gardens and the hours of futile sentry-go behind the fortifications. The sight of tipsy shopkeepers in a frenzy of foolish ardour, half drink, half patriotism, sickened him, and this playing at soldiers, tramping through the mud on an empty stomach, struck him as after all an odious, ugly business.

Luckily Garneret was his comrade in the ranks, and Servien felt the salutary effect of that well-stored, well-ordered mind, the servant of duty and stern reality. Only this saved him from a passion, as futile in the past as it was hopeless in the future, which was assuming the dangerous character of a mental disease.

He had not seen Gabrielle again for a long time. The theatres were shut; all he knew, from the newspapers, was that she was nursing the wounded in the theatre ambulance. He had no wish now to meet her.

When he was not on duty, he used to lie in bed and read (it was a hard winter and wood was scarce), or else scour the boulevards and mix with the throng of idlers in search of news. One evening, early in January, as he was passing the corner of the *Rue Drouot*, his attention was attracted by the clamour of voices, and he saw Monsieur Bargemont being roughly handled by an ill-looking gang of National Guards.

"I am a better Republican than any of you," the big man was vociferating; "I have always protested against the infamies of the Empire. But when you shout: Vive Blanqui!... excuse me... I have a right to shout: Vive Jules Favre! excuse me, I have a perfect right — —" But his voice was drowned in a chorus of yells. Men in *képis* shook their fists at him, shouting: "Traitor! no surrender! down with Badinguet!" His broad face, distraught with terror, still bore traces of its erstwhile look of smug effrontery. A girl in the crowd shrieked: "Throw him in the river!" and a hundred voices took up the cry. But just at that moment the crowd swayed back violently and Monsieur Bargemont darted into the forecourt of the *Mairie*. A squad of police officers received him in their ranks and closed in round him. He was saved!

Little by little the crowd melted away, and Jean heard a dozen different versions of the incident as it travelled with ever-increasing exaggeration from

mouth to mouth. The last comers learned the startling news that they had just arrested a German general officer, who had sneaked into Paris as a spy to betray the city to the enemy with the connivance of the Bonapartists.

The streets being once more passable, Jean saw Monsieur Bargemont come out of the *Mairie*. He was very red and a sleeve of his overcoat was torn away.

Jean made up his mind to follow him.

Along the boulevards he kept him in view at a distance, and not much caring whether he lost track of him or no; but when the Functionary turned up a cross street, the young man closed in on his quarry. He had no particular suspicion even now; a mere instinct urged him to dog the man's heels. Monsieur Bargemont wheeled to the right, into a fairly broad street, empty and badly lighted by petroleum flares that supplied the place of the gas lamps. It was the one street Jean knew better than another. He had been there so often and often! The shape of the doors, the colour of the shop-fronts, the lettering on the sign-boards, everything about it was familiar; not a thing in it, down to the night-bell at the chemist's and druggist's, but called up memories, associations, to touch him. The footsteps of the two men echoed in the silence. Monsieur Bargemont looked round, advanced a few paces more and rang at a door. Jean Servien had now come up with him and stood beside him under the archway. It was the same door he had kissed one night of desperation, Gabrielle's door. It opened; Jean took a step forward and Monsieur Bargemont, going in first, left it open, thinking the National Guard there was a tenant going home to his lodging. Jean slipped in and climbed two flights of the dark staircase. Monsieur Bargemont ascended to the third floor and rang at a door on the landing, which was opened. Jean could hear Gabrielle's voice saying: "How late you are coming home, dear; I have sent Rosalie to bed; I was waiting up for you, you see."

The man replied, still puffing and panting with his exertions: "Just fancy, they wanted to pitch me into the river, those scoundrels! But never you mind, I've brought you something mighty rare and precious — a pot of butter."

"Like Little Red Ridinghood," laughed Gabrielle's voice. "Come in and you shall tell me all about it.... Hark! do you hear?"

"What, the guns? Oh! that never stops."

"No, the noise of a fall on the stairs."

"You're dreaming!"

"Give me the candle, I'm going to look."

Monsieur Bargemont went down two or three steps and saw Jean stretched motionless on the landing.

“A drunkard,” he said; “there’s so many of them! They were drunkards, those chaps who wanted to drown me.”

He was holding his light to Jean’s ashy face, while Gabrielle, leaning over the rail, looked on: “It’s not a drunken man,” she said; “he is too white. Perhaps it is a poor young fellow dying of hunger. When you’re brought down to rations of bread and horseflesh — —”

Then she looked more carefully under frowning brows, and muttered: “It’s very queer, it’s really very queer!”

“Do you know him?” asked Bargemont.

“I am trying to remember — —”

But there was no need to try; already she had recalled it all — how her hand had been kissed at the gate of the little house at Bellevue.

Running to her rooms, she returned with water and a bottle of ether, knelt beside the fainting man, and slipping her arm, which was encircled by the white band of a nursing sister, under his shoulders, raised Jean’s head. He opened his eyes, saw her, heaved the deepest sigh of love ever expelled from a human breast and felt his lids fall softly to again. He remembered nothing; only she was bending over him; and her breath had caressed his cheek. Now she was bathing his temples, and he felt a delicious sense of returning life. Monsieur Bargemont with the candle leant over Jean Servien, who, opening his eyes for the second time, saw the man’s coarse red cheek within an inch of the actress’s delicate ear. He gave a great cry and a convulsive spasm shook his body.

“Perhaps it is an epileptic fit,” said Monsieur Bargemont, coughing; he was catching cold standing on the staircase.

She protested:

“We cannot leave a sick man without doing something for him. Go and wake Rosalie.”

He remounted the stairs, grumbling. Meantime Jean had got to his feet and was standing with averted head.

She said to him in a low tone:

“So you love me still?”

He looked at her with an indescribable sadness:

“No, I don’t love you any longer” — and he staggered down the stairs.

Monsieur Bargemont reappeared:

“It’s very curious,” he said, “but I can’t make Rosalie hear.”

The actress shrugged her shoulders.

“Look here, go away, will you? I have a horrid headache. Go away, Bargemont.”

XXX

She was Bargemont's mistress! The thought was torture to Jean Servien, the more atrocious from the unexpectedness of the discovery. He both hated and despised the coarse ruffian whose sham good-nature did not impose on him, and whom he knew for a brutal, dull-witted, mean-spirited bully. That pimply face, those goggle eyes, that forehead with the swollen black vein running across it, that heavy hand, that ugly, vulgar soul, could it be —— It sickened him to think of it! And disgust was the thing of all others Servien's delicately balanced nature felt most keenly. His morality was shaky, and he could have found excuse for elegant vices, refined perversions, romantic crimes. But Bargemont and his pot of butter!... Never to possess the most adorable of women, never to see her more, he was quite willing for the sacrifice still, but to know her in the arms of that coarse brute staggered the mind and rendered life impossible.

Absorbed in such thoughts, he found his way back instinctively to his own quarter of the city. Shells whistled over his head and burst with terrific reports. Flying figures passed him, their heads enveloped in handkerchiefs and carrying mattresses on their backs. At the corner of the *Rue de Rennes* he tripped over a lamp-post lying across the pavement beside a half-demolished wall. In front of his father's shop he saw a huge hole. He went to open the door; a shell had burst it in and he could see the work-bench capsized in a dark corner.

Then he remembered that the Germans were bombarding the left bank, and he felt a sudden impulse to roam the streets under the rain of iron.

A voice hailed him, issuing from underground:

"Is it you, my lad? Come in quick; you've given me a fine fright. Come down here; we are settled in the cellars."

He followed his father and found beds arranged in the underground chambers, while the main cellar served as kitchen and sitting-room. The bookbinder had a map, and was pointing out to the *concierge* and tenants the position of the relieving armies. Aunt Servien sat in a dim corner, her eyes fixed in a dull stare, mumbling bits of biscuit soaked in wine. She had no notion of what was happening, but maintained an attitude of suspicion.

The little assemblage, which had been living this subterranean life since the evening of the day before, asked what news young Servien brought. Then the bookbinder resumed the explanations which as an old soldier and a responsible man he had been asked to give the company.

“The thing to do is,” he continued, “to join hands with the Army of the Loire, piercing the circle of iron that shuts us in. Admiral La Roncière has carried the positions at Épinay away beyond Longjumeau — —”

Then turning to Jean:

“My lad, just find me Longjumeau on the map; my eyes are not what they were at twenty, and these tallow candles give a very poor light.”

At that moment a tremendous explosion shook the solid walls and filled the cellar with dust. The women screamed; the porter went off to make his round of inspection, tapping the walls with his heavy keys; an enormous spider scampered across the vaulted roof.

Then the conversation was resumed as if nothing had happened, and two of the lodgers started a game of cards on an upturned cask.

Jean was dog-tired and fell asleep on the floor — a nightmare sleep.

“Has the little lad come home?” asked Aunt Servien, still sucking at her biscuit.

XXXI

Old Servien, in his working jacket, stepped up to the bed; then, creeping away again on tip-toe: "He is asleep, Monsieur Garneret, he is asleep. The doctor tells us he is saved. He is a very good doctor! *You* know that yourself, for he is your friend, and it was you brought him here. You have been our saviour, Monsieur Garneret."

And the bookbinder turned his head away to wipe his eyes, walked across to the window, lifted the curtain and looked out into the sunlit street.

"The fine weather will quite set him up again. But we have had six terrible weeks. I never lost heart; it is not in the nature of things that a father should despair of his son's life; still, you know, Monsieur Garneret, he has been very ill.

"The neighbours have been very good to us; but it was a hard job nursing him in this cursed cellar. Just think, Monsieur Garneret, for twenty days we had to keep his head in ice."

"You know that is the treatment for meningitis."

The bookbinder came up confidentially to Garneret. He scratched his ear, rubbed his forehead, stroked his chin in great embarrassment.

"My poor lad," he got started at last, "is in love, passionately in love. I have found it out from the things he said when he was delirious. It is not my way to interfere with what does not concern me; but as I see the matter is serious, I am going to ask you, for his own good, to tell me who it is, if you know her."

Garneret shrugged his shoulders:

"An actress! a tragedy actress! pooh!"

The bookbinder pondered a moment; then:

"Look you, Monsieur Garneret, I acted for the best in my poor boy's interest, but I blame myself. I tell myself this, the education I gave him has disqualified him for hard work and practical life.... An actress, you say, a tragedy actress? Tastes of that sort must be acquired in the schools. Those times he was attending his classes, I used to get hold of his exercise books after he had gone to bed and read whatever there was in French. It was my way of checking his work; because, *ignoramus* as he may be, a man can see, with a little common sense, what is done properly and what is scamped. Well, Monsieur Garneret, I was terrified to find in his themes so many high-flown ideas; some of them were very fine, no doubt, and I copied out on a paper those that struck me most. But I used to tell myself: All these grand speeches, all these histories, taken from the books of the ancient Romans, are going to put my lad's head in a fever, and he will

never know the truth of things. I was right, my dear Monsieur Garneret; it is school learning, look you, has made him fall in love with a tragedy actress —
—”

Jean Servien raised himself up in bed.

“Is that you, Garneret? I am very glad to see you.”

Then, after listening a moment:

“Why, what is that noise?” he asked.

Garneret told him it was Mont Valérien firing on the fortifications.
The Commune was in full swing.

“Vive la Commune!” cried Jean Servien, and he dropped his head back on the pillow with a smile.

XXXII

He was recovered and, with a book in his hand, was talking a quiet walk in the Luxembourg gardens. He had that feeling of harmless selfishness, that self-pity that comes with convalescence. Of his previous life, all he cared to remember was a charming face bending over him and a voice sweeter than the loveliest music murmuring: "So you love me still?" Oh! never fear, he would not answer now as he did on that dreadful staircase: "I don't love you any longer." No, he would answer with eyes and lips and open arms: "I shall love you always!" Still the odious spectre of his rival would cross his memory at times and cause him agonies. Suddenly his eyes were caught by an extraordinary sight.

Two yards away from him in the garden, in front of the orange-house, was Monsieur Tudesco, burly and full-blown as usual, but how metamorphosed in costume! He wore a National Guard's tunic, covered with glittering *aiguillettes*; from his red sash peeped the butts of a brace of pistols. On his head was perched a *képi* with five gold bands. The central figure of a group of women and children, he was gazing at the heavens with as much tender emotion as his little green eyes were capable of expressing. His whole person breathed a sense of power and kindly patronage. His right hand rested at arm's length on a little boy's head, and he was addressing him in a set speech:

"Young citizen, pride of your mother's heart, ornament of the public parks, hope of the Commune, hear the words of the proscribed exile. I say it: Young citizen, the 18th of March is a great day; it witnessed the foundation of the Commune, it rescued you from slavery. Grave on your heart's core that never-to-be-forgotten date. I say it: We have suffered and fought for you. Son of the disinherited and despairing, you shall be a free man!"

He ended, and restoring the child to its mother, smiled upon his listeners of the fair sex, who were lost in admiration of his eloquence, his red sash, his gold lace and his green old age.

Albeit it was three o'clock in the afternoon, he had not drunk more than he could carry, and he trod the sandy walks with a mien of masterful assurance amid the plaudits of the people.

Jean advanced to meet him; he had a soft place in his heart for the old man. Monsieur Tudesco grasped his hand with a fatherly affection and declaimed:

"I am overjoyed to see my dear disciple, the child of my intellect. Monsieur Servien, look yonder and never forget the sight; it is the spectacle of a free people."

The fact is, a throng of citizens of both sexes was tramping over the lawns, picking the flowers in the beds and breaking branches from the trees.

The two friends tried to find seats on a bench; but these were all occupied by *fédérés* of all ranks huddled up on them and snoring in chorus. For this reason Monsieur Tudesco opined it was better to adjourn to a café.

They came upon one in the *Place de l'Odéon*, where Monsieur Tudesco could display his striking uniform to his own satisfaction.

"I am an engineer," he announced, when he was seated with his bitter before him, "an engineer in the service of the Commune, with the rank of Colonel."

Jean thought it mighty strange all the same. No doubt he had heard his old tutor's tales about his confabulations at the dram-shop with the leaders of the Commune, but it struck him as extraordinary that the Monsieur Tudesco he knew should have blossomed into an engineer and Colonel under any circumstances. But there was the fact. Monsieur Tudesco manifested no surprise, not he!

"Science!" he boasted, "science is everything! It's study does it! Knowledge is power! To vanquish the myrmidons of despotism, we must have science. That is why I am an engineer with the rank of Colonel."

And Monsieur Tudesco went on to relate how he was charged with very special duties — to discover the underground passages which the instruments of tyranny had dug beneath the capital, tunnelling under the two branches of the Seine, for the transport of munitions of war. At the head of a gang of navvies, he inspected the palaces, hospitals, barracks and religious houses, breaking up cellars and staving in drain-pipes. Science! science is everything! He also inspected the crypts of churches, to unearth traces of the priests' lubricity. Knowledge is power!

After the bitter came absinthe, and Colonel Tudesco proposed for Servien's consideration a lucrative post at the Delegacy for Foreign Affairs.

But Jean shook his head. He felt tired and had lost all heart.

"I see what it is," cried the Colonel, patting him on the shoulder; "you are young and in love. There are two spirits breathe their inspiration alternately in the ear of mankind — Love and Ambition. Love speaks the first; and you are still hearkening to his voice, my young friend."

Jean, who had drunk *his* share of absinthe, confessed that he was deeper in love than ever and that he was jealous. He related the episode of the staircase and inveighed bitterly against Monsieur Bargemont. Nor did he fail to identify

his case with the good of the Commune, by making out Gabrielle's lover to be a Bonapartist and an enemy of the people.

Colonel Tudesco drew a note-book from his pocket, inscribed Bargemont's name and address in it, and cried:

"If the man has not fled like a poltroon, we will make a hostage of him! I am the friend of the Citizen Delegate in charge of the Prefecture of Police, and I say it: you shall be avenged on the infamous Bargemont! Have you read the decree concerning hostages? No? Read it then; it is an inimitable monument of the wisdom of the people.

"I tear myself regretfully from your company, my young friend. But I must be gone to discover an underground passage the Sisters of Marie-Joseph, in their contumacy, have driven right from the Prison of Saint-Lazare to the Mother Convent in the village of Argenteuil. It is a long tunnel by which they communicate with the traitors at Versailles. Come and see me in my quarters at the General Staff, in the *Place Vendôme*. Farewell and fraternal greeting!"

Jean paid the Colonel's score and set out for home. The walls were all plastered over with posters and proclamations. He read one that was half hidden under bulletins of victories:

"Article IV. All persons detained in custody by the verdict of the jury of accusation shall be hostages of the people of Paris.

"Article V. Every execution of a prisoner of war or a partisan of the government of the Commune of Paris shall be followed by the instant execution of thrice the number of hostages detained in virtue of Article IV, the same being chosen by lot. "

He frowned dubiously and asked himself:

"Can it be I have denounced a man as hostage?"

But his fears were soon allayed; Colonel Tudesco was only a wind-bag, and could not really arrest people. Besides, was it credible that Bargemont, head of a Ministerial Department, was still in Paris? And after all, if he did come to harm, well, so much the worse for him!

XXXIII

Two days after a cab with a musket barrel protruding from either window stopped before the bookbinder's shop. The two National Guards who stumbled out of it demanded to see the citizen Jean Servien, handed him a sealed packet and signed to him to open the door wide and wait for them. Next minute they reappeared carrying a full-length portrait.

It represented a woman of forty or thereabouts, with a yellow face, very long and disproportionately large for the frail, sickly body it surmounted, and dressed in an unpretending black gown. She wore a sad, submissive look. Her grey eyes bespoke a contrite and fearful heart, the cheeks were pendulous and the loose chin almost touched the bosom. Jean scrutinized the poor, pitiful face, but could recall no memory in connection with it. He opened the letter and read: "*Commune of Paris — General Staff* .

"Order to deliver to the citizen Jean Servien the portrait of Madame Bargemont.

"Tudesco.

"Colonel commanding the Subterranean
Ways of the Commune."

Jean wanted to ask the National Guards what it all meant, but already the cab was driving off, bayonets protruding from both windows. The passers-by, who had long ceased to be surprised at anything, cast a momentary glance after the retreating vehicle.

Jean, left alone with Madame Bargemont's portrait before him, began to ask himself why his disconcerting friend Tudesco had sent it to him.

"The wretch," he told himself, "must have arrested Bargemont and sacked his apartments."

Meantime Madame Bargemont was gazing at him with a martyr's haunting eyes. She looked so unhappy that Jean was filled with pity.

"Poor woman!" he ejaculated, and turning the canvas face to the wall, he left the house.

Presently the bookbinder returned to his work and, though anything but an inquisitive man, was tempted to look at this big picture that blocked up his shop. He scratched his head, wondering if this could be the actress his son was in love with. He opined she must be mightily taken with the young man to send him so

large a portrait in so handsome a frame. He could not see anything to capture a lover's fancy.

“At any rate,” he thought, “she does not look like a bad woman.”

XXXIV

Jean stepped over the bodies of two or three drunk National Guards and found himself in the room occupied by Colonel Tudesco and in that worthy's presence. The Colonel lay snoring on a satin sofa, a cold chicken on the table at his elbow. He wore his spurs. Jean shook him roughly by the shoulder and asked him where the portrait came from, declaring that he, Jean, had not the smallest wish to keep it. The Colonel woke, but his speech was thick and his memory confused. His mind was full of his underground passages. He was commander of them all and could not find one. There was something in this fact that offended his sense of justice. The Lady Superior of the Nuns of Marie-Joseph had refused to betray the secret of the famous Saint-Lazare tunnel.

"She has refused," declared the old Italian, "out of contumacy — and also, perhaps, because there is no tunnel. And, since truth must out, I'm bound to say, if I was not Commandant of the subterranean passages of the capital, I should really think there were none."

His wits came back little by little.

"Young man, you have seen the soldier reposing from his labours. What question have you come to ask the veteran champion of freedom?"

"About Bargemont? About that portrait?"

"I know, I know. I proceeded with a dozen men to his domicile to arrest him, but he had taken to flight, the coward! I carried out a perquisition in his rooms. In the *salon* I saw Madame Bargemont's portrait and I said: 'That lady looks as sad as Monsieur Jean Servien. They are both victims of the infamous Bargemont; I will bring them together and they shall console each other.' Monsieur Servien, oblige me by tasting that cognac; it comes from the cellar of your odious rival."

He poured the brandy into two big glasses and hiccuped with a laugh: "The cognac of an enemy tastes well."

Then he fell back on the sofa, muttering: "The soldier reposing — —"

His face was crimson. Jean shrugged his shoulders and left the room. He had hardly opened the door when the old man began howling in his sleep: "Help! help! they're murdering me."

In an instant the *fédérés* on guard hurled themselves upon Jean; he could feel the cold muzzles of revolvers at his temples and hear rifles banging off at random in the ante-room.

The Colonel was raving in the frenzy of alcoholic delirium, writhing in horrible convulsions and yelling: "He has killed me! he has murdered me!"

"He has murdered the Colonel," the *fédérés* took up the cry.

"He has poisoned him. Take him before the court martial."

"Shoot him right away. He's an assassin; the Versaillais have sent him."

"Off with him to the lock-up!"

Servien's denials and struggles were in vain. Again and again he protested: "You can see for yourselves he's drunk and asleep!"

"Listen to him — he is insulting the sovereign people."

"Pitch him in the river!"

"Swing him on a lamp-post."

"Shoot him!"

Bundled down the stairs, rifle-butts prodding him in the back to help him along, Jean was haled before an officer, who there and then signed an order of arrest.

XXXV

He had been in solitary confinement in a cell at the *depôt* for sixteen days now — or was it fifteen? — he was not sure. The hours dragged by with an excruciating monotony and tediousness.

At the start he had demanded justice and loudly protested his innocence. But he had come to realize at last that justice had no concern with his case or that of the priests and gendarmes confined within the same walls. He had given up all thought of persuading the savage frenzy of the Commune to listen to reason, and deemed it the wisest thing to hold his tongue and the best to be forgotten. He trembled to think how easily it might end in tragedy, and his anguish seemed to choke him.

Sometimes, as he sat dreaming, he could see a tree against a patch of blue sky, and great tears would rise to his eyes.

It was there, in his prison cell, Jean learned to know the shadowy joys of memory.

He thought of his good old father sitting at his work-bench or tightening the screw of the press; he thought of the shop packed with bound volumes and bindings, of his little room where of evenings he read books of travel — of all the familiar things of home. And every time he reviewed in spirit the poor thin romance of his unpretending life, he felt his cheeks burn to think how it was all dominated, almost every episode controlled, by this drunken parasite of a Tudesco! It was true nevertheless! Paramount over his studies, his loves, his dangers, over all his existence, loomed the rubicund face of the old villain! The shame of it! He had lived very ill! but what a meagre life it had been too. How cruel it was, how unjust! and there was more of self-pity in the poor, sore heart than of anger.

Every day, every hour he thought of Gabrielle; but how changed the complexion of his love for her! Now it was a tender, tranquil sentiment, a disinterested affection, a sweet, soothing reverie. It was a vision of a wondrous delicacy, such as loneliness and unhappiness alone can form in the souls they shield from the rude shocks of the common life — the dream of a holy life, a life dim and overshadowed, vowed wholly and completely, without reward or recompense, to the woman worshipped from afar, as that of the good country *curé* is vowed to the God who never steps down from the tabernacle of the altar.

His gaoler was a good-natured *sous-officier* who, amazed and horrified at what was going forward, clung to discipline as a sheet-anchor in the general

shipwreck. He felt a rough, uncouth pity for his prisoners, but this never interfered with the strict performance of his duties, and Jean, who had no experience of soldiers' ways, never guessed the man's true character. However, he grew less and less unbending and taciturn the nearer the army of order approached the city.

Finally, one day he had told his prisoner, with a wink of the eye: "Courage, lad! something's going to turn up soon."

The same afternoon Jean heard a distant sound of musketry; then, all in a moment, the door of his cell opened and he saw an avalanche of prisoners roll from one end of the corridor to the other. The gaoler had unlocked all the cells and shouted the words, "Every man for himself; run for it!" Jean himself was carried along, down stairs and passages, out into the prison courtyard, and pitched head foremost against the wall. By the time he recovered from the shock of his fall, the prisoners had vanished, and he stood alone before the open wicket.

Outside in the street he heard the crackle of musketry and saw the Seine running grey under the lowering smoke-cloud of burning Paris. Red uniforms appeared on the *Quai de l'École*. The *Pont-au-Change* was thick with *fédérés*. Not knowing where to fly, he was for going back into the prison; but a body of *Vengeurs de Lutèce*, in full flight, drove him before their bayonets towards the *Pont-au-Change*. A woman, a *cantinière*, kept shouting: "Don't let him go, give him his gruel. He's a Versaillais." The squad halted on the *Quai-aux-Fleurs*, and Jean was pushed against the wall of the *Hôtel-Dieu*, the *cantinière* dancing and gesticulating in front of him. Her hair flying loose under her gold-laced *képi*, with her ample bosom and her elastic figure poised gallantly on the strong, well-shaped limbs, she had the fierce beauty of some magnificent wild animal. Her little round mouth was wide open, yelling menaces and obscenities, as she brandished a revolver. The *Vengeurs de Lutèce*, hard-pressed and dispirited, looked stolidly at their white-faced prisoner against the wall, and then looked in each other's faces. Her fury redoubled; threatening them collectively, addressing each man by some vile nickname, pacing in front of them with a bold swing of the powerful hips, the woman dominated them, intoxicated them with her puissant influence.

They formed up in platoon.

"Fire!" cried the *cantinière*.

Jean threw out his arms before him.

Two or three shots went off. He could hear the balls flatten against the wall, but he was not hit.

“Fire! fire!” The woman repeated the cry in the voice of an angry, self-willed child.

She had been through the fighting, this girl, she had drunk her fill from staved-in wine-casks and slept on the bare ground, pell-mell with the men, out in the public square reddened with the glare of conflagration. They were killing all round her, and nobody had been killed yet *for her*. She was resolved they should shoot her someone, before the end! Stamping with fury, she reiterated her cry: “Fire! Fire! Fire!”

Again the guns were cocked and the barrels levelled. But the *Vengeurs de Lutèce* had not much heart left; their leader had vanished; they were disorganized, they were running away; sobered and stupefied, they knew the game was up. They were quite willing all the same to shoot the bourgeois there at the wall, before bolting for covert, each to hide in his own hole.

Jean tried to say: “Don’t make me suffer more than need be!” but his voice stuck in his throat.

One of the *Vengeurs* cast a look in the direction of the *Pont-au-Change* and saw that the *fédérés* were losing ground. Shouldering his musket, he said:

“Let’s clear out of the bl — y place, by God!”

The men hesitated; some began to slink away.

At this the *cantinière* shrieked:

“Bl — sted hounds! Then *I’ll* have to do his business for him!”

She threw herself on Jean Servien and spat in his face; she abandoned herself to a frantic orgy of obscenity in word and gesture and clapped the muzzle of her revolver to his temple.

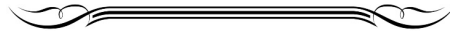
Then he felt all was over and waited.

A thousand things flashed in a second before his eyes; he saw the avenues under the old trees where his aunt used to take him walking in old days; he saw himself a little child, happy and wondering; he remembered the castles he used to build with strips of plane-tree bark... The trigger was pulled. Jean beat the air with his arms and fell forward face to the ground. The men finished him with their bayonets; then the woman danced on the corpse with yells of joy.

The fighting was coming closer. A well-sustained fire swept the *Quai*. The woman was the last to go. Jean Servien’s body lay stretched in the empty roadway. His face wore a strange look of peacefulness; in the temple was a little hole, barely visible; blood and mire fouled the pretty hair a mother had kissed with such transports of fondness.

THE END

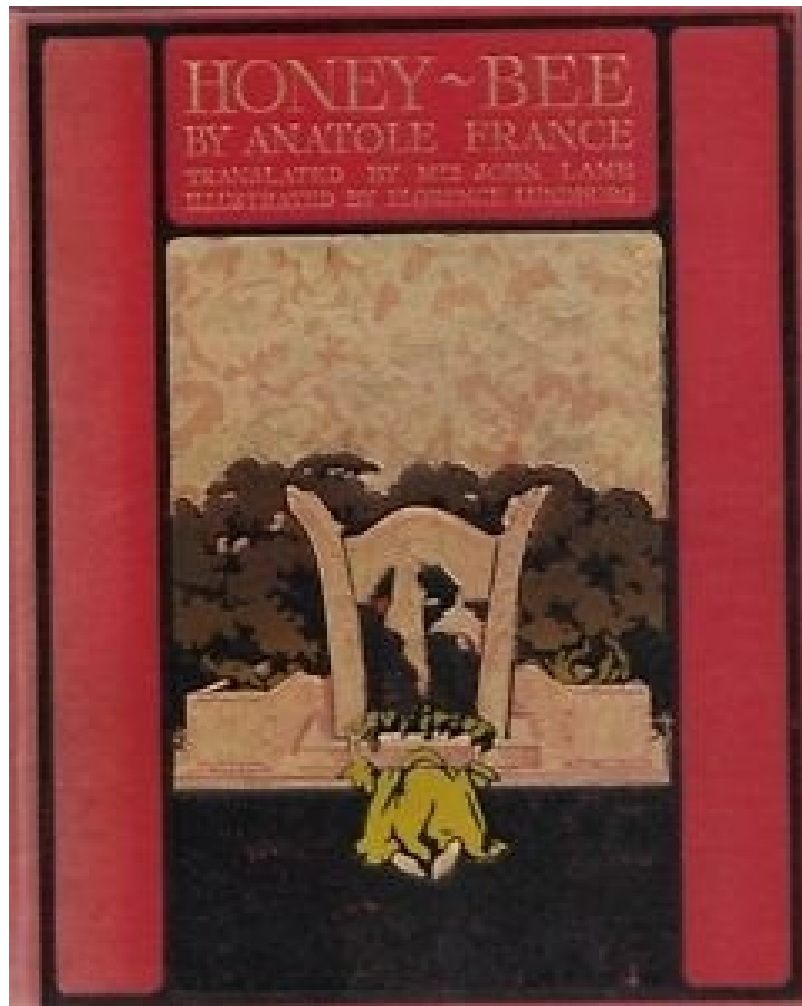
HONEY-BEE



Translated by Mrs. John Lane

Honey-Bee was first published in 1882 in a French magazine, before it was included in *Balthasar and Other Works*: a collection of stories published in 1889. It was translated and released in English in 1911 by the publisher John Lane of London. Anna Eichberg or ‘Mrs John Lane’ was the translator of the novel. In the introduction to the work France stated that he wrote the book for those with a playful and youthful mind, arguing he did not believe such works should only be for children. The implication of labelling a book a ‘child’s story’ undermines the pleasure and enjoyment that can be derived from such work.

The novel is not one of France’s better known books, but it does demonstrate the author’s versatility as a writer, and his interest in a broad array of literary forms. The story centres on Bee, the young daughter of the Duchess of Clarides, and her brother Georges. The young pair decides to visit a lake to observe the horizon. Bee is kidnapped by gnome like creatures and taken to their underworld kingdom. The tale involves Georges and Bee attempting to reunite and their interaction with the King of the underworld, who wishes to make Bee his wife. France crafts a lively and fantastical story, engaging the reader’s mind and imagination.



An early English translation of the novel

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

XIII

XIV

XV

XVI

XVII

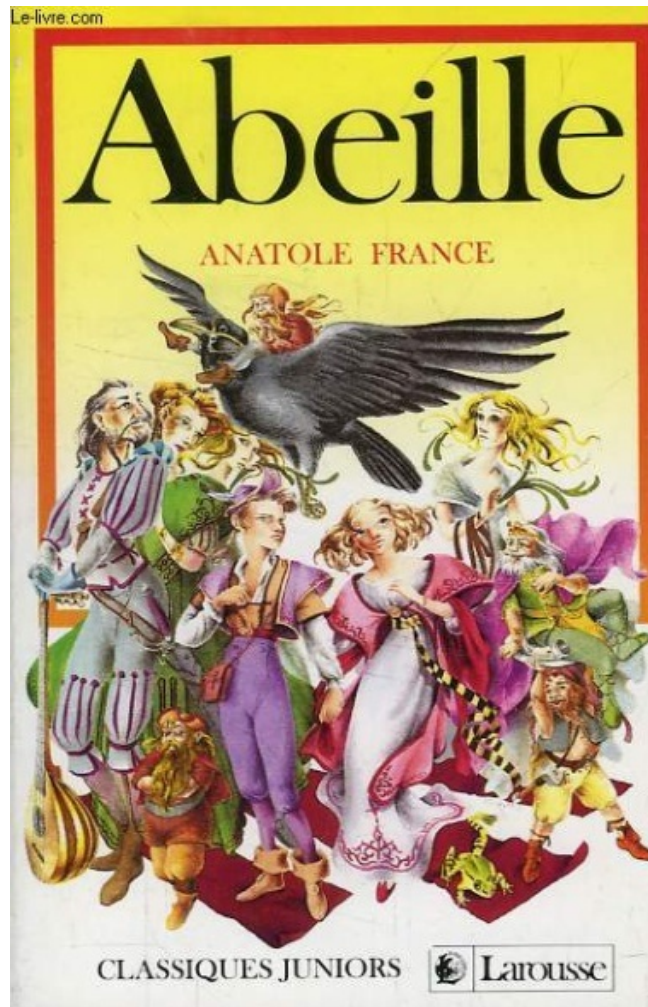
XVIII

XIX

XX

XXI

XXII



French edition for children

TO H. B. H.

DEAR AND LIFE-LONG FRIEND

INTRODUCTION

It is an honour, but, also, a great responsibility, to introduce through the dangerous medium of a translation one of the most distinguished writers of our time, and, probably, the greatest living master of style, to a new world — the world of childhood. One is conscious that it is as impossible to translate the charm and art of Anatole France as it is to describe in dull, colourless words the exquisite perfume of the rose.

Such as this translation is I offer it with diffidence, realising that I have undertaken a difficult task. And yet I venture to do so for I long to make known to English and American children one of the loveliest and noblest of stories — a story overflowing with poetic imagination, wisdom and humour, divine qualities to which the heart of the child is always open as the flower to the dew.

I want young children as well as others, older only by accident of years, but whose hearts are always young — which is the eternal youth — to know the greatest French writer of his day, when, by the magic of his pen, he, like them, becomes young, gentle and charming. I want them to learn to love his “Honey-Bee,” newest and sweetest of those darlings of childhood who have come down to us from bygone ages, distant lands and half-forgotten races, but who in their eternal charm appeal to all children since children first heard those wonderful stories or pored over treasured books that awaken the ardent young imagination to love, beauty, romance and goodness.

So, too, some day will “Honey-Bee” the golden-haired princess of the dear, good dwarfs, join her enchanting companions, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Red Riding Hood, The Sleeping Beauty, The Frog Prince, Puss in Boots, Aladdin, and all the others of that immortal galaxy whose glorious destiny it has been to be beloved by childhood. May they welcome “Honey-Bee,” youngest of all. And so the Master, supreme when he writes for men and women, will find open to him a new world, purer and more beautiful, in the hearts of English and American children.

A. E. L.

I

Which treats of the appearance of the country and serves as
Introduction

The sea covers to-day what was once the Duchy of Clarides. No trace of the town or the castle remains. But when it is calm there can be seen, it is said, within the circumference of a mile, huge trunks of trees standing on the bottom of the sea. A spot on the banks, which now serves as a station for the customhouse officers, is still called "The Tailor's Booth," and it is quite probable that this name is in memory of a certain Master Jean who is mentioned in this story. The sea, which encroaches year by year, will soon cover this spot so curiously named.

Such changes are in the nature of things. The mountains sink in the course of ages, and the depths of the seas, on the contrary, rise until their shells and corals are carried to the regions of clouds and ice.

Nothing endures. The face of land and sea is for ever changing. Tradition alone preserves the memory of men and places across the ages and renders real to us what has long ceased to exist. In telling you of Clarides I wish to take you back to times that have long since vanished. Thus I begin:

The Countess of Blanchelande having placed on her golden hair a little black hood embroidered with pearls....

But before proceeding I must beg very serious persons not to read this. It is not written for them. It is not written for grave people who despise trifles and who always require to be instructed. I only venture to offer this to those who like to be entertained, and whose minds are both young and gay. Only those who are amused by innocent pleasures will read this to the end. Of these I beg, should they have little children, that they will tell them about my Honey-Bee. I wish this story to please both boys and girls and yet I hardly dare to hope it will. It is too frivolous for them and, really, only suitable for old-fashioned children. I have a pretty little neighbour of nine whose library I examined the other day. I found many books on the microscope and the zoophytes, as well as several scientific story-books. One of these I opened at the following lines: "The cuttle-fish *Sepia Officinalis* is a cephalopodic mollusc whose body includes a spongy organ containing a chylaqueous fluid saturated with carbonate of lime." My pretty little neighbour finds this story very interesting. I beg of her, unless she wishes me to die of mortification, never to read the story of Honey-Bee.

II

In which we learn what the white rose meant to the Countess of Blanchelande

Having placed on her golden hair a little black hood embroidered with pearls and bound about her waist a widow's girdle, the Countess of Blanchelande entered the chapel where it was her daily custom to pray for the soul of her husband who had been killed in single-handed combat with a giant from Ireland.

That day she saw a white rose lying on the cushion of her *prie-Dieu* ; at sight of this she turned pale; her eyes grew dim; she bowed her head and wrung her hand. For she knew that when a Countess of Blanchelande is about to die she always finds a white rose on her *prie-Dieu* .

Warned by this that her time had come to leave a world in which in so short a time she had been wife, mother and widow, she entered the chamber where her son George slept in the care of the nurses. He was three years old. His long eyelashes threw a lovely shadow on his cheeks, and his mouth looked like a flower. At sight of him, so helpless and so beautiful, she began to weep.

"My little child," she cried in anguish, "my dear little child, you will never have known me and my image will fade for ever from your dear eyes. And yet, to be truly your mother, I nourished you with my own milk, and for love of you I refused the hand of the noblest cavaliers."

So speaking she kissed a medallion in which was her own portrait and a lock of her hair, and this she hung about the neck of her son. A mother's tear fell on the little one's cheek as he stirred in his cradle and rubbed his eyes with his little hands. But the Countess turned her head away and fled out of the room. How could eyes about to be extinguished for ever bear the light of two dear eyes in which the soul was only beginning to dawn?

She ordered a steed to be saddled and followed by her squire, Francoeur, she rode to the castle of Clarides.

The Duchess of Clarides embraced the Countess of Blanchelande.

"Loveliest! what good fortune brings you here?"

"The fortune that brings me here is not good. Listen, my friend. We were married within a few years of each other, and similar fates have made us widows. For in these times of chivalry the best perish first, and in order to live long one must be a monk. When you became a mother I had already been one for two years. Your daughter Honey-Bee is lovely as the day, and my little George is good. I love you and you love me. Know then that I have found a

white rose on the cushion of my *prie-Dieu* . I am about to die; I leave you my son.”

The Duchess knew what the white rose meant to the ladies of Blanchelande. She began to weep and in the midst of her tears she promised to bring up Honey-Bee and George as brother and sister, and to give nothing to one which the other did not share.

Still in each other's arms the two women approached the cradle where little Honey-Bee slept under light curtains, blue as the sky, and without opening her eyes, she moved her little arms. And as she spread her fingers five little rosy rays came out of each sleeve.

“He will defend her,” said the mother of George.

“And she will love him,” the mother of Honey-Bee replied.

“She will love him,” a clear little voice repeated, which the Duchess recognised as that of a spirit which for a long time had lived under the hearth-stone.

On her return to her manor the lady of Blanchelande divided her jewels among her women and having had herself anointed with perfumed ointments and robed in her richest raiment in order to honour the body destined to rise again at the Day of Judgment, she lay down on her bed and fell asleep never again to awaken.

III

Wherein begins the love of George of Blanchelande and Honey-Bee of Claride

Contrary to the common destiny which is to have more goodness than beauty, or more beauty than goodness, the Duchess of Clarides was as good as she was beautiful, and she was so beautiful that many princes, though they had only seen her portrait, demanded her hand in marriage. But to all their pleading she replied:

“I shall have but one husband as I have but one soul.”

However, after five years of mourning she left off her long veil and her black robes so as not to spoil the happiness of those about her, and in order that all should smile and be free to enjoy themselves in her presence. Her duchy comprised a great extent of country; moorlands, overgrown by heather, covered the desolate expanse, lakes in which fishermen sometimes caught magic fish, and mountains which rose in fearful solitudes over subterraneous regions inhabited by dwarfs.

She governed Clarides with the help of an old monk who, having escaped from Constantinople and seen much violence and treachery, had but little faith in human goodness. He lived in a tower in the company of birds and books, and from this place he filled his position as counsellor by the aid of a number of little maxims. His rules were these: “Never revive a law once fallen into disuse; always accede to the demands of a people for fear of revolt, but accede as slowly as possible, because no sooner is one reform granted than the public demands another, and you can be turned out for acceding too quickly as well as for resisting too long.”

The Duchess let him have his own way, for she understood nothing about politics. She was compassionate and, as she was unable to respect all men, she pitied those who were unfortunate enough to be wicked. She helped the suffering in every possible way, visited the sick, comforted the widows, and took the poor orphans under her protection.

She educated her daughter Honey-Bee with a charming wisdom. Having brought the child up only to do good, she never denied her any pleasure.

This good woman kept the promise she had made to the poor Countess of Blanchelande. She was like a mother to George, and she made no difference between him and Honey-Bee. They grew up together, and George approved of

Honey-Bee, though he thought her rather small. Once, when they were very little, he went up to her and asked:

“Will you play with me?”

“I should like to,” said Honey-Bee.

“We will make mud pies,” said George, which they proceeded to do. But as Honey-Bee made hers very badly, George struck her fingers with his spade. Whereupon Honey-Bee set up a most awful roar and the squire, Francoeur, who was strolling about in the garden, said to his young master:

“It is not worthy of a Count of Blanchelande to strike young ladies, your lordship.”

Whereupon George was seized with an ardent desire to hit Francoeur also with his spade. But as this presented insurmountable difficulties, he resigned himself to do what was easier, and that was to stand with his nose against the trunk of a big tree and weep torrents.

In the meantime Honey-Bee took care to encourage her own tears by digging her fists into her eyes; and in her despair she rubbed her nose against the trunk of a neighbouring tree. When night came and softly covered the earth, Honey-Bee and George were still weeping, each in front of a tree. The Duchess of Clarides was obliged to come and take her daughter by one hand and George by the other, and lead them back to the castle. Their eyes were red and their noses were red and their cheeks shone. They sighed and sobbed enough to break one’s heart. But they ate a good supper, after which they were both put to bed. But as soon as the candle was blown out they re-appeared like two little ghosts in two little night-gowns, and they hugged each other and laughed at the top of their voices.

And thus began the love of Honey-Bee of Clarides and George of Blanchelande.

IV

Which treats of Education in general, and George of Blanche lande's in particular

So George grew up in the Castle side by side with Honey-Bee, whom he affectionately called his sister though he knew she was not.

He had masters in fencing, riding, swimming, gymnastics, dancing, hunting, falconry, tennis, and, indeed, in all the arts. He even had a writing-master. This was an old cleric, humble of manner but very proud within, who taught him all manner of penmanship, and the more beautiful this was the less decipherable it became. Very little pleasure or profit did George get out of the old cleric's lessons, as little as out of those of an old monk who taught him grammar in barbarous terms. George could not understand the sense of learning a language which one knows as a matter of course and which is called one's mother tongue.

He only enjoyed himself with Francoeur the squire, who, having knocked about the world, understood the ways of men and beasts, could describe all sorts of countries and compose songs which he could not write. Francoeur was the only one of his masters who taught George anything, for he was the only one who really loved him, and the only good lessons are those which are given with love. The two old goggle-eyes, the writing-master and the grammar-master, who hated each other with all their hearts, were, however, united in a common hatred of the old squire, whom they accused of being a drunkard.

It is true that Francoeur frequented the tavern "The Pewter Pot" somewhat too zealously. It was here that he forgot his sorrows and composed his songs. But of course it was very wrong of him.

Homer made better verses than Francoeur, and Homer only drank the water of the springs. As for sorrows the whole world has sorrows, and the thing to make one forget them is not the wine one drinks, but the good one does. But Francoeur was an old man grown grey in harness, faithful and trustworthy, and the two masters of writing and grammar should have hidden his failings from the duchess instead of giving her an exaggerated account of them.

"Francoeur is a drunkard," said the writing-master, "and when he comes back from 'The Pewter Pot' he makes a letter S as he walks. Moreover, it is the only letter he has ever made; because if it please your Grace, this drunkard is an ass."

The grammar-master added, "And the songs Francoeur sings as he staggers about err against all rules and are constructed on no model at all. He ignores all the rules of rhetoric, please your Grace."

The Duchess had a natural distaste for pedants and tale-bearers. She did what we all would have done in her place; at first she did not listen to them but as they again began to repeat their tittle-tattle, she ended by believing them and decided to send Francoeur away. However, to give him an honourable exile, she sent him to Rome to obtain the blessing of the Pope. This journey was all the longer for Francoeur the squire because a great many taverns much frequented by musicians separated the duchy of Clarides from the holy apostolic seat. In the course of this story we shall see how soon the Duchess regretted having deprived the two children of their most faithful guardian.

V

Which tells how the Duchess took Honeybee and George to the Hermitage, and of their encounter with a hideous old woman. That morning, it was the first Sunday after Easter, the Duchess rode out of the castle on her great sorrel horse, while on her left George of Blanchelande was mounted on a dark horse with a white star on his black forehead, and on her right Honey-Bee guided her milk-white steed with rose-coloured reins. They were on their way to the Hermitage to hear mass. Soldiers armed with lances formed their escort and, as they passed, the people crowded forward to admire them, and, indeed, all three were very fair to see. Under a veil of silver flowers and with flowing mantle the Duchess had an air of lovely majesty; while the pearls with which her coif was embroidered shone with a soft radiance that well-suited the face and soul of this beautiful lady. George by her side with flowing hair and sparkling eyes was very good to see. And on the other side rode Honey-Bee, the tender and pure colour of her face like a caress for the eyes; but most glorious of all her fair tresses, flowing over her shoulders, held by a circlet of gold surmounted by three gold flowers, seemed the shining mantle of her youth and beauty. The good people said, on seeing her: "What a lovely young damsel."

The master tailor, old Jean, took his grandson Peter in his arms to point out Honey-Bee to him, and Peter asked was she alive or was she an image of wax, for he could not understand how any one could be so white and so lovely, and yet belong to the same race as himself, little Peter with his good big weather-beaten cheeks, and his little home-spun shirt laced behind in country fashion.

While the Duchess accepted the people's homage with gracious kindness, the two children showed how it gratified their pride, George by his blushes, Honey-Bee by her smiles, and for this reason the Duchess said to them: "How kindly these good people greet us. For what reason, George? And what is the reason, Honey-Bee?"

"So they should," said Honey-Bee.

"It's their duty," George added.

"But why should it be their duty?" asked the Duchess.

And as neither replied, she continued:

"I will tell you. For more than three hundred years the dukes of Clarides, from father to son, have lance in hand protected these poor people so that they could gather the harvests of the fields they had sown. For more than three hundred years all the duchesses of Clarides have spun the cloth for the poor,

have visited the sick, and have held the new-born at the baptismal font. That is the reason they greet you, my children.”

George was lost in deep thought: “We must protect those who toil on the land,” and Honey-Bee said: “One should spin for the poor.”

And thus chatting and meditating they went on their way through meadows starred with flowers. A fringe of blue mountains lay against the distant horizon. George pointed towards the east.

“Is that a great steel shield I see over there?”

“Oh no,” said Honey-Bee, “it’s a round silver clasp, as big as the moon.”

“It is neither a steel shield nor a silver clasp, my children,” replied the Duchess, “but a lake glittering in the sunshine. The surface of this lake, which seen from here is as smooth as a mirror, is stirred by innumerable ripples. Its borders which appear as distinct as it cut in metal are really covered by reeds with feathery plumes and irises whose flower is like a human glance between the blades of swords. Every morning a white mist rises over the lake which shines like armour under the midday sun. But none must approach it for in it dwell the nixies who lure passers by into their crystal abodes.”

At this moment the bell of the Hermitage was heard.

“Let us dismount,” said the Duchess, “and walk to the chapel. It was neither on elephants nor camels that the wise men of the East approached the manger.”

They heard the hermit’s mass. A hideous old crone covered with rags knelt beside the Duchess, who on leaving the church offered her holy water.

“Accept it, good mother,” she said.

George was amazed.

“Do you not know,” said the Duchess, “that in the poor you honour the chosen of our Lord Jesus Christ? A beggar such as this as well as the good Duke of Rochesnoires held you at the font when you were baptized; and your little sister, Honey-Bee, also had one of these poor creatures as godmother.”

The old crone who seemed to have guessed the boy’s thoughts leaned towards him.

“Fair prince,” she cried mockingly, “may you conquer as many kingdoms as I have lost. I was the queen of the Island of Pearls and the Mountains of Gold; each day my table was served with fourteen different kinds of fish, and a negro page bore my train.”

“And by what misfortune have you lost your islands and your mountains, good woman?” asked the Duchess.

“I vexed the dwarfs, and they carried me far away from my dominions.”

“Are the dwarfs so powerful?” George asked.

“As they live in the earth,” the old woman answered, “they know the virtue of precious stones, they work in metals, and they unseal the hidden sources of the springs.”

“And what did you do to vex them?” asked the Duchess.

“On a December night,” said the old woman, “one of them came to ask permission to prepare a great midnight banquet in the kitchen of the castle, which, vaster than a chapter-house, was furnished with casseroles, frying-pans, earthen saucepans, kettles, pans, portable-ovens, gridirons, boilers, dripping-pans, dutch-ovens, fish-kettles, copper-pans, pastry-moulds, copper-jugs, goblets of gold and silver, and mottled wood, not to mention iron roasting-jacks, artistically forged, and the huge black cauldron which hung from the pothook. He promised neither to disturb nor to damage anything. I refused his request, and he disappeared muttering vague threats. The third night, it being Christmas, this same dwarf returned to the chamber where I slept. He was accompanied by innumerable others, who pulled me out of bed and carried me to an unknown land in my nightgown. ‘Such,’ they said as they left me, ‘such is the punishment of the rich who refuse even a part of their treasure to the industrious and kindly dwarf folk who work in gold and cause the springs to flow.’”

Thus said the toothless old woman, and the Duchess having comforted her with words and money, she and the two children retraced their way to the castle.

VI

Which tells of what can be seen from the Keep of Clarides It was one day shortly after this that Honey-Bee and George, without being observed, climbed the steps of the watch-tower which stands in the middle of the Castle of Clarides. Having reached the platform they shouted at the top of their voices and clapped their hands.

Their view extended down the hillside divided into brown and green squares of cultivated fields. Woods and mountains lay dimly blue against the distant horizon.

"Little sister," cried George, "little sister, look at the whole wide world!"

"The world is very big," said Honey-Bee. "My teachers," said George, "have taught me that it is very big; but, as Gertrude our housekeeper says, one must see to believe."

They went the round of the platform.

"Here is something wonderful, little brother," cried Honey-Bee. "The castle stands in the middle of the earth and we are on the watch-tower in the middle of the castle, and so we are standing in the middle of the earth. Ha! ha! ha!"

And, indeed, the horizon formed a circle about the children of which the watch-tower was the centre.

"We are in the middle of the earth! Ha! ha! ha!" George repeated.

Whereupon they both started a-thinking.

"What a pity that the world is so big!" said Honey-Bee, "one might get lost and be separated from one's friends."

George shrugged his shoulders.

"How lucky that the world is so big! One can go in search of adventures. When I am grown up I mean to conquer the mountains that stand at the ends of the earth. That is where the moon rises; I shall seize her as she passes, and I will give her to you, Honey-Bee."

"Yes," said Honey-Bee, "give her to me and I will put her in my hair."

Then they busied themselves searching for the places they knew as on a map.

"I recognise everything," said Honey-Bee, who recognised nothing, "but what are those little square stones scattered over the hillside?"

"Houses," George replied. "Those are houses. Don't you recognise the capital of the Duchy of Clarides, little sister? After all, it is a great city; it has three streets, and one can drive through one of them. Don't you remember that we passed through it last week when we went to the Hermitage?"

“And what is that winding brook?”

“That is the river. See the old stone bridge down there?”

“The bridge under which we fished for crayfish?”

“That’s the one; and in one of the niches stands the statue of the ‘Woman without a Head.’ One cannot see her from here because she is too small.”

“I remember. But why hasn’t she got a head?”

“Probably because she has lost it.”

Without saying if this explanation was satisfactory, Honey-Bee gazed at the horizon.

“Little brother, little brother, just see what sparkles by the side of the blue mountains? It is the lake.”

“It is the lake.”

They then remembered what the Duchess had told them of these beautiful and dangerous waters where the nixies dwell.

“We will go there,” said Honey-Bee.

George was aghast. He stared at her with his mouth wide open.

“But the Duchess has forbidden us to go out alone, so how can we go to this lake which is at the end of the earth?”

“How can we go? I don’t know. It’s you who ought to know, for you are a man and you have a grammar-master.”

This piqued George who replied that one might be a man, and even a very brave man, and yet not know all the roads on earth. Whereupon Honey-Bee said drily with a little air of scorn which made him blush to his ears: “I never said *I* would conquer the blue mountains or take down the moon. I don’t know the way to the lake, but I mean to find it!”

George pretended to laugh.

“You laugh like a cucumber.”

“Cucumbers neither laugh nor cry.”

“If they did laugh they would laugh like you. I shall go along to the lake. And while I search for the beautiful waters in which the nixies live you shall stay alone at home like a good girl. I will leave you my needle-work and my doll. Take care of them, George, take good care of them.”

George was proud, and he was conscious of the humiliation with which Honey-Bee covered him.

Gloomily and with head bowed he cried in a hollow voice: “Very well, then, we will go to the lake.”

VII

In which is described how George and Honey-Bee went to the lake

The next day after the midday meal, the Duchess having gone to her own room George took Honey-Bee by the hand. "Now come!" he said. "Where?" "Hush!"

They crept down stairs and crossed the courtyard. After they had passed the postern, Honey-Bee again asked where they were going.

"To the lake," George said resolutely. Honey-Bee opened her mouth wide but remained speechless. To go so far without permission and in satin shoes! For her shoes were of satin. There was no sense in it.

"We must go and there is no need to be sensible."

Such was George's proud reply. She had once humiliated him and now she pretended to be astonished.

This time it was he who disdainfully sent her back to her dolls. Girls always tempt one on to adventures and then run away. So mean! She could remain. He'd go alone.

She clung to his arm; he pushed her away.

She hung about his neck.

"Little brother," she sobbed, "I will follow you."

He allowed himself to be moved by such touching repentance.

"Come then, but not through the town; we may be seen. We will follow the ramparts and then we can reach the highway by a cross road."

And so they went hand in hand while George explained his plans.

"We will follow the road we took to the Hermitage and then we shall be sure to see the lake, just as we did the other day, and then we can cross the fields in a bee line."

"A bee line" is the pretty rustic way of saying a straight line; and they both laughed because of the young girl's name which fitted in so oddly.

Honey-Bee picked flowers along the ditches; she made a posy of marshmallows, white mullein, asters and chrysanthemums; the flowers faded in her little hands and it was pitiful to see them when Honey-Bee crossed the old stone bridge. As she did not know what to do with them she decided to throw them into the water to refresh them, but finally she preferred to give them to the "Woman without a head."

She begged George to lift her in his arms so as to make her tall enough, and she placed her armful of wild flowers between the folded hands of the old stone

figure.

After she was far away she looked back and saw a pigeon resting on the shoulder of the statue.

When they had been walking some time, said Honey-bee, "I am thirsty."

"So am I," George replied, "but the river is far behind us, and I see neither brook nor fountain."

"The sun is so hot that he has drunk them all up. What shall we do?"

So they talked and lamented when they saw a peasant woman approach who carried a basket of fruit.

"Cherries!" cried George. "How unlucky: I have no money to buy any."

"I have money," said Honey-Bee.

She pulled out of her pocket a little purse in which were five pieces of gold.

"Good woman," she said to the peasant, "will you give me as many cherries as my frock will hold?"

And she raised her little skirt with her two hands. The woman threw in two or three handfuls of cherries. With one hand Honey-Bee held the uplifted skirt and with the other she offered the woman a gold piece.

"Is that enough?"

The woman clutched the gold piece which would amply have paid not only for the cherries in the basket but for the tree on which they grew and the plot of land on which the tree stood.

The artful one replied:

"I'm satisfied, if only to oblige you, little princess."

"Well then, put some more cherries in my brother's cap," said Honey-Bee, "and you shall have another gold piece."

This was done. The peasant woman went on her way meditating in what old stocking or under what mattress she should hide her two gold pieces.

And the two children followed the road eating the cherries and throwing the stones to the right and the left. George chose the cherries that hung two by two on one stem and made earrings for his little sister, and he laughed to see the lovely twin fruit dangle its vermillion beauty against her cheeks.

A pebble stopped their joyous progress. It had got into Honey-Bee's little shoe and she began to limp. At every step she took, her golden curls bobbed against her cheek, and so limping she sat down on a bank by the roadside. Her brother knelt down and took off the satin shoe. He shook it and out dropped a little white pebble.

"Little brother," she said as she looked at her feet, "the next time we go to the lake we'll put on boots."

The sun was already sinking against the radiant sky; a soft breeze caressed their cheeks and necks, and so, cheered and refreshed, the two little travellers proceeded on their way. To make walking easier they went hand in hand, and they laughed to see their moving shadows melt together before them. They sang: Maid Marian, setting forth to find The mill, with sacks of corn to grind, Her donkey, Jan, bestrode.

My dainty maiden, Marian,
She mounted on her donkey, Jan,
And took the mill-ward road.*

* Marian' s'en allant au moulin,
Pour y faire moudre son grain,
Ell monta sur son âne,
Ma p'tite mam'sell' Marianne!
Ell' monta sur son âne Martin
Pour aller au moulin.

But Honey-Bee stopped:

"I have lost my shoe, my satin shoe," she cried. And so it was. The little shoe, whose silken laces had become loose in walking, lay in the road covered-with dust. Then as she looked back and saw the towers of the castle of Clarides fade into the distant twilight her heart sank and the tears came to her eyes.

"The wolves will eat us," she cried, "and our mother will never see us again and she will die of grief."

But George comforted her as he put on her shoe.

"When the castle bell rings for supper we shall have returned to Clarides. Come!"

The miller saw her coming nigh
And could not well forbear to cry, Your donkey you must tether.
My dainty maiden, Marian,
Tether you here your donkey, Jan,
Who brought us twain together.*

* Le meunier qui la voit venir
Ne peut s'empêcher de lui dire:
Attachez là votre âne,
Ma p'tite Mam'sell' Marianne,
Attachez là votre âne Martin
Qui vous mène au moulin.

"The lake, Honey-Bee! See the lake, the lake, the lake!"

"Yes, George, the lake!"

George shouted “hurrah” and flung his hat in the air. Honey-Bee was too proper to fling hers up also, so taking off the shoe that wouldn’t stay on she threw it joyfully over her head.

There lay the lake in the depths of the valley and its curved and sloping banks made a framework of foliage and flowers about its silver waves. It lay there clear and tranquil, and one could see the swaying of the indistinct green of its banks.

But the children could find no path through the underbrush that would lead to its beautiful waters.

While they were searching for one their legs were nipped by some geese driven by a little girl dressed in a sheepskin and carrying a switch. George asked her name.

“Gilberte.”

“Well, then, Gilberte, how can one go to the lake?”

“Folks doesn’t go.”

“Why?”

“Because...”

“But supposing folks did?”

“If folks did there’d be a path, and one would take that path.”

George could think of no adequate reply to this guardian of the geese.

“Let’s go,” he said, “farther on we shall be sure to find a way through the woods.”

“And we will pick nuts and eat them,” said Honey-Bee, “for I am hungry. The next time we go to the lake we must bring a satchel full of good things to eat.”

“That we will, little sister,” said George. “And I quite agree with Francoeur, our squire, who when he went to Rome, took a ham with him, in case he should hunger, and a flask lest he should be thirsty. But hurry, for it is growing late, though I don’t know the time.”

“The shepherdesses know by looking at the sun,” said Honey-Bee; “but I am not a shepherdess. Yet it seems to me that when we left the sun was over our head, and now it is down there, far behind the town and castle of Clarides. I wonder if this happens every day and what it means?”

While they looked at the sun a cloud of dust rose up from the high road, and they saw some cavaliers with glittering weapons ride past at full speed. The children hid in the underbrush in great terror. “They are thieves or probably ogres,” they thought. They were really guards sent by the Duchess of Clarides in search of the little truants.

The two little adventurers found a footpath in the underbrush, not a lovers’ lane, for it was impossible to walk side by side holding hands as is the fashion of

lovers. Nor could the print of human footsteps be seen, but only indentations left by innumerable tiny cloven feet.

“Those are the feet of little devils,” said Honey-Bee.

“Or deer,” suggested George.

The matter was never explained. But what is certain is that the footpath descended in a gentle slope towards the edge of the lake which lay before the two children in all its languorous and silent beauty. The willows surrounded its banks with their tender foliage. The slender blades of the reeds with their delicate plumes swayed lightly over the water. They formed tremulous islands about which the water-lilies spread their great heart-shaped leaves and snow-white flowers. Over these blossoming islands dragon-flies, all emerald or azure, with wings of flame, sped their shrill flight in suddenly altered curves.

The children plunged their burning feet with joy in the damp sand overgrown with tufted horse-tails and the reed-mace with its slender lance. The sweet flag wafted towards them its humble fragrance and the water plantain unrolled about them its filaments of lace on the margin of the sleeping waters which the willow-herb starred with its purple flowers.

VIII

Wherein we shall see what happened to George of Blanchelande because he approached the lake in which the nixies dwell Honey-Bee crossed the sand between two clumps of willows, and the little spirit of the place leaped into the water in front of her, leaving circles that grew greater and greater and finally vanished. This spirit was a little green frog with a white belly. All was silent; a fresh breeze swept over the clear lake whose every ripple had the gracious curve of a smile.

“This lake is pretty,” said Honey-Bee, “but my feet are bleeding in my little torn shoes, and I am very hungry. I wish I were back in the castle.”

“Little sister,” said George, “sit down on the grass. I will wrap your feet in leaves to cool them; then I will go in search of supper for you. High up along the road I saw some ripe blackberries. I will fetch you the sweetest and best in my hat. Give me your handkerchief; I will fill it with strawberries, for there are strawberries near here along the footpath under the shade of the trees. And I will fill my pockets with nuts.”

He made a bed of moss for Honey-Bee under a willow on the edge of the lake, and then he left her.

Honey-Bee lay with folded hands on her little mossy bed and watched the light of the first stars tremble in the pale sky; then her eyes half closed, and yet it seemed to her as if overhead she saw a little dwarf mounted on a raven. It was not fancy. For having reined in the black bird who was gnawing at the bridle, the dwarf stopped just above the young girl and stared down at her with his round eyes. Whereupon he disappeared at full gallop. All this Honey-Bee saw vaguely and then she fell asleep.

She was still asleep when George returned with the fruit he had gathered, which he placed at her side. Then he climbed down to the lake while he waited for her to awaken. The lake slept under its delicate crown of verdure. A light mist swept softly over the waters. Suddenly the moon appeared between the branches, and then the waves were strewn as if with countless stars.

But George could see that the lights which irradiated the waters were not all the broken reflections of the moon, for blue flames advanced in circles, swaying and undulating as if in a dance. Soon he saw that the blue flames flickered over the white faces of women, beautiful faces rising on the crests of the waves and crowned with sea-weeds and sea-shells, with sea-green tresses floating over their shoulders and veils flowing from under their breasts that shimmered with pearls.

The child recognised the nixies and tried to flee. But already their cold white arms had seized him, and in spite of his struggles and cries he was borne across the waters along the galleries of porphyry and crystal.

IX

Wherein we shall see how Honey-Bee was taken to the dwarfs

The moon had risen over the lake and the water now only showed broken reflections of its disc. Honey-Bee still slept. The dwarf who had watched her came back again on his raven followed this time by a crowd of little men. They were very little men. Their white beards hung down to their knees. They looked like old men with the figures of children. By their leathern aprons and the hammers which hung from their belts one could see that they were workers in metals. They had a curious gait, for they leaped to amazing heights and turned the most extraordinary somersaults, and showed the most inconceivable agility that made them seem more like spirits than human beings.

Yet while cutting their most foolhardy capers they preserved an unalterable gravity of demeanour, to such a degree that it was quite impossible to make out their real characters.

They placed themselves in a circle about the sleeping child.

“Now then,” said the smallest of the dwarfs from the heights of his plumed charger; “now then, did I deceive you when I said that the loveliest of princesses was lying asleep on the borders of the lake, and do you not thank me for bringing you here?”

“We thank you, Bob,” replied one of the dwarfs who looked like an elderly poet, “indeed there is nothing lovelier in the world than this young damsel. She is more rosy than the dawn which rises on the mountains, and the gold we forge is not so bright as the gold of her tresses.”

“Very good, Pic, nothing can be truer,” cried the dwarfs, “but what shall we do with this lovely little lady?”

Pic, who looked like a very elderly poet, did not reply to this question, probably because he knew no better than they what to do with this pretty lady.

“Let us build a large cage and put her in,” a dwarf by the name of Rug suggested.

Against this another dwarf called Dig vehemently protested. It was Dig’s opinion that only wild beasts were ever put into cages, and there was nothing yet to prove that the pretty lady was one of these.

But Rug clung to his idea for the reason possibly that he had no other. He defended it with much subtlety. Said he:

“If this person is not savage she will certainly become so as a result of the cage, which will be therefore not only useful but indispensable.”

This reasoning displeased the dwarfs, and one of them named Tad denounced it with much indignation. He was such a good dwarf. He proposed to take the beautiful child back to her kindred who must be great nobles.

But this advice was rejected as being contrary to the custom of the dwarfs.

“We ought to follow the ways of justice not custom,” said Tad.

But no one paid any further attention to him and the assembly broke into a tumult as a dwarf named Pau, a simple soul but just, gave his advice in these terms:

“We must begin by awakening this young lady, seeing she declines to awake of herself; if she spends the night here her eyelids will be swollen to-morrow and her beauty will be much impaired, for it is very unhealthy to sleep in a wood on the borders of a lake.”

This opinion met with general approval as it did not clash with any other.

Pic, who looked like an elderly poet burdened with care, approached the young girl and looked at her very intently, under the impression that a single one of his glances would be quite sufficient to rouse the dreamer out of the deepest sleep. But Pic was quite mistaken as to the power of his glance, for Honey-Bee continued to sleep with folded hands.

Seeing this the good Tad pulled her gently by her sleeve. Thereupon she partly opened her eyes and raised herself on her elbow. When she found herself lying on a bed of moss surrounded by dwarfs she thought what she saw was nothing but a dream, and she rubbed her eyes to open them, so that instead of this fantastic vision she should see the pure light of morning as it entered her little blue room in which she thought she was. For her mind, heavy with sleep, did not recall to her the adventure of the lake. But indeed, it was useless to rub her eyes, the dwarfs did not vanish, and so she was obliged to believe that they were real.

Then she looked about with frightened eyes and saw the forest and remembered.

“George! my brother George!” she cried in anguish. The dwarfs crowded about her, and for fear of seeing them she hid her face in her hands.

“George! George! Where is my brother George?” she sobbed.

The dwarfs could not tell her, for the good reason that they did not know. And she wept hot tears and cried aloud for her mother and brother.

Pau longed to weep with her, and in his efforts to console, he addressed her with rather vague remarks.

“Do not distress yourself so much,” he urged, “it would be a pity for so lovely a young damsel to spoil her eyes with weeping. Rather tell us your story, which cannot fail to be very amusing. We should be so pleased.”

She did not listen. She rose and tried to escape. But her bare and swollen feet caused her such pain that she fell on her knees, sobbing most pitifully. Tad held her in his arms, and Pau tenderly kissed her hand. It was this that gave her the courage to look at them, and she saw that they seemed full of compassion.

Pic looked to her like one inspired, and yet very innocent, and perceiving that all these little men were full of compassion for her, she said:

“Little men, it is a pity you are so ugly; but I will love you all the same if you will only give me something to eat, for I am so hungry.”

“Bob,” all the dwarfs cried at once, “go and fetch some supper.”

And Bob flew off on his raven. All the same, the dwarfs resented this small girl’s injustice in finding them ugly. Rug was very angry. Pic said to himself, “She is only a child, and she does not see the light of genius which shines in my eyes, and which gives them the power which crushes as well as the grace which charms.”

As for Pau, he thought to himself: “Perhaps it would have been better if I had not awakened this young lady who finds us ugly.” But Tad said smiling:

“You will find us less ugly, dear young lady, when you love us more.”

As he spoke Bob re-appeared on his raven. He held a dish of gold on which were a roast pheasant, an oatmeal cake, and a bottle of claret. He cut innumerable capers as he laid this supper at the feet of Honey-Bee.

“Little men,” Honey-Bee said as she ate, “your supper is very good. My name is Honey-Bee; let us go in search of my brother, and then we will all go together to Clarides where mama is waiting for us in great anxiety.”

But Dig, who was a kind dwarf, represented to Honey-Bee that she was not able to walk; that her brother was big enough to find his own way; that no misfortune could come to him in a country in which all the wild beasts had been destroyed.

“We will make a litter,” he added, “and cover it with leaves and moss, and we will put you on it, and in this way we will carry you to the mountain and present you to the King of the Dwarfs, according to the custom of our people.”

All the dwarfs applauded. Honey-Bee looked at her aching feet and remained silent. She was glad to learn that there were no wild beasts in the country. And on the whole she was willing to trust herself to the kindness of the dwarfs.

They were already busy constructing the litter. Those with hatchets were felling two young fir trees with resounding blows. This brought back to Rug his original suggestion.

“If instead of a litter we made a cage,” he urged.

But he aroused a unanimous protest. Tad looked at him scornfully.

“You are more like a human being than a dwarf, Rug,” he said. “But at least it is to the honour of our race that the most wicked dwarf is also the most stupid.”

In the meantime the task had been accomplished. The dwarfs leaped into the air and in a bound seized and cut the branches, out of which they deftly wove a basket chair. Having covered it with moss and leaves, they placed Honey-Bee upon it, then they seized the two poles, placed them on their shoulders and, then! off they went to the mountain.

X

In which we are faithfully told how King Loc received Honey-Bee of Clarides

They climbed a winding path along the wooded slope of the hill. Here and there granite boulders, bare and blasted, broke through the grey verdure of the dwarf oaks, and the sombre purple mountain with its bluish ravines formed an impassable barrier about the desolate landscape.

The procession, preceded by Bob on his feathered steed, passed through a chasm overgrown with brambles. Honey-Bee, with her golden hair flowing over her shoulders, looked like the dawn breaking on the mountains, supposing, of course, that the dawn was ever frightened and called her mother and tried to escape, for all these things she did as she caught a confused glimpse of dwarfs, armed to the teeth, lying in ambush along the windings of the rocks.

With bows bent or lance at rest they stood immovable. Their tunics of wild beast skins and their long knives that hung from their belts gave them a most terrible appearance. Game, furred and feathered, lay beside them. And yet these hunters, to judge only by their faces, did not seem very grim; on the contrary, they appeared gentle and grave like the dwarfs of the forest, whom they greatly resembled.

In their midst stood a dwarf full of majesty. He wore a cock feather over his ear, and on his head a diadem set with enormous gems. His mantle raised at the shoulder disclosed a muscular arm covered with circlets of gold. A horn of ivory and chased silver hung from his belt. His left hand rested on his lance in an attitude of quiet strength, and his right he held over his eyes so as to look towards Honey-Bee and the light.

"King Loc," said the forest dwarfs, "we have brought you the beautiful child we have found; her name is Honey-Bee."

"You have done well," said King Loc. "She shall live amongst us according to the custom of the dwarfs."

"Honey-Bee," he said, approaching her, "you are welcome." He spoke very gently, for he already felt very kindly towards her. He lifted himself on the tips of his toes to kiss her hand that hung at her side, and he assured her not only that he would do her no harm, but that he would try to gratify all her wishes, even should she long for necklaces, mirrors, stuffs from Cashmere and silks from China.

"I wish I had some shoes," replied Honey-Bee. Upon which King Loc struck his lance against a bronze disc that hung on the surface of the rock, and instantly something bounded like a ball out of the depths of the cavern. Increasing in size it disclosed the face of a dwarf with features such as painters give to the illustrious Belisarius, but his leather apron proclaimed that he was a shoemaker. He was indeed the chief of the shoemakers.

"True," said the king, "choose the softest leather out of our store-houses, take cloth-of-gold and silver, ask the guardian of my treasures for a thousand pearls of the finest water, and with this leather, these fabrics, and these pearls create a pair of shoes for the lady Honey-Bee."

At these words True threw himself at the feet of Honey-Bee and measured them with great care.

"Little King Loc," said Honey-Bee, "I want the pretty shoes you promised at once, because as soon as I have them I must return to Clarides to my mother." "You shall have the shoes," King Loc replied; "you shall have them to walk about the mountain, but not to return to Clarides, for never again shall you leave this kingdom, where we will teach you wonderful secrets still unknown on earth. The dwarfs are superior to men, and it is your good fortune that you are made welcome amongst them."

"It is my misfortune," replied Honey-Bee. "Little King Loc, give me a pair of wooden shoes, such as the peasants wear, and let me return to Clarides."

But King Loc made a sign with his head to signify that this was impossible. Then Honey-Bee clasped her hands and said, coaxingly:

"Little King Loc, let me go and I will love you very much."

"You will forget me in your shining world."

"Little King Loc, I will never forget you, and I will love you as much as I love Flying Wind."

"And who is Flying Wind?"

"It is my milk-white steed, and he has rose-coloured reins and he eats out of my hand. When he was very little Francoeur the squire used to bring him to my room every morning and I kissed him. But now Francceur is in Rome, and Flying Wind is too big to mount the stairs."

King Loc smiled.

"Will you love me more than Flying Wind?"

"Indeed I would," said Honey-Bee.

"Well said," cried the King.

"Indeed I would, but I cannot, I hate you, little King Loc, because you will not let me see my mother and George again."

"Who is George?"

“George is George and I love him.”

The friendship of King Loc for Honey-Bee had increased prodigiously in a few minutes, and as he had already made up his mind to marry her as soon as she was of age, and hoped through her to reconcile men and dwarfs, he feared that later on George might become his rival and wreck his plans. It was because of this that he turned away frowning, his head bowed as if with care.

Honey-Bee seeing that she had offended him pulled him gently by his mantle.

“Little King Loc,” she said, in a voice both tender and sad, “why should we make each other unhappy, you and I?”

“It is in the nature of things,” replied King Loc. “I cannot take you back to your mother, but I will send her a dream which will tell her your fate, dear Honey-Bee, and that will comfort her.”

“Little King Loc,” and Honey-Bee smiled through her tears, “what a good idea, but I will tell you just what you ought to do. You must send my mother a dream every night in which she will see me, and every night you must send me a dream in which I shall see her.”

And King Loc promised, and so said, so done. Every night Honey-Bee saw her mother, and every night the Duchess saw her daughter, and that satisfied their love just a little.

XI

In which the marvels of the kingdom of the dwarfs are
accurately described as well as the dolls that were given to
Honey-Bee

The kingdom of the dwarfs was very deep and extended under the greater part of the earth. Though one only caught a glimpse of the sky here and there through the clefts in the rocks, the roads, the avenues, the palaces and the galleries of this subterranean region were not plunged in absolute darkness. Only a few spaces and caverns were lost in obscurity. The rest was illumined not by lamps or torches but by stars or meteors which diffused a strange and fantastic light, and this light revealed the most astonishing marvels. One saw stupendous edifices hewn out of the solid rocks, and in some places, palaces cut out of granite, of such height that their tracery of stone was lost under the arches of this gigantic cavern in a haze across which fell the orange glimmer of little stars less lustrous than the moon.

There were fortresses in this kingdom, of the most crushing and formidable dimensions; an amphitheatre in which the stone seats formed a half-circle whose extent it was impossible to measure at a single glance, and vast wells with sculptured sides, in which one could descend forever and yet never reach the bottom. All these structures, so out of proportion it would seem to the size of the inhabitants, were quite in keeping with their curious and fantastic genius.

Dwarfs in pointed hoods pricked with fern leaves whirled about these edifices in the airiest fashion. It was common to see them leap up to the height of two or three storeys from the lava pavement and rebound like balls, their faces meanwhile preserving that impressive dignity with which sculptors endow the great men of antiquity.

No one was idle and all worked zealously. Entire districts echoed to the sound of hammers. The shrill discord of machinery broke against the arches of the cavern, and it was a curious sight to see the crowds of miners, blacksmiths, gold-beaters, jewellers, diamond polishers handle pickaxes, hammers, pincers and files with the dexterity of monkeys. However there was a more peaceful region.

Here coarse and powerful figures and shapeless columns loomed in chaotic confusion, hewn out of the virgin rock, and seemed to date back to an immemorial antiquity. Here a palace with low portals extended its ponderous expanse; it was the palace of King Loc.

Directly opposite was the house of Honey-Bee, a house or rather a cottage of one room all hung with white muslin. The furniture of pine-wood perfumed the room. A glimpse of daylight penetrated through a crevice in the rock, and on fine nights one could see the stars.

Honey-Bee had no special attendants, for all the dwarf people were eager to serve her and to anticipate all her wishes except the single one to return to earth.

The most erudite dwarfs, familiar with the profoundest secrets, were glad to teach her, not from books, for dwarfs do not write, but by showing her all the plants of mountains and plains, all the diverse species of animals, and all the varied gems that are extracted from the bosom of the earth. And it was by means of such sights and marvels that they taught her, with an innocent gaiety, the wonders of nature and the processes of the arts.

They made her playthings such as the richest children on earth never have; for these dwarfs were always industrious and invented wonderful machinery. In this way they produced for her dolls that could move with exquisite grace, and express themselves according to the strictest rules of poetry. Placed on the stage of a little theatre, the scenery of which represented the shores of the sea, the blue sky, palaces and temples, they would portray the most interesting events. Though no taller than a man's arm some of them represented respectable old men, others men in the prime of life, and, others still, beautiful young girls dressed in white.

Among them also were mothers pressing their innocent children to their hearts. And these eloquent dolls acted as if they were really moved by hate, love and ambition. They passed with the greatest skill from joy to sorrow and they imitated nature so well that they could move one to laughter or to tears. Honey-Bee clapped her hands at the sight. She had a horror of the dolls who tried to be tyrants. On the other hand she felt a boundless compassion for a doll who had once been a princess, and who, now a captive widow, had no other resource alas, by which to save her child, than to marry the barbarian who had made her a widow.

Honey-Bee never tired of this game which the dolls could vary indefinitely. The dwarfs also gave concerts and taught her to play the lute, the viola, the theorbo, the lyre, and various other instruments.

In short she became an excellent musician, and the dramas acted in the theatre by the dolls taught her a knowledge of men and life. King Loc was always present at the plays and the concerts, but he neither saw nor heard anything but Honey-Bee; little by little he had set his whole heart upon her. In the meantime months passed and even years sped by and Honey-Bee was still among the dwarfs, always amused and yet always longing for earth. She grew to be a

beautiful girl. Her singular destiny had imparted something strange to her appearance, which gave her, however, only an added charm.

XII

In which the treasures of King Loc are described as well as the writer is able

Six years to a day had passed since Honey-Bee had come to live with the dwarfs. King Loc called her into his palace and commanded his treasurer to displace a huge stone which seemed cemented into the wall, but which in reality was only lightly placed there. All three passed through the opening left by the great stone and found themselves in a fissure of rock too narrow for two persons to stand abreast. King Loc preceded the others along the dim path and Honey-Bee followed him holding to a tip of the royal mantle. They walked on for a long time, and at intervals the sides of the rocks came so close together that the young girl was seized with terror lest she should be unable to advance or recede, and so would die there. Before her, along the dark and narrow road floated the mantle of King Loc. At last King Loc came to a bronze door which he opened and out of which poured a blaze of light.

"Little King Loc," said Honey-Bee, "I had no idea that light could be so beautiful!"

And King Loc taking her by the hand led her into the hall out of which the light shone.

"See!" he cried.

Honey-Bee, dazzled, could see nothing, for this immense hall, supported by high marble columns, was a glitter of gold from floor to roof.

At the end on a dais made of glittering gems set in gold and silver, the steps of which were covered by a carpet of marvellous embroidery, stood a throne of ivory and gold under a canopy of translucent enamel, and on each side two palm-trees three thousand years old, in gigantic vases carved in some bygone time by the greatest artists among the dwarfs. King Loc mounted his throne and commanded the young girl to stand at his right hand.

"Honey-Bee," said King Loc, "these are my treasures. Choose all that will give you pleasure."

Immense gold shields hung from the columns and reflected the sunlight, and sent it back in glittering rays; swords and lances crossed had each a flame at their point.

Tables along the walls were laden with tankards, flagons, ewers, chalices, pyxes, patens, goblets, gold cups, drinking horns of ivory with silver rings, enormous bottles of rock crystal, chased gold and silver dishes, coffers,

reliquaries in the form of churches, scent-boxes, mirrors, candelabra and torch-holders equally beautiful in material and workmanship, and incense-burners in the shape of monsters. And on one table stood a chessboard with chessmen carved out of moonstones.

“Choose,” King Loc repeated.

But lifting her eyes above these treasures, Honey-Bee saw the blue sky through an opening in the roof, and as if she had comprehended that the light of day could alone give all these things their splendour, she said simply:

“Little King Loc, I want to return to earth.”

Whereupon King Loc made a sign to his treasurer who, raising heavy tapestries, disclosed an enormous iron-bound coffer covered with plates of open ironwork. This coffer being opened out poured thousands of rays of different and lovely tints, and each ray seemed to leap out of a precious stone most artistically cut. King Loc dipped in his hands and there flowed in glittering confusion violet amethysts and virgins’ stones, emeralds of three kinds, one dark green, another called the honey emerald because of its colour, and the third a bluish green, also called beryl, which gives happy dreams; oriental topazes, rubies beautiful as the blood of heroes, dark blue sapphires, called the male sapphire, and the pale blue ones, called the female sapphire, the cymophanes, hyacinths, euclases, turquoises, opals whose light is softer than the dawn, the aquamarine and the Syrian garnet. All these gems were of the purest and most luminous water. And in the midst of these coloured fires great diamonds flashed their rays of dazzling white.

“Choose, Honey-Bee,” said King Loc. But Honey-Bee shook her head.

“Little King Loc,” she said, “I would rather have a single beam of sunlight that falls on the roof of Clarides than all these gems.”

Then King Loc ordered another coffer to be opened, in which were only pearls. But these pearls were round and pure; their changing light reflected all the colours of sea and sky, and their radiance was so tender that they seemed to express a thought of love.

“Accept these,” said King Loc

“Little King Loc,” Honey-Bee replied, “these pearls are like the glance of George of Blanchelande; I love these pearls, but I love his eyes even more.”

Hearing these words King Loc turned his head away. However he opened a third coffer and showed the young girl a crystal in which a drop of water had been imprisoned since the beginning of time; and when the crystal was moved the drop of water could be seen to stir. He also showed her pieces of yellow amber in which insects more brilliant than jewels had been imprisoned for thousands of years. One could distinguish their delicate feet and their fine

antennae, and they would have resumed their flight had some power but shattered like glass their perfumed prison.

“These are the great marvels of nature; I give them to you, Honey-Bee.”

“Little King Loc,” Honey-Bee replied, “keep your amber and your crystal, for I should not know how to give their freedom either to the fly or the drop of water.”

King Loc watched her in silence for some time. Then he said, “Honey-Bee, the most beautiful treasures will be safe in your keeping. You will possess them and they will not possess you. The miser is the prey of his gold, only those who despise wealth can be rich without danger; their souls will always be greater than their riches.”

Having uttered these words he made a sign to his treasurer who presented on a cushion a crown of gold to the young girl.

“Accept this jewel as a sign of our regard for you,” said King Loc. “Henceforth you shall be called the Princess of the Dwarfs.”

And he himself placed the crown on the head of Honey-Bee.

XIII

In which King Loc declares himself The dwarfs celebrated the crowning of their first princess by joyous revels. Harmless and innocent games succeeded each other in the huge amphitheatre; and the little men, with cockades of fern or two oak leaves fastened coquettishly to their hoods, bounded gaily across the subterranean streets. The rejoicings lasted thirty days. During the universal excitement Pic looked like a mortal inspired; Tad the kind-hearted was intoxicated by the universal joy; Dig the tender gave expression to his delight in tears; Rug, in his ecstasy, again demanded that Honey-Bee should be put in a cage, but this time so that the dwarfs need not be afraid to lose so charming a princess; Bob, mounted on his raven, filled the air with such cries of rapture that the sable bird, infected by the gaiety, gave vent to innumerable playful little croaks.

Only King Loc was sad.

On the thirtieth day, having given the princess and the dwarf people a festival of unparalleled magnificence, he mounted his throne, and so stood that his kind face just reached her car.

“My Princess Honcy-Bee,” he said, “I am about to make a request which you are at liberty either to accept or to refuse. Honey-Bee of Clarides, Princess of the Dwarfs, will you be my wife?”

As he spoke, King Loc, grave and tender, had something of the gentle beauty of a majestic poodle.

“Little King Loc,” Honey-Bee replied, as she pulled his beard, “I am willing to become your wife for fun, but never your wife for good. The moment you asked me to marry you I was reminded of Francoeur, who when I was on earth used to amuse me by telling me the most ridiculous stories.”

At these words King Loc turned his head away, but not so soon but that Honey-Bee saw the tears in his eyes. Then Honey-Bee was grieved because she had pained him.

“Little King Loc,” she said to him, “I love you for the little King Loc you are; and if you make me laugh as Francoeur did, there is nothing in that to vex you, for Francoeur sang well and he would have been very handsome if it had not been for his grey hair and his red nose.”

“Honey-Bee of Clarides, Princess of the Dwarfs,” the king replied, “I love you in the hope that some day you will love me. And yet without that hope I

should love you just the same. The only return I ask for my friendship is that you will always be honest with me.”

“Little King Loc, I promise.”

“Well then, tell me truly, Honey-Bee, do you love some one else enough to marry him?”

“Little King Loc, I love no one enough for that.”

Whereupon King Loc smiled, and seizing his golden cup he proposed, with a resounding voice, the health of the Princess of the Dwarfs. An immense uproar rose from the depths of the earth, for the banquet table reached from one end to the other of the Empire of the Dwarfs.

XIV

In which we are told how Honey-Bee saw her mother again, but could not embrace her

Honey-Bee, a crown on her head, was now more often sad and lost in thought than when her hair flowed loose over her shoulders, and when she went laughing to the forge and pulled the beards of her good friends Pic, Tad and Dig, whose faces, red from the reflected flames, gave her a gay welcome. But now these good dwarfs, who had once danced her on their knees and called her Honey-Bee, bowed as she passed and maintained a respectful silence. She grieved because she was no longer a child, and she suffered because she was the Princess of the Dwarfs.

It was no longer a pleasure for her to see King Loc, since she had seen him weep because of her. But she loved him, for he was good and unhappy. One day, if one may say that there are days in the empire of the dwarfs, she took King Loc by the hand and drew him under the cleft in the rock, through which a sunbeam shone, along whose rays there danced a haze of golden dust.

“Little King Loc,” she said, “I suffer. You are a king and you love me and I suffer.”

Hearing these words from the pretty damsel, King Loc replied:

“I love you, Honey-Bee of Clarides, Princess of the Dwarfs; and that is why I have held you captive in our world, in order to teach you our secrets, which are greater and more wonderful than all those you could learn on earth amongst men, for men are less skilful and less learned than the dwarfs.”

“Yes,” said Honey-Bee, “but they are more like me than the dwarfs, and for that reason I love them better. Little King Loc, let me see my mother again if you do not wish me to die.”

Without replying King Loc went away. Honey-Bee, desolate and alone, watched the ray of light which bathes the whole face of nature and which enfolds all the living, even to the beggars by the wayside, in its resplendent waves. Slowly this ray paled, and its golden radiance faded to a pale blue light. Night had come upon earth. A star twinkled over the cleft in the rock.

Then some one gently touched her on the shoulder, and she saw King Loc wrapped in a black cloak. He had another cloak on his arm with which he covered the young girl.

“Come,” said he.

And he led her out of the under-world. When she saw again the trees stirred by the wind, the clouds that floated across the moon, the splendour of the night so fresh and blue, when she breathed again the fragrance of the herbage, and when the air she had breathed in childhood again entered her breast in floods, she gave a great sigh and thought to die of joy.

King Loc had taken her in his arms; small though he was, he carried her as lightly as a feather, and they glided over the ground like the shadows of two birds.

“You shall see your mother again, Honey-Bee. But listen! You know that every night I send her your image. Every night she sees your dear phantom; she smiles upon it, she talks to it and she caresses it. To-night she shall, instead, see you yourself. You will see her, but you must not touch her, you must not speak to her, or the charm will be broken and she will never again see you nor your image, which she does not distinguish from you.”

“Then I will be prudent, alas! little King Loc!... See! See!...”

Sure enough the watch-tower of Clarides rose black on the hill. Honey-Bee had hardly time to throw a kiss to the beloved old stone walls when the ramparts of the town of Clarides, overgrown with gillyflowers already flew past; already she was ascending the terrace, where the glow-worms glimmer in the grass, to the postern, which King Loc easily opened, for the dwarfs are masters of metals, nor can locks, padlocks, bolts, chains or bars ever stop them.

She climbed the winding stairs that led to her mother’s room, and she paused to clasp her beating heart with both her hands. Softly the door opened, and by the light of a night lamp that hung from the ceiling she saw her mother in the holy silence that reigned, her mother frailer and paler, with hair grey at the temples, but in the eyes of her daughter more beautiful even than in past days as she remembered her riding fearlessly in magnificent attire. As usual the mother beheld her daughter as in a dream, and she opened her arms as if to caress her. And the child, laughing and sobbing, was about to throw herself into those open arms; but King Loc tore her away, and like a wisp of straw he bore her through the blue landscape to the Kingdom of the Dwarfs.

XV

In which we shall see how King Loc suffered

Seated on the granite step of the underground palace, Honey-Bee watched the blue sky through the cleft in the rock, and saw the elder-trees turn their spreading white parasols to the light. She began to weep.

“Honey-Bee,” said King Loc as he took her hand in his, “why do you weep, and what is it you desire?” And as she had been grieving these many days, the dwarfs at her feet tried to cheer her with simple airs on the flute, the flageolet, the rebeck, and the cymbals. And other dwarfs, to amuse her, turned such somersaults one after the other that they pricked the grass with the points of their hoods with their cockades of leaves, and nothing could be more charming than to watch the capers of these tiny men with their venerable beards. Tad so kind and Dig so wise, who had loved her since the day they had found her asleep on the shore of the lake, and Pic, the elderly poet, gently took her arm and implored her to tell them the cause of her grief. Pau, a simple just soul, offered her a basket of grapes, and all of them gently pulled the edge of her skirt and said with King Loc:

“Honey-Bee, Princess of the Dwarfs, why do you weep?”

“Little King Loc,” Honey-Bee replied, “and you, little men, my grief only increases your love, because you are good; you weep with me. Know that I weep when I think of George of Blanchelande, who should now be a cavalier, but whom I shall never see again. I love him and I wish to be his wife.”

King Loc took his hand away from the hand he had pressed.

“Honey-Bee,” he said, “why did you deceive me when you told me at the banquet that you loved no one else?”

“Little King Loc,” Honey-Bee replied, “I did not deceive you at the banquet. At that time I had no desire to marry George of Blanchelande, but to-day it is my dearest wish that he should ask to marry me. But he will never ask me, as I do not know where he now is, nor does he know where I am. And this is the reason I weep.”

At these words the musicians ceased playing; the acrobats interrupted their tumbling and stood immovable, some on their heads and some on their haunches; Tad and Dig shed silent tears on the sleeve of Honey-Bee; Pau, simple soul, dropped his basket of grapes, and all the little men gave vent to the most fearful groans.

But King Loc, more unhappy than all under his splendid jewelled crown, silently withdrew, his mantle trailing behind him like a purple torrent.

XVI

In which an account is given of the learned Nur who was the cause of such extraordinary joy to King Loc

King Loc did not permit the young girl to observe his weakness; but when he was alone he sat on the ground and with his feet in his hands gave way to grief. He was jealous. "She loves him," he said to himself, "and she does not love me! And yet I am a king and very wise; great treasures are mine and I know the most marvellous secrets. I am superior to all other dwarfs, who are in turn superior to all men. She does not love me but she loves a young man who not only has not the learning of the dwarfs, but no other learning either.

"It must be acknowledged that she does not appreciate merit — nor has she much sense. I ought to laugh at her want of judgment; but I love her and I care for nothing in the world because she does not love me."

For many long days King Loc roamed alone through the most desolate mountain passes, turning over in his mind thoughts both sad and, sometimes, wicked. He even thought of trying by imprisonment and starvation to force Honey-Bee to become his wife. But rejecting this plan as soon as formed he decided to go in search of her and throw himself at her feet. But he could come to no decision, and at last he was quite at a loss what to do. The truth being that whether Honey-Bee would love him did not depend on him.

Suddenly his anger turned against George of Blanchelande; and he hoped that the young man had been carried far away by some enchanter, and that at any rate, should he ever hear of Honey-Bee's love, he would disdain it.

"Without being old," the king meditated, "I have already lived too long not to have suffered sometimes. And yet my sufferings, intense though they were, were less painful than those of which I am conscious to-day. With the tenderness and pity which caused them was mingled something of their own divine sweetness. Now, on the contrary, my grief has the baseness and bitterness of an evil desire. My soul is desolate and the tears in my eyes are like an acid that burns them."

So thought King Loc. And fearing that jealousy might make him unjust and wicked he avoided meeting the young girl, for fear that in spite of himself, he might use towards her the language of a man either weak or brutal.

One day when he was more than ever tormented by the thought that Honey-Bec loved George, he decided to consult Nur, the most learned of all the dwarfs, who lived at the bottom of a well deep down in the bowels of the earth.

This well had the advantage of an even and soft temperature. It was not dark, for two little stars, a pale sun and a red moon, alternately illumined all parts. King Loc descended into the well and found Nur in his laboratory. Nur looked like a kind little old man, and he wore a sprig of wild thyme in his hood. In spite of his learning he had the innocence and candour characteristic of his race.

“Nur,” said the king as he embraced him, “I have come to consult you because you know many things.”

“King Loc,” replied Nur, “I might know a good deal and yet be an idiot. But I possess the knowledge of how to learn some of the innumerable things I do not know, and that is the reason I am so justly famous for my learning.”

“Well, then,” said King Loc, “can you tell me the whereabouts at present of a young man by the name of George of Blanchelande?”

“I do not know and I never cared to know,” replied Nur. “Knowing as I do the ignorance, stupidity and wickedness of mankind, I don’t trouble myself as to what they say or do. Humanity, King Loc, would be entirely deplorable and ridiculous if it were not that something of value is given to this proud and miserable race, inasmuch as the men are endowed with courage, the women with beauty, and the little children with innocence. Obligated by necessity, as are also the dwarfs, to toil, mankind has rebelled against this divine law, and instead of being, like ourselves, willing and cheerful toilers, they prefer war to work, and they would rather kill each other than help each other. But to be just one must admit that their shortness of life is the principal cause of their ignorance and cruelty. Their life is too short for them to learn how to live. The race of the dwarfs who dwell under the earth is happier and better. If we are not immortal we shall at least last as long as the earth which bears us in her bosom, and which permeates us with her intimate and fruitful warmth, while for the races born on her rugged surface she has only the turbulent winds which sometimes scorch and sometimes freeze, and whose breath is at once the bearer of death and of life. And yet men owe to their overwhelming miseries and wickedness a virtue which makes the souls of some amongst them more beautiful than the souls of dwarfs. And this virtue, O King Loc, which for the mind is what the soft radiance of pearls is for the eyes, is pity. It is taught by suffering, and the dwarfs know it but little, because being wiser than men they escape much anguish. Yet sometimes the dwarfs leave their deep grottoes and seek the pitiless surface of the earth to mingle with men so as to love them, to suffer with them and through them, and thus to feel this pity which refreshes the soul like a heavenly dew. This is the truth concerning men, King Loc. But did you not ask me as to the exact fate of some one amongst them?”

King Loc having repeated his question, Nur looked into one of the many telescopes which filled the room. For the dwarfs have no books, those which are found amongst them have come from men, and are only used as playthings. They do not learn as we do by consulting marks on paper, but they look through telescopes and see the subject itself of their inquiry. The only difficulty is to choose the right telescope and get the right focus.

There are telescopes of crystal, of topaz and of opal; but those whose lens is a great polished diamond are more powerful, and permit them to see the most distant objects.

The dwarfs also have lenses of a translucent substance unknown to men. These enable the sight to pass through rocks and walls as if they were glass. Others, more remarkable still, reconstruct as accurately as a mirror all that has vanished with the flight of time. For the dwarfs, in the depths of their caverns, have the power to recall from the infinite surface of the ether the light of immemorial days and the forms and colours of vanished times. They can create for themselves a phantasm of the past by re-arranging the splinters of light which were once shattered against the forms of men, animals, plants and rocks, so that they again flash across the centuries through the unfathomable ether.

The venerable Nur excelled in discovering figures of antiquity and even such, inconceivable though it may seem, as lived before the earth had assumed the shape with which we are familiar. So it was really no trouble at all for him to find George of Blanchelande.

Having looked for a moment through a very ordinary telescope indeed, he said to King Loc:

“King Loc, he for whom you search is with the nixies in their palace of crystal, from which none ever return, and whose iridescent walls adjoin your kingdom.”

“Is he there?” cried the king, “Let him stay!” and he rubbed his hands. “I wish him joy.”

And having embraced the venerable dwarf, he emerged out of the well roaring with laughter.

The whole length of the road he held his sides so as to laugh at his ease; his head shook, and his beard swung backwards and forwards on his stomach. How he laughed! The little men who met him laughed out of sheer sympathy. Seeing them laugh made others laugh. A contagion of laughter spread from place to place until the whole interior of the earth was shaken as if with a mighty and jovial hiccough. Ha! ha! ha!

XVII

Which tells of the wonderful adventure of George of
Blanchelande

King Loc did not laugh long; indeed he hid the face of a very unhappy little man under the bed-clothes.

He lay awake all night long thinking of George of Blanchelande, the prisoner of the nixies.

So about the hour when such of the dwarfs as have a dairymaid for sweetheart go in her stead to milk the cows while she sleeps in her white bed with folded hands, little King Loc again sought the astute Nur in the depths of his well.

“You did not tell me, Nur, what he is doing down there with the nixies?”

The venerable Nur was quite convinced that the king was mad, though that did not alarm him because he knew if King Loc should lose his reason he would be a most gracious, charming, amiable and kindly lunatic. The madness of the dwarfs is gentle like their reason, and full of the most delicious fancies. But King Loc was not mad; at least not more so than lovers usually are.

“I wish to speak of George of Blanchelande,” he said to the venerable Nur, who had forgotten all about this young man as soon as possible.

Thereupon Nur the wise placed a series of lenses and mirrors before the king in an order so exact that it looked like disorder, but which enabled him to show the king in a mirror the form of George of Blanchelande as he was when the nixies carried him away. By a lucky choice and a skilful adjustment of instruments the dwarf was able to reproduce for the love-sick king all the adventures of the son of that Countess to whom a white rose announced her end. And the following, expressed in words, is what the little man saw in all the reality of form and colour.

When George was borne away in the icy arms of the daughters of the lake the water pressed upon his eyes and his breast and he felt that he was about to die. And yet he heard songs that sounded like a caress and his whole being was permeated by a sense of delicious freshness. When he opened his eyes he found himself in a grotto whose crystal columns reflected the delicate tints of the rainbow. At the end of the grotto was a great sea shell of mother-of-pearl iridescent with the tenderest colours, and this served as a dais to the throne of coral and seaweed of the Queen of the Nixies. But the face of the Sovereign of the waters shone with a light more tender than either the mother-of-pearl or the

crystal. She smiled at the child which her women brought her, and her green eyes lingered long upon him.

"Friend," she said at last, "be welcome into our world, in which you shall be spared all sorrow. For you neither dry lessons nor rough sports; nothing coarse shall remind you of earth and its toil, for you only the songs and the dances and the love of the nixies."

And indeed the women of the green hair taught the child music and dancing and a thousand graces. They loved to bind his forehead with the cockle shells that decked their own tresses. But he, remembering his country, gnawed his clenched hands with impatience.

Years passed and George longed with a passion unceasing to see the earth again, the rude earth where the sun burns and where the snow hardens, the mother earth where one suffers, where one loves, the earth where he had seen Honey-Bee, and where he longed to see her again. He had in the meantime grown to be a tall lad with a fine golden down on his upper lip. Courage came with the beard, and so one day he presented himself before the Queen of the Nixies and bowing low, said:

"Madam, I have come, with your gracious permission, to take leave of you; I am about to return to Clarides."

"Fair youth," the queen replied smiling, "I cannot grant you the leave you ask, for I guard you in my crystal palace, to make of you my lover."

"Madam," he replied, "I am not worthy of so great an honour."

"That is but your courtesy. What gallant cavalier ever believes that he has sufficiently deserved his lady's favour. Besides you are still too young to know your own worth. Let me tell you, fair youth, that we do but desire your welfare; obey your lady and her alone."

"Madam, I love Honey-Bee of Clarides. I will have no other lady but her."

"A mortal maid!" the queen cried, turning pale, but more beautiful still, "a coarse daughter of men, this Honey-Bee! How can you love such a thing?"

"I do not know, but I know that I love her."

"Never mind. It will pass."

And she still held the young man captive by means of the allurements of her crystal abode.

He did not comprehend the devious thing called a woman; he was more like Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes than Tannhauser in the enchanted castle. And that is why he wandered sadly along the walls of the mighty palace searching for an outlet through which to escape; but he only saw the splendid and silent empire of the waves sealing his shining prison. Through the transparent walls he watched the blooming sea anemones and the spreading

coral, while over the delicate streams of the madrepores and the sparkling shells, purple, blue, and gold fishes made a glitter of stars with a stroke of their tails. These marvels he left unheeded, for, lulled by the delicious songs of the nixies, he felt little by little his will broken and his soul grow weak. He was all indolence and indifference when one day he found by chance in a gallery of the palace, an ancient well-worn book bound in pigskin and studded with great copper nail-heads. The book, saved from some wreck in mid-ocean, treated of chivalry and fair ladies, and related at great length the adventures of heroes who went about the world redressing wrongs, protecting widows and succouring orphans for the love of justice and in honour of beauty. George flushed and paled with wonder, shame, and anger as he read these tales of splendid adventures. He could not contain himself.

"I also," he cried, "will be a gallant knight. I also will go about the world punishing the wicked and succouring the unfortunate for the good of mankind and in the name of my lady Honey-Bee."

With sword drawn and his heart big with valour he dashed across the crystal dwellings. The white ladies fled and swooned before him like the silver ripples of a lake. Their queen alone beheld his approach without a tremor; she turned on him the icy glance of her green eyes.

"Break the enchantment which binds me," he cried, running towards her. "Open to me the road to earth. I wish to fight in the light of the sun like a cavalier. I wish to return to where one loves, to where one suffers, to where one struggles! Give back to me the life that is real and the light that is real. Give me back my prowess! If not, I will kill you, you wicked woman!"

With a smile she shook her head as if to refuse. Beautiful she was and serene. With all the strength that was in him George struck her; but his sword broke against her glittering breast.

"Child!" she said, and she commanded that he be cast into a dungeon which formed a kind of crystal tunnel under her palace, and about which sharks roamed with wide-stretched monstrous jaws armed with triple rows of pointed teeth. At every touch it seemed as if they must crush the frail glass wall, which made it impossible to sleep in this strange prison.

The extremity of this under-sea tunnel rested on a bed of rock which formed the vaulting of the most distant and unexplored cavern in the empire of the dwarfs.

And this is what the two little men saw in a single hour and quite as accurately as if they had followed George all the days of his life. The venerable Nur, having described the dungeon scene in all its tragic gloom, addressed the

King in much the same way as the Savoyards speak to the little children when they show their magic lanterns.

“King Loc,” he said, “I have shown you all you wished to see, and now that you know all I can add nothing more. It’s nothing to me whether you liked what you saw; it is enough to know that what you saw was the truth. Science neither cares to please nor to displease. She is inhuman. It is not science but poetry that charms and consoles. And that is why poetry is more necessary than science. Go, King Loc, and get them to sing you a song.”

And without uttering a word King Loc left the well.

XVIII

In which King Loc undertakes a terrible journey

Having left the well of wisdom, King Loc went to his treasure house and out of a casket, of which he alone had the key, he took a ring which he placed on his finger. The stone set in the ring emitted a brilliant light, for it was a magic stone of whose power we shall learn more further on. Thereupon King Loc went to his palace, put on a travelling cloak and thick boots and took a stick; then he started on a journey across crowded streets, great highways, villages, galleries of porphyry, torrents of rock-oil, and crystal grottoes, all of which communicated with each other through narrow openings.

He seemed lost in deep meditation and he uttered words that had no meaning. But he trudged on doggedly. Mountains obstructed his path and he climbed the mountains. Precipices opened under his feet and he descended into the precipices; he forded streams, he crossed horrible regions black with the fumes of sulphur. He trudged across burning lava on which his feet left their imprint; he had the appearance of a desperately dogged traveller. He penetrated into gloomy caverns into which the water of the ocean oozed drop by drop, and flowed like tears along the sea wrack, forming pools on the uneven ground where countless crustaceans increased and multiplied into hideous shapes. Enormous crabs, crayfish, giant lobsters and sea spiders crackled under the dwarfs feet, then crawled away leaving some of their claws behind, and in their flight rousing horrible molluscs and octopuses centuries old that suddenly writhed their hundred arms and spat fetid poison out of their bird-beaks. And yet King Loc went on undaunted. He made his way to the ends of these caverns, through the midst of a heaped up chaos of shelled monsters armed with spikes, with double saw-edged nippers, with claws that crept stealthily up to his neck and bleared eyes on swaying tentacles. He crept up the sides of the cavern by clinging to the rough surface of the rocks and the mailed monsters crept with him, but he never faltered until he recognised by touch a stone that projected from the centre of the natural arch. He touched the stone with his magic ring and suddenly it rolled away with a horrible crash, and at once a glory of light flooded the cavern with its beautiful waves and put to flight the swarming monsters bred in its gloom.

As King Loc thrust his head into the opening through which daylight poured, he saw George of Blanchelande in his glass dungeon where he was lamenting

grievously as he thought of Honey-Bee and of earth. For King Loc had undertaken this subterranean journey only to deliver the captive of the nixies.

But seeing this huge dishevelled head, frowning and bearded, watching him from under his tunnel, George believed himself to be menaced by a mighty danger and he felt for the sword at his side forgetting that he had broken it against the breast of the woman with the green eyes. In the meantime King Loc examined him curiously.

“Bah,” said he to himself, “it is only a child!” And indeed he was only an ignorant child, and it was because of his great ignorance that he had escaped from the deadly and delicious kisses of the Queen of the Nixies. Aristotle with all his wisdom might not have done so well.

“What do you want, fathead?” George cried, seeing himself defenceless, “why harm me if I have never harmed you?”

“Little one,” King Loc replied in a voice at once jovial and testy, “you do not know whether or not you have harmed me, for you are ignorant of effects and causes and reflections, and all philosophy in general. But we’ll not talk of that. If you don’t mind leaving your tunnel, come this way.”

George at once crept into the cavern, slipped down the length of the wall, and as soon as he had reached the bottom he said to his deliverer:

“You are a good little man; I shall love you for ever; but do you know where Honey-Bee of Clarides is?”

“I know a great many things,” retorted the dwarf, “and especially that I don’t like people who ask questions.”

Hearing this George paused in great confusion and followed his guide in silence through the dense black air where the octopuses and crustaceans writhed. King Loc said mockingly:

“This is not a carriage road, young prince.”

“Sir,” George replied, “the road to liberty is always beautiful, and I fear not to be led astray when I follow my benefactor.”

Little King Loc bit his lips. On reaching the gallery of porphyry he pointed out to the youth a flight of steps cut in the rock by the dwarfs, by which they ascend to earth.

“This is your way,” he said, “farewell.”

“Do not bid me farewell,” George replied, “say I shall see you again. After what you have done my life is yours.”

“What I have done,” King Loc replied, “I have not done for your sake, but for another’s. It will be better for us never to meet again, for we can never be friends.”

"I would not have believed that my deliverance could have caused me such pain," George said simply and gravely, "and yet it does. Farewell."

"A pleasant journey," cried King Loc, in a gruff voice.

Now it happened that these steps of the dwarfs adjoined a deserted stone quarry less than a mile from the castle of Clarides.

"This young lad," King Loc murmured as he went on his way, "has neither the wisdom nor the wealth. Truly I cannot imagine why Honey-Bee loves him, unless it is because he is young, handsome, faithful and brave."

As he went back to the town he laughed to himself as a man does who has done some one a good turn. As he passed Honey-Bee's cottage he thrust his big head into the open window just as he had thrust it into the crystal tunnel, and he saw the young girl, who was embroidering a veil with silver flowers.

"I wish you joy, Honey-Bee," he cried.

"And you also, little King Loc, seeing you have nothing to wish for and nothing to regret."

He had much to wish for, but, indeed, he had nothing to regret. And it was probably this which gave him such a good appetite for supper. Having eaten a huge number of truffled pheasants he called Bob.

"Bob," said he, "mount your raven; go to the Princess of the Dwarfs and tell her that George or Blanchelande, long a captive of the nixies, has this day returned to Clarides."

Thus he spoke and Bob flew off on his raven.

XIX

Which tells of the extraordinary encounter of Jean the master tailor, and of the blessed song the birds in the grove sang to the duchess

When George again found himself on the earth on which he was born, the very first person he met was Jean, the master tailor, with a red suit of clothes on his arm for the steward of the castle. The good man shrieked at sight of his young master.

“Holy St. James,” he cried, “if you are not his lordship George of Blanchelande who was drowned in the lake seven years ago, you are either his ghost or the devil in person.”

“I am neither ghost nor devil, good Jean, but I am truly that same George of Blanchelande who used to creep to your shop and beg bits of stuff out of which to make dresses for the dolls of my sister Honey-Bee.”

“Then you were not drowned, your lordship,” the good man exclaimed. “I am so glad! And how well you look. My little Peter who climbed into my arms to see you pass on horseback by the side of the Duchess that Sunday morning has become a good workman and a fine fellow. He is all of that, God be praised, your lordship. He will be glad to hear that you are not at the bottom of the sea, and that the fish have not eaten you as he always declared. He was in the habit of saying many pleasant things about it, your lordship, for he is very amusing. And it is a fact that you are much mourned in Clarides. You were such a promising child. I shall remember to my dying day how you once asked me for a needle to sew with, and as I refused, for you were not of an age to use it without danger, you replied you would go to the woods and pick beautiful green pine needles. That is what you said, and it still makes me laugh. Upon my soul you said that. Our little Peter, also, used to say clever things. Now he is a cooper and at your service, your lordship.”

“I shall employ no one else. But give me news of Honey-Bee and the Duchess, Master Jean.”

“Alack, where do you come from, your lordship, seeing that you do not know that it is now seven years since the Princess Honey-Bee was stolen by the dwarfs of the mountain? She disappeared the very day you were drowned; and one can truly say that on that day Clarides lost its sweetest flowers. The Duchess is in deep mourning. And it’s that which makes me say that the great of the earth have their sorrows just as well as the humblest artisans, if only to prove that we are all the sons of Adam. And because of this a cat may well look at a king, as the

saying is. And by the same token the good Duchess has seen her hair grow white and her gaiety vanish. And when in the springtime she walks in her black robes along the hedgerow where the birds sing, the smallest of these is more to be envied than the sovereign lady of Clarides. And yet her grief is not quite without hope, your lordship; for though she had no tidings of you, she at least knows by dreams that her daughter Honey-Bee is alive.”

This and much else said good man Jean, but George listened no longer after he heard that Honey-Bee was a captive among the dwarfs.

“The dwarfs hold Honey-Bee captive under the earth,” he pondered; “a dwarf rescued me from my crystal dungeon; these little men have not all the same customs; my deliverer cannot be of the same race as those who stole my sister.”

He knew not what to think except that he must rescue Honey-Bee.

In the meantime they crossed the town, and on their way the gossips standing on the thresholds of their houses asked each other who was this young stranger, but they all agreed that he was very handsome. The better informed amongst them, having recognised the young lord of Blanchelande, decided that it must be his ghost, wherefore they fled, making great signs of the cross.

“He must be sprinkled with holy water,” said one old crone, “and he will vanish leaving a disgusting smell of sulphur. He will carry away Master Jean, and he will of course plunge him alive into the fire of hell.”

“Softly! old woman,” a citizen replied, “his lordship is alive and much more alive than you or I. He is as fresh as a rose, and he looks as if he had come from some noble court rather than from the other world. One does return from afar, good dame. As witness Francoeur the squire who came back from Rome last midsummer day.”

And Margaret the helmet-maker, having greatly admired George, mounted to her maiden chamber and kneeling before the image of the Holy Virgin prayed, “Holy Virgin, grant me a husband who shall look precisely like this young lord.”

So each in his way talked of George’s return until the news spread from mouth to mouth and finally reached the ears of the Duchess who was walking-in the orchard. Her heart beat violently and she heard all the birds in the hedgerow sing: “Cui, cui, cui,

Oui, oui, oui,
Georges de Blanchelande,
Cui, cui, cui.
Dont vous avez nourri l’enfance
Cui, cui, cui,
Est ici, est ici, est ici!
Oui, oui, oui.”

Francoeur approached her respectfully and said: “Your Grace, George de Blanchelande whom you thought dead has returned. I shall make it into a song.” In the meantime the birds sang: “Cucui, cui, cui, cui, cui,

Oui, oui, oui, oui, oui, oui,

Il est ici, ici, ici, ici, ici, ici.”

And when she saw the child who had been to her as a son, she opened her arms and fell senseless at his feet.

XX

Which treats of a little satin shoe

Everybody in Clarides was quite convinced that Honey-Bee had been stolen by the dwarfs. Even the Duchess believed it, though her dreams did not tell her precisely. "We will find her again," said George. "We will find her again," replied Francoeur. "And we will bring her back to her mother," said George.

"And we will bring her back," replied Francoeur. "And we will marry her," said George.

"And we will marry her," replied Francoeur. And they inquired among the inhabitants as to the habits of the dwarfs and the mysterious circumstances of Honey-Bee's disappearance.

And so it happened that they questioned Nurse Maurille who had once been the nurse of the Duchess of Clarides; but now as she had no more milk for babies Maurille instead nursed the chickens in the poultry yard. It was there that the master and squire found her. She cried: "Psit! Psit! psit! lil — lil — lil — lil — psit, psit, psit, psit!" as she threw grain to the chicks.

"Psit, psit, psit, psit! Is it you, your lordship? Psit, psit, psit! Is it possible that you have grown so tall — psit! and so handsome? Psit, psit! Shoo! shoo, shoo! Just look at that fat one there eating the little one's portion! Shoo, shoo, shoo! The way of the world, your lordship. Riches go the rich, lean ones grow leaner, while the fat ones grow fatter. There's no justice on earth! What can I do for you, my lord? May I offer you each a glass of beer?"

"We will accept it gladly, Maurille, and I must embrace you because you nursed the mother of her whom I love best on earth."

"That's true, my lord, my foster child cut her first tooth at the age of six months and fourteen days. On which occasion the deceased duchess made me a present. She did indeed."

"Now, Maurille, tell us all you know about the dwarfs who carried away Honey-Bee."

"Alas, my lord, I know nothing of the dwarfs who carried her away. And how can you expect an old woman like me to know anything? It's ages ago since I forgot the little I ever knew, and I haven't even enough memory left to remember where I put my spectacles. Sometimes I look for them when they're on my nose. Try this drink; it's fresh."

"Here's to your health, Maurille; but I was told that your husband knew something about the disappearance of Honey-Bee."

“That’s true, your lordship. Though he never was taught anything he learnt a great deal in the pothouses and the taverns. And he never forgot anything. Why if he were alive now and sitting at this table he could tell you stories until tomorrow. He used to tell me so many that they quite muddled my head and even now I can’t tell the tail of one from the head of the other. That’s true, your lordship.”

Indeed, it was true, for the head of the old nurse could only be compared to a cracked soup-pot. It was with the greatest difficulty that George and Francoeur got anything good out of it. Finally, however, by means of much repetition they did extract a tale which began somewhat as follows:

“It’s seven years ago, your lordship, the very day you and Honey-Bee went on that frolic from which neither of you ever returned. My deceased husband went up the mountain to sell a horse. That’s the truth. He fed the beast with a good peck of oats soaked in cider to give him a firm leg and a brilliant eye; he took him to market near the mountain. He had no cause to regret his oats or his cider, for he sold his horse for a much better price. Beasts are like human beings; one judges them by their appearance. My deceased husband was so rejoiced at his good stroke of business that he invited his friends to drink with him, and glass in hand he drank to their health.

“You must know, your lordship, that there wasn’t a man in all Clarides could equal my husband when glass in hand he drank to the health of his friends. So much so that on that day, after a number of such compliments, when he returned alone at twilight he took the wrong road for the reason that he could not recognise the right one. Finding himself near a cavern he saw as distinctly as possible, considering his condition and the hour, a crowd of little men carrying a girl or a boy on a litter. He ran away for fear of ill-luck; for the wine had not robbed him of prudence. But at some distance from the cavern he dropped his pipe, and on stooping to pick it up he picked up instead a little satin shoe. When he was in a good humour he used to amuse himself by saying, ‘It’s the first time a pipe has changed into a shoe.’ And as it was the shoe of a little girl he decided that she who had lost it in the forest was the one who had been carried away by the dwarfs and that it was this he had seen. He was about to put the shoe into his pocket when a crowd of little men in hoods pounced down on him and gave him such a thrashing that he lay there quite stunned.”

“Maurille! Maurille!” cried George, “it’s Honey-Bee’s shoe. Give it to me and I will kiss it a thousand times. It shall rest for ever on my heart, and when I die it shall be buried with me.”

“As you please, your lordship; but where will you find it? The dwarfs took it away from my poor husband and he always thought that they only gave him such

a sound thrashing because he wanted to put it in his pocket to show to the magistrates. He used to say when he was in a good humour — —”

“Enough — enough! Only tell me the name of the cavern!”

“It is called the cavern of the dwarfs, your lordship, and very well named too. My deceased husband — —”

“Not another word, Maurille! But you. Francoeur, do you know where this cavern is?”

“Your lordship,” replied Francoeur as he emptied the pot of beer, “you would certainly know it if you knew my songs better. I have written at least a dozen about this cavern, and I’ve described it without even forgetting a single sprig of moss. I venture to say, your lordship, that of these dozen songs, six are of great merit. And even the other six are not to be despised. I will sing you one or two....”

“Francoeur,” cried George, “we will take possession of this cavern of the dwarfs and rescue Honey-Bee.”

“Of course we will!” replied Francoeur.

XXI

In which a perilous adventure is described

That night when all were asleep George and Francoeur crept into the lower hall in search of weapons. Lances, swords, dirks, broadswords, hunting-knives and daggers glittered under the time-stained rafters — everything necessary to kill both man and brute. A complete suit of armour stood upright under each beam in an attitude as resolute and proud as if it were still filled with the soul of the brave man it had once decked for mighty adventures. The gauntlet grasped the lance in its ten iron fingers, while the shield rested against the plates of the greaves as if to prove that prudence is necessary to courage, and that the best fighter is armed as well for defence as for attack.

From among all these suits of armour George chose the one that Honey-Bee's father had worn as far away as the isles of Avalon and Thule. He donned it with the aid of Francoeur, nor did he forget the shield on which was emblazoned the golden sun of Clarides. As for Francoeur, he put on a good old steel coat of mail of his grandfather's and on his head a casque of a bygone time, to which he attached a ragged and moth-eaten tuft or plume. This he chose merely as a matter of fancy and to give himself an air of rejoicing, for, as he justly reasoned, gaiety, which is good under every circumstance, is especially so in the face of great dangers.

Having thus armed themselves they passed under the light of the moon into the dark open country. Francoeur had fastened the horses on the edge of a little grove near the postern, and there he found them nibbling at the bark of the bushes; they were swift steeds, and it took them less than an hour to reach the mountain of the dwarfs, through a crowd of goblins and phantoms.

"Here is the cave," said Francoeur.

Master and man dismounted and, sword in hand, penetrated into the cavern. It required great courage to attempt such an adventure; but George was in love and Francoeur was faithful, and this was a case in which one could say with the most delightful of poets:

"What may not friendship do with Love for guide!"

Master and man had trudged through the gloom for nearly an hour when they were astonished to see a brilliant light. It was one of the meteors which we know illumines the kingdom of the dwarfs. By the light of this subterranean luminary they discovered that they were standing at the foot of an ancient castle.

"This," said George, "is the castle we must capture."

“To be sure,” said Francœur; “but first permit me to drink a few drops of this wine which I brought with me as a precaution, because the better the wine the better the man, and the better the man the better the lance, the better the lance the less dangerous the enemy.”

George, seeing no living soul, struck the hilt of his sword sharply against the door of the castle. He looked up at the sound of a little tremulous voice, and he saw at one of the windows a little old man with a long beard, who asked:

“Who are you!”

“George of Blanchelande.”

“And who do you want?”

“I have come to deliver Honey-Bee of Clarides whom you unjustly hold captive in your mole-hill, hideous little moles that you are!”

The dwarf disappeared and again George was left alone with Francoeur who said to him:

“Your lordship, possibly I may exaggerate if I remark that in your answer to the dwarf you have not quite exhausted all the persuasive powers of eloquence.”

Francoeur was afraid of nothing, but he was old; his heart like his head was polished by age, and he disliked to offend people.

As for George he stormed and clamoured at the top of his voice.

“Vile dwellers in the earth, moles, badgers, dormice, ferrets, and water-rats, open the door and I’ll cut off all your ears.”

But hardly had he uttered these words when the bronze door of the castle slowly opened of itself, for no one could be seen pushing back its enormous wings.

George was seized with terror and yet he sprang through the mysterious door because his courage was even greater than his terror. Entering the courtyard he saw that all the windows, the galleries, the roofs, the gables, the skylights, and even the chimney-pots, were crowded with dwarfs armed with bows and cross-bows.

He heard the bronze door close behind him and suddenly a shower of arrows fell thick and fast on his head and shoulders, and for the second time he was filled with a great fear, and for the second time he conquered his fear.

Sword in hand and his shield on his arm he mounted the steps until suddenly he perceived on the very highest, a majestic dwarf who stood there in serene dignity, gold sceptre in hand and wearing the royal crown and the purple mantle. And in this dwarf he recognised the little man who had delivered him out of his crystal dungeon.

Thereupon he threw himself at his feet and cried weeping:

“O my benefactor, who are you? Are you one of those who have robbed me of Honey-Bee, whom I love?”

“I am King Loc,” replied the dwarf. “I have kept Honey-Bee with me to teach her the wisdom of the dwarfs. Child, you have fallen into my kingdom like a hail-storm in a garden of flowers. But the dwarfs, less weak than men, are never angered as are they. My intelligence raises me too high above you for me to resent your actions whatever they are. And of all the attributes that render me superior to you that which I guard most jealously is justice. Honey-Bee shall be brought before me and I will ask her if she wishes to follow you. This I do, not because you desire it, but because I must.”

A great silence ensued and Honey-Bee appeared attired all in white and with flowing golden hair. No sooner did she see George than she ran and threw herself in his arms and clasped his iron breast with all her strength.

Then King Loc said to her:

“Honey-Bee, is it true that this is the man you wish to marry?”

“It is true, very true that this is he, little King Loc,” replied Honey-Bee. “See, all you little men, how I laugh and how happy I am.”

And she began to weep. Her tears fell on her lover’s face, but they were tears of joy; and with them were mingled tiny bursts of laughter and a thousand endearing words without sense, like the lisp of a little child. She quite forgot that the sight of her joy might sadden the heart of King Loc.

“My beloved,” said George, “I find you again such as I had longed for: the fairest and dearest of beings. You love me! Thank heaven, you love me! But, Honey-Bee, do you not also love King Loc a little, who delivered me out of the glass dungeon in which the nixies held me captive far away from you?”

Honey-Bee turned to King Loc.

“Little King Loc, and did you do this?” she cried. “You loved me, and yet you rescued the one I love and who loves me — —”

Words failed her and she fell on her knees, her head in her hands.

All the little men who witnessed this scene deluged their cross-bows with tears. Only King Loc remained serene. And Honey-Bee, overcome by his magnanimity and his goodness, felt for him the love of a daughter for a father.

She took her lover’s hand.

“George,” she said, “I love you. God knows how much I love you. But how can I leave little King Loc?”

“Hallo, there?” King Loc cried in a terrible voice, “now you are my prisoners!”

But this terrible voice he only used for fun and just as a joke, for he really was not at all angry. Here Francoeur approached and knelt before him.

“Sire,” he cried, “may it please your Majesty to let me share the captivity of the masters I serve?”

Said Honey-Bee, recognising him:

“Is it you, my good Francoeur? How glad I am to see you again. What a horrid cap you’ve got on! Tell me, have you composed any new songs?”

And King Loc took them all three to dinner.

XXII

In which all ends well

The next morning Honey-Bee, George and Francoeur again arrayed themselves in the splendid garments prepared for them by the dwarfs, and proceeded to the banquet-hall where, as he had promised, King Loc, in the robes of an Emperor, soon joined them. He was followed by his officers fully armed, and covered with furs of barbarous magnificence, and in their helmets the wings of swans. Crowds of hurrying dwarfs came in through the windows, the air-holes and the chimneys, and rolled under the benches.

King Loc mounted a stone table one end of which was laden with flagons, candelabra, tankards, and cups of gold of marvellous workmanship. He signed to Honey-Bee and to George to approach.

"Honey-Bee," he said, "by a law of the nation of the dwarfs it is decreed that a stranger received in our midst shall be free after seven years. You have been with us seven years, Honey-Bee, and I should be a disloyal citizen and a blameworthy king should I keep you longer. But before permitting you to go I wish, not having been able to wed you myself, to betroth you to the one you have chosen. I do so with joy for I love you more than I love myself, and my pain, if such remains, is like a little cloud which your happiness will dispel. Honey-Bee of Clarides, Princess of the Dwarfs, give me your hand, and you, George of Blanchelande, give me yours."

Placing the hand of George in the hand of Honey-Bee he turned to his people and said with a ringing voice:

"Little men, my children, you bear witness that these two pledge themselves to marry one another on earth. They shall go back together and together help courage, modesty, and fidelity to blossom, as roses, pinks, and peonies bloom for good gardeners."

At these words the dwarfs burst into a mighty shout, but not knowing if they ought to grieve or to rejoice, they were torn by conflicting emotions.

King Loc, again turning to the lovers, said as he pointed to the flagons, the tankards, all the beautiful art of the goldsmith:

"Behold the gifts of the dwarfs. Take them, Honey-Bee, they will remind you of your little friends. It is their gift to you, not mine. What I am about to give you, you shall know before long."

A lengthy silence ensued.

With an expression sublime in its tenderness, King Loc gazed at Honey-Bee, whose beautiful and radiant head, crowned by roses, rested on her lover's shoulder.

Then he continued:

"My children, it is not enough to love passionately; you must also love well. A passionate love is good doubtless, but a beautiful love is better. May you have as much strength as gentleness; may it lack nothing, not even forbearance, and let even a little compassion be mingled with it. You are young, fair and good; but you are human, and because of this capable of much suffering. If then something of compassion does not enter into the feelings you have one for the other, these feelings will not always befit all the circumstances of your life together; they will be like festive robes that will not shield you from wind and rain. We love truly only those we love even in their weakness and their poverty. To forbear, to forgive, to console, that alone is the science of love."

King Loc paused, seized by a gentle but strong emotion.

"My children," he then continued; "may you be happy; guard your happiness well, guard it well."

While he addressed them Pic, Tad, Dig, Bob, True, and Pau clung to Honey-Bee's white mantle and covered her hands and arms with kisses and they implored her not to leave them. Thereupon King Loc took from his girdle a ring set with a glittering gem. It was the magic ring which had unclosed the dungeon of the nixies. He placed it on Honey-Bee's finger.

"Honey-Bee," he said, "receive from my hand this ring which will permit you, you and your husband, to enter at any hour the kingdom of the dwarfs. You will be welcomed with joy and succoured at need. In return teach the children that will be yours not to despise the little men, so innocent and industrious, who dwell under the earth."

THAÏS



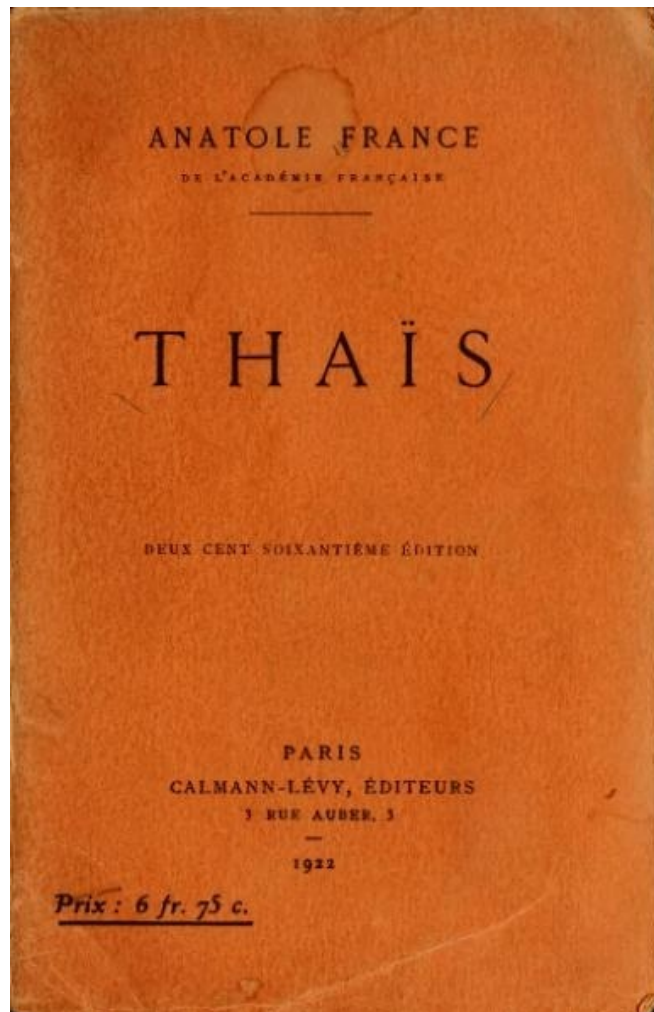
Translated by Robert B. Douglas

Thaïs was first published in 1890 in France and the title of the work is a reference to Saint Thaïs of Egypt, a supposed convert to Christianity in fourth century Alexandria. She is portrayed as a beautiful and wealthy courtesan, who comes to repent her behaviour and lifestyle when she discovers Christianity. She is sent to a convent cell for three years to demonstrate penance for her sins. When she is finally released she spends just over two weeks with the nuns in the desert before she dies. An early source on the tale of the conversion is the 9th century play *Paphnutius*, written by Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim, detailing the importance of 'Saint Paphnutius the Ascetic' in Thaïs' journey to faith. It has been argued, although not agreed upon, that the tale of Thaïs' conversion was one created to serve as a moral lesson and underline the possibility of change, and the necessity of repentance.

France's novel is an interesting and unique exploration of the story, which involves subverting the traditional moral message of Thaïs' conversion to Christianity. Paphnuce is an anchorite that decides he should leave his desert dwelling and venture to Alexandria to attempt to convert the famous actress and courtesan Thaïs to Christianity. France's depiction of Thaïs and her journey does not deviate too much from the known story, but his portrayal of Paphnuce and the ascetic lifestyle, demonstrates an intriguing inversion of the classic story, and an entirely different comment on the Christian morality tale, while never rejecting religion.



'Saint Thais' by José de Ribera



1922 French edition

CONTENTS

PART THE FIRST — THE LOTUS

PART THE SECOND — THE PAPYRUS

THE BANQUET

PART THE THIRD — THE EUPHORBIA



Image of Mary Garden in the opera Thais

PART THE FIRST — THE LOTUS

In those days there were many hermits living in the desert. On both banks of the Nile numerous huts, built by these solitary dwellers, of branches held together by clay, were scattered at a little distance from each other, so that the inhabitants could live alone, and yet help one another in case of need. Churches, each surmounted by a cross, stood here and there amongst the huts, and the monks flocked to them at each festival to celebrate the services or to partake of the Communion. There were also, here and there on the banks of the river, monasteries, where the cenobites lived in separate cells, and only met together that they might the better enjoy their solitude.

Both hermits and cenobites led abstemious lives, taking no food till after sunset, and eating nothing but bread with a little salt and hyssop. Some retired into the desert, and led a still more strange life in some cave or tomb.

All lived in temperance and chastity; they wore a hair shirt and a hood, slept on the bare ground after long watching, prayed, sang psalms, and, in short, spent their days in works of penitence. As an atonement for original sin, they refused their body not only all pleasures and satisfactions, but even that care and attention which in this age are deemed indispensable. They believed that the diseases of our members purify our souls, and the flesh could put on no adornment more glorious than wounds and ulcers. Thus, they thought they fulfilled the words of the prophet, "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Amongst the inhabitants of the holy Thebaid, there were some who passed their days in asceticism and contemplation; others gained their livelihood by plaiting palm fibre, or by working at harvest-time for the neighbouring farmers. The Gentiles wrongly suspected some of them of living by brigandage, and allying themselves to the nomadic Arabs who robbed the caravans. But, as a matter of fact, the monks despised riches, and the odour of their sanctity rose to heaven.

Angels in the likeness of young men, came, staff in hand, as travellers, to visit the hermitages; whilst demons — having assumed the form of Ethiopians or of animals — wandered round the habitations of the hermits in order to lead them into temptation. When the monks went in the morning to fill their pitcher at the spring, they saw the footprints of Satyrs and Aigipans in the sand. The Thebaid was, really and spiritually, a battlefield, where, at all times, and more especially at night, there were terrible conflicts between heaven and hell.

The ascetics, furiously assailed by legions of the damned, defended themselves — with the help of God and the angels — by fasting, prayer, and penance. Sometimes carnal desires pricked them so cruelly that they cried aloud with pain, and their lamentations rose to the starlit heavens mingled with the howls of the hungry hyaenas. Then it was that the demons appeared in delightful forms. For though the demons are, in reality, hideous, they sometimes assume an appearance of beauty which prevents their real nature from being recognised. The ascetics of the Thebaid were amazed to see in their cells phantasms of delights unknown even to the voluptuaries of the age. But, as they were under the sign of the Cross, they did not succumb to these temptations, and the unclean spirits, assuming again their true character, fled at daybreak, filled with rage and shame. It was not unusual to meet at dawn one of these beings, flying away and weeping, and replying to those who questioned it, “I weep and groan because one of the Christians who live here has beaten me with rods, and driven me away in ignominy.”

The power of the old saints of the desert extended over all sinners and unbelievers. Their goodness was sometimes terrible. They derived from the Apostles authority to punish all offences against the true and only God, and no earthly power could save those they condemned. Strange tales were told in the cities, and even as far as Alexandria, how the earth had opened and swallowed up certain wicked persons whom one of these saints struck with his staff. Therefore they were feared by all evil-doers, and particularly by mimes, mountebanks, married priests, and prostitutes.

Such was the sanctity of these holy men that even wild beasts felt their power. When a hermit was about to die, a lion came and dug a grave with its claws. The saint knew by this that God had called him, and he went and kissed all his brethren on the cheek. Then he lay down joyfully, and slept in the Lord.

Now that Anthony, who was more than a hundred years old, had retired to Mount Colzin with his well-beloved disciples, Macarius and Amathas, there was no monk in the Thebaid more renowned for good works than Paphnutius, the Abbot of Antinoe. Ephrem and Serapion had a greater number of followers, and in the spiritual and temporal management of their monasteries surpassed him. But Paphnutius observed the most rigorous fasts, and often went for three entire days without taking food. He wore a very rough hair shirt, he flogged himself night and morning, and lay for hours with his face to the earth.

His twenty-four disciples had built their huts near his, and imitated his austerities. He loved them all dearly in Jesus Christ, and unceasingly exhorted them to good works. Amongst his spiritual children were men who had been robbers for many years, and had been persuaded by the exhortations of the holy

abbot to embrace the monastic life, and who now edified their companions by the purity of their lives. One, who had been cook to the Queen of Abyssinia, and was converted by the Abbot of Antinoe, never ceased to weep. There was also Flavian, the deacon, who knew the Scriptures, and spoke well; but the disciple of Paphnutius who surpassed all the others in holiness was a young peasant named Paul, and surnamed the Fool, because of his extreme simplicity. Men laughed at his childishness, but God favoured him with visions, and by bestowing upon him the gift of prophecy.

Paphnutius passed his life in teaching his disciples, and in ascetic practices. Often did he meditate upon the Holy Scriptures in order to find allegories in them. Therefore he abounded in good works, though still young. The devils, who so rudely assailed the good hermits, did not dare to approach him. At night, seven little jackals sat in the moonlight in front of his cell, silent and motionless, and with their ears pricked up. It was believed that they were seven devils, who, owing to his sanctity, could not cross his threshold.

Paphnutius was born at Alexandria of noble parents, who had instructed him in all profane learning. He had even been allured by the falsehoods of the poets, and in his early youth had been misguided enough to believe that the human race had all been drowned by a deluge in the days of Deucalion, and had argued with his fellow-scholars concerning the nature, the attributes, and even the existence of God. He then led a life of dissipation, after the manner of the Gentiles, and he recalled the memory of those days with shame and horror.

“At that time,” he used to say to the brethren, “I seethed in the cauldron of false delights.”

He meant by that that he had eaten food properly dressed, and frequented the public baths. In fact, until his twentieth year he had continued to lead the ordinary existence of those times, which now seemed to him rather death than life; but, owing to the lessons of the priest Macrinus, he then became a new man.

The truth penetrated him through and through, and — as he used to say — entered his soul like a sword. He embraced the faith of Calvary, and worshipped Christ crucified. After his baptism he remained yet a year amongst the Gentiles, unable to cast off the bonds of old habits. But one day he entered a church, and heard a deacon read from the Bible, the verse, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.” Thereupon he sold all that he had, gave away the money in alms, and embraced the monastic life.

During the ten years that he had lived remote from men, he no longer seethed in the cauldron of false delights, but more profitably macerated his flesh in the balms of penitence.

One day when, according to his pious custom, he was recalling to mind the hours he had lived apart from God, and examining his sins one by one, that he might the better ponder on their enormity, he remembered that he had seen at the theatre at Alexandria a very beautiful actress named Thais. This woman showed herself in the public games, and did not scruple to perform dances, the movements of which, arranged only too cleverly, brought to mind the most horrible passions. Sometimes she imitated the horrible deeds which the Pagan fables ascribe to Venus, Leda, or Pasiphae. Thus she fired all the spectators with lust, and when handsome young men, or rich old ones, came, inspired with love, to hang wreaths of flowers round her door, she welcomed them, and gave herself up to them. So that, whilst she lost her own soul, she also ruined the souls of many others.

She had almost led Paphnutius himself into the sins of the flesh. She had awakened desire in him, and he had once approached the house of Thais. But he stopped on the threshold of the courtesan's house, partly restrained by the natural timidity of extreme youth — he was then but fifteen years old — and partly by the fear of being refused on account of his want of money, for his parents took care that he should commit no great extravagances.

God, in His mercy, had used these two means to prevent him from committing a great sin. But Paphnutius had not been grateful to Him for that, because at that time he was blind to his own interests, and did not know that he was lusting after false delights. Now, kneeling in his cell, before the image of that holy cross on which hung, as in a balance, the ransom of the world, Paphnutius began to think of Thais, because Thais was a sin to him, and he meditated long, according to ascetic rules, on the fearful hideousness of the carnal delights with which this woman had inspired him in the days of his sin and ignorance. After some hours of meditation the image of Thais appeared to him clearly and distinctly. He saw her again, as he had seen her when she tempted him, in all the beauty of the flesh. At first she showed herself like a Leda, softly lying upon a bed of hyacinths, her head bowed, her eyes humid and filled with a strange light, her nostrils quivering, her mouth half open, her breasts like two flowers, and her arms smooth and fresh as two brooks. At this sight Paphnutius struck his breast and said —

“I call Thee to witness, my God, that I have considered how heinous has been my sin.”

Gradually the face of the image changed its expression. Little by little the lips of Thais, by lowering at the corners of the mouth, expressed a mysterious suffering. Her large eyes were filled with tears and lights; her breast heaved with sighs, like the sighing of a wind that precedes a tempest. At this sight Paphnutius

was troubled to the bottom of his soul. Prostrating himself on the floor, he uttered this prayer —

“Thou who hast put pity in our hearts, like the morning dew upon the fields, O just and merciful God, be Thou blessed! Praise! praise be unto Thee! Put away from Thy servant that false tenderness which tempts to concupiscence, and grant that I may only love Thy creatures in Thee, for they pass away, but Thou endurest for ever. If I care for this woman, it is only because she is Thy handiwork. The angels themselves feel pity for her. Is she not, O Lord, the breath of Thy mouth? Let her not continue to sin with many citizens and strangers. There is great pity for her in my heart. Her wickednesses are abominable, and but to think of them makes my flesh creep. But the more wicked she is, the more do I lament for her. I weep when I think that the devils will torment her to all eternity.”

As he was meditating in this way, he saw a little jackal lying at his feet. He felt much surprised, for the door of his cell had been closed since the morning. The animal seemed to read the Abbot’s thoughts, and wagged its tail like a dog. Paphnutius made the sign of the cross and the beast vanished. He knew then that, for the first time, the devil had entered his cell, and he uttered a short prayer; then he thought again about Thais.

“With God’s help,” he said to himself, “I must save her.” And he slept.

The next morning, when he had said his prayers, he went to see the sainted Palemon, a holy hermit who lived some distance away. He found him smiling quietly as he dug the ground, as was his custom. Palemon was an old man, and cultivated a little garden; the wild beasts came and licked his hands, and the devils never tormented him.

“May God be praised, brother Paphnutius,” he said, as he leaned upon his spade.

“God be praised!” replied Paphnutius. “And peace be unto my brother.”

“The like peace be unto thee, brother Paphnutius,” said Palemon; and he wiped the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve.

“Brother Palemon, all our discourse ought to be solely the praise of Him who has promised to be wheresoever two or three are gathered together in His Name. That is why I come to you concerning a design I have formed to glorify the Lord.”

“May the Lord bless thy design, Paphnutius, as He has blessed my lettuces. Every morning He spreads His grace with the dew on my garden, and His goodness causes me to glorify Him in the cucumbers and melons which He gives me. Let us pray that He may keep us in His peace. For nothing is more to be feared than those unruly passions which trouble our hearts. When these passions

disturb us we are like drunken men, and we stagger from right to left unceasingly, and are like to fall miserably. Sometimes these passions plunge us into a turbulent joy, and he who gives way to such, sullies the air with brutish laughter. Such false joy drags the sinner into all sorts of excess. But sometimes also the troubles of the soul and of the senses throw us into an impious sadness which is a thousand times worse than the joy. Brother Paphnutius, I am but a miserable sinner, but I have found, in my long life, that the cenobite has no foe worse than sadness. I mean by that the obstinate melancholy which envelopes the soul as in a mist, and hides from us the light of God. Nothing is more contrary to salvation, and the devil's greatest triumph is to sow black and bitter thoughts in the heart of a good man. If he sent us only pleasurable temptations, he would not be half so much to be feared. Alas! he excels in making us sad. Did he not show to our father Anthony a black child of such surpassing beauty that the very sight of it drew tears? With God's help, our father Anthony avoided the snares of the demon. I knew him when he lived amongst us; he was cheerful with his disciples, and never gave way to melancholy. But did you not come, my brother, to talk to me of a design you had formed in your mind? Let me know what it is — if, at least, this design has for its object the glory of God."

"Brother Palemon, what I propose is really to the glory of God. Strengthen me with your counsel, for you know many things, and sin has never darkened the clearness of your mind."

"Brother Paphnutius, I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of thy sandals, and my sins are as countless as the sands of the desert. But I am old, and I will never refuse the help of my experience."

"I will confide in you, then, brother Palemon, that I am stricken with grief at the thought that there is, in Alexandria, a courtesan named Thais, who lives in sin, and is a subject of reproach unto the people."

"Brother Paphnutius, that is, in truth, an abomination which we do well to deplore. There are many women amongst the Gentiles who lead lives of that kind. Have you thought of any remedy for this great evil?"

"Brother Palemon, I will go to Alexandria and find this woman, and, with God's help, I will convert her; that is my intention; do you approve of it, brother?"

"Brother Paphnutius, I am but a miserable sinner, but our father Anthony used to say, 'In whatsoever place thou art, hasten not to leave it to go elsewhere.'"

"Brother Palemon, do you disapprove of my project?"

"Dear Paphnutius, God forbid that I should suspect my brother of bad intentions. But our father Anthony also said, 'Fishes die on dry land, and so is it

with those monks who leave their cells and mingle with the men of this world, amongst whom no good thing is to be found.”

Having thus spoken, the old man pressed his foot on the spade, and began to dig energetically round a fig tree laden with fruit. As he was thus engaged, there was a rustling in the bushes, and an antelope leaped over the hedge which surrounded the garden; it stopped, surprised and frightened, its delicate legs trembling, then ran up to the old man, and laid its pretty head on the breast of its friend.

“God be praised in the gazelle of the desert,” said Palemon.

He went to his hut, the light-footed little animal trotting after him, and brought out some black bread, which the antelope ate out of his hand.

Paphnutius remained thoughtful for some time, his eyes fixed upon the stones at his feet. Then he slowly walked back to his cell, pondering on what he had heard. A great struggle was going on in his mind.

“The hermit gives good advice,” he said to himself; “the spirit of prudence is in him. And he doubts the wisdom of my intention. Yet it would be cruel to leave Thais any longer in the power of the demon who possesses her. May God advise and conduct me.”

As he was walking along, he saw a plover, caught in the net that a hunter had laid on the sand, and he knew that it was a hen bird, for he saw the male fly to the net, and tear the meshes one by one with its beak, until it had made an opening by which its mate could escape. The holy man watched this incident, and as, by virtue of his holiness, he easily comprehended the mystic sense of all occurrences, he knew that the captive bird was no other than Thais, caught in the snares of sin, and that — like the plover that had cut the hempen threads with its beak — he could, by pronouncing the word of power, break the invisible bonds by which Thais was held in sin. Therefore he praised God, and was confirmed in his first resolution. But then seeing the plover caught by the feet, and hampered by the net it had broken, he fell into uncertainty again.

He did not sleep all night, and before dawn he had a vision. Thais appeared to him again. There was no expression of guilty pleasure on her face, nor was she dressed according to custom in transparent drapery. She was enveloped in a shroud, which hid even a part of her face, so that the Abbot could see nothing but the two eyes, from which flowed white and heavy tears.

At this sight he began to weep, and believing that this vision came from God, he no longer hesitated. He rose, seized a knotted stick, the symbol of the Christian faith, and left his cell, carefully closing the door, lest the animals of the desert and the birds of the air should enter, and befoul the copy of the Holy Scriptures which stood at the head of his bed. He called Flavian, the deacon, and

gave him authority over the other twenty-three disciples during his absence; and then, clad only in a long cassock, he bent his steps towards the Nile, intending to follow the Libyan bank to the city founded by the Macedonian monarch. He walked from dawn to eve, indifferent to fatigue, hunger, and thirst; the sun was already low on the horizon when he saw the dreadful river, the blood-red waters of which rolled between the rocks of gold and fire.

He kept along the shore, begging his bread at the door of solitary huts for the love of God, and joyfully receiving insults, refusals, or threats. He feared neither robbers nor wild beasts, but he took great care to avoid all the towns and villages he came near. He was afraid lest he should see children playing at knuckle-bones before their father's house, or meet, by the side of the well, women in blue smocks, who might put down their pitcher and smile at him. All things are dangerous for the hermit; it is sometimes a danger for him to read in the Scriptures that the Divine Master journeyed from town to town and supped with His disciples. The virtues that the anchorites embroider so carefully on the tissue of faith, are as fragile as they are beautiful; a breath of ordinary life may tarnish their pleasant colours. For that reason, Paphnutius avoided the towns, fearing lest his heart should soften at the sight of his fellow men.

He journeyed along lonely roads. When evening came, the murmuring of the breeze amidst the tamarisk trees made him shiver, and he pulled his hood over his eyes that he might not see how beautiful all things were. After walking six days, he came to a place called Silsile. There the river runs in a narrow valley, bordered by a double chain of granite mountains. It was there that the Egyptians, in the days when they worshipped demons, carved their idols. Paphnutius saw an enormous sphinx carved in the solid rock. Fearing that it might still possess some diabolical properties, he made the sign of the cross, and pronounced the name of Jesus; he immediately saw a bat fly out of one of the monster's ears, and Paphnutius knew that he had driven out the evil spirits which had been for centuries in the figure. His zeal increased, and picking up a large stone, he threw it in the idol's face. Then the mysterious face of the sphinx expressed such profound sadness that Paphnutius was moved. In fact, the expression of superhuman grief on the stone visage would have touched even the most unfeeling man. Therefore Paphnutius said to the sphinx —

“O monster, be like the satyrs and centaurs our father Anthony saw in the desert, and confess the divinity of Jesus Christ, and I will bless thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

When he had spoken a rosy light gleamed in the eyes of the sphinx; the heavy eyelids of the monster quivered and the granite lips painfully murmured, as

though in echo to the man's voice, the holy name of Jesus Christ; therefore Paphnutius stretched out his right hand, and blessed the sphinx of Silsile.

That being done, he resumed his journey, and the valley having grown wider, he saw the ruins of an immense city. The temples, which still remained standing, were supported by idols which served as columns, and — by the permission of God — these figures with women's heads and cow's horns, threw on Paphnutius a long look which made him turn pale. He walked thus seventeen days, his only food a few raw herbs, and he slept at night in some ruined palace, amongst the wild cats and Pharaoh's rats, with which mingled sometimes, women whose bodies ended in a scaly tail. But Paphnutius knew that these women came from hell, and he drove them away by making the sign of the cross.

On the eighteenth day, he found, far from any village, a wretched hut made of palm leaves, and half buried under the sand which had been driven by the desert wind. He approached it, hoping that the hut was inhabited by some pious anchorite. He saw inside the hovel — for there was no door — a pitcher, a bunch of onions, and a bed of dried leaves.

"This must be the habitation of a hermit," he said to himself. "Hermits are generally to be found near their hut, and I shall not fail to meet this one. I will give him the kiss of peace, even as the holy Anthony did when he came to the hermit Paul, and kissed him three times. We will discourse of things eternal, and perhaps our Lord will send us, by one of His ravens, a crust of bread, which my host will willingly invite me to share with him."

Whilst he was thus speaking to himself, he walked round the hut to see if he could find any one. He had not walked a hundred paces when he saw a man seated, with his legs crossed, by the side of the river. The man was naked; his hair and beard were quite white, and his body redder than brick. Paphnutius felt sure this must be the hermit. He saluted him with the words the monks are accustomed to use when they meet each other.

"Peace be with you, brother! May you some day taste the sweet joys of paradise."

The man did not reply. He remained motionless, and appeared not to have heard. Paphnutius supposed this was due to one of those rhapsodies to which the saints are accustomed. He knelt down, with his hands joined, by the side of the unknown, and remained thus in prayer till sunset. Then, seeing that his companion had not moved, he said to him —

"Father, if you are now out of the ecstasy in which you were lost, give me your blessing in our Lord Jesus Christ."

The other replied without turning his head —

"Stranger, I understand you not, and I know not the Lord Jesus Christ."

“What!” cried Paphnutius. “The prophets have announced Him; legions of martyrs have confessed His name; Caesar himself has worshipped Him, and, but just now, I made the sphinx of Silsile proclaim His glory. Is it possible that you do not know Him?”

“Friend,” replied the other, “it is possible. It would even be certain, if anything in this world were certain.”

Paphnutius was surprised and saddened by the incredible ignorance of the man.

“If you know not Jesus Christ,” he said, “all your works serve no purpose, and you will never rise to life immortal.”

The old man replied —

“It is useless to act, or to abstain from acting. It matters not whether we live or die.”

“Eh, what?” asked Paphnutius. “Do you not desire to live through all eternity? But, tell me, do you not live in a hut in the desert as the hermits do?”

“It seems so.”

“Do I not see you naked, and lacking all things?”

“It seems so.”

“Do you not feed on roots, and live in chastity?”

“It seems so.”

“Have you not renounced all the vanities of this world?”

“I have truly renounced all those vain things for which men commonly care.”

“Then you are like me, poor, chaste, and solitary. And you are not so — as I am — for the love of God, and with a hope of celestial happiness! That I cannot understand. Why are you virtuous if you do not believe in Jesus Christ? Why deprive yourself of the good things of this world if you do not hope to gain eternal riches in heaven?”

“Stranger, I deprive myself of nothing which is good, and I flatter myself that I have found a life which is satisfactory enough, though — to speak more precisely — there is no such thing as a good or evil life. Nothing is itself, either virtuous or shameful, just or unjust, pleasant or painful, good or bad. It is our opinion which gives those qualities to things, as salt gives savour to meats.”

“So then, according to you there is no certainty. You deny the truth which the idolaters themselves have sought. You lie in ignorance — like a tired dog sleeping in the mud.”

“Stranger, it is equally useless to abuse either dogs or philosophers. We know not what dogs are or what we are. We know nothing.”

“Old man, do you belong, then, to the absurd sect of sceptics? Are you one of those miserable fools who alike deny movement and rest, and who know not

how to distinguish between the light of the sun and the shadows of night?”

“Friend, I am truly a sceptic, and of a sect which appears praiseworthy to me, though it seems ridiculous to you. For the same things often assume different appearances. The pyramids of Memphis seem at sunrise to be cones of pink light. At sunset they look like black triangles against the illuminated sky. But who shall solve the problem of their true nature? You reproach me with denying appearances, when, in fact, appearances are the only realities I recognise. The sun seems to me illuminous, but its nature is unknown to me. I feel that fire burns — but I know not how or why. My friend, you understand me badly. Besides, it is indifferent to me whether I am understood one way or the other.”

“Once more. Why do you live on dates and onions in the desert? Why do you endure great hardships? I endure hardships equally great, and, like you, I live in abstinence and solitude. But then it is to please God, and to earn eternal happiness. And that is a reasonable object, for it is wise to suffer now for a future gain. It is senseless, on the contrary, to expose yourself voluntarily to useless fatigue and vain sufferings. If I did not believe — pardon my blasphemy, O uncreated Light! — if I did not believe in the truth of that which God has taught us by the voice of the prophets, by the example of His Son, by the acts of the Apostles, by the authority of councils, and by the testimony of the martyrs, — if I did not know that the sufferings of the body are necessary for the salvation of the soul — if I were, like thee, lost in ignorance of sacred mysteries — I would return at once amongst the men of this day, I would strive to acquire riches, that I might live in ease, like those who are happy in this world, and I would say to the votaries of pleasure, ‘Come, my daughters, come, my servants, come and pour out for me your wines, your philtres, your perfumes.’ But you, foolish old man! you deprive yourself of all these advantages; you lose without hope of any gain; you give without hope of any return, and you imitate foolishly the noble deeds of us anchorites, as an impudent monkey thinks, by smearing a wall, to copy the picture of a clever artist. What, then, are your reasons, O most besotted of men?”

Paphnutius spoke with violence and indignation, but the old man remained unmoved.

“Friend,” he replied, gently, “what matter the reasons of a dog sleeping in the dirt or a mischievous ape?”

Paphnutius’ only aim was the glory of God. His anger vanished, and he apologised with noble humility.

“Pardon me, old man, my brother,” he said, “if zeal for the truth has carried me beyond proper bounds. God is my witness, that it is thy errors and not thyself that I hate. I suffer to see thee in darkness, for I love thee in Jesus Christ, and

care for thy salvation fills my heart. Speak! give me your reasons. I long to know them that I may refute them.”

The old man replied quietly —

“It is the same to me whether I speak or remain silent. I will give my reasons without asking yours in return, for I have no interest in you at all. I care neither for your happiness nor your misfortune, and it matters not to me whether you think one way or another. Why should I love you, or hate you? Aversion and sympathy are equally unworthy of the wise man. But since you question me, know then that I am named Timocles, and that I was born at Cos, of parents made rich by commerce. My father was a shipowner. In intelligence he much resembled Alexander, who is surnamed the Great. But he was not so gross. In short, he was a man of no great parts. I had two brothers, who, like him, were shipowners. As for me, I followed wisdom. My eldest brother was compelled by my father to marry a Carian woman, named Timaessa, who displeased him so greatly that he could not live with her without falling into a deep melancholy. However, Timaessa inspired our younger brother with a criminal passion, and this passion soon turned to a furious madness. The Carian woman hated them both equally; but she loved a flute-player, and received him at night in her chamber. One morning he left there the wreath which he usually wore at feasts. My two brothers, having found this wreath, swore to kill the flute-player, and the next day they caused him to perish under the lash, in spite of his tears and prayers. My sister-in-law felt such grief that she lost her reason, and these three poor wretches became beasts rather than human beings, and wandered insane along the shores of Cos, howling like wolves and foaming at the mouth, and hooted at by the children, who threw shells and stones at them. They died, and my father buried them with his own hands. A little later his stomach refused all nourishment, and he died of hunger, though he was rich enough to have bought all the meats and fruits in the markets of Asia. He was deeply grieved at having to leave me his fortune. I used it in travels. I visited Italy, Greece, and Africa without meeting a single person who was either wise or happy. I studied philosophy at Athens and Alexandria, and was deafened by noisy arguments. At last I wandered as far as India, and I saw on the banks of the Ganges a naked man, who had sat there motionless with his legs crossed for more than thirty years. Climbing plants twined round his dried up body, and the birds built their nests in his hair. Yet he lived. At the sight of him I called to mind Timaessa, the flute-player, my two brothers, and my father, and I realised that this Indian was a wise man. ‘Men,’ I said to myself, ‘suffer because they are deprived of that which they believe to be good; or because, possessing it they fear to lose it; or because they endure that which they believe to be an evil. Put an end to all

beliefs of this kind, and the evils would disappear.' That is why I resolved henceforth to deem nothing an advantage, to tear myself entirely from the good things of this world, and to live silent and motionless, like the Indian."

Paphnutius had listened attentively to the old man's story.

"Timocles of Cos," he replied, "I own that your discourse is not wholly devoid of sense. It is, in truth, wise to despise the riches of this world. But it would be absurd to despise also your eternal welfare, and render yourself liable to be visited by the wrath of God. I grieve at your ignorance, Timocles, and I will instruct you in the truth, in order that knowing that there really exists a God in three hypostases, you may obey this God as a child obeys its father."

Timocles interrupted him.

"Refrain, stranger, from showing me your doctrines, and do not imagine that you will persuade me to share your opinions. All discussions are useless. My opinion is to have no opinion. My life is devoid of trouble because I have no preferences. Go thy ways, and strive not to withdraw me from the beneficent apathy in which I am plunged, as though in a delicious bath, after the hardships of my past days."

Paphnutius was profoundly instructed in all things relating to the faith. By his knowledge of the human heart, he was aware that the grace of God had not fallen on old Timocles, and the day of salvation for this soul so obstinately resolved to ruin itself had not yet come. He did not reply, lest the power given for edification should turn to destruction. For it sometimes happens, in disputing with infidels, that the means used for their conversion may steep them still farther in sin. Therefore they who possess the truth should take care how they spread it.

"Farewell, then, unhappy Timocles," he said; and heaving a deep sigh, he resumed his pious pilgrimage through the night.

In the morning, he saw the ibises motionless on one leg at the edge of the water, which reflected their pale pink necks. The willows stretched their soft grey foliage to the bank, cranes flew in a triangle in the clear sky, and the cry of unseen herons was heard from the sedges. Far as the eye could reach, the river rolled its broad green waters o'er which white sails, like the wings of birds, glided, and here and there on the shores, a white house shone out. A light mist floated along the banks, and from out the shadow of the islands, which were laden with palms, flowers, and fruits, came noisy flocks of ducks, geese, flamingoes, and teal. To the left, the grassy valley extended to the desert its fields and orchards in joyful abundance; the sun shone on the yellow wheat, and the earth exhaled forth its fecundity in odorous wafts. At this sight, Paphnutius fell on his knees, and cried —

“Blessed be the Lord, who has given a happy issue to my journey. O God, who spreadest Thy dew upon the fig trees of the Arsiniote, pour Thy grace upon Thais, whom Thou hast formed with Thy love, as Thou hast the flowers and trees of the field. May she, by Thy loving care, flourish like a sweet-scented rose in the heavenly Jerusalem.”

And every time that he saw a tree covered with blossom, or a bird of brilliant plumage, he thought of Thais. Keeping along the left arm of the river and through a fertile and populous district, he reached, in a few days, the city of Alexandria, which the Greeks have surnamed the Beautiful and the Golden. The sun had risen an hour, when he beheld, from the top of a hill, the vast city, the roofs of which glittered in the rosy light. He stopped, and folded his arms on his breast.

“There, then,” he said, “is the delightful spot where I was born in sin; the bright air where I breathed poisonous perfumes; the sea of pleasure where I heard the songs of the sirens. There is my cradle, after the flesh; my native land — in the parlance of the men of these days! A rich cradle, an illustrious country, in the judgment of men! It is natural that thy children should reverence thee like a mother, Alexandria, and I was begotten in thy magnificently adorned breast. But the ascetic despises nature, the mystic scorns appearances, the Christian regards his native land as a place of exile, the monk is not of this earth. I have turned away my heart from loving thee, Alexandria. I hate thee! I hate thee for thy riches, thy science, thy pleasures, and thy beauty. Be accursed, temple of demons! Lewd couch of the Gentiles, tainted pulpit of Arian heresy, be thou accursed! And thou, winged son of heaven who led the holy hermit Anthony, our father, when he came from the depths of the desert, and entered into the citadel of idolatry to strengthen the faith of believers and the confidence of martyrs, beautiful angel of the Lord, invisible child, first breath of God, fly thou before me, and cleanse, by the beating of thy wings, the corrupted air I am about to breathe amongst the princes of darkness of this world!”

Having thus spoken, he resumed his journey. He entered the city by the Gate of the Sun. This gate was a handsome structure of stone. In the shadow of its arch, crowded some poor wretches, who offered lemons and figs for sale, or with many groans and lamentations, begged for an obolus.

An old woman in rags, who was kneeling there, seized the monk’s cassock, kissed it, and said —

“Man of the Lord, bless me, that God may bless me. I have suffered many things in this world that I may have joys in the world to come. You come from God, O holy man, and that is why the dust of your feet is more precious than gold.”

“The Lord be praised!” said Paphnutius, and with his half-closed hand he made the sign of redemption on the old woman’s head.

But hardly had he gone twenty paces down the street, than a band of children began to jeer at him, and throw stones, crying —

“Oh, the wicked monk! He is blacker than an ape, and more bearded than a goat! He is a skulker! Why not hang him in an orchard, like a wooden Priapus, to frighten the birds? But no; he would draw down the hail on the apple-blossom. He brings bad luck. To the ravens with the monk! to the ravens!” and stones mingled with the cries.

“My God, bless these poor children!” murmured Paphnutius.

And he pursued his way, thinking.

“I was worshipped by the old woman, and hated and despised by these children. Thus the same object is appreciated differently by men who are uncertain in their judgment and liable to error. It must be owned that, for a Gentile, old Timocles was not devoid of sense. Though blind, he knew he was deprived of light. His reasoning was much better than that of these idolaters, who cry from the depths of their thick darkness, ‘I see the day!’ Everything in this world is mirage and moving sand. God alone is steadfast.”

He passed through the city with rapid steps. After ten years of absence he would still recognise every stone, and every stone was to him a stone of reproach that recalled a sin. For that reason he struck his naked feet roughly against the kerb-stones of the wide street, and rejoiced to see the bloody marks of his wounded feet. Leaving on his left the magnificent portico of the Temple of Serapis, he entered a road lined with splendid mansions, which seemed to be drowsy with perfumes. Pines, maples, and larches raised their heads above the red cornices and golden acroteria. Through the half-open doors could be seen bronze statues in marble vestibules, and fountains playing amidst foliage. No noise troubled the stillness of these quiet retreats. Only the distant strains of a flute could be heard. The monk stopped before a house, rather small, but of noble proportions, and supported by columns as graceful as young girls. It was ornamented with bronze busts of the most celebrated Greek philosophers.

He recognised Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Zeno, and having knocked with the hammer against the door, he waited, wrapped in meditation.

“It is vanity to glorify in metal these false sages; their lies are confounded, their souls are lost in hell, and even the famous Plato himself, who filled the earth with his eloquence, now disputes with the devils.”

A slave opened the door, and seeing a man with bare feet standing on the mosaic threshold, said to him roughly —

“Go and beg elsewhere, stupid monk, or I will drive you away with a stick.”

“Brother,” replied the Abbott of Antinoe, “all that I ask is that you conduct me to your master, Nicias.”

The slave replied, more angrily than before —

“My master does not see dogs like you.”

“My son,” said Paphnutius, “will you please do what I ask, and tell your master that I desire to see him.

“Get out, vile beggar!” cried the porter furiously; and he raised his stick and struck the holy man, who, with his arms crossed upon his breast, received unmovedly the blow, which fell full in his face, and then repeated gently —

“Do as I ask you, my son, I beg.”

The porter tremblingly murmured —

“Who is this man who is not afraid of suffering?”

And he ran and told his master.

Nicias had just left the bath. Two pretty slave girls were scraping him with strigils. He was a pleasant-looking man, with a kind smile. There was an expression of gentle satire in his face. On seeing the monk, he rose and advanced with open arms.

“It is you!” he cried, “Paphnutius, my fellow-scholar, my friend my brother! Oh, I knew you again, though, to say the truth, you look more like a wild animal than a man. Embrace me. Do you remember the time when we studied grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy together? You were, even then, of a morose and wild character, but I liked you because of your complete sincerity. We used to say that you looked at the universe with the eyes of a wild horse, and it was not surprising you were dull and moody. You needed a pinch of Attic salt, but your liberality knew no bounds. You cared nothing for either your money or your life. And you had the eccentricity of genius, and a strange character which interested me deeply. You are welcome, my dear Paphnutius, after ten years of absence. You have quitted the desert; you have renounced all Christian superstitions, and now return to your old life. I will mark this day with a white stone.”

“Crobyle and Myrtale,” he added, turning towards the girls, “perfume the feet, hands, and beard of my dear guest.”

They smiled, and had already brought the basin, the phials, and the metal mirror. But Paphnutius stopped them with an imperious gesture, and lowered his eyes that he might not look upon them, for they were naked. Nicias brought cushions for him, and offered him various meats and drinks, which Paphnutius scornfully refused.

“Nicias,” he said, “I have not renounced what you falsely call the Christian superstition, which is the truth of truths. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and

without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was the life, and the life was the light of men.”

“My dear Paphnutius,” replied Nicias, who had now put on a perfumed tunic, “do you expect to astonish me by reciting a lot of words jumbled together without skill, which are no more than a vain murmur? Have you forgotten that I am a bit of a philosopher myself? And do you think to satisfy me with some rags, torn by ignorant men from the purple garment of AEmilius, when AEmilius, Porphyry, and Plato, in all their glory, did not satisfy me! The systems devised by the sages are but tales imagined to amuse the eternal childishness of men. We divert ourselves with them, as we do with the stories of *The Ass*, *The Tub*, and *The Ephesian Matron*, or any other Milesian fable.”

And, taking his guest by the arm, he led him into a room where thousands of papyri were rolled up and lay in baskets.

“This is my library,” he said. “It contains a small part of the various systems which the philosophers have constructed to explain the world. The Serapeium itself, with all its riches, does not contain them all. Alas! they are but the dreams of sick men.”

He compelled his guest to sit down in an ivory chair, and sat down himself. Paphnutius scowled gloomily at all the books in the library, and said —

“They ought all to be burned.”

“Oh, my dear guest, that would be a pity!” replied Nicias. “For the dreams of sick men are sometimes amusing. Besides, if we should destroy all the dreams and visions of men, the earth would lose its form and colours, and we should all sleep in a dull stupidity.”

Paphnutius continued in the same strain as before —

“It is certain that the doctrines of the pagans are but vain lies. But God, who is the truth, revealed Himself to men by miracles, and He was made flesh, and lived among us.”

Nicias replied —

“You speak well, my dear Paphnutius, when you say that he was made flesh. A God who thinks, acts, speaks, who wanders through nature, like Ulysses of old on the glaucous sea, is altogether a man. How do you expect that we should believe in this new Jupiter, when the urchins of Athens, in the time of Pericles, no longer believed in the old one?

“But let us leave all that. You did not come here; I suppose, to argue about the three hypostases. What can I do for you, my dear fellow-scholar?”

“A good deed,” replied the Abbot of Antinoe. “Lend me a perfumed tunic, like the one you have just put on. Be kind enough to add to the tunic, gilt sandals, and a vial of oil to anoint my beard and hair. It is needful also, that you

should give me a purse with a thousand drachmae in it. That, O Nicias, is what I came to ask of you, for the love of God, and in remembrance of our old friendship.”

Nicias made Crobyle and Myrtale bring his richest tunic; it was embroidered, after the Asiatic fashion, with flowers and animals. The two girls held it open, and skilfully showed its bright colours, waiting till Paphnutius should have taken off the cassock which covered him down to his feet. But the monk having declared that they should rather tear off his flesh than this garment, they put on the tunic over it. As the two girls were pretty, they were not afraid of men, although they were slaves. They laughed at the strange appearance of the monk thus clad. Crobyle called him her dear satrap, as she presented him with the mirror, and Myrtale pulled his beard. But Paphnutius prayed to the Lord, and did not look at them. Having tied on the gilt sandals, and fastened the purse to his belt, he said to Nicias, who was looking at him with an amused expression —

“O Nicias, let not these things be an offence in your eyes. For know that I shall make pious use of this tunic, this purse, and these sandals.”

“My dear friend,” replied Nicias, “I suspect no evil, for I believe that men are equally incapable of doing evil or doing good. Good and evil exist only in the opinion. The wise man has only custom and usage to guide him in his acts. I conform with all the prejudices which prevail at Alexandria. That is why I pass for an honest man. Go, friend, and enjoy yourself.”

But Paphnutius thought that it was needful to inform his host of his intention.

“Do you know Thais,” he said, “who acts in the games at the theatre?”

“She is beautiful,” replied Nicias, “and there was a time when she was dear to me. For her sake, I sold a mill and two fields of corn, and I composed in her honour three books full of detestably bad verses. Surely beauty is the most powerful force in the world, and were we so made that we could possess it always, we should care as little as may be for the demiurgos, the logos, the aeons, and all the other reveries of the philosophers. But I am surprised, my good Paphnutius, that you should have come from the depths of the Thebaid to talk about Thais.”

Having said this, he sighed gently. And Paphnutius gazed at him with horror, not conceiving it possible that a man should so calmly avow such a sin. He expected to see the earth open, and Nicias swallowed up in flames. But the earth remained solid, and the Alexandrian silent, his forehead resting on his hand, and he smiling sadly at the memories of his past youth. The monk rose, and continued in solemn tones —

“Know then, O Nicias, that, with the aid of God, I will snatch this woman Thais from the unclean affections of the world, and give her as a spouse to Jesus

Christ. If the Holy Spirit does not forsake me, Thais will leave this city and enter a nunnery."

"Beware of offending Venus," replied Nicias. "She is a powerful goddess, she will be angry with you if you take away her chief minister."

"God will protect me," said Paphnutius. "May He also illumine thy heart, O Nicias, and draw thee out of the abyss in which thou art plunged."

And he stalked out of the room. But Nicias followed him, and overtook him on the threshold, and placing his hand on his shoulder whispered into his ear the same words —

"Beware of offending Venus; her vengeance is terrible."

Paphnutius, disdainful of these trivial words, left without turning his head. He felt only contempt for Nicias; but what he could not bear was the idea that his former friend had received the caresses of Thais. It seemed to him that to sin with that woman was more detestable than to sin with any other. To him this appeared the height of iniquity, and he henceforth looked upon Nicias as an object of execration. He had always hated impurity, but never before had this vice appeared so heinous to him; never before had it so seemed to merit the anger of Jesus Christ and the sorrow of the angels.

He felt only a more ardent desire to save Thais from the Gentiles, and that he must hasten to see the actress in order to save her. Nevertheless, before he could enter her house, he must wait till the heat of the day was over, and now the morning had hardly finished. Paphnutius wandered through the most frequented streets. He had resolved to take no food that day, in order to be the less unworthy of the favours he had asked of the Lord. To the great grief of his soul, he dared not enter any of the churches in the city, because he knew they were profaned by the Arians, who had overturned the Lord's table. For, in fact, these heretics, supported by the Emperor of the East, had driven the patriarch Athanasius from his episcopate, and sown trouble and confusion among the Christians of Alexandria.

He therefore wandered about aimlessly, sometimes with his eyes fixed on the ground in humility, and sometimes raised to heaven in ecstasy. After some time, he found himself on the quay. Before him lay the harbour, in which were sheltered innumerable ships and galleys, and beyond them, smiling in blue and silver, lay the perfidious sea. A galley, which bore a Nereid at its prow, had just weighed anchor. The rowers sang as the oars struck the water; and already the white daughter of the waters, covered with humid pearls, showed no more than a flying profile to the monk. Steered by her pilot, she cleared the passage leading from the basin of the Eunostos, and gained the high seas, leaving a glittering trail behind her.

“I also,” thought Paphnutius, “once desired to embark singing on the ocean of the world. But I soon saw my folly, and the Nereid did not carry me away.”

Lost in his thoughts, he sat down upon a coil of rope, and went to sleep. During his sleep, he had a vision. He seemed to hear the sound of a clanging trumpet, and the sky became blood red, and he knew that the day of judgment had come. Whilst he was fervently praying to God, he saw an enormous monster coming towards him, bearing on its forehead a cross of light, and he recognised the sphinx of Silsile. The monster seized him between its teeth, without hurting him, and carried him in its mouth, as a cat carries a kitten. Paphnutius was thus conveyed across many countries, crossing rivers and traversing mountains, and came at last to a desert place, covered with scowling rocks and hot cinders. The ground was rent in many places, and through these openings came a hot air. The monster gently put Paphnutius down on the ground, and said —

“Look!”

And Paphnutius, leaning over the edge of the abyss, saw a river of fire which flowed in the interior of the earth, between two cliffs of black rocks. There, in a livid light, the demons tormented the souls of the damned. The souls preserved the appearance of the bodies which had held them, and even wore some rags of clothing. These souls seemed peaceful in the midst of their torments. One of them, tall and white, his eyes closed, a white fillet across his forehead, and a sceptre in his hand, sang; his voice filled the desert shores with harmony; he sang of gods and heroes. Little green devils pierced his lips and throat with red-hot irons. And the shade of Homer still sang. Near by, old Anaxagoras, bald and hoary, traced figures in the dust with a compass. A demon poured boiling oil into his ear, yet failed, however, to disturb the sage’s meditations. And the monk saw many other persons, who, on the dark shore by the side of the burning river, read, or quietly meditated, or conversed with other spirits while walking, — like the sages and pupils under the shadow of the sycamore trees of Academe. Old Timocles alone had withdrawn from the others, and shook his head like a man who denies. One of the demons of the abyss shook a torch before his eyes, but Timocles would see neither the demon nor the torch.

Mute with surprise at this spectacle, Paphnutius turned to the monster. It had disappeared, and, in place of the sphinx, the monk saw a veiled woman, who said —

“Look and understand. Such is the obstinacy of these infidels, that, even in hell, they remain victims of the illusions which deluded them when on earth. Death has not undeceived them; for it is very plain that it does not suffice merely to die in order to see God. Those who are ignorant of the truth whilst living, will be ignorant of it always. The demons which are busy torturing these souls, what

are they but agents of divine justice? That is why these souls neither see them nor feel them. They were ignorant of the truth, and therefore unaware of their own condemnation, and God Himself cannot compel them to suffer.

“God can do all things,” said the Abbot of Antinoe.

“He cannot do that which is absurd,” replied the veiled woman. “To punish them, they must first be enlightened, and if they possessed the truth, they would be like unto the elect.”

Vexed and horrified, Paphnutius again bent over the edge of the abyss. He saw the shade of Nicias smiling, with a wreath of flowers on his head, sitting under a burnt myrtle tree. By his side was Aspasia of Miletus, gracefully draped in a woollen cloak, and they seemed to talk together of love and philosophy; the expression of her face was sweet and noble. The rain of fire which fell on them was as a refreshing dew, and their feet pressed the burning soil as though it had been tender grass. At this sight Paphnutius was filled with fury.

“Strike him, O God! strike him!” he cried. “It is Nicias! Let him weep! let him groan! let him grind his teeth! He sinned with Thais!”

And Paphnutius woke in the arms of a sailor, as strong as Hercules, who cried

“Quietly! quietly! my friend! By Proteus, the old shepherd of the seals, you slumber uneasily. If I had not caught hold of you, you would have tumbled into the Eunostos. It is as true as that my mother sold salt fish, that I saved your life.”

“I thank God,” replied Paphnutius.

And, rising to his feet, he walked straight before him, meditating on the vision which had come to him whilst he was asleep.

“This vision,” he said to himself, “is plainly an evil one; it is an insult to divine goodness to imagine hell is unreal. The dream certainly came from the devil.”

He reasoned thus because he knew how to distinguish between the dreams sent by God and those produced by evil angels. Such discernment is useful to the hermit, who lives surrounded by apparitions, and who, in avoiding men, is sure to meet with spirits. The deserts are full of phantoms. When the pilgrims drew near the ruined castle, to which the holy hermit, Anthony, had retired, they heard a noise like that which goes up from the public square of a large city at a great festival. The noise was made by the devils, who were tempting the holy man.

Paphnutius remembered this memorable example. He also called to mind St. John the Egyptian, who for sixty years was tempted by the devil. But John saw through all the tricks of the demon. One day, however, the devil, having assumed the appearance of a man, entered the grotto of the venerable John, and said to him, “John, you must continue to fast until to-morrow evening.” And

John, believing that it was an angel who spoke, obeyed the voice of the demon, and fasted the next day until the vesper hour. That was the only victory that the Prince of Darkness ever gained over St. John the Egyptian, and that was but a trifling one. It was therefore not astonishing that Paphnutius knew at once that the vision which had visited him in his sleep was an evil one.

Whilst he was gently remonstrating with God for having given him into the power of the demons, he felt himself pushed and dragged amidst a crowd of people who were all hurrying in the same direction. As he was unaccustomed to walk in the streets of a city, he was shoved and knocked from one passer to another like an inert mass; and being embarrassed by the folds of his tunic, he was more than once on the point of falling. Desirous of knowing where all these people could be going, he asked one of them the cause of this hurry.

“Do you not know, stranger,” replied he, “that the games are about to begin, and that Thais will appear on the stage? All the citizens are going to the theatre, and I also am going. Would you like to accompany me?”

It occurred to him at once that it would further his design to see Thais in the games, and Paphnutius followed the stranger. In front of them stood the theatre, its portico ornamented with shining masks, and its huge circular wall covered with innumerable statues. Following the crowd, they entered a narrow passage, at the end of which lay the amphitheatre, glittering with light. They took their places on one of the seats, which descended in steps to the stage, which was empty but magnificently decorated. There was no curtain to hide the view, and on the stage was a mound, such as used to be erected in old times to the shades of heroes. This mound stood in the midst of a camp. Lances were stacked in front of the tents, and golden shields hung from masts, amidst boughs of laurel and wreaths of oak. On the stage all was silence, but a murmur like the humming of bees in a hive rose from the vast hemicycle filled with spectators. All their faces, reddened by the reflection from the purple awning which waved above them, turned with attentive curiosity towards the large, silent stage, with its tomb and tents. The women laughed and ate lemons, and the regular theatre-goers called gaily to one another from their seats.

Paphnutius prayed inwardly, and refrained from uttering any vain words, but his neighbour began to complain of the decline of the drama.

“Formerly,” he said, “clever actors used to declaim, under a mask, the verses of Euripides and Menander. Now they no longer recite dramas, they act in dumb show; and of the divine spectacles with which Bacchus was honoured in Athens, we have kept nothing but what a barbarian — a Scythian even — could understand — attitude and gesture. The tragic mask, the mouth of which was provided with metal tongues that increased the sound of the voice; the cothurnus,

which raised the actors to the height of gods; the tragic majesty and the splendid verses that used to be sung, have all gone. Pantomimists, and dancing girls with bare faces, have replaced Paulus and Roscius. What would the Athenians of the days of Pericles have said if they had seen a woman on the stage? It is indecent for a woman to appear in public. We must be very degenerate to permit it. It is as certain as that my name is Dorion, that woman is the natural enemy of man, and a disgrace to human kind."

"You speak wisely," replied Paphnutius; "woman is our worst enemy. She gives us pleasure, and is to be feared on that account."

"By the immovable gods," cried Dorion, "it is not pleasure that woman gives to man, but sadness, trouble, and black cares. Love is the cause of our most biting evils. Listen, stranger. When I was a young man I visited Troezen, in Argolis, and I saw there a myrtle of a most prodigious size, the leaves of which were covered with innumerable pinholes. And this is what the Troezenians say about that myrtle. Queen Phaedra, when she was in love with Hippolytos, used to recline idly all day long under this same tree. To beguile the tedium of her weary life she used to draw out the golden pin which held her fair locks, and pierce with it the leaves of the sweet-scented bush. All the leaves were riddled with holes. After she had ruined the poor young man whom she pursued with her incestuous love, Phaedra, as you know, perished miserably. She locked herself up in her bridal chamber, and hanged herself by her golden girdle from an ivory peg. The gods willed that the myrtle, the witness of her bitter misery, should continue to bear, in its fresh leaves, the marks of the pinholes. I picked one of these leaves, and placed it at the head of my bed, that by the sight of it I might take warning against the folly of love, and conform to the doctrine of the divine Epicurus, my master, who taught that all lust is to be feared. But, properly speaking, love is a disease of the liver, and one is never sure of not catching the malady."

Paphnutius asked —

"Dorion, what are your pleasures?"

Dorion replied sadly —

"I have only one pleasure, and, it must be confessed, that it is not a very exciting one; it is meditation. When a man has a bad digestion, he must not look for any others."

Taking advantage of these words, Paphnutius proceeded to initiate the Epicurean into those spiritual joys which the contemplation of God procures. He began —

"Hear the truth, Dorion, and receive the light."

But he saw then that all heads were turned towards him, and everybody was making signs for him to be quiet. Dead silence prevailed in the theatre, broken at last by the strains of heroic music.

The play began. The soldiers left their tents, and were preparing to depart, when a prodigy occurred — a cloud covered the summit of the funeral pile. Then the cloud rolled away, and the ghost of Achilles appeared, clad in golden armour. Extending his arms towards the warriors, he seemed to say to them, “What! do you depart, children of Danaos? do you return to the land I shall never behold again, and leave my tomb without any offerings?” Already the principal Greek chieftains pressed to the foot of the pile. Acamas, the son of Theseus, old Nestor, Agamemnon, bearing a sceptre and with a fillet on his brow, gazed at the prodigy. Pyrrhus, the young son of Achilles, was prostrate in the dust. Ulysses, recognisable by the cap which covered his curly hair, showed by his gestures that he acquiesced in the demand of the hero’s shade. He argued with Agamemnon, and their words might be easily guessed —

“Achilles,” said the King of Ithaca, “is worthy to be honoured by us, for he died gloriously for Hellas. He demands that the daughter of Priam, the virgin Polyxena, should be immolated on his tomb. Greeks! appease the manes of the hero, and let the son of Peleus rejoice in Hades.”

But the king of kings replied —

“Spare the Trojan virgins we have torn from the altars. Sufficient misfortunes have already fallen on the illustrious race of Priam.”

He spoke thus because he shared the couch of the sister of Polyxena, and the wise Ulysses reproached him for preferring the couch of Cassandra to the lance of Achilles.

The Greeks showed they shared the opinion of Ulysses, by loudly clashing their weapons. The death of Polyxena was resolved on, and the appeased shade of Achilles vanished. The music — sometimes wild and sometimes plaintive — followed the thoughts of the personages in the drama. The spectators burst into applause.

Paphnutius, who applied divine truth to everything murmured —

“This fable shows how cruel the worshippers of false gods were.”

“All religions breed crimes,” replied the Epicurean. “Happily, a Greek, who was divinely wise, has freed men from foolish terrors of the unknown—”

Just at that moment, Hecuba, her white hair dishevelled, her robe tattered, came out of the tent in which she was kept captive. A long sigh went up from the audience, when her woeful figure appeared. Hecuba had been warned by a prophetic dream, and lamented her daughter’s fate and her own. Ulysses approached her, and asked her to give up Polyxena. The old mother tore her hair,

dug her nails into her cheeks, and kissed the hands of the cruel chieftain, who, with unpitied calmness, seemed to say —

“Be wise, Hecuba, and yield to necessity. There are amongst us many old mothers who weep for their children, now sleeping under the pines of Ida.”

And Hecuba, formerly queen of the most flourishing city in Asia, and now a slave, bowed her unhappy head in the dust.

Then the curtain in front of one of the tents was raised, and the virgin Polyxena appeared. A tremor passed through all the spectators. They had recognised Thais. Paphnutius saw again the woman he had come to seek. With her white arm she held above her head the heavy curtain. Motionless as a splendid statue, she stood, with a look of pride and resignation in her violet eyes, and her resplendent beauty made a shudder of commiseration pass through all who beheld her.

A murmur of applause uprose, and Paphnutius, his soul agitated, and pressing both hands to his heart, sighed —

“Why, O my God, hast thou given this power to one of Thy creatures?”

Dorion was not so disturbed. He said —

“Certainly the atoms, which have momentarily met together to form this woman, present a combination which is agreeable to the eye. But that is but a freak of nature, and the atoms know not what they do. They will some day separate with the same indifference as they came together. Where are now the atoms which formed Lais or Cleopatra? I must confess that women are sometimes beautiful. But they are liable to grievous afflictions, and disgusting inconveniences. That is patent to all thinking men, though the vulgar pay no attention to it. And women inspire love, though it is absurd and ridiculous to love them.”

Such were the thoughts of the philosopher and the ascetic as they gazed on Thais. They neither of them noticed Hecuba, who turned to her daughter, and seemed to say by her gestures —

“Try to soften the cruel Ulysses. Employ your tears, your beauty, and your youth.”

Thais — or rather Polyxena herself — let fall the curtain of the tent. She made a step forward, and all hearts were conquered. And when, with firm but light steps, she advanced towards Ulysses, her rhythmic movements, which were accompanied by the sound of flutes, created in all present such happy visions, that it seemed as though she were the divine centre of all the harmonies of the world. All eyes were bent on her; the other actors were obscured by her effulgence, and were not noticed. The play continued, however.

The prudent son of Laertes turned away his head, and hid his hand under his mantle, in order to avoid the looks and kisses of the suppliant. The virgin made a sign to him to fear nothing. Her tranquil gaze said —

“I follow you, Ulysses, and bow to necessity — because I wish to die. Daughter of Priam, and sister of Hector, my couch, which was once worthy of Kings, shall never receive a foreign master. Freely do I quit the light of day.”

Hecuba, lying motionless in the dust, suddenly rose and enfolded her daughter in a last despairing embrace. Polyxena gently, but resolutely, removed the old arms which held her. She seemed to say —

“Do not expose yourself, mother, to the fury of your master. Do not wait until he drags you ignominiously on the ground in tearing me from your arms. Better, O well-beloved mother, to give me your wrinkled hand, and bend your hollow cheeks to my lips.”

The face of Thais looked beautiful in its grief. The crowd felt grateful to her for showing them the forms and passions of life endowed with superhuman grace, and Paphnutius pardoned her present splendour on account of her coming humility, and glorified himself in advance for the saint he was about to give to heaven.

The drama neared its end. Hecuba fell as though dead, and Polyxena, led by Ulysses, advanced towards the tomb, which was surrounded by the chief warriors. A dirge was sung as she mounted the funeral pile, on the summit of which the son of Achilles poured out libations from a gold cup to the manes of the hero. When the sacrificing priests stretched out their arms to seize her, she made a sign that she wished to die free and unbound, as befitted the daughter of so many kings. Then, tearing aside her robe, she bared her bosom to the blow. Pyrrhus, turning away his head, plunged his sword into her heart, and by a skilful trick, the blood gushed forth over the dazzling white breast of the virgin, who, with head thrown back, and her eyes swimming in the horrors of death, fell with grace and modesty.

Whilst the warriors enshrouded the victim with a veil, and covered her with lilies and anemones, terrified screams and groans rent the air, and Paphnutius, rising from his seat, prophesied in a loud voice.

“Gentiles? vile worshippers of demons! And you Arians more infamous than the idolaters! — learn! That which you have just seen is an image and a symbol. There is a mystic meaning in this fable, and very soon the woman you see there will be offered, a willing and happy sacrifice, to the risen God.”

But already the crowd was surging in dark waves towards the exits. The Abbot of Antinoe, escaping from the astonished Dorion, gained the door, still prophesying.

An hour later he knocked at the door of the house of Thais.

The actress then lived in the rich Racotis quarter, near the tomb of Alexander, in a house surrounded by shady gardens, in which a brook, bordered with poplars, flowed amidst artificial rocks. An old black slave woman, loaded with rings, opened the door, and asked what he wanted.

“I wish to see Thais,” he replied. “God is my witness that I came here for no other purpose.”

As he wore a rich tunic, and spoke in an imperious manner, the slave allowed him to enter.

“You will find Thais,” she said, “in the Grotto of Nymphs.”

PART THE SECOND — THE PAPYRUS

Thais was born of free, but poor, parents, who were idolaters. When she was a very little girl, her father kept, at Alexandria, near the Gate of the Moon, an inn, which was frequented by sailors. She still retained some vivid, but disconnected, memories of her early youth. She remembered her father, seated at the corner of the hearth with his legs crossed — tall, formidable, and quiet, like one of those old Pharaohs who are celebrated in the ballads sung by blind men at the street corners. She remembered also her thin, wretched mother, wandering like a hungry cat about the house, which she filled with the tones of her sharp voice, and the glitter of her phosphorescent eyes. They said in the neighbourhood that she was a witch, and changed into an owl at night, and flew to see her lovers. It was a lie. Thais knew well, having often watched her, that her mother practised no magic arts, but that she was eaten up with avarice, and counted all night the gains of the day. The idle father and the greedy mother let the child live as best it could, like one of the fowls in the poultry-yard. She became very clever in extracting, one by one, the oboli from the belt of some drunken sailor, and in amusing the drinkers with artless songs and obscene words, the meaning of which she did not know. She passed from knee to knee, in a room reeking with the odours of fermented drinks and resiny wine-skins; then, her cheeks sticky with beer and pricked by rough beards, she escaped, clutching the oboli in her little hand, and ran to buy honey-cakes from an old woman who crouched behind her baskets under the Gate of the Moon. Every day the same scenes were repeated, the sailors relating their perilous adventures, then playing at dice or knuckle-bones, and blaspheming the gods, amid their shouting for the best beer of Cilicia.

Every night the child was awakened by the quarrels of the drunkards. Oyster-shells would fly across the tables, cutting the heads of those they hit, and the uproar was terrible. Sometimes she saw, by the light of the smoky lamps, the knives glitter, and the blood flow.

It humiliated her to think that the only person who showed her any human kindness in her young days was the mild and gentle Ahmes. Ahmes, the house-slave, a Nubian blacker than the pot he gravely skimmed, was as good as a long night's sleep. Often he would take Thais on his knee, and tell her old tales about underground treasure-houses constructed for avaricious kings, who put to death the masons and architects. There were also tales about clever thieves who married kings' daughters, and courtesans who built pyramids. Little Thais loved

Ahmes like a father, like a mother, like a nurse, and like a dog. She followed the slave into the cellar when he went to fill the amphorae, and into the poultry-yard amongst the scraggy and ragged fowls, all beak, claws, and feathers, who flew swifter than eagles before the knife of the black cook. Often at night, on the straw, instead of sleeping, he built for Thais little water-mills, and ships no bigger than his hand, with all their rigging.

He had been badly treated by his masters; one of his ears was torn, and his body covered with scars. Yet his features always wore an air of joyous peace. And no one ever asked him whence he drew the consolation in his soul, and the peace in his heart. He was as simple as a child. As he performed his heavy tasks, he sang, in a harsh voice, hymns which made the child tremble and dream. He murmured, in a gravely joyous tone —

“Tell us, Mary, what thou hast seen where thou hast been?”

I saw the shroud and the linen cloths, and the angels
seated on the tomb.

And I saw the glory of the Risen One.”

She asked him —

“Father, why do you sing about angels seated on a tomb?”

And he replied —

“Little light of my eyes, I sing of the angels because Jesus, our Lord, is risen to heaven.”

Ahmes was a Christian. He had been baptised, and was known as Theodore at the meetings of the faithful, to which he went secretly during the hours allowed him for sleep.

At that time the Church was suffering the severest trials. By order of the Emperor, the churches had been thrown down, the holy books burned, the sacred vessels and candlesticks melted. The Christians had been deprived of all their honours, and expected nothing but death. Terror reigned over all the community at Alexandria, and the prisons were crammed with victims. It was whispered with horror amongst the faithful, that in Syria, in Arabia, in Mesopotamia, in Cappadocia, in all the empire, bishops and virgins had been flogged, tortured, crucified or thrown to wild beasts. Then Anthony, already celebrated for his visions and his solitary life, a prophet, and the head of all the Egyptian believers, descended like an eagle from his desert rock on the city of Alexandria, and, flying from church to church, fired the whole community with his holy ardour. Invisible to the pagans, he was present at the same time at all the meetings of Christians, endowing all with the spirit of strength and prudence by which he was animated. Slaves, in particular, were persecuted with singular severity. Many of them, seized with fright, denied the faith. Others, and by far the greater

number, fled to the desert, hoping to live there, either as hermits or robbers. Ahmes, however, frequented the meetings as usual, visited the prisoners, buried the martyrs, and joyfully professed the religion of Christ. The great Anthony, who saw his unshaken zeal, before he returned into the desert, pressed the black slave in his arms, and gave him the kiss of peace.

When Thais was seven years old, Ahmes began to talk to her of God.

“The good Lord God,” he said, “lived in heaven like a Pharaoh, under the tents of His harem, and under the trees of His gardens. He was the Ancient of Ancients, and older than the world; and He had but one Son, the Prince Jesus, whom He loved with all His heart, and who surpassed in beauty the virgins and the angels. And the good Lord God said to Prince Jesus —

“‘Leave My harem and My palace, and My date trees and My running waters. Descend to earth for the welfare of men. There Thou shalt be like a little child, and Thou shalt live poor amongst the poor. Suffering shall be Thy daily bread, and Thou shalt weep so profusely that Thy tears shall form rivers, in which the tired slave shall bathe with delight. Go, My Son!’

“Prince Jesus obeyed the good Lord, and He came down to earth, to a place named Bethlehem of Judaea. And He walked in fields, amidst the flowering anemones, saying to His companion —

“‘Blessed are they who hunger, for I will lead them to My Father’s table! Blessed are they who thirst, for they shall drink of the fountains of heaven! Blessed are they who weep, for I will dry their tears with veils finer than those of the almehs!’

“That is why the poor loved Him, and believed in Him. But the rich hated Him; fearing that He should raise the poor above them. At that time, Cleopatra and Caesar were powerful on the earth. They both hated Jesus, and they ordered the judges and priests to put Him to death. To obey the Queen of Egypt, the princes of Syria erected a cross on a high mountain, and they caused Jesus to die on this cross. But women washed His corpse, and buried it; and Prince Jesus, having broken the door of His tomb, rose again to the good Lord, His Father.

“And, from that time, all those who believed in Him go to heaven.

“The Lord God opens His arms, and says to them —

“‘Ye are welcome, because ye love the Prince, My Son. Wash, and then eat.’

“They bathe to the sound of beautiful music, and, all the time they are eating, they see almehs dancing, and they listen to tales that never end. They are dearer to the good Lord God than the light of His eyes, because they are His guests, and they shall have for their portion the carpets of His house, and the pomegranates of His gardens.”

Ahmes often spoke in this strain, and thus taught the truth to Thais. She wondered, and said —

“I should like to eat the pomegranates of the good Lord.”

Ahmes replied —

“Only those who are baptised may taste the fruits of heaven.”

And Thais asked to be baptised. Seeing by this that she believed in Jesus, the slave resolved to instruct her more fully, so that, being baptised, she might enter the Church; and he loved her as his spiritual daughter.

The child, unloved and uncared for by its selfish parents, had no bed in the house. She slept in a corner of the stable amongst the domestic animals, and there Ahmes came to her every night secretly.

He gently approached the mat on which she lay, and sat down on his heels, his legs bent and his body straight — a position hereditary to his race. His face and his body, which was clothed in black, were invisible in the darkness; but his big white eyes shone out, and there came from them a light like a ray of dawn through the chinks of a door. He spoke in a husky, monotonous tone, with a slight nasal twang that gave it the soft melody of music heard at night in the streets. Sometimes the breathing of an ass, or the soft lowing of an ox, accompanied, like a chorus of invisible spirits, the voice of the slave as he recited the gospels. His words flowed gently in the darkness, which they filled with zeal, mercy, and hope; and the neophyte, her hand in that of Ahmes, lulled by the monotonous sounds, and the vague visions in her mind, slept calm and smiling, amid the harmonies of the dark night and the holy mysteries, gazed down on by a star, which twinkled between the joists of the stable-roof.

The initiation lasted a whole year, till the time when the Christians joyfully celebrate the festival of Easter. One night in the holy week, Thais, who was already asleep on her mat, felt herself lifted by the slave, whose eyes gleamed with a strange light. He was clad, not as usual in a pair of torn drawers, but in a long white cloak, beneath which he pressed the child, whispering to her —

“Come, my soul! Come, light of my eyes! Come, little sweetheart! Come and be clad in the baptismal robes!”

He carried the child pressed to his breast. Frightened and yet curious, Thais, her head out of the cloak, threw her arms round her friend’s neck, and he ran with her through the darkness. They went down narrow, black alleys; they passed through the Jews’ quarter; they skirted a cemetery, where the osprey uttered its dismal cry; they traversed an open space, passing under crosses on which hung the bodies of victims, and on the arms of the crosses the ravens clacked their beaks. Thais hid her head in the slave’s breast. She did not dare to peep out all the rest of the way. Soon it seemed to her that she was going down

under ground. When she reopened her eyes she found herself in a narrow cave, lighted by resin torches, on the walls of which were painted standing figures, which seemed to move and live in the flickering glare of the torches. They were men clad in long tunics and carrying branches of palm, and around them were lambs, doves, and tendrils of vine.

Amongst these figures, Thais recognised Jesus of Nazareth, by the anemones flowering at his feet. In the centre of the cave, near a large stone font filled with water, stood an old man clad in a scarlet dalmatic embroidered with gold, and on his head a low mitre. His thin face ended in a long beard. He looked gentle and humble, in spite of his rich costume. This was Bishop Vivantius, an exiled dignitary of the Church of Cyrene, who now gained his livelihood by weaving common stuffs of goats' hair. Two poor children stood by his side. Close by, an old negress unfolded a little white robe. Ahmes set the child down on the ground, and kneeling before the Bishop, said —

“Father, this is the little soul, the child of my soul. I have brought her that you may, according to your promise, and if it please your holiness, bestow on her the baptism of life.”

At these words the Bishop opened his arms, and showed his mutilated hands. His nails had been torn out because he had maintained the faith in the days of persecution. Thais was frightened, and threw herself into the arms of Ahmes. But the kind words of the priest reassured her.

“Fear nothing, dearly beloved little one. Thou hast here a spiritual father, Ahmes, who is called Theodore amongst the faithful, and a kind mother in grace, who has prepared for thee, with her own hands, a white robe.”

And turning towards the negress —

“She is called Nitida,” he added, “and is a slave in this world, but in heaven she will be a spouse of Jesus.”

Then he said to the child neophyte —

“Thais, dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty; and in His only Son, who died for our salvation; and in all that the apostles taught?”

“Yes,” replied together the negro and negress, who held her by each hand.

By the Bishop's orders, Nitida knelt down and undressed Thais. The child was quite naked; round her neck was an amulet. The Pontiff plunged her three times into the baptismal font. The acolytes brought the oil, with which Vivantius anointed the catechumen, and the salt, a morsel of which he placed on her tongue. Then, having dried that body which was destined, after many trials, to life immortal, the slave Nitida put on Thais the white robe she had woven.

The Bishop gave to each and all the kiss of peace, and, the ceremony being terminated, took off his sacerdotal insignia.

When they had left the crypt, Ahmes said —

“We ought to rejoice that we have this day brought a soul to the good Lord God; let us go to the house of your Holiness and spend the rest of the night in rejoicing.”

“Thou hast well said, Theodore,” replied the Bishop, and he led the little band to his house, which was quite near. It consisted of a single room, furnished with a couple of looms, a heavy table, and a worn-out carpet. As soon as they had entered,

“Nitida,” cried the Nubian, “bring hither the stove and the jar of oil, and we will have a good supper.”

Saying thus, he drew from under his cloak some little fish which he had kept concealed, and lighted a fire and fried them. The Bishop, the girl, the two boys, and the two slaves sat in a ring on the carpet, ate the fried fish, and blessed the Lord. Vivantius spoke of the torture he had undergone, and prophesied the speedy triumph of the Church. His language was grotesque, and full of word-play and rhetorical tropes. He compared the life of the just to a tissue of purple, and to explain the mystery of baptism, he said —

“The Divine Spirit floated on the waters, and that is why Christians receive the baptism of water. But demons also inhabit the brooks; springs consecrated to nymphs are especially dangerous, and there are certain waters which cause various maladies, both of the soul and of the body.”

Sometimes he spoke enigmatically, and the child listened to him with profound awe and wonder. At the end of the repast he offered his guests a little wine, and this unloosed their tongues, and they began to sing lamentations and hymns. Ahmes and Nitida then rose, and danced a Nubian dance which they had learned as children, and which, no doubt, had been danced by their tribe since the early ages of the world. It was a love dance; waving their arms, and moving their bodies in rhythmic measure, they feigned, in turn, to fly from and to pursue each other. Their big eyes rolled, and they showed their gleaming teeth in broad grins.

In this strange manner did Thais receive the holy rite of baptism.

She loved amusements, and, as she grew, vague desires were created in her mind. All day long she danced and sang with the children in the streets, and when at night she returned to her father’s house, she was still singing —

“Crooked twist, why do you stay in the house? I comb the wool, and the Miletan threads. Crooked twist, what did your son die of? He fell from the white horses into the sea.”

She now began to prefer the company of boys and girls to that of the gentle and quiet Ahmes. She did not notice that her friend was not so often with her.

The persecution having relented, the Christians were able to assemble more regularly, and the Nubian frequented these meetings assiduously. His zeal increased, and he sometimes uttered mysterious threats. He said that the rich would not keep their wealth. He went to the public places to which the poorer Christians used to resort, and assembling together all the poor wretches who were lying in the shade of the old walls, he announced to them that all slaves would soon be free, and that the day of justice was at hand.

“In the kingdom of God,” he said, “the slaves will drink new wine and eat delicious fruits; whilst the rich, crouching at their feet like dogs, will devour the crumbs from their table.”

These sayings were noised abroad through all that quarter of the city, and the masters feared that Ahmes might incite the slaves to revolt. The innkeeper hated him intensely, though he carefully concealed his rancour.

One day, a silver salt-cellar, reserved for the table of the gods, disappeared from the inn. Ahmes was accused of having stolen it — out of hate to his master and to the gods of the empire. There was no proof of the accusation, and the slave vehemently denied the charge. Nevertheless, he was dragged before the tribunal, and as he had the reputation of being a bad servant, the judge condemned him to death.

“As you did not know how to make a good use of your hands,” he said, “they will be nailed to the cross.”

Ahmes heard the verdict quietly, bowed to the judge most respectfully, and was taken to the public prison. During the three days that remained to him, he did not cease to preach the gospel to the prisoners, and it was related afterwards that the criminals, and the gaoler himself, touched by his words, believed in Jesus crucified.

He was taken to the very place which one night, less than two years before, he had crossed so joyfully, carrying in his cloak little Thais, the daughter of his soul, his darling flower. When his hands were nailed to the cross, he uttered no complaint, but many times he sighed and murmured, “I thirst.”

His agony lasted three days and three nights. It seemed hardly possible that human flesh could have endured such prolonged torture. Many times it was thought he was dead; the flies clustered on his eyelids, but suddenly he would reopen his bloodshot eyes. On the morning of the fourth day, he sang, in a voice clearer and purer than that of a child —

“Tell us, Mary, what thou hast seen where thou hast been?”

Then he smiled and said —

“They come, the angels of the good Lord. They bring me wine and fruit. How refreshing is the fanning of their wings!”

And he expired.

His features preserved in death an expression of ecstatic happiness. Even the soldiers who guarded the cross were struck with wonder. Vivantius, accompanied by some of the Christian brethren, claimed the body, and buried it with the remains of the other martyrs in the crypt of St. John the Baptist, and the Church venerated the memory of Saint Theodore the Nubian.

Three years later, Constantine, the conquerer of Maxentius, issued an edict which granted toleration to the Christians, and the believers were not henceforth persecuted, except by heretics.

Thais had completed her eleventh year when her friend was tortured to death, and she felt deeply saddened and shocked. Her soul was not sufficiently pure to allow her to understand that the slave Ahmes was blessed both in his life and his death. The idea sprang up in her little mind that no one can be good in this world except at the cost of the most terrible sufferings. And she was afraid to be good, for her delicate flesh could not bear pain.

At an early age, she had given herself to the lads about the port, and she followed the old men who wandered about the quarter in the evening, and with what she received from them she bought cakes and trinkets.

As she did not take home any of the money she gained, her mother continually ill-treated her. To get out of reach of her mother's arm, she often ran, bare-footed, to the city walls, and hid with the lizards. There she thought with envy of the ladies she had seen pass her, richly dressed, and in a litter surrounded by slaves.

One day, when she had been beaten more brutally than usual, she was crouching down beside the gate, motionless and sulky, when an old woman stopped in front of her, looked at her for some moments in silence, and then cried —

“Oh, the pretty flower! the beautiful child! Happy is the father who begot thee, and the mother who brought thee into the world!”

Thais remained silent, with her eyes fixed on the ground. Her eyelids were red, and it was evident she had been weeping.

“My white violet,” continued the old woman, “is not your mother happy to have nourished a little goddess like you, and does not your father, when he sees you, rejoice from the bottom of his heart?”

To which the child replied, as though talking to herself —

“My father is a wine-skin swollen with wine, and my mother a greedy horse-leech.”

The old woman glanced to right and left, to see if she were observed. Then, in a fawning voice —

“Sweet flowering hyacinth, beautiful drinker of light, come with me, and you shall have nothing to do but dance and smile. I will feed you on honey cakes, and my son — my own son — will love you as his eyes. My son is handsome and young; he has but little beard on his chin; his skin is soft, and he is, as they say, a little Acharnian pig.”

Thais replied —

“I am quite willing to go with you.”

And she rose and followed the old woman out of the city.

The old woman, who was named Moeroe, went from city to city with a troupe of girls and boys, whom she taught to dance, and then hired out to rich people to appear at feasts.

Guessing that Thais would soon develop into a most beautiful woman, she taught her — with the help of a whip — music and prosody, and she flogged with leather thongs those beautiful legs, when they did not move in time to the strains of the cithara. Her son — a decrepit abortion, of no age and no sex — ill-treated the child, on whom he vented the hate he had for all womankind. Like the dancing-girls whose grace he affected, he knew, and taught Thais, the art of pantomime, and how to mimic, by expression, gesture, and attitude, all human passions, and more especially the passions of love. He was a clever master, though he disliked his work; but he was jealous of his pupil, and as soon as he discovered that she was born to give men pleasure, he scratched her cheeks, pinched her arms, or pricked her legs, as a spiteful girl would have done. Thanks, however, to his lessons, she quickly became an excellent musician, pantomimist, and dancer. The brutality of her master did not at all surprise her; it seemed natural to her to be badly treated. She even felt some respect for the old woman, who knew music and drank Greek wine. Moeroe, when she came to Antioch, praised her pupil to the rich merchants of the city who gave banquets, both as a dancer and a flute-player. Thais danced and pleased. She accompanied the rich bankers, when they left the table, into the shady groves on the banks of the Orontes. She gave herself to all, for she knew nothing of the price of love. But one night that she had danced before the most fashionable young men of the city, the son of the pro-consul came to her, radiant with youth and pleasure, and said, in a voice that seemed redolent of kisses —

“Why am I not, Thais, the wreath which crowns your hair, the tunic which enfolds your beautiful form, the sandal on your pretty foot? I wish you to tread me under foot as a sandal; I wish my caresses to be your tunic and your wreath. Come, sweet girl! come to my house, and let us forget the world.”

She looked at him whilst he was speaking, and saw that he was handsome. Suddenly she felt a cold sweat on her face. She turned green as grass; she reeled;

a cloud descended before her eyes. He again implored her to come with him, but she refused. His ardent looks, his burning words were vain, and when he took her in his arms to try and drag her away, she pushed him off rudely. Then he implored her, and shed tears. But a new, unknown, and invincible passion dominated her heart, and she still resisted.

“What madness!” said the guests. “Lollius is noble, handsome, and rich, and a dancing-girl treats him with scorn!”

Lollius returned home alone that night, quite love-sick. He came in the morning, pale and red-eyed, and hung flowers at the dancing-girl’s door.

But Thais was frightened and troubled; she avoided Lollius, and yet he was continually in her mind. She suffered, and she did not know the cause of her complaint. She wondered why she had thus changed, and why she was melancholy. She recoiled from all her lovers; they were hateful to her. She loathed the light of day, and lay on her bed all day, sobbing, and with her head buried in the pillows. Lollius contrived to gain admittance, and came many times, but neither his pleadings nor his execrations had any effect on the obdurate girl. In his presence, she was as timid as a virgin, and would say nothing but —

“I will not! I will not!”

But at the end of a fortnight she gave in, for she knew that she loved him; she went to his house and lived with him. They were supremely happy. They passed their days shut up together, gazing into each other’s eyes, and babbling a childish jargon. In the evening, they walked on the lonely banks of the Orontes, and lost themselves in the laurel woods. Sometimes they rose at dawn, to go and gather hyacinths on the slopes of Sulpicus. They drank from the same cup, and he would take a grape from between her lips with his mouth.

Moeroe came to Lollius, and cried and shrieked that Thais should be restored to her.

“She is my daughter,” she said, “my daughter, who has been torn from me. My perfumed flower — my own bowels — !”

Lollius gave her a large sum of money, and sent her away. But, as she came back to demand some more gold staters, the young man had her put in prison, and the magistrates having discovered that she was guilty of many crimes, she was condemned to death, and thrown to the wild beasts.

Thais loved Lollius with all the passion of her mind, and the bewilderment of innocence. She told him, and told him truly from the bottom of her heart —

“I have never loved any one but you.”

Lollius replied —

“You are not like any other woman.”

The spell lasted six months, but it broke at last. Thais suddenly felt that her heart was empty and lonely. Lollius no longer seemed the same to her. She thought —

“What can have thus changed me in an instant? How is it that he is now like any other man, and no longer like himself?”

She left him, not without a secret desire to find Lollius again in another, as she no longer found him in himself. She thought it would be less dull to live with someone she had never loved, than with one she had ceased to love. She appeared, in the company of rich debauchees, at those sacred feasts at which naked virgins danced in the temples, and troops of courtesans swam across the Orontes. She took part in all the pleasures of the fashionable and depraved city; and she assiduously frequented the theatres, at which clever mimes from all countries performed amidst the applause of a crowd greedy for excitement.

She carefully observed the mimes, dancers, comedians, and especially the women, who in tragedies represented goddesses in love with young men, or mortals loved by the gods. Having discovered the secrets by which they pleased the audience, she thought to herself that she was more beautiful and could act better. She went to the manager, and asked to be admitted into the troupe. Thanks to her beauty, and to the lessons she had received from old Moeroe, she was received, and appeared on the stage in the part of Dirce.

She met with but indifferent success, for she was inexperienced, and the admiration of the spectators had not been aroused by hearing her praises sung. But after she had played small parts for a few months, the power of her beauty burst forth with such effect that all the city was moved. All Antioch crowded to the theatre. The imperial magistrates and the chief citizens were compelled, by the force of public opinion, to show themselves there. The porters, sweepers, and dock labourers went without bread and garlic, that they might pay for their places. Poets composed epigrams in her honour. Bearded philosophers inveighed against her in the baths and gymnasia; when her litter passed, Christian priests turned away their heads. The threshold of her door was wreathed with flowers, and sprinkled with blood. She received so much money from her lovers that it was no longer counted, but measured by the medimnus, and all the treasure hoarded by miserly old men was poured out at her feet. But she was placid and unmoved. She rejoiced, with quiet pride, in the admiration of the public and the favour of the gods, and was so much loved that she loved herself.

After she had several years enjoyed the admiration and affection of the Antiochians, she was taken with a desire to revisit Alexandria, and show her glory in that city in which, as a child, she had wandered in want and shame, hungry and lean as a grasshopper in the middle of a dusty road. The golden city

joyfully welcomed her, and loaded her with fresh riches; when she appeared in the games it was a triumph. Countless admirers and lovers came to her. She received them with indifference, for she at last despaired of meeting another Lollius.

Amongst many others, she met the philosopher Nicias, who desired to possess her, although he professed to have no desires. In spite of his riches, he was intelligent and modest. But his delicate wit and beautiful sentiments failed to charm her. She did not love him and sometimes his refined irony even irritated her. His perpetual doubts hurt her, for he believed in nothing, and she believed in everything. She believed in divine providence, in the omnipotence of evil spirits, in spells, exorcisms, and eternal justice; she believed in Jesus Christ, and in the goddess of good of the Syrians; she believed also that bitches barked when black Hecate passed through the streets, and that a woman could inspire love by pouring a philtre into a cup wrapped in the bleeding skin of a sheep. She thirsted for the unknown; she called on nameless gods, and lived in perpetual expectation. The future frightened her, and yet she wished to know it. She surrounded herself with priests of Isis, Chaldean magi, pharmacopolists, and professors of the black arts, who invariably deceived her, though she never tired of being deceived. She feared death, and she saw it everywhere. When she yielded to pleasure, it seemed to her that an icy finger would suddenly touch her on the bare shoulder, and she turned pale, and cried with terror, in the arms which embraced her.

Nicias said to her —

“What does it matter, O my Thais, whether we descend to eternal night with white locks and hollow cheeks, or, whether this very day, now laughing to the vast sky, shall be our last? Let us enjoy life; we shall have greatly lived if we have greatly loved. There is no knowledge except that of the senses; to love is to understand. That which we do not know does not exist. What good is it to worry ourselves about nothing?”

She replied angrily —

“I despise men like you, who hope for nothing and fear nothing. I wish to know! I wish to know!”

In order to understand the secret of life, she set to work to read the books of the philosophers, but she did not understand them. The further the years of her childhood receded from her, the more anxious she was to recall them. She loved to traverse at night, in disguise, the alleys, squares, and places where she had grown up so miserably. She was sorry she had lost her parents, and especially that she had not been able to love them. When she met any Christian priest, she thought of her baptism, and felt troubled. One night, when enveloped in a long

cloak, and her fair hair hidden under a black hood, she was wandering, according to custom, about the suburbs of the city, she found herself — without knowing how she came there — before the poor little church of St. John the Baptist. They were singing inside the church, and a bright light glimmered through the chinks of the door. There was nothing strange in that, as, for the past twenty years, the Christians, protected by the conqueror of Maxentius, had publicly solemnised their festivals. But these hymns seemed more like an ardent appeal to the soul. As if she had been invited to the mysteries, she pushed the door open with her arm, and entered the building. She found a numerous assembly of women, children, and old men, on their knees before a tomb, which stood against the wall. The tomb was nothing but a stone coffer, roughly sculptured with vine tendrils and bunches of grapes; yet it had received great honours, and was covered with green palms and wreaths of red roses. All round, innumerable lights gleamed out of the heavy shadow, in which the smoke of Arabian gums seemed like the folds of angels' robes, and the paintings on the walls visions of Paradise. Priests, clad in white, were prostrate at the foot of the sarcophagus. The hymns they sang with the people expressed the delight of suffering, and mingled, in a triumphal mourning, so much joy with so much grief, that Thais, in listening to them, felt the pleasures of life and the terrors of death flowing, at the same time, through her re-awakened senses.

When they had finished singing, the believers rose, and walked in single file to the tomb, the side of which they kissed. They were common men, accustomed to work with their hands. They advanced with a heavy step, the eyes fixed, the jaw dropped, but they had an air of sincerity. They knelt down, each in turn, before the sarcophagus, and put their lips to it. The women lifted their little children in their arms, and gently placed their cheek to the stone.

Thais, surprised and troubled, asked a deacon why they did so.

“Do you not know, woman,” replied the deacon, “that we celebrate to-day the blessed memory of St. Theodore the Nubian, who suffered for the faith in the days of the Emperor Diocletian? He lived virtuously and died a martyr, and that is why, robed in white, we bear red roses to his glorious tomb.”

On hearing these words, Thais fell on her knees, and burst into tears. Half-forgotten recollections of Ahmes returned to her mind. On the memory of this obscure, gentle, and unfortunate man, the blaze of candles, the perfume of roses, the clouds of incense, the music of hymns, the piety of souls, threw all the charms of glory. Thais thought in the dazzling glare —

“He was good, and now he has become great and glorious. Why is it that he is elevated above other men? What is this unknown thing which is more than riches or pleasure?”

She rose slowly, and turned towards the tomb of the saint who had loved her, those violet eyes, now filled with tears which glittered in the candle-light; then, with bowed head, humble, slow, and the last, with those lips on which so many desires hung, she kissed the stone of the slave's tomb.

When she returned to her house, she found Nicias, who, with his hair perfumed, and his tunic thrown open, was reading a treatise on morals whilst waiting for her. He advanced with open arms.

"Naughty Thais," he said, in a laughing voice, "whilst I was waiting for you to come, do you know what I saw in this manuscript, written by the gravest of Stoics? Precepts of virtue and noble maxims: No! On the staid papyrus, I saw dance thousands and thousands of little Thaises. Each was no bigger than my finger, and yet their grace was infinite, and all were the only Thais. There were some who flaunted in mantles of purple and gold; others, like a white cloud, floated in the air in transparent drapery. Others again, motionless and divinely nude, the better to inspire pleasure, expressed no thought. Lastly, there were two, hand in hand; two so alike that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. Both smiled. The first said, 'I am love.' The other, 'I am death.'"

Thus speaking, he pressed Thais in his arms, and not noticing the sullen look in her downcast eyes, he went on adding thought to thought, heedless of the fact that they were all lost upon her.

"Yes, when I had before my eyes the line in which it was written, 'Nothing should deter you from improving your mind,' I read, 'The kisses of Thais are warmer than fire, and sweeter than honey.' That is how a philosopher reads the books of other philosophers — and that is your fault, you naughty child. It is true that, as long as we are what we are, we shall never find anything but our own thoughts in the thoughts of others, and that all of us are somewhat inclined to read books as I have read this one."

She did not hear him; her soul was still before the Nubian's tomb. As he heard her sigh, he kissed her on the neck, and said —

"Do not be sad, my child. We are never happy in this world, except when we forget the world.

"Come, let us cheat life — it is sure to take its revenge. Come, let us love!"

But she pushed him away.

"We love!" she cried bitterly. "*You* never loved any one. And *I* do not love *you* ! No! I do not love you! I hate you! Go! I hate you! I curse and despise all who are happy, and all who are rich! Go! Go! Goodness is only found amongst the unfortunate. When I was a child I knew a black slave who died on the cross. He was good; he was filled with love, and he knew the secret of life. You are not worthy to wash his feet. Go! I never wish to see you again!"

She threw herself on her face on the carpet, and passed the night sobbing and weeping, and forming resolutions to live, in future, like Saint Theodore, in poverty and humbleness.

The next day, she devoted herself again to those pleasures to which she was addicted. As she knew that her beauty, though still intact, would not last very long, she hastened to derive all the enjoyment and all the fame she could from it. At the theatre, where she acted and studied more than ever, she gave life to the imagination of sculptors, painters, and poets. Recognising that there was in the attitudes, movements, and walk of the actress, an idea of the divine harmony which rules the spheres, wise men and philosophers considered that such perfect grace was a virtue in itself, and said, "Thais also is a geometrician!" The ignorant, the poor, the humble, and the timid before whom she consented to appear, regarded her as a blessing from heaven. Yet she was sad amidst all the praise she received, and dreaded death more than ever. Nothing was able to set her mind at rest, not even her house and gardens, which were celebrated, and a proverb throughout the city.

The gardens were planted with trees, brought at great expense from India and Persia. They were watered by a running brook, and colonnades in ruins, and imitation rocks, arranged by a skilful artist, were reflected in a lake, which also mirrored the statues that stood round it. In the middle of the garden was the Grotto of Nymphs, which owed its name to three life-size figures of women, which stood on the threshold. They were represented as divesting themselves of their garments, and about to bathe. They anxiously turned their heads, fearing to be seen, and looked as though they were alive. The only light which entered the building came, tempered and iridescent, through thin sheets of water. All the walls were hung — as in the sacred grottoes — with wreaths, garlands, and votive pictures, in which the beauty of Thais was celebrated. There were also tragic and comic masks, bright with colours; and paintings representing theatrical scenes or grotesque figures, or fabulous animals. On a stele in the centre stood a little ivory Eros of wonderful antique workmanship. It was a gift from Nicias. In one of the bays was a figure of a goat in black marble, with shining agate eyes. Six alabaster kids crowded round its teats; but, raising its cloven hoofs and its ugly head, it seemed impatient to climb the rocks. The floor was covered with Byzantine carpets, pillows embroidered by the yellow men of Cathay, and the skins of Libyan lions. Perfumed smoke arose from golden censers. Flowering plants grew in large onyx vases. And at the far end, in the purple shadow, gleamed the gold nails on the shell of a huge Indian tortoise turned upside down, which served as the bed of the actress. It was here that every day, to the murmur of the water, and amid perfumes and flowers, Thais

reclined softly, and conversed with her friends, while awaiting the hour of supper, or meditated in solitude on theatrical art, or on the flight of years.

On the afternoon after the games, Thais was reposing in the Grotto of Nymphs. She had noticed in her mirror the first signs of the decay of her beauty, and she was frightened to think that white hair and wrinkles would at last come. She vainly tried to comfort herself with the assurance that she could recover her fresh complexion by burning certain herbs and pronouncing a few magic words. A pitiless voice cried, "You will grow old Thais; you will grow old." And a cold sweat of terror bedewed her forehead. Then, on looking at herself again in the mirror with infinite tenderness, she found that she was still beautiful and worthy to be loved. She smiled to herself, and murmured, "There is not a woman in Alexandria who can rival me in suppleness or grace or movement, or in splendour of arms, and the arms, my mirror, are the real chains of love!"

While she was thus thinking she saw an unknown man — thin, with burning eyes and unkempt beard, and clad in a richly embroidered robe — standing before her. She let fall her mirror, and uttered a cry of fright.

Paphnutius stood motionless, and seeing how beautiful she was, he murmured this prayer from the bottom of his heart —

"Grant, my God, that the face of this woman may not be a temptation, but may prove salutary to Thy servant."

Then, forcing himself to speak, he said —

"Thais, I live in a far country, and the fame of thy beauty has led me to thee. It is said that thou art the most clever of actresses and the most irresistible of women. That which is related of thy riches and thy love affairs seems fabulous, and calls to mind the old story of Rhodope, whose marvellous history is known by heart to all the boatmen on the Nile. Therefore I was seized with a desire to know thee, and I see that the truth surpasses the rumour. Thou art a thousand times more clever and more beautiful than is reported. And now that I see thee, I say to myself, 'It is impossible to approach her without staggering like a drunken man.'"

The words were feigned; but the monk, animated by pious zeal, uttered them with real warmth. Thais gazed, without displeasure, at this strange being who had frightened her. The rough, wild aspect, and the fiery glances of his eyes, astonished her. She was curious to learn the state of life of a man so different from all others she had met. She replied, with gentle raillery —

"You seem prompt to admire, stranger. Beware that my looks do not consume you to the bones! Beware of loving me!"

He said —

“I love thee, O Thais! I love thee more than my life, and more than myself. For thee I have quitted the desert; for thee my lips — vowed to silence — have pronounced profane words; for thee I have seen what I ought not to have seen, and heard what it was forbidden to me to hear; for thee my soul is troubled, my heart is open, and the thoughts gush out like the running springs at which the pigeons drink; for thee I have walked day and night across sandy deserts teeming with reptiles and vampires; for thee I have placed my bare foot on vipers and scorpions! Yes, I love thee! I love thee, but not like those men who, burning with the lusts of the flesh, come to thee like devouring wolves or furious bulls. Thou art dear to them as is the gazelle to the lion. Their ravening lusts will consume thee to the soul, O woman! I love thee in spirit and in truth; I love thee in God, and for ever and ever; that which is in my breast is named true zeal and divine charity. I promise thee better things than drunkenness crowned with flowers or the dreams of a brief night. I promise thee holy feasts and celestial suppers. The happiness that I bring thee will never end; it is unheard-of, it is ineffable, and such that if the happy of this world could only see a shadow of it they would die of wonder.”

Thais laughed mischievously.

“Friend,” she said, “show me this wonderful love. Make haste! Long speeches would be an insult to my beauty; let us not lose a moment. I am impatient to taste the felicity you announce; but, to say the truth, I fear that I shall always remain ignorant of it, and that all you have promised me will vanish in words. It is easier to promise a great happiness than to give it. Everyone has a talent of some sort. I fancy that yours is to make long speeches. You speak of an unknown love. It is so long since kisses were first exchanged that it would be very extraordinary if there still remained secrets in love. On this subject lovers know more than philosophers.”

“Do not jest, Thais. I bring thee the unknown love.”

“Friend, you come too late. I know every kind of love.”

“The love that I bring thee abounds with glory, whilst the loves that thou knowest breed only shame.”

Thais looked at him with an angry eye, a frown gathered on her beautiful face.

“You are very bold, stranger, to offend your hostess. Look at me, and say if I resemble a creature crushed down with shame. No, I am not ashamed, and all others who live like me are not ashamed either, although they are not so beautiful or so rich as I am. I have sown pleasure in my footsteps, and I am celebrated for that all over the world. I am more powerful than the masters of the world. I have seen them at my feet. Look at me, look at these little feet;

thousands of men would pay with their blood for the happiness of kissing them. I am not very big, and I do not occupy much space on the earth. To those who look at me from the top of the Serapeium, when I pass in the street, I look like a grain of rice; but that grain of rice has caused among men, griefs, despairs, hates, and crimes enough to have filled Tartarus. Are you not mad to talk to me of shame when all around proclaims my glory?"

"That which is glory in the eyes of men, is infamy before God. O woman, we have been nourished in countries so different, that it is not surprising we have neither the same language nor the same thoughts! Yet Heaven is my witness that I wish to agree with thee, and that it is my intention not to leave thee until we share the same sentiments. Who will inspire me with burning words that will melt thee like wax in my breath, O woman, that the fingers of my desires may mould thee as they wish? What virtue will deliver thee to me, O dearest of souls, that the spirit which animates me, creating thee a second time, may imprint on thee a fresh beauty, and that thou mayest cry, weeping for joy, 'It is only now that I am born'? Who will cause to gush in my heart a fount of Siloam, in which thou mayest bathe and recover thy first purity? Who will change me into a Jordan, the waves of which sprinkled on thee, will give thee life eternal?"

Thais was no longer angry.

"This man," she thought, "talks of life eternal and all that he says seems written on a talisman. No doubt he is a mage, and knows secret charms against old age and death," and she resolved to offer herself to him. Therefore, pretending to be afraid of him, she retired a few steps to the end of the grotto, and sitting down on the edge of the bed, artfully pulled her tunic across her breast; then, motionless and mute and her eyes cast down, she waited. Her long eyelashes made a soft shadow on her cheeks. Her entire attitude expressed modesty; her naked feet swung gently, and she looked like a child sitting thinking on the bank of a brook. But Paphnutius looked at her, and did not move. His trembling knees hardly supported him, his tongue dried in his mouth, a terrible buzzing rang in his ears. But all at once his sight failed, and he could see nothing before him but a thick cloud. He thought that the hand of Jesus had been laid on his eyes, to hide this woman from them. Reassured by such succour, strengthened and fortified, he said with a gravity worthy of an old hermit of the desert —

"If thou givest thyself to me, thinkest thou it is hidden from God?"

She shook her head.

"God? Who forces Him to keep His eye always upon the Grotto of Nymphs? Let Him go away if we offend Him! But why should we offend Him? Since He has created us, He can be neither angry nor surprised to see us as He made us,

and acting according to the nature He has given us. A good deal too much is said on His behalf, and He is often credited with ideas He never had. You yourself, stranger, do you know His true character? Who are you that you should speak to me in His name?"

At this question the monk, opening his borrowed robe, showed the cassock, and said —

"I am Paphnutius, Abbot of Antinoe, and I come from the holy desert. The hand that drew Abraham from Chaldaea and Lot from Sodom has separated me from the present age. I no longer existed for the men of this century. But thy image appeared to me in my sandy Jerusalem, and I knew that thou wert full of corruption, and death was in thee. And now I am before thee, woman, as before a grave, and I cry unto thee, 'Thais, arise!'"

At the words, Paphnutius, monk, and abbot, she had turned pale with fright. And now, with dishevelled hair and joined hands, weeping and groaning, she dragged herself to the feet of the saint.

"Do not hurt me! Why have you come? What do you want of me? Do not hurt me! I know that the saints of the desert hate women who, like me, are made to please. I am afraid that you hate me, and want to hurt me. Go! I do not doubt your power. But know, Paphnutius, that you should neither despise me nor hate me. I have never, like many of the men I know, laughed at your voluntary poverty. In your turn, do not make a crime of my riches. I am beautiful, and clever in acting. I no more chose my condition than my nature. I was made for that which I do. I was born to charm men. And you yourself, did you not say just now that you loved me? Do not use your science against me. Do not pronounce magic words which would destroy my beauty, or change me into a statue of salt. Do not terrify me! I am already too frightened. Do not kill me! I am so afraid of death."

He made a sign to her to rise, and said —

"Child, have no fear. I will utter no word of shame or scorn. I come on behalf of Him who sat on the edge of the well, and drank of the pitcher which the woman of Samaria offered to Him; and who, also, when He supped at the house of Simon, received the perfumes of Mary. I am not without sin that I should throw the first stone. I have often badly employed the abundant grace which God has bestowed upon me. It was not anger, but pity, which took me by the hand to conduct me here. I can, without deceit, address thee in words of love, for it is the zeal in my heart which has brought me to thee. I burn with the fire of charity, and if thy eyes, accustomed only to the gross sights of the flesh, could see things in their mystic aspect, I should appear unto thee as a branch broken off the burning bush which the Lord showed on the mountain to Moses of old, that he

might understand true love — that which envelops us, and which, so far from leaving behind it mere coals and ashes, purifies and perfumes for ever that which it penetrates.”

“I believe you, monk, and no longer fear either deceit or ill-will from you. I have often heard talk of the hermits of the Thebaid. Marvellous things have been told concerning Anthony and Paul. Your name is not unknown to me, and I have heard say that, though you are still young, you equal in virtue the oldest anchorites. As soon as I saw you, and without knowing who you were, I felt that you were no ordinary man. Tell me! can you do for me that which neither the priests of Isis, nor of Hermes, nor of the celestial Juno, nor the Chaldean soothsayers, nor the Babylonian magi have been able to effect? Monk, if you love me, can you prevent me from dying?”

“Woman, whosoever wishes to live shall live. Flee from the abominable delights in which thou diest for ever. Snatch from the devils, who will burn it most horribly, that body which God kneaded with His spittle and animated with his own breath. Thou art consumed with weariness; come, and refresh thyself at the blessed springs of solitude; come and drink of those fountains which are hidden in the desert, and which gush forth to heaven. Careworn soul, come, and possess that which thou desirest! Heart greedy for joy, come and taste true joys — poverty, retirement, self-forgetfulness, seclusion in the bosom of God. Enemy of Christ now, and to-morrow His well-beloved, come to Him! Come, thou whom I have sought, and thou wilt say, ‘I have found love!’”

Thais seemed lost in meditation on things afar.

“Monk,” she asked, “if I adjure all pleasures and do penance, is it true that I shall be born again in heaven, my body intact in all its beauty?”

“Thais, I bring thee eternal life. Believe me, for that which I announce to thee is the truth.”

“Who will assure me that it is the truth?”

“David and the prophets, the Scriptures, and the wonders that thou shalt behold.”

“Monk, I should like to believe you, for I must confess that I have not found happiness in this world. My lot in life is better than that of a queen, and yet I have many bitternesses and misfortunes, and I am infinitely weary of my existence. All women envy me, and yet sometimes I have envied the lot of a toothless old woman who, when I was a child, sold honey-cakes under one of the city gates. Often has the idea flashed across my mind that only the poor are good, happy, and blessed, and that there must be great gladness in living humble and obscure. Monk, you have agitated a storm in my soul, and brought to the

surface that which lay at the bottom. Who am I to believe, alas! and what is to become of me — and what is life?”

Whilst she thus spoke, Paphnutius was transfigured; celestial joy beamed in his face.

“Listen!” he said. “I was not alone when I entered this house. Another accompanied me, another who stands by my side. Him thou canst not see, because thy eyes are yet unworthy to behold Him; but soon thou shalt see Him in all His glorious splendour, and thou wilt say, ‘He alone is to be adored.’ But now, if He had not placed His gentle hands before my eyes, O Thais, I should perhaps have fallen into sin with thee, for of myself I am but weak and sinful. But He saved us both. He is as good as He is powerful, and His name is the Saviour. He was promised to the world, by David and the prophets, worshipped in His cradle by the shepherds and the magi, crucified by the Pharisees, buried by the holy women, revealed to the world by the apostles, testified to by the martyrs. And now, having learned that thou fearest death, O woman, He has come to thy house to prevent thee from dying. Art Thou not here present with me, Jesus, at this moment, as Thou didst appear to the men of Galilee, in those wonderful days when the stars, which came down with thee from heaven, were so near the earth that the holy innocents could take them in their hands, when they played in their mothers’ arms on the terraces of Bethlehem? Is it not true, Jesus, that Thou art here present, and that Thou showest me in reality Thy precious body? Is not Thy face here, and that tear which flows down Thy cheek a real tear? Yes, the angel of eternal justice shall receive it, and it shall be the ransom of the soul of Thais. Art Thou not here, Jesus? Jesus, Thy loving lips open. Thou canst speak; speak, I hear Thee! And thee, Thais, happy Thais! listen to what the Saviour Himself says to thee; it is He who speaks, not I. He says, ‘I have sought thee long, O My lost sheep! I have found thee at last! Fly from Me no more. Let Me take thee by the hands, poor little one, and I will bear thee on My shoulders to the heavenly fold. Come, My Thais! come, My chosen one! come, and weep with Me!’”

And Paphnutius fell on his knees, his eyes filled with ecstasy. And then Thais saw in his face the likeness of the living Christ.

“O vanished days of my childhood!” she sobbed. “O sweet father Ahmes! good Saint Theodore, why did I not die in thy white mantle whilst thou didst bear me, in the first dawn of day, yet fresh from the waters of baptism!”

Paphnutius advanced towards her, crying —

“Thou art baptised! O divine wisdom! O Providence! O great God! I know now the power which drew me to thee. I know what rendered thee so dear and so beautiful in my eyes. It was the virtue of the baptismal water, which made me

leave the shadow of God, where I lived, to seek thee in the poisoned air where men dwell. A drop — a drop, no doubt, of the water which washed thy body — has been sprinkled in my face. Come, O my sister, and receive from thy brother the kiss of peace.”

And the monk touched with his lips the forehead of the courtesan.

Then he was silent, letting God speak, and nothing was heard in the Grotto of Nymphs but the sobs of Thais, mingled with the rippling of the running water.

She wept without trying to stop her tears, when two black slaves appeared, loaded with stuffs, perfumes, and garlands.

“It was hardly the right time to weep,” she said, trying to smile. “Tears redden the eyes and spoil the complexion, and I must sup tonight with some friends, and want to be beautiful, for there will be women there quick to spy out marks of care on my face. These slaves come to dress me. Withdraw, my father, and allow them to do their work. They are clever and experienced, and I pay them well for their services. You see that one who wears thick rings of gold, and shows such white teeth. I took her from the wife of the pro-consul.”

Paphnutius had at first a thought of dissuading Thais, as earnestly as he could, from going to this supper. But he determined to act prudently, and asked what persons she would meet there.

She replied that there would be the host, old Cotta, the Prefect of the Fleet, Nicias, and several other philosophers who loved an argument, the poet Callicrates, the high priest of Serapis, some young men whose chief amusement was training horses, and lastly some women, of whom there was little to be said except that they were young. Then, by a supernatural inspiration —

“Go amongst them, Thais,” said the monk. “Go! But I will not leave thee. I will go with thee to this banquet, and will remain by thy side without saying a word.”

She burst out laughing. And whilst her two black slaves were busy dressing her, she cried —

“What will they say when they see that I have a monk of the Thebaid for my lover?”

THE BANQUET

When, followed by Paphnutius, Thais entered the banqueting-room, the guests were already, for the most part, assembled, and reclining on their couches before the horseshoe table, which was covered with glittering vessels. In the centre of the table stood a silver basin, surmounted by four figures of satyrs, who poured out from wine-skins on the boiled fish a kind of pickle in which they floated. When Thais appeared, acclamations arose from all sides.

Greetings to the sister of the Graces!

To the silent Melpomene, who can express all things with her looks!

Salutation to the well-beloved of gods and men!

To the much desired!

To her who gives suffering and its cure!

To the pearl of Racotis!

To the rose of Alexandria!

She waited impatiently till this torrent of praise had passed, and then said to Cotta, the host —

“Lucius, I have brought you a monk of the desert, Paphnutius, the Abbot of Antinoe. He is a great saint, whose words burn like fire.”

Lucius Aurelius Cotta, the Prefect of the Fleet, rose, and replied —

“You are welcome, Paphnutius, you who profess the Christian faith. I myself have some respect of a religion that has now become imperial. The divine Constantine has placed your co-religionists in the front rank of the friends of the empire. Latin wisdom ought, in fact, to admit your Christ into our pantheon. It was a maxim of our forefathers that there was something divine in every god. But no more of that. Let us drink and enjoy ourselves while there is yet time.”

Old Cotta spoke tranquilly. He had just studied a new model for a galley, and had finished the sixth book of his history of the Carthaginians. He felt sure he had not lost his day, and was satisfied with himself and the gods.

“Paphnutius,” he added, “you see here several men who are worthy to be loved — Hermodorus, the High Priest of Serapis; the philosophers Dorion, Nicias, and Zenothemis; the poet Callicrates; young Chereas and young Aristobulus, both sons of dear old comrades; and near them Philina and Drosea, who deserve to be praised for their beauty.”

Nicias embraced Paphnutius, and whispered in his ear —

“I warned you, brother, that Venus was powerful. It is her gentle force that has brought you here in spite of yourself. Listen: you are a man full of piety, but

if you do not confess that she is the mother of the gods, your ruin is certain. Do you know that the old mathematician, Melanthes, used to say, 'I cannot demonstrate the properties of a triangle without the aid of Venus'?"

Dorion, who had for some seconds been looking at the new-comer, suddenly clapped his hands and uttered a cry of surprise.

"It is he, friends! His look, his beard, his tunic — it is he himself! I met him at the theatre whilst our Thais was acting. He was furiously excited, and spoke with violence, as I can testify. He is an honest man, but he will abuse us all; his eloquence is terrible. If Marcus is the Plato of the Christians, Paphnutius is the Demosthenes. Epicurus, in his little garden, never heard the like."

Philina and Drosea, however, devoured Thais with their eyes. She wore on her fair hair a wreath of pale violets, each flower of which recalled, in a paler hue, the colour of her eyes, so that the flowers looked like softened glances, and the eyes like sparkling flowers. It was the peculiar gift of this woman; on her everything lived, and was soul and harmony. Her robe, which was of mauve spangled with silver, trailed in long folds with a grace that was almost melancholy and was not relieved by either bracelets or necklaces. The chief charm of her appearance was her beautiful bare arms. The two friends were obliged to admire, in spite of themselves the robe and head-dress of Thais, though they said nothing to her on the subject.

"How beautiful you are!" said Philina. "You could not have been more so when you came to Alexandria. Yet my mother, who remembers seeing you then, says there were few women who were worthy to be compared with you."

"Who is the new lover you have brought?" asked Drosea. "He has a strange, wild appearance. If there are shepherds of elephants, assuredly he must resemble one. Where did you find such a wild-looking friend, Thais? Was it amongst the troglodytes who live under the earth, and are grimy with the smoke of Hades?"

But Philina put her finger on Drosea's lips.

"Hush! the mysteries of love must remain secret, and it is forbidden to know them. For my own part, certainly, I would rather be kissed by the mouth of smoking Etna than by the lips of that man. But our dear Thais, who is beautiful and adorable as the goddesses, should, like the goddesses, grant all requests, and not, like us, only those of nice young men."

"Take care, both of you!" replied Thais. "He is a mage and an enchanter. He hears words that are whispered, and even thoughts. He will tear out your heart while you are asleep, and put a sponge in its place, and the next day, when you drink water, you will be choked to death."

She watched them grow pale, then she turned away from them, and sat on a couch by the side of Paphnutius. The voice of Cotta, kind but imperious, was

suddenly heard above the murmur of conversation.

“Friends, let each take his place! Slaves, pour out the honeyed wine!”

Then, the host raising his cup —

“Let us first drink to the divine Constantine and the genius of the empire. The country should be put first of all, even above the gods, for it contains them all.”

All the guests raised their full cups to their lips. Paphnutius alone did not drink, because Constantine had persecuted the Nicæan faith, and because the country of the Christian is not of this world.

Dorion, having drunk, murmured —

“What is one’s country? A flowing river. The shores change, and the waves are incessantly renewed.”

“I know, Dorion,” replied the Prefect of the Fleet, “that you care little for the civic virtues, and you think that the sage ought to hold himself aloof from all affairs. I think, on the contrary, that an honest man should desire nothing better than to fill a responsible post in the State. The State is a noble thing.”

Hermodorus, the High Priest of Serapis, spoke next —

“Dorion has asked, ‘What is one’s country?’ I will reply that the altars of the gods and the tombs of ancestors make one’s country. A man is a fellow-citizen by association of memories and hopes.”

Young Aristobulus interrupted Hermodorus.

“By Castor! I saw a splendid horse to-day. It belonged to Demophoon. It has a fine head, small jaw, and strong forelegs. It carries its neck high and proud, like a cock.”

But young Chereas shook his head.

“It is not such a good horse as you say, Aristobulus. Its hoofs are thin, and the pasterns are too low; the animal will soon go lame.”

They were continuing their dispute, when Drosea uttered a piercing shriek.

“Oh! I nearly swallowed a fish-bone, as long and much sharper than a style. Luckily, I was able to get it out of my throat in time! The gods love me!”

“Did you say, Drosea, that the gods loved you?” asked Nicias, smiling. “Then they must share the same infirmities as men. Love presupposes unhappiness on the part of whoever suffers from it, and is a proof of weakness. The affection they feel for Drosea is a great proof of the imperfection of the gods.”

At these words Drosea flew into a great rage.

“Nicias, your remarks are foolish and not to the point. But that is your character — you never understand what is said, and reply in words devoid of sense.”

Nicias smiled again.

“Talk away, talk away, Drosea. Whatever you say, we are glad every time you open your mouth. Your teeth are so pretty!”

At that moment, a grave-looking old man, negligently dressed, walking slowly, with his head high, entered the room, and gazed at the guests quietly. Cotta made a sign to him to take a place by his side, on the same couch.

“Eucrites,” he said, “you are welcome. Have you composed a new treatise on philosophy this month? That would make, if I calculate correctly, the ninety-second that has proceeded from the Nile reed you direct with an Attic hand.”

Eucrites replied, stroking his silver beard —

“The nightingale was created to sing, and I was created to praise the immortal gods.”

DORION. Let us respectfully salute, in Eucrites, the last of the stoics. Grave and white, he stands in the midst of us like the image of an ancestor. He is solitary amidst a crowd of men, and the words he utters are not heard.

EUCRITES. You deceive yourself, Dorion. The philosophy of virtue is not dead. I have numerous disciples in Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Many of the slaves, and some of the nephews of Caesar, now know how to govern themselves, to live independently, and being unconcerned with all affairs, they enjoy boundless happiness. Many of them have revived, in their own person, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. But if it were true that virtue were for ever extinguished upon the earth, in what way would the loss of it affect my happiness, since it did not depend on me whether it existed or perished? Only fools, Dorion, place their happiness out of their own power. I desire nothing that the gods do not wish, and I desire all that they do wish. By that means I render myself like unto them, and share their infallible content. If virtue perishes, I consent that it should perish, and that consent fills me with joy, as the supreme effort of my reason or my courage. In all things my wisdom will copy the divine wisdom, and the copy will be more valuable than the model; it will have cost greater care and more work.

NICIAS. I understand. You put yourself on the same level as divine providence. But if virtue consists only in effort, Eucrites, and in that intense application by which the disciples of Zeno pretend to render themselves equal to the gods, the frog, which swelled itself out to try and become as big as the ox, accomplished a masterpiece of stoicism.

EUCRITES. You jest, Nicias, and, as usual, you excel in ridicule. But if the ox of which you speak is really a god, like Apis, or like that subterranean ox whose high priest I see here, and if the frog, being wisely inspired, succeed in equalling it, would it not be, in fact, more virtuous than the ox, and could you refrain from admiring such a courageous little animal!

Four servants placed on the table a wild pig, still covered with its bristles. Little pigs, made of pastry, surrounded the animal, as though they would suckle, to show that it was a sow.

Zenothemis, turning towards the monk, said —

“Friends, a guest has come hither to join us. The illustrious Paphnutius, who leads such an extraordinary life of solitude, is our unexpected guest.”

COTTA. You may even add, Zenothemis, that the place of honour is due to him, because he came without being invited.

ZENOTHEMIS. Therefore, we ought, my dear Lucius, to make him the more welcome, and strive to do that which would be most agreeable to him. Now it is certain that such a man cares less for the perfumes of meat than for the perfumes of fine thoughts. We shall, doubtless, please him by discussing the doctrine he professes, which is that of Jesus crucified. For my own part, I shall the more willingly discuss this doctrine, because it keenly interests me, on account of the number and the diversity of the allegories it contains. If one may guess at the spirit by the letter, it is filled with truths, and I consider that the Christian books abound in divine revelations. But I should not, Paphnutius, grant equal merit to the Jewish books. They were inspired not, as it was said, by the Spirit of God, but by an evil genius. Iaveh, who dictated them, was one of those spirits who people the lower air, and cause the greater part of the evils, from which we suffer; but he surpassed all the others in ignorance and ferocity. On the contrary, the serpent with golden wings, which twined its azure coils round the tree of knowledge, was made up of light and love. A combat between these two powers — the one of light and the other of darkness — was, therefore, inevitable. It occurred soon after the creation of the world. God had hardly begun to rest after His labors; Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, lived happy and naked in the Garden of Eden, when Iaveh conceived — to their misfortune — the design of governing them and all the generations which Eve already bore in her splendid loins. As he possessed neither the compass nor the lyre, and was equally ignorant of the science which commands and the art which persuades, he frightened these two poor children by hideous apparitions, capricious threats, and thunderbolts. Adam and Eve, feeling his shadow upon them, pressed closer to one another, and their love waxed stronger in fear. The serpent took pity on them, and determined to instruct them, in order that, possessing knowledge, they might no longer be misled by lies. Such an undertaking required extreme prudence, and the frailty of the first human couple rendered it almost hopeless. The well-intentioned demon essayed it, however. Without the knowledge of Iaveh — who pretended to see everything, but, in reality, was not very sharp-sighted — he approached these two beings, and charmed their eyes by the

splendour of his coat and the brilliancy of his wings. Then he interested their minds by forming before them, with his body, definite figures, such as the circle, the ellipse, and the spiral, the wonderful properties of which have since been recognised by the Greeks. Adam meditated on these figures more than Eve did. But when the serpent began to speak, and taught the most sublime truths — those which cannot be demonstrated — he found that Adam being made of red earth, was of too dull a nature to understand these subtle distinctions, but that Eve, on the contrary, being more tender and more sensitive, was easily impressed. Therefore he conversed with her alone, in the absence of her husband, in order to initiate her first —

DORION. Permit me, Zenothemis, to interrupt you. I speedily recognised in the myth you have explained to us an episode in the war of Pallas Athene against the giants. Iaveh much resembles Typhoon, and Pallas is represented by the Athenians with a serpent at her side. But what you have said causes me considerable doubt as to the intelligence or good faith of the serpent of whom you have spoken. If he had really possessed knowledge, would he have entrusted it to a woman's little head, which was incapable of containing it? I should rather consider that he was like Iaveh, ignorant and a liar, and that he chose Eve because she was easily seduced, and he imagined that Adam would have more intelligence and perception.

ZENOTHEMIS. Learn, Dorion, that it is not by perception and intelligence, but by sensibility, that the highest and purest truths are reached. That is why women, who, generally, are less reflective but more sensitive than men, rise more easily to the knowledge of things divine. In them is the gift of prophecy, and it is not without reason that Apollo Citharedes, and Jesus of Nazareth, are sometimes represented clad, like women, in flowing robes. The initiator was therefore wise — whatever you may say to the contrary, Dorion — in bestowing light, not on the duller Adam, but on Eve, who was whiter than milk or the stars. She freely listened to him, and allowed herself to be led to the tree of knowledge, the branches of which rose to heaven, and which was bathed with the divine spirit as with a dew. This tree was covered with leaves which spoke all the languages of future races of men, and their united voices formed a perfect harmony. Its abundant fruit gave to the initiated who tasted it the knowledge of metals, stones, and plants, and also of physical and moral laws; but this fruit was like fire, and those who feared suffering and death did not dare to put it to their lips. Now, as she had listened attentively to the lessons of the serpent, Eve despised these empty terrors, and wished to taste the fruit which gave the knowledge of God. But, as she loved Adam, and did not wish him to be inferior to her, she took him by the hand and led him to the wonderful tree. Then she

picked one of the burning apples, bit it, and proffered it to her companion. Unfortunately, Iaveh, who was by chance walking in the garden, surprised them, and seeing that they had become wise, he fell into a most ungovernable rage. It is in his jealous fits that he is most to be feared. Assembling all his forces, he created such a turmoil in the lower air that these two weak beings were terrified. The fruit fell from the man's hand, and the woman, clinging to the neck of her luckless husband, said, "I too will be ignorant and suffer with him." The triumphant Iaveh kept Adam and Eve and all their seed in a condition of hebetude and terror. His art, which consisted only in being able to make huge meteors, triumphed over the science of the serpent, who was a musician and geometrician. He made men unjust, ignorant, and cruel, and caused evil to reign in the earth. He persecuted Cain and his sons because they were skilful workmen; he exterminated the Philistines because they composed Orphic poems, and fables like those of AEsop. He was the implacable enemy of science and beauty, and for long ages the human race expiated, in blood and tears, the defeat of the winged serpent. Fortunately, there arose among the Greeks learned men, such as Pythagoras, and Plato, who recovered by the force of genius, the figures and the ideas which the enemy of Iaveh had vainly tried to teach the first woman. The soul of the serpent was in them; and that is why the serpent, as Dorion has said, is honoured by the Athenians. Finally, in these latter days, there appeared, under human form, three celestial spirits — Jesus of Galilee, Basilides, and Valentinus — to whom it was given to pluck the finest fruits of that tree of knowledge, whose roots pass through all the earth, and whose top reaches to the highest heaven. I have said all this in vindication of the Christians, to whom the errors of the Jews are too often imputed.

DORION. If I understood you aright, Zenothemis, you said that three wonderful men — Jesus, Basilides, and Valentinus — had discovered secrets which had remained hidden from Pythagoras and Plato, and all the philosophers of Greece, and even from the divine Epicurus, who, however, has freed men from the dread of empty terrors. You would greatly oblige me by telling me by what means these three mortals acquired knowledge which had eluded the most contemplative sages.

ZENOTHEMIS. Must I repeat to you, Dorion, that science and cogitation are but the first steps to knowledge, and that ecstasy alone leads to eternal truth?

HERMODORUS. It is true, Zenothemis, that the soul is nourished on ecstasy, as the cicada is nourished on dew. But we may even say more: the mind alone is capable of perfect rapture. For man is of a threefold nature, composed of material body, of a soul which is more subtle, but also material, and of an incorruptible mind. When, emerging from the body as from a palace suddenly

given over to silence and solitude and flying through the gardens of the soul, the mind diffuses itself in God, it tastes the delights of an anticipated death, or rather of a future life, for to die is to live; and in that condition, partaking of divine purity, it possesses both infinite joy and complete knowledge. It enters into the unity which is All. It is perfected.

NICIAS. That is very fine; but, to say the truth, Hermodorus, I do not see much difference between All and Nothing. Words even seem to fail to make the distinction. Infinity is terribly like nothingness — they are both inconceivable to the mind. In my opinion perfection costs too dear; we pay for it with all our being, and to possess it must cease to exist. That is a calamity from which God Himself is not free, for the philosophers are doing their best to perfect Him. After all, if we do not know what it is *not* to be, we are equally ignorant what it is to *be*. We know nothing. It is said that it is impossible for men to agree on this question. I believe — in spite of our noisy disputes — that it is, on the contrary, impossible for men not to become some day all at unity buried under the mass of contradictions, a Pelion on Ossa, which they themselves have raised.

COTTA. I am very fond of philosophy, and study it in my leisure time. But I never understand it well, except in Cicero's books. Slaves, pour out the honeyed wine!

CALLICRATES. It is a singular thing, but when I am hungry I think of the time when the tragic poets sat at the boards of good tyrants, and my mouth waters. But when I have tasted the excellent wine that you give us so abundantly, generous Lucius, I dream of nothing but civil wars and heroic combats. I blush to live in such inglorious times; I invoke the goddess of Liberty; and I pour out my blood — in imagination — with the last Romans on the field of Philippi.

COTTA. In the days of the decline of the Republic my ancestors died with Brutus — for liberty. But there is reason to suspect that what the Roman people called liberty was only in reality the right to govern themselves. I do not deny that liberty is the greatest boon a nation can have. But the longer I live the more I am persuaded that only a strong government can bestow it on the citizens. For forty years I have filled high positions in the State, and my long experience has shown me that when the ruling power is weak the people are oppressed. Those, therefore, who — like the great majority of rhetoricians — try to weaken the government, commit an abominable crime. An autocrat, who governs by his single will, may sometimes cause most deplorable results; but if he governs by popular consent there is no remedy possible. Before the majesty of the Roman arms had bestowed peace upon all the world, the only nations which were happy were those which were ruled over by intelligent despots.

HERMODORUS. For my part, Lucius, I believe that there is no such thing as a good form of government, and that we shall never discover one, because the Greeks, who had so many excellent ideas, were never able to find one. In that respect, therefore, all hope of ultimate success is taken from us. Unmistakable signs show that the world is about to fall into ignorance and barbarism. It has been our lot, Lucius, to witness terrible events. Of all the mental satisfactions which intelligence, learning, and virtue can give, all that remains is the cruel pleasure of watching ourselves die.

COTTA. It is true that the rapacity of the people, and the boldness of the barbarians, are threatening evils. But with a good fleet, a good army, and plenty of money ——

HERMODORUS. What is the use of deceiving ourselves? The dying empire will become an easy prey to the barbarians. Cities which were built by Hellenic genius, or Latin patience, will soon be sacked by drunken savages. Neither art nor philosophy will exist any longer on the earth. The statues of the gods will be overturned in the temples, and in men's hearts as well. Darkness will overcome all minds, and the world will die. Can we believe that the Sarmatians will ever devote themselves to intelligent work, that the Germani will cultivate music and philosophy, and that the Quadi and the Marcomani will adore the immortal gods? No! we are sliding toward the abyss. Our old Egypt, which was the cradle of the world, will be its burial vault; Serapis, the god of Death, will receive the last adoration of mortals, and I shall have been the last priest of the last god.

At this moment a strange figure raised the tapestry, and the guests saw before them a little hunchback, whose bald skull rose in a point. He was clad, in the Asiatic fashion, in a blue tunic, and wore round his legs, like the barbarians, red breeches, spangled with gold stars. On seeing him, Paphnutius recognised Marcus the Arian, and fearing lest a thunderbolt should fall from heaven, he covered his head with his arms, and grew pale with fright. At this banquet of the demons, neither the blasphemies of the pagans, nor the horrible errors of the philosophers, had had any effect on him, but the mere presence of the heretic quenched his courage. He would have fled, but his eyes met those of Thais, and he felt at once strengthened. He read in her soul that she, who was predestined to become a saint, already protected him. He seized the skirt of her long, flowing robe, and inwardly prayed to the Saviour Jesus.

A murmur of acclamation welcomed the arrival of the personage who had been called the Christian Plato. Hermodorus was the first to speak.

“Most illustrious Marcus, we rejoice to see you amongst us, and it may be said that you come at the right moment. We know nothing of the Christian doctrine, beyond what is publicly taught. Now, it is certain that a philosopher,

like you, cannot think as the vulgar think, and we are curious to know your opinion of the principal mysteries of the religion you profess. Our dear friend, Zenothemis, who, as you know, is always hunting for symbolic meanings, just now questioned the illustrious Paphnutius concerning the Jewish books. But Paphnutius made no reply, and we should not be surprised at that, as our guest has made a vow of silence, and God has sealed his tongue in the desert. But you Marcus, who have spoken at the Christian synods, and even at the councils of the divine Constantine, can if you wish, satisfy our curiosity by revealing to us the philosophic truths which are wrapped up in the Christian fables. Is not the first of these truths the existence of an only God — in whom, for my part, I fervently believe?”

MARCUS. Yes, venerable brethren, I believe in an only God, not begotten — the only Eternal, the origin of all things.

NICIAS. We know, Marcus, that your God created the world. That must certainly have been a great crisis in His existence. He had already existed an eternity before He could make up His mind to it. But I must, in justice, confess that His situation was a most difficult one. He must continue inactive if He would remain perfect, and must act if He would prove to Himself His own existence. You assure me that He decided to act. I am willing to believe you, although it was an unpardonable imprudence on the part of a perfect God. But tell us, Marcus, how He set about making the world.

MARCUS. Those who, without being Christians, possess, like Hermodorus and Zenothemis, the principles of knowledge, are aware that God did not create the world personally without an intermediary. He gave birth to an only Son, by whom all things were made.

HERMODORUS. That is quite true, Marcus; and this Son is worshipped under the various names of Hermes, Mithra, Adonis, Apollo, and Jesus.

MARCUS. I should not be a Christian if I gave Him any other names than those of Jesus Christ, and Saviour. He is the true Son of God. But He is not eternal, since He had a beginning; as to thinking that He existed before He was begotten, we must leave that absurdity to the Nicæan mules, and the obstinate ass who too long governed the Church of Alexandria under the accursed name of Athanasius.

At these words Paphnutius, white with horror and his face bedewed with the sweat of agony made the sign of the cross, but maintained a sublime silence.

Marcus continued —

“It is clear that the foolish Nicene Creed is a treason against the majesty of the only God, by compelling Him to share His indivisible attributes with His own emanation — the Mediator by whom all things were made. Cease jesting at

the true God of the Christians, Nicias, and learn that, like the lilies of the field, He toils not, neither does He spin. It was not He who was the worker, it was His only Son, Jesus, who, having created the world, came afterwards to repair His handiwork. For the creation could not be perfect, and evil was necessarily mingled with good.”

NICIAS. What is “good,” and what is “evil”?

There was a moment’s silence, during which Hermodorus, his arm extended on the cloth, pointed to a little ass in Corinthian metal which bore two baskets — the one containing white olives, the other black olives.

“You see these olives,” he said. “The contrast between the colours is pleasant to the eye, and we are content that these should be light and those should be dark. But, if they were endowed with thought and knowledge, the white would say, It is good for an olive to be white, it is bad for it to be black; and the black olives would hate the white olives. We judge better, for we are as much above them as the gods are above us. For man, who only sees a part of things, evil is an evil; for God, who understands all things, evil is a good. Doubtless ugliness is ugly, and not beautiful; but if all were beautiful, the whole would not be beautiful. It is, then, well that there should be evil, as the second Plato, far greater than the first, has demonstrated.”

EUCRITES. Let us talk more morally. Evil is an evil — not for the world, of which it cannot destroy the indestructible harmony but for the sinner who does it, and cannot help doing it.

COTTA. By Jupiter? that is a good argument.

EUCRITES. The world is a tragedy by an excellent poet. God, who composed it, has intended each of us to play a part in it. If he wills that you shall be a beggar, a prince, or a cripple, make the best of the part assigned you.

NICIAS. Assuredly it would be well that the cripple should limp like Hephaistos: it would be well that the madman should indulge in all the fury of Ajax, that the incestuous woman should repeat the crimes of Phaedra, that the traitor should betray, that the rascal should lie, and the murderer kill, and when the piece was played, all the actor — kings, just men, bloody tyrants, pious virgins, immodest wives, noble-minded citizens, and cowardly assassins — should receive from the poet an equal share in the felicitations.

EUCRITES. You distort my thought, Nicias, and change a beautiful young girl into a hideous Gorgon. I am sorry for you, if you are so ignorant of the nature of the gods, of justice, and of the eternal laws.

ZENOTHEMIS. For my part, friends, I believe in the reality of good and evil. But I am convinced that there is not a single human action — were it even the kiss of Judas — which does not bear within itself the germ of redemption. Evil

contributes to the ultimate salvation of men, and, in that respect issues from Good, and shares the merits belonging to Good. This has been admirably expressed by the Christians, in the myth concerning the man with red hair, who, in order to betray his master, gave him the kiss of peace, and by such act assured the salvation of men. Therefore, nothing is, in my opinion, more unjust and absurd than the hate with which certain disciples of Paul, the tentmaker, pursue the most unfortunate of the apostles of Jesus without realising that the kiss of Iscariot — prophesied by Jesus Himself — was necessary, according to their own doctrine, for the redemption of men, and that if Judas had not received the thirty pieces, the divine wisdom would have been impugned, Providence frustrated, its designs upset, and the world given over to evil, ignorance, and death.

MARCUS. Divine wisdom foresaw that Judas, though he was not obliged to give the traitor's kiss, would give it, notwithstanding. It thus employed the sin of Iscariot as a stone in the marvellous edifice of the redemption.

ZENOTHEMIS. I spoke just now, Marcus, as though I believed that the redemption of men had been accomplished by Jesus crucified, because I know that such is the belief of the Christians, and I borrowed their opinion that I might the better show the mistake of those who believe in the eternal damnation of Judas. But, in reality, Jesus was, in my eyes, but the precursor of Basilides and Valentinus. As to the mystery of the redemption, I will tell you, my dear friends — if you are at all curious to hear it — how it was really accomplished on earth.

The guests made a sign of assent. Like the Athenian virgins with the baskets sacred to Ceres, twelve young girls, bearing on their heads baskets filled with pomegranates and apples, entered the room with a light step, in time to the music of an invisible flute. They placed the baskets on the table, the flute ceased, and Zenothemis spoke as follows —

“When Eunoia, ‘the thought of God,’ had created the world, she confided the government of the earth to the angels. But they did not preserve the dispassion befitting masters. Seeing that the daughters of men were fair, they surprised them in the evening by the wellside, and united themselves to them. From these unions sprang a turbulent race, who covered the earth with injustice and cruelty, and the dust of the roads drank up the blood of the innocent. The sight of this caused Eunoia infinite grief.

“‘See what I have done!’ she sighed, leaning towards the world. ‘My poor children are plunged in misery, and by my fault. Their suffering is my crime, and I will expiate it. God Himself, who only thinks through me, would be powerless to restore them to their pristine purity. That which is done is done, and the creation will remain for ever imperfect. But, at least, I will not forsake my

creatures. If I cannot make them happy, like me, I can make myself unhappy, like them. Since I committed the mistake of giving them bodies which dishonour them, I will myself assume a body like unto theirs, and will go and live amongst them.'

"Having thus spoken, Eunoia descended to the earth, and was incarnate in the breast of a woman of Argos. She was born small and feeble, and received the name of Helen. She submitted to all the labours of this life, but soon grew in grace and beauty, and became the most desired of women, as she had determined, in order that her mortal body might be tried by the most supreme defilements. An inert prey to lascivious and violent men, she suffered rape and adultery, in expiation of all the adulteries, all the violences, all the iniquities, and caused, by her beauty, the ruin of nations, that God might pardon the sins of the universe. And never was the celestial thought, never was Eunoia, so adorable as in those days when, as a woman, she prostituted herself to heroes and shepherds. The poets surmised her divinity when they painted her so peaceful, superb, and fatal, and when they addressed that invocation to her, 'A soul as serene as a calm upon the waters.'

"Thus was Eunoia led by pity into evil and suffering. She died, and the Argives still show her tomb — for it was necessary that she should know death after lust, and taste the bitter fruit she had sown. But, emerging from the decomposed flesh of Helen, she became incarnate again as a woman, and again suffered every form of insult and outrage. Thus, passing from body to body, throughout all the evil ages, she takes upon her the sins of the world. Her sacrifice will not be in vain. Joined to us by the bonds of the flesh, loving us, and weeping with us, she will effect her redemption and ours, and will carry us, clinging to her white breast, into the peace of the regained paradise."

HERMODORUS. This myth was not unknown to me. I remembered having heard that, in one of her metamorphoses, the divine Helen lived with the magician, Simon, in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. I thought, however, that her perdition was involuntary, and that she was dragged down by the angels in their fall.

ZENOTHEMIS. It is true, Hermodorus, that men who were not properly initiated in the mysteries have imagined that the sad Eunoia was not a party to her own downfall. But if it were as they assert Eunoia would not be the expiating courtesan, the victim covered with stains of all sorts, the bread steeped in the wine of our shame, the pleasant offering, the meritorious sacrifice, the holocaust, the smoke of which rises to God. If they were not voluntary, there would be no merit in her sins.

CALLICRATES. Does anyone know, Zenothemis in what country, under what name, in what adorable form, this ever-renascent Helen is living now?

ZENOTHEMIS. A man would have to be very wise indeed to discover such a secret. And wisdom, Callicrates, is not given to poets, who live in the rude world of forms and amuse themselves, like children, with sounds and empty shows.

CALLICRATES. Beware of offending the gods, impious Zenothemis; the poets are dear to them. The first laws were dictated in verse by the immortals themselves, and the oracles of the gods are poems. Hymns have a pleasant sound to celestial ears. Who does not know that the poets are prophets, and that nothing is hidden from them? Being a poet myself, and crowned with Apollo's laurel, I will make known to all the last incarnation of Eunoia. The eternal Helen is close to us; she is looking at us, and we are looking at her. You see that woman reclining on the cushions of her couch — so beautiful and so contemplative — whose eyes shed tears, and whose lips abound with kisses! It is she! Lovely as in the time of Priam and the halcyon days of Asia, Eunoia is now called Thais.

PHILINA. What do you say, Callicrates? Our dear Thais knew Paris, Menelaus, and the Achaeans who fought before Ilion! Was the Trojan horse big, Thais?

ARISTOBULUS. Who speaks of a horse?

"I have drunk like a Thracian!" cried Chereas and he rolled under the table.

Callicrates, raising his cup, cried —

"If we drink like desperate men, we die unavenged!"

Old Cotta was asleep, and his bald head nodded slowly above his broad shoulders.

For some time past Dorion had seemed to be greatly excited under his philosophic cloak. He reeled up to the couch of Thais.

"Thais, I love you, although it is unseemly in me to love a woman."

THAIS. Why did you not love me before?

DORION. Because I had not supped.

THAIS. But I, my poor friend, have drunk nothing but water; therefore you must excuse me if I do not love you.

Dorion did not wait to hear more, but made towards Drosea, who had made a sign to him in order to get him away from her friend. Zenothemis took the place he had left, and gave Thais a kiss on the mouth.

THAIS. I thought you more virtuous.

ZENOTHEMIS. I am perfect, and the perfect are subject to no laws.

THAIS. But are you not afraid of sullyng your soul in a woman's arms?

ZENOTHEMIS. The body may yield to lust without the soul being concerned.

THAIS. Go away! I wish to be loved with body and soul. All these philosophers are old goats.

The lamps died out one by one. The pale rays of dawn, which entered between the openings of the hangings, shone on the livid faces and swollen eyes of the guests. Aristobulus was sleeping soundly by the side of Chereas, and, in his dreams, devoting all his grooms to the ravens. Zenothemis pressed in his arms the yielding Philina; Dorion poured on the naked bosom of Drosea drops of wine, which rolled like rubies on the white breast, which was shaking with laughter, and the philosopher tried to catch these drops with his lips, as they rolled on the slippery flesh. Eucrites rose, and placing his arm on the shoulder of Nicias, led him to the end of the hall.

“Friend,” he said, smiling, “if you can still think at all — of what are you thinking?”

“I think that the love of women is like a garden of Adonis.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Do you not know, Eucrites, that women make little gardens on the terraces, in which they plant boughs in clay pots in honour of the lover of Venus? These boughs flourish a little time, and then fade.”

“What does that signify, Nicias? That it is foolish to attach importance to that which fades?”

“If beauty is but a shadow, desire is but a lightning flash. What madness it is, then, to desire beauty! Is it not rational, on the contrary, that that which passes should go with that which does not endure, and that the lightning should devour the gliding shadow?”

“Nicias, you seem to me like a child playing at knuckle-bones. Take my advice — be free! By liberty only can you become a man.”

“How can a man be free, Eucrites, when he has a body?”

“You shall see presently, my son. Presently you will say, ‘Eucrites was free.’”

The old man spoke, leaning against a porphyry pillar, his face lighted by the first rays of dawn. Hermodorus and Marcus had approached, and stood before him by the side of Nicias; and all four, regardless of the laughter and cries of the drinkers, conversed on things divine. Eucrites expresses himself so wisely and eloquently, that Marcus said —

“You are worthy to know the true God.”

Eucrites replied —

“The true God is in the heart of the wise man.”

Then they spoke of death.

“I wish,” said Eucrites, “that it may find me occupied in correcting my faults, and attentive to all my duties. In the face of death I will raise my pure hands to

heaven, and I will say to the gods, ‘Your images, gods, that you have placed in the temple of my soul, I have not profaned; I have hung there my thoughts, as well as garlands, fillets, and wreaths. I have lived according to your providence. I have lived enough.’”

Thus speaking, he raised his arms to heaven, and he remained thoughtful a moment. Then he continued, with extreme joy —

“Separate thyself from life, Eucrites, like the ripe olive which falls; returning thanks to the tree which bore thee, and blessing the earth, thy nurse.”

At these words, drawing from the folds of his robe a naked dagger, he plunged it into his breast.

Those who listened to him sprang forward to seize his hand, but the steel point had already penetrated the heart of the sage. Eucrites had already entered into his rest. Hermodorus and Nicias bore the pale and bleeding body to one of the couches, amidst the shrill shrieks of the women, the grunts of the guests disturbed in their sleep, and the heavy breathing of the couples hidden in the shadow of the tapestry. Cotta, an old soldier, who slept lightly, woke, approached the corpse, examined the wound, and cried —

“Call Aristaeus, my physician!”

Nicias shook his head.

“Eucrites is no more,” he said. “He wished to die as others wish to live. He has, like all of us, obeyed his inexpressible desire. And, lo, now he is like unto the gods, who desire nothing.”

Cotta struck his forehead.

“Die! To want to die when he might still serve the State! What nonsense!”

Paphnutius and Thais remained motionless and mute, side by side, their souls overflowing with disgust, horror, and hope.

Suddenly the monk seized the hand of the actress, and stepping over the drunkards, who had fallen close to the lascivious couples, and treading in the wine and blood spilt upon the floor, he led her out of the house.

The sun had risen over the city. Long colonnades stretched on both sides of the deserted street, and at the end shone the dome of Alexander’s tomb. Here and there on the pavement lay broken wreaths and extinguished torches. Fresh wafts of the sea could be felt in the air. Paphnutius, with a look of disgust, tore off his rich robe and trampled the fragments under his feet.

“Thou hast heard them, my Thais!” he cried. “They have spat forth every sort of folly and abomination. They dragged the Divine Creator of all things down the gemonies(*) of the devils of hell, impudently denied the existence of Good and Evil, blasphemed Jesus, and exalted Judas. And the most infamous of all, the jackal of darkness, the stinking beast, the Arian full of corruption and death,

opened his mouth like a yawning sepulchre. My Thais, thou hast seen these filthy snails crawling towards thee and defiling thee with their sticky sweat; thou hast seen others, like brutes, sleeping under the heels of their slaves; thou hast seen them coupling like beasts on the carpet they had fouled with their vomit; thou hast seen a foolish old man shed a blood yet viler than the wine which flowed at his debauch, and at the end of the orgie throw himself in the face of the unforeseen Christ. Praise be to God! Thou hast seen error and recognised how hideous it was. Thais, Thais, Thais, recall to mind the follies of these philosophers, and say if thou wilt go mad with them! Remember the looks, the gestures, the laughs of their fitting companions, those two lascivious and malicious strumpets, and say if thou wilt remain like unto them.”

(*) Steps on the Aventine Hill, leading to the Tiber, to which the bodies of executed criminals were dragged to be thrown into the river. The word is now obsolete, but was employed by Ben Jonson (Sejanus) and Massinger (The Roman Actor). — TRANS.

Thais, her heart stirred with horror and disgust at all she had seen and heard that night, and feeling the indifference and brutality, the malicious jealousy of women, the heavy weight of useless hours, sighed.

“I am weary to death, O my father! Where shall I find rest? I feel that my face is burning, my head empty, and my arms are so tired that I should not have the strength to seize happiness were it within reach of my hand.”

Paphnutius gazed at her with loving pity.

“Courage, O my sister! The hour of rest rises for thee, white and pure as the vapours thou seest rise from the gardens and waters.”

They were near the house of Thais, and could see, above the wall, the tops of the sycamore and fir trees, which surrounded the Grotto of Nymphs, tremble in the morning breeze. In front of them was a public square, deserted, and surrounded with steles and votive statues, and having at each end a semicircular marble seat, supported by figures of monsters. Thais fell on one of these seats. Then, looking anxiously at the monk, she asked —

“What must I do?”

“Thou must,” replied the monk, “follow Him who has come to seek thee. He will separate thee from this present life, as the vintager gathers the cluster that would have rotted on the tree, and bears it to the wine-press to change it into perfumed wine. Listen! there is, a dozen hours from Alexandria, towards the west, not far from the sea, a nunnery, the rules of which, a masterpiece of wisdom, deserve to be put in lyric verse and sung to the sound of the theorbo and tambourines. It may truly be said that the women who are there, submissive to

these rules, have their feet upon earth and their faces in heaven. They desire to be poor, that Jesus may love them, modest, that He may gaze upon them; chaste that He may wed them. He visits them every day in the guise of a gardener, His feet bare, His beautiful hands open — even as He showed Himself to Mary at the entrance of the tomb. I will conduct thee this very day to this nunnery, my Thais, and soon, commingling with these holy women, thou wilt share in their heavenly conversation. They await thee as a sister. On the threshold of the convent, their mother, the pious Albina, will give thee the kiss of peace and will say, ‘My daughter, thou art welcome!’”

The courtesan uttered a cry of amazement.

“Albina! a daughter of the Caesars! The great niece of the Emperor Carus!”

“She herself! Albina, who, born in the purple, has donned the serge, and a daughter of the masters of this world, has risen to the rank of servant of Jesus Christ. She will be thy mother.”

Thais rose and said —

“Take me to the house of Albina.”

And Paphnutius, completing his victory —

“Surely I will conduct thee thither, and there I will place thee in a cell, where thou shalt weep for thy sins. For it is not fitting that thou shouldst mingle with the daughters of Albina until thou art cleansed from thy sins. I will seal the door, and there, a happy prisoner, thou wilt wait in tears till Jesus Himself come, as a sign of pardon, to break the seal that I have placed. And doubt not that He will come, Thais, and how the flesh of thy soul will tremble when thou shalt feel the fingers of Light placed upon thy eyes to dry thy tears!”

Thais said a second time —

“Take me, my father, to the house of Albina.”

His heart filled with joy, Paphnutius gazed around him, and tasted, almost without fear, the pleasure of contemplating the works of creation; his eyes drank in with joy God’s light, and unknown breezes fanned his cheeks. Suddenly, seeing at one of the corners of the public square the little door which led to Thais’ house, and remembering that the trees, whose foliage he had been admiring, shaded the courtesan’s garden, he thought of all the impurities which there sullied the air, to-day so light and pure, and his soul was so grieved that bitter tears sprang to his eyes.

“Thais,” he said, “we must fly without looking back. But we must not leave behind us the instruments, the witnesses, the accomplices of thy past crimes; those heavy hangings, those beds, carpets, perfume censers and lamps, which would proclaim thy infamy! Dost thou wish that, animated by the demons, and carried by the evil spirit that is in them, those accursed belongings should pursue

thee even to the desert? It is but too true that there are tables which bring ruin, seats which serve as the instruments of devils, which act, speak, strike the ground, and pass through the air. Let all perish which has seen thy shame! Hasten, Thais, and, whilst the city is yet asleep, order thy slaves to make, in the centre of this place, a pile, upon which we will burn all the abominable riches thy dwelling contains.”

Thais consented.

“Do as you will, my father,” she said. “I know that spirits often dwell in inanimate objects. At night some articles of furniture talk, either by giving knocks at regular intervals or by emitting little flashes of light as signals. And even more. Have you remarked, my father, at the entrance to the Grotto of Nymphs, on the right, a statue of a naked woman about to bathe? One day I saw, with my own eyes, that statue turn its head like a living person, and then return to its ordinary attitude. I was terrified. Nicias, to whom I related this prodigy, laughed at me; yet there must be some magic in that statue, for it inspired with violent desires a certain Dalmatian, who was insensible to my beauty. It is certain that I have lived amongst enchanted things, and that I was exposed to the greatest perils, for men have been strangled by the embraces of a bronze statue. Yet it would be a pity to destroy valuable works made with rare skill, and to burn my carpets and tapestry would be a great loss. The beautiful colours of some of them are truly wonderful, and they cost much money to those who gave them to me. I also possess cups, statues, and pictures of great price. I do not think they ought to perish. But you know what is necessary. Do as you will, my father.”

Thus saying, she followed the monk to the little door at which so many garlands and wreaths had been hung, and, when it was opened, she told the porter to call together all the slaves in the house. Four Indians, who were employed in the kitchen, were the first to appear. They were all four yellow men, and each had but one eye. It had cost Thais much trouble, and given her amusement, to get together these four slaves of the same race, and all afflicted with the same infirmity. When they attended at table they excited the curiosity of the guests, and Thais made them relate the story of their lives. These four waited in silence. Their assistants followed them. Then came the stablemen, the huntsmen, the litter-bearers, and the running footmen with muscles like iron, two gardeners hirsute as Priapus, six ferocious looking negroes, three Greek slaves — one a grammarian, another a poet, and the third a singer. They all stood, ranged in order, on the public square, and were presently joined by the negresses — curious, suspicious, rolling big round eyes, and each with a huge mouth slit to her earrings. Lastly, adjusting their veils and languidly dragging their feet, which

were shackled with light gold chains, appeared six sulky-looking, beautiful white slave-girls. When they were all assembled, Thais, pointing to Paphnutius, said —

“Do whatever this man commands you; for the spirit of God is in him, and if you disobey him you will fall dead.”

For she had heard, and really believed, that the earth would open and swallow up in flames and smoke any impious wretch whom a saint of the desert struck with his staff.

Paphnutius sent away the women and the Greek men-slaves, and said to the others —

“Bring wood to the middle of this place, make a huge fire, and throw into it pell-mell all that there is in the house and grotto.”

They were astonished, and stood motionless, looking at their mistress. And they still stood inactive and silent, and pressed against each other, elbow to elbow, suspecting that the order was a joke.

“Obey!” said the monk.

Several of them were Christians. They understood the command, and went to the house to fetch wood and torches. The others were not indisposed to imitate them, for, being poor, they hated riches and had a natural instinct for destruction. Whilst they were building the pile, Paphnutius said to Thais —

“I thought at one time of fetching the treasurer of one of the churches of Alexandria (if there still remain one worthy of the name of church, and that is not defiled by the Arian beasts) and giving him thy goods, woman, that he might distribute them to widows, and change the proceeds of crime into the treasure of justice. But such a thought did not come from God, and I cast it from me, for assuredly it would be a great offence to the well-beloved of Jesus Christ to offer them the spoils of thy lust. Thais, all that thou hast touched must be devoured by the fire, even to its very soul. Thanks be to Heaven, these tunics and veils, which have seen kisses more innumerable than the waves of the sea, will only feel now the lips and tongues of the flames. Hasten, slaves! More wood! More links and torches! And thou, woman, return to thy house, strip thyself of thy shameful robes, and ask of the most humble of thy slaves, as an undeserving favour, the tunic that she puts on when she scrubs the floors.”

Thais obeyed. Whilst the Indians knelt down and blew the embers, the negroes threw on the pile coffers of ivory, ebony, or cedar, which broke open and let out wreaths, garlands, and necklaces. The smoke rose in a dark column, as in the holocausts of the old religion. Then the fire, which had been smouldering, burst out suddenly with a roar as of some monstrous animal, and the almost invisible flames began to devour their valuable prey. The slaves

worked more eagerly; they joyfully dragged out rich carpets, veils embroidered with silver, and flowered tapestry. They staggered under the weight of tables, couches, thick cushions, and beds with gold nails. Three strong Ethiopians came hugging the coloured statues of the nymphs, one of which had been loved as though it were a mortal; and they looked like huge apes carrying off women. And when the beautiful naked forms fell from the arms of these monsters, and were broken on the stones, a deep groan was heard.

At that moment Thais appeared, her hair unloosed and streaming over her shoulders, barefooted, and clad in a clumsy coarse garment which seemed redolent with divine voluptuousness merely from having touched her body. Behind her came a gardener, carrying, half hidden in his long beard, an ivory Eros.

She made a sign to the man to stop, and approaching Paphnutius, showed him the little god.

“My father,” she asked, “should this also be thrown into the flames? It is of marvellous antique work, and is worth a hundred times its weight in gold. Its loss would be irreparable, for there is not a sculptor in the world capable of making such a beautiful Eros. Remember also, my father, that this child is Love, and he should not be harshly treated. Believe me, Love is a virtue, and if I have sinned, it is not through him, my father, but against him. Never shall I regret aught that he has caused me to do, and I deplore only those things I have done contrary to his commands. He does not allow women to give themselves to those who do not come in his name. For that reason he ought to be honoured. Look, Paphnutius, how pretty this little Eros is! With what grace he hides himself in the gardener’s beard! One day Nicias, who loved me then, brought it to me and said, ‘It will remind you of me.’ But the roguish boy did not remind me of Nicias, but of a young man I knew at Antioch. Enough riches have been destroyed upon this pile, my father! Preserve this Eros, and place it in some monastery. Those who see it will turn their hearts towards God, for love leads naturally to heavenly thoughts.”

The gardener, already believing that the little Eros was saved, smiled on it as though it had been a child, when Paphnutius, snatching the god from the arms which held it, threw it into the flames, crying —

“It is enough that Nicias has touched it to make it replete with every sort of poison!”

Then, seizing by armfuls the sparkling robes, the purple mantles, the golden sandals, the combs, strigils, mirrors, lamps, theorbos, and lyres, he threw them into this furnace, more costly than the funeral pile of Sardanapalus, whilst,

drunken with the rage of destruction, the slaves danced round, uttering wild yells amid a shower of sparks and ashes.

One by one, the neighbours, awakened by the noise, opened the windows, and rubbing their eyes, looked out to see whence the smoke came. Then they came down, half dressed, and drew near the fire.

“What does it mean?” they wondered.

Amongst them were merchants from whom Thais had often bought perfumes and stuffs, and they looked on anxiously with long, yellow faces, unable to comprehend what was going on. Some young debauchees, who, returning from a supper, passed by there, preceded by their slaves, stopped, their heads crowned with flowers, their tunics floating, and uttered loud cries. Attracted by curiosity, the crowd increased unceasingly, and soon it was known that Thais had been persuaded by the Abbot of Antioe to burn her riches and retire to a nunnery.

The shopkeepers thought to themselves —

“Thais is going to leave the city; we shall sell no more to her; it is dreadful to think of. What will become of us without her? This monk has driven her mad. He is ruining us. Why let him do it? What is the use of the laws? Are there no magistrates in Alexandria? Thais does not think about us and our wives and our poor children. It is a public scandal. She ought to be compelled to stay in the city.”

The young men, on their part, also thought —

“If Thais is going to renounce acting and love, our chief amusements will be taken from us. She was the glory, delight, and honour of the stage. She was the joy even of those who had never possessed her. The women we loved, we loved in her. There were no kisses given in which she was altogether absent, for she was the joy of all voluptuaries, and the mere thought that she breathed amongst us excited us to pleasure.”

Thus thought the young men, and one of them, named Cerons, who had held her in his arms, cried out upon the abduction, and blasphemed against Christ. In every group the conduct of Thais was severely criticised.

“It is a shameful flight!”

“A cowardly desertion!”

“She is taking the bread out of our mouths.”

“She is robbing our children.”

“She ought at least to pay for the wreaths I have sold to her.”

“And the sixty robes she has ordered of me.”

“She owes money to everybody.”

“Who will represent Iphigenia, Electra, and Polyxena when she is gone? The handsome Polybia herself will not make such a success as she has done.”

“Life will be dull when her door is closed.”

“She was the bright star, the soft moon of the Alexandrian sky.”

All the most notorious mendicants of the city — cripples, blind men, and paralytics — had by this time assembled in the place; and crawling through the remnants of the riches, they groaned —

“How shall we live when Thais is no longer here to feed us? Every day the fragments from her table fed two hundred poor wretches, and her lovers, when they quitted her, threw us as they passed handfuls of silver pieces.”

Some thieves, too, also mingled with the crowd, and created a deafening clamour, and pushed their neighbours, to increase disorder, and take advantage of the tumult to filch some valuable object.

Old Taddeus, who sold Miletan wool and Tarentan linen, and to whom Thais owed a large sum of money, alone remained calm and silent in the midst of the uproar. He listened and watched, and gently stroking his goat-beard, seemed thoughtful. At last he approached young Cerons, and pulling him by the sleeve, whispered —

“You are the favoured lover of Thais, handsome youth; show yourself, and do not allow this monk to carry her off.”

“By Pollux and his sister, he shall not!” cried Cerons. “I will speak to Thais, and without flattering myself, I think she will listen to me rather than to that sooty-faced Lapithan. Place! Place, dogs!”

And striking with his fist the men, upsetting the old women and treading on the young children, he reached Thais, and taking her aside —

“Dearest girl,” he said, “look at me, remember, and tell me truly if you renounce love.”

But Paphnutius threw himself between Thais and Cerons.

“Impious wretch!” he cried, “beware and touch her not; she is sacred — she belongs to God.”

“Get away, baboon!” replied the young man furiously. “Let me speak to my sweetheart, or if not I will drag your obscene carcase by the beard to the fire, and roast you like a sausage.”

And he put his hand on Thais. But, pushed away by the monk with unexpected force, he staggered back four paces and fell at the foot of the pile amongst the scattered ashes.

Old Taddeus, meanwhile, had been going from one to the other, pulling the ears of the slaves and kissing the hands of the masters, inciting each and all against Paphnutius, and had already formed a little band resolutely determined to oppose the monk who would steal Thais from them.

Cerons rose, his face black, his hair singed, and choking with smoke and rage. He blasphemed against the gods, and threw himself amongst the assailants, behind whom the beggars crawled, shaking their crutches. Paphnutius was soon enclosed in a circle of menacing fists, raised sticks, and cries of death.

“To the ravens with the monk! to the ravens!”

“No; throw him in the fire! Burn him alive!”

Seizing his fair prey, he pressed her to his heart.

“Impious men,” he cried in a voice of thunder, “strive not to tear the dove from the eagle of the Lord. But rather copy this woman, and like she turn your filth into gold. Imitate her example, and renounce the false wealth which you think you hold and which holds you. Hasten! the day is at hand, and divine patience begins to grow weary. Repent, confess your sins, weep and pray. Walk in the footsteps of Thais. Hate your offenses, which are as great as hers. Which of you, poor or rich, merchants, soldiers, slaves or eminent citizens, would dare to say, before God, that he was better than a prostitute? You are all nothing but living filth, and it is by a miracle of divine goodness that you do not suddenly turn into streams of mire.”

Whilst he spoke flames shot from his eyes; and it seemed as though live coals came from his lips and those who surrounded him were obliged to hear him in spite of themselves.

But old Taddeus did not remain idle. He picked up stones and oyster shells, which he hid in the skirt of his tunic, and not daring to throw them himself slipped them into the hands of the beggars. Soon the stones began to fly, and a well-directed shell cut Paphnutius’ face. The blood, which flowed down the dark face of the martyr, dropped in a new baptism on the head of the penitent, and Thais, half stifled in the monk’s embrace and her delicate skin scratched by the coarse cassock, felt a thrill of horror and fright.

At that moment a man elegantly dressed, and with a wreath of wild celery on his head, opened a road for himself through the furious crowd, and cried —

“Stop! Stop! This monk is my brother!”

It was Nicias, who, having closed the eyes of the philosopher Eucrites, was passing through the square to return to his house, and saw, without very much surprise (for nothing astonished him), the smoking pile, Thais clad in a serge cassock, and Paphnutius being stoned.

He repeated —

“Stop, I tell you; spare my old fellow-scholar; respect the beloved head of Paphnutius!”

But, being only used to subtle disquisitions with philosophers, he did not possess that imperious energy which commands vulgar minds. He was not

listened to. A shower of stones and shells fell on the monk, who, protecting Thais with his body, praised the Lord whose goodness turned his wounds into caresses. Despairing of making himself heard, and feeling but too sure that he could not save his friend either by force or persuasion, Nicias resigned himself to the will of the gods — in whom he had little confidence — when the idea occurred to him to use a stratagem which his contempt for men had suddenly suggested to him. He took from his girdle his purse, which was full of gold and silver, for he was a pleasure-loving and charitable man, and running up to the men who were throwing the stones, he chinked the money in their ears. At first they paid no attention to him, their fury being too great; but little by little their looks turned towards the chinking gold, and soon their arms dropped and no longer menaced their victim. Seeing that he had attracted their eyes and minds, Nicias opened his purse and threw some pieces of gold and silver amongst the crowd. The more greedy of them stooped to pick it up. The philosopher, pleased at his first success, adroitly threw deniers and drachmas here and there. At the sound of the pieces of money rattling on the pavement, the persecutors of Paphnutius threw themselves on the ground. Beggars, slaves, and tradespeople scrambled after the money, whilst, grouped round Cerons, the patricians watched the struggle and laughed heartily. Cerons himself quite forgot his wrath. His friends encouraged the rivals, chose competitors, and made bets, and urged on the miserable wretches as they would have done fighting dogs. A cripple without legs having succeeded in seizing a drachma, the applause was frenetic. The young men themselves began to throw money, and nothing was to be seen in the square but a multitude of backs, rising and falling like waves of the sea, under a shower of coins. Paphnutius was forgotten.

Nicias ran up to him, covered him with his cloak, and dragged him and Thais into by-streets where they were safe from pursuit. They ran for some time in silence, and when they thought they were out of reach of their enemies, they ceased running, and Nicias said, in a tone of raillery in which a little sadness was mingled —

“It is finished then! Pluto ravishes Proserpine, and Thais will follow my fierce-looking friend whithersoever he will lead her.”

“It is true, Nicias,” replied Thais, “that I am tired of living with men like you, smiling, perfumed, kindly egoists. I am weary of all I know, and I am, therefore, going to seek the unknown. I have experienced joy that was not joy, and here is a man who teaches me that sorrow is true joy. I believe him, for he knows the truth.”

“And I, sweetheart,” replied Nicias, smiling, “I know the truths. He knows but one, I know them all. I am superior to him in that respect, but to tell the truth,

it doesn't make me any the prouder nor any the happier."

Then, seeing that the monk was glaring fiercely at him —

"My dear Paphnutius, do not imagine that I think you extremely absurd, or even altogether unreasonable. And if I were to compare your life with mine, I could not say which is preferable in itself. I shall presently go and take the bath which Crobyle and Myrtale have prepared for me; I shall eat the wing of a Phasian pheasant; then I shall read — for the hundredth time — some fable by Apuleius or some treatise by Porphyry. You will return to your cell, where, leaning like a tame camel, you will ruminate on — I know not what — formulas of incarnations you have long chewed and rechewed, and in the evening you will swallow some radishes without any oil. Well, my dear friend, in accomplishing these acts, so different apparently, we are both obeying the same sentiment, the only motive for all human actions; we are both seeking our own pleasure, and striving to attain the same end — happiness, the impossible happiness. It would be folly on my part to say you were wrong, dear friend, even though I think myself in the right.

"And you, my Thais, go and enjoy yourself, and be more happy still, if it be possible, in abstinence and austerity than you have been in riches and pleasure. On the whole, I should say you were to be envied. For if in our whole lives, Paphnutius and I have pursued but one kind of pleasurable satisfaction, you in your life, dear Thais, have tasted diverse joys such as it is rarely given to the same person to know. I should really like to be for one hour, a saint like our dear friend Paphnutius. But that is not possible. Farewell, then, Thais! Go where the secret forces of nature and your destiny conduct you! Go, and take with you, whithersoever you go, the good wishes of Nicias! I know that is mere foolishness, but can I give you anything more than barren regrets and vain wishes in payment for the delicious illusions which once enveloped me when I was in your arms, and of which only the shadow now remains to me? Farewell, my benefactress! Farewell, goodness that is ignorant of its own existence, mysterious virtue, joy of men! Farewell to the most adorable of the images that nature has ever thrown — for some unknown reasons — on the face of this deceptive world!"

Whilst he spoke, deep wrath had been brewing in the monk's heart, and it now broke forth in imprecations.

"Avaunt, cursed wretch! I scorn thee and hate thee. Go, child of hell, a thousand times worse than those poor lost ones who just now threw stones and insults at me! They knew not what they did, and the grace of God, which I implored for them, may some day descend into their hearts. But thou, detestable Nicias, thou art but a perfidious venom and a bitter poison. Thy mouth breathes

despair and death. One of thy smiles contains more blasphemy than issues in a century from the smoking lips of Satan. Avaunt, backslider!”

Nicias looked at him.

“Farewell, my brother,” he said, “and may you preserve until your life’s end your store of faith, hate, and love. Farewell, Thais! It is in vain that you will forget me, because I shall ever remember you.”

On quitting them he walked thoughtfully through the winding streets in the vicinity of the great cemetery of Alexandria, which are peopled by the makers of funeral urns. Their shops were full of clay figures painted in bright colours and representing gods and goddesses, mimes, women, winged sprites, &c., such as were usually buried with the dead. He fancied that perhaps some of the little images which he saw there might be the companions of his eternal sleep; and it seemed to him that a little Eros, with its tunic tucked up, laughed at him mockingly. He looked forward to his death, and the idea was painful to him. To cure his sadness he tried to philosophise, and reasoned thus —

“Assuredly,” he said to himself, “time has no reality. It is a simple illusion of our minds. Then, if it does not exist, how can it bring death to me? Does that mean that I shall live for ever? No, but I conclude therefrom that my death is, always has been, as it always will be. I do not feel it yet, but it is in me, and I ought not to fear it, for it would be folly to dread the coming of that which has arrived. It exists, like the last page of a book I read and have not finished.”

This argument occupied him all the rest of the way, but without making him more cheerful; and his mind was filled with dismal thoughts when he arrived at the door of his house and heard the merry laughter of Crobyle and Myrtale, who were playing at tennis whilst they were waiting for him.

Paphnutius and Thais left the city by the Gate of the Moon, and followed the coast.

“Woman,” said the monk, “all that great blue sea could not wash away thy pollutions.”

He spoke with scorn and anger.

“More filthy than a bitch or a sow, thou hast prostituted to pagans and infidels a body which the Eternal had intended for a tabernacle, and thy impurities are such that, now that thou knowest the truth, thou canst not unite thy lips or join thy hands without a horror of thyself rising in thy heart.”

She followed him meekly, over stony roads, under a burning sun. Her knees ached from fatigue, and her throat was parched with thirst. But, far from feeling any of the pity which softens the hearts of the profane, Paphnutius rejoiced at these propitiatory sufferings of the flesh which had so sinned. So infuriated was he with holy zeal that he would have liked to cut with rods the body that had

preserved its beauty as a shining witness to its infamy. His meditations augmented his pious fury, and remembering that Thais had received Nicias in her bed, that idea seemed so horrible to him that his blood all flowed back to his heart, and his breast felt ready to burst. His curses were stifled in his throat, and he could only grind his teeth. He sprang forward and stood before her, pale, terrible, and filled with the Spirit of God — looked into her very soul, and then spat in her face.

She calmly wiped her face and continued to walk on. He followed, glaring at her in pious anger, as if she had been hell itself. He was thinking how he could avenge Christ in order that Christ should not avenge Himself, when he saw a drop of blood that had dripped from the foot of Thais on the sand. Then a hitherto unknown influence entered his opened heart, sobs rose to his lips, he wept, he ran and knelt before her, called her his sister, and kissed her bleeding feet. He murmured a hundred times, “My sister, my sister, my mother, O most holy!”

He prayed —

“Angels of heaven, receive carefully this drop of blood, and bear it before the throne of the Lord. And may a miraculous anemone blossom on the sand sprinkled with the blood of Thais, that those who see the flower may recover purity of heart and feeling. O holy, holy, most holy Thais!”

As he prayed and prophesied thus, a lad passed on an ass. Paphnutius ordered him to descend, seated Thais on the ass, and led it by the bridle. Towards evening they came to a canal shaded by fine trees; he tied the ass to the trunk of a date palm, and sitting on a mossy stone he shared with Thais a loaf, which they ate with salt and hyssop. They drank fresh water in their hands, and talked of things eternal. She said —

“I have never drunk water so pure nor breathed an air so light, and I feel that God floats in the breezes that pass.”

“Look! it is the evening, O my sister. The blue shadows of night cover the hills. But soon thou wilt see shining in the dawn the tabernacles of Light; soon thou wilt behold shine forth the roses of the eternal morning.”

They journeyed all night, and, while the crescent moon gleamed on the silver crests of the waves, they sang psalms and hymns. When the sun rose, the Libyan desert stretched before them like a huge lion-skin. At the edge of the desert, and close to a few palm-trees, some white huts shimmered in the morning light.

“Are those the tabernacles of Light, father?” asked Thais.

“Even so, my daughter and my sister. Yonder is the House of Salvation, where I will confine you with my own hands.”

Soon they saw a number of women busy around the buildings, like bees round their hives. There were some who baked bread, or prepared vegetables; many were spinning wool, and the light of heaven shone upon them like a smile of God. Others meditated in the shade of the tamarisk trees; their white hands hung by their sides, for, being filled with love, they had chosen the part of Magdalen, and performed no work but prayer, contemplation, and ecstasy. They were, therefore, called the Marys, and were clad in white. Those who worked with their hands were called the Marthas, and wore blue robes. All wore the hood, but the younger ones allowed a few curls to show on their foreheads — unintentionally, it is to be presumed, since it was forbidden by the rules. A very old lady, tall and white, walked from cell to cell, leaning on a staff of hard wood. Paphnutius approached her respectfully, kissed the hem of her veil, and said —

“The peace of the Lord be with thee, venerable Albina. I have brought to the hive, of which thou art queen, a bee I found lost on a flowerless road. I took it in the palm of my hand, and revived it with my breath. I give it to thee.”

And he pointed to the actress, who knelt down before the daughter of the Caesars.

Albina cast a piercing glance on Thais, ordered her to rise, kissed her on the forehead, and then, turning to the monk —

“We will place her,” she said, “amongst the Marys.”

Paphnutius then related how Thais had been brought to the House of Salvation, and asked that she should be at once confined in a cell. The abbess consented, and led the penitent to a hut, which had remained empty since the death of the virgin Laeta, who had sanctified it. In this narrow chamber there was but a bed, a table, and a pitcher, and Thais when she crossed the threshold, felt filled with ineffable joy.

“I wish to close the door myself,” said Paphnutius, “and put thereon a seal, which Jesus will come and break with His own hands.”

He went to the side of the spring, and took a handful of wet clay, mixed with it a little spittle and a hair from his head, and plastered it across the chink of the door. Then, approaching the window, near which Thais stood peaceful and happy, he fell on his knees and praised the Lord three times.

“How beautiful are the feet of her who walketh in the paths of righteousness! How beautiful are her feet, and how resplendent her face!”

He rose, lowered his hood over his eyes, and walked away slowly.

Albina called one of her virgins.

“My daughter,” she said, “take to Thais those things which are needful for her — bread, water, and a flute with three holes.”

PART THE THIRD — THE EUPHORBIA

Paphnutius had returned to the holy desert. He took, near Athribis, the boat which went up the Nile to carry food to the monastery of Abbot Serapion. When he disembarked, his disciples advanced to meet him with great demonstrations of joy. Some raised their arms to heaven; others, prostrate on the ground, kissed the Abbot's sandals. For they knew already what the saint had accomplished in Alexandria. The monks generally received, by rapid and unknown means, information concerning the safety or glory of the Church. News spread through the desert with the rapidity of the simoon.

When Paphnutius strode across the sand, his disciples followed him, praising the Lord. Flavian, who was the oldest member of the brotherhood, was suddenly seized with a pious frenzy and began to sing an inspired hymn —

“O blessed day! Now is our father restored to us.

He has returned laden with fresh merits, of which we reap the benefit.

For the virtues of the father are the wealth of the children, and the sanctity of the Abbot illuminates every cell.

Paphnutius, our father, has given a new spouse to Jesus Christ. By his wondrous art, he has changed a black sheep into a white sheep.

And now, behold, he has returned to us, laden with fresh merits.

Like unto the bee of the Arsinoetid, heavy with the nectar of flowers.

Even as the ram of Nubia, which could hardly bear the weight of its abundant wool.

Let us celebrate this day by mingling oil with our food.”

When they came to the door of the Abbot's cell, they fell on their knees, and said —

“Let our father bless us, and give each of us a measure of oil to celebrate his return.”

Paul the Fool, who alone had remained standing, asked, “Who is this man?” and did not recognise Paphnutius. But no one paid any attention to what he said, as he was known to be devoid of intelligence, though filled with piety.

The Abbot of Antinoe, locked in his cell, thought —

“I have at last regained the haven of my repose and happiness. I have returned to my fortress of contentment. But how is it that this roof of rushes, so dear to

me, does not receive me as a friend, and the walls say not to me, 'Thou art welcome.' Nothing has changed, since my departure, in this abode I have chosen. There is my table and my bed. There is the mummy's head which has so often inspired me with salutary thoughts; and there is the book in which I have so often sought conceptions of God. And yet nothing that I left is here. The things appear grievously despoiled of their customary charm, and it seems to me as though I saw them to-day for the first time. When I look at that table and couch, that in former days I made with my own hands, that black, dried head, these rolls of papyrus filled with the sayings of God, I seem to see the belongings of a dead man. After having known them all so well, I know them no longer. Alas! since nothing around me has really changed, it is I who am no longer what I was. I am another. I am the dead man! What has happened, my God? What has been taken from me? What is left unto me? And who am I?"

And it especially perplexed him to find, in spite of himself, that his cell was small, whereas, when viewed by the eye of faith, he ought to consider it immense, because the infinitude of God began there.

He began to pray, with his face against the ground, and felt a little happier. He had hardly been an hour in prayer, when a vision of Thais passed before his eyes. He returned thanks to God —

"Jesus! it is Thou who hast sent her. I acknowledge in that Thy wonderful goodness; Thou wouldst please me, reassure me and comfort me by the sight of her whom I have given to Thee. Thou; presentest her to my eyes with her smile now disarmed; her grace, now become innocent; her beauty from which I have extracted the sting. To please me, my God, thou showest her to me as I have prepared and purified her for Thy designs, as one friend pleasantly reminds another of the rich gift he has received from him. Therefore I see this woman with delight, being assured that the vision comes from Thee. Thou dost not forget that I have given her to Thee, Jesus. Keep her, since she pleases Thee, and suffer not her beauty to give joy to any but Thyself."

He could not sleep all night, and he saw Thais more distinctly than he had seen her in the Grotto of Nymphs. He commended himself, saying —

"What I have done, I have done to the glory of God."

Yet, to his great surprise, his heart was not at ease. He sighed.

"Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?"

And his mind was still perturbed. Thirty days he remained in that condition of sadness which precedes the sore trials of a solitary monk. The image of Thais never left him day or night. He did not try to banish it, because he still thought it came from God, and was the image of a saint. But one morning she visited him in a dream, her hair crowned with violets, and her very gentleness seemed so

formidable, that he uttered a cry of fright, and woke in an icy sweat. His eyes were still heavy with sleep, when he felt a moist warm breath on his face. A little jackal, its two paws placed on the side of the bed, was panting its stinking breath in his face, and grinning at him.

Paphnutius was greatly astonished, and it seemed to him as though a tower had given way under his feet. And, in fact, he had fallen, for his self-confidence had gone. For some time he was incapable of thought and when he did recover himself, his meditations only increased his perplexity.

“It is one of two things,” he said to himself; “either this vision, like the preceding ones, came from God, and was a good vision, and it is my natural perversity which has misrepresented it, as wine turns sour in a dirty cup. I have, by my unworthiness, changed instruction into reproach, of which this diabolical jackal immediately took advantage. Or else this vision came, not from God, but, on the contrary, from the devil, and was evil. In that case I should doubt whether the former ones had, as I thought, a celestial origin. I am therefore incapable of that discernment which is necessary for the ascetic. In either case it is plain that God is no longer with me, — of which I feel the effects, though I cannot explain the cause.”

He reasoned in this way, and anxiously asked —

“Just God, what trials dost Thou appoint for Thy servants if the apparitions of Thy saints are a danger for them? Give me to discern, by an intelligible sign, that which comes from Thee, and that which comes from the other.”

And as God, whose designs are inscrutable, did not see fit to enlighten his servant, Paphnutius, lost in doubt, resolved not to think of Thais any more. But his resolutions were vain. Though absent, she was ever with him. She gazed at him whilst he read, or meditated, or prayed, or met his eyes wherever he looked. Her imaginary approach was heralded by a slight sound, such as is made by a woman’s dress when she walks, and the visions had more verisimilitude than reality itself, which moves and is confused, whereas the phantoms which are caused by solitude are fixed and unchangeable. She came under various appearances — sometimes pensive, her head crowned with her last perishable wreath, clad as at the banquet at Alexandria, in a mauve robe spangled with silver flowers; sometimes voluptuously in a cloud of light veils, and bathed in the warm shadows of the Grotto of Nymphs; sometimes in a serge cassock, pious and radiant with celestial joy; sometimes tragic, her eyes swimming in the terrors of death, and showing her bare breast bedewed with the blood from her pierced heart. What disturbed him the most in these visions was that the wreaths, tunics, and veils, that he had burned with his own hands, should thus return; it

became evident to him that these things had an imperishable soul, and he cried —

“Lo, all the countless souls of the sins of Thais come upon me!”

When he turned away his head, he felt that Thais was behind him, and that made him feel still more uneasy. His torture was cruel. But as his soul and body remained pure in the midst of all his temptations, he trusted in God, and gently complained to Him.

“My God, if I went so far to seek her amongst the Gentiles, it was for Thy sake, and not for mine. It would not be just that I should suffer for what I have done in Thy behalf. Protect me, sweet Jesus! My Saviour, save me! Suffer not the phantom to accomplish that which the body could not. As I have triumphed over the flesh, suffer not the shadow to overthrow me. I know that I am now exposed to greater dangers than I ever ran. I feel and know that the dream has more power than the reality. And how could it be otherwise, since it is itself but a higher reality? It is the soul of things. Plato, though he was but an idolater, has testified to the real existence of ideas. At that banquet of demons to which Thou accompaniedst me, Lord, I heard men — sullied with crimes truly, but certainly not devoid of intelligence — agree to acknowledge that we see real objects in solitude, meditation, and ecstasy; and Thy Scriptures, my God, many times affirm the virtue of dreams, and the power of visions formed either by Thee, great God, or by Thy adversary.”

There was a new man in him and now he reasoned with God, but God did not choose to enlighten him. His nights were one long dream, and his days did not differ from his nights. One morning he awoke uttering sighs, such as issue, by moonlight, from the tombs of the victims of crimes. Thais had come, showing her bleeding feet, and whilst he wept, she had slipped into his couch. There was no longer any doubt; the image of Thais was an impure image.

His heart filled with disgust, he leaped out of his profaned couch, and hid his face in his hands that he might not see the daylight. The hours passed, but they did not remove his shame. All was quiet in the cell. For the first time for many long days, Paphnutius was alone. The phantom had at last left him, and even its absence seemed dreadful. Nothing, nothing to distract his mind from the recollection of the dream. Full of horror, he thought —

“Why did I not drive her away? Why did I not tear myself from her cold arms and burning knees?”

He no longer dared to pronounce the name of God near that horrible couch, and he feared that his cell being profaned, the demons might freely enter at any hour. His fears did not deceive him. The seven little jackals, which had never crossed the threshold, entered in a file, and went and hid under the bed. At the

vesper hour, there came an eighth, the stench of which was horrible. The next day, a ninth joined the others, and soon there were thirty, then sixty, then eighty. They became smaller as they multiplied, and being no bigger than rats, they covered the floor, the couch, and the stool. One of them jumped on the little table by the side of the bed, and standing with its four feet together on the death's head, looked at the monk with burning eyes. And every day fresh jackals came.

To expiate the abominable sin of his dream, and flee from impure thoughts, Paphnutius determined to leave his cell, which had now become polluted, go far into the desert, and practise unheard-of austerities, strange labours, and fresh works of grace. But before putting his design into action, he went to see old Palemon and ask his advice.

He found him in his garden watering his lettuces. It was the evening. The blue Nile flowed at the foot of violet hills. The good old man was walking slowly, in order not to frighten a pigeon that had perched on his shoulder.

"The Lord be with thee, brother Paphnutius," he said. "Admire his goodness; He sends me the animals that He has created that I may converse with them of His works, and praise Him in the birds of the air. Look at this pigeon; note the changing hues of its neck, and say, is it not a beautiful work of God? But have you not come to talk with me, brother, on some pious subject? If so, I will put down my watering-pot, and listen to you."

Paphnutius told the old man about his journey, his return, the visions of his days and the dreams of his nights, — without omitting the sinful one — and the pack of jackals.

"Do you not think, father," he added, "that I ought to bury myself in the desert, and perform some extraordinary austerities that would even astonish the devil?"

"I am but a poor sinner," replied Palemon, "and I know little about men, having passed all my life in this garden, with gazelles, little hares and pigeons. But it seems to me, brother, that your distemper comes from your having passed too suddenly from the noisy world to the calm of solitude. Such sudden transitions can but do harm to the health of the soul. You are, brother, like a man who exposes himself, almost at the same time, to great heat and great cold. A cough shakes him, and fever torments him. In your place, brother Paphnutius, instead of retiring at once into some awful desert, I should take such amusements as are fitting to a monk and a holy abbot. I should visit the monasteries in the neighbourhood. Some of them are wonderful, it is said. That of Abbot Serapion contains, I have been told, a thousand four hundred and thirty-two cells, and the monks are divided into as many legions as there are letters in the Greek alphabet.

I am even informed that a certain analogy is observed between the character of the monks and the shape of the letter by which they are designated, and that, for example, those who are placed under Z have a tortuous character, whilst those under I have an upright mind. If I were you, brother, I should go and assure myself of this with my own eyes, and I should know no rest until I had seen such a wonderful thing. I should not fail to study the regulations of the various communities which are scattered along the banks of the Nile, so as to be able to compare one with another. Such study is befitting a religious man like yourself. You have heard say, no doubt, that Abbot Ephrem has drawn up for his monastery pious regulations of great beauty. With his permission, you might make a copy of them, as you are a skilful penman. I could not do so, for my hands, accustomed to wield the spade, are too awkward to direct the thin reed of the scribe over the papyrus. But you have the knowledge of letters, brother, and should thank God for it, for beautiful writing cannot be too much admired. The work of the copyist and the reader is a great safeguard against evil thoughts. Brother Paphnutius, why do you not write out the teachings of our fathers, Paul and Anthony? Little by little you would recover, in these pious works, peace of soul and mind; solitude would again become pleasant to your heart, and soon you would be in a condition to recommence those ascetic works which your journey has interrupted. But you must not expect much benefit from excessive penitence. When he was amongst us, our Father Anthony used to say, ‘Excessive fasting produces weakness, and weakness begets idleness. There are some monks who ruin their body by fasts improperly prolonged. Of them it may be said that they plunge a dagger into their own breast, and deliver themselves up unresistingly into the power of the devil.’ So said the holy man, Anthony. I am but a foolish old man, but, by the grace of God, I have remembered what our father told us.”

Paphnutius thanked Palemon and promised to think over his advice. When he had passed the fence of reeds which enclosed the little garden, he turned round and saw the good old gardener engaged in watering his salads, whilst the pigeon walked about on his bent back, and at that sight Paphnutius felt ready to weep.

On returning to his cell, he found there a strange turmoil, as though it were filled with grains of sand blown about by a strong wind, and on looking closer, he saw these moving bodies were myriads of little jackals. That night he saw in a dream, a high stone column surmounted by a human face, and he heard a voice which said —

“Ascend this pillar!”

On awaking, he felt confident that this dream had been sent from heaven. He called his disciples, and addressed them in these words —

“My beloved sons, I must leave you, and go where God sends me. During my absence obey Flavian as you would me, and take care of our brother Paul. Bless you. Farewell.”

As he strode away, they remained prostrate on the ground, and when they raised their heads, they saw his tall dark figure on the sandy horizon.

He walked day and night until he reached the ruins of the temple, formerly built by the idolaters, in which he had slept amongst the scorpions and sirens on his former strange journey. The walls, covered with magic signs, were still standing. Thirty immense columns, which terminated in human heads or lotus flowers, still supported a heavy stone entablature. But, at one end of the temple, a pillar had shaken off its old burden, and stood isolated. It had for its capital the head of a woman which smiled, with long eyes and rounded cheeks, and on her forehead cow’s horns.

Paphnutius, on seeing it, recognised the column which had been shown him in his dream, and he calculated that it was thirty-two cubits high. He went to the neighbouring village, and ordered a ladder of that height to be made; and when the ladder was placed against the pillar, he ascended, knelt down on the top, and said to the Lord —

“Here, then, O God, is the abode Thou hast chosen for me. May I remain here, in Thy Grace, until the hour of my death.”

He had brought no provisions with him, trusting in divine providence, and expecting that charitable peasants would give him all that he needed. And, in fact, the next day, about the ninth hour, women came with their children, bringing bread, dates, and fresh water, which the boys carried to the top of the column.

The top of the pillar was not large enough to allow the monk to lie at full length, so that he slept with his legs crossed and his head on his breast, and sleep was a more cruel torture to him than his wakeful hours. At dawn the ospreys brushed him with their wings, and he awoke filled with pain and terror.

It happened that the carpenter who had made the ladder feared God. Disturbed at the thought that the saint was exposed to the sun and rain, and fearing that he might fall in his sleep, this pious man constructed a roof and a railing on the top of the column.

Soon the report of this extraordinary existence spread from village to village, and the labourers of the valley came on Sundays, with their wives and children, to look at the stylite. The disciples of Paphnutius, having learned with surprise the place of this wonderful retreat, came to him, and obtained from him permission to build their huts at the foot of the column. Every morning they

came and stood in a circle round the master, and received from him the words of instruction.

“My sons,” he said to them, “continue like those little children whom Jesus loved. That is the way of salvation. The sin of the flesh is the source and origin of all sins; they spring from it as from a parent. Pride, avarice, idleness, anger, and envy are its dearly beloved progeny. I have seen this in Alexandria; I have seen rich men carried away by the vice of lust, which, like a river with a turbid flood, swept them into the gulf of bitterness.”

The abbots Ephrem and Serapion, being informed of his strange proceeding, wished to behold him with their own eyes. Seeing from afar, on the river, the triangular sail which was bringing them to him, Paphnutius could not prevent himself from thinking that God had made him an example to all solitary monks. The two abbots, when they saw him, did not conceal their surprise; and, having consulted together, they agreed in condemning such an extraordinary penance, and exhorted Paphnutius to come down.

“Such a mode of life is contrary to all usage,” they said; “it is peculiar, and against all rules.”

But Paphnutius replied —

“What is the monastic life if not peculiar? And ought not the deeds of a monk to be as eccentric as he is himself? It was a sign from God that caused me to ascend here; it is a sign from God that will make me descend.”

Every day religious men came to join the disciples of Paphnutius, and they built for themselves shelters round the aerial hermitage. Several of them, to imitate the saint, mounted the ruins of the temple; but, being reproved by their brethren, and conquered by fatigue, they soon gave up these attempts.

Pilgrims flocked from all parts. There were some who had come long distances, and were hungry and thirsty. The idea occurred to a poor widow of selling fresh water and melons. Against the foot of the column, behind her bottles of red clay, her cups and her fruit under an awning of blue-and-white striped canvas, she cried, “Who wants to drink?” Following the example of this widow, a baker brought some bricks and made an oven close by, in the hope of selling loaves and cakes to visitors. As the crowd of visitors increased unceasingly, and the inhabitants of the large cities of Egypt began to come, some man, greedy of gain, built a caravanserai to lodge the guests and their servants, camels, and mules. Soon there was, in front of the column, a market to which the fishermen of the Nile brought their fish, and the gardeners their vegetables. A barber, who shaved people in the open air, amused the crowd with his jokes. The old temple, so long given over to silence and solitude was filled with countless sights and sounds of life. The innkeepers turned the subterranean vaults into

cellars and nailed on the old pillars signs surmounted by the figure of the holy Paphnutius, and bearing this inscription in Greek and Egyptian— "*Pomegranate wine, fig wine, and genuine Cilician beer sold here* ." On the walls, sculptured with pure and graceful carvings, the shop-keepers hung ropes of onions, and smoked fish, dead hares, and the carcasses of sheep. In the evening, the old occupants of the ruins, the rats, scuttled in a long row to the river, whilst the ibises, suspiciously craning their necks, perched on the high cornices, to which rose the smoke of the kitchens, the shouts of the drinkers, and the cries of the tapsters. All around, builders laid out streets, and masons constructed convents, chapels, and churches. By the end of six months a city was established with a guardhouse, a tribunal, a prison, and a school, kept by an old blind scribe.

The pilgrims were innumerable. Bishops and other Church dignitaries, came, full of admiration. The Patriarch of Antioch, who chanced to be in Egypt at that time, came with all his clergy. He highly approved of the extraordinary conduct of the stylite, and the heads of the Libyan Church followed, in the absence of Athanasius, the opinion of the Patriarch. Having learned which, Abbots Ephrem and Serapion came to the feet of Paphnutius to apologise for their former mistrust. Paphnutius replied —

"Know, my brothers, that the penance I endure is barely equal to the temptations which are sent me, the number and force of which astound me. A man, viewed externally, is but small, and, from the height of the pillar to which God has called me, I see human beings moving about like ants. But, considered internally, man is immense; he is as large as the world, for he contains it. All that is spread before me — these monasteries, these inns, the boats on the river, the villages, and what I see in the distance of fields, canals, sand, and mountains — is nothing in respect to what is in me. I carry in my heart countless cities and illimitable deserts. And evil — evil and death — spread over this immensity, cover them all, as night covers the earth. I am, in myself alone, a universe of evil thoughts."

He spoke thus because the desire for woman was in him.

The seventh month, there came from Alexandria, Bubastis and Sais, women who had long been barren, hoping to obtain children by the intercession of the holy man and the virtues of his pillar. They rubbed their sterile bodies against the stone. There followed a procession, as far as the eye could reach, of chariots, palanquins, and litters, which stopped and pushed and jostled below the man of God. From them came sick people terrible to see. Mothers brought to Paphnutius young boys whose limbs were twisted, their eyes starting, their mouth foaming, their voices hoarse. He laid his hands upon them. Blind men approached, groping with their hands, and raising towards him a face pierced with two

bleeding holes. Paralytics displayed before him the heavy immobility, the deadly emaciation, and the hideous contractions of their limbs; lame men showed him their club feet; women with cancer, holding their bosoms with both hands, uncovered before him their breasts devoured by the invisible vulture. Dropsical women, swollen like wine skins were placed on the ground before him. He blessed them. Nubians, afflicted with elephantiasis, advanced with heavy steps and looked at him with streaming eyes and expressionless countenances. He made the sign of the cross over them. A young girl of Aphroditopolis was brought to him on a litter; after having vomited blood, she had slept for three days. She looked like a waxen image, and her parents, who thought she was dead, had placed a palm leaf on her breast. Paphnutius having prayed to God, the young girl raised her head and opened her eyes.

As the people reported everywhere the miracles which the saint had performed, unfortunate persons afflicted with that disease which the Greeks call "the divine malady," came from all parts of Egypt in incalculable legions. As soon as they saw the pillar, they were seized with convulsions, rolled on the ground, writhed, and twisted themselves into a ball. And — though it is hardly to be believed — the persons present were in their turn seized with a violent delirium, and imitated the contortions of the epileptics. Monks and pilgrims, men and women, wallowed and struggled pell-mell, their limbs twisted, foaming at the mouth, eating handfuls of earth and prophesying. And Paphnutius at the top of his pillar felt a thrill of horror pass through him, and cried to God —

"I am the scapegoat, and I take upon me all the impurities of these people, and that is why, Lord, my body is filled with evil spirits."

Every time that a sick person went away healed, the people applauded, carried him in triumph, and ceased not to repeat —

"We behold another well of Siloam!"

Hundreds of crutches already hung round the wonderful column; grateful women suspended wreaths and votive images there. Some of the Greeks inscribed distiches, and as every pilgrim carved his name, the stone was soon covered as high as a man could reach with an infinity of Latin, Greek, Coptic, Punic, Hebrew, Syrian, and magic characters.

When the feast of Easter came there was such an affluence of people to this city of miracles that old men thought that the days of the ancient mysteries had returned. All sorts of people, in all sorts of costumes, were to be seen there; the striped robes of the Egyptians, the burnoose of the Arabs, the white drawers of the Nubians, the short cloak of the Greeks, the long toga of the Romans, the scarlet breeches of the barbarians, the gold-spangled robes of the courtesans. A veiled woman would pass on an ass, preceded by black eunuchs, who cleared a

passage for her by the free use of their sticks. Acrobats, having spread a carpet on the ground, juggled and performed skilful tricks before a circle of silent spectators. Snake-charmers unrolled their living girdles. A glittering, dusty, noisy, chattering crowd! The curses of the camel-drivers beating the animals; the cries of the hawkers who sold amulets against leprosy and the evil eye; the psalmody of the monks reciting verses of the Bible; the shrieking of the women who were prophesying; the shouting of the beggars singing old songs of the harem; the bleating of sheep; the braying of asses; the sailors calling tardy passengers; all these confused noises caused a deafening uproar, over which dominated the strident voices of the little naked negro boys, running about everywhere selling fresh dates.

And all these human beings stifled under the white sky, in a heavy atmosphere laden with the perfumes of women, the odour of negroes, the fumes of cooking and the smoke of gums, which the devotees bought of the shepherds to burn before the saint.

When night came, fires, torches, and lanterns were lighted everywhere, and nothing was to be seen but red shadows and black shapes. Standing amidst a circle of squatting listeners, an old man, his face lighted by a smoky lamp, related how, formerly, Bitiou had enchanted his heart, torn it from his breast, placed it in an acacia, and then transformed himself into a tree. He made gestures, which his shadow repeated with absurd exaggerations, and the audience uttered cries of admiration. In the taverns, the drinkers, lying on couches, called for beer and wine. Dancing girls, with painted eyes and bare stomachs, performed before them religious or lascivious scenes. In retired corners, young men played dice or other games, and old men followed prostitutes. Above all these rose the solitary, unchanging column; the head with the cow's horns gazed into the shadow, and above it Paphnutius watched between heaven and earth. All at once the moon rose over the Nile, like the bare shoulder of a goddess. The hills gleamed with blue light, and Paphnutius thought he saw the body of Thais shinning in the glimmer of the waters amidst the sapphire night.

The days passed, and the saint still lived on his pillar. When the rainy season came, the waters of heaven, filtering through the cracks in the roof, wetted his body; his stiff limbs were incapable of movement. Scorched by the sun, and reddened by the dew, his skin broke; large ulcers devoured his arms and legs. But the desire of Thais still consumed him inwardly, and he cried —

“It is not enough, great God! More temptations! More unclean thoughts! More horrible desires! Lord, lay upon me all the lusts of men, that I may expiate them all! Though it is false that the Greek bitch took upon herself all the sins of

the world, as I heard an impostor once declare, yet there is a hidden meaning in the fable, the truth of which I now recognise. For it is true that the sins of the people enter the soul of the saints, and are lost there as in a well. Thus it is that the souls of the just are polluted with more filth than is ever found in the soul of the sinner. And, for that reason, I praise Thee, O my God, for having made me the cesspool of the world.”

One day, a rumour ran through the holy city, and even reached the ears of the hermit: a very great personage, a man occupying a high position, the Prefect of the Alexandrian fleet, Lucius Aurelius Cotta, was about to visit the city — was, indeed, now on his way.

The news was true. Old Cotta, who was inspecting the canals and the navigation of the Nile, had many times expressed a desire to see the stylite and the new city, to which the name of Stylopolis had been given. The Stylopolitans saw the river covered with sails one morning. Cotta appeared on board a golden galley hung with purple, and followed by all his fleet. He landed, and advanced, accompanied by a secretary carrying his tablets, and Aristaeus, his physician, with whom he liked to converse.

A numerous suite walked behind him, and the shore was covered with *laticlaves* (*) and military uniforms. He stopped, some paces from the column, and began to examine the stylite, wiping his face meanwhile with the skirt of his toga. Being of a naturally curious disposition, he had observed many things in the course of his long voyages. He liked to remember them, and intended to write, after he had finished his Punic history, a book on the remarkable things he had witnessed. He seemed much interested by the spectacle before him.

(*) The *laticlave* was a toga, with a broad purple band, worn by Roman senators as the distinguishing mark of their high office.

“This is very curious!” he said, puffing and blowing. “And — which is a circumstance worthy of being recorded — this man was my guest. Yes, this monk supped with me last year, after which he carried off an actress.”

Turning to his secretary —

“Note that, my son, on my tablets; also the dimensions of the column, not omitting the shape of the top of it.”

Then, wiping his face again —

“Persons deserving of belief have assured me that this monk has not left his column for a single moment since he mounted it a year ago. Is that possible, Aristaeus?”

“That which is possible to a lunatic or a sick man,” replied Aristaeus, “would be impossible to a man sound in body and mind. Do you know, Lucius, that

sometimes diseases of the mind or body give to those afflicted by them a strength which healthy men do not possess? For, as a matter of fact, there is no such thing as good health or bad health. There are only different conditions of the organs. Having studied what are called maladies, I have come to consider them as necessary forms of life. I take pleasure in studying them in order to be able to conquer them. Some of them are worthy of admiration, and conceal, under apparent disorder, profound harmonies; for instance, a quartan fever is certainly a very pretty thing! Sometimes certain affections of the body cause a rapid augmentation of the faculties of the mind. You know Creon? When he was a child, he stuttered and was stupid. But, having cracked his skull by tumbling off a ladder, he became an able lawyer, as you are aware. This monk must be affected in some hidden organ. Moreover, this kind of existence is not so extraordinary as it appears to you, Lucius. I may remind you that the gymnosophists of India can remain motionless, not merely for a year, but during twenty, thirty, or forty years.”

“By Jupiter!” cried Cotta, “that is a strange madness. For man was born to move and act, and idleness is an unpardonable crime, because it is an injury to the State. I do not know of any religion in which such an objectionable practice is permitted, though it possibly may be in some of the Asiatic creeds. When I was Governor of Syria, I found *phalli* erected in the porches at the city of Hera. A man ascended, twice a year, and remained there for a week. The people believed that this man talked with the gods, and interceded with them for the prosperity of Syria. The custom appeared senseless to me; nevertheless I did nothing to put it down. For I consider that a functionary ought not to interfere with the manners and customs of the people, but on the contrary, to see that they are preserved. It is not the business of the government to force a religion on a people, but to maintain that which exists, which, whether good or bad, has been regulated by the spirit of the time, the place, and the race. If it endeavours to put down a religion, it proclaims itself revolutionary in its spirit, and tyrannical in its acts, and is justly detested. Besides, how are you to raise yourself above the superstitions of the vulgar, except by understanding them and tolerating them? Aristaeus, I am of opinion that I should leave this nephelo-coccygian(*) in the air, exposed only to the indignities the birds shower on him. I should not gain anything by having him pulled down, but I should by taking note of his thoughts and beliefs.”

(*) Nephelo-coccygia, the cloud-city built by the cuckoos,
in the *Birds* of Aristophanes.

He puffed, coughed, and placed his hand on the secretary’s shoulder.

“My child, note down that, amongst certain sects of Christians, it is considered praiseworthy to carry off courtesans and live upon columns. You may add that these customs are evidence of the worship of genetic divinities. But on this point we ought to question him himself.”

Then, raising his head, and shading his eyes with his hand, to keep off the sun, he shouted —

“Hallo, Paphnutius! If you remember that you were once my guest, answer me. What are you doing up there? Why did you go up, and why do you stay there? Has this column any phallic signification in your mind?”

Paphnutius, considering Cotta as nothing but an idolater, did not deign to reply. But his disciple, Flavian, approached, and said —

“Illustrious Sir, this holy man takes the sins of the world upon him, and cures diseases.”

“By Jupiter! Do you hear, Aristaeus?” cried Cotta. “This nephelo-coccygian practises medicine, like you. What do you think of so high a rival?”

Aristaeus shook his head.

“It is very possible that he may cure certain diseases better than I can; such, for instance, as epilepsy, vulgarly called the divine malady, although all maladies are equally divine, for they all come from the gods. But the cause of this disease lies, partly, in the imagination, and you must confess, Lucius, that this monk, perched up on the head of a goddess, strikes the minds of the sick people more forcibly than I, bending over my mortars and phials in my laboratory, could ever do. There are forces, Lucius, infinitely more powerful than reason and science.”

“What are they?” asked Cotta.

“Ignorance and folly,” replied Aristaeus.

“I have rarely seen a more curious sight,” continued Cotta, “and I hope that some day an able writer will relate the foundation of Stylopolis. But even the most extraordinary spectacles should not keep, longer than is befitting, a serious and busy man from his work. Let us go and inspect the canals. Farewell, good Paphnutius! or rather, till our next meeting! If ever you should come down to earth again, and revisit Alexandria, do not fail to come and sup with me.”

These words, heard by all present, passed from mouth to mouth, and being repeated by the believers, added greatly to the reputation of Paphnutius. Pious minds amplified and transformed them, and it was stated that Paphnutius, from the top of his pillar, had converted the Prefect of the Fleet to the faith of the apostles and the Nicaean fathers. The believers found a figurative meaning in the last words uttered by Aurelius Cotta; to them, the supper to which this important personage had invited the ascetic, was a holy communion, a spiritual repast, a

celestial banquet. The story of this meeting was embroidered with wonderful details, which those who invented were the first to believe. It was said that when Cotta, after a long argument, had embraced the truth, an angel had come from heaven to wipe the sweat from his brow. The physician and secretary of the Prefect of the Fleet had also, it was asserted, been converted at the same time. And, the miracle being public and notorious, the deacons of the principal churches of Libya recorded it amongst the authentic facts. After that, it could be said, without any exaggeration, that the whole world was seized with a desire to see Paphnutius, and that, in the West as well as the East, all Christians turned their astonished eyes towards him. The most celebrated cities of Italy sent deputations to him, and the Roman Caesar, the divine Constantine who favoured the Christian religion, wrote him a letter which the legates brought to him with great ceremony. But one night, whilst the budding city at his feet slept in the dew, he heard a voice, which said —

“Paphnutius, thou art become celebrated by thy works and powerful by thy word. God has raised thee up for His glory. He has chosen thee to work miracles, heal the sick, convert the Pagans, enlighten sinners, confound the Arians, and establish peace in the Church.”

Paphnutius replied —

“God’s will be done!”

The voice continued —

“Arise, Paphnutius, and go seek in his palace the impious Constans, who, far from imitating the wisdom of his brother, Constantine, inclines to the errors of Arius and Marcus. Go! The bronze gates shall fly open before thee, and thy sandals shall resound on the golden floor of the basilica before the throne of the Caesars, and thy awe-inspiring voice shall change the heart of the son of Constantinus. Thou shalt reign over a peaceful and powerful Church. And, even as the soul directs the body, so shall the Church govern the empire. Thou shalt be placed above senators, comites, and patricians. Thou shalt repress the greed of the people, and check the boldness of the barbarians. Old Cotta, knowing that thou art the head of the government, will seek the honour of washing thy feet. At thy death thy *cilicium* shall be taken to the patriarch of Alexandria, and the great Athanasius, white with glory, shall kiss it as the relic of a saint. Go!”

Paphnutius replied —

“Let the will of God be accomplished!”

And making an effort to stand up, he prepared to descend. But the voice, divining his intention, said —

“Above all, descend not by the ladder. That would be to act like an ordinary man, and to be unconscious of the gifts that are in thee. A great saint, like thee,

ought to fly through the air. Leap! the angels are there to support thee. Leap, then!”

Paphnutius replied —

“The will of God be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Extending his long arms like the ragged wings of a huge sick bird, he was about to throw himself down, when, suddenly, a hideous mocking laugh rang in his ears. Terrified, he asked —

“Who laughs thus?”

“Ah? ah!” screamed the voice, “we are yet but at the beginning of our friendship; thou wilt some day be better acquainted with me. My friend, it was I who caused thee to ascend here, and I ought to be satisfied at the docility with which thou hast accomplished my wishes. Paphnutius, I am pleased with thee.”

Paphnutius murmured, in a voice stifled by fear —

“Avaunt, avaunt! I know thee now; thou art he who carried Jesus to a pinnacle of the temple, and showed him all the kingdoms of this world.”

He fell, affrighted, on the stone.

“Why did I not know this sooner?” he thought. “More wretched than the blind, deaf, and paralysed who trust in me, I have lost all knowledge of things supernatural, and am more depraved than the maniacs who eat earth and approach dead bodies. I can no longer distinguish between the clamours of hell and the voices of heaven. I have lost even the intuition of the new-born child, who cries when its nurse’s breast is taken from it, of the dog that scents out its master’s footsteps, of the plant that turns towards the sun. I am the laughing-stock of the devils. So, then, it is Satan who led me here. When he elevated me on this pedestal, lust and pride mounted with me. It is not the magnitude of my temptations which terrifies me. Anthony, on his mountain, suffers the same. I wish that all their swords may pierce my flesh, before the eyes of the angels. I have even learned to like my sufferings. But God does not speak to me, and His silence astonishes me. He has left me — and I had but Him to look to. He leaves me alone in the horror of His absence. He flies from me. I will follow after Him. This stone burns my feet. Let me leave quickly, and come up with God.”

With that he seized the ladder which stood against the column, put his feet on it, and having descended a rung, found himself face to face with the monster’s head; she smiled strangely. He was certain then that what he had taken for the site of his rest and glory, was but the diabolical instrument of his trouble and damnation. He hastily descended and touched the soil. His feet had forgotten their use, and he reeled. But, feeling on him the shadow of the cursed column, he forced himself to run. All slept. He traversed, without being seen, the great square surrounded by wine-shops, inns, and caravanserais, and threw himself

into a by-street which led towards the Libyan Hills. A dog pursued him, barking, and stopped only at the edge of the desert. Paphnutius went through a country where there was no road but the trail of wild beasts. Leaving behind him the huts abandoned by the coiners, he continued all night and all day his solitary flight.

At last, almost ready to expire with hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and not knowing if God was still far from him, he came to a silent city which extended from right to left, and stretched away till it was lost in the blue horizon. The buildings, which were widely separated and like each other, resembled pyramids cut off at half their height. They were tombs. The doors were broken, and in the shadow of the chambers could be seen the gleaming eyes of hyaenas and wolves who brought forth their young there, whilst the dead bodies lay on the threshold, despoiled by robbers, and gnawed by the wild beasts. Having passed through this funeral city, Paphnutius fell exhausted before a tomb which stood near a spring surrounded by palm trees. This tomb was much ornamented, and, as there was no door to it, he saw inside it a painted chamber, in which serpents bred.

“Here,” he sighed, “is the abode I have chosen; the tabernacle of my repentance and penitence.”

He dragged himself to it, drove out the reptiles with his feet, and remained prostrate on the stone floor for eighteen hours, at the end of which time he went to the spring, and drank out of his hand. Then he plucked some dates and some stalks of lotus, the seeds of which he ate. Thinking this kind of life was good, he made it the rule of his existence. From morning to night he never lifted his forehead from the stone.

One day, whilst he was thus prostrated, he heard a voice which said —

“Look at these images, that thou mayest learn.”

Then, raising his head, he saw, on the walls of the chamber, paintings which represented lively and domestic scenes. They were of very old work, and marvellously lifelike. There were cooks who blew the fire, with their cheeks all puffed out; others plucked geese, or cooked quarters of sheep in stew-pans. A little farther, a hunter carried on his shoulders a gazelle pierced with arrows. In one place, peasants were sowing, reaping, or gathering. In another, women danced to the sounds of viols, flutes, and harp. A young girl played the theorbo. The lotus flower shone in her hair, which was neatly braided. Her transparent dress let the pure forms of her body be seen. Her bosom and mouth were perfect. The face was turned in profile, and the beautiful eye looked straight before her. The whole figure was exquisite. Paphnutius having examined it, lowered his eyes, and replied to the voice —

“Why dost thou command me to look at these images? No doubt they represent the terrestrial life of the idolater whose body rests here, under my feet,

at the bottom of a well, in a coffin of black basalt. They recall the life of a dead man, and are, despite their bright colours, the shadows of a shadow. The life of a dead man! O vanity!”

“He is dead, but he lived,” replied the voice; “and thou wilt die, and wilt not have lived.”

From that day, Paphnutius had not a moment’s rest. The voice spoke to him incessantly. The girl with the theorbo looked fixedly at him from underneath the long lashes of her eye. At last she also spoke —

“Look. I am mysterious and beautiful. Love me. Exhaust in my arms the love which torments you. What use is it to fear me? You cannot escape me; I am the beauty of woman. Whither do you think to fly from me, senseless fool? You will find my likeness in the radiancy of flowers, and in the grace of the palm trees, in the flight of pigeons, in the bounds of the gazelle, in the rippling of brooks, in the soft light of the moon, and if you close your eyes, you will find me within yourself. It is a thousand years since the man who sleeps here, swathed in linen, in a bed of black stone, pressed me to his heart. It is a thousand years since he received the last kiss from my mouth, and his sleep is yet redolent with it. You know me well, Paphnutius. How is it you have not recognised me? I am one of the innumerable incarnations of Thais. You are a learned monk, and well skilled in the knowledge of things. You have travelled, and it is by travel a man learns the most. Often a day passed abroad will show more novelties than ten years passed at home. You have heard that Thais lived formerly in Argos, under the name of Helen. She had another existence in Thebes Hecatompyle. And I was Thais of Thebes. How is it you have not guessed it? I took, when I was alive, a large share in the sins of this world, and now reduced here to the condition of a shadow, I am still quite capable of taking your sins upon me, beloved monk. Whence comes your surprise? It was certain that, wherever you went, you would find Thais again.”

He struck his forehead against the pavement, and uttered a cry of terror. And every night the player of the theorbo left the wall, approached him, and spoke in a clear voice mingled with soft breathing. And as the holy man resisted the temptations she gave him, she said to him —

“Love me; yield, friend. As long as you resist me I shall torment you. You do not know what the patience of a dead woman is. I shall wait, if necessary, till you are dead. Being a sorceress, I shall put into your lifeless body a spirit who will reanimate it, and who will not refuse me what I have asked in vain of you. And think, Paphnutius, what a strange situation when your blessed soul sees, from the height of heaven, its own body given up to sin. God, who has promised to return you this body after the day of judgment and the end of time, will

Himself be much puzzled. How can He place in celestial glory a human form inhabited by a devil, and guarded by a sorceress? You have not thought of that difficulty. Nor God either, perhaps. Between ourselves, He is not very knowing. Any ordinary magician can easily deceive Him, and if He had not His thunder, and the cataracts of heaven, the village urchins would pull His beard. He has certainly not as much sense as the old serpent, His adversary. He, indeed, is a wonderful artist. If I am so beautiful, it is because he adorned me with all my attractions. It was he who taught me how to braid my hair, and to make for myself rosy fingers with agate nails. You have misunderstood him. When you came to live in this tomb, you drove out with your feet the serpents which were here, without troubling yourself to know whether they were of his family, and you crushed their eggs. I am afraid, my poor friend, you will have a troublesome business on your hands. You were warned, however, that he was a musician and a lover. What have you done? You have quarrelled with science and beauty. You are altogether miserable, and Iaveh does not come to your help. It is not probable that he will come. Being as great as all things, he cannot move for want of space, and if, by an impossibility, he made the least movement, all creation would be pushed out of place. My handsome hermit, give me a kiss.”

Paphnutius was aware that great prodigies are performed by magic arts. He thought — not without much uneasiness —

“Perhaps the dead man buried at my feet knows the words written in that mysterious book which exists hidden, not far from here, at the bottom of a royal tomb. By virtue of these words, the dead, taking the form which they had upon earth, see the light of the sun and the smiles of women.”

His chief fear was that the girl with the theorbo and the dead man might come together, as they did in their lifetime, and that he should see them unite. Sometimes he thought he heard the sound of kissing.

He was troubled in his mind, and now, in the absence of God he feared to think as much as to feel. One evening, when he was kneeling prostrate according to his custom, an unknown voice said to him —

“Paphnutius, there are on earth more people than you imagine, and if I were to show you what I have seen, you would die of astonishment. There are men with a single eye in the middle of their forehead. There are men who have but one leg, and advance by jumps. There are men who change their sex, and the females become males. There are men-trees, who shoot out roots in the ground. And there are men with no head, with two eyes, a nose, and a mouth in their breast. Can you honestly believe that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of these men?”

Another time he had a vision. He saw, in a strong light, a broad road, rivulets, and gardens. On the road, Aristobulus and Chereas passed at a gallop on their Syrian horses, and the joyous ardour of the race reddened the cheeks of the two young men. Beneath a portico, Callicrates recited his verses; satisfied pride trembled in his voice and shone in his eyes. In the garden, Zenothemis picked apples of gold, and caressed a serpent with azure wings. Clad in white, and wearing a shining mitre, Hermodorus meditated beneath a sacred persea, which bore, instead of flowers, small heads of pure profile, wearing, like the Egyptian goddesses, vultures, hawks, or the shining disk of the moon; whilst in the background, by the side of a fountain, Nicias studied, on an armillary sphere, the harmonious movements of the stars.

Then a veiled woman approached the monk, holding in her hand a branch of myrtle. She said to him —

“Look! Some seek eternal beauty, and place their ephemeral life in the infinite. Others live without much thought. But by that alone they submit to fair Nature, and they are happy and beautiful in the joy of living only, and give glory to the supreme artist of all things; for man is a noble hymn to God. All think that happiness is innocent, and that pleasure is permitted to man. Paphnutius, if they are right, what a dupe you have been!”

And the vision vanished.

Thus was Paphnutius tempted unceasingly in body and mind. Satan never gave him a minute’s repose. The solitude of the tomb was more peopled than the streets of a great city. The devils shouted with laughter, and millions of imps, evil genii, and phantoms imitated all the ordinary transactions of life. In the evening, when he went to the spring, satyrs and nymphs capered round him, and tried to drag him into their lascivious dances. The demons no longer feared him. They loaded him with insults, obscene jests, and blows. One day a devil, no longer than his arm, stole the cord he wore round his waist.

He said to himself —

“Thought, whither hast thou led me?”

And he resolved to work with his hands, in order to give his mind that rest of which it had need. Near the spring, some banana trees, with large leaves, grew under the shade of the palms. He cut the stalks, and carried them to the tomb. He crushed them with a stone, and reduced them to fibres, as he had seen ropemakers do. For he intended to make a cord, to replace that which the devil had stolen. The demons were somewhat displeased at this; they ceased their clamour, and the girl with the theorbo no longer continued her magic arts, but remained quietly on the wall. The courage and faith of Paphnutius increased whilst he pounded the banana stems.

“With Heaven’s help,” he said to himself, “I shall subdue the flesh. As to my soul, its confidence is still unshaken. In vain do the devils, and that accursed woman, try to instil into my mind doubts as to the nature of God. I will reply to them, by the mouth of the Apostle John, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.’ That I firmly believe, and that which I believe is absurd, I believe still more firmly. In fact it should be absurd. If it were not so, I should not believe; I should know. And it is not that which we know which gives eternal life; it is faith only that saves.”

He exposed the separated fibres to the sun and the dew, and every morning he took care to turn them, to prevent them rotting; and he rejoiced to find that he had become as simple as a child. When he had twisted his cord, he cut reeds to make mats and baskets. The sepulchral chamber resembled a basket-maker’s workshop, and Paphnutius could pass without difficulty from work to prayer. Yet still God was not merciful to him, for one night he was awakened by a voice which froze him with horror, for he guessed that it was the voice of the dead man.

The voice called quickly, in a light whisper —

“Helen! Helen! come and bathe with me! come quickly!”

A woman, whose mouth was close to the monk’s ear, replied —

“Friend, I cannot rise; a man is lying on me.”

Paphnutius suddenly perceived that his cheek rested on a woman’s breast. He recognised the player of the theorbo, who, partly relieved of his weight, raised her breast. He clung tightly to the sweet, warm, perfumed body, and consumed with the desire of damnation, he cried —

“Stay, stay, my heavenly one!”

But she was already standing on the threshold. She laughed, and her smile gleamed in the silver rays of the moon.

“Why should I stay?” she said. “The shadow of a shadow is enough for a lover endowed with such a lively imagination. Besides, you have sinned. What more was needed?”

Paphnutius wept in the night, and when the dawn came, he murmured a prayer that was a meek complaint —

“Jesus, my Jesus, why hast Thou forsaken me! Thou seest the danger in which I am. Come, and help me, sweet Saviour. Since Thy Father no longer loves me, and does not hear me, remember that I have but Thee. From Him nothing is to be hoped; I cannot comprehend Him, and He cannot pity me. But Thou was born of a woman, and that is why I trust in Thee. Remember that Thou wast a man. I pray to Thee, not because Thou art God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, but because Thou hast lived poor and humble on this

earth where now I suffer, because Satan has tempted Thy flesh, because the sweat of agony has bedewed Thy face. It is to Thy humanity that I pray, Jesus, my brother Jesus!”

When he had thus prayed, wringing his hands, a terrible peal of laughter shook the walls of the tomb, and the voice which rang in his ears on the top of the column, said jeeringly —

“That is a prayer worthy of the breviary of Marcus, the heretic. Paphnutius is an Arian! Paphnutius is an Arian!”

As though thunderstruck, the monk fell senseless.

When he reopened his eyes, he saw around him monks wearing black hoods, who poured water on his temples, and recited exorcisms. Many others were standing outside, carrying palm leaves.

“As we passed through the desert,” said one of them, “we heard cries issuing from this tomb, and, having entered, we found you lying unconscious on the floor. Doubtless the devils had thrown you down, and had fled at our approach.”

Paphnutius, raising his head, asked in a feeble voice —

“Who are you, my brothers? And why do you carry palms in your hands? Is it for my burial?”

One of them replied —

“Brother, do you not know that our father, Anthony, now a hundred and five years old, having been warned of his approaching end, has come down from Mount Colzin, to which he had retired, to bless his numerous spiritual children? We are going with palm leaves to greet our holy father. But how is it, brother, that you are ignorant of such a great event? Can it be possible that no angel came to this tomb to inform you?”

“Alas!” replied Paphnutius, “I am not worthy of such a favour, and the only denizens of this abode are demons and vampires. Pray for me. I am Paphnutius, Abbot of Antinoe, the most wretched of the servants of God.”

At the name of Paphnutius, all waved their palm leaves and murmured his praises. The monk who had previously spoken, cried in surprise —

“Can it be that thou art that holy Paphnutius, celebrated for so many works that it was supposed he would some day equal the great Anthony himself? Most venerable, it was thou who convertedst to God the courtesan, Thais, and who, raised upon a high column, was carried away by the seraphs. Those who watched by night, at the foot of the pillar, saw thy blessed assumption. The wings of the angels encircled thee in a white cloud, and with thy right hand extended thou didst bless the dwellings of man. The next day, when the people saw thou wert no longer there, a long groan rose to the summit of the discrowned

pillar. But Flavian, thy disciple, reported the miracle, and took thy place as the head. But a foolish man, of the name of Paul, tried to contradict the general opinion. He asserted that he had seen thee, in a dream, carried away by the devils; the people wanted to stone him, and it was a miracle that he escaped death. I am Zozimus, abbot of these solitary monks whom thou seest prostrate at thy feet. Like them, I kneel before thee, that thou mayest bless the father with the children. Then thou shalt relate to us the marvels which God has deigned to accomplish by thy means.”

“Far from having favoured me as thou believest,” replied Paphnutius, “the Lord has tried me with terrible temptations. I was not carried away by angels. But a shadowy wall is raised in front of my eyes, and moves before me. I have lived in a dream. Without God all is a dream. When I made my journey to Alexandria, I heard, in a short space of time, many discourses, and I learned that the army of errors was innumerable. It pursues me, and I am compassed about with swords.”

Zozimus replied —

“Venerable father, we must remember that the saints, and especially the solitary saints, undergo terrible trials. If thou wast not carried to heaven by the seraphs, it is certain that the Lord granted that favour to thy image, for Flavian, the monks, and the people were witnesses of thy assumption.”

Paphnutius resolved to go and receive the blessing of Anthony.

“Brother Zozimus,” he said, “give me one of these palm leaves, and let us go and meet our father.”

“Let us go,” replied Zozimus; “military order is most befitting for monks, who are God’s soldiers. Thou and I, being abbots, will march in front, and the others shall follow us, singing psalms.”

They set out on their march, and Paphnutius said —

“God is unity, for He is the truth, which is one. The world is many, because it is error. We should turn away from all the sights of nature, even those which appear the most innocent. Their diversity renders them pleasant, which is a sign that they are evil. For that reason, I cannot see a tuft of papyrus by the side of still waters without my soul being imbued with melancholy. All things that the senses perceive are detestable. The least grain of sand brings danger. Everything tempts us. Woman is but a combination of all the temptations scattered in the thin air, on the flowering earth, in the clear waters. Happy is he whose soul is a sealed vase! Happy is he who knows how to be deaf, dumb, and blind, and who knows nothing of the world, in order that he may know God!”

Zozimus, having meditated upon these words, replied as follows —

“Venerable father, it is fitting that I should avow my sins to thee, since thou hast shown me thy soul. Thus we shall confess to each other, according to the apostolic custom. Before I was a monk, I led an abominable life. At Madaura, a city celebrated for its courtesans, I sought out all kinds of worldly love. Every night I supped in company with young debauchees and female flute players, and I took home with me the one who pleased me the best. A saint like thee could never imagine to what a pitch the fury of my desires carried me. Suffice it to say that it spared neither matrons nor nuns, and spread adultery and sacrilege everywhere. I excited my senses with wine, and was justly known as the heaviest drinker in Madaura. Yet I was a Christian, and, in all my follies, kept my faith in Jesus crucified. Having devoured my substance in riotous living, I was beginning to feel the first attacks of poverty, when I saw one of my companions in pleasure suddenly struck with a terrible disease. His knees could not sustain him; his twitching hands refused to obey him; his glazed eyes closed. Only horrible groans came from his breast. His mind, heavier than his body, slumbered. To punish him for having lived like a beast, God had changed him into a beast. The loss of my property had already inspired me with salutary reflections, but the example of my friend was of yet greater efficacy; it made such an impression on my heart that I quitted the world and retired into the desert. There I have enjoyed for twenty years a peace that nothing has troubled. I work with my monks as weaver, architect, carpenter, and even as scribe, though, to say the truth, I have little taste for writing, having always preferred action to thought. My days are full of joy, and my nights without dreams, and I believe that the grace of the Lord is in me, because, even in the midst of the most frightful sins, I have never lost hope.”

On hearing these words, Paphnutius lifted his eyes to heaven and murmured

“Lord, Thou lookest with kindness upon this man polluted by adultery, sacrilege, and so many crimes, and Thou turnest away from me, who have always kept Thy commandments! How inscrutable is Thy justice, O my God! and how impenetrable are Thy ways!”

Zozimus extended his arms.

“Look, venerable father! On both sides of the horizon are long, black files that look like emigrant ants. They are our brothers, who, like us, are going to meet Anthony.”

When they came to the place of meeting, they saw a magnificent spectacle. The army of monks extended, in three ranks, in an immense semicircle. In the first rank stood the old hermits of the desert, cross in hand, and with long beards that almost touched the ground. The monks, governed by the abbots Ephrem and

Serapion, and also all the cenobites of the Nile, formed the second line. Behind them appeared the ascetics, who had come from their distant rocks. Some wore, on their blackened and dried-up bodies, shapeless rags; others had for their only clothes, bundles of reeds held together by withies. Many of them were naked, but God had covered them with a fell of hair as thick as a sheep's fleece. All held branches of palm; they looked like an emerald rainbow, or they might have been also compared to the host of the elect — the living walls of the city of God.

Such perfect order reigned in the assembly, that Paphnutius found, without difficulty, the monks he governed. He placed himself near them, after having taken care to hide his face under his hood, that he might remain unknown, and not disturb them in their pious expectation. Suddenly, an immense shout arose —

“The saint!” they all cried. “The saint! Behold the great saint, against whom hell has not prevailed, the well-beloved of God! Our father, Anthony!”

Then a great silence followed, and every forehead was lowered to the sand.

From the summit of a dune, in the vast void space, Anthony advanced, supported by his beloved disciples, Macarius and Amathas. He walked slowly, but his figure was still upright, and showed the remains of a superhuman strength. His white beard spread over his broad chest, his polished skull reflected the rays of sunlight like the forehead of Moses. The keen gaze of the eagle was in his eyes; the smile of a child shone on his round cheek. To bless his people, he raised his arms, tired by a century of marvellous works, and his voice burst forth for the last time, with the words of love.

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!”

Immediately, from one end to the other of the living wall, like a peal of harmonious thunder, the psalm, “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,” broke forth.

Accompanied by Macarius and Amathas, Anthony passed along the ranks of the old hermits, anchorites, and cenobites. This seer, who had beheld heaven and hell; this hermit, who from a cave in the rock, governed the Christian Church; this saint, who had sustained the faith of the martyrs; this scholar, whose eloquence had paralysed the heretics, spoke tenderly to each of his sons, and bade them a kindly farewell, on the eve of the blessed death, which God, who loved him, had at last promised him.

He said to the abbots Ephrem and Serapion —

“You command large armies, and you are both great generals. Therefore, you shall put on in heaven an armour of gold, and the Archangel Michael shall give you the title of chiliarchs of his hosts.”

Perceiving the old man Philemon, he embraced him, and said —

“Behold, the kindest and best of all my children. His soul exhales a perfume as sweet as the flower of the beans he sows every year.”

To Abbot Zozimus he addressed these words —

“Thou hast never mistrusted divine goodness, and therefore the peace of the Lord is in thee. The lily of thy virtues has flowered upon the dunghill of thy corruption.”

To all he spoke words of unerring wisdom.

To the old hermits he said —

“The apostle saw, round the throne of God, eighty old men seated, clad in white robes, and wearing crowns on their heads.”

To the young men —

“Be joyful; leave sadness to the happy ones of this world.”

Thus he passed along the front of his filial army, exhorting and comforting. Paphnutius, seeing him approach, fell on his knees, his heart torn by fear and hope.

“My father! my father!” he cried in his agony. “My father! come to my help, for I perish. I have given to God the soul of Thais; I have lived upon the top of a column, and in the chamber of a tomb. My forehead, unceasingly in the dust, has become horny as a camel’s knee. And yet God has gone from me. Bless me, my father, and I shall be saved; shake the hyssop, and I shall be washed, and I shall shine as the snow.”

Anthony did not reply. He turned to the monks of Antinoe those eyes whose looks no man could sustain. He gazed for a long time at Paul, called the Fool; then he made a sign to him to approach. And, as all were astonished that the saint should address himself to a man who was not in his senses, Anthony said —

“God has granted to him more grace than to any of you. Lift thy eyes, my son Paul, and tell me what thou seest in heaven.”

Paul the Fool raised his eyes; his face shone, and his tongue was unloosed.

“I see in heaven,” he said, “a bed adorned with hangings of purple and gold. Around it three virgins keep constant watch that no soul may approach it, except the chosen one for whom the bed is prepared.”

Believing that this bed was the symbol of his glorification, Paphnutius had already begun to return thanks to God. But Anthony made a sign to him to be silent, and to listen to the Fool, who murmured in his ecstasy —

“The three virgins speak to me; they say unto me: ‘A saint is about to quit the earth; Thais of Alexandria is dying. And we have prepared the bed of her glory, for we are her virtues — Faith, Fear, and Love.’”

Anthony asked —

“Sweet child, what else seest thou?”

Paul gazed vacantly from the zenith to the nadir, and from west to east, when suddenly his eyes fell on the Abbot of Antinoe. His face grew pale with a holy terror, and his eyeballs reflected invisible flames.

“I see,” he murmured, “three demons, who, full of joy, prepare to seize that man. One of them is like unto a tower, one to a woman, and one to a mage. All three bear their name, marked with red-hot iron; the first on the forehead, the second on the belly, the third on the breast, and those names are — Pride, Lust, and Doubt. I have finished.”

Having spoken thus, Paul, with haggard eyes and hanging jaw, returned to his old simple ways.

And, as the monks of Antinoe looked anxiously at Anthony, the saint pronounced these words —

“God has made known His just judgment. Let us bow to Him and hold our peace.”

He passed. He bestowed blessings as he went. The sun, now descended to the horizon, enveloped him in its glory, and his shadow, immeasurably elongated by a miracle from heaven, unrolled itself behind him like an endless carpet, as a sign of the long remembrance this great saint would leave amongst men.

Upright, but thunderstruck, Paphnutius saw and heard nothing more. One word alone rang in his ears, “Thais is dying!” The thought had never occurred to him. Twenty years had he contemplated a mummy’s head, and yet the idea that death would close the eyes of Thais astonished him hopelessly.

“Thais is dying!” An incomprehensible saying! “Thais is dying!” In those three words what a new and terrible sense! “Thais is dying!” Then why the sun, the flowers, the brooks, and all creation? “Thais is dying!” What good was all the universe? Suddenly he sprang forward. “To see her again, to see her once more!” He began to run. He knew not where he was, or whither he went, but instinct conducted him with unerring certainty; he went straight to the Nile. A swarm of sails covered the upper waters of the river. He sprang on board a barque manned by Nubians, and lying in the forepart of the boat, his eyes devouring space, he cried, in grief and rage —

“Fool, fool, that I was, not to have possessed Thais whilst there was yet time! Fool to have believed that there was anything else in the world but her! Oh, madness! I dreamed of God, of the salvation of my soul, of life eternal — as if all that counted for anything when I had seen Thais! Why did I not feel that blessed eternity was in a single kiss of that woman, and that without her life was senseless, and no more than an evil dream? Oh, stupid fool! thou hast seen her, and thou hast desired the good things of the other world! Oh, coward! thou hast

seen her, and thou hast feared God! God! heaven! what are they? And what have they to offer thee which are worth the least tittle of that which she would have given thee? Oh, miserable, senseless fool, who sought divine goodness elsewhere than on the lips of Thais! What hand was upon thy eyes? Cursed be he who blinded thee then! Thou couldst have bought, at the price of thy damnation, one moment of her love, and thou hast not done it! She opened to thee her arms — flesh mingled with the perfume of flowers — and thou wast not engulfed in the unspeakable enchantments of her unveiled breast. Thou hast listened to the jealous voice which said to thee, ‘Refrain!’ Dupe, dupe, miserable dupe! Oh, regrets! Oh, remorse! Oh, despair! Not to have the joy to carry to hell the memory of that never-to-be-forgotten hour, and to cry to God, ‘Burn my flesh, dry up all the blood in my veins, break all my bones, thou canst not take from me the remembrance which sweetens and refreshes me for ever and ever!’ . . . Thais is dying! Preposterous God, if thou knewest how I laugh at Thy hell! Thais is dying, and she will never be mine — never! never!”

And as the boat came down the river with the current, he remained whole days lying on his face, and repeating —

“Never! never! never!”

Then, at the idea that she had given herself to others, and not to him; that she had poured forth an ocean of love, and he had not wetted his lips therein, he stood up, savagely wild, and howled with grief. He tore his breast with his nails, and bit the flesh of his arms. He thought —

“If I could but kill all those she has loved!”

The idea of these murders filled him with delicious fury. He dreamed of killing Nicias slowly and leisurely, looking him full in the eyes whilst he murdered him. Then suddenly his fury melted away. He wept, he sobbed. He became feeble and meek. An unknown tenderness softened his soul. He longed to throw his arms round the neck of the companion of his childhood and say to him, “Nicias, I love thee, because thou hast loved her. Talk to me about her. Tell me what she said to thee.” And still, without ceasing, the iron of that phrase entered into his soul— “Thais is dying!”

“Light of day, silvery shadows of night stars, heavens, trees with trembling crests, savage beasts, domestic animals, all the anxious souls of men, do you not hear? ‘Thais is dying!’ Disappear, ye lights, breezes, and perfumes! Hide yourselves, ye shapes and thoughts of the universe! ‘Thais is dying!’ She was the beauty of the world, and all that drew near to her grew fairer in the reflection of her grace. The old man and the sages who sat near her, at the banquet at Alexandria, how pleasant they were, and how fascinating was their conversation! A host of brilliant thoughts sprang to their lips, and all their ideas were steeped

in pleasure. And it was because the breath of Thais was on them that all they said was love, beauty, truth. A delightful impiety lent its grace to their discourse. They thoroughly expressed all human splendour. Alas! all that is but a dream. Thais is dying! Oh, how easy it will be to me to die of her death! But canst thou only die, withered embryo, fetus steeped in gall and scalding tears? Miserable abortion, dost thou think thou canst taste death, thou who hast never known life? If only God exists, that he may damn me. I hope for it — I wish it. God, I hate Thee — dost Thou hear? Overwhelm me with Thy damnation. To compel Thee to, I spit in Thy face. I must find an eternal hell, to exhaust the eternity of rage which consumes me.”

The next day, at dawn, Albina received the Abbot of Antinoe at the nunnery.

“Thou art welcome to our tabernacles of peace, venerable father, for no doubt, thou comest to bless the saint thou hast given us. Thou knowest that God, in his mercy, has called her to Him; how couldst thou fail to know tidings that the angels have carried from desert to desert? It is true that Thais is about to meet her blessed death. Her labours are accomplished, and I ought to inform thee, in a few words, as to her conduct whilst she was still amongst us. After thy departure, when she was confined in a cell sealed with thy seal, I sent her, with her food, a flute, similar to those which girls of her profession play at banquets. I did that to prevent her from falling into a melancholy mood, and that she should not show less skill and talent before God than she had shown before men. In this I showed prudence and foresight, for all day long Thais praised the Lord upon the flute, and the virgins, who were attracted by the sound of this invisible flute, said, ‘We hear the nightingale of the heavenly groves, the dying swan of Jesus crucified.’ Thus did Thais perform her penance, when, after sixty days, the door which thou hadst sealed opened of itself, and the clay seal was broken without being touched by any human hand. By that sign I knew that the trial thou hadst imposed upon her was at an end, and that God had pardoned the sins of the flute-player. From that time she has shared the ordinary life of my nuns, working and praying with them. She was an example to them by the modesty of her acts and words, and seemed like a statue of purity amongst them. Sometimes she was sad; but those clouds soon passed. When I saw that she was really drawn towards God by faith, hope, and love, I did not hesitate to employ her talent, and even her beauty, for the improvement of her sisters. I asked her to represent before us the actions of the famous women and wise virgins of the Scriptures. She acted Esther, Deborah, Judith, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. I know, venerable father, that thy austere mind is alarmed at the idea of these performances. But thou thyself wouldest have been touched if thou hadst

seen her in these pious scenes, shedding real tears, and raising to heaven arms graceful as palm leaves. I have long governed a community of women, and I make it a rule never to oppose their nature. All seeds give not the same flowers. Not all souls are sanctified in the same way. It must also not be forgotten that Thais gave herself to God whilst she was still beautiful, and such a sacrifice is, if not unexampled, at least very rare. This beauty — her natural vesture — has not left her during the three months' fever of which she is dying. As, during her illness, she has incessantly asked to see the sky, I have her carried every morning into the courtyard, near the well, under the old fig tree, in the shade of which the abbesses of this convent are accustomed to hold their meetings. Thou wilt find her there, venerable father; but hasten, for God calls her, and this night a shroud will cover that face which God made both to shame and to edify this world."

Paphnutius followed her into a courtyard flooded with the morning light. On the edge of the brick roofs, the pigeons formed a string of pearls. On a bed, in the shade of the fig tree, Thais lay quite white, her arms crossed. By her side stood veiled women, reciting the prayers for the dying.

"Have mercy, upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

He called her —

"Thais!"

She raised her eyelids, and turned the whites of her eyes in the direction of the voice.

Albina made a sign to the veiled women to retire a few paces.

"Thais!" repeated the monk.

She raised her head; a light breath came from her pale lips.

"Is it thou, my father? . . . Dost thou remember the water of the spring, and the dates that we picked? . . . That day, my father, love was born in my heart — the love of life eternal."

She was silent, and her head fell back.

Death was upon her, and the sweat of the last agony bedewed her forehead. A pigeon broke the still silence with its plaintive cooing. Then the sobs of the monk mingled with the psalms of the virgins.

"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

Suddenly Thais sat up in the bed. Her violet eyes opened wide, and with a rapt gaze, her arms stretched towards the distant hills, she said in a clear, fresh voice —

"Behold them — the roses of the eternal dawn!"

Her eyes shone; a slight flush suffused her face. She had revived, more sweet and more beautiful than ever. Paphnutius knelt down, and threw his long black arms around her.

“Do not die!” he cried, in a strange voice, which he himself did not recognise. “I love thee! Do not die! Listen, my Thais. I have deceived thee? I was but a wretched fool. God, heaven — all that is nothing. There is nothing true but this worldly life, and the love of human beings. I love thee! Do not die! That would be impossible — thou art too precious! Come, come with me! Let us fly? I will carry thee far away in my arms. Come, let us love! Hear me, O my beloved, and say, ‘I will live; I wish to live.’ Thais, Thais, arise!”

She did not hear him. Her eyes gazed into infinity.

She murmured —

“Heaven opens. I see the angels, the prophets, and the saints. . . . The good Theodore is amongst them, his hands filled with flowers; he smiles on me and calls me. . . . Two angels come to me. They draw near. . . . How beautiful they are! I see God!”

She uttered a joyful sigh, and her head fell back motionless on the pillow. Thais was dead.

Paphnutius held her in a last despairing embrace; his eyes devoured her with desire, rage, and love.

Albina cried to him —

“Avaunt, accursed wretch!”

And she gently placed her fingers on the eyelids of the dead girl. Paphnutius staggered back, his eyes burning with flames and feeling the earth open beneath his feet.

The virgins chanted the song of Zacharias:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.”

Suddenly their voices stayed in their throat. They had seen the monk’s face, and they fled in affright, crying —

“A vampire! A vampire!”

He had become so repulsive, that passing his hand over his face, he felt his own hideousness.

AT THE SIGN OF THE REINE PÉDAUQUE



Translated by Mrs. Wilfred Jackson

At the Sign of the Reine Pedauque was written in 1892, and published the following year by Calmann -Levy. The work is probably one of the author's better known novels and contains one of his most interesting character creations. The narrative centres on the young man Jacques Menetrier; he is the son of a lecherous cook and a poor, long-suffering mother. Brother Ange appears on the scene and begins to teach Jacques to read and write, but this arrangement is quickly terminated when Brother Ange is imprisoned for drunken brawling. Jacques is soon tutored by the priest Jerome Coignard, an intriguing and unconventional character. Despite cloaking himself with the title of priest, Coignard's behaviour and his philosophy on living diverge radically from traditional Catholic theology. He believes that to truly repent one must first truly sin, which involves lechery, theft and cheating in his case. He leads a hedonist lifestyle, while still maintaining a spiritual outlook. Coignard is also a man of great learning and intelligence, espousing a bleak philosophy regarding the idea of progress for humanity, and ridiculing humankind as being no different from animals in their passions.

The slight eccentric nobleman d'Astarac is introduced into the novel and an element of the occult permeates the work when d'Astarac invites Jacques and Coignard to live with him at his old estate to decipher and translate ancient texts. The only other inhabitant of the property is the elderly Jewish scholar Mosaide, whose beautiful niece visits the estate and becomes entangled and enmeshed in Jacques' complicated love life. France crafts a novel which is often funny, frequently engaging and occasionally quite bizarre.

LA RÔTISSERIE
DE LA
REINE PÉDAUQUE
PAR
ANATOLE FRANCE



SEIZIÈME ÉDITION



PARIS
CALMANN LÉVY, ÉDITEUR
ANCIENNE MAISON MICHEL LÉVY FRÈRES
3, RUE AUBER, 3
—
1893

The first edition's title page

CONTENTS

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[PREFACE](#)

[I](#)

[II](#)

[III](#)

[IV](#)

[V](#)

[VI](#)

[VII](#)

[VIII](#)

[IX](#)

[X](#)

[XI](#)

[XII](#)

[XIII](#)

[XIV](#)

[XV](#)

[XVI](#)

[XVII](#)

[XVIII](#)

[XIX](#)

[XX](#)

[XXI](#)

[XXII](#)

[XXIII](#)

[XXIV](#)

INTRODUCTION

THE novel of which the following pages are a translation was published in 1893, the author's forty-ninth year, and comes more or less midway in the chronological list of his works. It thus marks the flood tide of his genius, when his imaginative power at its brightest came into conjunction with the full ripeness of his scholarship. It is, perhaps, the most characteristic example of that elusive point of view which makes for the magic of Anatole France. No writer is more personal. No writer views human affairs from a more impersonal standpoint. He hovers over the world like a disembodied spirit, wise with the learning of all times and with the knowledge of all hearts that have beaten, yet not so serene and unfleshly as not to have preserved a certain tricksiness, a capacity for puckish laughter which echoes through his pages and haunts the ear when the covers of the book are closed. At the same time he appears unmistakably before you, in human guise, speaking to you face to face, in human tones. He will present tragic happenings consequent on the little follies, meannesses and passions of mankind with an emotionlessness which would be called delicate cruelty were the view point that of one of the sons of earth, but ceases to be so when the presenting hands are calm and immortal; and yet shining through all is the man himself, loving and merciful, tender and warm.

The secret of this paradox lies in the dual temperament of the artist and the philosopher. One is ever amused by the riddle of life, dallies with it in his study, and seeks solutions scholarwise in the world of the past, knowing full well that all endeavours to pierce the veil are vanity, and that measured by the cosmic scale the frying of a St. Lawrence and the chilblain on a child's foot are equally insignificant occurrences. The other penetrated by the beauty and interest of the world is impelled by psychological law to transmit through the prism of his own individuality his impressions, his rare sense of relative values, his passionate conviction of the reality and importance of things. The result of the dual temperament is entertaining. What the artist, after infinite travail, has created, the easy philosopher laughs at. What the artist has set up as God, the philosopher flouts as Baal. In most men similarly endowed there has been conflict between the twin souls which has generally ended in the strangling of the artist; but in the case of Anatole France they have worked together in bewildering harmony. The philosopher has been mild, the artist unresentful. In amity therefore they have proclaimed their faith and their unfaith, their aspirations and their negations, their earnestness and their mockery. And since they must proclaim them in one

single voice, the natural consequence, the resultant as it were of the two forces, has been a style in which beauty and irony are so subtly interfused as to make it perhaps the most alluring mode of expression in contemporary literature.

The personal note in Anatole France's novels is never more surely felt than when he himself, in some disguise, is either the protagonist or the *raisonneur* of the drama. It is the personality of Monsieur Bergeret that sheds its sunset kindness over the sordid phases of French political and social life presented in the famous series. It is the charm of Sylvestre Bonnard that makes an idyll of the story of his crime. It is Doctor Trublet in *Histoire Comique* who gives humanity to the fantastic adventure. It is Maître Jérôme Coignard whom we love unreservedly in *La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque*. And saving the respect due to Anatole France, Monsieur Bergeret, Sylvestre Bonnard, Doctor Trublet and Maître Jérôme Coignard are but protean manifestations of one and the same person. Of them all we cannot but love most Maître Jérôme Coignard. And the reason is plain. He is the only scapegrace of the lot. Even were he a layman we should call him a pretty scoundrel; but, priest that he is, we have no words wherein to summarise the measure of his fall from grace. He drinks, he brawls, he cheats at cards; he cannot pass a pretty girl on the stairs but his arm slips round her waist; to follow in Pandarus's foot-steps causes him no compunction; he "borrows" half a dozen bottles of wine from an inn, and runs away with his employer's diamonds. At first sight he appears to be an unconscionable villain. But endow him with the inexhaustible learning, the philosophy, the mansuetude, the wit of Monsieur Bergeret, imagine him a Sylvestre Bonnard qualified for the personal entourage of Pantagruel, and you have a totally different conception of his character. He becomes for you the *bon Maître* of Tournebroche, his pupil, a personage cast in heroic mould who, at all events, drank in life with great lungs and died like a man and a Christian. Now there dwells in the heart of the mildest scholar a little demon of unrest whom academies may imprison but cannot kill. It is he who cries out for redemption from virtue and proclaims the glories of the sinful life. He whispers — of course mendaciously, for demons and truth are known to be sworn enemies — that there is mighty fine living in the world of tosspots and trulls and rufflers, and having insidiously changed the good man's pen into a rapier, and his ink-pot into a quart measure, leads him forth on strange literary adventures.

On such an adventure has the scholar (at the same time mocking philosopher and exquisite artist) gone in the *Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque*. He has gone in all lustiness, in a spaciousness of enjoyment granted only to the great imaginers,

and vested in Maître Coignard's wine-stained cassock he comes to you with all the irresistible charm of his personality.

WILLIAM J. LOCKE.

PREFACE

IT is my design to recount the singular chances of my life. Some of them have been strange and some beautiful. In bringing them to memory it is doubtful even to me whether I have not dreamt them. I once knew a Gascon cabalist, whom I cannot call wise for he perished very unhappily, who, however, one night, in the Isle of Swans, entranced me with his sublime discourse which I have been fortunate enough to keep in mind and careful to put in writing. His discourses treated of magic and the occult sciences which run so much in peoples' heads to-day. One hears of nothing but the Rosy-Cross. For the matter of that I do not flatter myself that I shall gain much honour by these revelations. Some will say that I have invented it all, and that it is not the true doctrine; others, that I have only told what every one knew before. I allow that I am not very well grounded in the cabala, my master having perished at the beginning of my initiation. But the little that I did learn of his art made me very strongly suspect that it is all illusion, fraud, and vanity. Besides, it is enough for me to know that magic is contrary to religion for me to reject it with my whole heart. Nevertheless I think I ought to make myself clear on one point of his false science in order that I may not be thought more ignorant than I am. I know that cabalists in general think that sylphs, salamanders, elves, gnomes, and gnomides, are born with a soul as perishable as their bodies, and that they acquire immortality by commerce with the magi. My cabalist taught me, on the contrary, that eternal life was the birthright of no creature, whether terrestrial or aerial. I have followed his opinion without pretending to judge of it.

He was in the habit of saying that elves kill those who reveal their mysteries, and he attributed to the vengeance of these sprites the death of Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, who was assassinated on the Lyons Road. But I well knew that his death, ever to be deplored, had a more natural cause. I shall speak freely of the genii of water and fire. One must needs run divers risks in life, and that from the sprites is small in the extreme.

I have jealously garnered the sayings of my good master, Monsieur l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard, who perished as I have just said. 'Twas a man full of wisdom and piety. Had he known more peace of soul he might have equalled Monsieur l'Abbé Rollin in virtue as he far surpassed him in range of knowledge and depth of understanding. At least he had in the turmoil of a troubled life the advantage over Monsieur Rollin in that he did not fall into Jansenism. For the strength of his intelligence remained unshaken by any violence of rash doctrines, and I can

bear witness before God to the purity of his faith. He had a great knowledge of the world, acquired by frequenting every-kind of company. This experience would have served him well in the history of Rome, which he would doubtless have composed after the style of Monsieur Rollin, had not time and leisure failed him, and if his way of life had better assorted with his genius. What I can relate of so excellent a man will be an ornament to my memoirs. Like Aulus Gellius who gives the finest passage of the philosophers in his Attic Nights, like Apuleius who puts in his Golden Ass the best fables of the Greeks, I undertake a bee-like industry and hope to gather the most exquisite honey. Nevertheless I cannot flatter myself to the point of thinking that I can emulate these two great authors, since it is only from the souvenirs of my own life and not from wide and varied reading that I draw all my riches. What I supply of my own material is my good faith. If ever any one is curious enough to read my memoirs he will recognise that only a simple soul could express itself in language so simple and coherent. I was always thought simple-minded in every company I have mixed in, and this work can but perpetuate this opinion after my death.

I

MY name is Elme-Laurent-Jacques Ménétrier. My father, Léonard Ménétrier, kept a cook-shop in the Rue Saint-Jacques at the sign of the Reine Pédauque, whose feet, as one knows, were webbed after the fashion of ducks and geese.

His gables rose over against *Saint-Benoît-le-Bétourné*, between Madame Gilles the draper at the sign of the *Trois Pucelles*, and Monsieur Blaizot the bookseller at the sign of the *Image of Saint Catherine*, and not far from the *Petit Bacchus*, whose railing, decorated with vine-branches, formed the corner of the Rue des Cordiers. He was very fond of me, and when I lay in my little bed after supper he would take my hand in his, and raising my fingers one after the other, beginning with the thumb, would say: "This one killed it, this one plucked it, this one fried it, and this one ate it. And here's little Riquiqui, who gets nothing at all."

"Sauce, sauce, sauce," he would add, tickling the palm of my hand with the tip of my little finger.

And he laughed loudly. I laughed also till I fell asleep, and my mother vowed that the smile was still on my lips next morning.

My father was a good cook and feared God. That is why on feast-days he carried the banner of the cooks whereon was embroidered a beautiful St. Laurence with his gridiron and his golden palm. My father used to say to me:

"Jacquot, your mother is a saintly and worthy woman."

It was a speech he was fond of repeating. And in truth my mother went to church every Sunday carrying a book printed in large letters. For she could not read small print well, saying it dragged the eyes out of her head. My father passed an hour or two every evening at the inn, the *Petit Bacchus*, where Jeannette the viol player, and Catherine the lace-maker would also repair. And whenever he returned a little later than usual he would say in a softened voice as he donned his cotton night-cap, "Barbe, sleep in peace. As I told the lame cutler but a moment ago, you are a saintly and worthy woman."

I was six years of age when one day, readjusting his apron, always a sign in him of having come to a resolution, he spoke to me as follows:

"Miraut, our faithful dog, has turned my spit for fourteen years. I have nothing to say against him. He is a good servant who has never robbed me of the smallest morsel of turkey or goose, happy if, as reward for his work, he was allowed to lick the jack. But he is growing old. His paws are stiffening, he no longer sees, and he is of no use for turning the wheel. Jacquot, it is for you, my

son, to take his place. With care and a little practice you will succeed as well as he.”

Miraut heard these words and wagged his tail in sign of approval.

My father continued.

“Very well then, seated on this stool you will turn the spit. Nevertheless, so as to form your mind you can go over your catechism, and when, in consequence, you are able to read all the printed letters you can learn by heart some book of grammar, or instruction, or yet again the admirable teachings of the Old and New Testament. For knowledge of God and of the distinction between good and evil, are necessary even in the practice of a routine such as mine, a condition of little standing, no doubt, but honest, and after all that of my father, and yet one day thine, please God.”

From that day forward, seated from morning till evening in the chimney corner, I turned the spit, my catechism open on my knees. A good capuchin, who came bag in hand to beg of my father, helped me with my spelling. He did it all the more willingly for that my father, who respected knowledge, paid him for his lessons with a good slice of turkey and a big glass of wine, so that at length the little brother, seeing that I could put together syllables and words fairly well, brought me a beautiful life of St. Marguerite wherein he taught me to read with fluency.

One day, putting his wallet on the counter according to custom, he came and sat down near me, and warming his bare feet in the ashes on the hearth, he made me repeat for the hundredth time:

Virgin wise and pure and fair
Help a mother's pains to bear
Have pity on us all.

At that moment a man, thick set but handsome, clad in ecclesiastical garb, came into the kitchen and cried in a big voice:

“Hello, mine host! Serve me with something good.”

Under his grey hair he looked in the prime of life and strength. His mouth laughed, his eyes sparkled. His rather heavy jowl and triple chin sloped with majesty on to his clerical bands, become, by sympathy no doubt, as greasy as the neck that overhung them. My father, courteous by profession, doffed his cap and said as he bowed:

“If your Reverence will warm himself at my fire I will serve him with what he requires.”

Without any further pressing the Abbé took his place before the fire beside the capuchin.

Hearing the good brother read:

Virgin wise and pure and fair, &c.

he clapped his hands and said:

“Oh, what a rare bird! What an uncommon man! A capuchin who can read! What are you called, little brother?”

“Brother Ange, an unworthy capuchin,” answered my master.

My mother, who had heard voices from her room above, came down into the shop, drawn by curiosity.

The Abbé greeted her with a politeness that was already friendly, and said:

“Here is something to be admired, Madame, brother Ange is a capuchin, and he can read.”

“He can read anything written,” answered my mother.

And approaching the brother she recognised the hymn of St. Marguerite by the picture representing the virgin-martyr, holy-water sprinkler in hand.

“This hymn is difficult to read,” she added, “because the words are quite small and are scarcely separated the one from the other. Happily, it suffices, when in pain, to apply it as a poultice to the part that hurts the most, and it acts thus as well and even better than when recited. I have put it to the proof, Monsieur, at the birth of my son Jacquot, who is here present.”

“Do not doubt it, my good Madame,” said brother Ange. “The hymn to St. Marguerite is a sovereign remedy for what you say, on the express condition that alms be given to the capuchins.” With these words brother Ange emptied the goblet which my mother had filled to the brim for him, threw his wallet over his shoulder, and went off in the direction of the *Petit Bacchus*. My father served the Abbé with a portion of chicken, and he, drawing from his pocket a slice of bread, a flask of wine, and a knife whose copper handle represented the late king as a Roman emperor on an antique column, began his supper.

But he had barely put the first morsel of food in his mouth before he stopped and, turning to my father, asked for salt, appearing surprised that he had not been offered the salt-cellar before.

“It was customary,” said he, “among the ancients to offer salt as a sign of hospitality. Moreover, they placed salt-cellars in the temples on the tables of the gods.”

My father handed him grey salt in the wooden shoe which hung in the chimney corner. The Abbé took what he wanted and said:

“The ancients looked upon salt as a necessary seasoning for all meals, and they rated it so highly that they gave the metaphorical name of salt to all witticisms which add savour to conversation.”

“Ah!” said my father, “however highly your ancients may have held it, the salt tax of to-day puts a still higher price upon it.”

My mother, who listened as she knitted a woollen stocking, was pleased to put in a word:

“One must believe salt is a good thing, for the priest puts a grain of it on the tongues of infants held at the baptismal font. When my Jacquot felt the salt on his tongue he pulled a face, for small as he was he was cunning. I am speaking, Monsieur l’Abbé, of my son Jacques, here present.”

The Abbé looked at me and said:

“He is a big boy now. Modesty is depicted on his face, and he is reading the life of St. Marguerite attentively.”

“Oh!” continued my mother, “he can read the prayer against chilblains and also the prayer of St. Hubert, both of which brother Ange has given him, and the history of him who was devoured in the *faubourg* Saint Marcel by several devils for having blasphemed the holy Name of God.”

My father looked at me with admiration, then whispered in the Abbé’s ear that I learnt all I wished with inborn and natural facility.

“Well, then, we must accustom him to good reading,” replied the Abbé, “which is the ornament of man, a consolation in this life, and a remedy for all ills, even those of love, as the poet Theocritus affirms.”

“Cook though I am I venerate knowledge,” said my father, “and I am willing to believe that it is a cure for love as your worship says. But I do not think it is a cure for hunger.”

“Perhaps it is not a universal panacea,” answered the Abbé, “but it brings some solace with it, after the manner of an exceeding sweet balm, imperfect though it may be.”

As he was thus talking, Catherine the lace-maker appeared on the threshold, her cap over one ear, her fichu tumbled. At the sight of her my mother frowned and dropped three stitches of her knitting.

“Monsieur Ménétrier,” said Catherine, “come and speak to the officers of the watch. If you don’t they will take brother Ange off to prison without fault of his. The good brother came into the *Petit Bacchus* a moment ago and drank two or three pots of wine for which he did not pay, for fear, said he, of wanting in respect to the rule of St. Francis. But the worst part of the affair is that seeing me in the arbour with friends, he came up to me to teach me a new hymn. I told him it was not the right moment, but as he became insistent the lame cutler, who was

close beside me, pulled him away by the beard. Then brother Ange flung himself on the cutler, who rolled on the ground pulling over the table and the jugs with him. The innkeeper rushed up on hearing the noise, and seeing the table overthrown, the wine spilt, and brother Ange, one foot on the cutler's head, brandishing a stool with which he hit all who came near him, this wicked landlord swore like a fiend, and fled to call the watch. Monsieur Ménétrier, come without delay, come and rescue the little brother from the hands of the officers! He is a holy man and there is excuse to be made for him in this matter."

My father was inclined to be obliging to Catherine. Nevertheless this time the lace-maker's words did not produce the effect she expected. He replied sharply that he saw no excuse for the capuchin, and that he hoped he would be well punished with bread and water in the blackest dungeon-cell of the convent whose shame and disgrace he seemed to be.

He became heated as he spoke:

"A drunkard and a debauchee to whom I give good wine and good cheer daily, and who goes off to the pot-house to wanton with trollops who are abandoned enough to prefer the society of a peddling cutler and a capuchin to that of honest tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Fie!"

He stopped short at this part of his invective and looked stealthily at my mother, who, standing stiff and straight by the staircase, was knitting with short, sharp jerks of her needles.

Catherine, surprised at this bad reception, said drily:

"So you won't speak a good word for him to the innkeeper and the guard?"

"If you like I will tell them to take the cutler with the capuchin."

"But," she said laughing, "the cutler is your friend."

"More your friend than mine," said my father irritably. "A beggar who tugs at a strap and limps."

"Oh, as to that it is quite true that he limps, he limps, he limps." And she left the cook-shop bursting with laughter.

My father turned to the Abbé who was scraping a bone with his knife, "As I have had the honour to explain to your worship, every lesson in reading and writing that this capuchin gives to my child I have paid for in goblets of wine and succulent slices of hare, rabbit, goose, nay even of woodcock and capon. He is a drunkard and a debauchee."

"No doubt about that," replied the Abbé.

"But if he dare put foot in my house again I will drive him out with a broom-handle."

"That would be quite right," said the Abbé. "This capuchin is a donkey, and he would teach your son to bray rather than to talk. You will do well to throw

into the fire his life of St. Marguerite, his prayer against chilblains, and the story of the were-wolf with which the frowsy monk poisons the child's mind. At the price brother Ange got for his lessons I will give you mine. I will teach the child Latin and Greek, French too, which Voiture and Balzac have so perfected. Thus by a twofold good fortune, for it is both rare and beneficent, Jacquot Tournebroche shall become learned, and I shall have a meal every day."

"Done," said my father, "Barbe, bring two goblets. There is no business settled when the parties have not touched glasses in sign of agreement. We will drink here. I never want to set foot in the *Petit Bacchus* again, the cutler and this monk have filled me with such disgust."

The Abbé got up and placing his hands on the back of his chair said slowly and gravely:

"Before all I thank God — Creator and Preserver of all good things for having led me to this fostering household. It is He alone who guides us, and we should acknowledge His providence in human affairs, though it may be rash and at times incongruous to obey it too blindly. For being universal His providence is to be encountered in all sorts of cases, sublime assuredly, by reason of God's part in them, but obscene or ridiculous for the part played in them by men which is the only side they show us. So we must not, like monks and old women, invoke the finger of God every time the cat jumps. Praise God, and beseech Him to enlighten me in the teaching which I shall give this child, and, for the rest, let us recline ourselves on His holy Will, without seeking to understand Him in everything."

Then raising his glass he drank a great gulp of wine.

"This wine induces a soft and salutary heat in the workings of the human body," said he. "It is a liquor worthy of celebration at Teos and in the Temple by the princes of bacchic song, Anacreon and Chaulieu. It must touch the lips of my youthful disciple."

He put the beaker to my chin and cried:

"Come, O bees of Academe, and light in harmonious swarm on the lips, henceforth sacred to the Muses, of Jacobus Tournebroche."

But my mother said, "O Monsieur l'Abbé, it is true that wine will draw bees, more particularly when it is sweet wine. But you must not wish those evil insects to light on the lips of my Jacquot, for their sting is cruel. One day when biting into a peach I was stung on the tongue by a bee, and I suffered the torments of the damned. And nothing eased me till brother Ange put in my mouth a pinch of earth moistened with saliva while he repeated the prayer to St. Cosmas."

The Abbé made her understand that he spoke of bees in an allegorical sense. And my father said to her in a tone of reproach:

“Barbe, you are a saintly and worthy woman, but I have often remarked that you have an annoying fondness for plunging headlong into serious conversation, like a dog into a bowling-alley.”

“May be,” replied my mother, “but if you had paid more attention to my advice, Léonard, you would be better off. I can’t be expected to know all the different kinds of bees, but I know about the conduct of a household, and what is due behaviour in a man of certain age, who is father of a family, and banner-bearer in his confraternity.”

My father scratched his ear, and poured more wine for the Abbé, who said, sighing:

“Certes, knowledge is no longer honoured in our day, in the kingdom of France, as it was among the Romans when, though fallen from their pristine virtues, rhetoric raised Eugenius to the purple. It is no rare thing in our time to see an able man in a garret without fire or light. *Exemplum ut talpa*. I am an example.”

He then gave us an account of his life, which I will report to you as it came from his lips, saving where in places my tender years hindered me from understanding it plainly, and consequently from retaining it in my memory. And I believe that I have been able to fill up such gaps from the confidences he made me later, when he honoured me with his friendship.

II

SUCH as you see me," he said, "or, to put it better, such as you do not see me, young, lithe, bright-eyed and black-haired, I taught the liberal arts in the college of Beauvais under Messieurs Dugué, Guérin, Coffin, and Baffier. I had taken orders, and I thought to make myself a great reputation in letters. But a woman overthrew my hopes. She was one Nicole Pigoreau, and she kept a bookshop at the sign of the *Bible d 'Or*, on the *place* in front of the college. I was in the habit of going there, for ever turning over the books she received from Holland, and also those bi-pontic editions furnished with notes, glosses, and learned commentaries. I was a pleasing youth, and, to my misfortune, Madame Pigoreau recognised it. She had been pretty, and could still attract. Her eyes could speak. One day Cicero and Titus Livius, Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Polybius, Varro, Epictetus, Seneca, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plautus, Terence, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus il St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, Erasmus, Salmasius, Turnebus, Scaliger, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, Bossuet with Ferri in his train, Lenain, Godefroy, Mezéray, Maimbourg, Fabricius, Father Lelong and Father Pitou, all the poets, all the orators, all the historians, all the fathers, all the doctors, all the theologians, all the humanists, all the compilers, sitting assembled on the walls from ceiling to floor, witnessed our embraces.

"‘You are irresistible,’ she said. ‘Do not think too badly of me.’

"She avowed her love in raptures inconceivable. One day she made me try on some bands and ruffles of lace, and finding they suited me to perfection, she begged me to keep them. I did not want to do so at all. But as she seemed irritated at my refusal, wherein she saw a slight to her love, I consented to take what she offered me for fear of offending her.

"My happiness lasted until I was replaced by an officer. I was filled with anger and spite, and hot for vengeance, I made it known to the governors of the college that I no longer repaired to the *Bible d 'Or* lest I should see there sights likely to offend the modesty of a young cleric. Truth to tell, I had no need to congratulate myself on this trick. For Madame Pigoreau, hearing of my behaviour in regard to her, told every one that I had stolen from her some lace bands and ruffles. Her false accusation came to the ears of the governors, who had my box searched, and there they found the set, which was sufficiently valuable. They turned me out, and thus I learnt, after the fashion of Hippolytus and Bellerophon, the wiles and wickedness of woman. Finding myself in the

street, with my clothes and oratorical text-books, I ran great risk of dying of hunger there when, abandoning my clerical collar, I offered myself to a Huguenot gentleman, who took me as secretary, and dictated to me his pamphlets against religion."

"Ah! there you did wrong," cried my father. "That was bad, Monsieur l'Abbé! An honest man should never lend a hand to such abominations. And for my part, ignorant as I am, and a mere workman, I cannot endure any taint of Colas's cow."

"You are right, mine host," replied the Abbé.

"'Tis the worst passage in my life, and the one that I repent the most. But my man was a Calvinist; he only employed me to write against the Lutherans and the Socinians, whom he could not endure; and I assure you that he made me treat these heretics more hardly than the Sorbonne has ever done."

"Amen!" said my father. "Lambs feed in peace while the wolves devour one another."

The Abbé continued his recital:

"For the matter of that I did not remain long with that gentleman, who set more store on the letters of Ulrich von Hutten than on the orations of Demosthenes, and in whose house one drank but water. After that I tried various trades, none of which succeeded with me. I was successively pedlar, comedian, monk, and varlet. Then, donning my bands again, I became secretary to the bishop of Sééz, and edited the catalogue of precious MSS. shut away in his library. The catalogue forms two volumes, in folio, which he has placed in his collection, gilt-edged, and bound in red morocco bearing his arms. I venture to say it is a good piece of work.

"It rested entirely with me whether I should grow old in the service of Monseigneur in study and in peace. But I loved a chambermaid in the steward's household. Do not be too hard on me. Dark-skinned, full of life, fresh and plump, St. Pachomius himself must have loved her. One day she took coach, and went to seek her fortune in Paris. I followed her there, but I did not do as well for myself as she did. On her recommendation I entered the service of Madame de St. Ernest, a dancer at the Opera, who, knowing my particular talent, ordered me to write, under her prompting, a lampoon against Mademoiselle Davilliers, against whom she had a grudge. I was a good secretary, and well did I merit the fifty *écus* which had been promised me. The book was printed at Amsterdam by Marc-Michel Rey, with an allegorical frontispiece, and Mademoiselle Davilliers received the first copy at the very moment when she was going on the stage to sing the principal air in *Armide*. Rage made her voice hoarse and uncertain. She sang out of tune, and was hissed. Her part played, she ran in her powder and

panniers to the stage-manager, who could refuse her nothing. She flung herself at his feet in tears, and cried for vengeance. It was soon known that the stab came from Madame de St. Ernest.

“Questioned, pressed, menaced, she denounced me, and I was thrown into the Bastille, where I lay four years. I found some consolation in reading Boethius and Cassiodorus.

“Since then I have kept a public writer’s stall at the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, and have put at the disposal of amorous servant-girls a pen which should rather paint the illustrious men of Rome, or annotate the writings of the Fathers. I make two *liards* for a love-letter, and it is a trade by which I die rather than live. But I do not forget that Epictetus was a slave and Pyrrho a gardener.

“A moment ago, by great luck, I got an *ecu* for an anonymous letter. It was two days since I had eaten anything. So I promptly went in search of an eating-house. I saw from the street your illuminated sign, and the fire of your hearth, which flickered joyously on the pane. I smelt a delicious odour on the threshold. I entered. My good host, you know my life.”

“I perceive it is that of an honest man,” said my father, “and excepting the matter of Colas’s cow, there is nothing much to take amiss. Your hand. We are friends. What is your name?”

“Jérôme Coignard, doctor of theology, and bachelor of arts.”

III

THE wonderful thing in human affairs is the linking together of effects and causes. Monsieur Jérôme Coignard might well say so: when we come to consider the strange succession of incident and consequence wherein our destinies clash, we are bound to recognise that God in His perfection is not wanting in wit nor fancy, nor in the comic spirit, but, on the contrary, that He excels in imbroglio as in all else, and that after having inspired Moses, David, and the Prophets, He had deigned to inspire Monsieur Le Sage and the playwrights of the booth. He could have dictated to them some very diverting harlequinades. Thus, for instance, I became a Latinist because brother Ange was taken by the guard and put in the ecclesiastical prison for having knocked down a cutler in the arbour of the *Petit Bacchus*. Monsieur Jérôme Coignard fulfilled his promise. He gave me lessons, and finding me docile and intelligent, he took pleasure in teaching me ancient literature. In a few years he made me a fairly good Latinist.

I cherish his memory with a gratitude which will only end with my life. The obligation he laid me under may be conceived when I say that he left nothing undone that might help to shape my affections and my soul along with my intelligence. He would repeat to me the Maxims of Epictetus, the Homilies of St. Basil, and Boethius, — his consolations. He exhibited to me, in many a fine passage, the philosophy of the Stoics; but he only displayed it in its sublimity to abase it the lower before the philosophy of the Christian. His faith remained intact above the ruins of his fondest illusions and of his most rightful hopes. His weaknesses, his mistakes, and his faults — and he did not try to conceal them nor to lend them colouring — had not shaken his trust in Divine goodness. And to understand him well you must realise that he had care of his eternal welfare on occasions when he seemed apparently to care the least for it. He inculcated in me principles of enlightened piety. He exerted himself to apprentice me to virtue — to make it, so to speak, homely and familiar to me by examples drawn from the life of Zeno.

That I might learn of the dangers of vice he drew his arguments from a source nearer to hand, confiding to me that, through having loved wine and women over much, he had had to renounce the honour of being raised to a collegiate chair, the long robe, the doctor's cap.

To these exceptional merits he joined a constancy and an assiduity, and he gave his lessons with a punctuality that one would not have expected from a man

given up, as he was, to every caprice of a wandering life, and driven about incessantly by the stresses of an existence less dignified than picaresque. This zeal was the result of his kind-heartedness, and emanated also from the liking he had for our worthy street, the Rue St. Jacques, where he found the wherewithal to satisfy at once the desires of body and mind. Having given me some profitable lesson while enjoying a succulent dinner, he would go the round of the *Petit Bacchus* and of the *Image of St. Catherine*, finding thus united in the little corner of earth, which was his Paradise, good wine and books.

He had become an assiduous visitor of Monsieur Blaizot the bookseller, who always welcomed him, notwithstanding that he turned over all the books without ever buying one. And it was a wonderful sight to see my master at the back of the shop, his nose poked into some little books new come from Holland, raising his head to hold forth according to the occasion with the same smiling and overflowing knowledge, whether concerning the plans for universal monarchy attributed to the late king, or the amorous adventures of a financier and an actress. Monsieur Blaizot never tired of listening to him. This Monsieur Blaizot was a little dry old man, neat in his person, in maroon coat and breeches and grey worsted stockings. I admired him immensely, and I could think of nothing more delightful in the world than to sell books as he did at the *Image of St. Catherine*.

A certain memory helped to indue Monsieur Blaizot's shop for me with a mysterious charm. It was there that when very young I saw, for the first time, a woman unclothed. I see her still. It was Eve, in a pictured Bible. She had a round stomach and rather short legs, and she was conversing with the serpent in a Dutch landscape. The possessor of this print inspired me thenceforward with a consideration which showed no falling off when, thanks to Monsieur Coignard, I acquired the taste for books.

By the time I was sixteen I knew a good deal of Latin and a little Greek. Said my good master to my father:

"Do you not think, mine host, that it is improper that a young Ciceronian should still wear the clothes of a scullion?"

"I hadn't thought about it," answered my father.

"It is very true," said my mother, "our son should have a dimity coat. He is pleasing in his appearance, he has good manners, and is well taught. He will do honour to his clothes."

My father remained thoughtful for a minute, and then asked, would a dimity coat look well on a cook? But Abbé Coignard represented to him that, fostered

by the Muses, I could never become a cook, and that the time was near when I should wear the clerical bands.

My father sighed when he thought that I should never, when he had gone, carry the banner of the Parisian Confraternity of Cooks.

And my mother's eyes ran over with pride and joy at the thought of her son in the church.

The first effect of my dimity coat was to give me self-confidence and to encourage me to get a more exact notion of women than that given me once on a time by Monsieur Blaizot's Eve. I thought, not unreasonably for the purpose, of Jeannette the violplayer, and Catherine the lace-maker, whom I saw pass the cook-shop twenty times a day, showing in wet weather a slim ankle and a little foot, whose point skipped from paving-stone to stone. Jeannette was not as pretty as Catherine, neither was she so young nor so smart in her attire. She was a Savoyard, and dressed her head *en marmotte* with a checked kerchief which hid her hair. But it must be said for her that she put on no airs and graces, and understood what was wanted of her even before one spoke. This quality suited my bashfulness down to the ground. One night in the porch of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné, which is furnished with stone seats, she taught me what I did not know as yet, and what she had known for long enough. But I was not as grateful for it as I ought to have been, and I only longed to bring to the service of others who were prettier the knowledge she had instilled into me. I must say, as an excuse for my ingratitude, that Jeannette the violplayer put no greater price on her lessons than I myself had paid; and she was prodigal of her favours to every scamp in the neighbourhood.

Catherine had more reserve in her ways. I was much afraid of her, and did not dare tell her how pretty I thought her. What made me doubly shy was that she made fun of me continually, and lost no occasion to tease me. She made game of me on account of my smooth chin. I blushed for it, and wished the earth would cover me. I assumed a dark and aggrieved air when I met her. I pretended to despise her, but truth to tell, she was far too pretty for any such despite.

IV

THAT night, the night of the Epiphany and the nineteenth anniversary of my birth, while the heavens shed along with the melted snow a relentless cold which pierced one to the bone, and an icy wind set the sign of the *Reine Pédaque* creaking, a clear fire, scented with goose-fat, blazed in the cookshop, and the soup-bowl smoked on the cloth round which were seated Monsieur Jérôme Coignard, my father and myself. My mother, as her habit was, was standing behind the master of the house, ready to serve.

He had already filled the Abbe's basin when, the door opening, we saw brother Ange, very pale, his nose red and his beard dripping. In his surprise my father raised his soup-ladle nearly up to the smoked beams of the ceiling.

My father's surprise was easily explained. Brother Ange who once before had disappeared for six months after knocking down the lame cutler, had this time stayed away two whole years without anything having been heard of him. He had gone away one spring with a donkey laden with relics, and the worst of the matter was that he had taken Catherine along with him, dressed as a nun. It was not known what had become of them, but there had been rumours at the *Petit Bacchus* that the little brother and the little sister had come in conflict with the authorities between Tours and Orleans.

Without counting that one of the *vicaires* of St. Benoît declared with much outcry that this gallows-thief of a capuchin had stolen his donkey.

"What," exclaimed my father, "isn't this rascal in the deepest of dungeons? Then there is no longer justice in the kingdom." But brother Ange repeated the *Benedicite* and made the sign of the Cross over the bowl of soup.

"Hello there!" my father went on. "A truce to your grimaces, my fine monk! And now confess that you have spent in prison at least one of the two years that haven't seen your Beelzebub's face in the parish. The Rue St. Jacques was the honester for it, and the whole quarter more respectable. Look at him, the shameless fellow, who leads astray his neighbour's donkey and every man's hack!"

"Perhaps," replied brother Ange, his eyes downcast and his hands in his sleeves, "perhaps, Maître Léonard, you wish to refer to Catherine, whom I had the happiness to convert and to turn to a better life. So much so that she ardently longed to follow me along with the relics that I bore, and to accompany me on blessed pilgrimages to the Black Virgin of Chartres? I agreed on condition that she should don a religious habit. Which she did without a murmur."

“Hold your tongue,” said my father, “you are a deboshed rogue. You have no respect for your cloth. Go back whence you came, and go and look if you like, out in the street, whether the *Reine Pédauque* has any chilblains.”

But my mother signed to the brother to sit down in the chimney corner, which he quietly did.

“We must forgive much to capuchins, for they sin without malice,” said the Abbé.

My father begged Monsieur Coignard to talk no more of the brood, for their very name sent the blood to his head.

“Maître Léonard,” said the Abbé, “philosophy is conducive to clemency. For my part I freely absolve ragamuffins, rogues and all wretched people. And I bear no ill-will even to the wealthy, though in their case there is much frowardness. And if you had mixed as I have done with people of repute, Maître Léonard, you would know they are worth no more than others, and that they are often less agreeable to meet. When I was with the bishop of Séz I sat at the third table, and two attendants clad in black stood at my elbow: Constraint and Ennui.”

“It must be owned,” said my mother, “that Monseigneur’s valets bore tiresome names. Why didn’t they call them Champagne, Olive, or Frontin, according to custom?”

The Abbé continued:

“It is true that certain people easily accommodate themselves to the drawbacks of living among the great. At the second table of the bishop of Séz sat a certain Canon, a very polite man, who remained on a formal footing until the day of his death. Learning that he was extremely ill Monseigneur went to see him in his extremity. ‘Alas,’ said the Canon, ‘I ask pardon of your lordship for unavoidably dying in your presence.’

‘Go on, go on, do not mind me,’ replied Monseigneur kindly.”

At this moment my mother brought in the roast, which she placed on the table with a gesture so imbued with homely gravity that my father was quite moved, and cried out brusquely, his mouth full: “Barbe, you are a saintly and worthy woman.”

“Madame,” said my good master, “is indeed comparable to the virtuous woman of Holy Writ. She is a spouse such as God loves.”

“Thanks be to God,” replied my mother, “I have never failed in the fidelity I swore to my husband Léonard Menétrier and now that the worst is over assuredly I reckon on not failing in it until the hour of my death. I only wish that he had been as faithful to me as I to him.”

“Madame, I knew at first sight that you were a good woman,” the Abbé ran on, “for I feel in your presence a peace which is more of Heaven than earth.”

My mother, who was simple but not foolish, well understood what he meant, and answered that had he but known her twenty years before he would have found her very different from what she had become in this cookshop where her good looks had been lost under the fiery heat of the spit and the steam from the smoking bowls. And now, being roused, she related how the baker at Auneau found her sufficiently to his taste to offer her cakes every time she passed his bakehouse. She added, with spirit, that for the matter of that there is neither maid nor woman so ugly but that she can do wrong if the fancy take her.

“The good woman is right,” said my father; “I remember when I was apprenticed at the cookshop of the *Oie Royale*, near the gate of St. Denis, my master, who was in those days banner-bearer to the confraternity, as I am now, saying to me: ‘I shall never be cuckold, my wife is too ugly.’ This speech gave me the notion of doing what he thought impossible. I succeeded at the first attempt, one morning when he was at La Vallée. He spoke truth: his wife was very plain, but not without wit, and she was not without gratitude.”

At this anecdote my mother lost her temper altogether, saying that that was not the kind of talk a father of a family should indulge in with his wife and son should he wish to keep their respect. Monsieur Jérôme Coignard seeing her quite red with anger, turned the conversation with adroit kindness, suddenly questioning brother Ange who, his hands in his sleeves, was sitting humbly in the kitchen corner:

“Little brother,” said he, “what relics did you and Catherine carry on the *vicaire*’s donkey? It was your breeches, wasn’t it, you gave to the devotees to kiss, like the Franciscan in the tale told by Henry Estienne?”

“Ah, Monsieur l’Abbé,” replied brother Ange with the air of a martyr suffering for the truth, “it was not my breeches but a foot of St. Eustatius.”

“I would have sworn it, were swearing not a sin,” cried the Abbé waving a drumstick. “These capuchins ferret you out saints that good writers of church history know nothing of. Neither Tillemont nor Fleury mention this St. Eustatius, to whom it was exceedingly wrong to dedicate a church in Paris, when there are so many saints, acknowledged by writers worthy of belief, who still await such an honour. The life of this Eustatius is a tissue of ridiculous fables. The same may be said of that of St. Catherine, who never existed save in the imagination of some malicious Byzantine monk. I will not be too severe upon her though, for she is the patron saint of writers and serves for a sign at good Monsieur Blaizot’s shop, which is the most delectable spot in the world.”

“I had also,” went on the little brother imperturbably, “a rib of St. Mary of Egypt.”

“Oh! oh! as to her,” cried the Abbé, throwing his bone across the room, “I rate her as a great saint, for in her life she gave a beautiful example of humility! You know, Madame,” he answered, pulling my mother by the sleeve, “that St. Mary of Egypt making a pilgrimage to the tomb of our Saviour was stopped by a deep river, and not having a farthing wherewith to pay the ferry-boat, she offered her body in payment to the boatman. What do you say to that, my good lady?”

My mother first asked whether the story was really true. When she was assured that it was printed in books and painted on a window in the church of La Jussienne, she held it for true. “I think,” said she, “that one would needs be as great a saint as she to do as much without sinning. As for me, I would not risk it.”

“For my part,” said the Abbé, “in accordance with the more subtle theologians, I approve the conduct of this saint. She is a lesson to honest women who entrench themselves too overweeningly in the height of their virtue. There is a certain sensuality when one thinks about it in putting such a very high price on the flesh, and in guarding with such exceeding care what one ought to disdain. One sees matrons who think they have in themselves a treasure to protect, and who visibly exaggerate the interest taken in their person by God and the angels. They believe themselves a sort of natural Blessed Sacrament St. Mary of Egypt knew better. Although pretty and ravishingly well-made, she judged that there would be too much pride of the flesh in stopping on her blessed pilgrimage for a thing indifferent in itself, and which, far from being a precious jewel, is but an occasion for mortification. She suffered mortification, Madame, and in this manner with admirable humility she entered on the path of penitence, where she accomplished marvellous things.”

“Monsieur l’Abbé,” said my mother, “I fail to understand you. You are too learned for me.”

“This great saint,” said brother Ange, “is painted life-size in my convent chapel, and all her body is covered, by God’s grace, with long, thick hair. Copies of it are made, and I will bring you one which has been blessed, my good lady.”

My mother, touched, passed him the soup-bowl behind the master’s back. And the good brother sitting over the ashes, dipped his beard in the savoury-smelling soup.

“Now is the time,” said my father, “to uncork one of those bottles which I hold in reserve for great feast-days such as Christmas, Twelfth Night, and the feast of St. Lawrence; nothing is more pleasing than to drink good wine when one is quietly at home, sheltered from all intruders.”

He had scarcely pronounced these words when the door opened and a big man invaded the cookshop in a squall of wind and snow. "A Salamander! a Salamander!" he cried, and without taking notice of any one, he leant over the hearth and stirred the fire with his stick, to the great annoyance of brother Ange who, swallowing cinders and smuts in his soup, coughed till he nearly gave up the ghost. And the big man stirred the fire again, crying "A Salamander! — I see a Salamander!" till the troubled flame made his shadow waver on the ceiling in the shape of some great bird of prey.

My father was surprised, nay even shocked, at the ways of this visitor. But he knew how to control himself. He got up, his napkin under his arm, and approaching the chimney-corner he bent over the hearth, his hands on his hips.

When he had sufficiently considered his fire all scattered and brother Ange covered with ash:

"If your lordship will pardon me," he said, "I see but a sinful monk and no Salamander."

"And after all I do not regret it," my father added. "For from all I have heard, it is an ugly beast, hairy and horned and with great claws."

"What a mistake!" replied the dark man. "Salamanders are like women, or rather, like Nymphs, for they are of a perfect beauty. But it was silly of me to ask if you could see this one. One must be a philosopher to see a Salamander and I should scarcely think that there are any philosophers in this kitchen."

"Possibly you are mistaken," said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. "I am a doctor of theology and master of arts; I have studied to some extent the Greek and Latin moralists, whose maxims have fortified my soul in the vicissitudes of my life, and particularly have I applied Boethius as a local application for the evils of existence. And behold by my side Jacobus Tournebroche, my pupil, who knows by heart the Aphorisms of Publius Syrus."

The unknown turned on the Abbé his yellow eyes, which shone strangely over his eagle nose, and excused himself with more politeness than his fierce looks gave promise of, not having immediately recognised a person of his merit.

"It is extremely probable," he added, "that this Salamander has come for you or for your pupil. I saw her very plainly from the street, when passing the shop. She would have been more apparent if the fire had been brighter. That is why one should stir the fire vigorously when one thinks there is a Salamander in the chimney."

At the first movement that the unknown made to stir the coals, brother Ange, in his anxiety, covered his soup with a corner of his robe and shut his eyes.

"Monsieur," pursued the Salamander-seeking gentleman, "allow your pupil to approach the hearth, and tell us if he cannot see some resemblance to a woman

above the flames.”

Just then, the smoke which went up under the hood of the chimney curled into a marked grace, making curves which might have been said to simulate a sinuous body had one’s attention been on the strain. I was not altogether fibbing therefore when I said that I could, perhaps, see something.

I had scarcely said so when the unknown, raising his abnormally long arm, struck me on the shoulder so roughly with his fist that I thought he must have broken my collar-bone.

Thereon, in a very gentle voice, he said, looking in the meanwhile with a benevolent air: —

“My child, it was necessary to make this strong impression on you that you may never forget that you have seen a Salamander. ’Tis a sign that you are destined to become a learned man, perhaps a Mage.

Your face, moreover, augurs well for your intelligence,”

“Monsieur,” said my mother, “he has all the learning that he wishes, and please God he will yet be an Abbé.”

Monsieur Jérôme Coignard added that I had drawn some profit from his lessons, and my father asked the stranger if he would not have something to eat.

“I have no need to eat,” said the man, “and it is easy for me to go for a year and even more without food, with the exception of a certain elixir, whose composition is known only to the philosophers. This faculty is not peculiar to me. It is common to all the elect, and we know that the illustrious Cardan abstained from all food for several years without being inconvenienced. On the contrary, his mind gained during that time a rare sharpness. At the same time I will eat of what you may offer me solely to do you pleasure.”

And he took a seat without ceremony at our table. At the same time brother Ange silently pushed a stool between my chair and my master’s, and slipped into position to receive his share of the pasty of partridges that my mother had just served up.

The philosopher, having thrown his cloak over the back of his chair, allowed us to remark the diamond buttons in his coat. He sat there dreamily. The shadow of his nose shaded his mouth, and his fallen cheeks sank into his jaw. His gloomy mood affected us all.

My good master himself drank in silence. The only sound one heard was the little brother chewing his pasty.

Suddenly the philosopher said:

“The more I think of it the more persuaded I am that this Salamander came for this young man.” And he pointed at me with his knife. “Monsieur,” I answered him, “if Salamanders are half such as you say, this one does me great

honour, and I am much obliged to her. But truth to tell, I rather guessed at her than saw her, and this first meeting has roused my curiosity without satisfying it."

My good master was choking with the desire to speak his mind.

"Monsieur," he burst out all at once to the philosopher, "I am fifty-one years of age; I am bachelor of arts and doctor of theology; I have read all the Greek and Latin authors who have survived the injury done by time and the evil done by man, and I have never seen a Salamander, whence I reasonably conclude that no such thing exists."

"Excuse me," said brother Ange, half-choked with partridge and with fright. "Excuse me. But unhappily Salamanders do exist. And a Jesuit father, whose name I forget, has written a treatise on these apparitions. I myself saw, in a place called St. Claude, in the house of some villagers, a Salamander in a chimney-corner, right up against the stew-pot. She had a cat's head, a frog's body, and a fish tail. I threw a potful of holy water over the beast and she immediately vanished into thin air with a fearful frizzling noise, and in the midst of an exceedingly acrid smoke which all but burnt my eyes out. And what I tell you is so true that for at least a whole week my beard smelt of burning, which proves more than all the rest the malign nature of this beast."

"You are making fun of us, little brother," said the Abbé, "your frog with a cat's head is no more real than the nymph of this gentleman here. And moreover, it is a disgusting invention."

The philosopher began to laugh.

Brother Ange had not been allowed, said he, to see the Salamanders as known to the wise, "When the nymphs of the fire see capuchins they turn their backs on them."

"Oh! Oh!" said my father laughing loudly, "a nymph's back is too good for a capuchin."

And as he was in a good temper he passed a huge slice of pasty to the little brother.

My mother placed the roast in the middle of the table and took the opportunity of asking whether the Salamanders were good Christians, which she much doubted, having never heard that those who dwelt in fire praised the Lord.

"Madame," replied the Abbé, "many theologians of the Society of Jesus have acknowledged the existence of a whole race of incubi and succubi, who are not demons properly speaking because they do not allow themselves to be put to rout by a sprinkling of holy water, and who do not belong to the church triumphant, for spirits of glory would never have tried to seduce a baker's wife, as happened at Pérouse. But if you want my opinion, these are rather the unclean

imaginings of a canting humbug than the views of a divine. We should abhor these ridiculous bedevilments and deplore that sons of the Church, born in the light, should form a less sublime idea of the world and of God than did a Plato or a Cicero in the shades of paganism. God, I venture to say, is more present in the Thoughts of Scipio than in those dark treatises on demonology, whose authors pronounce themselves to be Christians and Catholics.”

“Monsieur l’Abbé, mind what you say,” said the philosopher. “Your Cicero spoke fluently and easily, but his was a commonplace mind, and he was not far advanced in the sacred sciences. Have you ever heard speak of Hermes Trismegistus and the Emerald Table?”

“Monsieur,” said the Abbé, “I found a very ancient manuscript of ‘The Emerald Table’ in the library of my Lord Bishop of Sééz, and I would have deciphered it sooner or later had not the chambermaid in the steward’s household fled to Paris to seek her fortune and made me climb into the coach with her. There was no sorcery in that, Master philosopher, and the charms that worked upon her were those of nature:

*Non facit hoc verbis: facie tenerisque lacertis
Devovet et flavis nostra puella comis .”*

“It is one more proof,” said the philosopher, “that women are great enemies of knowledge, and so the wise man should keep himself from all dealings with them.”

“Even in lawful marriage?” asked my father.

“Above all in lawful marriage,” replied the philosopher.

“Alas, what is left for your poor wise man when he is disposed to relax a little?” asked my father.

The philosopher replied:

“The Salamanders are left to them.”

At these words brother Ange raised a terrified nose above his plate.

“Do not speak thus, my good Monsieur,” he murmured, “in the name of all the saints of my order, do not say such things! And do not lose sight of the fact that a Salamander is no other than the devil, who, as one knows, clothes himself in divers forms, sometimes pleasing, when he succeeds in disguising his natural ugliness, at other times hideous, when he lets his true nature be seen.”

“It is for you to mind what you say, brother Ange,” replied the philosopher, “and since you fear the devil, do not anger him too much nor excite him by ill-considered speeches. You know that the Old Enemy, the Spirit that denies, still

holds such power in the spiritual world that even God must reckon with him. I will go further: that God, Who fears him, has made him His steward. Beware, little brother, beware! They understand one another!”

On hearing this speech, the poor capuchin thought he heard and saw the devil in person, whom the unknown precisely resembled, with his fiery eyes, his hooked nose, his dark skin, and the whole of his long thin person.

His wits, already confounded, were finally overwhelmed by pious terror. Feeling himself in the grip of the Evil One, he began to tremble in every limb, slipped into his pocket all the good scraps he could collect, got up very quietly and made for the door, moving backwards, and murmuring exorcisms.

The philosopher took no notice of him. He pulled from his coat a little dogs' eared parchment covered book, which he held out open to my good master and me. It was an old Greek text, full of abbreviations and linked letters, which at first sight looked to me like a volume of Grammary. But Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, once he had donned his spectacles and held out the book at a just distance, began to read easily, characters, more like skeins of thread tangled by cat's claws, than the plain and steady lettering of my St. John Chrysostom, where I learnt the tongue of Plato and the Gospel. When he had finished his reading:

“Monsieur,” said he, “this passage is to be understood in this way:

“Among the Egyptians, the instructed learn first of all the letters which are called epistolographic; secondly, the hieratic, which the hierogrammats use, and lastly, the hieroglyphic. ”

Then, pulling off his spectacles and waving them with an air of triumph:

“Ha! ha! Master philosopher,” he added, “you don't catch me tripping. This is taken from the first book of the *Stromata*, whose author, Clement of Alexandria, is not inscribed in the martyrology, for divers reasons, learnedly set forth by His Holiness Benedict II, the principal of which is that this father frequently erred in matters of faith. This exclusion should not trouble him much, if you consider with what philosophic detachment he regarded martyrdom during his life. He preferred exile, and took care to spare the crime to his persecutors, for he was a very good man. He wrote with elegance, had a lively talent, his morals were unimpeachable, and even austere. He had an excessive fondness for allegories and for salads.”

The philosopher stretched an arm, which elongating itself prodigiously, at least to me it seemed so, crossed the whole length of the table, to recover the

book from the hands of my learned master.

“Enough,” said he, replacing the *Stromata* in his pocket. “I see that you understand Greek. You have rendered the passage well enough, at any rate, in its vulgar and literal sense. I will make your fortune and that of your pupil. I shall employ you both in my house in translating Greek texts sent to me from Egypt.”

And turning to my father:

“I imagine, mine host, that you will consent to let me have your son that I may make a learned man and a man of substance of him. If it is too much to ask of your paternal affection to give him up altogether, I will maintain at my expense a scullion to take his place in your cookshop.”

“Since your Excellency thus arranges it,” replied my father, “I will not stand in the way of his benefiting my son.”

“On the condition,” said my mother, “that it shall not be at the cost of his soul? You must promise me, Monsieur, that you are a good Christian?”

“Barbe,” said my father, “you are a saintly and worthy woman, but you force me to make excuses to his lordship for your want of manners, which comes less, truth to tell, from your disposition, which is good enough, than from your neglected education.”

“Let the good woman speak,” said the philosopher, “and let her make her mind easy, I am a very religious man.”

“That is a good thing,” said my mother. “We must worship the holy Name of God.”

“I worship all His Names, my good woman, for He has many. He is called Adonai, Tetragrammaton, Jehovah, Otheos, Athanatas, and Schyros, and many others.”

“I don’t know anything about it,” said my mother, “but I am not surprised at what you tell me, Monsieur, for I have noticed that people of quality have many more names than common people. I come from Auneau, near the town of Chartres, and I was quite small when the lord of the manor passed from this world to the next; now I well remember how when the herald cried the death of the deceased lord he gave him nearly as many names as are to be found in the litany of saints. I readily believe that God has more names than had my lord of Auneau, because He has a still higher position. Educated people are very lucky to know them all. And if you help my son Jacques to advance in this knowledge I shall be very much obliged to you, Monsieur.”

“Then that matter is settled,” said the philosopher. “And as to you, Monsieur l’Abbé, you will not be averse from translating from the Greek — in consideration of a salary, be it understood.” My good master, who for some

moments past had been trying to collect those few wits which were not already hopelessly bemused with the fumes of wine, filled his goblet, rose up, and said:

“Master philosopher, with my whole heart I accept your generous offer. You are a magnificent being. I am honoured, Monsieur, to be in your service. Of furniture, there are two pieces I hold high in esteem, the bed and the board. The board, which laden, turn by turn about, with learned books and succulent dishes, serves to support the nourishment of body and mind; the bed, propitious to the sweets of repose as to the torments of love. It was surely an inspired man who gave to the Sons of Deucalion the bed and the board. If I find at your house, Monsieur, these two precious pieces of furniture, I will sound your name, as that of my benefactor, in eternal praise, and I will celebrate you in Greek and Latin verse of divers metres.”

Thus he spoke, and drank a great gulp of wine.

“That is well said,” replied the philosopher. “I shall expect you both to-morrow morning at my house. You must follow the route to St. Germain as far as the Cross of Les Sablons. From the foot of this Cross reckon a hundred paces going west and you will find a small green door in a garden wall. Raise the knocker, which is in the shape of a veiled figure, its finger on its lips. You must ask the old man who opens the door for Monsieur d’Astarac.”

“My son,” said my good master, pulling me by the sleeve, “keep all this in your memory. Cross, knocker, and all the rest, so that we may be able to-morrow to find this gate of fortune. And you, Monsieur Mæcenas...”

But the philosopher had already disappeared without any one having seen him go.

V

THE next day we fared early, my master and I, along the road to St. Germain. The snow which covered the ground under the reddish light from the sky, made the atmosphere dead and still. The road was deserted. We walked in great cart-ruts between the walls of market-gardens, tumble-down palings, and low houses whose windows watched us with suspicious eye. Then, having left behind us two or three broken-down hovels of wattle and daub, we saw in the midst of a desolate common, the Cross of Les Sablons. Fifty paces beyond was the beginning of an immense park enclosed by a ruined wall. This wall was pierced by a small green door whose knocker was in the shape of a horrible face, its finger on its lips. We readily recognised it for that which the philosopher had described to us, and lifted it and knocked.

After a considerable time, an old serving-man came and let us in and signed to us to follow him across a deserted park. Statues of nymphs, which had witnessed the youth of the late king, hid under the ivy their melancholy and their scars. At the end of the alley whose ditches were masked with snow, rose a mansion of brick and stone, which was as gloomy as the *château* of Madrid, its neighbour, and which topped by a roof of slate, all awry, seemed the very castle of the Sleeping Beauty.

While we followed the steps of the uncommunicative serving-man, the Abbé said in my ear:

“I confess to you, my son, that the dwelling does not smile upon the view. It bears witness to the rude condition of French manners still inveterate at the time of Henry IV and it induces depression and even melancholy in the mind by the state of neglect into which it has been allowed to lapse. How far sweeter would it be to mount the enchanting slopes of Tusculum, in the hope of hearing Cicero discourse on virtue under the pines and terebinths of his villa, dear to philosophers. And have you not noticed, my son, that we did not pass a single inn or hostelry of any sort on the road and that it is necessary to cross the bridge and climb the hill as far as the crossing of the avenues of Bergères, to drink a glass of wine? It is true that there is the inn at the sign of the *Cheval Rouge* where I remember Madame de St. Ernest taking me once to dine, along with her monkey and her lover. You cannot imagine, Tournebroche, what good cheer is to be had there. The *Cheval Rouge* is as renowned for its lunches as for the number of its horses and its posting facilities. I assured myself of that while pursuing into the stables a certain serving-wench who seemed to me to be pretty.

But she was not so; one might more justly have called her ugly. I lent her the illumination of my amorous fancy. Such is the state of men given over to themselves: piteous are their mistakes. We are abused by vain images, we follow dreams, and we embrace shadows. In God alone is truth and steadfastness.”

Meanwhile, following the old servant, we climbed the disjointed steps of the old terrace.

“Alas,” said the Abbé in my ear, “I begin to regret your good father’s cook-shop, where we ate many a choice morsel, expounding Quintilian the while.”

Having scaled the first flight of a large stone staircase we were ushered into a room where Monsieur d’Astarac was busy writing near a big fire, surrounded by Egyptian coffins of human form, ranged against the wall, their cases painted with sacred emblems, and their faces in gold, with long shining eyes.

Monsieur d’Astarac invited us politely to sit down, and said:

“Messieurs, I was expecting you, and since you are both good enough to render me the favour of your services I beg you to consider this house as yours. You will be occupied here in translating Greek texts which I have brought back from Egypt. I have no doubt that you will put all your zeal into the accomplishment of this labour, when you learn that it concerns the work I have undertaken, which is to rediscover the lost knowledge whereby man shall be re-established in his original authority over the elements. Though I have no intention to-day of lifting from your eyes the veil of nature and of showing you Isis in all her dazzling nudity, I will confide to you the object of my studies without fear that you should betray the mystery, for I rely on your probity, and also on the power that I have of divining and of preventing anything that may be attempted against me, and of disposing of terrible and secret forces to avenge myself. In default of a fidelity which I do not question, my powers, Messieurs, assure me of your silence, and I risk nothing in exposing myself to you. You must know that man came from the hands of Jehovah perfect in the knowledge he has since lost. At his birth he had great power and great wisdom. One sees it in the book of Moses. Yet it is needful to understand it. First of all, it is clear that Jehovah is not God, but a mighty Demon, for he created the world. The idea of a God at one and the same time a creator and perfect is but a barbarous fancy, a barbarism fit for a Celt or a Saxon. One cannot admit, however little one’s intelligence may be formed, that a perfect being can add anything whatever to his perfection, were it but a hazel-nut. That stands to reason. God can have no conception. For, being infinite what can He well conceive? He does not create, for He is beyond time and space, conditions necessary to any construction. Moses was too good a philosopher to teach that the world was created by God. He knew Jehovah for what he is in reality, namely for a mighty Demon, and, to

give him the name, for a Demiurge. Now, when Jehovah created man, he gave him the knowledge of the visible and invisible worlds. The fall of Adam and Eve, which I will one day explain to you, did not altogether destroy this knowledge in the first man and the first woman, whose enlightenment descended to their children. These doctrines, on which lordship over nature depends, were transcribed in the book of Enoch. The Egyptian priests kept the tradition, which they fixed in mysterious signs on the walls of temples and on the coffins of the dead. Moses, brought up in the sanctuary of Memphis, was one of the initiated. His books, to the number of five or even six, enclose like so many precious arks, the treasures of divine knowledge. One finds in them the noblest of secrets, if after having purged them of unworthy interpolations one is careful to disdain the gross and literal meaning, to follow but the more subtle, which I have in great measure penetrated to, as will be made plain to you later on. However the truths whose virginity was guarded in the temples of Egypt passed to the sages of Alexandria, who added further to them, and crowned them with all the pure gold left as a legacy to Greece by Pythagoras and his disciples, with whom the powers of air held familiar converse. Therefore, Messieurs, we must explore the books of the Hebrews, the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, and the treatises of those Greeks whom they call gnostics, because they had knowledge. For myself, as is only just, I have reserved the most arduous part of this great labour. I devote myself to deciphering the hieroglyphics that the Egyptians inscribed in the temples of their gods and on the tombs of the priests. Having brought back from Egypt many of these inscriptions, I am getting at their meaning with the help of the key that I have been able to find in the writing of Clement of Alexandria.

“The Rabbi Mosaïde, who lives a retired life under my roof, labours to re-establish the true meaning of the Pentateuch. He is an elder, and very learned in magic, who lived for seventeen years shut in the crypts of the great Pyramid, where he read the works of Thoth. As for you, Messieurs, I count on employing your knowledge to read the Alexandrine manuscripts which I have myself collected in large numbers. Doubtless you will find marvellous secrets in them, and I have no fear but that with the help of these three sources of enlightenment, the Egyptian, the Hebraic, and the Greek, I shall soon arrive at possession of the means still lacking to me of ruling absolutely over nature both visible and invisible.

“Rest assured that I shall acknowledge your services by allowing you to participate to some extent in my powers.

“I do not speak to you of a more vulgar method of acknowledgment. At the point I have reached in my philosophic work money is but a mere trifle.”

When Monsieur d'Astarac got to this point of his speech, my good master interrupted him:

"Monsieur," said he, "I will not conceal from you that this money, which seems but a trifle to you, is for me a burning anxiety, for I have experienced that it is not easy to gain it honestly or even otherwise. I shall therefore be grateful for any assurance you may give me on this subject."

Monsieur d'Astarac, with a gesture which seemed to sweep aside some invisible object, reassured Monsieur Jérôme Coignard. As for me, curious of all I saw, I only wished to begin my new life.

At his master's call, the old serving-man who had opened the door, appeared in the study.

"Messieurs," continued our host, "I give you your liberty until the mid-day meal. I shall be much obliged to you, however, if you will go and see the rooms prepared for you upstairs, and tell me if anything be wanting. Criton will show you the way."

After having made sure that we were following him, the silent Criton left the room and began to mount the stairs. He climbed to the very top. Then going a few steps down a long corridor, he showed us two very neat rooms where a good fire was burning. I should never have believed that a house outwardly in such a ruined state and whose front showed but cracked walls and blind windows could in some parts be so habitable. My first care was to look where I was. Our rooms gave on to fields, and the view, over the marshy banks of the Seine, spread as far as the Calvary of Mount Valerian.

On taking a look at our furniture, I saw laid out on the bed, a grey coat, breeches to match, a hat, and a sword. On the carpet, a pair of buckled shoes stood genteelly paired, heels together, toes out, as if they had an innate appreciation of gallant bearing.

I augured favourably from all this of our master's liberality. To do him honour I took great pains over my toilet, and I powdered my hair freely with powder, of which I found a box full on a little table. I found in a drawer of the chest of drawers, a lace shirt and white stockings — all in keeping.

Having clad myself in the shirt, stockings, breeches, coat and waistcoat, I set about walking up and down the room, the hat under my arm, my hand on the hilt of my sword, stopping every moment to lean over the mirror, and regretting that Catherine the lace-maker could not see me thus gallantly equipped.

I had gone through this little performance several times when Monsieur Jérôme Coignard came into my room with new bands and a very respectable clerical collar.

“Is it you Tournebroche, my son?” he exclaimed. “Never forget that you owe these fine clothes to the knowledge that I have instilled into you. They suit a humanist such as you are, for where we speak of the *humanities* it is as much as to say ornaments. But look at me, I beg of you, and tell me do I not look well. In this coat I feel that I am a man of worthy repute. This Monsieur d’Astarac is of a magnificent turn. ’Tis a pity that he is mad. But he is at least sane on one point — for he calls his valet Criton, that is to say judge. And it is true indeed that our valets are the witnesses of our every action. They are sometimes their instigation. When milord Verulam, Chancellor of England, whose philosophy is not much to my taste, but who was a learned man, entered the Upper House to take his trial, his lackeys, clad with a sumptuousness that gave evidence of the display exhibited by the chancellor in the conduct of his household, rose up as a mark of respect. But milord Verulam said to them:— ‘Be seated! Your aggrandisement has brought me low.’

“In reality, these rogues had by their extravagance rushed him to ruin and constrained him to acts for which he was indicted for corruption. Tournebroche, my son, may the example of milord Verulam, Chancellor of England, and author of the *Novum Organon* be always before your eyes. But to return to this Seigneur d’Astarac, in whose service we are, it is a great pity that he is a sorcerer and given over to evil knowledge. You know, my son, that I pride myself on my particularity in matters of faith. It costs me something to take service with a cabalist, who turns our sacred writings upside down, on the pretext of understanding them better so. All the same, if, as his name and his speech seem to indicate he is a gentleman of Gascony, we have nothing to fear. A Gascon can make pact with the devil, for you may be sure that it is the devil who will be duped.”

The bell for our mid-day dinner interrupted our talk.

“Tournebroche, my son,” said my master, going downstairs, “remember during the meal to follow all my movements, so that you may imitate them. Having eaten at the third table of my lord Bishop of Séz I know how to behave myself. It is a difficult art. It is less easy to eat like a gentleman than to speak like one.”

VI

IN the dining-room we found the table laid for three, where Monsieur d'Astarac made us sit down. Criton, who did the office of butler, served us with jellies, extracts and "purées" passed a dozen times through the sieve. We saw no roast appear. Though we were very careful to hide our surprise, my good master and I, Monsieur d'Astarac perceived it and said to us:

"Messieurs, this is only an experiment, and if it seems an unfortunate one to you, I will not persist in it. You shall be served with more ordinary dishes, and I myself will not disdain to partake. If the dishes that I offer you to-day are badly prepared, it is less the fault of my cook than that of the science of chemistry, which is yet in its infancy. All the same, this will give you some notion of what we shall see in the future. At present men eat without philosophy. They do not feed like reasonable beings. They do not even think about it. But what do they think about? They nearly all live in a state of stupidity, and even such as are capable of reflection occupy their mind with follies such as controversy and the making of poetry. Consider, Messieurs, the subject of man and his food since distant times when they ceased all commerce with Sylphs and Salamanders. Abandoned by these sprites of air, they sank heavily down into ignorance and barbarism. Without art and without governance, they lived naked and miserable in caves, on the banks of streams, or in the forests. The chase was their only pursuit. When by surprise or superior swiftness they took some timid animal, they devoured their prey while it was yet quivering.

"Moreover, they ate the flesh of their companions, and of their weakly brethren, and the first sepulchres of humanity were living tombs, were bowels, famished and without compassion.

"After long and savage centuries, appeared a man divine whom the Greeks called Prometheus. There is no doubt that this sage had commerce with the race of Salamanders, in the secret resorts of the Nymphs. He learnt from them, and taught to poor mortals, the art of kindling and keeping fire. Among the innumerable gains which mankind has derived from him who is now enskied, one of the happiest was to be able to cook food, and by this treatment to render it lighter and less gross.

"And it is in great measure as a result of their nourishment being submitted to the action of fire, that men have slowly and by degrees become intelligent, industrious, reflective, and apt to cultivate the arts and sciences. But this was but

the first step, and it is distressing to think that so many millions of years have rolled by without there having been a second. Since the time when our ancestors broiled a bear's ham over a brushwood fire, under the shelter of a rock, we have made no real progress in cookery. For you will scarcely reckon as anything, the inventions of Lucullus, and that fat pasty to which Vitellius gave the name of the buckler of Minerva, any more than our toasts, our patties, our stews, our stuffed meats, and all those made dishes which still retain much of the old barbarity.

"The king's table at Fontainebleau, where they dish a whole stag in his skin, and with his antlers, presents to the eyes of a philosopher as gross a spectacle as that of the troglodytes crouching round the fire gnawing horse-bones. The gay pictures on the walls, the guards, the richly-dressed officers, the musicians playing airs from Lambert and Lulli in the gallery, the silken cloths, the silver service, the cups of gold, the Venetian glass, the sconces, the chased epergnes decked with flowers, all these fail to deceive or to cast a charm which shall hide the true nature of this unclean charnel-house, where men and women meet to feast greedily on the carcasses of beasts, on broken bones and torn flesh. What an unphilosophic repast! We swallow, with stupid greed, muscles, fat and entrails of animals, without making any distinction in these substances between the parts which are really suitable for our nourishment and those, far more plentiful, which should be thrown away; and we bolt without distinction, the good and the bad, the useful and the hurtful. This is, however, where we should make a distinction, and if, in all the faculty, a single doctor of chemistry and philosopher could be found, we should no longer be obliged to sit down to these disgusting orgies.

"He would prepare for us, Messieurs, extracts of meat, containing merely what is in sympathy and affinity with our bodies. Only the quintessence of beef and swine-flesh would be taken, merely the elixir of partridges and pullets, and everything that one swallowed could be digested. It is what I do not despair of succeeding in doing one day, Messieurs, in dwelling more on the study of medicine and chemistry than I have hitherto had the time to do."

At these words from our host Monsieur Jérôme Coignard lifted his eyes from the Spartan broth on his plate, and looked uneasily at Monsieur d'Astarac.

"Even so our progress would still be inadequate," continued the latter. "An honest man cannot without disgust eat the flesh of animals, and nations cannot call themselves civilised so long as slaughter-houses and butchers' shops are to be found in their towns. But one day we shall know how to rid ourselves of these barbarous trades. When we know exactly the nutrient substances which are contained in the bodies of animals, it will become possible to draw these same substances out of the lifeless bodies, which will supply them abundantly. These

bodies really contain all that is found in living beings, since the animal is formed from the vegetable, which in its turn has drawn its substance from lifeless matter.

“The next thing will be to nourish ourselves on extracts of metals and minerals suitably prepared by physicians. Have no fear the taste will be delicious and its absorption wholesome. Cooking will be done in retorts, and in alembics and we shall have alchemists as master-cooks. Are you not exceedingly anxious, Messieurs, to see these marvels? I promise you them in time to come. But you cannot yet grasp the excellent results they will effect.”

“Truly, Monsieur, I fail to grasp it.” said my good master, taking a drink of wine.

“Deign, in that case, to listen to me a moment,” said Monsieur d’Astarac. “Being no longer weighed down by slow processes of digestion men will become singularly agile, their sight will become wonderfully keen, and they will see ships gliding on the seas of the moon. Their understanding will be clearer, their manners will soften. They will advance greatly in the knowledge of God and nature. But one must face the changes which will not fail to be produced. Even the structure of the human body will be modified. It is a fact that for want of use organs dwindle and even end by disappearing. It has been observed that fish deprived of light become blind; and in Valais I have seen shepherds who, living only on curds and whey, lost their teeth very early; some amongst them never even had any. One cannot but admire nature in that particular; she suffers nothing useless to exist. When mankind feeds but on the infusions I have described, the intestines will not fail to become shorter by several ells, and the size of the stomach will be considerably diminished.”

“Upon my word,” said my good master, “you go too fast, Monsieur, and risk making a bad job of it! It has never vexed me that women should have a little of that, so long, as the rest was in proportion. It is a beauty which appeals to me. Do not inconsiderately prune it away.”

“Well, never mind about that. We will leave women’s waists and hips to shape themselves according to the canon of the Greek sculptors. That will be to please you, Monsieur l’Abbé, and in consideration of the needs of maternity; though, to speak candidly, I desire to make various changes on that point, of which I will speak to you some day.

To return to our subject, I ought to tell you that all I have told you up to the present is but feeling the way towards the true nourishment, which is that of the Sylphs, and the Spirits of the air. They drink in the light, which suffices to give a strength and wonderful suppleness to their bodies. It is their only potion. One day it will be ours, Messieurs. It is merely a question of rendering potable the

beams of the sun. I confess to not seeing with sufficient clearness the road to success, and I foresee numerous troubles and great obstacles in the way. If ever some sage attains this goal, mankind will equal the Sylphs and Salamanders in intelligence and beauty.”

My good master listened to these words sitting bowed in his seat, his head bent in sadness. He seemed to be pondering the changes in his appearance the nutrition imagined by his host would one day bring about.

“Monsieur,” said he at last, “did you not speak yesterday at the cook-shop of a certain elixir which dispenses with all other nourishment?”

“True,” said Monsieur d’Astarac, “but that liquor is only good for philosophers; by that you will readily conceive that its usage is restricted. It were better not to speak of it.”

However, a doubt troubled me, and I asked permission of my host to put it before him, certain that he would throw light upon it at once. He gave me permission to speak, and I said:

“Monsieur, these Salamanders who, as you say, are so beautiful and of whom, by your account, I have formed so charming a notion — have they had the misfortune to spoil their teeth by drinking light as the peasants of Valais have lost theirs by taking nothing but milk-food? I allow that I am anxious on the point.”

“My son,” replied Monsieur d’Astarac, “your curiosity pleases me, and I will satisfy it. Salamanders have no teeth, properly speaking. But their gums are furnished with two rows of very white and shining pearls, which lend an inconceivable grace to their smile. Know, then, that these pearls are but materialised light.”

I told Monsieur d’Astarac that I was very much relieved to hear it. He continued:

“Men’s teeth are a sign of their ferocity. When we feed as we ought these teeth will be replaced by some ornament like the Salamander’s pearls. Then we shall be unable to imagine how a lover could have looked without horror and disgust on the dog-teeth in his mistress’s mouth.”

VII

AFTER dinner our host led us into a large gallery adjoining his study and serving as a library.

There on oaken shelves were ranged an innumerable army, or rather a great council of books, duodecimos, octavos, quartos, folios, covered in calf, basil, morocco, parchment and pigskin. Six windows threw light on this silent gathering which stretched from one end of the apartment to the other the whole length of the high walls. Great tables, alternating with celestial globes and astronomical instruments, occupied the middle of the gallery. Monsieur d'Astarac begged us to choose the corner which seemed to us the most convenient for work.

But my good master, his mouth watering, his head thrown back, feasted his eyes and inhaled the very atmosphere of books.

"By Apollo!" he cried, "a magnificent library indeed! The library of my lord Bishop of Sééz, rich as it is in works on the canon-law, cannot be compared to this. There is no resort more pleasing to my taste, not even the Elysian Fields described by Virgil. I make out at first glance so many rare works and so many precious collections that I doubt, Monsieur, if any private library can better this, which only yields in France to the Mazarin, and to the Royal. I go so far as to say, at the sight of the Greek and Latin manuscripts, which crowd this corner here, that after the Bodleian, the Ambrosian, the Laurentian and the Vatican, we may name the Astaracian. Without flattering myself I can scent truffles and books from afar, and I hold you from this moment for the equal of Peiresc, Grolier, and de Canevarius, princes among bibliophiles!"

"I out-top them all," replied Monsieur d'Astarac calmly, "and this library is infinitely more precious than all those you have just named.

"The king's library is but a book-pedlar's lot besides mine, unless you merely reckon by number of volumes and mass of inked paper.

"Gabriel Naudé, and your Abbé Bignon, renowned as book collectors, in comparison with myself, were but indolent shepherds of a sheepish and ignoble flock of books.

"As to the Benedictines, I grant you they are industrious, but they have no nicety of discernment, and their libraries reflect the mediocrity of the minds that have formed them. My collection, Monsieur, is not on the model of these. The works which I have brought together form a whole which will not fail to procure me the Knowledge. It is gnostic, oecumenical, and spiritual. If all the lines traced

on these innumerable leaves of parchment and of paper could enter in due order into your brain, Monsieur, you would know all things, be capable of all things, you would be the master of nature, a worker in plasmic matter; you would hold the world between the two fingers of your hand as I hold these grains of snuff.”

Whereupon he offered his box to my good master.

“You are very good,” said Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard.

And letting his ravished gaze wander once more over this marshalled learning, he cried:

“There, between the third and fourth windows are shelves bearing an illustrious burden! The Oriental manuscripts are assembled and seem to converse in company! I can see that ten or twelve of them are very venerable under their rags of purple, and gold-brocaded silk. There are some who wear clasps of precious stones to their coats, like the Byzantine emperors. Others again are shut in plaques of ivory.”

“Those,” said Monsieur d’Astarac, “are the cabalists, Jew, Arabic and Persian. That is *The Hand of Power* you have just opened. Alongside you will find *The Spread Table*, *The Faithful Pastor*, *Fragments of the Temple*, and *The Light in Darkness*. One place is empty; that of *The Still Waters*, a precious treatise which Mosaïde is at the moment studying. Mosaïde, as I have already told you, Messieurs, is occupied in my house in discovering the most profound secrets contained in Hebrew writings, and, although more than a hundred years old, this rabbi is unwilling to die until he has penetrated the meaning of every cabalistic symbol. I am under great obligation to him; therefore I beg of you, Messieurs, to evince the same feelings towards him that I have myself.

“Enough of that, and now let us turn to what particularly concerns you. I thought, Monsieur l’Abbé, you might transcribe and put into Latin these Greek manuscripts of inestimable value. I have faith in your knowledge and in your zeal, and I do not doubt that your pupil will soon be of great help to you.”

And addressing himself to me:

“Yes, my son, I have great hopes of you. They are founded in great measure on the education you have received. For you were, so to speak, nourished in the flames, under a chimney-hood haunted by Salamanders. This circumstance has great weight.”

As he spoke he seized an armful of manuscripts which he placed on the table.

“This,” said he, pointing to a roll of papyrus, “comes from Egypt. It is a work of Zozimus the Panopolitan, which was thought to be lost, and which I myself found in the coffin of a priest of Serapis. And what you see there,” he added, showing us some shreds of shining and fibrous leaves on which Greek characters traced with a brush were dimly to be discerned, “are quite unheard of revelations

which we owe, the one to Sophar the Persian, the other to John, arch-priest of St. Evagia.

“I shall be infinitely obliged to you if you will first of all busy yourself with these works. Afterwards we will study the manuscripts of Synesius, Bishop of Ptolémaïs, of Olympiodorus and Stephanus, which I found in Ravenna in a vault where they had been shut up, since the reign of the ignorant Theodosius, surnamed the Great.

“Messieurs, you will please first get an idea of what this vast work will mean. At the end of the room you will find, to the right of the fireplace, all the lexicons and grammars I have been able to collect, and these will be of some use to you. Permit me to leave you; there are four or five Sylphs awaiting me in my study. Criton will see that you want for nothing. Farewell.”

As soon as Monsieur d’Astarac was out of the room my good master sat down before the papyrus of Zozimus and arming himself with a magnifying-glass he had found on the table, began to decipher it. I asked him if he had not been surprised at all he had just heard.

He answered without raising his head:

“My son, I have known too many kinds of people and gone through too many changes of fortune to be astonished at anything.

VIII

FOR the space of a month or even six weeks Monsieur Coignard applied himself day and night as he had promised to reading Zozimus the Panopolitan. During meals, which we took at Monsieur d'Astarac's table, the conversation ran but on the opinions of gnostics and on the knowledge of the ancient Egyptians. Being but a very ignorant scholar I gave my master little enough help. Still I busied myself in researches under his directions to the best of my ability; I took a certain pleasure in them. And we undoubtedly lived a happy and peaceful life. Towards the seventh week Monsieur d'Astarac gave me leave to go and see my parents at the cook-shop. The shop seemed to me strangely shrunk. My mother was there, alone and sad. She gave a loud cry when she saw me equipped like a young prince."

"My Jacques," she said, "I am happy indeed." And she began to cry. We embraced one another. Then, wiping her eyes with a corner of her coarse apron:

"Your father," she said, "is at the *Petit Bacchus*. He goes there a great deal since you left, for he takes less pleasure in his home now that you are away. He will be pleased to see you again. But tell me, my Jacquot, are you pleased with your new life? I have had my regrets that I let you go away with this nobleman. I even accused myself in confession, to Monsieur the third *vicaire*, of having preferred the good of your body to that of your soul, and of not having given enough thought to God in placing you out. Monsieur the third *vicaire* rebuked me kindly and exhorted me to follow the example of the virtuous women of Holy Scripture, of whom he named several to me, but those are names that I see plainly enough I shall never remember. He did not explain himself very fully, as it was Saturday night, and the church was full of penitents."

I comforted my good mother as well as I could, and told her how Monsieur d'Astarac made me work at Greek, which is the language of the Gospel. This thought was pleasing to her. Nevertheless she was still troubled with cares.

"You will never guess, my Jacques," she said to me, "who has been speaking to me of Monsieur d'Astarac. Why, Cadette Saint-Avit, the servant of the curé of St. Benoît. She comes from Gascony, from a place called Laroque-Timbaut, quite near St. Eulalie, where Monsieur d'Astarac is lord of the manor. Cadette St. Avit is old, you know, as a priest's servant should be. When she was young and lived in that neighbourhood, she knew the three Messieurs d'Astarac, one of whom, captain of a ship, was drowned in the sea. He was the youngest. The second, colonel of a regiment, went to the war and was killed there. The eldest,

Hercule d'Astarac, is the only survivor. It is this one then whom you are with, and for your good, my Jacques, at least I hope so. When young he was magnificent in his attire, liberal in his ways, but of a gloomy cast. He held aloof from public office, and did not seem eager to enter the king's service as his brothers did, and there meet an honourable end. He was in the habit of saying that there was nothing glorious in bearing a sword at one's side, that he knew no trade more ignoble than the noble career of arms, and that a village bone-setter, was, in his opinion, much above a brigadier or a marshal of France. Such was his talk. I must own that it does not seem either bad or mischievous to me, but rather bold and odd. Still it must in some measure be condemned, since Cadette St. Avit said that Monsieur the curé took exception to it, as contrary to the ordering of things established by God in the world, and as opposed to passages in the Bible, where God is called a name which means field-marshal. That would be a great sin. Monsieur Hercule held himself so aloof from the court that he refused to make the journey to Versailles to be presented to his majesty, as his birth warranted. He said:— 'The king does not visit me. I shall not visit him.' And it stands to reason, my Jacquot, that this is a most unnatural speech."

My good mother looked at me with troubled interrogation, and then went on in the same way: "What I have still to tell you, my Jacquot, is even less credible. Yet Cadette St. Avit spoke of it as sure and certain. I will tell you that Monsieur Hercule d'Astarac, not leaving his domain, cared for nothing but the putting of sunlight into glass bottles. Cadette St. Avit did not know how he set about it, but of this much she is certain, that in the course of time, in these glass bottles well corked and warmed in a *bain-marie*, women were formed very tiny and beautifully made, and dressed like princesses in a play. You laugh, my Jacquot, yet one cannot joke at these things when one sees the consequences. It is a great sin to make creatures in this way who cannot be baptized and can never participate in eternal bliss. For you can scarcely imagine that Monsieur d'Astarac took these little dolls to the priests in their bottles to hold them over the baptismal font? They could never have found a god-mother."

"But, dear mother," said I, "Monsieur d'Astarac's dolls have no need of baptism for they had no share in original sin."

"I never thought of that," said my mother, "and Cadette St. Avit herself said nothing about it, although she is servant to a curé. Unfortunately she left Gascony very young to come into France, and she heard no more of Monsieur d'Astarac, his bottles and his puppets. I hope indeed, my dear Jacquot, that he has renounced these evil works which could not be accomplished without the help of the Evil One."

But I asked:

“Tell me, my good mother, Cadette St. Avit, the curé’s servant, did she see with her own eyes these ladies in the bottles?”

“Not so, my child; Monsieur d’Astarac was far too secretive to show those dolls. But she heard them spoken of by an ecclesiastic of the name of Fulgence, who was always about the *château* and swore he had seen these little people come out of their glass prison and dance a minuet. And, therefore, she had all the more reason for believing it. For one may doubt what one sees but not the word of an honest man, particularly when he is an ecclesiastic. There is another drawback to these practices, that is that they are extremely costly, and one cannot imagine, Cadette St. Avit said, the expense Monsieur Hercule went to, to procure the bottles of various shapes, the furnaces, and the grammaries with which he had filled his *château*. But by the death of his brother he became the richest gentleman in the county, and while he wasted his substance in folly his fat lands worked for him. Cadette St. Avit judges that notwithstanding his outlay he must still be very rich, even now.”

As she spoke my father entered the shop. He embraced me fondly and confided to me that the house had lost half its attraction in consequence of my departure, and that of Monsieur Jérôme Coignard, who was a good fellow and a jovial. He complimented me on my clothes and gave me some hints on deportment, declaring that business had bred an affable manner in him from the continual obligation he was under to greet customers as if they were gentlemen, even when they were of the vulgarest sort. He gave me the advice to round my elbow and turn out my toes, and counselled me over and above to go and see Léandre, at the fair of Saint Germain, so as to model myself on him.

IX

IT was black night when I left the cook-shop. At the corner of the rue des Ecrivains I heard a rich deep voice that sang:

*“If it be thine honours lost ,
Frail and fair , ’twas thy desire”*

And I soon saw on the side whence came the voice brother Ange who, his wallet swinging on his shoulder and holding Catherine the lace-maker round the waist, walked in the shadow with staggering and triumphant gait, throwing up the waters of the gutter under his sandals in magnificent great splashes of mud which seemed to celebrate his sottish gloriousness, as the basins at Versailles play their jets in honour of kings. I stood against a stone door-post that they might not see. But it was an unnecessary precaution for they were too occupied with one another. Catherine laughed, with her head thrown back on the monk’s shoulder. A ray of moonlight played on her fresh lips, and in her eyes, as in spring waters. And I went on my way, vexed to the soul, with a weight on my heart, thinking on the rounded shape of this beautiful girl pressed in the arms of a dirty capuchin.

“How should it be,” I asked myself, “that so sweet a thing should come into such foul hands? And if it be that Catherine disdains me, need she yet make her scorn the more cruel by the liking she shows for this scoundrel, brother Ange?”

The preference seemed to me astonishing, and surprised as much as it disgusted me. But it was not in vain that I was the pupil of Monsieur Jérôme Coignard. The incomparable master had formed my mind to meditation. I pictured to myself the Satyrs one sees in gardens ravishing the Nymphs, and I made the reflection that if Catherine was made like a Nymph, the Satyrs such as they are exhibited to us, were as frightful as the monk. I came to the conclusion that I should not be too much astonished at that I had just seen. Still my reasons did not dissipate my grief; no doubt because they did not come from the same source. These meditations led me, across the shades of night and the puddles melted by the thaw, to the St. Germain road, where I met Monsieur l’Abbé Jérôme Coignard, who had been supping in the town and was returning late to the Cross of Les Sablons.

“My son,” he said, “I have just been discussing Zozimus and the gnostics at the table of a very learned ecclesiastic, a second Peiresc. The wine was rough

and the cheer but middling. But nectar and ambrosia flowed in our speech.”

My good master then spoke of the Panopolitan with unimaginable eloquence. Alas! I was a bad listener, thinking of that bead of moonlight that fell through the dark on Catherine’s lips.

At last he paused, and I asked him on what ground the Greeks had founded the Nymph’s taste for Satyrs. My good master was ready with an answer to any questions, so extensive was his knowledge. Said he:

“My son, it is a taste founded on natural sympathy. Although less ardent, it is as pronounced as that of the Satyrs for the Nymphs to which it corresponds. Poets have well observed the distinction. In this connection I will tell you a singular adventure I read of in a manuscript which belonged to my lord bishop of Sééz’ library (I see it still). It was a compilation in folio written in good writing of the last century. The singular story it told was this. A Norman gentleman and his wife took part in a public merry-making, the one disguised as a Satyr, the other as a Nymph. One knows from Ovid with what ardour the Satyrs pursued the Nymphs. This gentleman had read his *Metamorphoses*. He entered so well into the spirit of his disguise that nine months afterwards his wife presented him with a child that had the goat’s foot and the horned brow. What became of the father we do not know, except that he died — the lot common to all — leaving, along with his little goat-foot, another and a younger child, a Christian this one, and of human form. This younger son appealed to the law that his brother should be deprived of the paternal inheritance by reason that he did not belong to the race redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Parliament of Normandy, sitting in Rouen, gave him judgment and the decree was registered.”

I asked my good master if it were possible that such a travesty could have its effect on nature, and if the shape of the child result from the cut of a coat. Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard advised me not to believe a word of it.

“Jacques Tournebroche, my son,” said he, “always bear in mind that a sound intelligence rejects everything that is contrary to reason, except in matters of faith, where it is necessary to believe blindly. God be thanked I have never erred in the matter of the dogmas of our holy religion, and I trust that I shall be found in this disposition in the article of death.”

While talking thus we arrived at the *château*. In the midst of the darkness the roof showed up with a red illumination. From one of the chimneys sparks poured out which mounted in volumes to fall again in golden rain under the thick smoke which hid the sky. We both thought that flames were devouring the building. My good master tore his hair and groaned.

“My Zozimus! my papyrus! my Greek manuscripts! Help! help! my Zozimus!”

Running up the avenue through pools of water which reflected the glow of the fire, we crossed the park which was buried in deep shadow still and deserted. In the *château* all seemed asleep. We heard the roar of the fire, which filled the dark stairway. We went up two steps at a time, stopping at moments to hear whence came this awful noise.

It seemed to come from a corridor on the first floor where we had never yet set foot. We felt our way along this direction, and seeing a red light through the cracks of a closed door we flung ourselves upon it. It yielded suddenly.

Monsieur d'Astarac, who had opened it, stood tranquilly before us. His long, black-clad figure stood erect in a very atmosphere of flame. He asked us quietly what urgent matter made us seek him at this hour.

There was no conflagration, but an enormous fire issuing from a reverberatory furnace, known to me since as an athanor. The whole of this room, and it was big enough, was full of long-necked glass bottles surmounted by winding, duck-billed glass tubes; retorts, like faces with inflated cheeks, whence sprang a nose like an elephant's trunk; crucibles, matrasses, cupels, cucurbits and vessels of unknown shapes.

My good master, wiping his face, which shone like fire, said:

"Ah, Monsieur! we thought the *château* was blazing like a handful of straw. Thank God the library is not burnt. But I see, Monsieur, that you practice the spagyric art."

"I will not conceal from you," replied Monsieur d'Astarac, "that I have made considerable progress in it, without, however, having altogether found the Theleme, which would complete my work. At the very moment you burst in I was in the act of distilling the *Spirit of the World* and the *Flower of Heaven*, which is the *True Fountain of Youth*. Do you understand alchemy at all, Monsieur Coignard?"

The Abbé replied that he had acquired a certain smattering from books, but he held the practice pernicious, and contrary to religion.

Monsieur d'Astarac smiled and said:

"You are too able a man, Monsieur Coignard, not to know the *Flying Eagle*, the *Bird of Hermes*, the *Fowl of Hermogenes*, the *Raven's Head*, the *Green Lion* and the *Phoenix*."

"I have heard it said," replied my good master, "that those are the names of the philosopher's stone in its different states. But I doubt the possibility of transmuting metals."

Monsieur d'Astarac answered very confidently: "Nothing is easier for me, Monsieur, than to put an end to your uncertainty."

He went and opened an old lop-sided cupboard propped against the wall, took out a copper coin bearing the effigy of the late king, and drew our attention to a round spot which ran through it. "That," said he, "is the effect of the stone which has transmuted the copper into silver. But that is but a trifle."

He returned to the cupboard and took out a sapphire as large as an egg, an opal of marvellous size, and a handful of perfectly beautiful emeralds.

"Here," said he, "is some of my work, which will sufficiently prove to you that the spagyric art is not the dream of an empty brain."

At the bottom of the bowl where the stones lay were five or six small diamonds which Monsieur d'Astarac did not even mention. My good master asked if they were also of his making. And the alchemist having replied that they were:

"Monsieur," said the Abbé, "I advise you first to show these latter to the curious, for prudence sake. If you first show the sapphire, opal and the ruby, they will say that only the devil could produce such stones, and they will proceed against you for sorcery. Moreover, only the devil could live comfortably with these furnaces, where one inhales the very flames. As for me, who have been here but a quarter of an hour, I am already nearly cooked." Monsieur d'Astarac smiled benevolently, and showing us out explained himself as follows: "Although knowing well what to think as regards the reality of the devil and of That Other, I am always willing to speak of them with those who believe in them. The devil and That Other are, as we may say, characters; and we may talk of them as of Achilles and Thersites. Rest assured, Messieurs, that if the devil be what they say, he does not dwell in so subtle an element as the fire. It is a contradiction of the worst kind to put so evil a beast in the substance of the sun. But as I had the honour to explain, Monsieur Tournebroche, to your mother's friend the capuchin, I consider that Christians calumniate Satan and his demons. That there may be, in some unknown land, beings yet more wicked than men is possible, though barely conceivable. Assuredly, if they do exist, they inhabit regions deprived of light, and if they burn it is in ice, which truthfully enough causes acute pain, and not in illustrious flame amidst the ardent daughters of the stars. They suffer because they are wicked, and wickedness is an ill, but it can be but from frost-bite. As to your Satan, Monsieur, who is held in such horror by our theologians, I do not think him so contemptible, to judge by all you say of him, and if, peradventure, he exists I should take him for no evil beast, but rather for some slight Sylph, or, to put him at the lowest, for a metal-working Gnome, very intelligent and slightly ironical."

My good master stopped his ears and fled that he might not hear any more.

“What impiety, Tournebroche my son,” he cried on the stairs, “what blasphemy! Did you fully understand the detestableness of this philosopher’s principles? He pushes his atheism to the point of a frenzied rejoicing which confounds me. But that of itself renders him nearly innocent in the matter, for, being separate from all belief, he cannot lacerate the Holy Church as do those who are still partially attached to her by some half-severed and still bleeding member. Such, my son, are the Lutherans and the Calvinists, whose rupture is the gangrene of the Church. Atheists, on the contrary, are their own damnation, and one may die with them without sin. So we need have no scruples in living with this Monsieur d’Astarac, who believes in neither God nor devil. But did you notice, Tournebroche my son, that at the bottom of the bowl lay a handful of small diamonds he himself scarcely troubled to take count of, and which seemed to me of very good water? I have my doubts about the opal and the sapphire. But as to those small diamonds, they seemed to me to be the real thing.”

Having reached our rooms upstairs we bade each other good-night.

X

WE led, my good master and I, a secluded and regular life until the spring came. We worked all morning, shut up in the library, and we returned there after dinner as to the play — according to Monsieur Jérôme Coignard's expression; not indeed, as this excellent man said, to witness a scurrilous show, after the manner of men of fashion and lackeys, but to hear the sublime if contradictory dialogues of ancient writers.

In this way the reading and translation of the Panopolitan advanced wonderfully. To this I scarcely contributed. Such work was beyond my knowledge, and it was as much as I could do to learn the shape the Greek characters took on papyrus. At the same time I helped my master to consult the authors who could throw light on his researches, particularly Olympiodorus and Photius, who since then have ever remained familiar to me. The little help I gave him raised me much in my own estimation.

After a long and bitter winter I was in a fair way to become a *savant*, when the spring came all at once with her gay train of sunshine, of tender green, and the song of birds. The scent of the lilac which mounted into the library made me fall to vague dreamings from which my good master brusquely dragged me, saying to me:

“Jacquot Tournebroche, climb up the ladder if you please, and tell me if that rogue of a Manethe does not speak of a god Imhotep, who with his contradictions torments me like a fiend?”

And my good master charged his nose with snuff with an air of much content.

“My son,” he said further, “it is to be remarked that our clothes have great influence on our moral being. Since my clerical collar is all spotted with different sauces that I have let drop on it I do not feel so worthy a man. Tournebroche, now you are clad like a marquis, are you not tickled with the desire to assist at an opera dancer's toilet, and to push a roll of false notes on to a faro-table? In one word, don't you feel yourself a man of quality? Do not take what I say in bad part, and remember that it is sufficient to give a coward a bear-skin cap to make him go and get his head broken in the king's service. Tournebroche, our feelings are made up of a thousand things which escape us by their very minuteness, and the destiny of our immortal soul depends sometimes on a breath too light to bend a blade of grass. We are the plaything of the winds. But hand me, I beg you, the rudiments of Vossius whose red edges I see gaping open under your left arm.”

That day, after the three o'clock dinner, Monsieur d'Astarac took my good master and myself for a walk in the park. He led us to the west side, which looked out on Rueil and Mt. Valerian. It was the most withdrawn and the loneliest. Ivy, and grass close-cropped by the rabbits, covered the alleys, which were blocked here and there by huge trunks of dead trees. The marble statues on either side smiled, knowing nothing of their ruin. A Nymph with her broken hand to her lips signed to a shepherd to be discreet. A young Faun, whose head lay on the ground, still sought his lips with his flute. And all these beings of divinity seemed to teach us to despise the hurts of time and fortune. We followed the banks of a canal where the rainwater refreshed the small green frogs. At one point, around the juncture of several alleys, were sloping fountains where the wood-pigeons drank. Having come to this spot we took a narrow path cut in the underwood.

"Walk carefully," said Monsieur d'Astarac. "This path is dangerous, for it is bordered with mandragoras who sing at nightfall at the foot of the trees. They are hidden in the ground. Take care not to step on them, you would either take a love-sickness or a thirst for riches, and you would be lost, for the passions inspired by the mandragora are melancholy."

I asked him how we could possibly avoid this unseen danger. Monsieur d'Astarac replied that one could escape it by divining it intuitively and not otherwise.

"Anyway," he added, "this path is fateful."

It led straight to a brick cottage hidden in ivy, which had doubtless once served as a keeper's lodge. Here the park terminated on the monotonous marshes of the Seine.

"You see this cottage," said Monsieur d'Astarac.

"It has in its keeping the wisest of men. There it is that Mosaïde, now aged one hundred and twelve years, penetrates with a persistency that has a majesty of its own to the arcana of nature. He has left Imbonatus and Bartolini far behind him. I desired to honour myself by entertaining under my roof the greatest of cabalists since Enoch the son of Cain. But religious scruples prevent Mosaïde from sitting at my table which he holds for Christian — in which he does it too much honour. You cannot conceive to what extremity of violence this sage carries his hatred of Christians. It is under great persuasion only that he consents to inhabit this cottage where he lives alone with his niece Jael. Messieurs, you must no longer delay in making his acquaintance, and I will present you both immediately to this inspired being."

Having spoken thus, Monsieur d'Astarac pushed us into the cottage and made us climb up a spiral staircase to a room where, in the midst of scattered

manuscripts in a great winged chair, sat an aged man, bright-eyed, hook-nosed, whose sloping chin let fall two thin streamers of white beard. A velvet cap, shaped like a cap of state, covered his bald head, and his body so thin as to be scarcely human, was wrapped in an old yellow silk gown, splendid but soiled.

Although his piercing gaze was turned towards us, he showed no sign of being aware of our approach. His face showed a painful stubbornness and he twisted slowly between his wrinkled fingers the reed which served him as a pen.

“Do not expect empty words from Mosaïde,” said Monsieur d’Astarac.

“For many a long day this sage has discoursed with no one save the Genii and myself. His discourse is sublime. As he will doubtless not consent to converse with you, Messieurs, I will give you in a few words an idea of his worth. Firstly, he has penetrated to the spiritual meaning of the books of Moses in accordance with the value of the Hebrew characters, which depend on the order of the letters in the alphabet. This order had been upset after the eleventh letter. Mosaïde has re-established it, which Atrabis, Philo, Avicenna, Raymond Lully, Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Henry More, and Robert Fludd were unable to do. Mosaïde knows the golden number which corresponds to Jehovah in the spirit-world. And you will understand, Messieurs, that that is of infinite importance.”

My good master drew his box from his pocket and after offering it civilly to us inhaled a pinch of snuff, and said:

“Do you not think, Monsieur d’Astarac, that these attainments are extremely likely to guide you to the devil at the end of this transitory life? For this Seigneur Mosaïde errs palpably in his interpretation of Holy Writ. When Our Saviour died on the Cross for the redemption of mankind, the synagogue felt a bandage tighten over her eyes, she tottered like a drunken woman, and her crown fell from her head. Since then the interpretation of the Old Testament has been relegated to the Catholic Church, to which I belong notwithstanding my multiple sins.”

At these words Mosaïde, looking like a Satyr, smiled in a manner truly terrifying, and addressed my good master in a slow grating far-away voice: “The Mashora has not confided its secrets to you, nor the Mischna its mysteries.”

“Mosaïde,” continued Monsieur d’Astarac, “interprets clearly not only the books of Moses but that of Enoch, which is much more important, and which for lack of understanding the Christians have rejected, as the cock in the Arabian fable disdained the pearl fallen in his food. This book of Enoch, Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, is the more precious as one finds therein the first dealings of the daughters of men and the Sylphs. For you well understand that these angels whom Enoch shows us as allying themselves with women in amorous intercourse are Sylphs and Salamanders.”

“I am ready to understand it that way,” replied my good master, “so as not to annoy you. But by what has been left to us of the book of Enoch, which is visibly apocryphal, I suspect that those angels were not Sylphs, but Phoenician merchants.”

“And on what, may I ask, do you found such a strange opinion?” said Monsieur d’Astarac.

“I found it, Monsieur, on this, that it says in this book that it was the angels who taught to women the usage of bracelets and necklaces, the art of painting their eyebrows, and of using all kinds of dyes. It is also recounted in this book that the angels taught to the daughters of men the properties of roots and trees, charms and the art of stargazing. In all good faith, Monsieur, have not these angels rather the look of Tyrians or Sidonians disembarking on some half-wild coast, and undoing at the foot of the rocks their corded bales to tempt the daughters of the savage tribes? These traffickers gave them collarettes of copper, amulets and medicaments in exchange for amber, incense and furs, and they amazed these handsome ignorant creatures by their talk of the stars with a knowledge gained in navigation. That is all quite straightforward, and I should like to know on what point Monsieur Mosaïde can gainsay it.”

Mosaïde kept silence, and Monsieur d’Astarac smiled once more. “Monsieur Coignard,” said he “you do not argue badly, ignorant as you are still of gnosticism and cabalism. What you say makes me think that there may have been some gnomes who were metal-workers and goldsmiths among the Sylphs who united themselves in love with the daughters of men. Gnomes, in fact, readily busy themselves with goldsmiths’ work, and probably ingenious demons wrought those bracelets you think were of Phoenician manufacture. But you will suffer some disadvantages, I warn you Monsieur, in measuring yourself with Mosaïde in the knowledge of human antiquities. He has found remains thought to be lost, among others the column of Seth and the oracles of Sambethe, daughter of Noah, and the most ancient of the Sibyls.”

“Oh!” exclaimed my good master, bounding on the dusty floor, whence arose a cloud of dust, “oh! what moonshine! It is too much of a good thing! You are laughing at me. And Monsieur Mosaïde cannot house so many follies in his head under his big cap, which looks like Charlemagne’s crown. This column of Seth is a ridiculous invention of that thickhead Flavius-Josephus, an absurd tale which has never yet deceived any one but you. As to the predictions of Sambethe, the daughter of Noah, I should be very curious to know them, and Monsieur Mosaïde, who seems sparing enough of his words, would oblige me greatly by giving us a few by word of mouth, for it is not possible for him, I am glad to see, to utter them by the more hidden way through which the ancient Sibyls were

accustomed to give utterance to their mysterious replies.” Mosaïde, who appeared not to have heard anything, suddenly said:— “The daughter of Noah has spoken; Sambethe has said: ‘The foolish man who laughs and mocks shall not hear the voice coming from the seventh tabernacle; and the impious shall go wretchedly to his ruin.’”

On this utterance all three of us took leave of Mosaïde.

XI

THAT year the summer was glorious, whence came a wish to wander afield. One day, as I strolled under the trees of the Cours-la-Reine, with two poor *ecus* that I had found that morning in my breeches' pocket, and which were the first visible sign so far of my alchemist's munificence, I took a seat at the door of a coffee-house at a table whose small size befitted my solitude and my modesty, and there I fell a-thinking of the oddness of my fate, while on either side of me mousquetaires and gay ladies drank the wine of Spain. I questioned whether the Cross of Les Sablons, Monsieur d'Astarac, Mosaïde, the papyrus of Zozimus and my fine coat were not all dreams from which I should awake to find myself in dimity before the spit at the *Reine Pédauque*. I came out of my dream on feeling myself pulled by the sleeve. And I saw before me brother Ange, whose face was lost between his cowl and his beard.

"Monsieur Jacques Menétrier," said he, in a low voice, "a young lady who means you well awaits you in her carriage on the road between the river and the Porte de la Conférence."

My heart beat loudly. Startled and charmed with the adventure, I went immediately to the spot indicated by the capuchin, walking nevertheless with the measured step which seemed best to become me. Arrived on the quay I saw a coach and a little white hand on the edge of the door.

The door opened on my approach, and I was extremely surprised to find Mam'selle Catherine in the coach, in a rose-coloured satin dress, her head covered with a hood, her blond hair intermingled with the black lace.

Dumbfounded I hesitated at the step.

"Come in," she said, "and sit by me. Close the door, I pray you. You must not be seen. A moment ago, in passing by the Cours, I saw you at the coffee-house. I immediately sent the good brother to fetch you. I engaged him for my lenten practices, and I have kept him with me since, for in whatever condition one may be placed, one must cling to religion. You looked very well, Monsieur Jacques, seated before your little table, your sword across your knees, wearing the melancholy air of a man of quality. I have always had a friendly feeling for you, and I am not one of those women, who, in prosperity, despise their former friends."

"Eh, what! Mam'selle Catherine," I exclaimed, "this coach, these lackeys, this satin dress—"

"All come," said she, "from the kindness of Monsieur de la Guéritaude, who is in the Revenue department, and is one of our richest financiers. He has advanced money to the king. He is a good friend, whom I would not vex for anything in the world. But he is not as agreeable as you, Monsieur Jacques. He has also given me a small house at Grenelle, which I will show you one day from attic to cellar. Monsieur Jacques, I am very pleased to see you on the road to making your fortune. You shall see my bedroom, which is a copy of that of Mademoiselle Davilliers. It is all mirrors and china ornaments. How is your good father? Between ourselves, he neglected his wife and his cook-shop a little. It is exceedingly wrong in a man of his position. But let us talk of you."

"Let us talk of you, Mam'selle Catherine," said I at last. "You are very pretty, and it is a great pity that you are so very fond of capuchins. For one must forgive you your Farmers-general."

"Oh," she said, "do not reproach me with brother Ange. I only keep him for my soul's good, and if I gave Monsieur de la Guéritaude a rival it would be—"

"It would be?"

"Do not ask me, Monsieur Jacques. You are ungrateful. For you know I always singled you out. But you took no notice of it."

"On the contrary, I was alive to your mockery, Mam'selle Catherine. You made me ashamed of my beardless chin. You told me many a time that I was a little stupid."

"'Twas true, Monsieur Jacques, truer than you thought. Why did you not guess that I meant you well?"

"And you, Catherine, why were you so intimidatingly pretty? I dared not look at you. And then I saw one day that you were downright vexed with me."

"I had reason to be so, Monsieur Jacques. You preferred that Savoyarde with her handkerchief round her head, the very dregs of the Port St. Nicholas."

"Oh, do believe, Catherine, that it was neither taste nor inclination, but merely because she took strong means to conquer my bashfulness."

"Ah, my friend, believe me who am your senior, bashfulness is a great sin against love. But could you not see that beggar had holes in her stockings and a flounce of mud and dirt half an ell wide at the hem of her skirt?"

"I saw it, Catherine."

"Did you not see, Jacques, that she was badly made, and what's worse, positively deformed?"

"I saw it, Catherine."

"You could actually love that beggar of a Savoyarde, you with your fair skin and distinguished manners."

“I cannot understand it myself, Catherine. It must have been that at the time my fancy was full of you. And if the mere thought of you gave me the hardihood and courage with which you reproach me to-day, judge of my transports, Catherine, if I had held you in my arms, or even a girl a little like you. For I loved you dearly.”

She took my hand and sighed. I continued in a melancholy tone:— “Yes, I loved you, Catherine, and I should love you still were it not for that disgusting monk.”

She defended herself:

“What a suspicion. You make me cross. It is absurd.”

“You do not love capuchins?”

“Fie!”

Not considering it opportune to press her too closely on the subject, I took her by the waist, we kissed one another, our lips met, and I felt my whole being dissolve in delight. After a moment of delicious abandon, she disengaged herself, her cheeks pink, eyes dewy and lips half-open. From that moment I have known how much a woman is beautified and adorned by the kisses one puts on her lips. Mine had made roses of the most delicate tint bloom on Catherine’s cheeks, and drowned the blue flower of her eyes in sparkling dew.

“You are a child,” she said, replacing her hood. “Go along with you, You must not stay a moment longer. Monsieur de la Guéritaude will be here directly. He loves me with an impatience that is apt to forestall the hour of the appointment.”

Then reading on my face the disappointment I felt, she pursued with tender vivacity:

“But listen, Jacques: he goes home every evening at nine o’clock to his old wife, who has become peevish with years, and no longer permits his infidelities now that she is beyond the possibility of paying them back. Her jealousy has become something terrible. Come at half-past nine tonight. I will receive you. My house is at the corner of the Rue du Bac. You will know it by its three windows on every floor and its rose-covered balcony. You know I have always loved flowers. Till tonight.”

She put me from her with caressing gesture wherein she seemed to show her sorrow that I might not stay; then, finger on lips, she whispered once more:

“Till tonight.”

XII

I DO not know how I managed to tear myself away from Catherine's arms. But it is certain that, in jumping out of the coach I nearly fell over Monsieur d'Astarac whose tall figure was planted like a tree on the edge of the path. I saluted him politely and evinced my surprise at so happy a chance.

"Chance," said he, "diminishes in proportion as knowledge is augmented: for me it does not exist. I knew, my son that I was to meet you here. I must have an interview with you which has been too long deferred. Let us, if you please, go in search of that solitude and silence necessary to the speech I wish to have with you. Do not look anxious. The mysteries that I shall unveil to you are sublime, it is true, but of a pleasing nature."

Having thus spoken he led me to the banks of the Seine hard by the Isle of Swans, which lifted itself in mid-stream like a leafy barque. There he signalled the ferry-man whose shallop bore us to the verdant isle, frequented only by a few pensioners who on fine days played at bowls and drank their glass of beer. Night lit her first stars in the sky and gave voice to the insects in the grass. The isle was deserted. Monsieur d'Astarac sat down on a wooden bench in a clearing at the end of a grove of walnuts, invited me to sit down by him and spoke in these words:

"There are three kinds of people, my son, from whom the philosopher must hide his secrets. They are princes, because it would not be prudent to add to their might; the ambitious, whose pitiless driving power wants no reinforcement; and the debauched, who would find in the hidden knowledge the means of glutting their worst passions. But I may bare my mind to you who are neither debauched, for I think nothing of the slip whereby a moment ago you fell into the arms of that young woman, nor ambitious, having lived till now content to turn the paternal spit. I can then without fear unfold to you the hidden laws of the universe. You must not suppose that life is confined within the narrow condition in which it manifests itself to vulgar eyes. When they teach that creation had man for end and object, your theologians and philosophers reason like the ground-lice in Versailles, or the Tuileries, who believe that the damp cellars are made for them, and that the rest of the *château* is quite uninhabitable. The solar system, taught by the canon Copernicus in the last century, following Aristarchus of Samos and the Pythagorean philosophers is, no doubt, known to you, for they have even made abridgements of it for the use of urchins at schools and dialogues for the chatterboxes in town. You have seen an instrument at my

house which demonstrates it perfectly by means of a clock-work movement. Look up, my son, and see above your head the chariot of David drawn by Mizar and his two illustrious companions turning round the Pole, Arcturus, Vega in Lyra, Spica in Virgo, Ariadne's crown and its lovely pearl.

"These are suns. One glance at the world will show you that all creation is a work of fire and that life under its highest forms must be nourished by flame.

"And what are the planets? Specks of mud, a little scum and ferment. Contemplate the stately choir of the stars, this gathering of suns. They equal or surpass our own in grandeur and in power, and when, some clear winter night, I show you Sirius through my glass, your eyes and your soul will be dazzled.

"Can you really, believe that Sirius, Altair, Regulus, Aldebaran, all these suns indeed, are merely luminaries? Can you believe that old Phœbus, who pours incessantly through space, wherein we swim, his immeasurable floods of heat and light, has no other function than to illuminate the earth and a few other imperceptible and contemptible planets? What a candle! A million time bigger, than the house!

"I have been obliged to give you the idea to start with that the Universe is composed of suns, and that the planets that may be found there are less than nothing. But I foresee that you would raise an objection, and I will reply to it. These suns you were going to say burn out in the course of ages and become as dirt in their turn.

"Not so! I reply, for they are sustained by the comets that they draw to them and which fall into them. They are the habitation of the real life. The planets and this earth in which we live are but the dwelling-places of larvae. Such are the truths which you must first absorb.

"Now that you understand, my son, that fire excels every other element, you will better grasp what I am about to explain to you, which is of more importance than anything you have learnt up to now and even more than was ever known to Erasmus, Turnebus, and Scaliger. I will not refer to theologians like Quesnel or Bossuet, who, between our selves, are but of the dregs of humanity's intelligence, and have scarcely more understanding than a captain of horse. We will not lose time in despising such brains comparable in size and contents to wren's eggs, and we will come at once to the subject of my talk.

"Whereas creatures formed of clay do not surpass in beauty of form the degree of perfection attained by Antinous and Madame de Parabère, and the faculty of knowledge attained only by Democritus and myself, beings formed of fire enjoy a wisdom and an understanding whose range it is impossible for us to compass.

“Such, my son, is the nature of the glorious children of the suns, they are masters of the laws of the universe, as we of the rules of chess, and the course of the stars in heaven puzzles them no more than the movement on the chess-board of king, rook, and bishop, trouble us. These Genii create worlds in corners of space where they were not to be found before, and organise them to their liking. It affords them a momentary distraction from their chief business which is to mate, one with another, in ineffable love. Yesterday I turned my glass on the sign of Virgo and there I observed a distant vortex of light. No doubt, my son, but that it was the still unformed work of these beings of fire.

“Truth to tell the universe has no other origin. Far from being the result of a single will, it is the result of a sublime caprice of a great number of Genii who have found recreation each in his good time and in his own way. So may we explain the diversity, the magnificence and the imperfection. For the powers and the clairvoyance of these Genii, though immense, have limits. I should deceive you did I say that a man, were he philosopher and mage, could enter into familiar intercourse with them. No one of them has ever manifested himself to me and all that I tell you of them is known to me but by induction and hearsay. Therefore, although their existence is certain I should go too far were I to describe to you their ways and their character. We must know our own ignorance, my son, and I pride myself on advancing but fully observed facts. We will then leave these Genii, or rather these Demiurges to their distant glories and come to the illustrious beings who concern us more nearly. And it is at this point, my son, that you must lend your ear.

“Speaking to you a moment ago of the planets, if I gave way to a sentiment of disdain it was because I was merely considering the skin and surface of these little balls or tops and the animals which scramble dismally thereon. I should have used another tone if my mind had contemplated along with the planets, the air and vapour which envelops them. For air is an element which only cedes to fire in nobility, whence it follows that the dignity and illustriousness of planets is in the air which bathes them. These mists, these clinging vapours, these zephyrs, these waves of blue, these moving isles of purple and gold, which pass above our heads, are the home of a worshipful race. We call them Sylphs and Salamanders. They are creatures of infinite sweetness and beauty. It is possible, and it is fitting for us to form with them unions, whose delights cannot be dreamt of. Salamanders are of such a kind that beside them the prettiest person in town or at court is but a repulsive monkey. They yield themselves willing to philosophers. You have no doubt heard tell of the wondrous being by whom Monsieur Descartes was accompanied on his travels. Some said it was a natural daughter he took everywhere with him, others thought it was an automaton that he had

made with inimitable art. In reality it was a Salamander that this able man had taken for his lady-love. He never left her. On one of his passages in the Dutch seas he took her on board shut in a box of precious wood lined with satin. The shape of this box and the precautions with which Monsieur Descartes handled it drew the attention of the captain, who, when Monsieur Descartes was asleep, lifted the lid and discovered the Salamander. This ignorant and coarse man thought that so marvellous a being must be the devil's handiwork. For very fear, he threw her in the sea. But as you can well believe the beautiful creature was not drowned and it was easy for her to rejoin her good friend Monsieur Descartes. She remained faithful to him as long as he lived, and on his death left this earth never to return.

"I cite this example among many others to acquaint you with the love of philosopher and Salamander. This love is too sublime to be subjected to contracts, and you will agree that the ridiculous farrago and apparatus of our marriage would not be the right thing in such unions. Truly, it would be a pretty thing if a bewigged notary and a fat *curé* were to put their noses into it! These gentlemen are fit only to set the seal to the vulgar union of man and woman. The hymeneals of Salamander and sage are borne witness to in more august fashion. They are celebrated by the aërial peoples in aëry navies, which, borne on gentle zephyrs, glide on invisible waves to the sound of harps, their poops bedecked with roses. But do not run away with the notion that because they are not inscribed in a thumbed register in a dirty sacristy such troth is not enduring, or may be broken with facility. The Spirits are its sureties, who sport among the clouds, whence flashes the lightning and bursts the thunder. I make revelations which will be of use to you, my son, for I have already recognised by indications not to be mistaken that you are destined for the bed of a Salamander."

"Alas! Monsieur," I cried, "this destiny terrifies me, and my scruples on the subject are nearly as great as those of the Dutch captain who threw Monsieur Descartes's pretty friend into the sea. I cannot help thinking as did he that these aërial ladies are demons! I should fear to lose my soul for them, for, in fine, Monsieur, such marriages are contrary to nature, and opposed to divine law.

Would that Monsieur Jérôme Coignard, my good master, could hear you! I am quite certain that he would uphold me with good arguments against the seductions of your Salamanders, and against your eloquence."

"Abbé Coignard," said Monsieur d'Astarac, "translates Greek admirably. Let him stick to his books. He is no philosopher. As for you, my son, you argue with the feebleness of ignorance, and the weakness of your arguments afflicts me.

These unions you say are contrary to nature. What do you know about it? And what means can you have of knowing about it? How is it possible to distinguish

what is natural from what is not? Do we know enough of universal Isis to discern what is in accord with her and what runs counter to her? But let us put it better; nothing runs counter to her, and all is in accord, for nothing exists which does not enter into the play of her organism nor follow the innumerable poses of her body. Whence, I ask you, could enemies come who would offend her? Nothing acts against her or without her, and forces that seem to work against her are but manifestations of her own life.

“Only the ignorant can have sufficient assurance to say whether an action be natural or not. But let us for a moment enter into their point of view and their prejudice, and pretend to allow that it is possible to commit acts against nature. Will these acts on that account be bad, or must they be condemned? I am prepared to hear on this point the common opinion of moralists who represent virtue as a restraint on instincts, an effort against the inclination that we all have in us, a struggle in fact against the original man. By their own showing virtue is contrary to nature, and from this it proceeds that they cannot condemn an action, whatever it may be, for what it has in common with virtue.

“I have made this digression, my son, to the end that I might show you the pitiable frivolity of your arguments. I cannot insult you by believing that you have any remaining doubts on the innocence of the carnal intercourse that men may hold with Salamanders. Know henceforth, that far from being forbidden by the laws of religion, such marriages are ordained by that law to the exclusion of all others. I will now give you manifest proof.”

He stopped speaking, took his box from his pocket, and held his nose to a pinch of snuff.

Night had fallen. The moon shed her liquid light on the river which shimmered beneath it, touched too with the glancing light of the lamps. Flights of gnats swarmed round us in airy spirals. Shrill insect voices rose amid the universal silence. Such sweetness fell from heaven that the starlight seemed to be suffused with milk.

Monsieur d’Astarac continued in this wise:

“The Bible, my son, and principally the books of Moses contain great and useful truths. This opinion seems absurd and unreasonable in consequence of the treatment that theologians have meted out to what they call the Scripture, which by their commentaries, explanations, and meditations, they have made a manual of mistakes, a volume of absurdities, a storehouse of imbecilities, a collection of lies, a string of follies, a school of ignorance, a treasury of everything inept, and the lumber-room for all stupidity and wickedness. You must know that it was in its origin a temple of celestial light.

“I have been fortunate enough to re-establish it in pristine splendour. And truth compels me to state that Mosaïde has greatly helped me by his understanding of the language and alphabet of the Hebrews. But do not let us lose sight of our main subject. Learn, first of all, that the meaning of the Bible is figurative, and that the chief error of theologians has been to take literally what must be understood as symbolical. Bear that truth in mind throughout the rest of my discourse.

“When the Demiurge we call Jehovah, who also possesses many other names since we apply to him generally all the terms expressing quantity and quality, had, I do not say created the world, for that would be a foolish thing to say, but made straight a little corner of the universe to make a dwelling-place for Adam and Eve, there were to be found in space creatures of a subtle nature which Jehovah had not formed — would have been incapable of forming. They were the work of various other Demiurges more ancient than he and more cunning. His artifice did not yet go beyond that of a very able potter capable of moulding beings, such as we are, in clay, as you fashion pots. What I say of him is not to depreciate him, for such a work is still far beyond human power.

“But one cannot fail to notice the inferior quality of the work of the seven days. Jehovah worked, not in fire which alone gives birth to master-pieces of life, but in clay wherefrom he could produce but the handiwork of a clever ceramist. We are nothing, my son, but animated pottery. One cannot reproach Jehovah with having any illusions about his work. If he found it good at first and in the ardour of composition, he was not slow in recognising his error, and the Bible is full of the expression of his discontent, which often grew to ill-humour and sometimes even to anger. Never did artisan treat objects produced by his industry with more disgust and aversion. He thought of destroying them and indeed he drowned the greater part of them. The deluge, the memory of which has been proved a last deception for the unhappy Demiurge preserved by the Jews, the Greeks, and the Chinese, who, soon recognising the uselessness and ridiculousness of such violence, fell into discouragement and apathy, which has not ceased since the day of Noah but has progressed to the extreme degree of the present day. But I see I look too far ahead. It is the drawback of these vast subjects that one cannot confine oneself to them. Our mind abandoning itself in them acts like the children of the stars who pass at one bound from universe to universe.

“Let us return to the earthly paradise where the Demiurge had placed the two vessels shaped by his hand: Adam and Eve. They did not live alone there among the animals and plants. Spirits of air created by the Demiurges of the fire floated above them, and looked on them with curiosity mingled with sympathy and pity.

It was just what Jehovah had foreseen. To his praise let it be said he had reckoned on the Genii of the fire, to whom we can henceforth give real names of Elves and Salamanders, to improve and complete his little figures of clay. He had said to himself in his prudence, 'My Adam and Eve, opaque, and sealed in clay, lack air and light. I did not know how to give them wings. But by uniting themselves with Elves and Salamanders created by a Demiurge more powerful and subtle than I, they will give birth to children who will derive from the people of light, as well as from the race of clay, and will bear in their turn children more luminous than themselves, until at last their posterity shall nearly equal in beauty the sons and the daughters of air and fire.'

"Truly he had neglected nothing to draw the attention of the Sylphs and Salamanders to his Adam and Eve. He had modelled the woman to the shape of an amphora with a harmony of curved lines which sufficed to show him a prince of Geometers, and he succeeded in redeeming the coarseness of the material by the magnificence of the form. Adam he had moulded with a hand less light but firmer, shaping his body with such justness and according to such perfect proportions that, applied later by the Greeks to architecture, these lines and measurements made all the beauty of their temples.

"So you see, my son, Jehovah tried according to his powers to render his creatures worthy of the ethereal embrace he hoped for them. I lay no stress on the pains he took to make these unions fruitful. The economy of the sexes bears sufficient witness to his wisdom in this respect. And at first he could congratulate himself on his cunning and address. I have said that the Sylphs and Salamanders looked on Adam and Eve with that curiosity, that sympathy, and that tenderness which are the first ingredients of love. They drew near, and were taken in the cunning snares which Jehovah had set, and spread for them in and on the bellying bodies of the amphorae. The first man and the first woman enjoyed during centuries the delectable embraces of the Genii of the air, which preserved them in eternal youth.

"Such was their lot, such should be ours. Why did the parents of the human race, tired of these sublime delights, seek illicit pleasure the one with the other? But what would you have, my son? Moulded in clay, they loved the mud whence they came. Alas! they knew one another, even as they had known the Genii.

"This is what the Demiurge had expressly forbidden them. Dreading, and with reason, that they would produce children heavy, dull, and earthbound, as themselves, he had forbidden them, under strictest penalty, to approach one another. It is the meaning of those words of Eve's:— 'But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' For you can well understand, my son, the apple

which tempted the luckless Eve was not the fruit of the apple-tree, and therein lies an allegory whose meaning I have explained to you. Although imperfect, and sometimes violent and capricious Jehovah was a Demiurge, and too intelligent to vex himself about an apple or a pomegranate. To uphold such extravagant imaginings one must be a bishop or a capuchin. And the proof that the apple was what I have said it was is that Eve was visited with the punishment suited to her fault.

“It was not said to her, ‘In sorrow shalt thou eat of it,’ but:— ‘In sorrow thou shalt bring forth.’

Now what connection, I ask you, can there be between an apple and the pains of child-birth? On the contrary, the punishment is exactly fitted if the fault were such as I have explained it.

“There, my son, is the true explanation of original sin. It teaches you your duty, which is to keep away from women. The fondness which draws you to them is fatal. All children born in this fashion are foolish and wretched.”

“But, Monsieur,” I cried, stupefied, “is another way then possible?”

“Happily,” said he, “a great many are born from the union of men with the Spirits of air. And such are clever and beautiful. Thus were born the giants spoken of by Hesiod and Moses. Thus was born Pythagoras, whom the Salamander, his mother, endowed with a golden thigh. Thus was born Alexander the Great, said to be the son of Olympias and a serpent. Scipio-Africanus, Aristomenes of Messenia, Julius Cæsar, Porphyry, the emperor Julian who re-established the worship of fire, abolished by Constantine the Apostate; Merlin the Wizard, born of a Sylph and a nun, daughter of Charlemagne; St. Thomas Aquinas, Paracelsus, and more recently Monsieur Van Helmont.”

I promised Monsieur d’Astarac, as this was the case, to lend myself to the advances of a Salamander, could one be found so obliging as to wish for me. He assured me I should not only find one, but twenty or thirty, among whom I should have but the difficulty of choosing. And less by desire to put it to the test than to please him, I asked the philosopher how it were possible to put oneself in communication with these aërial beings.

“Nothing is easier,” he replied. “It needs but a crystal ball, whose use I will explain to you. I keep by me a fairly large number of these balls, and I will give you all the necessary directions before long in my study. But that is enough for today.”

XIII

THIS long interview left me the confused feeling of a dream; I was more alive to the thought of Catherine. In spite of the sublimities that I had been hearing I longed to see her, and that although I had not supped. I was not so penetrated by the philosopher's notions that I was in any way out of taste with this pretty girl. I was resolved to push my good fortune to a finish before falling to the possession of one of those handsome furies of the air, who allowed no earthly rivals. My dread was lest, at so late an hour of the night, Catherine should be tired of waiting for me. Making my way along the river and crossing the Pont Royal at full speed, I rushed down the Rue du Bac. A minute later I reached the Rue de Grenelle, where I heard cries mingled with the clash of swords. The noise came from the house Catherine had described to me. There, on the pavement, shadows and lanterns were flickering and voices arose: "Help! Jesus! They murder me! Have at the monk.... Foward on! To him... Jesus and Mary help! Look at the precious rascal! Have at him! To him, boys, to him! Let him have it!"

Windows opened in the surrounding houses and showed heads bonnetted with night-caps.

All this tumult and rout passed suddenly across me like a forest chase and I recognised brother Ange who was making off with such speed that he kicked himself with his sandalled feet as he ran, while three great strapping lackeys armed like the Swiss guard, pressing him close pricked his hide with the points of their halberts. Their master, a young gentleman, thick-set and red of face, ceased not to encourage them with voice and gesture as one sets on the hounds.

"To him!... to him!... Strike home!... He's a tough brute!"

When he was near me:

"Ah Monsieur," I said, "you have no pity!"

"Monsieur," he replied, "obviously it is not your mistress this capuchin has caressed, and it was not you who surprised Madame here in the arms of this malodorous beast. Her financier is all very well — there are things that are understood. But a monk is not to be endured. Look at the bold impudent hussy."

And he showed me Catherine in her night-dress in the doorway, her eyes glittering with tears, dishevelled, wringing her hands, more beautiful than I had ever seen her, and murmuring in a languishing voice which cut me to the heart: "Do not kill him! It is brother Ange, it is the little brother."

The ruffianly lackeys came back announcing they had given up the chase on seeing the watch, but not without having first felt their pikes half a finger deep in the back of the holy man. The night-caps disappeared from the windows, which shut again, and while the young lord talked with his men I approached Catherine whose tears were drying on her cheeks in the pretty creases of her smile.

“The poor brother has escaped,” she said. “But I trembled for him. Men are terrible. When they love you they will listen to nothing.”

“Catherine,” I replied rather piqued, “did you ask me to come here merely to assist at your friends’ quarrels? Alas! I have no right to take part in them.”

“You would have, Monsieur Jacques, you would have, if you wished.”

“But,” said I again, “you are the most sought-after person in all Paris. You have never spoken to me of this young gentleman.”

“Neither did I think of him. He came by surprise.”

“And he surprised you with brother Ange.”

“He thought he saw what did not exist. He is so hot-headed and will not listen to reason.”

Her night-dress, half open, showed amid its lace a bosom full as a ripe fruit and flowering to a rosebud. I took her in my arms and covered her breast with kisses.

“Heavens!” she cried, “and in the street too, before Monsieur d’Anquetil, who is looking at us!”

“Who is he? Monsieur d’Anquetil?”

“The murderer of brother Ange, pardi! Who else do you suppose?”

“Truly, Catherine, others are not needful; your friends are gathered round you in sufficient force.”

“Monsieur Jacques, I pray you do not insult me!”

“I am not insulting you, Catherine, I acknowledge your attractions, to which I do but wish to pay the same homage as do so many others.”

“Monsieur Jacques, what you say smells odiously of your good father’s cook-shop.”

“You were formerly well content Mam’selle Catherine, to smell that smoke.”

“Fie, you villain! You mean wretch! To insult a woman!”

As she began to screech and to get excited, Monsieur d’Anquetil left his men and came to us, pushed her into the house calling her a shameless hussy and a good-for-nothing, followed her into the passage and shut the door in my face.

XIV

THE thought of Catherine filled my mind during the whole week following this unlucky adventure. Her likeness shone on the leaves of the folios over which I bent in the library beside my good master; so much so that Photius, Olympiodorus, Fabricius and Vossius, spoke to me but of a little lady in a lace night-gown. These visions inclined me to idleness. But indulgent to others as to himself Monsieur Jérôme Coignard smiled benevolently on my trouble and distraction.

“Jacques Tournebroche,” the good man said to me one day, “are you not struck by the variations of the moral law throughout the ages? The books gathered together in this admirable Astaracian library bear witness to man’s uncertainty on this subject. If I offer some reflections thereon, my son, it is to fix in your mind this sound and salutary thought, that there is no good conduct outside religion, and that the maxims of the philosophers who pretend to set up a code of natural morals are but whim-whams and crotchets. The wherefore for right conduct is not to be found in nature, who, of herself, is indifferent, ignoring evil as well as good. It is written in the Holy Scriptures that one must not transgress, at least not without suitably repenting afterwards. Human laws are founded on utility, and that can be but apparent and illusive utility, for one does not know instinctively what is of use to man or what really befits him. And again, in our Code of Usage a good part of the articles are born of prejudice alone. Upheld by the threat of punishment human laws may be eluded by ruse and dissimulation. Every man capable of thought is above them. They are in fact but snares for the foolish.

“Such is not the case my son, with divine laws. These latter are imprescriptible, ineluctable, and stable. Their absurdity is but apparent, and hides a wisdom we cannot grasp. If they offend our reason it is because they are superior to it and because they accord with the true ends of man and not with the ends which are apparent to him. It is well to observe them when one is fortunate enough to recognise them. At the same time I make no difficulty about confessing that the observation of these laws contained in the Decalogue and in the commandments of the church, is difficult at most times, and even impossible without grace, which is often delayed, since it is our duty to long for it. Hence we are all miserable sinners.

“And here it is indeed that we should admire the system of the Christian faith, which bases salvation principally upon repentance. It is to be observed, my son,

that the greatest saints were the penitents, and as repentance is in proportion to the fault, in the greatest sinners is found the stuff of the greatest saints. I could illustrate this doctrine with a great number of admirable examples, but I have said enough to make you understand that the primary substance of saintliness is concupiscence, incontinence, every impurity of the flesh and spirit. It needs but, having collected your material together, to work it up according to the theological art, to shape it, so to speak, into the form of repentance, which is the affair of years, of days, and sometimes even of a single moment, as may be seen in the case of perfect contrition. Jacques Tournebroche, if you have well understood me, you will not wear yourself out in wretched efforts to become an honest man according to the way of the world, but you will apply yourself solely to the satisfying of divine justice.”

I did not fail to recognise the great wisdom enshrined in the maxims of my good master. I only feared that this morality, were it followed without discrimination would bring upon men the worst disorders. I shared my doubts with Monsieur Jérôme Coignard who reassured me as follows:

“Jacobus Tournebroche, you take no notice of what I have just particularly told you, to wit, that what you call disorders are such in fact only in the opinion of lawyers and judges whether civil or ecclesiastical, and in reference to human laws which are arbitrary and transitory, and, in a word, that to live according to these laws is the mark of a sheepish intelligence. A man of parts does not pride himself on acting according to the laws in force at the Châtelet and under the eye of the judge. He only concerns himself with the salvation of his soul, and he does not think himself dishonoured if he gets to heaven by some one of the crooked paths followed by the greatest saints. If the blessed Pelagia had not practiced the profession by which you know Jeannette the viol-player gains her livelihood under the porch of *St. Benôit-le-Bétournê*, that saint would not have had occasion for her full and ample repentance, and it is extremely probable that, after having lived as a matron in average and commonplace goodness, she would not at this moment be playing the psaltery before the tabernacle where the Holy of Holies rests in glory. Do you call so beautiful a dispensation of a predestinated life, disorder? Not so. Let us leave such base figures of speech to Monsieur the lieutenant of police, who after death will not perhaps find the meanest place behind the wretched women he drags ignominiously to-day to the reformatory. Save the loss of one’s soul and eternal damnation, there should be no disorder nor crime nor any evil in this perishable world, where everything should be adjusted and governed with an eye to the world to come. Admit, then, Tournebroche my son, that acts the most reprehensible in man’s opinion may lead to a good end, and do not try to reconcile the justice of men with that of

God, which alone is just, not indeed to our perceptions but in very surety. For the moment you will oblige me, my son, by looking up in Vossius the meaning of five or six obscure terms employed by the Panopolitan with whom one must wrestle in the darkness, in the insidious manner which dismayed even the great heart of Ajax, according to Homer, prince of poets and historians. These old alchemists had a rough-hewn style; Manilius, if Monsieur d'Astarac does not mind my saying so, wrote on these same subjects with more elegance."

My good master had scarcely uttered these last words when a shadow rose between us. It was that of Monsieur d'Astarac, or rather it was Monsieur d'Astarac himself, thin and black as a shadow.

Whether he had not overheard the conversation, or whether he disdained to notice it, he showed no resentment; on the contrary, he congratulated Monsieur Jérôme Coignard on his zeal and knowledge, and he added that he counted on his insight for the completion of the greatest work ever undertaken by man. Then turning to me, he said:

"My son, I beg you to come down to my study for a moment, where I wish to communicate to you a secret of some importance."

I followed him into the room where he had first received us, my good master and me, the day he took us into his service. I found once again the old Egyptians with their gilded faces standing against the walls. A glass globe the size of a pumpkin stood on the table. Monsieur d'Astarac let himself drop on to a sofa and signed to me to sit down in front of him, and having passed his hand, laden with precious stones and amulets, across his brow, said:

"My son, I do not do you the injustice of thinking that after our interview on the Isle of Swans any doubt can remain to you as to the existence of Sylphs and Salamanders, which is just as real as that of men, and even much more so if one counts its reality by the duration of the apparitions through which it shows itself, for their life is far longer than ours. Salamanders carry their unchangeable youth from century to century; some of them have seen Noah, Menes and Pythagoras. The plenitude of their remembrances and the freshness of their memory make their conversation extremely attractive. It has been imagined that they acquired their immortality in the arms of mortals, and that the hope of avoiding death drew them to the couch of philosophers. But these are falsehoods which cannot deceive a reflective mind. Every union of the sexes, far from assuring immortality to lovers, is an evidence of death, and we should never know love were we destined to live for ever. It cannot be otherwise for the Salamanders, who seek in the arms of the sages but one kind of immortality — that of the race. It is also the only one that it is reasonable to hope for. And although I have promised myself, with the help of science, notably to prolong human life, and to

spread it over five or six centuries at least, I have never flattered myself that I could ensure its duration indefinitely. It would be insensate to combat the natural law. Reject, my son, as vain tales, the idea of immortality drawn from a kiss. It is the shame of various cabalists ever to have thought such a thing. It is none the less true that Salamanders are inclined to the love of man. You will have experience of it without delay. I have sufficiently prepared you for their visit and since you have had, from the night of your initiation, no impure dealings with women, you shall now receive the reward of your continence.”

My candid nature suffered uneasily a praise I merited only in spite of myself, and I thought of owning my culpable desires to Monsieur d’Astarac. But he left me not time to confess, and continued with vivacity:

“There only remains to give you the key, my son, which will open to you the kingdom of the Genii. And I will do it straight away.”

And getting up he put his hand on the globe which occupied half the table.

“This ball,” he said, “is full of star dust which escapes your sight by its very purity. For it is far too rare to be palpable to the gross sense of man. So it is, my son, that the more beautiful side of the universe hides itself from our vision, and only reveals itself to the *savant* who is furnished with the apparatus proper to discover it. The rivers and the plains of the air, for instance, remain invisible to you, though in reality they are a thousand times more rich and varied in aspect than those of the most beautiful of earthly landscapes.

“Know then that in this globe there is a star dust of sovereign property to exalt the fire that is within us. And the effect of the exaltation makes itself felt at once. It consists in a subtlety of the senses which allows us to see and to touch the aërial shapes floating round about us. As soon as you have broken the seal which closes the opening of this globe, and inhaled the star dust which will escape therefrom, you will find in this room one or more creatures like to women in the system of curved lines which form their bodies, but far more beautiful than ever woman was, and who are, in truth, Salamanders. There is no doubt that the one which I saw last year in your father’s cook-shop will appear to you first, for she has a liking for you, and I would advise you to satisfy her desires as soon as possible. So sit down comfortably in this armchair before the table, unseal the globe, and inhale its contents gently. You will soon see all that I have described to you take shape by degrees. I will now leave you. Farewell.”

And he disappeared after his fashion, which was strangely sudden. I remained alone, before this globe of glass, hesitating to uncork it for fear that some stupefying exhalation should escape. I thought that perhaps Monsieur d’Astarac might have introduced therein, according to his art, some vapour which should send to sleep those who breathed it and set them dreaming of Salamanders. I was

not yet philosopher enough to care to be happy in such fashion. Perhaps, I said to myself, these fumes induce madness. In fact I was distrustful enough to think for a moment of going to the library to ask advice of my good master, Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. But I recognised immediately that it would be taking useless trouble. As soon as he heard me speak, I told myself, of star dust and Genii of the air, he would reply, "Jacques Tournebroche, my son, be mindful never to put faith in absurdities, but to bring everything to the test of your reason save in the matter of our holy religion. Let be these globes and powders along with all the other follies of the cabala and the spagyric art."

I thought I could hear him making this little speech between two pinches of snuff, and I knew not what to reply to such Christian language. On the other hand, I foresaw and considered in what embarrassment I should find myself before Monsieur d'Astarac when he should ask me what news of the Salamander? What should I reply to him? How could I confess my reserve and my abstention, without at the same time betraying my suspicion and my fear? And then again, in spite of myself, I was curious to try such an adventure. I am not credulous. On the contrary, I have a prodigious leaning to doubt, and this propensity induces me to defy common sense and even evidence along with it. To everything that is told me I say to myself why not? Before the crystal globe this "why not?" did insult to my natural intelligence. This "why not" inclines me to credulity and, it is worthy of note here, that to believe nothing is to believe everything, and one must not keep too open and free a mind lest perchance it should become a storehouse for adventure, and stuff should lodge there of extravagant form and weight which could find no place in minds sensibly and commonplacely furnished with beliefs. While with my hand on the waxen seal I remembered what my mother had told me of magic bottles my "why not?" whispered to me that perchance after all one might see in this astral dust aerial sprites. But as soon as this notion, having set foot in my mind, inclined to lodge there and recline upon itself, I found it odd, absurd and grotesque. Ideas, when they lay hold of one soon become impertinent. Few of them are capable of being anything but passing fancies, and certainly this one had an air of folly. While I still asked myself, Shall I open it? Shall I not open it? the seal, which I had not ceased to press between my fingers, broke suddenly in my hand, and behold the bottle was uncorked!

I waited and I watched. I saw nothing and I felt nothing. I felt cheated, so facile and prompt to slip into our minds is the hope of over-reaching nature! Nothing! Not even a vague or confused illusion, or uncertain image. What I had foreseen had happened. What a deception! I felt a kind of chagrin. Lying back in my armchair I swore to myself before the surrounding Egyptians with their long

black eyes to shut my mind closer in future against the lies of cabalists. Once again I acknowledged the wisdom of my good master and I resolved on his example to guide myself by reason in all matters not relating to the Christian and Catholic faith. To have expected the visit of a Salamander-lady, what a simpleton! Could there possibly be Salamanders? But what does one know of such things? and “why not?”

The atmosphere, heavy since mid-day, was become overpowering. Torpid from long, peaceful, and secluded days I felt a weight on my brow and on my eyelids. The coming storm quite bore me down. I let my arms fall, and with head thrown back and closed eyes I slid into a half-slumber full of gilded Egyptians and lascivious shades. This uncertain condition, during which the feeling of love burnt in me as a fire in the night, lasted for I know not how long, when I was awakened by a light sound of steps and of rustling material. I opened my eyes and gave a loud cry.

A marvellous creature stood before me, robed in black satin, her hair decked with lace, dark, with blue eyes, well-marked features, a young pure skin, rounded cheeks and a mouth breathing an invisible kiss. Her short dress showed little feet, light and instinct with gaiety and movement. She held herself erect, rounded, and a trifle thickset in her voluptuous perfection. One could see a small square of her neck under the velvet band tied round her throat, and it was dark but dazzling. She looked at me with an air of curiosity.

I have said that my sleep had given me thoughts of love. I rose up. I sprang towards her.

“Excuse me,” she said, “I was looking for Monsieur d’Astarac.”

I replied:— “Madame, there is no question of Monsieur d’Astarac. There is but you and I. I was waiting for you. You are my Salamander. I have opened the crystal bottle. You have come. You are mine.”

I took her in my arms and covered with kisses all of her that my lips could meet above the opening of her bodice.

She disengaged herself and said.

“You are mad.”

“It is very natural,” said I, “who would not be, in my place?”

She looked down, blushed and smiled. I threw myself at her feet.

“Since Monsieur d’Astarac is not here,” she said, “I must withdraw.”

“Stay,” I cried, and bolted the door.

She asked me, “Do you know if he will return shortly?”

“No, Madame, he will not come back for long enough. He has left me alone with the Salamanders. I desire but one. It is you.”

I took her in my arms, I bore her to the sofa, I dropped down with her, I covered her with kisses, I was no longer conscious of myself. She cried out, I did not listen to her. Her open palms repulsed me, her nails scratched me, and her vain defence but sharpened my desires. I clasped her, I enfolded her, over-borne, and undone. Her yielding body ceded to me; she closed her eyes. I soon felt in my triumph her beautiful arms forgivingly enfold me.

Then, unlocked alas! from this delicious embrace, we looked on one another with surprise. Anxious to recover her propriety she smoothed her skirts and was silent.

“I love you,” said I. “What is your name?”

I did not think she was a Salamander, and truth to tell I had never really thought so.

“I am called Jael,” she said.

“What! you are Mosaïde’s niece?”

“Yes, but say nothing. If he knew...”

“What would he do?”

“Oh! nothing to me. But much harm to you. He does not love Christians.”

“And you!”

“Oh! I — I do not love Jews.”

“Jael, do you love me a little?”

“It seems to me, Monsieur, after what we have expressed to one another, that your question is an insult.”

“It is true, Mademoiselle, but I hope that you will pardon a haste and an ardour which was not careful to consult your feelings.”

“Oh, Monsieur, do not make yourself out more guilty than you are. All your violence and all your ardour would not have served you had you not pleased me. A moment ago, seeing you asleep in that armchair, I thought you deserving. I waited your awakening, and you know the rest.”

I answered her with a kiss. She returned it. What a kiss! I thought the wild wood-strawberry melted in my mouth! My desires re-awoke, and I pressed her ardently against my heart.

“This time,” said she, “do not let yourself be so carried away, and do not think only of yourself. One must not be an egoist in love. That is what young men do not well understand. But one teaches them.”

We dived again into the depths of delight. Afterwards the adorable Jael said to me:

“Have you a comb? I look like a witch.”

“Jael,” said I, “I have no comb; I was expecting a Salamander. I adore you.”

“Adore me, my friend, but with discretion. You do not know Mosaïde.”

“Why, Jael, is he so terrifying, at a hundred and thirty years of age, and seventy-five of them passed in a pyramid?”

“I see, my friend, that you have heard tales about my uncle, and that you have been simple enough to believe them. Nobody knows his age; I am ignorant of it myself. He has been old as long as I have known him. I only know that he is robust and of no common strength. He was a banker at Lisbon, where he happened to kill a Christian whom he had surprised with my aunt Myriam. He fled and took me with him. Since then he has borne a mother’s love towards me. He talks to me as one talks to little children, and he weeps as he watches me sleep.”

“Do you dwell with him?”

“Yes, in the keeper’s cottage at the other end of the park.”

“I know, one follows the mandragora path. How comes it I have not met you before? By what melancholy chance have I, although so near to you, lived without seeing you? But do I say lived? Is it life to live without knowing you? You are kept close then in this cottage?”

“It is true that I live very secludedly, and that I cannot go for walks or shopping or to the plays as I should like. Mosaïde’s affection for me allows me no freedom. He keeps me jealously, and in all the world he loves but me, and six little gold cups that he brought from Lisbon. As he is far more attached to me than he was to my aunt Myriam, he would kill you, my friend, with a better will than he killed the Portuguese. I warn you of it to make you discreet, and because it is not a consideration which will give pause to a man of mettle. Are you a man of quality and born of a good family?”

“Alas, no,” I replied, “my father practises one of the mechanic arts, and is in a kind of business.”

“Is he in the Revenue? Has he any office of profit? No?... That’s a pity. So one must love you for yourself alone. But tell me the truth: Will not Monsieur d’Astarac soon be here?”

At this name, at this query, a horrible doubt crossed my mind. I suspected that this ravishing young woman, Jael, had been sent by the cabalist to play the *rôle* of a Salamander to me. I even secretly accused her of playing the Nymph to this old madman. To be immediately enlightened on the subject, I asked her roughly, if she were in the habit of playing the Salamander in the castle?

“I fail to understand you,” she answered, looking at me with eyes full of innocent surprise. “You speak like Monsieur d’Astarac himself, and I should think you infected with his complaint had I not proved that you do not share his aversion from women. He cannot abide them, and it is a real embarrassment to

me to see him and to speak to him. Nevertheless, I was looking for him a short time ago when I found you."

In my joy at being thus reassured I covered her with kisses. She managed to let me see that she wore black stockings, fastened above the knee with diamond-buckled garters, and the sight of them turned my mind to fancies which pleased her. On her side, she led me on with much skill and warmth of affection, and I felt the spirit of play beginning to wake in her at a moment when I began to weary of it. However, I did my best and was again happy in being able to spare this delightful person the affront that she least deserved. It seemed to me she was not ill-pleased with me. She rose up with a tranquil mien and said:

"Do you not really know whether Monsieur d'Astarac will soon be back? I will confess to you I came to ask him for a small sum of money owing on my uncle's pension, of which for the moment I am in great need."

I apologetically pulled three *ecus* from my purse which she did me the kindness to accept. It was all that was left to me from the too rare generousities of the cabalist, who, professing to disdain money, unluckily forgot to pay my wages.

I asked Mademoiselle Jael if I should not have the good fortune to see her again.

"You shall," she said.

And we arranged that she should come to my room at night whenever she could make her escape from the cottage where she was kept.

"Only take care," said I, "my door is the fourth on the right in the corridor, and the fifth is that of my good master, Abbé Coignard. The others," added I, "merely lead to the attics, which accommodate two or three of the scullions, and many hundreds of rats."

She assured me she would take care to make no mistake, and that she would tap at my door and no other.

"For the matter of that, your Abbé Coignard seems to me to be a very good sort of man. I think we have nothing to fear from him. I saw him through a peephole the day he came with you to see my uncle. He seemed to be amiable, though I could scarcely hear what he said. His nose, in particular, seemed clever and capable. He who bears it must be a man of resource, and I should like to make his acquaintance. There is always something to be had from the society of men of parts. I am only sorry that he displeased my uncle by his freedom of speech and his jesting humours. Mosaïde hates him, and he has a capacity for hatred quite unimaginable by a Christian."

"Mademoiselle," I replied, "Monsieur l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard is a very learned man, and he is moreover a philosopher and a benevolent one. He knows

the world, and you are right in thinking his counsel worthy of following. I live entirely under his guidance. But tell me, did you not see me also that day from your peephole in the cottage?"

"I saw you," said she, "and I will not deny that I saw you very plainly. But I must return to my uncle. Farewell."

Monsieur d'Astarac did not fail to ask me that night after supper for news of the Salamander. His curiosity embarrassed me not a little. I answered that the meeting had surpassed my hopes, but that beyond that I thought it my duty to keep the reserve fitting in adventures of the kind.

"This discretion, my son," said he, "is not as necessary as you think. Salamanders do not require secrecy on the subject of amours of which they are not ashamed. One of these Nymphs, who loves me, has no dearer pastime in my absence than to cut my initials entwined with hers on the bark of the trees, as you may satisfy yourself by examining the trunks of five or six pines whose graceful tops you can see from here. But have you not noticed, my son, that this kind of love, so sublime, far from leaving one fatigued imparts fresh vigour to the heart? I am sure that after what has passed you will busy yourself to-night by translating at least sixty pages of Zozimus the Panipolitan."

I confessed that, on the contrary, I felt a great desire to sleep, which he explained by the surprise of a first interview. And so the great man rested assured that I had had dealings with a Salamander. I felt scruples about deceiving him, but I was obliged to, and, indeed, he so deceived himself that one could scarcely add much to his illusions. So I sought my couch in peace of mind: and having got to bed, I blew out my candle and closed the sweetest day of my life.

XV

JAEL kept her word. No later than the day after the morrow she came tapping at my door. We were much more at home in my room than we had been in Monsieur d'Astarac's study, and what took place at our first meeting was but child's play compared with what love inspired us with at our second. She tore herself from my arms at the break of day with a thousand vows to join me soon again, calling me her life, her soul, and her pet.

I got up very late that day. When I went down to the library my good master was seated before the papyrus of Zozimus, his pen in one hand, his magnifying glass in the other, and worthy the admiration of any one who can appreciate learning and letters.

"Jacques Tournebroche," he said to me, "the principal difficulty in reading this lies in the fact that various of the letters may easily be confounded with others, and it is needful to success in deciphering it, to draw up a table of the characters which lend themselves to mistakes of this kind; for unless we take this precaution we risk the adoption of wrong readings, to our eternal shame and just vilification. I have made some laughable blunders this very day since matins. I must have had my mind distracted by what I saw last night, which I will tell you about. Having woke up in the early dawn I felt a desire for a draught of that light white wine which, you will remember, I complimented Monsieur d'Astarac on yesterday. For there is a sympathy, my son, between white wine and cock-crow dating certainly from the time of Noah, and I feel certain that if St. Peter, during the curséd night he spent in the courtyard of the high-priest, had drunk a finger of clear Moselle wine or even of that of Orleans, he would not have denied Jesus before the cock crew twice. But we must in no wise regret this ill deed, my son, for it was necessary that the prophecies should be fulfilled; and if Peter, or Cephas, as he was called, had not that night committed the worst of infamies he would not be to-day the greatest saint in Paradise and the corner-stone of our holy Church, to the utter confusion of the good people of this world who see the keys of their eternal happiness held by a cowardly good-for-nothing. Oh! wholesome example! which draws man from the fallacious inspirations of human honour and leads him in the way of salvation! O wise system of religion! O divine wisdom which exalteth the humble and the meek and putteth down the mighty! Oh marvel! Oh mystery!

"To the eternal shame of the Pharisees and lawyers, a coarse fisherman from the lake of Tiberias, who, by his clumsy cowardice had become the laughing-

stock of the wenches in the high-priest's kitchen, where they warmed themselves side by side, a boor and a coward who denied his master and his faith before dirty wenches far less pretty than the chambermaid of the bailiff's household at Sééz, wears on his brow the triple crown, on his finger the pontifical ring, is set above the princes of the church, kings, and emperor, and is invested with the power to bind and to loose; the most respectable man, the most worthy woman, can enter heaven only if he give them access to it. But tell me, Tournebroche, my son, how far had I got in my narrative when I lost my thread running after the great Saint Peter, prince of Apostles. I am almost sure I was speaking of a glass of white wine that I drank at dawn. I went down in my night garments to the store-room and drew from a certain cupboard, of which I had thoughtfully obtained the key the night before, a bottle, which I emptied with enjoyment. Afterwards, on going upstairs, I met between the second and third floors a little lady in white, who was going down. She seemed very frightened and fled to the end of the corridor. I followed her, I caught her up, I seized her in my arms and kissed her, suddenly and irresistibly attracted by her. Do not blame me, my son, you would have done the same in my place, perhaps even more. She was a pretty girl, she was like the bailiff's chambermaid, but with more sparkle in her eye. She did not dare cry out. She whispered in my ear: 'Let me go! let me go! you are mad!'

Look, Tournebroche, I still bear the marks of her nails on my wrists. Had I but kept the impression of her kiss as vividly on my lips!"

"What, Monsieur l'Abbé," I exclaimed, "she gave you a kiss?"

"Rest assured, my son," replied my good master, "that had you been in my place you would have received one as good, had you seized the opportunity as I did. I think I told you that I held the young lady in a close embrace. She tried to get away, she stifled her cries, she murmured lamentations.

"I beseech you to let me go. Here is the dawn, a moment longer and I am lost.'

"Her fears, her terror, her peril, what savage would not have been touched by them? I am not inhuman. I gave her her liberty at the price of a kiss which she gave me at once. I give you my word I have never received a more delicious one."

At this point of his story my good master raised his nose to inhale a pinch of snuff and saw my trouble and my distress, which he took for surprise.

"Jacques Tournebroche," he continued, "what I have still to tell you will surprise you even more. With regret I let the pretty lass go, but my curiosity impelled me to follow her. I went downstairs after her. I saw her cross the vestibule, go out by the little door which opens on to the fields on the side where

the park stretches out widest, and run down the path. I ran after her. I thought she could not go far in night-garb and night-cap. She took the mandragora path. My curiosity redoubled and I followed her as far as Mosaïde's cottage. At that moment that wicked Jew appeared at the window, in his robe and his great cap, like those figures you see appear when mid-day strikes on old clocks, more ridiculous and Gothic than are the churches which preserve them for the pleasure of the country bumpkins and the profit of the verger.

"He discovered me under the greenwood at the very moment when the pretty girl, swift as Galatea herself, slipped into the cottage. So that I had exactly the appearance of pursuing her in the manner and style of the Satyrs we spoke of one day when discussing some fine passages in Ovid. And my dress helped the likeness, for, I think I told you, my son, I was in my night-garments. At the sight of me Mosaïde's eyes glittered. He drew from his dirty yellow cloak a useful-looking stiletto and brandished it out of the window with an arm which seemed by no means weighed down with age. Meanwhile he swore at me bi-lingually. Yes, Tournebroche, my knowledge of grammar authorises me to state that his curses were bi-lingual, and Spanish, or rather Portuguese, was mingled with Hebrew. It angered me that I could not catch the exact meaning, for I do not understand these languages although I can recognise them by certain sounds which constantly recur. But it is very likely that he accused me of corrupting this girl who is I believe his niece Jael, whom Monsieur d'Astarac, you may remember, has mentioned to us several times. Wherein his invectives conveyed something of flattery; for such as I have become my son, what with the passing of time and the fatigues of a troubled life I do not pretend any longer to the love of young maidens. Alas! unless I become a bishop it is a dish whose flavour I shall never know again. I regret it. But one must not be too strongly attached to the perishable things of this world and we must renounce what renounces us. Mosaïde, then, handling his stiletto, poured hoarse sounds from his throat alternating with shrill screeches, so that I was insulted and vituperated in form of chant or canticle. And without vanity, my son, I may say I was treated as a corrupter and a loose fellow in a solemn and ceremonious tone. When Mosaïde came to the end of his imprecations, I endeavoured to make a riposte bi-lingual, like the attack. I accused him in Latin and in French of homicide and sacrilege, of having cut the throats of little children and poignarded the sacred host. The early morning breeze playing round my legs reminded me that I was in my nightshirt. I felt somewhat embarrassed, for it is very evident, my son, that a man who wears no breeches is in a poor position to explain the sacred truths, to confound error and follow up crime. All the same I drew him a terrible picture of his outrages and menaced him with both divine and human justice.

“What! my good master,” I cried, “this Mosaïde, who has so pretty a niece, has cut the throats of new-born children and poignarded the sacred host?”

“I know nothing of that,” replied Monsieur Jérôme Coignard, “and can know nothing of it. But those crimes are his, being those of his race, and I may attribute them to him without doing him wrong. I followed this up with a long list of scoundrelly ancestors for the old wretch. For you are not ignorant of what is said of the Jews and their abominable rites. In the old cosmography of Munster there is a plate representing Jews mutilating a child, and they are recognisable by the wheel of cloth they bore on their garments as a sign of disgrace. Nevertheless, I do not think it was an every-day and household usage among them. I also doubt whether all these Jews should be so given to outraging the sacred elements. To accuse them of it is to believe them as deeply penetrated as ourselves with the divinity of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. For one cannot imagine sacrilege without faith, and the Jew who stabbed the sacred host, by doing so rendered a sincere homage to the truth of transubstantiation. Those are all fables we may leave to the ignorant, my son, and if I threw them in the face of that horrible Mosaïde, it was less from the considered beliefs of a sound scholarship than from the swift promptings of resentment and anger.”

“Ah, Monsieur,” I replied, “you might have satisfied yourself with reproaching him with the Portuguese he killed from jealousy, for that was a real murder.”

“What!” exclaimed my good master, “Mosaïde has killed a Christian. Tournebroche, we have in him a dangerous neighbour. But you will draw the conclusion that I myself draw from this adventure. It is certain that his niece is Monsieur d’Astarac’s light of love, whose room she was surely leaving when I met her on the stairs.

“I have too much religion not to regret that such a charming person should belong to the race which crucified Jesus Christ. Alas! there is no room for doubt, my son, this wicked Mordecai is uncle to an Esther who has no need to bathe for six months in myrrh before she be worthy of the couch of a king. This magic-working old crow is not at all suitable for such a beauty, and I feel an interest in her waking in me. Mosaïde must hide her with the utmost secrecy, for were she seen one day at court or at the play, she would have all the world at her feet on the morrow. Do you not wish to see her, Tournebroche?”

I replied that I should like to very much, and we buried ourselves once more in our Greek.

XVI

ONE evening my good master and I finding ourselves in the Rue du Bac, he said to me, for it was a warm night:— “Jacques Tournebroche, my son, how would it suit you to turn up here to the left, up the Rue de Grenelle, and look for a cabaret? We must also find a landlord who sells wine at two *sous* the pot, for I am devoid of money, and I think you are no better provided than I am, my son, by fault of Monsieur d’Astarac, who may make gold but who gives none to his servants and his secretaries, as far as can be seen in our case. The state he leaves us in is distressing. I am not worth a penny, and I see that my own industry or cunning must make good this formidable ill. It is very fine to bear poverty with an equal mind, as did Epictetus, and gained thereby an imperishable glory. But it is a practice I am tired of, and it has become tedious by its very sameness. I feel it is high time that I tried some other virtue, and that I practised myself in the art of possessing wealth without wealth possessing me, which is a very noble state of things, and the best that a philosopher can attain to. I would gladly come by something, were it only to show that my wits did not desert me even in prosperity. I seek the means, you see me pondering thereon, Tournebroche, my son.”

While my good master was speaking in this elegant fashion we approached the pretty house where Monsieur de la Guéritaude had established Catherine. “You will know it,” she had said to me, “by the roses on the balcony.” It was not light enough for me to see the roses, but I thought I could scent them. A few paces further and I recognised her at the window, a jug of water in her hand, watering her flowers. At the same moment she recognised me in the street below, and she laughed and blew me a kiss. Whereupon a hand appearing at the window gave her a smack on the cheek which so surprised her that she dropped the jug of water which all but fell on my good master’s head. Then the buffeted fair one disappeared, and the buffeter, taking her place at the window, leant over the railing and called out:

“God be praised that you are not the capuchin! I cannot endure my mistress blowing kisses to that evil-smelling beast who prowls for ever under the window. At least I need not blush for her taste this time. You seem to me to be an honest fellow, and I think that I have seen you before. Do me the honour to come up. There is supper prepared within. You will do me pleasure if you will share it, along with Monsieur l’Abbé there, who has just received a potful of water on his head and is shaking himself like a wet dog. After supper we will

play cards, and as soon as it is light we will go and cut each other's throats. But that will be out of pure politeness and only to do you honour, Monsieur, for truth to tell, this young woman is not worth a sword-thrust. She is a hussy whom I never wish to see again."

I recognised him who spoke thus as Monsieur d'Anquetil, whom I had lately seen encouraging his men so actively to prick brother Ange in the rear.

He spoke civilly, and treated me as a gentleman. I felt the favour he did me in consenting to cut my throat. My good master was no less affected by such urbanity. Having shaken himself sufficiently, he said:

"Jacques Tournebroche, my son, we cannot refuse such a gracious invitation."

Two lackeys had already descended with torches. They led us to a room where a cold collation was spread on a table lighted by two silver candelabra. Monsieur d'Anquetil begged us to be seated, and my good master tied his napkin round his neck. He had already impaled a lark on the end of his fork when the sound of sobbing smote our ears.

"Take no notice of those cries," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "they come from Catherine, whom I have shut up in her room."

"Ah, Monsieur! you must forgive her," said my good master, gazing sadly at the little bird at the end of his fork. "The most succulent dishes taste bitter when seasoned with tears and cries. How have you the heart to let a woman cry? Be indulgent to this one, I implore you. Is she then so guilty for having blown a kiss to my young pupil, who was her neighbour and her companion in the simple time of their youth, when the charms of this pretty girl were only known in the arbour of the *Petit Bacchus*? There is nothing therein but what is innocent, if it so be that any human action, and more particularly the action of a woman can be entirely innocent and free from original sin. Allow me also to tell you, Monsieur, that jealousy is a Gothic sentiment, a melancholy remnant of barbarous customs, which should find no place in an elegant and well-bred mind."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," replied Monsieur d'Anquetil, "from what do you conclude that I am jealous? I am not. But I will not allow a woman to make light of me."

"We are the playthings of the winds," said my good master with a sigh. "Everything laughs at us, sky, stars, rain, breezes, light and shade, and woman herself. Allow Catherine to sup with us, Monsieur. She is pretty, she will enliven your table. All that she may have done, that kiss and what more, makes her no less pleasing to look upon. Woman's infidelities do not mar her face. Nature, who delights in decking them, is indifferent to their faults. Imitate her, Monsieur, and forgive Catherine."

I joined my prayers to those of my good master, and Monsieur d'Anquetil consented to liberate the prisoner. He went to the door whence the cries came, opened it, and called Catherine, who replied merely by renewed lamentations.

"Messieurs," her lover told us, "she is there lying flat on her chest on her bed, her head buried in the pillow, and making ridiculous contortions at every sob. Look at her! There is the sort of thing for which we make ourselves so unhappy and commit so many follies!... Catherine, come to supper!"

But Catherine did not budge, and continued crying. He went and took her by the arm, by the waist. She resisted. He became urgent:— "Come then, come, my darling!"

She stayed obstinately where she was, holding on to the bed and the mattress.

Her lover lost patience at last, and cried in a rough voice, with many oaths, "Get up, you wench."

She immediately got up and, smiling amid her tears, took his arm and came into the dining room, a not unhappy victim. She sat down between Monsieur d'Anquetil and me, her head on her lover's shoulder, and seeking my foot with hers under the table.

"Messieurs," said our host, "I trust you will forgive an impetuous action I cannot regret since it gives me the honour of entertaining you here. I really cannot put up with all the caprices of this charming young woman, and I have become very suspicious since I surprised her with her capuchin."

"My friend," said Catherine, pressing my foot with hers, "your jealousy is at fault. Know then, that I have no fancy for any one but for Monsieur Jacques."

"She mocks me," said Monsieur d'Anquetil.

"Have no doubt about that," I replied. "One can see she loves but you."

"Without vanity," he answered, "I think I have inspired her with some interest. But she is a coquette."

"A drink!" said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard.

Monsieur d'Anquetil passed the demijohn to my good master, and exclaimed as he did so:

"Pardi l'Abbé, as you belong to the Church you can perhaps tell us why women love monks?"

Monsieur Coignard wiped his lips and said:

"The reason is that monks love with humility, and lend themselves to anything. Another reason is that their natural instincts have not been weakened by taking thought or by having any care for their manners. This is a generous wine, Monsieur."

"You do me too much honour," replied Monsieur d'Anquetil. "The wine is Monsieur de la Guéritaude's. I took his mistress from him, I may well take his

bottles.”

“Nothing could be fairer,” replied my good master. “I see, Monsieur, that you are not a man to stand on convention.”

“Do not praise me more than is fitting, l’Abbé,” answered Monsieur d’Anquetil. “My birth renders easy to me what would be difficult for the vulgar. A common man is forced to put restraint on all his actions. He is the slave of a strict uprightness, but a gentleman has the honour to fight for his king and for his own pleasure. That dispenses him from troubling himself about silly trifles. I have served under Monsieur de Villars, and I fought in the war of succession, and I risked being killed for no reason at the battle of Parma. Surely it is a small matter that in return I beat my men, defraud my creditors, and, should it please me, steal my neighbour’s wife or his mistress.”

“You speak like a nobleman,” said my good master, “and you are jealous to uphold the prerogatives of nobility.”

“I have none of those scruples,” continued Monsieur d’Anquetil, “which intimidate the mass of mankind and which I hold useful merely to give halt to the fearful and to restrain the discontented.”

“Well and good,” said my excellent master.

“I do not believe in virtue,” said the other. “You are right,” said my good master. “Seeing the way in which the human animal is made he could not be virtuous without some deformity. Look at this pretty girl for instance who is supping with us: her little head, her beautiful throat, her charmingly rounded form and all the rest. In what corner of her person could a grain of virtue find lodgment? There is no room, all is so firm, so full of sap, plump and well filled. Virtue like the raven lives among the ruins. It is to be found in the lines and wrinkles of the body. I myself, Monsieur, who since my childhood have pondered the austere maxims of religion and philosophy, I have been unable to insinuate any virtue in myself save by the breaches made by suffering and age in my constitution. And yet each time I have been filled less with virtue than with pride. So I am in the habit of praying to the Creator of the world in this wise: ‘My God, keep me from virtue if it remove me from holiness.’ Ah, holiness! that is what it is possible and needful to attain to! There is the goal that befits us! May we reach it one day! In the meanwhile, give me something to drink.”

“I will confide to you that I do not believe in God,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil.

“For once I think you are to blame, Monsieur,” said the Abbé. “One must believe in God and in all the truths of our holy religion.”

Monsieur d’Anquetil cried out:— “You are laugh ing at us, l’Abbé, and you take us to be far more foolish than we are. I tell you I neither believe in God nor

devil, and I never go to Mass unless to the king's Mass. Priestly discourses are but old wives' tales, only endurable, if then, in the days when my grandmother saw the Abbé de Choisy, dressed as a woman, distributing the blessed bread in the church of St. Jacques-du-Haut-Pas. There may have been such a thing as religion in those days. There is none now, thank God!"

"In the name of all the saints and devils do not speak thus, my friend," exclaimed Catherine. "God exists as certainly as this pie is on the table, and the proof is that one day last year, finding myself in great poverty and distress, on brother Ange's advice, I burnt a candle in the church of the capuchins, and on the morrow I met Monsieur de la Guéritaude out walking, who gave me this house with all its furniture and the cellar full of wine that we are now drinking, and enough money to live honestly."

"Fie! Fie!" said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "the foolish wench drags God into her wretched affairs! It is so shocking that it offends one even though one be an atheist."

"Monsieur," said my good master, "it is infinitely better to drag God into one's wretched affairs, as does this simple-minded girl, than after your fashion to turn Him out of the world He has created. If He did not especially send that fat money-dealer to Catherine, He at least allowed her to meet him. We are ignorant of His ways, and what this innocent being says contains more truth, notwithstanding some admixture and alloy of blasphemy, than all the vain speeches spouted by the impious from an empty heart. There is nothing more detestable than this libertinage of mind displayed by the youth of to-day. Your words make one shudder. Shall I answer them with proofs drawn from holy books and the writings of the Fathers? Shall I make you listen to the Almighty as He spoke to the patriarchs and the prophets? *Sicut locutus est Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula?* Shall I unroll the traditions of the Church before your eyes? Shall I invoke the authority of the two Testaments against you? Shall I overwhelm you with the miracles of Christ? And His words as miraculous as His acts? No. I will not take up these holy weapons. I fear too greatly to profane them in this combat, which is not serious. The Church warns us in her prudence that edification should not be made an occasion for scandal. Therefore I shall remain silent, Monsieur, on the subject of the truths on which I was fed at the foot of the altar. But without doing violence to the pure modesty of my soul, and without exposing the sacred mysteries to profanation, I will show to you the Almighty ruling over the reason of mankind, I will show you Him in pagan philosophy and even in the speeches of the impious. Yes, Monsieur, I will make you recognise that you profess Him in spite of yourself even while you pretend that He does not exist. For you will grant that if there is an ordering of things in

this world it is a divine ordering, and flows from the source and fountain of all order.”

“I grant you that,” replied Monsieur d’Anquetil, lying back in his armchair and stroking his leg, which was well turned.

“Mind what you say then,” continued my good master. “Even while you say that God does not exist, what are you doing but stringing thoughts together, marshalling your reasons and manifesting in yourself the primary cause of all thought and all reason, which is God? And can one even attempt to establish the fact that He does not exist without making conspicuous by this worst of all arguments, which is nevertheless an argument, *sortie remnant* of the harmony that He has established in the universe?”

“L’Abbé,” replied M. d’Anquetil, “you are an amiable sophist. One knows nowadays that the world is but the work of blind chance, and we must no longer speak of Providence since the physicists have seen winged frogs in the moon by the aid of their glasses.”

“Well, Monsieur,” answered my good master, “I am in no wise troubled that there should be winged frogs in the moon; such marsh-fowl are suitable inhabitants for a world which has not been sanctified by the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I confess we know but a small part of the universe, and may be as Monsieur d’Astarac says, who by the by, is quite mad, this world is but a spot of mud in an infinity of worlds. May be Copernicus, the astronomer, was not altogether dreaming when he announced that the earth is not the mathematical centre of the universe. I have read that an Italian, called Galileo, who perished miserably, also thought as did Copernicus, and to-day we see little Monsieur de Fontenelle in accordance with this way of thinking. But these are but vain imaginings fitted merely to disturb weak minds. What matters it that the physical world should be larger or smaller, of one shape or of another? It suffices that it has but to be envisaged through the light of intelligence and reason for God to appear manifest in it.

“If the meditations of a sage can be of any use to you, Monsieur, I will teach you how this proof of God’s existence, better than the proof that St.

Anselm gives us, and quite independent of those proofs which come from Revelation, appeared to me suddenly in all its clearness. It was at Sééz, twenty-five years ago, I was librarian to my lord bishop, and the library windows overlooked a yard where I saw a kitchen maid scouring Monseigneur’s pots and pans every morning. She was tall, young, and strong. A light down shaded her upper lip, and lent a provocation and a charm to her face. Her tangled hair, her thin bust, and long bare arms were as suitable to Adonis as to Diana, in fact she was a boyish beauty. I loved her for it. I loved her strong red hands. In a word

this girl filled me with a desire as strong and savage as herself. You know how overmastering such feelings are. I made mine known to her from my window with few words and signs. She let me understand more briefly still that she responded to my sentiments and gave me a *rendez-vous* for the following night in the loft, where she slept on the hay by the kindness of Monseigneur whose dishes she washed. I awaited the coming of night with impatience. When at length she enfolded the earth I took a ladder and climbed up to the loft where the girl awaited me. My first thought was to embrace her, my second to admire the chain of events which had led me to her arms. For after all, Monsieur, a young divine, a kitchen maid, a ladder, a bundle of hay! What a sequence! what an ordering of things! What a just meeting of pre-established harmonies! What a linking of cause and effect! What a proof of the existence of God! That is what struck me so strangely, and I rejoice at being able to add this profane demonstration to the reasons supplied by theology which are moreover amply sufficient."

"L'Abbé," said Catherine, "the worst part of your story is that the girl had no bosom. A woman with no bosom is like a bed without a pillow. But d'Anquetil, don't you know what we might do now?"

"Yes," he said, "play at ombre, which requires three people."

"If you want to," she continued. "But I pray you, my friend, call for pipes. Nothing is pleasanter than to smoke a pipe of tobacco while drinking wine."

A lackey brought some cards, and the pipes, which we lighted. The room was soon filled with a thick smoke amidst which our host and Monsieur L'Abbé Coignard played solemnly at piquet.

Luck favoured my good master till the moment when Monsieur d'Anquetil thought he saw him for the third time marking fifty-five when he had but forty, and called him a Greek, a card-sharper and a knight of the road, and threw a bottle at his head, which broke on the table and deluged it with wine.

"You will have to give yourself the trouble of opening another bottle," said the Abbé, "for we are very thirsty."

"Willingly," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "but you must know, my Abbé, that a gentleman does not mark points that he has not made, and does not force cards except at the king's table, where all sorts of people are met to whom one is under no obligation. Everywhere else it is villainous. Do you want to be taken for an adventurer then, Abbé?"

"It is a remarkable thing," said my good master, "that at cards or dice people blame a practice recommended in the arts of war, in politics, and business, where one prides oneself on correcting a turn of ill-fortune. It is not that I do not pride myself on my honesty at cards. I am exact in my dealings thank God, and you

were dreaming, Monsieur, just now when you thought you saw me mark points that I had not scored — were it otherwise I should invoke the example of the Bishop of Geneva of blessed memory, who made no scruples about cheating at cards. But I cannot help reflecting that men are more punctilious at cards than in serious matters and that they bring more honesty to bear on trictrac, where it is a passable hindrance and leave it out in battles or in treaties of peace where it would be troublesome. Ælian, Monsieur, has written a book in Greek on the subject of stratagem, showing to what excess ruse may be carried by great leaders.”

“L’Abbé,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I have not read your Ælian, and shall not read him as long as I live, but I have been to the wars as every good gentleman has. I served the king for eighteen months. It is the noblest of callings. I will tell you exactly wherein it consists.

“It is a secret I may well confide to you since there is no one to hear me but you, some bottles, Monsieur, whom I am going to kill presently, and this girl here who is taking off her clothes.”

“Yes,” Catherine said, “my chemise is enough, I’m so hot.”

“Well, then,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “war, whatever the gazettes may say, simply consists in stealing chickens and pigs from the peasants. When soldiers are on campaign that is all they think about.”

“You are quite right,” said my good master, “and in the old days in Gaul they used to call the soldier’s doxy Madame Lightfinger. But I would beg of you not to kill my pupil, Jacques Tournebroche.”

“L’Abbé,” replied Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I’m obliged in honour to do so.”

“Ouf!” said Catherine, arranging the lace of her chemise at her throat, “now I feel better.”

“Monsieur,” continued my good master, “Jacques Tournebroche is of great help to me in a translation of Zozimus the Panopolitan, which I have undertaken. I should be infinitely obliged to you if you would not fight with him until after this great work is achieved.”

“I do not care a fig for your Zozimus,” replied Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I don’t care a fig. You hear me, l’Abbé? I care no more than did the king for his first mistress,” and he began to sing:

To shape the youthful squire of horse,
Steady in stirrup and set on his course,
The wits of woman must help him perforce —
Laire, lan, laire.

“Who is this Zozimus?”

“Zozimus, Monsieur,” replied the Abbé, “Zozimus of Panopolis, was a learned Greek who flourished in Alexandria in the third century of the Christian era, and wrote treatises on the spagyric art.”

“How do you think that affects me?” replied Monsieur d’Anquetil, “and why do you translate him?”

Strike the iron while ’tis hot
Quoth she, nor let her be forgot
Whose title was the Sultan’s fair —
Laire, lan, laire.

“Monsieur,” said my good master, “I grant you that there is no real use in doing so, and that it will not affect the course of the world. But in illustrating, with notes and commentaries, this treatise, which the Greek composed for his sister Theosebia....”

Catherine interrupted my good master’s discourse by singing in a shrill voice:

In spite of jealousy and rebuke
I’d see my husband made a duke,
I’m sick of the sight of his desk and chair —
Laire, lan, laire.

“I contribute,” went on my good master, “to the treasures of knowledge amassed by learned men, and I add my stone to the monument of true history which is rather that of maxims and opinions than of wars and treaties; for, Monsieur, the nobility of man....”

Catherine resumed:

I can hear the public murmuring
I know the sort of ballad they’ll sing,
The vulgar herd — but it’s my affair —
Laire, lan, laire.

Notwithstanding her my good master continued... “lies in his thought, and having regard to that it is not a matter of indifference to ascertain what idea of the nature of metals and of the qualities of matter this Egyptian had formed.”

Monsieur l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard drank a great draught of wine while Catherine took up her song:

Pleasant to win the style of lord
Whether or no by naked sword,
If the end be fair, the means are fair —
Laire, lan, laire.

"L'Abbé," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "you drink nothing — what is more you talk wild nonsense. In Italy during the war of succession I was under the orders of a brigadier who translated Polybius. But he was an idiot. Why translate Zozimus?"

"If you want to know all," said my good master, "I find therein a certain sensuality."

"Well and good," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "but how can Monsieur Tournebroke help you, who at this moment is caressing my mistress?"

"By the knowledge of Greek," said my good master, "which I have imparted to him."

Monsieur d'Anquetil then turned to me and said, "What Monsieur, you know Greek! Then you are not a gentleman?"

"Monsieur," I replied, "my father is the banner bearer to the Confraternity of Parisian Cooks."

"That makes it impossible for me to kill you, Monsieur. I beg you to excuse me. But, l'Abbé, you are drinking nothing. You have deceived me. I thought you were a good toper, and I wished you to be my chaplain when I should have a house of my own."

Nevertheless Monsieur Coignard was drinking out of the bottle and Catherine leant towards me and whispered in my ear:— "Jacques — I feel that I shall never love any one but you."

These words, coming from a pretty person in her chemise, troubled me extremely, but Catherine put the finishing touch to my intoxication by making me drink out of her glass, which passed unnoticed in the confusion of a supper which had mounted to all our heads.

Monsieur d'Anquetil, breaking the neck of the bottle against the table, filled us fresh bumpers, and from that moment on I could not give an account of what was said and done around me. All the same I saw that Catherine had traitorously poured a glass of wine down her lover's back between the neck and the coat collar. Monsieur d'Anquetil replied by pouring two or three bottles over the young lady in the chemise, whom he thus turned into a sort of mythological

figure, of the damp family of Nymphs and Naiads. She cried with rage and twisted herself about convulsively. At the same moment we heard heavy raps from the door-knocker in the silence of the night whereupon we all became suddenly still and dumb like enchanted guests. The knocks soon redoubled in strength and frequency, and Monsieur d'Anquetil broke the silence first by asking out loud with dreadful oaths, who this troublesome person might be. My good master, who in the most ordinary occurrences was often inspired with admirable maxims, rose up, and said with unction and solemnity, "What matters whose the hand that knocks so roughly against the closed door for a vulgar and possibly ridiculous motive; let us not ask, and let us take these blows as struck at the door of our hardened and corrupted souls. Let us say at each astounding blow: that is to warn us to amend our ways and think of our salvation which we neglect in the pursuit of pleasure; that is to make us disdain the good things of this world; that is to make us think on eternity. Thus, we shall obtain all possible profit from an occurrence otherwise slight and of but small account."

"You are amusing, l'Abbé," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "with the vigour with which they knock they will burst in the door," and indeed the knocker rattled like thunder.

"They are brigands," cried the wine-sopped Catherine. "Jesus! we shall be massacred! it is our punishment for having turned out the little brother. I have told you a hundred times, d'Anquetil, ill-luck comes to the house whence they drive a monk." —

"Stupid," replied d'Anquetil, "this cursed friar makes her believe all the silliness he wishes. Thieves would be more polite, or at least more discreet. It is more likely the watch."

"The watch! But that is worse still," said Catherine.

"Bah!" said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "we will thrash them."

My good master put a bottle in one pocket just for precaution and another bottle in the other pocket for equilibrium, as the story says. All the house shook under the furious blows of the knocker.

Monsieur d'Anquetil, whose soldierly qualities were awakened by this attack, cried out, "I will go and reconnoitre the enemy."

Stumbling as he went he ran to the window where he had so lately and so liberally boxed his mistress's ears, and then came back into the dining-room bursting with laughter.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, "do you know who is knocking? It is Monsieur de la Guéritaude in a clawhammer wig, with two big lackeys bearing lighted torches."

"Impossible!" said Catherine, "by this time he is sleeping by the side of his elderly wife."

“Then it is his very ghost,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “and we must believe that the ghost has taken the Revenue officer’s wig. Even a spectre could not imitate it so well, for it is so absolutely comic!”

“Do you really mean it? Are you not joking?” said Catherine; “is it really Monsieur de la Guéritaude?”

“It is he himself, Catherine, if I am to believe my eyes.”

“Then I am lost,” exclaimed the poor girl. “How unlucky women are. They never can leave us in peace. What will become of me? Messieurs, will you not hide yourselves in different cupboards?”

“That might be done,” said Abbé Coignard, “but how are we to take with us these empty bottles — for the most part broken, or at any rate with their necks knocked off, the débris of the demijohn, which Monsieur flung at my head, the cloth, the pasty, the plates, the candelabra, and the chemise of Mademoiselle here, which, owing to the wine with which it is soaked has become but a pink and transparent veil for her beauty?”

“It is true that idiot has wet my chemise,” said Catherine, “and I shall catch cold. But it would perhaps suffice were we to hide Monsieur d’Anquetil in the upper room. I will pass off the Abbé as my uncle and Monsieur Jacques as my brother.”

“Not so,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I will beg Monsieur de la Guéritaude myself to sup with us.” We implored him — my good master, Catherine, and myself — to do nothing of the kind; we besought him, we hung on his neck. All in vain. He seized a light and went down the steps. We followed him trembling. He opened the door. Monsieur de la Guéritaude stood there as he had described him to us in his wig, between two lackeys armed with torches. Monsieur d’Anquetil bowed ceremoniously to him and said:

“Do us the favour to come inside, Monsieur. You will meet some charming and uncommon people. A turnspit to whom Mademoiselle Catherine blows kisses from her window, and an Abbé who believes in God.”

And he bowed low.

Monsieur de la Guéritaude was a tall withered man, little inclined to that kind of pleasantry, which irritated him exceedingly, and his anger was visibly increased by the sight of my good master, unbuttoned, a bottle in his hand and two others in his pockets, and by the appearance of Catherine in her damp and clinging chemise.

“Young man,” said he to Monsieur d’Anquetil, coldly angry, “I have the honour to know your esteemed father, with whom I shall to-morrow consider to what town the king should send you to meditate on your disgraceful behaviour and your impertinence.

“The worthy gentleman, to whom I have lent money which I do not press for, can refuse me nothing. And our well-beloved prince, who is in exactly the same position as your father, is inclined to do me favour. So that is settled. I have put through more difficult things in my time, thank God! As to this young woman, since it is hopeless to expect better ways of her, before mid-day to-morrow I shall speak two words to Monsieur the head of the police, who, I know, is full willing to send her to the reformatory. I have no more to say to you. This house is mine. I have paid for it, and I mean to enter it.”

Then turning towards his lackeys, and designating my good master and me with the point of his stick, he said: “Throw those two drunkards out.”

Monsieur Jérôme Coignard was commonly of exemplary sweetness, and he was in the habit of saying that he owed this gentleness to the vicissitudes of his life, fortune having treated him like the pebbles that the sea polishes by rolling them in its ebb and flow. He bore insults calmly, as much through a Christian spirit as through philosophy. But what helped him most was his great contempt for mankind, from which he did not except himself. Nevertheless, this time he was angry out of all proportion, and entirely forgot his prudence.

“Hold your tongue! vile money-grubber!” he cried, waving his bottle like a club. “If these rogues dare come near me, I will break their heads, to teach them to respect my cloth, which bears sufficient witness to my sacred character.” In the torch-light, shining with perspiration, rubicund, his eyes starting from his head, his coat open, and his great paunch half out of his breeches, my good master seemed the sort of fellow who would not easily be driven into a corner. The rogues hesitated.

“Drag him out!” cried Monsieur de la Guéritaude to them. “Drag out this wine-skin! Do you not see you only have to push him into the gutter, and he’ll stay there until the sweepers come to throw him on the dust-heap? I would drag him out myself were I not afraid to soil my clothes.”

My good master fiercely resented these insults.

“Odious tax-gatherer!” said he, in a voice fit to echo in a church, “infamous hanger-on; savage sweater of the people! You pretend that this house is yours? If you want people to believe you, if you want them to know it is yours, write up over the door this word from the Gospel: *Acelanda*, which means, the price of blood. Then, bowing low, we will allow the master to enter his dwelling. Thief, bandit, homicide, write with the charcoal I will throw in your face, write with your dirty hand over the door your owner’s title. The price of the blood of the widow and the orphan, the price of the blood of the just, *Acelanda*. If not, stay outside and leave us within, usurer.”

Monsieur de la Guéritaude, who had never heard anything like this in his life, thought he had to do with a madman, as he might well believe, and rather to protect himself than to make an attack, he raised his big stick.

My good master, beside himself, flung his bottle at the Revenue officer's head, who fell full length on the pavement, crying out "He has killed me!" And as he was swimming in the wine out of the bottle it looked as if he had been assassinated.

His two lackeys wanted to fling themselves on the murderer, and one of the two, a stout fellow, thought he had him, when Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard gave him such a blow in the stomach with his head that the fool rolled in the gutter beside the financier.

He got up for his sins, and arming himself with a lighted torch threw it down the passage whence his enemy had fallen on him. My good master was no longer there, he had already fled the spot.

Monsieur d'Anquetil was there still with Catherine, and he it was who received the lighted torch in his face. This insult seemed unbearable to him: he drew his sword and plunged it into the body of the unlucky rogue, who thus learnt to his cost that it does not do to attack a gentleman.

Nevertheless my good master had not made twenty paces down the road before the second lackey, a long spidery-legged beggar, commenced running after him, calling to the watch, and crying "Stop him."

He gained on him, and at the corner of the Rue Saint Guillaume we saw him stretch his arm out and seize him by the collar.

But my good master, who knew more than a trick or two, doubled sharply, and passing by his man tripped him up against a milestone where he cracked his head. This occurred whilst we were running, Monsieur d'Anquetil and I, to the assistance of Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, whom it was not seemly to desert in this pressing danger.

"L'Abbé," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "give me your hand, you are a brave man."

"In truth I think I was more or less murderous," said my good master. "But I am not unnatural enough to glory in it. It suffices me if I do not incur too much blame. These violent ways are scarcely mine, and such as you see me, Monsieur, I am better fitted to teach the liberal arts from a college chair than to fight with lackeys on the roadside."

"Oh!" continued Monsieur d'Anquetil, "that is not the worst part of the business. But I think you have nearly killed a Farmer-general."

"Is that really so?" asked Monsieur l'Abbé.

"As true as I stuck my sword through the tripe of some of this dirty crew."

“At this juncture,” said the Abbé, “it is first necessary to ask forgiveness of God, towards Whom alone we are answerable for spilt blood; secondly, to hasten our steps to the nearest fountain, so as to wash ourselves. For I think I am bleeding from the nose.”

“You are right, l’Abbé,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “for the fool who lies cut open in the gutter has broken my head. What impertinence!”

“Forgive him,” said the Abbé, “so that you may be forgiven for what you have done unto him.”

We found at the right moment in the wall of a hospital where the Rue du Bac loses itself in the fields, a little bronze Triton throwing a spray of water into a stone basin. We stopped to wash ourselves and drink, for our throats were dry.

“What have we done?” said my good master, “and how comes it I have been so unlike my real pacific self? It is indeed true one must not judge men from their actions, which depend on circumstances, but rather as God our Father does, by their secret thoughts and inward intentions.”

“And Catherine,” I asked— “what has become of her in this terrible adventure?”

“I left her,” replied Monsieur d’Anquetil, “blowing into her financier’s mouth to put life into him. But she might spare her pains. I know la Guéritau. He is pitiless. He will send her to the reformatory and perchance to America. I am sorry for her. She was a pretty girl. I did not love her. But she was mad about me. And extraordinary to relate, here I am without a mistress.”

“Do not be troubled,” said my good master, “you will find another no different from that one, or at least not essentially different. And it seems to me that what you look for in a woman is common to all.”

“It is quite clear that we are in danger,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I — of being put in the Bastille, and you, l’Abbé, of being hung with your pupil, Tournebroche, who nevertheless has killed no one.”

“It is only too true,” replied my good master, “we must think of our safety. It may be necessary to quit Paris where they will not fail to look for us, and even to fly to Holland. Alas! I foresee that I shall write scurrilous papers for women of the theatre, with this very hand which illustrated with such ample notes the alchemistic treatise of Zozimus the Panopolitan.”

“Listen to me, l’Abbé,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “I have a friend who will hide us on his estate as long as may be necessary. He lives four leagues from Lyons, in a wild and horrid part of the country where there is nothing to be seen but poplars, grass and woods. That’s where we must go, and wait till the storm has past over. We will turn our attention to the chase. But we must find a post-chaise as quickly as possible or, better still, a berline.”

"I know the very thing, Monsieur," said the Abbé. "The *Hôtel du Cheval Rouge*, at the cross roads of Bergères will supply you with good horses and every kind of carriage. I knew the landlord in the days when I was secretary to Madame de St. Ernest. He was willing to oblige people of quality; I believe he is dead since, but he ought to have a son who takes after him. Have you any money?"

"I have a fairly large sum on me," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "and very glad I am of it, for I cannot think of going back to my house, where the police will not fail to search for me to take me to the Châtelet. I have forgotten my men left in Catherine's house — God knows what has become of them; but I care little. I beat them and I never paid them, and yet I am not sure of their fidelity; on whom can one rely? Let us go to the cross roads of Bergères at once."

"Monsieur" said the Abbé, "I am going to make you a proposition, hoping that it may prove agreeable to you. Tournebroche and I are living in an alchemist's workshop, in a tumble-down old *château* at the Cross of Les Sablons, where you can easily spend twelve hours without being seen. We will take you with us there, and we will wait until our carriage be ready. There is much advantage that Les Sablons is not far from the cross roads of Bergères."

Monsieur d'Anquetil did not gainsay these arrangements, and we decided — standing before the little Triton blowing water from his full cheeks — to go first to the Cross of Les Sablons and then to take a berline at the *Hôtel du Cheval Rouge* to drive us to Lyons.

"I will confide to you, Monsieur," said my good master, "that of the three bottles I took care to carry off with me one was unluckily broken on the head of Monsieur de la Guéritaude, the second broke in my pocket during my flight. They are both much to be regretted. The third was preserved intact against all hope — and here it is!"

And drawing it from under his coat he placed it on the edge of the fountain.

"That is one good thing," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "you have wine, I have dice and cards in my pocket. We can play."

"It is indeed excellent entertainment," said my good master. "A game of cards, Monsieur, is a book of adventures of the kind we call romance, and it has this superiority over other books of its kind that one composes it even while one reads it, and one need not have wit to compose it, nor know one's letters to read it. And it is furthermore a marvellous work, in that it makes sense and has a new meaning each time that one turns over the leaves. It is of such cunning design one cannot admire it sufficiently, for from mathematical laws it draws thousands and thousands of curious combinations and so many singular juxtapositions that

people have been led to think, contrary to truth, that they could discover therein secrets of the heart, the mystery of fate, and the hidden things of the future. What I say is particularly applicable to the *tarot* of the Bohemians, which is the best of card games, but also may apply to the game of piquet. The invention of cards may be referred to the ancients, and for my part, although truth to tell, I know no text which positively supports me here, I believe them to be of Chaldean origin. But in its present form the game of piquet does not go further back than the time of Charles VII, and, if it is true, as is said in a learned dissertation which I remember to have read at Séez, that the Queen of Hearts represents in an emblematical manner the beautiful Agnes Sorel, and that the Queen of Spades is no other than Jeanne Dulys, also called Jeanne Darc, who by her bravery re-established the affairs of the monarchy, and was then boiled at Rouen by the English, in a cauldron they show one for two *liards*, and which I have seen in passing through that town. Certain historians pretend that this maiden was burnt alive at the stake. One reads in Nicole Gilles and in Pasquier, that Saint Catherine and Saint Marguerite appeared to her. But certainly it was not God who sent them, for there is no one, however little learned or pious, but knows that Marguerite and Catherine were invented by the Byzantine monks whose extravagant and barbarous imaginings have defiled the Martyrology. There is a ridiculous impiety in pretending that God made saints, who never existed, appear to Jeanne Dulys, but the old chroniclers were not afraid of giving us to understand this. Why did they not say that God sent to this maiden Yseulte the fair, Melusina, Bertha Big-Foot and all the heroines of the romances of chivalry whose existence is no more fabulous than that of the Virgin Catherine and the Virgin Marguerite? —

“Monsieur de Valois in the last century rightly set himself against these gross fables, which are as much opposed to religion as error is contrary to truth. It is to be wished that some religious, instructed in history, should make the distinction between the real saints, whom it is fitting to venerate, and saints such as Marguerite, Luce or Lucie, and Eustace who are imaginary, and even St. George, of whom I have my doubts.

“If ever some day I may retire to a fair abbey provided with a rich library, I will consecrate to this task the remainder of a life nearly worn out by tempest and shipwreck. I long for port and desire to taste the sweets of repose befitting my age and condition.”

While Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard was making these memorable remarks, Monsieur d’Anquetil, without hearing him, seated on the edge of the basin — shuffled the cards and swore like a fiend, because one could not see to play a game of piquet.

“You are right Monsieur,” said my good master, “one cannot see very well, and I feel some annoyance, less by thought of the cards which I can very easily do without, than for the wish I have to read some pages of the Consolations of Boethius, a copy of which in a small edition I always carry in my coat-pocket, that I may have it under my hand and open it directly I fall into misfortune, as happens to me to-day. For it is a cruel mischance, Monsieur, for a man of my kind to be a homicide and menaced with the ecclesiastical prisons. I feel that one single page of this admirable book would keep up my heart, which sinks at the very notion of the police.”

Pronouncing these words he let himself sink over the inner side of the basin, and that so deeply, that he dipped the greater part of his person in the water — but he was not concerned, and seemed not even to perceive it, and drawing from his pocket his Boethius which was really there and donning his spectacles which had but one glass left and that broken in three places, he set himself to look in the little book for the page most appropriate to his situation. He would have found it no doubt, and would have drawn fresh strength from it if the ill-condition of his spectacles, the tears that rose to his eyes and the feeble light that fell from the sky had allowed the search. But he had soon to confess that he saw nothing and he fell out with the moon who showed her sharp horn from the edge of a cloud. He addressed her with vivacity and overwhelmed her with invective.

“Thou obscene Star, mischievous and libidinous!” said he. “Thou never weariest of holding the candle to the wicked ways of men, and thou grudgest a ray of light to him who seeks a virtuous maxim!”

“Well, well, l’Abbé,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “since this trollop of a moon gives us enough light to guide us through the street and not enough to play piquet, let us go straight to the *château* you spoke of and where I must enter without being seen.”

The advice was good, and having drained the bottle by the neck we all three took the road to the Cross of Les Sablons, Monsieur d’Anquetil and I walked on ahead, my good master, hindered by all the water his breeches had absorbed, followed us weeping, groaning, and dripping.

XVII

OUR eyes were smarting in the early dawn when we reached the green door opening into the park of Les Sablons. We were under no necessity of knocking. For some time past the master of the house had given us the keys of his domain. We had planned that my good master should go forward cautiously with d'Anquetil in the shadow of the alley, and that I should remain behind a little to look out if necessary for the faithful Criton, and for any of the kitchen varlets who might catch sight of the intruder. This arrangement, which was only reasonable, was to cost me much anxiety. For at the moment when my two companions had already climbed the stairs, and gained without being seen my own room, where we had decided to hide Monsieur d'Anquetil till the time for our flight in the postchaise, I had scarcely reached the second floor, and there I came upon Monsieur d'Astarac himself, clad in a robe of red damask, and bearing a silver torch. He put his hand on my shoulder as his habit was, and said to me:

“Well, my son, are you not well content to have broken off all dealings with women, and so escaped all the dangers of bad company? You have no need to fear from these daughters of the air those quarrels and fights and violent and harmful scenes which commonly break out among creatures who lead an evil life. In your solitude, which the fairies make charming to you, you enjoy a delicious tranquillity.”

At first I thought he spoke mockingly. But I soon recognised that he had no such intention.

“Our meeting is very opportune, my son, and I should be much obliged to you if you would come to my workshop for a few moments.”

I followed him. With a key at least an ell in length, he opened the door of that cursed room whence I had formerly seen the infernal flames dart forth. And when we had both entered the laboratory he asked me to make up the fire, which was dying out. I threw some logs of wood in the furnace, where something was cooking which gave forth a suffocating smell. While he shifted crucibles and retorts and compounded his unholy messes, I sat back on the bench where I had sunk down, and in spite of myself closed my eyes. He forced me to open them again to admire a vessel of green pottery capped with a glass top, which he held in his hand.

“My son,” said he, “you must know that this sublimatory apparatus is called an aludel. It holds a liquid which you must carefully observe, for I am about to

reveal to you that this liquid is no other than the mercury of the philosophers. Do not think it is always of so dark a hue. Before long it will become white, and in that state it transforms metals into silver. Then, owing to my skill and cunning, it will turn red, and acquire the virtue of transmuting silver into gold. It would be greatly to your profit, doubtless, if, shut up in this laboratory, you did not leave it before these sublime operations were little by little accomplished, which cannot take more than two or three months. But perchance, that would be putting too great a strain on your youth, so content yourself this time in watching the preliminaries of the work, heaping plenty of wood in the furnace meanwhile, if you please.”

Having spoken thus, he disappeared once more among his bottles and retorts. Meanwhile I meditated on the unlucky position my ill-luck and imprudence had brought me to.

Alas! I said to myself, throwing logs on the fire, at this very moment the police are seeking us, my good master and me, and we shall have perhaps to go to prison — we certainly shall have to leave this *château* where I had, though lacking money, board and a certain position. I shall never dare to appear again before Monsieur d’Astarac, who believes that I spent the night in the noiseless delights of magic, and it were indeed better I had done so. Alas! never again shall I see Mosaïde’s niece, she who in my little room so agreeably interrupted my slumbers. And no doubt she will forget me. Perhaps she will love another on whom she will bestow the same caresses as on me. The very thought of such infidelity, is intolerable to me. But seeing how the world wags, one must expect anything and everything.

“My son,” said Monsieur d’Astarac, “you do not feed the athanor sufficiently. I perceive that you are not imbued enough with the true love of fire, whose qualities are capable of ripening this mercury and thus forming the marvellous fruit I shall soon be allowed to pluck. More wood! Fire, my son, is the superior element; I have often told you so, and I will give you an example. On a very cold day last winter I went to call on Mosaïde in his cottage. I found him seated with his feet on a foot-warmer, and noticed that the subtle and essential particles of the fire that escaped from the stove were powerful enough to swell and puff out the learned man’s gathered robe; whence I concluded that had the fire been fiercer Mosaïde would, without any doubt about it, have been raised up into the air, as he is verily worthy of such up-raising, and that were it possible to enclose in some vessel a large enough quantity of these particles of fire we might thus navigate the clouds as easily as we do to-day the sea and visit the Salamanders in their ethereal abode. I shall think over that in the time to come at leisure. And I

do not despair of being able to build one of those fiery vessels myself. But let us return to our work, and put some wood in the stove.”

He kept me for a considerable time longer in this glowing chamber, whence I thought to escape as quickly as I could to rejoin Jael, to whom I was anxious to impart my woes. At length he left the workshop and I thought I was at liberty. But he disappointed my hopes once again.

“The weather,” said he, “is quite mild to-day, although somewhat cloudy. Would it not be pleasant to take a walk in the park with me before continuing your work on Zozimus the Panopolitan, which will do much honour to you and your good master if you finish as well as you have begun.”

Regretfully I followed him to the park, when he addressed me as follows:

“I am not sorry, my son, to find myself alone with you to warn you, while there is yet time, against a great danger which may one day threaten you, and I reproach myself for not having thought of warning you sooner, for what I have to tell you is of extreme importance.”

Speaking thus he led me to the main alley which descends to the marshes of the Seine, whence one sees Rueil and Mount Valerian with its Calvary. It was his daily walk. The path was practicable, notwithstanding several tree trunks lying across it.

“It is necessary to make you understand,” he pursued, “to what you may be exposed in betraying your Salamander. I shall not question you on your dealings with this supernatural person whom I was fortunate enough to introduce to you. As far as I can judge you seem yourself to feel a certain repugnance in discussing her. And perhaps it is praiseworthy on your part. If Salamanders have not the same ideas as have women of the court and of the town on the discretion of their lovers, it is none the less true that it is of the essence of the beauty of love to be inexpressible — and that to spread abroad a deep-seated feeling is to profane it. —

“But your Salamander (whose name I could easily discover were I indiscreetly curious) has perhaps not spoken to you of one of her strongest passions — which is jealousy. This characteristic is common to all her kind. Bear well in mind, my son — Salamanders do not allow themselves to be betrayed with impunity. They wreak a terrible vengeance on the perjured. The divine Paracelsus relates an example which will doubtless suffice to inspire you with a wholesome dread. Therefore I will make it known to you. In a town in Germany called Staufen there was a spagyric philosopher who, like you, had dealings with a Salamander. He was depraved enough to betray her ignominiously with a woman, pretty it is true, but not impossibly beautiful. One evening as he was supping with his new mistress and some friends, the guests

saw a glistening limb of marvellous form above their heads. The Salamander showed it in order that they might be sensible that she did not merit the wrong done her by her lover. Whereafter the outraged daughter of the skies struck the faithless one with apoplexy. The vulgar, which is born to be deceived, thought it a natural death, but the initiated knew by what hand the blow came. My son, it was my duty to give you this advice and this example.”

They were less useful to me than Monsieur d’Astarac thought. While listening to them I cherished other matter for alarm. My face doubtless betrayed my anxiety, for the great cabalist having turned his gaze on me asked me whether I did not fear that a pledge undertaken under such severe penalties would prove trying to my youth.

“I can reassure you on that point,” he added. “The Salamander’s jealousy is only roused if one puts them on a rival footing with women, and truth to tell it is more resentment, indignation and disgust than real jealousy. Salamanders have too fine a soul and too subtle an intelligence to be envious one of another and to suffer a feeling which harks back to the barbarity in which mankind is still half immersed. On the contrary, they make a pleasure of sharing with their companions the delights they enjoy in the company of a sage, and amuse themselves by bringing the prettiest of their sisters to their lovers. You will soon experience that they actually push amiability to the point I have described, and not a year nor even six months will pass before your rooms will be a meeting-place for five or six daughters of the light vying with one another who shall loose before you their dazzling girdles. Do not fear to respond to their caresses, my son. Your friend will take no umbrage, and how should she take offence since she is so wise? In your turn, do not be vexed should your Salamander leave you for a time to visit another philosopher. Look upon this over-weening jealousy which men bring to the union of sexes as a savage feeling founded on the most absurd illusion. It rests on the idea that a woman is yours when she has given herself to you, which is simply a play upon words.”

While thus holding forth to me, Monsieur d’Astarac had entered on the mandragora path and we already perceived Mosaïde’s cottage through the foliage, when a terrible voice rang in my ears and made my heart beat violently. It rolled out raucous sounds, accompanied by gnashing of teeth, and on drawing near one realised that the sounds were modulated and each phrase terminated in a sort of feeble recitative, which one could not hear without shuddering.

After taking a few steps forward we could, by straining our ears, grasp the meaning of these strange words. The voice said:

“Listen to the malediction of Elisha and his curse on the joyful and insolent children. Hark to the anathema which Barak launched at Meroz.

“I condemn thee in the name of Archithariel, also called the lord of battles who holds the shining sword. I devote thee to perdition in the name of Sardaliphon who presents his master with the acceptable flowers and the garlands of merit offered by the children of Israel.

“Be accursed O dog! — and anathema, O swine!” On looking whence the voice came we saw Mosaïde standing at his doorway — his arms raised, his hands like claws with their curved nails which the sunlight appeared to redden. Crowned with his dirty headdress, wrapped in his gaudy robe which opening allowed his thin, bowed legs to appear in their ragged breeches, he looked like some mendicant soothsayer, eternal and aged.

His eyes gleamed. He said:

“Be thou accursed in the name of the Globes — Be thou accursed in the name of the Wheels — Be thou accursed in the name of the mysterious Beasts which Ezekiel saw,” and he stretched out his long clawed-like arms before him, repeating: —

“In the name of the Globes, in the name of the Wheels, in the name of the mysterious Beasts — Go thou down among those who are no more.”

We went a few steps into the wood to see the object to which Mosaïde extended his arms, and his wrath, and my surprise was great at discovering Monsieur Jérôme Coignard hanging on a thorn tree by his coat. The night’s disorder showed all over his person, his cape and hands all torn, his stockings stained with mud, his shirt half open, all were pitiable reminders of our common misadventures, and, worst of all, his swollen nose, now spoilt that fine and smiling expression which never left his face. —

I rushed towards him and drew him so successfully out of the thorn-bush that he left there but a fragment of his breeches. And Mosaïde having nothing left to curse went back into his house. As he only wore slippers I was enabled to see that his leg was in the middle of his foot so to speak, so that the heel was nearly half as far out behind as the instep in front. This formation rendered his walk extremely ungraceful, which would otherwise have been rather noble.

“Jacques Tournebroche, my son,” said my good master with a sigh, “that Jew must be Isaac Laquedem himself to swear thus in all languages. He consigned me to a violent and early death with an abundance of imagery, and he called me a pig in fourteen different idioms, if I counted aright. I should take him to be Anti-Christ, did he not lack several of the signs by which that enemy of the Almighty is to be recognised. In any case he is a wicked Jew, and never has the wheel been applied in sign of infamy on the garb of a wilder miscreant. As for him, he deserves not only the wheel which they formerly fastened to the Jews’ cloaks, but that wheel to which they fasten evil-doers.”

And my good master, irritated beyond all measure, in his turn shook his fist at Mosaïde's back, accusing him of crucifying children and devouring the flesh of new-born infants.

Monsieur d'Astarac came up to him and touched him on the chest with the ruby he wore on his finger.

"It is useful," said the great cabalist, "to know the property of precious stones. The ruby appeases resentment and you will soon see Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard return to his usual gentleness."

My good master was already smiling, more from the effect of a philosophy which raised this admirable man above all human passions, than from the virtue of the stone. For I must own even at the time when my recital darkens and becomes saddened, Monsieur Jérôme Coignard showed me an example of wisdom in circumstances where it is rarest of all to meet with it.

We asked him the reason of the quarrel. But I understood by the vagueness of his embarrassed replies that he had no wish to satisfy our curiosity. I had suspected from the first that Jael was mixed up in it in some manner, my indication being that we heard mingled with the grinding voice of Mosaïde the grinding of locks and the outburst of a quarrel in the cottage between the uncle and niece. Having done my very best again to extract some enlightenment from my good master, he said: "Hatred of Christians is deep-rooted in the heart of the Jews, and this Mosaïde is an odious example of it. I thought I could discern in his horrid mouthings, some portion of the imprecation vomited last century by the synagogue on a little Dutch Jew called Baruch or Benedict, known later under the name of Spinoza, for having formulated a philosophy which was utterly refuted almost at its birth by able theologians. But this old Mordecai added to them, it seemed to me, many imprecations more horrible still, and I confess that they touched me a little. I was just meditating escape by flight from this torrent of abuse when, to my misfortune, I was caught up in these thorns, and so well seized in different parts of my clothes and my skin, that I thought I should have left both one and the other there; and I should be there still in the liveliest pain had not Tournebroche, my pupil, delivered me."

"Thorns are nothing," said Monsieur d'Astarac. "But I fear, Monsieur l'Abbé, that you may have stepped on a mandragora."

"That is the least of my anxieties," said the Abbé.

"You are wrong," said Monsieur d'Astarac with vivacity. "It is enough to put your foot on a mandragora to be tangled in some criminal love and perish miserably therein."

"Ah, Monsieur!" said my good master, "these are perils indeed, and I see that it is necessary to live close confined within the eloquent walls of the Astaracian,

that queen of libraries. I quitted it for a moment and received at my head the Beasts of Ezekiel, without counting the rest.”

“Have you nothing to tell me of Zozimus the Panopolitan?” asked Monsieur d’Astarac.

“He goes on his way,” replied my good master, “he goes on his way, although a little languidly for the moment.”

“Bethink yourself, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said the cabalist, “that the possession of the greatest secrets is bound up in the knowledge of these ancient texts.”

“I bethink myself of it with the greatest solicitude,” said the Abbé.

And Monsieur d’Astarac, on receiving this assurance, strode off under the trees at the call of the Salamanders, leaving us by the Faun who fingered his flute, careless of his head fallen in the grass beneath him.

My good master took me by the arm in the manner of one who can at length talk openly:

“Jacques Tournebroche, my son,” said he, “I must not conceal from you that a somewhat strange meeting took place this morning under the house-roof, while you were detained on the first floor by that mad fire-blower. For I overheard him perfectly asking you to help him with his cooking, which is far less odorous and Christian than that of Maître Léonard, your father. Alas! when shall I see again the cook-shop of the *Reine Pédauque*, and Monsieur Blaizot’s book-shop, at the sign of St. Catherine, where I took such pleasure in turning over the new books from Amsterdam and The Hague!” —

“Alas!” I exclaimed — with tears in my eyes, “when shall I myself see them again? When shall I see once more the Rue St. Jacques where I was born, and my dear parents to whom the news of our misfortunes will cause the most acute grief? But deign to explain, my good master, this somewhat strange meeting which you say took place this morning and also the occurrences of to-day.” Monsieur Jérôme Coignard consented to enlighten me as I wished. Which he did as follows: “You must know, my son, that without hindrance I reached the top floor of the château along with this Monsieur d’Anquetil, whom I like well enough, though he is somewhat ill-mannered and illiterate. His mind is not acquainted with what is finest, nor curious beyond its depth. The vivacity of youth sparkles agreeably in him and the generosity of his blood expends itself in amusing sallies. He knows the world as he knows women, from his upper station and without philosophy. It is mere ingenuousness on his part to call himself an atheist. His impiety carries no malice and you will see it will vanish of itself when the heat of his feelings subsides. God has no other enemies in this soul but horses, cards and women. In the soul of a true libertine such as Monsieur Bayle, for instance, truth meets with more redoubtable and cunning adversaries. But I

see, my son, that I am drawing you a portrait and a character when what you want of me is but a plain recital.

“I will satisfy your wish. Having then reached the top floor of the *château* along with Monsieur d’Anquetil, I showed the young gentleman into your room, and I begged him, in accordance with our promise to him before the fountain, to make use of the room as if it were his own. He did so without more ado, undressed, and merely retaining his boots, got into your bed, whose curtains he closed so as not to be troubled with the piercing light of early dawn, and was not long in falling asleep.

“As for me, my son, having reached my own room, although overcome with fatigue, I did not wish to taste repose before seeking in Boethius a passage suitable to my position. I found none quite fitting, and in truth the great Boethius had no need to meditate on the disgrace of having broken a Farmer-general’s head with a bottle from his own cellar. But I gathered from his admirable treatise some maxims here and there which permitted of application to the present juncture.

“Whereupon, drawing my night-cap over my eyes, and recommending my soul to God, I fell asleep quite peacefully. After a period which seemed to me short, without my having had the means to measure it — for our actions are the sole measure of time, my son, which is, so to speak, suspended for us during sleep, I felt myself being pulled by the arm and heard a voice crying in my ear: — ‘Eh! l’Abbé, eh! l’Abbé, wake up then!’ I thought it was a police officer come to arrest me and take me before the magistrate, and I deliberated within myself if ‘twere not better to break his head with my candlestick. It is unhappily but too true, my son, that once having left the straight path of gentleness and equity, where the sage walks with firm and prudent steps, one sees oneself forced to meet violence with violence, and cruelty with cruelty, in such wise that the consequence of a first transgression is to produce others. We must bear this in mind if we are to understand the life of the Roman Emperors, which Monsieur Crévier has set down with exactitude. These princes were born no worse than other men, Caius, surnamed Caligula, lacked neither natural talent nor judgment, and was even capable of friendship. Nero had an innate love of virtue, and his temperament inclined him towards all that is just and sublime. A first transgression flung them, both one and the other, on the criminal path they followed to their wretched end. That is what Monsieur Crévier shows us in his book. I knew him as an able man when he taught literature at the College of Beauvais, as I should be doing to-day had not my life been crossed by a thousand obstacles and had not the natural easiness of my spirit led me to divers snares wherein I fell. Monsieur Crévier, my son, was a man of pure life, he

professed a severe morality, and I once heard him say that a woman who has broken her marriage vows is capable of the greatest crimes, such as murder and arson. I quote this maxim to give you an idea of the holy austerity of this priest. But I see I am wandering from the point and I hasten to take up my story where I left off. I thought then that the hand of the police was on me, and I already saw myself in the Archbishop's prison, when I recognised the face and voice of Monsieur d'Anquetil. 'L'Abbé,' said the young gentleman, 'a singular thing has happened to me in Tournebroche's room. A woman entered the room while I was asleep, slipped into my bed and awoke me with a rain of caresses, tender names, soft murmurings and ardent kisses. I opened the curtains to distinguish the features of my good fortune. I saw she was dark, of a passionate eye, and the most beautiful creature in the world. But she then and there gave a loud cry, and fled away in vexation, not so quickly though but that I was enabled to rejoin her in the corridor and hold her in a close embrace. She began by defending herself and scratching my face; when I was scratched enough for the satisfaction of her honour we commenced explanations. She heard with pleasure that I was a gentleman and none so poor. I soon ceased to appear odious to her and she had begun to wish me well when a scullion passing along the corridor caused her to fly without returning.

"'As far as I can see,' added Monsieur d'Anquetil, 'this adorable creature came, not for me but for another; she mistook the door, and her surprise was the reason of her flight. But I reassured her well and had it not been for the scullion I should have won her heart.' I confirmed him in this supposition. We considered for whom this pretty person could well have come, and we both were of accord that it must have been, as I have already told you, Tournebroche, for that old madman of a d'Astarac, who visits her in intimacy in a room near to yours, or, maybe unknown to you, in your own. Do you not think so?"

"Nothing is more likely," I replied.

"There is no need to doubt it," said my good master. "This magician mocks us with his Salamanders. And the truth is that he embraces that pretty girl. He is an imposter."

I begged my good master to continue his recital. He did so with a good grace.

"I abridge the discourse held with me by Monsieur d'Anquetil," said he. "It is the sign of a low and vulgar mind to enlarge on small events. On the contrary, we ought to put them into few words, tending to conciseness and keeping for moral instruction and exhortation the abundant rush of words which it is then fitting to pour down like the snow from the mountains. So I shall have instructed you enough in Monsieur d'Anquetil's remarks when I tell you that he assured me he had found in this young girl, a beauty, a charm, and an extraordinary

grace. He ended his speech by asking me if I knew her name and who she was. 'From the picture you have given me,' I replied, 'I recognise her as Jael, niece of the rabbi Mosaïde, whom I happened to embrace on the same staircase — with this difference that it was between the second and third floor.'

"'I hope,' said Monsieur d'Anquetil, 'that there were other differences for I, for my part, held her close to me. I am also grieved to hear you say she is a Jewess. For without believing in God, a certain sentiment within me would prefer her to be a Christian. But what does one know of her? Who knows but what she may be a stolen child. Jews and Bohemians go off with some every day. And then one so often fails to remember that the blessed Virgin was a Jewess. Jewess or no, she pleases me. I want her and I will have her.' Thus spoke the foolish youth. But my son, permit me to take a seat on this moss-grown bank, for last night's work, my combats and my flight, have weakened my legs."

He sat down and drawing his empty snuff-box from his pocket looked at it sadly.

I sat down by him in a state of agitation and depression. His narrative caused me acute pain. I cursed the fate which had put a rough fellow in my place at the very moment when my beloved mistress came to seek me with all the appearance of ardent love, not knowing that I meanwhile was busied piling logs on the alchemist's stove. Jael's more than probable faithfulness cut me to the heart, and I could have wished that my good master had at least observed more discretion before my rival. I risked reproaching him respectfully for having given up Jael's name.

"Monsieur," I said, "do you not think there was a certain imprudence in furnishing such information to so pleasure-loving and headstrong a gentleman?"

My good master appeared not to hear me.

"My snuff-box," said he, "unhappily burst open during the scuffle last night, and the snuff contained therein, mixed with wine in my pocket, is now no more than a disgusting mess. I dare not ask Criton to powder me a few leaves, the countenance of that old Rhadamanthus and serving man appears so cold and severe. I suffer all the more at not being able to take snuff since my nose tickles violently as a result of the blow I received last night, and you see me quite worried by this untimely solicitation to which I have nothing to give. I must bear this small misfortune with an equal mind — whilst waiting till Monsieur d'Anquetil gives me a few grains from his box. And to return to this young gentleman, my son, he expressly said to me— 'I love this girl — I would have you know, l'Abbé, that I shall take her with us in the postchaise. If I have to stay here a week — a month — six months or more — I shall not leave without her.'

I represented to him the dangers that might be incurred by the least delay. But he answered me that those dangers troubled him the less; that they were great for us but small for him.

“‘You, l’Abbé,’ said he, ‘are in a fair way to be hanged with Tournebroche, while, as for me I only risk being sent to the Bastille, where I shall find both cards and women, and whence my family will soon liberate me, for my father will interest some duchess or some dancer in my case, and notwithstanding my mother having become pious, she will know how, on my behalf, to bring herself to the memory of two or three princes of the blood. So it is a settled thing — I leave with Jael — or not at all. You are at liberty, l’Abbé, to hire a postchaise with Tournebroche.’

“The wretch well knew, my son, that we had not the means to do so. I tried to make him go back on his word. I was pressing, unctuous, and even exhortatory. It was pure waste, and in vain I made use of an eloquence which in the pulpit of a good parish church would have been worth both honour and money to me. Alas! my son — it is decreed that none of my actions should bear good fruit in this world, and it is for me that it is written in Ecclesiastes:

Quid habet amplius homo de universo labore suo, quo laborat sub sole?

“Far from making him more reasonable, my speech strengthened the young man in his obstinacy, and I will not conceal the fact from you, my son, that he made plain to me that he counted on me absolutely for the success of his wishes, and he pressed me to go and find Jael, so as to persuade her to agree to an elopement with the promise of a trousseau of fine linen, silver plate, jewels and a good income.”

“Oh! Monsieur,” I exclaimed, “this Monsieur d’Anquetil is uncommonly insolent. What do you think Jael will reply to these proposals when she hears of them?”

“My son,” he replied, “she knows them by this time and I think will accede to them.”

“In that case,” I replied quickly, “we must warn Mosaïde.”

“Mosaïde,” answered my master, “is only too well warned. You heard a little time ago, in the neighbourhood of the cottage, the last outburst of his anger.”

“What, Monsieur,” said I deeply moved, “you warned that Jew of the dishonour about to touch his family. It was just like you. Allow me to embrace you. But then Mosaïde’s wrath, to which we were witness, threatened Monsieur d’Anquetil, and not you?”

“My son,” replied the Abbé, in an honest and noble manner, “a natural

indulgence for human frailty, an obliging gentleness, the imprudent benevolence of a heart too easily touched, all these lead men oftentimes to ill-considered measures, and expose them to the severity of the world's empty judgment. I will not hide from you, Tournebroche, that, yielding to the young gentleman's earnest appeals, I obligingly promised to go and find Jael for him, and to neglect nothing to make her agree to an elopement."

"Alas!" I exclaimed, "and you fulfilled that dismal promise! I cannot tell you to what extent your action wounds and afflicts me!"

"Tournebroche," answered my good master sternly, "you speak like a Pharisee. A divine, amiable as he was austere, has said: — Turn your eyes upon yourself, and beware of judging the actions of others. Judging others, one works in vain; one is often mistaken, and easily falls into sin, whereas in self-examination and self-judgment the occupation is profitable. It is written: Thou shalt not fear the judgment of men! St. Paul the Apostle has said: — It is a very small thing that I should be judged... of men's judgment.

"And if I thus lecture on the finest moral texts, it is to instruct you, Tournebroche, and to recall you to the humble and gentle modesty which suits you, and not to make myself appear innocent, weighed down and overcome as I am by the multitude of my sins. It is hard not to slip into sin, and it befits us not to fall into despair at each step we take in this world, where all participate equally in the original curse, and in the redemption effected by the blood of the Son of God. I do not want to lend colour to my faults, and I confess to you that the embassy which I undertook on behalf of Monsieur d'Anquetil proceeds from the fall of Eve, and is, so to speak, one of the innumerable consequences of it, conflicting with the dolorous and abject opinion I hold of it at present, which is drawn from the desire and hope of my eternal salvation. For you must imagine mankind balanced between damnation and redemption, and tell yourself that I am at this moment at the right end of the see-saw, after being at the wrong end this morning. I own, then, that having taken the mandragora path which leads to Mosaïde's cottage, I hid myself behind a thorn-bush, waiting for Jael to appear at her window. She soon showed herself. I discovered myself and signed to her to come down. She came and found me behind the bush at a time when she thought to deceive the vigilance of her old guardian. There I told her in a low voice the night's adventures, of which she was still in ignorance, I made known to her the designs the impetuous young man had upon her, I represented to her that it was necessary in his interest as well as in yours and mine, Tournebroche, that she should assure our flight by her own departure. I dangled before her eyes Monsieur d'Anquetil's promises. 'If,' said I, 'you consent to follow him to-

night, you shall have a good welcome, a trousseau richer than that of an opera singer, or that of an Abbess de Panthémont, and a fine service of silverplate.'

"'He takes me for a light woman,' said she, 'he is over bold.'

"'He loves you,' I replied. 'Do you wish to be worshipped?' —

"'I must have a silver centre-piece and a massive one. Did he speak to you of that? Go and tell him, Monsieur l'Abbé...

"'What shall I tell him?'

"'That I am an honest woman.'

"'What more?'

"'That he is very forward!'

"'Is that all? Jael, think of our safety!'

"'Tell him then, I only consent to go providing a note in proper form is signed the evening before.', "'He will sign it. Consider it done.'

"'No, l'Abbé — nothing can be done until he undertakes to give me lessons with Monsieur Couperin. I want to learn music.'

"We were at this clause of our conference when, as ill-luck had it, the aged Mosaïde surprised us, and without hearing our conversation divined its drift. For he began to call me suborner and to load me with abuse. Jael ran to hide in her room, and I remained alone exposed to the fury of this decide, in the state in which you saw me and whence you extricated me. Truth to tell the affair was so to speak concluded, the elopement agreed upon, our flight assured. The Wheels and the Beasts of Ezekiel shall not prevail against the silver centre-piece. I only fear lest that old Mordecai should enclose his niece behind triple bolts and bars."

"In truth," I replied, without being able to disguise my satisfaction, "I heard a great noise of keys and bolts at the very moment when I drew you from among the thorns. But is it really true that Jael agreed so quickly to proposals which were far from honest and must have cost you something to transmit to her. It confounds me. Tell me once more, my good master, did she not speak of me — did she not pronounce my name, sighing, or otherwise?"

"No, my son," replied Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "she did not pronounce it, at least not perceptibly. Neither did I hear her murmur that of Monsieur d'Astarac her lover, which should have been more present with her than yours. But be not surprised that she should forget her alchemist. The mere possessing of a woman does not suffice to imprint upon her mind any profound or durable impression. Minds are impenetrable to one another, and this shows you the cruel emptiness of love. The wise man will say to himself: — I am as nothing in the nothing that this creature is. To hope to leave a memory in the heart of a woman is to wish to stamp the imprint of a seal on the face of running water. Let us then

beware of setting our hearts upon what passes away, and lay hold on that which is undying.”

“Any way,” I replied, “Jael is under sound locks, and we may trust to the vigilance of her guardian.”

“My son,” continued my good master, “this very night she should join us at the *Cheval Rouge*. Darkness is propitious to escapes, ravishments, furtive attempts, and clandestine actions. We must rely on the cunning of this girl. As to yourself, take care that you are at the cross roads of Bergères at twilight. You know that Monsieur d’Anquetil is not patient and that he is just the man to go off without you.”

As he gave me this advice the bell rang for breakfast.

“Have you not a needle and thread?” he asked me, “my clothes are torn in several places, and before I appear at table I should like to restore them, with a few stitches, to their former decency. My breeches particularly disquiet me. They are so injured that unless I come to their assistance promptly it will be all over with them.”

XVIII

SO I took my usual place at the cabalist's table with the distressing thought that it was for the last time. Jael's black treachery weighed on my heart. "Alas!" I said to myself, "my dearest wish was to fly with her. There was no likelihood of its being realised. Nevertheless it is to be and in the most cruel fashion." And I fell to admiring once again my good master's wisdom, who, one day I wanted too keenly that something should succeed, answered me with these words from the Bible: "*Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum.*" My sorrows and my anxieties took away all my appetite and I hardly put the various viands to my lips. However, my good master kept his unalterable suavity of mind. He overflowed with agreeable conversation and one would have said that he was one of those sages shown to us in *Télémaque* conversing in the shades of the Elysian fields, rather than a man sought for as a murderer and reduced to a wretched and wandering life.

Monsieur d'Astarac, thinking I had passed the night at the cook-shop, asked me kindly for news of my good parents, and as he could not abstract himself for a moment from his visions he added: "When I speak of that cook as your father it is to be understood that I express myself thus according to the world and not according to nature. For there is nothing to prove, my son, that you were not fathered by a Sylph. It is indeed what I should prefer to believe, however little your still youthful talent may grow in strength and beauty."

"Oh — do not speak thus, Monsieur," replied my good master with a smile, "you will force him to hide his wits that he may not injure his mother's good name. But if you knew her better, you would think, as I do, that she has never had any dealings with a Sylph; she is a good Christian who has known no man but her husband, and who bears her good character written on her face, very different from that other cook's wife, Madame Quonian, of whom there was much talk in Paris and the provinces in the days of my youth. Did you never hear of her, Monsieur? She had the Sieur Mariette for a lover, he who later became secretary to Monsieur d'Angervilliers. He was a burly man, who, each time that he saw his lady-love, left her some bauble as a remembrance — one day a Croix de Lorraine, another day a St. Esprit, a watch or a chatelaine. Or, yet again, a handkerchief, a fan, or a casket; he stripped the jewelers' and drapers' shops at the fair of St. Germain for her, till at last the cook, seeing his wife decked like a shrine, had a suspicion that it was not all honestly come by. He watched her and it was not long before he surprised her with her lover. You must understand that

the husband was a mere jealous wretch. He was angry, and gained nothing thereby — quite the contrary. For the two lovers, annoyed by his outcry, swore to be rid of him.

“The Sieur Mariette had a long arm. He obtained a *lettre de cachet* in the name of the wretched Quonian. Meanwhile, the treacherous wife said to her husband:

“‘Take me to dine in the country next Sunday, I beg of you., I look forward with pleasure to this little excursion.’

“She was loving and urgent. The husband, flattered, agreed to what she asked. Sunday come, he mounted into a ramshackle carriage with her to go to Porcherons. But scarcely had they reached Roule, when a troupe of police, posted there by Mariette, arrested him and took him to Bicêtre, whence he was sent out to the Mississippi where he is still. They made a song about it which ended thus:

Wise husbands will live undistressed
Nor open their eyes over wide.
It is better to be as the rest,
Than to see Mississippi's far tide.

"And that, no doubt, is the most valuable lesson to be drawn from the case of poor Quonian of the spit.

"As for the incident, itself it only wants telling by a Petronius or an Apuleius to equal the best of the Milesian fables. The moderns are inferior to the ancients in tragedy and the minor epic. But if we fail to surpass the Greeks and Latins in the telling of the story, it is not the fault of the ladies of Paris, who never tire of enriching the subject matter by many ingenious turns and pleasing inventions. You are not without knowledge of Boccaccio's collection of tales, Monsieur: I have often read them for amusement's sake and I assure you that if the Florentine lived in France to-day he would make poor Quonian's misfortune the subject of one of his most amusing stories. For my part I have only recounted it while sitting here to make brighter by contrast the virtue of Madame Léonard Tournebroche, who is the pride of her husband's profession as Madame Quonian was the shame of it. Madame Tournebroche, I dare make the assertion, has never been wanting in the lesser virtues whose practice is recommended in marriage, which alone of the seven sacraments is contemptible."

"I do not deny it," replied Monsieur d'Astarac. "But this Madame Tournebroche would be still more estimable had she had dealings with a Sylph, after the example of Semiramis, Olympias, and the mother of the great Pope Sylvester II."

"Ah! Monsieur," said l'Abbé Coignard, "you are always talking of Sylphs and Salamanders. In good faith have you ever seen them?"

"As well as I see you," replied Monsieur d'Astarac, "and even nearer, at least as regards the Salamanders."

"Monsieur," continued my good master, "still that is not enough for us to believe in their existence, which is contrary to the teachings of the Church. For we may be led astray by illusions. Our eyes and all our senses are but messengers of error and bearers of falsehood. They deceive us far more than they instruct us. They show us but uncertain and fugitive pictures. Truth escapes them; deriving from the eternal principle, truth is invisible as it."

"Ah!" said Monsieur d'Astarac, "I did not know you were such a philosopher nor of so subtle a mind."

"Truly," said my good master, "there are days when my soul seems heavier, and more attached to the bed and the board. But last night I broke a bottle over

the head of a Revenue officer, and it has freshened my wits to an extraordinary degree. I feel capable of scattering the ghosts which haunt you and of blowing away all these vapours. For indeed, Monsieur, these Sylphs are but the exhalations of your brain.”

Monsieur d’Astarac stopped him with a quiet gesture and said:— “Pardon me, Monsieur l’Abbé, but do you believe in demons?”

“I can reply to that without any difficulty,” said my good master, “for I believe all that is told us of demons in good books, and I reject as error and superstition all belief in spells, amulets and exorcisms. St. Augustine tells us that when Scripture exhorts us to resist the devil, it means we should resist our evil passions and our unbridled appetites. Nothing is more detestable than all these bedevilments with which monks terrorise honest women.”

“I see,” said Monsieur d’Astarac, “that you endeavour to think like an honest man. You hate the coarse superstitions of the monks as much as I detest them myself. But still you believe in demons, and I had no difficulty in making you avow it. Know then that they are none other than Sylphs and Salamanders. Ignorance and fear have disfigured them in the imaginations of the timid. But in reality they are beautiful and virtuous. I will not put you in the way of meeting with the Salamanders, not being sufficiently assured of the purity of your morals; but there is nothing to hinder me from inducing you to frequent the Sylphs, Monsieur l’Abbé, they who inhabit the fields of the air, and who approach men willingly in so benevolent and affectionate a spirit that it has been possible to call them the helpful Genii. Far from pushing us towards our ruin, as theologians believe who take them to be devils, they protect and guard their earthly friends from all peril. I could give you an infinite number of examples of the help they give. But as there must be a limit I will permit myself but one story which I have from Madame la Maréchale de Grancey herself. She was of a certain age, and had been a widow for some years, when one night in bed she received a visit from a Sylph, who said to her:— ‘Madame, make search in the wardrobe of your late husband. In the pocket of one of his pairs of knee-breeches will be found a letter, which were its contents known, would prove the undoing of Monsieur des Roches, your good friend and mine. See that it is given to you, and take care to burn it.’

“The Maréchale promised to follow this advice, and asked the Sylph for news of the defunct Maréchal, but he disappeared without replying.

“When she awoke she called her women to her and sent them to see if there were any clothes of the Maréchal’s remaining in his cupboard. They replied that there were none, and that the lackeys had sold them all to the old-clothes man. Madame de Grancey insisted that they should search and see if they could not

find at least one pair of knee-breeches. Having ransacked every corner they discovered at last an old pair of black taffeta breeches which laced up in the fashion of a former time; these they brought to the Maréchale. The latter put her hand in one of the pockets and drew out a letter, which she opened and found therein more than was necessary to ensure Monsieur des Roches being sent to a state prison. She made all speed to throw this letter in the fire. Thus the gentleman was saved by his good friends the Sylph and the Maréchale.

“I ask you, Monsieur l’Abbé, were those the ways of a demon? But I will give you an instance which will appeal to you more, and which I feel certain will touch the heart of a learned man like yourself. You are well aware that the Academy of Dijon is rich in men of able minds. One of them, whose name is not unknown to you, who lived in the last century, was spending learned vigils on an edition of Pindar. One night when he had worked desperately on five lines whose meaning he could not unravel, the text being very corrupt, he fell asleep despairing at cock-crow. During his slumber a Sylph, who loved him, transported him in spirit to Stockholm, introduced him into the palace of Queen Christina, led him to the library, and drawing a manuscript of Pindar from one of the shelves opened it for him at the difficult passage. The five lines were there with two or three good comments which made them quite intelligible.

“In his vehement joy the learned man awoke, struck a light, and immediately set down the lines in pencil as he remembered them. Whereupon he slept profoundly. The next day, reflecting upon his nocturnal adventure, he resolved to get light on it. Monsieur Descartes was in Sweden at the time, with the Queen, to whom he was teaching his philosophy. Our Pindarist was acquainted with him; but he was on more familiar footing with the King of Sweden’s ambassador in France — one Monsieur Chanut. He addressed himself to the latter to forward a letter to Monsieur Descartes, in which he begged him to tell him if there was really a manuscript of Pindar in the Queen’s library at Stockholm containing the different reading he now indicated. Monsieur Descartes, who was extremely civil, replied to the academician of Dijon that Her Majesty did in truth possess such a manuscript, and that he himself had read therein the lines with the different reading contained in the letter.”

Monsieur d’Astarac, having related this story while peeling an apple, looked at Abbé Coignard to see the success of his speech.

My good master smiled.

“Ah! Monsieur,” said he, “I see that I flattered myself a moment ago with a vain hope, and we shall never make you renounce your chimeras. I grant you with a good grace that you have shown us an ingenious Sylph, and I should like to have so pleasing a secretary. His help would be particularly useful to me in

one or two passages of Zozimus the Panopolitan which are extremely obscure. Could you not give me the means of invoking at need some library Sylph as handy as the one at Dijon?"

Monsieur d'Astarac replied gravely. "'Tis a secret, Monsieur l'Abbé, which I will confide to you willingly. But I warn you that if you impart it to the profane your ruin is certain."

"Have no fear," said the Abbé. "I am very anxious to know such a valuable secret, although, to speak plainly, I expect no result, not believing in your Sylphs. So instruct me if you please."

"You demand it?" said the cabalist. "Know, then, that when you wish for help from a Sylph you have but to pronounce the one word *Agla*. Immediately the sons of the air will fly towards you, but you will understand, Monsieur l'Abbé, this word must be spoken from the heart as well as with the lips, and that in faith lies all its virtue. Without faith it is but an empty murmur. And as I have just said it, without either expression or desire, it has, even in my mouth, but feeble power, and at most some Sons of the Morning, hearing it, may train their light shadows through the room. I rather guessed at than perceived them; I saw them on that curtain, and they vanished before they took shape. Neither you nor your pupil suspected their presence. But had I pronounced the magic word with true expression you would have seen them appear in all their glory. They are of entrancing beauty. Here, Monsieur l'Abbé, you have from me a great and useful secret. Once more let me beg you not to divulge it imprudently. And do not overlook the case of the Abbé de Villars, who, for having revealed their secrets, was assassinated by the Sylphs on the Lyons road."

"On the Lyons road," said my good master. "That is strange!"

Monsieur d'Astarac left us in his sudden fashion.

"I mean to ascend once more," said the Abbé "to that august library where I tasted such austere delights and which I shall never see again. Do not fail, Tournebroche, to be at the cross roads of Bergères at night-fall."

I promised not to fail him; I had planned to shut myself in my room to write to Monsieur d'Astarac and my good parents that they must forgive my not taking leave of them, fleeing as I did after an adventure in which I had been more unfortunate than culpable.

But on the landing I heard snores issuing from my room and on opening the door I saw Monsieur d'Anquetil asleep on my bed — his sword against the bed-post and playing-cards spread all over the coverlet. I had the desire for a moment to stab him with his own sword, but this notion was dissipated as soon as born and I let him sleep, smiling to myself in my sorrow at the thought that Jael — shut behind triple bolts — could not come and join him.

I went into my good master's room to write my letters, where I disturbed five or six rats who were nibbling the volume of Boethius on the bed-side table. I wrote to Monsieur d'Astarac and to my mother, and I composed a most affecting letter for Jael. I re-read it and wet it with my tears— "Perchance," said I to myself, "the faithless one will mingle hers with them."

Then, overcome with fatigue and melancholy, I threw myself on my good master's mattress and was not long in falling into a half-slumber troubled by dreams at once amorous and gloomy. I was drawn from my slumbers by the speechless Criton who entered the room and held out to me on a silver tray an iris-scented curl-paper where I read a few words written in pencil in an awkward hand — I was wanted outside on urgent business. The note was signed:—"Brother Ange, unworthy monk."

I ran to the green door and I found the little brother in the road sitting beside the ditch in a pitiable state of prostration. Not having strength to rise at my approach, he turned on me the doglike gaze of two big eyes, almost human, and drowned in tears. His bearded chest heaved beneath his sighs. He said to me in a tone that carried grief:

"Alas! Monsieur Jacques, the hour of trial has come to Babylon, as was spoken by the prophets.

On information given by Monsieur de la Guéritaude to the head of the police, Catherine was taken to the reformatory by the officers and will be sent to America in the next convoy. I had the news from Jeannette the viol-player, who, at the moment when Catherine arrived in the cart at the reformatory, was just leaving it herself, after having been kept there through illness of which she is now cured by the surgeon's art — at least if God wills. As regards Catherine she will be sent to the islands without mercy."

And at this point of his story brother Ange cried copiously. After trying to stop his tears with kind words, I asked him if he had nothing else to tell me.

"Alas! Monsieur Jacques," he replied, "I have told you what was the most essential, and the rest floats in my head like the Spirit of God on the waters — though I mean no comparison. It is all obscure chaos. Catherine's misfortune has destroyed all feeling in me. Nevertheless I must have had news of some importance to communicate to you, thus to risk coming to the door of this cursed house, where you live in company with all kinds of devils, and it was with terror, after reciting the prayer to St. Francis that I dared raise the knocker to give a servant the note I had written to you. I do not know if you have been able to read it, I am so little accustomed to forming letters, and the paper was not good to write upon, but it is the pride of our sacred order not to yield to the vanities of the age. Oh! Catherine in the reformatory! Catherine in America! Is it not

enough to melt the hardest heart? Jeannette herself was crying her eyes out over it, although she is jealous of Catherine, who outshines her in beauty and youth as St. Francis surpasses all other saints in holiness. Ah, Monsieur Jacques! Catherine in America! such are the extraordinary ways of Providence! Alas! our holy religion says truth, and King David was right when he said that all flesh was grass, for Catherine is in the reformatory. These stones on which I sit are happier than I, although I am clad as a Christian and even as a monk. Catherine in the reformatory!”

He sobbed afresh. I waited till the torrent of his woes had abated and I asked him if he had news of my dear parents.

“Monsieur Jacques,” he answered, “it is they who sent me to you charged with an urgent message. I must tell you they are not at all happy, it is the fault of Maître Léonard your father, who passes all the days God gives him in drinking and in play. And the savoury steam of chickens and geese no longer rises as once towards the *Reine Pédaque* whose picture swings dismally in the wet and rusting winds. Where are the days gone when your father’s cook-shop would scent the rue St. Jacques from the *Petit Bacchus* to the *Trois Pucelles*? Since that sorcerer entered there everything wastes away, man and beast, as a result of the spell he cast on it. And divine vengeance has begun to manifest in the place ever since that fat Abbé Coignard was received whilst I, on the contrary, was turned out. It was the primary cause of the evil, which came from l’Abbé Coignard being so proud of the depth of his knowledge and of the elegance of his manners. For pride is the source of all sin. Your sainted mother did very wrong, Monsieur Jacques, not to be satisfied with the lessons I charitably gave you, which would without doubt have made you capable of ruling the kitchen, handling the larding-pin and bearing the banner of the fraternity after the Christian death of your father, whose last service and funeral cannot be long delayed — for all life is transitory and he drinks exceedingly hard.”

The news caused me a grief easy to understand. I mingled my tears with the little brother’s. At the same time I asked him for news of my good mother.

“God,” he made reply, “who was pleased to afflict Rachel in Ramah, has sent your mother, Monsieur Jacques, divers tribulations for the good of her soul, and for the purpose of chastising Maître Léonard for his sin, when in my person he wickedly drove Jesus Christ from the cook-shop. For He has transferred the greater part of the purchasers of poultry and pasties to Madame Quonian’s daughter, who turns the spit at the other end of the rue St. Jacques. Your respected mother sees with sorrow that He has blessed that house at the expense of her own, which is so deserted now that moss all but covers the doorstep. She is upheld in her trials firstly by her devotion to St. Francis, and secondly, by

thought of your success in the world where you bear a sword like a man of quality.

“But this second consolation was greatly diminished this morning, when the police came to seek you at the shop to take you to Bicêtre to pound lime for a year or two. It was Catherine who denounced you to Monsieur de la Guéritaude, but one must not blame her, she merely confessed the truth which it was her duty to do, seeing she is a Christian. She designated you and Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard as Monsieur d’Anquetil’s accomplices, and gave a faithful account of the murders and carnage of that awful night. Alas! her candour availed her nothing and she was taken to the reformatory! It is horrible to think about.”

At this point in his story the little brother put his head in his hands and cried afresh.

Night had fallen. I feared to miss the *rendezvous*. Dragging the little brother out of the ditch where he was half buried, I put him on his feet and begged him to continue his narrative accompanying me meanwhile on the St. Germain’s road as far as the cross roads of Bergères. He acceded willingly, and walking sadly beside me asked me to try and unravel the tangled thread of his thoughts. I led him back to the point when the police came to take me at the cook-shop.

“Not finding you,” he continued, “they wanted to take your father in your place. Maître Léonard pretended he did not know where you were hidden, your respected mother said the same thing, with many vows, may God forgive her, Monsieur, for she was evidently perjuring herself. The police began to be angry. Your father made them listen to reason by giving them drink. And they parted quite good friends. During this time your mother went and fetched me from the *Trois Pucelles*, where I was begging in accordance with the holy rules of my order. She sent me with all haste to you to warn you to fly without delay, for fear that the lieutenant of police should discover the house where you are living.”

While listening to these gloomy words I hastened my steps and we had already crossed the bridge of Neuilly.

On the somewhat steep hill which mounts up to the cross roads whose elms we could already distinguish, the little brother continued talking in an exhausted voice.

“Your worthy mother,” said he “especially commanded me to warn you of the peril which threatens you and she gave me a little bag for you, which I hid under my robe. I cannot find it though,” he added, after feeling himself all over. “And how can you expect me to find anything after losing Catherine? She had a great devotion for St. Francis and was very charitable. Yet they have treated her as a harlot, and will shave her head, and it is terrible to think that she will come to

look like a dress-maker's dummy — and in that state she will be shipped to America, where she will risk dying of fever or being eaten by savage cannibals.”

He finished his recital with a sigh as we reached the cross roads. On our left the inn, the *Cheval Rouge*, lifted above a double row of elms its slate-covered roof and dormer windows provided with pulleys, and through the trees one saw the carriage entrance wide open. I slackened my steps, and the little brother sank down under a tree.

“Brother Ange,” said I, “you spoke of a packet my good mother begged you to give me.”

“She did, indeed, ask me to do so,” replied the little brother, “and I have put the packet away so carefully somewhere that I do not know where it can be, but please believe, Monsieur Jacques, that I can only have lost it through over-much precaution.”

I answered him impetuously that he could not have lost it, and if he did not immediately find it I would help him myself to look for it.

He was not insensible to the tone of my words, for with a heavy sigh he drew from under his robe a small calico bag which he regretfully held out to me. I found therein an *ecu* of six *livres* and a medal of the Black Virgin of Chartres, which I kissed while shedding tears of emotion and repentance. Meanwhile the little brother was drawing packets of coloured pictures out of all of his pockets, and prayers decorated with coarse drawings. He picked out one or two which he offered to me in preference to the others as being more useful in his opinion, for pilgrims, and travellers, and all wandering people.

“They are blessed,” he told me, “and efficacious when in danger of death or sickness, either by reciting them aloud or by touching and placing them on the skin. I give them to you, Monsieur Jacques, for the love of God. Remember to give me some alms. Do not forget that I beg in the name of St. Francis. He will take you under his protection without fail, if you assist his most unworthy son — which I certainly am.” —

While he spoke in this fashion, I saw in the fading light of day a berline with four horses drive out of the carriage entrance of the *Cheval Rouge* and take its place with noisy clackings of the whip and neighing of horses at the road-side, quite near to the tree under which brother Ange was seated. I noticed then that it was not exactly a berline, but a big carriage with places for four people, with a rather small coupé in front. I had been looking at it for a minute or two, when I saw Monsieur d’Anquetil climbing up the hill accompanied by Jael in a mob cap carrying some bundles under her cloak and followed by Monsieur Coignard laden with five or six ancient books wrapped in an old manuscript.

At their approach the postilions let down the steps, and my pretty mistress,

drawing up her skirts like a balloon, hoisted herself into the coupé, pushed from behind by Monsieur d'Anquetil.

At this sight I ran forward crying:

"Stop, Jael! Stop, Monsieur!" But the seducer merely pushed the faithless one the harder, and her charming curves were soon lost to sight. Then, preparing to join her, one foot on the step, he looked at me in surprise:

"Ah, Monsieur Tournebroke! You would take all my mistresses from me! First Catherine and then Jael. I vow it must be a wager."

But I took no notice of him and I still called on Jael, while brother Ange, having risen from the shade of his elm-tree, went and stood by the door offering Monsieur d'Anquetil pictures of Saint Roche, a prayer to recite while horses are being shod, and the prayer against erysipelas, and asked for alms in a mournful voice.

I should have remained there all night calling on Jael if my good master had not drawn me towards him and pushed me into the body of the carriage whither he followed me.

"Leave them the coupé," he said, "and let us travel together in this roomy body. I sought you for a long time, Tournebroke, and I will not disguise the fact that we were going without you, when I perceived you and the monk under the tree. We can tarry no longer, for Monsieur de la Guéritaude is searching busily for us, and he has a long arm — he lends money to the king."

The berline was already moving, and brother Ange, hanging by the door with outstretched hand, pursued us, begging for alms.

I sank back on the cushions.

"Alas! Monsieur," I exclaimed, "you told me that Jael was imprisoned behind triple bolts."

"My son," replied my good master, "you ought not to have had such confidence in them, for young women make light of jealousy and padlocks. And if the door be shut they jump from the window. You have no idea, Tournebroke, of the cunning of women. The ancient writers have given us many admirable examples, and you will find several in the book of Apuleius, where they are like salt seasoning the narrative of the Golden Ass. But where this cunning is best to be seen is in an Arabian tale which Monsieur Galland has lately made known to Europe, and which I will relate to you:

"Schariar, Sultan of Tartary, and his brother Schahzenan, were walking one day by the sea, when they suddenly espied a black column rising above the waters and advancing towards the land. They recognised a Djinn of the fiercest kind, in the form of a giant of prodigious height bearing on his head a glass box fastened with four iron locks. This sight inspired them with such fear that they

went and hid in the fork of a tree near by. Meanwhile the Djinn stepped out on the beach with the box, which he carried to the foot of the tree where the two princes were hid. Then lying down himself, he was not long in falling asleep. His legs stretched as far as the sea and his breathing shook heaven and earth. While he took his repose in this terrifying manner, the lid of the box was lifted and out stepped a lady of majestic height and perfect beauty. She raised her head..."

At this point I interrupted the story to which I was scarcely listening.

"Ah, Monsieur," I cried, "what do you think Jael and Monsieur d'Anquetil are saying to one another now, alone in the coupé?"

"I do not know," replied my good master, "that is their business, not ours. But let us finish this Arabian tale, which is full of meaning. You thoughtlessly interrupted me, Tournebroche, at the moment when the lady, raising her head, discovered the two princes in the tree where they were hidden. She made signs to them to come to her, and, seeing them hesitate, divided between desire to respond to the appeal of so beautiful a person and fear of approaching so terrible a giant, she said to them in a low but animated voice, 'Come down at once or I will wake the Djinn!' They understood by her imperious and resolute look that it was no mere threat and that the safest and most agreeable way was to come down. They did so, taking all possible precautions not to wake the Djinn. When they got down again, the lady took them by the hand and going a little way off with them she made them clearly understand she was ready to give herself straightway to both one and the other. They lent themselves with a good grace to this fancy, and as they were men of stout heart their fears did not spoil their pleasure. Having obtained all she wished, and noticing that each wore a ring on his finger, she asked for it. Then returning to the box wherein she dwelt she drew forth a chaplet of rings which she showed to the princes.

"'Do you know,' she said to them, 'the meaning of these threaded rings? They are those of all the men to whom I have been as gracious as to you. There are ninety-eight all told, which I keep in remembrance of them. I asked you for yours for the same reason and to make up the hundred. So there,' she said, 'are a hundred lovers whom I have had up to now, despite the vigilance and care of this wicked Djinn who never leaves me. Let him shut me in a glass case and keep me hidden at the bottom of the sea, I deceive him as often as I please.'"

"This ingenious apologue," added my good master, "shows you woman to be as cunning in the East where she is kept in seclusion as amongst the Europeans where she is free. If one of them has formed a scheme, neither husband, lover, father, uncle nor guardian can prevent its being carried out. You need not be surprised then, my son, that to betray the vigilance of that old Mordecai was but

mere play for Jael who, with her perverse talent, mingles the skill of our courtesans with oriental perfidy. I suspect her to be as greedy for pleasure as she is for gold and silver, and worthy of the race of Aholah and Aholibah.

“Her beauty bites and stings the sense, and I myself feel it in some degree, though age, sublime meditation, and the wretchedness of a troubled life have much deadened the sentiment of carnal pleasure in me. Judging by the pain that the success of her adventure with Monsieur d’Anquetil causes you, my son, I conclude that you feel the piercing fang of desire far more keenly than do I, and that you are wrung with jealousy. That is why you blame an action, irregular it is true and contrary to vulgar conventions, but indifferent in itself — or at least which adds little to the universal ill. You condemn me in your heart for having had a share in it, and you think you uphold the moral view of the question when you are but following the prompting of your passions. So do we colour our worst instincts in our own eyes, my son. The morals of mankind have no other origin. Nevertheless confess that it would have been a pity to leave such a handsome girl any longer to that old madman. Agree that Monsieur d’Anquetil, young and handsome as he is, is better suited to such a charming person, and be resigned to what you cannot prevent. Such philosophy is difficult, but it would be still more so were it your mistress who had been taken. Then you would feel teeth of iron torturing your flesh and your mind would be filled with odious and over-definite pictures. These considerations, my son, should mitigate your present suffering. For the matter of that, life is full of pains and suffering. That is what has made us conceive the hope of eternal beatitude.”

Thus spoke my good master, while the elms lining the royal road fled past us on either side. I refrained from telling him that he merely irritated me in wishing to ease my woes and that unconsciously he touched an open wound.

Our first relay was at Juvisy where we arrived in the rain in the early morning. Entering the posting inn I found Jael in the chimney-corner where five or six chickens were turning on three spits. She was warming her feet and showing a little bit of silk stocking which greatly disturbed me by the thought of the leg which I pictured to myself, the fine grain of the skin, and its down and all sorts of arresting details.

Monsieur d’Anquetil leant over the back of her chair, his cheek on his hand. He was calling her his life and his soul, he asked her if she were not hungry, and when she replied that she was, he went out to give orders. Left alone with the faithless one, I looked into her eyes, which reflected the flame of the fire.

“Ah, Jael!” I exclaimed, “I am very unhappy; you have deceived me, and you love me no longer.”

“Who has told you that I love you no longer?” she replied, looking at me with a glance of velvet and of flame.

“Alas! Mademoiselle, it is sufficiently apparent in your behaviour.” —

“What, Jacques — do you mean to say you grudge me the outfit of fine Dutch linen and the embossed plate this gentleman is going to give me? I ask you only to be discreet until his promises are realised, and you shall see me what I was at the Cross of Les Sablons.”

“Alas, Jael, meanwhile my rival will enjoy your favours.”

“I feel,” said she, “that he will not mean much to me, and nothing can efface the memory I have of you. Do not torment yourself about such trifles; they are only of value by your idea of them.”

“Oh,” I exclaimed, “the very idea is terrible to me, and I fear I shall not survive your treachery.” She looked at me in sympathetic raillery and said, smiling:

“Believe me, my friend, we shall neither of us die of it. Bethink yourself, Jacques, that I must have linen and plate. Be prudent, do not allow the feelings which trouble you to be seen, and I promise to reward you for your discretion later.”

This hope somewhat softened my consuming grief. Mine hostess came and laid the lavender-scented cloth, and put the tin-plates, goblets, and jugs on the table. I was very hungry, and when Monsieur d’Anquetil came into the inn with the Abbé and invited us to eat something, I took my place willingly between Jael and my good master. In fear of being pursued we left after hastily devouring three omelets and two small chickens. It was agreed upon that in this pressing danger we should not halt until we got to Sens, where we decided to spend the night.

I had horrible thoughts of this night, thinking it was to witness the consummation of Jael’s treachery. And this only too legitimate apprehension troubled me to such an extent that I lent but a distracted attention to my good master’s speech — whom the smallest incidents of the journey inspired with admirable reflections.

My fears were not vain. Alighting at Sens, at the wretched hostelry of the *Homme-Armé*, scarcely had we eaten our supper when Monsieur d’Anquetil led Jael away to his room, which happened to be next to mine, and I could not taste a moment’s repose. I rose up in the dawn, and fleeing this hateful room I went and sat down mournfully in the carriage-entrance amid the post boys who were drinking white wine and ogling the maid-servants. There I remained for two or three hours meditating on my troubles. The horses were already put to, when Jael appeared under the archway, shivering under her black cloak. I could not

bear to look at her. I turned away my eyes. She came up to me and sitting down by me on the door-post said gently that I was not to distress myself, that what I imagined to be so monstrous was really nothing much, that one must be guided by reason, that I was too sensible a man to want a woman to myself alone, and that in that case one took a housekeeper with neither wit nor beauty, and even then there was great risk to be run.

“I must leave you,” she added, “I hear Monsieur d’Anquetil’s step on the stairs.”

And she gave me a kiss on the mouth which she lingered over and prolonged in a rapture of fear, for her lover’s boots were creaking on the stairs near us, and the pretty gambler was risking the loss of her Dutch linen and embossed silver centre-piece.

The postilion lowered the step of the coupé, but Monsieur d’Anquetil asked Jael if it would not be pleasanter for all to sit together in the body of the carriage, and it did not escape me that it was the first result of his intimacy with Jael, and that fulfilling of his desires had rendered solitude with her less attractive. My good master had taken care to borrow five or six bottles of white wine from the cellar of the *Homme-Armé*, which he had arranged under the cushions and which we drank to pass the time on the way.

At mid-day we arrived at Joigny, which is quite a pretty town. Foreseeing that I should come to the end of my funds before the close of our journey, and not being able to bear the thought of Monsieur d’Anquetil paying my share of the reckoning without being reduced thereto by the most extreme need, I resolved to sell a ring and a medal of my mother’s that I had by me. I searched the town for a jeweller. I found one in the market-place opposite to the church, who had a shop full of chains and crosses at the sign of the *Bonne Foi*.

What was my astonishment at finding my good master there, who, standing before the counter, and drawing from a twist of paper five or six small diamonds which I easily recognised as those which Monsieur d’Astarac had shown us, asked the jeweller what price he thought he could give for the stones!

The jeweller examined them, then looking at the Abbé over his spectacles said:

“Monsieur, these stones would be very valuable if they were real. But they are false and there is no need of the touchstone to be assured of it. They are beads of glass, only fit for children’s playthings — unless one were to stick them in the crown of some village statue of Our Lady, where they would make a fine effect.”

On hearing this Monsieur Coignard took up his diamonds and turned his back on the jeweller. In doing so he perceived me and seemed somewhat confused at

the meeting. I finished my business in a very short time, and finding my good master in the doorway, I represented to him the wrong he did himself and his companions in making off with stones which, had they been real, might have been his undoing.

“My son,” he replied, “God in His desire to keep me guiltless has willed that they should be jewels only in appearance and seeming. I confess that I did wrong to go off with them. You see that I am regretting it, and it is a page in the book of my life I should like to tear out, where several leaves, to speak plainly, are not as clean and immaculate as they should be. I feel keenly how reprehensible my behaviour has been in this particular. But man should not be over-much cast down when he falls into fault; now is the moment for me to say to myself, as did a famous divine, ‘Consider your great weakness, which you put to the proof only too often on the slightest occasion, and nevertheless it is for your good that these things or others like unto them happen to you. All is not over for you if you find yourself often afflicted and sorely tempted, and that though you succumb to temptation. You are man and not God; you are human flesh and no angel. How can you always remain in the same virtuous state when this fidelity has failed the very angels in Heaven and the first man in Paradise?’ Such, Jacques, my son, is the only spiritual discourse and sound self-communion which meet my present state of mind. But is it not time, after this unfortunate step over which we will not linger, to return to our inn, and there in company with the postboys who are simple folk and easy to deal with, drink one or two bottles of the wine of the place?”

I sided with this view, and we regained the posthouse where we found Monsieur d’Anquetil, who had also returned from the town bringing back some cards. He played piquet with my good master and when we were on our way again they continued playing in the carriage. This passion for play, by which my rival was carried away, afforded me some freedom with Jael, who talked more willingly with me now that she was deserted. I found a bitter pleasure in these talks. Reproaching her with her treachery and her unfaithfulness I eased my sorrow by complaints now low now loud.

“Alas, Jael,” said I, “the memory and the vision of our caresses, which were once my dearest delight, have become but cruel torture to me, through the thought that to-day you are for another what you once were for me.”

She made answer:

“A woman is not the same with every one.”

And when I lengthily prolonged my wailings and reproaches, she said:

“I understand that I have caused you sorrow. But that is no reason why you should overwhelm me a hundred times a day with your useless complaining.”

When Monsieur d'Anquetil lost, his temper became troublesome. He molested Jael at every opportunity, who, not being patient, threatened to write to her uncle Mosaïde to come and fetch her away. These quarrels at first afforded me some glimmer of hope and rejoicing, but after they had been renewed several times, I saw them arise with anxiety, having recognised the fact that they were followed by impetuous reconciliations which proclaimed themselves to my ears in sudden kisses, whisperings and lustful sighs. Monsieur d'Anquetil could scarcely endure me. But, on the other hand, he had a lively affection for my good master, who deserved it by his equable and smiling temper and the incomparable elegance of his wit. They played and drank together in a sympathy which grew with every day. With knees approached to support the table on which they threw down the cards, they laughed, joked, and teased one another, and though it sometimes happened that they threw the cards at each other's heads, exchanging abuse that would have made blush the dockmen of the Port St. Nicholas or the boatmen of the Mall, and though Monsieur d'Anquetil swore before God, the Virgin and all the saints that he had never in his life seen a worse scoundrel than Abbé Coignard even at the end of a rope, one felt that he dearly loved my good master, and it was amusing to hear him a moment after say laughingly:

“L'Abbé — you shall be my chaplain and my partner at piquet. You must also hunt with us. We must search the whole county of Perche for a horse strong enough to carry you, and you shall have a hunting-outfit such as I have seen on the bishop of Uzès. It is high time anyway that you had some new clothes, for, without complaining, Monsieur l'Abbé, your breeches really scarcely cover you at the back.”

Jael also yielded to the irresistible attraction which inclined souls to my good master. She resolved to repair as well as possible the disorder of his toilet. She pulled one of her dresses to pieces and made him a present of a lace handkerchief to make some bands. My good master received these small gifts with graceful dignity. I had occasion to remark it several times: he carried himself gallantly towards women. He showed an interest in them which never became indiscreet, praised them with the insight of a connoisseur, gave them counsel gained in his long experience, and shielded them with the infinite indulgence of a heart ready to pardon all weaknesses, and yet neglected no occasion to make them listen to great and useful truths.

Reaching Montbard on the fourth day we stopped on a height whence we could perceive the whole town, lying in a small compass as if it had been painted on canvas by some clever workman careful to put in all the details.

“Look upon these walls, these towers, belfries and roofs which rise above the verdure,” said my good master. “They constitute a town, and without seeking to

know its name or its history, it befits us to reflect upon it as one of the most worthy subjects of meditation that can be offered us on the face of the globe. Indeed, a town of any kind affords the mind subject for speculation. The postboys tell us this is Montbard. The place is unknown to me. Nevertheless, I do not fear to affirm by analogy that the people who dwell there, like ourselves, are egoistic, cowardly, treacherous, greedy and debauched. Otherwise they would not be men, nor descended from Adam, in whom, being at once miserable and yet worthy of veneration, all our instincts even down to the very lowest have their august source. The only point on which one might hesitate is to know whether those people down there are more disposed to the love of food than to reproduction of their kind. Yet no doubt is permissible; a philosopher will form the sane opinion that hunger, for these unfortunate beings, is a more pressing goad than love. In my salad days I thought the human animal was inclined above all things to the union of the sexes. But it was merely a snare; and it is plain that men are more interested in preserving life than in giving it. Hunger is the axis of humanity: but as it is idle to dispute the matter here I will say, if you wish, that mortal life has two poles, hunger and love. And now is the moment to lend me your ears and your hearts! These hideous creatures, who are bent on furiously devouring or embracing one another, live together under laws which straitly forbid them the satisfying of this double and deep-seated concupiscence. These ingenuous animals, having become citizens, willingly impose on themselves privations of all kinds, respect the property of others, which is a prodigious thing considering their greedy nature, and observe a modesty, a common but enormous hypocrisy, consisting in rarely speaking of what they think of continually. For own, in all good faith, Messieurs, when we see a woman it is not the beauty of her soul and the qualities of her mind on which our thoughts fix themselves, and in talk with her it is her natural traits we have principally in view. And the charming creature knows it so well, that dressed by a clever milliner she has taken care only to veil her attractions by heightening them with various artifices. And Mademoiselle Jael, who is no savage, would be quite distressed if art in her had the upper hand over nature to such a point that one could not see the fulness of her bosom and the roundness of her form. So, in whatever way we regard men since the fall of Adam we see them hungry and incontinent. Whence comes it then that gathered together in towns they impose privations of all sorts on themselves, and submit themselves to a regimen completely opposed to their corrupt nature. It has been said that they found it to their advantage, and that they felt that this constraint was the price of their safety. But that is to suppose them unreasonable, and, what is more, using a wrong reasoning, for it is ridiculous to save one's life at the cost of what

constitutes its excuse and its value. It has also been said that fear held them obedient, and it is true that imprisonment, the gallows and the wheel, all successfully insure obedience to laws. But certain it is that prejudice has gone hand in hand with the laws, and one cannot well see how constraint has been so universally established. One defies laws as the necessary relations of things, but we have just seen that these relations, far from being necessary, are in flat contradiction to nature. Hence, Messieurs, I seek the source and origin of laws not in mankind but beyond them, and I believe that being strange to mankind they come from God, Who has shaped with His mysterious Hands not only the earth and the water, plants and animals, but even nations and societies. I believe that laws emanate straight from Him, from His first decalogue and that they are inhuman because they are divine. You quite understand that I am considering codes in their underlying principles and essence, without wishing to enter into their laughable diversity and pitiable complications. The details of custom and prescription both written and spoken, are man's part in it, and this part may be disdained. But do not let us fear to acknowledge it. The City is a divine institution. From which it results that every government should be a theocracy. A priest noted for the share he took in the Declaration of 1682, Monsieur Bossuet, was not mistaken in wanting to lay down political rules after the maxims of Holy Scripture, and if he failed miserably, one can only blame the weakness of his genius which dully clung to examples drawn from the book of Judges and Kings, failing to see that God, when He works in this world, has regard to time and space and knows how to differentiate between the French and the Israelites. The City, re-established under this, the only true and lawful authority, would not be the city of Joshua, Saul, nor David, it would more likely be the city of the *Gospel*, the city of the poor, where the workman and the prostitute will not be put to shame by the Pharisee. Oh, Messieurs, how well it would be to draw from the Scriptures a more beautiful and sacred policy than that which was painfully extracted by Monsieur Bossuet, so strict and harsh in style. What a City, more harmonious than that which Orpheus raised to the sounds of his lyre, shall rise on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the day when His priests, no longer sold to emperors and kings, shall show themselves as the true princes of the people!"

While standing round my good master, hearing him discourse in this wise, we were surrounded without our noticing by a troop of beggars, who, limping, shivering, dribbling, waving stumps, shaking goitres, and exposing wounds running with poisonous discharge, beset us with their importunate benedictions. They flung themselves greedily on some coins which Monsieur d'Anquetil threw to them and rolled together in the dust.

"It makes me ill to look at those unfortunate beings," sighed Jael.

“Your pity sits on you like an ornament, Mademoiselle,” said Monsieur Coignard; “these sighs lend a grace to your bosom by swelling it with a breath we should each of us like to inhale from your lips. But allow me to tell you that this tenderness, which is not the less touching for being interested, moves your bowels to compassion by the comparison of these poor wretches with yourself, and by the instinctive feeling that your young body touches, so to speak, these hideously ulcerated and mutilated forms, as it is in very truth allied and attached to them in so far as we are all members of Our Lord Jesus Christ, whence it follows that you cannot face the corruption on the flesh of these wretches without seeing it at the same time as a presage to your own flesh. And these wretched beings have risen up before you like prophets proclaiming that the lot of the children of Adam in this world is sickness and death. That is why you sighed, Mademoiselle.

“As a matter of fact there is no reason to conclude that these beggars, eaten up with ulcers and vermin, are more unhappy than kings and queens. We must not even say that they are poorer, if, as it appears, the *liard* that woman with the goitre has picked up in the dust, dribbling with joy, seems to her more precious than is a collar of pearls to the mistress of a Prince-Bishop of Cologne or Salzburg. Properly, to understand our spiritual and veritable interests we ought to envy the existence of that cripple, who creeps towards you on his hands, in preference to that of the King of France or the Emperor. Their equal before God, he perchance possesses that peace of the heart which they know not, and the inestimable treasure of innocence. But draw your skirts round you, Mademoiselle, for fear of the vermin with which I see he is covered.”

Thus talked my good master and we never tired of listening to him.

At about three leagues from Montbard, one of the traces having broken and the postboys lacking the cord wherewith to mend it, as that part of the world was far from all habitation, we remained there in a distressed condition. My good master and Monsieur d’Anquetil killed the boredom of this enforced halt by playing cards with that sympathy in their quarrels now become a habit with them. While the young gentleman showed his astonishment that his partner returned the king more often than consorted with the law of probabilities, Jael drew me aside and somewhat agitatedly asked me if I did not see a carriage stopping behind us at a winding in the road. Looking at the spot she indicated I saw indeed an antiquated *calèche* of a ridiculous and odd shape.

“That carriage,” added Jael, “stopped when we did. So it must have been following us. I wish I could make out the faces of those who are travelling in that concern. I am anxious about it. Is it not covered with a tall narrow hood? It is like the carriage my uncle took me in to Paris when I was quite small, after he

had killed the Portuguese. As far as I know it was left in a stable at the *château* of Sablons. This one exactly recalls it, and a horrible souvenir it is, for I last saw my uncle in it foaming with rage. You cannot imagine, Jacques, how violent he is. I experienced his rage the very day of my departure. He shut me in my room, vomiting frightful abuse on Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. I shudder when I think of the state he must have been in when he found my room empty, and my sheets still fastened to the window whence I escaped to meet and fly with you."

"You mean to say with Monsieur d'Anquetil, Jael."

"How punctilious you are! Did we not all leave together? But that *calèche* makes me anxious, it is so like my uncle's."

"Rest assured, Jael, that it is some worthy Burgundian's carriage who is going about his business with no thought of us."

"You know nothing about it," said Jael; "I am afraid."

"You surely cannot be afraid that your uncle, decrepit as he has become, will scour the roads in pursuit of you, Mademoiselle. He is occupied with the caballa and his Hebrew speculations."

"You do not know him," she made reply with a sigh. "He is entirely taken up with me. He loves me so much that he execrates the rest of the world. He loves me in a way...."

"In what way?"

"In all ways.... In short he loves me."

"Jael, I shudder to hear you. Just Heaven! This Mosaïde loves you without that disinterestedness which is so admirable in an old man, and so befitting an uncle! Tell me everything, Jael...."

"Oh, you can put it into words better than I, Jacques."

"I am stupefied. At his age — is it possible?"

"My friend, you have a white skin and a soul to match it. Everything astonishes you. 'Tis this candour that is your charm. You are deceived with very little trouble. You believe that Mosaïde is a hundred and thirty years old when he is not much more than sixty — that he lived in the great pyramid, when in reality he was a banker at Lisbon. And had I chosen I could have passed in your eyes for a Salamander."

"What, Jael, are you speaking the truth? Your uncle...."

"Yes — and it is the secret of his jealousy. He believes Abbé Coignard to be his rival. He hated him instinctively at first sight. But it is quite another matter now when, having overheard several words of the interview the good Abbé had with me among the thorn-bushes, he may hate him as the cause of my flight and elopement. For, indeed, I was carried off, my friend, and that should put a certain value on me in your eyes. Oh! I was very ungrateful to leave such a good

uncle. But I could not endure the slavery in which he kept me any longer. And then I had an ardent desire to grow rich; it is very natural, is it not, to want nice things when one is young and pretty? We have but one life and that a short one. I have been taught no beautiful lies about the immortality of the soul."

"Alas! Jael," I exclaimed in an ardour of love which lent me hardihood, "I lacked nothing when I was near you at Sablons; what did you lack to be happy?"

She signed to me that Monsieur d'Anquetil was observing us. The trace was mended and the berline rolled on between the vine-covered slopes.

We stopped at Nuits to sup and sleep the night. My good master drank half a dozen bottles of the native wine which marvellously heightened his eloquence. Monsieur d'Anquetil made a good second, glass in hand, but as to coping with him in conversation the gentleman was quite incapable of that.

The cheer was good, the lodging was bad. Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard slept in the low room under the stairs, on a feather-bed which he shared with the inn-keeper and his wife and where they all thought to suffocate.

Monsieur d'Anquetil - took the upper room with Jael, where the bacon and onions hung from the rafters. I climbed up to the loft by a ladder and lay down on the straw. My first deep sleep over, the rays of the moon, whose light came through the cracks in the roof, slipped under my eyelids and opened them in time for me to see Jael in her nightcap coming through the trap-door. At the cry I gave she put her finger on her lips.

"Hush!" she said, "Maurice is drunk as a porter or a lord. He sleeps the sleep of Noah down below."

"Maurice, who is that?" I asked, rubbing my eyes.

"Anquetil. Who else should it be?"

"No one. But *I* did not know that he was called Maurice."

"I have not known it long myself. But that is no matter."

"You are right, Jael. That is of no consequence."

She was in her chemise, and the moonlight lay like milk on her naked shoulders. She glided to my side, calling me the tenderest and again the coarsest of names, which slid from her lips in soft murmurings. Then she spoke no more and began to give me kisses as only she knew how and in comparison with which the caresses of other women were insipid.

The restraint and the silence augmented the high tension of my nerves. Surprise, the pleasure of revenge, and maybe, a perverse jealousy, all added flame to my desires. The elasticity of her body and the supple strength of her movements asked, promised, and deserved the most ardent of caresses. We knew those deeps of pleasure that border upon pain.

On going down to the courtyard of the hostelry next morning, I found Monsieur d'Anquetil there, who seemed less odious to me now that I had deceived him.

On his side he seemed more drawn to me than he had been since the beginning of our journey. He spoke to me with familiarity, sympathy, and trustfulness, he reproached me with showing Jael so little consideration and gallantry, and with not paying her those attentions which a good man should pay to every woman.

"She complains," he said, "of your incivility. Take note of it, my dear Tournebroche; I should be sorry if there were any unpleasantness between her and you. She is a pretty girl and exceedingly fond of me."

The berline had been on its way an hour when Jael, having put her head out of the window, said:

"The *calèche* has turned up again. I would much like to see the faces of the two men in it. But I cannot succeed."

I replied that such a long way off, and in the early morning mist too, we could distinguish nothing.

She made reply that her sight was so keen, that she could distinguish them well notwithstanding the mist and the distance, were they really faces.

"But," added she, "they are not faces."

"What do you think they are then?" I asked with a burst of laughter.

In her turn she asked me what absurd idea had entered my mind that I should laugh in such a stupid fashion, and said:

"They are not faces, they are masks. Those two men are following us and they are masked."

I warned Monsieur d'Anquetil that it appeared we were being pursued by a wretched *calèche*. But he begged me to leave him in peace.

"If a hundred thousand devils were at our heels I should not trouble myself," he exclaimed, "having plenty to do in keeping a watch on this fat hang-dog rascal of an Abbé, who forces the cards in an underhand way and steals all my money. I should even not be astonished that in thrusting that wretched *calèche* on me in the middle of my game, you were in league with this old cheat. Can a carriage not travel on the road without causing you emotion?"

Jael whispered low in my ear:

"Jacques, I foresee that *calèche* will bring us some evil. I have a presentiment and my presentiments are never wrong."

"Do you want to make me believe you have the gift of prophecy?"

She gravely answered:— "Indeed I have."

“What, you a prophetess!” I exclaimed smiling. “How strange!”

“You laugh at me,” she said, “and you doubt of it because you have never seen a prophetess so close before. How would you have her look?”

“I thought they had to be virgins.”

“That is not at all necessary,” she replied with assurance.

The rival *calèche* was lost to sight behind a turning in the road. But Jael’s anxiety had affected Monsieur d’Anquetil without his avowing it and he gave orders to the postboys to increase their speed, promising to pay them good money.

With an excess of solicitude he passed each of them one of the bottles that the Abbé had kept in reserve at the back of the carriage.

The postilions communicated to their horses the ardour they drew from the wine.

“You may make your mind easy, Jael,” said he, “at the rate we are going that ancient *calèche* drawn by the horses of the Apocalypse will not catch us up.”

“We go like a cat on hot bricks,” said the Abbé.

“If only it lasts!” said Jael.

On our right we saw the vine rows planted at intervals fly by on the slopes. On the left the Saône flowed sluggishly. We passed the bridge of Tournus like a whirlwind. On the other side of the river rose the town on a hill crowned with abbey walls strong as a fortress.

“That,” said the Abbé, “is one of the innumerable Benedictine abbeys which are sewn like jewels on the robe of ecclesiastical Gaul. Had it pleased God that my destiny had accorded with my character, my life would have slipped by, obscure, easy, and joyful in one of those houses. There is no order for doctrine and way of life I hold equal to the Benedictine. They possess admirable libraries. Happy is he who wears their habit and follows their holy rule! Either from the discomfort I feel at present in being so rudely shaken in this carriage which will not fail to upset shortly in one of the many ruts in which this road is so deeply worn, or more likely as the result of my time of life, which inclines to retirement and serious thought, I long more ardently than ever to seat myself at a table in some old library, where numerous and choice books are gathered together in silence. I prefer their conversation to that of man, and my dearest wish is to await, while busied with intellectual work, the hour when God will withdraw me from this world. I would write histories, preferably that of the Romans, in the decline of the Republic. For it is full of instruction and great deeds. I would divide my zeal between Cicero, St. John Chrysostom and Boethius; my life passed thus modestly and fruitfully would be like unto the garden of the old man of Tarentum.

“I have tried various ways of living, and I judge that the best of all is, while giving myself up to study, to look on in peace at the changes in mankind, and to prolong by the contemplation of centuries and empires the briefness of our days. But sequence and continuity are necessary. They have been more wanting than anything in my life. If, as I hope to do, I succeed in recovering from this present false step I shall endeavour to find an honourable and safe shelter in some learned abbey where letters flourish and are in honour. I already see myself there tasting the peaceful renown of knowledge. Could I but count on this good turn from the helpful Sylphs of whom that old madman d’Astarac speaks and who appear, it is said, when they are invoked by the cabalistic name of *Agla*. ..

At the moment my good master pronounced this word a sudden shock overwhelmed us all four under a hail of glass, in such confusion that I found myself suddenly blinded and suffocated beneath Jael’s skirts, while Monsieur Coignard, in a stifled voice, denounced Monsieur d’Anquetil’s sword for having broken all the teeth he had left, and above my head Jael gave vent to cries which rent all the valleys of Burgundy. Meanwhile Monsieur d’Anquetil was promising the postilions to have them all hung. By the time I succeeded in freeing myself he had already jumped through a broken window; we followed him by the same way my good master and I, and then we all three drew Jael from the overturned carriage. She was unhurt and her first care was to re-adjust her hair.

“Thank Heaven,” said my good master, “I have escaped with the loss of a tooth, and one neither perfect nor white at that. Time, by its attack, had prepared it for its fall.”

Monsieur d’Anquetil, with legs wide apart and hands on his hips, was examining the overturned carriage.

“The rogues have made it in a pretty state,” said he. “If we get the horses up, it will fall in the gutter. L’Abbé, it is good for nothing but to play spellicans with.”

The horses, fallen one over another, kicked each other with their hoofs. In a confused heap of cruppers, manes, flanks and steaming bellies, one of the postilions was buried, boots in air. The other was spitting blood in the ditch where he had been flung. And Monsieur d’Anquetil shouted at them:

“Fools! I do not know what keeps me from running my sword through your bodies!”

“Monsieur,” said the Abbé, “would it not first be better to drag that poor man from amidst the horses where he is buried?”

We all set to work, and when the horses were unharnessed and got up, we knew the extent of the damage.

There was a spring smashed, a wheel broken and one horse lamed. "Fetch a wheelwright," said Monsieur d'Anquetil to the postilions, "and let all be made ready within an hour."

"There is no wheelwright here," said the postilions.

"A farrier."

"There is no farrier."

"A saddler."

"There is no saddler."

We looked round us. In the setting sun the vine-covered slopes stretched in long peaceful lines to the horizon. On the height smoke rose from a roof near by a belfry. On the other side the Saône, veiled in light mist, was gently effacing the ripple made by a boat which had just passed. The shadows of the poplars were lengthening on the bank. The sharp cry of a bird pierced the vast silence.

"Where are we?" asked Monsieur d'Anquetil.

"Two good leagues from Tournus," replied the postilion who had fallen in the ditch, spitting blood as he did so, "and at least four from Mâcon."

And raising his arm towards the roof smoking on the hill:

"That village up there must be Vallars. Its resources are small."

"God's thunder split you!" said Monsieur d'Anquetil.

While the horses, huddled together, nibbled at each other's necks, we drew near the carriage lying sorrowfully on its side. The little postilion, who had been drawn from under the horses said:

"As for the spring, that could be remedied by a strong piece of wood fitted to the strap. The carriage would only be slightly more shaky. But there is the broken wheel! And the worst of it is my hat is underneath it."

"Damn your hat," said Monsieur d'Anquetil.

"Your Lordship does not perhaps know it was quite new," said the little postilion.

"And the broken windows!" sighed Jael — sitting on her portmanteau on the road-side.

"If it were only the windows," said my good master, "we could fill their places by lowering the blinds, but the bottles must be in exactly the same state as the windows. That is what I must make sure of as soon as the berline is right side up. I am equally troubled about my Boethius which I left under the cushions with several other good works."

"They matter nothing," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "I have got the cards in my waistcoat pocket. But are we not going to sup?"

"I was thinking of that," said the Abbé. "It is not in vain that God has given man for his use, the animals which people the earth, sky and water. I am an

excellent angler, the careful watch for fish particularly suits my meditative spirit, and the Orne has seen me holding the insidious line and pondering the eternal verities. Have no fear about your supper. If Mademoiselle Jael will kindly give me one of the pins which support her attire I will soon make a hook of it, with which to fish in the river, and I flatter myself that I shall bring you two or three small carp before night-fall, which we will grill over a fire of brushwood."

"I clearly perceive," said Jael, "that we are reduced to a savage state. But I cannot give you a pin, l'Abbé, unless you give me something in exchange, otherwise our friendship runs the risk of being broken. And I do not want that to occur."

"Then I will make an advantageous bargain," said my good master. "I will pay for your pin with a kiss, Mademoiselle."

Thereupon, taking the pin, he put his lips to Jael's cheek in an indescribably charming, graceful and becoming manner.

After wasting a good deal of time we decided on the most sensible method. The tall postilion, who spat blood no longer, was sent to Tournus with a horse to bring back a wheelwright, while his fellow lighted a fire in a sheltered spot, for the air was becoming fresh and the wind was rising.

We perceived on the road a hundred paces beyond the scene of our downfall, a hill of soft stone whose base was hollowed in places. In one of these hollows we decided to await the return of the postilion sent as a messenger to Tournus, warming ourselves meanwhile. The second postilion tied the three remaining horses, one of which was lamed, to the trunk of a tree, near by our cave. The Abbé, who had succeeded in making a line with some branches of willow, a string, a cork, and a pin, went off to angle, inclined thereto as much by his philosophic and meditative turn as by the design of bringing us some fish. Monsieur d'Anquetil remaining with Jael and me in the grotto proposed a game of ombre, which three can play at, and which, being Spanish, he said was suitable to such adventurous people as we were for the time being. And in truth, in this stone-pit, at night-fall, on a deserted road, our little party would not have seemed unworthy to figure in one of those encounters of Don Quigeot or Don Quichotte which amuse the servants. So we played at ombre. It is a game which needs to be taken seriously. I made many mistakes and my impatient partner began to be angry, when the fine and smiling countenance of my good master appeared before us in the fire-light. Untying his handkerchief Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard took out four or five small fish, which he cut open with his knife ornamented with the image of the late king as a Roman emperor on a triumphant column, and which he gutted as easily as if he had never lived anywhere but among the fish-wives in the market, so much did he excel in the smallest

undertakings as in the greater. While he arranged this small fry over the ashes he said:

“I will confide to you that following the river on its downward course, looking for a favourable bank whence to fish, I perceived the Apocalyptic *calèche* which strikes terror into Mademoiselle Jael. It had stopped some way off behind our berline. You must have seen it pass by here while I was fishing in the river, and it must have brought consolation to the mind of Mademoiselle here.”

“We did not see it,” said Jael.

“Then it must have started off again, when night had already fallen; and at least you must have heard it.”

“We have not heard it,” said Jael.

“Then the night must be both blind and deaf. For it is scarcely believable that that *calèche* with neither a broken wheel nor a lame horse, should have stayed on the road. What could it do there?”

“Yes, what could it do there?” said Jael.

“This supper,” said my good master, “by its simplicity, recalls those repasts in the Bible, where the pious traveller shares fish from the Tigris with an angel on the river bank. But we need bread, salt and wine. I shall try to get the provisions out of the berline where they are shut up, and see if by chance a bottle has not been preserved intact. For there are times when glass will not break under a blow which would shatter steel. Tournebroche, my son, please give me your flint and steel; and you, Mademoiselle, do not fail to turn the fish. I shall return immediately.”

He went off, his somewhat heavy step died away slowly on the road, and soon we heard nothing more.

“The night,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “reminds me of the one which preceded the battle of Parma. For you are not ignorant of the fact that I served under Villars and fought in the war of succession. I was among the scouts. We saw nothing. That is one of the artifices of war. They send men to reconnoître the enemy, who come back without having seen or heard anything. But they make reports out of it after the battle, and that is where the tacticians triumph. Well, then, at nine o’clock in the evening I was sent out as a scout with twelve troopers....”

And he told us of the war of succession, and of his love-passages in Italy; his recital lasted fully a quarter of an hour, after which he exclaimed:

“That rascal of an Abbé does not come back. I wager he is drinking all the wine left in the slings over there.”

Thinking then that my good master might be somewhat hampered I got up to go to his aid. The night was moonless, and while the sky glittered with stars the

earth remained in such darkness that my eyes, dazzled by the light of the fire, could not penetrate it. Having gone but fifty steps on the road, which was pale in the darkness, I heard in front of me a terrible cry, which did not seem to issue from a human breast, a cry different from all the cries I had heard before, and which froze me with horror. I ran in the direction whence came the shriek of mortal distress. But the darkness and my fear made my steps tremble. Arrived at length at the spot where the carriage lay shapeless and magnified by the dark, I found my good master seated by the edge of the ditch, doubled in two.

I could not distinguish his face. I asked him tremblingly:

“What is the matter with you? Why did you cry out?”

“Yes — why did I cry out?” said he in a changed voice, a voice new to me. “I did not know that I cried out. Tournebroche, have you not seen a man? He knocked against me rather roughly in the dark. He gave me a blow with his fist.”

“Come, my good master, raise yourself,” I said.

Having raised himself up, he fell back heavily to earth.

I struggled to lift him up, and my hands were wet as I touched his breast.

“You are bleeding!”

“I am bleeding? I am a dead man. He has murdered me. I thought at first it was but a very rough blow. But it is a wound of which I feel I shall never recover.”

“Who has struck you, my good master?”

“It was the Jew. I did not see him, but I know it was he. How do I know it was he when I never saw him? Yes, how comes that? What strange happenings! It is unbelievable, is it not, Tournebroche? I have the taste of death in my mouth which cannot be defined.... It had to be, my God! But why here rather than there? There lies the mystery! *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini. ... Domine, exaudi orationem meam. ..*

He prayed for some time in a low voice, and then he said:

“Tournebroche, my son, take the two bottles which I drew from out the slings and put opposite. I can do no more. Tournebroche, where do you think the wound is? It is in the back I suffer the most, and it seems to me that my life is ebbing from my limbs. My mind is going.”

Murmuring these words he quietly fainted away in my arms. I tried to lift him up, but I had but the strength to lay him down on the road. His shirt open, I found the wound; it was in the chest, small and bleeding but little. I tore up my ruffles and applied the strips to the wound. I called out; I cried for help. Soon I thought I heard them coming to my assistance from the direction of Tournus, and I recognised Monsieur d’Astarac. So unexpected was this meeting I was not

even surprised at it, overwhelmed as I was by the grief of thus holding the best of masters dying in my arms.

“What means this, my son?” demanded the alchemist.

“Come to my help, Monsieur,” I replied, “l’Abbé Coignard is dying. Mosaïde has murdered him.”

“It is true,” said Monsieur d’Astarac, “that Mosaïde came here in an old *calèche* in pursuit of his niece, and I accompanied him to exhort you, my son, to resume your work in my house. Since yesterday we have pressed close upon your berline, that we saw a short time ago go to pieces in a ditch. At that moment Mosaïde got out of the carriage, and, whether he went for a walk or whether, what is more likely still, he made himself invisible, as he has the power to do, I have not seen him since. It is possible he has already shown himself to his niece to curse her; for such was his design. But he has not murdered Abbé Coignard. It is the Elves, my son, who have killed your master, to punish him for having revealed their secrets. Nothing is more certain.”

“Ah! Monsieur,” I exclaimed, “what matters whether it be the Jew or the Elves; we must succour him.”

“My son, on the contrary, it matters very much,” replied Monsieur d’Astarac; “for if he had been struck by a human hand it would be very easy for me to heal him by a magical operation; but whereas he has drawn on himself the enmity of the Elves he cannot escape their infallible vengeance.”

As he spoke these last words, Monsieur d’Anquetil and Jael, drawn by my cries, came up with the postilion bearing a lantern.

“What!” said Jael, “is Monsieur Coignard ill?” And kneeling down by my good master’s side, she raised his head and made him inhale her salts.

“Mademoiselle,” said I, “you are the cause of his undoing. His death is the vengeance for your elopement. It is Mosaïde who has killed him.”

She lifted her face over my good master, pale with horror and glistening with tears.

“Do you suppose, then, it is so easy to be a pretty girl without causing unhappiness?” she asked.

“Alas!” I replied, “what you say is only too true. But we have lost the best of men.”

At this moment Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard gave a deep sigh, turned up the whites of his eyes, asked for his copy of Boethius, and fell unconscious again.

The postilion was of opinion we should bear the wounded man to the village of Vallars, situated half a league away on the hill.

“I will fetch the quietest of the three horses which remain to us,” said he. “We will fasten the poor man safely on, and take him at a slow pace. I think he is very

ill. He has just the look of a courier who was assassinated on St. Michael's Day, on the road four posts from here, near Senecy, where my intended lives. The poor devil blinked his eyelids and turned up the whites of his eyes like a whore, with all respect to you, Messieurs. And your Abbé did likewise when Mademoiselle tickled his nose with the salts. It is a bad sign for the wounded; as to the girls, they do not die for turning up their eyes in such fashion. Your lordships know that well. And it is a far cry the Lord be praised from the thrills of love to the rigors of death. But it is the same turn of the eye. Stay here, Messieurs, I will go and fetch the horse."

"The rustic is amusing," said Monsieur d'Anquetil, "with his turned-up eyes and his die-away lady. In Italy I have seen soldiers die with a fixed stare and their eyes starting out of their head. There is no law about dying of a wound, even among soldiers, where exactitude is pushed as far as it will go. But have the goodness, Tournebroche, in default of some one better qualified to present me to this black-clad gentleman who wears diamond buttons on his coat and whom I divine to be Monsieur d'Astarac."

"Ah! Monsieur," I replied, "take it as done. I have no care for anything but to help my good master."

"So be it," said Monsieur d'Anquetil.

And approaching Monsieur d'Astarac he said: "Monsieur, I have taken your mistress from you. I am ready to give you satisfaction."

"Monsieur," replied Monsieur d'Astarac, "thanks be to Heaven, I have no connection with any woman, and I do not know what you mean by speaking thus."

At this moment the postilion returned with a horse. My good master had regained consciousness a little. We all four raised him up, and with great difficulty we succeeded in placing him on the horse, on which we fastened him. Then we set out. I sustained him on one side, Monsieur d'Anquetil on the other. The postilion held the bridle and carried the lantern. Jael followed us crying. Monsieur d'Astarac had regained his *calèche*. We advanced carefully. All went well while we kept to the road. But when we had to climb the steep path between the vines, my good master, slipping with every movement of the horse, lost the small amount of strength remaining to him and fainted away once more. We judged it expedient to take him off his horse and to carry him in our arms. The postilion held him by the arm-pits and I carried his feet. The ascent was steep, and I thought several times I should sink down under my living cross on the stones of the path. At length the hill became easier. We threaded our way through a little path bordered with hedges, which twisted up the hillside, and

soon we perceived on our left the first roofs of Vallars. At the sight we put down our dismal burden and stopped a moment to take breath. Then taking up our load again we pushed on as far as the village.

A rosy light showed in the east above the horizon. The morning star in the paling heavens shone as white and peaceful as the moon, whose slim crescent paled in the west. The birds began to sing: my good master heaved a sigh.

Jael ran before us, knocking at the doors in quest of a bed and a surgeon. Laden with baskets and hampers the vinegrowers were going to the vintage. One of them told Jael that Gaulard in the square had lodging for travellers whether on horse or on foot.

“As to the surgeon, Coquebert,” he added, “you see him over there under the barber’s basin which serves him as a sign. He is leaving his house to go to his vineyard.”

He was a little man, very civil. He told us that since his daughter had married a short time ago he had a bed in his house which would take the wounded man.

At his command, his wife, a fat woman with a white cap surmounted by a felt hat, put sheets on the bed in the ground floor room. She helped us to undress Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard and to put him to bed. Then she went off to find the priest.

Meanwhile Monsieur Coquebert examined the wound.

“You see,” said I, “it is but small and bleeds only a little.”

“That is not a good sign and does not please me at all, my young Monsieur — I like a big wound that bleeds.”

“I see that for a saw-bones and a village barber you have not bad taste,” said Monsieur d’Anquetil, “nothing is worse than these small deep wounds which look like mere nothings. Talk to me of a fine gash in the face. That is pleasant to look at and heals immediately. But you must know, my good fellow, that this wounded man is my chaplain and my partner at piquet. Are you man enough to put him on his feet again, in spite of your face, which is rather that of a purge-giver?”

“At your service,” replied the surgeon-barber, bowing. “But I also set broken bones and I dress wounds. I will examine this one.”

“Be quick about it, Monsieur,” said I. “Patience,” said he. “First we must wash it, and I am waiting till the water is hot in the kettle.”

My good master, who had revived a little, said slowly in quite a strong voice:

“Lamp in hand he will visit all the corners of Jerusalem, and that which was hidden in darkness shall be brought forth to daylight.”

“What are you saying, my good master?”

“Leave me alone, my son,” he replied, “I am occupied with thoughts suitable to my condition.”

“The water is hot,” said the barber. “Hold this basin close to the bed. I am going to wash the wound.”

While he was passing a sponge filled with warm water over my good master’s chest, the priest entered the room with Madame Coquebert. He held in his hand a basket and some scissors.

“Here is the poor man, then,” said he, “I was going to my vines, but one must tend those of Jesus Christ first of all. My son,” he added, drawing near him, “offer up your affliction to Our Saviour. May be it is not so serious as you think. After all, we must comply with the Will of God.” Then turning to the barber he asked:

“Monsieur Coquebert, is it a very urgent case, and can I go to my vineyard? The white grapes can wait, it does no harm if they are over-ripe, and even a little rain will but render the wine better and more abundant. But the red should be picked immediately.”

“You say true, Monsieur le curé,” replied Coquebert, “I have grapes in my vineyard which are all covered with mildew and which have escaped the heat of the sun only to perish in the rain.”

“Alas!” said the curé, “damp and dryness are the vinegrower’s two enemies.”

“Nothing is truer,” said the barber, “but I must probe the wound.” So saying he put his finger forcibly in the place.

“Ah! Executioner!” exclaimed the patient. “Remember,” said the curé, “that the Saviour forgave His executioners.”

“They were not barbers,” said the Abbé.

“That is wickedly said,” said the curé.

“You must not chide a dying man for his pleasantries,” said my good master. “But I suffer cruelly, this man has murdered me and I die a second time. First it was at the hands of a Jew.”

“What does he mean?” asked the curé.

“The best thing, Monsieur le curé, is not to trouble oneself,” said the barber. “One should never wish to understand the speeches of the sick. They are but ravings.”

“Coquebert,” said the curé, “you do not speak rightly. One must listen to the sick in confession, and some Christian who has said nothing good in his life may finish by pronouncing the words which shall open Paradise to him.”

“I only speak of things temporal,” said the barber.

“Monsieur le curé,” said I in my turn, “my good master, Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, is not delirious, and it is only too true that he has been assassinated by

a Jew named Mosaïde.”

“In that case,” replied the curé, “he should see God’s special favour therein Who willed that he should perish by the hand of a descendant of those who crucified His Son. The ways of Providence in this world are always admirable. Monsieur Coquebert, may I go to my vineyard?”

“You may go, Monsieur le curé,” replied the barber. “The wound is no light one, but it is not the kind of which one dies at once. It is, Monsieur le curé, one of those wounds which play with the sick person like a cat with a mouse, and at that game we may gain some time.”

“That is well,” said Monsieur le curé. “Let us thank God, my son, for what life He has left you, but it is precarious and transitory. One must always be ready to leave it.”

My good master gravely made reply.

“Exist on this earth as not existing, possess without possessing, for the image of this world passes.” Taking up his basket and his scissors Monsieur le curé said:

“Judging from your speech, my son, rather than from your habit and your bands that I see spread on that stool, I know that you belong to the Church and lead a holy life. Have you taken holy orders?”

“He is a priest,” said I, “doctor of theology and professor of eloquence.”

“In what diocese?” asked the curé.

“Of Séez in Normandy, Suffragan to Rouen.”

“A notable ecclesiastical province,” said Monsieur le curé, “but which yields much in antiquity and celebrity to the diocese of Rheims of which I am a priest.”

And he went out. Monsieur Jérôme Coignard passed the day peacefully. Jael wished to stay the night with the sick man. Towards eleven o’clock in the evening, I left Monsieur Coquebert’s house and sought a lodging at the inn of the worthy Gaulard. I found Monsieur d’Astarac on the *place*, and his shadow in the moonlight stretched nearly across its whole expanse. He put his hand on my shoulder as was his habit and said with his accustomed gravity:

“It is time that I re-assured you, my son, I merely accompanied Mosaïde for that reason. I see you have been cruelly tormented by goblins. These little spirits of the earth have assailed you, deceived you by all sorts of phantasmagoria, seduced you by a thousand lies, and finally driven you to leave my house.”

“Alas, Monsieur!” I replied, “it is true I left your roof with an apparent ingratitude for which I ask your pardon. But I was pursued by the police-sergeants, not by goblins. And my good master has been assassinated. That is no phantasy.”

“You may be certain of it,” replied the great man, “the unfortunate Abbé has been mortally struck by the Sylphs whose secrets he has revealed. He took from a cupboard some stones which are the handiwork of the Sylphs, and which the latter had left in an imperfect state, differing greatly in brilliancy and pureness from the diamond.

“It is this greed — and the name of *Alga* indiscreetly pronounced which has vexed them the most. Now understand, my son, it is impossible for philosophers to arrest the vengeance of these irascible people. I learnt by a supernatural channel and also from Criton’s report the sacrilegious larceny of Monsieur Coignard, who insolently plumed himself on surprising the art by which Salamanders, Sylphs and Gnomes, ripen the morning dew and insensibly transform it into crystal and diamond.”

“Alas! Monsieur, I assure you he never thought of doing so, and that it was that horrible Mosaïde who struck him down with a dagger-thrust on the road.”

This speech extremely displeased Monsieur d’Astarac, who invited me in a manner not to be denied to talk no more in such fashion.

“Mosaïde,” added he, “is a good enough cabalist to reach his enemies without running after them. Know, my son, that had he wished to kill Monsieur Coignard, he could have done it easily in his room, by the operation of magic. I see that you are still ignorant of the first elements of the science. The truth is that this learned man, informed by the faithful Criton of his niece’s flight, took post to regain her, and if need be, to bring her back to his house. Which is what he would certainly have done, had he but discerned in the unhappy being’s soul some gleam of repentance and regret. But seeing her quite corrupted and debauched, he preferred to excommunicate and curse her by all the Globes, the Wheels and the Beasts of Ezekiel. That is precisely what he has just done, before my eyes, in the *calèche* where he is quartered apart, so as not to share the bed and the board of Christians.”

I was silent, amazed at such maunderings, but this extraordinary man spoke with such eloquence that it did not leave me untroubled.

“Why,” said he, “will you not allow yourself to be enlightened by the advice of a philosopher? What wisdom can you oppose to him, my son? Consider then, that yours is less in quantity without differing in essence. To you, as to me, nature appears as an infinite multitude of images, which one must recognise and classify and which form a sequence of hieroglyphs. You easily distinguish many of these signs to which you attach a meaning, but you are too inclined to content yourself with a vulgar and literal one, and do not sufficiently seek the ideal and the symbolical. Nevertheless, the world is only conceivable as a symbol, and all that is seen in the universe is but pictured writing, which the vulgar among

mankind spell out without understanding. Beware, my son, of drawling and braying in this universal tongue, like the savants who fill the academies. But rather receive at my hand the key of all knowledge.”

He stopped for a moment and continued his speech in a more familiar tone:

“You are pursued, my son, by foes less terrible than the Sylphs. And your Salamander will have no trouble in ridding you of the goblins as soon as you ask her to do so. I repeat, that I only came here with Mosaïde to give you this good advice and to press you to return to me and continue your work. I understand that you wish to be with your good master until the end. I give you full permission. But do not fail to return hereafter to my house. Farewell! I return to Paris this night with the great Mosaïde whom you have so unjustly suspected.”

I promised him all he wished, and dragged myself as far as my wretched bed in the inn, on which I fell, overwhelmed with sorrow and fatigue.

XIX

THE following day, at early dawn, I returned to the surgeon's and there I found Jael by my good master's bedside, sitting up straight on her straw-bottomed chair, her head enveloped in her black mantle, attentive, serious, and docile like a sister of charity. Monsieur Coignard, very red in the face, was dozing. "He has not had a good night," she said in a low voice. "He wandered, he sang, he called me sister Germaine, and made advances to me. I am not offended at that, but it shows how upset he is."

"Alas!" I explained, "if you had not betrayed me, Jael, and scoured the roads with that fine gentleman, my good master would not lie on this bed with his breast pierced."

"It is just our friend's misfortune," she replied, "which causes my consuming regret. But as for the rest it is not worth a thought and I cannot conceive, Jacques, how you can dwell on it at such a moment."

"The thought is always with me," I answered.

"I," said she, "I never think of it at all. You yourself provide more than three fourths of your unhappiness."

"What do you mean by that, Jael?"

"I mean, my friend, that if I supply the stuff you apply the embroidery, and that your imagination enriches the simple reality far too much. I swear to you that at this present hour I do not myself remember the quarter of what causes you sorrow, and you ponder so obstinately on this subject that your rival is more present to you than even to myself. Think no more of it and let me give this cooling drink to the Abbé who is just waking up."

At this moment Monsieur Coquebert approached the bed with his surgical case, dressed the wound afresh, and said out loud that it was well on the road to recovery. Then drawing me aside he said, "I can assure you, Monsieur, this good Abbé will not die from the blow he has received. But truth to tell I much fear he will not get over a rather bad attack of pleurisy occasioned by his wound. Just now he is in a condition of high fever. But here comes Monsieur le curé."

My good master recognised him quite well and asked politely how he did.

"Better than the vines," replied the curé. "For they are all spoilt with blight and maggots notwithstanding that the clergy of Dijon held a fine procession against them this year, with cross and banners. But we must have a finer one next year and burn more wax-lights. It will also be necessary for the ecclesiastical court to excommunicate afresh the flies which destroy the grapes."

“Monsieur le curé,” said my good master, “they say that you wanton with the girls among the vines. Fie! That is not fitting at your age. In my youth I was, like you, fond of the sex. But years have improved me, and latterly I let a nun pass without speaking to her. You treat damsels and bottles in another fashion, Monsieur le curé. But you do worse still in not saying masses for which you are paid, and in trafficking in the goods of the Church. You are a bigamist and a simonist.”

On hearing these words Monsieur le curé was sadly surprised; his mouth remained opened, and his chaps fell mournfully on either side of his big face.

“What an unworthy insult to the character I bear!” he sighed at last, his eyes on the ceiling. “What a way he talks so near to the judgment-seat of God. Oh! Monsieur l’Abbé, is it for you to talk in such fashion, who have led such a holy life, and have studied so many books?”

My good master raised himself on his elbow. Fever gave him back, in melancholy and unnatural fashion, the jovial air we had loved to see on him.

“It is true,” said he, “that I have studied the ancient writers. But I am far from being as well read as was the second *vicaire* of my lord bishop of Sééz. Although he looked a donkey, and was one, he was a greater reader than I. For he was crosseyed, and looking askew he read two pages at a time. What do you say to that, you old rascal of a curé, you old gallant who runs after wenches in the moonlight? Curé, your lady-love looks like a witch. She has a beard on her chin, she is the surgeon-barber’s wife. He is fully cuckold and it serves the homunculus right, whose whole medical knowledge reaches no further than the giving of a clyster.”

“Lord God, what is he saying?” exclaimed Madame Coquebert. “He must have the devil in him.”

“I have heard many sick people talk in delirium,” said Monsieur Coquebert, “but no one of them talked so wickedly.”

“I perceive,” continued the curé, “that we shall have more difficulty than I thought in bringing this sick man to a good end. He is of a more bitter humour and has more impurity in his disposition than I had at first remarked. His speeches are unseemly in an ecclesiastic and a sick person.”

“It is the effect of the fever,” said the surgeon-barber.

“But,” went on the curé, “this fever, if it does not go down may lead him to hell. He has very seriously failed in what is owing to a priest. I shall, nevertheless, return to-morrow to exhort him, for I owe him, by example of Our Lord, infinite pity. But on this score I feel a lively anxiety. Ill-luck will have it that there is a crack in my winepress, and all the workmen are in the vineyards. Coquebert, do not fail to speak a word to the carpenter, and to call me to the sick

man here should his condition become suddenly worse. A host of cares, Coquebert!”

The next day was such a good one for Monsieur Coignard that we nursed the hope that we might yet keep him with us. He took some soup and sat up in bed. He spoke to each of us with his usual gentleness and grace. Monsieur d’Anquetil, who was lodging at Gaulard’s, came to see him and, rather thoughtlessly, asked him to play piquet. My good master smilingly promised to do so the following week. But the fever took hold of him at nightfall. Pale, his eyes swimming in unutterable terror, shuddering, and with chattering teeth, he cried: “There he is, the old Jew! It is the son Judas Iscariot fathered on a she-devil in the shape of a goat. But he shall be hanged on his father’s fig-tree, and his entrails shall be shed on the earth. Stop him... he is killing me....! I am cold.” A moment after, throwing back his coverings, he complained of being too hot. “I am very thirsty,” said he, “give me some wine. And let it be cool. Madame Coquebert, make haste to go and cool it in the cistern, for the day promises to be burning.”

It was night time but he confused the hours in his brain.

“Be quick about it,” he re-iterated, to Madame Coquebert, “but do not be as simple-minded as the bellringer of Sééz Cathedral, who, on going to draw the bottles from the well where he had put them, perceived his reflection in the water and began crying out ‘Hello! Messieurs! Come to my help quickly, for there are antipodeans down there who will drink our wine if we do not see to it.’”

“He is cheerful,” said Madame Coquebert. “But a short time ago he made very shocking accusations against me. Had I deceived Coquebert it would not have been with Monsieur le curé, having regard to his age and position.”

Monsieur le curé came in at that very moment.

“Well, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said he to my master, “in what humour are you to-day? What is there new?”

“Thank God,” said Monsieur Coignard, “there is nothing new in my soul. For, as St. Chrysostom said, avoid novelties. Do not adventure on paths which are as yet untried; one wanders unendingly when one begins to wander. I have sad experience of it. And I am lost for having followed unbeaten tracks. I listened to my own counsel and it led me to the pit. Monsieur le curé, I am a miserable sinner; the number of my iniquities oppresses me.”

“Those are noble words,” said Monsieur le curé, “it is God Himself Who dictates them to you. I recognise His inimitable style. Are you not desirous that we should join in furthering the salvation of your soul a little?”

“Willingly” said Monsieur Coignard, “for my impurities rise up against me. I see both great and small rear themselves before me. I see some that are red and some that are black. I see some of the very basest astride of dogs and pigs, and I see others that are fat and stark naked, with teats like leather bottles, and stomachs falling in big folds, and enormous buttocks.”

“Is it possible,” said Monsieur le curé, “that you should have so distinct a sight of them? But if your faults are such as you say, my son, it were better not to describe them, and to limit yourself to detesting them inwardly.”

“Would you have my sins fashioned like Adonis, Monsieur le curé?” said the Abbé. “But enough of that. And you, barber, give me to drink. Do you know Monsieur de la Musardière?”

“Not that I am aware,” said Monsieur Coquebert.

“Learn then that he was very fond of women,” said my good master.

“It is thereby,” said the curé, “that the devil takes great advantage of man. But what do you want to arrive at, my son?”

“You will soon see,” said my good master. “Monsieur de la Musardière gave tryst to a maiden in a stable. She went, and he let her go as she came. Do you know why?”

“I am ignorant,” said the curé. “But enough of that.”

“Not so,” continued Monsieur Coignard. “Know then that he took care to have no connection with her for fear of engendering a horse, for which he would have been criminally prosecuted.”

“Ah!” said the barber, “he might rather have feared to father a donkey.”

“Without doubt,” said the curé, “but that does not help us on our way to Paradise. It befits us to take up the good road again. A short time since you gave us such edifying words.”

Instead of replying my good master began to sing in quite a strong voice: To put King Louis in good fettle

They sent for a dozen lads of mettle,

Landerinette.

Who led a jovial life and free,

Landeriri.

“If you want to sing, my son,” said Monsieur le curé, “sing rather some beautiful Burgundian carol. You will gladden your soul while you sanctify it.”

“Willingly,” answered my good master. “There are some by Guy Barozai which I hold, in their apparent rusticity, as finer than the diamond and more precious than gold. This one, for instance: Then when the time did befall

That Jesus Christ came on to earth,

The ox and ass with their breath
Kept him warm in the stall.
How many an ox and an ass
I know in the kingdom of Gaul,
How many an ox and an ass
Would have grudged him that little, alas!

The surgeon, his wife, and the curé took up together: How many an ox and an
ass
I know in the kingdom of Gaul,
How many an ox and an ass
Would grudge him that little, alas!

And my good master went on in more feeble voice: But the part of the tale I
like best,
Is that the ox and the ass
Both of them let the night pass
Without food or water or rest.
How many an ox and an ass
In stuff, or in silken vest,
How many an ox and an ass
Would grudge him that little, alas!

Then he let his head fall back on the pillow and sang no more.

“There is good in this Christian,” said Monsieur le curé. “Much good, and just now again he edified even me by his beautiful words. But he still causes me anxiety, for all hangs on the end; and one does not know what may remain at the bottom of the basket. God in His goodness wills that a single moment should save us; furthermore, this moment must be the last; so that everything depends on a single minute, by the side of which the rest of our life is as nothing. This is what makes me tremble for this sick man for whom the angels and the devils are fighting so furiously. But one must not despair of the divine mercy.”

XX

TWO days passed in cruel alternations. Thereafter my good master fell into a state of extreme weakness.

“There is no longer any hope,” Monsieur Coquebert said in a low voice, “look how his head is sunk into the pillow and notice how sharp his nose has become.”

Indeed, my good master’s nose, formerly big and red, offered no more than a curved edge as livid as lead.

“Tournebroche, my son,” said he, in a voice which was still full and strong, but with a note in it I had not heard before, “I feel that I have but a short time to live. Go and find that good priest that he may hear my confession.”

Monsieur le curé was in his vineyard, whither I ran.

“The vintage is done,” he told me, “and a more abundant one than I hoped; let us go and assist the poor man.”

I took him back to the bedside of my good master and we left him alone with the dying man.

He came out after an hour and said to us:

“I can assure you that Monsieur Jérôme Coignard is dying in admirable sentiments of piety and humility. At his request, and in consideration of his fervour, I am about to give him the holy viaticum. While I put on my alb and stole have the goodness, Madame Coquebert, to send the child who serves low mass for me every day, to the sacristy, and prepare the room to receive the blessed sacrament.”

Madame Coquebert swept the chamber, put a white coverlet on the bed, placed at the bed-head a small table which she covered with a cloth, put two candlesticks with lighted candles upon it, and a china bowl where a sprig of box lay steeped in the holy water.

Soon we heard the bell being rung in the road by the server, and we saw the cross appear, held up by a child, and the priest clad in white and bearing the sacred elements. Jael, Monsieur d’Anquetil, Monsieur and Madame Coquebert, and I, fell on our knees.

“*Pax huic domui.*” said the priest.

“*Et omnibus habitantibus*” answered the server.

Then Monsieur le curé took the holy water with which he sprinkled the sick man and the bed.

He remained in meditation for a moment and then said:

“My son, have you no declaration to make?”

“Yes, Monsieur,” said Abbé Coignard in a firm voice. “I forgive my assassin.”

Then the celebrant, drawing the host from the ciborium, said:

“Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.”

My good master answered, sighing:

“Shall I speak with My Lord, I who am but dust and ashes? How shall I venture to approach Thee, I who feel that no good exists in me that can give me courage? How can I receive Thee into my house after having so often offended Thine eyes filled with loving-kindness?”

And Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard received the holy viaticum in a profound silence, rent by our sobs and by the loud noise made by Madame Coquebert in blowing her nose.

After the administration my good master made a sign to me to draw near his bed, and said in a voice weak but distinct:

“Jacques Tournebroche, my son, reject, along with the example I gave you, the maxims I may have proposed to you during my period of folly, which alas! has lasted as long as my life. Fear women and books for the enervation and the pride one gains from them. Be humble in heart and mind. God grants a clearer intelligence to the simple-minded than the learned can ever instil. He is the Giver of all knowledge, my son. Do not listen to those who, like myself, subtilise over good and evil. Do not allow yourself to be touched by the beauty and the finesse of their talk. For the kingdom of God lies not in words but in virtue.”

He lay silent, exhausted. I seized his hand lying on the sheet and covered it with my tears and kisses. I told him he was our master, our friend, our father, and that I should not know how to live without him.

And I remained for a long time sunk in sorrow at the foot of his bed.

He passed such a peaceful night that I conceived a sort of despairing hope. This condition lasted all through the day that followed. But towards evening he became restless and murmured such indistinct words that they must forever remain a secret between God and himself.

At midnight he sank once more into deep prostration, and we only heard the light sound of his nails plucking at the sheets. He knew us no longer.

Towards two o’clock the death-rattle began; the hoarse, hurried breath that issued from his chest was loud enough to be heard far off in the village street, and my ears were so filled with it that I thought I could hear it for days following that wretched night. At dawn he made a sign with his hand which we could not understand, and gave a deep sigh. It was the last. His countenance assumed in death a majesty worthy of the genius which had animated it and whose loss will never be repaired.

XXI

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ of Vallars gave Monsieur Jérôme Coignard solemn burial. He sang the funeral mass and gave absolution. My good master was borne to the cemetery attached to the church. And Monsieur d'Anquetil gave a supper at Gaulard's to all the people who had assisted at the ceremony. They drank new wine and sang songs of Burgundy.

The following day I went with Monsieur d'Anquetil to thank Monsieur le curé for his pious care.

"Ah," said the holy man, "this priest has given us great consolation by his edifying end. I have seen few Christians die in such admirable sentiments, and the memory of them should be preserved on his tomb in a fine inscription. You are both of you clever enough to do this successfully, and I will see to it that the epitaph of the defunct is engraved on a large white stone in the fashion and order in which you shall compose it. But bear in mind, in thus making the stone speak, that it proclaim but the praises of God."

I begged him to believe that I would bring all my zeal to bear on it, and Monsieur d'Anquetil promised on his part to give it a gallant and graceful turn.

"I will try my hand," said he, "at French verse, modelled on those of Monsieur Chapelle."

"Well and good," said Monsieur le curé. "But are you not curious to see my wine-press? The wine will be excellent this year and I have gathered enough for my use and for that of my servant. Alas! were it not for the blight we should have had far more."

After supper Monsieur d'Anquetil asked for the inkstand and began to compose French verses. Then, impatiently, he flung pen, ink, and paper away from him.

"Tournebroche," said he, "I have only written two lines and I am not certain if even those are good; here they are such as they have come to me: "Monsieur Coignard here doth lie,

Soon or late we all must die."

I answered that they had this much good in them that they needed no third.

And I spent the night in turning a Latin epitaph in the following manner:
D.O.M.

HIC JACET

in spe beatae aeternitatis

DOMINUS HIERONYMUS COIGNARD

presbyter quondam in Bellovacensi collegio eloquentiae magister
eloquentissimus Sagiensis episcopi bibliothecarius solertissimus Zozimi
Panopolitani ingeniosissimus translator
opéré tamen immaturata morte intercepto periit enim cum Lugdunum peteret
judea manu nefandissima
id est a nepote Christi carnificum in via trucidatus
anno aet lii.

comitate fuit optima doctissimo convitu ingenio sublimi facetiis jucundus
sententiis plenus donorum Dei laudator fide devotissima per multas tempestates
constanter munitus humilitate sanctissima ornatus saluti suae magis intentus
quam vano et fallaci hominum judicio sic honoribus mundanis nunquam
quaesitis sibi gloriam sempiternam meruit.

Which means

HERE LIES in hope of blissful eternity MESSIRE JEROME COIGNARD priest
formerly eloquent professor of eloquence in the college of Beauvais most
zealous librarian to the bishop of Sééz author of a fine translation from Zozimus
the Panipolitan which unhappily he left unfinished when overtaken by premature
death.

He was struck down on the Lyons road in the 52nd year of his age by the
scoundrelly hand of a Jew and thus perished a victim to a descendant of the
executioners of Jesus Christ.

He was agreeable in intercourse learned in conversation and of a lofty genius
flowing with joyful talk and admirable precepts and praised God in his works.

Through the tempest of life he kept an unshaken faith more careful for the
salvation of his soul than for the empty and deceitful goodwill of mankind it was
while living without honours in this world that he directed his path to eternal
glory.

XXII

THREE days after my good master had rendered up his soul Monsieur d'Anquetil decided to set off once more. The carriage was mended. He gave orders to the postilions to be ready for the following morning. His society had never been pleasing to me. In the sad mood I was in it had become odious. I could not bear the idea of following him with Jael. I resolved to seek employment at Tournus or Mâcon and to live there hidden until the storm having abated, it would be possible for me to return to Paris where I knew my parents would receive me with open arms. I made known this plan to Monsieur d'Anquetil and excused myself for not accompanying him further. He exerted himself at first to keep me with a good grace which he had not led me to expect, then he willingly gave me my leave. Jael was more regretful over it, but being naturally sensible she understood the reasons I had for leaving her.

The night preceding my departure, while Monsieur d'Anquetil drank and played cards with the surgeon-barber, we went out on to the market-place, Jael and I, to breathe the air. It was scented with grasses and filled with the song of crickets.

"What a beautiful night," I said to Jael, "the year will bring no more like it, and perhaps in all my life I shall never again see one so sweet."

Before us the village cemetery, flower-filled, spread its immobile waves of grass, and the moonlight whitened the scattered grave stones on the dark herbage. The thought came to us both at the same time to go and say good-bye to our friend. The spot where he reposed was marked by a cross sprinkled with pictured tears, whose foot sank in the soft earth. The stone on which the epitaph was to be inscribed was not put up yet. We sat down near by, on the grass and there, from unconscious and natural inclination, we fell into one another's arms, without fear of offending with our kisses the memory of a friend whose profound wisdom rendered him indulgent to human weaknesses.

All at once Jael whispered in my ear, where for the moment her lips happened to be:

"I see Monsieur d'Anquetil on the cemetery wall, and he is looking keenly in our direction."

"Can he see us in the shadow?" I asked.

"He can certainly see my white skirts," she replied. "It is quite enough to make him want to see more."

I was already thinking of drawing my sword and I was quite decided to defend two existences which at the moment were indeed all but one. Jael's calm astonished me; nothing in her gestures or her voice betrayed fear.

"Go," said she, "fly, have no fear for me. It is a surprise which I have more or less desired. He was beginning to tire, and this is excellent for reawakening his taste and adding a spice to his love. Go, and leave me. The first few moments will be hard to bear for he is of a passionate disposition. He will beat me but I shall only be dearer to him afterwards. Farewell."

"Alas," I exclaimed "did you but take me, Jael, to sharpen the desire of a rival?"

"I am surprised that you too wish to quarrel with me. Go, I tell you."

"What, and leave you thus?"

"It must be. Farewell. He must not find you here. I want to make him jealous, but with discretion. Farewell, farewell."

I had scarcely taken a few steps in the labyrinth of tombs when Monsieur d'Anquetil having come near enough to recognise his mistress cried and swore loud enough to wake all these village dead.

I was impatient to free Jael from his wrath. I thought he would kill her. Already I was gliding to her rescue in the shadow of the tombs. But after some minutes, while I watched them carefully, I saw Monsieur d'Anquetil push her out of the cemetery and take her to Gaulard's inn, with the remains of a fury she was well capable of pacifying alone and without help.

I regained my room when they had gone back to theirs. I did not sleep that night, and spying on them in the dawn, through the opening in the curtains, I saw them cross the courtyard of the inn with great show of friendship.

Jael's departure increased my sadness. I threw myself full-length in the middle of my room, and, my face in my hands, wept till evening.

XXIII

AT this period my life loses the interest it had borrowed from circumstances, and my destiny, conforming once more with my character, offers nothing but what is commonplace. If I prolonged my memoirs my narrative would soon appear insipid. I will bring it to a close in a few words. Monsieur le curé of Vallars gave me a letter of recommendation to a wine merchant in Mâcon, with whom I found employment for two months, at the end of which my father wrote he had arranged my affairs and that I could return to Paris without any danger.

I immediately took the coach and made the journey with some recruits. My heart beat as if it would burst when I saw once again the rue St. Jacques, the clock of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné, the sign-board of the *Trois Pucelles*, and the St. Catherine of Monsieur Blaizot.

My mother wept at the sight of me. I wept, we embraced, and we wept anew. My father, coming in all haste from the *Petit Bacchus*, said, with softened dignity:

“Jacquot, my son, I will not hide from you that I was very irritated with you when I saw the police enter the *Reine Pédaque* to take you, or failing you, to take me in your place. They would not listen to anything, affirming that it would be permitted to me to explain myself in prison. They sought you on a complaint lodged by Monsieur de la Guéritaude. I formed a horrible notion of your evil ways in my own mind. But having learnt from your letters that they were but peccadilloes I thought only of seeing you again. I have consulted many a time with the landlord of the *Petit Bacchus* on the means of hushing up your affair. He always answered me, ‘Maître Léonard, go and find the judge with a big bag of *ecus* and he will give you back your son as white as snow.’ But *ecus* are rare here, and there is neither chicken, goose nor duck which lays golden eggs in my house. At the most, nowadays, the poultry pays but for the fire in my chimney. By good luck your sainted and worthy mother had the idea of going to find Monsieur d’Anquetil’s mother, who we knew was busied in her son’s favour, sought for at the same time as you and for the same affair. For I recognise, my Jacquot, that you have played the scoundrel in company with a gentleman, and my heart is too well placed not to feel the honour which is thus reflected over all the family. Your mother then demanded an interview with Madame d’Anquetil in her house in the *faubourg* St. Antoine. She had dressed herself neatly as if she were going to mass, and Madame d’Anquetil received her kindly. Your mother is a saintly woman, Jacquot, but she is not very well-bred, and she spoke at first

unconventionally and in an unseemly fashion. She said, ‘Madame, at our age, nothing is left us after God, but our children.’ It was not the thing to say to that great lady who still has her lovers.”

“Be quiet, Léonard,” said my mother, “Madame d’Anquetil’s behaviour is not known to you, and I must have spoken well enough to the lady, for she replied:

“‘Be at peace, Madame Menétrier, I will act for your son as for my own; count on my zeal.’ And you know, Léonard, that before two months had elapsed we received the assurance that our Jacquot could return to Paris without any anxiety.”

We supped with good appetite. My father asked me whether I counted on remaining in Monsieur d’Astarac’s service. I replied that after the ever-to-be-regretted death of my good master I had no wish to find myself with that cruel Mosaïde and with a gentleman who paid his servants only in fine speeches. My father obligingly invited me to turn his spit as before.

“Latterly I have given the employment to brother Ange, Jacquot,” he told me, but he acquitted himself less well than Miraut and even than you. Will you not take your place on the stool again in the chimney-corner, my son?”

My mother who, simple as she was, did not lack judgment, shrugged her shoulders and said:

“Monsieur Blaizot, who is a bookseller at the sign of *St. Catherine*, has need of an assistant. That employment, my son, would fit you like a glove. You have gentle ways and good manners. That is what is suitable for the selling of Bibles.” I went at once and offered myself to Monsieur Blaizot, who took me into his service.

My misfortunes had rendered me wise. I was not discouraged by the humbleness of my task, and I fulfilled it with exactitude, handling the featherbrush and the broom to my patron’s satisfaction.

My duty was to pay a call on Monsieur d’Astarac. I presented myself at the great alchemist’s the last Sunday in November after the mid-day dinner. The distance is great from the rue St. Jacques to the Cross of Les Sablons, and the almanack does not lie when it tells us that the days are short in November. When I arrived at La Roule night had fallen, and a dark fog covered the deserted road. I meditated sadly in the gloom.

“Alas!” I said to myself, “it will soon be a year since for the first time I took the same road in the snow in the company of my good master, who rests now on a vine-covered hill in a village of Burgundy. He fell asleep in the hope of eternal life. And that is a hope it befits us to share with so learned and wise a man. God keep me from ever doubting the immortality of the soul. But one must own to one’s self that all that belongs to a future existence and to another world

appertains to those imperceptible truths which one believes without being affected by them, and which have neither taste nor savour, in such wise that one swallows them without being aware of them. For my part, I am not consoled by the thought of one day meeting Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard once more in Paradise. Surely he would not be recognisable, and his speeches would not have the charm they borrowed from circumstances."

While making these reflections I saw before me a great light spreading over half the sky; the fog was reddened with it right over my head, and the light palpitated at its source. A heavy smoke mingled with the vapours of the air. I feared at once that it was the *château* d'Astarac on fire. I hastened my steps, and I soon saw that my fears were but too well-founded. I perceived the Calvary of Les Sablons opaquely black against a torrent of flame and I saw, nearly at the same time, the *château* whose windows all blazed as if for a sinister revel. The little green door was burst open. Shadows moved in the park and whispered in horror. They were the inhabitants of the town of Neuilly who had hastened thither out of curiosity and to bring help. Some were throwing jets of water from a pump, which fell like glittering rain in the blazing furnace. A thick column of smoke rose above the *château*. A rain of sparks and cinders fell around me, and I soon perceived that my clothes and hands were blackened with them. I thought with despair that this dust which filled the air was the remains of so many beautiful books and precious manuscripts which had been my master's joy, the remains perhaps of Zozimus the Panipolitan, at which we had worked together during the noblest hours of my life.

I had seen Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard die. This time it was his very soul, his shining and gentle soul, that I thought I saw reduced to powder with the queen of libraries. I felt that a part of myself was destroyed at the same time. The wind which was rising added strength to the fire, and the flames roared like hungry throats. Seeing a man from Neuilly, blacker than I was myself, and wearing but his waistcoat, I asked him if they had saved Monsieur d'Astarac and his people.

"No one," said he, "has come out of the *château* except an old Jew, who was seen to escape with some bundles towards the marshes. He lived in the keeper's cottage on the river, and was hated for his origin and for the crimes of which he was suspected. Some children pursued him, and in flying he fell into the Seine. He was fished out dead, holding to his heart a grammar and six gold cups. You can see him on the bank in his yellow robe. He is awful, with open eyes."

"Ah," I replied, "his end was due to his crimes. But his death will not give me back the best of masters, whom he assassinated. Tell me again, has no one seen Monsieur d'Astarac?"

At the moment when I asked this question I heard one of the restless shadows near me give a terror-stricken cry:

“The roof is going to fall in.”

Then I recognised with horror the tall black form of Monsieur d’Astarac running along the gutter. The alchemist cried in a ringing voice:

“I rise on the wings of the flame into the abode of divine life.”

He spoke: all at once the roof gave way with a horrible crash, and flames high as mountains enveloped the friend of the Salamanders.

XXIV

THERE is no love can outlast absence. The memory of Jael, cruel at first, softened little by little, and there remained to me but a vague restlessness of which she was not even the unique object.

Monsieur Blaizot waxed old. He withdrew to Montrouge, to his little house in the fields, and sold me his stock-in-trade in consideration of an allowance for life. Becoming, in his place, sworn bookseller at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine*, I made my father and mother retire there, for their cook-shop had not smoked for some time past. I had a liking for my modest shop and I was solicitous to deck it. I nailed old Venetian maps on the doors, and these ornamented with allegorical engravings, which make an odd and old-world ornamentation no doubt, but pleasant to friends of the classics. My knowledge, on the condition that I took care to hide it, did me no harm in my business. It would have stood more in my light had I been, like Marc-Michel Rey, bookseller and publisher, and obliged as he was to earn my living at the expense of public stupidity.

I stock, as they say, the classic authors, and it is a commodity which has its price in this learned rue St. Jacques, whose antiquities and illustrious occupants it would give me pleasure one day to write of. The first Parisian printer set up his venerable presses here. The Cramoisy, whom Guy Patin calls the kings of the rue St. Jacques, sent forth from here the collected works of our historians. Before the College of France rose up, the king's readers Pierre Danès, François Votable, and Ramus, gave their lessons in a shed where resounded the quarrels of porters and washerwomen. And how can we forget Jean de Meung, who, in a little house in this street, composed the *Romaunt of the Rose*?

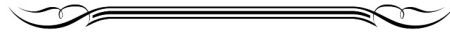
I have the run of all the house, which is old, and dates at least from the Gothic period, as appears in the beams of wood which cross on the narrow façade, in the two projecting storeys, and in the overhanging roof laden with moss-grown tiles. It has but one window on each floor. The one on the first floor is full of flowers in all seasons and furnished with strings on which convolvulus and nasturtium climb in the spring-time. My good mother plants and waters them.

It is the window of her room. One can see her from the street, reading her prayers from a book printed in large type, above the sign of *Sainte Catherine*. Years, devotion, and maternal pride have given her an air of dignity, and to see her waxen face under the high white coif one would swear it was that of a rich *bourgeoise*.

My father, with advancing years, has also acquired a certain dignity. As he likes fresh air and movement I occupy him in carrying the books to town. At first I had employed brother Ange, but he asked for alms of my clients, made them kiss relics, stole their wine, caressed their maid-servants, and left half my books in all the gutters of the neighbourhood, I withdrew his appointment as soon as possible. But my good mother, whom he makes believe he possesses secrets wherewith to gain heaven, gives him soup and wine. He is not a bad man and he has ended by inspiring me with a sort of attachment.

Many savants and some of our wits frequent my shop. And it is the great advantage of my position to be put in daily intercourse with people of worth. Among those who come oftenest to turn over the leaves of the new books and converse familiarly with one another, are historians as learned as Tillemont, ecclesiastical orators who equal Bossuet and even Bourdaloue in eloquence; poets, comic and tragic; theologians in whom pureness of morals is joined to solidity of doctrine; esteemed authors of Spanish romances; geometricians and philosophers capable, like Monsieur Descartes, of measuring and weighing universes. I admire them, I relish their lightest words. But none, to my thinking, equals in genius the good master I had the misfortune to lose on the Lyons road; none recalls that incomparable elegance of thought, the sweet sublimity, that amazing richness of a soul always overflowing and pouring forth like the urns of those personified rivers one sees in marble in the gardens; none offers me that inexhaustible wellspring of knowledge and morals where I had the happiness to slake the thirst of my youth; none gives me even the shadow of that grace, that wisdom, that vigour of thought which shone in Monsieur Jérôme Coignard. Him I hold for the kindest soul that ever blossomed on this earth.

THE OPINIONS OF JEROME COIGNARD



Translated by Mrs. Wilfred Jackson

The Opinions of Jerome Coignard was first published in 1893 in France and two decades later it was translated and released in Britain. The work is a companion piece to France's novel *At the Sign of the Reine Pedauque*, consisting of a series of fictionalised essays attributed to the controversial priest Jerome Coignard. Jacques Tournebroke (Menetrier) returns as a prominent figure in this novel, which details philosophical discussions often held at an old bookstore near where they both reside. Coignard is an intriguing figure, representing a combination of philosophical positions, while also managing to appear cohesive as a character and a great thinker. While often employing irony, he is shown to be incredibly harsh in debunking notions he believes to be illusions. He launches satirical attacks on the problems with the government and Church, while somehow being able to also reaffirm aspects of faith.

The essays address a plethora of issues and topics, including the priest's dismal view on the nature of humankind and its inability to evolve or progress. One intriguing discussion is focused on the notion of justice: a concept and ideal which has plagued philosophers since Plato's *The Republic*. France explores how morality becomes established, the inadequate form that justice takes in society, and the faulty means through which this justice is supposedly enacted.

CONTENTS

- [I. MINISTERS OF STATE](#)
- [II. SAINT ABRAHAM](#)
- [III. MINISTERS OF STATE \(concluded\)](#)
- [IV. THE AFFAIR OF THE MISSISSIPPI](#)
- [V. EASTER EGGS](#)
- [VI. THE NEW MINISTRY](#)
- [VII. THE NEW MINISTRY \(concluded\)](#)
- [VIII. THE CITY MAGISTRATES](#)
- [IX. SCIENCE](#)
- [X. THE ARMY](#)
- [XI. THE ARMY \(continued\)](#)
- [XII. THE ARMY \(concluded\)](#)
- [XIII. ACADEMIES](#)
- [XIV. SEDITION-MONGERS](#)
- [XV. REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES](#)
- [XVI. HISTORY](#)
- [XVII. MONSIEUR NICODEME](#)
- [XVIII. JUSTICE](#)
- [XIX. THE BEADLE'S STORY](#)
- [XX. JUSTICE \(continued\)](#)
- [XXI. JUSTICE \(continued\)](#)
- [XXII. JUSTICE \(concluded\)](#)

TO OCTAVE MIRBEAU

THERE is no need for me to tell over again here the life of Monsieur l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard, professor of oratory at the college of Beauvais, librarian to Monseigneur de Séz, *Sagiensis episcopi bibliothecarius solertissimus*, as his epitaph has it, later on secretary at the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, and finally curator of that queen of libraries (the Astaracian), whose loss is for ever to be deplored. He perished, assassinated, on the Lyons road, by a Jew cabalist of the name of Mosaïde (*Judæa manu nefandissima*), leaving several incomplete works, and the memory of his admirable familiar conversation. All the circumstances of his odd existence and tragic end have been reported by his disciple Jacques Menétrier, called Tournebroche, or Turnspit because he was the son of a cook in the Rue St. Jacques. This Tournebroche professed for him whom it was his habit to speak of as his good master, a lively and tender admiration. "His was the kindest soul," said he, "that ever blossomed on this earth." Modestly and faithfully he edited the memoirs of the Abbé, who lives again in the work as Socrates does in the Memorabilia of Xenophon.

Observant, exact, and charitable, he drew a portrait full of life and instinct with a loving faithfulness. It is a work that makes one think of those portraits of Erasmus by Holbein that one sees in the Louvre, at Bâle, or at Hampton Court, the delicacy of which never wearies the sense of appreciation. In short, he left us a masterpiece. It will cause surprise no doubt, that he was not careful to have it printed. Moreover, he could have published it himself, for he set up as a bookseller in the Rue St. Jacques at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine*, where he succeeded Blaizot.

Perhaps, living as he did among books, he feared to add, if it were but a few leaves, to the horrible hoard of blackened paper that mildews unseen on the book-stalls. We may share his disgust when we pass the twopenny box on the quays, where the sun and the rain slowly consume pages written for immortality. Like those pathetic death's-heads that Bossuet sent to the Abbot of la Trappe to divert his solitude, here are subjects for reflection fitted to make the man of letters conceive the vanity of writing. I may say, for my part, that between the Pont Royal and the Pont Neuf, I have felt that vanity to the full. I should incline to believe that Abbé Coignard's pupil never printed his work because, formed by so good a master, he judged sanely of literary glory, and esteemed it at its worth, and that is exactly nothing. He knew it for uncertain, capricious, subject to every vicissitude, and dependent on circumstances themselves petty and wretched. Seeing his contemporaries, ignorant, abusive, and mediocre, he saw no reason to

hope that their posterity would suddenly become learned, balanced, and reliable. He merely divined that the Future, a stranger to our quarrels, would accord indifference in default of justice. We are well-nigh assured that, great and small, the Future will unite us in oblivion and cover us in a peaceful uniformity of silence. But if, by some extraordinary chance, that hope deceives us, if future generations keep some memory of our name and writings, we can foresee that they will only make acquaintance with our thoughts by the ingenious labour of gloss and super-gloss which alone perpetuates works of genius through the ages. The long life of a masterpiece is assured only at the price of quite pitiable intellectual hazards, in which the gabble of pedants reinforces the ingenious word-twisting of aesthetic souls. I am not afraid to say that, at the present day, we do not understand a single line of the Iliad, of the Divine Comedy, in the sense primitively attaching to it. To live is to change, and the posthumous life of our written-down thoughts is not free from the rule: they only continue to exist on condition that they become more and more different from what they were when they issued from our minds. Whatsoever in future may be admired in us, will have become altogether alien from us.

Possibly Jacques Tournebroche, whose simplicity we know, did not put himself all these questions in reference to the little book under his hand. It would be an insult to think that he had an exaggerated opinion of himself. —

I think I know him. I have meditated over his book. Everything he says, and everything he doesn't say, betrays an exquisite modesty of soul. — If, however, he was not without knowledge of his talent, he knew also that it is precisely talent that is least pardonable. In people of note we tolerate easily bareness of soul and falseheartedness. We are quite content that they should be bad or cowardly, and their good-luck even does not raise over much envy so long as it is not merited. Mediocrities are at once raised up, and carried along, by the surrounding nobodies who are honoured in them. The success of a commonplace person disturbs nobody. Rather, it secretly flatters the mob. But there is an insolence of talent which is expiated by dumb hatred, and calumnies not loud but deep. If Jacques Tournebroche consciously renounced the painful honour of irritating the foolish and the wicked by eloquent writing, one can only admire his good sense, and hold him the worthy scholar of a master who knew mankind. However it may be, the manuscript of Jacques Tournebroche, being left unpublished, was lost for more than a century.

I had the extraordinary good luck to find it again at a general broker's on the Boulevard Montparnasse, who spreads behind the dirtied panes of his shop, *croix du Lis*, *médailles de Sainte-Hélène*, and *decorations de Juillet*, without a suspicion that he is furnishing the generations a melancholy lesson on

peacemaking. This manuscript was published under my care in 1893, under the title: *La Rotisserie de la Reine Pédauque*. I refer the reader to it. He will find there more novelties than he looks for ordinarily in an old book. But it is not with that book that we have to do here.

Jacques Tournebroke was not content to make known the doings and sayings of his master in a connected recital. He was careful to collect much discourse and conversation of Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard that had not found place in the memoirs (for that is the name we must give to *La Rotisserie de la Reine Pédauque*) and he made a little note-book of it, which has fallen into my hands along with his other papers.

It is the note-book that I print now under the title: *The Opinions of The Abbé Jerome Coignard* . The kind and gracious welcome the public gave the preceding work by Jacques Tournebroke, encourages me to commence forthwith these dialogues, in which we meet once more the former librarian of Monseigneur de Séz with his indulgent wisdom, and that kind of generous scepticism to which his considerations tend, so mingled with contempt and kindness for man. I have no notion of taking responsibility for the ideas expressed by this philosopher on divers questions of politics and morality. My duties, as editor, merely bind me to present my author's thought in the most favourable light. His unfettered understanding trampled vulgar beliefs underfoot, and did not side uncritically with popular opinion, except in matters touching the Catholic faith, wherein he was immovable. In anything else he did not fear to oppose his age. Were it only for that he would merit esteem. We owe him the gratitude due to minds that have fought against prejudices. But it is easier to praise than to imitate them. Prejudices melt away and grow unceasingly with the eternal mobility of the clouds. They are by nature most imposing, until they become hateful, and men are rare who are free from the superstition of their period, and look squarely at what the crowd dares not face. Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard was independent in a humble walk of life; enough, I think to put him far above a Bossuet, and above all the great people that glitter, according to their degree, in the traditional pomp of custom and belief.

But while we hold that Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard lived as a free man, enfranchised from common errors, and that the spectre of common passions and fears had no empire over him, we must further observe that his surpassing intelligence had originality of outlook on nature and society, and only wanted, in order to astonish and delight mankind by some vast and beautiful mental engineering feat, the skill or the will to scatter sophisms, like cement, in the

interstices between truth and truth. It is only in that way that great systems of philosophy are built up and held together by the mortar of sophistry.

The synthetic faculty was wanting in him, or, (if you like), the art and law of symmetry. Without it, he was bound to appear, as in fact he did, a kind of wonderful compound of Epicurus and St. Francis of Assisi.

Those two, it seems to me, were the best friends that suffering humanity has yet met on its confused progress through life.

Epicurus freed the soul from empty fears and taught it to proportion its idea of happiness to its miserable nature and feeble powers. Good St. Francis, tenderer and more material, led the way to happiness by interior vision, and would have had souls expand like his, in joy, in the depths of an enchanted solitude. Both were helpful, one, to destroy illusions that deceive, the other, to create illusions from which one does not wake.

But it does not do to exaggerate. Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard was certainly not the equal, in action or in thought, of the boldest of the sages, nor of the most ardent of the saints. The truths that he discovered he could not fling himself upon headlong. In his hardest exploration he maintained the pose of a peaceful pedestrian. He did not sufficiently except himself from the contempt other men inspired in him. He lacked that valuable illusion that sustained Descartes and Bacon, who believed in themselves when they believed in no one else. He had doubts of the witness he bore, and scattered heedlessly the treasures of his mind. That confidence, however common in thinkers, was withheld from him, the confidence in himself as the superior of the greatest wits. It is an unpardonable fault, for glory is only given to those who importune it. In Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard it was, moreover, a weakness, and an illogicality. Since he pushed philosophical audacity to its farthest limits, he should not have scrupled to proclaim himself the first of men. But his heart remained simple and his soul pure, and his poorness of spirit that knew not how to rear itself above the world, did him an irreparable wrong. But need I say that I love him better as he was? I am not afraid to affirm that Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, philosopher and Christian, mingled in an incomparable union the epicurism that wards off grief, and the holy simplicity that conducts to joy.

It is to be remarked that not only did he accept the idea of God as furnished him by the Catholic faith, but further, that he tried to uphold it against argument of the rationalistic kind. He never imitated that practical address of professed Deists, who make a moral, philanthropical and prudish God for their own use, with whom they enjoy the satisfaction of a perfect understanding. The strict relations they establish with Him give much authority to their writings, and much consideration to their persons, before the public. And this God, akin to the

government, temperate, weighty, exempt from fanaticism, and who has His following, is a recommendation to them in salons, academies, and public meetings. Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard did not figure the Eternal to himself in so profitable a light. But considering the impossibility of conceiving of the world otherwise than under the category of intelligent beings, and that the cosmos must be held to be intelligible, even if but to demonstrate its absurdity, he referred the cause to an intelligence he called God, leaving the term in its infinite vagueness, relying for the rest on theology, which as we know, treats of the unknowable with minutest accuracy.

This reserve, which marks the limits of his understanding, was fortunate if, as I believe, it deprived him of the temptation to nibble at some appetising system of philosophy, and kept him from putting his nose into one of those mousetraps wherein independent minds are in such hurry to get caught. At his ease in the big old rat-run, he found more than one opening to look out on the world and observe nature. I do not share his religious beliefs, and am of opinion that they deceived him, as they have deceived, for their good or ill, so many generations of men. But it looks as if the old errors were less vexatious than the new, and that, since we are bound to go wrong, it were best to hold by illusions that have lost their sparkle.

It is certain, though, that Abbé Coignard, in accepting Christian and Catholic principles, did not deny himself the deduction of some original conclusions therefrom. Rooted in orthodoxy, his luxuriant spirit flourished singularly in epicurism and in humility. As I have said before he always tried to chase away those phantoms of the night, those empty fears, or as he called them, those gothic diabolisms, which make the pious existence of the simple bourgeois a kind of sordid and day-long witches' sabbath. Theologians have, in our own day, accused him of carrying hope to excess, and even beyond bounds. I meet the reproach once more under the hand of an eminent philosopher.

I do not know if Monsieur Coignard really reposed an exaggerated trust in divine goodness. But certainly he conceived the meaning of grace in a large and natural sense, and the world, in his eyes, less resembled the deserts of the Thebaid than the garden of Epicurus. He took his way through it with that daring ingenuousness which is the most marked trait in his character, and the foundation of his teaching.

Never did a mind show itself at once so bold and so pacificatory, nor soften its disdain with greater gentleness. His rule conjoined the freedom of the cynics and the innocence of the primitive community of the Portiuncula. Tenderly he despised men. He tried to show them that having no measure of greatness about them save their capacity for sorrow, they could lay up for themselves nothing

useful or beautiful save pity; that fit only for desire or suffering, they should practise themselves in the indulgent and the pleasure giving virtues. He came to consider pride as the source of greatest evil, and the one vice against nature.

It seems likely indeed, that men make themselves miserable by the exaggerated opinion they have of themselves and their kind, and that if they could form a humbler and truer notion of human nature they might be kinder to others and kinder to themselves.

His sympathetic regard, then, urged him to humiliate his fellows, in their opinions, their knowledge, their philosophy, and institutions. He put his heart into showing them that their weak and silly nature has never constructed nor imagined anything worth the trouble of attacking and defending very briskly, and that if they knew the crudity and weakness of their greatest works, such as their laws and their empires, they would only fight in fun or in play, like children building sand-castles by the sea.

We must not be astonished or scandalised then, that he depreciated every conception which makes for the honour and glory of mankind, at the expense of their peace. The majesty of the law did not impose on his clear-sighted intellect, and he deplored the fact that the wretched were subjected to so many restraints, of which in most cases, they could not discover the origin or the meaning. All principles appeared equally contestable to him. He had at last come to believe that members of a state would never condemn so many of their kind to infamy, if it were not to taste, by contrast, the pleasure of respectability. Such a view made him prefer bad company to good, after the example of Him who lived among publicans and sinners. But he kept his purity of heart, his gift of sympathy, and the treasure of his pity. I shall not speak here of his actions, which are recounted in *La Rotisserie de la Reine Pédauque*. — I have no means of knowing whether, as was said of Madame de Mouchy, he was more worthy than his life. Our actions are not altogether our own; they depend less on us than on fortune. They come to us from all sides. We do not always merit them. Our inviolable mind is all we have of our very own. Thence the vanity of the world's judgments. Nevertheless, I can say with pleasure that our leading lights have found Monsieur Coignard an amiable and pleasing person. Indeed one must be a Pharisee not to see in him a beautiful creation of God. So much said I hasten to return to his teachings, which alone matter here.

What he had least of was the bump of veneration. Nature had denied it him, and he took no steps to acquire it. He feared lest, in exalting some, he should cast down others, and his universal charity was extended equally to the humble and the proud. It bore itself to the victims with a greater solicitude, but the

executioners themselves seemed to him too wretched to be worthy of hate. He wished them no harm, and merely pitied them that they were wicked.

He had no belief that reprisals, whether spontaneous, or according to law, did anything but add ill to ill. He viewed with complacency neither the vengeance that is private and much to the point, nor the majestic cruelty of the law, and if he happened to smile when the police were being drubbed, it was simply the result of his being but flesh and blood, and naturally a good fellow.

He had, in fact, formed a very simple and sensible notion of evil. He ascribed it altogether to man's functions and natural feelings, without mixing up with it all the prejudices that take on an artificial consistency in the codes. I have said that he formed no system, being little inclined to resolve his difficulties by sophistry. It is evident that, at the outset, a difficulty stopped him short in his meditations on the means of establishing happiness or even peace on earth. He was convinced that man is by nature a vicious animal, and that communities are not abominable simply because he uses all his wits to shape them. Consequently he looked for no benefit from a return to nature. I doubt if he would have changed his opinion if he had lived to read *Emile*. When he died, Jean-Jacques had not yet stirred the world by eloquence of the sincerest feeling joined to logic or the falsest. He was still but a little vagabond, and unhappily for him, found other Abbés than Monsieur Jérôme Coignard on the benches of Lyons' deserted walks. We may regret that Monsieur Coignard, who knew all sorts of people, never met by chance Madame de Warens' young friend. But it could only have been an amusing incident, a romantic scene. Jean-Jacques would not have found the wisdom of our disillusioned philosopher much to his taste. Nothing could be less like the philosophy of Rousseau than that of Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. The latter is marked with a kindly irony. It is easy and indulgent. Founded on human infirmity it is solid at bottom. The other is lacking in its gay scepticism and fleeting smile. —

Taking its seat on an imaginary base, that of the original virtue of our kind, it finds itself in an awkward position, the comicality of which is not quite evident to itself. It is the doctrine for men who have never laughed. Its embarrassment is seen in its bad humour. It is ungracious. There would be nothing in that but it reinstals man among the monkeys, and then gets unreasonably angry when the monkey is not virtuous. In which it is absurd and cruel. This was well exemplified when statesmen wished to apply the teachings of the *Contrat Social* to the best of Republics.

Robespierre venerated the memory of Rousseau.

He would have held Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard for a bad man. I would not make the remark if Robespierre had been a monster. But, for the learned, there

are no monsters. Robespierre was an optimist, who believed in good. Statesmen of this turn do all the evil possible. If one meddles in the government of mankind one must never lose sight of the fact that they are monkeys, and mischievous. Only thus can you have a humane and kindly polity. The folly of the Revolution was to wish to establish virtue on earth. When one would make men good and wise, free, moderate, and liberal, one is led to the fatal desire of killing them all. Robespierre believed in virtue and he brought about the Terror. Marat believed in justice; he demanded two hundred thousand heads. Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard is perhaps, of all the minds of the eighteenth century, the one whose principles were most opposed to the principles of the Revolution. He would not have signed a line of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, because of the excessive and unfair separation it establishes between man and the gorilla.

Last week I had a visit from an anarchist-comrade who honours me with his friendship, and whom I like, because having taken no part as yet in the government of his country, he has kept much of his innocence. He wants to blow up everything merely because he believes men to be naturally good and virtuous. He thinks that, deprived of their goods, and delivered from laws, they would shed their egoism and wickedness. The tenderest optimism has led him to the most savage ferocity. His only misfortune and his only crime, is that he has brought an elysian soul, made for the golden age, into the business of a cook, to which he is condemned. He is a Jean-Jacques, very simple, and very honest, who has never let himself be worried by the sight of a Madame d'Houdetot, nor softened by the refined generosity of a Maréchal de Luxembourg. His candour leaves him at the mercy of his logic, and renders him terrible. He reasons better than a minister, but he starts from an absurd principle. He does not believe in original sin, and yet, for all that, it is a dogma of such solid and stable truth that we have been able to build on it everything we have chosen to.

Why were you not with him in my study, Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, to make him feel the falsity of his doctrine? You would not have talked to this generous Utopian of the benefits of civilization and of state interests. You knew these to be pleasantries, indecent to vent on the unfortunate. You knew that public order is but public violence, and that each man can judge of the interest he has in it. But you would have drawn a true and terrible picture of that state of nature he wishes to re-establish; you would have shown him in the idyll of his dreams, an infinity of bloody and domestic tragedies, and in his too happy anarchy the beginning of a dreadful tyranny.

And that leads me to define the attitude that Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard at the *Petit Bacchus*, took in regard to governments and peoples. He respected neither the supports of society nor the vault of Empire. He held as subject to doubt and

as matter for dispute the very virtue of the Holy Ampulla, then a principle in the constitution such as universal suffrage is to-day. Such a liberty which would then have scandalised every Frenchman shocks us no longer.

But it would be to misunderstand our philosopher to make excuses for the liveliness of his criticisms on the old order of things.

Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard made no great difference between governments called absolute, and those we call free, and we may well suppose that had he lived in our day he would still have kept a strong dose of that generous discontent of which his heart was full.

Since he dealt in principles, no doubt he would have discovered the vanity of ours. I judge by a remark of his which has come down to us. "In a democracy," said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "a people is subjected to its own will — a very hard slavery. In fact, it has as little knowledge of its own will, and is as opposed to it, as it could be to that of a prince. For the universal will is to be seen scarcely or not at all in the individual, who nevertheless suffers the constraint of all. And universal suffrage is a hoax, like the dove that brought the Sacred Chrism in its beak. Popular government, like monarchy, rests on fiction and lives by expedient. It suffices that the fiction be accepted, and the expedient happy."

This maxim is enough to make us believe that he would have preserved in our day the proud and smiling freedom which was the ornament of his mind in the age of kings. Still, he was never a revolutionary. He had too few illusions for that, and thought that governments should not be destroyed otherwise than by the blind and inexorable forces, slow and irresistible, that carry away all things.

He held that the one people could not be governed two ways at the same time, for this reason, that, nations being indeed bodies, their functions depend on the structure of their parts, and the condition of their organs; that is to say, of the land and the people, and not of the ruling powers, who must be adjusted to a nation as a man's clothes are to his body.

"The misfortune is," added he, "that the people are suited by them like a Harlequin or a Jack-in-the-green. Their coat is ever too loose or too tight, ill-fitting, ridiculous, grubby, covered with stains, and crawling with vermin. We may mend things by shaking it out, cautiously, putting in a stitch here, and when necessary, applying the scissors there, with discretion, so as to avoid being at the expense of another equally bad, but not clinging too obstinately to the old garment when the body has changed its shape by growth."

One sees from this that Monsier l'Abbé Coignard, was a friend to order and progress, and altogether was not a bad citizen. He incited no man to revolt, and had rather that instituted things were worn and ground-down by incessant friction, than overturned and broken by any great strokes. He was for ever

pointing out to his disciples that the harshest laws grew wonderfully smoother in practice, and that the clemency of time is surer than that of man. As for seeing the sprawling Corpus of the law one day re-shaped, he neither hoped it nor wished for it; laying no store by the benefits of hasty legislation. Jacques Tournebroke asked him at times whether he were not afraid that his critical philosophy, as exercised on institutions he himself judged necessary, might not have the inopportune effect of toppling down what he would wish preserved.

“Why, oh best of masters,” said his faithful disciple, “why reduce to dust the foundations of all right, of justice, and law, and generally of all civil and — military rule, since you acknowledge the necessity of right, justice, armies, magistrates and drill-sergeants?”

“My son,” replied Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, “I have ever remarked that men’s prejudices are the source of their ills, just as spiders and scorpions issue from the gloom of cellars and the damp of back-gardens. It is just as well to pass the Turk’s head or the broom at random now and then in these — dark — corners. It — is not a bad thing even to — give — a touch of the — pick here and there on — the walls of the cellar and garden. It scares the vermin and prepares the way for the ruin that must come.”

“I agree willingly,” replied the mild Tournebroke; “but when you have destroyed every principle, my master, what will be left?”

And his master replied: “After the destruction of every false principle society will still cohere, because it is founded on necessity, whose laws, older than Saturn, will still prevail when Prometheus shall have dethroned Jupiter.”

Prometheus has dethroned Jupiter more than once since the time when Abbé Coignard spoke these words, and the prophecies of the sage have been so literally verified that at the present day one feels doubts, so much does the new resemble the old order, whether the power does not still rest in ancient Jove. There are those who deny the coming of the Titan. There is no sign on his breast, they say, of the wound whence the eagle, the creature of injustice, tore out his heart, the wound that should bleed for ever. He knows nothing of the griefs and insurgence of the exile. This is not the workaday divinity, promised, and expected by us. This is the full-fed Jove from the hoary and laughable Olympus. When shall he appear again, the strong friend of men, the fire-kindler, the Titan still nailed to his crag? A terrible noise from out the mountains makes known that he is lifting his lacerated shoulders from off the iniquitous rock, and we can feel, flaming on us, his distant breath.

A stranger to business, Monsieur Coignard inclined to pure speculation and dealt readily in general ideas. This disposition of his, which may have damaged him in the eyes of his contemporaries, gives his reflections some worth and

usefulness after a century and a half. We can there learn to know the manners of our own day and disentangle what there is of evil in them.

Injustice, stupidity, and cruelty, do not strike us when they are the common lot. We see them in our ancestors but not in ourselves. Still, since there is no past epoch whatever, when mankind does not seem absurd to us, savage and unjust, it would be a miracle if our age had, by some privilege, cast away every shred of folly, malice, and savagery. The opinions of Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard would help us to make our examination of conscience, if we were not like those idols which have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not. With a little good faith and impartiality we should soon see that our legal codes are still but a hotbed of injustice, that we preserve in our manners the inherited hardness of avarice and pride; that we value wealth alone, and have no respect for labour. Our system of affairs would appear to us what it really is, a wretched and precarious system, condemned by abstract justice if not by that of man, and the ruin of which is beginning. Our rich men would seem to us as foolish as cockchafers continuing to eat the leaves of a tree, while the little beetle on their body devours their entrails. No more would we be lulled to sleep by the false speeches of our statesmen; we should conceive a positive pity for our economists arguing with one another about the cost of the furniture in a burning house. Abbé Coignard's disquisitions reveal to us a prophetic disdain of the great principles of the Revolution and of the rights of the people, on which we have established these hundred years, with every kind of violence and usurpation, an incoherent succession of insurrectionary governments, themselves, innocent of irony, condemning insurrection. If we could begin to smile a little at follies, which once appeared majestic and at times were stained with blood; if we could perceive that our modern prejudices are, like the old, the outcome of something, either ridiculous or hateful; if we could judge one another with a charitable scepticism, quarrels would be less sharp, in the fairest country in the world, and Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, for one, would have laboured for the universal good.

ANATOLE FRANCE

This has been very favourably received, Monsieur Hugues Rebell having admitted that there is such a thing as a charitable scepticism. Referring, not, it is true, to the opinions of Monsieur Coignard, but to some writings drawn from the same source, he has made some remarks of which I may avail myself here:

“An interesting vein of thought might be followed up after reading this work, furnishing, as it does, some valuable teaching: I may be permitted some reflections on it:

“1. The organisation of a particular society does not depend on individual wills, but on the compulsion of nature, or to put it more simply, on the unanimity of the more intelligent beings of which that society is composed who inevitably choose the most agreeable rule of life:

“2. Mankind at any one period, having the same organic constitution and passions as mankind at any other period, can never have entirely differing institutions. It results from this that a political revolution is no more than a rotatory movement, round the ancient ways, which ends where it began; it is just a disease, an interruption in human development. And the result of this law is that all societies live and die in the same way.”

HUGUES REBELL in *l'Ermitage*, April 1893.

Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard simply says that a people is not susceptible to more than one form of government at the same period.

THE OPINIONS OF
JÉRÔME COIGNARD
COLLECTED BY
JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE
AND PUBLISHED BY
ANATOLE FRANCE
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JÉRÔME COIGNARD

I. MINISTERS OF STATE

THIS afternoon, Abbé Jérôme Coignard visited, as he was in the habit of doing, Monsieur Blaizot, the bookseller in the Rue Saint-Jacques, at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine* .

Perceiving the works of Jean Racine on the shelves he set about carelessly turning over the leaves of one of the volumes.

“This poet,” he informed us, “was not lacking in genius, and had he but risen to the writing of his tragedies in Latin verse he would be worthy of praise, more especially in the case of his *Athalie* , where he shows that he understood politics well enough. In comparison with him Corneille is but an empty ranter. This tragedy of the accession of Joas shows us some of the forces whose play raises empires or casts them down. And one must perforce believe that Monsieur Racine possessed that spirit of finesse which we should hold of more account than all the sublimities of poetry and eloquence, which in reality are but rhetorical tricks serving for the amusement of the vulgar. To raise mankind to the sublime belongs to an inferior order of mind self-deceived on the true nature of Adam’s race, which is altogether wretched and deserving of pity. I refrain from calling man a ridiculous animal for the sole consideration that Jesus Christ ransomed him with His precious blood. The nobility of mankind is based only upon this inconceivable mystery, and of themselves human beings, be they mean or great, are but savage and disgusting beasts.”

Just as my good master pronounced these final words Monsieur Roman came into the shop.

“Stop! Monsieur l’Abbé,” exclaimed this able man. “You forget that those disgusting and ferocious beasts are, in Europe at any rate, subjected to an admirable government, and that states, such as the kingdom of France, and the Dutch Republic, are far removed from the barbarous and rude conditions which offend you.”

My good master replaced the volume of Racine on the shelf, and replied to Monsieur Roman with his customary grace:

“I grant you, Monsieur, that in the writings of the philosophers, who treat of these subjects, the doings of public men take on a certain symmetry and perspicuousness, and in your treatise on *Monarchy* I admire the sequence and connection of ideas. But it is to you alone that I do honour for the fine sentiments that you attribute to the great politicians of times past and present. They had not the wit you endow them with, and these illustrious beings, who

appear to have led the world, were themselves but the plaything of nature and chance. They did not rise above human imbecility, and were in fact but brilliant nobodies.”

While listening impatiently to this speech Monsieur Roman had seized hold of an old atlas. He began to turn it about with a noise which mingled with the sound of his voice.

“What blindness!” said he. “What! to fail to understand the actions of great statesmen, of great citizens! Are you so ignorant of history that it does not appear obvious to you that a Caesar, a Richelieu, a Cromwell, moulded his people as a potter his clay? Do you not see that a state goes like a watch in the hands of a watchmaker?”

“I do not see it,” replied my good master, “and during the fifty years of my life I have noticed that this country has changed its form of government several times without changing the condition of the people, excepting for an insensible progress that does not depend on the human will. From which I conclude that it is well-nigh immaterial whether we be governed one way or another, and that statesmen are only noteworthy by reason of their coats and their coaches.”

“Can you talk like this,” replied Monsieur Roman, “on the day following the death of a statesman who took such a prominent part in affairs, and who, after long disgrace, dies at the moment he has regained power and honour? By the tumult round his bier you may judge the result of his work. This result lasts after him.”

“Monsieur,” answered my good master, “this statesman was an honest man, laborious and painstaking, and it might be said of him as of Monsieur Vauban, that he was too well-bred to affect the appearance of it, for he never took pains to please any one.

I would praise him before all, for having improved where others in the same business do but deteriorate.

He possessed his soul and had a glowing sense of the greatness of his country. He was praiseworthy also, in that he carried easily on those broad shoulders the spites of hucksters and rufflers. Even his enemies accord him a concealed approval. But what big things did he ever do, my good sir, and why does he seem to you anything but the sport of the winds which blew round him? The Jesuits whom he drove away, have come back; the little religious war he kindled to amuse the people has gone out, leaving next day but the stinking shell of a bad firework. I grant you he was clever in diverting opinion, or rather, in deflecting it. His party, which was but a party of opportunism and expediency, did not wait for his death to change its name and its chief without changing its doctrine. His

cabal remained faithful to its chief and to itself in continuing to submit to circumstances. Is there anything astonishingly great about that?"

"There is certainly something admirable," replied Monsieur Roman. "Had he only withdrawn the art of government from the clouds of metaphysics to lead it back to reality, he should have all my praise. His party, you say, was one of opportunism and expediency. But to excel in human affairs what needs one but to seize the happy moment and have recourse to utilitarian methods? This is what he did, or, at least, this is what he would have done, if the chicken-hearted instability of his friends and the false effrontery of his foes had left him any peace. But he wore himself out in the vain endeavour to placate the latter and steady the former. Time and men, those necessary tools, both were wanting to establish his beneficent rule. At least he framed admirable plans for home politics. And you ought not to forget that he endowed his country with vast and fertile possessions abroad. We owe him all the more gratitude in that he made these successful conquests alone and in spite of the parliament from which he drew his powers."

"Monsieur," answered my good master, "he showed energy and skill in colonial affairs, but not perhaps much more than a plain man displays in buying a piece of land. And what is not to my taste in all these over-sea affairs is the way the Europeans deal with the peoples of Africa and America. White men, when they come to grips with black and yellow races find themselves forced to exterminate them. One can only conquer the savage by a higher form of barbarity. Here is the extreme to which all foreign enterprises tend. I am not denying that the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English have drawn profit from them. But, ordinarily speaking, they launch themselves haphazard, and quite recklessly on these big and cruel undertakings.

"What is the wisdom and the will of one man in enterprises affecting commerce, agriculture, and navigation, which necessarily depend on an immense number of units? The part played by a statesman in such affairs is a very small one, and if it seems marked to us it is because our minds, turning to mythology, too willingly give a name and a personality to all the secret workings of nature.

"What did he discover in the matter of colonisation that was not already known to the Phoenicians in the time of Cadmus?"

At these words Monsieur Roman let fall his atlas, which the bookseller quietly picked up.

"I discover to my sorrow, Monsieur l'Abbé," said he, "that you are a sophist. For that he must be who can thus smother the colonial enterprises of the dead and gone minister with Cadmus and the Phoenicians. You are unable to deny

that these undertakings were his work and you have made this pitiable introduction of Cadmus to set us at loggerheads.”

“Monsieur,” said the Abbé, “let us leave Cadmus alone if he annoys you. I merely wish to say that a statesman plays but a small part in his own works, and he deserves neither the glory nor the shame of them. I mean to say that, if, in this wretched comedy of life, princes appear to rule and people to obey, it is but a game, an empty show; and that really they are, both one and the other, directed by an unseen force.”

II. SAINT ABRAHAM

ONE summer night, while the gnats danced round the lamp of the *Petit Bacchus*, Abbé Coignard was taking the air in the porch of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné. There he was meditating, as his habit was, when Catherine came up and seated herself by him on the stone bench. My good master was ever inclined to praise God in his works. He took pleasure in the contemplation of this handsome girl, and as he had an agreeable and graceful wit he held her in pleasant talk. He paid tribute not only to the charm of her tongue, but to that of her neck and the rest of her person, and to the fact that she smiled no less with all the dimplement and lines of her pretty body than with lips and cheeks; in such sort that one submitted with impatience to drapery disguising the rest of the smile.

“Since we must needs all sin in this world and no one, without pride, may believe himself infallible, it is when with you, Mademoiselle, by preference, if such were your pleasure, that I would the Divine Grace failed me. I should gain thereby two valuable advantages, to wit: firstly, to sin with rare delight and unusual pleasure; secondly, to find thereafter an excuse in the strength of your fascination; for it is doubtless written in the Judgment Books that your charms are irresistible. That should be taken into consideration. There are imprudent people who sin with women ugly and ill-made. These unhappy mortals, setting about it in this way, run great risk of the loss of their souls, for they sin for sinning’s sake, and their onerous ill-doing is full of evil intent. Whereas, so fair a skin as yours, Catherine, is an excuse in the eyes of the Almighty. Your charms wonderfully alleviate the fault, which becomes pardonable, being involuntary. In fact, to tell you the plain truth, Mademoiselle, when I am near you Divine Grace abandons me at one stroke of the wing. At this moment that I am talking to you, it is but as a little white spot above those roofs where, on the tiles, the cats make love with mad cries and childish lamentation, the while the moon is perched unblushingly on a chimneypot. What I see of your person, Catherine, appeals to me; but what I do not see appeals to me still more.”

At these words she lowered her gaze on her lap; — then turned its liquid appeal on the Abbé. And in a very sweet voice she said:

“As you wish me well, Monsieur Jérôme, do promise to grant me the favour I am going to ask you, and for which I shall be so grateful.”

My good master promised. Who would not have done as much in his place?

Catherine then said vivaciously:

“You know, Monsieur l’Abbé, that Abbé La Perruque, the *vicaire* of St. Benoît, accuses brother Ange of having stolen his donkey, and he has carried his complaint to the ecclesiastical court. Now, nothing could be more untrue. The good brother had borrowed the donkey to take some relics to various villages. The donkey was lost on the way. The relics were found. That is the essential point, says brother Ange. But Abbé La Perruque reclaims his donkey, and won’t listen to anything else. He is going to put the little brother in the Archbishop’s prison. You alone can soften his anger and induce him to withdraw his complaint.”

“But, Mademoiselle,” said Abbé Coignard, “I have neither the power nor the inclination to do so.”

“Oh!” resumed Catherine, sliding near to him and looking at him with a great pretence of tenderness, “I shall be very unhappy if I cannot succeed in giving you the inclination. Whilst as to the power, you have it, Monsieur Jérôme; you have it! And nothing would be easier for you than to save the little brother. You have only to give Monsieur La Perruque eight sermons for Lent and four for Advent. You write sermons so well that it must be a real pleasure to you to write them. Compose these twelve sermons, Monsieur Jérôme; compose them at once. I will come and fetch them myself from your stall at the Innocents. Monsieur La Perruque, who thinks a great deal of your worth and your knowledge, reckons that twelve of your sermons are as good as a donkey. As soon as he has the dozen he will withdraw his complaint. He has said so. What are twelve sermons, Monsieur Jérôme? I promise to write Amen at the foot of the last one. I have your promise?” she added, putting her arms round his neck.

“As for that,” Monsieur Coignard said roughly, disengaging the pretty hands clasped on his shoulder, “I refuse flatly. Promises made to pretty girls are but skin deep, and it is no sin to retract them. Don’t count on me, my beauty, to drag your bearded gallant from the hands of the ecclesiastical court!

Should I write a sermon, or two, or twelve, they would be directed against the bad monks who are the shame of the Church, and are as vermin clinging to the robe of St. Peter. This brother Ange is a rascal. He gives good women to touch, as relics, some old mutton or pork bone which he has gnawed himself with disgusting greediness. I wager he bore on Monsieur La Perruque’s donkey a feather of the Angel Gabriel, a ray from the wise men’s star, and in a little phial a trifle of the sound of the bells that rang in the belfry of Solomon’s temple. He is a dunce, he is a liar, and you love him. There are three reasons why I should dislike him. I leave you to judge, Mademoiselle, which of the three is the strongest. Perchance it may well be the least honest; for in truth I was, a moment ago, drawn to you with a violence neither befitting my age nor my condition. But

make no mistake; I resent extremely the insults offered by your cowed rascal to the Church of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of which I am a very unworthy member. And this capuchin's example fills me with such disgust that I am possessed by a sudden longing to meditate on some beautiful passage of St. John Chrysostom, instead of sitting knee to knee with you, Mademoiselle, as I have been doing for the last quarter of an hour. For the desire of the sinner is short-lived and the glory of God is everlasting. I have never held an exaggerated notion of sins of the flesh. I think injustice to me that must be allowed.

"I am not scared like Monsieur Nicodème, for example, at such a little thing as taking one's pleasure with a pretty girl. But what I cannot endure is the baseness of soul, the hypocrisy, the lies, and the crass ignorance, which make your brother Ange an accomplished monk. From your intercourse with him, Mademoiselle, you get a habit of crapulence which drags you much below your position, which is that of a courtesan. I know the shame and the misery of it; but it is a far superior state to that of a monk. This rascal dishonours you even as he dishonours the gutters of the Rue St. Jacques by dipping his feet into them. Think of all the virtues with which you might adorn yourself, Mademoiselle, in your precarious walk of life, and one alone of which might one day open Paradise to you, if you were not subjugated and enslaved to this unclean beast.

"Even while permitting yourself to pick up here and there what must, after all, be bestowed on you as tokens of gratitude, you, Catherine, could blossom forth in faith, hope, and charity, love the poverty-stricken, and visit the sick. You could be charitable and compassionate; and find pure delight in the sight of the skies, the waters, the woods, and the fields. Of a morning, on opening your window, you could praise God while listening to the song of the birds. On days of pilgrimage you might climb the hill of St. Valérien, and there, beneath the Calvary softly bewail your lost innocence. You could act in such a way that He who, alone reads our hearts would say: 'Catherine is my creature, and I know her by the glimmerings of a clear light not altogether extinguished in her.'"

Catherine interrupted him:

"But Abbé," she said drily, "you are spinning me a sermon."

"Did you not ask me for a dozen?" he replied.

She began to be angry:

"Take care Abbé. It rests with you if we are to be friends or enemies. Will you compose the twelve sermons? Think well before you answer."

"Mademoiselle," said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "I have done blameworthy things in my life, but not after reflection."

"You will not? Quite certain? One — two — You refuse? Abbé, I shall take my revenge."

For some time she sulked, mute and bad-tempered, on the bench. Then all at once she started crying:

“Have done, Monsieur l’Abbé! Have done! At your age, and a man of your cloth to plague me thus! Fie Monsieur l’Abbé! Fie! How shameful, Monsieur l’Abbé!”

As she was squealing at her shrillest, the Abbé saw Mademoiselle Lecoeur, of the draper’s shop at the sign of the *Trois Pucelles*, pass through the porch. She was going thus late to confess to the third *vicaire* of St. Benoît, and turned away her head in sign of her huge disgust.

He owed to himself that Catherine’s revenge was prompt and sure, for Mademoiselle Lecoeur’s sense of virtue, fortified by age, had become so vigorous, that she was down upon every impropriety of the parish, and seven times a day stabbed with the point of her tongue the carnal sinners of the Rue St. Jacques.

But Catherine herself did not know how complete was her revenge. She had seen Mademoiselle Lecoeur come into the market-place, but she had not seen my father who was following closely.

He was coming with me to look for the Abbé in the porch, and take him to the *Petit Bacchus*. My father had a liking for Catherine. Nothing vexed him more than to see her close beset by gallants. He had no illusions about her conduct. But as he said, knowing and seeing are two different things. Now Catherine’s cries had reached his ears quite clearly, He was hasty and incapable of selfrestraint. I was much afraid that his wrath would burst forth in coarse suggestion or savage threats. I already saw him drawing his larding-pin, which he wore on his apron-string like an honourable weapon, for he gloried in his art and in his spit.

My fears were but half-justified. The occasion surprised him, but not unpleasantly, when Catherine showed virtue, and satisfaction overcame anger in his mind. —

He accosted my good master fairly civilly and said with mock severity:

“Monsieur Coignard, all priests who cultivate the society of courtesans lose thereby their virtue and their good name. And rightly so, even if no pleasure has rewarded their dishonour.”

Catherine left the spot with a fine air of offended modesty, and my excellent master answered my father with a sweet and smiling eloquence:

“That maxim is excellent, Monsieur Léonard; still one should not apply it without discretion, nor stick it on to everything as the lame cutler labels all his knives ‘sixpence.’ I will not inquire why I merited its application a moment ago. Will it not do if I own that I merited it?

“It is not seemly to talk of oneself and it would be too great a shock to my modesty to be obliged to discourse on what is personal to me. I would rather set up the case of the venerable Robert d’Arbrissel who acquired merit from frequenting courtesans. One might also quote St. Abraham, the anchorite of Syria, who did not fear to enter a house of ill-fame.”

“What St. Abraham was that?” asked my father, whose thoughts were all put to rout.

“Let us sit down outside your door,” said my good master, “bring a jug of wine, and I will tell you the story of this great saint as it was recorded for us by St. Ephraim himself.”

My father made a gesture of ready assent. We all three sat down under the eaves, and my good master spoke as follows:

“St. Abraham, being already old, lived alone in the desert in a little hut, when his brother died leaving a daughter of great beauty, named Mary. Assured that the life he led would be excellent for his niece, Abraham had built for her a little cell near his own, whence he taught her by means of a small window that he had pierced.

“He took care that she fasted, watched, and sang psalms. But a monk, whom we may suppose to have been a false monk, drew nigh Mary while the holy man Abraham was meditating on the Scriptures, and led the young girl into sin; who thus said to herself:

“‘It were far better, since I am dead to God, to go into a country where I am known to none.’

“Leaving her cell she betook herself to a neighbouring town called Edessa, where there were delightful gardens and cool fountains; it is still to this day the pleasantest of the towns of Syria. Meanwhile, the holy man Abraham remained plunged in profound meditation. His niece had already been gone some days when, opening her little window, he asked: —

“‘Mary, why do you no longer sing the psalms you sang so well?’ And receiving no reply he suspected the truth and cried: ‘A cruel wolf has carried off my ewe lamb from me!’

“He lived in sorrow for two years, after which he learnt that his niece was leading a bad life. Acting with discretion, he begged one of his friends to go to the town and find out what had become of her. The friend’s report was, that, in very deed, Mary was leading a bad life. At this news the holy man begged his friend to lend him a riding-dress and bring him a horse, and putting on his head a big hat which hid his face, so as not to be recognised, he presented himself at the hostelry where they had told him his niece was lodged. He looked on all sides to

see if he could not see her, but, as she did not appear, he said to the innkeeper, feigning to smile:

““ Mine host, they tell me you have a pretty girl here. Can I not see her?’

“The innkeeper, an obliging man, had her called and Mary appeared in a costume, which, according to the words of St. Ephraim himself, sufficed to reveal her mode of life. The holy man was pierced with sorrow.

“He affected gaiety nevertheless, and ordered a good meal. Mary was in a sober mood that day. In giving pleasure one does not always taste it, and the sight of this old man whom she did not recognise, for he had not removed his hat, in no way inclined her to joyousness. The innkeeper cried shame upon her for such naughty behaviour so opposed to the duties of her profession, but she said with a sigh: ‘ Would to God that I had died three years ago!’

“The holy man Abraham was careful to adopt the language, as he had taken the coat, of a gallant cavalier:

““My child,’ said he, ‘ I have come here not to bewail your sins but to partake of your affection.’

“But when the innkeeper left him alone with Mary he feigned no more, but raising his hat, he said weeping:

““Mary, my child, do you not know me? Am I not that Abraham who has been a father to you?’

“He took her by the hand and all the night long he exhorted her to repentance and penance. Above all he was careful not to drive her to despair. He repeated incessantly ‘ My child, it is only God who is without sin.’

“Mary was naturally a sweet soul. She consented to go back to him. At daybreak they set out. She would have taken her robes and jewels. But the holy man made her understand that it would be more fitting to leave them. He mounted her on his horse and led her back to their cells, where they both took up their past life. Only this time the good man took care that Mary’s room did not communicate with the outside world, and that there was no going out without passing through the room that he himself occupied. By which means and by the grace of God, he kept his ewe lamb. Such is the history of St. Abraham,” said my good master, drinking his cup of wine.

“It is quite beautiful,” said my father, “and the misfortunes of poor Mary have brought tears to my eyes.”

III. MINISTERS OF STATE (concluded)

THAT same day my good master and I were exceedingly surprised to meet at Monsieur Blaizot's at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine* , a little thin, yellow man, who was no other than the celebrated pamphleteer, Jean Hibou.... We had every reason to believe that he was in the Bastille, where he usually was. And if we had no hesitation in recognising him it was because his face still showed traces of the darkness and mildew of the dungeon. He was turning over with a trembling hand, under the bookseller's anxious eye, some political writings newly come from Holland. Abbé Jérôme Coignard doffed his hat with a natural grace which would have been more effective if the hat had not been staved in the night before in a scuffle, that need not concern us, in the arbour at the *Petit Bacchus* .

Abbé Coignard having shown his pleasure at meeting so able a man again; Monsieur Jean Hibou replied. "It will not be for long. I am leaving this country where I am unable to live. I cannot breathe the corrupted air of this town any longer. In a month's time I shall be settled in Holland. It is cruel to have to put up with Fleury after Dubois, and I am too virtuous to be a Frenchman. We are governed on bad principles, by fools and rogues. I cannot endure it."

"Truly," said my excellent master, "public affairs are badly managed and there are many thieves in office. Power is divided between fools and knaves, and should I ever write on the affairs of the day I should make a small book on the lines of the *Apokolokyntosis* of Seneca the Philosopher, or of our own *Satire Mènippée* , which is fairly pungent. This light and pleasant style suits the subject better than the morose stiltedness of a Tacitus or the patient seriousness of a de Thou. I would make copies of this lampoon which would be passed about under the rose, and it should display a philosophical disdain for mankind. The majority of the people in office would be extremely annoyed, but I think some would taste a secret pleasure in seeing themselves covered with shame. I judge so from what I heard said by a lady of good birth whose acquaintance I made at Sééz during the time when I was the Bishop's librarian. She was growing old, but still thrilled to lascivious memories. For I must tell you that for twenty years she had been the most notorious trollop in Normandy. And when I asked her what had given her the most lively pleasure in life, she answered me: 'To know myself dishonoured.'

"From this reply I gathered that she had some nicety of feeling. I would give as much credit to certain of our ministers, and if ever I write against them it

would be to incite them to hug their infamy and viciousness.

“But why postpone the execution of so fine a project? I will ask Monsieur Blaizot at once for half a dozen sheets of paper and set about writing the first chapter of the new *Mênippée* .”

He was already reaching out his hand to the astonished Monsieur Blaizot, when Monsieur Jean Hibou stopped him quickly:

“Keep this splendid scheme for Holland, Monsieur l’Abbé,” he said, “and come with me to Amsterdam, where I will provide you with the means of livelihood at some coffee-house or bagnio. There you will be free, and of nights you shall write your *Mênippée* at one end of the table, whilst I, at the other, am busy with my lampoons. They shall be full charged with virus, and who knows but what we may bring about a change in the affairs of the kingdom? Pamphleteers play more part than is thought in the downfall of empires. They prepare the catastrophe which is consummated by a popular revolt.”

“What a triumph,” he added, in a voice which whistled through his blackened teeth, carious with the bitter humours of his mouth, “what joy if I effected the destruction of one of those ministers, who, like cowards, shut me in the Bastille! Will you not take a share in such good work, Monsieur l’Abbé?”

“By no means,” replied my good master, “I should be very sorry to change anything in the system of the State, and if I thought that my *Apokolokyntosis* or *Ménippee* could have such a result, I would never write it.”

“What!” exclaimed the disappointed pamphleteer, “didn’t you tell me but a moment ago, that the present government was wicked?”

“No doubt,” said Monsieur l’Abbé, “but I merely imitate the wisdom of that old crone of Syracuse who, at the time when Dionysius treated his people most execrably, went to the temple every day to pray to the gods for the life of the tyrant. Told of this singular piety, Dionysius wished to know the reason for it. He sent for the good woman, and questioned her:

“She replied, ‘I am no longer young and have lived under many tyrants, and I have always observed that a bad one was succeeded by a worse. You are the most detestable that I have yet seen. From which I conclude that your successor will be, if possible, more wicked than yourself, and I pray the gods to give him to us as late as may be.’

“That old woman was very sensible, and I think as she did, Monsieur Jean Hibou, that sheep do well to allow themselves to be sheared by their old shepherd, for fear a younger one should come along, who would but shear them closer.”

Monsieur Jean Hibou's gall, stirred by this discourse, spent itself in bitter words:

"What cowardly talk! What shameful sentiments! Oh! Monsieur l'Abbé, what little love you bear to the public good, and how ill you deserve the oak-leaf crown promised by the poets to civic heroes. You should have been born amongst the Turks, amongst the Tartars, slave to a Genghis Khan or a Bajazet, rather than in Europe where principles of public right are taught, and divine philosophy. What! you endure bad government nor even wish to alter it! Such sentiments would be punished in a republic of my making by exile or banishment at least. Yes, Monsieur l'Abbé, in the constitution that I meditate, which is to be formulated on the maxims of antiquity, I shall add a clause for the punishment of such bad citizens as you, and I shall proclaim penalties against whomsoever can improve his State but does not do so."

"Eh! eh!" laughed the Abbé, "that is not the way to make me wish to live in your Salentum. What you have let me know of it leads me to think that there would be much constraint there."

Monsieur Jean Hibou replied sententiously: "You would only be constrained to be virtuous."

"Ah, how right that old woman was, and what reason we have to fear a Jean Hibou after a Dubois and a Fleury! What you offer me, my good sir, is a government of violence and hypocrisy, and to hasten this promised good you undertake to make me a keeper of a coffee-house or a bagnio on a canal in Amsterdam! Thank you for nothing! I stick to the Rue St. Jacques, where we drink cool claret and grumble at the ministers. Do you think you can seduce me by the vision of a government of honest men that so hedges in all liberties that no one can enjoy them?"

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said Jean Hibou, getting heated, "is it fair to attack a system of State conceived by me in the Bastille, and undisclosed to you?"

"Sir," retorted my excellent master, "I am suspicious of governments born of cabals and rebellions. To be in opposition is a very bad school of government, and wary politicians, who push themselves into office by this means, take great care to govern by rules entirely opposed to those they formerly taught. You need not go to China to see that! They are guided by the same necessities which lay on their predecessors. And they bring nothing new to the task but their inexperience. Which is one reason, sir, which makes me foretell that a new government would be more vexatious than the one it replaces, without being very different. Have we not already put it to the proof?"

"So," said Monsieur Jean Hibou, "you hold by abuses?"

“Such is the case,” answered my good master. “Governments are like wines that grow crusted and mellow with age. The roughest lose at length something of their crudity. I fear an empire in the greenness of its youth. I fear the rawness of a republic, and since we must be ill-governed I prefer princes and statesmen in whom the first ardour has cooled off.”

Monsieur Jean Hibou, crushing his hat on his nose, bade us good-bye with irritation in his voice.

As soon as he was gone Monsieur Blaizot looked up over his ledgers, and settling his spectacles, said to my excellent master:

“I have been a bookseller for forty years at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine*, and it is always a fresh pleasure to me to listen to the converse of the learned men who meet in my shop. But I do not greatly care for discussions on public affairs. People get heated, and quarrel to no purpose.”

“Moreover,” said my good master, “in this subject there is little solid principle.”

“There is, at least, one that no man will do well to contest,” replied Monsieur Blaizot the bookseller, “and that is that he must be a bad Christian and a bad Frenchman who would deny the virtue of the holy Ampulla of Rheims, by whose unction our kings are made vicars of Jesus Christ for the kingdom of France. Here is the basis of monarchy, which shall never be shaken.”

IV. THE AFFAIR OF THE MISSISSIPPI

It is well known that during the year 1722 the Parliament of Paris sat in judgment on the Mississippi affair, in which were implicated, along with the directors of the Company, a minister of State, secretary to the King, and many subinspectors of provinces. The Company was accused of having corrupted the officers of the King and his dominions, who had in reality stripped it with the greed usual to people in office under weak governments. And it is certain that at this period all the springs of government were slackened and warped.

At one of the sittings of this memorable action, Madame de la Morangère, wife of one of the directors of the Mississippi Company, was called before the members of Parliament in the upper chamber. She gave evidence that a Monsieur Lescot, secretary to the *Lieutenant-Criminel*, having sent for her to come in secret to the Châtelet, made her understand that it lay with her entirely to save her husband, who was a fine man and of comely aspect. He said to her, nearly in these terms: "Madame, what vexes the true friends of the King in this business is that the Jansenists are not implicated in it. Jansenists are enemies to the Crown as well as to religion. Help us, Madame, to convict one of them and we will acknowledge the service to the State by giving you back your husband with all his possessions."

When Madame de la Morangère had reported this conversation, which was not intended for the public, the President of the Parliament was obliged to call Monsieur Lescot to the upper chamber, who at first tried to deny it. But Madame de la Morangère had beautiful ingenuous eyes, whose gaze he could not meet. He grew troubled and was confounded. He was a big, villainous-looking, red-haired man like Judas Iscariot. This affair, noticed by the Press, became the talk of Paris. It was spoken of in the salons, on the public walks, at the barbers', and in the coffee-houses. Everywhere Madame de la Morangère gained as much sympathy as Lescot caused disgust.

Public curiosity was still rife when I accompanied my good master Monsieur Jérôme Coignard to Monsieur Blaizot's, who, as you know, is a bookseller in the Rue St. Jacques, at the sign of the *Image dé Sainte Catherine*. In the shop we found Monsieur Gentil, private secretary to one of the ministers of State, whose face was hidden in a book newly come from Holland, and the celebrated Monsieur Roman, who has treated of systems of State in various estimable works. Old Monsieur Blaizot was reading his paper behind the counter —

Monsieur Jérôme Coignard, always avid of news, slid up to him to glean what he could across his shoulder. This man, learned and of so rare a genius, owned nothing of the goods of this world, and when he had drunk his pint at the *Petit Bacchus* he had not a halfpenny left in his pockets to buy a newssheet. Having read the depositions of Madame de la Morangère over Monsieur Blaizot's shoulder, he cried out that it was well, and that it pleased him to see wickedness topple from its high seat under the weak hand of woman, as in wonderful examples witnessed to in Holy Writ.

"This lady," he added, "although allied with public men of whom I do not approve, may be likened unto those strong women lauded in the Book of Kings. She pleases by an uncommon mixture of straightforwardness and finesse, and I applaud her telling victory."

Monsieur Roman interrupted him:

"Take care, Monsieur l'Abbé," said he, stretching out his arm, "take care how you look at this affair from an individual and personal point of view, without troubling yourself as you should do with the public interests that are bound up in it. There are reasons of State in all this, and it is clear that this supreme reason demanded that Madame de la Morangère should not speak, or that her words should not find credence."

Monsieur Gentil lifted his nose from his book. "The importance of this incident," said he, "has been much exaggerated."

"Ah, Mr. Secretary," retorted Monsieur Roman, "we cannot believe that an incident that will lose you your place can be without importance. For you will fall by it, sir, you and your master. For my part, I am full of regrets. But what consoles me for the fall of the Ministry now reeling under the shock is that they were powerless to prevent it."

Monsieur Gentil made us understand by a slight wink that on this point he saw eye to eye with Monsieur Roman.

The latter continued:

"The State is like the human body — all the functions it accomplishes are not noble. Some there are indeed that one must needs hide, I may say the most necessary."

"Ah, Monsieur," said the Abbé, "was it then necessary that Monsieur Lescot should so behave to the unfortunate wife of a prisoner? It was infamous!"

"Oh," said Monsieur Roman, "it was infamous when it was known. Before, it was of no importance. If you wish to enjoy the benefit of being governed, which alone raises mankind above the animals, you must leave, to those who govern, the means of exercising power, and the first of these means is secrecy. That is why popular government, which is the least secret of all, is also the weakest. Do

you then think, Monsieur l'Abbé, that you can govern men by virtue? That is a wild dream!"

"I do not think so," replied my good master, "I have noticed in the varied chances of my life that men are evil beasts; one can only control them by force and cunning. But one must be measured and not offend the small amount of good tendencies which mingles with the evil instincts in their minds. For after all, Monsieur, man, all cowardly, stupid, cruel, as he is was made in God's image, and there remain to him still certain features of his primal shape. A government drawn from the common stock of average honesty, and that yet scandalises the people, should be deposed."

"Speak lower, Monsieur l'Abbé," said the Secretary.

"The King can do no wrong," said Monsieur Roman, "and your maxims are seditious, Monsieur l'Abbé. You deserve, you and your like, not to be governed at all."

"Oh!" said my good master, "if, as you give us to understand, government consists in swindling, violence, and exactions of all kinds, there is not much fear that this threat will take effect, and we shall find, for long enough yet, ministers of State and governors of provinces to carry on our affairs. Only I should much like to see others in place of these. The new-comers could not be worse than the old, and who knows but that they may be even slightly better?"

"Take care!" said Monsieur Roman, "take care! What is admirable in a state, is succession and continuity, and if there is no perfect state in this world, it is because, according to my idea, the flood in the time of Noah disordered the transmission of crowns. It is a confusion we have not quite set straight to this day."

"Monsieur," retorted my good master, "you are amusing with your theories. The history of the world is full of revolutions. One sees but civil wars, tumults, and seditions, caused by the wickedness of princes, and I know not which to admire the most nowadays, the impudence of the rulers, or the patience of the people."

The secretary complained then that Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard overlooked the benefits of royalty, and Monsieur Blaizot represented to us that it was not fitting to contend about public matters in a bookseller's shop.

When we were outside, I pulled my good master by the sleeve.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," I said, "have you then forgotten the old woman of Syracuse, that you now want to change the tyrant?"

"Tournebroche, my son," answered he, "I acknowledge with a good grace that I have fallen into a contradiction. But this ambiguity, that you justly point out in my words, is not as evil as that called antinomy by the philosophers."

Charron, in his book on ‘Wisdom,’ affirms that antinomies exist which cannot be resolved. For my part, I am no sooner plunged in meditations of the kind than I see in my mind’s eye half a dozen of these she-devils take each other by the nose and make pretence to tear each other’s eyes out, and one sees at once that one would never come to the end of reconciling these obstinate shrews. I lose all hope of making them agree, and it is their fault if I have not much advanced metaphysics. But in the present case the contradiction, my son, is merely apparent. My reason always sides with the old woman of Syracuse. I think to-day what I thought yesterday. Only I have let my feelings run away with me and have yielded to passion as do the vulgar.”

V. EASTER EGGS

MY father kept a cook-shop in the Rue St. Jacques opposite to St. Benoit-le-Bétourné. I do not pretend that he had any affection for Lent; the sentiment would not have been natural in a cook. But he observed the fasts and days of abstinence like the good Christian that he was. For lack of money to buy a dispensation from the Archbishop he supped off haddock on fast-days, with his wife, his son, his dog, and his usual guests, of whom the most assiduous was my good master, Monsieur l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard. My pious mother would not have allowed Miraut, our watchdog, to gnaw a bone on Good Friday. That day she put neither meat nor fat in the poor animal's mess. In vain did Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard represent to her that this was doing the wrong thing, and that in all justice, Miraut, who had no share in the sacred mysteries of redemption, ought not to suffer in his allowance.

"My good woman," said this great man, "it is fitting, that we, as members of the Church, should sup off haddock; but there is a certain superstition, impiety, temerity — nay even sacrilege — to associate a dog, as you do, with these mortifications of the flesh, made infinitely precious by the interest God Himself takes in them, and which that interest apart would be contemptible and ridiculous. It is an abuse, which your simplicity renders innocent, but which would be criminal in a Divine, or even in a judiciously minded Christian. Such a practice, my good lady, leads straight to the most shocking heresy. It tends to no less than the upholding of the theory that Jesus Christ died for dogs even as for the sons of Adam. And nothing is more contrary to the Scriptures."

"That may be," replied my mother. "But if Miraut ate meat on Good Friday I should fancy to myself that he was a Jew, and have a horror of him. Is that committing a sin, Monsieur l'Abbé?"

My excellent master answered gently, taking a drink of wine:

"Ah dear creature, without deciding at this moment if you sin or if you do not, I can tell you for a certainty that there is no malice in you, and I believe more surely in your eternal salvation than in that of five or six bishops and cardinals of my acquaintance, who have nevertheless written fine treatises on the canon law."

Miraut swallowed his mess sniffing at it, as if he did not like it, and my father went off with Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard to take a stroll to the *Petit Bacchus*.

Thus passed the holy time of Lent at the *Sign of the Reine Pédaque*. But from early Easter morn, when the bells of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné announced the joyful Resurrection, my father spitted chickens, ducks, and pigeons by the

dozen, and Miraut, in the corner by the glowing fire-place, sniffed the good smell of fat, wagging his tail with grave and pensive joy. Old, tired, and nearly blind, he still relished the joys of this life, whose ills he accepted with a resignation which made them less unkind for him. He was a sage, and I am not surprised that my mother associated such a reasonable creature in her good works.

Having heard High Mass we dined in the savoury smelling shop. My father brought to this repast a pious joy. He had commonly, as companions, a few attorneys' clerks, and my good master Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. This year of grace 1725, at Easter-tide, I remember, my good master brought Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, whom he had dragged from a loft in the Rue des Maçons, where this learned man wrote, day and night, news of the republic of letters for Dutch publishers. On the table a mound of red eggs rose from a wire basket. And when Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard had said the Benedicite, these eggs formed the topic of conversation.

"One reads in *Ælius Lampridus*," said Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, "that a hen owned by the father of Alexander Severus laid a red egg on the birthday of that child destined to Empire."

"This *Lampridus*, who had not much intelligence," said my good master, "had better have left such a tale to the old wives who have spread it abroad. You have too much good sense, sir, to deduce from this ridiculous fable the Christian custom of serving red eggs on Easter Day?"

"I do not indeed believe," replied Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, "that this usage is derived from the egg of Alexander Severus. The only conclusion that I wish to draw from the fact, as reported by *Lampridus*, is that a red egg, among the heathen, presaged supreme power. For the rest," he added, "that egg must have been reddened in some manner, for hens do not lay red eggs."

"Excuse me," said my mother, who was standing by the fire-place decorating the dishes, "in my childhood I saw a black hen who laid eggs shading into brown; that is why I am ready to believe that there are hens whose eggs are red, or of a colour approaching red, as for instance brick-colour."

"That is quite possible," said my good master, and Nature is more diverse and varied in her productions than we commonly believe. There are oddities of every sort in the generating of animals, and one sees in natural-history collections far stranger monsters than a red egg."

"For instance, they keep a calf with five feet, and a child with two heads, in the King's collection," said Monsieur Nicolas Cerise.

"They can better that at Auneau, near Chartres," said my mother, putting on the table, as she spoke, a dozen strings of sausages and cabbage, whence a

pleasing odour rose up to the joists of the ceiling. "I saw there, gentlemen, a new-born infant with goose-feet and a serpent's head. The midwife who received it got such a shock that she threw it in the fire."

"Be careful," said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "be careful, for man is born of woman to serve God, and it is unimaginable that he could serve Him with a serpent's head, and it follows therefore that there are no children of the kind, and that your midwife was dreaming or making fun of you."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, with a slight smile. "You have seen as I have, in the King's collection, a bi-sexual foetus with four legs, preserved in a jar filled with spirits of wine, and in another jar, a child without a head and with an eye over the navel. Could these monsters serve God any better than the child with the serpent's head our hostess speaks of? And what is one to say of those who have two heads, so that one does not know whether they have two souls? Acknowledge, Monsieur l'Abbé, that nature, while amusing herself with such cruel sport, puzzles the theologian no little?"

My good master had already opened his mouth to speak, and doubtless he would have entirely demolished the objection of Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, had not my mother, whom nothing could stop when she wanted to speak anticipated him by saying very loudly that the child at Auneau was no human creature, and it was the devil himself who had fathered it on a baker's wife. "And the proof is," she added, "that no one thought of having it baptized, and that it was buried in a napkin at the bottom of the enclosed garden. If it had been a human being it would have been buried in consecrated ground. When the devil fathers a child it takes the shape of an animal."

"My good woman," replied Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "it is marvellous that a villager should know more of the devil than a Doctor of Divinity. I admire the way you interest yourself in the matron of Auneau, to the extent of knowing if such fruit of a woman is one with mankind, redeemed by the blood of God. Believe me, these devilries are but unclean fancies which you should purge from your mind. It is not written in the Fathers that the devil fathers children on poor girls. All these tales of satanic fornication are disgusting imaginings, and it is a disgrace that the Jesuits and Dominicans have written treatises on them."

"You speak well, Abbé," said Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, impaling a sausage from the dish. "But you give no answer to what I said, that the children born without heads are far from being adapted to the destiny of mankind, which, the Church tells us, is to know God and to serve Him and to love Him, and in that, as in the amount of germs which are wasted, nature is not, speaking plainly, sufficiently theological and Christian. I may add that she exhibits no religious

spirit in any of her acts, and seems to ignore her God. That is what frightens me, Monsieur l'Abbé."

"Oh!" cried my father, waving on the end of his fork a drum-stick of the chicken he was carving, "Oh! this is indeed gloomy and dreary talk, ill-suited to the feast we celebrate to-day. And it is my wife who is to blame, who offers us a child with a serpent's head as if it were an agreeable dish for honest company. That out of my beautiful red eggs should come so many diabolical tales!"

"Ah, mine host," said Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard. "It is true that everything comes out of the egg. From this idea the heathens have drawn many philosophical fables. But that from eggs, so Christian under their antique purple as those we have just eaten, should escape such a flight of wild impieties, that is what amazes me."

Monsieur Nicolas Cerise looked at my good master, winking his eye, and said, with a thin laugh:

"Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, these eggs, whose beetroot-tinted shells lie scattered on the floor under our feet, are not in their essence as Christian and Catholic as it pleases you to think them. Easter Eggs, on the contrary, are of heathen origin, and recall, at the time of spring equinox, the mysterious burgeoning of life. It is an ancient symbol which has been preserved in the Christian religion."

"One might equably reasonably uphold," said my good master, "that it is a symbol of the Resurrection of Christ. I, for one, have no wish to load religion with symbolical subtleties. I would most willingly believe that the pleasure of eating eggs, denied to us during Lent, is the sole reason why on this day they appear on the tables with honour and clothed in royal purple. But no matter, these are mere trifles, serving to amuse the learned and the bookmen. What is worth considering in your talk, Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, is that you bring into opposition nature and religion, and you want to make them inimical to each other. Impiety! Monsieur Nicolas Cerise. And so horrible that this good fellow of a cook trembles at it without understanding it. But I am not a whit disturbed; and such arguments cannot, even for one minute, seduce a mind which knows how to govern itself."

"In truth, Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, you have proceeded by that rational and scientific route which is but a narrow, short, and dirty blind-alley, on coming to the end of which we break our noses ingloriously. You argue in the manner of a thoughtful apothecary, who thinks he understands nature because he can smell some of her manifestations. And you have concluded that natural generation producing monsters is no part of the secret of God, Who creates men to celebrate His glory, '*Pulcher hymnus Dei homo immortalis*'; It was very generous of you

to omit mention of the new-born who die as soon as they see the light, of the mad, and the imbecile, and all creatures who are not, from your point of view, what Lactantius calls a worthy hymn to God, *Pulcher hymnus Dei*. But what do you know of it all, and what do we know of it all, Monsieur Nicolas Cerise? You take me for one of your readers at Amsterdam or at the Hague, to wish to make me believe that the unintelligibility of nature is an objection to our holy Christian faith. Nature, sir, shows to our eyes but a succession of incoherent images in which it is impossible for us to find a meaning, and I grant you, that according to her, and in tracking her footsteps, I fail to discern in the child that is born either the Christian, the man, or even the individual; and the flesh is an absolutely indecipherable hieroglyphic.

But that matters nothing, and we are looking at the wrong side of the tapestry. Do not let us fix our gaze on that, but understand that from that side we can know nothing. Let us turn entirely to the understandable, which is the human soul united to God.

“You are amusing, Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, with your nature and your generation. You are, to my mind, like some good fellow who thinks he has surprised the King’s secrets because he has seen the paintings which decorate the council chamber. In the same way that the secrets are to be found in the conversation of the King and his ministers, so is the fate of man in the thought which proceeds alike from the created and the Creator. All the rest is but folly and amusement, fit to divert the loungers, of whom one sees many in the Academies. Do not talk to me of nature, except of what one sees at the *Petit Bacchus* in the person of Catherine the lace-maker, who is plump and well-made.

“And you, mine host,” added Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, “ give me to drink, for I have a thirst on me, all the fault of Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, who thinks nature an atheist. And, by a thousand devils, so she is, and perforce must be, to some extent; and if at all times she declares the glory of God, it is without knowing it, for there is no knowledge, save in the mind of man, which alone proceeds from both the finite and the infinite. Give me to drink!” My father poured out a brimming glass for my good master, Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, and for Monsieur Nicolas Cerise, and forced them to clink their glasses, which they did right heartily, for they were good fellows.

VI . THE NEW MINISTRY

MR. SHIPPEN, who practised the trade of a locksmith at Greenwich, dined every day, during his short stays in Paris, at the *Sign of the Reine Pêdaque* , in the company of his landlord and of my good master, Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard.

That day, at dessert, having called for a bottle of wine as was his custom, lighted his pipe, and drawn from his pocket the London Gazette, he set himself peaceably to smoke, drink, and read; then folding his paper, and placing his pipe on the edge of the table, he said:

“Gentlemen, the Government is defeated.”

“Oh! said my good master, “ it is of no consequence.”

“Pardon me,” said Mr. Shippen, “it is a matter of consequence, for the former ministry being Tory, the new one will be Whig, and moreover, everything that happens in England is of importance.”

“Sir,” replied my good master, “We have seen greater changes than that in France. We have seen the four officials known as Secretaries of State replaced by six or seven Councils of ten members apiece, and the Secretaries of State hewn in ten pieces and then re-established in their original shape. At each of these changes there were some who swore that all was lost, and others that all was saved. And rhymes were made about it all. For my part, I take little interest in what is done in the King’s cabinet, for I notice that the course of life is in no way changed, and after reforms men are as before, selfish, avaricious, cowardly, cruel, stupid and furious by turns, and there is always a nearly even number of births, marriages, cuckolds, and gallows-birds, in which is made manifest the beautiful ordering of our society. This condition is stable, sir, and nothing could shake it, for it is founded on human misery and imbecility, and those are foundations which will never be wanting. The whole edifice gains from them a strength which defies the efforts of the worst of princes, and of the ignorant crowd of officials who assist them.”

My father, who, larding-pin in hand, was listening to this conversation, made this amendment with deferential firmness: that good ministers are to be found, and that he could remember one, who had; recently died, as the author of a very wise regulation protecting cooks against the devouring ambitions of butchers and confectioners.

“That may be, Monsieur Tournebroche,” retorted my good master, “and it is a matter to discuss with confectioners. But what is necessary to consider is that empires subsist, not by the wisdom of certain Secretaries of State, but by the

needs of millions of men, who, to live, work at all sorts of lowly and ignoble arts such as industry, commerce, agriculture, war, and navigation. These individual hardships make up what is called the greatness of a people, and neither prince nor ministers have a part in them.”

“You are mistaken, sir,” said the Englishman, “ministers do their part by making laws, of which a single one may enrich or ruin the nation.”

“Oh, as for that,” replied the Abbé, “it is a risk that must be run. Since the affairs of the State are so widespread that the intelligence of a single man cannot embrace them, we must forgive ministers for working blindly thereat, and harbour no resentment against the good or evil they do, but suppose that they moved as in a game of blind-man’s buff.

Moreover, this evil and this good would seem less to us if estimated without superstition, and I doubt, sir, if a general order could have the effect that you mention. I judge by the women of the town, who are themselves alone, in a year, the object of more regulations than are put forth in a century for all other classes in the kingdom, and who, none the less, carry on their business with an exactitude based on the forces of nature. They laugh at the simple blackening which a magistrate named Nicodème meditates in regard to them, and make fun of Monsieur Baiselance, the mayor who has formed, along with several attorneys and treasury officials, an impotent association for their ruin. I can tell you that Catherine, the lace-maker, is ignorant of the very name of Baiselance, and that she will remain ignorant of it until her end, which will be a Christian one — at least I hope so. And I infer that all the laws with which a minister swells his portfolio, are but useless papers which neither enable us to live nor prevent us from living.”

“Monsieur Coignard,” said the locksmith from Greenwich, “it is easy to see by the baseness of your talk that you are accustomed to servitude. You would speak differently of statesmen and laws if you had, as I have, the happiness to enjoy a free Government.”

“Mr. Shippen,” said the Abbé, “true liberty is that of a soul enfranchised from the vanities of this world. As for public liberty, I do not care a cherrystone for it! It is an illusion which flatters the vanity of the ignorant.”

“You confirm me in the idea,” said Mr. Shippen, “that the French are mere monkeys.”

“Allow me,” said my father, brandishing his larding-pin, “there are lions also to be found amongst them.”

“Only citizens fail you then,” retorted Mr.

Shippen. “All the world discusses public matters in the Tuileries Gardens, without one reasonable notion resulting from their squabbles. Your population is

but a turbulent wild-beast show.”

“Sir,” said my good master, “it is true that when human societies attain to a certain degree of refinement, they turn aside from the manners of a menagerie, and that it is evidence of progress to live in a cage, instead of wandering miserably in the woods. And this tendency is common to all the countries of Europe.”

“Sir,” said the Greenwich locksmith, “England is no menagerie, for she has a Parliament on which her Ministers depend.”

“Sir,” said the Abbé, “it may be that one day France will also have Ministers obedient to a Parliament. [Better still. Time brings many changes in the constitution of empires, and one can fancy that, in a century or two, France may adopt popular government. But, sir, secretaries of State, who count for little in our day, will then no longer count for anything. For instead of depending on the King, from whom they derive their period and power, they will be subject to public opinion, and will share its instability. It is to be remarked that statesmen only exercise their power, with any force, in absolute monarchies, as is seen in the example of Joseph the son of Jacob, Pharaoh’s Minister, and in that of Haman, Minister to Ahasuerus, who played a great *rôle* in the government; the first in Egypt, the second among the Persians. It needed the coincidence of a strongly established crown and a weak king, in France, to strengthen the arm of a Richelieu. Under popular government, ministers will become so impotent that even their wickedness and stupidity will do harm no more.

“They will receive from the general assemblies only an uncertain and precarious authority; unable to indulge in far-flung hopes and vast schemes, they will spend their ephemeral existence in wretched expedients. They will grow jaundiced in the unhappy effort to read their orders on the five hundred faces of a crowd, ignorant and at cross-purposes; they will languish in restless impotence. They will become unused to foresee anything or prepare anything, and they will only study intrigue and falsehood. They will fall from so low that their fall will do them no harm, and their names, chalked on the walls by little scribbling school-boys, will make the bourgeois laugh.”

Mr. Shippen shrugged his shoulders at this speech. “It’s possible,” he said, “I can well enough imagine the French in such a state.”

“Oh,” said my good master, “in that state the world will go on its way. We shall still have to eat, it is the great need which gives rise to all others.” Mr. Shippen said, shaking out his pipe:

“In the meanwhile they promise us a minister who will favour the farmers, but who will ruin trade if he has his way. I must look to it, for I am a locksmith at Greenwich, and I shall call all the locksmiths together and address them.”

He put his pipe in his pocket and went out without saying good-night to us.

VII. THE NEW MINISTRY (concluded)

AFTER supper, as it was a fine night, Abbé Jérôme Coignard took a turn in the Rue St. Jacques where the lamps were being lighted, and I had the honour to accompany him. He stopped under the porch of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné, and pointing with a plump hand, shaped equally well for scholastic demonstration and for delicate caress, at one of the stone benches ranged on either side beneath the antique statues fouled with obscene scrawls. "Tournebroche, my son," said he, "if you are of the same turn of mind we will take the air for a moment or two on one of these well-polished old stones where so many beggars before us have rested from their troubles. Perchance some of those countless poor creatures have here held quite excellent talk among themselves.... We shall run the risk of catching fleas. But you, my son, being at the amorous age, may believe they are Jeannette, the viol player's, or Catherine, the lace-maker's, who are in the habit of bringing their gallants here at dusk; and their bite will seem sweet to you. That is an illusion permitted to your youth. For me, who am past the age of these charming follies, I shall tell myself that one must not give way too much to the weakness of the flesh, and that a philosopher must not trouble about fleas which, like all else in the world, are among God's mysteries."

So saying, he sat down, taking care not to disturb a small Savoyard and his marmoset who were sleeping their innocent sleep on the old stone bench. I sat down by his side. The conversation which had occupied the dinner-hour came back to my mind: "Monsieur l'Abbé," I asked this good master, "you were speaking a while ago of ministers. Those of the King did not impress you by their clothes, nor by their coaches, nor by their genius, and you judged them with the freedom of a mind which nothing astonishes. Then, considering the lot of these officials in a popular state (should it ever be established), you showed them to us as wretched to excess and less worthy of praise than of pity. Are you then, perhaps, opposed to free governments as revived from the republics of antiquity?"

"I am personally inclined to love popular government, my son," answered my good master. "My humbleness of condition draws me towards it, and Holy Writ, of which I have made some study, confirms me in this preference, for the Lord said in Ramah: 'The people of Israel desired a king that I should not reign over them.' And He said, 'Now this will be the manner of king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them for himself and for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariot. And he will take

your daughters to be confectioners and to be cooks and to be bakers.’ *Filias quoque vestras faciet sibi unguentarias et focarias et panificas*. That is said expressly in the Book of Kings, and one still sees that the monarch brings his subjects two grievous gifts: war and tithes. And if it be true that monarchies are of Divine institution it is equally true that they present all the characteristics of human imbecility and wickedness. It is credible that Heaven has given them to the people for their chastisement: *Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum* .

‘Often in His anger He accepts our sacrifice
His gifts are often the penalty of our crimes.’

I could quote, my son, many fine passages from old authors where the hatred of tyranny is described with admirable vigour. Finally, I think I have always shown some strength of soul in disdaining the pride of the flesh, and have, quite as much as the Jansenist Blaise Pascal, the disgust for swashbucklers. All these reasons speak to my heart and to my intelligence in favour of popular government. I have made it the subject of meditations, which one day I shall put down in writing, in a work of that kind of which they say that one must break the bone to find the marrow. I want you to understand from that, that I shall compose a new *Praise of Folly* which will appear frivolity to the frivolous, but the wise will recognise wisdom under the cap and bells. In short, I shall be a second Erasmus; following his example I shall teach the people by a learned and judicious playfulness. And you will find, my son, in one chapter of this treatise, every enlightenment on the subject that interests you; you will acquire a knowledge of the condition of statesmen placed in dependence on popular states or assemblies.”

“Oh, Monsieur l’Abbé!” I cried, “how impatient I am to read this book! When do you think it will be written?”

“I do not know,” replied my good master, “and truth to tell I think I shall never write it. Plans made by man are often thwarted. We have no power over the smallest particle of the future, and this uncertainty, common to Adam’s race, is carried to extremes in my case by a long series of misfortunes. That is why, my son, I despair of ever being able to compose this respectable jest. Without giving you a political treatise, seated on this bench, I will tell you at least how I came to have the idea of introducing into my imaginary book a chapter wherein would appear the weakness and spite of servants taken on by good man Demos when master, if he ever become so, of which I am not quite decided, for I do not meddle in prophecy, leaving this preoccupation to maidens who vaticinate after

the manner of the sibyls such as the Cumean, the Persian, or the Tiburtine, ‘*quarum insigne virginitas est et virginitatis præmium divinatio.*’ Let us then turn to our subject. It is nearly twenty years since I lived in the pleasant town of Sééz, where I was librarian to the Bishop. Some travelling actors, who chanced to pass, gave a fairly good tragedy in a barn; I went to it and saw a Roman emperor appear whose wig was decorated with more laurels than a ham at the fair of Saint Laurence. He seated himself in a curule chair; his two ministers, in court dress with their impressive insignia, took their place on either side on stools, and the three formed a Council of State before the footlights, which stank exceedingly. Eventually, during the course of their deliberations, one of the councillors drew a satirical portrait of the consuls during the latter period of the Republic. He showed them as impatient to use and abuse their temporary power — enemies of the public good, and jealous of their successors, in whom they were only assured of seeing accomplices to their robbery and peculation. This is how he spoke: ‘These little monarchs, reigning for a year,

Seeing the limit of their rule so near,

Spoil the green fruit, of fairest seed and growth, Rather than leave what they to leave are loath.

Since they have little part in what they wield,

Take a full harvest from the public field,

Assured of pardon, for their easy heirs

Hope for like treatment when the turn is theirs.’

“Well, my son, these lines which, by their sententious precision recall the quatrains of Pibrac, are more excellent as regards meaning than the rest of the tragedy, which smells a little too much of the pompous frivolities of the princes’ Fronde, and is altogether spoilt by the heroic love-affairs of a kind of Duchesse de Longueville, who appears under the name of Emilie. I took care to remember them so as to meditate upon them. For one finds beautiful maxims even in works written for the theatre. What the poet says in these eight lines, on consuls of the Roman Republic, applies equally well to ministers of democracies whose power is precarious.

“They are weak, my son, because they depend on a popular assembly, incapable equally of the large and profound views of a politician, and of the innocent stupidity of an idle king. Ministers are only great if they second, as did Sully, an intelligent prince, or if, like Richelieu, they take the place of the monarch. And who does not feel that Demos will have neither the obstinate prudence of a Henry IV, nor the favourable inertia of a Louis XIII? Even supposing he knows what he wants he will not know how to carry out his

wishes, nor even if they be feasible. Ordering ill, he will be badly obeyed, and will always believe himself betrayed. The deputies he will send to his States-General will keep up his illusions by ingenious lies up to the moment of falling under his unjust or legitimate suspicions. These states will perpetuate the same confused mediocrity as the mob from which they spring. They will revolve multiple and obscure thoughts. They will give the heads of government the task of carrying out vague wishes of which they themselves are not conscious, and their ministers, more unhappy than Œdipus in the fable, will be devoured, each in turn, by the Sphinx with a hundred heads for not having guessed the riddle of which the Sphinx herself was ignorant. The source of their greatest unhappiness will be their enforced resignation to impotence, and to talk instead of action. They will become rhetoricians and very bad rhetoricians, for talent, bringing some clarity with it, will be their undoing. They will have to train themselves to speak without saying anything, and the least foolish amongst them will be condemned to lie more than all the others. So, the most intelligent will become the most despicable. And if any are to be found clever enough to conclude treaties, regulate finance, and see to business, their knowledge will serve them nothing, for time will fail them, and time is the stuff of great undertakings.

“These humiliating conditions will discourage the good and lend ambition to the bad. From all sides, ambitious incompetence will rise from the depth of struggling villages to the first posts in the State, and as probity is not natural to mankind, but must be cultivated with great care and long-continued artifice, we shall see clouds of peculators fall on the public treasury. The evil will be much increased by the outburst of scandal, for, as it is difficult to hide anything under popular government, by the fault of some all will become suspect.

“I do not conclude from this, my son, that people will be more unhappy than they are now, I have told you often enough in our former conversations that I do not think the fate of a nation depends on its prince and its ministers, and it is ascribing too much virtue to laws to make them the source of general prosperity or unhappiness. Nevertheless, the multitude of laws is grievous, and I also fear that the States-General will abuse their legislative powers.

“It is the harmless foible of Colin and Jeannot to frame laws while they keep their sheep, and to say: ‘ If I were king!’ When Jeannot is king he will promulgate more edicts in a year than the Emperor Justinian codified during all his reign. It is in that direction, it seems to me, that Jeannot’s reign will prove formidable. But that of kings and emperors was usually so bad one could not fear a worse, and Jeannot, no doubt, will not commit many more follies, nor wickednesses, than all those princes girt with the double or triple crown, who, since the deluge, have covered the world with blood and destruction. His very

incapacity and turbulence will have this much good in them that they will render impossible those learned correspondences between country and country we call diplomacy, which end in nothing but in the artistic lighting-up of useless and disastrous wars. The ministers of good man Demos unceasingly kicked, hustled, humiliated, thrown down and assailed with more rotten apples and eggs than the worst harlequin in a booth at a fair, will have no leisure to prepare carnage politely, in the secrecy and peace of the cabinet, on the board of green cloth, by conferences in regard to what is called the balance of Europe, which is but the happy hunting-ground of the diplomat. There will be no more foreign policy, and that will be a great thing for unhappy humanity." At these words my good master rose up, and continued as follows: "It is time to go in, my son, for I feel the dew penetrate by reason that my clothes are in holes in various places. Also, by remaining any longer under this porch, we risk frightening away the lovers of Catherine and Jeannette, who here await the hour of tryst."

VIII. THE CITY MAGISTRATES

THAT evening we betook ourselves, my master and I, to the arbour of the *Petit Bacchus*, where we found Catherine the lace-maker, the lame cutler, and the father who begot me. They were all seated at the same table before a jug of wine, of which they had taken enough to be pleasant and sociable.

Two magistrates had just been elected according to form, out of four, and my father was talking of it, according to the measure of his lights and his talents.

"The pity is," said he, "that these city magistrates are gentlemen of the long robe, and not cooks, and that they hold their magistracy from the king, and not from the tradesmen, notably not from the corporation of Parisian cooks of which I am the banner-bearer. If they were of my choosing they would abolish tithes and the salt tax, and we should all be happy.... At any rate, if the world does not walk backwards like a crab, a day will come when magistrates will be elected by the tradesmen."

"No doubt," said Monsieur l'Abbé, "magistrates will one day be elected by the masters and their apprentices."

"Mind what you are saying, Monsieur l'Abbé," said my father anxiously, and drawing his brows together. "When apprentices mix themselves up with the election of magistrates all will be lost. In the days when I was apprenticed I thought of nothing but of misappropriating my master's wife and goods. But since I own a shop and a wife I attend to the public interest, in which my own is bound up." Lesturgeon, our landlord, brought a jug of wine. He was a small, red-haired man, quick, and rough.

"You speak of the new magistrates," he said, his hands on his hips, "I only wish them as much wisdom as the old ones, who were nevertheless not very knowing about the public welfare. But they were beginning to learn their business. You know, Monsieur Léonard (he spoke to my father), the school where the children of the Rue St. Jacques go to learn their alphabet, is built of wood, and a slow match and a few shavings would suffice to make it blaze like a veritable midsummer night's bonfire. I warned the gentlemen of the Hôtel de Ville about it. My letter did not err in style for I had it written for sixpence by a scrivener who has a stall under the Val-de-Grace. I represented to the magistrate that all the small boys of the neighbourhood were in daily danger of being grilled, like chitterlings, which was a matter for thought, having regard to the sensibility of mothers. The magistrate who has to do with the schools answered politely, after a year had elapsed, that the danger run by the small boys of the

Rue St. Jacques roused all his solicitude, and that he was eager to remove it, and, in consequence he was sending a fire-engine to the afore-mentioned pupils. ‘The king,’ he added, ‘having in his goodness built a fountain in commemoration of his victories, at two hundred paces from the school, water would not be lacking, and the children will learn in a few days to manage the engine which the town consents to grant them free.’

“On reading this letter I jumped to the ceiling. And returning to Val-de-Grace I dictated a reply to the scrivener as follows:

“‘Honoured City-magistrate — Sir, in the school-house of the Rue St. Jacques are two hundred youngsters, of whom the oldest is but seven years of age. These are fine firemen, sir, to work your fire-engine. Take it back again, and have a school-house built of stone and rubble.’ —

“This letter, like the former one, cost me sixpence, including the seal. But I did not lose my money, for, after twenty months had passed, I received a reply in which the magistrate assured me that the youngsters of the Rue St. Jacques were worthy of the care of the Parisian magistrates, who would prudently watch over their safety. We remain there. If my magistrate leaves his post I shall have to begin all over again, and pay a shilling once more to the scrivener in the Val-de-Grace. That is why, Monsieur Léonard, although I am firmly convinced there are faces at the town-hall which would be better fitted to play the buffoon at a fair, I have not the slightest desire to see new faces there, and I particularly wish to keep him of the fire-engine.”

“For my part,” said Catherine, it is the *Lieutenant-Criminel* I have a grudge against. He allows Jeannette, the viol player, to prowl about every day, at twilight, under the porch of St. Benoît-le-Bétourné. It is a disgrace. She walks through the streets with a kerchief tied round her head, and trails her dirty skirts through every gutter in the place. The public places should be reserved for girls well turned-out enough to show themselves with credit.”

“Oh! I reckon the pavement belongs to all the world,” said the lame cutler. “And one of these days I shall follow the example of our landlord, Lesturgeon, and go to the scrivener in the Val-de-Grace to get him to draw up, in my name, a fine petition in favour of poor hawkers. I cannot push my cart into a good position but I am at once bothered by the police, and as soon as a lackey or a couple of servant-girls stop at my stall, a big, black rascal turns up and orders me, in the name of the law, to go and undo my bundle elsewhere. Sometimes I am on ground rented by the market people, at others, I find myself a near neighbour of Monsieur Leborgne, sworn cutler. Another time I must yield the pavement to the carriage of a bishop or a prince. And there I am, getting into my harness and pulling at the straps, happy if the lackeys and the chambermaids

have not carried off without payment, profiting by my awkwardness, a needle-case, some scissors, or a fine blade from Chatellerault. I am sick of suffering tyranny. I am sick of experiencing the injustice of the justiciaries. I feel a great desire to revolt.”

“I know from that sign,” said my good master, “that you are a magnanimous cutler.”

“I am not at all magnanimous, Monsieur l’Abbé,” modestly replied the cripple, “I am vindictive, and resentment has pushed me to sell, in secret, songs written against the king, his mistresses, and his ministers. I keep a fairly good assortment in the tilt of my cart. Do not betray me. That of the twelve reed-pipes is admirable.”

“I will not betray you,” answered my father, “a good song is worth a glass of wine to me, and even more, I do not say anything either about the knives, and I am glad, my good fellow, that you sell yours, for all the world must live. But acknowledge that one cannot allow wandering hawkers to enter into competition with tradesmen who rent a shop and pay taxes. Nothing is more contrary to law and order. The impudence of these draggle-tails is unspeakable. How far would it not go were it not checked. Last year did not a peasant from Montrouge come to a stop in front of the *Reine Pédaque* with his little cart full of pigeons that he was selling, ready cooked, for two liards and a sou cheaper than I sell mine! And the bumpkin cried, in a voice fit to crack the windows of my shop, ‘ Beautiful pigeons for five sous.’ I threatened him twenty times with my larding-pin. But he answered me, stupidly, that the street belonged to all the world. I made a complaint to the *Lieutenant* -

Criminel who saw justice done, and rid me of the villain. I do not know what has become of him, but I owe him a grudge for the harm he did me, for the sight of my usual customers, buying his pigeons, by couples, nay even by half-dozens, gave me an attack of jaundice, from the effect of which I became melancholy for a long time. I wish they’d stick as many feathers on his body, with glue, as he had plucked from the winged creatures he sold ready-cooked in my very face, and that thus be-feathered from head to foot he was led through the streets at the tail of his cart.”

“Monsieur Léonard,” said the lame cutler, “you are hard on poor people. It is thus the unfortunate are driven to desperation.”

“Master Cutler, I counsel you,” said my good master, laughing, “to order at the Innocents by some paid writer, a satire on Maitre Léonard and to sell it along with your songs on the twelve pipes of King Louis. Our friend here should be celebrated a little, who, in a semi-servile state, aspires, not to freedom but to tyranny. I conclude from all your talking, gentlemen, that the policing of towns

is a difficult art, that one must try and reconcile diverse and often contrary interests, that the public welfare is made up of a large number of private and individual woes, and that in fact, it is already rather wonderful that people shut up within walls do not devour one another. It is a blessing one must attribute to their poltroonery. Public peace is founded simply on the feeble courage of citizens who hold each other in respect by reason of their reciprocal fear. And the prince, in inspiring all with awe, assures to them the inestimable benefit of peace. As to your magistrates, whose power is weak, and who are incapable of serving or of injuring you much, and whose merits consist chiefly in their tall canes and wigs, do not complain overmuch that they are chosen by the king and ranked, or little short of it, since the last reign, with officers of the Crown. Friends of the prince, they are vaguely inimical to all citizens, and this enmity is rendered bearable to each by the perfect equality with which it bears upon all. It is like rain, of which one with another we receive but a few drops. One day, when they are elected by the people (as they tell us they were in the early days of the monarchy) magistrates will have friends and foes in the town. Elected by the shop-people, paying rent and tithes, they will ill-use the hawkers. Elected by the hawkers, they will ill-use the tradesmen. Elected by the artisans, they will be in opposition to the masters, who make the artisans work. It will be an incessant cause of dispute and quarrels. They will form a turbulent council where each will agitate for the interests and passions of his electors. Nevertheless, I fancy they will not make the present magistrates regretted who only depend on the prince. Their clamorous vanity will amuse the citizens who will see themselves as in an enlarging mirror. They will employ mediocre powers after a mediocre fashion. Risen from the mass of the people they will be as incapable of fostering it as of restraining it. The rich will be frightened at their audacity, and the poor will blame their fearfulness, whereas they will really display only noise and impotence. For the rest, they may be equal to common tasks, and to administering the public wealth with that insufficient sufficiency which they always attain to and never get beyond.”

“Ouf!” said my father, “you have spoken well, Monsieur l’Abbé — now drink!”

IX. SCIENCE

THAT day we tramped as far as the Pont Neuf, my good master and I, where the recesses were covered with those trestles on which the secondhand booksellers expose a conglomeration of romances and books of devotion. There one may find at twopence apiece the complete *Astrée* and the *Grand Cyrus*, worn and thumbed by provincial readers, with the "Ointment for Burns," and divers works of the Jesuits. My good master was accustomed, in passing, to read some pages of these works, of which he made no purchase, being out of funds, and wisely keeping for the *Petit Bacchus* the sixpence he happened by a rare chance to have in his breeches' pocket. For the rest, he did not thirst to possess the good things of this world, and the best works did not make him envious so long as he could get acquainted with the noble passages in them, on which he expatiated afterwards with admirable wisdom. The trestles of the Pont Neuf pleased him in that the books were impregnated with the smell of frying from the near neighbourhood of the hot-potato sellers, and this great man inhaled at the same time the welcome fragrance of cooking and of science.

Adjusting his spectacles, he examined the display of a secondhand dealer with the contentment of a happy soul, to which all things are gracious, for all things gain a grace from their reflection in it.

"Tournebroche, my son," he said to me, "there are books to be found on the stall of this good man, fashioned in the days when printing was, so to speak, in its swaddling-clothes, and these books still suffer from the effects of the roughness of our forbears. I find a barbarous chronicle of Monstrelet, an author said to have been more frothy than a pot of mustard, and two or three lives of *Ste. Marguerite*, which the gossips of old put as a compress on their stomachs during the pains of childbirth. It would be inconceivable that men could be so idiotic as to write and to read similar absurdities, if our holy religion did not teach us that they are born with a germ of imbecility. And as the light of faith has never failed me, not even, happily, in the sins of the couch or of the table, I can more easily understand their past stupidity than their present intelligence, which, to speak frankly, appears to me illusory and deceptive, as it will seem to future generations, for man is in his essence a stupid animal, and the progress of his mind is but the empty consequence of his restlessness. That is the reason, my son, that I mistrust what they call science and philosophy, which are, to my mind, but an abuse of visions, and fallacious figures, and, in a certain sense, the advantage gained by the evil spirit over the soul. You will understand that I am

far from believing all the devilries with which popular credulity frightens itself. I think with the Fathers that temptation is within us, and that we are to ourselves our own demons and bedevilments. But I bear a grudge against Monsieur Descartes and against all the philosophers who, following his example, have searched for a rule of life and the principles of conduct in the knowledge of nature. For, after all, Tournebroche, my son, what is knowledge of nature if it be not a fantasy of the senses? And what does science add to it, I ask you, with its savants, from the time of Gassendi, who was no donkey, and Descartes and his disciples, down to that precious fool, Monsieur de Fontenelle? Large spectacles, my son, spectacles like those which sit on my nose.

All the microscopes and telescopes which we make a show of, what are they but glasses a little clearer than these of mine, that I bought last year at the fair of St. Laurence, of which the glass for the left eye, the one I see the best with, was unhappily cracked this winter by a footstool flung at my head by the lame cutler, who fancied I was kissing Catherine the lace-maker, for he is a coarse man, and utterly obfuscated by his visions of carnal desires. Yes, Tournebroche, my son, what are these instruments with which the savants and the curious fill their galleries and their cabinets? What are spectacles, astrolabes, compasses, if not the means of helping the senses to keep their illusions, and to multiply our fatal ignorance of nature while we multiply our relations with her? The most learned among us differ merely from the ignorant by the faculty they acquire of amusing themselves with manifold and complicated errors. They see the world in a faceted topaz, instead of seeing it as does Madame, your mother, for instance, with the naked eye the good God has given her. But they do not alter their eyes in donning spectacles; they do not alter dimensions in using apparatus proper to the measurement of space; they do not alter the weight of things in using very sensitive scales. They discover new appearances merely, and are but the plaything of new illusions. That is all! If I were not convinced, my son, of the holy truths of our religion, there would be left to me in this conviction, which I hold, that all human knowledge is but a progress in phantasmagoria, nothing but to throw myself from this parapet into the Seine, which has seen many others drown since she began to flow, or to go and ask of Catherine that form of oblivion from the ills of this world which one finds in her arms, and for which it would be indecent for me to look, in my position, and above all, at my age. I should not know what to believe in the midst of all this apparatus, whose powerful deceptions would increase immeasurably the falsehood of my outlook and I should be an entirely miserable academician."

My good master was talking in this fashion before the first recess to the left, counting from the Rue Dauphine, and he was beginning to frighten the dealer

who took him for an exorcist, when he suddenly picked up an old geometry, illustrated with sufficiently bad cuts by Sebastien Leclerc.

“Perhaps,” he said, “instead of drowning myself in love or in water, if I were not a Christian and a Catholic, I should decide to throw myself into the study of mathematics where the mind finds the aliment of which it is most in need, to wit: sequence and continuity. And I vow that this little book, quite ordinary as it is, gives me a certain good opinion of man’s genius.”

At these words he opened the treatise by Sebastien Leclerc so widely, at the section concerning triangles, that he nearly broke it clean in two. But soon he flung it down in disgust.

“Alas,” he murmured, “numbers depend on time, lines on space, and these again are but human illusions. Without man there is neither mathematics nor geometry, and it is, after all, but a form of knowledge which does not draw us out of ourselves, although it affects an air of quite magnificent independence.”

Having spoken, he turned his back on the relieved bookstall-keeper, and drew a long breath.

“Ah! Tournebroche, my son,” he continued, “you see me suffering from an ill that I have brought on myself, and burnt with the fiery tunic with which I have been at such pains to clothe and deck myself.”

He spoke thus in a fanciful fashion, being in reality clad in a shocking old overcoat generally held together by two or three buttons which, moreover, were not even fastened in their own button-holes, and, as he was accustomed to say laughingly, when one spoke to him of it, it was an adulterous connection, a presentation of city manners!”

He spoke with warmth:

“I hate science,” said he, “for having loved it too much, after the manner of voluptuaries who reproach women with not having come up to the dream they formed of them. I wanted to know everything, and I suffer to-day for my culpable folly. Happy,” added he, “oh! very happy are those good people assembled round that vendor of quack medicines.”

And he pointed with his hand to the lackeys, the chambermaids, and the porters of St. Nicolas, forming a circle round a practitioner who was giving a demonstration with his attendant.

“Look, Tournebroche,” said he, “they laugh heartily when that funny fellow kicks the other man’s behind. And in truth it is a pleasant sight, quite spoilt for me by thinking about it, for when one looks for the essence of this foot and the rest of it, one laughs no more. I ought, being a Christian, to have recognised earlier the malignity of that heathen saying, ‘Happy is he who knows the cause of things.’ I ought to have shut myself in holy ignorance as in an enclosed

garden, and remained as the little children. I should not truly have been amused with the coarse play of this Mondor (this Molière of the Pont Neuf would have had little attraction for me when his prototype already appears to me too scurrilous), but I should have found pleasure in the plants of my garden, I should have praised God in the flowers and fruit of my apple-trees.

“An immoderate curiosity has led me astray my son; I have lost, in the intercourse with books and learned men, the peace of heart, holy simplicity, and that purity of the simple-minded, all the more admirable in that it falters neither in the tavern nor in the hovel; as may be seen in the example of the lame cutler, and, if I dare say so, in that of your father, the cook, who retains much innocence though drunken and debauched. But it is not thus with him who has studied books. They leave, eternally, a bitter superiority, and a proud sadness.”

Talking thus, his speech was cut off by the roll of drums.

X. THE ARMY

SO, being on the Pont Neuf, we heard the roll of drums. It was the call to attention of a recruiting-sergeant, who, hand on hip, was strutting in an open space in front of a dozen soldiers, who were carrying bread and sausages spiked on the bayonets of their guns. A circle of beggars and youngsters looked on open-mouthed.

He twirled his moustache and made his proclamation.

“Do not let us listen to him,” said my good master to me. “It would be waste of time. This sergeant speaks in the king’s name. He has no talent for speaking. If it would please you to hear a clever discourse on the same subject you should go into one of those bakehouses on the Quai de la Ferraille, where the crimps cajole the lackeys and bumpkins. These crimps, being rascals, are bound to be eloquent. I remember, in my youth, in the time of the late king, having heard the most wonderful harangue from the mouth of one of these dealers in men, who kept shop in the Unhappy Valley, which you can see from here, my son. Recruiting men for the Colonies: ‘Young men who surround me,’ said he, ‘you have no doubt heard tell of the Land of Cockayne; it is to India you must go to find this land of fortune, where one is in clover. Do you wish for gold, pearls, diamonds? The roads are paved with them, one has but to stoop to pick them up. And you need not even stoop. The savages will pick them up for you. I do not even mention the coffee, the lemons, pomegranates, oranges, pineapples, and the thousand delicious fruits which grow without cultivation as in an earthly paradise. Did I speak to women and children I might extol all these dainties, but I am talking to men.’ I omit, my son, all that he said about glory, but you may believe he equalled Demosthenes in vigour and Cicero in fluency. The result of his discourse was the sending of five or six unhappy beings to die of yellow fever in the swamps, so true is it that eloquence is a dangerous weapon, and that talent for the arts exercises its irresistible force for evil as well as for good. Thank God, Tournebroche, in that, not having given you talents of any kind, He does not expose you to become one day the scourge of nations. One recognises the favourites of God by their lack of wit, and I have experienced that the fairly quick intelligence heaven has given me has been but an unceasing cause of danger to my peace in this world and in the next. What would it be if the heart and thought of a Caesar dwelt in my head and my breast? My desires would recognise no sex and I should be untouched by pity. I should light the fire of inextinguishable war at home and abroad. And yet the great Caesar had a

delicate soul and a certain gentleness. He died decently under the dagger of his virtuous assassins. Day of the Ides of March! Ever fatal day, when sententious brutes destroyed this charming monster! I am fain to weep over the divine Julius along with Venus, his mother, and if I call him a monster it is from affection, for in his equable soul nothing was excessive save power. He had a natural feeling for rhythm and proportion. He found equal pleasure in his youth in the beauties of debauchery or those of grammar. He was an orator, and his beauty doubtless ornamented the purposed dryness of his speeches. He loved Cleopatra with that geometric exactitude that he brought to all his doings. He put in his writings and in his actions his talent for clarity. He was the friend of order and peace, even in war, sensitive to harmony, and so able a maker of laws that we still live, barbarians as we are, under the majesty of his rule, which has made the world what it is to-day. You see, my son, I am not sparing in praise or love for him. Commander, dictator, sovereign-pontiff he moulded the world with his beautiful hands. And I — I, have been professor of eloquence at the college of Beauvais, secretary to an opera-singer, librarian to my Lord Bishop of Séz, public-writer at the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, and tutor to the son of your father at the sign of the *Reine Pédaque*. I have made a beautiful catalogue of precious manuscripts, I have written some pamphlets, of which it is best not to speak, and set down on wastepaper certain maxims scornfully declined by the booksellers. Nevertheless, I would not change my existence for that of the great Cæsar. It would cost my innocence too much. And I would rather be an obscure man, poor and despised, as indeed I am, than rise to the height whence new destinies are opened to the world through paths of blood. —

“This recruiting-sergeant, whom you can hear from here promising these vagabonds a halfpenny a day, with bread and meat, fills me, my son, with profound reflections on war and armies. I have worked at all trades save that of a soldier, which has always filled me with disgust and terror, by the characteristics of servitude, false glory, and cruelty, attached to it, which are in direct opposition to my peaceful temper, to my wild love of freedom, and to my turn of mind, which, judging sanely of glory, estimates at its rightful worth that attainable by a musketeer. I am not speaking at all of my incorrigible leaning to meditation which would have been exceedingly thwarted by sword and gun exercise. Not desirous of being Caesar you will easily understand that neither do I wish to be a La Tulipe or Brin-d’Amour. And I own to you, my son, that military service seems to me to be the most terrible pest of civilised nations.

“This is the opinion of a philosopher. There is nothing to show that it will ever be shared by a large number of people. And in actual fact, kings and republics will always find as many soldiers as they want for their parades and

their wars. I have read Machiavelli's treatises at Monsieur Blaizot's, at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine*, where they are all very nicely bound in parchment. They deserve it my son, and, for my part, I hold an infinitely high opinion of the Florentine secretary, who was the first to remove from political action the legendary foundation of justice, on which they set up nothing but highly respectable villainies. This Florentine, seeing his country at the mercy of its hireling defenders, conceived the idea of a national and patriotic army. He says somewhere in his books that it is right that all citizens should unite for the safety of their country and all be soldiers. I have likewise heard this theory sustained at Monsieur Blaizot's by Monsieur Roman, who is very zealous, as you know, for state rights. He has no care save for the general, and the universal, and will never be content until the day when every private interest is sacrificed to the public interest. Thus Machiavelli and Monsieur Roman wish us all to be soldiers, since we are all citizens. I do not say, as do they, that it is just, nor do I say that it is unjust, because justice and injustice are matter for debate, and it is a subject which only sophists can decide."

"What! my good master," I cried in sorrow and surprise, "you hold that justice depends on the reasoning of a sophist, and that our actions are just or unjust according to the arguments of a clever man! Such a maxim shocks me more than I can say."

"Tournebroche, my son," replied Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, "you must consider that I speak of human justice, which is different from God's justice, and generally opposed to it. Men have never upheld the idea of justice and injustice save by eloquence which is prone to embrace the for and against. Perhaps, my son, you would seat justice on sentiment, but beware lest on this petty site you merely raise some humble domestic hovel, some cabin of old Evander, or hut for a Philemon and Baucis. But the palace of law, the tower of State institutions, needs other foundations. Ingenuous nature alone could not support such weight of inequity, and these redoubtable walls rise from a foundation of most ancient falsehood, by the subtle and fierce art of law-givers, magistrates, and princes. It is folly, Tournebroche my son, to enquire if a law be just or unjust, and it is the same of military service as of other institutions of which one cannot say if they be good or bad on principle, since there is no principle saving God, from Whom all things come. You must protect yourself, my son, against this kind of slavery to words, to which men submit themselves with such docility. Know then, that the word justice has no meaning, if it be not in theology, where it is terribly expressive. Recognise that Monsieur Roman is but a sophist when he demonstrates to you that one owes service to a prince. Nevertheless, I think if the prince ever orders all citizens to become soldiers, he will be obeyed, I don't say

with docility, but light-heartedly. I have noticed that the profession most natural to man is that of a soldier; it is the one to which he is drawn the most easily by his instincts, and by his tastes, which are not always good. And beyond some rare exceptions, of which I am one, man may be defined as an animal with a musket. Give him a fine uniform with the hope of fighting, and he will be happy. Also, we make the military calling the noblest, which is true, in a sense, for it is the oldest calling, and the earliest of mankind made war. The military calling, moreover, has this appropriateness to human nature, that it never thinks, and clearly we are not made for thought.

“Thought is a malady peculiar to certain individuals which cannot propagate itself without promptly ending the race. Soldiers live in company, and man is a sociable animal. They wear blue-and-white, blue-and-red, or grey-and-blue coats, ribbons, plumes, and cockades, which give them the same advantage over women as the cock over the hen. They march to war and pillage and man is naturally thievish, libidinous, destructive, and easily touched by glory. The love of glory decides us Frenchmen, above all, to take up arms. And it is certain, that in public opinion, military glory eclipses all. To be assured of this, read history. La Tulipe may be held excused if he was no more a philosopher than Titus Livius.”

XI. THE ARMY (continued)

MY good master continued in these terms:

“One must consider, my son, that men joined one to another in the succession of the ages by a chain of which they see but a few links, attach the notion of nobility to customs whose origin was lowly and barbarous. Their ignorance feeds their vanity. They found their glories on old, unhappy, far-off things, and the nobility of the profession of arms is due entirely to that savagery of early times of which the Bible and the poets have preserved the remembrance. And what, in fact, is this military nobility flaunted with so much pride over us, if not the debased legacy of those unfortunate hunters of the woods whom the poet Lucretius has depicted in such a way that one does not know if they be men or beasts? It is wonderful, Tournebroke my son, that war and the chase, of which the thought alone should overwhelm us with shame and remorse when we recall the wretched needs of our nature and our inveterate wickedness, serve on the contrary, as matter for vain-glory to men, that Christian peoples should continue to honour the profession of butcher and executioner, when it is of old standing in families, and that finally one estimates among refined people the celebrity of citizens by the quantity of murders and carnage that they bear so to speak, in their veins.”

“Monsieur l’Abbé,” I said to my good master, “do you not think that the profession of arms is looked upon as noble because of the danger one runs therein and the courage that it is necessary to display?”

“Truly, my son,” answered my good master, “if the state of man is noble in proportion to the danger that he runs I do not fear to state that peasants and labourers are the noblest men in the kingdom for they risk death every day by fatigue or hunger. The perils to which soldiers and commanders expose themselves are less in number and in duration, they last but a few hours in a lifetime, and consist in facing cannon-balls and bullets which kill less surely than poverty. Men must needs be light and frivolous, my son, to give more honour to a soldier’s doings than to the work of a labourer and to place the destruction of war at a higher price than the arts of peace.”

“Monsieur l’Abbé,” I asked again, “do you not consider that soldiers are necessary to the safety of the state and that we should honour them in recognition of their usefulness?”

“It is true, my son, that war is a necessity of human nature and one cannot imagine nations who will not fight, that is to say, who are neither homicides,

pillagers, nor incendiaries. Neither can you conceive a prince who is not in some measure a usurper. They would reproach him too much on that score, and they would despise him for it as one who was no lover of glory. For war is necessary to men; and is more natural to them than peace which is but war's interval. Thus one sees princes hurling their armies on one another on the worst of pretexts, and for the most futile of reasons. They invoke their honour, which is excessively touchy. A mere breath suffices to make a stain on it which cannot be washed save in the blood of ten, twenty, thirty, or a hundred thousand men, in proportion to the population of the contending principalities. If only one thinks of it, it is inconceivable that the honour of a prince can be cleansed by the blood of these unhappy beings, or rather one realises that it is a mere form of speech, void of meaning; but for words men go willingly to their death. What is yet more wonderful, is that a prince gains much honour from the theft of a province and the outrage that would be punished by death in the case of some daring private individual becomes praiseworthy if it is carried out with the most outrageous cruelty by a sovereign with the help of his hirelings."

My good master, having thus spoken, drew his box from his pocket and sniffed up a few remaining grains of rappee.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," I said, "are there no wars that are just, and fought for a good cause?"

"Tournebroche, my son," he answered me, "civilized nations have much overstrained the injustice of war and they have rendered it very iniquitous as well as very cruel. The first wars were undertaken for the establishment of tribes on fertile lands. Thus the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan. Hunger forced them to it. The advancement of civilization extended war to the conquest of colonies and foreign markets, as is seen in the example of Spain, Holland, England and France. Lastly, one has seen kings and emperors steal provinces of which they had no need, which they ruined, which they made waste, without profit to themselves and without other advantage than to raise pyramids and triumphal arches. And this abuse of war is the more odious as one must believe that nations are becoming more and more wicked by the advancement of the arts, or rather that war, being a necessity to human nature, is waged for its own sake when there is absolutely no reason for waging it.

"This reflection grieves me deeply, for I am disposed by my condition and inclination to the love of my fellow creatures. And what puts the finishing touch to my sadness, Tournebroche, my son, is that I find my snuff-box is empty, and want of snuff is where I feel my poverty the most."

As much to distract his thoughts from this personal trouble as to instruct myself in his teaching, I asked him if civil war did not seem to him the most

detestable kind of war there was?

“It is odious enough,” he replied, “but not so very inept, for members of a state when they come to blows between themselves have more chance of knowing why they fight than in the case where they go to war against a foreign people. Seditious and intestinal quarrels are usually born of the extreme wretchedness of the people. They are the result of despair, and the only issue left to the unhappy beings who may obtain thereby better conditions and sometimes even a hand in the game of ruling. But it is to be remarked, my son, that the more unhappy, and therefore excusable, are the insurgents, the less chance they have of winning the game. Starved and stupefied, armed but with their rage, they are incapable of great plans or of prudent considerations so that they are easily reduced by the prince. He has more difficulty in putting down rebellion among the great, which is to be detested, for it has not the excuse of necessity. In fine, my son, whether civil or foreign, war is execrable, and has a malignity that I detest.”

XII. THE ARMY (concluded)

I WILL show you, my son," said my good master, "in the condition of these poor soldiers who are going to serve their king, both man's shame and his glory. In fact, war sets us back and drives us to our natural savagery. It is the result of the ferocity that we have in common with the beasts; not only with lions and cocks, who bring a gallant bearing to it, but with little birds, such as jays and tits, whose ways are very quarrelsome, and even with insects, such as wasps and ants, who fight with a bloodthirstiness of the like of which the Romans themselves have left no example. The principal causes of war are the same in man and animal, who struggle with one another to gain or keep their prey, to defend their nest or their lair, or to gain a mate. There is no distinction in all this, and the rape of the Sabines perfectly recalls those duels between stags which make the woods bloody of a night. We have merely succeeded in lending a certain colouring to base and natural motives by the notions of honour with which we cover them, and without great exactitude at that. If we believe that we fight for very noble motives in these days, the nobility of them dwells entirely in the vagueness of our sentiments. The less the object of war is simple, clear, and precise, the more war itself is odious and detestable. And if it be true, my son, that we have come to killing one another for honour's sake, it is beyond all bounds. We have surpassed the cruelty of wild beasts, who do each other no injury without good reason. And it is only right to say that man is wicked and more unnatural in his wars than are bulls or ants in theirs. But that is not all, for I detest armies less for the death they sow, than for the ignorance and stupidity that follow in their train. There is no worse enemy of the arts than a captain of mercenaries or marauders, and as a rule commanders are as unfitted for letters as are their soldiers. The habit of imposing his will by force makes your old soldier very awkward in speech, for eloquence has its source in the necessity of persuasion. Also, military men affect a disdain of speech and fine attainments. I remember having known at Séz in the days when I was librarian to the Bishop, an old captain, who had grown grey in harness and passed for a gallant man, wearing proudly a large scar across his face. He was an old ruffian, and had killed many a man and violated more than one nun quite good-humouredly. He understood his business fairly well and was very particular regarding the appearance of his regiment, which marched past better than any other. In short, a brave man and a good comrade, when it was question of draining a pot as well I saw at the inn of the *Cheval Blanc*, where many a time I held my own against

him. Now it happened one night that I accompanied him (for we were good friends) while he was instructing his men how to find their way by the stars. He first let me have Monsieur de Louvois' ordinance on the subject, and as he had repeated it by heart for the last thirty years, he made no more mistakes than in his *Pater* or *Ave*. He started off by saying that the soldiers must begin by searching the heavens for the pole-star, which is fixed in relation to the other stars, which turn round it in the contrary direction to the hands of a watch. But he did not understand all he said. For after having repeated his sentence two or three times in a sufficiently imperious voice, he stooped and said in my ear:

‘Show me this beggar of a pole-star, Abbé. The devil take me if I can distinguish it in this mess of candle-ends with which the sky is littered!’

“I told him at once the way to find it, and pointed it out with my finger. ‘Oh! Oh! cried he, ‘the silly thing is perched very high! From where we are we cannot see it without straining our necks.’ And he immediately gave orders to his officers to withdraw the men fifty paces so they should more easily see the pole-star. What I am telling you, my son, I heard with my own ears, and you will agree that this wearer of a sword had a sufficiently naïve notion of the system of the universe, particularly of the stellar parallaxes. Yet he wore the king's orders on a fine embroidered coat, and was more honoured in the state than a learned divine. It is this uncouthness that I cannot endure in the army.”

My good master having stopped to take breath at these words, I asked him if he did not think, despite this captain's ignorance, that one must have much intelligence to win battles? He answered me in these words:

“Taking into consideration, Tournebroke, my son, the difficulty that there is in getting together and leading armies, the knowledge necessary in the attack or the defence of a place, and the ability demanded for a good order of battle, one easily admits that only a genius nearly super-human, such as that of a Caesar, is capable of such an undertaking, and one would be astonished that minds were to be found capable of holding all the qualities proper to a true fighting-man. A great commander does not only know the configuration of a country, but its manners and customs, and also the industries of its inhabitants. He keeps in his mind an infinity of little circumstances from which he forms in the end large and simple views. The plans which he has slowly meditated and traced out beforehand, he may change in the midst of action by a sudden inspiration, and he is at the same time, very prudent and very bold; his thoughts move, now with the dull slowness of the mole, now soar up with an eagle's flight.

“Nothing is truer than this. But bethink you, my son, that when two armies are in sight of one another, one of them must be conquered; from which it follows that the other will necessarily be victorious, without its chief in

command having all the qualities of a great commander, or without his even having one of them. There are, I take it, clever commanders; there are also lucky ones, whose glory is no less. How, in these astounding collisions, are we to disentangle the effect of art from the result of luck? But you are leading me from my subject, Tournebroche, my son, I want to show you that war is man's disgrace nowadays, but that in other days it was his pride. Of necessity the arbitrament of empires, war has been the great school-mistress of the human race. It is by her that men have learnt patience, firmness, disdain of danger, the glory of sacrifice. The day that the herdsmen first rolled pieces of rock to form an enclosure behind which they defended their women and cattle, the first human society was founded, and the progress of the arts assured. This great good that we enjoy, our native land, that august thing the Romans adored above all their gods, the town, 'Urbs,' is the daughter of war.

"The first city was a fortified enclosure, and it was in that rough and bloody cradle that were nursed august laws, flourishing industries, science and learning. And that is why the true God wishes to be called the God of battles.

"What I tell you on this subject, Tournebroche, my son, does not mean that you should sign your engagement to this recruiting-sergeant and be seized with the desire to become a hero as the recipient of sixty strokes of the rod on your back every day, on an average.

"War is, moreover, in our time but an inherited evil, a prurient return to savage life, a criminal puerility. The princes of our day, and especially the late king, will for ever bear the notoriety of having made war the sport and amusement of courts. It saddens me to think that we have not yet seen the end of this preconcerted slaughter.

XIII. ACADEMIES

WE learnt that day that the Bishop of Séez had just been elected a member of the *Académie Française*. Twenty years ago he had delivered a panegyric on St. Maclou, which was considered rather a good thing, and I am willing to believe that there were some excellent passages in it; for my good master, Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard, had put a hand to it before quitting the Bishop's palace with Madame de la Baillive's chambermaid. Monseigneur de Séez was descended from the best Norman aristocracy. His piety, his cellar, and his stable, were justly vaunted throughout the kingdom, and his own nephew dispensed the ecclesiastical patronage all over the country. His election surprised nobody. It was approved by all the world, save by the "grey-stockings" of the *Café Procope*, who are never content. They are grumblers.

My good master blamed them gently for their contradictory temper.

"Of what does Monsieur Duclos complain?" said he. "Since yesterday, he is the equal of Monseigneur de Séez, who has the handsomest clergy and the finest pack of hounds in the kingdom. For academicians are equal by virtue of the statutes.

It is true that it is the insolent equality of revellers, which ceases, when, the meeting over, my lord bishop steps into his chariot, leaving Monsieur Duclos to splash his woollen stockings in the gutter. But if he does not want thus to be put on a par with my lord Bishop of Séez, why does he rub shoulders with the badge bedecked. Why does he not hie him to a tub, like Diogenes, or like me, to a stall at the Innocents? It is only in a tub, or in a stall, that one can lord it over this earthly grandeur. It is only! there that one is a real prince, and a real lord. Happy is he who has not fixed his hopes on the Academy! Happy is he who lives exempt from fears and desires, and who knows the emptiness of all things! Happy is he who knows that it is equally a vanity to be an Academician, or not to be one. Such a one leads, untroubled, a life obscure and unseen. Fair liberty follows him everywhere he goes. He celebrates in the shade the stilly offices of wisdom, and all the Muses smile on him as on one initiated into their service."

Thus spoke my good master, and I admired the pure enthusiasm which swelled his voice and shone in his eyes. But the restlessness of youth fermented in me. I wanted to take sides, to throw myself into the fight, to declare myself for or against the Academy.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," I asked. "Should not the Academy call to itself the best minds in the kingdom, rather than the uncle of the man who has the

ecclesiastical patronage in his gift?" I asked my good master.

"My son," he answered gently, "if Monseigneur de Séez appears austere in his ordinances, great and gallant in his life, and if he is in fact, a paragon among prelates, and pronounced that panegyric on St. Maclou, the exordium of which, relative to the healing of the King's evil by the King of France, seemed to be noble, do you want the Society to turn him out for the sole reason that he has a nephew as powerful as he is amiable? That would be showing a truly ferocious virtue, and punishing Monseigneur de Séez inhumanly for the grandeur of his family. The Academy wished to forget that. That alone, my son, is sufficiently magnanimous."

I was daring enough to make reply to this speech, so carried away was I by the fire of youth.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said I, "allow my feelings to oppose your arguments. All the world knows that Monseigneur de Séez has only become considerable by the suppleness of his character and his manners, and what one admires in him is his skill in detaching himself from both parties.... We have seen him glide gently between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, tincting his pale prudence with the roses of Christian charity.... He thinks he has done enough when he has displeased no one, and all his care is to sustain his position. Thus it is not his great heart which has gained for him the suffrages of the King's illustrious *protégés* Neither is it his great mind. For, with the exception of this panegyric on St. Maclou, which he had (as all the world knows) but the trouble of reading, this peace-loving bishop has only let us hear the depressing instructions issued to his clergy.

"He recommends himself by the amenity of his language and the politeness of his conversation. Are these sufficient titles to immortality?"

"Tournebroche," answered Monsieur l'Abbé, civilly, "you reason with the simplicity given to you by Madame, your mother, at your birth, and I see that you will keep your natural candour for long enough. I congratulate you upon it. But innocence must not make you unjust; it is enough that it leaves you ignorant. The immortality that they have bestowed on Monseigneur de Séez does not call for the attainments of a Bossuet or a Belzunce; it is not graven in the heart of an astounded people — it is inscribed in a big book; and you can well understand that these paper laurels only suit the heads of such heroes.

"If, among the Forty, there are persons of more gentility than genius, what harm do you see in it?"

Mediocrity triumphs in the Academy. But where does it not? Do you see it less powerful in Parliament or in the royal Council, where doubtless it is less fitted to find place? Must one be an exceptional man to work at a dictionary which wishes to regulate custom, and can only follow it?

“Academicians, or academists, were instituted, as you know, to fix the best usage in matters of speech, to purge the language of all archaisms and vulgar impurities, and to see that a second Rabelais, or a second Montaigne, does not arise, smelling of the rabble, of pedantry, or of the provinces. They assembled, to this end, gentlemen, who knew good usage and writers who were interested in knowing it. That gave rise to alarm lest the assembly should, tyrannically, reform the French language. But it was soon recognised that these fears were vain, and the academists, far from imposing custom, obeyed it. In spite of their veto we continue to say as before, ‘I shut my door.’

The Assembly soon resigned itself to entombing the progress of usage in a big dictionary. It is the sole care of the Immortals. When they are not sitting they find leisure for recreation with one another. For that they need pleasant companions, easy and affable, amiable colleagues, well-informed men, and men who know the world. This is not always the case with men of great talent. Genius is sometimes unsociable. An exceptional man is rarely a man of resource. The Academy could do without Descartes and Pascal. Who says that it could do well without Monsieur Godeau or Monsieur Conrart, or any other person of a supple, complacent, and circumspect turn of mind?”

“Alas!” I sighed, “then it is no senate of divine beings, or council of immortals, no august Areopagus of poetry and eloquence?”

“By no means, my son. It is a society which teaches manners, and which has gained a great reputation for that among foreign nations, and particularly among the Muscovites. You have no idea what admiration the *Académie Française* inspires among German barons, colonels of the Russian Army and English milords. Europeans rate nothing higher than our Academicians and our dancers. I knew a Sarmatian princess of great beauty who, passing through Paris, impatiently sought for an academician, whoever he might be, to make him a present of her virtue.”

“If it be thus,” I cried, “why do the academicians risk compromising their good reputation by these unfortunate selections which are so universally blamed?”

“Stop, Tournebroche, my son, do not say anything evil of unfortunate selections,” replied my master. “To begin with, in all human undertakings one must take into consideration the part played by chance, which is, upon the whole, the part played by God on earth, and the only occasion where Divine Providence manifests itself clearly in this world. For you well understand, my son, that what we call the absurdity of chance and the caprice of fortune, are, in reality, but the revenge taken in sport by Divine justice on the counsels of the would-be wise. In the second place, it is suitable in assemblies to give some play

to caprice and fancy. A perfectly reasonable society would be a perfectly unbearable one. It would languish under the cold rule of justice. It would not have any belief in its own power or freedom if it did not taste, from time to time, the delicious pleasure of braving public opinion and good sense. It is the darling sin of the powers of this world to be taken with bizarre caprices. Why should not the Academy indulge in whims just as much as the Grand Turk or a pretty woman?

“Many opposite passions unite to inspire these unfortunate selections which vex simple souls. It is a pleasure for good people to take an unfortunate mortal and make an academician of him. Thus the God of the psalmist takes the poor man from his dunghill. *Erigens de stercore pauperem , ut collocet eum cum principibus , cum principibus populi sui* . These are strokes which astonish the nations and those who deal them must think themselves armed with a mysterious force and terrible power. And what pleasure to drag the poor soul from his dunghill, while leaving, meanwhile, some intellectual despot in the shade! It is to quaff, at a draught, a rare and delicious mixture of charity fulfilled and jealousy satisfied. It is enjoyment in every sense and content for the whole man. And you want the academicians to resist the sweetness of such a philtre!

“We must take into consideration again, that in procuring for themselves this very sophisticated pleasure, the academicians act for the best in their own interests. A society formed exclusively of great men would not be numerous, and would appear rather depressing.

“Great men cannot endure one another, and they have little wit. It is good to let them mix with smaller fry. It amuses them. The small fry benefit by their neighbourhood, the great by the comparison with the small, and there is profit for both one and the other. Let us admire by what skilful play, what ingenious contrivance, the *Académie Française* passes on to some of its members the importance it gains from others. It is a collection of suns and planets, where all shine with their own or with a borrowed effulgence.

“I go even further. Unfortunate selections are necessary to the existence of this society. If, in the elections, the Academy did not take the side of weakness and error, if it did not have the air of choosing haphazardly at times, it would make itself so hated by all that it could no longer continue to exist. In the republic of letters it would be as a tribunal set in the midst of condemned men. Infallible, it would appear odious. What an affront for those who were not chosen, were the elected one always the best! The daughter of Richelieu must seem a little volatile, so as not to appear too insolent. What saves her is that she takes fancies. Her injustice proves her innocence. It is because we know her capricious that she can reject us without wounding us. It is sometimes so

advantageous to her to deceive herself that I am tempted to believe, notwithstanding appearances, that she does it on purpose. She has admirable ruses for dealing tactfully with the self-love of the candidates she sets aside. An election of such a kind disarms envy. It is in her apparent faults that you must admire her true wisdom.

XIV. SEDITION-MONGERS

MY good master and I having paid our accustomed visit at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine*, we found in the shop the famous Mr. Rockstrong, mounted on the highest rung of the ladder ferreting out the old books, of which he is a connoisseur. For it pleases him, as is well known, in his troubled existence to collect precious books and fine prints.

Condemned by the English Parliament to imprisonment for life for taking part in Monmouth's Rebellion, he lives in France, whence he is continually sending articles to the gazettes of his country.

My good master, as his habit was, let himself down on to a stool, then raised his eyes to the ladder where Mr. Rockstrong was turning about with the squirrel-like agility he has preserved in his declining years.

"God be thanked!" said he, "I see, *Monsieur le Rebelle*, you are as well and as young as ever."

Mr. Rockstrong turned on my good master the glowing eyes that light up his sallow countenance.

"Why do you call me a rebel?" he asked, "you fat Abbé!"

"I call you a rebel, Mr. Rockstrong, because you have failed. One is a rebel when one is vanquished. Victors are never rebels."

"Abbé, you speak with a disgusting cynicism."

"Beware, Mr. Rockstrong; that maxim does not come from me. It comes from a very great man. I found it among the papers of Julius Caesar Scaliger."

"Well, Abbé, those are villainous papers. And it is an infamous saying. Our loss, due to the irresolution of our chief, and to an indolence which he paid for with his life, does not alter the goodness of our cause. And honest people conquered by rogues, remain honest people."

"It pains me to hear you talk of honest people and rogues, in public matters, Mr. Rockstrong. These simple expressions might suffice to indicate the good and the bad side in those combats of angels which were fought in Heaven before the creation of the world; and which your fellow countryman, John Milton, has sung with very great barbarity. But, on this terraqueous globe, camps are not, however desirable it might be, so equally divided that one can discriminate, without prejudice or compliance, between the army of the pure and the impure; nor even distinguish the side of the just from the unjust. So that, success must necessarily remain the only witness to the goodness of a cause. I annoy you, Mr.

Rockstrong, by telling you that one is rebel when one is vanquished. Yet when it happens to you to climb to power, you will not suffer rebellion.”

“Abbé, you do not know what you are saying. I have always hastened to the side of the vanquished.”

“Truly, Mr. Rockstrong, you are a natural and constant enemy of the State. You are hardened in your enmity by the force of your genius, which finds pleasure in destruction and ruin.”

“Abbé, do you call me a criminal?”

“Mr. Rockstrong, if I were a statesman, or a friend of the prince, like Monsieur Roman, I should take you for a remarkable criminal. But I am not a sufficiently fervent believer in the religion of politics to be very terrified at the murmur of your crimes, or of outrages which make more noise than they do harm.”

“Abbé, you are immoral!”

“If it be only at such a price one can afford to be indulgent, Mr. Rockstrong, do not blame me too severely.”

“I have no use, my fat Abbé, for an indulgence that you share between me, the victim, and the scoundrels in Parliament, who condemned me with such revolting injustice.”

“It is amusing to hear you talk of the injustice of the lords, Mr. Rockstrong.”

“Is it not a crying injustice?”

“It is quite true, Mr. Rockstrong, that you were convicted, on a ridiculous charge, by the Lord-Chancellor for a collection of libels, none of which came in particular under the ban of the English law; it is true that in a country where one is allowed to write anything and everything, you were punished for some pungent writings; it is true that they used, as weapons, obsolete and out-of-the-way forms whose imposing hypocrisy poorly dissimulated the impossibility of getting at you by legal methods; it is true that the milords who judged you were interested in your ruin, since Monmouth’s, and your success would infallibly have dragged them from their seats. It is true your ruin was decided on beforehand in the royal Councils. It is true you escaped by flight, from a mediocre kind of martyrdom in truth, but a painful one. For imprisonment for life is a penalty even if one may reasonably hope to escape from it soon. But there is no justice nor injustice there. You were condemned for State reasons — which is extremely honourable. And more than one of the lords who condemned you had conspired with you twenty years before. Your crime was to have frightened those in office — and it is an unpardonable one. Ministers and their friends invoke the safety of the State when danger threatens their fortunes or their posts. And they are willing to believe themselves necessary for the

preservation of the empire, for they are for the most part interested parties and no philosophers. But that does not make bad men of them. They are human beings and that is quite enough to explain their pitiable mediocrity, their stupidity and their avarice. But whom do you set up against them, Mr. Rockstrong? Other men of equal mediocrity, and yet more greedy, because they are hungrier. The people of London would have borne with them as they bear with the others. They awaited your victory or your defeat to declare themselves, wherein they gave proof of remarkable sagacity.

The people are well advised when they judge that they have nothing to gain or lose by change of masters.”

Thus spoke Abbé Coignard, and Mr. Rockstrong with inflamed countenance, eyes on fire, and wig starting from his head, shouted at him with gestures from the top of his ladder: “Abbé, I understand thieves and all types of rogues in Chancery and Parliament. But I do not understand you, who, without any personal interest in the matter, out of pure malice, propound maxims that they themselves profess but for their own profit. You must be wickeder than they, for you have nothing to gain in the matter. It is beyond me, Abbé!”

“It is a sign of my being a philosopher,” gently replied my good master. “It is in the nature of wise men to irritate the rest of mankind. Anaxagoras was a celebrated example of it. I do not speak of Socrates who was but a sophist.

But we see that in all times and in all countries the opinions of meditative minds were subjects of scandal. You think yourself very different from your enemies, Mr. Rockstrong, and that you are as lovable as they are odious. Allow me to tell you that this is but the effect of your pride and of your high courage. In actual fact, you share in common with those who condemned you, all human weaknesses and passions. If you are more honest than many of them, and even if you are a man of incomparable vivacity of mind, you are filled with a talent for hatred and discord which renders you very inconvenient in a well-regulated country. The calling of a journalist, in which you excel, has raised to the highest degree of perfection the wonderful partiality of your mind, and though a victim of injustice, you are yourself not just. What I have just said embroils me both with you and with your enemies, and I am very certain I shall never obtain a fat living from the minister who has them in his gift. But I prize freedom of mind more highly than a fat abbey or a cosy priory. I shall have succeeded in vexing all the world, but I shall die in peace, and in contentment of heart.”

“Abbé,” half-laughingly, replied Mr. Rockstrong, “I forgive you, because I think you a little mad. You make no difference between rogues and honest men, and you would not rather have a free country than a despotic and shuffling government. You are a lunatic, and of no ordinary kind.”

“Let us go and drink a pot of wine at the *Petit Bacchus* , Mr. Rockstrong,” said my good master, “and I will explain to you, while emptying my glass, why I am totally indifferent to forms of government, and why I do not trouble myself about any change of masters.”

“Very willingly,” said Mr. Rockstrong, “I shall be interested to drink in company with such a bad arguer as you.”

He sprang lightly down from his ladder, and we all three repaired to the inn.

XV. REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES

MR. ROCKSTRONG, who was a sensible man, bore my good master no malice for his sincerity of speech. When the landlord of the *Petit Bacchus* had brought a pot of wine, the pamphleteer lifted his glass and drank to Abbé Coignard's health, calling him a rogue, a friend of robbers, a tool of tyrants and an old scamp! all with quite a jovial air.

My master returned his compliments with a good grace, congratulating him on the fact that he drank to a man whose natural humour had remained unaffected by philosophy.

"As for myself," he added, "I feel that my intelligence is quite spoilt by reflection. And as it is not in the nature of mankind to think with any profundity, I own that my leaning to thought is an odd mania and highly inconvenient. In the first place it makes me unfit for any undertaking, for our actions result from a limited outlook and narrow way of thinking. You will be astonished, Mr. Rockstrong, if you picture to yourself the simplemindedness of the men of genius who have stirred the world. Conquerors and statesmen, who have changed the face of the earth, have never reflected on the essence of the beings they handled so roughly. They shut themselves up altogether in the pettiness of their grand projects and the wisest see but very few things at a time. Such as you see me, Mr. Rockstrong, it would be impossible for me to work like Alexander at the conquest of India, or to found and govern an empire, or, generally speaking, to throw myself into any one of those vast undertakings which tempt the pride of the impetuous. Reflection would hamper me, from the outset, and I should find reasons for coming to a stop at every move I made."

Then turning to me my good master said sighing:

"Thought is a great infirmity, God keep you from it Tournebroche, my son, as He has kept His greatest saints, and the souls for whom He cherishes a singular predilection, and for whom He reserves eternal glory. Men who think little, or who think not at all, go about their business happily in this world and the next, whilst the meditative soul is incessantly menaced with its temporal and spiritual loss. Such malice lies in thought! Reflect and tremble, my son, at the thought that the serpent of Genesis is the oldest of philosophers and their everlasting prince."

Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard drank a great draught of wine and went on in a low voice:

“As regards my salvation, that is a subject to which I have never applied my intelligence. I have never exercised my reason on the truths of the Faith. Unhappily, I have meditated the deeds of men and the ways of cities; therefore I am no longer fit to govern an Island, as was Sancho Panza.”

“That is a very good thing,” retorted Mr. Rockstrong, laughingly, “for your isle would be a retreat for bandits and vagabonds where the criminal would judge the innocent, if perchance there were any.

“I well believe it! Mr. Rockstrong, I well believe it!” answered my good master! “It is quite possible that, if I were to govern another island of Baratania, manners would be as you say. With one stroke you have depicted all the empires of the world. I feel that mine would be no better than the rest. I have no illusions about mankind, and, so as not to hate them, I despise them. I despise and pity them, Mr. Rockstrong. But they bear me no good-will for it. They want to be hated. One vexes them when one shows them the gentlest, the most indulgent, the most charitable, most human and gracious of all feelings that they could inspire: contempt. Nevertheless, mutual contempt means peace on earth, and if men would only thoroughly despise one another they would do themselves no further harm and live together in an amiable tranquillity.

“All the ills of civilised societies originate in people thinking too highly of each other, and raising honour, like a monster, above the wretchedness of the flesh and the spirit. This feeling makes them both proud and cruel, and I detest the pride that wants honour to be shown to it and to others, as if anyone descended from Adam could be worthy of honour! An animal which eats, drinks (give me something to drink), and makes love, is worthy of pity, interesting perhaps, even sometimes pleasant and agreeable.

“He can only be honourable by the effect of a most absurd and headstrong prejudice in his favour. This prejudice is the source of all the ills from which we suffer. It is a detestable kind of idolatry. And to assure to humanity a sweetening of their existence you must begin by recalling them to their natural humility.

“They will be happy, when, brought back again to a true appreciation of their condition, they despise one another without there being a single exception to this most excellent contempt.”

Mr. Rockstrong shrugged his shoulders.

“My fat Abbé,” said he, “you are a pig.”

“I am but a man,” replied my master, “you flatter me, and I feel in me the germs of that bitter pride that I detest, and that vain-glory which leads the human race into duels and into war. There are times, Mr. Rockstrong, when I would have my throat cut for my opinions; which would be an act of madness. For who

can prove that I reason better than you, you, who reason excessively badly! Give me something to drink!”

Mr. Rockstrong courteously filled my good master’s glass.

“Abbé, you talk nonsense,” he said, “but I love you, and I should much like to know what you find blameworthy in my public behaviour, and why you side against me with tyrants, forgers, thieves, and dishonest judges?”

“Mr. Rockstrong, allow me first of all to diffuse over you and your friends, with a sweet impartiality, that single sentiment which gently puts an end to quarrels, and brings pacification. Bear with me if I respect neither the one nor the other enough to consign them to the vengeance of the law and to call down punishment on their heads. Men, whatsoever they do, are always silly sheep, and I leave to milord-chancellor, who condemned you, the Ciceronian declamations on state crimes. I have little taste for Catiline orations from whichever side they come.

I am merely sad to see a man like you occupied in changing forms of government. It is the most frivolous and empty method of using one’s intelligence, and to fight people in office is folly, unless it is a way of earning one’s bread and getting on in the world. Give me something to drink! Bethink you, Mr. Rockstrong, that these startling changes in the State, meditated by you, are merely displacements of particular men, and that men taken in the mass are one like another, average in evil as well as in good; so that to replace two or three hundred ministers, governors of provinces, colonial agents, and bonneted presidents of courts, by two or three hundred others, is as good as doing nothing, and is simply putting Philip and Barnabas in place of Paul and Xavier. As to changing the condition of people at the same time, as you hope to do, that is quite impossible, for that condition does not depend on the ministers, who count for nothing, but on the earth and its fruits, industry, commerce, money amassed in the kingdom, the cleverness of the townfolk in trade and exchange — all things, which be they good or bad, are not kept going by either the prince or the officers of the crown.”

Mr. Rockstrong quickly interrupted my good master:

“Who does not know,” he exclaimed, “that the condition of industry and commerce depends on the government, and that only under a free government can you have good finance?”

“Liberty,” continued Monsieur l’Abbé Coignard, “is but the result of the wealth of citizens, who free themselves as soon as they are powerful enough to be independent. People take all the liberty they can enjoy, or, to put it more plainly, they imperiously clamour for institutions in recognition and guarantee of the rights which they have acquired by their industry.

“All liberty emanates from them and their several actions. Their most involuntary movements enlarge the mould of the state which shapes itself on them.

“So that one may say that detestable as tyranny is, every tyranny is necessary, and despotic governments are but the strait-waistcoat on a feeble and dwindled body. And who does not see that the outward appearance of government is like the skin which reveals the structure of an animal without being the cause of it?

“You seize hold upon the skin without troubling yourself about the viscera, in which you show little natural philosophy, Mr. Rockstrong.”

“So you make no difference between a free state and a tyrannical government, and all that you regard as nothing but the hide of the beast, my fat Abbé. And you fail to see that the expenditure of the prince and the depredations of ministers can ruin agriculture and wear out trade by raising the taxes.”

“Mr. Rockstrong, there cannot be at the same period and for the same country more than one possible form of government, any more than an animal can have more than one pelt at a time.

From which it results, that we must leave to the care of Time, who is a courtly person, the changing of empires and the remaking of laws. He works at it slowly, untiringly, and kindly.”

“And you don’t think, my fat Abbé, that we ought to help the old man who figures on the clocks with a scythe in his hand? You do not believe that a revolution, such as that of the English or that in the Low Countries, can have any effect on the condition of the people. No? You old idiot! you deserve to be crowned with a fool’s cap!”

“Revolutions come about in conservation of good things already acquired, and not to gain new. It is the folly of nations, it is your own, Mr. Rockstrong, to found great hopes on the downfall of princes. People assure unto themselves, by revolting from time to time, the preservation of their threatened liberties. They have never gained new liberties thereby. But they are fooled with words. It is remarkable, Mr. Rockstrong, that men will easily let themselves be killed for words of no meaning. Ajax made the remark long ago: ‘I thought in my youth’ the poet makes him say, ‘that deeds were more powerful than words, but I see to-day that the word is the stronger of the two.’ Thus said Ajax, son of Oileus. Mr. Rockstrong, I am very thirsty!”

XVI. HISTORY

MONSIEUR ROMAN placed half a dozen volumes on the counter.

"I beg of you, Monsieur Blaizot," said he, "to send me these books.

"There are 'Mother and Son,' the 'Memoirs of the Court of France,' and the 'Testament of Richelieu.' I should be grateful if you will add to them anything new you have received lately in the way of history, and more particularly, anything treating of France since the death of Henry IV.... All these are works in which I am extremely interested."

"You are right, Monsieur," said my master. "Books on history are full of light stuff very suitable to amuse an honest fellow, and one is sure of finding a great number of pleasant stories."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," answered Monsieur Roman, "what I look for from the historians is not frivolous amusement. It is a serious study, and I am filled with despair if I find fiction mingled with fact. I study human actions in relation to the conduct of nations, and I seek for maxims of government in history."

"I am not ignorant of that, Monsieur," said my good master. "Your treatise on 'Monarchy' is renowned enough for us to know that you have conceived a political system drawn from history."

"In such sort," said Monsieur Roman, "I have been the first to draw rules for princes and ministers which they cannot avoid without danger."

"And we behold you, Monsieur, on the frontispiece of your book, in the likeness of Minerva, presenting to a youthful king the mirror handed you by the muse, Clio, hovering above your head, in a study decked with busts and pictures. But allow me to tell you, Monsieur, that this muse is a story-teller, and that she holds out to you a mirror of falsehood. There are few truths in history, and the only facts on which all agree are those we get from a single source. Historians contradict one another every time they meet. Even more! We see that Flavius Josephus, who has portrayed the same incidents in his 'Antiquities' and in his 'Wars of the Jews,' records them differently in each of these works. Titus Livris is but a collector of fables; and Tacitus, your oracle, gives me the impression of an unsmiling deceiver who flouts all the world under a pretence of gravity. I have a sufficient esteem for Thucydides, Polybius, and Guicciardini. As for our own Mézeray, he does not know what he is saying, any more than do Villaret and Abbé Vély. But I am accusing historians; it is history itself I should attack.

"What is history? A miscellany of moral tales, or an eloquent medley of narratives and speeches, according as the historian is a philosopher or a spouter.

You may find eloquent passages, but one must not look for the truth there, because truth consists in showing the necessary relation of things, and the historian does not know how to establish this relation, because he is unable to follow the chain of effects and causes. Consider that every time that the cause of an historical fact lies in a fact that is not historical, history fails to see it. And as historical facts are intimately allied to non-historical facts, it comes about that events are not linked after their natural order in history, but are connected one with another by mere artifices of rhetoric. And I ask you also to notice that the distinction between facts which appear in history and facts which do not is entirely arbitrary. It results from this that, far from being a science, history is condemned by a vice in its essence to the chaos of untruth. Sequence and continuity will always be lacking to it, and without these there can be no true knowledge. You see also that one can draw no prognostic as to the future of a nation from its past history. Now, the peculiarity of science is to be prophetic, as may be seen by those tables where the moon's periods, tides, and eclipses are to be found calculated beforehand, whilst revolutions and wars escape calculation."

Monsieur Roman explained to Monsieur l'Abbé Coignard that he merely asked of history facts, somewhat confused it is true, uncertain, mingled with errors, but infinitely precious, through their subject, which is man.

"I know," he added, "how human annals are curtailed and mixed with fable. But, though a strict sequence of cause and effect fails us, I see in it a kind of plan that one loses and then finds again, like the ruins of temples half-buried in the sand. That alone is of immense value to me. And I flatter myself that, in the future, history, formed from abundant material and treated with method, will rival in exactitude the natural sciences."

"Do not reckon on that," said my good master, "I should rather believe that the growing abundance of memoirs, correspondence, and filed records, will render the task more difficult to future historians. Mr. Elward, who gives up his life to the study of the revolution in England, assures me that one man's lifetime would not suffice in which to read the half of what was written during the disturbances. It reminds me of a story told to me by Monsieur l'Abbé Blanchet on this subject, which I will tell you as I remember it, regretting that Monsieur l'Abbé Blanchet is not here to tell it you himself, for he is a man of wit.

"Here is the apologue:

"When the young prince Zémire succeeded his father on the throne of Persia, he called all the academicians of his kingdom together, and said:

"The learned Zeb, my instructor, has taught me that monarchs would be liable to fewer errors if they were enlightened by past experience. Therefore I

wish to study the history of nations. I order you to compose a universal history and to neglect nothing to make it complete.’

“The wise men promised to carry out the prince’s desire, and having withdrawn they set to work immediately. At the end of twenty years they appeared before the king, followed by a caravan composed of twelve camels each bearing 500 volumes. The secretary of the academy, having prostrated himself on the steps of the throne, spoke in these terms:

“‘Sire, the academicians of your kingdom have the honour to place at your feet the universal history that they have compiled at your majesty’s behests. It comprises 6000 volumes and contains all that we could possibly collect regarding the customs of nations and the vicissitudes of empires. We have inserted the ancient chronicles which have been luckily preserved, and we have illustrated them with abundant notes on geography, chronology, and diplomacy. The prolegomena are alone one camel’s load, and the paralipomena are borne with great difficulty by another camel.’

“The king answered:

“‘Gentlemen, I thank you for the trouble that you have taken. But I am very busy with the cares of state. Moreover, I have aged while you worked. I am arrived, as says the Persian poet, half-way along the road of life, and even supposing I die full of years, I cannot reasonably hope to have the time to read such a lengthy history. It shall be placed in the archives of the kingdom. Be good enough to make me a summary better fitted to the brevity of human life.’

“The Persian academicians worked twenty years; then they brought to the king 1500 volumes on three camels.

“‘Sire,’ said the permanent secretary, in a weakened voice, ‘here is our new work. We believe we have omitted nothing essential.’

“‘That may be,’ answered the king, ‘but I shall not read it. I am old; lengthy undertakings do not suit my years; abridge it further and do not be long about it.’

“They lingered so little that at the end of ten years they returned followed by a young elephant bearing 500 volumes.

“‘I flatter myself I have been succinct,’ said the permanent secretary. —

“‘You have not yet been sufficiently so,’ answered the king.

“‘I am at the end of my life. Abridge, abridge, if you want me to know the history of mankind ere I die.’

“The permanent secretary reappeared before the palace at the end of five years. Walking with crutches, he held by the bridle a small donkey which bore a big book on its back.

“‘Hasten,’ said the officer to him, ‘the king is dying.’

“The king in fact was on his death-bed. He turned on the academician and his big book his nearly expiring gaze, and said with a sigh:

“‘I shall die, then, without knowing the history of mankind!’

“‘ Sire,’ replied the learned man, who was almost as near death as himself, ‘I will sum it up for you in three words: *They were born , they suffered, they died!* ’

“Thus did the king of Persia learn the history of the world in the evening of his life.”

XVII. MONSIEUR NICODEME

WHILE, at the sign of the *Image de Sainte Catherine* , my good master, seated on the highest rung of the ladder, was reading Cassiodorus with great pleasure, an elderly man came into the shop, of an arrogant air, and severe aspect. He went straight to Monsieur Blaizot, who smilingly stretched his head over the counter.

“Monsieur,” he said, “you are sworn bookseller, and I must take you for a well-conducted man. Nevertheless, in your display of goods a volume of the works of Ronsard is open at the frontispiece, which represents a naked woman. And it is a thing not fit to be looked at.”

“Pardon me, Monsieur,” replied Monsieur Blaizot, gently, “it is a frontispiece of Léonard Gautier’s who, in his day, was considered a very able draughtsman.”

“It matters little to me,” replied the elder, “that the draughtsman was clever. All that I take into consideration is that he represented nudities. This figure has nothing on but its hair, and I am grievously surprised, Monsieur, that a man of age and prudence, such as you appear, should expose it to the gaze of the young men who frequent the Rue St. Jacques. You would do well to burn it, following the example of Father Garasse, who expended his means in acquiring, in order to burn them, a number of books opposed to public decency and to the Society of Jesus. At least, it would be more decent in you to hide it in the most secret recess of your shop, which conceals, I fear, many a book calculated to excite minds to vice, not only by their text, but by their plates.”

Monsieur Blaizot replied, reddening, that such a suspicion was unjust, and it grieved him coming from a worthy man.

“I must tell you who I am,” said the elder. “You see before you Monsieur Nicodème, the President of the Purity League. The end that I pursue is to outdo in niceness in the matter of modesty the regulations of the *Lieutenant de Police* .

I busy myself, with the help of a dozen Parliamentary councillors, and two hundred churchwardens from the principal parishes, in clearing away nudities exposed in public places, such as squares, boulevards, streets, alleys, quays, courts, and gardens. And, not content with establishing modesty in the public way, I exert myself to spread its dominion even into the salon, the study, and the bedroom, whence it is but too often banished. Know, Monsieur, that the Society that I have founded has trousseaux made for young married people, containing long and ample night-garments which permit these young spouses chastely to go about the execution of God’s commandment relative to increase and multiplication. And, to mingle charm, if I may say so, with austerity, these

garments are trimmed with pleasing embroidery. I plume myself on having thus invented garments of an intimate nature so well designed to make another Sarah and Tobias of all our young couples, and to cleanse the sacrament of marriage from the impurities which unfortunately have clung to it."

My good master, who, his nose in Cassiodorus, had been listening to their discourse, replied with the utmost gravity from the top of his ladder, that he thought the invention admirable, and praiseworthy, but that he had a still more excellent one of the kind.

"I would that our young spouses," said he, "were rubbed from head to foot with blacking before they met, making their skin like boot-leather, which would greatly damp the criminal ardours of the flesh, and be a grievous obstacle to the caresses, kisses, and endearments that lovers practise too generally between the sheets."

Monsieur Nicodème, lifting his head at these words, saw my good master on the ladder, and saw also from his demeanour that he was laughing at him.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said he, with sadness and indignation, "I would forgive you did you merely laugh at me. But you ridicule at the same time, decency and public morals, and there you are much to blame. In spite of wicked jokes, the Society that I have founded has already done good and useful work. Crack your jokes, sir! We have fixed six hundred vine or fig-leaves on the statues in the king's gardens."

"Admirable indeed, sir," responded my good master, adjusting his spectacles, "and at that rate every statue will soon have its leaf. But (seeing that objects have no meaning for us save by association of ideas) in placing vine-leaves and fig-leaves on statues, you transfer the quality of indecency to the leaves; so that one can no longer see vine or fig-tree on the countryside without conceiving them as sheltering some indecency; and it is no small sin, my good sir, to fix immodesty on these innocent plants. Allow me to tell you further that it is a dangerous thing to make a study, as you do, of everything that may cause disquietude and uneasiness to the flesh, without reflecting that if a given shape be such as to scandalise souls, each of us who bears the original of that shape will scandalise himself, except he be less than a man — a thing one does not like to contemplate."

"Monsieur," responded the aged Nicodème, rather heatedly, "I gather from the language you hold that you are a libertine and a debauchee."

"Monsieur," said my good master, "I am a Christian, and as for living in debauchery, I could not think of such a thing, having enough to do to gain my daily bread, wine, and tobacco. Such as you see me, Monsieur, I know no orgy but the silent orgies of meditation, and the only feast I sit down to is the feast of

the Muses. But I, as a wise man, consider that it is a bad thing to outbid in shamefacedness the teachings of the Catholic religion, which on this subject allows a good deal of liberty, and adjusts itself easily to people's customs and prejudices. I take you to be tainted with Calvinism and to be leaning to the heresy of iconoclasm. For, in truth, one does not know whether your zeal will not go so far as to burn images of God and the saints, from hatred of the humanity evident in them. Such words as modesty, decency, and shame, which come so readily from your mouth, have as a matter of fact no precise and constant meaning. Custom and nice feeling can alone define them with truth and moderation. I only acknowledge poets, artists, and pretty women, as judges in these delicate matters. What an extraordinary notion, to set up a row of attorneys in judgment on Grace and Pleasure!"

"But, Monsieur," replied the aged Nicodème, "we have nothing to do with Smiles or Graces, still less with images of God and the saints, and you are maliciously fastening a quarrel on us. We are decent people, who wish to turn aside the eyes of our sons from improper sights, and one knows well enough what is decent and what is not. Do you wish, Monsieur l'Abbé, that our young people should be open to every temptation of the streets?"

"Ah! Monsieur," replied my good master. "We must all be tempted. It is the lot of men and Christians on this earth. And the most formidable temptation comes from within — not from without. You would not take so much trouble to remove from the shop windows any sketch of nude women if, as I have done, you had studied the lives of the Fathers of the desert. There you would have seen how, in a frightful wilderness, far from any carved or painted shape, torn with hair-shirts, macerated with penance, faint from fasting, tossing on a bed of thorns, the anchorites were penetrated to the very marrow with the prickings of carnal desire. In their wretched cells they saw visions a thousand times more voluptuous than this allegory which offends you in Monsieur Blaizot's window.

"The devil, or, as free-thinkers would say, nature, is a better painter of lascivious scenes than Giulio Romano himself. He surpasses all the Italian and Flemish masters in grouping, movement, and colour. Alas! one is powerless against his glowing pictures. Those that shock you are of small account in comparison, and you would do wisely to leave to the care of the *Lieutenant de Police*, as your fellow citizens are willing it should be left, the guardianship of public decency. Truly your ingenuousness astonishes me; you have little notion what a man is, and what society is, and of the fever and insurgence of a great city. Oh! the silly grey-beards, who in the midst of all the uncleanness of a Babylon where every lifted curtain shows the eye or the arm of a courtesan, where busy humanity touch and quicken one another in the public squares, fall a-

groaning and complaining of a few naughty pictures hung up on booksellers' stalls; and carry their lamentations even to the very Parliament of the kingdom when a woman has shown her legs to some fellows in a dancing-saloon — just the most ordinary sight in the world for them."

Thus spoke my good master from the top of his ladder. But Monsieur Nicodème stopped his ears in order not to hear him, and cried out on his cynicism.

"Heavens!" he sighed, "what can be more disgusting than a naked woman, and how shameful to compromise, as does this Abbé, with an immorality which is the ruin of a country, for people can only exist by purity of morals."

"It is true, Monsieur," said my good master, "that peoples are strong only so long as they preserve their morals; but by that is understood a community of rules, opinions, and interests, and a generous-minded obedience to law; not trifles such as occupy you. Beware, moreover, lest shamefacedness, failing as a charm, become but a piece of stupidity, and less the artless dullness of your fears present a ridiculous spectacle and one not a little indecent."

But Monsieur Nicodème had already left the place.

XVIII. JUSTICE

MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ COIGNARD, who should rather have been nourished at the Prytaneum by a grateful republic, gained his bread by writing letters for servant-girls in a stall near the cemetery of the Innocents. There he happened to serve in the office of secretary to a Portuguese lady who was crossing France, with her nigger-boy. She gave him a *liard* for a letter written to her husband, and an *écu* of six *livres* for another to her lover. It was the first *écu* my good master had handled since the feast of St. John; and since he was openhanded, even to magnificence, he straightway took me to the *Tomme d'Or*, on the Quai de Grève, close to the Town-hall, where the wine is not doctored, and the sausages are of the best. And the big dealers, who buy apples on the Mall, go there ordinarily towards midday to try to best one another. It was spring-time, and sweet to be alive on such a day. My good master had our table spread on the embankment, and we hearkened, as we dined, to the lapping of the water under the oars of the boatmen. A light caressing breeze laved us with gentle breath, and we were glad to be alive and in the sunlight. While we were eating our fried gudgeons a noise of men and horses at our elbow made us turn round.

Guessing what made us curious a dingy little old man, at the next table, said, with an obliging smile:

"It is nothing, gentlemen — a servant-girl whom they are taking to be hanged for stealing some bits of lace from her mistress."

'And indeed, as he spoke, we saw, seated at the tail of a cart between two mounted police-sergeants, a girl, quite pretty, her appearance bewildered, her bosom forced into relief by the drag of her arms, which were bound behind her back. She passed in a moment, and yet I shall always see before my eyes that vision of a white face, and that look that already stared out upon nothing.

"Yes, gentlemen," said the dingy little old man, "she is the servant of Madame Josse, the councillor's wife, and to make herself smart when going with her lover to Ramponneau's stole from her mistress a lace head-dress in *point à Alençon*, and then, having committed the theft, ran away. She was taken in a house by the Pont-au-Change, and at once confessed her crime. Accordingly she was not put to the torture for more than an hour or two. What I tell you, gentlemen, I know to be true, as I am beadle at the court where she was tried."

The dingy little old man attacked his sausage, for it was getting cold, and continued:

“She should be at the scaffold by now, and in five minutes, perhaps a little more, perhaps a little less, the pretty rogue will have given up the ghost. Some of the hanged give no trouble to the executioner. No sooner is the cord round their neck than they quietly expire. But there are others who positively live at the rope’s end, and make a furious to-do about it. The most demoniacal of all was a priest, who was sentenced last year for forging the Royal signature on lottery tickets. For more than twenty minutes he fought like a carp on the end of a line.

“He! He! “chuckled the little old man, “the Abbé was modest and did not want the honour of a step up in the world. I saw him when they took him out of the cart. He cried and struggled so that the hangman said to him: ‘ Do not be a child, Monsieur l’Abbé!’ But the oddest thing was, that, there being another thief along with him, he was, at first, taken for the chaplain, and that by the executioner, whom the police-officer had the greatest difficulty in undeceiving. Wasn’t that amusing?”

“No, Monsieur,” replied my good master, “letting the fish, he had held to his lips for some moments, fall on his plate. “No, it is not amusing, and the thought that that nice-looking girl is at this moment yielding up her soul spoils the taste of my gudgeons for me, and the joy of seeing the sky above, which smiled on me but a moment back.”

“Ah, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said the little official, “if you are so sensitive as all that, you could never have witnessed without fainting what my father saw with his own eyes, when yet a child, at Dijon, his native town. Have you ever heard speak of Hélène Gillet?”

“Never,” said my master.

“In that case I will tell you her story, as my father, many a time, told it to me.”

He drank off his wine, wiped his lips with a corner of the cloth, and recounted the history I here repeat.

XIX. THE BEADLE'S STORY

IN the year 1624, in the month of October, H  l  ne Gillet, aged twenty-two, daughter of the governor-royal of Bourg-en-Bresse, who was still under the paternal roof, along with her brothers yet of tender years, showed such visible signs of being with child that it was the talk of the town, and the young girls of Bourg ceased to associate with her. It was noticed next that her figure went down, and such comments were made that the *Lieutenant-Criminel* ordered her to be examined by a jury of matrons. These latter reported that she had been with child and that her confinement had taken place at least fifteen days before. On their report, H  l  ne Gillet was put in prison and was questioned by the Court of First Instance. She there made a confession:

“‘Some months ago,’ she told them, ‘a young man from the neighbourhood, who was staying at my uncle’s house, came to my father’s to teach the boys to read and write. He possessed me but once. It was through a servant who locked me up in a room with him. There he ravished me.’ And when they asked her why she had not cried for help, she replied that surprise had taken away her voice. Pressed by the judges, she added, that in consequence of this violation she became with child and was delivered prematurely. Far from having helped on the birth, she would not have known what it was, had not a servant revealed to her the true nature of the occurrence.

“The magistrates, dissatisfied with her replies, did not know, all the same, how to contradict them, when an unexpected witness came forward to furnish certain proofs of the accusation. A soldier, who happened to pass when out walking by the garden of Monsieur Pierre Gillet, the governor-royal, father of the accused, saw in a ditch, at the foot of the wall, a raven trying to pull away a cloth with its beak. He went up to it to see what it was and found the body of a little child. He immediately informed the authorities. The child was wrapped in a chemise marked with the letters H. G. on the neck. It was proved to have been a full-term child, and H  l  ne Gillet, convicted of infanticide, was condemned to death according to custom. On account of the honourable post held by her father she was permitted to enjoy the privilege accorded those of noble birth, and the sentence ran that her head should be cut off.

“An appeal having been made to the Parliament of Dijon, she was conducted under the guard of two archers to the capital of Burgundy, and shut in the conciergerie of the Palace. Her mother, who had gone with her, withdrew to the house of the Bernardine nuns. The case was heard by the members of Parliament

on Monday the 12th of May, the last sitting before Whitsuntide. On the report of Counsellor Jacob the judges confirmed the sentence of the Bourg Court of First Instance, ordering that the condemned should be led to execution with the cord round her neck. It was generally remarked that this circumstance of infamy was added in a strange and unusual fashion to the punishment of a noble, and such severity, which was against all rules, was greatly blamed. But the decree admitted of no appeal, and had to be carried out immediately.

“And indeed, on the same day, at half-past three in the afternoon, H  l  ne Gillet was led to the scaffold, the bells tolling the while, in a procession, heralded by trumpets, which sounded such a peal that all the good folk of the town heard it in their houses, and falling on their knees prayed for the soul of her who was about to die. The deputy King’s-attorney advanced on horseback followed by his attendants. Then came the condemned woman in a cart, the cord round her neck according to the decree of Parliament.

“She was attended by two Jesuit fathers and two Capuchin brothers, who held up before her Jesus dying on the Cross. Near by stood the headsman with his sword and the headswoman with a pair of shears. A company of archers surrounded the cart. Behind pressed a crowd of curious people where might have been discerned many small tradesmen, bakers, butchers, masons, from whom a great tumult arose.

“The procession stopped on the place called Place Morimont not, as might be thought, because it was the place of public execution, but in remembrance of the mitred and croziered abbots of Morimont, who formerly had their house there. The wooden scaffold was set up on some stone steps adjoining a humble chapel where the monks were wont to pray for the souls of the victims.

“H  l  ne Gillet ascended the steps with the four religious, the headsman, and his wife the headswoman. The latter, having withdrawn the cord which encircled the victim’s neck, cut her hair with shears half a foot long and bandaged her eyes; the religious prayed aloud. The headsman, however, began to tremble and turn pale. He was one, Simon Grandjean, a feeble-looking man, and as gentle and timorous of appearance as his wife, the headswoman, was savage. He had taken communion that morning in prison, and yet he felt upset and without courage to put this child to death. He leant over towards the crowd:

“‘Your pardon, all of you,’ he said, ‘if I do what I have to do badly. I have a fever on me I have been unable to shake off for three months.’

“Then tottering, wringing his hands, lifting his eyes to heaven, he fell on his knees before H  l  ne Gillet, and twice asked her pardon. He asked a blessing from the priests, and when the headswoman had arranged the victim on the block he lifted his sword.

“The Jesuits and the Capuchins cried out ‘Jesus! Mary!’ and a groan went up from the crowd. The blow, which should have severed the neck, made a large gash on the left shoulder, and the poor creature fell over on her right side.

“Simon Grandjean, turning to the crowd, exclaimed:

“‘ Let me die!’

“Hooting arose, and some stones were thrown on the scaffold where the headswoman was replacing the victim on the block.

“Her husband again took his sword. Striking a second time, he deeply gashed the neck of the poor girl, who fell on the sword, which slipped from the hands of the executioner.

“This time the uproar from the crowd was terrible, and such a hail of stones showered on the scaffold that Simon Grandjean and the Jesuits and the Capuchins jumped down. They managed to gain the low-roofed chapel and shut themselves in. The headswoman, left alone with the victim, looked for the sword. Not seeing it, she took the cord with which H  l  ne Gillet had been led there, knotted it round the neck, and setting her foot on her chest tried to strangle her.

“H  l  ne, seizing the cord with both hands, defended herself, all bleeding as she was; whereupon the woman Grandjean dragged her by the cord, head downwards, to the edge of the platform, and, having got her to the stone steps, she cut her throat with the shears.

“She was at it when the butchers and the masons, upsetting the archers and the police, rushed the approaches of the scaffold and chapel: a dozen strong arms lifted H  l  ne Gillet and carried her, insensible, to the shop of Ma  tre Jacquin, the barber-surgeon.

“The crowd of people which flung itself on the chapel-door would soon have forced it. But the two Capuchin brothers and the two Jesuit fathers opened it, being terrified. And holding up their crosses with outstretched arm, they made a way with great difficulty through the riot.

“The headsman and his wife were stoned, and struck down with hammers, and their bodies dragged through the streets, H  l  ne Gillet, however, recovering consciousness at the surgeon’s, asked to drink. Then, while Ma  tre Jacquin was dressing her wound, she said:

“‘ Shall I not have anything more to suffer?’

“It was found that she had suffered two blows with the sword, six cuts from the shears, which had slashed her lips and throat, and that her loins had been deeply cut by the sword, over which the headswoman dragged her while trying

to strangle her; and finally that her whole body was bruised by the stones the crowd had thrown on the scaffold.

“Nevertheless she was healed of all her wounds.

Left in the hands of Jacquin the surgeon, under guard of a sheriff’s officer, she asked continually:

“‘Is it not over? Will they kill me?

“The surgeon, and some charitable people who stood by her, were urgent in reassuring her. But only the king could grant her her life. Févret, the advocate, drew up a petition which was signed by many notables of Dijon, and carried to his Majesty. Festivities were being held at the court at that moment on account of the marriage of Henrietta - Maria of France with the King of England. On the score of this marriage, Louis the Just granted the favour asked.

“He gave a full pardon to the poor girl, deeming, as the letters of remission said, that she had suffered tortures which equalled, nay even surpassed, the penalty of her sentence.

“Hélène Gillet, restored to life, withdrew into a convent at Brest where she practised up to the time of her death, the strictest piety. Such,” said the little official, “is the true history of Hélène Gillet, as every one in Dijon knows. Do you not find it entertaining, Monsieur l’Abbé?”

XX. JUSTICE (continued)

ALAS!" said my good master, "I cannot stomach my food. My heart is as sick at this horrible scene, which you have described so cold-bloodedly, sir, as at the sight of this servant of Madame Josse's whom they are taking to be hanged, when something better might be made of her."

"But, Monsieur," retorted the beadle, "have I not told you that this girl has stolen from her mistress; and do you not wish thieves to be hanged?"

"Certainly," said my good master, "it is customary; and as the force of custom is irresistible, I pay no attention to it in my ordinary course of life. In the same way Seneca, the philosopher, who nevertheless inclined to mildness, put together treatises of consummate elegance, even while near to him, at Rome, slaves were crucified for the smallest fault, as we see in the case of the slave Mithridates, who died, his hands nailed to the cross; merely guilty of having blasphemed the divinity of his master, the infamous Trimalchio. We are so made that nothing usual or customary either troubles or wounds us. And habit wears away, if I may say so, our indignation as well as our astonishment. I wake up every morning without thinking, I own, of the unhappy beings who are to be hanged or broken upon the wheel during the day. But when the thought of torture becomes more perceptible to me my heart is troubled, and the sight of this handsome girl led to her death contracts my throat to the point of refusing passage to this little fish."

"What is a handsome girl?" said the beadle. "There is not a street in Paris where they don't make them by the dozen every night. Why did this one steal from her mistress, Madame Josse?"

"I know nothing of that, Monsieur," gravely answered my good master, "you know nothing, and the judges who condemned her knew no more, for the reasons of our actions are obscure, and their springs remain deeply hidden. I hold man free as regards his deeds, as my religion teaches me to believe, but beyond the doctrine of the Church, which is sure, there is so little ground for believing in the freedom of mankind, that I tremble when I think of decrees of justice punishing actions whose mainspring, sequence, and causes, all equally escape us, where the will plays often but a small part, and which are sometimes accomplished without consciousness. If, finally, we are responsible for our acts, since the system of our holy religion is founded on the mysterious accord between human free-will and divine grace, it is an error to deduce from this obscure and delicate liberty all the troubles, all the tortures, and all the suffering of which our laws are prodigal."

“I perceive with sorrow, Monsieur,” said the dingy little man, “that you are on the side of the rogues.”

“Alas! Monsieur,” said my good master, “they are part of suffering humanity, and members like ourselves of Jesus Christ who died between two thieves. I seem to perceive cruelties in our laws which will appear more distinctly in the future, and over which our posterity will wax indignant.”

“I do not agree with you, Monsieur,” said the other, drinking a little gulp of wine. “All the gothic barbarity has been pared away from our laws and customs, and justice is to-day restrained and humane to excess. Punishment is exactly proportioned to crime, and you see thieves hanged, murderers broken on the wheel, traitors torn by four horses, atheists, sorcerers, and sodomites burnt, coiners boiled alive; in all which criminal law exhibits extreme moderation and all possible mildness.”

“Monsieur, in all times judges have believed themselves to be benevolent, equitable, and gentle. In the gothic ages of St. Louis, and even of Charlemagne, they admired their own benignity, which appears to us to-day as savage. I divine that, in their turn, our sons will judge us as savage, and that they will find still something more to pare away from the tortures and punishments which we inflict.”

“Monsieur, you are not speaking as a magistrate. Torture is necessary to extract confessions unobtainable by gentle means. As to punishments, they are reduced to what is necessary to assure safety of their life and goods to citizens.”

“You acknowledge then, Monsieur, that justice has for its object not what is just, but what is useful, and that it is inspired only by the interests and prejudices of peoples. Nothing is more true, and faults are punished not in proportion to the malice attached to them, but in view of the harm they cause, or which it is believed they cause, to society in general. Thus, coiners are put into a copper of boiling water, although, in reality, there is little malice in striking false coins. But the public, and financiers in particular, suffer a marked damage therefrom. It is this loss for which they avenge themselves with pitiless cruelty. Thieves are hanged, less for the perversity that lies in taking bread, and clothes, which is, by the way, excessively small, than for the reason of the natural attachment men have for their possessions. It is expedient to restore human justice to its true reason — which is the material interest of men, and to disengage it from all high philosophy — with which it pompously and hypocritically veils itself.”

“Monsieur,” replied the little official, “I do not understand you. It appears to me that justice is the more equitable the more useful it is, and this usefulness itself, which makes you disdain it, ought to render it august and sacred to you.”

“You do not understand me,” said my good master.

“Monsieur,” said the little official, “I notice that you are drinking nothing. Your wine is good if I may judge by the colour of it. May I not taste it?” It is true that for the first time in his life my good master had left some wine at the bottom of the bottle. He poured it into the little official’s glass.

“Your health, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said the beadle. “Your wine is good, but your arguments are worthless. Justice, I repeat, is the more equitable the more useful it is, and this usefulness itself, which, you say, is in its origin and foundation, should make it appear to you as august and sacred. But you must acknowledge that the essence of justice is to be *just*, as the word implies?”

“Monsieur,” said my good master, “when we have called beauty beautiful, truth true, and justice just, we shall have said nothing at all. Your Ulpian, who spoke with precision, asserted that justice is the firm and perpetual desire to attribute to each what belongs to him, and that laws are just when they sanction this desire. The misfortune is, that men have nothing of their own, and thus the equity of law does but guarantee to them the fruit of their inherited, or recent, rapine. They resemble those childish agreements wherein after having won some marbles, the winners say to those who wish to win them back again, ‘That is not fair play.’ The sagacity of judges limits itself to differentiating between usurpations which are not fair play and those which were agreed upon in starting, and this distinction is equally childish and thin. Above all, it is arbitrary. The strapping young woman who at this very moment is hanging at the end of a hempen rope, had stolen, you say, a lace head-dress from Councillor Josse’s wife. But on what do you found your belief that this head-dress belonged to Councillor Josse’s wife? You will tell me that she bought it with her own money, or found it in her wedding-chest, or received it from some lover — all good ways of acquiring lace. But however she may have acquired it I merely see that she had the enjoyment of it, as one of those gifts of fortune one finds, or loses perchance, and over which one has no natural right. Nevertheless, I own that the lappets belonged to her conformably to the rules of this game of possession, which human society can play as children play at hop-sotch. She valued her lappets, and in fact she had no less right to them than any other. Well and good. It was justice to return them to her, but without putting such a high price on them that for two wretched lappets of *point d’Alençon* a human creature should be destroyed.”

“Monsieur,” said the little official, “you keep in view but one side of the justice of the matter. It was not enough to do right by Councillor Josse’s wife by giving her back her lappets. It was necessary also to do right by the servant in hanging her by the neck. For justice is to render to each what is due to him. In which lies its majesty.”

“In that case,” said my good master, “justice is wickeder even than I thought. This belief that she owes punishment to the guilty is ferocious in the extreme. It is gothic barbarity.”

“Monsieur,” said the little official, “you misunderstand justice. Justice strikes without anger, and it has no hatred for this girl it sends to the gallows.”

“A good thing, too,” said my good master. “But I should prefer that judges confess that they punish the guilty from pure necessity, and only to make impressive examples. In that case they would merely hold by what was actually necessary. But if they think, in punishing, to give the guilty his due, one sees to what this delicate discrimination will lead them, and their probity itself will make them inexorable; for one knows not how to refuse people what is due to them. This maxim horrifies me, Monsieur. It was laid down with the greatest severity by an able philosopher of the name of Menardus, who pretends that to fail to punish an ill-doer is to do him wrong, and wickedly to deprive him of the right to expiate his fault. He held that the Athenian magistrates had done excellently well by Socrates the sage, and that they worked for the purification of his soul when they made him drink the hemlock. But those are odious thoughts. I ask that criminal justice should tend less to the sublime. The notion of pure revenge attached more commonly to the punishment of malefactors, although base and bad in itself, is less terrible in its consequences than the overweening virtue of ingenuous philosophers. I knew in former days, in Séez, a jovial and good sort of fellow, who took his children on his knee every evening and told them tales. He led an exemplary life, went to the sacraments, and prided himself on his scrupulous honesty in the corn business he had carried on for more than sixty years. Now he happened to be robbed by his servant of some doubloons, ducats, rose-nobles, and some fine gold coins, which he, curious of such things, kept in a case at the back of a drawer. As soon as he discovered this loss he carried complaint to the police, whereupon the maidservant was questioned, tried, condemned, and executed. The good man, who knew his rights, exacted that the skin of the thief should be given to him, of which he made a pair of pantaloons; and he would often smack his thigh and cry, ‘The hussy! the hussy!’ The girl had taken his gold pieces, he had taken her skin; anyway he had his unphilosophical revenge in all the simplicity of his rustic savagery. He had no notion of fulfilling a lofty duty when he slapped his hand light-heartedly on his garment of human skin. Better is it to acknowledge that if one hangs a thief it is for prudence’ sake, and with the object of frightening the others by his example, and not at all on the philosophical plea for the sake of giving each man his due. For in true philosophy nothing belongs to anyone if we except life itself. To pretend that we owe expiation to criminals is to fall into

mysticism of a ferocious description, worse than naked violence and open anger. As to the punishment of thieves, it is a right which has its origin in force, not in philosophy. Philosophy teaches us, on the contrary, that all we possess is acquired by violence or by cunning. And you see also that judges approve of our being deprived of our possessions if the ravisher be powerful enough. Thus it is permitted to the king to take our silver-plate to make war, as was seen under Louis the Great, when the requisition was so exacting that they even took away the fringe of the bed-hangings, to use the gold woven with the silk. This prince put his hand on the goods of individuals and on the treasures of the Church, and twenty years ago, performing my devotions in Notre-Dame-de-Liesse in Picardy, I heard the complaints of an old verger, who deplored that the late king had taken away and melted down all the treasures of the church, and ravished even the jewelled breast of gold, placed there some time before in great pomp by the Princess Palatine, after she had been miraculously cured of cancer. Justice seconded the prince in his requisition, and punished severely those who hid away any article from the king's commissaries. Evidently she did not think that these things belonged so peculiarly to their possessors that nothing could separate them."

"Monsieur," said the little official, "the commissaries acted in the name of the king, who, possessing everything in the kingdom, can dispose of it to his liking, either for war, or for naval armaments, or in any other way."

"That is true," said my good master, "and that is one of the rules of the game. The judges go about it as in the game of 'goose,' following one another and looking at what is written in the rules. The sovereign's rights, upheld by the Swiss Guard, and by all sorts of soldiers, are written there. And this poor girl, who has been hanged, had no Swiss Guard to inscribe in the rules of the game that she had the right to wear Madame Josse's lace. That is just how it is."

"Monsieur," said the little official, "I hope you do not liken Louis the Great, who took his subjects' plate to pay his soldiers, to this creature who stole a head-dress to deck herself."

"Monsieur," said my good master, "it is less innocent to make war than to go to Ramponneau's in a lace head-dress. But justice gives to every one what is his, according to the rules of this game played by man, which is the wickedest, the most absurd, and the least amusing of all games. And 'tis our misfortune that every man is obliged to take a hand in it."

"It is necessary," said the little official.

"Laws are also of use," said my good master. "But they are not just and can never be so, for the judge assures to his fellow men the enjoyment of the goods that belong to them, without distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful:

this distinction is not found in the rules of the game, but in the book of Divine justice only, wherein no one may read. Do you know the story of the angel and the anchorite? An angel came down to earth with the face of a man and the dress of a pilgrim; making his way through Egypt. He knocked, at eventide, at the door of a good anchorite, who, taking him for a traveller, gave him supper, and wine from a golden cup. Then he made him lie down on his bed whilst he laid himself on the ground on some handfuls of maize-straw. While he slept his celestial guest rose up, took the cup out of which he had drunk, and, hiding it under his cloak, fled away. He acted thus, not meaning any ill-will towards the good hermit, but, on the contrary, in the interest of the host who had given him such a charitable welcome. For he knew that this cup would have been the undoing of the holy man, who had put his heart into its keeping, whereas God desires us to love none but Him and does not brook that a man, devoted to religion, should attach himself to the things of this world. The angel who had his share of Divine wisdom, distinguished between goods that are good and goods that are not. Judges do not make this distinction. Who knows but what Madame Josse may not lose her soul along with the lappets of lace her servant took, and which the judges have given back?"

"In the meanwhile," said the little official, rubbing his hands, "there is now a hussy the less in this world." He shook the crumbs from his coat, bowed to those present, and went off jauntily.

XXI. JUSTICE (continued)

MY good master, turning to me, continued in this manner:

“I only related the story of the angel and the hermit to show the abyss which separates the temporal from the spiritual. Now it is only in things temporal that human justice is exercised, and it is on a low plane where high principles are not in favour. The cruellest offence that could be possibly be done our Lord Jesus Christ is to place His image in the courts of law, where judges pardon Pharisees who crucified Him, and condemn the Magdalene whom He raised up with His Divine hands. What does He — the Just One — among these men, who are unable to show themselves just, even should they wish to, because their melancholy duty is to consider the actions of their fellows, not for what they are in their essence, but merely from the point of view of the social interest; that is to say, on account of this mass of egoism, avarice, error, and abuse which go to the making of cities, and of which they are the purblind guardians. In weighing a fault they add to it the weight of fear or anger it inspired in the cowardly public. And all this is written in their book in such wise that the ancient reading and dead letter stand in the stead of intelligence, heart, and a living soul. And all these regulations, some of which go back to the infamous time of Byzantium and Theodora, agree on this one point only, that all must be perpetuated — virtues and vices alike, in a society which has no desire for change. A fault, in itself, is of so little account in the eyes of the law, and the surrounding circumstances are so considerable, that the selfsame act allowable in one case becomes unpardonable in another, as is shown in the instance of a slap in the face, which, given by one man to another appears simply, in the case of a bourgeois, the effect of an irascible temper, but, for a soldier, becomes a crime punishable by death. This barbarity, which still exists, will be our shame in centuries to come. We reckon little of it, but one day they will ask each other what sort of savages we can have been to send a man to his death for a generous warmth of blood springing from his heart when he is bound by law to suffer the perils of war and the miseries of barrack-life. And it is clear that, if there were such a thing as justice, we should not have two codes, one military, the other civil. This military justice, whose results one sees daily, is atrociously cruel; and men, if they ever establish law and order, will never believe that formerly, in times of peace, courts-martial avenged the majesty of corporals and sergeants by the death of a man. They will not believe that unfortunate beings were ordered to be shot for the crime of desertion before the enemy, in an expedition where the government

of France itself did not recognise a state of war. What is to be wondered at is that such atrocities are committed by Christian people who do honour to St. Sebastian, a mutinous soldier; and to those martyrs of the Theban legion, whose sole glory is having, in a former age, incurred the severity of courts-martial in refusing to fight against the Bagaudes. But enough of this, let us talk no more of the justice of these gentlemen of the sword, who will perish one day according to the prophecy of the Son of God; let us return to our civil magistrates.

“Judges search not the reins, neither do they read the heart of man, and their justest justice is rude and superficial. All the more then must they cling to this coarse skin of the law on which the codes are inscribed. They are men — that is to say weak and corruptible, gentle to the strong, and pitiless to the weak. They sanction, by their judgments, the cruellest social iniquities, and it is difficult to distinguish, in this partiality, what comes from their personal baseness from what is imposed on them by their duty to their profession; which duty is, in reality, to uphold the State in what is evil as well as in what is good; to see that public morality remains unaltered, whether excellent or detestable; and to assure the rights of citizens along with the tyrannical desires of the prince, to say nothing of the ridiculous and cruel superstitions which find an inviolable shelter under the lilies of France.

“The most austere magistrate may be brought, by his integrity itself, to decrees as revolting, and perhaps even more inhuman, than those of one who fails in his duty, and I do not know myself, which of the two I should dread the most, the judge who has made a soul for himself out of the text of the law, or he who makes use of a remnant of sentiment to twist the text. The one would sacrifice me to his interests or his passions, the other would immolate me coldly for the written word.

“Again, we must notice that the magistrate is the defender, through his office, not of new prejudices to which we are all more or less submissive, but of old prejudices which are preserved in our laws while they are fading from our minds and our manners. And there is no one of a thinking and liberal turn of mind who does not feel how much of the barbarous there is in law, whereas the judge has not the right to feel this.

“But I am speaking as if laws, clumsy and barbarous as they are, were at least clear and precise. But much is necessary for them to become so. The ‘gramarye’ of a wizard would be easy to understand compared with many of the articles in our codes and case-law. This difficulty of interpretation has greatly contributed to the establishing of divers degrees of jurisdiction, and we admit that what the manorial court has not understood the Parliamentary gentlemen will make clear. It is expecting a great deal from five men in red robes and square caps, who even

after having recited the *Veni Creator* are still subject to error; and it is better to acknowledge that the highest court judges without further appeal, for the sole reason, that the others were exhausted before recourse was had to this. The prince is himself of this opinion, for he has a judgment-seat above the Parliament.”

XXII. JUSTICE (concluded)

MY good master looked sorrowfully at the flowing water, an image of this life, where all things pass and nothing changes. He pondered for some time and then continued in a low voice:

“That point is of itself, my son, an insurmountable perplexity to me, that it is needful that justice should come from judges. It is clear that they are interested in finding guilty the man whom they at first suspected. *Esprit de corps*, so strong among them, pushes them to it, and so you may see throughout their procedure how they brush aside the defence as importunate, and only allow it a hearing when the prosecution has donned its arms and composed its countenance, and has, in fact, contrived to assume the air of the Goddess of Wisdom. By professional feeling they are inclined to see guilt in every accused person, and their zeal appears so alarming to certain European nations that, in important cases, they give them the help of twelve men, drawn by lot. Whereby, it appears, blind chance is a better guarantee of the life and liberty of the accused than can be the enlightened conscience of a judge. It is true, however, that these bourgeois magistrates, drawn by lot, are kept out of the affair, of which they see but the outside pomp and show. And it is also true that, ignorant of the law, they are not called upon to apply it, but to decide merely, in one word, whether it is a case for applying it. It is said that this kind of assize results sometimes in absurdities, but that the nations who have instituted it are attached to it as a kind of very precious safeguard. I willingly believe that. And I understand their accepting decrees given in such fashion, which may be inept or cruel, but at least whose absurdity and barbarity cannot be imputed to one person, so to speak. Iniquity seems bearable when it is incoherent enough to appear involuntary.

“The little official of a moment ago, who had such a feeling for justice, suspected me of taking the side of thieves and assassins. On the contrary, I disapprove so strongly of theft and murder that I cannot endure even the authorised copy of them by the law, and it is painful to me to observe that judges have found no better way to punish rogues and homicides than by imitating them; for in truth, Tournebroke my son, what is fine or execution, save theft and murder, perpetrated with majestic punctiliousness? And do you not see that, notwithstanding all its splendour, our justice *f* only attains to the shameful revenge of evil for evil, misery for misery; and to the doubling of crimes and sins for the sake of equilibrium and symmetry? It is possible, in the carrying out of this duty, to exercise a certain probity and disinterestedness. One may show

oneself a l'Hospital as well as a Jeffreys, and for my part I know a magistrate who is an honest fellow enough. But to return to the principle of the thing, I have wanted to show the true character of an institution which the pride of the judges and the terror of the people, vying with each other, have clothed in borrowed majesty. I have wanted to show the humble origin of these codes they wish to make august, and which are in reality but an odd heap of expedients.

“Alas! laws emanate from man; a poor and miserable origin. They are mostly born of occasion. Ignorance, superstition, the pride of princes, the interests of the legislator, caprice, fantasy — these are the sources of the great body of the law, which becomes worthy of veneration when it is no longer intelligible. This obscurity that envelops it, thickened by the commentators, gives it the majesty of the oracles of old. I hear on all sides, and I read in every paper, that nowadays we make laws fitting for the circumstance and the occasion. That is the view of the short-sighted, who fail to see that it is but following an immemorial custom, and that in all times laws have resulted from some chance thing. We complain also of the obscurity and contradiction into which legislators continually fall. And we fail to note that their predecessors were equally dense and confused.

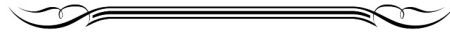
“In actual fact, Tournebroche my son, laws are good or bad less by their nature than in the way we use them, and such and such a provision, extremely wicked though it be, does no harm if the judge does not put it into force. Custom is stronger than law. Refinement of manners, gentleness of mind, are the only remedies one can reasonably bring for legal barbarity. For to correct laws by laws is to take a lengthy and uncertain road. Centuries alone undo the work of centuries. There is little hope that a French Numa will meet one day in the forest of Compiègne, or among the rocks of Fontainebleau, with another nymph Egeria, who shall dictate wise laws to him.”

He gazed for long on the hills which showed blue on the horizon. His air was grave and sad. Then, laying his hand gently on my shoulder, he spoke to me in accents so profound that I was touched to the depths of my soul. He said:

“Tournebroche, my son, you see me, all at once, wavering and embarrassed, stammering and stupid, at the mere notion of correcting what I find detestable. Do not think this timidity of mind. Nothing may give pause to the audacity of my thought. But note well, my son, what I now say to you. Truths, detected by the intelligence, will for ever remain sterile. The heart alone can fertilise its dreams. It pours the water of life on all it loves. Seeds of good are sown in the world by the feelings. Reason has no such virtue. And I confess that up to now I have been too reasonable in my criticism of laws and manners. And so this judgment will fall without fruit, and wither as a tree bitten by April frosts.

To help mankind one must throw aside all reason as an encumbrance, and rise on the wings of enthusiasm. So long as we reason we shall never soar.”

THE RED LILY



Brentano's 1898 Anonymous Translation

The Red Lily was first published by Calmann-Levy in July 1894 in France and it was first translated and released in early 20th century in Britain. The work is set in contemporary Paris and Florence, centring on a group of fashionable, rich elites, such as politicians, socialites and aristocrats. One prominent character featured in the work is Therese Martin-Belleme; she is the beautiful, young daughter of a successful financier and forms part of the newly wealthy class of Paris. Therese is unhappily married and seeks affection and attention elsewhere in the arms of the keen hunter Robert Le Menil. However she finds herself quickly dissatisfied with her suitor and decides to take a break from France and the two men in her life, and travels to Italy. She soon encounters the moody and volatile sculptor Jacques Dechartre; she falls passionately in love, but their relationship is constantly marred by jealousy and Therese's fear that Dechartre will discover her past with Robert.

Dechartre is a carefully crafted character, and it is believed that aspects of his personality mirror those of the author. In *The Love Affair as a Work of Art* Daniel Hodstadfer asserts that some of the dialogue between Dechartre and Therese has clearly been inspired by the words exchanged in letters between France and his lover Leontine Lippmann (Madame Arman de Caillavet), which lends an air of authenticity to their encounters. However, these instances taken from real life highlight the elevated and unnatural language that permeates much of the dialogue, and which often appears odd and misplaced. While France fails to breathe life into some of the characters in the novel, he does create a vivid and incisive portrait of the violence of jealousy.



Léontine Lippmann (1844–1910), better known by her married name of Madame Arman or Madame Arman de Caillavet, was France's muse and the hostess of a highly fashionable literary salon during the French Third Republic. She was also the model of Madame Verdurin in Proust's 'Remembrance of Things Past'.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

BOOK 1.

CHAPTER I. "I NEED LOVE"

CHAPTER II. "ONE CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE YOUNG!"

CHAPTER III. A DISCUSSION ON THE LITTLE CORPORAL

CHAPTER IV. THE END OF A DREAM

CHAPTER V. A DINNER 'EN FAMILLE'

CHAPTER VI. A DISTINGUISHED RELICT

CHAPTER VII. MADAME HAS HER WAY

CHAPTER VIII. THE LADY OF THE BELLS

CHAPTER IX. CHOULETTE FINDS A NEW FRIEND

BOOK 2.

CHAPTER X. DECHARTRE ARRIVES IN FLORENCE

CHAPTER XI. "THE DAWN OF FAITH AND LOVE"

CHAPTER XII. HEARTS AWAKENED

CHAPTER XIII. "YOU MUST TAKE ME WITH MY OWN SOUL!"

CHAPTER XIV. THE AVOWAL

CHAPTER XV. THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

CHAPTER XVI. "TO-MORROW?"

CHAPTER XVII. MISS BELL ASKS A QUESTION

CHAPTER XVIII. "I KISS YOUR FEET BECAUSE THEY HAVE COME!"

CHAPTER XIX. CHOULETTE TAKES A JOURNEY

CHAPTER XX. WHAT IS FRANKNESS?

CHAPTER XXI. "I NEVER HAVE LOVED ANY ONE BUT YOU!"

CHAPTER XXII. A MEETING AT THE STATION

BOOK 3.

CHAPTER XXIII. "ONE IS NEVER KIND WHEN ONE IS IN LOVE"

CHAPTER XXIV. CHOULETTE'S AMBITION

CHAPTER XXV. "WE ARE ROBBING LIFE"

CHAPTER XXVI. IN DECHARTRE'S STUDIO

CHAPTER XXVII. THE PRIMROSE PATH

CHAPTER XXVIII. NEWS OF LE MENIL

CHAPTER XXIX. JEALOUSY

CHAPTER XXX. A LETTER FROM ROBERT

CHAPTER XXXI. AN UNWELCOME APPARITION

CHAPTER XXXII. THE RED LILY

CHAPTER XXXIII. A WHITE NIGHT

CHAPTER XXXIV. "I SEE THE OTHER WITH YOU ALWAYS!"

PREFACE

The real name of the subject of this preface is Jacques-Anatole Thibault. He was born in Paris, April 16, 1844, the son of a bookseller of the Quai Malaquais, in the shadow of the Institute. He was educated at the College Stanislas and published in 1868 an essay upon Alfred de Vigny. This was followed by two volumes of poetry: 'Les Poemes Dorees' (1873), and 'Les Noces Corinthiennes' (1876). With the last mentioned book his reputation became established.

Anatole France belongs to the class of poets known as "Les Parnassiens." Yet a book like 'Les Noces Corinthiennes' ought to be classified among a group of earlier lyrics, inasmuch as it shows to a large degree the influence of Andre Chenier and Alfred de Vigny. France was, and is, also a diligent contributor to many journals and reviews, among others, 'Le Globe, Les Debats, Le Journal Officiel, L'Echo de Paris, La Revue de Famille, and Le Temps'. On the last mentioned journal he succeeded Jules Claretie. He is likewise Librarian to the Senate, and has been a member of the French Academy since 1896.

The above mentioned two volumes of poetry were followed by many works in prose, which we shall notice. France's critical writings are collected in four volumes, under the title, 'La Vie Litteraire' (1888-1892); his political articles in 'Opinions Sociales' (2 vols., 1902). He combines in his style traces of Racine, Voltaire, Flaubert, and Renan, and, indeed, some of his novels, especially 'Thais' (1890), 'Jerome Coignard' (1893), and Lys Rouge (1894), which was crowned by the Academy, are romances of the first rank.

Criticism appears to Anatole France the most recent and possibly the ultimate evolution of literary expression, "admirably suited to a highly civilized society, rich in souvenirs and old traditions.... It proceeds," in his opinion, "from philosophy and history, and demands for its development an absolute intellectual liberty..... It is the last in date of all literary forms, and it will end by absorbing them all To be perfectly frank the critic should say: 'Gentlemen, I propose to enlarge upon my own thoughts concerning Shakespeare, Racine, Pascal, Goethe, or any other writer.'"

It is hardly necessary to say much concerning a critic with such pronounced ideas as Anatole France. He gives us, indeed, the full flower of critical Renanism, but so individualized as to become perfection in grace, the extreme flowering of the Latin genius. It is not too much to say that the critical writings of Anatole France recall the Causeries du Lundi, the golden age of Sainte-Beuve!

As a writer of fiction, Anatole France made his debut in 1879 with 'Jocaste', and 'Le Chat Maigre'. Success in this field was yet decidedly doubtful when 'Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard' appeared in 1881. It at once established his reputation; 'Sylvestre Bonnard', as 'Le Lys Rouge' later, was crowned by the French Academy. These novels are replete with fine irony, benevolent scepticism and piquant turns, and will survive the greater part of romances now read in France. The list of Anatole France's works in fiction is a large one. The titles of nearly all of them, arranged in chronological order, are as follows: 'Les Desirs de Jean Seyvien (1882); Abeille (1883); Le Livre de mon Ami (1885); Nos Enfants (1886); Balthazar (1889); Thais (1890); L'Etui de Naire (1892); Jerome Coignard, and La Rotisserie de la Reine Pedanque (1893); and Histoire Contemporaine (1897-1900), the latter consisting of four separate works: 'L'Orme du Mail, Le Mannequin d'Osier, L'Anneau d'Amethyste, and Monsieur Bergeret a Paris'. All of his writings show his delicately critical analysis of passion, at first playfully tender in its irony, but later, under the influence of his critical antagonism to Brunetiere, growing keener, stronger, and more bitter. In 'Thais' he has undertaken to show the bond of sympathy that unites the pessimistic sceptic to the Christian ascetic, since both despise the world. In 'Lys Rouge', his greatest novel, he traces the perilously narrow line that separates love from hate; in 'Opinions de M. l'Abbe Jerome Coignard' he has given us the most radical breviary of scepticism that has appeared since Montaigne. 'Le Livre de mon Ami' is mostly autobiographical; 'Clio' (1900) contains historical sketches.

To represent Anatole France as one of the undying names in literature would hardly be extravagant. Not that I would endow Ariel with the stature and sinews of a Titan; this were to miss his distinctive qualities: delicacy, elegance, charm. He belongs to a category of writers who are more read and probably will ever exercise greater influence than some of greater name. The latter show us life as a whole; but life as a whole is too vast and too remote to excite in most of us more than a somewhat languid curiosity. France confines himself to themes of the keenest personal interest, the life of the world we live in. It is herein that he excels! His knowledge is wide, his sympathies are many-sided, his power of exposition is unsurpassed. No one has set before us the mind of our time, with its half-lights, its shadowy vistas, its indefiniteness, its haze on the horizon, so vividly as he.

In Octave Mirbeau's notorious novel, a novel which it would be complimentary to describe as naturalistic, the heroine is warned by her director against the works of Anatole France, "Ne lisez jamais du Voltaire... C'est un peche mortel... ni de Renan... ni de l'Anatole France. Voila qui est dangereux."

The names are appropriately united; a real, if not precisely an apostolic, succession exists between the three writers.

JULES LEMAITRE

de l'Academie Francais

BOOK 1.

CHAPTER I. "I NEED LOVE"

She gave a glance at the armchairs placed before the chimney, at the tea-table, which shone in the shade, and at the tall, pale stems of flowers ascending above Chinese vases. She thrust her hand among the flowery branches of the guelder roses to make their silvery balls quiver. Then she looked at herself in a mirror with serious attention. She held herself sidewise, her neck turned over her shoulder, to follow with her eyes the spring of her fine form in its sheath-like black satin gown, around which floated a light tunic studded with pearls wherein sombre lights scintillated. She went nearer, curious to know her face of that day. The mirror returned her look with tranquillity, as if this amiable woman whom she examined, and who was not unpleasing to her, lived without either acute joy or profound sadness.

On the walls of the large drawing-room, empty and silent, the figures of the tapestries, vague as shadows, showed pallid among their antique games and dying graces. Like them, the terra-cotta statuettes on slender columns, the groups of old Saxony, and the paintings of Sevres, spoke of past glories. On a pedestal ornamented with precious bronzes, the marble bust of some princess royal disguised as Diana appeared about to fly out of her turbulent drapery, while on the ceiling a figure of Night, powdered like a marquise and surrounded by cupids, sowed flowers. Everything was asleep, and only the crackling of the logs and the light rattle of Therese's pearls could be heard.

Turning from the mirror, she lifted the corner of a curtain and saw through the window, beyond the dark trees of the quay, the Seine spreading its yellow reflections. Weariness of the sky and of the water was reflected in her fine gray eyes. The boat passed, the 'Hirondelle', emerging from an arch of the Alma Bridge, and carrying humble travellers toward Grenelle and Billancourt. She followed it with her eyes, then let the curtain fall, and, seating herself under the flowers, took a book from the table. On the straw-colored linen cover shone the title in gold: 'Yseult la Blonde', by Vivian Bell. It was a collection of French verses composed by an Englishwoman, and printed in London. She read indifferently, waiting for visitors, and thinking less of the poetry than of the poetess, Miss Bell, who was perhaps her most agreeable friend, and whom she almost never saw; who, at every one of their meetings, which were so rare, kissed her, calling her "darling," and babbled; who, plain yet seductive, almost ridiculous, yet wholly exquisite, lived at Fiesole like a philosopher, while England celebrated her as her most beloved poet. Like Vernon Lee and like

Mary Robinson, she had fallen in love with the life and art of Tuscany; and, without even finishing her *Tristan*, the first part of which had inspired in Burne-Jones dreamy aquarelles, she wrote Provencal verses and French poems expressing Italian ideas. She had sent her 'Yseult la Blonde' to "Darling," with a letter inviting her to spend a month with her at Fiesole. She had written: "Come; you will see the most beautiful things in the world, and you will embellish them."

And "darling" was saying to herself that she would not go, that she must remain in Paris. But the idea of seeing Miss Bell in Italy was not indifferent to her. And turning the leaves of the book, she stopped by chance at this line:

Love and gentle heart are one.

And she asked herself, with gentle irony, whether Miss Bell had ever been in love, and what manner of man could be the ideal of Miss Bell. The poetess had at Fiesole an escort, Prince Albertinelli. He was very handsome, but rather coarse and vulgar; too much so to please an aesthete who blended with the desire for love the mysticism of an Annunciation.

"Good-evening, Therese. I am positively worn out."

The Princess Seniavine had entered, supple in her furs, which almost seemed to form a part of her dark beauty. She seated herself brusquely, and, in a voice at once harsh yet caressing, said:

"This morning I walked through the park with General Lariviere. I met him in an alley and made him go with me to the bridge, where he wished to buy from the guardian a learned magpie which performs the manual of arms with a gun. Oh! I am so tired!"

"But why did you drag the General to the bridge?"

"Because he had gout in his toe."

Therese shrugged her shoulders, smiling:

"You squander your wickedness. You spoil things."

"And you wish me, dear, to save my kindness and my wickedness for a serious investment?"

Therese made her drink some Tokay.

Preceded by the sound of his powerful breathing, General Lariviere approached with heavy state and sat between the two women, looking stubborn and self-satisfied, laughing in every wrinkle of his face.

"How is Monsieur Martin-Belleme? Always busy?"

Therese thought he was at the Chamber, and even that he was making a speech there.

Princess Seniavine, who was eating caviare sandwiches, asked Madame Martin why she had not gone to Madame Meillan's the day before. They had

played a comedy there.

“A Scandinavian play? Was it a success?”

“Yes — I don’t know. I was in the little green room, under the portrait of the Duc d’Orleans. Monsieur Le Menil came to me and did me one of those good turns that one never forgets. He saved me from Monsieur Garain.”

The General, who knew the Annual Register, and stored away all useful information, pricked up his ears.

“Garain,” he asked, “the minister who was in the Cabinet when the princes were exiled?”

“Himself. I was excessively agreeable to him. He talked to me of the yearnings of his heart and he looked at me with alarming tenderness. And from time to time he gazed, with sighs, at the portrait of the Duc d’Orleans. I said to him: ‘Monsieur Garain, you are making a mistake. It is my sister-in-law who is an Orleanist. I am not.’ At this moment Monsieur Le Menil came to escort me to the buffet. He paid great compliments — to my horses! He said, also, there was nothing so beautiful as the forest in winter. He talked about wolves. That refreshed me.”

The General, who did not like young men, said he had met Le Menil the day before in the forest, galloping, with vast space between himself and his saddle.

He declared that old cavaliers alone retained the traditions of good horsemanship; that people in society now rode like jockeys.

“It is the same with fencing,” he added. “Formerly—”

Princess Seniavine interrupted him:

“General, look and see how charming Madame Martin is. She is always charming, but at this moment she is prettier than ever. It is because she is bored. Nothing becomes her better than to be bored. Since we have been here, we have bored her terribly. Look at her: her forehead clouded, her glance vague, her mouth dolorous. Behold a victim!”

She arose, kissed Therese tumultuously, and fled, leaving the General astonished.

Madame Martin-Belleme prayed him not to listen to what the Princess had said.

He collected himself and asked:

“And how are your poets, Madame?”

It was difficult for him to forgive Madame Martin her preference for people who lived by writing and were not of his circle.

“Yes, your poets. What has become of that Monsieur Choulette, who visits you wrapped in a red muffler?”

“My poets? They forget me, they abandon me. One should not rely on anybody. Men and women — nothing is sure. Life is a continual betrayal. Only that poor Miss Bell does not forget me. She has written to me from Florence and sent her book.”

“Miss Bell? Isn’t she that young person who looks, with her yellow waving hair, like a little lapdog?”

He reflected, and expressed the opinion that she must be at least thirty.

An old lady, wearing with modest dignity her crown of white hair, and a little vivacious man with shrewd eyes, came in suddenly — Madame Marmet and M. Paul Vence. Then, carrying himself very stiffly, with a square monocle in his eye, appeared M. Daniel Salomon, the arbiter of elegance. The General hurried out.

They talked of the novel of the week. Madame Marmet had dined often with the author, a young and very amiable man. Paul Vence thought the book tiresome.

“Oh,” sighed Madame Martin, “all books are tiresome. But men are more tiresome than books, and they are more exacting.”

Madame Marmet said that her husband, who had much literary taste, had retained, until the end of his days, a horror of naturalism. She was the widow of a member of the ‘Academie des Inscriptions’, and plumed herself upon her illustrious widowhood. She was sweet and modest in her black gown and her beautiful white hair.

Madame Martin said to M. Daniel Salomon that she wished to consult him particularly on the picture of a group of beautiful children.

“You will tell me if it pleases you. You may also give me your opinion, Monsieur Vence, unless you disdain such trifles.”

M. Daniel Salomon looked at Paul Vence through his monocle with disdain. Paul Vence surveyed the drawing-room.

“You have beautiful things, Madame. That would be nothing. But you have only beautiful things, and all serve to set off your own beauty.”

She did not conceal her pleasure at hearing him speak in that way. She regarded Paul Vence as the only really intelligent man she knew. She had appreciated him before his books had made him celebrated. His ill-health, his dark humor, his assiduous labor, separated him from society. The little bilious man was not very pleasing; yet he attracted her. She held in high esteem his profound irony, his great pride, his talent ripened in solitude, and she admired him, with reason, as an excellent writer, the author of powerful essays on art and on life.

Little by little the room filled with a brilliant crowd. Within the large circle of armchairs were Madame de Wesson, about whom people told frightful stories, and who kept, after twenty years of half-smothered scandal, the eyes of a child and cheeks of virginal smoothness; old Madame de Morlaine, who shouted her witty phrases in piercing cries; Madame Raymond, the wife of the Academician; Madame Garain, the wife of the exminister; three other ladies; and, standing easily against the mantelpiece, M. Berthier d'Eyzelles, editor of the 'Journal des Debats', a deputy who caressed his white beard while Madame de Morlaine shouted at him:

"Your article on bimetallism is a pearl, a jewel! Especially the end of it."

Standing in the rear of the room, young clubmen, very grave, lisped among themselves:

"What did he do to get the button from the Prince?"

"He, nothing. His wife, everything."

They had their own cynical philosophy. One of them had no faith in promises of men.

"They are types that do not suit me. They wear their hearts on their hands and on their mouths. You present yourself for admission to a club. They say, 'I promise to give you a white ball. It will be an alabaster ball — a snowball! They vote. It's a black ball. Life seems a vile affair when I think of it.'"

"Then don't think of it."

Daniel Salomon, who had joined them, whispered in their ears spicy stories in a lowered voice. And at every strange revelation concerning Madame Raymond, or Madame Berthier, or Princess Seniavine, he added, negligently:

"Everybody knows it."

Then, little by little, the crowd of visitors dispersed. Only Madame Marmet and Paul Vence remained.

The latter went toward Madame Martin, and asked:

"When do you wish me to introduce Dechartre to you?"

It was the second time he had asked this of her. She did not like to see new faces. She replied, unconcernedly:

"Your sculptor? When you wish. I saw at the Champ de Mars medallions made by him which are very good. But he does not work much. He is an amateur, is he not?"

"He is a delicate artist. He does not need to work in order to live. He caresses his figures with loving slowness. But do not be deceived about him, Madame. He knows and he feels. He would be a master if he did not live alone. I have known him since his childhood. People think that he is solitary and morose. He is passionate and timid. What he lacks, what he will lack always to reach the

highest point of his art, is simplicity of mind. He is restless, and he spoils his most beautiful impressions. In my opinion he was created less for sculpture than for poetry or philosophy. He knows a great deal, and you will be astonished at the wealth of his mind.”

Madame Marmet approved.

She pleased society by appearing to find pleasure in it. She listened a great deal and talked little. Very affable, she gave value to her affability by not squandering it. Either because she liked Madame Martin, or because she knew how to give discreet marks of preference in every house she went, she warmed herself contentedly, like a relative, in a corner of the Louis XVI chimney, which suited her beauty. She lacked only her dog.

“How is Toby?” asked Madame Martin. “Monsieur Vence, do you know Toby? He has long silky hair and a lovely little black nose.”

Madame Marmet was relishing the praise of Toby, when an old man, pink and blond, with curly hair, short-sighted, almost blind under his golden spectacles, rather short, striking against the furniture, bowing to empty armchairs, blundering into the mirrors, pushed his crooked nose before Madame Marmet, who looked at him indignantly.

It was M. Schmoll, member of the Academie des Inscriptions. He smiled and turned a madrigal for the Countess Martin with that hereditary harsh, coarse voice with which the Jews, his fathers, pressed their creditors, the peasants of Alsace, of Poland, and of the Crimea. He dragged his phrases heavily. This great philologist knew all languages except French. And Madame Martin enjoyed his affable phrases, heavy and rusty like the iron-work of brica-brac shops, among which fell dried leaves of anthology. M. Schmoll liked poets and women, and had wit.

Madame Marmet feigned not to know him, and went out without returning his bow.

When he had exhausted his pretty madrigals, M. Schmoll became sombre and pitiful. He complained piteously. He was not decorated enough, not provided with sinecures enough, nor well fed enough by the State — he, Madame Schmoll, and their five daughters. His lamentations had some grandeur. Something of the soul of Ezekiel and of Jeremiah was in them.

Unfortunately, turning his golden-spectacled eyes toward the table, he discovered Vivian Bell’s book.

“Oh, ‘Yseult La Blonde’,” he exclaimed, bitterly. “You are reading that book, Madame? Well, learn that Mademoiselle Vivian Bell has stolen an inscription from me, and that she has altered it, moreover, by putting it into verse. You will find it on page 109 of her book: ‘A shade may weep over a shade.’ You hear,

Madame? 'A shade may weep over a shade.' Well, those words are translated literally from a funeral inscription which I was the first to publish and to illustrate. Last year, one day, when I was dining at your house, being placed by the side of Mademoiselle Bell, I quoted this phrase to her, and it pleased her a great deal. At her request, the next day I translated into French the entire inscription and sent it to her. And now I find it changed in this volume of verses under this title: 'On the Sacred Way' — the sacred way, that is I."

And he repeated, in his bad humor:

"I, Madame, am the sacred way."

He was annoyed that the poet had not spoken to him about this inscription. He would have liked to see his name at the top of the poem, in the verses, in the rhymes. He wished to see his name everywhere, and always looked for it in the journals with which his pockets were stuffed. But he had no rancor. He was not really angry with Miss Bell. He admitted gracefully that she was a distinguished person, and a poet that did great honor to England.

When he had gone, the Countess Martin asked ingenuously of Paul Vence if he knew why that good Madame Marmet had looked at M. Schmoll with such marked though silent anger. He was surprised that she did not know.

"I never know anything," she said.

"But the quarrel between Schmoll and Marmet is famous. It ceased only at the death of Marmet.

"The day that poor Marmet was buried, snow was falling. We were wet and frozen to the bones. At the grave, in the wind, in the mud, Schmoll read under his umbrella a speech full of jovial cruelty and triumphant pity, which he took afterward to the newspapers in a mourning carriage. An indiscreet friend let Madame Marmet hear of it, and she fainted. Is it possible, Madame, that you have not heard of this learned and ferocious quarrel?

"The Etruscan language was the cause of it. Marmet made it his unique study. He was surnamed Marmet the Etruscan. Neither he nor any one else knew a word of that language, the last vestige of which is lost. Schmoll said continually to Marmet: 'You do not know Etruscan, my dear colleague; that is the reason why you are an honorable savant and a fair-minded man.' Piqued by his ironic praise, Marmet thought of learning a little Etruscan. He read to his colleague a memoir on the part played by flexions in the idiom of the ancient Tuscans."

Madame Martin asked what a flexion was.

"Oh, Madame, if I explain anything to you, it will mix up everything. Be content with knowing that in that memoir poor Marmet quoted Latin texts and quoted them wrong. Schmoll is a Latinist of great learning, and, after Mommsen, the chief epigraphist of the world.

“He reproached his young colleague — Marmet was not fifty years old — with reading Etruscan too well and Latin not well enough. From that time Marmet had no rest. At every meeting he was mocked unmercifully; and, finally, in spite of his softness, he got angry. Schmoll is without rancor. It is a virtue of his race. He does not bear ill-will to those whom he persecutes. One day, as he went up the stairway of the Institute with Renan and Oppert, he met Marmet, and extended his hand to him. Marmet refused to take it, and said ‘I do not know you.’ — ‘Do you take me for a Latin inscription?’ Schmoll replied. Marmet died and was buried because of that satire. Now you know the reason why his widow sees his enemy with horror.”

“And I have made them dine together, side by side.”

“Madame, it was not immoral, but it was cruel.”

“My dear sir, I shall shock you, perhaps; but if I had to choose, I should like better to do an immoral thing than a cruel one.”

A young man, tall, thin, dark, with a long moustache, entered, and bowed with brusque suppleness.

“Monsieur Vence, I think that you know Monsieur Le Menil.”

They had met before at Madame Martin’s, and saw each other often at the Fencing Club. The day before they had met at Madame Meillan’s.

“Madame Meillan’s — there’s a house where one is bored,” said Paul Vence.

“Yet Academicians go there,” said M. Robert Le Menil. “I do not exaggerate their value, but they are the elite.”

Madame Martin smiled.

“We know, Monsieur Le Menil, that at Madame Meillan’s you are preoccupied by the women more than by the Academicians. You escorted Princess Seniavine to the buffet and talked to her about wolves.”

“What wolves?”

“Wolves, and forests blackened by winter. We thought that with so pretty a woman your conversation was rather savage!”

Paul Vence rose.

“So you permit, Madame, that I should bring my friend Dechartre? He has a great desire to know you, and I hope he will not displease you. There is life in his mind. He is full of ideas.”

“Oh, I do not ask for so much,” Madame Martin said. “People that are natural and show themselves as they are rarely bore me, and sometimes they amuse me.”

When Paul Vence had gone, Le Menil listened until the noise of footsteps had vanished; then, coming nearer:

“To-morrow, at three o’clock? Do you still love me?”

He asked her to reply while they were alone. She answered that it was late, that she expected no more visitors, and that no one except her husband would come.

He entreated. Then she said:

“I shall be free to-morrow all day. Wait for me at three o’clock.”

He thanked her with a look. Then, placing himself on at the other side of the chimney, he asked who was that Dechartre whom she wished introduced to her.

“I do not wish him to be introduced to me. He is to be introduced to me. He is a sculptor.”

He deplored the fact that she needed to see new faces, adding:

“A sculptor? They are usually brutal.”

“Oh, but this one does so little sculpture! But if it annoys you that I should meet him, I will not do so.”

“I should be sorry if society took any part of the time you might give to me.”

“My friend, you can not complain of that. I did not even go to Madame Meillan’s yesterday.”

“You are right to show yourself there as little as possible. It is not a house for you.”

He explained. All the women that went there had had some spicy adventure which was known and talked about. Besides, Madame Meillan favored intrigue. He gave examples. Madame Martin, however, her hands extended on the arms of the chair in charming restfulness, her head inclined, looked at the dying embers in the grate. Her thoughtful mood had flown. Nothing of it remained on her face, a little saddened, nor in her languid body, more desirable than ever in the quiescence of her mind. She kept for a while a profound immobility, which added to her personal attraction the charm of things that art had created.

He asked her of what she was thinking. Escaping the magic of the blaze in the ashes, she said:

“We will go to-morrow, if you wish, to far distant places, to the odd districts where the poor people live. I like the old streets where misery dwells.”

He promised to satisfy her taste, although he let her know that he thought it absurd. The walks that she led him sometimes bored him, and he thought them dangerous. People might see them.

“And since we have been successful until now in not causing gossip—”

She shook her head.

“Do you think that people have not talked about us? Whether they know or do not know, they talk. Not everything is known, but everything is said.”

She relapsed into her dream. He thought her discontented, cross, for some reason which she would not tell. He bent upon her beautiful, grave eyes which

reflected the light of the grate. But she reassured him.

"I do not know whether any one talks about me. And what do I care? Nothing matters."

He left her. He was going to dine at the club, where a friend was waiting for him. She followed him with her eyes, with peaceful sympathy. Then she began again to read in the ashes.

She saw in them the days of her childhood; the castle wherein she had passed the sweet, sad summers; the dark and humid park; the pond where slept the green water; the marble nymphs under the chestnut-trees, and the bench on which she had wept and desired death. To-day she still ignored the cause of her youthful despair, when the ardent awakening of her imagination threw her into a troubled maze of desires and of fears. When she was a child, life frightened her. And now she knew that life is not worth so much anxiety nor so much hope; that it is a very ordinary thing. She should have known this. She thought:

"I saw mamma; she was good, very simple, and not very happy. I dreamed of a destiny different from hers. Why? I felt around me the insipid taste of life, and seemed to inhale the future like a salt and pungent aroma. Why? What did I want, and what did I expect? Was I not warned enough of the sadness of everything?"

She had been born rich, in the brilliancy of a fortune too new. She was a daughter of that Montessuy, who, at first a clerk in a Parisian bank, founded and governed two great establishments, brought to sustain them the resources of a brilliant mind, invincible force of character, a rare alliance of cleverness and honesty, and treated with the Government as if he were a foreign power. She had grown up in the historical castle of Joinville, bought, restored, and magnificently furnished by her father. Montessuy made life give all it could yield. An instinctive and powerful atheist, he wanted all the goods of this world and all the desirable things that earth produces. He accumulated pictures by old masters, and precious sculptures. At fifty he had known all the most beautiful women of the stage, and many in society. He enjoyed everything worldly with the brutality of his temperament and the shrewdness of his mind.

Poor Madame Montessuy, economical and careful, languished at Joinville, delicate and poor, under the frowns of twelve gigantic caryatides which held a ceiling on which Lebrun had painted the Titans struck by Jupiter. There, in the iron cot, placed at the foot of the large bed, she died one night of sadness and exhaustion, never having loved anything on earth except her husband and her little drawing-room in the Rue Maubeuge.

She never had had any intimacy with her daughter, whom she felt instinctively too different from herself, too free, too bold at heart; and she

divined in Therese, although she was sweet and good, the strong Montessuy blood, the ardor which had made her suffer so much, and which she forgave in her husband, but not in her daughter.

But Montessuy recognized his daughter and loved her. Like most hearty, full-blooded men, he had hours of charming gayety. Although he lived out of his house a great deal, he breakfasted with her almost every day, and sometimes took her out walking. He understood gowns and furbelows. He instructed and formed Therese. He amused her. Near her, his instinct for conquest inspired him still. He desired to win always, and he won his daughter. He separated her from her mother. Therese admired him, she adored him.

In her dream she saw him as the unique joy of her childhood. She was persuaded that no man in the world was as amiable as her father.

At her entrance in life, she despaired at once of finding elsewhere so rich a nature, such a plenitude of active and thinking forces. This discouragement had followed her in the choice of a husband, and perhaps later in a secret and freer choice.

She had not really selected her husband. She did not know: she had permitted herself to be married by her father, who, then a widower, embarrassed by the care of a girl, had wished to do things quickly and well. He considered the exterior advantages, estimated the eighty years of imperial nobility which Count Martin brought. The idea never came to him that she might wish to find love in marriage.

He flattered himself that she would find in it the satisfaction of the luxurious desires which he attributed to her, the joy of making a display of grandeur, the vulgar pride, the material domination, which were for him all the value of life, as he had no ideas on the subject of the happiness of a true woman, although he was sure that his daughter would remain virtuous.

While thinking of his absurd yet natural faith in her, which accorded so badly with his own experiences and ideas regarding women, she smiled with melancholy irony. And she admired her father the more.

After all, she was not so badly married. Her husband was as good as any other man. He had become quite bearable. Of all that she read in the ashes, in the veiled softness of the lamps, of all her reminiscences, that of their married life was the most vague. She found a few isolated traits of it, some absurd images, a fleeting and fastidious impression. The time had not seemed long and had left nothing behind. Six years had passed, and she did not even remember how she had regained her liberty, so prompt and easy had been her conquest of that husband, cold, sickly, selfish, and polite; of that man dried up and yellowed by business and politics, laborious, ambitious, and commonplace. He liked women

only through vanity, and he never had loved his wife. The separation had been frank and complete. And since then, strangers to each other, they felt a tacit, mutual gratitude for their freedom. She would have had some affection for him if she had not found him hypocritical and too subtle in the art of obtaining her signature when he needed money for enterprises that were more for ostentation than real benefit. The man with whom she dined and talked every day had no significance for her.

With her cheek in her hand, before the grate, as if she questioned a sibyl, she saw again the face of the Marquis de Re. She saw it so precisely that it surprised her. The Marquis de Re had been presented to her by her father, who admired him, and he appeared to her grand and dazzling for his thirty years of intimate triumphs and mundane glories. His adventures followed him like a procession. He had captivated three generations of women, and had left in the heart of all those whom he had loved an imperishable memory. His virile grace, his quiet elegance, and his habit of pleasing had prolonged his youth far beyond the ordinary term of years. He noticed particularly the young Countess Martin. The homage of this expert flattered her. She thought of him now with pleasure. He had a marvellous art of conversation. He amused her. She let him see it, and at once he promised to himself, in his heroic frivolity, to finish worthily his happy life by the subjugation of this young woman whom he appreciated above every one else, and who evidently admired him. He displayed, to capture her, the most learned stratagems. But she escaped him very easily.

She yielded, two years later, to Robert Le Menil, who had desired her ardently, with all the warmth of his youth, with all the simplicity of his mind. She said to herself: "I gave myself to him because he loved me." It was the truth. The truth was, also, that a dumb yet powerful instinct had impelled her, and that she had obeyed the hidden impulse of her being. But even this was not her real self; what awakened her nature at last was the fact that she believed in the sincerity of his sentiment. She had yielded as soon as she had felt that she was loved. She had given herself, quickly, simply. He thought that she had yielded easily. He was mistaken. She had felt the discouragement which the irreparable gives, and that sort of shame which comes of having suddenly something to conceal. Everything that had been whispered before her about other women resounded in her burning ears. But, proud and delicate, she took care to hide the value of the gift she was making. He never suspected her moral uneasiness, which lasted only a few days, and was replaced by perfect tranquillity. After three years she defended her conduct as innocent and natural.

Having done harm to no one, she had no regrets. She was content. She was in love, she was loved. Doubtless she had not felt the intoxication she had

expected, but does one ever feel it? She was the friend of the good and honest fellow, much liked by women who passed for disdainful and hard to please, and he had a true affection for her. The pleasure she gave him and the joy of being beautiful for him attached her to this friend. He made life for her not continually delightful, but easy to bear, and at times agreeable.

That which she had not divined in her solitude, notwithstanding vague yearnings and apparently causeless sadness, he had revealed to her. She knew herself when she knew him. It was a happy astonishment. Their sympathies were not in their minds. Her inclination toward him was simple and frank, and at this moment she found pleasure in the idea of meeting him the next day in the little apartment where they had met for three years. With a shake of the head and a shrug of her shoulders, coarser than one would have expected from this exquisite woman, sitting alone by the dying fire, she said to herself: "There! I need love!"

CHAPTER II. "ONE CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE YOUNG!"

It was no longer daylight when they came out of the little apartment in the Rue Spontini. Robert Le Menil made a sign to a coachman, and entered the carriage with Therese. Close together, they rolled among the vague shadows, cut by sudden lights, through the ghostly city, having in their minds only sweet and vanishing impressions while everything around them seemed confused and fleeting.

The carriage approached the Pont-Neuf. They stepped out. A dry cold made vivid the sombre January weather. Under her veil Therese joyfully inhaled the wind which swept on the hardened soil a dust white as salt. She was glad to wander freely among unknown things. She liked to see the stony landscape which the clearness of the air made distinct; to walk quickly and firmly on the quay where the trees displayed the black tracery of their branches on the horizon reddened by the smoke of the city; to look at the Seine. In the sky the first stars appeared.

"One would think that the wind would put them out," she said.

He observed, too, that they scintillated a great deal. He did not think it was a sign of rain, as the peasants believe. He had observed, on the contrary, that nine times in ten the scintillation of stars was an augury of fine weather.

Near the little bridge they found old iron-shops lighted by smoky lamps. She ran into them. She turned a corner and went into a shop in which queer stuffs were hanging. Behind the dirty panes a lighted candle showed pots, porcelain vases, a clarinet, and a bride's wreath.

He did not understand what pleasure she found in her search.

"These shops are full of vermin. What can you find interesting in them?"

"Everything. I think of the poor bride whose wreath is under that globe. The dinner occurred at Maillot. There was a policeman in the procession. There is one in almost all the bridal processions one sees in the park on Saturdays. Don't they move you, my friend, all these poor, ridiculous, miserable beings who contribute to the grandeur of the past?"

Among cups decorated with flowers she discovered a little knife, the ivory handle of which represented a tall, thin woman with her hair arranged a la Maintenon. She bought it for a few sous. It pleased her, because she already had a fork like it. Le Menil confessed that he had no taste for such things, but said that his aunt knew a great deal about them. At Caen all the merchants knew her.

She had restored and furnished her house in proper style. This house was noted as early as 1690. In one of its halls were white cases full of books. His aunt had wished to put them in order. She had found frivolous books in them, ornamented with engravings so unconventional that she had burned them.

“Is she silly, your aunt?” asked Therese.

For a long time his anecdotes about his aunt had made her impatient. Her friend had in the country a mother, sisters, aunts, and numerous relatives whom she did not know and who irritated her. He talked of them with admiration. It annoyed her that he often visited them. When he came back, she imagined that he carried with him the odor of things that had been packed up for years. He was astonished, naively, and he suffered from her antipathy to them.

He said nothing. The sight of a public-house, the panes of which were flaming, recalled to him the poet Choulette, who passed for a drunkard. He asked her if she still saw that Choulette, who called on her wearing a mackintosh and a red muffler.

It annoyed her that he spoke like General Lariviere. She did not say that she had not seen Choulette since autumn, and that he neglected her with the capriciousness of a man not in society.

“He has wit,” she said, “fantasy, and an original temperament. He pleases me.”

And as he reproached her for having an odd taste, she replied:

“I haven’t a taste, I have tastes. You do not disapprove of them all, I suppose.”

He replied that he did not criticise her. He was only afraid that she might do herself harm by receiving a Bohemian who was not welcome in respectable houses.

She exclaimed:

“Not welcome in respectable houses — Choulette? Don’t you know that he goes every year for a month to the Marquise de Rieu? Yes, to the Marquise de Rieu, the Catholic, the royalist. But since Choulette interests you, listen to his latest adventure. Paul Vence related it to me. I understand it better in this street, where there are shirts and flowerpots at the windows.

“This winter, one night when it was raining, Choulette went into a public-house in a street the name of which I have forgotten, but which must resemble this one, and met there an unfortunate girl whom the waiters would not have noticed, and whom he liked for her humility. Her name was Maria. The name was not hers. She found it nailed on her door at the top of the stairway where she went to lodge. Choulette was touched by this perfection of poverty and infamy. He called her his sister, and kissed her hands. Since then he has not quitted her a

moment. He takes her to the coffee-houses of the Latin Quarter where the rich students read their reviews. He says sweet things to her. He weeps, she weeps. They drink; and when they are drunk, they fight. He loves her. He calls her his chaste one, his cross and his salvation. She was barefooted; he gave her yarn and knitting-needles that she might make stockings. And he made shoes for this unfortunate girl himself, with enormous nails. He teaches her verses that are easy to understand. He is afraid of altering her moral beauty by taking her out of the shame where she lives in perfect simplicity and admirable destitution.”

Le Menil shrugged his shoulders.

“But that Choulette is crazy, and Paul Vence has no right to tell you such stories. I am not austere, assuredly; but there are immoralities that disgust me.” They were walking at random. She fell into a dream.

“Yes, morality, I know — duty! But duty — it takes the devil to discover it. I can assure you that I do not know where duty is. It’s like a young lady’s turtle at Joinville. We spent all the evening looking for it under the furniture, and when we had found it, we went to bed.”

He thought there was some truth in what she said. He would think about it when alone.

“I regret sometimes that I did not remain in the army. I know what you are going to say — one becomes a brute in that profession. Doubtless, but one knows exactly what one has to do, and that is a great deal in life. I think that my uncle’s life is very beautiful and very agreeable. But now that everybody is in the army, there are neither officers nor soldiers. It all looks like a railway station on Sunday. My uncle knew personally all the officers and all the soldiers of his brigade. Nowadays, how can you expect an officer to know his men?”

She had ceased to listen. She was looking at a woman selling fried potatoes. She realized that she was hungry and wished to eat fried potatoes.

He remonstrated:

“Nobody knows how they are cooked.”

But he had to buy two sous’ worth of fried potatoes, and to see that the woman put salt on them.

While Therese was eating them, he led her into deserted streets far from the gaslights. Soon they found themselves in front of the cathedral. The moon silvered the roofs.

“Notre Dame,” she said. “See, it is as heavy as an elephant yet as delicate as an insect. The moon climbs over it and looks at it with a monkey’s maliciousness. She does not look like the country moon at Joinville. At Joinville I have a path — a flat path — with the moon at the end of it. She is not there every night; but she returns faithfully, full, red, familiar. She is a country

neighbor. I go seriously to meet her. But this moon of Paris I should not like to know. She is not respectable company. Oh, the things that she has seen during the time she has been roaming around the roofs!"

He smiled a tender smile.

"Oh, your little path where you walked alone and that you liked because the sky was at the end of it! I see it as if I were there."

It was at the Joinville castle that he had seen her for the first time, and had at once loved her. It was there, one night, that he had told her of his love, to which she had listened, dumb, with a pained expression on her mouth and a vague look in her eyes.

The reminiscence of this little path where she walked alone moved him, troubled him, made him live again the enchanted hours of his first desires and hopes. He tried to find her hand in her muff and pressed her slim wrist under the fur.

A little girl carrying violets saw that they were lovers, and offered flowers to them. He bought a two-sous' bouquet and offered it to Therese.

She was walking toward the cathedral. She was thinking: "It is like an enormous beast — a beast of the Apocalypse."

At the other end of the bridge a flower-woman, wrinkled, bearded, gray with years and dust, followed them with her basket full of mimosas and roses. Therese, who held her violets and was trying to slip them into her waist, said, joyfully:

"Thank you, I have some."

"One can see that you are young," the old woman shouted with a wicked air, as she went away.

Therese understood at once, and a smile came to her lips and eyes. They were passing near the porch, before the stone figures that wear sceptres and crowns.

"Let us go in," she said.

He did not wish to go in. He declared that the door was closed. She pushed it, and slipped into the immense nave, where the inanimate trees of the columns ascended in darkness. In the rear, candles were moving in front of spectre-like priests, under the last reverberations of the organs. She trembled in the silence, and said:

"The sadness of churches at night moves me; I feel in them the grandeur of nothingness."

He replied:

"We must believe in something. If there were no God, if our souls were not immortal, it would be too sad."

She remained for a while immovable under the curtains of shadow hanging from the arches. Then she said:

“My poor friend, we do not know what to do with this life, which is so short, and yet you desire another life which shall never finish.”

In the carriage that took them back he said gayly that he had passed a fine afternoon. He kissed her, satisfied with her and with himself. But his good-humor was not communicated to her. The last moments they passed together were spoiled for her always by the presentiment that he would not say at parting the thing that he should say. Ordinarily, he quitted her brusquely, as if what had happened were not to last. At every one of their partings she had a confused feeling that they were parting forever. She suffered from this in advance and became irritable.

Under the trees he took her hand and kissed her.

“Is it not rare, Therese, to love as we love each other?”

“Rare? I don’t know; but I think that you love me.”

“And you?”

“I, too, love you.”

“And you will love me always?”

“What does one ever know?”

And seeing the face of her lover darken:

“Would you be more content with a woman who would swear to love only you for all time?”

He remained anxious, with a wretched air. She was kind and she reassured him:

“You know very well, my friend, that I am not fickle.”

Almost at the end of the lane they said good-by. He kept the carriage to return to the Rue Royale. He was to dine at the club and go to the theatre, and had no time to lose.

Therese returned home on foot. Opposite the Trocadero she remembered what the old flower-woman had said: “One can see that you are young.” The words came back to her with a significance not immoral but sad. “One can see that you are young!” Yes, she was young, she was loved, and she was bored to death.

CHAPTER III. A DISCUSSION ON THE LITTLE CORPORAL

In the centre of the table flowers were disposed in a basket of gilded bronze, decorated with eagles, stars, and bees, and handles formed like horns of plenty. On its sides winged Victories supported the branches of candelabra. This centrepiece of the Empire style had been given by Napoleon, in 1812, to Count Martin de l'Aisne, grandfather of the present Count Martin-Belleme. Martin de l'Aisne, a deputy to the Legislative Corps in 1809, was appointed the following year member of the Committee on Finance, the assiduous and secret works of which suited his laborious temperament. Although a Liberal, he pleased the Emperor by his application and his exact honesty. For two years he was under a rain of favors. In 1813 he formed part of the moderate majority which approved the report in which Laine censured power and misfortune, by giving to the Empire tardy advice. January 1, 1814, he went with his colleagues to the Tuileries. The Emperor received them in a terrifying manner. He charged on their ranks. Violent and sombre, in the horror of his present strength and of his coming fall, he stunned them with his anger and his contempt.

He came and went through their lines, and suddenly took Count Martin by the shoulders, shook him and dragged him, exclaiming: "A throne is four pieces of wood covered with velvet? No! A throne is a man, and that man is I. You have tried to throw mud at me. Is this the time to remonstrate with me when there are two hundred thousand Cossacks at the frontiers? Your Laine is a wicked man. One should wash one's dirty linen at home." And while in his anger he twisted in his hand the embroidered collar of the deputy, he said: "The people know me. They do not know you. I am the elect of the nation. You are the obscure delegates of a department." He predicted to them the fate of the Girondins. The noise of his spurs accompanied the sound of his voice. Count Martin remained trembling the rest of his life, and tremblingly recalled the Bourbons after the defeat of the Emperor. The two restorations were in vain; the July government and the Second Empire covered his oppressed breast with crosses and cordons. Raised to the highest functions, loaded with honors by three kings and one emperor, he felt forever on his shoulder the hand of the Corsican. He died a senator of Napoleon III, and left a son agitated by the same fear.

This son had married Mademoiselle Belleme, daughter of the first president of the court of Bourges, and with her the political glories of a family which gave three ministers to the moderate monarch. The Bellemes, advocates in the time of

Louis XV, elevated the Jacobin origins of the Martins. The second Count Martin was a member of all the Assemblies until his death in 1881. His son took without trouble his seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Having married Mademoiselle Therese Montessuy, whose dowry supported his political fortune, he appeared discreetly among the four or five bourgeois, titled and wealthy, who rallied to democracy, and were received without much bad grace by the republicans, whom aristocracy flattered.

In the dining-room, Count Martin-Belleme was doing the honors of his table with the good grace, the sad politeness, recently prescribed at the Elysee to represent isolated France at a great northern court. From time to time he addressed vapid phrases to Madame Garain at his right; to the Princess Seniavine at his left, who, loaded with diamonds, felt bored. Opposite him, on the other side of the table, Countess Martin, having by her side General Lariviere and M. Schmoll, member of the Academie des Inscriptions, caressed with her fan her smooth white shoulders. At the two semicircles, whereby the dinner-table was prolonged, were M. Montessuy, robust, with blue eyes and ruddy complexion; a young cousin, Madame Belleme de Saint-Nom, embarrassed by her long, thin arms; the painter Duviquet; M. Daniel Salomon; then Paul Vence and Garain the deputy; Belleme de Saint-Nom; an unknown senator; and Dechartre, who was dining at the house for the first time. The conversation, at first trivial and insignificant, was prolonged into a confused murmur, above which rose Garain's voice:

"Every false idea is dangerous. People think that dreamers do no harm. They are mistaken: dreamers do a great deal of harm. Even apparently inoffensive utopian ideas really exercise a noxious influence. They tend to inspire disgust at reality."

"It is, perhaps, because reality is not beautiful," said Paul Vence.

M. Garain said that he had always been in favor of all possible improvements. He had asked for the suppression of permanent armies in the time of the Empire, for the separation of church and state, and had remained always faithful to democracy. His device, he said, was "Order and Progress." He thought he had discovered that device.

Montessuy said:

"Well, Monsieur Garain, be sincere. Confess that there are no reforms to be made, and that it is as much as one can do to change the color of postage-stamps. Good or bad, things are as they should be. Yes, things are as they should be; but they change incessantly. Since 1870 the industrial and financial situation of the country has gone through four or five revolutions which political economists had

not foreseen and which they do not yet understand. In society, as in nature, transformations are accomplished from within.”

As to matters of government his ideas were terse and decided. He was strongly attached to the present, heedless of the future, and the socialists troubled him little. Without caring whether the sun and capital should be extinguished some day, he enjoyed them. According to him, one should let himself be carried. None but fools resisted the current or tried to go in front of it.

But Count Martin, naturally sad, had, dark presentiments. In veiled words he announced catastrophes. His timorous phrases came through the flowers, and irritated M. Schmoll, who began to grumble and to prophesy. He explained that Christian nations were incapable, alone and by themselves, of throwing off barbarism, and that without the Jews and the Arabs Europe would be to-day, as in the time of the Crusades, sunk in ignorance, misery, and cruelty.

“The Middle Ages,” he said, “are closed only in the historical manuals that are given to pupils to spoil their minds. In reality, barbarians are always barbarians. Israel’s mission is to instruct nations. It was Israel which, in the Middle Ages, brought to Europe the wisdom of ages. Socialism frightens you. It is a Christian evil, like priesthood. And anarchy? Do you not recognize in it the plague of the Albigeois and of the Vaudois? The Jews, who instructed and polished Europe, are the only ones who can save it to-day from the evangelical evil by which it is devoured. But they have not fulfilled their duty. They have made Christians of themselves among the Christians. And God punishes them. He permits them to be exiled and to be despoiled. Anti-Semitism is making fearful progress everywhere. From Russia my co-religionists are expelled like savage beasts. In France, civil and military employments are closing against Jews. They have no longer access to aristocratic circles. My nephew, young Isaac Coblentz, has had to renounce a diplomatic career, after passing brilliantly his admission examination. The wives of several of my colleagues, when Madame Schmoll calls on them, display with intention, under her eyes, anti-Semitic newspapers. And would you believe that the Minister of Public Instruction has refused to give me the cross of the Legion of Honor for which I have applied? There’s ingratitude! Anti-Semitism is death — it is death, do you hear? to European civilization.”

The little man had a natural manner which surpassed all the art in the world. Grotesque and terrible, he threw the table into consternation by his sincerity. Madame Martin, whom he amused, complimented him on this:

“At least,” she said, “you defend your co-religionists. You are not, Monsieur Schmoll, like a beautiful Jewish lady of my acquaintance who, having read in a

journal that she received the elite of Jewish society, went everywhere shouting that she had been insulted.”

“I am sure, Madame, that you do not know how beautiful and superior to all other moralities is Jewish morality. Do you know the parable of the three rings?”

This question was lost in the murmur of the dialogues wherein were mingled foreign politics, exhibitions of paintings, fashionable scandals, and Academy speeches. They talked of the new novel and of the coming play. This was a comedy. Napoleon was an incidental character in it.

The conversation settled upon Napoleon I, often placed on the stage and newly studied in books — an object of curiosity, a personage in the fashion, no longer a popular hero, a demi-god, wearing boots for his country, as in the days when Norvins and Beranger, Charlet and Raffet were composing his legend; but a curious personage, an amusing type in his living infinity, a figure whose style is pleasant to artists, whose movements attract thoughtless idlers.

Garain, who had founded his political fortune on hatred of the Empire, judged sincerely that this return of national taste was only an absurd infatuation. He saw no danger in it and felt no fear about it. In him fear was sudden and ferocious. For the moment he was very quiet; he talked neither of prohibiting performances nor of seizing books, of imprisoning authors, or of suppressing anything. Calm and severe, he saw in Napoleon only Taine’s ‘condottiere’ who kicked Volney in the stomach. Everybody wished to define the true Napoleon. Count Martin, in the face of the imperial centrepiece and of the winged Victorys, talked suitably of Napoleon as an organizer and administrator, and placed him in a high position as president of the state council, where his words threw light upon obscure questions. Garain affirmed that in his sessions, only too famous, Napoleon, under pretext of taking snuff, asked the councillors to pass to him their gold boxes ornamented with miniatures and decked with diamonds, which they never saw again. The anecdote was told to him by the son of Mounier himself.

Montessuy esteemed in Napoleon the genius of order. “He liked,” he said, “work well done. That is a taste most persons have lost.”

The painter Duviquet, whose ideas were those of an artist, was embarrassed. He did not find on the funeral mask brought from St. Helena the characteristics of that face, beautiful and powerful, which medals and busts have consecrated. One must be convinced of this now that the bronze of that mask was hanging in all the old shops, among eagles and sphinxes made of gilded wood. And, according to him, since the true face of Napoleon was not that of the ideal Napoleon, his real soul may not have been as idealists fancied it. Perhaps it was the soul of a good bourgeois. Somebody had said this, and he was inclined to think that it was true. Anyway, Duviquet, who flattered himself with having

made the best portraits of the century, knew that celebrated men seldom resemble the ideas one forms of them.

M. Daniel Salomon observed that the fine mask about which Duviquet talked, the plaster cast taken from the inanimate face of the Emperor, and brought to Europe by Dr. Antommarchi, had been moulded in bronze and sold by subscription for the first time in 1833, under Louis Philippe, and had then inspired surprise and mistrust. People suspected the Italian chemist, who was a sort of buffoon, always talkative and famished, of having tried to make fun of people. Disciples of Dr. Gall, whose system was then in favor, regarded the mask as suspicious. They did not find in it the bumps of genius; and the forehead, examined in accordance with the master's theories, presented nothing remarkable in its formation.

"Precisely," said Princess Seniavine. "Napoleon was remarkable only for having kicked Volney in the stomach and stealing a snuffbox ornamented with diamonds. Monsieur Garain has just taught us."

"And yet," said Madame Martin, "nobody is sure that he kicked Volney."

"Everything becomes known in the end," replied the Princess, gayly. "Napoleon did nothing at all. He did not even kick Volney, and his head was that of an idiot."

General Lariviere felt that he should say something. He hurled this phrase:

"Napoleon — his campaign of 1813 is much discussed."

The General wished to please Garain, and he had no other idea. However, he succeeded, after an effort, in formulating a judgment:

"Napoleon committed faults; in his situation he should not have committed any." And he stopped abruptly, very red.

Madame Martin asked:

"And you, Monsieur Vence, what do you think of Napoleon?"

"Madame, I have not much love for sword-bearers, and conquerors seem to me to be dangerous fools. But in spite of everything, that figure of the Emperor interests me as it interests the public. I find character and life in it. There is no poem or novel that is worth the Memoirs of Saint Helena, although it is written in ridiculous fashion. What I think of Napoleon, if you wish to know, is that, made for glory, he had the brilliant simplicity of the hero of an epic poem. A hero must be human. Napoleon was human."

"Oh, oh!" every one exclaimed.

But Paul Vence continued:

"He was violent and frivolous; therefore profoundly human. I mean, similar to everybody. He desired, with singular force, all that most men esteem and desire. He had illusions, which he gave to the people. This was his power and his

weakness; it was his beauty. He believed in glory. He had of life and of the world the same opinion as any one of his grenadiers. He retained always the infantile gravity which finds pleasure in playing with swords and drums, and the sort of innocence which makes good military men. He esteemed force sincerely. He was a man among men, the flesh of human flesh. He had not a thought that was not in action, and all his actions were grand yet common. It is this vulgar grandeur which makes heroes. And Napoleon is the perfect hero. His brain never surpassed his hand — that hand, small and beautiful, which grasped the world. He never had, for a moment, the least care for what he could not reach.”

“Then,” said Garain, “according to you, he was not an intellectual genius. I am of your opinion.”

“Surely,” continued Paul Vence, “he had enough genius to be brilliant in the civil and military arena of the world. But he had not speculative genius. That genius is another pair of sleeves, as Buffon says. We have a collection of his writings and speeches. His style has movement and imagination. And in this mass of thoughts one can not find a philosophic curiosity, not one expression of anxiety about the unknowable, not an expression of fear of the mystery which surrounds destiny. At Saint Helena, when he talks of God and of the soul, he seems to be a little fourteen-year-old school-boy. Thrown upon the world, his mind found itself fit for the world, and embraced it all. Nothing of that mind was lost in the infinite. Himself a poet, he knew only the poetry of action. He limited to the earth his powerful dream of life. In his terrible and touching naivete he believed that a man could be great, and neither time nor misfortune made him lose that idea. His youth, or rather his sublime adolescence, lasted as long as he lived, because life never brought him a real maturity. Such is the abnormal state of men of action. They live entirely in the present, and their genius concentrates on one point. The hours of their existence are not connected by a chain of grave and disinterested meditations. They succeed themselves in a series of acts. They lack interior life. This defect is particularly visible in Napoleon, who never lived within himself. From this is derived the frivolity of temperament which made him support easily the enormous load of his evils and of his faults. His mind was born anew every day. He had, more than any other person, a capacity for diversion. The first day that he saw the sun rise on his funereal rock at Saint Helena, he jumped from his bed, whistling a romantic air. It was the peace of a mind superior to fortune; it was the frivolity of a mind prompt in resurrection. He lived from the outside.”

Garain, who did not like Paul Vence’s ingenious turn of wit and language, tried to hasten the conclusion:

“In a word,” he said, “there was something of the monster in the man.”

"There are no monsters," replied Paul Vence; "and men who pass for monsters inspire horror. Napoleon was loved by an entire people. He had the power to win the love of men. The joy of his soldiers was to die for him."

Countess Martin would have wished Dechartre to give his opinion. But he excused himself with a sort of fright.

"Do you know," said Schmoll again, "the parable of the three rings, sublime inspiration of a Portuguese Jew."

Garain, while complimenting Paul Vence on his brilliant paradox, regretted that wit should be exercised at the expense of morality and justice.

"One great principle," he said, "is that men should be judged by their acts."

"And women?" asked Princess Seniavine, brusquely; "do you judge them by their acts? And how do you know what they do?"

The sound of voices was mingled with the clear tintinabulation of silverware. A warm air bathed the room. The roses shed their leaves on the cloth. More ardent thoughts mounted to the brain.

General Lariviere fell into dreams.

"When public clamor has split my ears," he said to his neighbor, "I shall go to live at Tours. I shall cultivate flowers."

He flattered himself on being a good gardener; his name had been given to a rose. This pleased him highly.

Schmoll asked again if they knew the parable of the three rings.

The Princess rallied the Deputy.

"Then you do not know, Monsieur Garain, that one does the same things for very different reasons?"

Montessuy said she was right.

"It is very true, as you say, Madame, that actions prove nothing. This thought is striking in an episode in the life of Don Juan, which was known neither to Moliere nor to Mozart, but which is revealed in an English legend, a knowledge of which I owe to my friend James Russell Lowell of London. One learns from it that the great seducer lost his time with three women. One was a bourgeoisie: she was in love with her husband; the other was a nun: she would not consent to violate her vows; the third, who had for a long time led a life of debauchery, had become ugly, and was a servant in a den. After what she had done, after what she had seen, love signified nothing to her. These three women behaved alike for very different reasons. An action proves nothing. It is the mass of actions, their weight, their sum total, which makes the value of the human being."

"Some of our actions," said Madame Martin, "have our look, our face: they are our daughters. Others do not resemble us at all."

She rose and took the General's arm.

On the way to the drawing-room the Princess said:

“Therese is right. Some actions do not express our real selves at all. They are like the things we do in nightmares.”

The nymphs of the tapestries smiled vainly in their faded beauty at the guests, who did not see them.

Madame Martin served the coffee with her young cousin, Madame Belleme de Saint-Nom. She complimented Paul Vence on what he had said at the table.

“You talked of Napoleon with a freedom of mind that is rare in the conversations I hear. I have noticed that children, when they are handsome, look, when they pout, like Napoleon at Waterloo. You have made me feel the profound reasons for this similarity.”

Then, turning toward Dechartre:

“Do you like Napoleon?”

“Madame, I do not like the Revolution. And Napoleon is the Revolution in boots.”

“Monsieur Dechartre, why did you not say this at dinner? But I see you prefer to be witty only in *tete-a-tetes*.”

Count Martin-Belleme escorted the men to the smoking-room. Paul Vence alone remained with the women. Princess Seniavine asked him if he had finished his novel, and what was the subject of it. It was a study in which he tried to reach the truth through a series of plausible conditions.

“Thus,” he said, “the novel acquires a moral force which history, in its heavy frivolity, never had.”

She inquired whether the book was written for women. He said it was not.

“You are wrong, Monsieur Vence, not to write for women. A superior man can do nothing else for them.”

He wished to know what gave her that idea.

“Because I see that all the intelligent women love fools.”

“Who bore them.”

“Certainly! But superior men would weary them more. They would have more resources to employ in boring them. But tell me the subject of your novel.”

“Do you insist?”

“Oh, I insist upon nothing.”

“Well, I will tell you. It is a study of popular manners; the history of a young workman, sober and chaste, as handsome as a girl, with the mind of a virgin, a sensitive soul. He is a carver, and works well. At night, near his mother, whom he loves, he studies, he reads books. In his mind, simple and receptive, ideas lodge themselves like bullets in a wall. He has no desires. He has neither the passions nor the vices that attach us to life. He is solitary and pure. Endowed

with strong virtues, he becomes conceited. He lives among miserable people. He sees suffering. He has devotion without humanity. He has that sort of cold charity which is called altruism. He is not human because he is not sensual.”

“Oh! One must be sensual to be human?”

“Certainly, Madame. True pity, like tenderness, comes from the heart. He is not intelligent enough to doubt. He believes what he has read. And he has read that to establish universal happiness society must be destroyed. Thirst for martyrdom devours him. One morning, having kissed his mother, he goes out; he watches for the socialist deputy of his district, sees him, throws himself on him, and buries a poniard in his breast. Long live anarchy! He is arrested, measured, photographed, questioned, judged, condemned to death, and guillotined. That is my novel.”

“It is not very amusing,” said the Princess; “but that is not your fault. Your anarchists are as timid and moderate as other Frenchmen. The Russians have more audacity and more imagination.”

Countess Martin asked Paul Vence whether he knew a silent, timid-looking man among the guests. Her husband had invited him. She knew nothing of him, not even his name. Paul Vence could only say that he was a senator. He had seen him one day by chance in the Luxembourg, in the gallery that served as a library.

“I went there to look at the cupola, where Delacroix has painted, in a wood of bluish myrtles, heroes and sages of antiquity. That gentleman was there, with the same wretched and pitiful air. His coat was damp and he was warming himself. He was talking with old colleagues and saying, while rubbing his hands: ‘The proof that the Republic is the best of governments is that in 1871 it could kill in a week sixty thousand insurgents without becoming unpopular. After such a repression any other regime would have been impossible.’”

“He is a very wicked man,” said Madame Martin. “And to think that I was pitying him!”

Madame Garain, her chin softly dropped on her chest, slept in the peace of her housewifely mind, and dreamed of her vegetable garden on the banks of the Loire, where singing-societies came to serenade her.

Joseph Schmoll and General Lariviere came out of the smoking-room. The General took a seat between Princess Seniavine and Madame Martin.

“I met this morning, in the park, Baronne Warburg, mounted on a magnificent horse. She said, ‘General, how do you manage to have such fine horses?’ I replied: Madame, to have fine horses, you must be either very wealthy or very clever.”

He was so well satisfied with his reply that he repeated it twice.

Paul Vence came near Countess Martin:

“I know that senator’s name: it is Lyer. He is the vice-president of a political society, and author of a book entitled, The Crime of December Second.”

The General continued:

“The weather was horrible. I went into a hut and found Le Menil there. I was in a bad humor. He was making fun of me, I saw, because I sought shelter. He imagines that because I am a general I must like wind and snow. He said that he liked bad weather, and that he was to go foxhunting with friends next week.”

There was a pause; the General continued:

“I wish him much joy, but I don’t envy him. Foxhunting is not agreeable.”

“But it is useful,” said Montessuy.

The General shrugged his shoulders.

“Foxes are dangerous for chicken-coops in the spring when the fowls have to feed their families.”

“Foxes are sly poachers, who do less harm to farmers than to hunters. I know something of this.”

Therese was not listening to the Princess, who was talking to her. She was thinking:

“He did not tell me that he was going away!”

“Of what are you thinking, dear?” inquired the Princess.

“Of nothing interesting,” Therese replied.

CHAPTER IV. THE END OF A DREAM

In the little shadowy room, where sound was deadened by curtains, portieres, cushions, bearskins, and carpets from the Orient, the firelight shone on glittering swords hanging among the faded favors of the cotillons of three winters. The rosewood chiffonier was surmounted by a silver cup, a prize from some sporting club. On a porcelain plaque, in the centre of the table, stood a crystal vase which held branches of white lilacs; and lights palpitated in the warm shadows. Therese and Robert, their eyes accustomed to obscurity, moved easily among these familiar objects. He lighted a cigarette while she arranged her hair, standing before the mirror, in a corner so dim she could hardly see herself. She took pins from the little Bohemian glass cup standing on the table, where she had kept it for three years. He looked at her, passing her light fingers quickly through the gold ripples of her hair, while her face, hardened and bronzed by the shadow, took on a mysterious expression. She did not speak.

He said to her:

“You are not cross now, my dear?”

And, as he insisted upon having an answer, she said:

“What do you wish me to say, my friend? I can only repeat what I said at first. I think it strange that I have to learn of your projects from General Lariviere.”

He knew very well that she had not forgiven him; that she had remained cold and reserved toward him. But he affected to think that she only pouted.

“My dear, I have explained it to you. I have told you that when I met Lariviere I had just received a letter from Caumont, recalling my promise to hunt the fox in his woods, and I replied by return post. I meant to tell you about it to-day. I am sorry that General Lariviere told you first, but there was no significance in that.”

Her arms were lifted like the handles of a vase. She turned toward him a glance from her tranquil eyes, which he did not understand.

“Then you are going?”

“Next week, Tuesday or Wednesday. I shall be away only ten days at most.”

She put on her sealskin toque, ornamented with a branch of holly.

“Is it something that you can not postpone?”

“Oh, yes. Fox-skins would not be worth anything in a month. Moreover, Caumont has invited good friends of mine, who would regret my absence.”

Fixing her toque on her head with a long pin, she frowned.

"Is foxhunting interesting?"

"Oh, yes, very. The fox has stratagems that one must fathom. The intelligence of that animal is really marvellous. I have observed at night a fox hunting a rabbit. He had organized a real hunt. I assure you it is not easy to dislodge a fox. Caumont has an excellent cellar. I do not care for it, but it is generally appreciated. I will bring you half a dozen skins."

"What do you wish me to do with them?"

"Oh, you can make rugs of them."

"And you will be hunting eight days?"

"Not all the time. I shall visit my aunt, who expects me. Last year at this time there was a delightful reunion at her house. She had with her her two daughters and her three nieces with their husbands. All five women are pretty, gay, charming, and irreproachable. I shall probably find them at the beginning of next month, assembled for my aunt's birthday, and I shall remain there two days."

"My friend, stay as long as it may please you. I should be inconsolable if you shortened on my account a sojourn which is so agreeable."

"But you, Therese?"

"I, my friend? I can take care of myself."

The fire was languishing. The shadows were deepening between them. She said, in a dreamy tone:

"It is true, however, that it is never prudent to leave a woman alone."

He went near her, trying to see her eyes in the darkness. He took her hand.

"You love me?" he said.

"Oh, I assure you that I do not love another but—"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. I am thinking — I am thinking that we are separated all through the summer; that in winter you live with your parents and your friends half the time; and that, if we are to see so little of each other, it is better not to see each other at all."

He lighted the candelabra. His frank, hard face was illuminated. He looked at her with a confidence that came less from the conceit common to all lovers than from his natural lack of dignity. He believed in her through force of education and simplicity of intelligence.

"Therese, I love you, and you love me, I know. Why do you torment me? Sometimes you are painfully harsh."

She shook her little head brusquely.

"What will you have? I am harsh and obstinate. It is in the blood. I take it from my father. You know Joinville; you have seen the castle, the ceilings, the tapestries, the gardens, the park, the hunting-grounds, you have said that none

better were in France; but you have not seen my father's workshop — a white wooden table and a mahogany bureau. Everything about me has its origin there. On that table my father made figures for forty years; at first in a little room, then in the apartment where I was born. We were not very wealthy then. I am a parvenu's daughter, or a conqueror's daughter, it's all the same. We are people of material interests. My father wanted to earn money, to possess what he could buy — that is, everything. I wish to earn and keep — what? I do not know — the happiness that I have — or that I have not. I have my own way of being exacting. I long for dreams and illusions. Oh, I know very well that all this is not worth the trouble that a woman takes in giving herself to a man; but it is a trouble that is worth something, because my trouble is myself, my life. I like to enjoy what I like, or think what I like. I do not wish to lose. I am like papa: I demand what is due to me. And then—”

She lowered her voice:

“And then, I have — impulses! Now, my dear, I bore you. What will you have? You shouldn't have loved me.”

This language, to which she had accustomed him, often spoiled his pleasure. But it did not alarm him. He was sensitive to all that she did, but not at all to what she said; and he attached no importance to a woman's words. Talking little himself, he could not imagine that often words are the same as actions.

Although he loved her, or, rather, because he loved her with strength and confidence, he thought it his duty to resist her whims, which he judged absurd. Whenever he played the master, he succeeded with her; and, naively, he always ended by playing it.

“You know very well, Therese, that I wish to do nothing except to be agreeable to you. Don't be capricious with me.”

“And why should I not be capricious? If I gave myself to you, it was not because I was logical, nor because I thought I must. It was because I was capricious.”

He looked at her, astonished and saddened.

“The word is not pleasant to you, my friend? Well let us say that it was love. Truly it was, with all my heart, and because I felt that you loved me. But love must be a pleasure, and if I do not find in it the satisfaction of what you call my capriciousness, but which is really my desire, my life, my love, I do not want it; I prefer to live alone. You are astonishing! My caprices! Is there anything else in life? Your foxhunt, isn't that capricious?”

He replied, very sincerely:

“If I had not promised, I swear to you, Therese, that I would sacrifice that small pleasure with great joy.”

She felt that he spoke the truth. She knew how exact he was in filling the most trifling engagements, yet realized that if she insisted he would not go. But it was too late: she did not wish to win. She would seek hereafter only the violent pleasure of losing. She pretended to take his reason seriously, and said:

“Ah, you have promised!”

And she affected to yield.

Surprised at first, he congratulated himself at last on having made her listen to reason. He was grateful to her for not having been stubborn. He put his arm around her waist and kissed her on the neck and eyelids as a reward. He said:

“We may meet three or four times before I go, and more, if you wish. I will wait for you as often as you wish to come. Will you meet me here to-morrow?”

She gave herself the satisfaction of saying that she could not come the next day nor any other day.

Softly she mentioned the things that prevented her.

The obstacles seemed light; calls, a gown to be tried on, a charity fair, exhibitions. As she dilated upon the difficulties they seemed to increase. The calls could not be postponed; there were three fairs; the exhibitions would soon close. In fine, it was impossible for her to see him again before his departure.

As he was well accustomed to making excuses of that sort, he failed to observe that it was not natural for Therese to offer them. Embarrassed by this tissue of social obligations, he did not persist, but remained silent and unhappy.

With her left arm she raised the portiere, placed her right hand on the key of the door; and, standing against the rich background of the sapphire and ruby-colored folds of the Oriental draperies, she turned her head toward the friend she was leaving, and said, a little mockingly, yet with a touch of tragic emotion:

“Good-by, Robert. Enjoy yourself. My calls, my errands, your little visits are nothing. Life is made up of just such trifles. Good-by!”

She went out. He would have liked to accompany her, but he made it a point not to show himself with her in the street, unless she absolutely forced him to do so.

In the street, Therese felt suddenly that she was alone in the world, without joy and without pain. She returned to her house on foot, as was her habit. It was night; the air was frozen, clear, and tranquil. But the avenues through which she walked, in shadows studded with lights, enveloped her with that mild atmosphere of the queen of cities, so agreeable to its inhabitants, which makes itself felt even in the cold of winter. She walked between the lines of huts and old houses, remains of the field-days of Auteuil, which tall houses interrupted here and there. These small shops, these monotonous windows, were nothing to her. Yet she felt that she was under the mysterious spell of the friendship of

inanimate things; and it seemed to her that the stones, the doors of houses, the lights behind the windowpanes, looked kindly upon her. She was alone, and she wished to be alone. The steps she was taking between the two houses wherein her habits were almost equal, the steps she had taken so often, to-day seemed to her irrevocable. Why? What had that day brought? Not exactly a quarrel. And yet the words spoken that day had left a subtle, strange, persistent sting, which would never leave her. What had happened? Nothing. And that nothing had effaced everything. She had a sort of obscure certainty that she would never return to that room which had so recently enclosed the most secret and dearest phases of her life. She had loved Robert with the seriousness of a necessary joy. Made to be loved, and very reasonable, she had not lost in the abandonment of herself that instinct of reflection, that necessity for security, which was so strong in her. She had not chosen: one seldom chooses. She had not allowed herself to be taken at random and by surprise. She had done what she had wished to do, as much as one ever does what one wishes to do in such cases. She had nothing to regret. He had been to her what it was his duty to be. She felt, in spite of everything, that all was at an end. She thought, with dry sadness, that three years of her life had been given to an honest man who had loved her and whom she had loved. "For I loved him. I must have loved him in order to give myself to him." But she could not feel again the sentiments of early days, the movements of her mind when she had yielded. She recalled small and insignificant circumstances: the flowers on the wall-paper and the pictures in the room. She recalled the words, a little ridiculous and almost touching, that he had said to her. But it seemed to her that the adventure had occurred to another woman, to a stranger whom she did not like and whom she hardly understood. And what had happened only a moment ago seemed far distant now. The room, the lilacs in the crystal vase, the little cup of Bohemian glass where she found her pins — she saw all these things as if through a window that one passes in the street. She was without bitterness, and even without sadness. She had nothing to forgive, alas! This absence for a week was not a betrayal, it was not a fault against her; it was nothing, yet it was everything. It was the end. She knew it. She wished to cease. It was the consent of all the forces of her being. She said to herself: "I have no reason to love him less. Do I love him no more? Did I ever love him?" She did not know and she did not care to know. Three years, during which there had been months when they had seen each other every day — was all this nothing? Life is not a great thing. And what one puts in it, how little that is!

In fine, she had nothing of which to complain. But it was better to end it all. All these reflections brought her back to that point. It was not a resolution;

resolutions may be changed. It was graver: it was a state of the body and of the mind.

When she arrived at the square, in the centre of which is a fountain, and on one side of which stands a church of rustic style, showing its bell in an open belfry, she recalled the little bouquet of violets that he had given to her one night on the bridge near Notre Dame. They had loved each other that day — perhaps more than usual. Her heart softened at that reminiscence. But the little bouquet remained alone, a poor little flower skeleton, in her memory.

While she was thinking, passers-by, deceived by the simplicity of her dress, followed her. One of them made propositions to her: a dinner and the theatre. It amused her. She was not at all disturbed; this was not a crisis. She thought: “How do other women manage such things? And I, who promised myself not to spoil my life. What is life worth?”

Opposite the Greek lantern of the Musée des Religions she found the soil disturbed by workmen. There were paving-stones crossed by a bridge made of a narrow flexible plank. She had stepped on it, when she saw at the other end, in front of her, a man who was waiting for her. He recognized her and bowed. It was Dechartre. She saw that he was happy to meet her; she thanked him with a smile. He asked her permission to walk a few steps with her, and they entered into the large and airy space. In this place the tall houses, set somewhat back, efface themselves, and reveal a glimpse of the sky.

He told her that he had recognized her from a distance by the rhythm of her figure and her movements, which were hers exclusively.

“Graceful movements,” he added, “are like music for the eyes.”

She replied that she liked to walk; it was her pleasure, and the cause of her good health.

He, too, liked to walk in populous towns and beautiful fields. The mystery of highways tempted him. He liked to travel. Although voyages had become common and easy, they retained for him their powerful charm. He had seen golden days and crystalline nights, Greece, Egypt, and the Bosphorus; but it was to Italy that he returned always, as to the mother country of his mind.

“I shall go there next week,” he said. “I long to see again Ravenna asleep among the black pines of its sterile shore. Have you seen Ravenna, Madame? It is an enchanted tomb where sparkling phantoms appear. The magic of death lies there. The mosaic works of Saint Vitale, with their barbarous angels and their aureolated empresses, make one feel the monstrous delights of the Orient. Despoiled to-day of its silver lamels, the grave of Galla Placidia is frightful under its crypt, luminous yet gloomy. When one looks through an opening in the sarcophagus, it seems as if one saw the daughter of Theodosius, seated on her

golden chair, erect in her gown studded with stones and embroidered with scenes from the Old Testament; her beautiful, cruel face preserved hard and black with aromatic plants, and her ebony hands immovable on her knees. For thirteen centuries she retained this funereal majesty, until one day a child passed a candle through the opening of the grave and burned the body."

Madame Martin-Belleme asked what that dead woman, so obstinate in her conceit, had done during her life.

"Twice a slave," said Dechartre, "she became twice an empress."

"She must have been beautiful," said Madame Martin. "You have made me see her too vividly in her tomb. She frightens me. Shall you go to Venice, Monsieur Dechartre? Or are you tired of gondolas, of canals bordered by palaces, and of the pigeons of Saint Mark? I confess that I still like Venice, after being there three times."

He said she was right. He, too, liked Venice.

Whenever he went there, from a sculptor he became a painter, and made studies. He would like to paint its atmosphere.

"Elsewhere," he said, "even in Florence, the sky is too high. At Venice it is everywhere; it caresses the earth and the water. It envelops lovingly the leaden domes and the marble facades, and throws into the iridescent atmosphere its pearls and its crystals. The beauty of Venice is in its sky and its women. What pretty creatures the Venetian women are! Their forms are so slender and supple under their black shawls. If nothing remained of these women except a bone, one would find in that bone the charm of their exquisite structure. Sundays, at church, they form laughing groups, agitated, with hips a little pointed, elegant necks, flowery smiles, and inflaming glances. And all bend, with the suppleness of young animals, at the passage of a priest whose head resembles that of Vitellius, and who carries the chalice, preceded by two choir-boys."

He walked with unequal step, following the rhythm of his ideas, sometimes quick, sometimes slow. She walked more regularly, and almost outstripped him. He looked at her sidewise, and liked her firm and supple carriage. He observed the little shake which at moments her obstinate head gave to the holly on her toque.

Without expecting it, he felt a charm in that meeting, almost intimate, with a young woman almost unknown.

They had reached the place where the large avenue unfolds its four rows of trees. They were following the stone parapet surmounted by a hedge of boxwood, which entirely hides the ugliness of the buildings on the quay. One felt the presence of the river by the milky atmosphere which in misty days seems to rest on the water. The sky was clear. The lights of the city were mingled with

the stars. At the south shone the three golden nails of the Orion belt. Dechartre continued:

“Last year, at Venice, every morning as I went out of my house, I saw at her door, raised by three steps above the canal, a charming girl, with small head, neck round and strong, and graceful hips. She was there, in the sun and surrounded by vermin, as pure as an amphora, fragrant as a flower. She smiled. What a mouth! The richest jewel in the most beautiful light. I realized in time that this smile was addressed to a butcher standing behind me with his basket on his head.”

At the corner of the short street which goes to the quay, between two lines of small gardens, Madame Martin walked more slowly.

“It is true that at Venice,” she said, “all women are pretty.”

“They are almost all pretty, Madame. I speak of the common girls — the cigar-girls, the girls among the glass-workers. The others are commonplace enough.”

“By others you mean society women; and you don’t like these?”

“Society women? Oh, some of them are charming. As for loving them, that’s a different affair.”

“Do you think so?”

She extended her hand to him, and suddenly turned the corner.

CHAPTER V. A DINNER 'EN FAMILLE'

She dined that night alone with her husband. The narrow table had not the basket with golden eagles and winged Victorys. The candelabra did not light Oudry's paintings. While he talked of the events of the day, she fell into a sad reverie. It seemed to her that she floated in a mist. It was a peaceful and almost sweet suffering. She saw vaguely through the clouds the little room of the Rue Spontini transported by angels to one of the summits of the Himalaya Mountains, and Robert Le Menil — in the quaking of a sort of world's end — had disappeared while putting on his gloves. She felt her pulse to see whether she were feverish. A rattle of silverware on the table awoke her. She heard her husband saying:

"My dear friend Gavaut delivered to-day, in the Chamber, an excellent speech on the question of the reserve funds. It's extraordinary how his ideas have become healthy and just. Oh, he has improved a great deal."

She could not refrain from smiling.

"But Gavaut, my friend, is a poor devil who never thought of anything except escaping from the crowd of those who are dying of hunger. Gavaut never had any ideas except at his elbows. Does anybody take him seriously in the political world? You may be sure that he never gave an illusion to any woman, not even his wife. And yet to produce that sort of illusion a man does not need much." She added, brusquely:

"You know Miss Bell has invited me to spend a month with her at Fiesole. I have accepted; I am going."

Less astonished than discontented, he asked her with whom she was going.

At once she answered:

"With Madame Marmet."

There was no objection to make. Madame Marmet was a proper companion, and it was appropriate for her to visit Italy, where her husband had made some excavations. He asked only:

"Have you invited her? When are you going?"

"Next week."

He had the wisdom not to make any objection, judging that opposition would only make her capriciousness firmer, and fearing to give impetus to that foolish idea. He said:

"Surely, to travel is an agreeable pastime. I thought that we might in the spring visit the Caucasus and Turkestan. There is an interesting country. General Annenkoff will place at our disposal carriages, trains, and everything else on his

railway. He is a friend of mine; he is quite charmed with you. He will provide us with an escort of Cossacks."

He persisted in trying to flatter her vanity, unable to realize that her mind was not worldly. She replied, negligently, that it might be a pleasant trip. Then he praised the mountains, the ancient cities, the bazaars, the costumes, the armor.

He added:

"We shall take some friends with us — Princess Seniavine, General Lariviere, perhaps Vence or Le Menil."

She replied, with a little dry laugh, that they had time to select their guests.

He became attentive to her wants.

"You are not eating. You will injure your health."

Without yet believing in this prompt departure, he felt some anxiety about it. Each had regained freedom, but he did not like to be alone. He felt that he was himself only when his wife was there. And then, he had decided to give two or three political dinners during the session. He saw his party growing. This was the moment to assert himself, to make a dazzling show. He said, mysteriously:

"Something might happen requiring the aid of all our friends. You have not followed the march of events, Therese?"

"No, my dear."

"I am sorry. You have judgment, liberality of mind. If you had followed the march of events you would have been struck by the current that is leading the country back to moderate opinions. The country is tired of exaggerations. It rejects the men compromised by radical politics and religious persecution. Some day or other it will be necessary to make over a Casimir-Perier ministry with other men, and that day—"

He stopped: really she listened too inattentively.

She was thinking, sad and disenchanted. It seemed to her that the pretty woman, who, among the warm shadows of a closed room, placed her bare feet in the fur of the brown bear rug, and to whom her lover gave kisses while she twisted her hair in front of a glass, was not herself, was not even a woman that she knew well, or that she desired to know, but a person whose affairs were of no interest to her. A pin badly set in her hair, one of the pins from the Bohemian glass cup, fell on her neck. She shivered.

"Yet we really must give three or four dinners to our good political friends," said M. Martin-Belleme. "We shall invite some of the ancient radicals to meet the people of our circle. It will be well to find some pretty women. We might invite Madame Berard de la Malle; there has been no gossip about her for two years. What do you think of it?"

"But, my dear, since I am to go next week—"

This filled him with consternation.

They went, both silent and moody, into the drawing-room, where Paul Vence was waiting. He often came in the evening.

She extended her hand to him.

"I am very glad to see you. I am going out of town. Paris is cold and bleak. This weather tires and saddens me. I am going to Florence, for six weeks, to visit Miss Bell."

M. Martin-Belleme then lifted his eyes to heaven.

Vence asked whether she had been in Italy often.

"Three times; but I saw nothing. This time I wish to see, to throw myself into things. From Florence I shall take walks into Tuscany, into Umbria. And, finally, I shall go to Venice."

"You will do well. Venice suggests the peace of the Sabbath-day in the grand week of creative and divine Italy."

"Your friend Dechartre talked very prettily to me of Venice, of the atmosphere of Venice, which sows pearls."

"Yes, at Venice the sky is a colorist. Florence inspires the mind. An old author has said: 'The sky of Florence is light and subtle, and feeds the beautiful ideas of men.' I have lived delicious days in Tuscany. I wish I could live them again."

"Come and see me there."

He sighed.

The newspaper, books, and his daily work prevented him.

M. Martin-Belleme said everyone should bow before such reasons, and that one was too happy to read the articles and the fine books written by M. Paul Vence to have any wish to take him from his work.

"Oh, my books! One never says in a book what one wishes to say. It is impossible to express one's self. I know how to talk with my pen as well as any other person; but, after all, to talk or to write, what futile occupations! How wretchedly inadequate are the little signs which form syllables, words, and phrases. What becomes of the idea, the beautiful idea, which these miserable hieroglyphics hide? What does the reader make of my writing? A series of false sense, of counter sense, and of nonsense. To read, to hear, is to translate. There are beautiful translations, perhaps. There are no faithful translations. Why should I care for the admiration which they give to my books, since it is what they themselves see in them that they admire? Every reader substitutes his visions in the place of ours. We furnish him with the means to quicken his imagination. It is a horrible thing to be a cause of such exercises. It is an infamous profession."

"You are jesting," said M. Martin-Belleme.

“I do not think so,” said Therese. “He recognizes that one mind is impenetrable to another mind, and he suffers from this. He feels that he is alone when he is thinking, alone when he is writing. Whatever one may do, one is always alone in the world. That is what he wishes to say. He is right. You may always explain: you never are understood.”

“There are signs—” said Paul Vence.

“Don’t you think, Monsieur Vence, that signs also are a form of hieroglyphics? Give me news of Monsieur Choulette. I do not see him any more.”

Vence replied that Choulette was very busy in forming the Third Order of Saint Francis.

“The idea, Madame, came to him in a marvellous fashion one day when he had gone to call on his Maria in the street where she lives, behind the public hospital — a street always damp, the houses on which are tottering. You must know that he considers Maria the saint and martyr who is responsible for the sins of the people.

“He pulled the bellrope, made greasy by two centuries of visitors. Either because the martyr was at the wine-shop, where she is familiarly known, or because she was busy in her room, she did not open the door. Choulette rang for a long time, and so violently that the bellrope remained in his hand. Skilful at understanding symbols and the hidden meaning of things, he understood at once that this rope had not been detached without the permission of spiritual powers. He made of it a belt, and realized that he had been chosen to lead back into its primitive purity the Third Order of Saint Francis. He renounced the beauty of women, the delights of poetry, the brightness of glory, and studied the life and the doctrine of Saint Francis. However, he has sold to his editor a book entitled ‘Les Blandices’, which contains, he says, the description of all sorts of loves. He flatters himself that in it he has shown himself a criminal with some elegance. But far from harming his mystic undertakings, this book favors them in this sense, that, corrected by his later work, he will become honest and exemplary; and the gold that he has received in payment, which would not have been paid to him for a more chaste volume, will serve for a pilgrimage to Assisi.”

Madame Martin asked how much of this story was really true. Vence replied that she must not try to learn.

He confessed that he was the idealist historian of the poet, and that the adventures which he related of him were not to be taken in the literal and Judaic sense.

He affirmed that at least Choulette was publishing *Les Blandices*, and desired to visit the cell and the grave of St. Francis.

“Then,” exclaimed Madame Martin, “I will take him to Italy with me. Find him, Monsieur Vence, and bring him to me. I am going next week.”

M. Martin then excused himself, not being able to remain longer. He had to finish a report which was to be laid before the Chamber the next day.

Madame Martin said that nobody interested her so much as Choulette. Paul Vence said that he was a singular specimen of humanity.

“He is not very different from the saints of whose extraordinary lives we read. He is as sincere as they. He has an exquisite delicacy of sentiment and a terrible violence of mind. If he shocks one by many of his acts, the reason is that he is weaker, less supported, or perhaps less closely observed. And then there are unworthy saints, just as there are bad angels: Choulette is a worldly saint, that is all. But his poems are true poems, and much finer than those written by the bishops of the seventeenth century.”

She interrupted him:

“While I think of it, I wish to congratulate you on your friend Dechartre. He has a charming mind.”

She added:

“Perhaps he is a little too timid.”

Vence reminded her that he had told her she would find Dechartre interesting.

“I know him by heart; he has been my friend since our childhood.”

“You knew his parents?”

“Yes. He is the only son of Philippe Dechartre.”

“The architect?”

“The architect who, under Napoleon III, restored so many castles and churches in Touraine and the Orleanais. He had taste and knowledge. Solitary and quiet in his life, he had the imprudence to attack Viollet-le-Duc, then all-powerful. He reproached him with trying to reestablish buildings in their primitive plan, as they had been, or as they might have been, at the beginning. Philippe Dechartre, on the contrary, wished that everything which the lapse of centuries had added to a church, an abbey, or a castle should be respected. To abolish anachronisms and restore a building to its primitive unity, seemed to him to be a scientific barbarity as culpable as that of ignorance. He said: ‘It is a crime to efface the successive imprints made in stone by the hands of our ancestors. New stones cut in old style are false witnesses.’ He wished to limit the task of the archaeologic architect to that of supporting and consolidating walls. He was right. Everybody said that he was wrong. He achieved his ruin by dying young, while his rival triumphed. He bequeathed an honest fortune to his widow and his son. Jacques Dechartre was brought up by his mother, who adored him. I do not

think that maternal tenderness ever was more impetuous. Jacques is a charming fellow; but he is a spoiled child."

"Yet he appears so indifferent, so easy to understand, so distant from everything."

"Do not rely on this. He has a tormented and tormenting imagination."

"Does he like women?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Oh, it isn't with any idea of match-making."

"Yes, he likes them. I told you that he was an egoist. Only selfish men really love women. After the death of his mother, he had a long liaison with a well-known actress, Jeanne Tancrede."

Madame Martin remembered Jeanne Tancrede; not very pretty, but graceful with a certain slowness of action in playing romantic roles.

"They lived almost together in a little house at Auteuil," Paul Vence continued. "I often called on them. I found him lost in his dreams, forgetting to model a figure drying under its cloths, alone with himself, pursuing his idea, absolutely incapable of listening to anybody; she, studying her roles, her complexion burned by rouge, her eyes tender, pretty because of her intelligence and her activity. She complained to me that he was inattentive, cross, and unreasonable. She loved him and deceived him only to obtain roles. And when she deceived him, it was done on the spur of the moment. Afterward she never thought of it. A typical woman! But she was imprudent; she smiled upon Joseph Springer in the hope that he would make her a member of the Comedie Francaise. Dechartre left her. Now she finds it more practical to live with her managers, and Jacques finds it more agreeable to travel."

"Does he regret her?"

"How can one know the things that agitate a mind anxious and mobile, selfish and passionate, desirous to surrender itself, prompt in disengaging itself, liking itself most of all among the beautiful things that it finds in the world?"

Brusquely she changed the subject.

"And your novel, Monsieur Vence?"

"I have reached the last chapter, Madame. My little workingman has been guillotined. He died with that indifference of virgins without desire, who never have felt on their lips the warm taste of life. The journals and the public approve the act of justice which has just been accomplished. But in another garret, another workingman, sober, sad, and a chemist, swears to himself that he will commit an expiatory murder."

He rose and said good-night.

She called him back.

“Monsieur Vence, you know that I was serious. Bring Choulette to me.”

When she went up to her room, her husband was waiting for her, in his red-brown plush robe, with a sort of doge’s cap framing his pale and hollow face. He had an air of gravity. Behind him, by the open door of his workroom, appeared under the lamp a mass of documents bound in blue, a collection of the annual budgets. Before she could reach her room he motioned that he wished to speak to her.

“My dear, I can not understand you. You are very inconsequential. It does you a great deal of harm. You intend to leave your home without any reason, without even a pretext. And you wish to run through Europe with whom? With a Bohemian, a drunkard — that man Choulette.”

She replied that she should travel with Madame Marmet, in which there could be nothing objectionable.

“But you announce your going to everybody, yet you do not even know whether Madame Marmet can accompany you.”

“Oh, Madame Marmet will soon pack her boxes. Nothing keeps her in Paris except her dog. She will leave it to you; you may take care of it.”

“Does your father know of your project?”

It was his last resource to invoke the authority of Montessuy. He knew that his wife feared to displease her father. He insisted:

“Your father is full of sense and tact. I have been happy to find him agreeing with me several times in the advices which I have permitted myself to give you. He thinks as I do, that Madame Meillan’s house is not a fit place for you to visit. The company that meets there is mixed, and the mistress of the house favors intrigue. You are wrong, I must say, not to take account of what people think. I am mistaken if your father does not think it singular that you should go away with so much frivolity, and the absence will be the more remarked, my dear, since circumstances have made me eminent in the course of this legislature. My merit has nothing to do with the case, surely. But if you had consented to listen to me at dinner I should have demonstrated to you that the group of politicians to which I belong has almost reached power. In such a moment you should not renounce your duties as mistress of the house. You must understand this yourself.”

She replied “You annoy me.” And, turning her back to him, she shut the door of her room between them. That night in her bed she opened a book, as she always did before going to sleep. It was a novel. She was turning the leaves with indifference, when her eyes fell on these lines:

“Love is like devotion: it comes late. A woman is hardly in love or devout at twenty, unless she has a special disposition to be either, a sort of native sanctity.

Women who are predestined to love, themselves struggle a long time against that grace of love which is more terrible than the thunderbolt that fell on the road to Damascus. A woman oftenest yields to the passion of love only when age or solitude does not frighten her. Passion is an arid and burning desert. Passion is profane asceticism, as harsh as religious asceticism. Great woman lovers are as rare as great penitent women. Those who know life well know that women do not easily bind themselves in the chains of real love. They know that nothing is less common than sacrifice among them. And consider how much a worldly woman must sacrifice when she is in love — liberty, quietness, the charming play of a free mind, coquetry, amusement, pleasure — she loses everything.

“Coquetry is permissible. One may conciliate that with all the exigencies of fashionable life. Not so love. Love is the least mundane of passions, the most anti-social, the most savage, the most barbarous. So the world judges it more severely than mere gallantry or looseness of manners. In one sense the world is right. A woman in love betrays her nature and fails in her function, which is to be admired by all men, like a work of art. A woman is a work of art, the most marvellous that man’s industry ever has produced. A woman is a wonderful artifice, due to the concourse of all the arts mechanical and of all the arts liberal. She is the work of everybody, she belongs to the world.”

Therese closed the book and thought that these ideas were only the dreams of novelists who did not know life. She knew very well that there was in reality neither a Carmel of passion nor a chain of love, nor a beautiful and terrible vocation against which the predestined one resisted in vain; she knew very well that love was only a brief intoxication from which one recovered a little sadder. And yet, perhaps, she did not know everything; perhaps there were loves in which one was deliciously lost. She put out her lamp. The dreams of her first youth came back to her.

CHAPTER VI. A DISTINGUISHED RELICT

It was raining. Madame Martin-Belleme saw confusedly through the glass of her coupe the multitude of passing umbrellas, like black turtles under the watery skies. She was thinking. Her thoughts were gray and indistinct, like the aspect of the streets and the squares.

She no longer knew why the idea had come to her to spend a month with Miss Bell. Truly, she never had known. The idea had been like a spring, at first hidden by leaves, and now forming the current of a deep and rapid stream. She remembered that Tuesday night at dinner she had said suddenly that she wished to go, but she could not remember the first flush of that desire. It was not the wish to act toward Robert Le Menil as he was acting toward her. Doubtless she thought it excellent to go travelling in Italy while he went fox-hunting. This seemed to her a fair arrangement. Robert, who was always pleased to see her when he came back, would not find her on his return. She thought this would be right. She had not thought of it at first. And since then she had thought little of it, and really she was not going for the pleasure of making him grieve. She had against him a thought less piquant, and more harsh. She did not wish to see him soon. He had become to her almost a stranger. He seemed to her a man like others — better than most others — good-looking, estimable, and who did not displease her; but he did not preoccupy her. Suddenly he had gone out of her life. She could not remember how he had become mingled with it. The idea of belonging to him shocked her. The thought that they might meet again in the small apartment of the Rue Spontini was so painful to her that she discarded it at once. She preferred to think that an unforeseen event would prevent their meeting again — the end of the world, for example. M. Lagrange, member of the Academie des Sciences, had told her the day before of a comet which some day might meet the earth, envelop it with its flaming hair, imbue animals and plants with unknown poisons, and make all men die in a frenzy of laughter. She expected that this, or something else, would happen next month. It was not inexplicable that she wished to go. But that her desire to go should contain a vague joy, that she should feel the charm of what she was to find, was inexplicable to her.

Her carriage left her at the corner of a street.

There, under the roof of a tall house, behind five windows, in a small, neat apartment, Madame Marmet had lived since the death of her husband.

Countess Martin found her in her modest drawing-room, opposite M. Lagrange, half asleep in a deep armchair. This worldly old savant had remained ever faithful to her. He it was who, the day after M. Marmet's funeral, had conveyed to the unfortunate widow the poisoned speech delivered by Schmoll. She had fainted in his arms. Madame Marmet thought that he lacked judgment, but he was her best friend. They dined together often with rich friends.

Madame Martin, slender and erect in her zibeline corsage opening on a flood of lace, awakened with the charming brightness of her gray eyes the good man, who was susceptible to the graces of women. He had told her the day before how the world would come to an end. He asked her whether she had not been frightened at night by pictures of the earth devoured by flames or frozen to a mass of ice. While he talked to her with affected gallantry, she looked at the mahogany bookcase. There were not many books in it, but on one of the shelves was a skeleton in armor. It amazed one to see in this good lady's house that Etruscan warrior wearing a green bronze helmet and a cuirass. He slept among boxes of bonbons, vases of gilded porcelain, and carved images of the Virgin, picked up at Lucerne and on the Righi. Madame Marmet, in her widowhood, had sold the books which her husband had left. Of all the ancient objects collected by the archaeologist, she had retained nothing except the Etruscan. Many persons had tried to sell it for her. Paul Vence had obtained from the administration a promise to buy it for the Louvre, but the good widow would not part with it. It seemed to her that if she lost that warrior with his green bronze helmet she would lose the name that she wore worthily, and would cease to be the widow of Louis Marmet of the Academie des Inscriptions.

"Do not be afraid, Madame; a comet will not soon strike the earth. Such a phenomenon is very improbable."

Madame Martin replied that she knew no serious reason why the earth and humanity should not be annihilated at once.

Old Lagrange exclaimed with profound sincerity that he hoped the cataclysm would come as late as possible.

She looked at him. His bald head could boast only a few hairs dyed black. His eyelids fell like rags over eyes still smiling; his cheeks hung in loose folds, and one divined that his body was equally withered. She thought, "And even he likes life!"

Madame Marmet hoped, too, that the end of the world was not near at hand.

"Monsieur Lagrange," said Madame Martin, "you live, do you not, in a pretty little house, the windows of which overlook the Botanical Gardens? It seems to me it must be a joy to live in that garden, which makes me think of the Noah's Ark of my infancy, and of the terrestrial paradises in the old Bibles."

But he was not at all charmed with his house. It was small, unimproved, infested with rats.

She acknowledged that one seldom felt at home anywhere, and that rats were found everywhere, either real or symbolical, legions of pests that torment us. Yet she liked the Botanical Gardens; she had always wished to go there, yet never had gone. There was also the museum, which she was curious to visit.

Smiling, happy, he offered to escort her there. He considered it his house. He would show her rare specimens, some of which were superb.

She did not know what a bolide was. She recalled that some one had said to her that at the museum were bones carved by primitive men, and plaques of ivory on which were engraved pictures of animals, which were long ago extinct. She asked whether that were true. Lagrange ceased to smile. He replied indifferently that such objects concerned one of his colleagues.

“Ah!” said Madame Martin, “then they are not in your showcase.”

She observed that learned men were not curious, and that it is indiscreet to question them on things that are not in their own showcases. It is true that Lagrange had made a scientific fortune in studying meteors. This had led him to study comets. But he was wise. For twenty years he had been preoccupied by nothing except dining out.

When he had left, Countess Martin told Madame Marmet what she expected of her.

“I am going next week to Fiesole, to visit Miss Bell, and you are coming with me.”

The good Madame Marmet, with placid brow yet searching eyes, was silent for a moment; then she refused gently, but finally consented.

CHAPTER VII. MADAME HAS HER WAY

The Marseilles express was ready on the quay, where the postmen ran, and the carriages rolled amid smoke and noise, under the light that fell from the windows. Through the open doors travellers in long cloaks came and went. At the end of the station, blinding with soot and dust, a small rainbow could be discerned, not larger than one's hand. Countess Martin and the good Madame Marniet were already in their carriage, under the rack loaded with bags, among newspapers thrown on the cushions. Choulette had not appeared, and Madame Martin expected him no longer. Yet he had promised to be at the station. He had made his arrangements to go, and had received from his publisher the price of *Les Blandices*. Paul Vence had brought him one evening to Madame Martin's house. He had been sweet, polished, full of witty gayety and naive joy. She had promised herself much pleasure in travelling with a man of genius, original, picturesquely ugly, with an amusing simplicity; like a child prematurely old and abandoned, full of vices, yet with a certain degree of innocence. The doors closed. She expected him no longer. She should not have counted on his impulsive and vagabondish mind. At the moment when the engine began to breathe hoarsely, Madame Marnet, who was looking out of the window, said, quietly:

"I think that Monsieur Choulette is coming."

He was walking along the quay, limping, with his hat on the back of his head, his beard unkempt, and dragging an old carpet-bag. He was almost repulsive; yet, in spite of his fifty years of age, he looked young, so clear and lustrous were his eyes, so much ingenuous audacity had been retained in his yellow, hollow face, so vividly did this old man express the eternal adolescence of the poet and artist. When she saw him, Therese regretted having invited so strange a companion. He walked along, throwing a hasty glance into every carriage — a glance which, little by little, became sullen and distrustful. But when he recognized Madame Martin, he smiled so sweetly and said good-morning to her in so caressing a voice that nothing was left of the ferocious old vagabond walking on the quay, nothing except the old carpet-bag, the handles of which were half broken.

He placed it in the rack with great care, among the elegant bags enveloped with gray cloth, beside which it looked conspicuously sordid. It was studded with yellow flowers on a blood-colored background.

He was soon perfectly at ease, and complimented Madame Martin on the elegance of her travelling attire.

"Excuse me, ladies," he added, "I was afraid I should be late. I went to six o'clock mass at Saint Severin, my parish, in the Virgin Chapel, under those pretty, but absurd columns that point toward heaven though frail as reeds-like us, poor sinners that we are."

"Ah," said Madame Martin, "you are pious to-day."

And she asked him whether he wore the cordon of the order which he was founding. He assumed a grave and penitent air.

"I am afraid, Madame, that Monsieur Paul Vence has told you many absurd stories about me. I have heard that he goes about circulating rumors that my ribbon is a bell-rope — and of what a bell! I should be pained if anybody believed so wretched a story. My ribbon, Madame, is a symbolical ribbon. It is represented by a simple thread, which one wears under one's clothes after a pauper has touched it, as a sign that poverty is holy, and that it will save the world. There is nothing good except in poverty; and since I have received the price of Les Blandices, I feel that I am unjust and harsh. It is a good thing that I have placed in my bag several of these mystic ribbons."

And, pointing to the horrible carpet-bag:

"I have also placed in it a host which a bad priest gave to me, the works of Monsieur de Maistre, shirts, and several other things:"

Madame Martin lifted her eyebrows, a little ill at ease. But the good Madame Marmet retained her habitual placidity.

As the train rolled through the homely scenes of the outskirts, that black fringe which makes an unlovely border to the city, Choulette took from his pocket an old book which he began to fumble. The writer, hidden under the vagabond, revealed himself. Choulette, without wishing to appear to be careful of his papers, was very orderly about them. He assured himself that he had not lost the pieces of paper on which he noted at the coffeehouse his ideas for poems, nor the dozen of flattering letters which, soiled and spotted, he carried with him continually, to read them to his newly-made companions at night. After assuring himself that nothing was missing, he took from the book a letter folded in an open envelope. He waved it for a while, with an air of mysterious impudence, then handed it to the Countess Martin. It was a letter of introduction from the Marquise de Rieu to a princess of the House of France, a near relative of the Comte de Chambord, who, old and a widow, lived in retirement near the gates of Florence. Having enjoyed the effect which he expected to produce, he said that he should perhaps visit the Princess; that she was a good person, and pious.

“A truly great lady,” he added, “who does not show her magnificence in gowns and hats. She wears her chemises for six weeks, and sometimes longer. The gentlemen of her train have seen her wear very dirty white stockings, which fell around her heels. The virtues of the great queens of Spain are revived in her. Oh, those soiled stockings, what real glory there is in them!”

He took the letter and put it back in his book. Then, arming himself with a horn-handled knife, he began, with its point, to finish a figure sketched in the handle of his stick. He complimented himself on it:

“I am skilful in all the arts of beggars and vagabonds. I know how to open locks with a nail, and how to carve wood with a bad knife.”

The head began to appear. It was the head of a thin woman, weeping.

Choulette wished to express in it human misery, not simple and touching, such as men of other times may have felt it in a world of mingled harshness and kindness; but hideous, and reflecting the state of ugliness created by the free-thinking bourgeois and the military patriots of the French Revolution. According to him the present regime embodied only hypocrisy and brutality.

“Their barracks are a hideous invention of modern times. They date from the seventeenth century. Before that time there were only guard-houses where the soldiers played cards and told tales. Louis XIV was a precursor of Bonaparte. But the evil has attained its plenitude since the monstrous institution of the obligatory enlistment. The shame of emperors and of republics is to have made it an obligation for men to kill. In the ages called barbarous, cities and princes entrusted their defence to mercenaries, who fought prudently. In a great battle only five or six men were killed. And when knights went to the wars, at least they were not forced to do it; they died for their pleasure. They were good for nothing else. Nobody in the time of Saint Louis would have thought of sending to battle a man of learning. And the laborer was not torn from the soil to be killed. Nowadays it is a duty for a poor peasant to be a soldier. He is exiled from his house, the roof of which smokes in the silence of night; from the fat prairies where the oxen graze; from the fields and the paternal woods. He is taught how to kill men; he is threatened, insulted, put in prison and told that it is an honor; and, if he does not care for that sort of honor, he is fusilladed. He obeys because he is terrorized, and is of all domestic animals the gentlest and most docile. We are warlike in France, and we are citizens. Another reason to be proud, this being a citizen! For the poor it consists in sustaining and preserving the wealthy in their power and their laziness. The poor must work for this, in presence of the majestic quality of the law which prohibits the wealthy as well as the poor from sleeping under the bridges, from begging in the streets, and from stealing bread. That is one of the good effects of the Revolution. As this Revolution was made

by fools and idiots for the benefit of those who acquired national lands, and resulted in nothing but making the fortune of crafty peasants and financiering bourgeois, the Revolution only made stronger, under the pretence of making all men equal, the empire of wealth. It has betrayed France into the hands of the men of wealth. They are masters and lords. The apparent government, composed of poor devils, is in the pay of the financiers. For one hundred years, in this poisoned country, whoever has loved the poor has been considered a traitor to society. A man is called dangerous when he says that there are wretched people. There are laws against indignation and pity, and what I say here could not go into print."

Choulette became excited and waved his knife, while under the wintry sunlight passed fields of brown earth, trees despoiled by winter, and curtains of poplars beside silvery rivers.

He looked with tenderness at the figure carved on his stick.

"Here you are," he said, "poor humanity, thin and weeping, stupid with shame and misery, as you were made by your masters — soldiers and men of wealth."

The good Madame Marmet, whose nephew was a captain in the artillery, was shocked at the violence with which Choulette attacked the army. Madame Martin saw in this only an amusing fantasy. Choulette's ideas did not frighten her. She was afraid of nothing. But she thought they were a little absurd. She did not think that the past had ever been better than the present.

"I believe, Monsieur Choulette, that men were always as they are to-day, selfish, avaricious, and pitiless. I believe that laws and manners were always harsh and cruel to the unfortunate."

Between La Roche and Dijon they took breakfast in the dining-car, and left Choulette in it, alone with his pipe, his glass of benedictine, and his irritation.

In the carriage, Madame Marmet talked with peaceful tenderness of the husband she had lost. He had married her for love; he had written admirable verses to her, which she had kept, and never shown to any one. He was lively and very gay. One would not have thought it who had seen him later, tired by work and weakened by illness. He studied until the last moment. Two hours before he died he was trying to read again. He was affectionate and kind. Even in suffering he retained all his sweetness. Madame Martin said to her:

"You have had long years of happiness; you have kept the reminiscence of them; that is a share of happiness in this world."

But good Madame Marmet sighed; a cloud passed over her quiet brow.

"Yes," she said, "Louis was the best of men and the best of husbands. Yet he made me very miserable. He had only one fault, but I suffered from it cruelly.

He was jealous. Good, kind, tender, and generous as he was, this horrible passion made him unjust, ironical, and violent. I can assure you that my behavior gave not the least cause for suspicion. I was not a coquette. But I was young, fresh; I passed for beautiful. That was enough. He would not let me go out alone, and would not let me receive calls in his absence. Whenever we went to a reception, I trembled in advance with the fear of the scene which he would make later in the carriage."

And the good Madame Marmet added, with a sigh:

"It is true that I liked to dance. But I had to renounce going to balls; it made him suffer too much."

Countess Martin expressed astonishment. She had always imagined Marmet as an old man, timid, and absorbed by his thoughts; a little ridiculous, between his wife, plump, white, and amiable, and the skeleton wearing a helmet of bronze and gold. But the excellent widow confided to her that, at fifty-five years of age, when she was fifty-three, Louis was just as jealous as on the first day of their marriage.

And Therese thought that Robert had never tormented her with jealousy. Was it on his part a proof of tact and good taste, a mark of confidence, or was it that he did not love her enough to make her suffer? She did not know, and she did not have the heart to try to know. She would have to look through recesses of her mind which she preferred not to open.

She murmured carelessly:

"We long to be loved, and when we are loved we are tormented or worried."

The day was finished in reading and thinking. Choulette did not reappear. Night covered little by little with its gray clouds the mulberry-trees of the Dauphine. Madame Marmet went to sleep peacefully, resting on herself as on a mass of pillows. Therese looked at her and thought:

"She is happy, since she likes to remember."

The sadness of night penetrated her heart. And when the moon rose on the fields of olive-trees, seeing the soft lines of plains and of hills pass, Therese, in this landscape wherein everything spoke of peace and oblivion, and nothing spoke of her, regretted the Seine, the Arc de Triomphe with its radiating avenues, and the alleys of the park where, at least, the trees and the stones knew her.

Suddenly Choulette threw himself into the carriage. Armed with his knotty stick, his face and head enveloped in red wool and a fur cap, he almost frightened her. It was what he wished to do. His violent attitudes and his savage dress were studied. Always seeking to produce effects, it pleased him to seem frightful.

He was a coward himself, and was glad to inspire the fears he often felt. A moment before, as he was smoking his pipe, he had felt, while seeing the moon swallowed up by the clouds, one of those childish frights that tormented his light mind. He had come near the Countess to be reassured.

“Arles,” he said. “Do you know Arles? It is a place of pure beauty. I have seen, in the cloister, doves resting on the shoulders of statues, and I have seen the little gray lizards warming themselves in the sun on the tombs. The tombs are now in two rows on the road that leads to the church. They are formed like cisterns, and serve as beds for the poor at night. One night, when I was walking among them, I met a good old woman who was placing dried herbs in the tomb of an old maid who had died on her wedding-day. We said goodnight to her. She replied: ‘May God hear-you! but fate wills that this tomb should open on the side of the northwest wind. If only it were open on the other side, I should be lying as comfortably as Queen Jeanne.’”

Therese made no answer. She was dozing. And Choulette shivered in the cold of the night, in the fear of death.

CHAPTER VIII. THE LADY OF THE BELLS

In her English cart, which she drove herself, Miss Bell had brought over the hills, from the railway station at Florence, the Countess Martin-Belleme and Madame Marmet to her pink-tinted house at Fiesole, which, crowned with a long balustrade, overlooked the incomparable city. The maid followed with the luggage. Choulette, lodged, by Miss Bell's attention, in the house of a sacristan's widow, in the shadow of the cathedral of Fiesole, was not expected until dinner. Plain and gentle, wearing short hair, a waistcoat, a man's shirt on a chest like a boy's, almost graceful, with small hips, the poetess was doing for her French friends the honors of the house, which reflected the ardent delicacy of her taste. On the walls of the drawing-room were pale Virgins, with long hands, reigning peacefully among angels, patriarchs, and saints in beautiful gilded frames. On a pedestal stood a Magdalena, clothed only with her hair, frightful with thinness and old age, some beggar of the road to Pistoia, burned by the suns and the snows, whom some unknown precursor of Donatello had moulded. And everywhere were Miss Bell's chosen arms-bells and cymbals. The largest lifted their bronze clappers at the angles of the room; others formed a chain at the foot of the walls. Smaller ones ran along the cornices. There were bells over the hearth, on the cabinets, and on the chairs. The shelves were full of silver and golden bells. There were big bronze bells marked with the Florentine lily; bells of the Renaissance, representing a lady wearing a white gown; bells of the dead, decorated with tears and bones; bells covered with symbolical animals and leaves, which had rung in the churches in the time of St. Louis; table-bells of the seventeenth century, having a statuette for a handle; the flat, clear cow-bells of the Ruth Valley; Hindu bells; Chinese bells formed like cylinders — they had come from all countries and all times, at the magic call of little Miss Bell.

"You look at my speaking arms," she said to Madame Martin. "I think that all these Misses Bell are pleased to be here, and I should not be astonished if some day they all began to sing together. But you must not admire them all equally. Reserve your purest and most fervent praise for this one."

And striking with her finger a dark, bare bell which gave a faint sound:

"This one," she said, "is a holy village-bell of the fifth century. She is a spiritual daughter of Saint Paulin de Nole, who was the first to make the sky sing over our heads. The metal is rare. Soon I will show to you a gentle Florentine, the queen of bells. She is coming. But I bore you, darling, with my babble. And I bore, too, the good Madame Marmet. It is wrong."

She escorted them to their rooms.

An hour later, Madame Martin, rested, fresh, in a gown of foulard and lace, went on the terrace where Miss Bell was waiting for her. The humid air, warmed by the sun, exhaled the restless sweetness of spring. Therese, resting on the balustrade, bathed her eyes in the light. At her feet, the cypress-trees raised their black distaffs, and the olive-trees looked like sheep on the hills. In the valley, Florence extended its domes, its towers, and the multitudes of its red roofs, through which the Arno showed its undulating line. Beyond were the soft blue hills.

She tried to recognize the Boboli Gardens, where she had walked at her first visit; the Cascine, which she did not like; the Pitti Palace. Then the charming infinity of the sky attracted her. She looked at the forms in the clouds.

After a long silence, Vivian Bell extended her hand toward the horizon.

“Darling, I do not know how to say what I wish. But look, darling, look again. What you see there is unique in the world. Nature is nowhere else so subtle, elegant, and fine. The god who made the hills of Florence was an artist. Oh, he was a jeweller, an engraver, a sculptor, a bronze-founder, and a painter; he was a Florentine. He did nothing else in the world, darling. The rest was made by a hand less delicate, whose work was less perfect. How can you think that that violet hill of San Miniato, so firm and so pure in relief, was made by the author of Mont Blanc? It is not possible. This landscape has the beauty of an antique medal and of a precious painting. It is a perfect and measured work of art. And here is another thing that I do not know how to say, that I can not even understand, but which is a real thing. In this country I feel — and you will feel as I do, darling — half alive and half dead; in a condition which is sad, noble, and very sweet. Look, look again; you will realize the melancholy of those hills that surround Florence, and see a delicious sadness ascend from the land of the dead.”

The sun was low over the horizon. The bright points of the mountain-peaks faded one by one, while the clouds inflamed the sky. Madame Marmet sneezed.

Miss Bell sent for some shawls, and warned the French women that the evenings were fresh and that the night-air was dangerous.

Then suddenly she said:

“Darling, you know Monsieur Jacques Dechartre? Well, he wrote to me that he would be at Florence next week. I am glad Monsieur Jacques Dechartre is to meet you in our city. He will accompany us to the churches and to the museums, and he will be a good guide. He understands beautiful things, because he loves them. And he has an exquisite talent as a sculptor. His figures in medallions are

admired more in England than in France. Oh, I am so glad Monsieur Jacques Dechartre and you are to meet at Florence, darling!”

CHAPTER IX. CHOULETTE FINDS A NEW FRIEND

She next day, as they were traversing the square where are planted, in imitation of antique amphitheatres, two marble pillars, Madame Marmet said to the Countess Martin:

“I think I see Monsieur Choulette.”

Seated in a shoemaker’s shop, his pipe in his hand, Choulette was making rhythmic gestures, and appeared to be reciting verses. The Florentine cobbler listened with a kind smile. He was a little, bald man, and represented one of the types familiar to Flemish painters. On a table, among wooden lasts, nails, leather, and wax, a basilic plant displayed its round green head. A sparrow, lacking a leg, which had been replaced by a match, hopped on the old man’s shoulder and head.

Madame Martin, amused by this spectacle, called Choulette from the threshold. He was softly humming a tune, and she asked him why he had not gone with her to visit the Spanish chapel.

He arose and replied:

“Madame, you are preoccupied by vain images; but I live in life and in truth.”

He shook the cobbler’s hand and followed the two ladies.

“While going to church,” he said, “I saw this old man, who, bending over his work, and pressing a last between his knees as in a vise, was sewing coarse shoes. I felt that he was simple and kind. I said to him, in Italian: ‘My father, will you drink with me a glass of Chianti?’ He consented. He went for a flagon and some glasses, and I kept the shop.”

And Choulette pointed to two glasses and a flagon placed on a stove.

“When he came back we drank together; I said vague but kind things to him, and I charmed him by the sweetness of sounds. I will go again to his shop; I will learn from him how to make shoes, and how to live without desire. After which, I shall not be sad again. For desire and idleness alone make us sad.”

The Countess Martin smiled.

“Monsieur Choulette, I desire nothing, and, nevertheless, I am not joyful. Must I make shoes, too?”

Choulette replied, gravely:

“It is not yet time for that.”

When they reached the gardens of the Oricellari, Madame Marmet sank on a bench. She had examined at Santa Maria-Novella the frescoes of Ghirlandajo,

the stalls of the choir, the Virgin of Cimabue, the paintings in the cloister. She had done this carefully, in memory of her husband, who had greatly liked Italian art. She was tired. Choulette sat by her and said:

“Madame, could you tell me whether it is true that the Pope’s gowns are made by Worth?”

Madame Marmet thought not. Nevertheless, Choulette had heard people say this in cafes. Madame Marmet was astonished that Choulette, a Catholic and a socialist, should speak so disrespectfully of a pope friendly to the republic. But he did not like Leo XIII.

“The wisdom of princes is shortsighted,” he said; “the salvation of the Church must come from the Italian republic, as Leo XIII believes and wishes; but the Church will not be saved in the manner which this pious Machiavelli thinks. The revolution will make the Pope lose his last sou, with the rest of his patrimony. And it will be salvation. The Pope, destitute and poor, will then become powerful. He will agitate the world. We shall see again Peter, Lin, Clet, Anaclet, and Clement; the humble, the ignorant; men like the early saints will change the face of the earth. If tomorrow, in the chair of Peter, came to sit a real bishop, a real Christian, I would go to him, and say: ‘Do not be an old man buried alive in a golden tomb; quit your noble guards and your cardinals; quit your court and its simulacrum of power. Take my arm and come with me to beg for your bread among the nations. Covered with rags, poor, ill, dying, go on the highways, showing in yourself the image of Jesus. Say, “I am begging my bread for the condemnation of the wealthy.” Go into the cities, and shout from door to door, with a sublime stupidity, “Be humble, be gentle, be poor!” Announce peace and charity to the cities, to the dens, and to the barracks. You will be disdained; the mob will throw stones at you. Policemen will drag you into prison. You shall be for the humble as for the powerful, for the poor as for the rich, a subject of laughter, an object of disgust and of pity. Your priests will dethrone you, and elevate against you an anti-pope, or will say that you are crazy. And it is necessary that they should tell the truth; it is necessary that you should be crazy; the lunatics have saved the world. Men will give to you the crown of thorns and the reed sceptre, and they will spit in your face, and it is by that sign that you will appear as Christ and true king; and it is by such means that you will establish Christian socialism, which is the kingdom of God on earth.”

Having spoken in this way, Choulette lighted one of those long and tortuous Italian cigars, which are pierced with a straw. He drew from it several puffs of infectious vapor, then he continued, tranquilly:

“And it would be practical. You may refuse to acknowledge any quality in me except my clear view of situations. Ah, Madame Marmet, you will never know

how true it is that the great works of this world were always achieved by madmen. Do you think, Madame Martin, that if Saint Francis of Assisi had been reasonable, he would have poured upon the earth, for the refreshment of peoples, the living water of charity and all the perfumes of love?"

"I do not know," replied Madame Martin; "but reasonable people have always seemed to me to be bores. I can say this to you, Monsieur Choulette."

They returned to Fiesole by the steam tramway which goes up the hill. The rain fell. Madame Marmet went to sleep and Choulette complained. All his ills came to attack him at once: the humidity in the air gave him a pain in the knee, and he could not bend his leg; his carpet-bag, lost the day before in the trip from the station to Fiesole, had not been found, and it was an irreparable disaster; a Paris review had just published one of his poems, with typographical errors as glaring as Aphrodite's shell.

He accused men and things of being hostile to him. He became puerile, absurd, odious. Madame Martin, whom Choulette and the rain saddened, thought the trip would never end. When she reached the house she found Miss Bell in the drawing-room, copying with gold ink on a leaf of parchment, in a handwriting formed after the Aldine italics, verses which she had composed in the night. At her friend's coming she raised her little face, plain but illuminated by splendid eyes.

"Darling, permit me to introduce to you the Prince Albertinelli."

The Prince possessed a certain youthful, godlike beauty, that his black beard intensified. He bowed.

"Madame, you would make one love France, if that sentiment were not already in our hearts."

The Countess and Choulette asked Miss Bell to read to them the verses she was writing. She excused herself from reciting her uncertain cadence to the French poet, whom she liked best after Francois Villon. Then she recited in her pretty, hissing, birdlike voice.

"That is very pretty," said Choulette, "and bears the mark of Italy softly veiled by the mists of Thule."

"Yes," said the Countess Martin, "that is pretty. But why, dear Vivian, did your two beautiful innocents wish to die?"

"Oh, darling, because they felt as happy as possible, and desired nothing more. It was discouraging, darling, discouraging. How is it that you do not understand that?"

"And do you think that if we live the reason is that we hope?"

"Oh, yes. We live in the hope of what tomorrow, tomorrow, king of the land of fairies, will bring in his black mantle studded with stars, flowers, and tears.

Oh, bright king, Tomorrow!”

BOOK 2.

CHAPTER X. DECHARTRE ARRIVES IN FLORENCE

They had dressed for dinner. In the drawing-room Miss Bell was sketching monsters in imitation of Leonard. She created them, to know what they would say afterward, sure that they would speak and express rare ideas in odd rhythms, and that she would listen to them. It was in this way that she often found her inspiration.

Prince Albertinelli strummed on the piano the Sicilian 'O Lola'! His soft fingers hardly touched the keys.

Choulette, even harsher than was his habit, asked for thread and needles that he might mend his clothes. He grumbled because he had lost a needle-case which he had carried for thirty years in his pocket, and which was dear to him for the sweetness of the reminiscences and the strength of the good advice that he had received from it. He thought he had lost it in the hall devoted to historic subjects in the Pitti Palace; and he blamed for this loss the Medicis and all the Italian painters.

Looking at Miss Bell with an evil eye, he said:

"I compose verses while mending my clothes. I like to work with my hands. I sing songs to myself while sweeping my room; that is the reason why my songs have gone to the hearts of men, like the old songs of the farmers and artisans, which are even more beautiful than mine, but not more natural. I have pride enough not to want any other servant than myself. The sacristan's widow offered to repair my clothes. I would not permit her to do it. It is wrong to make others do servilely for us work which we can do ourselves with noble pride."

The Prince was nonchalantly playing his nonchalant music. Therese, who for eight days had been running to churches and museums in the company of Madame Marmet, was thinking of the annoyance which her companion caused her by discovering in the faces of the old painters resemblances to persons she knew. In the morning, at the Ricardi Palace, on the frescoes of Gozzoli, she had recognized M. Gamin, M. Lagrange, M. Schmoll, the Princess Seniavine as a page, and M. Renan on horseback. She was terrified at finding M. Renan everywhere. She led all her ideas back to her little circle of academicians and fashionable people, by an easy turn, which irritated her friend. She recalled in her soft voice the public meetings at the Institute, the lectures at the Sorbonne, the evening receptions where shone the worldly and the spiritualist philosophers. As for the women, they were all charming and irreproachable. She dined with all

of them. And Therese thought: "She is too prudent. She bores me." And she thought of leaving her at Fiesole and visiting the churches alone. Employing a word that Le Menil had taught her, she said to herself:

"I will 'plant' Madame Marmet."

A lithe old man came into the parlor. His waxed moustache and his white imperial made him look like an old soldier; but his glance betrayed, under his glasses, the fine softness of eyes worn by science and voluptuousness. He was a Florentine, a friend of Miss Bell and of the Prince, Professor Arrighi, formerly adored by women, and now celebrated in Tuscany for his studies of agriculture. He pleased the Countess Martin at once. She questioned him on his methods, and on the results he obtained from them. He said that he worked with prudent energy. "The earth," he said, "is like women. The earth does not wish one to treat it with either timidity or brutality." The Ave Maria rang in all the campaniles, seeming to make of the sky an immense instrument of religious music. "Darling," said Miss Bell, "do you observe that the air of Florence is made sonorous and silvery at night by the sound of the bells?"

"It is singular," said Choulette, "we have the air of people who are waiting for something."

Vivian Bell replied that they were waiting for M. Dechartre. He was a little late; she feared he had missed the train.

Choulette approached Madame Marmet, and said, gravely "Madame Marmet, is it possible for you to look at a door — a simple, painted, wooden door like yours, I suppose, or like mine, or like this one, or like any other — without being terror-stricken at the thought of the visitor who might, at any moment, come in? The door of one's room, Madame Marmet, opens on the infinite. Have you ever thought of that? Does one ever know the true name of the man or woman, who, under a human guise, with a known face, in ordinary clothes, comes into one's house?"

He added that when he was closeted in his room he could not look at the door without feeling his hair stand on end. But Madame Marmet saw the doors of her rooms open without fear. She knew the name of every one who came to see her — charming persons.

Choulette looked at her sadly, and said, shaking his head: "Madame Marmet, those whom you call by their terrestrial names have other names which you do not know, and which are their real names."

Madame Martin asked Choulette if he thought that misfortune needed to cross the threshold in order to enter one's life.

"Misfortune is ingenious and subtle. It comes by the window, it goes through walls. It does not always show itself, but it is always there. The poor doors are

innocent of the coming of that unwelcome visitor.”

Choulette warned Madame Martin severely that she should not call misfortune an unwelcome visitor.

“Misfortune is our greatest master and our best friend. Misfortune teaches us the meaning of life. Madame, when you suffer, you know what you must know; you believe what you must believe; you do what you must do; you are what you must be. And you shall have joy, which pleasure expels. True joy is timid, and does not find pleasure among a multitude.”

Prince Albertinelli said that Miss Bell and her French friends did not need to be unfortunate in order to be perfect, and that the doctrine of perfection reached by suffering was a barbarous cruelty, held in horror under the beautiful sky of Italy. When the conversation languished, he prudently sought again at the piano the phrases of the graceful and banal Sicilian air, fearing to slip into an air of *Trovatore*, which was written in the same manner.

Vivian Bell questioned the monsters she had created, and complained of their absurd replies.

“At this moment,” she said, “I should like to hear speak only figures on tapestries which should say tender things, ancient and precious as themselves.”

And the handsome Prince, carried away by the flood of melody, sang. His voice displayed itself like a peacock’s plumage, and died in spasms of “ohs” and “ahs.”

The good Madame Marmet, her eyes fixed on the door, said:

“I think that Monsieur Dechartre is coming.”

He came in, animated, with joy on his usually grave face.

Miss Bell welcomed him with birdlike cries.

“Monsieur Dechartre, we were impatient to see you. Monsieur Choulette was talking evil of doors — yes, of doors of houses; and he was saying also that misfortune is a very obliging old gentleman. You have lost all these beautiful things. You have made us wait very long, Monsieur Dechartre. Why?”

He apologized; he had taken only the time to go to his hotel and change his dress. He had not even gone to bow to his old friend the bronze San Marco, so imposing in his niche on the San Michele wall. He praised the poetess and saluted the Countess Martin with joy hardly concealed.

“Before quitting Paris I went to your house, where I was told you had gone to wait for spring at Fiesole, with Miss Bell. I then had the hope of finding you in this country, which I love now more than ever.”

She asked him whether he had gone to Venice, and whether he had seen again at Ravenna the empresses wearing aureolas, and the phantoms that had formerly dazzled him.

No, he had not stopped anywhere.

She said nothing. Her eyes remained fixed on the corner of the wall, on the St. Paulin bell.

He said to her:

“You are looking at the Nolette.”

Vivian Bell laid aside her papers and her pencils.

“You shall soon see a marvel, Monsieur Dechartre. I have found the queen of small bells. I found it at Rimini, in an old building in ruins, which is used as a warehouse. I bought it and packed it myself. I am waiting for it. You shall see. It bears a Christ on a cross, between the Virgin and Saint John, the date of 1400, and the arms of Malatesta — Monsieur Dechartre, you are not listening enough. Listen to me attentively. In 1400 Lorenzo Ghiberti, fleeing from war and the plague, took refuge at Rimini, at Paola Malatesta’s house. It was he that modelled the figures of my bell. And you shall see here, next week, Ghiberti’s work.”

The servant announced that dinner was served.

Miss Bell apologized for serving to them Italian dishes. Her cook was a poet of Fiesole.

At table, before the fiascani enveloped with corn straw, they talked of the fifteenth century, which they loved. Prince Albertinelli praised the artists of that epoch for their universality, for the fervent love they gave to their art, and for the genius that devoured them. He talked with emphasis, in a caressing voice.

Dechartre admired them. But he admired them in another way.

“To praise in a becoming manner,” he said, “those men, who worked so heartily, the praise should be modest and just. They should be placed in their workshops, in the shops where they worked as artisans. It is there that one may admire their simplicity and their genius. They were ignorant and rude. They had read little and seen little. The hills that surround Florence were the boundary of their horizon. They knew only their city, the Holy Scriptures, and some fragments of antique sculptures, studied and caressed lovingly.”

“You are right,” said Professor Arrighi. “They had no other care than to use the best processes. Their minds bent only on preparing varnish and mixing colors. The one who first thought of pasting a canvas on a panel, in order that the painting should not be broken when the wood was split, passed for a marvellous man. Every master had his secret formulae.”

“Happy time,” said Dechartre, “when nobody troubled himself about that originality for which we are so avidly seeking to-day. The apprentice tried to work like the master. He had no other ambition than to resemble him, and it was

without trying to be that he was different from the others. They worked not for glory, but to live.”

“They were right,” said Choulette. “Nothing is better than to work for a living.”

“The desire to attain fame,” continued Dechartre, “did not trouble them. As they did not know the past, they did not conceive the future; and their dream did not go beyond their lives. They exercised a powerful will in working well. Being simple, they made few mistakes, and saw the truth which our intelligence conceals from us.”

Choulette began to relate to Madame Marmet the incidents of a call he had made during the day on the Princess of the House of France to whom the Marquise de Rieu had given him a letter of introduction. He liked to impress upon people the fact that he, the Bohemian and vagabond, had been received by that royal Princess, at whose house neither Miss Bell nor the Countess Martin would have been admitted, and whom Prince Albertinelli prided himself on having met one day at some ceremony.

“She devotes herself,” said the Prince, “to the practices of piety.”

“She is admirable for her nobility, and her simplicity,” said Choulette. “In her house, surrounded by her gentlemen and her ladies, she causes the most rigorous etiquette to be observed, so that her grandeur is almost a penance, and every morning she scrubs the pavement of the church. It is a village church, where the chickens roam, while the ‘cure’ plays briscola with the sacristan.”

And Choulette, bending over the table, imitated, with his napkin, a servant scrubbing; then, raising his head, he said, gravely:

“After waiting in consecutive anterooms, I was at last permitted to kiss her hand.”

And he stopped.

Madame Martin asked, impatiently:

“What did she say to you, that Princess so admirable for her nobility and her simplicity?”

“She said to me: ‘Have you visited Florence? I am told that recently new and handsome shops have been opened which are lighted at night.’ She said also ‘We have a good chemist here. The Austrian chemists are not better. He placed on my leg, six months ago, a porous plaster which has not yet come off.’ Such are the words that Maria Therese deigned to address to me. O simple grandeur! O Christian virtue! O daughter of Saint Louis! O marvellous echo of your voice, holy Elizabeth of Hungary!”

Madame Martin smiled. She thought that Choulette was mocking. But he denied the charge, indignantly, and Miss Bell said that Madame Martin was

wrong. It was a fault of the French, she said, to think that people were always jesting.

Then they reverted to the subject of art, which in that country is inhaled with the air.

“As for me,” said the Countess Martin, “I am not learned enough to admire Giotto and his school. What strikes me is the sensuality of that art of the fifteenth century which is said to be Christian. I have seen piety and purity only in the images of Fra Angelico, although they are very pretty. The rest, those figures of Virgins and angels, are voluptuous, caressing, and at times perversely ingenuous. What is there religious in those young Magian kings, handsome as women; in that Saint Sebastian, brilliant with youth, who seems merely the dolorous Bacchus of Christianity?”

Dechartre replied that he thought as she did, and that they must be right, she and he; since Savonarola was of the same opinion, and, finding no piety in any work of art, wished to burn them all.

“There were at Florence, in the time of the superb Manfred, who was half a Mussulman, men who were said to be of the sect of Epicurus, and who sought for arguments against the existence of God. Guido Cavalcanti disdained the ignorant folk who believed in the immortality of the soul. The following phrase by him was quoted: ‘The death of man is exactly similar to that of brutes.’ Later, when antique beauty was excavated from ruins, the Christian style of art seemed sad. The painters that worked in the churches and cloisters were neither devout nor chaste. Perugino was an atheist, and did not conceal it.”

“Yes,” said Miss Bell; “but it was said that his head was hard, and that celestial truths, could not penetrate his thick cranium. He was harsh and avaricious, and quite embedded in material interests. He thought only of buying houses.”

Professor Arrighi defended Pietro Vanucci of Perugia.

“He was,” he said, “an honest man. And the prior of the Gesuati of Florence was wrong to mistrust him. That monk practised the art of manufacturing ultramarine blue by crushing stones of burned lapis-lazuli. Ultramarine was then worth its weight in gold; and the prior, who doubtless had a secret, esteemed it more precious than rubies or sapphires. He asked Pietro Vanucci to decorate the two cloisters of his convent, and he expected marvels, less from the skilfulness of the master than from the beauty of that ultramarine in the skies. During all the time that the painter worked in the cloisters at the history of Jesus Christ, the prior kept by his side and presented to him the precious powder in a bag which he never quitted. Pietro took from it, under the saintly man’s eyes, the quantity he needed, and dipped his brush, loaded with color, in a cupful of water, before

rubbing the wall with it. He used in that manner a great quantity of the powder. And the good father, seeing his bag getting thinner, sighed: 'Jesus! How that lime devours the ultramarine!' When the frescoes were finished, and Perugino had received from the monk the agreed price, he placed in his hand a package of blue powder: 'This is for you, father. Your ultramarine which I took with my brush fell to the bottom of my cup, whence I gathered it every day. I return it to you. Learn to trust honest people.'

"Oh," said Therese, "there is nothing extraordinary in the fact that Perugino was avaricious yet honest. Interested people are not always the least scrupulous. There are many misers who are honest."

"Naturally, darling," said Miss Bell. "Misers do not wish to owe anything, and prodigal people can bear to have debts. They do not think of the money they have, and they think less of the money they owe. I did not say that Pietro Vanucci of Perugia was a man without property. I said that he had a hard business head and that he bought houses. I am very glad to hear that he returned the ultramarine to the prior of the Gesuati."

"Since your Pietro was rich," said Choulette, "it was his duty to return the ultramarine. The rich are morally bound to be honest; the poor are not."

At this moment, Choulette, to whom the waiter was presenting a silver bowl, extended his hands for the perfumed water. It came from a vase which Miss Bell passed to her guests, in accordance with antique usage, after meals.

"I wash my hands," he said, "of the evil that Madame Martin does or may do by her speech, or otherwise."

And he rose, awkwardly, after Miss Bell, who took the arm of Professor Arrighi.

In the drawing-room she said, while serving the coffee:

"Monsieur Choulette, why do you condemn us to the savage sadness of equality? Why, Daphnis's flute would not be melodious if it were made of seven equal reeds. You wish to destroy the beautiful harmonies between masters and servants, aristocrats and artisans. Oh, I fear you are a sad barbarian, Monsieur Choulette. You are full of pity for those who are in need, and you have no pity for divine beauty, which you exile from this world. You expel beauty, Monsieur Choulette; you repudiate her, nude and in tears. Be certain of this: she will not remain on earth when the poor little men shall all be weak, delicate, and ignorant. Believe me, to abolish the ingenious grouping which men of diverse conditions form in society, the humble with the magnificent, is to be the enemy of the poor and of the rich, is to be the enemy of the human race."

"Enemies of the human race!" replied Choulette, while stirring his coffee. "That is the phrase the harsh Roman applied to the Christians who talked of

divine love to him.”

Dechartre, seated near Madame Martin, questioned her on her tastes about art and beauty, sustained, led, animated her admirations, at times prompted her with caressing brusquerie, wished her to see all that he had seen, to love all that he loved.

He wished that she should go in the gardens at the first flush of spring. He contemplated her in advance on the noble terraces; he saw already the light playing on her neck and in her hair; the shadow of laurel-trees falling on her eyes. For him the land and the sky of Florence had nothing more to do than to serve as an adornment to this young woman.

He praised the simplicity with which she dressed, the characteristics of her form and of her grace, the charming frankness of the lines which every one of her movements created. He liked, he said, the animated and living, subtle, and free gowns which one sees so rarely, which one never forgets.

Although she had been much lauded, she had never heard praise which had pleased her more. She knew she dressed well, with bold and sure taste. But no man except her father had made to her on the subject the compliments of an expert. She thought that men were capable of feeling only the effect of a gown, without understanding the ingenious details of it. Some men who knew gowns disgusted her by their effeminate air. She was resigned to the appreciation of women only, and these had in their appreciation narrowness of mind, malignity, and envy. The artistic admiration of Dechartre astonished and pleased her. She received agreeably the praise he gave her, without thinking that perhaps it was too intimate and almost indiscreet.

“So you look at gowns, Monsieur Dechartre?”

No, he seldom looked at them. There were so few women well dressed, even now, when women dress as well as, and even better, than ever. He found no pleasure in seeing packages of dry-goods walk. But if a woman having rhythm and line passed before him, he blessed her.

He continued, in a tone a little more elevated:

“I can not think of a woman who takes care to deck herself every day, without meditating on the great lesson which she gives to artists. She dresses for a few hours, and the care she has taken is not lost. We must, like her, ornament life without thinking of the future. To paint, carve, or write for posterity is only the silliness of conceit.”

“Monsieur Dechartre,” asked Prince Albertinelli, “how do you think a mauve waist studded with silver flowers would become Miss Bell?”

“I think,” said Choulette, “so little of a terrestrial future, that I have written my finest poems on cigarette paper. They vanished easily, leaving to my verses

only a sort of metaphysical existence.”

He had an air of negligence for which he posed. In fact, he had never lost a line of his writing. Dechartre was more sincere. He was not desirous of immortality. Miss Bell reproached him for this.

“Monsieur Dechartre, that life may be great and complete, one must put into it the past and the future. Our works of poetry and of art must be accomplished in honor of the dead and with the thought of those who are to come after us. Thus we shall participate in what has been, in what is, and in what shall be. You do not wish to be immortal, Monsieur Dechartre? Beware, for God may hear you.”

Dechartre replied:

“It would be enough for me to live one moment more.”

And he said good-night, promising to return the next day to escort Madame Martin to the Brancacci chapel.

An hour later, in the aesthetic room hung with tapestry, whereon citron-trees loaded with golden fruit formed a fairy forest, Therese, her head on the pillow, and her handsome bare arms folded under her head, was thinking, seeing float confusedly before her the images of her new life: Vivian Bell and her bells, her pre-Raphaelite figures, light as shadows, ladies, isolated knights, indifferent among pious scenes, a little sad, and looking to see who was coming; she thought also of the Prince Albertinelli, Professor Arrighi, Choulette, with his odd play of ideas, and Dechartre, with youthful eyes in a careworn face.

She thought he had a charming imagination, a mind richer than all those that had been revealed to her, and an attraction which she no longer tried to resist. She had always recognized his gift to please. She discovered now that he had the will to please. This idea was delightful to her; she closed her eyes to retain it. Then, suddenly, she shuddered. She had felt a deep blow struck within her in the depth of her being. She had a sudden vision of Robert, his gun under his arm, in the woods. He walked with firm and regular step in the shadowy thicket. She could not see his face, and that troubled her. She bore him no ill-will. She was not discontented with him, but with herself. Robert went straight on, without turning his head, far, and still farther, until he was only a black point in the desolate wood. She thought that perhaps she had been capricious and harsh in leaving him without a word of farewell, without even a letter. He was her lover and her only friend. She never had had another. “I do not wish him to be unfortunate because of me,” she thought.

Little by little she was reassured. He loved her, doubtless; but he was not susceptible, not ingenious, happily, in tormenting himself. She said to herself:

“He is hunting and enjoying the sport. He is with his aunt, whom he admires.” She calmed her fears and returned to the charming gayety of Florence. She had seen casually, at the Offices, a picture that Dechartre liked. It was a decapitated head of the Medusa, a work wherein Leonardo, the sculptor said, had expressed the minute profundity and tragic refinement of his genius. She wished to see it again, regretting that she had not seen it better at first. She extinguished her lamp and went to sleep.

She dreamed that she met in a deserted church Robert Le Menil enveloped in furs which she had never seen him wear. He was waiting for her, but a crowd of priests had separated them. She did not know what had become of him. She had not seen his face, and that frightened her. She awoke and heard at the open window a sad, monotonous cry, and saw a humming-bird darting about in the light of early dawn. Then, without cause, she began to weep in a passion of self-pity, and with the abandon of a child.

CHAPTER XI. "THE DAWN OF FAITH AND LOVE"

She took pleasure in dressing early, with delicate and subtle taste. Her dressing-room, an aesthetic fantasy of Vivian Bell, with its coarsely varnished pottery, its tall copper pitchers, and its faience pavement, like a chess-board, resembled a fairy's kitchen. It was rustic and marvellous, and the Countess Martin could have in it the agreeable surprise of mistaking herself for a fairy. While her maid was dressing her hair, she heard Dechartre and Choulette talking under her windows. She rearranged all the work Pauline had done, and uncovered the line of her nape, which was fine and pure. She looked at herself in the glass, and went into the garden.

Dechartre was there, reciting verses of Dante, and looking at Florence: "At the hour when our mind, a greater stranger to the flesh..."

Near him, Choulette, seated on the balustrade of the terrace, his legs hanging, and his nose in his beard, was still at work on the figure of Misery on his stick.

Dechartre resumed the rhymes of the canticle: "At the hour when our mind, a greater stranger to the flesh; and less under the obsession of thoughts, is almost divine in its visions..."

She approached beside the boxwood hedge, holding a parasol and dressed in a straw-colored gown. The faint sunlight of winter enveloped her in pale gold.

Dechartre greeted her joyfully.

She said:

"You are reciting verses that I do not know. I know only Metastasio. My teacher liked only Metastasio. What is the hour when the mind has divine visions?"

"Madame, that hour is the dawn of the day. It may be also the dawn of faith and of love."

Choulette doubted that the poet meant dreams of the morning, which leave at awakening vivid and painful impressions, and which are not altogether strangers to the flesh. But Dechartre had quoted these verses in the pleasure of the glorious dawn which he had seen that morning on the golden hills. He had been, for a long time, troubled about the images that one sees in sleep, and he believed that these images were not related to the object that preoccupies one the most, but, on the contrary, to ideas abandoned during the day.

Therese recalled her morning dream, the hunter lost in the thicket.

“Yes,” said Dechartre, “the things we see at night are unfortunate remains of what we have neglected the day before. Dreams avenge things one has disdained. They are reproaches of abandoned friends. Hence their sadness.”

She was lost in dreams for a moment, then she said:

“That is perhaps true.”

Then, quickly, she asked Choulette if he had finished the portrait of Misery on his stick. Misery had now become a figure of Piety, and Choulette recognized the Virgin in it. He had even composed a quatrain which he was to write on it in spiral form — a didactic and moral quatrain. He would cease to write, except in the style of the commandments of God rendered into French verses. The four lines expressed simplicity and goodness. He consented to recite them.

Therese rested on the balustrade of the terrace and sought in the distance, in the depth of the sea of light, the peaks of Vallambrosa, almost as blue as the sky. Jacques Dechartre looked at her. It seemed to him that he saw her for the first time, such was the delicacy that he discovered in her face, which tenderness and intelligence had invested with thoughtfulness without altering its young, fresh grace. The daylight which she liked, was indulgent to her. And truly she was pretty, bathed in that light of Florence, which caresses beautiful forms and feeds noble thoughts. A fine, pink color rose to her well-rounded cheeks; her eyes, bluish-gray, laughed; and when she talked, the brilliancy of her teeth set off her lips of ardent sweetness. His look embraced her supple bust, her full hips, and the bold attitude of her waist. She held her parasol with her left hand, the other hand played with violets. Dechartre had a mania for beautiful hands. Hands presented to his eyes a physiognomy as striking as the face — a character, a soul. These hands enchanted him. They were exquisite. He adored their slender fingers, their pink nails, their palms soft and tender, traversed by lines as elegant as arabesques, and rising at the base of the fingers in harmonious mounts. He examined them with charmed attention until she closed them on the handle of her umbrella. Then, standing behind her, he looked at her again. Her bust and arms, graceful and pure in line, her beautiful form, which was like that of a living amphora, pleased him.

“Monsieur Dechartre, that black spot over there is the Boboli Gardens, is it not? I saw the gardens three years ago. There were not many flowers in them. Nevertheless, I liked their tall, sombre trees.”

It astonished him that she talked, that she thought. The clear sound of her voice amazed him, as if he never had heard it.

He replied at random. He was awkward. She feigned not to notice it, but felt a deep inward joy. His low voice, which was veiled and softened, seemed to caress her. She said ordinary things:

“That view is beautiful, The weather is fine.”

CHAPTER XII. HEARTS AWAKENED

In the morning, her head on the embroidered pillow, Therese was thinking of the walks of the day before; of the Virgins, framed with angels; of the innumerable children, painted or carved, all beautiful, all happy, who sing ingenuously the Alleluia of grace and of beauty. In the illustrious chapel of the Brancacci, before those frescoes, pale and resplendent as a divine dawn, he had talked to her of Masaccio, in language so vivid that it had seemed to her as if she had seen him, the adolescent master of the masters, his mouth half open, his eyes dark and blue, dying, enchanted. And she had liked these marvels of a morning more charming than a day. Dechartre was for her the soul of those magnificent forms, the mind of those noble things. It was by him, it was through him, that she understood art and life. She took no interest in things that did not interest him. How had this affection come to her? She had no precise remembrance of it. In the first place, when Paul Vence wished to introduce him to her, she had no desire to know him, no presentiment that he would please her. She recalled elegant bronze statuettes, fine waxworks signed with his name, that she had remarked at the Champ de Mars salon or at Durand-Ruel's. But she did not imagine that he could be agreeable to her, or more seductive than many artists and lovers of art at whom she laughed with her friends. When she saw him, he pleased her; she had a desire to attract him, to see him often. The night he dined at her house she realized that she had for him a noble and elevating affection. But soon after he irritated her a little; it made her impatient to see him closeted within himself and too little preoccupied by her. She would have liked to disturb him. She was in that state of impatience when she met him one evening, in front of the grille of the Musee des Religions, and he talked to her of Ravenna and of the Empress seated on a gold chair in her tomb. She had found him serious and charming, his voice warm, his eyes soft in the shadow of the night, but too much a stranger, too far from her, too unknown. She had felt a sort of uneasiness, and she did not know, when she walked along the boxwood bordering the terrace, whether she desired to see him every day or never to see him again.

Since then, at Florence, her only pleasure was to feel that he was near her, to hear him. He made life for her charming, diverse, animated, new. He revealed to her delicate joys and a delightful sadness; he awakened in her a voluptuousness which had been always dormant. Now she was determined never to give him up. But how? She foresaw difficulties; her lucid mind and her temperament presented them all to her. For a moment she tried to deceive herself; she

reflected that perhaps he, a dreamer, exalted, lost in his studies of art, might remain assiduous without being exacting. But she did not wish to reassure herself with that idea. If Dechartre were not a lover, he lost all his charm. She did not dare to think of the future. She lived in the present, happy, anxious, and closing her eyes.

She was dreaming thus, in the shade traversed by arrows of light, when Pauline brought to her some letters with the morning tea. On an envelope marked with the monogram of the Rue Royale Club she recognized the handwriting of Le Menil. She had expected that letter. She was only astonished that what was sure to come had come, as in her childhood, when the infallible clock struck the hour of her piano lesson.

In his letter Robert made reasonable reproaches. Why did she go without saying anything, without leaving a word of farewell? Since his return to Paris he had expected every morning a letter which had not come. He was happier the year before, when he had received in the morning, two or three times a week, letters so gentle and so well written that he regretted not being able to print them. Anxious, he had gone to her house.

"I was astounded to hear of your departure. Your husband received me. He said that, yielding to his advice, you had gone to finish the winter at Florence with Miss Bell. He said that for some time you had looked pale and thin. He thought a change of air would do you good. You had not wished to go, but, as you suffered more and more, he succeeded in persuading you.

"I had not noticed that you were thin. It seemed to me, on the contrary, that your health was good. And then Florence is not a good winter resort. I cannot understand your departure. I am much tormented by it. Reassure me at once, I pray you.

"Do you think it is agreeable for me to get news of you from your husband and to receive his confidences? He is sorry you are not here; it annoys him that the obligations of public life compel him to remain in Paris. I heard at the club that he had chances to become a minister. This astonishes me, because ministers are not usually chosen among fashionable people."

Then he related hunting tales to her. He had brought for her three fox-skins, one of which was very beautiful; the skin of a brave animal which he had pulled by the tail, and which had bitten his hand.

In Paris he was worried. His cousin had been presented at the club. He feared he might be blackballed. His candidacy had been posted. Under these conditions he did not dare advise him to withdraw; it would be taking too great a responsibility. If he were blackballed it would be very disagreeable. He finished by praying her to write and to return soon.

Having read this letter, she tore it up gently, threw it in the fire, and calmly watched it burn.

Doubtless, he was right. He had said what he had to say; he had complained, as it was his duty to complain. What could she answer? Should she continue her quarrel? The subject of it had become so indifferent to her that it needed reflection to recall it. Oh, no; she had no desire to be tormented. She felt, on the contrary, very gentle toward him! Seeing that he loved her with confidence, in stubborn tranquillity, she became sad and frightened. He had not changed. He was the same man he had been before. She was not the same woman. They were separated now by imperceptible yet strong influences, like essences in the air that make one live or die. When her maid came to dress her, she had not begun to write an answer.

Anxious, she thought: "He trusts me. He suspects nothing." This made her more impatient than anything. It irritated her to think that there were simple people who doubt neither themselves nor others.

She went into the parlor, where she found Vivian Bell writing. The latter said: "Do you wish to know, darling, what I was doing while waiting for you? Nothing and everything. Verses. Oh, darling, poetry must be our souls naturally expressed."

Therese kissed Miss Bell, rested her head on her friend's shoulder, and said:

"May I look?"

"Look if you wish, dear. They are verses made on the model of the popular songs of your country."

"Is it a symbol, Vivian? Explain it to me."

"Oh, darling, why explain, why? A poetic image must have several meanings. The one that you find is the real one. But there is a very clear meaning in them, my love; that is, that one should not lightly disengage one's self from what one has taken into the heart."

The horses were harnessed. They went, as had been agreed, to visit the Albertinelli gallery. The Prince was waiting for them, and Dechartre was to meet them in the palace. On the way, while the carriage rolled along the wide highway, Vivian Bell talked with her usual transcendentalism. As they were descending among houses pink and white, gardens and terraces ornamented with statues and fountains, she showed to her friend the villa, hidden under bluish pines, where the ladies and the cavaliers of the Decameron took refuge from the plague that ravaged Florence, and diverted one another with tales frivolous, facetious, or tragic. Then she confessed the thought which had come to her the day before.

“You had gone, darling, to Carmine with Monsieur Dechartre, and you had left at Fiesole Madame Marmet, who is an agreeable person, a moderate and polished woman. She knows many anecdotes about persons of distinction who live in Paris. And when she tells them, she does as my cook Pompaloni does when he serves eggs: he does not put salt in them, but he puts the salt-cellar next to them. Madame Marmet’s tongue is very sweet, but the salt is near it, in her eyes. Her conversation is like Pompaloni’s dish, my love — each one seasons to his taste. Oh, I like Madame Marmet a great deal. Yesterday, after you had gone, I found her alone and sad in a corner of the drawing-room. She was thinking mournfully of her husband. I said to her: ‘Do you wish me to think of your husband, too? I will think of him with you. I have been told that he was a learned man, a member of the Royal Society of Paris. Madame Marmet, talk to me of him.’ She replied that he had devoted himself to the Etruscans, and that he had given to them his entire life. Oh, darling, I cherished at once the memory of that Monsieur Marmet, who lived for the Etruscans. And then a good idea came to me. I said to Madame Marmet, ‘We have at Fiesole, in the Pretorio Palace, a modest little Etruscan museum. Come and visit it with me. Will you?’ She replied it was what she most desired to see in Italy. We went to the Pretorio Palace; we saw a lioness and a great many little bronze figures, grotesque, very fat or very thin. The Etruscans were a seriously gay people. They made bronze caricatures. But the monkeys — some afflicted with big stomachs, others astonished to show their bones — Madame Marmet looked at them with reluctant admiration. She contemplated them like — there is a beautiful French word that escapes me — like the monuments and the trophies of Monsieur Marmet.”

Madame Martin smiled. But she was restless. She thought the sky dull, the streets ugly, the passers-by common.

“Oh, darling, the Prince will be very glad to receive you in his palace.”

“I do not think so.”

“Why, darling, why?”

“Because I do not please him much.”

Vivian Bell declared that the Prince, on the contrary, was a great admirer of the Countess Martin.

The horses stopped before the Albertinelli palace. On the sombre facade were sealed those bronze rings which formerly, on festival nights, held rosin torches. These bronze rings mark, in Florence, the palaces of the most illustrious families. The palace had an air of lofty pride. The Prince hastened to meet them, and led them through the empty salons into the gallery. He, apologized for showing canvases which perhaps had not an attractive aspect. The gallery had

been formed by Cardinal Giulio Albertinelli at a time when the taste for Guido and Caraccio, now fallen, had predominated. His ancestor had taken pleasure in gathering the works of the school of Bologna. But he would show to Madame Martin several paintings which had not displeased Miss Bell, among others a Mantegna.

The Countess Martin recognized at once a banal and doubtful collection; she felt bored among the multitude of little Parrocels, showing in the darkness a bit of armor and a white horse.

A valet presented a card.

The Prince read aloud the name of Jacques Dechartre. At that moment he was turning his back on the two visitors. His face wore the expression of cruel displeasure one finds on the marble busts of Roman emperors. Dechartre was on the staircase.

The Prince went toward him with a languid smile. He was no longer Nero, but Antinous.

"I invited Monsieur Dechartre to come to the Albertinelli palace," said Miss Bell. "I knew it would please you. He wished to see your gallery."

And it is true that Dechartre had wished to be there with Madame Martin. Now all four walked among the Guidos and the Albanos.

Miss Bell babbled to the Prince — her usual prattle about those old men and those Virgins whose blue mantles were agitated by an immovable tempest. Dechartre, pale, enervated, approached Therese, and said to her, in a low tone:

"This gallery is a warehouse where picture dealers of the entire world hang the things they can not sell. And the Prince sells here things that Jews could not sell."

He led her to a Holy Family exhibited on an easel draped with green velvet, and bearing on the border the name of Michael-Angelo.

"I have seen that Holy Family in the shops of picture-dealers of London, of Basle, and of Paris. As they could not get the twenty-five louis that it is worth, they have commissioned the last of the Albertinellis to sell it for fifty thousand francs."

The Prince, divining what they were saying, approached them gracefully.

"There is a copy of this picture almost everywhere. I do not affirm that this is the original. But it has always been in the family, and old inventories attribute it to Michael-Angelo. That is all I can say about it."

And the Prince turned toward Miss Bell, who was trying to find pictures by the pre-Raphaelites.

Dechartre felt uneasy. Since the day before he had thought of Therese. He had all night dreamed and yearned over her image. He saw her again, delightful, but

in another manner, and even more desirable than he had imagined in his insomnia; less visionary, of a more vivid piquancy, and also of a mind more mysteriously impenetrable. She was sad; she seemed cold and indifferent. He said to himself that he was nothing to her; that he was becoming importunate and ridiculous. This irritated him. He murmured bitterly in her ear: "I have reflected. I did not wish to come. Why did I come?" She understood at once what he meant, that he feared her now, and that he was impatient, timid, and awkward. It pleased her that he was thus, and she was grateful to him for the trouble and the desires he inspired in her. Her heart throbbed faster. But, affecting to understand that he regretted having disturbed himself to come and look at bad paintings, she replied that in truth this gallery was not interesting. Already, under the terror of displeasing her, he felt reassured, and believed that, really indifferent, she had not perceived the accent nor the significance of what he had said. He said "No, nothing interesting." The Prince, who had invited the two visitors to breakfast, asked their friend to remain with them. Dechartre excused himself. He was about to depart when, in the large empty salon, he found himself alone with Madame Martin. He had had the idea of running away from her. He had no other wish now than to see her again. He recalled to her that she was the next morning to visit the Bargello. "You have permitted me to accompany you." She asked him if he had not found her moody and tiresome. Oh, no; he had not thought her tiresome, but he feared she was sad.

"Alas," he added, "your sadness, your joys, I have not the right to know them." She turned toward him a glance almost harsh. "You do not think that I shall take you for a confidante, do you?" And she walked away brusquely.

CHAPTER XIII. "YOU MUST TAKE ME WITH MY OWN SOUL!"

After dinner, in the salon of the bells, under the lamps from which the great shades permitted only an obscure light to filter, good Madame Marmet was warming herself by the hearth, with a white cat on her knees. The evening was cool. Madame Martin, her eyes reminiscent of the golden light, the violet peaks, and the ancient trees of Florence, smiled with happy fatigue. She had gone with Miss Bell, Dechartre, and Madame Marmet to the Chartrist convent of Ema. And now, in the intoxication of her visions, she forgot the care of the day before, the importunate letters, the distant reproaches, and thought of nothing in the world but cloisters chiselled and painted, villages with red roofs, and roads where she saw the first blush of spring. Dechartre had modelled for Miss Bell a waxen figure of Beatrice. Vivian was painting angels. Softly bent over her, Prince Albertinelli caressed his beard and threw around him glances that appeared to seek admiration.

Replying to a reflection of Vivian Bell on marriage and love:

"A woman must choose," he said. "With a man whom women love her heart is not quiet. With a man whom the women do not love she is not happy."

"Darling," asked Miss Bell, "what would you wish for a friend dear to you?"

"I should wish, Vivian, that my friend were happy. I should wish also that she were quiet. She should be quiet in hatred of treason, humiliating suspicions, and mistrust."

"But, darling, since the Prince has said that a woman can not have at the same time happiness and security, tell me what your friend should choose."

"One never chooses, Vivian; one never chooses. Do not make me say what I think of marriage."

At this moment Choulette appeared, wearing the magnificent air of those beggars of whom small towns are proud. He had played briscola with peasants in a coffeehouse of Fiesole.

"Here is Monsieur Choulette," said Miss Bell. "He will teach what we are to think of marriage. I am inclined to listen to him as to an oracle. He does not see the things that we see, and he sees things that we do not see. Monsieur Choulette, what do you think of marriage?"

He took a seat and lifted in the air a Socratic finger:

"Are you speaking, Mademoiselle, of the solemn union between man and woman? In this sense, marriage is a sacrament. But sometimes, alas! it is almost

a sacrilege. As for civil marriage, it is a formality. The importance given to it in our society is an idiotic thing which would have made the women of other times laugh. We owe this prejudice, like many others, to the bourgeois, to the mad performances of a lot of financiers which have been called the Revolution, and which seem admirable to those that have profited by it. Civil marriage is, in reality, only registry, like many others which the State exacts in order to be sure of the condition of persons: in every well organized state everybody must be indexed. Morally, this registry in a big ledger has not even the virtue of inducing a wife to take a lover. Who ever thinks of betraying an oath taken before a mayor? In order to find joy in adultery, one must be pious.”

“But, Monsieur,” said Therese, “we were married at the church.”

Then, with an accent of sincerity:

“I can not understand how a man ever makes up his mind to marry; nor how a woman, after she has reached an age when she knows what she is doing, can commit that folly.”

The Prince looked at her with distrust. He was clever, but he was incapable of conceiving that one might talk without an object, disinterestedly, and to express general ideas. He imagined that Countess Martin-Belleme was suggesting to him projects that she wished him to consider. And as he was thinking of defending himself and also avenging himself, he made velvet eyes at her and talked with tender gallantry:

“You display, Madame, the pride of the beautiful and intelligent French women whom subjection irritates. French women love liberty, and none of them is as worthy of liberty as you. I have lived in France a little. I have known and admired the elegant society of Paris, the salons, the festivals, the conversations, the plays. But in our mountains, under our olive-trees, we become rustic again. We assume golden-age manners, and marriage is for us an idyl full of freshness.”

Vivian Bell examined the statuette which Dechartre had left on the table.

“Oh! it was thus that Beatrice looked, I am sure. And do you know, Monsieur Dechartre, there are wicked men who say that Beatrice never existed?”

Choulette declared he wished to be counted among those wicked men. He did not believe that Beatrice had any more reality than other ladies through whom ancient poets who sang of love represented some scholastic idea, ridiculously subtle.

Impatient at praise which was not destined for himself, jealous of Dante as of the universe, a refined man of letters, Choulette continued:

“I suspect that the little sister of the angels never lived, except in the imagination of the poet. It seems a pure allegory, or, rather, an exercise in

arithmetic or a theme of astrology. Dante, who was a good doctor of Bologna and had many moons in his head, under his pointed cap — Dante believed in the virtue of numbers. That inflamed mathematician dreamed of figures, and his Beatrice is the flower of arithmetic, that is all.”

And he lighted his pipe.

Vivian Bell exclaimed:

“Oh, do not talk in that way, Monsieur Choulette. You grieve me much, and if our friend Monsieur Gebhart heard you, he would not be pleased with you. To punish you, Prince Albertinelli will read to you the canticle in which Beatrice explains the spots on the moon. Take the Divine Comedy, Eusebio. It is the white book which you see on the table. Open it and read it.”

During the Prince’s reading, Dechartre, seated on the couch near Countess Martin, talked of Dante with enthusiasm as the best sculptor among the poets. He recalled to Therese the painting they had seen together two days before, on the door of the Servi, a fresco almost obliterated, where one hardly divined the presence of the poet wearing a laurel wreath, Florence, and the seven circles. This was enough to exalt the artist. But she had distinguished nothing, she had not been moved. And then she confessed that Dante did not attract her. Dechartre, accustomed to her sharing all his ideas of art and poetry, felt astonishment and some discontent. He said, aloud:

“There are many grand and strong things which you do not feel.”

Miss Bell, lifting her head, asked what were these things that “darling” did not feel; and when she learned that it was the genius of Dante, she exclaimed, in mock anger:

“Oh, do you not honor the father, the master worthy of all praise, the god? I do not love you any more, darling. I detest you.”

And, as a reproach to Choulette and to the Countess Martin, she recalled the piety of that citizen of Florence who took from the altar the candles that had been lighted in honor of Christ, and placed them before the bust of Dante.

The Prince resumed his interrupted reading. Dechartre persisted in trying to make Therese admire what she did not know. Certainly he would have easily sacrificed Dante and all the poets of the universe for her. But near him, tranquil, and an object of desire, she irritated him, almost without his realizing it, by the charm of her laughing beauty. He persisted in imposing on her his ideas, his artistic passions, even his fantasy, and his capriciousness. He insisted in a low tone, in phrases concise and quarrelsome. She said:

“Oh, how violent you are!”

Then he bent to her ear, and in an ardent voice, which he tried to soften:

“You must take me with my own soul!”

Therese felt a shiver of fear mingled with joy.

CHAPTER XIV. THE AVOWAL

She next day she said to herself that she would reply to Robert. It was raining. She listened languidly to the drops falling on the terrace. Vivian Bell, careful and refined, had placed on the table artistic stationery, sheets imitating the vellum of missals, others of pale violet powdered with silver dust; celluloid pens, white and light, which one had to manage like brushes; an iris ink which, on a page, spread a mist of azure and gold. Therese did not like such delicacy. It seemed to her not appropriate for letters which she wished to make simple and modest. When she saw that the name of "friend," given to Robert on the first line, placed on the silvery paper, tinted itself like mother-of-pearl, a half smile came to her lips. The first phrases were hard to write. She hurried the rest, said a great deal of Vivian Bell and of Prince Albertinelli, a little of Choulette, and that she had seen Dechartre at Florence. She praised some pictures of the museums, but without discrimination, and only to fill the pages. She knew that Robert had no appreciation of painting; that he admired nothing except a little cuirassier by Detaille, bought at Goupil's.

She saw again in her mind this cuirassier, which he had shown to her one day, with pride, in his bedroom, near the mirror, under family portraits. All this, at a distance, seemed to her petty and tiresome. She finished her letter with words of friendship, the sweetness of which was not feigned. Truly, she had never felt more peaceful and gentle toward her lover. In four pages she had said little and explained less. She announced only that she should stay a month in Florence, the air of which did her good. Then she wrote to her father, to her husband, and to Princess Seniavine. She went down the stairway with the letters in her hand. In the hall she threw three of them on the silver tray destined to receive papers for the post-office. Mistrusting Madame Marmet, she slipped into her pocket the letter to Le Menil, counting on chance to throw it into a post-box.

Almost at the same time Dechartre came to accompany the three friends in a walk through the city. As he was waiting he saw the letters on the tray.

Without believing that characters could be divined through penmanship, he was susceptible to the form of letters as to elegance of drawing. The writing of Therese charmed him, and he liked its openness, the bold and simple turn of its lines. He looked at the addresses without reading them, with an artist's admiration.

They visited, that morning, Santa Maria Novella, where the Countess Martin had already gone with Madame Marmet. But Miss Bell had reproached them for

not observing the beautiful Ginevra of Benci on a fresco of the choir. "You must visit that figure of the morning in a morning light," said Vivian. While the poetess and Therese were talking together, Dechartre listened patiently to Madame Marmet's conversation, filled with anecdotes, wherein academicians dined with elegant women, and shared the anxiety of that lady, much preoccupied for several days by the necessity to buy a tulle veil. She could find none to her taste in the shops of Florence.

As they came out of the church they passed the cobbler's shop. The good man was mending rustic shoes. Madame Martin asked the old man whether he was well, whether he had enough work for a living, whether he was happy. To all these questions he replied with the charming affirmative of Italy, the musical *si*, which sounded melodious even in his toothless mouth. She made him tell his sparrow's story. The poor bird had once dipped its leg in burning wax.

"I have made for my little companion a wooden leg out of a match, and he hops upon my shoulder as formerly," said the cobbler.

"It is this good old man," said Miss Bell, "who teaches wisdom to Monsieur Choulette. There was at Athens a cobbler named Simon, who wrote books on philosophy, and who was the friend of Socrates. I have always thought that Monsieur Choulette resembled Socrates."

Therese asked the cobbler to tell his name and his history. His name was Serafino Stoppini, and he was a native of Stia. He was old. He had had much trouble in his life.

He lifted his spectacles to his forehead, uncovering blue eyes, very soft, and almost extinguished under their red lids.

"I have had a wife and children; I have none now. I have known things which I know no more."

Miss Bell and Madame Marmet went to look for a veil.

"He has nothing in the world," thought Therese, "but his tools, a handful of nails, the tub wherein he dips his leather, and a pot of basilick, yet he is happy."

She said to him:

"This plant is fragrant, and it will soon be in bloom."

He replied:

"If the poor little plant comes into bloom it will die."

Therese, when she left him, placed a coin on the table.

Dechartre was near her. Gravely, almost severely, he said to her:

"You know..."

She looked at him and waited.

He finished his phrase:

"... that I love you?"

She continued to fix on him, silently, the gaze of her clear eyes, the lids of which were trembling. Then she made a motion with her head that meant Yes. And, without his trying to stop her, she rejoined Miss Bell and Madame Marmet, who were waiting for her at the corner.

CHAPTER XV. THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

Therese, after quitting Dechartre, took breakfast with her friend and Madame Marmet at the house of an old Florentine lady whom Victor Emmanuel had loved when he was Duke of Savoy. For thirty years she had not once gone out of her palace on the Arno, where, she painted, and wearing a wig, she played the guitar in her spacious white salon. She received the best society of Florence, and Miss Bell often called on her. At table this recluse, eighty-seven years of age, questioned the Countess Martin on the fashionable world of Paris, whose movement was familiar to her through the journals. Solitary, she retained respect and a sort of devotion for the world of pleasure.

As they came out of the palazzo, in order to avoid the wind which was blowing on the river, Miss Bell led her friends into the old streets with black stone houses and a view of the distant horizon, where, in the pure air, stands a hill with three slender trees. They walked; and Vivian showed to her friend, on facades where red rags were hanging, some marble masterpiece — a Virgin, a lily, a St. Catherine. They walked through these alleys of the antique city to the church of Or San Michele, where it had been agreed that Dechartre should meet them. Therese was thinking of him now with deepest interest. Madame Marmet was thinking of buying a veil; she hoped to find one on the Corso. This affair recalled to her M. Lagrange, who, at his regular lecture one day, took from his pocket a veil with gold dots and wiped his forehead with it, thinking it was his handkerchief. The audience was astonished, and whispered to one another. It was a veil that had been confided to him the day before by his niece, Mademoiselle Jeanne Michot, whom he had accompanied to the theatre, and Madame Marmet explained how, finding it in the pocket of his overcoat, he had taken it to return it to his niece.

At Lagrange's name, Therese recalled the flaming comet announced by the savant, and said to herself, with mocking sadness, that it was time for that comet to put an end to the world and take her out of her trouble. But above the walls of the old church she saw the sky, which, cleared of clouds by the wind from the sea, shone pale blue and cold. Miss Bell showed to her one of the bronze statues which, in their chiselled niches, ornament the facade of the church.

"See, darling, how young and proud is Saint George. Saint George was formerly the cavalier about whom young girls dreamed."

But "darling" said that he looked precise, tiresome, and stubborn. At this moment she recalled suddenly the letter that was still in her pocket.

“Ah! here comes Monsieur Dechartre,” said the good Madame Marmet.

He had looked for them in the church, before the tabernacle. He should have recalled the irresistible attraction which Donatello’s St. George held for Miss Bell. He too admired that famous figure. But he retained a particular friendship for St. Mark, rustic and frank, whom they could see in his niche at the left.

When Therese approached the statue which he was pointing out to her, she saw a post-box against the wall of the narrow street opposite the saint. Dechartre, placed at the most convenient point of view, talked of his St. Mark with abundant friendship.

“It is to him I make my first visit when I come to Florence. I failed to do this only once. He will forgive me; he is an excellent man. He is not appreciated by the crowd, and does not attract attention. I take pleasure in his society, however. He is vivid. I understand that Donatello, after giving a soul to him, exclaimed: ‘Mark, why do you not speak?’”

Madame Marmet, tired of admiring St. Mark, and feeling on her face the burning wind, dragged Miss Bell toward Calzaioli Street in search of a veil.

Therese and Dechartre remained.

“I like him,” continued the sculptor; “I like Saint Mark because I feel in him, much more than in the Saint George, the hand and mind of Donatello, who was a good workman. I like him even more to-day, because he recalls to me, in his venerable and touching candor, the old cobbler to whom you were speaking so kindly this morning.”

“Ah,” she said, “I have forgotten his name. When we talk with Monsieur Choulette we call him Quentin Matsys, because he resembles the old men of that painter.”

As they were turning the corner of the church to see the facade, she found herself before the post-box, which was so dusty and rusty that it seemed as if the postman never came near it. She put her letter in it under the ingenuous gaze of St. Mark.

Dechartre saw her, and felt as if a heavy blow had been struck at his heart. He tried to speak, to smile; but the gloved hand which had dropped the letter remained before his eyes. He recalled having seen in the morning Therese’s letters on the hall tray. Why had she not put that one with the others? The reason was not hard to guess. He remained immovable, dreamy, and gazed without seeing. He tried to be reassured; perhaps it was an insignificant letter which she was trying to hide from the tiresome curiosity of Madame Marmet.

“Monsieur Dechartre, it is time to rejoin our friends at the dressmaker’s.”

Perhaps it was a letter to Madame Schmoll, who was not a friend of Madame Marmet, but immediately he realized that this idea was foolish.

All was clear. She had a lover. She was writing to him. Perhaps she was saying to him: "I saw Dechartre to-day; the poor fellow is deeply in love with me." But whether she wrote that or something else, she had a lover. He had not thought of that. To know that she belonged to another made him suffer profoundly. And that hand, that little hand dropping the letter, remained in his eyes and made them burn.

She did not know why he had become suddenly dumb and sombre. When she saw him throw an anxious glance back at the post-box, she guessed the reason. She thought it odd that he should be jealous without having the right to be jealous; but this did not displease her.

When they reached the Corso, they saw Miss Bell and Madame Marmet coming out of the dressmaker's shop.

Dechartre said to Therese, in an imperious and supplicating voice:

"I must speak to you. I must see you alone tomorrow; meet me at six o'clock at the Lungarno Acciaoli."

She made no reply.

CHAPTER XVI. "TO-MORROW?"

When, in her Carmelite mantle, she came to the Lungarno Acciaoli, at about half-past six, Dechartre greeted her with a humble look that moved her. The setting sun made the Arno purple. They remained silent for a moment. While they were walking past the monotonous line of palaces to the old bridge, she was the first to speak.

"You see, I have come. I thought I ought to come. I do not think I am altogether innocent of what has happened. I know: I have done what was my fate in order that you should be to me what you are now. My attitude has put thoughts into your head which you would not have had otherwise."

He looked as if he did not understand. She continued:

"I was selfish, I was imprudent. You were agreeable to me; I liked your wit; I could not get along without you. I have done what I could to attract you, to retain you. I was a coquette — not coldly, nor perfidiously, but a coquette."

He shook his head, denying that he ever had seen a sign of this.

"Yes, I was a coquette. Yet it was not my habit. But I was a coquette with you. I do not say that you have tried to take advantage of it, as you had the right to do, nor that you are vain about it. I have not remarked vanity in you. It may be possible that you had not noticed. Superior men sometimes lack cleverness. But I know very well that I was not as I should have been, and I beg your pardon. That is the reason why I came. Let us be good friends, since there is yet time."

He repeated, with sombre softness, that he loved her. The first hours of that love had been easy and delightful. He had only desired to see her, and to see her again. But soon she had troubled him. The evil had come suddenly and violently one day on the terrace of Fiesole. And now he had not the courage to suffer and say nothing. He had not come with a fixed design. If he spoke of his passion he spoke by force and in spite of himself; in the strong necessity of talking of her to herself, since she was for him the only being in the world. His life was no longer in himself, it was in her. She should know it, then, that he was in love with her, not with vague tenderness, but with cruel ardor. Alas! his imagination was exact and precise. He saw her continually, and she tortured him.

And then it seemed to him that they might have joys which should make life worth living. Their existence might be a work of art, beautiful and hidden. They would think, comprehend, and feel together. It would be a marvellous world of emotions and ideas.

"We could make of life a delightful garden."

She feigned to think that the dream was innocent.

“You know very well that I am susceptible to the charm of your mind. It has become a necessity to see you and hear you. I have allowed this to be only too plain to you. Count upon my friendship and do not torment yourself.” She extended her hand to him. He did not take it, but replied, brusquely:

“I do not desire your friendship. I will not have it. I must have you entirely or never see you again. You know that very well. Why do you extend your hand to me with derisive phrases? Whether you wished it or not, you have made me desperately in love with you. You have become my evil, my suffering, my torture, and you ask me to be an agreeable friend. Now you are coquettish and cruel. If you can not love me, let me go; I will go, I do not know where, to forget and hate you. For I have against you a latent feeling of hatred and anger. Oh, I love you, I love you!”

She believed what he was saying, feared that he might go, and feared the sadness of living without him. She replied:

“I found you in my path. I do not wish to lose you. No, I do not wish to lose you.”

Timid yet violent, he stammered; the words were stifled in his throat. Twilight descended from the far-off mountains, and the last reflections of the sun became pallid in the east. She said:

“If you knew my life, if you had seen how empty it was before I knew you, you would know what you are to me, and would not think of abandoning me.”

But, with the tranquil tone of her voice and with the rustle of her skirts on the pavement, she irritated him.

He told her how he suffered. He knew now the divine malady of love.

“The grace of your thoughts, your magnificent courage, your superb pride, I inhale them like a perfume. It seems to me when you speak that your mind is floating on your lips. Your mind is for me only the odor of your beauty. I have retained the instincts of a primitive man; you have reawakened them. I feel that I love you with savage simplicity.”

She looked at him softly and said nothing. They saw the lights of evening, and heard lugubrious songs coming toward them. And then, like spectres chased by the wind, appeared the black penitents. The crucifix was before them. They were Brothers of Mercy, holding torches, singing psalms on the way to the cemetery. In accordance with the Italian custom, the cortege marched quickly. The crosses, the coffin, the banners, seemed to leap on the deserted quay. Jacques and Therese stood against the wall in order that the funeral train might pass.

The black avalanche had disappeared. There were women weeping behind the coffin carried by the black phantoms, who wore heavy shoes.

Therese sighed:

“What will be the use of having tormented ourselves in this world?”

He looked as if he had not heard, and said:

“Before I knew you I was not unhappy. I liked life. I was retained in it by dreams. I liked forms, and the mind in forms, the appearances that caress and flatter. I had the joy of seeing and of dreaming. I enjoyed everything and depended upon nothing. My desires, abundant and light, I gratified without fatigue. I was interested in everything and wished for nothing. One suffers only through the will. Without knowing it, I was happy. Oh, it was not much, it was only enough to live. Now I have no joy in life. My pleasures, the interest that I took in the images of life and of art, the vivid amusement of creating with my hands the figures of my dreams — you have made me lose everything and have not left me even regret. I do not want my liberty and tranquillity again. It seems to me that before I knew you I did not live; and now that I feel that I am living, I can not live either far from you or near you. I am more wretched than the beggars we saw on the road to Ema. They had air to breathe, and I can breathe only you, whom I have not. Yet I am glad to have known you. That alone counts in my existence. A moment ago I thought I hated you. I was wrong; I adore you, and I bless you for the harm you have done me. I love all that comes to me from you.”

They were nearing the black trees at the entrance to San Niccola bridge. On the other side of the river the vague fields displayed their sadness, intensified by night. Seeing that he was calm and full of a soft languor, she thought that his love, all imagination, had fled in words, and that his desires had become only a reverie. She had not expected so prompt a resignation. It almost disappointed her to escape the danger she had feared.

She extended her hand to him, more boldly this time than before.

“Then, let us be friends. It is late. Let us return. Take me to my carriage. I shall be what I have been to you, an excellent friend. You have not displeased me.”

But he led her to the fields, in the growing solitude of the shore.

“No, I will not let you go without having told you what I wish to say. But I know no longer how to speak; I can not find the words. I love you. I wish to know that you are mine. I swear to you that I will not live another night in the horror of doubting it.”

He pressed her in his arms; and seeking the light of her eyes through the obscurity of her veil, said “You must love me. I desire you to love me, and it is

your fault, for you have desired it too. Say that you are mine. Say it."

Having gently disengaged herself, she replied, faintly and slowly "I can not! I can not! You see I am acting frankly with you. I said to you a moment ago that you had not displeased me. But I can not do as you wish."

And recalling to her thought the absent one who was waiting for her, she repeated: "I can not!" Bending over her he anxiously questioned her eyes, the double stars that trembled and veiled themselves. "Why? You love me, I feel it, I see it. You love me. Why will you do me this wrong?"

He drew her to him, wishing to lay his soul, with his lips, on her veiled lips. She escaped him swiftly, saying: "I can not. Do not ask more. I can not be yours."

His lips trembled, his face was convulsed. He exclaimed "You have a lover, and you love him. Why do you mock me?"

"I swear to you I have no desire to mock you, and that if I loved any one in the world it would be you." But he was not listening to her.

"Leave me, leave me!" And he ran toward the dark fields. The Arno formed lagoons, upon which the moon, half veiled, shone fitfully. He walked through the water and the mud, with a step rapid, blind, like that of one intoxicated. She took fright and shouted. She called him. But he did not turn his head and made no answer. He fled with alarming recklessness. She ran after him. Her feet were hurt by the stones, and her skirt was heavy with water, but soon she overtook him.

"What were you about to do?"

He looked at her, and saw her fright in her eyes. "Do not be afraid," he said. "I did not see where I was going. I assure you I did not intend to kill myself. I am desperate, but I am calm. I was only trying to escape from you. I beg your pardon. But I could not see you any longer. Leave me, I pray you. Farewell!"

She replied, agitated and trembling: "Come! We shall do what we can."

He remained sombre and made no reply. She repeated "Come!"

She took his arm. The living warmth of her hand animated him. He said:

"Do you wish it?"

"I can not leave you."

"You promise?"

"I must."

And, in her anxiety and anguish, she almost smiled, in thinking that he had succeeded so quickly by his folly.

"To-morrow?" said he, inquiringly.

She replied quickly, with a defensive instinct:

"Oh, no; not to-morrow!"

“You do not love me; you regret that you have promised.”

“No, I do not regret, but—”

He implored, he supplicated her. She looked at him for a moment, turned her head, hesitated, and said, in a low tone:

“Saturday.”

CHAPTER XVII. MISS BELL ASKS A QUESTION

After dinner, Miss Bell was sketching in the drawing-room. She was tracing, on canvas, profiles of bearded Etruscans for a cushion which Madame Marmet was to embroider. Prince Albertinelli was selecting the wool with an almost feminine knowledge of shades. It was late when Choulette, having, as was his habit, played briscola with the cook at the caterer's, appeared, as joyful as if he possessed the mind of a god. He took a seat on a sofa, beside Madame Martin, and looked at her tenderly. Voluptuousness shone in his green eyes. He enveloped her, while talking to her, with poetic and picturesque phrases. It was like the sketch of a lovesong that he was improvising for her. In oddly involved sentences, he told her of the charm that she exhaled.

"He, too!" said she to herself.

She amused herself by teasing him. She asked whether he had not found in Florence, in the low quarters, one of the kind of women whom he liked to visit. His preferences were known. He could deny it as much as he wished: no one was ignorant of the door where he had found the cordon of his Third Order. His friends had met him on the boulevard. His taste for unfortunate women was evident in his most beautiful poems.

"Oh, Monsieur Choulette, so far as I am able to judge, you like very bad women."

He replied with solemnity:

"Madame, you may collect the grain of calumny sown by Monsieur Paul Vence and throw handfuls of it at me. I will not try to avoid it. It is not necessary you should know that I am chaste and that my mind is pure. But do not judge lightly those whom you call unfortunate, and who should be sacred to you, since they are unfortunate. The disdained and lost girl is the docile clay under the finger of the Divine Potter: she is the victim and the altar of the holocaust. The unfortunates are nearer God than the honest women: they have lost conceit. They do not glorify themselves with the untried virtue the matron prides herself on. They possess humility, which is the cornerstone of virtues agreeable to heaven. A short repentance will be sufficient for them to be the first in heaven; for their sins, without malice and without joy, contain their own forgiveness. Their faults, which are pains, participate in the merits attached to pain; slaves to brutal passion, they are deprived of all voluptuousness, and in this they are like the men who practise continence for the kingdom of God. They are like us, culprits; but shame falls on their crime like a balm, suffering purifies it like fire. That is the

reason why God will listen to the first voice which they shall send to him. A throne is prepared for them at the right hand of the Father. In the kingdom of God, the queen and the empress will be happy to sit at the feet of the unfortunate; for you must not think that the celestial house is built on a human plan. Far from it, Madame.”

Nevertheless, he conceded that more than one road led to salvation. One could follow the road of love.

“Man’s love is earthly,” he said, “but it rises by painful degrees, and finally leads to God.”

The Prince had risen. Kissing Miss Bell’s hand, he said:

“Saturday.”

“Yes, the day after to-morrow, Saturday,” replied Vivian.

Therese started. Saturday! They were talking of Saturday quietly, as of an ordinary day. Until then she had not wished to think that Saturday would come so soon or so naturally.

The guests had been gone for half an hour. Therese, tired, was thinking in her bed, when she heard a knock at the door of her room. The panel opened, and Vivian’s little head appeared.

“I am not intruding, darling? You are not sleepy?”

No, Therese had no desire to sleep. She rose on her elbow. Vivian sat on the bed, so light that she made no impression on it.

“Darling, I am sure you have a great deal of reason. Oh, I am sure of it. You are reasonable in the same way that Monsieur Sadler is a violinist. He plays a little out of tune when he wishes. And you, too, when you are not quite logical, it is for your own pleasure. Oh, darling, you have a great deal of reason and of judgment, and I come to ask your advice.”

Astonished, and a little anxious, Therese denied that she was logical. She denied this very sincerely. But Vivian would not listen to her.

“I have read Francois Rabelais a great deal, my love. It is in Rabelais and in Villon that I studied French. They are good old masters of language. But, darling, do you know the ‘Pantagruel?’ ‘Pantagruel’ is like a beautiful and noble city, full of palaces, in the resplendent dawn, before the street-sweepers of Paris have come. The sweepers have not taken out the dirt, and the maids have not washed the marble steps. And I have seen that French women do not read the ‘Pantagruel.’ You do not know it? Well, it is not necessary. In the ‘Pantagruel,’ Panurge asks whether he must marry, and he covers himself with ridicule, my love. Well, I am quite as laughable as he, since I am asking the same question of you.”

Therese replied with an uneasiness she did not try to conceal:

“As for that, my dear, do not ask me. I have already told you my opinion.”

“But, darling, you have said that only men are wrong to marry. I can not take that advice for myself.”

Madame Martin looked at the little boyish face and head of Miss Bell, which oddly expressed tenderness and modesty.

Then she embraced her, saying:

“Dear, there is not a man in the world exquisite and delicate enough for you.”

She added, with an expression of affectionate gravity:

“You are not a child. If some one loves you, and you love him, do what you think you ought to do, without mingling interests and combinations that have nothing to do with sentiment. This is the advice of a friend.”

Miss Bell hesitated a moment. Then she blushed and arose. She had been a little shocked.

CHAPTER XVIII. "I KISS YOUR FEET BECAUSE THEY HAVE COME!"

Saturday, at four o'clock, Therese went, as she had promised, to the gate of the English cemetery. There she found Dechartre. He was serious and agitated; he spoke little. She was glad he did not display his joy. He led her by the deserted walls of the gardens to a narrow street which she did not know. She read on a signboard: Via Alfieri. After they had taken fifty steps, he stopped before a sombre alley:

"It is in there," he said.

She looked at him with infinite sadness.

"You wish me to go in?"

She saw he was resolute, and followed him without saying a word, into the humid shadow of the alley. He traversed a courtyard where the grass grew among the stones. In the back was a pavilion with three windows, with columns and a front ornamented with goats and nymphs. On the moss-covered steps he turned in the lock a key that creaked and resisted. He murmured,

"It is rusty."

She replied, without thought "All the keys are rusty in this country."

They went up a stairway so silent that it seemed to have forgotten the sound of footsteps. He pushed open a door and made Therese enter the room. She went straight to a window opening on the cemetery. Above the wall rose the tops of pine-trees, which are not funereal in this land where mourning is mingled with joy without troubling it, where the sweetness of living extends to the city of the dead. He took her hand and led her to an armchair. He remained standing, and looked at the room which he had prepared so that she would not find herself lost in it. Panels of old print cloth, with figures of Comedy, gave to the walls the sadness of past gayeties. He had placed in a corner a dim pastel which they had seen together at an antiquary's, and which, for its shadowy grace, she called the shade of Rosalba. There was a grandmother's armchair; white chairs; and on the table painted cups and Venetian glasses. In all the corners were screens of colored paper, whereon were masks, grotesque figures, the light soul of Florence, of Bologna, and of Venice in the time of the Grand Dukes and of the last Doges. A mirror and a carpet completed the furnishings.

He closed the window and lighted the fire. She sat in the armchair, and as she remained in it erect, he knelt before her, took her hands, kissed them, and looked

at her with a wondering expression, timorous and proud. Then he pressed his lips to the tip of her boot.

“What are you doing?”

“I kiss your feet because they have come.”

He rose, drew her to him softly, and placed a long kiss on her lips. She remained inert, her head thrown back, her eyes closed. Her toque fell, her hair dropped on her shoulders.

Two hours later, when the setting sun made immeasurably longer the shadows on the stones, Therese, who had wished to walk alone in the city, found herself in front of the two obelisks of Santa Maria Novella without knowing how she had reached there. She saw at the corner of the square the old cobbler drawing his string with his eternal gesture. He smiled, bearing his sparrow on his shoulder.

She went into the shop, and sat on a chair. She said in French:

“Quentin Matsys, my friend, what have I done, and what will become of me?”

He looked at her quietly, with laughing kindness, not understanding nor caring. Nothing astonished him. She shook her head.

“What I did, my good Quentin, I did because he was suffering, and because I loved him. I regret nothing.”

He replied, as was his habit, with the sonorous syllable of Italy:

“Si! si!”

“Is it not so, Quentin? I have not done wrong? But, my God! what will happen now?”

She prepared to go. He made her understand that he wished her to wait. He culled carefully a bit of basilick and offered it to her.

“For its fragrance, signora!”

CHAPTER XIX. CHOULETTE TAKES A JOURNEY

It was the next day.

Having carefully placed on the drawing-room table his knotty stick, his pipe, and his antique carpet-bag, Choulette bowed to Madame Martin, who was reading at the window. He was going to Assisi. He wore a sheepskin coat, and resembled the old shepherds in pictures of the Nativity.

“Farewell, Madame. I am quitting Fiesole, you, Dechartre, the too handsome Prince Albertinelli, and that gentle ogress, Miss Bell. I am going to visit the Assisi mountain, which the poet says must be named no longer Assisi, but the Orient, because it is there that the sun of love rose. I am going to kneel before the happy crypt where Saint Francis is resting in a stone manger, with a stone for a pillow. For he would not even take out of this world a shroud — out of this world where he left the revelation of all joy and of all kindness.”

“Farewell, Monsieur Choulette. Bring me a medal of Saint Clara. I like Saint Clara a great deal.”

“You are right, Madame; she was a woman of strength and prudence. When Saint Francis, ill and almost blind, came to spend a few days at Saint Damien, near his friend, she built with her own hands a hut for him in the garden. Pain, languor, and burning eyelids deprived him of sleep. Enormous rats came to attack him at night. Then he composed a joyous canticle in praise of our splendid brother the Sun, and our sister the Water, chaste, useful, and pure. My most beautiful verses have less charm and splendor. And it is just that it should be thus, for Saint Francis’s soul was more beautiful than his mind. I am better than all my contemporaries whom I have known, yet I am worth nothing. When Saint Francis had composed his Song of the Sun he rejoiced. He thought: ‘We shall go, my brothers and I, into the cities, and stand in the public squares, with a lute, on the market-day. Good people will come near us, and we shall say to them: “We are the jugglers of God, and we shall sing a lay to you. If you are pleased, you will reward us.” They will promise, and when we shall have sung, we shall recall their promise to them. We shall say to them: “You owe a reward to us. And the one that we ask of you is that you love one another.” Doubtless, to keep their word and not injure God’s poor jugglers, they will avoid doing ill to others.’”

Madame Martin thought St. Francis was the most amiable of the saints.

“His work,” replied Choulette, “was destroyed while he lived. Yet he died happy, because in him was joy with humility. He was, in fact, God’s sweet singer. And it is right that another poor poet should take his task and teach the world true religion and true joy. I shall be that poet, Madame, if I can despoil myself of reason and of conceit. For all moral beauty is achieved in this world through the inconceivable wisdom that comes from God and resembles folly.”

“I shall not discourage you, Monsieur Choulette. But I am anxious about the fate which you reserve for the poor women in your new society. You will imprison them all in convents.”

“I confess,” replied Choulette, “that they embarrass me a great deal in my project of reform. The violence with which one loves them is harsh and injurious. The pleasure they give is not peaceful, and does not lead to joy. I have committed for them, in my life, two or three abominable crimes of which no one knows. I doubt whether I shall ever invite you to supper, Madame, in the new Saint Mary of the Angels.” He took his pipe, his carpet-bag, and his stick:

“The crimes of love shall be forgiven. Or, rather, one can not do evil when one loves purely. But sensual love is formed of hatred, selfishness, and anger as much as of passion. Because I found you beautiful one night, on this sofa, I was assailed by a cloud of violent thoughts. I had come from the Albergo, where I had heard Miss Bell’s cook improvise magnificently twelve hundred verses on Spring. I was inundated by a celestial joy which the sight of you made me lose. It must be that a profound truth is enclosed in the curse of Eve. For, near you, I felt reckless and wicked. I had soft words on my lips. They were lies. I felt that I was your adversary and your enemy; I hated you. When I saw you smile, I felt a desire to kill you.”

“Truly?”

“Oh, Madame, it is a very natural sentiment, which you must have inspired more than once. But common people feel it without being conscious of it, while my vivid imagination represents me to myself incessantly. I contemplate my mind, at times splendid, often hideous. If you had been able to read my mind that night you would have screamed with fright.”

Therese smiled:

“Farewell, Monsieur Choulette. Do not forget my medal of Saint Clara.”

He placed his bag on the floor, raised his arm, and pointed his finger:

“You have nothing to fear from me. But the one whom you will love and who will love you will harm you. Farewell, Madame.”

He took his luggage and went out. She saw his long, rustic form disappear behind the bushes of the garden.

In the afternoon she went to San Marco, where Dechartre was waiting for her. She desired yet she feared to see him again so soon. She felt an anguish which an unknown sentiment, profoundly soft, appeased. She did not feel the stupor of the first time that she had yielded for love; she did not feel the brusque vision of the irreparable. She was under influences slower, more vague, and more powerful. This time a charming reverie bathed the reminiscence of the caresses which she had received. She was full of trouble and anxiety, but she felt no regret. She had acted less through her will than through a force which she divined to be higher. She absolved herself because of her disinterestedness. She counted on nothing, having calculated nothing.

Doubtless, she had been wrong to yield, since she was not free; but she had exacted nothing. Perhaps she was for him only a violent caprice. She did not know him. She had not one of those vivid imaginations that surpass immensely, in good as in evil, common mediocrity. If he went away from her and disappeared she would not reproach him for it; at least, she thought not. She would keep the reminiscence and the imprint of the rarest and most precious thing one may find in the world. Perhaps he was incapable of real attachment. He thought he loved her. He had loved her for an hour. She dared not wish for more, in the embarrassment of the false situation which irritated her frankness and her pride, and which troubled the lucidity of her intelligence. While the carriage was carrying her to San Marco, she persuaded herself that he would say nothing to her of the day before, and that the room from which one could see the pines rise to the sky would leave to them only the dream of a dream.

He extended his hand to her. Before he had spoken she saw in his look that he loved her as much now as before, and she perceived at the same time that she wished him to be thus.

“You—” he said, “I have been here since noon. I was waiting, knowing that you would not come so soon, but able to live only at the place where I was to see you. It is you! Talk; let me see and hear you.”

“Then you still love me?”

“It is now that I love you. I thought I loved you when you were only a phantom. Now, you are the being in whose hands I have put my soul. It is true that you are mine! What have I done to obtain the greatest, the only, good of this world? And those men with whom the earth is covered think they are living! I alone live! Tell me, what have I done to obtain you?”

“Oh, what had to be done, I did. I say this to you frankly. If we have reached that point, the fault is mine. You see, women do not always confess it, but it is always their fault. So, whatever may happen, I never will reproach you for anything.”

An agile troupe of yelling beggars, guides, and coachmen surrounded them with an importunity wherein was mingled the gracefulness which Italians never lose. Their subtlety made them divine that these were lovers, and they knew that lovers are prodigal. Dechartre threw coin to them, and they all returned to their happy laziness.

A municipal guard received the visitors. Madame Martin regretted that there was no monk. The white gown of the Dominicans was so beautiful under the arcades of the cloister!

They visited the cells where, on the bare plaster, Fra Angelico, aided by his brother Benedetto, painted innocent pictures for his companions.

“Do you recall the winter night when, meeting you before the Guimet Museum, I accompanied you to the narrow street bordered by small gardens which leads to the Billy Quay? Before separating we stopped a moment on the parapet along which runs a thin boxwood hedge. You looked at that boxwood, dried by winter. And when you went away I looked at it for a long time.”

They were in the cell wherein Savonarola lived. The guide showed to them the portrait and the relics of the martyr.

“What could there have been in me that you liked that day? It was dark.”

“I saw you walk. It is in movements that forms speak. Each one of your steps told me the secrets of your charming beauty. Oh! my imagination was never discreet in anything that concerned you. I did not dare to speak to you. When I saw you, it frightened me. It frightened me because you could do everything for me. When you were present, I adored you tremblingly. When you were far from me, I felt all the impieties of desire.”

“I did not suspect this. But do you recall the first time we saw each other, when Paul Vence introduced you? You were seated near a screen. You were looking at the miniatures. You said to me: ‘This lady, painted by Siccardi, resembles Andre Chenier’s mother.’ I replied to you: ‘She is my husband’s great-grandmother. How did Andre Chenier’s mother look?’ And you said: ‘There is a portrait of her: a faded Levantine.’”

He excused himself and thought that he had not spoken so impertinently.

“You did. My memory is better than yours.”

They were walking in the white silence of the convent. They saw the cell which Angelico had ornamented with the loveliest painting. And there, before the Virgin who, in the pale sky, receives from God the Father the immortal crown, he took Therese in his arms and placed a kiss on her lips, almost in view of two Englishwomen who were walking through the corridors, consulting their Baedeker. She said to him:

“We must not forget Saint Anthony’s cell.”

“Therese, I am suffering in my happiness from everything that is yours and that escapes me. I am suffering because you do not live for me alone. I wish to have you wholly, and to have had you in the past.”

She shrugged her shoulders a little.

“Oh, the past!”

“The past is the only human reality. Everything that is, is past.”

She raised toward him her eyes, which resembled bits of blue sky full of mingled sun and rain.

“Well, I may say this to you: I never have felt that I lived except with you.”

When she returned to Fiesole, she found a brief and threatening letter from Le Menil. He could not understand, her prolonged absence, her silence. If she did not announce at once her return, he would go to Florence for her.

She read without astonishment, but was annoyed to see that everything disagreeable that could happen was happening, and that nothing would be spared to her of what she had feared. She could still calm him and reassure him: she had only to say to him that she loved him; that she would soon return to Paris; that he should renounce the foolish idea of rejoining her here; that Florence was a village where they would be watched at once. But she would have to write: “I love you.” She must quiet him with caressing phrases.

She had not the courage to do it. She would let him guess the truth. She accused herself in veiled terms. She wrote obscurely of souls carried away by the flood of life, and of the atom one is on the moving ocean of events. She asked him, with affectionate sadness, to keep of her a fond reminiscence in a corner of his soul.

She took the letter to the post-office box on the Fiesole square. Children were playing in the twilight. She looked from the top of the hill to the beautiful cup which carried beautiful Florence like a jewel. And the peace of night made her shiver. She dropped the letter into the box. Then only she had the clear vision of what she had done and of what the result would be.

CHAPTER XX. WHAT IS FRANKNESS?

In the square, where the spring sun scattered its yellow roses, the bells at noon dispersed the rustic crowd of grain-merchants assembled to sell their wares. At the foot of the Lanzi, before the statues, the venders of ices had placed, on tables covered with red cotton, small castles bearing the inscription: 'Bibite ghiacciate'. And joy descended from heaven to earth. Therese and Jacques, returning from an early promenade in the Boboli Gardens, were passing before the illustrious loggia. Therese looked at the Sabine by John of Bologna with that interested curiosity of a woman examining another woman. But Dechartre looked at Therese only. He said to her:

"It is marvellous how the vivid light of day flatters your beauty, loves you, and caresses the mother-of-pearl on your cheeks."

"Yes," she said. "Candle-light hardens my features. I have observed this. I am not an evening woman, unfortunately. It is at night that women have a chance to show themselves and to please. At night, Princess Seniavine has a fine blond complexion; in the sun she is as yellow as a lemon. It must be owned that she does not care. She is not a coquette."

"And you are?"

"Oh, yes. Formerly I was a coquette for myself, now I am a coquette for you."

She looked at the Sabine woman, who with her waving arms, long and robust, tried to avoid the Roman's embraces.

"To be beautiful, must a woman have that thin form and that length of limb? I am not shaped in that way."

He took pains to reassure her. But she was not disturbed about it. She was looking now at the little castle of the ice-vender. A sudden desire had come to her to eat an ice standing there, as the working-girls of the city stood.

"Wait a moment," said Dechartre.

He ran toward the street that follows the left side of the Lanzi, and disappeared.

After a moment he came back, and gave her a little gold spoon, the handle of which was finished in a lily of Florence, with its chalice enamelled in red.

"You must eat your ice with this. The man does not give a spoon with his ices. You would have had to put out your tongue. It would have been pretty, but you are not accustomed to it."

She recognized the spoon, a jewel which she had remarked the day before in the showcase of an antiquarian.

They were happy; they disseminated their joy, which was full and simple, in light words which had no sense. And they laughed when the Florentine repeated to them passages of the old Italian writers. She enjoyed the play of his face, which was antique in style and jovial in expression. But she did not always understand what he said. She asked Jacques:

“What did he say?”

“Do you really wish to know?”

Yes, she wished to know.

“Well, he said he should be happy if the fleas in his bed were shaped like you!”

When she had eaten the ice, he asked her to return to San Michele. It was so near! They would cross the square and at once discover the masterpiece in stone. They went. They looked at the St. George and at the bronze St. Mark. Dechartre saw again on the wall the post-box, and he recalled with painful exactitude the little gloved hand that had dropped the letter. He thought it hideous, that copper mouth which had swallowed Therese’s secret. He could not turn his eyes away from it. All his gayety had fled. She admired the rude statue of the Evangelist.

“It is true that he looks honest and frank, and it seems that, if he spoke, nothing but words of truth would come out of his mouth.”

He replied bitterly:

“It is not a woman’s mouth.”

She understood his thought, and said, in her soft tone:

“My friend, why do you say this to me? I am frank.”

“What do you call frank? You know that a woman is obliged to lie.”

She hesitated. Then she said:

“A woman is frank when she does not lie uselessly.”

CHAPTER XXI. "I NEVER HAVE LOVED ANY ONE BUT YOU!"

Therese was dressed in sombre gray. The bushes on the border of the terrace were covered with silver stars and on the hillsides the laurel-trees threw their odoriferous flame. The cup of Florence was in bloom.

Vivian Bell walked, arrayed in white, in the fragrant garden.

"You see, darling, Florence is truly the city of flowers, and it is not inappropriate that she should have a red lily for her emblem. It is a festival to-day, darling."

"A festival, to-day?"

"Darling, do you not know this is the first day of May? You did not wake this morning in a charming fairy spectacle? Do you not celebrate the Festival of Flowers? Do you not feel joyful, you who love flowers? For you love them, my love, I know it: you are very good to them. You said to me that they feel joy and pain; that they suffer as we do."

"Ah! I said that they suffer as we do?"

"Yes, you said it. It is their festival to-day. We must celebrate it with the rites consecrated by old painters."

Therese heard without understanding. She was crumpling under her glove a letter which she had just received, bearing the Italian postage-stamp, and containing only these two lines:

"I am staying at the Great Britain Hotel, Lungarno Acciaoli. I shall expect you to-morrow morning. No. 18."

"Darling, do you not know it is the custom of Florence to celebrate spring on the first day of May every year? Then you did not understand the meaning of Botticelli's picture consecrated to the Festival of Flowers. Formerly, darling, on the first day of May the entire city gave itself up to joy. Young girls, crowned with sweetbrier and other flowers, made a long cortege through the Corso, under arches, and sang choruses on the new grass. We shall do as they did. We shall dance in the garden."

"Ah, we shall dance in the garden?"

"Yes, darling; and I will teach you Tuscan steps of the fifteenth century which have been found in a manuscript by Mr. Morrison, the oldest librarian in London. Come back soon, my love; we shall put on flower hats and dance."

"Yes, dear, we shall dance," said Therese.

And opening the gate, she ran through the little pathway that hid its stones under rose-bushes. She threw herself into the first carriage she found. The coachman wore forget-me-nots on his hat and on the handle of his whip:

“Great Britain Hotel, Lungarno Acciaoli.”

She knew where that was, Lungarno Acciaoli. She had gone there at sunset, and she had seen the rays of the sun on the agitated surface of the river. Then night had come, the murmur of the waters in the silence, the words and the looks that had troubled her, the first kiss of her lover, the beginning of incomparable love. Oh, yes, she recalled Lungarno Acciaoli and the river-side beyond the old bridge — Great Britain Hotel — she knew: a big stone facade on the quay. It was fortunate, since he would come, that he had gone there. He might as easily have gone to the Hotel de la Ville, where Dechartre was. It was fortunate they were not side by side in the same corridor. Lungarno Acciaoli! The dead body which they had seen pass was at peace somewhere in the little flowery cemetery.

“Number 18.”

It was a bare hotel room, with a stove in the Italian fashion, a set of brushes displayed on the table, and a time-table. Not a book, not a journal. He was there; she saw suffering on his bony face, a look of fever. This produced on her a sad impression. He waited a moment for a word, a gesture; but she dared do nothing. He offered a chair. She refused it and remained standing.

“Therese, something has happened of which I do not know. Speak.”

After a moment of silence, she replied, with painful slowness:

“My friend, when I was in Paris, why did you go away from me?”

By the sadness of her accent he believed, he wished to believe, in the expression of an affectionate reproach. His face colored. He replied, ardently:

“Ah, if I could have foreseen! That hunting party — I cared little for it, as you may think! But you — your letter, that of the twenty-seventh” — he had a gift for dates — “has thrown me into a horrible anxiety. Something has happened. Tell me everything.”

“My friend, I believed you had ceased to love me.”

“But now that you know the contrary?”

“Now—”

She paused, her arms fell before her and her hands were joined.

Then, with affected tranquillity, she continued:

“Well, my friend, we took each other without knowing. One never knows. You are young; younger than I, since we are of the same age. You have, doubtless, projects for the future.”

He looked at her proudly. She continued:

“Your family, your mother, your aunts, your uncle the General, have projects for you. That is natural. I might have become an obstacle. It is better that I should disappear from your life. We shall keep a fond remembrance of each other.”

She extended her gloved hand. He folded his arms:

“Then, you do not want me? You have made me happy, as no other man ever was, and you think now to brush me aside? Truly, you seem to think you have finished with me. What have you come to say to me? That it was a liaison, which is easily broken? That people take each other, quit each other — well, no! You are not a person whom one can easily quit.”

“Yes,” said Therese, “you had perhaps given me more of your heart than one does ordinarily in such 180 cases. I was more than an amusement for you. But, if I am not the woman you thought I was, if I have deceived you, if I am frivolous — you know people have said so — well, if I have not been to you what I should have been—”

She hesitated, and continued in a brave tone, contrasting with what she said:

“If, while I was yours, I have been led astray; if I have been curious; if I say to you that I was not made for serious sentiment—”

He interrupted her:

“You are not telling the truth.”

“No, I am not telling the truth. And I do not know how to lie. I wished to spoil our past. I was wrong. It was — you know what it was. But—”

“But?”

“I have always told you I was not sure of myself. There are women, it is said, who are sure of themselves. I warned you that I was not like them.”

He shook his head violently, like an irritated animal.

“What do you mean? I do not understand. I understand nothing. Speak clearly. There is something between us. I do not know what. I demand to know what it is. What is it?”

“There is the fact that I am not a woman sure of herself, and that you should not rely on me. No, you should not rely on me. I had promised nothing — and then, if I had promised, what are words?”

“You do not love me. Oh, you love me no more! I can see it. But it is so much the worse for you! I love you. You should not have given yourself to me. Do not think that you can take yourself back. I love you and I shall keep you. So you thought you could get out of it very quietly? Listen a moment. You have done everything to make me love you, to attach me to you, to make it impossible for me to live without you.

“Six weeks ago you asked for nothing better. You were everything for me, I was everything for you. And now you desire suddenly that I should know you no longer; that you should be to me a stranger, a lady whom one meets in society. Ah, you have a fine audacity! Have I dreamed? All the past is a dream? I invented it all? Oh, there can be no doubt of it. You loved me. I feel it still. Well, I have not changed. I am what I was; you have nothing to complain of. I have not betrayed you for other women. It isn’t credit that I claim. I could not have done it. When one has known you, one finds the prettiest women insipid. I never have had the idea of deceiving you. I have always acted well toward you. Why should you not love me? Answer! Speak! Say you love me still. Say it, since it is true. Come, Therese, you will feel at once that you love as you loved me formerly in the little nest where we were so happy. Come!”

He approached her ardently. She, her eyes full of fright, pushed him away with a kind of horror.

He understood, stopped, and said:

“You have a lover.”

She bent her head, then lifted it, grave and dumb.

Then he made a gesture as if to strike her, and at once recoiled in shame. He lowered his eyes and was silent. His fingers to his lips, and biting his nails, he saw that his hand had been pricked by a pin on her waist, and bled. He threw himself in an armchair, drew his handkerchief to wipe off the blood, and remained indifferent and without thought.

She, with her back to the door, her face calm and pale, her look vague, arranged her hat with instinctive care. At the noise, formerly delicious, that the rustle of her skirts made, he started, looked at her, and asked furiously:

“Who is he? I will know.”

She did not move. She replied with soft firmness:

“I have told you all I can. Do not ask more; it would be useless.”

He looked at her with a cruel expression which she had never seen before.

“Oh, do not tell me his name. It will not be difficult for me to find it.”

She said not a word, saddened for him, anxious for another, full of anguish and fear, and yet without regret, without bitterness, because her real soul was elsewhere.

He had a vague sensation of what passed in her mind. In his anger to see her so sweet and so serene, to find her beautiful, and beautiful for another, he felt a desire to kill her, and he shouted at her:

“Go!”

Then, weakened by this effort of hatred, which was not natural to him, he buried his head in his hands and sobbed.

His pain touched her, gave her the hope of quieting him. She thought she might perhaps console him for her loss. Amicably and comfortably she seated herself beside him.

“My friend, blame me. I am to blame, but more to be pitied. Disdain me, if you wish, if one can disdain an unfortunate creature who is the plaything of life. In fine, judge me as you wish. But keep for me a little friendship in your anger, a little bitter-sweet reminiscence, something like those days of autumn when there is sunlight and strong wind. That is what I deserve. Do not be harsh to the agreeable but frivolous visitor who passed through your life. Bid good-bye to me as to a traveller who goes one knows not where, and who is sad. There is so much sadness in separation! You were irritated against me a moment ago. Oh, I do not reproach you for it. I only suffer for it. Reserve a little sympathy for me. Who knows? The future is always unknown. It is very gray and obscure before me. Let me say to myself that I have been kind, simple, frank with you, and that you have not forgotten it. In time you will understand, you will forgive; to-day have a little pity.”

He was not listening to her words. He was appeased simply by the caress of her voice, of which the tone was limpid and clear. He exclaimed:

“You do not love him. I am the one whom you love. Then—”

She hesitated:

“Ah, to say whom one loves or loves not is not an easy thing for a woman, or at least for me. I do not know how other women do. But life is not good to me. I am tossed to and fro by force of circumstances.”

He looked at her calmly. An idea came to him. He had taken a resolution; he forgave, he forgot, provided she returned to him at once.

“Therese, you do not love him. It was an error, a moment of forgetfulness, a horrible and stupid thing that you did through weakness, through surprise, perhaps in spite. Swear to me that you never will see him again.”

He took her arm:

“Swear to me!”

She said not a word, her teeth were set, her face was sombre. He wrenched her wrist. She exclaimed:

“You hurt me!”

However, he followed his idea; he led her to the table, on which, near the brushes, were an ink-stand, and several leaves of letter-paper ornamented with a large blue vignette, representing the facade of the hotel, with innumerable windows.

“Write what I am about to dictate to you. I will call somebody to take the letter.”

And as she resisted, he made her fall on her knees. Proud and determined, she said:

“I can not, I will not.”

“Why?”

“Because — do you wish to know? — because I love him.”

Brusquely he released her. If he had had his revolver at hand, perhaps he would have killed her. But almost at once his anger was dampened by sadness; and now, desperate, he was the one who wished to die.

“Is what you say true? Is it possible?”

“How do I know? Can I say? Do I understand? Have I an idea, a sentiment, about anything?”

With an effort she added:

“Am I at this moment aware of anything except my sadness and your despair?”

“You love him, you love him! What is he, who is he, that you should love him?”

His surprise made him stupid; he was in an abyss of astonishment. But what she had said separated them. He dared not complain. He only repeated:

“You love him, you love him! But what has he done to you, what has he said, to make you love him? I know you. I have not told you every time your ideas shocked me. I would wager he is not even a man in society. And you believe he loves you? You believe it? Well, you are deceiving yourself. He does not love you. You flatter him, simply. He will quit you at the first opportunity. When he shall have compromised you, he will abandon you. Next year people will say of you: ‘She is not at all exclusive.’ I am sorry for your father; he is one of my friends, and will know of your behavior. You can not expect to deceive him.”

She listened, humiliated but consoled, thinking how she would have suffered had she found him generous.

In his simplicity he sincerely disdained her. This disdain relieved him.

“How did the thing happen? You can tell me.”

She shrugged her shoulders with so much pity that he dared not continue. He became contemptuous again.

“Do you imagine that I shall aid you in saving appearances, that I shall return to your house, that I shall continue to call on your husband?”

“I think you will continue to do what a gentleman should. I ask nothing of you. I should have liked to preserve of you the reminiscence of an excellent friend. I thought you might be indulgent and kind to, me, but it is not possible. I see that lovers never separate kindly. Later, you will judge me better. Farewell!”

He looked at her. Now his face expressed more pain than anger. She never had seen his eyes so dry and so black. It seemed as if he had grown old in an hour.

"I prefer to tell you in advance. It will be impossible for me to see you again. You are not a woman whom one may meet after one has been loved by her. You are not like others. You have a poison of your own, which you have given to me, and which I feel in me, in my veins. Why have I known you?"

She looked at him kindly.

"Farewell! Say to yourself that I am not worthy of being regretted so much."

Then, when he saw that she placed her hand on the latch of the door, when he felt at that gesture that he was to lose her, that he should never have her again, he shouted. He forgot everything. There remained in him only the dazed feeling of a great misfortune accomplished, of an irreparable calamity. And from the depth of his stupor a desire ascended. He desired to possess again the woman who was leaving him and who would never return. He drew her to him. He desired her, with all the strength of his animal nature. She resisted with all the force of her will, which was free and on the alert. She disengaged herself, crumpled, torn, without even having been afraid.

He understood that everything was useless; he realized she was no longer for him, because she belonged to another. As his suffering returned, he pushed her out of the door.

She remained a moment in the corridor, proudly waiting for a word.

But he shouted again, "Go!" and shut the door violently.

On the Via Alfieri, she saw again the pavilion in the rear of the courtyard where pale grasses grew. She found it silent and tranquil, faithful, with its goats and nymphs, to the lovers of the time of the Grand Duchess Eliza. She felt at once freed from the painful, brutal world, and transported to ages wherein she had not known the sadness of life. At the foot of the stairs, the steps of which were covered with roses, Dechartre was waiting. She threw herself in his arms. He carried her inert, like a precious trophy before which he had become pallid and trembling. She enjoyed, her eyelids half closed, the superb humiliation of being a beautiful prey. Her fatigue, her sadness, her disgust with the day, the reminiscence of violence, her regained liberty, the need of forgetting, remains of fright, everything vivified, awakened her tenderness. She threw her arms around the neck of her lover.

They were as gay as children. They laughed, said tender nothings, played, ate lemons, oranges, and other fruits piled up near them on painted plates. Her lips, half-open, showed her brilliant teeth. She asked, with coquettish anxiety, if he were not disillusioned after the beautiful dream he had made of her.

In the caressing light of the day, for the enjoyment of which he had arranged, he contemplated her with youthful joy. He lavished praise and kisses upon her. They forgot themselves in caresses, in friendly quarrels, in happy glances.

He asked her how a little red mark on her temple had come there. She replied that she had forgotten; that it was nothing. She hardly lied; she had really forgotten.

They recalled to each other their short but beautiful history, all their life, which began upon the day when they had met.

“You know, on the terrace, the day after your arrival, you said vague things to me. I guessed that you loved me.”

“I was afraid to seem stupid to you.”

“You were, a little. It was my triumph. It made me impatient to see you so little troubled near me. I loved you before you loved me. Oh, I do not blush for it!”

He gave her a glass of Asti. But there was a bottle of Trasimene. She wished to taste it, in memory of the lake which she had seen silent and beautiful at night in its opal cup. That was when she had first visited Italy, six years before.

He chided her for having discovered the beauty of things without his aid.

She said:

“Without you, I did not know how to see anything. Why did you not come to me before?”

He closed her lips with a kiss. Then she said:

“Yes, I love you! Yes, I never have loved any one but you!”

CHAPTER XXII. A MEETING AT THE STATION

Le Menil had written: "I leave tomorrow evening at seven o'clock. Meet me at the station."

She had gone to meet him. She saw him in long coat and cape, precise and calm, in front of the hotel stages. He said only:

"Ah, you have come."

"But, my friend, you called me."

He did not confess that he had written in the absurd hope that she would love him again and that the rest would be forgotten, or that she would say to him: "It was only a trial of your love."

If she had said so he would have believed her, however.

Astonished because she did not speak, he said, dryly:

"What have you to say to me? It is not for me to speak, but for you. I have no explanations to give you. I have not to justify a betrayal."

"My friend, do not be cruel, do not be ungrateful. This is what I had to say to you. And I must repeat that I leave you with the sadness of a real friend."

"Is that all? Go and say this to the other man. It will interest him more than it interests me."

"You called me, and I came; do not make me regret it."

"I am sorry to have disturbed you. You could doubtless find a better employment for your time. I will not detain you. Rejoin him, since you are longing to do so."

At the thought that his unhappy words expressed a moment of eternal human pain, and that tragedy had illustrated many similar griefs, she felt all the sadness and irony of the situation, which a curl of her lips betrayed. He thought she was laughing.

"Do not laugh; listen to me. The other day, at the hotel, I wanted to kill you. I came so near doing it that now I know what I escaped. I will not do it. You may rest secure. What would be the use? As I wish to keep up appearances, I shall call on you in Paris. It will grieve me to learn that you can not receive me. I shall see your husband, I shall see your father also. It will be to say good-by to them, as I intend to go on a long voyage. Farewell, Madame!"

At the moment when he turned his back to her, Therese saw Miss Bell and Prince Albertinelli coming out of the freight-station toward her. The Prince was very handsome. Vivian was walking by his side with the lightness of chaste joy.

“Oh, darling, what a pleasant surprise to find you here! The Prince, and I have seen, at the customhouse, the new bell, which has just come.”

“Ah, the bell has come?”

“It is here, darling, the Ghiberti bell. I saw it in its wooden cage. It did not ring, because it was a prisoner. But it will have a campanile in my Fiesole house.

“When it feels the air of Florence, it will be happy to let its silvery voice be heard. Visited by the doves, it will ring for all our joys and all our sufferings. It will ring for you, for me, for the Prince, for good Madame Marmet, for Monsieur Choulette, for all our friends.”

“Dear, bells never ring for real joys and for real sufferings. Bells are honest functionaries, who know only official sentiments.”

“Oh, darling, you are much mistaken. Bells know the secrets of souls; they know everything. But I am very glad to find you here. I know, my love, why you came to the station. Your maid betrayed you. She told me you were waiting for a pink gown which was delayed in coming and that you were very impatient. But do not let that trouble you. You are always beautiful, my love.”

She made Madame Martin enter her wagon.

“Come, quick, darling; Monsieur Jacques Dechartre dines at the house to-night, and I should not like to make him wait.”

And while they were driving through the silence of the night, through the pathways full of the fresh perfume of wildflowers, she said:

“Do you see over there, darling, the black distaffs of the Fates, the cypresses of the cemetery? It is there I wish to sleep.”

But Therese thought anxiously: “They saw him. Did they recognize him? I think not. The place was dark, and had only little blinding lights. Did she know him? I do not recall whether she saw him at my house last year.”

What made her anxious was a sly smile on the Prince’s face.

“Darling, do you wish a place near me in that rustic cemetery? Shall we rest side by side under a little earth and a great deal of sky? But I do wrong to extend to you an invitation which you can not accept. It will not be permitted to you to sleep your eternal sleep at the foot of the hill of Fiesole, my love. You must rest in Paris, in a handsome tomb, by the side of Count Martin-Belleme.”

“Why? Do you think, dear, that the wife must be united to her husband even after death?”

“Certainly she must, darling. Marriage is for time and for eternity. Do you not know the history of a young pair who loved each other in the province of Auvergne? They died almost at the same time, and were placed in two tombs separated by a road. But every night a sweetbrier bush threw from one tomb to the other its flowery branches. The two coffins had to be buried together.”

When they had passed the Badia, they saw a procession coming up the side of the hill. The wind blew on the candles borne in gilded wooden candlesticks. The girls of the societies, dressed in white and blue, carried painted banners. Then came a little St. John, blond, curly-haired, nude, under a lamb's fleece which showed his arms and shoulders; and a St. Mary Magdalene, seven years old, crowned only with her waving golden hair. The people of Fiesole followed. Countess Martin recognized Choulette among them. With a candle in one hand, a book in the other, and blue spectacles on the end of his nose, he was singing. His unkempt beard moved up and down with the rhythm of the song. In the harshness of light and shade that worked in his face, he had an air that suggested a solitary monk capable of accomplishing a century of penance.

"How amusing he is!" said Therese. "He is making a spectacle of himself for himself. He is a great artist."

"Darling, why will you insist that Monsieur Choulette is not a pious man? Why? There is much joy and much beauty in faith. Poets know this. If Monsieur Choulette had not faith, he could not write the admirable verses that he does."

"And you, dear, have you faith?"

"Oh, yes; I believe in God and in the word of Christ."

Now the banners and the white veils had disappeared down the road. But one could see on the bald cranium of Choulette the flame of the candle reflected in rays of gold.

Dechartre, however, was waiting alone in the garden. Therese found him resting on the balcony of the terrace where he had felt the first sufferings of love. While Miss Bell and the Prince were trying to fix upon a suitable place for the campanile, Dechartre led his beloved under the trees.

"You promised me that you would be in the garden when I came. I have been waiting for you an hour, which seemed eternal. You were not to go out. Your absence has surprised and grieved me."

She replied vaguely that she had been compelled to go to the station, and that Miss Bell had brought her back in the wagon.

He begged her pardon for his anxiety, but everything alarmed him. His happiness made him afraid.

They were already at table when Choulette appeared, with the face of an antique satyr. A terrible joy shone in his phosphorous eyes. Since his return from Assisi, he lived only among paupers, drank chianti all day with girls and artisans to whom he taught the beauty of joy and innocence, the advent of Jesus Christ, and the imminent abolition of taxes and military service. At the beginning of the procession he had gathered vagabonds in the ruins of the Roman theatre, and had

delivered to them in a macaronic language, half French and half Tuscan, a sermon, which he took pleasure in repeating:

“Kings, senators, and judges have said: ‘The life of nations is in us.’ Well, they lie; and they are the coffin saying: ‘I am the cradle.’

“The life of nations is in the crops of the fields yellowing under the eye of the Lord. It is in the vines, and in the smiles and tears with which the sky bathes the fruits on the trees.

“The life of nations is not in the laws, which were made by the rich and powerful for the preservation of riches and power.

“The chiefs of kingdoms and of republics have said in their books that the right of peoples is the right of war, and they have glorified violence. And they render honors unto conquerors, and they raise in the public squares statues to the victorious man and horse. But one has not the right to kill; that is the reason why the just man will not draw from the urn a number that will send him to the war. The right is not to pamper the folly and crimes of a prince raised over a kingdom or over a republic; and that is the reason why the just man will not pay taxes and will not give money to the publicans. He will enjoy in peace the fruit of his work, and he will make bread with the wheat that he has sown, and he will eat the fruits of the trees that he has cut.”

“Ah, Monsieur Choulette,” said Prince Albertinelli, gravely, “you are right to take interest in the state of our unfortunate fields, which taxes exhaust. What fruit can be drawn from a soil taxed to thirty-three per cent. of its net income? The master and the servants are the prey of the publicans.”

Dechartre and Madame Martin were struck by the unexpected sincerity of his accent.

He added:

“I like the King. I am sure of my loyalty, but the misfortunes of the peasants move me.”

The truth was, he pursued with obstinacy a single aim: to reestablish the domain of Casentino that his father, Prince Carlo, an officer of Victor Emmanuel, had left devoured by usurers. His affected gentleness concealed his stubbornness. He had only useful vices. It was to become a great Tuscan landowner that he had dealt in pictures, sold the famous ceilings of his palace, made love to rich old women, and, finally, sought the hand of Miss Bell, whom he knew to be skilful at earning money and practised in the art of housekeeping. He really liked peasants. The ardent praises of Choulette, which he understood vaguely, awakened this affection in him. He forgot himself enough to express his mind:

“In a country where master and servants form one family, the fate of the one depends on that of the others. Taxes despoil us. How good are our farmers! They are the best men in the world to till the soil.”

Madame Martin confessed that she should not have believed it. The country of Lombardy alone seemed to her to be well cultivated. Tuscany appeared a beautiful, wild orchard.

The Prince replied, smilingly, that perhaps she would not speak in that way if she had done him the honor of visiting his farms of Casentino, although these had suffered from long and ruinous lawsuits. She would have seen there what an Italian landscape really is.

“I take a great deal of care of my domain. I was coming from it to-night when I had the double pleasure of finding at the station Miss Bell, who had gone there to find her Ghiberti bell, and you, Madame, who were talking with a friend from Paris.”

He had the idea that it would be disagreeable to her to hear him speak of that meeting. He looked around the table, and saw the expression of anxious surprise which Dechartre could not restrain. He insisted:

“Forgive, Madame, in a rustic, a certain pretension to knowing something about the world. In the man who was talking to you I recognized a Parisian, because he had an English air; and while he affected stiffness, he showed perfect ease and particular vivacity.”

“Oh,” said Therese, negligently, “I have not seen him for a long time. I was much surprised to meet him at Florence at the moment of his departure.”

She looked at Dechartre, who affected not to listen.

“I know that gentleman,” said Miss Bell. “It is Monsieur Le Menil. I dined with him twice at Madame Martin’s, and he talked to me very well. He said he liked football; that he introduced the game in France, and that now football is quite the fashion. He also related to me his hunting adventures. He likes animals. I have observed that hunters like animals. I assure you, darling, that Monsieur Le Menil talks admirably about hares. He knows their habits. He said to me it was a pleasure to look at them dancing in the moonlight on the plains. He assured me that they were very intelligent, and that he had seen an old hare, pursued by dogs, force another hare to get out of the trail so as to deceive the hunters. Darling, did Monsieur Le Menil ever talk to you about hares?”

Therese replied she did not know, and that she thought hunters were tiresome.

Miss Bell exclaimed. She did not think M. Le Menil was ever tiresome when talking of the hares that danced in the moonlight on the plains and among the vines. She would like to raise a hare, like Phanion.

“Darling, you do not know Phanion. Oh, I am sure that Monsieur Dechartre knows her. She was beautiful, and dear to poets. She lived in the Island of Cos, beside a dell which, covered with lemon-trees, descended to the blue sea. And they say that she looked at the blue waves. I related Phanion’s history to Monsieur Le Menil, and he was very glad to hear it. She had received from some hunter a little hare with long ears. She held it on her knees and fed it on spring flowers. It loved Phanion and forgot its mother. It died before having eaten too many flowers. Phanion lamented over its loss. She buried it in the lemon-grove, in a grave which she could see from her bed. And the shade of the little hare was consoled by the songs of the poets.”

The good Madame Marmet said that M. Le Menil pleased by his elegant and discreet manners, which young men no longer practise. She would have liked to see him. She wanted him to do something for her.

“Or, rather, for my nephew,” she said. “He is a captain in the artillery, and his chiefs like him. His colonel was for a long time under orders of Monsieur Le Menil’s uncle, General La Briche. If Monsieur Le Menil would ask his uncle to write to Colonel Faure in favor of my nephew I should be grateful to him. My nephew is not a stranger to Monsieur Le Menil. They met last year at the masked ball which Captain de Lassay gave at the hotel at Caen.”

Madame Marmet cast down her eyes and added:

“The invited guests, naturally, were not society women. But it is said some of them were very pretty. They came from Paris. My nephew, who gave these details to me, was dressed as a coachman. Monsieur Le Menil was dressed as a Hussar of Death, and he had much success.”

Miss Bell said that she was sorry not to have known that M. Le Menil was in Florence. Certainly, she should have invited him to come to Fiesole.

BOOK 3.

CHAPTER XXIII. "ONE IS NEVER KIND WHEN ONE IS IN LOVE"

The next day, in the hidden pavilion of the Via Alfieri, she found him preoccupied. She tried to distract him with ardent gayety, with the sweetness of pressing intimacy, with superb humility. But he remained sombre. He had all night meditated, labored over, and recognized his sadness. He had found reasons for suffering. His thought had brought together the hand that dropped a letter in the postbox before the bronze San Marco and the dreadful unknown who had been seen at the station. Now Jacques Dechartre gave a face and a name to the cause of his suffering. In the grandmother's armchair where Therese had been seated on the day of her welcome, and which she had this time offered to him, he was assailed by painful images; while she, bent over one of his arms, enveloped him with her warm embrace and her loving heart. She divined too well what he was suffering to ask it of him simply.

In order to bring him back to pleasanter ideas, she recalled the secrets of the room where they were and reminiscences of their walks through the city. She was gracefully familiar.

"The little spoon you gave me, the little red lily spoon, I use for my tea in the morning. And I know by the pleasure I feel at seeing it when I wake how much I love you."

Then, as he replied only in sentences sad and evasive, she said:

"I am near you, but you do not care for me. You are preoccupied by some idea that I do not fathom. Yet I am alive, and an idea is nothing."

"An idea is nothing? Do you think so? One may be wretched or happy for an idea; one may live and one may die for an idea. Well, I am thinking."

"Of what are you thinking?"

"Why do you ask? You know very well I am thinking of what I heard last night, which you had concealed from me. I am thinking of your meeting at the station, which was not due to chance, but which a letter had caused, a letter dropped — remember! — in the postbox of San Michele. Oh, I do not reproach you for it. I have not the right. But why did you give yourself to me if you were not free?"

She thought she must tell an untruth.

"You mean some one whom I met at the station yesterday? I assure you it was the most ordinary meeting in the world."

He was painfully impressed with the fact that she did not dare to name the one she spoke of. He, too, avoided pronouncing that name.

“Therese, he had not come for you? You did not know he was in Florence? He is nothing more to you than a man whom you meet socially? He is not the one who, when absent, made you say to me, ‘I can not?’ He is nothing to you?”

She replied resolutely:

“He comes to my house at times. He was introduced to me by General Lariviere. I have nothing more to say to you about him. I assure you he is of no interest to me, and I can not conceive what may be in your mind about him.”

She felt a sort of satisfaction at repudiating the man who had insisted against her; with so much harshness and violence, upon his rights of ownership. But she was in haste to get out of her tortuous path. She rose and looked at her lover, with beautiful, tender, and grave eyes.

“Listen to me: the day when I gave my heart to you, my life was yours wholly. If a doubt or a suspicion comes to you, question me. The present is yours, and you know well there is only you, you alone, in it. As for my past, if you knew what nothingness it was you would be glad. I do not think another woman made as I was, to love, would have brought to you a mind newer to love than is mine. That I swear to you. The years that were spent without you — I did not live! Let us not talk of them. There is nothing in them of which I should be ashamed. To regret them is another thing. I regret to have known you so late. Why did you not come sooner? You could have known me five years ago as easily as to-day. But, believe me, we should not tire ourselves with speaking of time that has gone. Remember Lohengrin. If you love me, I am for you like the swan’s knight. I have asked nothing of you. I have wanted to know nothing. I have not chided you about Mademoiselle Jeanne Tancrede. I saw you loved me, that you were suffering, and it was enough — because I loved you.”

“A woman can not be jealous in the same manner as a man, nor feel what makes us suffer.”

“I do not know that. Why can not she?”

“Why? Because there is not in the blood, in the flesh of a woman that absurd and generous fury for ownership, that primitive instinct of which man has made a right. Man is the god who wants his mate to himself. Since time immemorial woman is accustomed to sharing men’s love. It is the past, the obscure past, that determines our passions. We are already so old when we are born! Jealousy, for a woman, is only a wound to her own self-love. For a man it is a torture as profound as moral suffering, as continuous as physical suffering. You ask the reason why? Because, in spite of my submission and of my respect, in spite of the alarm you cause me, you are matter and I am the idea; you are the thing and I

am the mind; you are the clay and I am the artisan. Do not complain of this. Near the perfect amphora, surrounded with garlands, what is the rude and humble potter? The amphora is tranquil and beautiful; he is wretched; he is tormented; he wills; he suffers; for to will is to suffer. Yes, I am jealous. I know what there is in my jealousy. When I examine it, I find in it hereditary prejudices, savage conceit, sickly susceptibility, a mingling of rudest violence and cruel feebleness, imbecile and wicked revolt against the laws of life and of society. But it does not matter that I know it for what it is: it exists and it torments me. I am the chemist who, studying the properties of an acid which he has drunk, knows how it was combined and what salts form it. Nevertheless the acid burns him, and will burn him to the bone.”

“My love, you are absurd.”

“Yes, I am absurd. I feel it better than you feel it yourself. To desire a woman in all the brilliancy of her beauty and her wit, mistress of herself, who knows and who dares; more beautiful in that and more desirable, and whose choice is free, voluntary, deliberate; to desire her, to love her for what she is, and to suffer because she is not puerile candor nor pale innocence, which would be shocking in her if it were possible to find them there; to ask her at the same time that she be herself and not be herself; to adore her as life has made her, and regret bitterly that life, which has made her so beautiful, has touched her — Oh, this is absurd! I love you! I love you with all that you bring to me of sensations, of habits, with all that comes of your experiences, with all that comes from him-perhaps, from them-how do I know? These things are my delight and they are my torture. There must be a profound sense in the public idiocy which says that love like ours is guilty. Joy is guilty when it is immense. That is the reason why I suffer, my beloved.”

She knelt before him, took his hands, and drew him to her.

“I do not wish you to suffer; I will not have it. It would be folly. I love you, and never have loved any one but you. You may believe me; I do not lie.”

He kissed her forehead.

“If you deceived me, my dear, I should not reproach you for that; on the contrary, I should be grateful to you. Nothing is so legitimate, so human, as to deceive pain. What would become of us if women had not for us the pity of untruth? Lie, my beloved, lie for the sake of charity. Give me the dream that colors black sorrow. Lie; have no scruples. You will only add another illusion to the illusion of love and beauty.”

He sighed:

“Oh, common-sense, common wisdom!”

She asked him what he meant, and what common wisdom was. He said it was a sensible proverb, but brutal, which it was better not to repeat.

“Repeat it all the same.”

“You wish me to say it to you: ‘Kissed lips do not lose their freshness.’”

And he added:

“It is true that love preserves beauty, and that the beauty of women is fed on caresses as bees are fed on flowers.”

She placed on his lips a pledge in a kiss.

“I swear to you I never loved any one but you. Oh, no, it is not caresses that have preserved the few charms which I am happy to have in order to offer them to you. I love you! I love you!”

But he still remembered the letter dropped in the postbox, and the unknown person met at the station.

“If you loved me truly, you would love only me.”

She rose, indignant:

“Then you believe I love another? What you are saying is monstrous. Is that what you think of me? And you say you love me! I pity you, because you are insane.”

“True, I am insane.”

She, kneeling, with the supple palms of her hands enveloped his temples and his cheeks. He said again that he was mad to be anxious about a chance and commonplace meeting. She forced him to believe her, or, rather, to forget. He no longer saw or knew anything. His vanished bitterness and anger left him nothing but the harsh desire to forget everything, to make her forget everything.

She asked him why he was sad.

“You were happy a moment ago. Why are you not happy now?”

And as he shook his head and said nothing:

“Speak! I like your complaints better than your silence.”

Then he said:

“You wish to know? Do not be angry. I suffer now more than ever, because I know now what you are capable of giving.”

She withdrew brusquely from his arms and, with eyes full of pain and reproach, said:

“You can believe that I ever was to another what I am to you! You wound me in my most susceptible sentiment, in my love for you. I do not forgive you for this. I love you! I never have loved any one except you. I never have suffered except through you. Be content. You do me a great deal of harm. How can you be so unkind?”

“There, one is never kind when one is in love.”

She remained for a long time immovable and dreamy. Her face flushed, and a tear rose to her eyes.

“Therese, you are weeping!”

“Forgive me, my heart, it is the first time that I have loved and that I have been really loved. I am afraid.”

CHAPTER XXIV. CHOULETTE'S AMBITION

While the rolling of arriving boxes filled the Bell villa; while Pauline, loaded with parcels, lightly came down the steps; while good Madame Marmet, with tranquil vigilance, supervised everything; and while Miss Bell finished dressing in her room, Therese, dressed in gray, resting on the terrace, looked once again at the Flower City.

She had decided to return home. Her husband recalled her in every one of his letters. If, as he asked her to do, she returned to Paris in the first days of May, they might give two or three dinners, followed by receptions. His political group was supported by public opinion. The tide was pushing him along, and Garain thought the Countess Martin's drawing-room might exercise an excellent influence on the future of the country. These reasons moved her not; but she felt a desire to be agreeable to her husband. She had received the day before a letter from her father, Monsieur Montessuy, who, without sharing the political views of his son-in-law and without giving any advice to his daughter, insinuated that society was beginning to gossip of the Countess Martin's mysterious sojourn at Florence among poets and artists. The Bell villa took, from a distance, an air of sentimental fantasy. She felt herself that she was too closely observed at Resole. Madame Marmet annoyed her. Prince Albertinelli disquieted her. The meetings in the pavilion of the Via Alfieri had become difficult and dangerous. Professor Arrighi, whom the Prince often met, had seen her one night as she was walking through the deserted streets leaning on Dechartre. Professor Arrighi, author of a treatise on agriculture, was the most amiable of wise men. He had turned his beautiful, heroic face, and said, only the next day, to the young woman "Formerly, I could discern from a long distance the coming of a beautiful woman. Now that I have gone beyond the age to be viewed favorably by women, heaven has pity on me. Heaven prevents my seeing them. My eyes are very bad. The most charming face I can no longer recognize." She had understood, and heeded the warning. She wished now to conceal her joy in the vastness of Paris.

Vivian, to whom she had announced her departure, had asked her to remain a few days longer. But Therese suspected that her friend was still shocked by the advice she had received one night in the lemon-decorated room; that, at least, she did not enjoy herself entirely in the familiarity of a confidante who disapproved of her choice, and whom the Prince had represented to her as a coquette, and perhaps worse. The date of her departure had been fixed for May 5th.

The day shone brilliant, pure, and charming on the Arno valley. Therese, dreamy, saw from the terrace the immense morning rose placed in the blue cup of Florence. She leaned forward to discover, at the foot of the flowery hills, the imperceptible point where she had known infinite joys. There the cemetery garden made a small, sombre spot near which she divined the Via Alfieri. She saw herself again in the room wherein, doubtless, she never would enter again. The hours there passed had for her the sadness of a dream. She felt her eyes becoming veiled, her knees weaken, and her soul shudder. It seemed to her that life was no longer in her, and that she had left it in that corner where she saw the black pines raise their immovable summits. She reproached herself for feeling anxiety without reason, when, on the contrary, she should be reassured and joyful. She knew she would meet Jacques Dechartre in Paris. They would have liked to arrive there at the same time, or, rather, to go there together. They had thought it indispensable that he should remain three or four days longer in Florence, but their meeting would not be retarded beyond that. They had appointed a rendezvous, and she rejoiced in the thought of it. She wore her love mingled with her being and running in her blood. Still, a part of herself remained in the pavilion decorated with goats and nymphs a part of herself which never would return to her. In the full ardor of life, she was dying for things infinitely delicate and precious. She recalled that Dechartre had said to her: "Love likes charms. I gathered from the terrace the leaves of a tree that you had admired." Why had she not thought of taking a stone of the pavilion wherein she had forgotten the world?

A shout from Pauline drew her from her thoughts. Choulette, jumping from a bush, had suddenly kissed the maid, who was carrying overcoats and bags into the carriage. Now he was running through the alleys, joyful, his ears standing out like horns. He bowed to the Countess Martin.

"I have, then, to say farewell to you, Madame."

He intended to remain in Italy. A lady was calling him, he said: it was Rome. He wanted to see the cardinals. One of them, whom people praised as an old man full of sense, would perhaps share the ideas of the socialist and revolutionary church. Choulette had his aim: to plant on the ruins of an unjust and cruel civilization the Cross of Calvary, not dead and bare, but vivid, and with its flowery arms embracing the world. He was founding with that design an order and a newspaper. Madame Martin knew the order. The newspaper was to be sold for one cent, and to be written in rhythmic phrases. It was a newspaper to be sung. Verse, simple, violent, or joyful, was the only language that suited the people. Prose pleased only people whose intelligence was very subtle. He had

seen anarchists in the taverns of the Rue Saint Jacques. They spent their evenings reciting and listening to romances.

And he added:

“A newspaper which shall be at the same time a song-book will touch the soul of the people. People say I have genius. I do not know whether they are right. But it must be admitted that I have a practical mind.”

Miss Bell came down the steps, putting on her gloves:

“Oh, darling, the city and the mountains and the sky wish you to lament your departure. They make themselves beautiful to-day in order to make you regret quitting them and desire to see them again.”

But Choulette, whom the dryness of the Tuscan climate tired, regretted green Umbria and its humid sky. He recalled Assisi. He said:

“There are woods and rocks, a fair sky and white clouds. I have walked there in the footsteps of good Saint Francis, and I transcribed his canticle to the sun in old French rhymes, simple and poor.”

Madame Martin said she would like to hear it. Miss Bell was already listening, and her face wore the fervent expression of an angel sculptured by Mino.

Choulette told them it was a rustic and artless work. The verses were not trying to be beautiful. They were simple, although uneven, for the sake of lightness. Then, in a slow and monotonous voice, he recited the canticle.

“Oh, Monsieur Choulette,” said Miss Bell, “this canticle goes up to heaven, like the hermit in the Campo Santo of Pisa, whom some one saw going up the mountain that the goats liked. I will tell you. The old hermit went up, leaning on the staff of faith, and his step was unequal because the crutch, being on one side, gave one of his feet an advantage over the other. That is the reason why your verses are unequal. I have understood it.”

The poet accepted this praise, persuaded that he had unwittingly deserved it.

“You have faith, Monsieur Choulette,” said Therese. “Of what use is it to you if not to write beautiful verses?”

“Faith serves me to commit sin, Madame.”

“Oh, we commit sins without that.”

Madame Marmet appeared, equipped for the journey, in the tranquil joy of returning to her pretty apartment, her little dog Toby, her old friend Lagrange, and to see again, after the Etruscans of Fiesole, the skeleton warrior who, among the bonbon boxes, looked out of the window.

Miss Bell escorted her friends to the station in her carriage.

CHAPTER XXV. "WE ARE ROBBING LIFE"

Dechartre came to the carriage to salute the two travellers. Separated from him, Therese felt what he was to her: he had given to her a new taste of life, delicious and so vivid, so real, that she felt it on her lips. She lived under a charm in the dream of seeing him again, and was surprised when Madame Marmet, along the journey, said: "I think we are passing the frontier," or "Rose-bushes are in bloom by the seaside." She was joyful when, after a night at the hotel in Marseilles, she saw the gray olive-trees in the stony fields, then the mulberry-trees and the distant profile of Mount Pilate, and the Rhone, and Lyons, and then the familiar landscapes, the trees raising their summits into bouquets clothed in tender green, and the lines of poplars beside the rivers. She enjoyed the plenitude of the hours she lived and the astonishment of profound joys. And it was with the smile of a sleeper suddenly awakened that, at the station in Paris, in the light of the station, she greeted her husband, who was glad to see her. When she kissed Madame Marmet, she told her that she thanked her with all her heart. And truly she was grateful to all things, like M. Choulette's St. Francis.

In the coupe, which followed the quays in the luminous dust of the setting sun, she listened without impatience to her husband confiding to her his successes as an orator, the intentions of his parliamentary groups, his projects, his hopes, and the necessity to give two or three political dinners. She closed her eyes in order to think better. She said to herself: "I shall have a letter to-morrow, and shall see him again within eight days." When the coupe passed on the bridge, she looked at the water, which seemed to roll flames; at the smoky arches; at the rows of trees; at the heads of the chestnut-trees in bloom on the Cours-la-Reine; all these familiar aspects seemed to be clothed for her in novel magnificence. It seemed to her that her love had given a new color to the universe. And she asked herself whether the trees and the stones recognized her. She was thinking; "How is it that my silence, my eyes, and heaven and earth do not tell my dear secret?"

M. Martin-Belleme, thinking she was a little tired, advised her to rest. And at night, closeted in her room, in the silence wherein she heard the palpitations of her heart, she wrote to the absent one a letter full of these words, which are similar to flowers in their perpetual novelty: "I love you. I am waiting for you. I am happy. I feel you are near me. There is nobody except you and me in the world. I see from my window a blue star which trembles, and I look at it, thinking that you see it in Florence. I have put on my table the little red lily

spoon. Come! Come!” And she found thus, fresh in her mind, the eternal sensations and images.

For a week she lived an inward life, feeling within her the soft warmth which remained of the days passed in the Via Alfieri, breathing the kisses which she had received, and loving herself for being loved. She took delicate care and displayed attentive taste in new gowns. It was to herself, too, that she was pleasing. Madly anxious when there was nothing for her at the postoffice, trembling and joyful when she received through the small window a letter wherein she recognized the large handwriting of her beloved, she devoured her reminiscences, her desires, and her hopes. Thus the hours passed quickly.

The morning of the day when he was to arrive seemed to her to be odiously long. She was at the station before the train arrived. A delay had been signalled. It weighed heavily upon her. Optimist in her projects, and placing by force, like her father, faith on the side of her will, that delay which she had not foreseen seemed to her to be treason. The gray light, which the three-quarters of an hour filtered through the window-panes of the station, fell on her like the rays of an immense hour-glass which measured for her the minutes of happiness lost. She was lamenting her fate, when, in the red light of the sun, she saw the locomotive of the express stop, monstrous and docile, on the quay, and, in the crowd of travellers coming out of the carriages, Jacques approached her. He was looking at her with that sort of sombre and violent joy which she had often observed in him. He said:

“At last, here you are. I feared to die before seeing you again. You do not know, I did not know myself, what torture it is to live a week away from you. I have returned to the little pavilion of the Via Alfieri. In the room you know, in front of the old pastel, I have wept for love and rage.”

She looked at him tenderly.

“And I, do you not think that I called you, that I wanted you, that when alone I extended my arms toward you? I had hidden your letters in the chiffonier where my jewels are. I read them at night: it was delicious, but it was imprudent. Your letters were yourself — too much and not enough.”

They traversed the court where fiacres rolled away loaded with boxes. She asked whether they were to take a carriage.

He made no answer. He seemed not to hear. She said:

“I went to see your house; I did not dare go in. I looked through the grille and saw windows hidden in rose-bushes in the rear of a yard, behind a tree, and I said: ‘It is there!’ I never have been so moved.”

He was not listening to her nor looking at her. He walked quickly with her along the paved street, and through a narrow stairway reached a deserted street

near the station. There, between wood and coal yards, was a hotel with a restaurant on the first floor and tables on the sidewalk. Under the painted sign were white curtains at the windows. Dechartre stopped before the small door and pushed Therese into the obscure alley. She asked:

“Where are you leading me? What is the time? I must be home at half-past seven. We are mad.”

When they left the house, she said:

“Jacques, my darling, we are too happy; we are robbing life.”

CHAPTER XXVI. IN DECHARTRE'S STUDIO

A fiacre brought her, the next day, to a populous street, half sad, half gay, with walls of gardens in the intervals of new houses, and stopped at the point where the sidewalk passes under the arcade of a mansion of the Regency, covered now with dust and oblivion, and fantastically placed across the street. Here and there green branches lent gayety to that city corner. Therese, while ringing at the door, saw in the limited perspective of the houses a pulley at a window and a gilt key, the sign of a locksmith. Her eyes were full of this picture, which was new to her. Pigeons flew above her head; she heard chickens cackle. A servant with a military look opened the door. She found herself in a yard covered with sand, shaded by a tree, where, at the left, was the janitor's box with bird-cages at the windows. On that side rose, under a green trellis, the mansard of the neighboring house. A sculptor's studio backed on it its glass-covered roof, which showed plaster figures asleep in the dust. At the right, the wall that closed the yard bore debris of monuments, broken bases of columnettes. In the rear, the house, not very large, showed the six windows of its facade, half hidden by vines and rosebushes.

Philippe Dechartre, infatuated with the architecture of the fifteenth century in France, had reproduced there very cleverly the characteristics of a private house of the time of Louis XII. That house, begun in the middle of the Second Empire, had not been finished. The builder of so many castles died without being able to finish his own house. It was better thus. Conceived in a manner which had then its distinction and its value, but which seems to-day banal and outlandish, having lost little by little its large frame of gardens, cramped now between the walls of the tall buildings, Philippe Dechartre's little house, by the roughness of its stones, by the naive heaviness of its windows, by the simplicity of the roof, which the architect's widow had caused to be covered with little expense, by all the lucky accidents of the unfinished and unpremeditated, corrected the lack of grace of its new and affected antiquity and archeologic romanticism, and harmonized with the humbleness of a district made ugly by progress of population.

In fine, notwithstanding its appearance of ruin and its green drapery, that little house had its charm. Suddenly and instinctively, Therese discovered in it other harmonies. In the elegant negligence which extended from the walls covered with vines to the darkened panes of the studio, and even in the bent tree, the bark of which studded with its shells the wild grass of the courtyard, she divined the

mind of the master, nonchalant, not skilful in preserving, living in the long solitude of passionate men. She had in her joy a sort of grief at observing this careless state in which her lover left things around him. She found in it a sort of grace and nobility, but also a spirit of indifference contrary to her own nature, opposite to the interested and careful mind of the Montessuys. At once she thought that, without spoiling the pensive softness of that rough corner, she would bring to it her well-ordered activity; she would have sand thrown in the alley, and in the angle wherein a little sunlight came she would put the gayety of flowers. She looked sympathetically at a statue which had come there from some park, a Flora, lying on the earth, eaten by black moss, her two arms lying by her sides. She thought of raising her soon, of making of her a centrepiece for a fountain. Dechartre, who for an hour had been watching for her coming, joyful, anxious, trembling in his agitated happiness, descended the steps. In the fresh shade of the vestibule, wherein she divined confusedly the severe splendor of bronze and marble statues, she stopped, troubled by the beatings of her heart, which throbbed with all its might in her chest. He pressed her in his arms and kissed her. She heard him, through the tumult of her temples, recalling to her the short delights of the day before. She saw again the lion of the Atlas on the carpet, and returned to Jacques his kisses with delicious slowness. He led her, by a wooden stairway, into the vast hall which had served formerly as a workshop, where he designed and modelled his figures, and, above all, read; he liked reading as if it were opium.

Pale-tinted Gothic tapestries, which let one perceive in a marvellous forest a lady at the feet of whom a unicorn lay on the grass, extended above cabinets to the painted beams of the ceiling. He led her to a large and low divan, loaded with cushions covered with sumptuous fragments of Spanish and Byzantine cloaks; but she sat in an armchair. "You are here! You are here! The world may come to an end."

She replied "Formerly I thought of the end of the world, but I was not afraid of it. Monsieur Lagrange had promised it to me, and I was waiting for it. When I did not know you, I felt so lonely." She looked at the tables loaded with vases and statuettes, the tapestries, the confused and splendid mass of weapons, the animals, the marbles, the paintings, the ancient books. "You have beautiful things."

"Most of them come from my father, who lived in the golden age of collectors. These histories of the unicorn, the complete series of which is at Cluny, were found by my father in 1851 in an inn."

But, curious and disappointed, she said: "I see nothing that you have done; not a statue, not one of those wax figures which are prized so highly in England,

not a figurine nor a plaque nor a medal.”

“If you think I could find any pleasure in living among my works! I know my figures too well — they weary me. Whatever is without secret lacks charm.” She looked at him with affected spite.

“You had not told me that one had lost all charm when one had no more secrets.”

He put his arm around her waist.

“Ah! The things that live are only too mysterious; and you remain for me, my beloved, an enigma, the unknown sense of which contains the light of life. Do not fear to give yourself to me. I shall desire you always, but I never shall know you. Does one ever possess what one loves? Are kisses, caresses, anything else than the effort of a delightful despair? When I embrace you, I am still searching for you, and I never have you; since I want you always, since in you I expect the impossible and the infinite. What you are, the devil knows if I shall ever know! Because I have modelled a few bad figures I am not a sculptor; I am rather a sort of poet and philosopher who seeks for subjects of anxiety and torment in nature. The sentiment of form is not sufficient for me. My colleagues laugh at me because I have not their simplicity. They are right. And that brute Choulette is right too, when he says we ought to live without thinking and without desiring. Our friend the cobbler of Santa Maria Novella, who knows nothing of what might make him unjust and unfortunate, is a master of the art of living. I ought to love you naively, without that sort of metaphysics which is passional and makes me absurd and wicked. There is nothing good except to ignore and to forget. Come, come, I have thought of you too cruelly in the tortures of your absence; come, my beloved! I must forget you with you. It is with you only that I can forget you and lose myself.”

He took her in his arms and, lifting her veil, kissed her on the lips.

A little frightened in that vast, unknown hall, embarrassed by the look of strange things, she drew the black tulle to her chin.

“Here! You can not think of it.”

He said they were alone.

“Alone? And the man with terrible moustaches who opened the door?”

He smiled:

“That is Fusellier, my father’s former servant. He and his wife take charge of the house. Do not be afraid. They remain in their box. You shall see Madame Fusellier; she is inclined to familiarity. I warn you.”

“My friend, why has Monsieur Fusellier, a janitor, moustaches like a Tartar?”

“My dear, nature gave them to him. I am not sorry that he has the air of a sergent-major and gives me the illusion of being a country neighbor.”

Seated on the corner of the divan, he drew her to his knees and gave to her kisses which she returned.

She rose quickly.

“Show me the other rooms. I am curious. I wish to see everything.”

He escorted her to the second story. Aquarelles by Philippe Dechartre covered the walls of the corridor. He opened the door and made her enter a room furnished with white mahogany:

It was his mother’s room. He kept it intact in its past. Uninhabited for nine years, the room had not the air of being resigned to its solitude. The mirror waited for the old lady’s glance, and on the onyx clock a pensive Sappho was lonely because she did not hear the noise of the pendulum.

There were two portraits on the walls. One by Ricard represented Philippe Dechartre, very pale, with rumpled hair, and eyes lost in a romantic dream. The other showed a middle-aged woman, almost beautiful in her ardent slightness. It was Madame Philippe Dechartre.

“My poor mother’s room is like me,” said Jacques; “it remembers.”

“You resemble your mother,” said Therese; “you have her eyes. Paul Vence told me she adored you.”

“Yes,” he replied, smilingly. “My mother was excellent, intelligent, exquisite, marvellously absurd. Her madness was maternal love. She did not give me a moment of rest. She tormented herself and tormented me.”

Therese looked at a bronze figure by Carpeaux, placed on the chiffonier.

“You recognize,” said Dechartre, “the Prince Imperial by his ears, which are like the wings of a zephyr, and which enliven his cold visage. This bronze is a gift of Napoleon III. My parents went to Compiègne. My father, while the court was at Fontainebleau, made the plan of the castle, and designed the gallery. In the morning the Emperor would come, in his frock-coat, and smoking his meerschaum pipe, to sit near him like a penguin on a rock. At that time I went to day-school. I listened to his stories at table, and I have not forgotten them. The Emperor stayed there, peaceful and quiet, interrupting his long silence with few words smothered under his big moustache; then he roused himself a little and explained his ideas of machinery. He was an inventor. He would draw a pencil from his pocket and make drawings on my father’s designs. He spoiled in that way two or three studies a week. He liked my father a great deal, and promised works and honors to him which never came. The Emperor was kind, but he had no influence, as mamma said. At that time I was a little boy. Since then a vague sympathy has remained in me for that man, who was lacking in genius, but whose mind was affectionate and beautiful, and who carried through great adventures a simple courage and a gentle fatalism. Then he is sympathetic to me

because he has been combated and insulted by people who were eager to take his place, and who had not, as he had, in the depths of their souls, a love for the people. We have seen them in power since then. Heavens, how ugly they are! Senator Loyer, for instance, who at your house, in the smoking-room, filled his pockets with cigars, and invited me to do likewise. That Loyer is a bad man, harsh to the unfortunate, to the weak, and to the humble. And Garain, don't you think his mind is disgusting? Do you remember the first time I dined at your house and we talked of Napoleon? Your hair, twisted above your neck, and shot through by a diamond arrow, was adorable. Paul Vence said subtle things. Garain did not understand. You asked for my opinion."

"It was to make you shine. I was already conceited for you."

"Oh, I never could say a single phrase before people who are so serious. Yet I had a great desire to say that Napoleon III pleased me more than Napoleon I; that I thought him more touching; but perhaps that idea would have produced a bad effect. But I am not so destitute of talent as to care about politics."

He looked around the room, and at the furniture with familiar tenderness. He opened a drawer:

"Here are mamma's eye-glasses. How she searched for these eye-glasses! Now I will show you my room. If it is not in order you must excuse Madame Fusellier, who is trained to respect my disorder."

The curtains at the windows were down. He did not lift them. After an hour she drew back the red satin draperies; rays of light dazzled her eyes and fell on her floating hair. She looked for a mirror and found only a looking-glass of Venice, dull in its wide ebony border. Rising on the tips of her toes to see herself in it, she said:

"Is that sombre and far-away spectre I? The women who have looked at themselves in this glass can not have complimented you on it."

As she was taking pins from the table she noticed a little bronze figure which she had not yet seen. It was an old Italian work of Flemish taste: a nude woman, with short legs and heavy stomach, who apparently ran with an arm extended. She thought the figure had a droll air. She asked what she was doing.

"She is doing what Madame Mundanity does on the portal of the cathedral at Basle."

But Therese, who had been at Basle, did not know Madame Mundanity. She looked at the figure again, did not understand, and asked:

"Is it something very bad? How can a thing shown on the portal of a church be so difficult to tell here?"

Suddenly an anxiety came to her:

"What will Monsieur and Madame Fusellier think of me?"

Then, discovering on the wall a medallion wherein Dechartre had modelled the profile of a girl, amusing and vicious:

“What is that?”

“That is Clara, a newspaper girl. She brought the Figaro to me every morning. She had dimples in her cheeks, nests for kisses. One day I said to her: ‘I will make your portrait.’ She came, one summer morning, with earrings and rings which she had bought at the Neuilly fair. I never saw her again. I do not know what has become of her. She was too instinctive to become a fashionable demi-mondaine. Shall I take it out?”

“No; it looks very well in that corner. I am not jealous of Clara.”

It was time to return home, and she could not decide to go. She put her arms around her lover’s neck.

“Oh, I love you! And then, you have been to-day good-natured and gay. Gayety becomes you so well. I should like to make you gay always. I need joy almost as much as love; and who will give me joy if you do not?”

CHAPTER XXVII. THE PRIMROSE PATH

After her return to Paris, for six weeks Therese lived in the ardent half sleep of happiness, and prolonged delightfully her thoughtless dream. She went to see Jacques every day in the little house shaded by a tree; and when they had at last parted at night, she took away with her adored reminiscences. They had the same tastes; they yielded to the same fantasies. The same capricious thoughts carried them away. They found pleasure in running to the suburbs that border the city, the streets where the wine-shops are shaded by acacia, the stony roads where the grass grows at the foot of walls, the little woods and the fields over which extended the blue sky striped by the smoke of manufactories. She was happy to feel him near her in this region where she did not know herself, and where she gave to herself the illusion of being lost with him.

One day they had taken the boat that she had seen pass so often under her windows. She was not afraid of being recognized. Her danger was not great, and, since she was in love, she had lost prudence. They saw shores which little by little grew gay, escaping the dusty aridity of the suburbs; they went by islands with bouquets of trees shading taverns, and innumerable boats tied under willows. They debarked at Bas-Meudon. As she said she was warm and thirsty, he made her enter a wine-shop. It was a building with wooden galleries, which solitude made to appear larger, and which slept in rustic peace, waiting for Sunday to fill it with the laughter of girls, the cries of boatmen, the odor of fried fish, and the smoke of stews.

They went up the creaking stairway, shaped like a ladder, and in a first-story room a maid servant brought wine and biscuits to them. On the mantelpiece, at one of the corners of the room, was an oval mirror in a flower-covered frame. Through the open window one saw the Seine, its green shores, and the hills in the distance bathed with warm air. The trembling peace of a summer evening filled the sky, the earth, and the water.

Therese looked at the running river. The boat passed on the water, and when the wake which it left reached the shore it seemed as if the house rocked like a vessel.

"I like the water," said Therese. "How happy I am!"

Their lips met.

Lost in the enchanted despair of love, time was not marked for them except by the cool splash of the water, which at intervals broke under the half-open window. To the caressing praise of her lover she replied:

“It is true I was made for love. I love myself because you love me.”

Certainly, he loved her; and it was not possible for him to explain to himself why he loved her with ardent piety, with a sort of sacred fury. It was not because of her beauty, although it was rare and infinitely precious. She had exquisite lines, but lines follow movement, and escape incessantly; they are lost and found again; they cause aesthetic joys and despair. A beautiful line is the lightning which deliciously wounds the eyes. One admires and one is surprised. What makes one love is a soft and terrible force, more powerful than beauty. One finds one woman among a thousand whom one wants always. Therese was that woman whom one can not leave or betray.

She exclaimed, joyfully:

“I never shall be forsaken?”

She asked why he did not make her bust, since he thought her beautiful.

“Why? Because I am an ordinary sculptor, and I know it; which is not the faculty of an ordinary mind. But if you wish to think that I am a great artist, I will give you other reasons. To create a figure that will live, one must take the model like common material from which one will extract the beauty, press it, crush it, and obtain its essence. There is nothing in you that is not precious to me. If I made your bust I should be servilely attached to these things which are everything to me because they are something of you. I should stubbornly attach myself to the details, and should not succeed in composing a finished figure.”

She looked at him astonished.

He continued:

“From memory I might. I tried a pencil sketch.” As she wished to see it, he showed it to her. It was on an album leaf, a very simple sketch. She did not recognize herself in it, and thought he had represented her with a kind of soul that she did not have.

“Ah, is that the way in which you see me? Is that the way in which you love me?”

He closed the album.

“No; this is only a note. But I think the note is just. It is probable you do not see yourself exactly as I see you. Every human creature is a different being for every one that looks at it.”

He added, with a sort of gayety:

“In that sense one may say one woman never belonged to two men. That is one of Paul Vence’s ideas.”

“I think it is true,” said Therese.

It was seven o’clock. She said she must go. Every day she returned home later. Her husband had noticed it. He had said: “We are the last to arrive at all

the dinners; there is a fatality about it!" But, detained every day in the Chamber of Deputies, where the budget was being discussed, and absorbed by the work of a subcommittee of which he was the chairman, state reasons excused Therese's lack of punctuality. She recalled smilingly a night when she had arrived at Madame Garain's at half-past eight. She had feared to cause a scandal. But it was a day of great affairs. Her husband came from the Chamber at nine o'clock only, with Garain. They dined in morning dress. They had saved the Ministry.

Then she fell into a dream.

"When the Chamber shall be adjourned, my friend, I shall not have a pretext to remain in Paris. My father does not understand my devotion to my husband which makes me stay in Paris. In a week I shall have to go to Dinard. What will become of me without you?"

She clasped her hands and looked at him with a sadness infinitely tender. But he, more sombre, said:

"It is I, Therese, it is I who must ask anxiously, What will become of me without you? When you leave me alone I am assailed by painful thoughts; black ideas come and sit in a circle around me."

She asked him what those ideas were.

He replied:

"My beloved, I have already told you: I have to forget you with you. When you are gone, your memory will torment me. I have to pay for the happiness you give me."

CHAPTER XXVIII. NEWS OF LE MENIL

The blue sea, studded with pink shoals, threw its silvery fringe softly on the fine sand of the beach, along the amphitheatre terminated by two golden horns. The beauty of the day threw a ray of sunlight on the tomb of Chateaubriand. In a room where a balcony looked out upon the beach, the ocean, the islands, and the promontories, Therese was reading the letters which she had found in the morning at the St. Malo post-office, and which she had not opened in the boat, loaded with passengers. At once, after breakfast, she had closeted herself in her room, and there, her letters unfolded on her knees, she relished hastily her furtive joy. She was to drive at two o'clock on the mall with her father, her husband, the Princess Seniavine; Madame Berthier-d'Eyzelles, the wife of the Deputy, and Madame Raymond, the wife of the Academician. She had two letters that day. The first one she read exhaled a tender aroma of love. Jacques had never displayed more simplicity, more happiness, and more charm.

Since he had been in love with her, he said, he had walked so lightly and was supported by such joy that his feet did not touch the earth. He had only one fear, which was that he might be dreaming, and might awake unknown to her. Doubtless he was only dreaming. And what a dream! He was like one intoxicated and singing. He had not his reason, happily. Absent, he saw her continually. "Yes, I see you near me; I see your lashes shading eyes the gray of which is more delicious than all the blue of the sky and the flowers; your lips, which have the taste of a marvellous fruit; your cheeks, where laughter puts two adorable dimples; I see you beautiful and desired, but fleeing and gliding away; and when I open my arms, you have gone; and I see you afar on the long, long beach, not taller than a fairy, in your pink gown, under your parasol. Oh, so small! — small as you were one day when I saw you from the height of the Campanile in the square at Florence. And I say to myself, as I said that day: 'A bit of grass would suffice to hide her from me, yet she is for me the infinite of joy and of pain.'"

He complained of the torments of absence. And he mingled with his complaints the smiles of fortunate love. He threatened jokingly to surprise her at Dinard. "Do not be afraid. They will not recognize me. I shall be disguised as a vender of plaster images. It will not be a lie. Dressed in gray tunic and trousers, my beard and face covered with white dust, I shall ring the bell of the Montessuy villa. You may recognize me, Therese, by the statuettes on the plank placed on my head. They will all be cupids. There will be faithful Love, jealous Love,

tender Love, vivid Love; there will be many vivid Loves. And I shall shout in the rude and sonorous language of the artisans of Pisa or of Florence: *‘Tutti gli Amori per la Signora Teersinal!’*”

The last page of this letter was tender and grave. There were pious effusions in it which reminded Therese of the prayer-books she read when a child. “I love you, and I love everything in you: the earth that carries you, on which you weigh so lightly, and which you embellish; the light that allows me to see you; the air you breathe. I like the bent tree of my yard because you have seen it. I have walked tonight on the avenue where I met you one winter night. I have culled a branch of the boxwood at which you looked. In this city, where you are not, I see only you.”

He said at the end of his letter that he was to dine out. In the absence of Madame Fusellier, who had gone to the country, he should go to a wine-shop of the Rue Royale where he was known. And there, in the indistinct crowd, he should be alone with her.

Therese, made languid by the softness of invisible caresses, closed her eyes and threw back her head on the armchair. When she heard the noise of the carriage coming near the house, she opened the second letter. As soon as she saw the altered handwriting of it, the lines precipitate and uneven, the distracted look of the address, she was troubled.

Its obscure beginning indicated sudden anguish and black suspicion: “Therese, Therese, why did you give yourself to me if you were not giving yourself to me wholly? How does it serve me that you have deceived me, now that I know what I did not wish to know?”

She stopped; a veil came over her eyes. She thought:

“We were so happy a moment ago. What has happened? And I was so pleased at his joy, when it had already gone; it would be better not to write, since letters show only vanished sentiments and effaced ideas.”

She read further. And seeing that he was full of jealousy, she felt discouraged.

“If I have not proved to him that I love him with all my strength, that I love him with all there is in me, how am I ever to persuade him of it?”

And she was impatient to discover the cause of his folly. Jacques told it. While taking breakfast in the Rue Royale he had met a former companion who had just returned from the seaside. They had talked together; chance made that man speak of the Countess Martin, whom he knew. And at once, interrupting the narration, Jacques exclaimed: “Therese, Therese, why did you lie to me, since I was sure to learn some day that of which I alone was ignorant? But the error is mine more than yours. The letter which you put into the San Michele post-box,

your meeting at the Florence station, would have enlightened me if I had not obstinately retained my illusions and disdained evidence.

“I did not know; I wished to remain ignorant. I did not ask you anything, from fear that you might not be able to continue to lie; I was prudent; and it has happened that an idiot suddenly, brutally, at a restaurant table, has opened my eyes and forced me to know. Oh, now that I know, now that I can not doubt, it seems to me that to doubt would be delicious! He gave the name — the name which I heard at Fiesole from Miss Bell, and he added: ‘Everybody knows about that.’

“So you loved him. You love him still! He is near you, doubtless. He goes every year to the Dinard races. I have been told so. I see him. I see everything. If you knew the images that worry me, you would say, ‘He is mad,’ and you would take pity on me. Oh, how I should like to forget you and everything! But I can not. You know very well I can not forget you except with you. I see you incessantly with him. It is torture. I thought I was unfortunate that night on the banks of the Arno. But I did not know then what it is to suffer. To-day I know.”

As she finished reading that letter, Therese thought: “A word thrown haphazard has placed him in that condition, a word has made him despairing and mad.” She tried to think who might be the wretched fellow who could have talked in that way. She suspected two or three young men whom Le Menil had introduced to her once, warning her not to trust them. And with one of the white and cold fits of anger she had inherited from her father she said to herself: “I must know who he is.” In the meanwhile what was she to do? Her lover in despair, mad, ill, she could not run to him, embrace him, and throw herself on him with such an abandonment that he would feel how entirely she was his, and be forced to believe in her. Should she write? How much better it would be to go to him, to fall upon his heart and say to him: “Dare to believe I am not yours only!” But she could only write. She had hardly begun her letter when she heard voices and laughter in the garden. Therese went down, tranquil and smiling; her large straw hat threw on her face a transparent shadow wherein her gray eyes shone.

“How beautiful she is!” exclaimed Princess Seniavine. “What a pity it is we never see her! In the morning she is promenading in the alleys of Saint Malo, in the afternoon she is closeted in her room. She runs away from us.”

The coach turned around the large circle of the beach at the foot of the villas and gardens on the hillside. And they saw at the left the ramparts and the steeple of St. Malo rise from the blue sea. Then the coach went into a road bordered by hedges, along which walked Dinard women, erect under their wide headdresses.

“Unfortunately,” said Madame Raymond, seated on the box by Montessuy’s side, “old costumes are dying out. The fault is with the railways.”

“It is true,” said Montessuy, “that if it were not for the railways the peasants would still wear their picturesque costumes of other times. But we should not see them.”

“What does it matter?” replied Madame Raymond. “We could imagine them.”

“But,” asked the Princess Seniavine, “do you ever see interesting things? I never do.”

Madame Raymond, who had taken from her husband’s books a vague tint of philosophy, declared that things were nothing, and that the idea was everything.

Without looking at Madame Berthier-d’Eyzelles, seated at her right, the Countess Martin murmured:

“Oh, yes, people see only their ideas; they follow only their ideas. They go along, blind and deaf. One can not stop them.”

“But, my dear,” said Count Martin, placed in front of her, by the Princess’s side, “without leading ideas one would go haphazard. Have you read, Montessuy, the speech delivered by Loyer at the unveiling of the Cadet-Gassicourt statue? The beginning is remarkable. Loyer is not lacking in political sense.”

The carriage, having traversed the fields bordered with willows, went up a hill and advanced on a vast, wooded plateau. For a long time it skirted the walls of the park.

“Is it the Gueric?” asked the Princess Seniavine.

Suddenly, between two stone pillars surmounted by lions, appeared the closed gate. At the end of a long alley stood the gray stones of a castle.

“Yes,” said Montessuy, “it is the Gueric.”

And, addressing Therese:

“You knew the Marquis de Re? At sixty-five he had retained his strength and his youth. He set the fashion and was loved. Young men copied his frockcoat, his monocle, his gestures, his exquisite insolence, his amusing fads. Suddenly he abandoned society, closed his house, sold his stable, ceased to show himself. Do you remember, Therese, his sudden disappearance? You had been married a short time. He called on you often. One fine day people learned that he had quitted Paris. This is the place where he had come in winter. People tried to find a reason for his sudden retreat; some thought he had run away under the influence of sorrow or humiliation, or from fear that the world might see him grow old. He was afraid of old age more than of anything else. For seven years he has lived in retirement from society; he has not gone out of the castle once.

He receives at the Gueric two or three old men who were his companions in youth. This gate is opened for them only. Since his retirement no one has seen him; no one ever will see him. He shows the same care to conceal himself that he had formerly to show himself. He has not suffered from his decline. He exists in a sort of living death."

And Therese, recalling the amiable old man who had wished to finish gloriously with her his life of gallantry, turned her head and looked at the Gueric lifting its four towers above the gray summits of oaks.

On their return she said she had a headache and that she would not take dinner. She locked herself in her room and drew from her jewel casket the lamentable letter. She read over the last page.

"The thought that you belong to another burns me. And then, I did not wish that man to be the one."

It was a fixed idea. He had written three times on the same leaf these words: "I did not wish that man to be the one."

She, too, had only one idea: not to lose him. Not to lose him, she would have said anything, she would have done anything. She went to her table and wrote, under the spur of a tender, and plaintive violence, a letter wherein she repeated like a groan: "I love you, I love you! I never have loved any one but you. You are alone, alone — do you hear? — in my mind, in me. Do not think of what that wretched man said. Listen to me! I never loved any one, I swear, any one, before you."

As she was writing, the soft sigh of the sea accompanied her own sigh. She wished to say, she believed she was saying, real things; and all that she was saying was true of the truth of her love. She heard the heavy step of her father on the stairway. She hid her letter and opened the door. Montessuy asked her whether she felt better.

"I came," he said, "to say good-night to you, and to ask you something. It is probable that I shall meet Le Menil at the races. He goes there every year. If I meet him, darling, would you have any objection to my inviting him to come here for a few days? Your husband thinks he would be agreeable company for you. We might give him the blue room."

"As you wish. But I should prefer that you keep the blue room for Paul Vence, who wishes to come. It is possible, too, that Choulette may come without warning. It is his habit. We shall see him some morning ringing like a beggar at the gate. You know my husband is mistaken when he thinks Le Menil pleases me. And then I must go to Paris next week for two or three days."

CHAPTER XXIX. JEALOUSY

Twenty-four hours after writing her letter, Therese went from Dinard to the little house in the Ternes. It had not been difficult for her to find a pretext to go to Paris. She had made the trip with her husband, who wanted to see his electors whom the Socialists were working over. She surprised Jacques in the morning, at the studio, while he was sketching a tall figure of Florence weeping on the shore of the Arno.

The model, seated on a very high stool, kept her pose. She was a long, dark girl. The harsh light which fell from the skylight gave precision to the pure lines of her hip and thighs, accentuated her harsh visage, her dark neck, her marble chest, the lines of her knees and feet, the toes of which were set one over the other. Therese looked at her curiously, divining her exquisite form under the miseries of her flesh, poorly fed and badly cared for.

Dechartre came toward Therese with an air of painful tenderness which moved her. Then, placing his clay and the instrument near the easel, and covering the figure with a wet cloth, he said to the model:

“That is enough for to-day.”

She rose, picked up awkwardly her clothing, a handful of dark wool and soiled linen, and went to dress behind the screen.

Meanwhile the sculptor, having dipped in the water of a green bowl his hands, which the tenacious clay made white, went out of the studio with Therese.

They passed under the tree which studded the sand of the courtyard with the shells of its flayed bark. She said:

“You have no more faith, have you?”

He led her to his room.

The letter written from Dinard had already softened his painful impressions. She had come at the moment when, tired of suffering, he felt the need of calm and of tenderness. A few lines of handwriting had appeased his mind, fed on images, less susceptible to things than to the signs of things; but he felt a pain in his heart.

In the room where everything spoke of her, where the furniture, the curtains, and the carpets told of their love, she murmured soft words:

“You could believe — do you not know what you are? — it was folly! How can a woman who has known you care for another after you?”

“But before?”

“Before, I was waiting for you.”

“And he did not attend the races at Dinard?”

She did not think he had, and it was very certain she did not attend them herself. Horses and horse men bored her.

“Jacques, fear no one, since you are not comparable to any one.”

He knew, on the contrary, how insignificant he was and how insignificant every one is in this world where beings, agitated like grains in a van, are mixed and separated by a shake of the rustic or of the god. This idea of the agricultural or mystical van represented measure and order too well to be exactly applied to life. It seemed to him that men were grains in a coffee-mill. He had had a vivid sensation of this the day before, when he saw Madame Fusellier grinding coffee in her mill.

Therese said to him:

“Why are you not conceited?”

She added few words, but she spoke with her eyes, her arms, the breath that made her bosom rise.

In the happy surprise of seeing and hearing her, he permitted himself to be convinced.

She asked who had said so odious a thing.

He had no reason to conceal his name from her. It was Daniel Salomon.

She was not surprised. Daniel Salomon, who passed for not having been the lover of any woman, wished at least to be in the confidence of all and know their secrets. She guessed the reason why he had talked.

“Jacques, do not be cross at what I say to you. You are not skilful in concealing your sentiments. He suspected you were in love with me, and he wished to be sure of it. I am persuaded that now he has no doubt of our relations. But that is indifferent to me. On the contrary, if you knew better how to dissimulate, I should be less happy. I should think you did not love me enough.”

For fear of disquieting him, she turned to other thoughts:

“I have not told you how much I like your sketch. It is Florence on the Arno. Then it is we?”

“Yes, I have placed in that figure the emotion of my love. It is sad, and I wish it were beautiful. You see, Therese, beauty is painful. That is why, since life is beautiful, I suffer.”

He took out of his flannel coat his cigarette-holder, but she told him to dress. She would take him to breakfast with her. They would not quit each other that day. It would be delightful.

She looked at him with childish joy. Then she became sad, thinking she would have to return to Dinard at the end of the week, later go to Joinville, and that during that time they would be separated.

At Joinville, at her father's, she would cause him to be invited for a few days. But they would not be free and alone there, as they were in Paris.

"It is true," he said, "that Paris is good to us in its confused immensity."

And he added:

"Even in your absence I can not quit Paris. It would be terrible for me to live in countries that do not know you. A sky, mountains, trees, fountains, statues which do not know how to talk of you would have nothing to say to me."

While he was dressing she turned the leaves of a book which she had found on the table. It was *The Arabian Nights*. Romantic engravings displayed here and there in the text grand viziers, sultanas, black tunics, bazaars, and caravans.

She asked:

"The Arabian Nights-does that amuse you?"

"A great deal," he replied, tying his cravat. "I believe as much as I wish in these Arabian princes whose legs become black marble, and in these women of the harem who wander at night in cemeteries. These tales give me pleasant dreams which make me forget life. Last night I went to bed in sadness and read the history of the Three Calendars."

She said, with a little bitterness:

"You are trying to forget. I would not consent for anything in the world to lose the memory of a pain which came to me from you."

They went down together to the street. She was to take a carriage a little farther on and precede him at her house by a few minutes.

"My husband expects you to breakfast."

They talked, on the way, of insignificant things, which their love made great and charming. They arranged their afternoon in advance in order to put into it the infinity of profound joy and of ingenious pleasure. She consulted him about her gowns. She could not decide to leave him, happy to walk with him in the streets, which the sun and the gayety of noon filled. When they reached the Avenue des Ternes they saw before them, on the avenue, shops displaying side by side a magnificent abundance of food. There were chains of chickens at the caterer's, and at the fruiterer's boxes of apricots and peaches, baskets of grapes, piles of pears. Wagons filled with fruits and flowers bordered the sidewalk. Under the awning of a restaurant men and women were taking breakfast. Therese recognized among them, alone, at a small table against a laurel-tree in a box, Choulette lighting his pipe.

Having seen her, he threw superbly a five-franc piece on the table, rose, and bowed. He was grave; his long frock-coat gave him an air of decency and austerity.

He said he should have liked to call on Madame Martin at Dinard, but he had been detained in the Vendee by the Marquise de Rieu. However, he had issued a new edition of the Jardin Clos, augmented by the Verger de Sainte-Claire. He had moved souls which were thought to be insensible, and had made springs come out of rocks.

“So,” he said, “I was, in a fashion, a Moses.”

He fumbled in his pocket and drew from a book a letter, worn and spotted.

“This is what Madame Raymond, the Academician’s wife, writes me. I publish what she says, because it is creditable to her.”

And, unfolding the thin leaves, he read:

“I have made your book known to my husband, who exclaimed: ‘It is pure spiritualism. Here is a closed garden, which on the side of the lilies and white roses has, I imagine, a small gate opening on the road to the Academie.’”

Choulette relished these phrases, mingled in his mouth with the perfume of whiskey, and replaced carefully the letter in its book.

Madame Martin congratulated the poet on being Madame Raymond’s candidate.

“You should be mine, Monsieur Choulette, if I were interested in Academic elections. But does the Institute excite your envy?”

He kept for a few moments a solemn silence, then:

“I am going now, Madame, to confer with divers notable persons of the political and religious worlds who reside at Neuilly. The Marquise de Rieu wishes me to be a candidate, in her country, for a senatorial seat which has become vacant by the death of an old man, who was, they say, a general during his illusory life. I shall consult with priests, women and children — oh, eternal wisdom! — of the Bineau Boulevard. The constituency whose suffrages I shall attempt to obtain inhabits an undulated and wooded land wherein willows frame the fields. And it is not a rare thing to find in the hollow of one of these old willows the skeleton of a Chouan pressing his gun against his breast and holding his beads in his fleshless fingers. I shall have my programme posted on the bark of oaks. I shall say ‘Peace to presbyteries! Let the day come when bishops, holding in their hands the wooden crook, shall make themselves similar to the poorest servant of the poorest parish! It was the bishops who crucified Jesus Christ. Their names were Anne and Caiph. And they still retain these names before the Son of God. While they were nailing Him to the cross, I was the good thief hanged by His side.’”

He lifted his stick and pointed toward Neuilly:

“Dechartre, my friend, do you not think the Bineau Boulevard is the dusty one over there, at the right?”

“Farewell, Monsieur Choulette,” said Therese. “Remember me when you are a senator.”

“Madame, I do not forget you in any of my prayers, morning and evening. And I say to God: ‘Since, in your anger, you gave to her riches and beauty, regard her, Lord, with kindness, and treat her in accordance with your sovereign mercy.’”

And he went erect, and dragging his leg, along the populous avenue.

CHAPTER XXX. A LETTER FROM ROBERT

Enveloped in a mantle of pink broad cloth, Therese went down the steps with Dechartre. He had come in the morning to Joinville. She had made him join the circle of her intimate friends, before the hunting-party to which she feared Le Menil had been invited, as was the custom. The light air of September agitated the curls of her hair, and the sun made golden darts shine in the profound gray of her eyes. Behind them, the facade of the palace displayed above the three arcades of the first story, in the intervals of the windows, on long tables, busts of Roman emperors. The house was placed between two tall pavilions which their great slate roofs made higher, over pillars of the Ionic order. This style betrayed the art of the architect Leveau, who had constructed, in 1650, the castle of Joinville-sur-Oise for that rich Mareuilles, creature of Mazarin, and fortunate accomplice of Fouquet.

Therese and Jacques saw before them the flowerbeds designed by Le Notre, the green carpet, the fountain; then the grotto with its five rustic arcades crowned by the tall trees on which autumn had already begun to spread its golden mantle.

“This green geometry is beautiful,” said Dechartre.

“Yes,” said Therese. “But I think of the tree bent in the small courtyard where grass grows among the stones. We shall build a beautiful fountain in it, shall we not, and put flowers in it?”

Leaning against one of the stone lions with almost human faces, that guarded the steps, she turned her head toward the castle, and, looking at one of the windows, said:

“There is your room; I went into it last night. On the same floor, on the other side, at the other end, is my father’s office. A white wooden table, a mahogany portfolio, a decanter on the mantelpiece: his office when he was a young man. Our entire fortune came from that place.”

Through the sand-covered paths between the flowerbeds they walked to the boxwood hedge which bordered the park on the southern side. They passed before the orange-grove, the monumental door of which was surmounted by the Lorraine cross of Mareuilles, and then passed under the linden-trees which formed an alley on the lawn. Statues of nymphs shivered in the damp shade studded with pale lights. A pigeon, posed on the shoulder of one of the white women, fled. From time to time a breath of wind detached a dried leaf which fell, a shell of red gold, where remained a drop of rain. Therese pointed to the nymph and said:

“She saw me when I was a girl and wishing to die. I suffered from dreams and from fright. I was waiting for you. But you were so far away!”

The linden alley stopped near the large basin, in the centre of which was a group of tritons blowing in their shells to form, when the waters played, a liquid diadem with flowers of foam.

“It is the Joinville crown,” she said.

She pointed to a pathway which, starting from the basin, lost itself in the fields, in the direction of the rising sun.

“This is my pathway. How often I walked in it sadly! I was sad when I did not know you.”

They found the alley which, with other lindens and other nymphs, went beyond. And they followed it to the grottoes. There was, in the rear of the park, a semicircle of five large niches of rocks surmounted by balustrades and separated by gigantic Terminus gods. One of these gods, at a corner of the monument, dominated all the others by his monstrous nudity, and lowered on them his stony look.

“When my father bought Joinville,” she said, “the grottoes were only ruins, full of grass and vipers. A thousand rabbits had made holes in them. He restored the Terminus gods and the arcades in accordance with prints by Perrelle, which are preserved at the Bibliotheque Nationale. He was his own architect.”

A desire for shade and mystery led them toward the arbor near the grottoes. But the noise of footsteps which they heard, coming from the covered alley, made them stop for a moment, and they saw, through the leaves, Montessuy, with his arm around the Princess Seniavine’s waist. Quietly they were walking toward the palace. Jacques and Therese, hiding behind the enormous Terminus god, waited until they had passed.

Then she said to Dechartre, who was looking at her silently:

“That is amazing! I understand now why the Princess Seniavine, this winter, asked my father to advise her about buying horses.”

Yet Therese admired her father for having conquered that beautiful woman, who passed for being hard to please, and who was known to be wealthy, in spite of the embarrassments which her mad disorder had caused her. She asked Jacques whether he did not think the Princess was beautiful. He said she had elegance. She was beautiful, doubtless.

Therese led Jacques to the moss-covered steps which, ascending behind the grottoes, led to the Gerbe-de-l’Oise, formed of leaden reeds in the midst of a great pink marble vase. Tall trees closed the park’s perspective and stood at the beginning of the forest. They walked under them. They were silent under the faint moan of the leaves.

He pressed her in his arms and placed kisses on her eyelids. Night was descending, the first stars were trembling among the branches. In the damp grass sighed the frog's flutes. They went no farther.

When she took with him, in darkness, the road to the palace, the taste of kisses and of mint remained on her lips, and in her eyes was the image of her lover. She smiled under the lindens at the nymphs who had seen the tears of her childhood. The Swan lifted in the sky its cross of stars, and the moon mirrored its slender horn in the basin of the crown. Insects in the grass uttered appeals to love. At the last turn of the boxwood hedge, Therese and Jacques saw the triple black mass of the castle, and through the wide bay-windows of the first story distinguished moving forms in the red light. The bell rang.

Therese exclaimed:

"I have hardly time to dress for dinner."

And she passed swiftly between the stone lions, leaving her lover under the impression of a fairy-tale vision.

In the drawing-room, after dinner, M. Berthier d'Eyzelles read the newspaper, and the Princess Seniavine played solitaire. Therese sat, her eyes half closed over a book.

The Princess asked whether she found what she was reading amusing.

"I do not know. I was reading and thinking. Paul Vence is right: 'We find only ourselves in books.'"

Through the hangings came from the billiard-room the voices of the players and the click of the balls.

"I have it!" exclaimed the Princess, throwing down the cards.

She had wagered a big sum on a horse which was running that day at the Chantilly races.

Therese said she had received a letter from Fiesole. Miss Bell announced her forthcoming marriage with Prince Eusebia Albertinelli della Spina.

The Princess laughed:

"There's a man who will render a service to her."

"What service?" asked Therese.

"He will disgust her with men, of course."

Montessuy came into the parlor joyfully. He had won the game.

He sat beside Berthier-d'Eyzelles, and, taking a newspaper from the sofa, said:

"The Minister of Finance announces that he will propose, when the Chamber reassembles, his savings-bank bill."

This bill was to give to savings-banks the authority to lend money to communes, a proceeding which would take from Montessuy's business houses

their best customers.

“Berthier,” asked the financier, “are you resolutely hostile to that bill?”

Berthier nodded.

Montessuy rose, placed his hand on the Deputy’s shoulder, and said:

“My dear Berthier, I have an idea that the Cabinet will fall at the beginning of the session.”

He approached his daughter.

“I have received an odd letter from Le Menil.”

Therese rose and closed the door that separated the parlor from the billiard-room.

She was afraid of draughts, she said.

“A singular letter,” continued Montessuy. “Le Menil will not come to Joinville. He has bought the yacht Rosebud. He is on the Mediterranean, and can not live except on the water. It is a pity. He is the only one who knows how to manage a hunt.”

At this instant Dechartre came into the room with Count Martin, who, after beating him at billiards, had acquired a great affection for him and was explaining to him the dangers of a personal tax based on the number of servants one kept.

CHAPTER XXXI. AN UNWELCOME APPARITION

A pale winter sun piercing the mists of the Seine, illuminated the dogs painted by Oudry on the doors of the dining room.

Madame Martin had at her right Garain the Deputy, formerly Chancellor, also President of the Council, and at her left Senator Loyer. At Count Martin-Belleme's right was Monsieur Berthier-d'Eyzelles. It was an intimate and serious business gathering. In conformity with Montessuy's prediction, the Cabinet had fallen four days before. Called to the Elysee the same morning, Garain had accepted the task of forming a cabinet. He was preparing, while taking breakfast, the combination which was to be submitted in the evening to the President. And, while they were discussing names, Therese was reviewing within herself the images of her intimate life.

She had returned to Paris with Count Martin at the opening of the parliamentary session, and since that moment had led an enchanted life.

Jacques loved her; he loved her with a delicious mingling of passion and tenderness, of learned experience and curious ingenuity. He was nervous, irritable, anxious. But the uncertainty of his humor made his gayety more charming. That artistic gayety, bursting out suddenly like a flame, caressed love without offending it. And the playful wit of her lover made Therese marvel. She never could have imagined the infallible taste which he exercised naturally in joyful caprice and in familiar fantasy. At first he had displayed only the monotony of passionate ardor. That alone had captured her. But since then she had discovered in him a gay mind, well stored and diverse, as well as the gift of agreeable flattery.

"To assemble a homogeneous ministry," exclaimed Garain, "is easily said. Yet one must be guided by the tendencies of the various factions of the Chamber."

He was uneasy. He saw himself surrounded by as many snares as those which he had laid. Even his collaborators became hostile to him.

Count Martin wished the new ministry to satisfy the aspirations of the new men.

"Your list is formed of personalities essentially different in origin and in tendency," he said. "Yet the most important fact in the political history of recent years is the possibility, I should say the necessity, to introduce unity of views in

the government of the republic. These are ideas which you, my dear Garin, have expressed with rare eloquence.”

M. Berthier-d'Eyzelles kept silence.

Senator Loyer rolled crumbs with his fingers. He had been formerly a frequenter of beer-halls, and while moulding crumbs or cutting corks he found ideas. He raised his red face. And, looking at Garain with wrinkled eyes wherein red fire sparkled, he said:

“I said it, and nobody would believe it. The annihilation of the monarchical Right was for the chiefs of the Republican party an irreparable misfortune. We governed formerly against it. The real support of a government is the Opposition. The Empire governed against the Orleanists and against us; MacMahon governed against the Republicans. More fortunate, we governed against the Right. The Right — what a magnificent Opposition it was! It threatened, was candid, powerless, great, honest, unpopular! We should have nursed it. We did not know how to do that. And then, of course, everything wears out. Yet it is always necessary to govern against something. There are to-day only Socialists to give us the support which the Right lent us fifteen years ago with so constant a generosity. But they are too weak. We should reenforce them, make of them a political party. To do this at the present hour is the first duty of a State minister.”

Garain, who was not cynical, made no answer.

“Garain, do you not yet know,” asked Count Martin, “whether with the Premiership you are to take the Seals or the Interior?”

Garain replied that his decision would depend on the choice which some one else would make. The presence of that personage in the Cabinet was necessary, and he hesitated between two portfolios. Garain sacrificed his personal convenience to superior interests.

Senator Loyer made a wry face. He wanted the Seals. It was a long-cherished desire. A teacher of law under the Empire, he gave, in cafes, lessons that were appreciated. He had the sense of chicanery. Having begun his political fortune with articles skilfully written in order to attract to himself prosecution, suits, and several weeks of imprisonment, he had considered the press as a weapon of opposition which every good government should break. Since September 4, 1870, he had had the ambition to become Keeper of the Seals, so that everybody might see how the old Bohemian who formerly explained the code while dining on sauerkraut, would appear as supreme chief of the magistracy.

Idiots by the dozen had climbed over his back. Now having become aged in the ordinary honors of the Senate, unpolished, married to a brewery girl, poor, lazy, disillusioned, his old Jacobin spirit and his sincere contempt for the people

surviving his ambition, made of him a good man for the Government. This time, as a part of the Garain combination, he imagined he held the Department of Justice. And his protector, who would not give it to him, was an unfortunate rival. He laughed, while moulding a dog from a piece of bread.

M. Berthier-d'Eyzelles, calm and grave, caressed his handsome white beard.

"Do you not think, Monsieur Garain, that it would be well to give a place in the Cabinet to the men who have followed from the beginning the political principles toward which we are directing ourselves to-day?"

"They lost themselves in doing it," replied Garam, impatiently. "The politician never should be in advance of circumstances. It is an error to be in the right too soon. Thinkers are not men of business. And then — let us talk frankly — if you want a Ministry of the Left Centre variety, say so: I will retire. But I warn you that neither the Chamber nor the country will sustain you."

"It is evident," said Count Martin, "that we must be sure of a majority."

"With my list, we have a majority," said Garain. "It is the minority which sustained the Ministry against us. Gentlemen, I appeal to your devotion."

And the laborious distribution of the portfolios began again. Count Martin received, in the first place, the Public Works, which he refused, for lack of competency, and afterward the Foreign Affairs, which he accepted without objection.

But M. Berthier-d'Eyzelles, to whom Garain offered Commerce and Agriculture, reserved his decision.

Loyer got the Colonies. He seemed very busy trying to make his bread dog stand on the cloth. Yet he was looking out of the corners of his little wrinkled eyelids at the Countess Martin and thinking that she was desirable. He vaguely thought of the pleasure of meeting her again.

Leaving Garain to his combination, he was preoccupied by his fair hostess, trying to divine her tastes and her habits, asking her whether she went to the theatre, and if she ever went at night to the coffee-house with her husband. And Therese was beginning to think he was more interesting than the others, with his apparent ignorance of her world and his superb cynicism.

Gamin arose. He had to see several persons before submitting his list to the President of the Republic. Count Martin offered his carriage, but Garain had one.

"Do you not think," asked Count Martin, "that the President might object to some names?"

"The President," replied Garain, "will be inspired by the necessities of the situation."

He had already gone out of the door when he struck his forehead with his hand.

“We have forgotten the Ministry of War.”

“We shall easily find somebody for it among the generals,” said Count Martin.

“Ah,” exclaimed Garain, “you believe the choice of a minister of war is easy. It is clear you have not, like me, been a member of three cabinets and President of the Council. In my cabinets, and during my presidency the greatest difficulties came from the Ministry of War. Generals are all alike. You know the one I chose for the cabinet that I formed. When we took him, he knew nothing of affairs. He hardly knew there were two Chambers. We had to explain to him all the wheels of parliamentary machinery; we had to teach him that there were an army committee, finance committee, subcommittees, presidents of committees, a budget. He asked that all this information be written for him on a piece of paper. His ignorance of men and of things amazed and alarmed us. In a fortnight he knew the most subtle tricks of the trade; he knew personally all the senators and all the deputies, and was intriguing with them against us. If it had not been for President Grevy’s help, he would have overthrown us. And he was a very ordinary general, a general like any other. Oh, no; do not think that the portfolio of war may be given hastily, without reflection.”

And Garain still shivered at the thought of his former colleague.

Therese rose. Senator Loyer offered his arm to her, with the graceful attitude that he had learned forty years before at Bullier’s dancing-hall. She left the politicians in the drawing-room, and hastened to meet Dechartre.

A rosy mist covered the Seine, the stone quays, and the gilded trees. The red sun threw into the cloudy sky the last glories of the year. Therese, as she went out, relished the sharpness of the air and the dying splendor of the day. Since her return to Paris, happy, she found pleasure every morning in the changes of the weather. It seemed to her, in her generous selfishness, that it was for her the wind blew in the trees, or the fine, gray rain wet the horizon of the avenues; for her, so that she might say, as she entered the little house of the Ternes, “It is windy; it is raining; the weather is pleasant;” mingling thus the ocean of things in the intimacy of her love. And every day was beautiful for her, since each one brought her to the arms of her beloved.

While on her way that day to the little house of the Ternes she thought of her unexpected happiness, so full and so secure. She walked in the last glory of the sun already touched by winter, and said to herself:

“He loves me; I believe he loves me entirely. To love is easier and more natural for him than for other men. They have in life ideas they think superior to love — faith, habits, interests. They believe in God, or in duties, or in themselves. He believes in me only. I am his God, his duty, and his life.”

Then she thought:

"It is true, too, that he needs nobody, not even me. His thoughts alone are a magnificent world in which he could easily live by himself. But I can not live without him. What would become of me if I did not have him?"

She was not alarmed by the violent passion that he had for her. She recalled that she had said to him one day: "Your love for me is only sensual. I do not complain of it; it is perhaps the only true love." And he had replied: "It is also the only grand and strong love. It has its measure and its weapons. It is full of meaning and of images. It is violent and mysterious. It attaches itself to the flesh and to the soul of the flesh. The rest is only illusion and untruth." She was almost tranquil in her joy. Suspicions and anxieties had fled like the mists of a summer storm. The worst weather of their love had come when they had been separated from each other. One should never leave the one whom one loves.

At the corner of the Avenue Marceau and of the Rue Galilee, she divined rather than recognized a shadow that had passed by her, a forgotten form. She thought, she wished to think, she was mistaken. The one whom she thought she had seen existed no longer, never had existed. It was a spectre seen in the limbo of another world, in the darkness of a half light. And she continued to walk, retaining of this ill-defined meeting an impression of coldness, of vague embarrassment, and of pain in the heart.

As she proceeded along the avenue she saw coming toward her newspaper carriers holding the evening sheets announcing the new Cabinet. She traversed the square; her steps followed the happy impatience of her desire. She had visions of Jacques waiting for her at the foot of the stairway, among the marble figures; taking her in his arms and carrying her, trembling from kisses, to that room full of shadows and of delights, where the sweetness of life made her forget life.

But in the solitude of the Avenue MacMahon, the shadow which she had seen at the corner of the Rue Galilee came near her with a directness that was unmistakable.

She recognized Robert Le Menil, who, having followed her from the quay, was stopping her at the most quiet and secure place.

His air, his attitude, expressed the simplicity of motive which had formerly pleased Therese. His face, naturally harsh, darkened by sunburn, somewhat hollowed, but calm, expressed profound suffering.

"I must speak to you."

She slackened her pace. He walked by her side.

"I have tried to forget you. After what had happened it was natural, was it not? I have done all I could. It was better to forget you, surely; but I could not.

So I bought a boat, and I have been travelling for six months. You know, perhaps?"

She made a sign that she knew.

He continued:

"The Rosebud, a beautiful yacht. There were six men in the crew. I manoeuvred with them. It was a pastime."

He paused. She was walking slowly, saddened, and, above all, annoyed. It seemed to her an absurd and painful thing, beyond all expression, to have to listen to such words from a stranger.

He continued:

"What I suffered on that boat I should be ashamed to tell you."

She felt he spoke the truth.

"Oh, I forgive you — I have reflected alone a great deal. I passed many nights and days on the divan of the deckhouse, turning always the same ideas in my mind. For six months I have thought more than I ever did in my life. Do not laugh. There is nothing like suffering to enlarge the mind. I understand that if I have lost you the fault is mine. I should have known how to keep you. And I said to myself: 'I did not know. Oh; if I could only begin again!' By dint of thinking and of suffering, I understand. I know now that I did not sufficiently share your tastes and your ideas. You are a superior woman. I did not notice it before, because it was not for that that I loved you. Without suspecting it, I irritated you."

She shook her head. He insisted.

"Yes, yes, I often wounded your feelings. I did not consider your delicacy. There were misunderstandings between us. The reason was, we have not the same temperament. And then, I did not know how to amuse you. I did not know how to give you the amusement you need. I did not procure for you the pleasures that a woman as intelligent as you requires."

So simple and so true was he in his regrets and in his pain, she found him worthy of sympathy. She said to him, softly:

"My friend, I never had reason to complain of you."

He continued:

"All I have said to you is true. I understood this when I was alone in my boat. I have spent hours on it to which I would not condemn my worst enemy. Often I felt like throwing myself into the water. I did not do it. Was it because I have religious principles or family sentiments, or because I have no courage? I do not know. The reason is, perhaps, that from a distance you held me to life. I was attracted by you, since I am here. For two days I have been watching you. I did not wish to reappear at your house. I should not have found you alone; I should

not have been able to talk to you. And then you would have been forced to receive me. I thought it better to speak to you in the street. The idea came to me on the boat. I said to myself: 'In the street she will listen to me only if she wishes, as she wished four years ago in the park of Joinville, you know, under the statues, near the crown.'"

He continued, with a sigh:

"Yes, as at Joinville, since all is to be begun again. For two days I have been watching you. Yesterday it was raining; you went out in a carriage. I might have followed you and learned where you were going if I wished to do it. I did not do it. I do not wish to do what would displease you."

She extended her hand to him.

"I thank you. I knew I should not regret the trust I have placed in you."

Alarmed, impatient, fearing what more he might say, she tried to escape him.

"Farewell! You have all life before you. You should be happy. Appreciate it, and do not torment yourself about things that are not worth the trouble."

He stopped her with a look. His face had changed to the violent and resolute expression which she knew.

"I have told you I must speak to you. Listen to me for a minute."

She was thinking of Jacques, who was waiting for her. An occasional passer-by looked at her and went on his way. She stopped under the black branches of a tree, and waited with pity and fright in her soul.

He said:

"I forgive you and forget everything. Take me back. I will promise never to say a word of the past."

She shuddered, and made a movement of surprise and distaste so natural that he stopped. Then, after a moment of reflection:

"My proposition to you is not an ordinary one, I know it well. But I have reflected. I have thought of everything. It is the only possible thing. Think of it, Therese, and do not reply at once."

"It would be wrong to deceive you. I can not, I will not do what you say; and you know the reason why."

A cab was passing slowly near them. She made a sign to the coachman to stop. Le Menil kept her a moment longer.

"I knew you would say this to me, and that is the reason why I say to you, do not reply at once."

Her fingers on the handle of the door, she turned on him the glance of her gray eyes.

It was a painful moment for him. He recalled the time when he saw those charming gray eyes gleam under half-closed lids. He smothered a sob, and

murmured:

“Listen; I can not live without you. I love you. It is now that I love you. Formerly I did not know.”

And while she gave to the coachman, haphazard, the address of a tailor, Le Menil went away.

The meeting gave her much uneasiness and anxiety. Since she was forced to meet him again, she would have preferred to see him violent and brutal, as he had been at Florence. At the corner of the avenue she said to the coachman:

“To the Ternes.”

CHAPTER XXXII. THE RED LILY

It was Friday, at the opera. The curtain had fallen on Faust's laboratory. From the orchestra, opera-glasses were raised in a surveying of the gold and purple theatre. The sombre drapery of the boxes framed the dazzling heads and bare shoulders of women. The amphitheatre bent above the parquette its garland of diamonds, hair, gauze, and satin. In the proscenium boxes were the wife of the Austrian Ambassador and the Duchess Gladwin; in the amphitheatre Berthe d'Osigny and Jane Tulle, the latter made famous the day before by the suicide of one of her lovers; in the boxes, Madame Berard de La Malle, her eyes lowered, her long eyelashes shading her pure cheeks; Princess Seniavine, who, looking superb, concealed under her fan panther — like yawnings; Madame de Morlaine, between two young women whom she was training in the elegances of the mind; Madame Meillan, resting assured on thirty years of sovereign beauty; Madame Berthier d'Eyzelles, erect under iron-gray hair sparkling with diamonds. The bloom of her cheeks heightened the austere dignity of her attitude. She was attracting much notice. It had been learned in the morning that, after the failure of Garain's latest combination, M. Berthier-d'Eyzelles had, undertaken the task of forming a Ministry. The papers published lists with the name of Martin-Belleme for the treasury, and the opera-glasses were turned toward the still empty box of the Countess Martin.

A murmur of voices filled the hall. In the third rank of the parquette, General Lariviere, standing at his place, was talking with General de La Briche.

"I will do as you do, my old comrade, I will go and plant cabbages in Touraine."

He was in one of his moments of melancholy, when nothingness appeared to him to be the end of life. He had flattered Garain, and Garain, thinking him too clever, had preferred for Minister of War a shortsighted and national artillery general. At least, the General relished the pleasure of seeing Garain abandoned, betrayed by his friends Berthier-d'Eyzelles and Martin-Belleme. It made him laugh even to the wrinkles of his small eyes. He laughed in profile. Weary of a long life of dissimulation, he gave to himself suddenly the joy of expressing his thoughts.

"You see, my good La Briche, they make fools of us with their civil army, which costs a great deal, and is worth nothing. Small armies are the only good ones. This was the opinion of Napoleon I, who knew."

"It is true, it is very true," sighed General de La Briche, with tears in his eyes.

Montessuy passed before them; Lariviere extended his hand to him.

“They say, Montessuy, that you are the one who checked Garain. Accept my compliments.”

Montessuy denied that he had exercised any political influence. He was not a senator nor a deputy, nor a councillor-general. And, looking through his glasses at the hall:

“See, Lariviere, in that box at the right, a very beautiful woman, a brunette.”

And he took his seat quietly, relishing the sweets of power.

However, in the hall, in the corridors, the names of the new Ministers went from mouth to mouth in the midst of profound indifference: President of the Council and Minister of the Interior, Berthier-d’Eyzelles; justice and Religions, Loyer; Treasury, Martin-Belleme. All the ministers were known except those of Commerce, War, and the Navy, who were not yet designated.

The curtain was raised on the wine-shop of Bacchus. The students were singing their second chorus when Madame Martin appeared in her box. Her white gown had sleeves like wings, and on the drapery of her corsage, at the left breast, shone a large ruby lily.

Miss Bell sat near her, in a green velvet Queen Anne gown. Betrothed to Prince Eusebio Albertinelli della Spina, she had come to Paris to order her trousseau.

In the movement and the noise of the kermess she said:

“Darling, you have left at Florence a friend who retains the charm of your memory. It is Professor Arrighi. He reserves for you the praise-which he says is the most beautiful. He says you are a musical creature. But how could Professor Arrighi forget you, darling, since the trees in the garden have not forgotten you? Their unleaved branches lament your absence. Even they regret you, darling.”

“Tell them,” said Therese, “that I have of Fiesole a delightful reminiscence, which I shall always keep.”

In the rear of the opera-box M. Martin-Belleme was explaining in a low voice his ideas to Joseph Springer and to Duviquet. He was saying: “France’s signature is the best in the world.” He was inclined to prudence in financial matters.

And Miss Bell said:

“Darling, I will tell the trees of Fiesole that you regret them and that you will soon come to visit them on their hills. But I ask you, do you see Monsieur Dechartre in Paris? I should like to see him very much. I like him because his mind is graceful. Darling, the mind of Monsieur Dechartre is full of grace and elegance.”

Therese replied M. Jacques Dechartre was doubtless in the theatre, and that he would not fail to come and salute Miss Bell.

The curtain fell on the gayety of the waltz scene. Visitors crowded the foyers. Financiers, artists, deputies met in the anteroom adjoining the box. They surrounded M. Martin-Belleme, murmured polite congratulations, made graceful gestures to him, and crowded one another in order to shake his hand. Joseph Schmoll, coughing, complaining, blind and deaf, made his way through the throng and reached Madame Martin. He took her hand and said:

“They say your husband is appointed Minister. Is it true?”

She knew they were talking of it, but she did not think he had been appointed yet. Her husband was there, why not ask him?

Sensitive to literal truths only, Schmoll said:

“Your husband is not yet a Minister? When he is appointed, I will ask you for an interview. It is an affair of the highest importance.”

He paused, throwing from his gold spectacles the glances of a blind man and of a visionary, which kept him, despite the brutal exactitude of his temperament, in a sort of mystical state of mind. He asked, brusquely:

“Were you in Italy this year, Madame?”

And, without giving her time to answer:

“I know, I know. You went to Rome. You have looked at the arch of the infamous Titus, that execrable monument, where one may see the seven-branched candlestick among the spoils of the Jews. Well, Madame, it is a shame to the world that that monument remains standing in the city of Rome, where the Popes have subsisted only through the art of the Jews, financiers and money-changers. The Jews brought to Italy the science of Greece and of the Orient. The Renaissance, Madame, is the work of Israel. That is the truth, certain but misunderstood.”

And he went through the crowd of visitors, crushing hats as he passed.

Princess Seniavine looked at her friend from her box with the curiosity that the beauty of women at times excited in her. She made a sign to Paul Vence who was near her:

“Do you not think Madame Martin is extraordinarily beautiful this year?”

In the lobby, full of light and gold, General de La Briche asked Lariviere:

“Did you see my nephew?”

“Your nephew, Le Menil?”

“Yes — Robert. He was in the theatre a moment ago.”

La Briche remained pensive for a moment. Then he said:

“He came this summer to Semanville. I thought him odd. A charming fellow, frank and intelligent. But he ought to have some occupation, some aim in life.”

The bell which announced the end of an intermission between the acts had hushed. In the foyer the two old men were walking alone.

“An aim in life,” repeated La Briche, tall, thin, and bent, while his companion, lightened and rejuvenated, hastened within, fearing to miss a scene.

Marguerite, in the garden, was spinning and singing. When she had finished, Miss Bell said to Madame Martin:

“Darling, Monsieur Choulette has written me a perfectly beautiful letter. He has told me that he is very celebrated. And I am glad to know it. He said also: ‘The glory of other poets reposes in myrrh and aromatic plants. Mine bleeds and moans under a rain of stones and of oyster-shells.’ Do the French, my love, really throw stones at Monsieur Choulette?”

While Therese reassured Miss Bell, Loyer, imperious and somewhat noisy, caused the door of the box to be opened. He appeared wet and spattered with mud.

“I come from the Elysee,” he said.

He had the gallantry to announce to Madame Martin, first, the good news he was bringing:

“The decrees are signed. Your husband has the Finances. It is a good portfolio.”

“The President of the Republic,” inquired M. Martin — Belleme, “made no objection when my name was pronounced?”

“No; Berthier praised the hereditary property of the Martins, your caution, and the links with which you are attached to certain personalities in the financial world whose concurrence may be useful to the government. And the President, in accordance with Garain’s happy expression, was inspired by the necessities of the situation. He has signed.”

On Count Martin’s yellowed face two or three wrinkles appeared. He was smiling.

“The decree,” continued Loyer, “will be published tomorrow. I accompanied myself the clerk who took it to the printer. It was surer. In Grevy’s time, and Grevy was not an idiot, decrees were intercepted in the journey from the Elysee to the Quai Voltaire.”

And Loyer threw himself on a chair. There, enjoying the view of Madame Martin, he continued:

“People will not say, as they did in the time of my poor friend Gambetta, that the republic is lacking in women. You will give us fine festivals, Madame, in the salons of the Ministry.”

Marguerite, looking at herself in the mirror, with her necklace and earrings, was singing the jewel song.

“We shall have to compose the declaration,” said Count Martin. “I have thought of it. For my department I have found, I think, a fine formula.”

Loyer shrugged his shoulders.

“My dear Martin, we have nothing essential to change in the declaration of the preceding Cabinet; the situation is unchanged.”

He struck his forehead with his hand.

“Oh, I had forgotten. We have made your friend, old Lariviere, Minister of War, without consulting him. I have to warn him.”

He thought he could find him in the boulevard cafe, where military men go. But Count Martin knew the General was in the theatre.

“I must find him,” said Loyer.

Bowing to Therese, he said:

“You permit me, Countess, to take your husband?”

They had just gone out when Jacques Dechartre and Paul Vence came into the box.

“I congratulate you, Madame,” said Paul Vence.

But she turned toward Dechartre:

“I hope you have not come to congratulate me, too.”

Paul Vence asked her if she would move into the apartments of the Ministry.

“Oh, no,” she replied.

“At least, Madame,” said Paul Vence, “you will go to the balls at the Elysees, and we shall admire the art with which you retain your mysterious charm.”

“Changes in cabinets,” said Madame Martin, “inspire you, Monsieur Vence, with very frivolous reflections.”

“Madame,” continued Paul Vence, “I shall not say like Renan, my beloved master: ‘What does Sirius care?’ because somebody would reply with reason ‘What does little Earth care for big Sirius?’ But I am always surprised when people who are adult, and even old, let themselves be deluded by the illusion of power, as if hunger, love, and death, all the ignoble or sublime necessities of life, did not exercise on men an empire too sovereign to leave them anything other than power written on paper and an empire of words. And, what is still more marvellous, people imagine they have other chiefs of state and other ministers than their miseries, their desires, and their imbecility. He was a wise man who said: ‘Let us give to men irony and pity as witnesses and judges.’”

“But, Monsieur Vence,” said Madame Martin, laughingly, “you are the man who wrote that. I read it.”

The two Ministers looked vainly in the theatre and in the corridors for the General. On the advice of the ushers, they went behind the scenes.

Two ballet-dancers were standing sadly, with a foot on the bar placed against the wall. Here and there men in evening dress and women in gauze formed groups almost silent.

Loyer and Martin-Belleme, when they entered, took off their hats. They saw, in the rear of the hall, Lariviere with a pretty girl whose pink tunic, held by a gold belt, was open at the hips.

She held in her hand a gilt pasteboard cup. When they were near her, they heard her say to the General:

“You are old, to be sure, but I think you do as much as he does.”

And she was pointing disdainfully to a grinning young man, with a gardenia in his button-hole, who stood near them.

Loyer motioned to the General that he wished to speak to him, and, pushing him against the bar, said:

“I have the pleasure to announce to you that you have been appointed Minister of War.”

Lariviere, distrustful, said nothing. That badly dressed man with long hair, who, under his dusty coat, resembled a clown, inspired so little confidence in him that he suspected a snare, perhaps a bad joke.

“Monsieur Loyer is Keeper of the Seals,” said Count Martin.

“General, you cannot refuse,” Loyer said. “I have said you will accept. If you hesitate, it will be favoring the offensive return of Garain. He is a traitor.”

“My dear colleague, you exaggerate,” said Count Martin; “but Garain, perhaps, is lacking a little in frankness. And the General’s support is urgent.”

“The Fatherland before everything,” replied Lariviere with emotion.

“You know, General,” continued Loyer, “the existing laws are to be applied with moderation.”

He looked at the two dancers who were extending their short and muscular legs on the bar.

Lariviere murmured:

“The army’s patriotism is excellent; the good-will of the chiefs is at the height of the most critical circumstances.”

Loyer tapped his shoulder.

“My dear colleague, there is some use in having big armies.”

“I believe as you do,” replied Lariviere; “the present army fills the superior necessities of national defence.”

“The use of big armies,” continued Loyer, “is to make war impossible. One would be crazy to engage in a war these immeasurable forces, the management of which surpasses all human faculty. Is not this your opinion, General?”

General Lariviere winked.

“The situation,” he said, “exacts circumspection. We are facing a perilous unknown.”

Then Loyer, looking at his war colleague with cynical contempt, said:

“In the very improbable case of a war, don’t you think, my dear colleague, that the real generals would be the station-masters?”

The three Ministers went out by the private stairway. The President of the Council was waiting for them.

The last act had begun; Madame Martin had in her box only Dechartre and Miss Bell. Miss Bell was saying:

“I rejoice, darling, I am exalted, at the thought that you wear on your heart the red lily of Florence. Monsieur Dechartre, whose soul is artistic, must be very glad, too, to see at your corsage that charming jewel.

“I should like to know the jeweller that made it, darling. This lily is lithe and supple like an iris. Oh, it is elegant, magnificent, and cruel. Have you noticed, my love, that beautiful jewels have an air of magnificent cruelty?”

“My jeweller,” said Therese, “is here, and you have named him; it is Monsieur Dechartre who designed this jewel.”

The door of the box was opened. Therese half turned her head and saw in the shadow Le Menil, who was bowing to her with his brusque suppleness.

“Transmit, I pray you, Madame, my congratulations to your husband.”

He complimented her on her fine appearance. He spoke to Miss Bell a few courteous and precise words.

Therese listened anxiously, her mouth half open in the painful effort to say insignificant things in reply. He asked her whether she had had a good season at Joinville. He would have liked to go in the hunting time, but could not. He had gone to the Mediterranean, then he had hunted at Semanville.

“Oh, Monsieur Le Menil,” said Miss Bell, “you have wandered on the blue sea. Have you seen sirens?”

No, he had not seen sirens, but for three days a dolphin had swum in the yacht’s wake.

Miss Bell asked him if that dolphin liked music.

He thought not.

“Dolphins,” he said, “are very ordinary fish that sailors call sea-geese, because they have goose-shaped heads.”

But Miss Bell would not believe that the monster which had earned the poet Arion had a goose-shaped head.

“Monsieur Le Menil, if next year a dolphin comes to swim near your boat, I pray you play to him on the flute the Delphic Hymn to Apollo. Do you like the sea, Monsieur Le Menil?”

"I prefer the woods."

Self-contained, simple, he talked quietly.

"Oh, Monsieur Le Menil, I know you like woods where the hares dance in the moonlight."

Dechartre, pale, rose and went out.

The church scene was on. Marguerite, kneeling, was wringing her hands, and her head drooped with the weight of her long tresses. The voices of the organ and the chorus sang the death-song.

"Oh, darling, do you know that that death-song, which is sung only in the Catholic churches, comes from a Franciscan hermitage? It sounds like the wind which blows in winter in the trees on the summit of the Alverno."

Therese did not hear. Her soul had followed Dechartre through the door of her box.

In the anteroom was a noise of overthrown chairs. It was Schmoll coming back. He had learned that M. Martin-Belleme had recently been appointed Minister. At once he claimed the cross of Commander of the Legion of Honor and a larger apartment at the Institute. His apartment was small, narrow, insufficient for his wife and his five daughters. He had been forced to put his workshop under the roof. He made long complaints, and consented to go only after Madame Martin had promised that she would speak to her husband.

"Monsieur Le Menil," asked Miss Bell, "shall you go yachting next year?"

Le Menil thought not. He did not intend to keep the Rosebud. The water was tiresome.

And calm, energetic, determined, he looked at Therese.

On the stage, in Marguerite's prison, Mephistopheles sang, and the orchestra imitated the gallop of horses. Therese murmured:

"I have a headache. It is too warm here."

Le Menil opened the door.

The clear phrase of Marguerite calling the angels ascended to heaven in white sparks.

"Darling, I will tell you that poor Marguerite does not wish to be saved according to the flesh, and for that reason she is saved in spirit and in truth. I believe one thing, darling, I believe firmly we shall all be saved. Oh, yes, I believe in the final purification of sinners."

Therese rose, tall and white, with the red flower at her breast. Miss Bell, immovable, listened to the music. Le Menil, in the anteroom, took Madame Martin's cloak, and, while he held it unfolded, she traversed the box, the anteroom, and stopped before the mirror of the half-open door. He placed on her

bare shoulders the cape of red velvet embroidered with gold and lined with ermine, and said, in a low tone, but distinctly:

“Therese, I love you. Remember what I asked you the day before yesterday. I shall be every day, at three o’clock, at our home, in the Rue Spontini.”

At this moment, as she made a motion with her head to receive the cloak, she saw Dechartre with his hand on the knob of the door. He had heard. He looked at her with all the reproach and suffering that human eyes can contain. Then he went into the dim corridor. She felt hammers of fire beating in her chest and remained immovable on the threshold.

“You were waiting for me?” said Montessuy. “You are left alone to-day. I will escort you and Miss Bell.”

CHAPTER XXXIII. A WHITE NIGHT

In the carriage, and in her room, she saw again the look of her lover, that cruel and dolorous look. She knew with what facility he fell into despair, the promptness of his will not to will. She had seen him run away thus on the shore of the Arno. Happy then in her sadness and in her anguish, she could run after him and say, "Come." Now, again surrounded, watched, she should have found something to say, and not have let him go from her dumb and desolate. She had remained surprised, stunned. The accident had been so absurd and so rapid! She had against Le Menil the sentiment of simple anger which malicious things cause. She reproached herself bitterly for having permitted her lover to go without a word, without a glance, wherein she could have placed her soul.

While Pauline waited to undress her, Therese walked to and fro impatiently. Then she stopped suddenly. In the obscure mirrors, wherein the reflections of the candles were drowned, she saw the corridor of the playhouse, and her beloved flying from her through it.

Where was he now? What was he saying to himself alone? It was torture for her not to be able to rejoin him and see him again at once.

She pressed her heart with her hands; she was smothering.

Pauline uttered a cry. She saw drops of blood on the white corsage of her mistress.

Therese, without knowing it, had pricked her hand with the red lily.

She detached the emblematic jewel which she had worn before all as the dazzling secret of her heart, and, holding it in her fingers, contemplated it for a long time. Then she saw again the days of Florence — the cell of San Marco, where her lover's kiss weighed delicately on her mouth, while, through her lowered lashes, she vaguely perceived again the angels and the sky painted on the wall, and the dazzling fountain of the ice-vender against the bright cloth; the pavilion of the Via Alfieri, its nymphs, its goats, and the room where the shepherds and the masks on the screens listened to her sighs and noted her long silences.

No, all these things were not shadows of the past, spectres of ancient hours. They were the present reality of her love. And a word stupidly cast by a stranger would destroy these beautiful things! Happily, it was not possible. Her love, her lover, did not depend on such insignificant matters. If only she could run to his house! She would find him before the fire, his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, sad. Then she would run her fingers through his hair, force him to lift

his head, to see that she loved him, that she was his treasure, palpitating with joy and love.

She had dismissed her maid. In her bed she thought of only one thing.

It was an accident, an absurd accident. He would understand it; he would know that their love had nothing to do with anything so stupid. What folly for him to care about another! As if there were other men in the world!

M. Martin-Belleme half opened the bedroom door. Seeing a light he went in.

“You are not asleep, Therese?”

He had been at a conference with his colleagues. He wanted advice from his wife on certain points. He needed to hear sincere words.

“It is done,” he said. “You will help me, I am sure, in my situation, which is much envied, but very difficult and even perilous. I owe it to you somewhat, since it came to me through the powerful influence of your father.”

He consulted her on the choice of a Chief of Cabinet.

She advised him as best she could. She thought he was sensible, calm, and not sillier than many others.

He lost himself in reflections.

“I have to defend before the Senate the budget voted by the Chamber of Deputies. The budget contains innovations which I did not approve. When I was a deputy I fought against them. Now that I am a minister I must support them. I saw things from the outside formerly. I see them from the inside now, and their aspect is changed. And, then, I am free no longer.”

He sighed:

“Ah, if the people only knew the little that we can do when we are powerful!”

He told her his impressions. Berthier was reserved. The others were impenetrable. Loyer alone was excessively authoritative.

She listened to him without attention and without impatience. His pale face and voice marked for her like a clock the minutes that passed with intolerable slowness.

Loyer had odd sallies of wit. Immediately after he had declared his strict adhesion to the Concordat, he said: “Bishops are spiritual prefects. I will protect them since they belong to me. And through them I shall hold the guardians of souls, curates.”

He recalled to her that she would have to meet people who were not of her class and who would shock her by their vulgarity. But his situation demanded that he should not disdain anybody. At all events, he counted on her tact and on her devotion.

She looked at him, a little astonished.

“There is no hurry, my dear. We shall see later.”

He was tired. He said good-night and advised her to sleep. She was ruining her health by reading all night. He left her.

She heard the noise of his footsteps, heavier than usual, while he traversed the library, encumbered with blue books and journals, to reach his room, where he would perhaps sleep. Then she felt the weight on her of the night's silence. She looked at her watch. It was half-past one.

She said to herself: "He, too, is suffering. He looked at me with so much despair and anger."

She was courageous and ardent. She was impatient at being a prisoner. When daylight came, she would go, she would see him, she would explain everything to him. It was so clear! In the painful monotony of her thought, she listened to the rolling of wagons which at long intervals passed on the quay. That noise preoccupied, almost interested her. She listened to the rumble, at first faint and distant, then louder, in which she could distinguish the rolling of the wheels, the creaking of the axles, the shock of horses' shoes, which, decreasing little by little, ended in an imperceptible murmur.

And when silence returned, she fell again into her reverie.

He would understand that she loved him, that she had never loved any one except him. It was unfortunate that the night was so long. She did not dare to look at her watch for fear of seeing in it the immobility of time.

She rose, went to the window, and drew the curtains. There was a pale light in the clouded sky. She thought it might be the beginning of dawn. She looked at her watch. It was half-past three.

She returned to the window. The sombre infinity outdoors attracted her. She looked. The sidewalks shone under the gas-jets. A gentle rain was falling. Suddenly a voice ascended in the silence; acute, and then grave, it seemed to be made of several voices replying to one another. It — was a drunkard disputing with the beings of his dream, to whom he generously gave utterance, and whom he confounded afterward with great gestures and in furious sentences. Therese could see the poor man walk along the parapet in his white blouse, and she could hear words recurring incessantly: "That is what I say to the government."

Chilled, she returned to her bed. She thought, "He is jealous, he is madly jealous. It is a question of nerves and of blood. But his love, too, is an affair of blood and of nerves. His love and his jealousy are one and the same thing. Another would understand. It would be sufficient to please his self-love." But he was jealous from the depth of his soul. She knew this; she knew that in him jealousy was a physical torture, a wound enlarged by imagination. She knew how profound the evil was. She had seen him grow pale before the bronze St.

Mark when she had thrown the letter in the box on the wall of the old Florentine house at a time when she was his only in dreams.

She recalled his smothered complaints, his sudden fits of sadness, and the painful mystery of the words which he repeated frequently: "I can forget you only when I am with you." She saw again the Dinard letter and his furious despair at a word overheard at a wine-shop table. She felt that the blow had been struck accidentally at the most sensitive point, at the bleeding wound. But she did not lose courage. She would tell everything, she would confess everything, and all her avowals would say to him: "I love you. I have never loved any one except you!" She had not betrayed him. She would tell him nothing that he had not guessed. She had lied so little, as little as possible, and then only not to give him pain. How could he not understand? It was better he should know everything, since everything meant nothing. She represented to herself incessantly the same ideas, repeated to herself the same words.

Her lamp gave only a smoky light. She lighted candles. It was six o'clock. She realized that she had slept. She ran to the window. The sky was black, and mingled with the earth in a chaos of thick darkness. Then she was curious to know exactly at what hour the sun would rise. She had had no idea of this. She thought only that nights were long in December. She did not think of looking at the calendar. The heavy step of workmen walking in squads, the noise of wagons of milkmen and marketmen, came to her ear like sounds of good augury. She shuddered at this first awakening of the city.

CHAPTER XXXIV. "I SEE THE OTHER WITH YOU ALWAYS!"

At nine o'clock, in the yard of the little house, she observed M. Fusellier sweeping, in the rain, while smoking his pipe. Madame Fusellier came out of her box. Both looked embarrassed. Madame Fusellier was the first to speak:

"Monsieur Jacques is not at home." And, as Therese remained silent, immovable, Fusellier came near her with his broom, hiding with his left hand his pipe behind his back —

"Monsieur Jacques has not yet come home."

"I will wait for him," said Therese.

Madame Fusellier led her to the parlor, where she lighted the fire. As the wood smoked and would not flame, she remained bent, with her hands on her knees.

"It is the rain," she said, "which causes the smoke."

Madame Martin said it was not worth while to make a fire, that she did not feel cold.

She saw herself in the glass.

She was livid, with glowing spots on her cheeks. Then only she felt that her feet were frozen. She approached the fire. Madame Fusellier, seeing her anxious, spoke softly to her:

"Monsieur Jacques will come soon. Let Madame warm herself while waiting for him."

A dim light fell with the rain on the glass ceiling.

Upon the wall, the lady with the unicorn was not beautiful among the cavaliers in a forest full of flowers and birds. Therese was repeating to herself the words: "He has not yet come home." And by dint of saying this she lost the meaning of it. With burning eyes she looked at the door.

She remained thus without a movement, without a thought, for a time the duration of which she did not know; perhaps half an hour. The noise of a footstep came to her, the door was opened. He came in. She saw that he was wet with rain and mud, and burning with fever.

She fixed on him a look so sincere and so frank that it struck him. But almost at once he recalled within himself all his sufferings.

He said to her:

"What do you want of me? You have done me all the harm you could do me."

Fatigue gave him an air of gentleness. It frightened her.

“Jacques, listen to me!”

He motioned to her that he wished to hear nothing from her.

“Jacques, listen to me. I have not deceived you. Oh, no, I have not deceived you. Was it possible? Was it—”

He interrupted her:

“Have some pity for me. Do not make me suffer again. Leave me, I pray you. If you knew the night I have passed, you would not have the courage to torment me again.”

He let himself fall on the divan. He had walked all night. Not to suffer too much, he had tried to find diversions. On the Bercy Quay he had looked at the moon floating in the clouds. For an hour he had seen it veil itself and reappear. Then he had counted the windows of houses with minute care. The rain began to fall. He had gone to the market and had drunk whiskey in a wine-room. A big girl who squinted had said to him, “You don’t look happy.” He had fallen half asleep on the leather bench. It had been a moment of oblivion. The images of that painful night passed before his eyes. He said: “I recalled the night of the Arno. You have spoiled for me all the joy and beauty in the world.” He asked her to leave him alone. In his lassitude he had a great pity for himself. He would have liked to sleep — not to die; he held death in horror — but to sleep and never to wake again. Yet, before him, as desirable as formerly, despite the painful fixity of her dry eyes, and more mysterious than ever, he saw her. His hatred was vivified by suffering.

She extended her arms to him. “Listen to me, Jacques.” He motioned to her that it was useless for her to speak. Yet he wished to listen to her, and already he was listening with avidity. He detested and rejected in advance what she would say, but nothing else in the world interested him.

She said:

“You may have believed I was betraying you, that I was not living for you alone. But can you not understand anything? You do not see that if that man were my lover it would not have been necessary for him to talk to me at the play-house in that box; he would have a thousand other ways of meeting me. Oh, no, my friend, I assure you that since the day when I had the happiness to meet you, I have been yours entirely. Could I have been another’s? What you imagine is monstrous. But I love you, I love you! I love only you. I never have loved any one except you.”

He replied slowly, with cruel heaviness:

“‘I shall be every day, at three o’clock, at our home, in the Rue Spontini.’ It was not a lover, your lover, who said these things? No! it was a stranger, an unknown person.”

She straightened herself, and with painful gravity said:

“Yes, I had been his. You knew it. I have denied it, I have told an untruth, not to irritate or grieve you. I saw you so anxious. But I lied so little and so badly. You knew. Do not reproach me for it. You knew; you often spoke to me of the past, and then one day somebody told you at the restaurant — and you imagined much more than ever happened. While telling an untruth, I was not deceiving you. If you knew the little that he was in my life! There! I did not know you. I did not know you were to come. I was lonely.”

She fell on her knees.

“I was wrong. I should have waited for you. But if you knew how slight a matter that was in my life!”

And with her voice modulated to a soft and singing complaint she said:

“Why did you not come sooner, why?”

She dragged herself to him, tried to take his hands. He repelled her.

“I was stupid. I did not think. I did not know. I did not wish to know.”

He rose and exclaimed, in an explosion of hatred:

“I did not wish him to be that man.”

She sat in the place which he had left, and there, plaintively, in a low voice, she explained the past. In that time she lived in a world horribly commonplace. She had yielded, but she had regretted at once. If he but knew the sadness of her life he would not be jealous. He would pity her. She shook her head and said, looking at him through the falling locks of her hair:

“I am talking to you of another woman. There is nothing in common between that woman and me. I exist only since I have known you, since I have belonged to you.”

He walked about the room madly. He laughed painfully.

“Yes; but while you loved me, the other woman — the one who was not you?”

She looked at him indignantly:

“Can you believe—”

“Did you not see him again at Florence? Did you not accompany him to the station?”

She told him that he had come to Italy to find her; that she had seen him; that she had broken with him; that he had gone, irritated, and that since then he was trying to win her back; but that she had not even paid any attention to him.

“My beloved, I see, I know, only you in the world.” He shook his head.

“I do not believe you.”

She revolted.

"I have told you everything. Accuse me, condemn me, but do not offend me in my love for you."

He shook his head.

"Leave me. You have harmed me too much. I have loved you so much that all the pain which you could have given me I would have taken, kept, loved; but this is too hideous. I hate it. Leave me. I am suffering too much. Farewell!"

She stood erect.

"I have come. It is my happiness, it is my life, I am fighting for. I will not go."

And she said again all that she had already said. Violent and sincere, sure of herself, she explained how she had broken the tie which was already loose and irritated her; how since the day when she had loved him she had been his only, without regret, without a wandering look or thought. But in speaking to him of another she irritated him. And he shouted at her:

"I do not believe you."

She only repeated her declarations.

And suddenly, instinctively, she looked at her watch:

"Oh, it is noon!"

She had often given that cry of alarm when the farewell hour had surprised them. And Jacques shuddered at the phrase which was so familiar, so painful, and was this time so desperate. For a few minutes more she said ardent words and shed tears. Then she left him; she had gained nothing.

At her house she found in the waiting-room the marketwoman, who had come to present a bouquet to her. She remembered that her husband was a State minister. There were telegrams, visiting-cards and letters, congratulations and solicitations. Madame Marmet wrote to recommend her nephew to General Lariviere.

She went into the dining-room and fell in a chair. M. Martin-Belleme was just finishing his breakfast. He was expected at the Cabinet Council and at the former Finance Minister's, to whom he owed a call.

"Do not forget, my dear friend, to call on Madame Berthier d'Eyzelles. You know how sensitive she is."

She made no answer. While he was dipping his fingers in the glass bowl, he saw she was so tired that he dared not say any more. He found himself in the presence of a secret which he did not wish to know; in presence of an intimate suffering which one word would reveal. He felt anxiety, fear, and a certain respect.

He threw down his napkin.

"Excuse me, dear."

He went out.

She tried to eat, but could swallow nothing.

At two o'clock she returned to the little house of the Ternes. She found Jacques in his room. He was smoking a wooden pipe. A cup of coffee almost empty was on the table. He looked at her with a harshness that chilled her. She dared not talk, feeling that everything that she could say would offend and irritate him, and yet she knew that in remaining discreet and dumb she intensified his anger. He knew that she would return; he had waited for her with impatience. A sudden light came to her, and she saw that she had done wrong to come; that if she had been absent he would have desired, wanted, called for her, perhaps. But it was too late; and, at all events, she was not trying to be crafty.

She said to him:

"You see I have returned. I could not do otherwise. And then it was natural, since I love you. And you know it."

She knew very well that all she could say would only irritate him. He asked her whether that was the way she spoke in the Rue Spontini.

She looked at him with sadness.

"Jacques, you have often told me that there were hatred and anger in your heart against me. You like to make me suffer. I can see it."

With ardent patience, at length, she told him her entire life, the little that she had put into it; the sadness of the past; and how, since he had known her, she had lived only through him and in him.

The words fell as limpid as her look. She sat near him. He listened to her with bitter avidity. Cruel with himself, he wished to know everything about her last meetings with the other. She reported faithfully the events of the Great Britain Hotel; but she changed the scene to the outside, in an alley of the Casino, from fear that the image of their sad interview in a closed room should irritate her lover. Then she explained the meeting at the station. She had not wished to cause despair to a suffering man who was so violent. But since then she had had no news from him until the day when he spoke to her on the street. She repeated what she had replied to him. Two days later she had seen him at the opera, in her box. Certainly, she had not encouraged him to come. It was the truth.

It was the truth. But the old poison, slowly accumulating in his mind, burned him. She made the past, the irreparable past, present to him, by her avowals. He saw images of it which tortured him. He said:

"I do not believe you."

And he added:

"And if I believed you, I could not see you again, because of the idea that you have loved that man. I have told you, I have written to you, you remember, that I

did not wish him to be that man. And since—”

He stopped.

She said:

“You know very well that since then nothing has happened.”

He replied, with violence:

“Since then I have seen him.”

They remained silent for a long time. Then she said, surprised and plaintive:

“But, my friend, you should have thought that a woman such as I, married as I was — every day one sees women bring to their lovers a past darker than mine and yet they inspire love. Ah, my past — if you knew how insignificant it was!”

“I know what you can give. One can not forgive to you what one may forgive to another.”

“But, my friend, I am like others.”

“No, you are not like others. To you one can not forgive anything.”

He talked with set teeth. His eyes, which she had seen so large, glowing with tenderness, were now dry, harsh, narrowed between wrinkled lids and cast a new glance at her. He frightened her. She went to the rear of the room, sat on a chair, and there she remained, trembling, for a long time, smothered by her sobs. Then she broke into tears.

He sighed:

“Why did I ever know you?”

She replied, weeping:

“I do not regret having known you. I am dying of it, and I do not regret it. I have loved.”

He stubbornly continued to make her suffer. He felt that he was playing an odious part, but he could not stop.

“It is possible, after all, that you have loved me too.”

She answered, with soft bitterness:

“But I have loved only you. I have loved you too much. And it is for that you are punishing me. Oh, can you think that I was to another what I have been to you?”

“Why not?”

She looked at him without force and without courage.

“It is true that you do not believe me.”

She added softly:

“If I killed myself would you believe me?”

“No, I would not believe you.”

She wiped her cheeks with her handkerchief; then, lifting her eyes, shining through her tears, she said:

“Then, all is at an end!”

She rose, saw again in the room the thousand things with which she had lived in laughing intimacy, which she had regarded as hers, now suddenly become nothing to her, and confronting her as a stranger and an enemy. She saw again the nude woman who made, while running, the gesture which had not been explained to her; the Florentine models which recalled to her Fiesole and the enchanted hours of Italy; the profile sketch by Dechartre of the girl who laughed in her pretty pathetic thinness. She stopped a moment sympathetically in front of that little newspaper girl who had come there too, and had disappeared, carried away in the irresistible current of life and of events.

She repeated:

“Then all is at an end?”

He remained silent.

The twilight made the room dim.

“What will become of me?” she asked.

“And what will become of me?” he replied.

They looked at each other with sympathy, because each was moved with self-pity.

Therese said again:

“And I, who feared to grow old in your eyes, for fear our beautiful love should end! It would have been better if it had never come. Yes, it would be better if I had not been born. What a presentiment was that which came to me, when a child, under the lindens of Joinville, before the marble nymphs! I wished to die then.”

Her arms fell, and clasping her hands she lifted her eyes; her wet glance threw a light in the shadows.

“Is there not a way of my making you feel that what I am saying to you is true? That never since I have been yours, never — But how could I? The very idea of it seems horrible, absurd. Do you know me so little?”

He shook his head sadly. “I do not know you.”

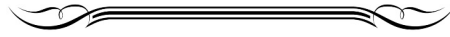
She questioned once more with her eyes all the objects in the room.

“But then, what we have been to each other was vain, useless. Men and women break themselves against one another; they do not mingle.”

She revolted. It was not possible that he should not feel what he was to her. And, in the ardor of her love, she threw herself on him and smothered him with kisses and tears. He forgot everything, and took her in his arms — sobbing, weak, yet happy — and clasped her close with the fierceness of desire. With her head leaning back against the pillow, she smiled through her tears. Then, brusquely he disengaged himself.

“I do not see you alone. I see the other with you always.” She looked at him, dumb, indignant, desperate. Then, feeling that all was indeed at an end, she cast around her a surprised glance of her unseeing eyes, and went slowly away.

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES I: THE ELM-TREE ON THE MALL



Translated by M. P. Willcocks The tetralogy *Histoire contemporaine* consists of the novels *Elm Tree on the Mall* (1897), *The Wicker Work Woman* (1897), *The Amethyst Ring* (1899) and *M. Bergeret in Paris* (1901). The four novels detail the political and social climate of France during the Third Republic towards the end of the 19th century. The central figure in the collection is M. Bergeret; he is a humanist and philologist and he finds himself engaged in philosophical dialogues with those close to him. The issue of the Church and government once again feature as vital aspects in the author's novels, as he demonstrates an aversion to the religious order and a profound scepticism about the state as a benevolent force under capitalism. There is a pervading pessimism throughout the tetralogy, with little hope expressed for any immediate human evolution or progression.

In *M. Bergeret a Paris*, the Dreyfus Affair, and what it reflects about French society and governance is at the heart of the text. The rampant anti-Semitism of 19th century Europe played a significant part in the prosecution of an innocent man and the corruption at the highest level of the French military was crucial to the wrongful conviction. France vehemently supported those defending Dreyfus and, as is very apparent in the text, attacked and lambasted those pro-army, royalist, nationalist, self-serving, reactionary forces that pervaded French society and supported such outrageous injustice.

HISTOIRE CONTEMPORAINE

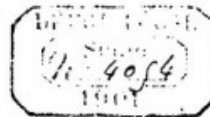
L'ORME DU MAIL

PAR

ANATOLE FRANCE

(A.-F. THIBAUT)

CINQUANTE-CINQUIÈME ÉDITION



PARIS

CALMANN LÉVY, ÉDITEUR

3, RUE AUBER, 3

1899

The title page of the first volume



Alfred Dreyfus

CONTENTS

[I](#)
[II](#)
[III](#)
[IV](#)
[V](#)
[VI](#)
[VII](#)
[VIII](#)
[IX](#)
[X](#)
[XI](#)
[XII](#)
[XIII](#)
[XIV](#)
[XV](#)
[XVI](#)
[XVII](#)



Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy was a commissioned officer in the French armed forces during the latter half of the 1800's, who gained notoriety as a spy for the German Empire and the actual perpetrator of the act of treason by which Dreyfus was wrongfully accused and convicted in 1894.

I

THE salon which the Cardinal-Archbishop used as a reception room had been fitted, in the time of Louis XV., with panellings of carved wood painted a light grey. Seated figures of women surrounded by trophies filled the angles of the cornices. The mirror on the chimney-piece being in two divisions, was covered, as to its lower half, with a drapery of crimson velvet, which threw into relief a pure white statue of Our Lady of Lourdes with her pretty blue scarf. Along the walls, in the middle of the panels, hung enamel plates framed in reddish plush, portraits of Popes Pius IX. and Leo XIII. printed in colours, and pieces of embroidery, either souvenirs of Rome or gifts from the pious ladies of the diocese. The gilded side-tables were loaded with plaster models of Gothic or Romanesque churches: the Cardinal-Archbishop was fond of buildings. From the plaster rose hung a Merovingian chandelier executed from the designs of M. Quatrebarbe, diocesan architect and Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory.

Tucking his cassock up above his violet stockings and warming his short, stout legs at the fire, Monseigneur was dictating a pastoral letter, whilst, seated on a large table of brass and tortoiseshell, on which stood an ivory crucifix, the vicar-general, M. de Goulet, was writing: *So that nothing may occur to sadden for us the joys of our retreat.. ..*

Monseigneur dictated in a dry, colourless voice. He was a very short man, but the great head with its square face softened by age was carried erect. Notwithstanding its coarse and homely lineaments, his face was expressive of subtlety and a kind of dignity born of habit and the love of command.

"The joys of our retreat.... Here you will expound the ideas of harmony, of the subduing of the mind, of that submission to the powers that be which is so necessary, and which I have already dealt with in my previous pastoral letters."

M. de Goulet raised his long, pale, refined head adorned by beautiful curled locks as though by a Louis Quatorze wig.

"But this time," said he, "would it not be expedient, while repeating these declarations, to show that reserve appropriate to the position of the secular powers, shaken as they are by internal convulsions and henceforth incapable of imparting to their covenants what they themselves do not possess — I mean continuity and stability? For you must see, Monseigneur, that the decline of parliamentary predominance..."

The Cardinal-Archbishop shook his head.

“Without reservations, Monsieur de Goulet, without any species of reservation. You are full of learning and piety, Monsieur de Goulet, but your old pastor can still give you a few lessons in discretion, before handing over the government of the diocese, at his death, to your youthful energy. Have we not to congratulate ourselves upon the attitude of M. *le Préfet* Worms-Clavelin, who regards our schools and our labours with favour? And are we not welcoming to our table to-morrow the general in command of the division and the president-in-chief? And, *à propos* of that, let me see the menu.”

The Cardinal-Archbishop inspected it, made alterations and additions, and gave special directions that the game should be ordered from Rivoire, the poacher to the prefecture.

A servant entered and presented him with a card on a silver tray.

Having read the name of Abbé Lantaigne, head of the high seminary, on the card, Monseigneur turned towards his vicar-general.

“I’ll wager,” said he, “that M. Lantaigne is coming to complain to me again about M. Guitrel.”

Abbé de Goulet rose to leave the salon. But Monseigneur stopped him.

“Stay! I want you to share with me the pleasure of listening to M. Lantaigne, who, as you know, is spoken of as the finest preacher in the diocese. For, if one listened only to public opinion, it would seem that he preaches better than you, dear Monsieur de Goulet. But that is not my opinion. Between ourselves, I care neither for his inflated style nor for his involved scholarship. He is terribly wearisome, and I am keeping you here to help me to get rid of him as quickly as possible.”

A priest entered the salon and bowed. He was very tall and immensely corpulent, with a serious, simple, abstracted face.

At sight of him Monseigneur exclaimed gaily: “Ah! good-day, Monsieur l’abbé Lantaigne. At the very moment that you sent in your name the vicar-general and I were talking about you. We were saying that you are the most distinguished orator in the diocese, and that the Lenten course you preached at Saint-Exupère is proof positive of your great talents and profound scholarship.”

Abbé Lantaigne reddened. He was sensitive to praise, and it was by the door of pride alone that the Enemy could find entrance to his soul.

“Monseigneur,” he answered, his face lit up by a smile which quickly died away, “the approval of Your Eminence gives me a deep delight which comes felicitously to soothe the opening of an interview which is a painful one to me. For it is a complaint which the head of the high seminary has the misfortune to pour into your paternal ears.”

Monseigneur interrupted him:

“Tell me, Monsieur Lantaigne, has that Lenten course at Saint-Exupère been printed?”

“A synopsis of it appeared in the diocesan *Semaine religieuse*. I am moved, Monseigneur, by the marks of interest which you deign to show in my apostolic labours. Alas! it is long enough ago since I first entered the pulpit. In 1880, when I had too many sermons, I gave them to M. Roquette, who has since been raised to a bishopric.”

“Ah!” cried Monseigneur, with a smile, “that good M. Roquette! When I went last year *ad limina apostolorum* I met M. Roquette for the first time just as he was gaily setting out for the Vatican. A week later I met him in Saint-Peter’s, where he was imbibing the solace that he much needed after being refused the cardinal’s hat.”

“And why,” demanded M. Lantaigne, in a voice that whistled like a whip-lash, “why should the purple have descended on the shoulders of this poor creature, a mediocrity in character, a nonentity in doctrine, whose mental density has made him ridiculous, and whose sole recommendation is that he has sat at table with the President of the Republic at a masonic banquet? Could M. Roquette only rise above himself, he would be astonished at finding himself a bishop. In these times of trial, when a future confronts us pregnant with awful menace as well as with gracious promise, it would be expedient to build up a body of clergy powerful both in character and in scholarship. And in fact, Monseigneur, I come to interview Your Eminence about another Roquette, about another priest who is unfitted to sustain the weight of his great duties. The professor of rhetoric at the high seminary, M. l’abbé Guitrel...”

Monseigneur interrupted with a feigned jest, and asked, with a laugh, whether Abbé Guitrel were in a fair way to become a bishop in his turn.

“What an idea, Monseigneur!” cried Abbé Lantaigne. “If perchance this man were raised to a bishopric, we should behold once more the days of Cautinus, when an unworthy pontiff defiled the see of Saint Martin.”

The Cardinal-Archbishop, curled up in his armchair, remarked genially:

“Cautinus, Bishop Cautinus” (it was the first time he had heard the name), “Cautinus who was a successor of Saint Martin. Are you quite sure that this Cautinus behaved as badly as they make out? It is an interesting point in the history of the Gallic Church concerning which I should much like to have the opinion of so learned a man as yourself, Monsieur Lantaigne.”

The head of the high seminary drew himself up.

“The testimony, Monseigneur, of Gregory of Tours is explicit in the passage touching Bishop Cautinus. This successor of the blessed Martin lived in such luxury and robbed the Church of its treasures to such an extent that, at the end of

two years of his administration, all the sacred vessels were in the hands of the Jews at Tours. And if I have coupled the name of Cautinus with that of this unhappy M. Guitrel, it is not without reason. M. Guitrel carries off the artistic curios, wood-carvings, or finely chased vessels, which are still to be found in country churches, in the care of ignorant churchwardens, and it is for the benefit of the Jews that he devotes himself to this robbery."

"For the benefit of the Jews?" demanded Monseigneur. "What is this that you are telling me?"

"For the benefit of the Jews," returned Abbé Lantaigne, "and to embellish the drawing-rooms of M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, Jew and freemason. Madame Worms-Clavelin is fond of antiquities. Through the medium of M. Guitrel she has gained possession of the copes treasured for three hundred years in the vestry of the church at Lusancy, and she has, I am told, turned them into seats of the kind called *poufs*."

Monseigneur shook his head.

"*Poufs!* But if the transfer of these disused vestments has been conducted legally, I do not see that Bishop Cautinus... I mean M. Guitrel, has done wrong in taking part in this lawful transaction. There is no reason why these copes of the pious priests of Lusancy should be revered as relics of the saints. There is no sacrilege in selling their cast-off clothes to be turned into *poufs*."

M. de Goulet, who had been nibbling his pen for some moments, could not refrain from a murmur. He deplored the fact that the churches should be thus robbed of their artistic treasures by infidels. The head of the high seminary answered in firm tones:

"Let us, Monseigneur, if you please, drop the subject of the trade to which the friend of M. Worms-Clavelin, the Jewish *préfet*, devotes himself, and allow me to enumerate the only too definite complaints which I have to bring against the professor of rhetoric at the high seminary. I impugn: first, his doctrine; second, his conduct. I say that I indict first his doctrine, and that on four grounds: first..."

The Cardinal-Archbishop stretched out both his arms as though to ward off such a multitude of charges.

"Monsieur Lantaigne, I see that for some time the vicar-general has been biting his pen and making desperate signs to remind me that our printer is waiting for our pastoral letter, which has to be read on Sunday in the churches of our diocese. Allow me to finish dictating this charge, which, I trust, will bring some solace to our priests and faithful people."

Abbé Lantaigne bowed, and very sadly withdrew. After his departure the Cardinal-Archbishop, turning to M. de Goulet, said:

“I did not know that M. Guitrel was so friendly with the *préfet*. And I am grateful to the head of the seminary for having warned me of it. M. Lantaigne is sincerity itself: I prize his frankness and straightforwardness. With him, one knows where one is...”

He corrected himself:

“Where one would be.”

II

M. LANTAIGNE, principal of the high seminary, was working in his study, the whitewashed walls of which were three parts covered by deal shelves loaded with the dark bindings of his working library, the whole of Migne's *Patrologie*, and cheap editions of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Baronius and Bossuet. A virgin in the manner of Mignard surmounted the door, with a dusty sprig of box sticking out of the old gilt frame. Uninviting horsehair chairs stood on the red tiles in front of the windows, through which the stale smell of the refectory ascended to the cotton window-curtains.

The principal, bending over his little walnut-wood desk, was turning over the pages of the registers handed him by Abbé Perruque, the master of method, who stood at his side.

"I see," said M. Lantaigne, "that again this week a hoard of sweetmeats has been discovered in a pupil's room. Such infractions are far too often repeated."

In fact, the students of the seminary made a practice of hiding cakes of chocolate among their school-books. This was what they called theology *Menier*. They used to meet in a room at night, by twos or threes, to discuss it.

M. Lantaigne begged the master of method to use unfaltering severity.

"This disorder is deplorable in that it may involve the most serious misconduct."

He asked for the register of the rhetoric class. But when M. Perruque had handed it to him, he looked away from it. His heart swelled at the idea that sacred rhetoric was taught by this Guitrel, a man with neither morals nor learning. He sighed within himself:

"When will the scales fall from the Cardinal-Archbishop's eyes, that he may see the unworthiness of this priest?"

Then, tearing himself from this bitter thought only to plunge into the bitterness of another:

"And Piédagnel?" he asked.

For two years Firmin Piédagnel had caused incessant anxiety to the head of the seminary. The only son of a cobbler who kept his stall between two buttresses of Saint-Exupère, he was, through the brightness of his intelligence, the most brilliant pupil in the house. Of placid temperament, he had a very fair report for conduct. The timidity of his character and the weakness of his constitution seemed a good safeguard for his moral purity. But he had neither the instinct for theology nor the vocation for the priesthood. His very faith was

unstable. With his great spiritual knowledge, M. Lantaigne had no inordinate fear of those violent crises among his young Levites, which, often salutary, are to be allayed by grace. He dreaded, on the contrary, the indifference of a placidly intractable mind. He almost despaired of a soul to whom doubt was light and bearable and whose thoughts flowed to irreligion by a natural inclination. Such a one the shoemaker's clever son showed himself to be. M. Lantaigne had one day unexpectedly chanced, by one of those brusque wiles which were natural to him, to plumb the depths of this nature, double-faced through its courtesy. He perceived with consternation that from the teaching at the seminary Firmin had only acquired an elegant Latin style, skill in sophistry, and a kind of sentimental mysticism. From that time Firmin had appeared to him as a being weak and formidable, pitiable and noxious. Yet he loved this lad, loved him tenderly, to infatuation. In spite of his disappointment it pleased him that he should be the honour, the glory of the seminary. He loved in Firmin the charm of his mind, the subtle harmony of his style, and even the tenderness of those pale, short-sighted eyes, like bruises under the quivering eyelids. He sometimes took pleasure in seeing in him one of the victims of this Abbé Guitrel, whose intellectual and moral poverty must (so he firmly believed) injure and depress an intelligent and quick-sighted pupil. He flattered himself that, if better trained in the future, Firmin, although too weak ever to give to the Church one of those powerful leaders whom she so much needs, would at least produce for religion, perhaps, a Péreyve or a Gerbet, one of those priests who carry into the priesthood the heart of a young mother. But, incapable of long self-flattery, M. Lantaigne speedily rejected this unlikely hope and saw in this lad a Guérault, a Renan. And the sweat of anguish chilled his forehead. His fear was lest, in rearing such pupils, he might be training formidable enemies of the truth.

He knew that it was in the temple itself that the hammers were forged which overthrew it. He very often said: "Such is the power of theological discipline that it alone is capable of rearing great reprobates; an unbeliever who has not passed through our hands is powerless and without weapons for evil. It is within our walls that they imbibe all knowledge, even that of blasphemy." From the mass of the students he only demanded industry and integrity, feeling certain that these would make good parish priests of them. But in his finest students he feared curiosity, pride, the impious boldness of the intellect, and even the qualities that brought the angels to perdition.

"Monsieur Perruque," said he brusquely, "let us see the notes on Piédagnel."

The master of method, with his thumb moistened at his lips, turned over the leaves of the register, and then pointed out with his great dirt-encircled forefinger the lines traced on the margin of the book:

M. Piédagnel holds thoughtless conversations.

M. Piédagnel gives way to depression.

M. Piédagnel refuses to take any physical exercise.

The director read and shook his head. He turned the leaf and continued reading:

M. Piédagnel has written a poor essay on the unity of the faith.

At this Abbé Lantaigne burst out:

“Unity — that is just what he will never grasp! And yet it is the idea above all others which ought to be impressed on the priest’s mind. For I do not fear to affirm that this conception is entirely of God, and, as it were, His most vivid manifestation among men.”

He turned his hollow, gloomy gaze towards Abbé ‘Perruque.

“This subject of the unity of the faith, Monsieur Perruque, is my touchstone by which I try the spirits. The simplest minds, if they do not fail in sincerity, draw logical conclusions from the idea of unity; and the most able derive an admirable philosophy from this principle. In the pulpit, Monsieur Perruque, I have three times handled the unity of the faith, and the wealth of the subject still amazes me.

He resumed his reading:

M. Piédagnel has compiled a note-book, which has been found in his desk, and which contains, written in M. Piédagnel’s own hand, extracts from different love-poems, composed by Leconte de Lisle and Paul Verlaine, as well as by several other loose writers, and the choice of the extracts betrays excessive profligacy both of the mind and the senses.

He shut the register and pushed it away roughly. “What we lack nowadays,” sighed he, “is neither learning nor intelligence; it is the theological mind.”

“Monsieur,” said Abbé Perruque, “the steward wants to know if you can receive him at once. The contract with Lafolie for butcher’s meat expires on the fifteenth of this month, and they are waiting for your decision before renewing an arrangement upon which the house can scarcely plume itself. For you cannot fail to have remarked the bad quality of the beef supplied by Lafolie.”

“Tell the steward to come in,” said M. Lantaigne.

And, left alone, he put his head in his hands and sighed:

“*O quando finieris et quando cessabis, universa vanitas mutidi?* (“When wilt thou end, when wilt thou cease to be, oh, everpresent vanity of this world?”) Far from Thee, O God, we are but wandering shadows. There are no greater crimes

than those committed against the unity of the faith. Vouchsafe to lead the world back to this blessed unity!"

When, during the recreation hour after the midday meal, the principal crossed the courtyard, the seminarists were playing a game of football. On the gravelled playground there was a great commotion of ruddy heads poised on stalks like black knife-handles, the jerky gestures of puppets, and shouts and cries in all the rustic dialects of the diocese. The master of method, Abbé Perruque, his cassock tucked up, was joining in the game with the zest of a cloistered peasant, drunk with air and exercise, and in athletic style was kicking from the toe of his buckled shoe the huge ball covered with its leather quarters. At sight of the principal the players stopped. M. Lantaigne made a sign to them to continue. He followed the grove of stunted acacia trees that fringes the courtyard on the side towards the ramparts and the country. Halfway along he met three pupils who, arm in arm, were walking up and down as they talked. Since they usually spent the recreation hours in this way, they were called the peripatetics. M. Lantaigne called one of them, the shortest, a pale-faced lad, with slightly stooping shoulders, a refined and mocking mouth, and timid eyes. He did not hear at first, and his neighbour had to nudge him with an elbow and say to him:

"Piédagnel, the principal is calling you."

At this Piédagnel approached Abbé Lantaigne and bowed to him with a half-graceful clumsiness.

"My child," said the principal to him, "you will be so good as to be my server at mass to-morrow." The young man blushed. It was a coveted honour to serve the principal's mass.

Abbé Lantaigne, his breviary under his arm, went out by the little door that opens on the fields and took the customary road in his walks, a dusty track edged with nettles and thistles that follows the ramparts.

He was thinking:

"What will become of this poor child, if he is suddenly expelled, ignorant of any sort of manual labour, weak, delicate, and timid? And what grief there will be in his infirm father's shop!" He walked along over the flints of the barren road. Having reached the mission cross, he took off his hat, wiped the perspiration from his forehead with his silk handkerchief, and said in a low voice:

"Oh God, inspire me to act according to Thy interests, whatever it may cost my paternal heart!" At half-past six next morning Abbé Lantaigne was saying the concluding words of the mass in the bare, deserted chapel.

In front of a side-altar a solitary old sacristan was setting paper flowers in porcelain vases, beneath the gilt statue of Saint Joseph. A grey, rainy daylight

poured sadly through the blurred window-panes. The celebrant, upright at the left of the high altar, was reading the last Gospel.

“Et Verbum caro factum est” said he, bending his knees.

Firmin Piédagnel, who was serving the mass, knelt at the same time on the step where stood the bell; then he rose and, after the last responses, preceded the priest into the sacristy. Abbé Lantaigne set down the chalice with the corporal and waited for the server to help him remove his priestly vestments. Firmin Piédagnel, being sensitive to the mysterious influences of things, felt the charm of this scene, so simple and yet so sacred. His soul, suffused with tender unction, tasted with a kind of joy the familiar grandeur of the priesthood. Never had he felt so deeply the desire to be a priest and in his turn to celebrate the holy sacrifice. Having kissed and carefully folded up the alb and chasuble, he bowed before Abbé Lantaigne ere retiring. The head of the seminary, who had resumed his great-coat, made a sign to him to stay, and looked at him with such nobility and kindness that the young man received the look as a favour and a blessing. After a long silence:

“My child,” said M. Lantaigne, “whilst celebrating this mass which I asked you to serve, I prayed God to give me the strength to send you away. My prayer has been granted. You are no longer a member of this household.”

As he took in these words, Firmin was stupefied. It seemed to him that the flooring was giving way beneath his feet. Through eyes big with tears, he vaguely saw the lonely road, the rain, a life darkened with misery and toil, the fate of a lost child terrified by its own weakness and timidity. He looked at M. Lantaigne. The resolute gentleness, the quiet strength, the calmness of this man revolted him. Suddenly a feeling was born and grew in him, a feeling that sustained and strengthened him, a hatred of the priest, a deathless and fruitful hatred, a hatred to fill a whole life. Without uttering a word, he went with great strides out of the sacristy.

III

ABBÉ LANTAIGNE, head of the high seminary of... wrote the following letter to Monseigneur the Cardinal-Archbishop of...: “MONSEIGNEUR,

“When, on the 17th of this month, I had the honour of being received by Your Eminence, I feared to trespass on your paternal kindness and on your pastoral clemency by expounding at sufficient length the matter about which I came to converse with you. But as this affair reflects on your high and holy jurisdiction and concerns the government of this diocese, which counts among the most ancient and beautiful provinces of Christian Gaul, I conceive it to be my duty to submit to the watchful impartiality of Your Eminence the facts concerning which it is called upon to judge in the plenitude of its authority and in the fulness of its wisdom.

“In bringing these facts to the knowledge of Your Eminence, I am fulfilling a duty which I should characterize as painful to my heart, if I did not know that the accomplishment of every duty brings to the soul an inexhaustible spring of consolation, and that it is not enough to obey God, if one does not obey Him with ready gladness.

“The facts which it behoves you to know, Monsiegnur, relate to Abbé Guitrel, professor of rhetoric at the high seminary. I will state them as briefly and as accurately as possible.

“These facts concern:

“First, the doctrine; “Second, the morals of Abbé Guitrel.

“I will first state the facts relating to M. Guitrel’s doctrine.

“On reading the note-books from which he delivers his lectures on sacred rhetoric, I noticed in them various opinions which do not agree with the tradition of the Church.

“First, M. Guitrel, whilst condemning as to their conclusions the commentaries on Holy Scripture drawn up by atheists and so-called reformers, does not condemn them in their principle and origin, in which he is seriously in error. For it is evident that, the care of the Scriptures having been confided to the Church, the Church alone is capable of interpreting the books which she alone preserves.

“Second, led astray by the recent example of a monk who thirsted for the applause of the age, M. Guitrel presumes to explain the scenes of the Gospel by means of that pretended local colour and that pseudo-psychology of which the Germans make a great show; and he does not perceive that, by thus walking in

the way of infidels, he is skirting the abyss into which they have fallen. I should weary the benevolent attention of His Eminence Monseigneur the Cardinal-Archbishop were I to place before his reverend glance the passages where M. Guitrel with pitiable childishness follows the narratives of travellers, as to 'the boat-service on the Lake of Tiberias,' and those where, with intolerable indecency, he describes what he calls 'the soul-states' and 'the psychic crises' of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"These foolish innovations, blameworthy in a cloistered worldling, should not be tolerated in a secular cleric entrusted with the instruction of young aspirants to the priesthood. Hence I was more grieved than surprised when I heard that an intelligent pupil, whom I have since been obliged to expel for his bad disposition, described the professor of rhetoric as a 'fin de siècle' priest.

"Third, M. Guitrel affects a culpable laxity in relying on the untrustworthy authority of Clement of Alexandria, who is not included in the martyrology. In this the professor of rhetoric betrays the weakness of a mind misled by the example of the so-called mystics, who imagine that they find in the *Stromata* a purely allegorical interpretation of the most concrete mysteries of the Christian faith. And, without actually going astray, M. Guitrel shows himself in this matter, to be inconsistent and light-minded.

"Fourth, since depravity of taste is one of the results of doctrinal weakness, and since a mind which rejects strong food batters on worthless nourishment, M. Guitrel seeks models of eloquence for the use of his pupils even in the speeches of M. Lacordaire and the homilies of M. Gratry.

"Secondly, I will enumerate the facts relating to M. Guitrel's morals.

"First, Abbé Guitrel consorts with M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin both secretly and constantly, and in this he throws off the reserve which it always behoves an ecclesiastic of lower rank to observe in relation to the public authorities, a reserve which, under present circumstances and towards a Jewish official, there is no excuse for dropping. And by the care which he takes never to enter the prefecture save by a private door, M. Guitrel seems to acknowledge to himself the falseness of a position which he nevertheless maintains.

"It is also notorious that M. Guitrel occupies a position with respect to Madame Worms-Clavelin that is more mercantile than religious. This lady is fond of antiquities, and although a Jewess, she does not despise any articles connected with religion, provided that they have the merit of art or of antiquity. It is unhappily well attested that M. Guitrel busies himself in buying for Madame Worms-Clavelin at an absurd price the antique furniture of village parsonages, left in the care of ignorant churchwardens. In this way carved wainscoting, priestly vestments, chalices, and pyxes are torn from the sacristies of your rural

churches, Monseigneur, in order that at the prefecture they may adorn the private apartments of M. and Madame Worms-Clavelin. And everybody knows that Madame Worms-Clavelin has trimmed with the splendid and sacred copes of Saint-Porchaire the species of furniture vulgarly called '*poufs*.' I do not imply that M. Guitrel has derived any material and direct profit from these transactions; but it must needs grieve your paternal heart that a priest of the diocese should have joined in robbing your churches of that wealth which proves, even in the eyes of unbelievers, the superiority of Christian to profane art.

"Second, without complaint or protest Abbé Guitrel allows the rumour to spread and grow that his elevation to the vacant bishopric of Tourcoing is favoured by the President of the Council, the Minister for Justice and Religion. Now this rumour is prejudicial to the minister, for, although a freethinker and a freemason, he ought to be too careful of the interests of the Church over which he has been appointed civil overseer to place in the seat of the blessed Loup a priest such as M. Guitrel. And if this invention were to be traced to its source, it is to be feared that in M. Guitrel himself would be found the first and foremost contriver of it.

"Third, having formerly occupied his leisure in translating into French verse the Bucolics of that Latin poet called Calpurnius, whom the best critics agree in relegating to the lowest class of insipid babblers, Abbé Guitrel, with a carelessness which I would fain believe to be quite unintentional, has allowed this work of his youth to circulate privately. A copy of the Bucolics was addressed to the freethinking radical paper of the district, *le Phare*, which published extracts from it; among them there occurred in particular this line, which I blush to put before the paternal eyes of Your Eminence:

"And our heaven of bliss is a well-loved breast. ("Notre ciel à nous, c'est un sein chéri.")

"This quotation was accompanied in *le Phare* by the most derogatory comments on the private character, as well as the literary taste, of Abbé Guitrel. And the editor, whose ill-will is only too well known to Your Eminence, took this wretched line as a pretext for charges of wanton thoughts and dishonourable intentions generally against all professors of the high seminary, and even against all the priests in the diocese. This is why, without inquiring whether as a scholar M. Guitrel had any excuse for translating Calpurnius, I deplore the publication of his work as the cause of a scandal which, I am sure, was more bitter to your benevolent heart, Monseigneur, than gall and wormwood.

"Fourth, M. Guitrel is in the habit of going every day at five o'clock in the afternoon to the confectioner's shop kept by Dame Magloire, in the Place Saint-

Exupère. And there, leaning over the sideboards, counters and tables, he examines with deep interest and careful diligence the dainties piled up on plates and dishes. Then, stopping at the spot where are arranged the kinds of cakes which they tell me are called *éclairs* and *babas*, he touches first one and then another of these pastries with the tip of his finger, and afterward has these dainty morsels wrapped up in a sheet of paper. Far be it from me to bring a charge of sensuality against him on account of this ridiculously careful choice of a few cream-cakes or sugar-pasties. But if one reflects that he goes to Dame Magloire's at the very moment when the shop is thronged with fashionable folk of both sexes, and that he makes himself a butt for the jests of worldlings, one will ask oneself whether the professor of rhetoric at the high seminary does not leave some part of his dignity behind him in the confectioner's shop. In fact, the choice of two cakes has not escaped the ill-natured comment of observers, and it is said, either rightly or wrongly, that M. Guitrel keeps one for himself and gives the other to his servant. He may doubtless, without incurring any blame, share any dainties with the woman attached to his service, especially if that woman has attained the canonical age. But malicious gossip interprets this intimacy and familiarity in the most shameful sense, and I should never dare to repeat to Your Eminence the remarks which are made in the town as to the relations between M. Guitrel and his domestic. I do not wish to entertain these charges. Nevertheless, Your Eminence will see that M. Guitrel is not easily to be excused for having given a show of truth to the calumny by his mischievous behaviour. I have related the facts. It now remains for me only to conclude.

"I have the honour to propose that Your Eminence should cancel the appointment of M. Guitrel (Joachim) as professor of sacred rhetoric at the high seminary of... in accordance with your spiritual powers as recognized by the State (decree of 17th March, 1808).

"Vouchsafe, Monseigneur, to continue your paternal kindness towards one who, being placed in command of your seminary, has no dearer, wish than to give you proofs of his complete devotion and of the profound respect with which he has the honour to be,

"Monseigneur,
"The most humble and obedient servant
of Your-Eminence,
"LANTAIGNE."

Having written this letter, M. Lantaigne sealed it with his seal.

IV

IT is true that Abbé Guitrel, professor of sacred rhetoric at the high seminary of... was intimately connected with M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin and with Madame Worms-Clavelin, *née* Coblentz. But Abbé Lantaigne was wrong in believing that M. Guitrel frequented the drawing-rooms of the prefecture, where his presence would have been equally disquieting to the Archbishop and to the masonic lodges, since the *préfet* was master of the lodge "The Rising Sun." It was in the confectioner's shop kept by Dame Magloire in the Place Saint-Exupère, where he went every Saturday at five o'clock to buy two little three-sou cakes, one for his servant and the other for himself, that the priest had met the *préfet's* wife, while she was eating *babas* there in the company of Madame Lacarelle, wife of M. *le préfet's* private secretary.

By his demeanour, at once obsequious and discreet, which inspired entire confidence and removed all apprehensions, the professor of sacred rhetoric had instantly gained the good graces of Madame Worms-Clavelin, to whom he suggested the mind, the face, and almost the sex of those old-clothes women, the guardian angels of her youth in the difficult days of Batignolles and the Place Clichy, when Noémi Coblentz had finished growing up and was beginning to fade in the business office kept by her father Isaac in the midst of distress-sales and police-raids. One of these dealers in second-hand clothes, a Madame Vacherie, who esteemed her, had acted as go-between for her and an active and promising young barrister, M. Théodore Worms-Clavelin, who, finding her seriously-minded and practically useful, had married her after the birth of their daughter Jeanne, and she in return had cleverly pushed him in the administration. Abbé Guitrel was very much like Madame Vacherie. They had the same look, the same voice, the same gestures. This propitious likeness had aroused in Madame Worms-Clavelin a sudden sympathy. Besides, she had always revered the Catholic clergy as one of the powers of this world. She constituted herself M. Guitrel's advocate in her husband's good graces. M. Worms-Clavelin, who recognised in his wife a quality that remained him a deep mystery, the quality of tact, and who knew her to be clever, received Abbé Guitrel courteously the first time he met him in the jeweller's shop kept by Rondonneau junior in the Rue des Tintelleries.

He had gone there to see the designs for the cups ordered by the State to be given as prizes in the races organised by the Society for the Improvement of Horse-breeding. After that visit he frequently returned to the goldsmith's, drawn

by an innate taste for precious metals. On his side, Abbé Guitrel contrived frequent occasions for visiting the show-rooms of Rondonneau the younger, maker of sacred vessels: candlesticks, lamps, pyxes, chalices, patens, monstrances, and tabernacles. The *préfet* and the priest were not ill-pleased at these meetings in the first-storey show-rooms, out of sight of prying eyes, in front of a counter loaded with bullion and amidst vases and statuettes that M. Worms-Clavelin called *bondieuseries*. Stretched out in Rondonneau junior's one arm-chair, M. Worms-Clavelin sent a little wave of his hand to M. Guitrel, who, black and fat, stole along by the glass cases like a great rat.

“Good-day, monsieur l’abbé. Delighted to see you!”

And it was true. He vaguely felt that, in contact with this ecclesiastic of peasant stock, as French in priestly character and in type as the blackened stones of Saint-Exupère and the old trees on the Mall, he was frenchifying himself, naturalising himself, stripping off the ponderous remnants of his German and Semitic descent. Intimacy with a priest was flattering to the Jewish official. In it he tasted, without actually acknowledging it to himself, the pride of revenge. To browbeat, to patronise one of those tonsured heads entrusted for eighteen centuries, both by heaven and earth, with the excommunication and extermination of the circumcised, was for the Jew a keen and flattering success. And besides, this dirty, threadbare, yet respected, cassock that bowed before him entered châteaux where the *préfet* was not received. The aristocratic women of the department revered this garb now humiliated before the official uniform. Deference from one of the clergy was almost equivalent to deference from that rural nobility that had not completely come over, and of whose scornful coldness the Jew, though by no means sensitive, had had painful experiences. M. Guitrel, humble, yet with *finesse*, made his deference appreciated.

Being honoured as a powerful master by this ecclesiastical politician, the head of the department returned in patronage what he received in deference, and flung conciliatory speeches at Abbé Guitrel:

“Doubtless there are good, devoted, and intelligent priests. When the clergy takes its stand upon its privileges...”

And Abbé Guitrel bowed.

M. Worms-Clavelin went on:

“The Republic does not wage systematic war on the parish priests. And, if the fraternities had submitted to the law, many of their difficulties would have been avoided.”

And M. Guitrel protested:

“It is a matter of principle. I should have decided in favour of the fraternities. It is also a matter of business. The fraternities did a great deal of good.”

The *préfet* summed up from out of the cloud of his cigar-smoke.

“Harking back over what has been done is useless. But the new spirit is a spirit of conciliation.”

And again M. Guitrel bowed, while Rondonneau junior bent over his account books his bald head where the flies pitched.

One day, being asked to give her opinion about a vase that the *préfet* was to present with his own hand to the winner in the race for draught-horses, Madame Worms-Clavelin came to Rondonneau junior’s with her husband. She found M. Guitrel in the jeweller’s office. He made a feint to leave the place. But they begged him to remain. They even consulted him as to the nymphs who formed, by their bending figures, the handles of the cup. The *préfet* would have preferred them to be Amazons.

“Amazons, doubtless,” murmured the professor of sacred rhetoric.

Madame Worms-Clavelin would have liked centaureesses.

“Centaureesses, yes, yes,” said the priest; “or rather centaurs.”

Meanwhile Rondonneau junior was holding up the wax model in his fingers in front of the spectators and smiling in admiration.

“Monsieur l’abbé,” asked the *préfet*, “does the Church always ban the nude in art?”

M. Guitrel replied:

“The Church has never absolutely proscribed nude studies; but she has always judiciously restrained their employment.”

Madame Worms-Clavelin looked at the priest and thought how remarkably like Madame Vacherie he was. She confided to him that she had a passion for curios, that she was mad about brocades, stamped velvets, gold fringes, embroidery and lace. She disclosed to him the covetous desires accumulated in her mind since the days when she used to trail in her youth and poverty in front of the shop-windows of the second-hand dealers in the Quartier Bréda. She told him that she had dreams of a salon with old copes and old chasubles, and that she was also collecting antique jewels.

He answered that in truth the ornaments of the priests provided precious models for artists, and that there we had proof that the Church was no enemy to art.

From that day forward M. Guitrel began to hunt in the country sacristies for splendid antiques, and scarcely a week passed that he did not carry into Rondonneau junior’s, under his great-coat, a chasuble or a cope, adroitly

pillaged from some innocent priest. M. Guitrel was, moreover, very scrupulous in remitting to the rifled vestry-board the hundred-sou piece with which the *préfet* paid for the silk, the brocade, the velvet and the lace.

In six months' time Madame Worms-Clavelin's drawing-room had become like a cathedral treasury; a clinging odour of incense lingered round it.

One summer day in that year, M. Guitrel, according to custom, mounted the goldsmith's stairs, and found M. Worms-Clavelin puffing away merrily in the shop. For the day before the *préfet* had succeeded in getting his candidate, a cattle-breeder, and young turn-coat royalist, returned; and he was counting on the approval of the minister, who secretly preferred the new to the old republicans as being less exacting and more humble. In the elation of his boisterous satisfaction, he slapped the priest on the shoulder:

"Monsieur l'abbé, what we want is many priests like you, enlightened, tolerant, free from prejudices — for you haven't any prejudices, not you! — priests who recognise the needs of the present day and the requirements of a democratic society. If the episcopate, if the French clergy would only catch the progressive yet conservative sentiments that the Republic professes, they would still have a fine part to play."

Then, amidst the smoke of his big cigar, he expounded ideas on religion which testified to an ignorance that filled M. Guitrel with inward dismay. The *préfet*, however, declared himself to be more Christian than many Christians, and in the language of the masonic lodge he extolled the moral teaching of Jesus, while he rejected indiscriminately local superstitions and fundamental dogmas, the needles thrown into the piscina of Saint Phal by marriageable girls, and the real presence in the Eucharist.

M. Guitrel, an easy-going soul, but incapable of yielding a point as to dogma, stammered out:

"One must make a distinction, monsieur *le préfet*, one must make a distinction."

In order to make a diversion, he drew out from a pocket of his great-coat a roll of parchment which he opened on the counter. It was a large page of plain-chant, with Gothic text under the four-line divisions, with rubrics and a decorated initial.

The *préfet* fixed his great, lamp-globe eyes on the page. Rondonneau junior, stretching out his rosy bald head, said:

"The miniature in the initial is rather fine. It's Saint Agatha, isn't it?"

“The martyrdom of Saint Agatha,” said M. Guitrel. “Here are seen the executioners torturing the breasts of the saint.”

And he added in a voice which flowed as sweetly as thick syrup:

“According to authentic records, such was in fact the torment inflicted on Saint Agatha of blessed memory by the proconsul. A page from an antiphonary, Monsieur *le préfet* — a trifle, a mere trifle, which perhaps will find a little niche in the collections of Madame Worms-Clavelin, so devoted to our Christian antiquities. This page gives us a fragment of the proper of the saint.”

And he deciphered the Latin text, marking the tonic accent energetically:

“Dum torqueretur beata Agata in mamillâ graviter dixit ad judicem:— ‘Impie, crudelis et dire tyranne, non es confusus amputare in feminâ quod ipse in matre surfisti? Ego habeo mamillas intégras in tus in animâ quas Domino consecravi.’” (“While the blessed Agatha was being cruelly tortured in the breast, she said to the judge: ‘Oh, wicked, cruel, and savage tyrant, art thou not ashamed to mutilate in a woman that with which your mother fed you? Within my soul I have breasts undesecrated which I have sanctified to God.’”)

The *préfet*, who was a graduate, half understood, and in his desire to appear Gallic, remarked that it was piquant.

“Naïve,” answered Abbé Guitrel gently, “naïve.” M. Worms-Clavelin granted that the language of the Middle Ages had, in fact, a certain naïveté.

“It has also sublimity,” said M. Guitrel.

But the *préfet* was rather inclined to seek in Church Latin for the piquancy of broad humour, and it was with a sly little laugh of obstinacy that he crammed the parchment into his pocket, with many thanks to his dear Guitrel for this discovery.

Then, pushing the Abbé into the window-recess, he whispered in his ear:

“My dear Guitrel, when the chance comes, I will do something for you.”

V

THERE was one party in the town which openly declared that Abbé Lantaigne, principal of the high seminary, was a priest worthy of a bishopric and fitted to fill the vacant see of Tourcoing honourably, until the time when Monseigneur Chariot's death should enable him, cross in hand and amethyst on finger, to assume the mitre in the town that had witnessed his labours and his merits. This was the scheme of the venerable M. Cassignol, ex-president in chief, and a State pensioner of twenty-five years' standing. With these plans were associated M. Lerond, deputy attorney-general at the time of the decrees, (The *coup d'état* of 1851.) now a barrister practising at..., and Abbé de Lalonde, formerly an Army chaplain, and now chaplain to the Dames du Salut. These, belonging to the most respected, but not to the most influential, class in the town, made up practically the whole of Abbé Lantaigne's party. The head of the high seminary had been invited to dine with M. Cassignol, the chief president, who said to him, in the presence of M. de Lalonde and M. Lerond:

"Monsieur l'abbé, put yourself forward as a candidate. When it shall come to a choice between Abbé Lantaigne, who has so nobly served both religion and Christian France by pen and tongue, who has protected the oft-betrayed cause of the rights of the French Church within the Catholic Church with the force of his mental endowments and high character, and M. Guitrel, none will have the effrontery to hesitate. And since it seems that this time the honour of supplying a bishop for the town of Tourcoing is to fall to our city, the faithful of the diocese are willing to lose you for a time for the good of the episcopate as well as of Christendom."

And the venerable M. Cassignol, who was now in his eighty-sixth year, added with a smile:

"We shall see you again, I have a firm conviction of that. You will come back to us from Tourcoing, monsieur l'abbé."

Abbé Lantaigne had replied:

"Monsieur *le président* with no intention of anticipating any honour, I yet shall shirk no duty." He yearned and longed for the see of the lamented Monseigneur Duclou. But this priest, whose ambition was frozen by his pride, was waiting until they came to bring him the mitre.

One morning M. Lerond came to see him at the seminary, and brought news of how Abbé Guitrel's candidature was progressing at the Ministry of Public Worship. It was suspected that M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was working hard

in favour of M. Guitrel in the offices of the Ministry, where all the freemasons had already received their orders. This was what he had been told at the offices of *le Libéral*, the religious and moderate paper of the district. With regard to the intentions of the Cardinal-Archbishop, nothing was known.

The truth was that Monseigneur Chariot dared neither oppose nor support any candidate. His characteristic caution had been growing on him for years. If he had any preferences he let no one guess them. For a long time he had been comfortably and pleasurably concealing his policy, just as he played his game of bezique every evening with M. de Goulet. And, in fact, the promotion of a priest of his diocese to a non-suffragan bishopric was in no way an affair of his. But he was forced to take part in this intrigue. M. Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, whom he did not wish to offend, had caused him to be sounded. His Eminence could not be ignorant of the shrewd and urbane disposition of which M. Guitrel had given plain proofs in the diocese. On the other hand, he believed this Guitrel to be capable of anything. "Who knows," thought he, "whether he is not scheming to get himself appointed here as my coadjutor, instead of going to that gloomy little metropolis of Northern Gaul? And if I declare him worthy of a bishopric, will it not be believed that I intend him to share my see?" This apprehension that he would be given a coadjutor embittered Monseigneur Chariot's old age. In Abbé Lantaigne's case he had strong reasons for being silent and holding aloof. He would not have supported this priest's candidature for the simple reason that he foresaw its failure. Monseigneur Chariot never willingly put himself on the losing side. Moreover, he loathed the principal of the high seminary. Yet this hatred, in a mind so easy-going and kindly as Monseigneur's was not actually prejudicial to M. Lantaigne's ambitions. In order to get rid of him, Monseigneur Chariot would have consented to his becoming either bishop or Pope. M. Lantaigne had a high reputation for piety, learning, and eloquence: one could not, without a certain shamelessness, be openly against him. Now Monseigneur Chariot being popular and very keen to gain every one's goodwill, did not despise the opinion of honourable men.

M. Lerond was unable to follow the secret thoughts of Monseigneur, but he knew that the Archbishop had not yet committed himself. He judged that it might be possible to bring influence to bear on the old man's mind and that an appeal to his pastoral instincts might not be in vain. He urged M. Lantaigne to proceed at once to the Archbishop's palace.

"You will beg His Eminence, with filial deference, for advice in the probable event of the bishopric of Tourcoing being offered to you. It is the right step, and it will produce an excellent effect."

M. Lantaigne objected:

“It behoves me to wait for a more solemn call.”

“What call could be more solemn than the suffrages of so many zealous Christians, who hail your name with a unanimity that recalls the ancient popular acclamations with which a Médard and a Remi were greeted?”

“But, monsieur,” answered honest Lantaigne, “those acclamations, in the obsolete custom to which you refer, came from the faithful of the diocese which these holy men were called upon to govern. And I am not aware that the Catholics of Tourcoing have acclaimed me.”

At this point lawyer Lerond said what had to be said:

“If you do not bar the road for him, M. Guitrel will become a bishop.”

The next day M. Lantaigne had fastened over his shoulders his visiting cloak, the turned-back wing of which flapped on his sturdy back, the while on the road to the Archbishop’s palace he besought his God to spare the Church of France an unmerited disgrace.

His Eminence, at the moment when M. Lantaigne bowed before him, had just received a letter from the nunciature asking him for a confidential note about M. Guitrel. The nuncio made no secret of his liking for a priest reputed to be intelligent and zealous and capable of being useful in negotiations with the temporal power. His Eminence had immediately dictated to M. de Goulet a note in favour of the nuncio’s protégé.

He exclaimed in his pleasant tremulous voice:

“Monsieur Lantaigne, how glad I am to see you!”

“Monseigneur, I have come to ask Your Eminence for your paternal counsel in case the Holy Father, regarding me with favour, should nominate me...”

“Very happy to see you, Monsieur Lantaigne. You come just in the nick of time!”

“I would venture, if Your Eminence did not deem me unworthy of...”

“You are, Monsieur Lantaigne, an eminent theologian and a priest of the highest possible learning in the canon law. You are an authority on knotty points of discipline. Your advice is precious on questions of the liturgy and, in general, on any point that concerns religion. If you had not come, I was going to send for you, as M. de Goulet can tell you. At the present moment I am in great need of your insight.”

And Monseigneur, with his gouty’ hand, well practised in benediction, waved the principal of the high seminary to a seat.

“Monsieur Lantaigne, be kind enough to listen to me. The venerable M. Lapruné, the curé of Saint-Exupère, is just gone from here. I must tell you that this poor curé has this morning found a man hanged in his church. Just conceive

his distress! He is beside himself. And in such a crisis, I myself need to take the advice of the most learned priest in my diocese. What ought we to do? Tell me!”

M. Lantaigne collected himself for a moment. Then, in the tone of a pedagogue, he began to expound the traditions concerning the purification of churches:

“The Maccabees, after having washed the temple profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the year 164 before the Incarnation, celebrated its dedication. That is the origin, Monseigneur, of the festival called Hanicha — that is to say, renewal. In fact...”

And he developed his ideas.

Monseigneur listened with an air of admiration, and M. Lantaigne drew up from his inexhaustible memory endless texts relating to the ceremonies of purification, precedents, arguments, commentaries.

“John, Chapter X., verse 22... the Roman Pontifical... the Venerable Bede, Baronius...”

He spoke for three-quarters of an hour.

After this the Cardinal-Archbishop replied:

“It should be noted that the hanged man was found in the porch of the side door, on the epistle side.”

“Was the inner door of the porch closed?” asked M. Lantaigne.

“Alas! alas!” answered Monseigneur, “it was not wide open... but neither was it completely shut.”

“Ajar, Monseigneur?”

“That’s it! Ajar.”

“And the suicide, Monseigneur, was within the space covered by the porch? That is a point which it is materially important to ascertain. Your Eminence perceives the whole importance of that?”

“Assuredly, Monsieur Lantaigne.... Monsieur de Goulet, was there not one arm of the hanged man which projected from the porch and jutted into the church?”

M. de Goulet replied with a blush and some incoherent syllables.

“I feel certain,” replied Monseigneur, “that the arm went beyond, or, at any rate, part of the arm.”

M. Lantaigne concluded from this that the church of Saint-Exupère was profaned. He quoted precedents and described the proceedings after the dastardly assassination of the Archbishop of Paris, in the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont. He travelled up the ages, passed through the Révolution, when the churches were transformed into armouries, referred to Thomas Becket and the impious Heliodorus.

“What scholarship! What sound doctrine!” said Monseigneur.

He rose and stretched out his hand for the priest to kiss.

“It is a priceless service that you have rendered me, Monsieur Lantaigne; be assured that I have a great esteem for your scholarship and accept my pastoral benediction. Farewell.”

And M. Lantaigne, dismissed, perceived that he had not been able to say a single word about the important business on which he had come. But, with the echoes of his own words all around him, full of his learning and his application of it, and much flattered, he descended the grand staircase still turning over in his own mind the matter of the suicide of Saint-Exupère and the urgent need for the purification of the parish church. Outside he was still thinking of it.

As he was descending the winding street of the Tintelleries, he met the curé of Saint-Exupère, the venerable M. Laprune, who, standing in front of cooper Lenfant’s shop, was examining the corks.

His wine had been turning sour, and this deterioration he attributed to the defective way in which his bottles were corked.

“It is deplorable,” he murmured, “deplorable!”

“And your suicide?” demanded Abbé Lantaigne.

At this question the worthy curé of Saint-Exupère opened his full, round eyes and asked in astonishment:

“What suicide?”

“The man who hanged himself in Saint-Exupère, the miserable suicide whom you found this morning in the porch of your church.”

M. Laprune, terrified, wondering from what he had just heard, whether he or M. Lantaigne had gone mad, replied that he had found no one hanged.

“What!” replied M. Lantaigne, surprised in his turn, “wasn’t a man found this morning hanged in the porch of a door on the epistle side!”

In sign of denial, the vicar twice revolved on his shoulders a face whereon shone the sacred truth.

Abbé Lantaigne now looked like a man taken with giddiness:

“But it was the Cardinal-Archbishop who has just told me himself that you found a man hanged in your church!”

“Oh!” replied M. Laprune, suddenly reassured, “Monseigneur wanted to amuse himself. He loves a jest. He is a capital hand at it, and knows how to keep within the bounds of seemliness. He has so much wit!”

But Abbé Lantaigne, rising heavenwards his fiery, sombre glance, exclaimed:

“The Archbishop has deceived me! This man will, then, never speak the truth, save when on the steps of the altar, taking the consecrated host in his hands, he pronounces the words: *Domine, non sum dignus!*”

VI

NOW that he was no longer inclined to the saddle and liked to keep his room, General Cartier de Chalmot had reduced his division to cards in small cardboard boxes, which he placed every morning on his desk, and which he arranged every evening on the white deal shelves above his iron bedstead. He marshalled his cards day by day with scrupulous exactitude, in an order which filled him with satisfaction. Every card represented a man. The symbol by which he henceforth thought of his officers, non-commissioned officers and men, satisfied his craving for method and suited his natural bent of mind. Cartier de Chalmot had always been noted as an excellent officer. General Parroy, under whom he had served, said of him:— “In Captain de Chalmot the capacity for obedience is exactly balanced by the power of command. A rare and priceless quality of the true military spirit.”

Cartier de Chalmot had always been scrupulous in the performance of his duty. Being upright, diffident, and an excellent penman, he had at last hit upon a system which fitted in with his abilities, and, in command of his division of cards, he applied his method with the utmost vigour.

On this particular day, having risen according to his custom at five o'clock in the morning, he had passed from his tub to his work-table; and, whilst the sun was mounting with solemn slowness above the elms of the Archbishop's palace, the general was organising manœuvres by manipulating the boxes of cards that symbolised reality, and that were actually identical with reality to an intelligence which, like his, was excessively reverent towards everything symbolic.

For more than three hours he had been poring over his cards with a mind and face as wan and melancholy as the cards themselves, when his servant announced the Abbé de Lalonde. Then he took off his glasses, wiped his work-reddened eyes, rose, and half smiling, turned towards the door a countenance which had once been handsome and which in old age remained quite simple in its lineaments. He stretched out to the visitor who entered a large hand the palm of which had scarcely any lines, and said good-day to the priest in a gruff, yet hesitating voice, which revealed at the same time the diffidence of the man and the infallibility of the commander.

“My dear abbé, how are you? I am very glad to see you.”

And he pushed forward to him one of the two horsehair chairs which, with the desk and the bed, comprised all the furniture of this clean, bright, empty room.

The abbé sat down. He was a wonderfully active little old man. In his face of weather-worn, crumbling brick, there were set, like two jewels, the blue eyes of a child.

They looked at one another for a moment, understanding, without saying a word. They were two old friends, two comrades-in-arms. Formerly a chaplain in the Army, Abbé de Lalonde was now chaplain to the Dames du Salut. As military chaplain he had been attached to the regiment of guards of which Cartier de Chalmot had been colonel in 1870, and which, forming part of the division..., had been shut up in Metz with Bazaine's army.

The memory of these homeric, yet lamentable, weeks came back to the minds of these two friends every time they saw one another, and every time they made the same remarks.

This time the chaplain began:

"Do you remember, general, when we were in Metz, running short of medicine, of fodder, running short of salt?..."

Abbé Lalonde was the least sensual of men. He had hardly felt the want of salt for himself, but he had suffered much at not being able to give the men salt as he gave them tobacco, in little packets carefully wrapped up. And he remembered this cruel privation.

"Ah! general, the salt ran short!"

General Cartier de Chalmot replied:

"They made up for it, to a certain extent, by mixing gunpowder with the food."

"All the same," answered the chaplain, "war is a terrible thing."

Thus spoke this innocent friend of soldiers in the sincerity of his heart. But the general did not acquiesce in this condemnation of war.

"Pardon me, my dear abbé! War is, of course, a cruel necessity, but one which provides for officers and men an opportunity of showing the highest qualities. Without war, we should still be ignorant of how far the courage and endurance of men can go."

And, very seriously, he added:

"The Bible proves the lawfulness of war, and you know better than I how in it God is called Sabaoth — that is, the God of armies."

The abbé smiled with an expression of frank roguishness, displaying the three very white teeth which were all that remained to him.

"Pooh! I don't know Hebrew, not I.... And God has so many more beautiful names that I can dispense with calling him by that one.... Alas! general, what a splendid army perished under the command of that unhappy marshal!..

At these words, General Cartier de Chalmot began to say what he had already said a hundred times:

“Bazaine!... Listen to me. Neglect of the regulations touching fortified towns, culpable hesitation in giving orders, mental reservations before the enemy. And before the enemy one ought to have no mental reservations.... Capitulation in open country.... He deserved his fate. And then a scapegoat was needed.”

“For my part,” answered the chaplain, “I should beware of ever saying a single word which might injure the memory of this unfortunate marshal. I cannot judge his actions. And it is certainly not my business to noise abroad even his indubitable shortcomings. For he granted me a favour for which I shall feel grateful as long as I live.”

“A favour?” demanded the general. “He? To you?”

“Oh! a favour so noble, so beautiful! He granted me a pardon for a poor soldier, a dragoon condemned to death for insubordination. In memory of this favour, every year I say a mass for the repose of the soul of ex-Marshal Bazaine.”

But General Cartier de Chalmot would not let himself be turned from the point.

“Capitulation in open country!... Just imagine it.... He deserved his fate.”

And, in order to hearten himself up, the general spoke of Canrobert, and of the splendid stand of the... brigade of Saint-Privat.

And the chaplain related anecdotes of a diverting kind, with an edifying climax.

“Ah, Saint-Privat, general! On the eve of the battle, a great rascal of a carabineer came to look for me. I see him still, all blackened, in a sheepskin. He cries to me:— ‘To-morrow’s going to be warm work. I may leave my bones to rot there. Confess me, monsieur le curé, and quickly! I must go and groom my little mare.’ I say to him:— ‘I don’t want to delay you, friend. Still, you must tell me your sins. What are your sins?’ In astonishment he looks at me and replies:— ‘Why, all!’

‘What, all?’

‘Yes, all. I have committed all the sins.’ I shake my head. ‘All, my friend — that is a good many!... Tell me, hast thou beaten thy mother?’ At this question, my gentleman grows excited, waves his great arms, swears like a Pagan, and exclaims:— ‘Monsieur le curé, you are mocking me!’ I reply to him:— ‘Calm yourself, friend.

You see now that you have not committed all the sins.’...”

Thus the chaplain cheerily narrated pious regimental anecdotes. And then he deduced the moral from them. Good Christians make good soldiers. It was a

mistake to banish religion from the Army.

General Cartier de Chalmot approved of these maxims.

"I have always said so, my dear abbé. In destroying mystical beliefs you ruin the military spirit. By what right do you exact of a man the sacrifice of his life if you take away from him the hope of another existence?"

And the chaplain answered, with a smile full of kindness, innocence and joy:

"You will see that there will be a return to religion. They are already going back to it on all sides. Men are not as bad as they appear and God is infinitely good."

Then at last he revealed the object of his visit.

"I come, general, to ask a great favour of you."

General Cartier de Chalmot became attentive; his face, already sad, grew sadder still. He loved and respected this old chaplain, and would have wished to give him pleasure. But the very idea of granting a favour was alarming to his strict uprightness.

"Yes, general, I come to ask you to work for the good of the Church. You know Abbé Lantaigne, head of the high seminary in our town. He is a priest renowned for his piety and learning, a great theologian."

"I have met Abbé Lantaigne several times. He made a favourable impression on me. But..."

"Oh! general, if you had heard his lectures as I have done, you would be amazed at his learning. Yet I was able to appreciate but a trifling part of it. Thirty years of my life I have spent in reminding poor soldiers stretched on a hospital bed of the goodness of God. I have slipped in a good word along with a screw of tobacco. For another twenty-five years I have been confessing holy maidens, full of sanctity, of course, but less charming in character than were my soldiers. I have never had the time to read the Fathers; I have neither enough brain nor enough theology to appreciate M. l'abbé Lantaigne at his true worth, for he is a walking encyclopedia. But at least I can assure you, general, that he speaks as he acts, and he acts as he speaks."

And the old chaplain, winking his eye roguishly, added:

"All ecclesiastics, unfortunately, are not of this kind."

"Nor are all soldiers," said the general, smiling a very wan smile.

And the two men exchanged a sympathetic glance, in their common hatred of intrigue and falsity.

Abbé de Lalonde, who was, however, capable of a little guile, wound up his eulogy of Abbé Lantaigne with this touch:

“He’s an excellent priest, and if he had been a soldier he would have made an excellent soldier.” But the general demanded brusquely:

“Well! what can I do for him?”

“Help him to slip on the violet stockings, which he has richly deserved, general. He is an admitted candidate for the vacant bishopric of Tourcoing. I beg you to support him with the Minister of Justice and Religion, whom, I am told, you know personally.”

The general shook his head. In fact, he had never asked anything of the Government. Cartier de Chalmot, as a royalist and a Christian, regarded the Republic with a disapproval that was complete, silent and whole-hearted. Reading no newspapers and talking with no one, he undervalued on principle a civil power on whose doings he knew nothing. He obeyed and held his tongue. He was admired in the châteaux of the neighbourhood for his melancholy resignation, inspired by the sentiment of duty, strengthened by a profound scorn for everything which was not military, intensified by a growing difficulty in thought and speech rendered obvious and affecting by the progress of an affection of the liver.

It was well known that General Cartier de Chalmot remained a faithful royalist in the depths of his heart. It was not so well known that one day in the year 1893 his heart had received one of those shocks which can only be compared with what Christians describe as the workings of grace, and which bring with the force of a thunderbolt deep and unlooked-for peace to a man’s innermost being. This event took place at five o’clock in the evening of the 4th of June in the drawing-rooms of the prefecture. There, among the flowers that Madame Worms-Clavelin had herself arranged, President Carnot, on his way through the town, had received the officers of the garrison. General Cartier de Chalmot, being present with his staff, saw the President for the first time, and instantly, for no apparent reason, on no explicable grounds, was pierced through and through by a terrible admiration. In a second, before the gentle gravity and honest inflexibility of the head of the State, all his prejudices fell away. He forgot that this sovereign was a civilian. He revered and loved him. He suddenly felt himself bound with ties of sympathy and respect to this man, sad and sallow like himself, but august and serene like a ruler. He uttered with a soldierly stutter the official compliment which he had learnt by heart. The President answered him:— “I thank you in the name of the Republic and of our country which you loyally serve.” At this, all the devotion to an absent prince which General Cartier de Chalmot had stored up for twenty-five years welled forth from his heart towards the President, whose quiet face remained surprisingly immobile, and who spoke in a melancholy voice with no movement of cheek or lips, on which

his black beard set a seal. On this waxen face, in these slow, honest eyes, on this feeble breast, across which blazed the broad red ribbon of his order, in the whole figure of this suffering automaton, the general perceived both the dignity of the leader, and the affliction of the ill-fated man who has never laughed. With his admiration there was mingled a strain of tenderness.

A year later he heard of the tragic end of this President for whose safety he would willingly have died, and whom he henceforth pictured in his thoughts as dark and stiff, like the flag rolled round its staff in the barracks and covered with its case.

From that time he had ignored the civil rulers of France. He cared to know nothing save of his military superiors, whom he obeyed with melancholy punctiliousness. Pained at the idea of answering the venerable Abbé de Lalonde by a refusal, he bethought himself for a moment, and then gave his reasons.

“A matter of principle. I never ask anything of the government. You agree with me, don’t you?”

... For from the moment that one lays down a rule for oneself...”

The chaplain looked at him with an expression of sadness that seemed as though thrown over his happy old face.

“Oh! how could I agree with you, general — I who beg of everybody? I am a hardened beggar. For God and the poor, I have pleaded with all the powers of the day, with King Louis Philippe’s ministers, with those of the provisional government, with Napoleon III.’s ministers, with those of the *Ordre Moral* and those of the present Republic. They have all helped me to do some good. And since you know the Minister of Religion...”

At this moment a shrill voice called in the passage:— “Poulot! — Poulot!”

And a stout lady in a morning wrapper, her white hair crowned with hair-curlers, entered the room with a rush. It was Madame Cartier de Chalmot, who was calling the general to déjeuner.

She had already shaken her husband with imperious tenderness, and exclaimed once more: “Poulot!” before she became aware of the presence of the old priest crushed up against the door.

She apologised for her untidy dress. She had had so much to do this morning! Three daughters, two sons, an orphan nephew and her husband — seven children to look after!

“Ah! madame,” said the abbé, “it is God himself who has sent you! You will be my providence.”

“Your providence, monsieur l’abbé I”

In her grey dressing-gown her figure revealed the ample dignity of classic motherhood. On her beaming moustachioed face shone a matronly pride; her

large gestures expressed at once the briskness of a housewife habituated to work and the ease of a woman accustomed to official deference. The general disappeared behind her. She was his household goddess and his guardian angel, this Pauline who carried on 'her brave, energetic shoulders all the burden of this poverty-stricken, ostentatious house, who played the part of seamstress to the family, as well as cook, dressmaker, chambermaid, governess, apothecary, and even milliner with a frankly gaudy taste, and yet showed at big dinners and receptions an imperturbable good breeding, a commanding profile, and shoulders that were still beautiful. It was commonly said in the division that if the general became Minister of War, his wife would do the honours of the hôtel in the Boulevard Saint-Germain (Where the French War Office is situated.) in capital fashion.

The energy of the general's wife spread freely over into the outer world and flourished vigorously in pious and charitable works. Madame Cartier de Chalmot was lady patroness of three creches and a dozen charities recommended by the Cardinal-Archbishop. Monseigneur Chariot showed a special predilection for this lady, and said to her sometimes, with his man-of-the-world smile:—"You are a general in the army of Christian charity." And, being a professor of orthodoxy, Monseigneur Chariot never failed to add:—"And there is no charity outside the Christian charity; for the Church alone is in a position to solve the social problems whose difficulties perplex the minds of all and cause special anxiety to our paternal heart."

This was just what Madame Cartier de Chalmot thought. She was lavishly, glaringly pious, and not free from the rather loud magnificence that was aptly accented by the sound of her voice and the flowers in her hats. Her faith, voluminous and decorative like the bosom which enshrined it, made a splendid show in drawing-rooms. By the breadth of her religious sentiments she had done much harm to her husband. But neither of them paid any heed to this. The general also believed in the Christian creed, although this would not have prevented him from having the Cardinal-Archbishop arrested on a written order from the Minister of War. Yet he was regarded with suspicion by the democracy. And the *préfet*, M. Worms-Clavelin himself, though little of a fanatic, regarded General Cartier de Chalmot as a dangerous man. This was his wife's fault. She was ambitious, but the soul of honour and incapable of betraying her God.

"How can I be your providence, monsieur l'abbé?"

And when she heard that the point at issue was the raising to the bishopric of Tourcoing of Abbé, Lantaigne, a man of such noble, steadfast piety, she caught fire and showed her courage.

"Those are the bishops we want. M. Lantaigne ought to be nominated."

The old chaplain began to make use of this happy valiancy.

"Then, madame, induce the general to write to the Minister of Religion, who turns out to be his friend."

She shook the crown of curlers on her head vigorously.

"No, monsieur l'abbé. My husband will not write. It is useless to persist. He thinks that a soldier ought never to ask for anything. He is right. My father was of this opinion. You knew him, monsieur l'abbé, and you know that he was a fine man and a good soldier."

The old Army chaplain smote his forehead.

"Colonel de Balny! Yes, of course, I knew him. He was a hero and a Christian."

General Cartier de Chalmot interposed:

"My father-in-law, Colonel de Balny, was chiefly commendable for having mastered in their entirety the regulations of 1829 on cavalry manœuvres. These regulations were so complicated that few officers mastered them in their completeness. They were afterwards withdrawn, and Colonel de Balny conceived such a disgust at this that it hastened his end. New regulations were imposed, possessing the unquestionable advantage of simplification. Yet I question whether the old state of things was not preferable. You must exact much from a cavalryman in order to get a little out of him. It is the same with the foot-soldier."

And the general began anxiously to manipulate his division of cards drawn up in the boxes.

Madame Cartier de Chalmot had heard these same words very often. She always made the same reply to them. Once more this time she said:

"Poulot! how can you say that papa died of chagrin, when he fell down in an apoplectic fit at a review?"

The old chaplain, by a crafty wile, brought the conversation back to the subject which interested him.

"Ah! madame, your excellent father, Colonel de Balny, would have certainly appreciated the character of M. Lantaigne, and he would have offered up prayers that this priest might be raised to a bishopric."

"I also, monsieur l'abbé, will offer up prayers for that," answered the general's wife. "My husband cannot, ought not to make any application. But if you think that my intervention will be useful, I will drop a word to Monseigneur. He doesn't terrify me at all, our Archbishop."

"Doubtless a word from your mouth..." murmured the old man. "... The ear of Monseigneur Chariot will be open to it."

The general's wife announced that she would be seeing the Archbishop at the inauguration of the Pain de Saint Antoine, of which she was president, and that there...

She interrupted herself:

"The cutlets!... Excuse me, monsieur l'abbé..

She rushed out on to the landing and shouted orders to the cook from the staircase. Then she reappeared in the room.

"And there I shall draw him aside, and beg him to speak to the nuncio in favour of M. Lantaigne. Is that the right way to go to work?"

The old chaplain made as if to take her hands, yet without actually doing so.

"That's just the way, madame. I am sure that the good Saint Anthony of Padua will be with you and will help you to persuade Monseigneur Chariot. He is a great saint. I mean Saint Anthony.... Ladies ought not to believe that he devotes himself exclusively to finding the jewels which they have lost. In heaven he has something better to do. To beg him for bread for the poor, that is assuredly far worthier. You have realised that, dear madame. The Pain de Saint Antoine is a fine work. I must inform myself more fully about it. But I shall take good care not to breathe a word of it to my good sisters."

He was referring to the Dames du Salut, to whom he was chaplain.

"They have already too many undertakings. They are excellent sisters, but too much absorbed in trifling duties, and far too petty, the poor ladies." He sighed, recalling the time when he was a regimental chaplain, the tragic days of the war, when he accompanied the wounded stretched out on an ambulance litter and gave them a drop of brandy. For it was by doles of tobacco and spirits that he was in the habit of carrying on his apostolic labours. He again gave way to his love of talking about the fighting round Metz and told some anecdotes. He had several concerning a certain sapper, a native of Lorraine called Larmoise, a man full of resources.

"I did not tell you, general, how this great devil of a sapper used to bring me' a bag of potatoes every morning. One day I asked him where he picked them up. Says he:— 'In the enemy's lines.'

'You villain,' I say to him. Thereupon he explains to me how he has found some fellow-countrymen among the German guards. 'Fellow-countrymen?'

'Yes, fellow-countrymen, fellows from home. We are only separated by the frontier. We embraced one another, we talked about our relatives and friends. And they said to me:— "You can take as many potatoes as you like."'"

And the chaplain added:

"This simple incident made me feel better than any reasoning how cruel and unjust war is."

“Yes,” said the general, “these annoying intimacies occasionally occur at the points of contact of two armies. They must be sternly repressed, having due regard, of course, to the circumstances.”

VII

ON the promenade along the ramparts that evening Abbé Lantaigne, head of the high seminary, fell in with M. Bergeret, a professor of literature who was considered a man of remarkable, but eccentric character. M. Lantaigne forgave him his scepticism and chatted with him willingly, whenever he met him under the elm-trees on the Mall. On his side, M. Bergeret had no objection to studying the mind of an intelligent priest. They both knew that their conversations on a seat in the promenade were equally displeasing to the dean of the Faculty and to the Archbishop. But Abbé Lantaigne knew nothing about worldly prudence, and M. Bergeret, very weary, discouraged, and disillusioned, had given up caring for fruitless considerations of policy.

Sceptical within the bounds of decorum and good taste, the assiduous devotions of his wife and the endless catechisms of his daughters had resulted in his being impeached of clericalism in the ministerial bureaux, whilst certain speeches that had been attributed to him were used against him, both by professing Catholics and professional patriots. Foiled in his ambitions, he still meant to live in his own way, and having failed to learn how to please, tried discreetly to displease.

On this peaceful and radiant evening M. Bergeret seeing the head of the high seminary coming along his usual road, advanced several paces to meet the priest and joined him under the first elm-trees on the Mall.

“To me the place is happy where I meet you,” said Abbé Lantaigne, who loved, before a university man, to air his harmless literary affectations.

In a few very vague phrases they made a mutual confession of the great pity aroused in them both by the world in which they lived. It was Abbé Lantaigne alone who deplored the decay of this ancient city, so rich, during the Middle Ages, in knowledge and thought, and now subject to a few petty tradesmen and freemasons. In frank opposition to this, M. Bergeret said:

“In days gone by men were just what they are now; that is to say, moderately good and moderately bad.”

“Not so!” answered M. Lantaigne. “Men were vigorous in character and strong in doctrine when Raymond the Great, surnamed the balsamic doctor, taught in this town the epitome of human knowledge.”

The professor and the priest sat down on a stone bench where two old men, pale-faced and decrepit, were already sitting without saying a word. In front of

the bench, green meadows, wreathed in light mist, stretched gently downwards to the poplars that fringed the river.

“Monsieur l’abbé,” said the professor, “I have, like everybody else, turned over the pages of the *Hortus* and the *Thesaurus* of Raymond the Great in the municipal library. Moreover, I have read the new book that Abbé Cazeaux has devoted to the balsamic doctor. Now, what struck me in that book...”

“Abbé Cazeaux is one of my pupils,” interrupted M. Lantaigne. “His book on Raymond the Great is based on facts, which is praiseworthy; it is founded on theology, which is still more praiseworthy and rare, for theology is lost in this decadent France, which was the greatest of the nations as long as she was the most theological.”

“This book of M. Cazeaux’s,” answered M. Bergeret, “appeared to me to be interesting from several points of view. For want of a knowledge of theology I lost myself in it more than once. Yet I fancied I could see in it that the blessed Raymond, rigidly orthodox monk as he was, claimed for the teacher the right of professing two contradictory opinions on the same subject, the one theological and in accordance with revelation, the other ‘purely human and based on experience or reason. The balsamic doctor, whose statue adorns so sternly the courtyard of the Archbishop’s palace, maintained, according to what I have been able to understand, that one and the same man may deny, as an observer or as a disputant, the truths which, as a Christian, he believes and confesses. And it seemed to me that your pupil, M. Cazeaux, approved of a system so strange.”

Abbé Lantaigne, quite animated by what he had just heard, drew his red silk handkerchief from his pocket, unfurled it like a flag, and with flushed face and mouth wide open flung himself fearlessly on the challenge thrown down.

“Monsieur Bergeret, as to whether one can have, on the same subject, two distinct opinions, the one theological and of divine origin, the other purely rational or experimental and of human origin, that is a question which I answer in the affirmative. And I am going to prove to you the truth of this apparent contradiction by a most common instance. When, seated in your study, before your table loaded with books and papers, you exclaim, ‘It is incredible! I have just this moment put my paper-knife on this table and now I do not see it there. I see it, I’m sure I see it, and yet I no longer see it.’ When you think in this way, Monsieur Bergeret, you have two contradictory opinions with respect to the same object, one that your paper-knife is on the table because it ought to be there: that opinion is based on reason; the other that your paper-knife is not on the table, because you do not see it there: that opinion is based on experience. There you have two irreconcilable opinions on the same subject. And they are simultaneous. You affirm at the same time both the presence and the absence of

the paper-knife. You exclaim, 'It is there, I am sure of it,' at the very moment you are proving it is not there."

And, having finished his demonstration, Abbé Lantaigne waved his chequered, snuff-besprinkled silk handkerchief, like the flaming banner of scholasticism.

But the professor of literature was not convinced. He had no difficulty in showing the emptiness of this sophism. He replied quite gently in the rather weak voice that he habitually husbanded, that, in looking for his paper-knife, he experienced fear and hope, by turns and not simultaneously, the result of an uncertainty which could not last; for it ended by his making sure whether the knife was on the table or not.

"There is nothing, monsieur l'abbé," added he, "nothing in this instance of the boxwood knife that is applicable to the contradictory judgment which the blessed Raymond, or M. Cazeaux, or you yourself, might form on such or such a fact recorded in the Bible, when you state that it is at the same time both true and false. Allow me, in my turn, to give you an instance. I choose, not, of course, in order to ensnare you, but because this incident comes of its own accord into my mind, — I choose the story of Joshua causing the sun to stand still...

M. Bergeret passed his tongue over his lips and smiled. For in truth he was, in the secret places of his soul, a Voltairean:

...Joshua causing the sun to stand still. Will you tell me, straight out, monsieur l'abbé, that Joshua made the sun stand still and did not make it stand still?"

The head of the high seminary had by no means an air of embarrassment. Splendid controversialist as he was, he turned to his opponent with flashing eyes and heaving breast.

"After every reservation has been expressly made with respect to the true interpretation, both literal and spiritual, of the passage in Judges which you attack and against which so many unbelievers have blindly dashed themselves before you, I will reply to you fearlessly. Yes, I have two distinct opinions as to the interpretation of this miracle. I believe as a natural philosopher, for reasons drawn from physics, that is to say, from observation, that the earth turns round a motionless sun. And as a theologian I believe that Joshua caused the sun to stand still. There is here a contradiction. But this contradiction is not irreconcilable. I will prove it to you at once. For the idea which we form of the sun is purely human; it only concerns man and could not be applicable to God. For man, the sun does not turn round the earth. I grant it, and am willing to decide in favour of Copernicus. But I will not go so far as to force God to become a Copernican like myself, and I shall not inquire whether, for God, the sun turns or does not turn round the earth. To speak truly, I had no need of the text of Judges in order to

know that our human astronomy is not the astronomy of God. Speculations as to time, number and space do not embrace infinity, and it is a mad idea to wish to entangle the Holy Spirit in a physical or mathematical difficulty.”

“Then,” asked the professor, “you admit that, even in mathematics, it is permissible to have two contradictory opinions, the one human, the other divine?”

“I will not risk being reduced to that extremity,” answered Abbé Lantaigne. “There is in mathematics an exactitude which practically reconciles it with absolute truth. Numbers, on the contrary, are only dangerous because the reason, being tempted to seek in them for its own principle, runs the risk of going so far astray as to see nothing in the universe save a system of numbers. This error has been condemned by the Church. Yet I will answer you boldly that human mathematics are not divine mathematics. Doubtless, however, it would not be possible for one to contradict the other, and I prefer to believe that you do not wish to make me say that for God three and three can make nine. But we do not know all the properties of numbers, and God does.

“I hear that there are priests, regarded as eminent, who maintain that science ought to agree with theology. I detest this impertinence, I will say this impiety, for there is a certain impiety in making the immutable and absolute truth walk in harmony with that imperfect and provisional truth which is called science. This madness of assimilating reality to appearance, the body to the soul, has produced a multitude of miserable, baneful opinions through which the apologists of this period have allowed their foolhardy feebleness to be seen. One, a distinguished member of the Society of Jesus, admits the plurality of inhabited worlds; he allows that intelligent beings may inhabit Mars and Venus, provided that to the earth there be reserved the privilege of the Cross, by which it again becomes unique and peculiar in the Creation. The other, a man who not without some merit occupied in the Sorbonne the chair of theology which has since been abolished, grants that the geologist can trace the vestiges of preadamites and reduces the Genesis of the Bible to the organisation of one province of the universe for the sojourn of Adam, and his seed. O dull folly! O pitiable boldness! O ancient novelties, already condemned a hundred times! O violation of sacred unity! How much better, like Raymond the Great and his historian, to proclaim that science and religion ought no more to be confused with each other than the relative and the absolute, the finite and the infinite, the darkness and the light!”

“Monsieur l’abbé,” said the professor, “you despise science.”

The priest shook his head.

“Not so, Monsieur Bergeret, not so! I hold, on the contrary, according to the example of Saint Thomas Aquinas and all the great doctors, that science and

philosophy ought to be held in high esteem in the schools.

“One does not despise science without despising reason; one does not despise reason without despising man; one does not despise man without insulting God. The rash scepticism which lays the blame on human reason is the first step towards that criminal scepticism that defies the divine mysteries. I value science as a gift which comes to us from God. But if God has given us science, he has not given us *His* science. His geometry is not ours. Ours speculates on one plane or in space; His works in infinitude. He has not conceived us: that is why I consider that there is a true human science. He has not taught us all: that is why I declare the powerlessness of this science, even though true, to agree with the truth of truths. And this discrepancy, every time that it occurs between the two, I see without fear: it proves nothing, neither against heaven, nor earth.”

M. Bergeret confessed that this system seemed to him as clever as it was bold, and ultimately consonant with the interests of the faith.

“But,” added he, “it is not our Archbishop’s doctrine. In his pastoral letters, Monseigneur Chariot speaks voluntarily of the truths of religion being confirmed by the discoveries of science, and especially by the experiments of M. Pasteur.”

“Oh!” answered Abbé Lantaigne in a nasal voice that hissed with scorn, “His Eminence observes, in philosophy at least, the vow of evangelical poverty.”

At the moment when this phrase was lashing the air beneath the quincunxes, a corpulent great-coat, capped by a wide clerical hat, passed in front of the bench.

“Speak lower, monsieur l’abbé,” said the professor; “Abbé Guitrel hears you.”

VIII

MLE PRÉFET WORMS-CLAVELIN was chatting with Abbé Guitrel in the shop of Rodonneau junior, goldsmith and jeweller. He leant back in an arm-chair and crossed his legs so that the sole of one of his boots stuck up towards the placid old man's chin.

"Monsieur l'abbé, it is useless for you to speak: you are an enlightened priest; you see in religion a collection of moral precepts, a necessary discipline, and not a set of antiquated dogmas, of mysteries whose absurdity is only too little mysterious."

As a priest M. Guitrel had excellent rules of conduct. One of these rules was to avoid scandal and to hold his tongue, rather than expose the truth to the mockery of unbelievers. And, as this precaution agreed with the bent of his character, he observed it scrupulously. But M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was lacking in discretion. His vast, fleshy nose, his thick lips, seemed like a powerful apparatus of suction and absorption, whilst his receding forehead, above his great pale eyes, betrayed his opposition to all moral delicacy. He persisted, marshalled against Christian dogmas the arguments of the masonic lodges and the literary cafés, and concluded by saying that it was impossible for an intelligent man to believe a word of the Catechism. Then, bringing down his fat, beringed hand on the priest's shoulder, he said:

"You don't answer, my dear abbé; you are of my opinion."

M. Guitrel, in some sort a martyr, was forced to confess his faith.

"Pardon me, monsieur *le préfet*; that little book, the Catechism, which it is the fashion to despise in certain quarters, contains more truths than the great treatises on philosophy which make such a vast noise in the world. The Catechism unites the most learned metaphysics with the most effective simplicity. This appreciation is not mine; it is that of an eminent philosopher, M. Jules Simon, who ranks the Catechism above Plato's *Timæus*."

The *préfet* dared not contradict the opinion of an ex-minister. He remembered at the same time that his official superior, the present Secretary of State for the Home Department, was a Protestant. He said:—"As an official I respect all religions equally, Protestantism as well as Catholicism. As a man, I am a freethinker, and if I had any preference as to dogma, let me tell you, monsieur l'abbé, that it would be in favour of the Reformed Party."

M. Guitrel replied in an unctuous voice: "There are, doubtless, among Protestants, many persons eminently estimable from the point of view of morals,

and I dare say many exemplary persons, if they are judged from the world's standpoint. But the so-called reformed Church is but a limb hacked from the Catholic Church, and the place of the wound still bleeds."

Indifferent to this powerful phrase, borrowed from Bossuet, M. *le préfet* drew from his case a big cigar, lighted it, and holding out the case to the priest:

"Will you accept a cigar, monsieur l'abbé?"

Being densely ignorant of ecclesiastical discipline, and believing that tobacco-smoking was forbidden to the clergy, he offered a cigar to M. Guitrel in order to make him look awkward or to lead him astray. In his ignorance he believed that by this offer he was leading a wearer of the cassock into sin, making him fall into disobedience, perhaps into sacrilege, and almost into apostasy. But M. Guitrel placidly took the cigar, slipped it carefully into the pocket of his great-coat, and said urbanely that he would smoke it after supper in his room.

Thus M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin and Abbé Guitrel, professor of sacred rhetoric at the high seminary, conversed in the goldsmith's office. Near them, Rondonneau junior, contractor to the Archbishop, who also worked for the prefecture, listened to the conversation discreetly, without taking part in it. He was preparing his mail, and his bald pate came and went among his account-books and the samples of commercial jewellery heaped up on the table.

With a brusque movement M. *le préfet* stood upright, pushed Abbé Guitrel to the other end of the room, into the recess of the window, and whispered in his ear:

"My dear Guitrel, you know that the bishopric of Tourcoing is vacant."

"I have in fact," answered the priest, "learnt of the death of Monseigneur Duclou. It is a great loss for the Church of France. Monseigneur Duclou's merits were only equalled by his modesty. He excelled in preaching. His pastoral addresses are models of hortatory eloquence. Shall I dare to recall to mind that I knew him in Orleans, at the time when he was still Abbé Duclou, the revered curé of Saint-Euverte, and that at that time he deigned to honour me with his gracious friendship? The news of his premature death was particularly distressing to me."

He was silent, letting his lips droop in sign of grief.

"It's not a question of that," said the *préfet*. "He is dead; it is a question of filling his place."

M. Guitrel's face changed. Now, screwing up his little eyes till they were quite round, he looked like a rat who sees bacon in the larder.

“You must know, my dear Guitrel,” continued the *préfet*, “that this business has nothing whatever to do with me. It is not I who appoint the bishops. I am not the keeper of the seals, nor the nuncio, nor the Pope. God be thanked!”

And he began to laugh.

“By the bye, on what terms do you stand with the nuncio?”

“The nuncio, monsieur *le préfet*, looks upon me with friendliness, as a humble and dutiful servant of the Holy Father. But I do not flatter myself that he especially heeds me, in the humble station in which I have been placed and where I am content to remain.”

“My dear abbé, if I speak to you about this affair — quite between ourselves, isn’t it? — it is because there is a question of sending a priest from my county town to Tourcoing. I hear on good authority that the name of Abbé Lantaigne, head of the high seminary, is being brought forward, and it is not impossible that I may be asked to supply confidential information about the candidate. He is your ecclesiastical superior. What do you think of him?”

M. Guitrel answered, with downcast eyes:

“It is certain that Abbé Lantaigne would bring to the episcopal see once sanctified by the apostle Loup both eminent piety and the precious gifts of eloquence. His Lenten sermons preached at Saint-Exupère have been justly admired for their logical arrangement of ideas and power of expression, and it is commonly recognised that some of the sermons would fall in no respect short of perfection, if there were present in them that unction, that perfumed and consecrated oil, if I may dare so to call it, which alone penetrates the heart.

“The curé of Saint-Exupère took pleasure in being the first to declare that M. Lantaigne, in speaking the word from the pulpit of the most venerable church in the diocese, had deserved well of the great apostle of the Gauls who laid the first stone of it, by reason of an ardour and a zeal whose very excesses were excused by their benevolent origin. He only deplored the orator’s excursions into the domain of contemporary history. For it must needs be confessed that M. Lantaigne has no fear of walking on embers that are still burning. M. Lantaigne is distinguished by piety, learning and talent. What a pity that a priest worthy of being raised to the highest positions in the Church should believe it to be his duty to proclaim a devotion, doubtless praiseworthy in principle, but reckless in its results, to an exiled family from whom he has received favours. He takes pleasure in showing a copy of the *Imitation de Jésus-Christ*, bound in purple and gold, which was given to him by the Comtesse de Paris, and he displays far too freely the extent of his gratitude and fidelity. And what a misfortune that an arrogance, excusable perhaps in such lofty talent, should lead him even to the lengths of speaking publicly under the quincunxes about the Cardinal-

Archbishop in terms which I dare not repeat! Alas! failing my voice, all the trees on the Mall would re-utter these words that fell from the mouth of M. Lantaigne, in the presence of M. Bergeret, professor of literature:— ‘In brain alone, His Eminence observes the evangelical vow of poverty!’ Such sayings are habitual with him, and was he not heard to say at the last ordination, when His Eminence advanced clothed in those pontifical ornaments which he bears with so much dignity, notwithstanding his short stature: ‘Golden cross, wooden bishop’? Most unseasonably he thus censured the magnificence with which Monseigneur Chariot delights to celebrate the offices as well as to regulate the ordering of his official banquets, and especially the dinner which he gave to the general in command of the new army-corps, and to which you were invited, Monsieur *le préfet*. And in particular any better agreement between the prefecture and the archbishopric offends Abbé Lantaigne, who is far too inclined, unfortunately, to prolong the painful misunderstandings from which Church and State suffer equally, in scorn of the precepts of St. Paul and the teaching of His Holiness Leo XIII.”

The *préfet* opened his mouth quite wide, being in the habit of listening with it. He burst out:

“This Lantaigne is steeped in the most detestable spirit of clericalism! He owes me a grudge? What has he got against me? Am I not tolerant and liberal enough? Did I not shut my eyes when on all sides the monks and nuns re-entered the convents, the schools? For if we vigorously uphold the essential laws of the Republic, we hardly enforce them. But priests are incorrigible. You are all the same. You cry out that you are being oppressed as soon as you yourself are not oppressing. And what does he say about me, this Lantaigne of yours?”

“Nothing definite can be set forth against the administration of M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, but an uncompromising soul like M. Lantaigne never forgives either your association with freemasonry or your Jewish origin.”

The *préfet* shook the ash from his cigar. “The Jews are no friends of mine. I have no ties in the Jewish world. But be tranquil, my dear abbé, I give you my word that M. Lantaigne shall not be bishop of Tourcoing. I have enough influence in the bureaux to checkmate him.... Just listen to me, Guitrel: I had no money when I started out in life. I made connections for myself. Connections are worth nearly as much as wealth. I have many and good ones. I shall be on the watch to see that Abbé Lantaigne cuts his own throat in the bureaux. Besides, my wife has a candidate for the bishopric of Tourcoing. And that candidate is you, Guitrel.”

At this word, Abbé Guitrel cast down his eyes and flung up his arms.

“I, sit in the seat sanctified by the blessed Loup and by so many pious apostles of Northern Gaul! Can such a thought have occurred to Madame Worms-Clavelin?”

“My dear Guitrel, she wishes that you should wear the mitre. And I assure you she is powerful enough to create a bishop. For my part, I shall not be sorry to give a Republican bishop to the Republic. That’s understood, my dear Guitrel; you look after the Archbishop and the nuncio; my wife and I will set the bureaux in motion.”

And M. Guitrel murmured with clasped hands: “The ancient and venerable see of Tourcoing!”

“A third-class bishopric, a mere hole, my dear abbé. But one must make a beginning. Why! do you know where I started my career in official life? At Céret! I was *sous-préfet* of Céret, in the Pyrénées-Orientales! Would any one credit it?... But I am wasting my time gossiping... Good evening, Monseigneur.”

The *préfet* held out his hand to the priest. And M. Guitrel went off along the winding street of the Tintelleries, humbly and with shoulders bent, yet planning cunning measures and promising himself, on the day when he wore the mitre and grasped the crozier, to resist the civil Government, like a prince of the Church, to fight the freemasons and to hurl anathemas at the principles of freethought, the Republic, and the Revolution.

IX

AN article in *le Libéral* informed the town of... that it possessed a prophetess. This was Mademoiselle Claude Deniseau, daughter of a man who kept a registry for country servants. Up to the age of seventeen Mademoiselle Deniseau had not revealed to the closest observer any abnormality of mind or body. She was a fair, fat, short girl, neither pretty nor ugly, but pleasant and of a lively disposition. "She had received," said *le Libéral*, "a good middle-class education, and she was religious without bigotry." At the beginning of her eighteenth year, on the 3rd of February 189-, at six o'clock in the evening, being engaged in laying the cloth on the table in the dining-room, she thought she heard her mother's voice saying, "Claudine, go to your room." She went there and between the bed and the door she perceived a bright light, and heard a voice which spoke from the light, saying: "Claudine, this country must do penance, for that will ward off great misfortunes. I am Saint Radegonde, Queen of France." Mademoiselle Deniseau then descried in the splendour a luminous and, as it were, transparent face that wore a crown of gold and gems.

After that Saint Radegonde came every day to converse with Mademoiselle Deniseau, to whom she revealed secrets and made prophecies. She had foretold the frosts that blighted the vine in blossom, and revealed that M. Rieu, curé of Sainte-Agnès, would not see the Easter festival. The venerable M. Rieu actually died on Holy Thursday. For the Republic and for France she never ceased to foretell terrible disasters close at hand — fires, floods, massacres. But God, wearied of chastising a faithless people, would at last, under a king, bring back peace and prosperity to it. The saint diagnosed and cured diseases. Under her inspiration, Mademoiselle Deniseau had told Jobelin, the road-mender, of an ointment which had cured him of an ankylosis of the knee. Jobelin had been able to resume his work again.

These marvels attracted a crowd of inquirers to the flat inhabited by the Deniseau family in the Place Saint-Exupère, above the tramway office. The young girl was studied by ecclesiastics, retired officers, and doctors of medicine. They believed that they noticed, when she was repeating the words of Saint Radegonde, that her voice became deeper, her expression sterner, and that her limbs became rigid. They also noticed that she used expressions which are not customary with young girls, and that her words could be explained by no natural means.

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, at first indifferent and scoffing, soon followed the extraordinary success of the prophetess with anxiety, for she announced the end of the Republic and the return of France to a Christian monarchy.

M. Worms-Clavelin had entered office at the time of the scandals at the Elysée under President Grévy. Since then he had participated in those cases of corruption that are endlessly being hushed up and as constantly revived to the great detriment of Parliament and the public authority. And this spectacle, which seemed natural to him, had ingrafted in his mind a profound feeling of laxity, which spread from him to all his subordinates. A senator and two deputies from his department were being threatened with legal proceedings. The most influential members of the party, engineers and financiers, were either in prison or in hiding. Under these circumstances, satisfied that the people were attached to the republican rule, he expected from them neither enthusiasm nor deference, which seemed to him but old-fashioned qualities and the empty symbols of a vanished age. Events had enlarged his naturally limited intelligence. The vast irony of things had passed into his soul, making it easy-going, mocking, indifferent. Having recognised, moreover, that the electoral committees constituted the only real authority that still subsisted in the department, he obeyed them with a semblance of zeal and with secret opposition. If he executed their orders, it was not without a considerable modification of their rigour. In a word, from opportunist he had become liberal and progressive. He willingly allowed liberty of speech and action. But he was too wise to allow any unbearable excesses, and, like a conscientious official, he took good care that the government should not receive any glaring insult, and that the ministers should peaceably enjoy that common attitude of indifference which, by gaining over their friends as well as their enemies, ensured at the same time both their power and their repose.

It pleased him that the governmental papers and the opposition ones, both being compromised by financial transactions, should be utterly discredited, alike as to their praise and their blame. The socialist sheet, being the only independent one, was also the only violent one. But it was very poor; and the fear which it inspired drove people back towards the government. Thus M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was entirely sincere when he informed the Home Secretary that the political situation was excellent in his department. And here was the prophetess of the Place Saint-Exupère destroying the harmony of this happy state. Under the direction of Saint Radegonde, she announced the fall of the ministry, the dissolution of Parliament, the resignation of the President of the Republic, and the collapse of a discredited government. She was much more violent than *le*

Libéral and far more influential. For *le Libéral* drew but few, while the whole town thronged around Mademoiselle Deniseau. The clergy, the large landowners, the nobility, the clerical press, hung upon her and drank in her words. Saint Radegonde rallied the defeated enemies of the Republic and brought together the "Conservatives." A harmless rally, but inconvenient. M. Worms-Clavelin was especially afraid lest a Paris paper should noise the affair about. "It would then assume," said he to himself, "the proportions of a scandal and would expose me to a reprimand from the minister." He resolved to look for the quietest way of silencing Mademoiselle Deniseau, and first began to make inquiries as to the character of her relations.

Her father's family was not much respected in the town. The Deniseaux were people of no position. Mademoiselle Claude's father kept a registry office, the reputation of which was neither better nor worse than that of other registries. Masters and servants complained of it, but still made use of it. In 1871 Deniseau had had the Commune proclaimed in the Place Saint-Exupère. Somewhat later, upon the expulsion of three Dominicans at the point of the sword, he had offered resistance to the gendarmes, and had got himself arrested. Next he had stood at municipal elections as a socialist, and had only obtained a very small number of votes. He was hot-headed and weak-minded, but believed to be honest.

The mother was a Nadal. The Nadals, in a better position than the Deniseaux, were small agricultural proprietors, all much respected. One of the Nadals, an aunt to Mademoiselle Claude, being subject to hallucinations, had been shut up in an asylum for some years. The Nadals were religious and had clerical connections. M. Worms-Clavelin could learn nothing more about them.

One morning he had a conversation on this subject with his private secretary, M. Lacarelle, who belonged to an old family in the neighbourhood and knew the department well.

"My dear Lacarelle, we must put an end to this madness. For it is plain that Mademoiselle Deniseau is mad."

Lacarelle replied gravely, not without the kind of arrogance inseparable from his long fair moustaches.

"Monsieur *le préfet*, opinions are divided with respect to this, and many people believe that Mademoiselle Deniseau is perfectly sane."

"After all, Lacarelle, you do not believe that Saint Radegonde comes every morning to chat with her and to drag the head of the State, along with the Government, down into the mire."

But Lacarelle was of opinion that there had been exaggeration, that ill-disposed persons were making the most of an extraordinary manifestation. It really was extraordinary that Mademoiselle Deniseau should prescribe sovereign

remedies for incurable diseases; she had cured Jobelin, the road-mender, and an old bailiff called Favru. That was not all. She foretold events that fell out as she had said.

“I can vouch for one fact, monsieur *le préfet*. Last week Mademoiselle Deniseau said:— ‘There is a treasure hidden in a field called Faifeu, at Noiselles.’ They dug at the place described and discovered a great slab of stone which blocked the entrance of an underground passage.”

“But, still,” cried the *préfet*, “you cannot maintain that Saint Radegonde...”

He stopped, thoughtful and questioning. He was profoundly ignorant of the saintly legends of Christian Gaul and of the national antiquities of France. But at school he had studied text-books of history. He was struggling to recall his boyish recollections.

“Saint Radegonde was the mother of Saint Louis?”

M. Lacarelle, who knew more history, only hesitated a moment.

“No,” said he, “the mother of Saint Louis was Blanche of Castille. Saint Radegonde was an earlier queen.”

“Well, she cannot be allowed to perform her conjuring tricks in the county town. And you, my dear Lacarelle, you ought to make her father understand — this Deniseau, I mean to say — that he has nothing to do but to give a good flogging to his daughter and put her under lock and key.” Lacarelle smoothed his Gallic moustaches. “Monsieur *le préfet*, I advise you to go and see this Deniseau girl. She is interesting. She will give you a private sitting quite to yourself.”

“You can’t mean it, Lacarelle! Fancy my going to be instructed by a little hussy that my Government is on the point of collapse!”

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was not credulous. He only thought of religion from a political point of view. He had inherited no creed from his parents, who were aliens to every superstition, as they were to every land. His soul had sucked none of the nourishment of the past from any soil. He remained empty, colourless, unfettered. Through metaphysical incompetency and the instinctive feeling for action and acquisition, he clung to tangible truth, and in all good faith believed himself to be a positivist. Having but lately drunk his bocks in the cafés at Montmartre in the company of chemists with political opinions, he still preserved a blind trustfulness in scientific methods, which he in his turn extolled in the lodges to the leading spirits among the freemasons. He enjoyed embellishing his political intrigues and administrative expedients with the fair appearance of sociological experiment. And the more useful science was to him the better he appreciated it. “I profess,” said he in all sincerity, “that unquestioning faith in facts which constitutes the scientist, the sociologist.” And

it was just because he only believed in facts and because he professed the creed of positivism that the affair of the Sibyl began to worry him.

His private secretary, M. Lacarelle, had said to him:— “This young woman has cured a road-mender and a bailiff. These are facts. She has pointed out the place where they would discover a treasure, and they really found in that place a trapdoor to the opening of a subterranean passage. That is a fact. She foretold the failure of the vines. That is a fact.”

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin had the instinct of mockery and a sense of humour, but this word *fact* exercised a spell over his mind; and it occurred vaguely to his memory that doctors like Charcot had made observations in the hospitals on sick people gifted with extraordinary powers. He remembered certain curious phenomena of hysteria and cases of second sight. He wondered whether Mademoiselle Deniseau were not a sufficiently interesting hysteric patient for her to be handed over to the experts in mental cases, which would rid the town of her.

He thought:

“I might give an official order for the consignment of this girl to an asylum, as in the case of any person whose mental derangement forms a danger to public order and personal safety; but the enemies of the government would squeal like polecats, and I can already hear lawyer Lerond charging me with unlawful committal. The plot must be unravelled, if the clericals of the county town have concocted one. For it is not to be endured that Mademoiselle Deniseau should declare every day, as the mouthpiece of Saint Radegonde, that the Republic is sinking into the mire. I grant that some regrettable deeds have been done. Certain partial changes will force themselves on us, especially in national representation, but, thank God, the government is still strong enough for me to support it.”

X

ABBÉ LANTAIGNE, principal of the high seminary, and M. Bergeret, professor of literature, were seated in conversation on a bench on the Mall, according to their custom in summer. On every subject they were opposed in opinion; never were two men more different in mind and character. But they were the only people in the town who took an interest in general ideas. This fellow-feeling united them. While philosophising beneath the quincunxes when the weather was fine, they consoled each other, one for the loneliness of celibacy, the other for the vexations of domestic life; both for their professional cares and for the unpopularity each alike shared.

On this particular day they could see from the bench where they sat the monument of Jeanne d'Arc still shrouded in wrappings. The maid having once slept a night in the town, at the house of an honest dame called la Gausse, in 189 — the municipality, with the concurrence of the State, had caused a monument to be raised to commemorate this stay. This monument, the work of two artists, the one a sculptor and the other an architect, both natives of the district, displayed the Maid fully armed, standing, meditative, on a high pedestal.

The date of the unveiling was fixed for the following Sunday. The Minister of Education was expected, and it was reckoned that there would be a lavish distribution of crosses of honour and academic decorations. The townsfolk thronged the Mall to gaze at the linen which covered the bronze figure and the stone pedestal. Outsiders installed themselves on the ramparts. On the booths set up under the quincunxes the refreshment-sellers were nailing up bands of calico bearing the legends: — *Véritable bière Jeanne d'Arc.* — *Café de la Pucelle.*

At sight of this, M. Bergeret remarked that one ought to rejoice in this concourse of citizens assembled to pay honour to the liberator of Orleans.

“The archivist of the department, M. Mazure,” added he, “stands out from the crowd. He has written a memoir to prove that the famous historical tapestry, representing the meeting at Chinon, was not made about 1430 in Germany, as was believed, but that it came at that period from some studio of Flemish France. He submitted the conclusions of his memoir to M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, who called them eminently patriotic and approved of them. He expressed a hope that he would see the author of this discovery receiving the insignia of an officer of the Academy beneath Jeanne's statue. It is also rumoured that in his speech at the unveiling M. *le préfet* will say, with his eyes turned towards the Vosges, that Jeanne was a daughter of Alsace-Lorraine.”

Abbé Lantaigne, caring but little for a joke, made no reply and kept a grave face. In principle he regarded these celebrations in honour of Jeanne d'Arc as praiseworthy. Two years before he had himself pronounced at Saint-Exupère a panegyric on the Maid, and had declared her the type of the good Frenchwoman and the good Christian. He found no subject for jest in a solemnity which was a glorification of faith and country. As a patriot and a Christian, he only regretted that the bishop and his clergy would not take the first place in it.

"The thing," said he, "that ensures the continuity of the French nation, is neither kings nor presidents of the Republic, neither provincial governors nor *préfets*, neither officers of the crown nor officials of the present government; it is the episcopacy which, from the first apostles to the Gauls down to the present day, has continued, without break, change, or diminution, and forms, so to say, the solid web of the history of France. The power of the bishops is spiritual and stable. The power of the kings, legitimate but transitory, is decrepit from its birth. On its continuance that of the nation does not depend. The nation is a spiritual conception inseparable from the moral and religious idea. But, although absent in the body from the celebrations that are being arranged for here, the clergy will be present at them in spirit and in truth. Jeanne d'Arc is ours, and it is vain for unbelievers to try and steal her from us."

M. BERGERET:— "It is, however, very natural that this simple girl, having become a symbol of patriotism, should be claimed by all patriots."

M. LANTAIGNE:— "I cannot imagine — I have told you so before — nationality without religion. Every duty comes from God, the duty of the citizen no less than that of others. If God be ignored the call of duty is stilled. If it is a right and a duty to defend one's native land against the foreigner, it is not in virtue of any pretended rights of man which never existed, but in conformity with the will of God. This conformity appears in the stories of Jael and Judith. It shines clearly in the book of the Maccabees. It can be read in the deeds of the Maid."

M. BERGERET:— "Then you believe, monsieur l'abbé, that Jeanne d'Arc received her mission from God Himself? That will land you in numberless difficulties. I will only submit to you one of these, because it is inherent in the nature of your beliefs. It relates to the voices and apparitions which manifested themselves to the peasant of Domremy. Those who grant that Saint Catherine really appeared to Jacquot d'Arc's daughter, in company with Saint Michael and Saint Marguerite, will find themselves, I fancy, much embarrassed when it has been proved to them that this Saint Catherine of Alexandria never existed, and that her history is in reality only a rather poor Greek romance. Now this fact was proved as early as the seventeenth century, not by the freethinkers of the period,

but by a learned doctor of the Sorbonne, Jean de Launoy, a man of piety and good life. The judicious Tillemont, although so submissive to the Church, rejected the biography of Saint Catherine as an absurd fable. Is not that a difficulty, monsieur l'abbé, for those who believe that the Voices of Jeanne d'Arc came from Heaven?"

M. LANTAIGNE:— "The martyrology, monsieur, worthy of all reverence as it is, is not an article of faith; and it is permissible, in imitation of Doctor de Launoy and Tillemont, to cast doubts on the existence of Saint Catherine of Alexandria. For my part, I am not inclined to go so far, and I hold such an absolute denial as rash. I recognise that the biography of this saint has come to us from the East overlaid everywhere with fabulous details, but I believe that these embellishments have been laid over a solid foundation. Neither Launoy nor Tillemont is infallible. It is not certain that Saint Catherine never existed, and if by chance historic proof of her non-existence were established, that would give way before the theological testimony to the contrary, furnished by the miraculous appearances of this saint authenticated by the Ordinary and solemnly recognised by the Pope. For, after all, good logic requires that truths of the scientific plane should yield to truths of a higher order. But we are not yet in a position to know the opinion of the Church as to the Maid's apparitions. Jeanne d'Arc has not been canonised, and the miracles wrought for her or by her are open to discussion: I neither deny nor affirm them, and it is a purely human vision which makes me perceive in the history of this marvellous girl the hand of God stretched out over France. Truth to tell, though, that vision is powerful and penetrating."

M. BERGERET:— "If I have rightly understood you, monsieur l'abbé, you do not consider the strange event at Fierbois as an attested miracle, when Jeanne, as they say, pointed out a sword concealed in the wall. And you are not certain that the Maid, as she herself declared, brought back a child to life at Lagny. You know my opinions, and for my part I should give a natural interpretation to these two facts. I suppose that the sword was fastened to the wall of the Church as a votive offering, and was consequently visible. As for the child that the Maid raised from the dead for the time necessary for the administration of baptism, and who died again after having been brought to the font, I confine myself to reminding you that there was near Domremy a Notre-Dame-des-Aviots whose particular function it was to endow still-born children with a few hours of life. I suspect that the memory of Notre-Dame-des-Aviots had a good deal to do with the illusions that possessed Jeanne d'Arc when she believed, at Lagny, that she had raised a new-born child from the dead."

M. LANTAIGNE:— “There is much uncertainty in these explanations, monsieur. And rather than adopt them, I suspend my judgment, which inclines, I confess, towards the miraculous side, at least with respect to Saint Catherine’s sword. For the passage is precise: the sword was *in* the wall, and it was necessary to excavate to find it. Neither is it impossible, again, that God, upon the efficacious prayers of a virgin, should have given life back to a child that had died without having received baptism.”

M. BERGERET:— “YOU speak, monsieur l’abbé, of ‘the efficacious prayers of a virgin.’ Do you then grant, in accordance with the belief of the Middle Ages, that there was some virtue, some peculiar power, in Jeanne d’Arc’s virginity?”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Clearly virginity is pleasing to God, and Jesus Christ rejoices in the triumph of His virgins. A young girl turned Attila and his Huns back from Lutetia; a young girl delivered Orleans and caused the lawful king to be crowned at Rheims.”

The priest having thus expressed himself, M. Bergeret seized on his words in a way of his own.

“Exactly,” said he. “Jeanne d’Arc was a mascotte.”

But Abbé Lantaigne did not hear. He rose and said:

“France’s destined rôle in Christendom is not yet achieved. I foresee that ere long God will yet again work His will through the nation which has been the most faithful and the most faithless to Him.”

“And so it is,” answered M. Bergeret, “that, as in the profligate times of King Charles VII., we behold the rise of prophetesses. Our town indeed holds one of them, who is making a happier start than Jeanne, since Jacquot d’Arc’s daughter was regarded as mad by her parents, and Mademoiselle Deniseau finds a disciple in her own father. Still I do not believe that her good luck will be great and lasting. Our *préfet*, M. Worms-Clavelin, is somewhat wanting in good breeding, but he is less of a simpleton than Baudricourt, and it is no longer the custom for the heads of the State to give audience to prophetesses. M. Félix Faure will not be advised by his confessor to test Mademoiselle Deniseau. Here, perhaps, you may reply, monsieur l’abbé, that the influence of Bernadette of Lourdes is stronger in our days than that of Jeanne d’Arc ever was. The latter overthrew some hundreds of starving and panic-stricken English; Bernadette has set countless pilgrims on the march and drawn thousands of millions to a mountain in the Pyrenees. And my revered friend, M. Pierre Laffitte, assures me that we have entered on an era of positive philosophy.”

“As for what happens at Lourdes,” said Abbé Lantaigne, “without becoming latitudinarian or falling into excessive credulity, I reserve my opinion on a point

upon which the Church has made no pronouncement. But henceforth I see a triumph for religion in this crowd of pilgrims, just as you yourself see in it a defeat for materialistic philosophy.”

XI

THE ministry had fallen. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin felt neither surprise nor regret at this. In the depths of his heart he had always considered it too restless and too disturbing, an object of suspicion, and not without reason, to the agriculturist, the large merchant, and the small investor. Without affecting the fortunate indifference of the masses, this cabinet had exercised, to the *prefers* grief, a vexatious influence over freemasonry, the organisation by which, for fifteen years past, the whole political life of the department had been drawn together and held in check. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin had been able to turn the masonic lodges of the department into boards vested with the preliminary choice of candidates for public offices, for electoral functions, and for party favours. Exercising in this way wide and definite prerogatives, the lodges, being as much opportunist as they were radical, combined, acted in concert with one another, and worked together for the republican cause. The *préfet*, rejoicing to see the ambition of some restraining the desires of others, gathered together, on the joint recommendation of the lodges, a band of senators, deputies, municipal councillors and road-surveyors, all equally loyal to the government, yet sufficiently diverse in opinion and sufficiently moderate to satisfy and reassure all republican parties, save the socialists. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin had brought about this unanimity. And now the radical ministry must needs break up so happy a harmony.

Ill-luck decreed that the holder of one of the minor portfolios (either agriculture or commerce) should travel through the department and stop for him to deliver a philosophic and moral speech at one assembly to flutter all the assemblies, divide each lodge into two, set brother against brother, and infuriate citizen Mandar, the chemist of the Rue Culture, master of the lodge "New Alliance," and a radical, against M. Tricoul, vine-grower of Les Tournelles, master of the lodge "Sacred Friendship," and an opportunist.

Mentally M. Worms-Clavelin made another complaint against the fallen ministry: that of having lavishly distributed academic decorations and given Orders of Merit for agricultural proficiency to radical-socialists only, thus robbing the *préfet* of the advantage of governing with the aid of these decorations, or at least by means of tardily fulfilled promises of them.

M. *le préfet* expressed his thoughts accurately as, alone in his study, he murmured these bitter words:

“If they believed they could play at politics by upsetting my loyal lodges and fastening my useful palms to the tail of every drunken dog in the department, they’ll find themselves finely mistaken!”

Thus it was that he heard of the fall of the ministry without any regret.

Besides, these changes that he had foreseen never surprised him. His administrative policy was always founded on the assumption that ministry succeeds minister. He made a point of never serving a Home Secretary with ardent zeal. He refrained from being over-pleasing to any one, and shunned all opportunities of doing too well. This moderation, kept up during the continuance of one ministry, assured him the sympathy of the next one, thus sufficiently predisposed in his favour to acquiesce in its turn in the half-hearted zeal, which became a claim to the favour of a third cabinet. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin reigned without ruling, corresponded briefly with the Place Beauvau, (Where the French Home Office is situated.) manoeuvred the boards, and stayed in office.

In his study, through the half-open windows of which came the scent of flowering lilacs and the twittering of sparrows, he was meditating, in a gentle and peaceful mood, on the lingering extinction of the scandals which on two occasions had gone near to ruining the leaders of the party. He looked forward to the day, still far distant, on which it would again be possible to resume activity. He reflected that, in spite of passing difficulties, and notwithstanding the discord unluckily communicated to the masonic lodges and the electoral committees, he would have capital municipal elections. The mayors in this agricultural district were excellent. The spirit of the populace was so loyal that the two deputies, who, being compromised in several financial transactions, were threatened with legal proceedings, had yet retained all their influence in their districts. He said to himself that the *scrutin de liste* (In which each voter inscribes on his paper as many names as there are vacancies to be filled.) would never have produced such favourable results. In his exaltation of mind thoughts that were almost philosophic came to the surface of his mind as to the ease with which men can be governed. He had a confused vision of this human beast allowing itself to be led, and straggling along in tireless gloomy tractableness beneath the eye of the shepherding dog.

M. Lacarelle entered the study with a newspaper in his hand.

“Monsieur *le préfet*, the resignation of the ministers, having been accepted by the President of the Republic, is announced in *l’Officiel*.”

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin continued his gentle musing, and M. Lacarelle turned up his long Gallic moustaches and rolled his china-blue eyes, as a sign

that he was about to give expression to a thought. And, as a matter of fact, he did so.

“Opinions differ as to the fall of the ministry.” “Really?” asked M. *le préfet*, who was not listening.

“Well! monsieur *le préfet*, it cannot be denied that Mademoiselle Claudine Deniseau predicted that the ministry would fall at an early date.”

M. *le préfet* shrugged his shoulders. He had a mind wise enough to see that there was nothing marvellous in the fulfilment of such a prophecy. But Lacarelle, with a profound knowledge of local affairs, a marvellously contagious stupidity, and an exceptional aptitude for self-delusion, immediately related to him three or four new stories which were running through the town, and especially the story of M. de Gromance, to whom Saint Radegonde had said, in reply to her visitor’s secret thought: “Be at ease, monsieur *le comte*; the child that your wife will bear is really your son.” Then Lacarelle returned to the disclosure of the hidden treasure. Two Roman coins had been found at the place indicated. The excavations were still going on. There had also been some cures of which the private secretary gave vague and rambling descriptions.

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin listened uncomprehendingly. The mere idea of the Deniseau girl saddened and worried him. The influence of this visionary over the townsfolk at large was beyond his understanding. He was afraid of using his abilities ineffectively in a psychic case such as this. This fear paralysed his reason, although it was strong enough in ordinary circumstances. As he listened to Lacarelle, he experienced a dread of being convinced, and instinctively exclaimed brusquely:

“I don’t believe in such things as these! I don’t believe in them!”

But doubt and anxiety overwhelmed him. He wished to know what Abbé Guitrel, whom he regarded as both learned and intelligent, thought on the subject of this prophetess. It was just the time when he would meet the abbé at the goldsmith’s house. He went to Rondonneau junior’s, and found him in the inner room, nailing up a case, whilst Abbé Guitrel examined a silver-gilt vase set on a long stem and surmounted with a rounded lid.

“That’s a fine chalice, isn’t it, monsieur l’abbé?”

“It is a pyx, monsieur *le préfet*, a ciborium, a vessel intended *ad fer endos cibos*. (To bear the bread.) In fact, the pyx holds the sacred hosts, the food of the soul. Formerly they used to keep the pyx in a silver dove hung over the baptismal font, the altar, or the tomb of a martyr. This one is decorated in the style of the thirteenth century. An austere and magnificent style, very suitable, monsieur *le préfet*, for church furniture, and especially for the sacred vessels.”

M. Worms-Clavelin was not listening to the priest, whose restless, crafty profile he was observing. "Here is the man," thought he, "who is going to tell me about Saint Radegonde and the prophetess." And the departmental representative of the Republic was already screwing up his courage, concentrating his energies, lest he should appear weak-minded, superstitious and credulous, before an ecclesiastic.

"Yes, monsieur *le préfet*," said Abbé Guitrel, "our worthy M. Rondonneau junior has executed this beautiful specimen of goldsmith's work after ancient models. I am inclined to think that they could not have done better in the Place Saint-Sulpice, in Paris, where the best goldsmiths are to be found."

"*À propos*, monsieur l'abbé, what is your opinion of the prophetess whom our town possesses?"

"What prophetess, monsieur *le préfet*? Do you mean that poor girl who pretends to be in communication with Saint Radegonde, queen of France? Alas! monsieur, it cannot possibly be the pious spouse of Clotaire who suggests to that miserable girl sorry nonsense of every kind and rhapsodies which, being irreconcilable with good sense, are still less to be reconciled with theology. Foolery, monsieur *le préfet*, mere foolery!"

M. Worms-Clavelin, who had prepared some subtle jests concerning priestly credulity, remained silent.

"No, indeed," continued M. Guitrel, with a smile, "it is incredible that Saint Radegonde should suggest this trash, this folly, all these silly, empty, sometimes heterodox, speeches that fall from the lips of this young maiden. The voice of the sainted Radegonde would have another accent, believe me."

M. LE PRÉFET:— "Very little is known, in fact, about this Saint Radegonde."

M. GUITREL:— "You mistake, monsieur *le préfet*, you mistake! Saint Radegonde, revered by the whole Catholic Church, is the object of special worship in the diocese of Poitiers, which was formerly witness of her merits."

M. LE PRÉFET:— "Yes, as you say, monsieur l'abbé, there is a special..."

M. GUITREL:— "Even atheists themselves have regarded this great figure with admiration. What a sublime picture, monsieur *le préfet*! After the murder of her brother by her husband, Clotaire's noble spouse betakes herself to Bishop Médard at Noyon, and urges him to dedicate her to God. Taken by surprise, Saint Médard hesitates; he urges the indissolubility of marriage. But Radegonde herself covers her head with the veil of a recluse, and flings herself at the feet of the pontiff, who, overcome by the saintly persistence of the queen, and braving the wrath of the savage monarch, offers this blessed victim to God."

M. LE PREFET:— “But, monsieur l’abbé, do you approve of a bishop defying the civil powers in that fashion and abetting the wife of his overlord in her revolt? The deuce! if these are your opinions, I shall be grateful to you for telling me so.”

M. GUITREL:— “Alas! monsieur *le préfet*, I have not, as the blessed Médard had, the illumination of sanctity to enable me to discern the will of God in extraordinary circumstances. Luckily nowadays the rules which a bishop should follow with regard to the civil powers are definitely defined. And monsieur *le préfet* will kindly remember, in speaking of me for the bishopric of Tourcoing to his friends in the ministry, that I recognise all the obligations that follow from the Concordat. But why intrude my humble personality in these great scenes of history? Saint Radegonde, clothed in the veil of a deaconess, founded the monastery of Sainte-Croix in Poitiers, where she lived for more than fifty years in the practice of a rigorous asceticism. She observed fasts and abstinences with such scrupulousness...”

M. LE PREFET:— “Keep these stories of yours, monsieur l’abbé, for your seminarists. You don’t believe that Saint Radegonde communicates with Mademoiselle Deniseau. I congratulate you on that. And I could wish that all the priests in the department were as reasonable as you. But it only needs this hysteric patient — for hysteric she is — to attack the government for all the curés to come in herds to listen, open-mouthed and applauding, to all the insults she spits out.”

M. GUITREL:— “Oh! they make reservations, monsieur *le préfet*, they make reservations. The Church instructs them to be extremely wary in face of every fact that assumes the appearance of a miracle. And I assure you that, for my part, I am very distrustful of modern miracles.”

M. LE PRÉFET:— “Tell me, between ourselves: you don’t believe in miracles, my dear abbé?”

M. GUITREL: “In miracles that are not duly verified I have, indeed, but little belief.”

M. LE PREFET:— “We are alone. Confess, now, that there are no miracles, that there never have been any, and that there never can possibly be any.”

M. GUITREL: “Not at all, monsieur *le préfet*. A miracle is possible; it can be unmistakably recognised; it is useful for the confirmation of doctrine; and its utility is proved by the conversion of nations.”

M. LE PREFET:— “Anyhow, you grant that it is ridiculous to believe that Saint Radegonde, who lived in the Middle Ages...”

M. GUITREL:— “In the sixth century, in the sixth century.”

M. LE PREFET:— “Exactly, in the sixth century.... should come in 189-to gossip with the daughter of a registry-keeper on the political programme of the ministry and the Chambers.”

M. GUITREL:— “Communications between the Church triumphant and the Church militant are possible; history supplies numberless undeniable instances of it. But, yet again, I do not believe that the young person of whom we are speaking is favoured with a communication of this kind. Her sayings, if I may dare to say so, do not bear the hall-mark of a celestial revelation. Everything she says is somehow...”

M. LE PREFET:— “Humbug.”

M. GUITREL:— “If you like.... Though, in deed, it might be quite possible that she is possessed.”

M. LE PRÉFET:— “What is this that you are say ing? You, an intelligent priest, a future bishop of the Republic, you believe in possession! It is a mediæval superstition! I have read a book by Michelet on it.”

M. GUITREL:— “But, monsieur *le préfet*, possession is a fact recognised not only by theologians, but also by scientists, atheists for the most part. And Michelet himself, whom you quote, believed in the cases of possession at Loudun.”

M. LE PREFET: “What notions! You are all the same! And if Claudine Deniseau were possessed, as you say?..

M. GUITREL:— “Then it would be necessary to exorcise her.”

M. LE PREFET:— “Exorcise her? Don’t you think, monsieur l’abbé, that that would be absurd?”

M. GUITREL:— “Not at all, monsieur *le préfet*} not at all.”

M. LE PREFET:— “What does one do?”

M. GUITREL:— “There are rules, monsieur *le préfet*, a formulary, a ritual for this kind of operation, which has never ceased to be used. Jeanne d’Arc herself had to undergo it, in the town of Vancouleurs, unless I mistake. M. Laprune, the curé of Saint-Exupère, would be the right person to exorcise this Deniseau girl, who is one of his parishioners. He is a very venerable priest. It is true that, as regards the Deniseau family, he is in a position which may react on his character, and, to a certain extent, influence a wise and cautious mind, as yet unenfeebled by age, or which at any rate still seems able to bear the weight of years and the fatigues of a long and onerous ministry. I mean to say that events, regarded by some as miracles, have taken place in the parish of this worthy curé; and M. Laprune’s zeal must needs have been led into error by the thought that the parish of Saint-Exupère may have been privileged to such a degree that a manifestation of divine power has taken place in it, in preference to all the other

parishes in our town. Buoyed up by such a hope, he has perhaps formed illusions which he has unconsciously communicated to his clergy. An error and a mistake which one can excuse, if one considers the circumstances. Indeed, what blessings would not a new miracle shed on the parish church of Saint-Exupère! The zeal of the faithful would be revived by it, an outpouring of gifts would bring wealth into the famous, but clean-stripped, walls of the ancient church. And the favour of the Cardinal-Archbishop would solace the last days of M. Lapruné, now arrived at the end of his ministry and strength.”

M. LE PREFET:— “But if I understand you rightly, monsieur l’abbé, it is this doddering curé of Saint-Exupère, it is M. Lapruné, with his vicaires, who has got up the affair of the Prophetess. Undoubtedly the priests are strong. They won’t believe it in Paris, in the bureaux, but it is the truth. The priests are a fine power! Here your old Lapruné has been organising these séances of clerical spiritualism which all the town attends in order to hear the Parliament, the presidency, and myself insulted — for I am perfectly aware that they don’t spare me in these conventicles of the Place Saint-Exupère.”

M. GUITREL:— “Oh! monsieur *le préfet*, far be it from me to think of suspecting the worthy curé of Saint-Exupère of having concocted a plot! On the contrary, I sincerely believe that, if he has in any way encouraged this unhappy affair, he will soon recognise his error, and will use all his influence to efface the results of it.... But even in his interest and in that of the diocese, one might forestall him and inform His Eminence of the real facts, of which he is perhaps still ignorant. Once warned of these disorders, he will doubtless put an end to them.”

M. LE PRÉFET:— “That’s an idea!... My dear abbé, are you willing to undertake the commission? For my part, as *préfet*, I am obliged to ignore the fact that there is an Archbishop, save in cases provided for by the law, such as bells and processions. When one thinks of it, it is an absurd situation, for from the moment that Archbishops have an actual existence... But politics have their necessities. Tell me frankly. Are you in favour at the Archbishop’s palace?”

M. GUITREL:— “His Eminence sometimes deigns to listen to me with kindness. The affability of His Eminence is extreme.”

M. LE PREFET:— “Well! tell him that it is inadmissible for Saint Radegonde to come to life again in order to plague the senators, the deputies, and the *préfet* of the department, and that, in the interests of the Church as well as of the Republic, it is time to bridle the tongue of the fierce Clotaire’s spouse. Just tell His Eminence that.”

M. GUITREL:— “Substantially, monsieur *le préfet*; substantially I will tell him that.”

M. LE PREFET:— “Set about it as you like, monsieur l’abbé, but prove to him that he must forbid his priests to enter the Deniseau house, that he must openly reprimand the curé Laprune, condemn in *la Semaine religieuse* the speeches made by this mad woman, and officially request the editors of *le Libéral* to cease the campaign they are waging in support of a miracle both unconstitutional and contrary to the Concordat.”

M. GUITREL:— “I will try it, monsieur *le préfet*.

Certainly, I will try it. But what am I, a poor professor of sacred rhetoric, before His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop?”

M. LE PREFET:— “He is intelligent, is your Arch bishop; he will understand that his own interests, and the honour of Saint Radegonde, by the Lord!...”

M. GUITREL:— “Doubtless, monsieur *le préfet*, doubtless. But His Eminence, so devoted to the spiritual interests of the diocese, perhaps considers that the prodigious crowd of souls around this poor girl is a token of that yearning after belief which torments the younger generation, a proof that faith is more living than ever among the masses, an example, in fact, which it would be well to present to the consideration of statesmen. And it is possible that, thinking thus, he may be in no hurry to cause the sign to cease, to suppress the proof and the example. It is possible...”

M. LE PRÉFET:— “... that he may make fun of everybody. He is quite capable of it.”

M. GUITREL:— “Oh! monsieur *le préfet*, there is no foundation for that assumption! But how much easier and more certain would my mission be, if, like the dove from the ark, I were the bearer of an olive branch, if I were authorised to say — oh! just in a whisper! — to Monseigneur, that the salary of the seven poor curés of the diocese, suspended by the former Minister of Religion, was restored!”

M. LE PREFET:— “Give, give, that’s it, isn’t it?

I will think it over.... I will telegraph to Paris, and I will bring you the answer at Rondonneau junior’s. Good evening, monsieur *le diplomate*!”

XII

M. PAILLOT was the bookseller at the corner of the Place Saint-Exupère and the Rue des Tintelleries. For the most part the houses which surrounded this square were ancient; those that leant against the church bore carved and painted signboards. Several had a pointed gable and a wooden frontage. One of these, which had kept its carved beams, was a gem admired by connoisseurs. The main joists were upheld by carved corbels, some in the shape of angels bearing shields, the others in the form of monks crouching low. To the left of the door, against a post, rose the mutilated figure of a woman, her brow encircled by a floreated crown. The townsfolk declared that this was Queen Marguerite. And the building was known by the name of Queen Marguerite's house.

It was believed, on the authority of Dom Maurice, author of a *Trésor d'antiquités*, printed in 1703, that Margaret of Scotland lodged in this house for several months of the year 1438. But M. de Terremondre, president of the Society of Agriculture and Archaeology, proves in a substantially constructed memoir that this house was built in 1488 for a prominent citizen named Philippe Tricouillard. The archaeologists of the town, whenever they conduct sightseers to the front of this building, seizing a moment when the ladies are inattentive, take pleasure in showing the canting arms of Philippe Tricouillard, carved on a shield held by two angels. These arms, which M. de Terremondre has judiciously compared with those of the Coleoni of Bergamo, are represented on the corbel which stands over the doorway, under the left lintel. The figures on it are very shadowy, and are only recognisable by those who have them pointed out. As for the figure of a woman wearing a crown, which leans against the perpendicular joist, M. de Terremondre found no difficulty in proving that it must be regarded as a Saint Marguerite. In fact, there may still be made out at the feet of the saint the remains of a hideous shape which is none other than that of the devil; and the right arm of the principal figure, which is lacking to-day, ought to hold the holy-water sprinkler which the blessed saint shook over the enemy of the human race. It is clear what Saint Marguerite typifies in this place, now that M. Mazure, the archivist of the department, has brought to light a document proving that in the year 1488 Philippe Tricouillard, then about seventy years of age, had lately married Marguerite Larrivée, daughter of a magistrate. By a confusion which is not very surprising, Marguerite Larrivée's celestial patron was taken for the young princess of Scotland whose sojourn in the town of... has left a deep impression. Few ladies have bequeathed a memory more full

of pity than that princess who died at twenty with this last sigh on her lips:—
“Out upon thee, life!”

The house of M. Paillot, the bookseller, joins on to Queen Marguerite’s house. Originally it was built, like its neighbour, with a wooden front, and the visible timber-work was no less carefully carved. But, in 1860, M. Paillot’s father, bookseller to the Archbishopric, had it pulled down in order to rebuild it simply, in the modern style, without any pretence at wealth or art, merely taking care to make it convenient as a dwelling-house and place of business. A tree of Jesse, in Renaissance style, which covered the entire front of Paillot’s house, at the corner formed by the Place Saint-Exupère and the Rue des Tintelleries, was torn down with the rest, but not destroyed. M. de Terremonde, coming upon it afterwards in a timber-merchant’s yard, purchased it for the museum. This monument is in good style. Unfortunately the prophets and patriarchs, who cluster on each branch like marvellous fruits, and the Virgin, blossoming on the summit of the prophetic tree, were mutilated by the Terrorists in 1793, and the tree suffered fresh damage in 1860, when it was carried to the timber-yard as firewood. M. Quatrebarbe, the diocesan architect, expatiates on these mutilations in his interesting pamphlet on *Les Vandales modernes*. “One shudders,” says he, “at the thought that this precious relic of an age of faith ran the risk of being sawn up and burnt before our very eyes.”

This sentiment, being expressed by a man whose clerical tendencies were well known, was trenchantly criticised by *le Phare* in an anonymous paragraph in which was recognised, rightly or wrongly, the hand of the archivist of the department, M. Mazure. “In twenty words,” said this paragraph, “the architect of the diocese supplies us with several occasions for surprise. The first is that any one should be able to shudder at the mere idea of the loss of an indifferently carved beam, and one so much mutilated that the details are not recognisable; the second is that this beam should stand to M. Quatrebarbe, whose creed is well known, as a relic of an age of faith, since it dates from 1530 — that is to say, from the year when the Protestant Diet of Augsburg assembled; the third is that M. Quatrebarbe should omit to say that the precious beam was torn down and sent to the timber-yard by his own father-in-law, M. Nicolet, the diocesan architect, who, in 1860, transformed the Paillot house in the way which one can now see; the fourth is that M. Quatrebarbe ignores the fact that it was none other than M. Mazure, the archivist, who discovered the carved beam in Clouzot’s wood-yard, where it had been rotting for ten years under M. Quatrebarbe’s very nose, and who pointed it out to M. de Terremonde, president of the Society of Agriculture and Archaeology, who purchased it for the museum.”

In its actual condition the house of M. Paillot, the bookseller, showed a uniform white frontage, three storeys in height. The shop, ornamented with woodwork painted green, bore, in letters of gold, the words, "Paillot, libraire." The shop-window displayed terrestrial and celestial globes of different diameters, boxes of mathematical instruments, school books and little text-books for the officers of the garrison, with a few novels and new memoirs: these were what M. Paillot called works of literature. A window, narrower and not so deep, that gave on the Rue des Tintelleries, contained works on agriculture and law, and thus completed the supply of instruments required by the intellectual life of the county town. On a counter inside the shop were to be found works on literature, novels, essays, and memoirs.

"Classics in sets" were stacked in pigeon-holes, and quite at the bottom, by the side of the door which opened on the staircase, some shelves were reserved for old books. For M. Paillot combined in his shop the business of a new and second-hand bookseller. This dark corner of the old books attracted the bibliophiles of the district, who in days gone by had found treasure-trove there. A certain copy of the first edition of the third book of Pantagruel was recalled, unearthed in excellent condition in 1871 by M. de Terremondre, father of the present president of the Agricultural Society, at Paillot's, in the old-book corner. There was still more mysterious talk of a Mellin de Saint-Gelais, containing on the back of the title-page some autograph verses by Marie Stuart, that M. Dutilleul, the notary, had found, about the same time, and in the same place, and for which he paid three francs. But, since then, no one had announced any marvellous discovery. The gloomy, monotonous corner of the old books scarcely changed. There was always to be seen there *l'Abrégé de l'Histoire des Voyages*, in fifty-six volumes, and the odd volumes of Kehl's Voltaire, in large paper. M. Dutilleul's discovery, doubted by many, was by some openly denied. They based their opinion on the idea that the old notary was quite capable of having lied through vanity, and on the fact that after M. Dutilleul's death no copy of the poems of Mellin de Saint-Gelais was found in his library. Yet the bibliophiles of the town, who frequented Paillot's shop, never failed to explore the old-book corner, at least once a month. M. de Terremondre was one of the most assiduous visitors.

He was a large landed proprietor in the department, well connected, a breeder of cattle and a connoisseur in artistic matters. He it was who designed the historic costumes for processions and who presided over the committee formed for the erection of a statue of Jeanne d'Arc on the ramparts. He spent four months of the year in Paris, and had the reputation of being a man of gallantry. At fifty he preserved a slim and elegant figure. He was very popular with all

three classes in the county town, and they had several times offered him the position of deputy. This he had refused, declaring that his leisure, as well as his independence, was dear to him. And people were curious about the reasons for his refusal.

M. de Terremondre had thought of buying Queen Marguerite's house in order to turn it into a museum of local archæology and offer it to the town. But Madame Houssieu, the widowed owner of this house, had not responded to the overtures which he had made to her. Now more than eighty years of age, she lived in the old house, alone, save for a dozen cats. She was supposed to be rich and miserly. All that could be done was to wait for her death. Every time that he entered Paillot's shop, M. de Terremondre asked the bookseller:

"Is Queen Marguerite still in the land of the living?"

And M. Paillot replied that assuredly one morning she would be found dead in her bed, living shut up alone at her age. Meanwhile, he dreaded her setting his house on fire. This was her neighbour's constant fear. He lived in terror lest the old lady should burn down her wooden house and his along with it.

Madame Houssieu interested M. de Terremondre greatly. He was inquisitive about all that Queen Marguerite, as he called her, said and did. At the last visit which he had paid to her, she had shown him a bad Restoration engraving representing the Duchess of Angoulême pressing to her heart the portraits of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette enclosed in a medallion. This engraving, set in a black frame, hung in the ground-floor sitting-room. Showing it to him, Madame Houssieu said:

"That's the portrait of Queen Marguerite, who long ago lived in this house."

And M. de Terremondre asked himself how a portrait of Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte of France had, even by the dullest of minds, been taken for a portrait of Margaret of Scotland. He meditated on it for a month.

Then one day he exclaimed, as he entered Paillot's shop:

"I've got it!"

And he explained to his friend the bookseller the very plausible reasons for this extraordinary confusion.

"Listen to me, Paillot! Margaret of Scotland, mistaken for Marguerite Larrivée, is confused with Marguerite of Valois, Duchess of Angouleme, and this princess is, in her turn, confused with the Duchess of Angouleme, daughter of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette, Marguerite Larrivée — Margaret of Scotland — Marguerite, Duchess of Angouleme — the Duchess of Angouleme.

"I am rather proud of having found that out, Paillot. Tradition should always be taken into account. But when we own Queen Marguerite's house, we will furbish up the memory of that good Philippe Tricouillard a little."

Hard upon this declaration Dr. Fornerol entered the shop with the wonted impetuosity of that indefatigable visitor of the sick, who brought with him hope and comfort. Gustave Fornerol was a fat, moustachioed man. Possessed in his wife's right of a small country estate, he affected the fashions of a country proprietor and paid his visits in a soft hat, a hunting waistcoat and leather leggings. Although his practice was exclusively among the lower middle class and the rural population of the suburbs, he was considered the most skilful practitioner in the town.

Friendly with Paillot, as with all his fellow-townsmen, he was not in the habit of paying useless visits to him, nor of wasting his time gossiping in the shop. This time, however, he sank down on one of the three rush-bottomed chairs which, set in the old-book corner, had gained for Paillot's shop the reputation for a hospitality at once literary, learned, cultured, and academic.

He puffed, waved a good-day to Paillot with his hand, bowed with some deference to M. de Terremondre, and said:

"I am tired.... Well! Paillot, were you pleased with the show yesterday? What did Madame Paillot think of the play and the actors?"

The bookseller did not commit himself. He considered that it is wise for a tradesman to express no opinions in his shop. Besides, he went to the theatre only *en famille*, and that but seldom. But Dr. Fornerol, whose position as medical officer to the theatre procured him free passes, never missed a performance.

A travelling company had given *la Maréchale* the night before, with Pauline Giry in the leading part.

"She is always capital, is Pauline Giry," said the doctor.

"That's the general opinion," said the bookseller.

"She isn't as young as she once was," said M. de Terremondre, who was turning over the leaves of volume xxxviii of *l'Histoire Générale des Voyages*.

"By Jove, no!" answered the doctor. "You know that Giry isn't her real name?"

"Her real name is Girou," answered M. de Terremondre authoritatively. "I knew her mother, Clémence Girou. Fifteen years ago Pauline Giry was dark and very pretty."

And the three of them, in the old-book corner, set to work to reckon the actress's age. But as they were calculating from doubtful or incorrect data, they only reached contradictory, or sometimes even absurd, conclusions, and with these they were by no means satisfied.

"I am worn out," said the doctor. "You all went to bed after the theatre. But I was called up at midnight to go to an old farmer on Duroc hill, who was

suffering from strangulated hernia. Says his man to me:— ‘He has brought up everything he can. He harps on one note. He is going to die.’ I have the horse put in and I spin out to Duroc hill, over yonder, right at the end of the Faubourg de Tramayes. I find my man a-bed and howling. Corpse-like face, stercoraceous vomiting. Very good! His wife says to me:— ‘It’s in his inside that it takes him.’”

“She’s forty-seven, is Pauline Giry,” said M. de Terremondre.

“It’s quite possible,” said Paillot.

“At least forty-seven,” answered the doctor. “Double hernia, and dangerous it was. Very good! I proceed to reduce it by hand-pressure. Although it is only necessary to exercise a very faint pressure with the hand, after thirty minutes of this business, one’s arms and back are broken. And it was only at the end of five hours, at the tenth repetition, that I was able to effect the reduction.”

At this point in the narrative recounted by Dr. Fornerol, Paillot the bookseller went to serve some ladies who asked for some interesting books to read in the country. And the doctor, addressing himself to M. de Terremondre alone, continued:

“I was one ache. I say to my man:— ‘You must keep to your bed, and, if possible, you must remain lying on your back, until the truss-maker has made a truss for you according to my directions. Lie stretched out, or look out for strangulation. And you know whether that’s nice! Without counting that one day or another it’ll carry you off. You understand?’

“‘Yes, sir.’

“‘Very good.’

“Down I go to the yard to wash myself at the pump. You may imagine that after this business I wanted a bit of a wash. I strip myself to the waist, and I rub myself with soft soap, for, maybe, a quarter of an hour. I dress myself again. I drink a glass of white wine that they bring me in the yard. I see the grey dawn break, I hear the lark sing, and I go back to the sick man’s room. There it was dark. I shout in the direction of the bed:— ‘Hey?’

That’s understood, isn’t it? Perfect stillness whilst waiting for the new truss. The one you have is no good at all. D’you hear?’ No answer. ‘Are you asleep?’ Then I hear behind me the voice of the old nurse:— ‘Doctor, our man’s no longer in the house,’ she tells me. ‘He was wearying to go out to his vines.’”

“There I recognise my peasants,” said M. de Terremondre.

He lapsed into meditation and resumed: “Doctor, Pauline Giry is now forty-nine. She made her *début* at the Vaudeville in 1876; she was then twenty-two. I am sure of it.”

“In that case,” said the doctor, “she would be in her forty-third year, since we are now in 1897.”

“It isn’t possible,” said M. de Terremondre, “for she is at least six years older than Rose Max, who has certainly passed her fortieth year.”

“Rose Max? I don’t say no, but she is still a fine woman,” said the doctor.

He yawned, stretched himself, and said:

“Getting back from Duroc hill, at six o’clock in the morning, I find two baker’s men in my hall, come to tell me that their mistress, the baker’s wife of the Tintelleries, has been brought to bed.”

“But,” asked M. de Terremondre, “did it require two baker’s men to tell you that?”

“They had sent them one after the other,” answered the doctor. “I ask if the characteristic symptoms have set in. They give me no answer, but a third baker’s man turns up in his master’s cart. Up I get and seat myself at his side. We take half a turn, and there I am rolling over the pavement of the Tintelleries.”

“I have it!” exclaimed M. de Terremondre, who was pursuing his own thoughts. “It was in ’69 that she came out at the Vaudeville. And it was in ’76 that my cousin Courtrai knew her... and was intimate with her.”

“Are you speaking of Jacques de Courtrai, who was a captain of dragoons?”

“No, I am speaking of Agénor, who died in Brazil.... She has a son who left Saint-Cyr last year.”

Thus spoke M. de Terremondre, just as M. Bergeret, professor of literature at the University, entered the shop.

M. Bergeret held one of the three academic chairs of the Paillot establishment, and was the most indefatigable talker of the old-book corner. There, with a friendly hand, he used to turn over the leaves of books old and books new, and although he never bought a single volume, for fear of getting a wiggling for it from his wife and three daughters, he received the heartiest welcome from Paillot, who held him in high esteem as a reservoir, an alembic, of that science and those belles-lettres on which booksellers live and flourish. The old-book corner was the only place in the town where M. Bergeret could sit in utter contentment, for at home Madame Bergeret chased him from room to room for different reasons of domestic administration; at the University, the Dean, in his hatred, forced him to give his lectures in a dark, unhealthy cellar, into which but few pupils descended, and all three classes in the town cast black looks at him for having called Jeanne d’Arc a military mascotte. Now M. Bergeret slipped into the old-book corner.

“Good-day, gentlemen! Anything new?”

“A baby to the baker’s wife in the Tintelleries,” said the doctor. “I brought it into the world just twenty minutes ago. I was going to tell M. de Terremondre about it. And I may add that it wasn’t without difficulty.”

“This child,” replied the professor, “hesitated to be born. He would never have consented to it if, being gifted with understanding and foresight, he had known the destiny of man on the earth, and more especially in our town.”

“It is a pretty little girl,” said the doctor, “a pretty little girl with a raspberry mark under the left breast.”

The conversation continued between the doctor and M. de Terremondre.

“A pretty little girl, with a raspberry mark under the left breast, doctor? It would seem that the bakeress had a longing for raspberries when she took off her corsets. The mere desire of a mother does not suffice to stamp the picture of it on the offspring she bears. It is also necessary that the longing woman should touch one particular part of her body. And the picture will be stamped on the child in the corresponding spot. Isn’t that the common belief, doctor?”

“That is what old women believe,” replied Dr. Fornerol. “And I have known men, and even doctors, who were women in this respect, and who shared in the credulity of the nurses. For my part, the experience of an already long practice, my knowledge of observations made by scientists, and especially a general view of embryology, prevent my sharing in this popular belief.”

“Then, according to your opinion, doctor, wishing-marks are just spots like others, that form on the skin without known cause.”

“Stop a bit! ‘Wishing-marks’ present a particular characteristic. They contain no bloodvessels and are not erectile, like the tumours with which you might perhaps be tempted to confuse them.”

“You declare, doctor, that they are a peculiar species. Do you make no inference from that as to their origin?”

“Absolutely none.”

“But if these spots are not really ‘wishing-marks,’ if you refuse them a... how shall I put it?... a psychic origin, I am unable to account for the accident of a belief which is found in the Bible, and which is still shared by such a great number of people. My aunt Pastré was a very intelligent and by no means superstitious woman. She died last spring, aged seventy-seven, in the full belief that the three white currants visible on the shoulder of her daughter Bertha had an illustrious origin and came from the Parc de Neuilly, where, in the autumn of 1834, during her pregnancy, she was presented to Queen Marie-Amélie, who took her to walk along a path bordered by currant-bushes.”

To this Dr. Fornerol made no reply. He was not remarkably given to contradicting the opinions of rich patients. But M. Bergeret, professor of

literature at the University, bent his head towards his left shoulder and gave a far-away look, as he always did whenever he was going to speak. Then he said:

“Gentlemen, it is a fact that these marks, called ‘wishing-spots,’ reduce themselves to a small number of types, which may be classified, according to their colour and form, into strawberries, currants, and raspberries, or wine and coffee spots. It would, perhaps, be convenient to add to these types that of those diffused yellow spots in which folks endeavour to recognise portions of tart or mincepie. Now, who can possibly believe that pregnant women desire nothing save to drink wine or *café au lait*, or to eat red fruits, and, possibly, forcemeatpie? Such an idea runs counter to natural philosophy. That desire which, according to certain philosophers, has alone created the world and alone preserves it, works in them as in all living beings, only with more range and diversity. It gives them secret fevers, hidden passions, and strange frenzies. Without going into the question of the effect of their particular condition on the appetites common to all that lives, and even to plants, we recognise that this condition does not produce indifference, but that it rather perverts and inflames the deeper instincts. If the new-born child ought really to carry the visible signs of its mother’s desires, believe me, we should more frequently see imprinted on its body other symbols than these innocent strawberries and drops of coffee with which the folly of old wives diverts itself.”

“I see what you mean,” said M. de Terremondre. “Women loving jewels, many children would be born with sapphires, rubies, and emeralds on their fingers, and with gold bracelets on their wrists; necklaces of pearls, rivières of diamonds would cover their neck and breast. Still, one ought to be able to point to such children as these.”

“Just so,” replied M. Bergeret.

And, taking up from the table, where M. de Terremondre had left it, the thirty-eighth volume of *l’Histoire Générale des Voyages*, the professor buried his nose in the book, between pages 212 and 213, a spot which, every time that he had opened the inevitable old book during the last six years, had confronted him like a fate, to the exclusion of every other page, as an instance of the monotony with which life glides by, a symbol of the uniformity of those tasks and those days in a provincial university which precede the day of death and the travail of the body in the tomb. And this time, as he had already done so many times before, M. Bergeret read in volume xxxviii of *l’Histoire Générale des Voyages* the first lines of page 212: “a passage to the North. ‘It is to this check,’ said he, ‘that we owe the opportunity of being able to visit the Sandwich Isles again, and to enrich our voyage with a discovery which, although the last, seems

in many respects to be the most important that Europeans have yet made in the whole expanse of the Pacific Ocean.' The happy prophecy which these words seemed to denote has, unfortunately, never been fulfilled."

And this time, as always, the reading of these lines plunged M. Bergeret into melancholy. Whilst he was immersed in it, the bookseller, M. Paillot, confronted a little soldier, who had come in to buy a sou's worth of letter-paper, with disdain and hauteur.

"I don't keep letter-paper," declared M. Paillot, turning his back on the little soldier.

Then he complained of his assistant, Léon, who was always on errands, and who, once gone out, never came back. Consequently he, Paillot, was constantly being pestered by intruders. They actually asked him for letter-paper!

"I remember," said Dr. Fornerol to him, "that one market-day a good country-woman came in and asked you for a plaster, and that you had the greatest difficulty in preventing her from tucking up her petticoats and showing you the painful spot where the paper was to be applied."

Paillot, the bookseller, replied to this anecdotic sally by a silence which expressed offended dignity.

"Heavens!" exclaimed M. de Terremonde, the book-lover, "this learned storehouse of our Frôben, our Elzevir, our Debure, confused with the chemist's shop of Thomas Diafoirus! What an outrage!"

"Indeed," replied Dr. Fornerol, "the good soul meant no harm in showing Paillot the seat of her trouble. But it won't do to judge the peasants by her. In general, they show extreme repugnance to letting themselves be seen by the doctor. My country colleagues have often remarked this to me. Country-women, attacked by serious diseases, resist examination with an energy and obstinacy which townswomen, and particularly women of the world, do not show in the same circumstances. I saw a farmer's wife at Lucigny die of an internal tumour, which she had never allowed to be suspected." M. de Terremonde, who, as president of several local academies, had literary prejudices, took these remarks as a pretext for accusing Zola of having shamefully maligned the peasants in *La Terre*. At this accusation, M. Bergeret emerged from his pensive sadness and said:

"Yet the peasants are drunkards and parricides, and voluntarily incestuous, as Zola has depicted them. Their repugnance to lend themselves to clinical inspection by no means proves their chastity. It only shows the power of prejudice in minds of limited intelligence. The simpler a prejudice is, the stronger is its power. The prejudice that it is wrong to be seen naked remains powerful with them. It has been weakened among artists and people of

intelligence by the custom of baths, douches, and massage; it has been still further weakened by aesthetic feeling and by the taste for voluptuous sensations, and it easily yields to considerations of health and hygiene. This is all that can be deduced from the doctor's observations."

"I have noticed," said M. de Terremondre, "that well-made women..."

"There are hardly any," said the doctor. "Doctor, you remind me of my chiropodist," replied M. de Terremondre. "He said to me one day:— 'If you were a chiropodist, sir, you would take no stock in women.'"

Paillot, the bookseller, who for some moments had been glued to the wall listening intently, said:

"I don't know what is going on in Queen Marguerite's house; I hear cries and the noise of furniture being overturned."

And he was again seized with his customary misgiving.

"That old lady will set fire to her house, and the whole block of buildings will be burnt: it's all wood."

Nobody heeded these words, nobody attempted to soothe his ridiculous apprehensions. Dr. Fornerol rose painfully to his feet, stretched the wearied muscles of his arms with an effort, and went off on his round of visits through the town.

M. de Terremondre put on his gloves and took a step towards the door. Then, perceiving a tall withered figure which was crossing the square in stiff, abrupt strides:

"Here," said he, "is General Cartier de Chalmot. I hope the *préfet* won't meet him."

"And why not?" demanded M. Bergeret.

"Because these meetings are by no means pleasant for M. Worms-Clavelin. Last Sunday our *préfet*, while driving by in a victoria, caught sight of General Cartier de Chalmot, who was walking with his wife and daughters. Lolling back in his carriage, with his hat on his head, he saluted the gallant veteran with a little wave of his hand and a 'Good-day, good-day, general!' The general reddened with anger. For the unassuming are always violent in their anger. General Chalmot was beside himself. He was terrible. Before all the promenaders he imitated M. Worms-Clavelin's familiar salute and shouted at him in a voice of thunder:— 'Good-day, good-day, *préfet*!'"

"There is perfect silence now in Queen Marguerite's house," said M. Paillot.

XIII

THE midday sun darted its clear white rays. Not a cloud in the sky, not a breath in the air. The solitary orb swung across the vast repose in which everything was wrapped and urged its blazing course towards the horizon. On the deserted Mall the shadows lay still and heavy at the foot of the elms. A road-mender slept in the bottom of the ditch that bounds the ramparts. The birds were silent.

Seated at the shady end of a bench three parts steeped in sunlight, M. Bergeret forgot, under these classic trees, in the friendly solitude, his wife and his three daughters, his cramped life and his cramped home; like Æsop he revelled in the freedom of his mind, and his analytical imagination roved irresponsibly among the living and the dead.

However Abbé Lantaigne, head of the high seminary, was passing, with his breviary in his hand, down the broad walk of the Mall. M. Bergeret rose to offer his shady place on the bench to the priest. M. Lantaigne came up and sank into it composedly, with that priestly dignity which never left him and which in him was just simplicity. M. Bergeret sat near him, at the spot where the shadow fell mingled with light from the feathery end of the branches, so that his black clothing was covered with golden discs, and over his dazzled eyes his eyelids began to blink.

He congratulated Abbé Lantaigne in these words:

"It is said everywhere, monsieur l'abbé, that you will be called to the bishopric of Tourcoing.

"The sign I hail, and from it dare to hope.

But this choice is too good a one not to make one doubtful. You are believed to be a royalist, and that counts against you. Are you not a republican like the Pope?"

M. LANTAIGNE:— "I am a republican like the Pope. That is to say, I am at peace and not at war with the government of the Republic. But peace is not love. And I do not love the Republic."

M. BERGERET:— "I guess your reasons. You condemn it for being freethinking and hostile to the clergy."

M. LANTAIGNE:— "Assuredly I condemn it as irreligious and inimical to the priests. But this *irréligion*, these hostilities, are not inherent in it. They are the attributes of republicans, not of the Republic. They diminish or increase at every change of ministers. They are less to-day than they were yesterday. Possibly they will increase to-morrow. Perhaps a time will come when they will be non-

existent, as they were non-existent under the rule of Marshal MacMahon, or at least during the delusive beginnings of that rule and under the deceptive ministry of May 16th. They are accidental, not essential. But even if it were respectful towards religion and its ministers, I should still hate the Republic.”

M. MERGERET:— “Why?”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Because it is diversity. In that it is essentially bad.”

M. BERGERET:— “I don’t quite understand you, monsieur l’abbé.”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “That comes from your not having the theological mind. At one time even laymen received some impress of it. Their college note-books, which they preserved, supplied them with the elements of philosophy. That is especially true of the men of the seventeenth century. At that time all those who were educated knew how to reason, even the poets. It is the teaching of Port-Royal that underlies the *Phèdre* of Racine. But to-day when theology has been relegated to the seminaries, no one knows how to reason, and men of the world are almost as foolish as poets and savants. Did not M. de Terremondre, believing that he was speaking to the point, tell me yesterday, on the Mall, that Church and State ought to make mutual concessions? People no longer know, they no longer think. Empty words pass and repass in the air. We are in Babel. You, Monsieur Bergeret, are much better read in Voltaire than in Saint Thomas.”

M. BERGERET:— “It is true. But did you not say, monsieur l’abbé, that the Republic is *diversity*, and that in that respect it is essentially bad? That is what I beg you to explain to me. Perhaps I might succeed in understanding you. I know more theology than you credit me with. Note-book in hand, I have read Baronius.”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Baronius is only an annalist, although the greatest of all; and I am quite sure that from him you have only been able to carry away some historic odds and ends. If you were in the slightest degree a theologian, you would be neither surprised nor disconcerted at what I have just said.

“Diversity is hateful. It is the characteristic of evil to be diverse. This characteristic manifests itself in the government of the Republic, which is more alienated than any other from unity. With its want of unity it fails in independence, permanence, and power. It fails in knowledge, and one may say of it that it knows not what it does. Although for our chastisement it continues, yet it has no continuity. For the idea of continuity implies that of identity, and the Republic of one day is never the same as that of the day before. Even its ugliness and its vices do not belong to it.

And you have yourself remarked that by them it has never been discredited. Reproaches and scandals that would have ruined the mightiest empire have

poured over it harmlessly. It is indestructible, for it is destruction. It is dispersion, it is discontinuity, it is diversity, it is evil.”

M. BERGERET:— “Are you speaking of Republics in general, or only of our own?”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Obviously I am considering neither the Roman Republic, nor the Dutch, nor the Swiss, but only the French. For these governments have nothing in common save the name, and you will not charge me with judging them by the name by which they call themselves, nor by those points in which they seem, one and all, opposed to monarchy — an opposition which is not in itself necessarily to be condemned; but the Republic in France means nothing more than the lack of a prince and the want of a governing power. And this nation was too old at the time of the amputation for one not to fear that it would die of it.”

M. BERGERET:— “Yet France has already survived the Empire by twenty-seven years, the *bourgeois-king* by forty-eight years, and the legitimate sovereign by sixty-six years.”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Say rather that for a century France, wounded to death, has been dragging out a miserable remnant of life in alternate fits of fever and prostration. And do not imagine that I flatter the past or base my regrets on lying pictures of an age of gold which never existed. The conditions of national life are quite familiar to me. Its hours are marked by perils, its days by disasters. And it is just and necessary that it should be so. Its life, like that of individual men, if it were exempt from trials, would have no meaning. The early history of France is full of crimes and expiations. God ceaselessly chastened this nation with the zeal of an untiring love, and in the time of the kings His mercy spared her no suffering. But, being then Christian, her woes were useful and precious to her. In them she recognised the ennobling power of chastisement. From them she derived her lessons, her merits, her salvation, her power, and her renown. Now her sufferings have no longer any meaning for her; she neither understands them nor acquiesces in them. Whilst undergoing the test she rebels against it. And the demented state expects good fortune! It is in losing faith in God that one loses, along with the idea of the absolute, the knowledge of the relative and even the historic sense. God alone informs the logical sequence of human events which, without Him, would no longer follow one another in a rational and conceivable manner. And for the last hundred years the history of France has been an enigma for the French. Yet even in our days there was one solemn hour of hope and expectation.

“The horseman who rides forth at the hour appointed by God, and who is called now Shalmanezar, now Nebuchadnezzar, then Cyrus, Cambyses,

Memmius, Titus, Alaric, Attila, Mahomet II., or William had ridden with fiery trail across France. Humiliated, bleeding, and mutilated, she raised her eyes to Heaven. May that moment be counted to her for righteousness! She seemed to understand, and along with her faith to recover her intelligence, to recognise the value and the use of her vast and providential woes. She aroused her just men, her Christians, to form a sovereign assembly. Then appeared the spectacle of that assembly, renewing a solemn custom and consecrating France to the heart of Jesus. We saw, as in the times of Saint Louis, churches rising on the mountains, before the gaze of penitent cities; we saw the foremost citizens preparing for the restoration of the monarchy.”

M. BERGERET (*sotto voce*) :— “I. The Assembly of Bordeaux. 2. The Sacré-Cœur of Montmartre and the Church of Fourvières at Lyons. 3. The Commission of the Nine and the mission of M. Chesnelong.”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “What do you say?”

M. BERGERET:— “Nothing. I am filling in the headings in the *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle*.”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Do not jest and do not deny.

Coming along the roads sounded the white horses that were bringing the king to his own again. Henri Dieudonné was coming to re-establish the principle of authority from which spring the two social forces: command and obedience; he was coming to restore human order along with divine order, political wisdom along with the religious spirit, the hierarchy, law, discipline, true liberty and unity. The nation, linking up its traditions once more, was recovering, along with the sense of its mission, the secret of its power and the pledge of victory.... God willed it not. These great designs, thwarted by the enemy who still hated us after having satisfied his hatred, opposed by a great number of the French, miserably supported even by those who had formed them, were brought to naught in one day. The frontier of our country was barricaded against Henri Dieudonné, and the people subsided into a Republic; that is to say, they repudiated their birthright, they renounced their rights and their duties, in order to govern themselves according to their own inclinations and to live at their ease in that liberty which God curbs and which overturns both law and order, the temporal images of Himself. Henceforth evil was king and proclaimed its edicts. The Church, exposed to incessant vexations, was perfidiously tempted on the one side to an impossible renunciation and on the other to revolt involving punishment.”

M. BERGERET:— “You doubtless reckon among the vexatious measures the expulsion of the fraternities?”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “It is clear that the expulsion of the fraternities was

prompted by evil intentions, and was the result of malicious calculation. It is also certain that the religious who were expelled did not deserve such treatment. In striking them it was believed that the Church was being struck. But the blow, badly aimed, strengthened the body that they wished to shake, and restored to the parishes the authority and the resources which had been diverted from them. Our enemies did not know the Church, and their chief minister of that time, less ignorant than they, but more desirous of satisfying them than of destroying us, made a war on us that was merely mimic and for purposes of show. For I do not regard the expulsion of the non-licensed orders as an effective attack. Of course, I honour the victims of this clumsy persecution; but I consider that the Church of France has in the secular clergy a sufficient staff to govern and minister to souls without the help of the regulars. Alas! the Republic has inflicted deeper and more secret wounds on the Church. You know too much about educational questions, Monsieur Bergeret, not to have discovered several of these plague-spots; but the most poisonous one was induced by the introduction into the episcopate of priests feeble in mind or in character.... I have said enough about that. The Christian at least consoles and reassures himself, knowing that the Church will not perish. But what will be the patriot's consolation? He discovers that all the members of the State are gangrened and rotten. In twenty years what progress in corruption! A chief of the State whose sole virtue is his powerlessness, and who is denounced as criminal if it should get wind that he ventures to act, or even merely to think; ministers subject to a foolish Parliament, which is believed to be corrupt, and whose members, more ignorant every day, were chosen, moulded, nominated in the godless clubs of the freemasons to carry out an evil policy of which they are yet incapable, and which is surpassed by the evils brought about through their turbulent inaction; an incessantly increasing bureaucracy, vast, greedy, and mischievous, in which the Republic believes she is securing for herself a band of supporters, but which she is nourishing to her own ruin; a magistracy recruited without law or equity, and too often canvassed by the government not to be suspected of obsequiousness; an army, nay, a whole nation, unceasingly pervaded by the fatal spirit of independence and equality, is poured back straightway into town and country, a whole community, depraved by barrack life, unfitted for arts and trades, and disliking all labour; an educational body which has a mission to teach atheism and immorality; a diplomatic corps which fails in readiness and authority, and which leaves the care of our foreign policy and the conclusion of our alliances to innkeepers, shopkeepers and journalists; in a word, all the powers, the legislative and the executive, the judicial, the military, and the civil, intermingled, confused, destroyed one by the other; a farcical rule which, in its destructive

weakness, has given to society the two most powerful instruments of death that wickedness ever devised: divorce and malthusianism. And all the evils of which I have made a rapid summary belong to the Republic and spring naturally from her: the Republic is essentially unrighteous. She is unrighteous in willing a liberty which God has not willed, since He is the master, and since He has delegated to priests and kings a part of his authority; she is unrighteous in willing an equality which God has not willed, since He has established the hierarchy of dignities in Heaven and on earth; she is unrighteous in instituting that tolerance which cannot be the will of God, since evil is intolerable; she is unrighteous in consulting the will of the people, as if the multitude of ignorant ought to prevail against a small company of those who bow themselves before the will of God, which overshadows the government and even the details of administration, as a principle whose consequences are never-ending; in a word, she is unrighteous in proclaiming her indifference to religion — that is to say, her impiety, her unbelief, her blasphemies (of which the very smallest is mortal sin), and her adhesion to diversity, which is evil and death.”

M. BERGERET:— “Did you not say just now, monsieur l’abbé, that being as republican as the Pope, you were resolved to live at peace with the Republic?”

M. LANTAIGNE:— “Certainly, I will live with her in submission and obedience. In rebelling against her, I should act according to her principles, and contrary to my own. By being seditious I should resemble her, and I should no longer resemble myself.

“It is unlawful to return evil for evil. Sovereignty is hers. Whether she decrees ill or does not decree, hers is the guilt. Let it rest with her! My duty is to obey. I shall do it. I shall obey. As a priest and, if it please God, as a bishop, I shall refuse nothing to the Republic of what I owe her. I call to mind that Saint Augustine, in Hippo, then besieged by the Vandals, died a bishop and a Roman citizen. For myself, the lowest member of this illustrious Church of the Gauls, after the example of the greatest of the doctors, I will die in France, a priest and a French citizen, praying God to scatter the Vandals.”

The elm-trees on the Mall began to incline their shadow towards the east. A fresh breeze coming from a region of distant storm stirred among the leaves. Whilst a ladybird travelled over the sleeve of his coat, M. Bergeret replied to Abbé Lantaigne in a tone of the greatest affability.

“Monsieur l’abbé, you have just traced, with an eloquence only to be found on your lips, the characteristics of democratic rule. This government is very much as you describe it. And yet it is the one I prefer. In it all bonds are loosened, which weakens the State, but relieves individuals and ensures a certain ease of life and a liberty which unfortunately local tyrannies counteract. It is true

that corruption appears to be greater in it than in monarchies. That springs from the number and diversity of the people who are raised to power. But this corruption would be less visible if the secret of it were better kept. The lack of secrecy and the want of continuity render all enterprise impossible in a democratic Republic. But, since the enterprises of monarchies have most often ruined the nations, I am not very sorry to live under a government incapable of great designs. What rejoices me especially in our Republic is the sincere desire which she shows not to provoke war in Europe. She rejoices in militarism, but is not at all bellicose. In considering the chances of a war, other governments have nothing to fear save defeat. Ours fears equally — and justly so — both victory and defeat. This salutary fear secures us peace, which is the greatest of blessings.

“The worst fault of the present *régime* is that it costs very dear. It makes no outward show: it is not ostentatious. It is gorgeous neither in its women nor its horses. But, with its humble appearance and neglected exterior, it is expensive. It has too many poor relations, too many friends to provide for. It is a spendthrift. The most grievous point is that it lives on an exhausted country whose powers are waning and which no longer thrives. And the administration has great need of money. It is aware that it is in difficulties. And its difficulties are greater than it fancies. They will increase still more. The evil is not new. It is the one which killed the old *régime*. I am going, monsieur l’abbé, to tell you a great truth: as long as the State contents itself with the revenues supplied by the poor, as long as it has enough from the subsidies which are assured to it with mechanical regularity by those who work with their hands, it lives happy, peaceful, and honoured. Economists and financiers are pleased to acknowledge its honesty. But as soon as this unhappy State driven by need, makes a show of asking for money from those who have it, and of levying some slight toll on the rich, it is made to feel that it is committing a horrible outrage, is violating all rights, is wanting in respect to a sacred thing, is destroying commerce and industry, and crushing the poor by touching the rich. No one hides his conviction that discredit is at hand. And it sinks beneath the genuine contempt of the good citizen. Yet ruin comes slowly and surely. The State touches capital: it is lost.

“Our ministers are jesting at us when they speak of the clerical or the socialist peril. There is but one peril, the financial peril. The Republic is beginning to recognise this. I pity her, I shall regret her. I was reared under the Empire, in love for the Republic. ‘She is justice,’ my father, professor of rhetoric at the college of Saint-Omer, used to say to me. He did not know her. She is not justice but she is ease. Monsieur l’abbé if you had a soul less exalted, less serious, and more given to jesting thoughts, I should confide to you that the present Republic, the Republic of 1896, delights me and touches me by its modesty. She

acquiesces in not being admired. She exacts but a trifling respect, and even renounces esteem. It is enough for her to live. That is her sole desire; it is a lawful one. The humblest beings cling to life. Like the wood-cutter of the fabulist, like the apothecary of Mantua, who so greatly astonished that young fool of a Romeo, she fears death, and it is her only fear. She mistrusts princes and soldiers. In danger of death she would be very ill to handle. Fear would make her ferocious. That would be a pity. But as long as they make no attempt on her life, and as long as they only attack her honour, she is good-natured. A government of this kind suits me and gives me confidence. So many others were merciless through selfesteem! So many others made sure of their rights, their grandeur and their prosperity by cruelties! So many others have poured out blood for their prerogative and their majesty! She has no selfesteem; she has no majesty. A fortunate lack which keeps her innocuous to us! Provided that she lives she is content. She rules laxly and I should be tempted to praise her for that more than for all the rest. And since she governs laxly I forgive her for governing badly. I suspect men at all times of having much exaggerated the necessity of government and the benefits of a strong administration. Certainly strong administrations make nations great and prosperous. But the nations have suffered so much all through the centuries for their grandeur and prosperity, that I fancy they would renounce it. Glory has cost them too dear for them to resent the fact that our present rulers have only procured for us the colonial variety of it. If the uselessness of all government should at last be discovered, the Republic of M. Carnot would have paved the way for this priceless discovery. And one ought to feel some gratitude towards it for that. Taking everything into consideration, I feel much attached to our institutions.” Thus spoke M. Bergeret, professor of literature at the University.

Abbé Lantaigne rose, drew out from his pocket his blue-checkered handkerchief, passed it over his lips, returned it to his pocket, smiled, contrary to his custom, secured his breviary under his arm, and said:

“You express yourself pleasantly, Monsieur Bergeret. Just so did the rhetors talk in Rome when Alaric entered it with his Visigoths. Yet under the terebinth trees of the Esquiline the rhetors of the fifth century let fall thoughts of less vanity. For then Rome was Christian. You are that no longer.”

“Monsieur l’abbé,” replied the professor, “be a bishop and not the head of the University.”

“It is true, Monsieur Bergeret,” said the priest with a loud laugh, “that if I were head of the University I should forbid you to be a teacher of youth.”

“And you would do me a great service. For then I should write in the papers like M. Jules Lemaître, and who knows whether, like him...”

“Well! well! you would not be out of place among the wits. And the French Academy has a partiality for freethinkers.”

He spoke and walked away with a firm, straight, heavy tread. M. Bergeret remained alone in the middle of the bench, which was now three-parts covered by shade. The ladybird which had been fluttering its wing-cases on his shoulder for a moment flew away. He began to dream. He was not happy, for he had an acute mind whose points were not always turned outwards, and very often he pricked himself with the needle-points of his own criticism. Anaemic and bilious, he had a very weak digestion and enfeebled senses, which brought him more disgust and suffering than pleasure and happiness. He was reckless in speech, and in unerringness and precision his tactlessness attained the same results as the most practised skill. With cunning art he seized every opportunity of injuring himself. He inspired the majority of people with a natural aversion, and being sociable and inclined to fraternise with his fellows, he suffered from that fact. He had never succeeded in moulding his pupils, and he delivered his lectures on Latin literature in a gloomy, damp, deserted cellar, in which he was buried through the Dean’s burning hatred of him. The University buildings were, however, spacious. Built in 1894, “these new premises,” according to the words of M. Worms-Clavelin at the opening, “testified to the zeal of the government of the Republic for the diffusion of learning.” They boasted an amphitheatre, decorated by M. Léon Glaize with allegorical paintings representing Science and Literature, where M. Compagnon gave his much-belauded lectures on mathematics. The other gownsmen in their red or yellow taught different subjects in handsome, well-lighted rooms. M. Bergeret alone, under the bedel’s ironic glance, had to descend, followed by three students, into a dusky, subterranean hole. There in the heavy, noisome air, he expounded the *Æneid* with German scholarship and French subtlety; there, by his literary and moral pessimism, he afflicted M. Roux, of Bordeaux, his best pupil; there, he opened up new vistas, whose aspect was terrifying; there, one evening he pronounced those words now become famous, but which ought rather to have perished, stifled in the shadow of the vault:— “Fragments of differing origins, soldered clumsily on to each other, made up the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Such are the models of composition that have been imitated by Virgil, by Fénelon, and in general, in classic literatures, by writers of narratives in verse or in prose.” M. Bergeret was not happy. He had received no honorary distinction. It is true that he despised honours. But he felt that it would have been much finer to despise them while accepting them. He was obscure and less well known in the town for works of talent than M. de Terremondre, author of a Tourist Guide; than General

Milher, a distinguished miscellaneous writer of the department; less even than his pupil, M. Albert Roux, of Bordeaux, author of *Nirée*, a poem in *vers libres*.

Certainly he despised literary fame, knowing that that of Virgil in Europe rested on a double misconception, one absurd and the other fabulous. But he suffered at having no intercourse with writers who, like MM. Faguet, Doumic, or Pellissier, seemed akin to him in mind. He would have liked to know them, to live with them in Paris, like them to write in reviews, to contradict, to rival, perhaps to outstrip them. He recognised in himself a certain subtlety of intellect, and he had written pages which he knew to be pleasing.

He was not happy. He was poor, shut up with his wife and his three daughters in a little dwelling, where he tasted to the full the inconveniences of domestic life; and it harassed him to find hair-curlers on his writing-table, and to see the margins of his manuscripts singed by curling-tongs. The only secure and pleasant place of retreat that he had in the world was that bench on the Mall shaded by an ancient elm, and the old-book corner in Paillot's shop.

He meditated for a moment on his sad condition; then he rose from his bench and took the road which leads to the bookseller's.

XIV

WHEN M. Bergeret entered the shop, Paillot, the bookseller, with a pencil thrust behind his ear, was collecting his "returns." He was stacking up the volumes whose yellow covers, after long exposure to the sunlight, had turned brown and become covered with fly-marks. These were the unsaleable copies which he was sending back to the publishers. M. Bergeret recognised among the "returns" several works that he liked. He felt no chagrin at this, having too much taste to hope to see his favourite authors winning the votes of the crowd.

He sank down, as he was accustomed to do, in the old-book corner, and through mere habit took up the thirty-eighth volume of *l'Histoire Générale des Voyages*. The book, bound in green leather, opened of its own accord at p. 212, and M. Bergeret once more read these fatal lines:

"a passage to the North. 'It is to this check,' said he, 'that we owe the opportunity of being able to visit the Sandwich Isles again...'"

And M. Bergeret sank into melancholy.

M. Mazure, the archivist of the department, and M. de Terremondre, president of the Society of Agriculture and Archæology, who both had their rush-bottomed chairs in the old-book corner, came in opportunely to join the professor. M. Mazure was a paleographer of great merit. But his manners were not elegant. He had married the servant of the archivist, his predecessor, and appeared in the town in a straw hat with battered crown. He was a radical, and published documents concerning the history of the county town during the Revolution. He enjoyed inveighing against the royalists of the department; but having applied for academic honours without having received them, he began invectives against his political friends, and particularly against M. Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*.

Being insulted by nature, his professional practice of discovering secrets disposed him to slander and calumny. Nevertheless he was good company, especially at table, where he used to sing drinking songs.

"You know," said he to M. de Terremondre and M. Bergeret, "that the *préfet* uses the house of Rodonneau junior for assignations with women. He has been caught there. Abbé Guitrel also haunts the place. And, appropriately enough, the house is called, in a land-survey of 1783, the House of the Two Satyrs."

"But," said M. de Terremondre, "there are no women of loose life in the house of Rondonneau junior."

"They are taken there," answered Mazure, the archivist.

“Talking of that,” said M. de Terremondre, “I have heard, my dear Monsieur Bergeret, that you have been shocking my old friend Lantaigne, on the Mall, by a cynical confession of your political and social immorality. They say that you know neither law nor curb...”

“They are mistaken,” replied M. Bergeret.

“... that you are indifferent in the matter of government.”

“Not at all! But, to tell the truth, I do not attach any special importance to the form of the State. Changes of government make little change in the condition of individuals. We do not depend on constitutions or on charters, but on instincts and morals. It serves no purpose at all to change the names of public necessities. And it is only the crazy and the ambitious who make revolutions.”

“It is not above ten years ago,” replied M. Mazure, “that I would have risked a broken head for the Republic. To-day I could see her turn a somersault, and only laugh and cross my arms. The old republicans are despised. Favour is only granted to the turncoats. I am not referring to you, Monsieur de Terremondre. But I am disgusted. I have come to think with M. Bergeret. All governments are ungrateful.”

“They are all powerless,” said M. Bergeret; “and I have here in my pocket a little tale which I should very much like to read to you. I have founded it on an anecdote which my father often related to me. It proves that absolute power is powerlessness itself. I should like to have your opinion on this trifle. If you do not disapprove of it, I shall send it to the *Revue de Paris*.”

M. de Terremondre and M. Mazure drew their chairs up to that of M. Bergeret, who pulled a notebook from his pocket and began to read in a weak, but clear voice:

A DEPUTY MAGISTRATE

In a salon of the Tuileries the ministers had assembled...

“Allow me to listen,” said M. Paillot, the bookseller. “I am waiting for Léon, who is not back yet. When he is out, he never comes back. I am obliged to tend the shop and serve the customers. But I shall hear at least a part of the reading. I like to improve my mind.”

“Very well, Paillot,” said M. Bergeret, and he resumed:

A DEPUTY MAGISTRATE

In a salon of the Tuileries the ministers had assembled in council, under the presidency of the Emperor. Napoleon III. was silently making marks with a pencil on a plan of an industrial town. His long, sallow face, with its melancholy sweetness, had a strange appearance amid the square heads of the men of affairs and the bronzed faces of the men of toil. He half raised his eyelids, glanced with his gentle, vague look round the oval table, and asked:

“Gentlemen, is there any other matter to be discussed?”

His voice issued from his thick moustaches a little muffled and hollow, and seemed to come from very far off.

At this moment the Keeper of the Seals made a sign to his colleague of the Home Department which the latter did not seem to notice. — At that time the Keeper of the Seals was M. Delarbre, a magistrate in virtue of his birth, who had displayed in his high judicial functions a becoming pliability, abruptly laid aside now and then for the rigidity of a professional dignity that nothing could bend. It was said that, after having become an ultramontane and a member of the Empress’s party, the jansenism of those great lawyers, his ancestors, sometimes bubbled up in his nature. But those who had access to him considered him to be merely punctilious, a trifle fanciful, indifferent to the great questions which his mind did not grasp, and obstinate about the trifles which suited the pettiness of his intriguing character.

The Emperor was preparing to rise, with his two hands on the gilt arms of his chair. Delarbre, seeing that the Home Secretary, his nose in his papers, was avoiding his look, took it upon himself to challenge him.

“Pardon me, my dear colleague, for raising a question which, although it started in your department, none the less concerns mine. But you have yourself declared to me your intention of apprising the Council of the extremely delicate situation in which a magistrate has been placed by the *préfet* of a department in the West.”

The Home Secretary shrugged his broad shoulders slightly and looked at Delarbre with some impatience. He had the air, at once jovial and choleric, which belongs to great demagogues.

“Oh,” said he, “that was gossip, ridiculous tittle-tattle, a rumour which I should be ashamed to bring to the notice of the Emperor, were it not that my colleague, the Minister of Justice, seems to attach an importance to it which, for my part, I have not succeeded in discovering.”

Napoleon began sketching once more. "It has to do with the *préfet* of Loire-Inférieure," continued the minister. "This official is reputed, in his department, to be a gallant squire of dames, and the reputation for gallantry which has become attached to his name, combined with his well-known courtesy and his devotion to the government, has contributed not a little to the popularity which he enjoys in the country. His attentions to Madame Méreau, the wife of the *procureur-général*, have been noticed and commented on. I grant that M. Péliſson, the *préfet*, has given occasion for scandalous gossip in Nantes, and that severe charges have been laid to his account in the bourgeois circles of the county town, especially in the drawing-rooms frequented by the magistracy. Assuredly M. Péliſson's attitude towards Madame Méreau, whose position ought to have protected her from any such equivocal attentions, would be regrettable, if it were continued. But the information I have received enables me to state that Madame Méreau has not been actually compromised and that no scandal is to be anticipated. A little prudence and circumspection will suffice to prevent this affair having any annoying consequences."

Having spoken in these terms, the Home Secretary closed his portfolio and leant back in his chair.

The Emperor said nothing.

"Excuse me, my dear colleague!" said the Keeper of the Seals drily, "the wife of the *procureur-général* of the court of Nantes is the mistress of the *préfet* of Loire-Inférieure; this connection, known throughout the whole district, is calculated to injure the prestige of the magistracy. It is important to call the attention of His Majesty to this state of things."

"Doubtless," replied the Home Secretary, his gaze turned towards the allegories on the ceiling, "doubtless, such facts are to be regretted; yet one must in no way exaggerate; it is possible that the *préfet* of Loire-Inférieure may have been a little imprudent and Madame Méreau a little giddy, but..."

The minister wafted the rest of his ideas towards the mythological figures which floated across the painted sky. There was a moment's silence, during which one could hear the impudent chirping of the sparrows perched on the trees in the garden and on the eaves of the château.

M. Delarbre bit his thin lips and pulled his austere but coquettish moustaches. He replied:

"Excuse my persistence; the secret reports which I have received leave no doubt as to the nature of the relationship between M. Péliſson and Madame Méreau. These relations were already established two years ago. In fact, in the month of September 18 — the *préfet* of Loire-Inférieure got the *procureur-*

général an invitation to hunt with the Comte de Morainville, deputy for the third division in the department, and during the magistrate's absence he entered Madame Méreau's room. He got in by way of the kitchen-garden. The next day the gardener saw traces that the wall had been scaled and informed the police. Inquiry was made; they even arrested a tramp, who, not being able to prove his innocence, endured several months of precautionary imprisonment. He had, it is true, a very bad record and no special points of interest about him. Still to this day the *procureur-général* persists, supported by a very small proportion of the public, in believing him to be guilty of housebreaking. The position, I repeat, is rendered by this fact no less annoying and prejudicial to the prestige of the magistracy."

The Home Secretary poured over the discussion, according to his wont, certain massive phrases calculated to close and suppress it by their weight. He held, said he, his *préfets* in the palm of his hand; he would be able to lead M. Péligon easily to a just appreciation of things, without taking any drastic measure against an intelligent and zealous official, who had succeeded in his department, and who was valuable "from the point of view of the electoral position." No one could say that he was more interested than the Home Secretary in maintaining a good understanding between the officials of the departments and the judicial authority.

Still the Emperor kept that dreamy look in which he was usually wrapped when silent. He was evidently thinking of past events, for he suddenly said:—"Poor M. Péligon! I knew His father. He was called Anacharsis Péligon. He was the son of a republican of 1792; himself a republican, he used to write in the opposition papers during the July administration. At the time of my captivity in the fortress of Ham, he addressed a friendly letter to me. You cannot imagine the joy which the slightest token of sympathy gives a prisoner. After that we went on our separate paths. We never saw one another again. He is dead."

The Emperor lit a cigarette and remained wrapped in his dream for a moment. Then rising: "Gentlemen, I will not detain you."

With the awkward gait of a great winged bird when it walks, he returned to his private apartments; and the ministers went out, one after the other, through the long suite of rooms, beneath the solemn gaze of the ushers. The marshal who was the Minister of War held out his cigar-case to the Keeper of the Seals.

"Monsieur Delarue, shall we take a little walk outside? I want to stretch my legs."

Whilst they were both walking down the Rue de Rivoli, by the railing that borders the Terrasse des Feuillants:

"Speaking of cigars," said the marshal, "I only like very dry one-sou cigars."

The others seem like sweetmeats to me. Don't you know..."

He cut short his thought, then:

"This Péliſson that you were talking about just now in the Council, isn't he a little dried up, swarthy man, who was *sous-préfet* at Saint-Dié five years ago?"

Delarbre replied that Péliſson had indeed been *sous-préfet* in the Vosges.

"So I said to myself: I knew Péliſson. And I remember Madame Péliſson very well. I sat next to her at dinner at Saint-Dié, when I went there for the unveiling of a monument. Don't you know..."

"What kind of woman is she?" asked Delarbre.

"Tiny, swarthy, thin. A deceptive thinness. In the morning, in a high-necked dress, she looked a mere wisp. At table in the evening, in a lownecked dress with flowers in her bosom, very charming."

"But morally, marshal?"

"Morally.... I am not an imbecile, am I, now? Well! I have never understood anything about a woman's morals. All that I can tell you is that Madame Péliſson passed for a sentimentalist. They said she had a warm heart for handsome men."

"She gave you a hint to that effect, my dear marshal?"

"Not the least in the world. She said to me at dessert, 'I dote on eloquence. A noble speech carries me away.' I could not apply that remark to myself. It is true that I had that morning delivered an address. But I had got my aide-de-camp, a short-sighted artillery officer, to write it out for me. He had written so small that I could not read it.... Don't you know?..."

They had reached the Place Vendôme. Delarbre held out his little withered hand to the marshal, and stole under the archway of the Ministry.

*

The following week, at the breaking up of the Council, when the ministers were already withdrawing, the Emperor laid his hand on the shoulder of the Keeper of the Seals.

"My dear Monsieur Delarbre," said he to him, "I have heard by chance — in my position, one never learns anything save by chance — that there is a deputy magistrate's post vacant at the Nantes bar. I beg that you will consider for that post a very deserving young doctor of law, who has written a remarkable treatise on Trade Unions. His name is Chanot, and he is the nephew of Madame Ramel. He is to beg an audience of you this very day. Should you propose him to me for it, I shall sign his nomination with pleasure."

The Emperor had pronounced the name of his foster-sister tenderly, for he had never lost his affection for her, although, a republican of republicans, she repelled his advances, refused, poor widow as she was, the master's offers, and raged openly in her garret against the *coup d'état*. But yielding at last, after fifteen years, to the persistent kindness of Napoleon III., she had come to beg, as earnest of reconciliation, a favour from the prince — not for herself, but for her nephew young Chanot, a doctor of law, and, according to his professors, an honour to the Schools. Even now it was an austere favour that Madame Ramel demanded of her foster-brother; admission to the open court for young Chanot could scarcely be considered an act of partiality. But Madame Ramel was keenly anxious that her nephew should be sent to Loire-Inférieure, where his relatives lived. This fact recurred to Napoleon's mind, and he impressed it on the Minister of Justice.

"It is very important," said he, "that my candidate should be nominated at Nantes, for that is his native place and where his parents live. That is an important consideration for a young man whose means are small and who likes family life."

"Chanot... hard-working, meritorious, and with small means..." answered the minister.

He added that he would use his best endeavours to act in accordance with the desire expressed by His Majesty. His only fear was lest the *procureur-général* should have already submitted to him a list of proposed nominees, among whom naturally, the name Chanot would not occur.

This *procureur-général* was, indeed, M. Méreau, concerning whom there had been a discussion in the preceding Council. The Keeper of the Seals was particularly anxious to act very handsomely towards him. But he would strain every nerve to bring this affair to an issue that conformed with the intentions expressed by His Majesty.

He bowed and took his leave. It was his reception day. As soon as he had entered his study, he asked his secretary, Labarthe, whether there were many people in the ante-room. There were two presidents of courts, a councillor of the Appeal Court, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Nicomedia, a crowd of judges, barristers, and priests. The minister asked if there was any one there called Chanot. Labarthe searched in the silver salver, and discovered, among the pile of cards, that of Chanot, doctor of law, prizeman of the Faculty of Law, Paris. — The minister ordered him to be called first, merely requesting that he should be conducted by the back passages, in order not to offend the magistrates and clergy.

The minister seated himself at his table and murmured quite to himself:

“‘A sentimentalist,’ said the marshal, ‘with a warm heart for handsome men who speak well.’..

The usher introduced into the study a huge, tall young man, stooping, spectacled, and with a pointed skull. Every part of his uncouth frame expressed at once the timidity of the recluse and the boldness of the thinker.

The Keeper of the Seals examined him from head to foot and saw that he had the cheeks of a child and no shoulders. He signed to him to sit down. The suitor, having perched himself at the edge of the chair, shut his eyes and began to pour forth a flood of words.

“Monsieur *le Ministre*, I come to beg from your noble patronage the privilege of admission to the magistracy. Possibly Your Excellence may consider that the reports I have gained in the various examinations which I have undergone, and a prize which has been awarded to me for a work on Trade Unions, are sufficient qualifications, and that the nephew of Madame Ramel, foster-sister of the Emperor, is not altogether unworthy...”

The Keeper of the Seals stopped him with a wave of his little yellow hand.

“Doubtless, Monsieur Chanot, doubtless an august patronage, which would never have been mistakenly bestowed on an unworthy recipient, has been secured for you. I know it, the Emperor takes much interest in you. You desire a chair as judge-advocate, Monsieur Chanot?”

“Your Excellence,” replied Chanot, “would put the finishing touch to my wishes by nominating me deputy magistrate at Nantes, where my family live.”

Delarbre fixed his leaden eyes on Chanot and said drily:

“There is no vacancy at the bar of Nantes.”

“Excuse me, Your Excellency, I thought...”

The minister rose.

“There is none there.”

And whilst Chanot was making clumsily for the door and looking for an exit in the white panels as he made his bow, the Keeper of the Seals said to him, with a persuasive air and almost in a confidential tone:

“Trust me, Monsieur Chanot, and dissuade your aunt from making any new solicitations which, far from being of any profit to you, will only do you harm. Rest assured that the Emperor takes an interest in you, and rely on me.”

As soon as the door was shut the minister called his secretary.

“Labarthe, bring me your candidate.”

At eight o'clock in the evening Labarthe entered a house in the Rue Jacob, mounted the staircase as far as the attics, and called from the landing:

"Are you ready, Lespardat?"

The door of a little garret opened. Inside on a shelf there were several law-books and tattered novels; on the bed a black velvet mask with a fall of lace, a bunch of withered violets, and some fencing foils. On the wall a bad portrait of Mirabeau, a copper-plate engraving. In the middle of the room a big bronzed fellow was brandishing dumb-bells. He had frizzled hair, a low forehead, hazel eyes full of laughter and sweetness, a nose that quivered like the nostrils of a horse, and in his pleasantly gaping mouth strong white teeth.

"I was waiting for you," said he.

Labarthe begged him to dress himself. He was hungry. What time would they get their dinner?

Lespardat, having laid his dumb-bells on the floor, pulled off his jersey, and showed the herculean nape that carried his round head on his broad shoulders.

"He looks at least twenty-six," thought Labarthe.

As soon as Lespardat had put on his coat, the thin cloth of which allowed one to follow the powerful, easy play of the muscles, Labarthe pushed him outside.

"We shall be at Magny's in three minutes. I have the minister's brougham."

As they had matters to discuss, they asked for a private room at the restaurant. After the sole and the *pré-salé*, Labarthe attacked his subject bluntly:

"Listen to me carefully, Lespardat. You will see my chief to-morrow, your nomination will be proposed by the *procureur-général* of Nantes on Thursday, and on Monday submitted for the signature of the Emperor. It is arranged that it shall be given to him unexpectedly, at the moment when he will be busy with Alfred Maury in fixing the site of Alesia. When he is studying the topography of the Gauls in the time of Cæsar, the Emperor signs everything they want him to. But understand clearly what is expected from you. You must win the favour of Madame *la préfète*. You must win from her the ultimate favour. It is only by this consummation that the magistracy will be avenged." Lespardat swallowed and listened, pleased and smiling in his ingenious self-conceit.

"But," said he, "what notion has budded in Delarbre's head? I thought he was a puritan." Labarthe, raising his knife, stopped him.

"First of all, my friend, I beg that you will not compromise my chief, who must remain ignorant of all that's going on here. But since you have brought in Delarbre's name, I will tell you that his Puritanism is a jansenist puritanism. He is a great-nephew of Deacon Paris. His maternal great-uncle was that M. Carré de Montgeron who defended the fanatics of Saint-Médard's Cloister before the Parliament. (In 1730 miracles were claimed by the jansenists to have been

worked in the cemetery of St. Médard, Paris, at the grave of François de Paris, a young jansenist deacon. The spot became a place of pilgrimage, and was visited by thousands of jansenist fanatics.) Now the jansenists love to practise their austerities in nooks and crannies; they have a taste for diplomatic and canonical blackguardism. It is the effect of their perfect purity. And then they read the Bible. The Old Testament is full of stories of the same kind as yours, my dear Lespardat.”

Lespardat was not listening. He was floating in a sea of naïve delight. He was asking himself: “What will father say? What will mother say?” thinking of his parents, grocers of large ambitions and little wealth at Agen. And he vaguely associated his budding fortune with the glory of Mirabeau, his favourite hero. Since his college days he had dreamt of a destiny rich with women and feats of oratory.

Labarthe recalled his young friend’s attention to himself.

“You know, monsieur *le substitut*, you are not irremovable. If after a reasonable interval you have not made yourself very agreeable to Madame Péliisson — I mean completely agreeable — you fall into disgrace.”

“But,” asked Lespardat frankly, “how much time do you give me to make myself excessively pleasing to Madame Péliisson?”

“Until the vacation,” answered the minister’s secretary gravely. “We give you, in addition, all sorts of facilities, secret missions, furloughs, &c.

Everything except money. Above all, we are an honest administration. People don’t believe it. But later on they will find that we were no jobbers. Take Delarbre: he has clean hands. Besides, the Home Office, which is on the husband’s side, controls the Secret Service Money. Do not count on anything save your two thousand four hundred francs of salary and your handsome face to captivate Madame Péliisson.”

“Is she pretty, this *préfète* of mine?” demanded Lespardat.

He asked this question carelessly, without exaggerating the importance of it, placidly, as behoves a very young man who finds all women beautiful. By way of reply, Labarthe threw on the table the photograph of a thin lady in a round hat, with a double bandeau falling on her brown neck.

“Here,” said he, “is the portrait of Madame Péliisson. It was ordered by the Cabinet from the Prefecture of Police, and they sent it on after they had stamped it with a warranty stamp, as you see.” Lespardat seized it eagerly with his square fingers.

“She is handsome,” said he.

“Have you a plan?” asked Labarthe. “A methodical scheme of operations.”

“No,” answered Lespardat simply.

Labarthe, who was keen-witted, protested that it was however, necessary to foresee, to arrange, not to allow oneself to be taken unawares by any contingencies.

“You are certain,” added he, “to be invited to the balls at the prefecture, and you will, of course, dance with Madame Péliisson. Do you know how to dance? Show me how you dance.”

Lespardat rose, and, clasping his chair in his arms, took one turn of a waltz with the deportment of a graceful bear.

Labarthe watched him very gravely through his eyeglass.

“You are heavy, awkward, without that irresistible suppleness which...”

“Mirabeau danced badly,” said Lespardat.

“After all,” said Labarthe, “perhaps it is only that the chair does not inspire you.”

When they were both once more on the damp pavement of the narrow Rue Contrescarpe, they met several girls who were coming and going between the Carrefour Buci and the wine-shops of the Rue Dauphine. As one of these, a thick-set, heavy girl, in a dingy black dress, was passing sadly by under a street lamp with slack gait, Lespardat seized her roughly by the waist, lifted her, and made her take with him two turns of a waltz across the greasy pavement and into the gutter, before she had any idea what was happening.

Recovering from her astonishment, she shrieked the foulest insults at her cavalier, who carried her away with irresistible nerve. He himself supplied the orchestra, in a baritone voice, as warm and seductive as military music, and whirled so madly with the girl that, all bespattered with mud and water from the street, they collided with the shafts of prowling cabs and felt on their neck the breath of the horses. After a few turns, she murmured in the young man’s ear, her head sunk on his breast and all her anger gone:

“After all, you are a pretty fellow, you are. You ought to make them happy, didn’t you? — those girls at Bullier’s.”

“That’s enough, my friend,” cried Labarthe. “Don’t go and get run in. My word, you will avenge the magistracy!”

*

In the golden light of a September day four months later, the Minister of Justice and Religion, passing with his secretary under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, recognised M. Lespardat, the deputy magistrate of Nantes, at the very moment when the young man was hurrying into the Hôtel du Louvre.

“Labarthe,” asked the minister, “did you know that your protégé was in Paris? Has he then nothing to keep him in Nantes? It seems to me that it is now some time since you have given me any confidential information about him. His start interested me, but I don’t know yet whether he has quite lived up to the high opinion you formed of him.”

Labarthe took up the cudgels for the *substitut*; he reminded the minister that Lespardat was on regular leave; that at Nantes he had immediately gained the confidence of his chiefs at the bar, and that he had at the same time won the good graces of the *préfet*.

“M. Péliisson,” added he, “cannot get on without him. It is Lespardat who organises the concerts at the prefecture.”

Then the minister and his secretary continued their walk towards the Rue de la Paix, along the arcades, stopping here and there before the windows of the photograph shops.

“There are too many nude figures exposed in these shop-fronts,” said the minister. “It would be better to take away their license from these shops. Strangers judge us by appearances, and such spectacles as these are calculated to injure the good name of the country and the government.”

Suddenly, at the corner of the Rue de l’Échelle, Labarthe told his chief to look at a veiled woman who was coming towards them with a rapid step. But Delarbre, glancing at her for a moment, considered her very ordinary, far too slender, and not at all elegant.

“She is clumsily shod,” said he; “she is from the provinces.”

When she had passed them:

“Your Excellency is quite right,” said Labarthe. “That is Madame Péliisson.”

At this name the minister, much interested, turned round eagerly. With a vague feeling of his own dignity, he dared not follow her. But he showed his curiosity in his look.

Labarthe spurred it on.

“I’ll wager, monsieur *le ministre*, that she won’t go very far.”

They both hastened their steps, and saw Madame Péliisson follow the arcades, skirt the Place du Palais-Royal, and then, throwing uneasy glances to left and right, disappear into the Hôtel du Louvre.

At that the minister began to laugh from the depths of his throat. His little leaden eyes lighted up. And he muttered between his teeth the words which his secretary guessed rather than heard:

“The magistracy is avenged.”

On the same day the Emperor, then in residence at Fontainebleau, was smoking cigarettes in the library of the palace. He was leaning motionless, with the air of a melancholy sea-bird, against the case in which is kept the Monaldeschi coat of mail. Viollet-le-Duc and Mérimée, both his intimate friends, stood by his side.

He asked:

“Why, Monsieur Mérimée, do you like the works of Brantôme?”

“Sire,” replied Mérimée, “in them I recognise the French nation, with her good and bad qualities. She is never worse than when she is without a leader to show her a noble aim.”

“Really,” said the Emperor, “does one find that in Brantôme?”

“One also finds in him,” answered Mérimée, “the influence of women in the affairs of state.”

At that moment Madame Ramel entered the gallery. Napoleon had given orders that she should be allowed to come to him whenever she presented herself. At the sight of his foster-sister he showed as much delight as his expressionless, sorrowful face was capable of displaying.

“My dear Madame Ramel,” asked he, “how is your nephew getting on at Nantes? Is he satisfied?”

“But, sire,” said Madame Ramel, “he was not sent there. Another was nominated in his place.”

“That’s strange,” murmured His Majesty thoughtfully.

Then, placing his hand on the academician’s shoulder:

“My dear Monsieur Mérimée, I am supposed to rule the fate of France, of Europe, and of the world. And I cannot get a nomination for a *substitut* of the sixth class, at a salary of two thousand four hundred francs.”

XV

HAVING finished his reading, M. Bergeret folded up his manuscript and put it in his pocket. M. Mazure, M. Paillot, and M. de Terremondre nodded three times in silence.

Then the last-named placed a hand on Bergeret's shoulder:

"What you have just read to us, my dear sir," said he, "is truly..."

At this moment Léon flung himself into the shop and exclaimed with a mixture of excitement and importance:

"Madame Houssieu has just been found strangled in her bed."

"How extraordinary!" said M. de Terremondre.

"From the state of the body," added Léon, "it is believed that death took place three days ago."

"Then," remarked M. Mazure, the archivist, "that would make it Saturday that the crime was committed."

Paillot, the bookseller, who had remained silent up till now, with his mouth wide open out of deference to death, now began to collect his thoughts.

"On Saturday, about five o'clock in the afternoon, I plainly heard stifled cries and the heavy thud produced by the fall of a body. I even said to these gentlemen" (he turned towards M. de Terremondre and M. Bergeret) "that something extraordinary was going on in Queen Marguerite's house."

No one supported the claim that the bookseller was making that he alone, by the keenness of his senses and the penetration of his mind, had suspected the deed at the moment when it was taking place.

After a respectful silence, Paillot began again: "During the night between Saturday and Sunday I said to Madame Paillot:— 'There isn't a sound from Queen Marguerite's house.'"

M. Mazure asked the age of the victim. Paillot replied that Madame Houssieu was between seventy-nine and eighty years of age, that she had been a widow fifty years, that she owned landed property, stocks and shares, and a large sum of money, but that, being miserly and eccentric, she kept no servant, and cooked her victuals herself over the fireplace in her room, living alone amidst a wreckage of furniture and crockery, covered with the dust of a quarter of a century. It was actually more than twenty-five years since any one had wielded a broom in Queen Marguerite's house. Madame Houssieu went out but seldom, bought a whole week's supply of provisions for herself, and never let any one in

to the house save the butcher-boy and two or three urchins who ran errands for her.

“And the crime is supposed to have been committed on Saturday afternoon?” asked M. de Terremondre.

“So it is believed, from the state of the body,” replied Léon. “It appears that it is a ghastly sight.”

“On Saturday, in the afternoon,” replied M. de Terremondre, “we were here, merely separated by a wall from the horrible scene, and we were chatting about passing trifles.”

There was again a long silence. Then some one asked if the assassin had been arrested, or if they even knew who it was. But, in spite of his zeal, Léon could not answer these questions.

A shadow, which grew ever deeper and deeper and seemed funereal, began to fall across the bookseller’s shop. It was caused by the dark crowd of sightseers swarming in the square in front of the house of crime.

“Doubtless they are waiting for the inspector of police and the public prosecutor,” said Mazure, the archivist.

Paillot, who was gifted with an exquisite caution, fearing lest the eager people would break the window-panes, ordered Léon to close the shutters.

“Don’t leave anything open,” said he, “save the window which looks on the Rue des Tintelleries.”

This precautionary measure seemed to bear the stamp of a certain moral delicacy. The gentlemen of the old-book corner approved of it. But since the Rue des Tintelleries was narrow, and since on that side the panes were covered with notices and drawing-copies, the shop became plunged in darkness.

The murmur of the crowd, till then unnoticed, spread with the shadow and became continuous, hollow, solemn, almost terrible, evidencing the unanimity of the moral condemnation.

Much moved, M. de Terremondre gave fresh expression to the thought which had struck him:

“It is strange,” said he, “that while the crime was being committed so near us, we were talking quietly of unimportant affairs.”

At this M. Bergeret bent his head towards his left shoulder, gave a far-away glance, and spoke thus:

“My dear sir, allow me to tell you that there is nothing strange in that. It is not customary, when a criminal action is going on, that conversations should stop of their own accord around the victim, either within a radius of so many leagues or even of so many feet. A commotion inspired by the most villainous thought only produces natural effects.”

M. de Terremondre made no reply to this speech, and the rest of his hearers turned away from M. Bergeret with a vague sense of disquietude and disapproval.

Still the professor of literature persisted:

“And why should an act so natural and so common as murder produce strange and uncommon results? To kill is common to animals, and especially to man. Murder was for long ages regarded in human civilisation as a courageous action, and there still remain in our morals and institutions certain traces of this ancient point of view.”

“What traces?” demanded M. de Terremondre.

“They are to be found in the honours,” replied M. Bergeret, “which are paid to soldiers.”

“That is not the same thing,” said M. de Terremondre.

“Certainly it is,” said M. Bergeret. “For the motive force of all human actions is hunger or love. Hunger taught savages murder, impelled them to wars, to invasions. Civilised nations are like hunting-dogs. A perverted instinct drives them to destroy without profit or reason. The unreasonableness of modern wars disguises itself under dynastic interest, nationality, balance of power, honour. This last pretext is perhaps the most extravagant of all, for there is not a nation in the world that is not sullied with every crime and loaded with every shame. There is not one of them which has not endured all the humiliations that fortune could inflict on a miserable band of men. If there yet remains any honour among the nations, it is a strange means of upholding it to make war — that is to say, to commit all the crimes by which an individual dishonours himself: arson, robbery, rape, murder. And as for the actions whose motive power is love, they are for the most part as violent, as frenzied, as cruel as the actions inspired by hunger; so much so that one must come to the conclusion that man is a mischievous beast. But it still remains to inquire why I know this, and whence it comes that the fact arouses grief and indignation in me. If nothing but evil existed, it would not be visible, as the night would have no name if the sun never rose.”

M. de Terremondre, however, had extended enough deference to the religion of tenderness and human dignity by reproaching himself with having conversed in a gay and careless fashion at the moment of the crime and so near the victim. He began to regard the tragic end of Madame Houssieu as a familiar incident which one might look at straightforwardly and of which one might deduce the consequences. He reflected that now there was nothing to prevent his buying Queen Marguerite’s house as a storehouse for his collections of furniture, china, and tapestry, and thus starting a sort of municipal museum. As a reward for his

zeal and munificence, he counted on receiving, along with the applause of his fellow-countrymen, the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and perhaps the title of correspondent of the Institute.

He had in the Academy of Inscriptions two or three comrades, old bachelors like himself, with whom he sometimes lunched in Paris in some wineshop, and to whom he recounted many anecdotes about women. And there was no correspondent for the district.

Hence he had already reached the point of depreciating the coveted house.

"It won't stand upright much longer," said he, "that house of Queen Marguerite. The beams of the floors used to fall in flakes of touchwood on the poor old octogenarian. It will be necessary to spend an immense sum in putting it in repair."

"The best thing," said Mazure, the archivist, "would be to pull it down and remove the frontage to the courtyard of the museum. It would really be a pity to abandon Philippe Tricouillard's shield to the wreckers."

They heard a great commotion among the crowd in the square. It was the noise of the people whom the police were driving back to clear a passage for the magistrates into the house of crime.

Paillot pushed his nose out of the half-open door.

"Here," said he, "comes the examining judge, M. Roquincourt, with M. Surcouf, his clerk. They have gone into the house."

One after the other the academicians of the old-book corner had slipped out behind the bookseller on to the pavement of the Rue des Tintelleries, from which they watched the surging movements of the people who crowded the Place Saint-Exupère.

Among the mob Paillot recognised M. Cassignol, the president in chief. The old man was taking his daily constitutional. The excited crowd, in which he had got entangled during his walk, impeded his short steps and feeble sight. He went on, still upright and sturdy, carrying his withered, white head erect.

When Paillot saw him, he ran up to him, doffed his velvet cap, and, offering him his arm, invited him to come and sit down in the shop.

"How imprudent of you, Monsieur Cassignol, to venture into such a crowd! It's almost like a riot."

At the word riot, the old man had a vision, as it were, of the century of revolution, three parts of which he had seen. He was now in his eighty-seventh year, and had already been on the retired list for twenty-five years.

Leaning on the bookseller, Paillot, he crossed the doorstep of the shop and sat down on a rush-bottomed chair, in the midst of the respectful academicians. His malacca cane, with its silver top, trembled under his hand between his hollow

thighs. His spine was stiffer than the back of his chair. He drew off his tortoiseshell spectacles to wipe them, and it took him a long time to put them on again. He had lost his memory for faces, and although he was hard of hearing, it was by the voice that he recognised people.

He asked concisely for the cause of the crowds which had gathered in the square, but he hardly listened to the answer given him by M. de Terremondre. His brain, sound but ossified, steeped as it were in myrrh, received no new impressions, although old ideas and passions remained deeply embedded in it.

MM. de Terremondre, Mazure, and Bergeret stood up in a circle round him. They were ignorant of his story, lost now in the immemorial past. They only knew that he had been the disciple, the friend, and the companion of Lacordaire and Montalembert, that he had opposed, as far as the precise limits of his rights and his office permitted, the establishment of the Empire, that in former days he had been subjected to the insults of Louis Veuillot, (Louis Veuillot, author and journalist, born 1813, and much given to duels, both with words and swords.) and that he went every Sunday to mass, with a great book under his arm. Like all the town, they recognised that he retained his old-world honesty and the glory of having maintained the cause of liberty throughout his whole life. But not one of them could have told of what type was his liberalism, for none of them had read this sentence in a pamphlet, published by M. Cassagnol in 1852, on the affairs of Rome:— “There is no liberty save that of the man who believes in Jesus Christ, and in the moral dignity of man.” It was said that, still remaining active in mind at his age, he was classifying his correspondence and working at a book on the relations between Church and State. He still spoke fluently and brightly.

During the conversation which he followed with difficulty, on hearing a mention of the name of M. Garrand, the public prosecutor of the Republic, he remarked, looking down at the knob of his stick as though it were the solitary witness of those bygone days that still survived:

“In 1838 I knew at Lyons a public prosecutor for the Crown who had a high idea of his duties. He used to maintain that one of the attributes of public administration was infallibility, and that the king’s prosecutor could no more be in the wrong than the king himself. His name was M. de Clavel, and he left some valuable works on criminal cross-examination.”

Then the old man was silent, alone with his memories in the midst of men.

Paillot, on the doorstep, was watching what was going on outside.

“Here is M. Roquincourt coming out of the house.”

M. Cassagnol, thinking only of past events, said:

“I started at the bar. I was under the orders of M. de Clavel, who used again and again to repeat to me: ‘Grasp this maxim thoroughly: — The interests of the

prisoner are sacred, the interests of society are doubly sacred, the interests of justice are thrice sacred.' Metaphysical principles had in those days more influence on men's minds than they have nowadays."

"That's very true," said M. de Terremonde.

"They are carrying away a bedside-table, some linen, and a little truck," said Paillot. "These are doubtless articles to be used in evidence."

M. de Terremonde, no longer able to restrain himself, went forward to watch the loading of the truck. Suddenly, knitting his brows, he exclaimed:

"Sacrebleu!"

Then, seeing Paillot's inquiring look, he added:

"It's nothing! nothing!"

Cunning collector that he was, he had just caught sight of a water-jug in *porcelaine a la Reine* among the articles attached, and he was making up his mind to inquire about it after the trial from Surcouf, the registrar, who was an obliging man. In getting together his collections he used artifice. "One must rise to the occasion," he used to say to himself. "Times are bad."

"I was nominated deputy at twenty-two years of age," resumed M. Cassagnol. "At that time my long, curly hair, my beardless, ruddy cheeks, gave me a look of youth that rendered me desperate. In order to inspire respect I had to affect an air of solemnity and to wear an aspect of severity. I carried out my duties with a diligence that brought its reward. At thirty-three years of age I became attorney-general at Puy."

"It is a picturesque town," said M. Mazure.

"In the performance of my new duties I had to inquire into an affair of little interest, if one only took account of the nature of the crime and the character of the accused, but which had indeed its own importance, since it was a matter that involved the death sentence. A fairly prosperous farmer had been found murdered in his bed. I pass over the circumstances of the crime, which yet remain fixed in my memory, although they were as commonplace as possible. I need only say that, from the opening of the inquiry, suspicions fell on a ploughman, a servant of the victim. This was a man of thirty. His name was Poudrilles, Hyacinthe Poudrilles. On the day following the crime he had suddenly disappeared, and was found in a wineshop, where he was spending pretty freely. Strong circumstantial evidence pointed to him as the author of this murder. A sum of sixty francs was found on him, for the possession of which he could not account; his clothes bore traces of blood. Two witnesses had seen him prowling round the farm on the night of the crime. It is true that another witness swore to an alibi, but that witness was a well-known bad character.

“The examination had been very well managed by a judge of consummate ability. The case for the prosecution was drawn up with much skill. But Poudraillles had made no confession. And in court, during the whole course of the cross-examination, he fenced himself about with a series of denials from which nothing could dislodge him. I had prepared my address as public prosecutor with all the care of which I was capable and with all the conscientiousness of a young man who does not wish to appear unfitted for his high duties. I brought to the delivery of it all the ardour of my youth. The alibi furnished by the woman Cortot, who pretended that she had kept Poudraillles in her house at Puy during the night of the crime, was a great obstacle to me. I set myself to break it down. I threatened the woman Cortot with the penalties attaching to perjury. One of my arguments made a special impression on the mind of the jury. I reminded them that, according to the report of the neighbours, the watch-dogs had not barked at the murderer. That was because they knew him. It was, then, no stranger. It was the ploughman; it was Poudraillles. Finally I called for the death penalty, and I got it. Poudraillles was condemned to death by a majority of votes. After the reading of the sentence, he exclaimed in a loud voice: ‘I am innocent!’ At this a terrible doubt seized me. I felt that, after all, he might be speaking the truth, and that I did not myself possess that certainty with which I had inspired the minds of the jury. My colleagues, my chiefs, my seniors, and even the counsel for the defence came to congratulate me on this brilliant success, to applaud my youthful and formidable eloquence. These praises were sweet to me. You know, gentlemen, Vauvenargues’ dainty fancy about the first rays of glory. Yet the voice of Poudraillles saying, ‘I am innocent’ thundered in my ears.

“My doubts still remained with me, and I was forced again and again to go over my speech for the prosecution in my mind.

“Poudraillles’ appeal was dismissed, and my uncertainty increased. At that time it was comparatively seldom that reprieves arrested the carrying out of the death sentence. Poudraillles petitioned in vain for a commutation of the sentence. On the morning of the day fixed for the execution, when the scaffold had already been erected at Martouret, I went to the prison, got them to open the condemned cell to me, and alone, face to face with the prisoner, said to him:— ‘Nothing can alter your fate. If there remains in you one good feeling, in the interests of your own soul and to set my mind at rest, Poudraillles, tell me whether you are guilty of the crime for which you are condemned.’ He looked at me for some moments without replying. I still see his dull face and wide, dumb mouth. I had a moment of terrible anguish. At last he bent his head right down and murmured in a feeble but distinct voice:— ‘Now that I have no hope left, I may as well tell you that I

did it. And I had more trouble than you would believe, because the old man was strong. All the same, he was a bad lot.' When I heard this final confession I heaved a deep sigh of relief."

M. Cassagnol stopped, gazed fixedly for a long time at the knob of his stick with his faded, washed-out eyes, and then uttered these words:

"During my long career as a magistrate I have never known of a single judicial error."

"That's a reassuring statement," said M. de Terremondre.

"It makes my blood run cold with horror," murmured M. Bergeret.

XVI

THAT year, as usual, M. Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, went shooting at Valcombe, at the house of M. Delion, an ironmaster and a member of the General Council, who had the finest shooting in the district. The *préfet* enjoyed himself very much at Valcombe; he was flattered at meeting there many people of good family, especially the Gromances and the Terremondres, and he took a deep joy in winging pheasants. Here he was to be seen pacing the woodland paths in exuberant spirits. He shot with twisted body, with raised shoulders and bent head, with one eye closed and brows knitted, in the style of the inhabitants of Bois-Colombes, the book-makers and restaurant-keepers, his original shooting companions. He proclaimed noisily, with tactless delight, the birds that he had brought down; and by now and then attributing to himself those that had fallen to his neighbours' guns, he aroused an indignation which he immediately allayed by the placidity of his temper and by entire ignorance of the fact that any one could possibly be vexed with him. In all his behaviour he united pleasantly enough the importance of an official with the familiarity of a cheerful guest. He flung their titles at men as though they were nicknames, and because, like all the department, he knew that M. de Gromance was an oft-betrayed husband, at every meeting he would give this man of ceremony several affectionate little taps without any apparent reason. Among the company at Valcombe he imagined himself to be popular, and he was not entirely wrong. When, despite his underbred manners and toadying air, his companions had got off scot-free of both shot and impertinences, he was considered dexterous, and they said that, at bottom, he had tact.

This year he had succeeded better than ever in the capitalist circle. It was known that he was opposed to the income tax, which in private conversation he had felicitously described as inquisitorial. At Valcombe, therefore, he was the recipient of the congratulations of a grateful society, and Madame Delion smiled on him, softening for him her steel-blue eyes and her majestic forehead crowned with bandeaux of iron-grey.

On leaving his room, where he had been dressing for dinner, he saw the lissom figure of Madame de Gromance gliding along the dark corridor, with a rustle of clothes and jewels. In the dusk her bare shoulders seemed barer than ever. He frisked forward to overtake her, seized her by the waist and kissed her on the neck. When she freed herself hurriedly, he said to her in reproachful accents: "Why so cruel to *me*, Countess?"

Then she gave him a box on the ears which surprised him greatly.

On the ground-floor landing he came upon Noémi, who, very seemly in her dress of black satin covered with black tulle, was slowly drawing her long gloves over her arms. He made a friendly little sign to her with his eye. He was a good husband, and regarded his wife with a good deal of esteem and some admiration.

She deserved it, for she had need of rare tact not to ruffle the anti-Jewish society of Valcombe. And she was not unpopular there. She had even won their sympathy. And what was most astonishing, she did not seem an outsider.

In that great cold provincial salon she assumed an awe-stricken face and a placid demeanour which produced a doubt of her intelligence, but proclaimed her honest, sweet, and good. With Madame Delion and the other women, she admired, approved, and held her tongue. And if a man of some intelligence and experience entered into a *tête-à-tête* with her, she made herself still more demure, modest, and timid, with downcast eyes; then suddenly she hurled some broad jest at him, which tickled him by its unexpectedness, and which he regarded as a special favour, coming from so prim a mouth and so reserved a mind. She captivated the hearts of the old sparks. Without a gesture, without a movement, without the flutter of a fan, with an imperceptible quiver of her eyelashes and a swift pursing of the lips, she insinuated ideas that flattered them. She made a conquest of M. Mauricet himself, who, great connoisseur as he was, said of her:

“She has always been plain, she is no longer even attractive, but she is a woman.”

M. Worms-Clavelin was placed at table between Madame Delion and Madame Laprat-Teulet, wife of the senator of... Madame Laprat-Teulet was a sallow little woman, whom one always seemed to be looking at through a gauze, so soft were her features. As a young girl, she had been steeped in religion as if it had been oil. Now, the wife of a clever man who had married her for her fortune, she wallowed in unctuous piety, while her husband devoted his energies to the anti-clerical and secular parties. She gave herself up to endless petty tasks. And deeply attached as she was to her wedded condition, when a demand was lodged before the Senate for the authorisation of judicial proceedings against Laprat-Teulet and several other senators, she offered two candles in the Church of Saint-Exupère, before the painted statue of Saint Anthony, in order that by his good offices her husband's opponents might be non-suited. And it was in that way that the affair ended. A pupil of Gambetta, M. Laprat-Teulet had in his possession certain small documents, a photographic reproduction of which he had sent at a timely moment to the Keeper of the Seals. Madame Laprat-Teulet, in the zeal of her gratitude, had a marble slab put up, as a votive-offering, on the

wall of the chapel, with this inscription drawn up by the venerable M. Lapruné himself: — *To Saint Anthony front a Christian wife, in gratitude for an unexpected blessing.* Since then M. Laprat-Teulet had retrieved his position. He had given serious pledges to the Conservatives, who hoped to utilise his great financial talents in the struggle against socialism. His political position had become satisfactory again, provided he affronted no one and did not seize the reins of power for himself.

And with her waxen fingers Madame Laprat-Teulet embroidered altar-frontals.

“Well, madame,” said the *préfet* to her, after the soup, “are your good works prospering? Do you know that, after Madame Cartier de Chalmot, you are the lady in the department who presides over the largest number of charities?”

She made no answer. He recollected that she was deaf, and, turning towards Madame Delion:

“Tell me, I beg you, madame, about Saint Anthony’s charity. It was this poor Madame Laprat-Teulet who made me think of it. My wife tells me it is a new cult that is becoming the rage in the department.”

“Madame Worms-Clavelin is right, my dear sir. We are all devoted to Saint Anthony.”

Then they heard M. Mauricet, in reply to a sentence lost in the noise, say to M. Delion:

“You flatter me, my dear sir. The Puits-du-Roi, very much neglected since Louis XIV.’s time, is not to be compared with Valcombe for its sport. There is very little game there. Still, a poacher of rare skill, named Rivoire, who honours the Puits-du-Roi with his nocturnal visits, kills plenty of pheasants there. And you’ve no idea what an extraordinary old blunderbuss he shoots them with. It’s a specimen for a museum! I owe him thanks for having one day allowed me to examine it at leisure. Imagine a...”

“I am told, madame,” said the *préfet*, “that the worshippers address their requests to Saint Anthony in a sealed paper, and that they make no payment until after the blessing demanded has been received.”

“Don’t jest,” replied Madame Delion; “Saint Anthony grants many favours.”

“It is,” continued M. Mauricet, “the barrel of an old musket which has been cut through and mounted on a kind of hinge, so that it rocks up and down, and..”

“I thought,” replied the *préfet*, “that Saint Anthony’s specialty was finding lost articles.”

“That is why,” answered Madame Delion, “so many requests are made to him.”

And she added, with a sigh:

“Who, in this world, has not lost a precious possession? Peace of heart, a conscience at rest, a friendship formed in childhood or... a husband’s love? It is then that one prays to Saint Anthony.”

“Or to his comrade,” added the *préfet*, whom the ironmaster’s wines had elated, and who in his innocence was confusing Saint Anthony of Padua with Saint Anthony the hermit.

“But,” asked M. de Terremondre, “this Rivoire is known as the poacher to the prefecture, is he not?”

“You are mistaken, Monsieur de Terremondre,” replied the *préfet*. “He has a still more honourable appointment as poacher to the Archbishopric. He supplies Monseigneur’s table.”

“He also consents to put his skill at the service of the court,” said President Peloux.

M. Delion and Madame Cartier de Chalmot were conversing together in low tones:

“My son Gustave, dear lady, is going to serve his military term this year. I should so much like him to be placed under General Cartier de Chalmot.”

“Do not set your heart on that, monsieur. My husband hates favouritism, and he is chary of granting leave; he expects lads of good family to show an example of work. And he has imbued all his colonel’s with his principles.”

“... And the barrel of this musket,” continued M. Mauricet, “corresponds with no recognised bore, so that Rivoire can only make use of undersized cartridges. You can easily imagine...”

The *préfet* was unfolding certain arguments calculated to bring Madame Delion completely over to the government, and he concluded with this noble thought:

“At the moment when the Czar is coming on a visit to France, it is necessary that the Republic should identify itself with the upper classes of the nation in order to put them in touch with our great ally, Russia.”

Meanwhile, with the calm of a Madonna, Noémi was kissing feet with M. *le président* Peloux, who had been feeling about for hers under the table.

Young Gustave Delion was saying in a low voice to Madame de Gromance:

“I hope that this time you will not keep me hanging about as you did on the day when you were playing the fool with that dotard of a Mauricet, whilst I had

no other amusement in your yellow drawing-room than to potter with the works of the clock.”

“What an excellent woman Madame Laprat-Teulet is!” exclaimed Madame Delion in a sudden outburst of affection.

“Excellent,” said the *préfet*, swallowing a quarter of a pear. “It is a pity that she is as deaf as a post. Her husband also is an excellent man, and very intelligent. I am glad to see that people are beginning to readjust their views of him. He has gone through a difficult time. The enemies of the Republic wanted to compromise him in order to discredit the government. He has been the victim of schemes that aimed at excluding from Parliament the leading men belonging to the business world. Such an exclusion would lower the level of national representation and would be in all respects deplorable.”

For a moment he remained thoughtful; then he said sadly:

“Besides, no further scandals can be hatched; no more charges are being trumped up. And there we have one of the most grievous results of this campaign of calumny, carried on with unheard-of audacity.”

“Perhaps it is as well!” sighed Madame Delion, thoughtfully and meaningly.

Then suddenly, with a burst of fervour:

“Monsieur *le préfet*, give us back our dear religious orders, let our Sisters of Charity return to the hospitals and our God to the schools whence you have expelled Him. No longer prevent our rearing our sons as Christians and... we shall be very near to a mutual understanding.”

Hearing these words, M. Worms-Clavelin flung up his hands, as well as his knife, on which was a morsel of cheese, and exclaimed with heartfelt sincerity: — “Good God! madame, don’t you see that the streets of the county town are black with curés, and that there are monks behind all the gratings? And as for your young Gustave, damn it! it isn’t I who prevent him from going to mass all day instead of running after the girls!”

M. Mauricet was finishing his description of the marvellous blunderbuss, amid the clatter of voices, the echo of laughter, and the little tinkling taps of silver upon china.

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, who was in a hurry to smoke, passed out first into the billiard-room. He was soon joined there by President Peloux, to whom he held out a cigar:

“Have one, do! They are capital.”

And in reply to M. Peloux’s thanks, showing the box of regalias, he answered:

“Don’t thank me; it is one of our host’s cigars.” This joke was one of his stock ones.

At last M. Delion appeared, leading the bulk of the guests, who with greater gallantry had been chatting for a few minutes with the ladies. He was listening approvingly to M. de Gromance, who was explaining to him how necessary it was in shooting to calculate distances accurately.

“For instance,” he said, “on uneven ground a hare seems relatively distant, whilst, on level ground, it seems nearer by more than fifty metres. It is on this account that...”

“Come,” said M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, taking down a cue from the rack, “come, Peloux, shall we play a game?”

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was a pretty fair stroke at billiards; but M. *le président* Peloux gave him points. A little Norman attorney who, at the close of a disastrous estate case, had been forced to sell his practice, he had been appointed a judge at the time when the Republic was purging the magistracy. Sent from one end of France to the other, in courts where the knowledge of the law had almost disappeared, his skill in sharp practice made him useful, and his ministerial relations secured him advancement. Yet everywhere a vague rumour of his past pursued him, and people refused to treat him with respect. But luckily he was wise enough to know how to endure persistent rebuffs. He bore affronts placidly. M. Lerond, deputy attorney-general, now a barrister at the bar at..., said of him in the Salle des Pas-Perdus:— “He is a man of intelligence who knows the distance between his seat and the prisoner’s dock.” Yet that public approval which he had not sought, and which evaded him, had at length, by a sudden recoil, come of its own accord. For the last two years the whole society of the district had looked upon President Peloux as an upright magistrate. They admired his courage when, smiling placidly between his two pale assessors, he had condemned to five years’ imprisonment three confederate anarchists, guilty of having distributed in the barracks bills exhorting the nations to fraternise.

“Twelve — four,” announced M. *le président* Peloux.

Having practised for a long time in the sleepy restaurant of a county town in a rural canton, he had learnt a close professional game. He raked his balls into a little corner of the billiard-table and brought off a series of cannons. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin played in the broad, splendid, reckless style of the artist-café of Montmartre and Clichy. And laying the failure of his rash strokes to the charge of the table, he complained of the hardness of the cushions.

“At la Tuilière,” said M. de Terremondre, “in my cousin Jacques’ house, there is a billiard-table with pockets, which dates from Louis XV.’s time, in a very low vaulted hall, of soft, whitewashed stone, where this inscription is still to be read:— ‘Gentlemen are requested not to rub their cues on the walls.’ It is a

request to which no one has paid any attention, for the vaulting is pitted with a number of little round holes, whose origin is accurately explained by this inscription.”

M. *le président* Peloux was asked in several directions at once for details as to the affair in Queen Marguerite’s house. The murder of Madame Houssieu, which had excited all the district, was still arousing interest. Every one knew that a crushing weight of evidence hung over a butcher’s boy of nineteen, named Lecœur, whom folks used to see twice a week entering the old lady’s house with his basket on his head. It was also known that the prosecution was detaining two upholsterer’s apprentices of fourteen and sixteen years of age as accomplices, and it was said that the crime had been committed in circumstances which made the story of it a particularly delicate one.

Being questioned on this point, M. *le président* Peloux lifted his round ruddy head from the billiard-table and winked.

“The case is being tried *in camera*. The scene of the murder has been reconstructed in its entirety. I don’t believe that there is a doubt left as to the acts of debauchery which preceded the crime and facilitated the perpetration of it.”

He took up his liqueur glass, swallowed a mouthful of armagnac, smacked his lips, and said: “Heavens! what velvet!”

And, when a circle of inquirers crowded round him asking for details, the magistrate, in a low voice, disclosed certain circumstances which provoked murmurs of surprise and grunts of disgust.

“Is it possible?” was the comment. “A woman of eighty!”

“The case,” answered M. *le président* Peloux, “is not unique. You may take my word for it after my experience as a magistrate. And the young scamps of the faubourgs know much more on this subject than we do. The crime in Queen Marguerite’s house is of a well-known, classified sort; I might call it a classic type. I immediately scented it out as senile debauchery, and I saw quite clearly that Roquincourt, the prosecuting counsel, was following a wrong track. He had naturally ordered the arrest of all the vagabonds and tramps found wandering within a wide circumference. Every one of them aroused suspicions; and what put the crowning touch to his mistake was that one of them, Sieurin, nicknamed Pied-d’Alouette, a regular gaolbird, made a confession.”

“How was that?”

“He was bored with solitary confinement. He had been promised a pipe of canteen tobacco if he confessed. He did confess. He told them all they wanted. This Sieurin, who has been sentenced thirty-seven times for vagabondage, is incapable of killing a fly. He has never committed robbery. He is a simpleton, an

inoffensive creature. At the time of the crime, the gendarmes saw him on Duroc hill making straw fountains and cork boats for the school children.”

M. *le président* resumed his game.

“Ninety — forty.... During this time, Lecœur was telling all the girls in the Quartier des Carreaux that he had done the deed, and the keepers of disorderly houses were bringing to the police-inspector Madame Houssieu’s earrings, chain, and rings that the butcher-boy had distributed among their inmates. This Lecœur, like so many other murderers, gave himself up. But Roquincourt, in a rage, left Sieurin, or Pied-d’Alouette in solitary confinement. He is still there. Ninety-nine... and one hundred.”

“Splendid!” said M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin.

“So,” murmured M. Delion, “this woman of eighty-three had still... It is incredible!”

But Dr. Fornerol, agreeing with President Peloux’s opinion, declared that the case was not as unusual as they fancied, and he supplied the physiological explanation, which was listened to with interest. Then he went on to quote different cases of sexual aberrations and wound up in these words:

“If the devil on two sticks, lifting us up in the air, were to raise the roofs of the town before our eyes, we should see appalling sights, and we should be staggered at the discovery among our fellow-citizens of so many maniacs, degenerates, mad men and mad women.”

“Bah!” said M. Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, “one must not look too closely into that. All these people, taken one by one, are perhaps what you say; but together they form a superb mass of constituents and a splendid county-town population for the department.”

Now, on the raised divan which overlooked the billiard-table, Senator Laprat-Teulet sat caressing his long white beard. He had the majesty of a river.

“For my part,” said he, “I can only believe in goodness. Wherever I cast my eyes, I see virtue and honesty. I have been able to prove by numerous instances that the morals of the French women since the Revolution leave nothing to be desired, especially in the middle classes.”

“I am not so optimistic,” replied M. de Terremondre, “but I certainly did not suspect that Queen Marguerite’s house hid such shameful mysteries behind its walls of crumbling woodwork and beneath the cobweb-curtains of its mullioned windows. I went to see Madame Houssieu several times; she seemed a miserly and mistrustful old woman, a little mad, yet like so many others. But, as they used to say in the time of Queen Marguerite;

“She is under the sod.

Her soul be with God!

("Elle est sous lame.
Dieu ait son âme!")

She will no longer, by her lewdness, blot the scutcheon of good Philippe Tricouillard."

At that name a shout of merry laughter burst from their knowing faces. It was the secret joy and inward pride of the town, that emblematic shield, with its witness to the triple virtue and power that put this bourgeois ancestor of theirs on a level with the great condottiere of Bergamo. The people of... loved him, their lusty forebear, the contemporary of the king in the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, their ancient alderman Philippe Tricouillard, about whom, to tell the truth, they knew nothing save the gift of nature to which he owed his illustrious surname.

The turn taken by the conversation led Dr. Fornerol to say that several instances had been cited of a similar anomaly, and that certain writers declare that at times this honourable monstrosity is transmitted hereditarily and becomes persistent in a family. Unluckily the line of the worthy Philippe had been extinct for more than two hundred years.

After this remark, M. de Terremondre, who was president of the Archaeological Society, related a true anecdote.

"Our departmental archivist," said he, "the learned M. Mazure, has recently discovered in the garrets of the prefecture some documents relating to a charge of adultery, brought, at the very period when Philippe Tricouillard was flourishing, towards the end of the fifteenth century, by Jehan Tabouret against Sidoine Cloche, his wife, for the reason that the aforesaid Sidoine, having had three children at a birth, Sieur Jehan Tabouret only acknowledged two of them as his, and maintained that the third was by another man, for he averred that he was constitutionally incapable of begetting more than two at a time. And he gave a reason for this, founded on an error then common among matrons, barber-surgeons, and apothecaries, who each as eagerly as the others professed to believe that the normal frame of a man was physiologically incapable of begetting more than twins, and that all over the number of pledges which the father can produce should be disowned. For this reason, poor Sidoine was convicted by the judge of having played the harlot, and for this put naked on an ass with her head towards the tail, and thus led through the town to the pond at Les Evés, where she was ducked three times. She would scarcely have suffered thus if her wicked husband had been as generously gifted by Dame Nature as good Philippe Tricouillard."

XVII

IN front of Rodonneau's house-door, the *préfet* glanced to right and left to see that he was not being spied upon. He had heard that it was said in the town that he went to the jeweller's house for assignations and that Madame Lacarelle had been seen following him into this house, called the House of the Two Satyrs. He felt very bad-tempered over this. He had another cause of annoyance. *Le Libéral*, which had treated him respectfully for a long time, had attacked him vigorously over the departmental budget. He was censured by the Conservative organ for having made a transfer to conceal the expenses of the electoral propaganda. M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin was perfectly honest. Money inspired him with respect as well as love. He felt before "Property" that feeling of religious terror that the moon inspires in dogs. With him wealth had become a cult.

His budget was very honestly put together. And, apart from the irregularities that had now become regular as the result of a faulty administration common to the whole Republic, nothing worthy of blame could be discovered in it.

M. Worms-Clavelin knew this. He felt himself strong in his integrity. But the polemics of the press put him out of patience. His heart was saddened by the animosity of his opponents and the rancour of the parties that he believed he had disarmed. After so many sacrifices he was pained at not having won the esteem of the Conservatives, which he secretly valued far more highly than the friendship of the Republicans. He would have to inspire *le Phare* with pointed and forceful replies, to conduct a lively, and, perhaps protracted war. This thought was harassing to the deep slothfulness of his mind and alarming to his prudence, which feared every action as a source of peril.

Thus he was in a very bad temper. And it was in a sharp voice that, throwing himself into the old leather arm-chair, he inquired of Rodonneau junior whether M. Guitrel had arrived. M. Guitrel had not yet come. So M. Worms-Clavelin, roughly snatching a paper from the jeweller's desk, tried to read while smoking his cigar. But neither political ideas nor tobacco-smoke served to dispel the gloomy pictures that crowded into his mind. He read with his eyes, but thought of the attacks of *le Libéral*: "Transfer! There are not fifty people in the county town who know what a transfer is. And here I can see all the idiots in the department shaking their heads and solemnly repeating the phrase in their newspaper:— 'We regret to see that M. *le préfet* has not abandoned the detestable and exploded practice of making transfers.'" He fell into thought. The ash from his cigar lavishly bestrewed his waistcoat. He went on thinking: "Why

does *le Libéral* attack me? I got its candidate returned. My department shows the greatest number of new adherents at election-times.” He turned over the page of the paper. He thought on again:— “I have not covered up a deficit. The sums voted on the presentation of the estimates have not been spent in a different way from what was proposed. These people don’t know how to read a budget. And they are disingenuous.” He shrugged his shoulders; and gloomy, indifferent to the cigar ash which covered his chest and thighs, he plunged into the reading of his paper.

His eyes fell on these lines:

“We learn that a fire having broken out in a faubourg of Tobolsk, sixty wooden houses have fallen a prey to the flames. In consequence of the disaster more than a hundred families are homeless and starving.”

As he read this, M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin emitted a deep shout, something like a triumphal growl, and, aiming a kick at the jeweller’s desk:

“I say, Rondonneau, Tobolsk is a Russian town, isn’t it?”

Rondonneau, raising his innocent, bald head towards the *préfet*, replied that Tobolsk was, indeed, a town in Asiatic Russia.

“Well,” cried M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin, “we are going to give an entertainment for the benefit of the sufferers by the fire at Tobolsk.”

And he added between his teeth:

“I’ll make... a Russian entertainment for ‘em. I shall have six weeks’ peace, and they won’t talk any more about transfers.”

At that moment Abbé Guitrel, with anxious eyes, his hat under his arm, entered the jeweller’s shop.

“Do you know, monsieur l’abbé,” said the *préfet* to him, “that, by general request, I am authorising entertainments for the benefit of the sufferers from the fire at Tobolsk — concerts, special performances, bazaars, &c.? I hope that the Church will join in these benevolent entertainments.”

“The Church, Monsieur *le préfet*,” replied Abbé Guitrel, “has her hands full of comfort for the afflicted who come to her. And doubtless her prayers...”

“*À propos*, my dear abbé, your affairs are not getting on at all. I come from Paris. I saw the friends whom I have at the Department of Religion. And I bring back bad news. To start with, there are eighteen of you.”

“Eighteen?”

“Eighteen candidates for the bishopric of Tourcoing. In the first rank is Abbé Olivet, curé of one of the richest parishes in Paris, and the president’s candidate. Next there is Abbé Lavardin, vicar-general at Grenoble. Ostensibly, he is supported by the nuncio.”

“I have not the honour of knowing M. Lavardin, but I do not think he can be the candidate of the nunciature. It is possible that the nuncio has his favourite. But assuredly that favourite remains unknown. The nunciature does not solicit on behalf of its protégés. It insists on their appointment.”

“Ah! ah! monsieur l’abbé, they are cute at the nunciature.”

“Monsieur *le préfet*, the members of it are not all eminent in themselves; but they have on their side unbroken tradition, and their action is guided by secular rules. It is a force, monsieur *le préfet*, a great force.”

“By Jove, yes! But we were saying that there is the president’s candidate and the nuncio’s candidate. There is also your own Archbishop’s candidate. When they first mentioned him, I thought to myself that it was you.... We were wrong, my poor friend. Monseigneur Chariot’s protégé — I’ll wager you won’t guess who it is.”

“Don’t make a wager, monsieur *le préfet*, don’t make a wager. I would bet that the candidate of Monseigneur the Cardinal-Archbishop is his vicar-general, M. de Goulet.”

“How do you know that? I did not know it myself.”

“Monsieur *le préfet*, you are not unaware that Monseigneur Chariot dreads that he may find himself saddled with a coadjutor, and that his old age, otherwise so august and serene, is darkened by this fear. He is afraid lest M. de Goulet should, so to say, attract this nomination to himself, as much by his personal merits as by the knowledge that he has acquired of the affairs of the diocese. And His Eminence is still more desirous, and even impatient, to separate himself from his vicar-general, since M. de Goulet belongs by birth to the nobility of the district, and through that fact shines with a brilliancy which is far too dazzling for Monseigneur Chariot. Since, on the contrary, Monseigneur does not rejoice in being the son of an honest artisan who, like Saint Paul, worked at the trade of weaver!”

“You know, Monsieur Guitrel, that they also talk of M. Lantaigne. He is the protégé of Madame Cartier de Chalmot. And General Cartier de Chalmot, although clerical and reactionary, is much respected in Paris. He is recognised as one of the ablest and most intelligent of our generals. Even his opinions, at this moment, are advantageous rather than harmful to him. With a ministry disposed to reunion, reactionaries get all that they want. They are needed; they give the turn to the scale. And then the Russian alliance and the Czar’s friendship have contributed to restore to the aristocracy and the army of our nation a part of their ancient prestige. We are shunting the Republic on to a certain distinction of mind and manners. Moreover, a general tendency towards authority and stability is

declaring itself. I do not, however, believe that M. Lantaigne has great chances. In the first place, I have reported most unfavourably with regard to him. I have represented him in high places as a militant monarchist. I have described his uncompromising ways, his cross-grained temperament. And I have painted a sympathetic portrait of you, my dear Guitrel. I have shown off your moderation, your pliancy, your politic mind, your respect for republican institutions.”

“I am very grateful to you for your kindness, monsieur *le préfet*. And what did they reply?”

“You want to know that. Well! they replied: ‘We know such candidates as your M. Guitrel. Once nominated, they are worse than the others. They show more zeal against us. That is easily accounted for. They have more to beg pardon for of their own party.’”

“Is it possible, monsieur *le préfet*, that they talked like this in high places?”

“Ha! yes. And my interlocutor added this: ‘I do not like candidates for the episcopacy who show too much zeal for our institutions. If I could get a hearing, the choice would be made from among the others. In the civil and political ranks they prefer officials who are most devoted, most attached to the government. Nothing can be better. But there are no priests devoted to the Republic. In this case, the wise thing is always to take the most honest men.’”

And the *préfet*, throwing the chewed end of his cigar into the middle of the floor, finished with these words:

“You see, my poor Guitrel, that your affairs are not making headway.”

M. Guitrel stammered:

“I do not see, Monsieur *le préfet*, I do not perceive anything, in such speeches, that is calculated to produce in you this impression of... discouragement. On the contrary, I should rather derive from it a sentiment of... confidence....”

M. *le préfet* Worms-Clavelin lit a cigar and said with a laugh:

“Who knows whether they are not right, at the bureaux?... But reassure yourself, my dear abbé, I do not abandon you. Let’s see, whom have we on our side?”

He opened his left hand, in order to count on his fingers.

They both considered.

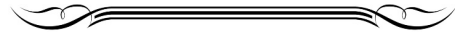
They found a senator of the department who was beginning to emerge from the difficulties into which the recent scandals had plunged him, a retired general, politician, publicist and financier, the bishop of Ecbatana, well known in the artistic world, and Théophile Mayer, the friend of the ministers.

“But, my dear Guitrel,” cried the *préfet* , “you have only the rag-tag and bobtail on your side.”

Abbé Guitrel endured these manners, but he did not like them. He looked at the *préfet* with a saddened air and pressed his sinuous lips together. M. Worms-Clavelin, who had no spite, regretted the playfulness of his words and took pains to console the old man:

“Come! come! they are by no means the worst protectors. Besides, my wife is for you. And Noémi by herself is well able to make a bishop.”

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES II: THE WICKER- WORK WOMAN



Translated by M. P. Willcocks

CONTENTS

[I](#)
[II](#)
[III](#)
[IV](#)
[V](#)
[VI](#)
[VII](#)
[VIII](#)
[IX](#)
[X](#)
[XI](#)
[XII](#)
[XIII](#)
[XIV](#)
[XV](#)
[XVI](#)
[XVII](#)
[XVIII](#)
[XIX](#)

I

IN his study M. Bergeret, professor of literature at the University, was preparing his lesson on the eighth book of the *Æneid* to the shrill mechanical accompaniment of the piano, on which, close by, his daughters were practising a difficult exercise. M. Bergeret's room possessed only one window, but this was a large one, and filled up one whole side. It admitted, however, more draught than light, for the sashes were ill-fitting and the panes darkened by a high contiguous wall. M. Bergeret's table, pushed close against this window, caught the dismal rays of niggard daylight that filtered through. As a matter of fact this study, where the professor polished and repolished his fine, scholarly phrases, was nothing more than a shapeless cranny, or rather a double recess, behind the framework of the main staircase which, spreading out most inconsiderately in a great curve towards the window, left only room on either side for two useless, churlish corners. Trammelled by this monstrous, green-papered paunch of masonry, M. Bergeret had with difficulty discovered in his cantankerous study — a geometrical abortion as well as an aesthetic abomination — a scanty flat surface where he could stack his books along the deal shelves, upon which yellow rows of Teubner classics were plunged in never-lifted gloom. M. Bergeret himself used to sit squeezed close up against the window, writing in a cold, chilly style that owed much to the bleakness of the atmosphere in which he worked. Whenever he found his papers neither torn nor topsy-turvy and his pens not gaping cross-nibbed, he considered himself a lucky man! For such was the usual result of a visit to the study from Madame Bergeret or her daughters, where they came to write up the laundry list or the household accounts. Here, too, stood the dressmaker's dummy, on which Madame Bergeret used to drape the skirts she cut out at home. There, bolt upright, over against the learned editions of Catullus and Petronius, stood, like a symbol of the wedded state, this wicker-work woman.

M. Bergeret was preparing his lesson on the eighth book of the *Æneid*, and he ought to have been devoting himself exclusively to the fascinating details of metre and language. In this task he would have found, if not joy, at any rate mental peace and the priceless balm of spiritual tranquillity. Instead, he had turned his thoughts in another direction: he was musing on the soul, the genius, the outward features of that classic world whose books he spent his life in studying. He had given himself up to the longing to behold with his own eyes those golden shores, that azure sea, those rose-hued mountains, those lovely

meadows through which the poet leads his heroes. He was bemoaning himself bitterly that it had never been his lot to visit the shores where once Troy stood, to gaze on the landscape of Virgil, to breathe the air of Italy, of Greece and holy Asia, as Gaston Boissier and Gaston Deschamps had done. The melancholy aspect of his study overwhelmed him and great waves of misery submerged his mind. His sadness was, of course, the fruit of his own folly, for all our real sorrows come from within and are self-caused. We mistakenly believe that they come from outside, but we create them within ourselves from our own personality.

So sat M. Bergeret beneath the huge plaster cylinder, manufacturing his own sadness and weariness as he reflected on his narrow, cramped, and dismal life: his wife was a vulgar creature, who had by now lost all her good looks; his daughters, even, had no love for him, and finally the battles of Æneas and Turnus were dull and boring. At last he was aroused from this melancholy train of thought by the arrival of his pupil, M. Roux, who made his appearance in red trousers and a blue coat, for he was still going through his year of military service.

“Ha!” said M. Bergeret, “so I see they’ve turned my best Latin scholar into a hero.”

And when M. Roux denied the heroic impeachment, the professor persisted: “I know what I’m talking about. I call a man who wears a sabre a hero, and I’m quite right in so doing. And if you only wore a busby, I should call you a great hero. The least one can decently do is to bestow a little flattery on the people one sends out to get shot. One couldn’t possibly pay them for their services at a cheaper rate. But may you never be immortalised by any act of heroism, and may you only earn the praises of mankind by your attainments in Latin verse! It is my patriotism, and nothing else, that moves me to this sincere wish. For I am persuaded by the study of history that heroism is mainly to be found among the routed and vanquished. Even the Romans, a people by no means so eager for war as is commonly supposed, a people, too, who were often beaten, even the Romans only produced a Decius in a moment of defeat. At Marathon, too, the heroism of Kynegirus was shown precisely at the moment of disaster for the Athenians, who, if they did succeed in arresting the march of the barbarian army, could not prevent them from embarking with all the Persian cavalry which had just been recuperating on the plains. Besides, it is not at all clear that the Persians made any special effort in this battle.”

M. Roux deposited his sabre in a corner of the study and sat down in a chair offered him by the professor.

“It is now four months,” said he, “since I have heard a single intelligent word. During these four months I have been concentrating all the powers of my mind on the task of conciliating my corporal and my sergeant-major by carefully calculated tips. So far, that is the only side of the art of warfare that I can really say I have mastered. It is, however, the most important side. Yet I have in the process lost all power of grasping a general idea or of following a subtle thought. And here you are, my dear sir, telling me that the Greeks were conquered at Marathon and that the Romans were not warlike. My head whirls.”

M. Bergeret calmly replied:

“I merely said that Miltiades did not succeed in breaking through the forces of the barbarians. As for the Romans, they were not essentially a military people, since they made profitable and lasting conquests, in contradistinction to the true military nations, such as the French, for instance, who seize all, but retain nothing.

“It is also to be noted that in Rome, in the time of the kings, aliens were not allowed to serve as soldiers. But in the reign of the good king Servius Tullius the citizens, being by no means anxious to reserve to themselves alone the honour of fatigue and perils, admitted aliens resident in the city to military service. There are such things as heroes, but there are no nations of heroes, nor are there armies of heroes. Soldiers have never marched save under penalty of death. Military service was hateful even to those Latin herdsmen who gained for Rome the sovereignty of the world and the glorious name of goddess among the nations. The wearing of the soldier’s belt was to them such a hardship that the very name of this belt, *ærumna*, eventually expressed for them the ideas of dejection, weariness of body and mind, wretchedness, misfortune and disaster. When well led they made, not heroes, but good soldiers and good navvies; little by little they conquered the world and covered it with roads and highways. The Romans never sought glory: they had no imagination. They only waged absolutely necessary wars in defence of their own interests. Their triumph was the triumph of patience and good sense.

“The make of a man is shown by his ruling passion. With soldiers, as with all crowds, the ruling passion, the predominant thought, is fear. They go to meet the enemy as the foe from whom the least danger is to be feared. Troops in line are so drawn up on both sides that flight is impossible. In that lies all the art of battle. The armies of the Republic were victorious because the discipline of the olden times was maintained in them with the utmost severity, while it was relaxed in the camp of the Allied Armies. Our generals of the second year after the Revolution were none other than sergeants like that la Ramée who used to

have half a dozen conscripts shot every day in order to encourage the others, as Voltaire put it, and to arouse them with the trumpet-note of patriotism.”

“That’s very plausible,” said M. Roux. “But there is another point. There is such a thing as the innate joy of firing a musket-shot. As you know, my dear sir, I am by no means a destructive animal. I have no taste for military life. I have even very advanced humanitarian ideas, and I believe that the brotherhood of the nations will be brought about by the triumph of socialism.

In a word, I am filled with the love of humanity. But as soon as they put a musket in my hand I want to fire at everyone. It’s in the blood....”

M. Roux was a fine hearty fellow who had quickly shaken down in his regiment. Violent exercise suited his robust temperament, and being in addition very adaptable, although he had acquired no special taste for the profession, he found life in barracks quite bearable, and so remained both healthy and happy.

“You have left the power of suggestion out of your calculations, sir,” said he. “Only give a man a bayonet at the end of a musket and he will instantly be ready to plunge it into the body of the first corner and so make himself a hero, as you call it.”

The rich southern tones of M. Roux were still echoing through the room when Madame Bergeret came in. As a rule she seldom entered the study when her husband was there. To-day M. Bergeret noticed that she wore her fine pink and white *peignoir*.

Expressing great surprise at finding M. Roux in the study, she explained that she had just come in to ask her husband for a volume of poems with which she might while away an hour or two.

She was suddenly a charming, good-tempered woman: the professor noticed the fact, as a fact, though he felt no special interest in it.

Removing Freund’s Dictionary from an old leather arm-chair, M. Roux cleared a seat for Madame Bergeret, while her husband’s thoughts strayed, first to the quartos stacked against the wall and then to his wife who had taken their place in the arm-chair. These two masses of matter, the dictionary and the lady, thought he, were once but gases floating in the primitive nebulousity. Though now they are strangely different from one another in look, in nature and in function, they were once for long ages exactly similar.

“For,” thought he to himself, “Madame Bergeret once swam in the vasty abyss of the ages, shapeless, unconscious, scattered in light gleams of oxygen and carbon. At the same time, the molecules that were one day to make up this Latin dictionary were whirling in this same vapour, which was destined at last to give birth to monstrous forms, to minute insects and to a slender thread of thought. These imperfect and often harassing creations, these monuments of my

weary life, my wife and my dictionary, needed the travail of eternity to produce them. Yet Amélie is just a paltry mind in a coarsened body, and my dictionary is full of mistakes. We can see from this example alone that there is very little hope that even new aeons of time would ever give us perfect knowledge and beauty. As it is, we live but for a moment, yet by living for ever we should gain nothing. The faults we see in nature, and how faulty she is we know, are produced neither by time nor space!"

And in the restless perturbation of his thoughts M. Bergeret continued:

"But what is time itself, save just the movements of nature, and how can I judge whether these are long or short? Granted that nature is cruel in her cast-iron laws, how comes it that I recognise the fact? And how do I manage to place myself outside her, so that I can weigh her deeds in my scales? Had I but another standpoint in it, perchance the universe might even seem to me a happier place."

M. Bergeret hereupon suddenly emerged from his day-dream, and leant forward to push the tottering pile of quartos close against the wall.

"You are somewhat sunburnt, Monsieur Roux," said Madame Bergeret, "and rather thinner, I fancy. But it suits you well enough."

"The first few months are trying," answered M. Roux. "Drill, of course, in the barrack-yard at six o'clock in the morning and with eight degrees of frost is rather a painful process, and just at first one finds it difficult to look on the mess as appetising. But weariness is, after all, a great blessing, stupefaction a priceless remedy and the stupor in which one lives is as soporific as a feather-bed. And because at night one only sleeps in snatches, by day one is never wide awake. And this state of automatic lethargy in which we all live is admirably conducive to discipline, it suits the tone of military life and produces physical and moral efficiency in the ranks."

In short, M. Roux had nothing to complain of, but one of his friends, a certain Deval, a student of Malay at the school of Oriental languages, was plunged in the depths of misery and despair. Deval, an intelligent, well-educated, intrepid man, was cursed with a sort of rigidity of mind and body that made him tactless and awkward. In addition to this he was harassed by a painfully exact sense of justice which gave him peculiar views of his rights and duties. This unfortunate turn of mind landed him in all sorts of troubles, and he had not been more than twenty-four hours in barracks before Sergeant Lebrec demanded, in terms which must needs be softened for Madame Bergeret's sake, what ill-conducted being had given birth to such a clumsy cub as Number Five. It took Deval a long time to make sure that he, and none other, was actually Number Five. He had, in fact, to be put under arrest before he was convinced on the subject. Even then he could not see why the honour of Madame Deval, his mother, should be called in

question because he himself was not exactly in line. His sense of justice was outraged by his mother's being unexpectedly declared responsible in this matter, and at the end of four months he was still a prey to melancholy amazement at the idea.

"Your friend Deval," answered M. Bergeret, "put a wrong construction on a warlike speech that I should be inclined to count among those which exalt men's moral tone. Such speeches, in fact, arouse the spirit of emulation by exciting a desire to earn the good-conduct stripes, which confer on their wearers the right to make similar speeches in their turn, speeches which obviously stamp the speaker of them as head and shoulders above those humble beings to whom they are addressed. The authority of officers in the army should never be weakened, as was done in a recent circular issued by a War Minister, which laid down the law that officers and non-commissioned officers were to avoid the practice of addressing the men with the contemptuous 'thou.' The minister, himself a well-bred, courteous, urbane and honourable man, was full of the idea of the dignified position of the citizen soldier and failed, therefore, to perceive that the power of scorning an inferior is the guiding principle in emulation and the foundation-stone of all governance. Sergeant Lebrec spoke like a hero who is schooling heroes, for, being a philologist, I am able to reconstruct the original form his speech took. This being the case, I have no hesitation in declaring that, in my opinion, Sergeant Lebrec rose to sublimity when he associated the good fame of a family with the port of a conscript, when he thus linked the life of Number Five, even before he saw the light, with the regiment and the flag. For, in truth, does not the issue of all warfare rest on the discipline of the recruit?"

"After this, you will probably tell me that I am indulging in the weakness common to all commentators and reading into the text of my author meanings which he never intended. I grant you that there is a certain element of unconsciousness in Sergeant Lebrec's memorable speech. But therein lies the genius of it. Unaware of his own range, he hurls his bolts broadcast."

M. Roux answered with a smile that there certainly was an unconscious element in Sergeant Lebrec's inspiration. He quite agreed with M. Bergeret there. But Madame Bergeret interposed drily:

"I don't understand you at all, Lucien. You always laugh when there is nothing funny, and really one never knows whether you are joking or serious. It's positively impossible to talk rationally to you." a My wife reasons after the dean's fashion," said M. Bergeret, "and the only thing to do with either is to give in."

"Ah!" exclaimed Madame Bergeret, "you do well to talk about the dean! You have always set yourself to annoy him and now you are paying for your folly."

You have also managed to fall out with the rector. I met him on Sunday when I was out with the girls and he hardly so much as bowed.” And turning towards the young soldier, she continued:

“I know that my husband is very much attached to you, Monsieur Roux. You are his favourite pupil and he foretells a brilliant future for you.”

M. Roux’s swarthy face, with its mat of frizzy hair, flashed into a bold smile that showed the brilliant whiteness of his teeth.

“Do try, Monsieur Roux, to get my husband to use a little tact with people who may be useful to him. His conduct is making life a howling wilderness for us all.”

“Surely not, Madame,” murmured M. Roux, turning the conversation.

“The peasants,” said he, “drag out a wretched three years of service. They suffer horribly, but no one ever guesses it, for they are quite inarticulate when it comes to expressing subtleties. Loving the land as they do with all the intensity of animal passion, when they are separated from it their existence is full of deep, silent, monotonous melancholy, with nothing whatever to distract them from their sense of exile and imprisonment, save fear of their officers and weariness of their occupation. Everything around them is strange and incomprehensible. In my company, for instance, there are two Bretons who have not learnt the colonel’s name after six months’ training. Every morning we are drawn up before the sergeant to repeat this name with them, for every one in the regiment receives exactly the same instruction. Our colonel’s name is Dupont. It’s the same in all our exercises: quick, clever men are kept back for ever to wait for the dolts.”

M. Bergeret inquired whether, like Sergeant Lebrec, the officers also cultivated the art of martial eloquence.

“Not at all,” said M. Roux. “My captain — quite a young man he is, too — is the very pink of courtesy. He is an aesthete, a Rosicrucian, and he paints pictures of angels and pallid virgins, against a background of pink and green skies. I devise the legends for his pictures, and whilst Deval is on fatigue-duty in the barrack-square, I am on duty with the captain, who employs me to produce verses for him. He really is a charming fellow. His name is Marcel de Lagère; he exhibits at L’Œuvre under the pseudonym of Cyne.”

“Is he a hero too?” asked M. Bergeret.

“Say rather a Saint George,” answered M. Roux. “He has conceived a mystic ideal of the military profession and declares that it is the perfect way of life. We are marching, unawares, to an unknown goal. Piously, solemnly, chastely, we advance towards the altar of mystic, fated sacrifice. He is exquisite. I am teaching him to write *vers libre* and prose poems and he is beginning to compose

prose sketches of military life. He is happy, placid and gentle, and the only sorrow he has is the flag. He considers its red, white and blue an intolerably violent colour scheme and yearns for one of rose-pink or lilac. His dreams are of the banner of Heaven. 'If even,' he says sadly, 'the three colours rose from a flower-stalk, like the three flames of the oriflamme, it would be bearable. But when they are perpendicular, they cut the floating folds painfully and ridiculously.' He suffers, but he bears his suffering bravely and patiently. As I said before, he is a true Saint George."

"From your description," said Madame Bergeret, "I feel keenly for the poor young man."

So speaking, she threw a severe glance in M. Bergeret's direction.

"But aren't the other officers amazed at him?" asked M. Bergeret.

"Not at all," answered M. Roux. "For at mess, or in society, he says nothing about his opinions and he looks just like any other officer."

"And what do the men think of him?"

"The men never come in contact with their officers in quarters."

"You will dine with us, won't you, Monsieur Roux?" said Madame Bergeret. "It will give us great pleasure if you will stay."

Her words instantly suggested to M. Bergeret's mind the vision of a pie, for whenever Madame Bergeret had informally invited anyone to dinner she always ordered a pie from Magloire, the pastrycook, and usually a pie without meat, as being more dainty. By a purely mental impetus that had no connection with greed, M. Bergeret now called up a picture of an egg or fish pie, smoking in a blue-patterned dish on a damask napkin. Homely and prophetic vision! But if Madame Bergeret invited M. Roux to dinner, she must think a great deal of him, for it was most unusual for Amélie to offer the pleasures of her humble table to a stranger. She dreaded the expense and fuss of doing so, and justly, for the days when she had a guest to dinner were made hideous by the noise of broken dishes, by yells of alarm and tears of rage from the young maid, Euphémie, by an acrid smoke-reek that filled the whole flat and by a smell of cooking which found its way to the study and disturbed M. Bergeret among the shades of Æneas, Turnus, and the bashful Lavinia. However, the professor was delighted at the idea that his pupil, M. Roux, would feed to-night at his table. For there was nothing he liked better than men's talk, and a long discussion filled him with joy.

Madame Bergeret continued:

"You know, Monsieur Roux, it will be just pot-luck."

Then she departed to give Euphémie her orders.

"My dear sir," said M. Bergeret to his pupil, "are you still asserting the pre-eminence of *vers libre*? Of course, I am aware that poetic forms vary according

to time and place. Nor am I ignorant of the fact that, in the course of ages, French verse has undergone incessant alterations, and, hidden behind my books of notes on metre, I can smile discreetly at the pious prejudices of the poets who refuse to allow anyone to lay an unhallowed finger on the instrument consecrated by their genius. I have noticed that they give no reasons for the rules they follow, and I am inclined to think that one must not search for these reasons in the verse itself, but rather in the music which in primitive times accompanied it. It is the scientific spirit which I acknowledge as my guide, and as that is naturally far less conservative than the artistic spirit, I am therefore ready to welcome innovations. But I must, nevertheless, confess that *vers libre* baffles me and I cannot even grasp the definition of it. The vagueness of the limits to which it must conform is a worry to me and...”

At that moment a visitor came into the study. It was a well-built man in the prime of life, with handsome sunburnt features. Captain Aspertini of Naples was a student of philology and agriculture and a member of the Italian Parliament who for the last ten years had been carrying on a learned correspondence with M. Bergeret, after the style of the great scholars of the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, and whenever he visited France he made it his practice to come and see his correspondent. Savants the world over held a high opinion of Carlo Aspertini for having deciphered a complete treatise by Epicurus on one of the charred scrolls from Pompeii. Although his energies were now absorbed in agriculture, politics and business, he was still passionately devoted to the art of numismatics and his sensitive hands still itched to have the fingering of medals. Indeed, there were two attractions which drew him to * — the pleasure of seeing M. Bergeret and the delight of looking once more at the priceless collection of ancient coins bequeathed to the town library by Boucher de La Salle. He also came to collate the letters of Muratori which were preserved there. The two men greeted each other with great pleasure, for a common love of knowledge had made them fellow-citizens. Then, when the Neapolitan perceived that they had a soldier with them in the study, M. Bergeret hastened to inform him that this Gallic warrior was a budding philologist, inspired by enthusiasm for the Latin tongue.

“This year, however,” said M. Bergeret, “he is learning in a barrack-square to put one foot before the other, and in him you see what our witty commandant, General Cartier de Chalmot, calls the primary tool of tactics, commonly known as a soldier. My pupil, M. Roux, is a warrior, and having a high-bred soul, he feels the honour of the position. Truth to tell, it is an honour which he shares at this identical moment with all the young men of haughty Europe. Your Neapolitans, too, rejoice in it, since they became part of a great nation.”

“Without wishing in any way to show disloyalty to the house of Savoy, to which I am genuinely attached,” said the captain, “I feel that military service and taxation weigh so heavily on the Neapolitans as to make them sometimes regret the happy days of King Bomba and the pleasure of living ingloriously under an easy-going government. Neither tax nor conscription is popular with the Neapolitan. What is wanted is that statesmen should really open their eyes to the necessities of national life. But, as you know, I have always been an opponent of megalomaniac politics and have always deplored those great armaments which hinder all progress in Europe, whether it be intellectual, moral, or material. It is a great, a ruinous folly which can only culminate in farce.”

“I foresee no end to it at all,” replied M. Bergeret. “No one wishes it to end save certain thinkers who have no means of making their ideas known. The rulers of states cannot desire disarmament, for such a movement would render their position difficult and precarious and would take an admirable tool of empire out of their hands. For armed nations meekly submit to government. Military discipline shapes them to obedience, and in a nation so disciplined, neither insurrections, nor riots, nor tumults of any kind need be feared. When military service is obligatory upon all, when all the citizens either are, or have been, soldiers, then all the forces of social life are so calculated as to support power, or even the lack of it. This fact the history of France can prove.” Just as M. Bergeret reached this point in his political reflections, from the kitchen close by there burst out the noise of grease pouring over on the fire; from this the professor inferred that the youthful Euphémie, according to her usual practice on gala days, had upset her saucepan on the stove, after rashly balancing it on a pyramid of coal. He had learnt by now that such an event must recur again and again with the inexorable certainty of the laws that govern the universe. A shocking smell of burnt meat filled the study, while M. Bergeret traced the course of his ideas as follows:

“Had not Europe,” said he, “been turned into a barrack, we should have seen insurrections bursting out in France, Germany, or Italy, as they did in former times. But nowadays those obscure forces which from time to time uplift the very pavements of our city find regular vent in the fatigue duty of barrack-yards, in the grooming of horses and the sentiment of patriotism.

“The rank of corporal supplies an admirable outlet for the energies of young heroes who, had they been left in freedom, would have been building barricades to keep their arms lissom. I have only this moment been told of the sublime speeches made by a certain Sergeant Lebrec. Were he dressed in the peasant’s blouse this hero would be thirsting for liberty, but clad in a uniform, it is tyranny for which he yearns, and to help in the maintenance of order the thing for which

he craves. In armed nations it is easy enough to preserve internal peace, and you will notice that, although in the course of the last twenty-five years, Paris has been a little agitated on one occasion, it was only when the commotion was the work of a War Minister. That is, a general was able to do what a demagogue could not have done. And the moment this general lost his hold on the army, he also lost it on the nation, and his power was gone. Therefore, whether the State be a monarchy, an empire, or a republic, its rulers have an interest in keeping up obligatory military service for all, in order that they may command an army, instead of governing a nation.

“And, while the rulers have no desire for disarmament, the people have lost all wish for it, too. The masses endure military service quite willingly, for, without being exactly pleasurable, it gives an outlet to the rough, crude instincts of the majority and presents itself as the simplest, roughest and strongest expression of their sense of duty. It overawes them by the gorgeous splendour of its outward paraphernalia and by the amount of metal used in it. In short, it exalts them through the only ideals of power, of grandeur and of glory, which they are capable of conceiving. Often the rush into it with a song; if not, they are perforce driven to it. For these reasons I foresee no termination to this honourable calling which is brutalising and impoverishing Europe.”

“There are,” said Captain Aspertini, “two ways out of it: war and bankruptcy.”

“War!” exclaimed M. Bergeret. “It is patent that great armaments only hinder that by aggravating the horrors of it and rendering it of doubtful issue for both combatants. As for bankruptcy, I foretold it the other day to Abbé Lantaigne, the principal of our high seminary, as we sat on a bench on the Mall. But you need not pin your faith on me. You have studied the history of the Lower Empire too deeply, my dear Aspertini, not to be perfectly aware that, in questions of national finance, there are mysterious resources which escape the scrutiny of political economists. A ruined nation may exist for five hundred years on robbery and extortion, and how is one to guess what a great people, out of its poverty, will manage to supply to its defenders in the way of cannon, muskets, bad bread, bad shoes, straw and oats?”

“This argument sounds plausible enough,” answered Aspertini. “Yet, with all due deference to your opinion, I believe I can already discern the dawn of universal peace,”

Then, in a sing-song voice, the kindly Neapolitan began to describe his hopes and dreams for the future, to the accompaniment of the heavy thumping of the chopper with which the youthful Euphémie was preparing a mince for M. Roux on the kitchen table just the other side of the wall.

“Do you remember, Monsieur Bergeret,” said Captain Aspertini, “the place in *Don Quixote* where Sancho complains of being obliged to endure a never-ending series of misfortunes and the ready-witted knight tells him that this protracted wretchedness is merely a sign that happiness is at hand? ‘For,’ says he, ‘fortune is a fickle jade and our troubles have already lasted so long that they must soon give place to good-luck.’ The law of change alone...”

The rest of these optimistic utterances was lost in the boiling over of the kettle of water, followed by the unearthly yells of Euphémie, as she fled in terror from her stove.

Then M. Bergeret’s mind, saddened by the sordid ugliness of his cramped life, fell to dreaming of a villa where, on white terraces overlooking the blue waters of a lake, he might hold peaceful converse with M. Roux and Captain Aspertini, amid the scent of myrtles, when the amorous moon rides high in a sky as clear as the glance of a god and as sweet as the breath of a goddess.

But he soon emerged from this dream and began once more to take part in the discussion.

“The results of war,” said he, “are quite incalculable. My good friend William Harrison writes to me that French scholarship has been despised in England since 1871, and that at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin it is the fashion to ignore Maurice Raynouard’s textbook of archaeology, though it would be more helpful to their students than any other similar work. But they refuse to learn from the vanquished. — And in order that they may feel confidence in a professor when he speaks on the characteristics of the art of *Ægina* or on the origins of Greek pottery, it is considered necessary that he should belong to a nation which excels in the casting of cannon. Because Marshal Mac-Mahon was beaten in 1870 at Sedan and General Chanzy lost his army at the Maine in the same year, my colleague Maurice Raynouard is banished from Oxford in 1897. Such are the results of military inferiority, slow-moving and illogical, yet sure in their effects. And it is, alas, only too true that the fate of the Muses is settled by a sword-thrust.”

“My dear sir,” said Aspertini, “I am going to answer you with all the frankness permissible in a friend. Let us first grant that French thought circulates freely through the world, as it has always done. And although the archaeological manual of your learned countryman Maurice Raynouard may not have found a place on the desks of the English Universities, yet your plays are acted in all the theatres of the world; the novels of Alphonse Daudet and of Emile Zola are translated into every language; the canvases of your painters adorn the galleries of two worlds; the achievements of your scientists win renown in every quarter of the globe. And if your soul no longer thrills the soul of the nations, if your

voice no longer quickens the heart-beats of mankind, it is because you no longer choose to play the part of apostles of brotherhood and justice, it is because you no longer utter the holy words that bring strength and consolation; it is because France is no longer the lover of the human race, the comrade of the nations; it is because she no longer opens her hands to fling broadcast those seeds of liberty which once she scattered in such generous and sovereign fashion that for long years it seemed that every beautiful human idea was a French idea; it is because she is no longer the France of the philosophers and of the Revolution: in the garrets round the Panthéon and the Luxembourg there are no longer to be found young leaders, writing on deal tables night after night, with all the fire of youth, those pages which make the nations tremble and the despots grow pale with fear. Do not then complain that the glory which you cannot view without misgivings has passed away.

“Especially, do not say that your defeats are the sources of your misfortunes: say, rather, that they are the outcome of your faults. A nation suffers no more injury from a battle lost than a robust man suffers from a sword-scratch received in a duel. It is an injury that only produces a transient illness in the system, a perfectly curable weakness. To cure it, all that is needed is a little courage, skill and political good sense. The first act of policy, the most necessary and certainly the easiest, is to make the defeat yield all the military glory it is capable of producing. For in the true view of things, the glory of the vanquished equals that of the conquerors, and it is, in addition, the more moving spectacle. In order to make the best of a disaster it is desirable to fête the general and the army which has sustained it, and to blazon abroad all the beautiful incidents which prove the moral superiority of misfortune. Such incidents are to be found even in the most headlong retreats. From the very first moment, then, the defeated side ought to decorate, to embellish, to gild their defeat, and to distinguish it with unmistakably grand and beautiful symbols. In Livy it may be read how the Romans never failed to do this, and how they hung palms and wreaths on the swords broken at the battles of the Trebbia, of Trasimene and of Cannae. Even the disastrous inaction of Fabius has been so extolled by them that, after the lapse of twenty-two centuries, we still stand amazed at the wisdom of the Cunctator, the Lingerer, as he was nicknamed. Yet, after all, he was nothing but an old fool. In this lies the great art of defeat.”

“It is by no means a lost art,” said M. Bergeret. “In our own days Italy showed that she knew how to practise it after Novara, after Lissa, after Adowa.”

“My dear sir,” said Captain Aspertini, “whenever an Italian army capitulates, we rightly reckon this capitulation glorious. A government which succeeds in throwing a glamour of poetry over a defeat rouses the spirit of patriotism within

the country and at the same time makes itself interesting in the eyes of foreigners. And to bring about these two results is a fairly considerable achievement. In the year 1870 it rested entirely with you Frenchmen to produce them for yourselves. After Sedan, had the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, and all the State officials publicly and unanimously congratulated the Emperor Napoleon and Marshal Mac-Mahon on not having despaired of the salvation of their country when they gave battle to the enemy, do you not think that France would have gained a radiant halo of glory from the defeat of its army? At the same time it would have given forcible expression of its will to conquer. And pray believe, dear Monsieur Bergeret, that I am not impertinent enough to be trying to give your country lessons in patriotism. In doing that, I should be putting myself in a wrong position. I am merely presenting you with some of the marginal notes that will be found, after my death, pencilled in my copy of Livy."

"It is not the first time," said M. Bergeret, "that the commentary on the Decades has been worth more than the text. But go on."

With a smile Captain Aspertini once more took up the thread of his argument.

"The wisest thing for the country to do is to cast huge handfuls of lilies over the wounds of war. Then, skilfully and silently, with a swift glance, she will examine the wound. If the blow has been a knock-down one, and if the strength of the country is seriously impaired, she will instantly start negotiating. In treating, with the victorious side, it will be found that the earliest moment is the most propitious. In the first surprise of triumph, the enemy welcomes with joy any proposal which tends to turn a favourable beginning into a definite advantage. He has not yet had time for repeated successes to go to his head, nor for long-continued resistance to drive him to rage. He will not demand huge damages for an injury that is still trifling, nor, as yet, have his budding aspirations had time to grow. It is possible that even under these circumstances he may not grant you peace on easy terms. But you are sure to have to pay dearer for it, if you delay in applying for it. The wisest policy is to open negotiations before one has revealed all one's weakness. It is possible then to obtain easy terms, which are usually rendered easier still by the intervention of neutral powers. As for seeking safety in despair and only making peace after a victory, these ideas are doubtless fine enough as maxims, but very difficult to carry out at a time when, for one thing, the industrial and commercial needs of modern life, and for another, the immense size of the armies which have to be equipped and fed, do not permit an indefinite continuance of warfare, and consequently do not leave the weaker side enough time to straighten out its affairs. France in 1870 was inspired by the noblest of sentiments, but if she had acted in accordance with reason, she would have started negotiations immediately after her first

reverses, honourable as they were. She had a government which could have undertaken the task, and which ought to have done so, a government which was, indeed, in a better position for bringing it to a successful issue than any that might follow. The sensible thing to have done would have been to exact this last service from it before getting rid of it altogether. Instead, they acted the wrong way about. After having maintained that government for twenty years, France conceived the ill-considered notion of overturning it just at the very moment when it ought to have been useful to her, and of substituting another government for it. This administration, not being jointly liable with the former one, had to begin the war over again, without, however, bringing any new strength to its prosecution. After that a third government tried to establish itself.

“If it had succeeded, the war would have begun again a third time, because the first two unfortunate attempts did not count. Honour, say you, must be satisfied. But you had given satisfaction with your blood to two honours: the honour of the Empire, as well as of the Republic; you were also ready to satisfy a third, the honour of the Commune. Yet it seems to me that even the proudest nation in the world has but one honour to satisfy. You were thrown by this excess of generosity into a state of great weakness from which you are now happily recovering...

“In fact,” said M. Bergeret, “if Italy had been beaten at Weissenburg and at Reichshoffen, these defeats would have been as valuable to her as the whole of Belgium. But we are a people of heroes, who always fancy that we have been betrayed. That sums up our history. Take note also of the fact that we are a democracy; and that is the state in which negotiations present most difficulties. Nobody can, however, deny that we made a long and courageous stand. Moreover, we have a reputation for magnanimity, and I believe we deserve it. Anyhow, the feats of the human race have always been but melancholy farces, and the historians who pretend to discover any sequence in the flow of events are merely great rhetoricians. Bossuet..

Just as M. Bergeret was uttering this name the study door opened with such a crash that the wicker-work woman was upheaved by it and fell at the feet of the astonished young soldier. Then there appeared in the doorway a ruddy, squinteyed wench, with no forehead worth mentioning. Her sturdy ugliness shone with the glow of youth and health. Her round cheeks and bare arms were a fine military red. Planting herself in front of M. Bergeret, she brandished the coal-shovel and shouted:

“I’m off!”

Euphémie, having quarrelled with Madame Bergeret, was now giving notice. She repeated:

“I’m going off home!”

Said M. Bergeret:

“Then go quietly, my child.”

Again and again she shouted:

“I’m off! Madame wants to turn me into a regular beast of burden.”

Then, lowering her shovel, she added in lower tones:

“Besides, things are always happening here that I would rather not see.”

Without attempting to unravel the mystery of these words, M. Bergeret merely remarked that he would not delay her, and that she could go.

“Well, then, give me my wages.”

“Leave the room,” answered M. Bergeret. “Don’t you see that I have something to do besides settling with you? Go and wait elsewhere.”

But Euphémie, once more waving the dull, heavy shovel, yelled:

“Give me my money! My wages! I want my wages!”

II

AT six o'clock in the evening Abbé Guitrel got out of the train in Paris and called a cab in the station-yard. Then, driving in the dusk through the murky, rain-swept streets, dotted with lights, he made for Number 5, Rue des Boulangers. There, in a narrow, rugged, hilly street, above the coopers and the cork-dealers, and amidst a smell of casks, lived his old friend Abbé Le Génil, chaplain to the Convent of the Seven Wounds, who was a popular Lenten preacher in one of the most fashionable parishes in Paris. Here Abbé Guitrel was in the habit of putting up, whenever he visited Paris in the hope of expediting the progress of his tardy fortunes. All day long the soles of his buckled shoes tapped discreetly upon the pavements, staircases and floors of all sorts of different houses. In the evening he supped with M. Le Génil. The two old comrades from the seminary spun each other merry yarns, chatted over the rates charged for mass and sermon, and played their game of manille. At ten o'clock Nanette, the maid, rolled into the dining-room an iron bedstead for M. Guitrel, who always gave her when he left the same tip — a brand-new twenty-sou piece.

On this occasion, as in the past, M. Le Génil, who was a tall, stout man, smacked his great hand down on Guitrel's flinching shoulder, and rumbling out a good-day in his deep organ note, instantly challenged him in his usual jolly style:

"Well, old miser, have you brought me twelve dozen masses at a crown each, or are you, as usual, going to keep to yourself the gold that your pious provincials swamp you with?"

Being a poor man, and knowing that Guitrel was as poor as himself, he regarded this sort of talk as a good jest.

Guitrel went so far as to understand a joke, though, being of a gloomy temperament, he never jested himself. He had, he explained, been obliged to come to Paris to carry out several commissions with which he had been charged, more especially the purchase of books. Would his friend, then, put him up for a day or two, three at the most?

"Now do tell the truth for once in your life!" answered M. Le Génil. "You have just come up to smell out a mitre, you old fox! To-morrow morning you will be showing yourself to the nuncio with a sanctimonious expression. Guitrel, you are going to be a bishop!"

Hereupon the chaplain of the Convent of the Seven Wounds, the preacher at the church of Sainte-Louise, made a bow to the future bishop. Mingled with his

ironic courtesy there was, perhaps, a certain strain of instinctive deference. Then once more his face fell into the harsh lines that revealed the temperament of a second Olivier Maillard. (An eccentric priest of the fifteenth century. His sermons were full of denunciations against his enemies. He once attacked Louis XI, who threatened to throw him into the Seine. Maillard replied: "The King is master, but tell him that I shall get to heaven by water sooner than he will by his post-horses.")

"Come in, then! Will you take some refreshment?"

M. Guitrel was a reserved man, whose compressed lips showed his determination not to be pumped. As a matter of fact, it was quite true that he had come up to enlist powerful influence in support of his candidature, but he had no wish to explain all his wily courses to this naturally frank friend of his. For M. Le Génil made, not only a virtue of his natural frankness, but even a policy.

M. Guitrel stammered:

"Don't imagine... dismiss this notion that..

M. Le Génil shrugged his shoulders, exclaiming, "You old mystery-monger!"

Then, conducting his friend to his bedroom, he sat down once more beneath the light of his lamp and resumed his interrupted task, which was that of mending his breeches.

M. Le Génil, popular preacher as he was both in Paris and Versailles, did his own mending, partly to save his old servant the trouble and partly because he was fond of handling a needle, a taste he had acquired during the years of grinding poverty that he had endured when he first entered the Church. And now this giant with lungs of brass, who fulminated against atheists from the elevation of a pulpit, was meekly sitting on a rush-bottomed chair, occupied in drawing a needle in and out with his huge red hands. In the midst of his task he raised his head and glancing shyly towards Guitrel with his big, kindly eyes, exclaimed:

"We'll have a game of manille to-night, you old trickster."

But Guitrel, hesitating, yet firm, stammered out that he would be obliged to go out after dinner. He was full of plans, and after pushing on the preparations for a meal, he gobbled down his food, to the great disgust of his host, who was not only a great eater, but a great talker. He refused to wait for dessert, but, retiring to another room, shut himself in, drew a layman's suit from his portmanteau and put it on.

When he appeared again, his friend saw that he was dressed in a long, severe, black frock-coat, which seemed to have the drollery of a disguise. With his head crowned by a rusty opera-hat of prodigious height, he hastily gulped down his coffee, mumbled a grace and slipped out. Leaning over the stair-rail, Abbé Le Génil shouted to him:

“Don’t ring when you come in, or you’ll wake Nanette. You’ll find the key under the mat. One moment, Guitrel, I know where you’re going. You old Quintilian, you, you’re just going to take an elocution lesson.”

Through the damp fog, Abbé Guitrel followed the quays along by the river, passed the bridge of Saint-Pères, crossed the Place du Carrousel, unnoticed by the indifferent passers-by, who scarcely took the trouble even to glance at his huge hat. Finally he halted under the Tuscan porch of the Comédie-Française. He carefully read the playbill in order to make sure that the arrangements had not been changed, and that *Andromaque* and the *Malade Imaginaire* would be presented. Then he asked at the second pay-box for a pit ticket.

The narrow seats behind the empty stalls were already almost filled when he sat down and opened an old newspaper, not to read, but to keep himself in countenance, while he listened to the talk going on around him. He had a quick ear, and it was always by the ear that he observed, just as M. Worms-Clavelin listened with his mouth. His neighbours were shop-hands and artists’ assistants who had obtained seats through friendship with a scene-shifter or a dresser. It is a little world of simple-minded folk, keenly bent on sight-seeing, very well satisfied with themselves, and busied with bets and bicycles. The younger members are peaceful enough in reality, although they assume a jaunty military air, being automatically democratic and republican, but conservative in their jokes about the President of the Republic. As Abbé Guitrel caught the words that flew hither and thither all round him, words which revealed this frame of mind, he thought of the fancies cherished by Abbé Lantaigne, who still dreamt, in his hermitlike seclusion, of bringing such a class as this back to obedience to monarchy and priestcraft. Behind his paper Abbé Guitrel chuckled at the idea.

“These Parisians,” thought he, “are the most adaptable people in the world. To the provincial mind they are quite incomprehensible, but would to God that the republicans and freethinkers of the diocese of Tourcoing were cut out on the same model! But the spirit of Northern France is as bitter as the wild hops of its plains. And in my diocese I shall find myself placed with violent Socialists on one side and fervid Catholics on the other.”

He foresaw the trials that awaited him in the see once held by the blessed Loup, and so far was he from shrinking at the contemplation of them, that he invoked them on himself, with an accompaniment of such loud sighs that his neighbour looked at him to see if he were ill. Thus Abbé Guitrel’s head seethed with fancies of his bishopric amid the murmur of frivolous chatter, the banging of doors and the restless movements of the work-girls.

But when at the signal the curtain slowly rose, he instantly became absorbed in the play. It was the delivery and the gestures of the actors on which his

attention was riveted. He studied the notes of their voices, their gait, the play of their features, with all the intent interest of an experienced preacher who would fain learn the secret of noble gesture and pathetic intonation. Whenever a long speech echoed through the theatre, he redoubled his attention and only longed to be listening to Corneille, whose speeches are longer, who is more fond of oratorical effects and more skilful in emphasising the separate points of a speech.

At the moment when the actor who played Orestes was reciting the great classic harangue "*Avant que tous les Grecs ...*" the professor of sacred elocution set himself to store up in his mind every attitude and intonation. Abbé Le Génil knew his old friend well; he was perfectly aware that the crafty preacher was in the habit of going to the theatre to learn the tricks of oratory.

To the actresses M. Guitrel paid far less attention. He held women in contempt, which fact by no means implies that his thoughts had always been chaste. Priest as he was, he had in his time known the promptings of the flesh. Heaven only knows how often he had dodged, evaded or transgressed the seventh commandment! And one had better ask no questions as to the kind of women who also knew this about him. *Si iniquitates observaverts, Domine , Domine quis sustinebit?* But he was a priest, and had the priestly horror of the woman's body. Even the perfume of long hair was abhorrent to him, and when his neighbour, a young shop-assistant, began to extol the beautiful arms of a famous actress, he replied by a contemptuous sneer that was by no means hypocritical.

However, he remained full of interest right up to the final fall of the curtain, as he saw himself in fancy transferring the passion of Orestes, as rendered by an expert interpreter, into some sermon on the torments of the damned or the miserable end of the sinner. He was troubled by a provincial accent which spoilt his delivery, and between the acts he sat busily trying to correct it in his mind, modelling his correction on what he had just heard. "The voice of a bishop of Tourcoing," thought he, "ought not to savour of the roughness of the cheap wines of our hills of the Midlands."

He was immensely tickled by the play of Molière with which the performance concluded. Incapable of seeing the humorous side of things for himself, he was very pleased when anyone else pointed them out to him. An absurd physical mishap filled him with infinite joy and he laughed heartily at the grosser scenes.

In the middle of the last act he drew a roll of bread from his pocket and swallowed it morsel by morsel, keeping his hand over his mouth as he ate, and watching carefully lest he should be caught in this light repast by the stroke of

midnight; for next morning he was to say Mass in the chapel of the Convent of the Seven Wounds.

He returned home after the play by way of the deserted quays, which he crossed with his short, tapping steps. The hollow moan of the river alone filled the silence, as M. Guitrel walked along through the midst of a reddish fog which doubled the size of everything and made his hat look an absurd height in the dimness. As he stole by, close to the dripping walls of the ancient Hôtel-Dieu, a bare-headed woman came limping forward to meet him. She was a fat, ugly creature, no longer young, and her white chemise barely covered her bosom. Coming abreast of him, she seized the tail of his coat and made proposals to him. Then suddenly, even before he had time to free himself, she rushed away, crying:

“A priest! What ill luck! Plague take it! What misfortune is coming to me?”

M. Guitrel was aware that some ignorant women still cherish the superstition that it is unlucky to meet a priest; but he was surprised that this woman should have recognised his profession even in the dress of a layman.

“That’s the penalty of the unfrocked,” thought he. “The priest, which still lives in him, will always peep out. *Tu es sacerdos in aeternum*, Guitrel.”

III

BLOWN by the north wind over the hard, white ground along with a whirl of dead leaves, M. Bergeret crossed the Mall between the leafless elms and began to climb Duroc Hill. His footsteps echoed on the uneven pavements as he walked towards the louring, smoky sky which painted a barrier of violet across the horizon; to the right he left the farrier's forge and the front of a dairy decorated with a picture of two red cows, to the left stretched the long, low walls of market-gardens. He had that morning prepared his tenth and last lesson on the eighth book of the *Æneid*, and now he was mechanically turning over in his mind the points in metre and grammar which had particularly caught his notice. Guiding the rhythm of his thoughts by the beat of his footsteps, at regular intervals he repeated to himself the rhythmic words: *Patrio vocat agmina sistro* But every now and then his keen, versatile mind flitted away to critical appreciation of a wider range.

The martial rhetoric of this eighth book annoyed him, and it seemed to him absurd that Venus should give Æneas a shield embossed with pictures of the scenes of Roman history up to the battle of Actium and the flight of Cleopatra. *Patrio vocat agmina sistro*. Having reached the cross-roads at the Bergères, which give toward Duroc Hill, he paused for a moment before the wine-coloured front of Maillard's tavern, now damp, deserted and shuttered. Here the thought occurred to him that these Romans, although he had devoted his whole life to the study of them, were, after all, but terrors of pomposity and mediocrity. As he grew older and his taste became more mellowed, there was scarcely one of them that he prized, save Catullus and Petronius. But, after all, it was his business to make the best of the lot to which fate had called him. *Patrio vocat agmina sistro*. Would Virgil and Propertius try to make one believe, said he to himself, that the timbrel, whose shrill sound accompanied the frenzied religious dances of the priests, was also the instrument of the Egyptian soldiers and sailors? It was really incredible.

As he descended the street of the Bergères, on the side opposite Duroc Hill, he suddenly noticed the mildness of the air. Just here the road winds downward between walls of limestone, where the roots of tiny oak-trees find a difficult foothold. Here M. Bergeret was sheltered from the wind, and in the eye of the December sun which filtered down on him in a half-hearted, rayless fashion, he still murmured, but more softly: *Patrio vocat agmina sistro*. Doubtless Cleopatra

had fled from Actium to Egypt, but still it was through the fleet of Octavius and Agrippa which tried to stop her passage.

Allured by the sweetness of air and sun, M. Bergeret sat down by the side of the road, on one of the blocks which had been quarried out of the mountain years ago, and which were now covered with a coating of black moss. Through the delicate tracery of the branches overhead he noticed the lilac hue of the sky, streaked here and there with smoke trails. Thus to plunge in lonely reverie filled his soul with peaceful sadness.

In attacking Agrippa's galleys which blocked their way, he reflected, Antony and Cleopatra had but one object, and that was to clear a passage. It was this precise feat that Cleopatra, who raised the blockade of her sixty ships, succeeded in accomplishing. Seated in the cutting, M. Bergeret enjoyed the harmless elation of settling the fate of the world on the far-famed waves of Acarnania. Then, as he happened to throw a glance three paces in front of him, he caught sight of an old man who was sitting on a heap of dead leaves on the other side of the road and leaning against the grey wall. It was scarcely possible to distinguish between this wild figure and its surroundings, for his face, his beard and his rags were exactly the colour of the stones and the leaves. He was slowly scraping a piece of wood with an old knife-blade ground thin on the millstone of the years.

"Good-day to you, sir," said the old fellow. "The sun is pretty. And I'll tell you what's more — it isn't going to rain."

M. Bergeret recognised the man: it was Pied d'Alouette, the tramp whom M. Roquincourt, the magistrate, had wrongly implicated in the murder that took place in Queen Marguerite's house and whom he had imprisoned for six months in the vague hope that unforeseen charges would be laid at his door. This he did, either because he thought that the longer the imprisonment continued the more justifiable it would seem, or merely through spite against a simpleton who had misled the officers of the law. M. Bergeret, who always had a fellow-feeling for the oppressed, answered Pied d'Alouette in a kindly style that reflected the old fellow's good-will.

"Good-day, friend," said he. "I see that you know all the pleasant nooks. This hillside is warm and well sheltered."

There was a moment's silence, and then Pied d'Alouette answered:

"I know better spots than this. But they are far away from here. One mustn't be afraid of a walk. Feet are all right. Shoes aren't. I can't wear good shoes because they're strange to my feet. I only rip them up, when they give me sound ones."

And raising his foot from the cushion of dead leaves, he pointed to his big toe sticking out, wrapped in wads of linen, through the slits in the leather of his boot.

Relapsing into silence once more, he began to polish the piece of hard wood. M. Bergeret soon returned to his own thoughts.

Pallentem morte futura . Agrippa's galleys could not bar the way to Antony's purple-sailed trireme. This time, at least, the dove escaped the vulture.

But hereupon Pied d'Alouette began again:

"They have taken away my knife!"

"Who have?"

Lifting his arm, the tramp waved it in the direction of the town and gave no other answer. Yet he was following the course of his own slow thought, for presently he said:

"They never gave it back to me."

He sat on in solemn silence, powerless to express the ideas that revolved in his darkened mind. His knife and his pipe were the only possessions he had in the world. It was with his knife that he cut the lump of hard bread and the bacon rind they gave him at farm-house doors, food which his toothless gums would not bite; it was with his knife that he chopped up cigar-ends to stuff them into his pipe; it was with his knife that he scraped out the rotten bits in fruit and with it he managed to drag out from the dung-heaps things good to eat. It was with his knife that he shaped his walking-sticks and cut down branches to make a bed of leaves for himself in the woods at night. With his knife he carved boats out of oak-bark for the little boys, and dolls out of deal for the little girls. His knife was the tool with which he practised all the arts of life, the most skilled, as well as the most homely, everyday ones. Always famished and often full of ingenuity, he not only supplied his own wants, but also made dainty reed fountains which were much admired in the town.

For, although the man would not work, he was yet a jack of all trades. When he came out of prison nothing would induce them to restore his knife to him; they kept it in the record office. And so he went on tramp once more, but now weaponless, stripped, weaker than a child, wretched wherever he went. He wept over his loss: tiny tear-drops came, that scorched his bloodshot eyes without overflowing. Then, as he went out of the town, his courage returned, for in the corner of a milestone he came upon an old knife-blade. Now he had cut a strong beechen handle for it in the woods of the Bergères, and was fitting it on with skilful hands.

The idea of his knife suggested his pipe to him. He said:

"They let me keep my pipe."

Drawing from the woollen bag which he wore against his breast, a kind of black, sticky thimble, he showed the bowl of a pipe without the fragment of a stem.

“My poor fellow,” said M. Bergeret, “you don’t look at all like a great criminal. How do you manage to get put in gaol so often?”

Pied d’Alouette had not acquired the dialogue habit and he had no notion of how to carry on a conversation. Although he had a kind of deep intelligence, it took him some time to grasp the sense of the words addressed to him. It was practice that he lacked and at first, therefore, he made no attempt to answer M. Bergeret, who sat tracing lines with the point of his stick in the white dust of the road. But at last Pied d’Alouette said: “I don’t do any wrong things. Then I am punished for other things.”

At length he seemed able to talk connectedly, with but few breaks.

“Do you mean to say that they put you in prison for doing nothing wrong?”

“I know the people who do the wrong things, but I should do myself harm if I blabbed.”

“You herd, then, with vagabonds and evildoers?”

“You are trying to make me peach. Do you know Judge Roquincourt?”

“I know him a little. He’s rather stern, isn’t he?”

“Judge Roquincourt, he is a good talker. I never heard anyone speak so well and so quickly. A body hasn’t time to understand him. A body can’t answer. There isn’t anybody who speaks one half as well.”

“He kept you in solitary confinement for long months and yet you bear him no grudge. What a humble example of mercy and long-suffering.”

Pied d’Alouette resumed the polishing of his knife-handle. As the work progressed, he became quieter and seemed to recover his peace of mind. Suddenly he demanded:

“Do you know a man called Corbon?”

“Who is he, this Corbon?”

It was too difficult to explain. Pied d’Alouette waved his arm in a vague semicircle that covered a quarter of the horizon. Yet his mind was busy with the man he had just mentioned, for again he repeated: “Corbon.”

“Pied d’ Alouette,” said M. Bergeret, “they say you are a queer sort of vagabond and that, even when you are in absolute want, you never steal anything. Yet you live with evildoers and you are the friend of murderers.”

Pied d’ Alouette answered:

“There are some who think one thing and others who think another. But if I myself thought of doing wrong, I should dig a hole under a tree on Duroc Hill and bury my knife at the bottom of the hole. Then I should pound down the earth on top of it with my feet. For when people have the notion of doing wrong, it’s the knife that leads them on. It’s also pride which leads them on. As for me, I

lost my pride when I was a lad, for men, women and children in my own parts all made fun of me.”

“And have you never had wicked, violent thoughts?”

“Sometimes, when I came upon women alone on the roads, for the fancy I had for them. But that’s all over now.”

“And that fancy never comes back to you?”

“Time and again it does.”

“Pied d’Alouette, you love liberty and you are free. You live without toil. I call you a happy man.”

“There are some happy folks. But not me.”

“Where are these happy folks, then?”

“At the farms.”

M. Bergeret rose and slipping a ten-sou piece into Pied d’Alouette’s hand, said:

“So you fancy, Pied d’Alouette, that happiness is to be found under a roof, by the chimney-corner, or on a feather-bed. I thought you had more sense.

IV

ON New Year's Day M. Bergeret was always in the habit of dressing himself in his black suit the first thing in the morning. Nowadays, it had lost all its gloss and the grey wintry light made it look ashen-colour. The gold medal that hung from M. Bergeret's buttonhole by a violet riband, although it gave him a false air of splendour, testified clearly to the fact that he was no Knight of the Legion of Honour. In fact, in this dress he always felt strangely thin and poverty-stricken. Even his white tie seemed to his fancy a wretchedly paltry affair, for to tell the truth, it was not even a fresh one. At length, after vainly crumpling the front of his shirt, he recognised the fact that it is impossible to make mother-of-pearl buttons stay in buttonholes that have been stretched by long wear: at the thought he became utterly disconsolate, for he recognised the fact sorrowfully that he was no man of the world. And sitting down on a chair, he fell into a reverie: "But, after all, does there in truth exist a world populated by men of the world? For it seems to me, indeed, that what is commonly called the world is but a cloud of gold and silver hung in the blue of heaven. To the man who has actually entered it, it seems but a mist. In fact, social distinctions are matters of much confusion. Men are drawn together in flocks by their common prejudices or their common tastes. But tastes often war against prejudices, and chance sets everything at variance. All the same, a large income and the leisure given by it tend to produce a certain style of life and special habits. This fact is the bond which links society people, and this kinship produces a certain standard which rules manners, physique and sport. Hence we derive the 'tone' of society. This 'tone' is purely superficial and for that very reason fairly perceptible. There are such things as society manners and appearances, but there is no such thing as society human nature, for what truly decides our character is passion, thought and feeling. Within us is a tribunal with which the world has no concern."

Still, the wretched look of his shirt and tie continued to harass him, till at last he went to look at himself in the sitting-room mirror. Somehow his face assumed a far-off appearance in the glass, quite obscured as it was by an immense basket of heather festooned with ribands of red satin. The basket was of wicker, in the shape of a chariot with gilded wheels, and stood on the piano between two bags of *marrons glacés*. To its gilded shaft was affixed M. Roux's card, for the basket was a present from him to Madame Bergeret.

The professor made no attempt to push aside the beribboned tufts of heather; he was satisfied with catching a glimpse of his left eye in the glass behind the

flowers, and he continued to gaze at it benevolently for some little time. M. Bergeret, firmly convinced as he was that no one loved him, either in this world or in any other, sometimes treated himself to a little sympathy and pity. For he always behaved with the greatest consideration to all unhappy people, himself included. Now, dropping further consideration of his shirt and tie, he murmured to himself: "You interpret the bosses on the shield of Æneas and yet your own tie is crumpled. You are ridiculous on both counts. You are no man of the world. You should teach yourself, then, at least, how to live the inner life and should cultivate within yourself a wealthy kingdom."

On New Year's Day he had always grounds for bewailing his destiny, before he set out to pay his respects to two vulgar, offensive fellows, for such were the rector and the dean. The rector, M. Leterrier, could not bear him. This feeling was a natural antipathy that grew as regularly as a plant and brought forth fruit every year. M. Leterrier, a professor of philosophy and the author of a text-book which summed up all systems of thought, had the blind dogmatic instincts of the official teacher. No doubt whatever remained in his mind touching the questions of the good, the beautiful and the true, the characteristics of which he had summarised in one chapter of his work (pages 216 to 262). Now he regarded M. Bergeret as a dangerous and misguided man, and M. Bergeret, in his turn, fully appreciated the perfect sincerity of the dislike he aroused in M. Leterrier. Nor, in fact, did he make any complaint against it; sometimes he even treated it with an indulgent smile. On the other hand, he felt abjectly miserable whenever he met the dean, M. Torquet, who never had an idea in his head, and who, although he was crammed with learning, still retained the brain of a positive ignoramus. He was a fat man with a low forehead and no cranium to speak of, who did nothing all day but count the knobs of sugar in his house and the pears in his garden, and who would go on hanging bells, even when one of his professional colleagues paid him a visit. In doing mischief he showed an activity and a something approaching intelligence which filled M. Bergeret with amazement. Such thoughts as these were in the professor's mind, as he put on his overcoat to go and wish M. Torquet a happy New Year.

Yet he took a certain pleasure in being out of doors, for in the street he could enjoy that most priceless blessing, the liberty of the mind. In front of the Two Satyrs at the corner of the Tintelleries, he paused for a moment to give a friendly glance at the little acacia which stretched its bare branches over the wall of Lafolie's garden.

"Trees in winter," thought he, "take on an aspect of homely beauty that they never show in all the pomp of foliage and flowers. It is in winter that they reveal their delicate structure, that they show their charming framework of black coral:

these are no skeletons, but a multitude of pretty little limbs in which life slumbers. If I were a landscape-painter..."

As he stood wrapt in these reflections, a portly man called him by name, seized his arm and walked on with him. This was M. Compagnon, the most popular of all the professors, the idolised master who gave his mathematical lectures in the great amphitheatre.

"Hullo! my dear Bergeret, happy New Year, I bet you're going to call on the dean. So am I. We'll walk on together."

"Gladly," answered M. Bergeret, "since in that way I shall travel pleasantly towards a painful goal. For I must confess it is no pleasure to me to see M. Torquet."

On hearing this uncalled-for confidence, M. Compagnon, whether instinctively or inadvertently it was hard to say, withdrew the hand which he had slipped under his colleague's arm.

"Yes, yes, I know! You and the dean don't get on very well. Yet in general he isn't a man who is difficult to get on with."

"In speaking to you as I have done," answered M. Bergeret, "I was not even thinking of the hostility which, according to report, the dean persists in keeping up towards me. But it chills me to the very marrow whenever I come in contact with a man who is totally lacking in imagination of any kind. What really saddens is not the idea of injustice and hatred, nor is it the sight of human misery. Quite the contrary, in fact, for we find the misfortunes of our fellows quite laughable, if only they are shown to us from a humorous standpoint. But those gloomy souls on whom the outer world seems to make no impression, those beings who have the faculty of ignoring the entire universe — the very sight of them reduces me to distress and desperation. My intercourse with M. Torquet is really one of the most painful misfortunes of my life."

"Just so!" said M. Compagnon. "Our college is one of the most splendid in France, on account of the high attainments of the lecturers and the convenience of the buildings. It is only the laboratories that still leave something to be desired. But let us hope that this regrettable defect will soon be remedied, thanks to the combined efforts of our devoted rector and of so influential a senator as M. Laprat-Teulet."

"It is also desirable," said M. Bergeret, "that the Latin lectures should cease to be given in a dark, unwholesome cellar."

As they crossed the Place Saint-Exupère, M. Compagnon pointed to Deniseau's house.

"We no longer," said he, "hear any chatter about the prophetess who held communion with Saint Radegonde and several other saints from Paradise. Did

you go to see her, Bergeret? I was taken to see her by Lacarelle, the *préfet's* chief secretary, just at the time when she was at the height of her popularity. She was sitting with her eyes shut in an arm-chair, while a dozen of the faithful plied her with questions. They asked her if the Pope's health was satisfactory, what would be the result of the Franco-Russian alliance, whether the income-tax bill would pass, and whether a remedy for consumption would soon be found. She answered every question poetically and with a certain ease. When my turn came, I asked her this simple question: "What is the logarithm of 9? Well, Bergeret, do you imagine that she said 0,954?"

"No, I don't," said M. Bergeret.

"She never answered a word," continued M. Compagnon; "never a word. She remained quite silent. Then I said: 'How is it that Saint Radegonde doesn't know the logarithm of 9? It is incredible!' There were present at the meeting a few retired colonels, some priests, old ladies and a few Russian doctors. They seemed thunderstruck and Lacarelle's face grew as long as a fiddle. I took to my heels amid a torrent of reproaches."

As M. Compagnon and M. Bergeret were crossing the square chatting in this way, they came upon M. Roux, who was going through the town scattering visiting-cards right and left, for he went into society a good deal.

"Here is my best pupil," said M. Bergeret.

"He looks a sturdy fellow," said M. Compagnon, who thought a great deal of physical strength. "Why the deuce does he take Latin?"

M. Bergeret was much piqued by this question and inquired whether the mathematical professor was of opinion that the study of the classics ought to be confined exclusively to the lame, the halt, the maimed and the blind.

But already M. Roux was bowing to the two professors with a flashing smile that showed his strong, white teeth. He was in capital spirits, for his happy temperament, which had enabled him to master the secret of the soldier's life, had just brought him a fresh stroke of good luck. Only that morning M. Roux had been granted a fortnight's leave that he might recover from a slight injury to the knee that was practically painless.

"Happy man!" cried M. Bergeret. "He needn't even tell a lie to reap all the benefits of deceit." Then, turning towards M. Compagnon, he remarked: "In my pupil, M. Roux, lie all the hopes of Latin verse. But, by a strange anomaly, although this young scholar scans the lines of Horace and Catullus with the utmost severity, he himself composes French verses that he never troubles to scan, verses whose irregular metre I must confess I cannot grasp. In a word, M. Roux writes *vers libres*."

“Really,” said M. Compagnon politely.

M. Bergeret, who loved acquiring information and looked indulgently on new ideas, begged M. Roux to recite his last poem, *The Metamorphosis of the Nymph*, which had not yet been given to the world.

“One moment,” said M. Compagnon. “I will walk on your left, Monsieur Roux, so that I may have my best ear towards you.”

It was settled that M. Roux should recite his poem while he walked with the two professors as far as the dean’s house on the Tournelles, for on such a gentle slope as that he would not lose his breath.

Then M. Roux began to declaim *The Metamorphosis of the Nymph* in a slow, drawling, singsong voice. In lines punctuated here and there by the rumbling of cart-wheels he recited: The snow-white nymph,

Who glides with rounded hips
Along the winding shore,
And the isle where willows grey
Girdle her waist with the belt of Eve,
In leafage of oval shape,
And palely disappears.

Then he painted a shifting kaleidoscope of: Green banks shelving down,
With the hostel of the town
And the frying of gudgeons within.
Restless, unquiet, the nymph takes to flight.

She draws near the town and there the metamorphosis takes place.

Fretted are her hips by the rough stone of the quay, Her breast is a thicket of rugged hair

And black with the coal, which mingled with sweat, Has turned the nymph to a stevedore wet.

And below is the dock
For the coke.

Next the poet sang of the river flowing through the city: And the river, from henceforth municipal and historic, And worthy of archives, of annals and records, Worthy of glory.

Deriving something solemn and even stern From the grey stone walls,

Flows under the heavy shadow of the basilica Where linger still the shades of
Eudes, of Adalberts, In the golden fringes of the past,

1 De vertes berges,

Avec l'auberge
Et les fritures de goujons.

2 La pierre du quai dur lui rabote les hanches, Sa poitrine est hérissée d'un poil rude, Et noire de charbons, que délaye la sueur, La nymphe est devenue un débardeur.

Et là-bas est le dock
Pour le coke.

Bishops who bless not the nameless dead, The nameless dead,
No longer bodies, but leather bottels,
Who will to go hence,
Along the isles in the form of boats
With, for masts, but the chimney-tops.
For the drowned will out beyond.
But pause you on the erudite parapets
Where, in boxes, lies many a fable strange, And the red-edged conjuring book
whereon the plane-tree Sheds its leaves,
Perchance there you'll discover potent words: For you're no stranger to the
value of runes Nor to the true power of signs traced on the sheets."

Et le fleuve, d'ores en avant municipal et historique, Et dignement d'archives,
d'annales, de fastes, De gloire.
Prenant du sérieux et même du morose
De pierre grise,
Se traîne sous la lourde ombre basilicale Que hantent encore des Eudes, des
Adalberts, Dans les orfrois passés,
Évêques qui ne bénissent pas les noyés anonymes, Anonymes,
Non plus des corps, mais des outres,
Qui vont outre,
Le long des îles en forme de bateaux plats Avec, pour mâtures, des tuyaux de
cheminées.
Et les noyés vont outre.
Mais arrête-toi aux parapets doctes
Où, dans les boîtes, gît mainte anecdote, Et le grimoire à tranches rouges sur
lequel le platane Fait pleuvoir ses feuilles,

U se peut que, là, tu découvres une bonne écriture: Car tu n'ignores pas la vertu des runes Ni le pouvoir des signes tracés sur les lames.

For a long, long while M. Roux traced the course of this marvellous river, nor did he finish his recital till they reached the dean's doorstep.

"That's very good," said M. Compagnon, for he had no grudge against literature, though for want of practice he could barely distinguish between a line of Racine and a line of Mallarmé.

But M. Bergeret said to himself:

"Perhaps, after all, this is a masterpiece?"

And, for fear of wronging beauty in disguise, he silently pressed the poet's hand.

V

AS he came out of the dean's house, M. Bergeret met Madame de Gromance returning from Mass. This gave him great pleasure, for he always considered that the sight of a pretty woman is a stroke of good luck when it comes in the way of an honest man, and in his eyes Madame de Gromance was a most charming woman. She alone, of all the women in the town, knew how to dress herself with the skilful art that conceals art: and he was grateful to her for this, as well as for her carriage that displayed the lissom figure and the supple hips, mere hints though they were of a beauty veiled from the sight of the humble, poverty-stricken scholar, but which could yet serve him as an apposite illustration of some line of Horace, Ovid or Martial. His heart went out towards her for her sweetness and the amorous atmosphere that floated round her. In his mind he thanked her for that heart of hers that yielded so easily; he felt it as a personal favour, although he had no hope at all of ever sunning himself in the light of her smile. Stranger as he was in aristocratic circles, he had never been in the lady's house, and it was merely by a stroke of extraordinary luck that someone introduced him to her in M. de Terremondre's box, after the procession at the Jeanne d'Arc celebrations. Moreover, being a wise man with a sense of the becoming, he did not even hope for closer acquaintance. It was enough for him to catch a chance glimpse of her fair face as he passed in the street, and to remember, whenever he saw her, the tales they told about her in Paillot's shop. Thus he owed some pleasant moments to her and accordingly felt a sort of gratitude towards her.

This New Year's morning he caught sight of her in the porch of Saint-Exupère, as she stood lifting her petticoat with one hand so as to emphasise the pliant bending of the knee, while with the other she held a great prayer-book bound in red morocco. As he gazed, he offered up a mental hymn of thanksgiving to her for thus acting as a charming fairy-tale, a source of subtle pleasure to all the town. This idea he tried to throw into his smile as he passed.

Madame de Gromance's notion of ideal womanhood was not quite the same as M. Bergeret's.

Hers was mingled with many society interests, and being of the world, she had a keen eye to worldly affairs. She was by no means ignorant of the reputation she enjoyed in the town, and hence, whenever she had no special desire to stand in anyone's good graces, she treated him with cold hauteur. Among such persons she classed M. Bergeret, whose smile seemed merely

impertinent. She replied to it, therefore, by a supercilious look which made him blush. As he continued his walk, he said to himself penitently:

“She has been a minx. But on my side, I have just made an ass of myself. I see that now; and now that it’s too late, I also see that my smile, which said ‘You are the joy of all the town,’ must have seemed an impertinence. This delicious being is no philosopher emancipated from common prejudices. Of course, she would not understand me: it would be impossible for her to see that I consider her beauty one of the prime forces of the world, and regard the use she makes of it only as a splendid sovereignty. I have been tactless and I am ashamed of it. Like all honourable people, I have sometimes transgressed a human law and yet have felt no repentance for it whatever. But certain other acts of my life, which were merely opposed to those subtle and lofty niceties that we call the conventions, have often filled me with sharp regret and even with a kind of remorse. At this moment I want to hide myself for very shame. Henceforth I shall flee whenever I see the charming vision of this lady of the supple figure, *crispum ... docta movere latus*. I have, indeed, begun the year badly!”

“A happy New Year to you,” said a voice that emerged from a beard beneath a straw hat.

It belonged to M. Mazure, the archivist to the department. Ever since the Ministry had refused him academic honours on the ground that he had no claim, and since all classes in the town steadily refused to return Madame Mazure’s calls, because she had been both cook and mistress to the two officials previously in charge of the archives, M. Mazure had been seized with a horror of all government and become disgusted with society. He lived now the life of a gloomy misanthrope.

This being a day when friendly or, at any rate, courteous visits are customary, he had put on a shabby knitted scarf, the bluish wool of which showed under his overcoat decorated with torn buttonholes: this he did to show his scorn of the human race. He had also donned a broken straw hat that his good wife, Marguerite, used to stick on a cherry tree in the garden when the cherries were ripe. He cast a pitying glance at M. Bergeret’s white tie.

“You have just bowed,” said he, “to a pretty hussy.”

It pained M. Bergeret to have to listen to such harsh and unphilosophic language. But as he could forgive a good deal to a nature warped by misanthropy, it was with gentleness that he set about reproving M. Mazure for the coarseness of his speech.

“My dear Mazure,” said he, “I expected from your wide experience a juster estimate of a lady who harms no one.”

M. Mazure answered drily that he objected to light women. From him it was by no means a sincere expression of opinion, for, strictly speaking, M. Mazure had no moral code. But he persisted in his bad temper.

“Come now,” said M. Bergeret with a smile, “I’ll tell you what is wrong with Madame de Gromance. She was born just a hundred and fifty years too late. In eighteenth-century society no man of brains would have disapproved of her.”

M. Mazure began to relent under this flattery. He was no sullen Puritan, but he respected the civil marriage, to which the statesmen of the Revolution had imparted fresh dignity. For all that, he did not deny the claim of the heart and the senses. He acknowledged that the mistress has her place in society as well as the wife.

“And, by the way, how is Madame Bergeret?” he inquired.

As the north wind whistled across the Place Saint-Exupère M. Bergeret watched M. Mazure’s nose getting redder and redder under the turned-down brim of the straw hat. His own feet and knees were frozen, and he suffered his thoughts to play round the idea of Madame de Gromance just to get a little warmth and joy into his veins.

Paillot’s shop was not open, and the two professors, thus fireless and houseless, stood looking at each other in sad sympathy.

In the depths of his friendly heart M. Bergeret thought to himself:

“As soon as I leave this fellow with his limited, boorish ideas, I shall be once more alone in the desert waste of this hateful town. It will be wretched.”

And his feet remained glued to the sharp stones of the square, whilst the wind made his ears burn. — .

“I will walk back with you as far as your door,” said the archivist of the department.

Then they walked on side by side, bowing from time to time to fellow-citizens who hurried along in their Sunday clothes, carrying dolls and bags of sweets.

“This Countess de Gromance,” said the archivist, “was a Chapon. There was never but one Chapon heard of — her father, the most arrant skinflint in the province. But I have hunted up the record of the Gromance family, who belong to the lesser nobility of the place. There was a Demoiselle Cécile de Gromance who in 1815 gave birth to a child by a Cossack father. That will make a capital subject for an article in a local paper. I am writing a regular series of them.”

M. Mazure spoke the truth: every day, from sunrise to sunset, alone in his dusty garret under the roof of the prefecture, he eagerly ransacked the six hundred and thirty-seven thousand pigeonholes which were there huddled together. His gloomy hatred of his fellow-townsmen drove him to this research,

merely in the hope that he would succeed in unearthing some scandalous facts about the most respected families in the neighbourhood. Amid piles of ancient parchments and papers stamped by the registrars of the last two centuries with the arms of six kings, two emperors and three republics he used to sit, laughing in the midst of the clouds of dust, as he stirred up the evidences, now half eaten up by mice and worms, of bygone crimes and sins long since expiated.

As they followed the windings of the Tintelleries, it was with the tale of these cruel revelations that he continued to entertain M. Bergeret, a man who always cultivated an attitude of particular indulgence towards our forefathers' faults, and who was inquisitive merely in the matter of their habits and customs. Mazure had, or so he averred, discovered in the archives a certain Terremondre who, being a terrorist and president of a local club of Sans-Culottes in 1793, had changed his Christian names from Nicolas-Eustache to Marat-Peuplier. Instantly Mazure hastened to supply M. Jean de Terremondre, his colleague in the Archaeological Society, who had gone over to the monarchical and clerical party, with full information touching this forgotten forbear of his, this Marat-Peuplier Terremondre, who had actually written a hymn to Saint Guillotine. He had also unearthed a great-great-uncle of the diocesan Vicar-General, a Sieur de Goulet, or rather, more precisely, a Goulet-Trocard as he signed himself, who, as an army contractor, was condemned to penal servitude in 1812 for having supplied glandered horseflesh instead of beef. The documents relating to this trial he had published in the most rabid journal in the department. M. Mazure promised still more terrible revelations about the Laprat family, revelations full of cases of incest; about the Courtrai family, with one of its members branded for high treason in 1814; about the Dellion family, whose wealth had been gained by gambling in wheat; about the Quatrebarbe family, whose ancestors, two stokers, a man and a woman, were hanged by lynch law on a tree on Duroc Hill at the time of the consulate. In fact, as late as 1860, old people were still to be met who remembered having seen in their childhood the branches of an oak from which hung a human form with long, black, floating tresses that used to frighten the horses.

"She remained hanging there for three years," exclaimed the archivist, "and she was own grandmother to Hyacinthe Quatrebarbe, the diocesan architect!"

"It's very singular," said M. Bergeret, "but, of course, one ought to keep that kind of thing to oneself."

But Mazure paid no heed. He longed to publish everything, to bruit everything abroad, in direct opposition to the opinion of M. Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, who wisely said: "One ought most carefully to avoid giving occasion to

scandal and dissension.” He had threatened, in fact, to get the archivist dismissed, if he persisted in revealing old family secrets.

“Ah!” cried Mazure, chuckling in his tangled forest of beard, “it shall be known that in 1815 there was a little Cossack who came into the world through the exertions of a Demoiselle de Gromance.”

Only a moment since M. Bergeret had reached his own door, and he still held the handle of the bell.

“What does it matter, after all?” said he.

“The poor lady did what she couldn’t help doing.. She is dead, and the little Cossack also is dead. Let us leave their memory in peace, or if we recall it for a moment, let it be with a kindly thought. What zeal is it that so carries you away, dear Monsieur Mazure?”

“The zeal for justice.”

M. Bergeret pulled the bell.

“Good-bye, Mazure,” said he; “don’t be just, and do be merciful. I wish you a very happy New Year.”

M. Bergeret looked through the dirty window of the hall to see if there were any letter or paper in the box; he still took an interest in letters from a distance or in literary reviews. But to-day there were only visiting-cards, which suggested to him nothing more interesting than personalities as shadowy and pale as the cards themselves, and a bill from Mademoiselle Rose, the modiste of the Tintelleries. As his eyes fell on this, the thought suddenly occurred to him that Madame Bergeret was becoming extravagant and that the house was stuffy. He could feel the weight of it on his shoulders, and as he stood in the hall, he seemed to be bearing on his back the whole flooring of his flat, in addition to the drawingroom piano and that terrible wardrobe that swallowed up his little store of money and yet was always empty. Thus weighted with domestic troubles, M. Bergeret grasped the iron handrail with its ample curves of florid metal-work, and began, with bent head and short breath, to climb the stone steps. These were now blackened, worn, cracked, patched, and ornamented with worn bricks and squalid paving-stones, but once, in the bygone days of their early youth, they had known the tread of fine gentlemen and pretty girls, hurrying to pay rival court to Pauquet, the revenue-tax farmer who had enriched himself by the spoils of a whole province. For it was in the mansion of Pauquet de Sainte-Croix that M. Bergeret lived, now fallen from its glory, despoiled of its splendour and degraded by a plaster top-storey which had taken the place of its graceful gable and majestic roof. Now the building was darkened by tall houses built all round it, on ground where once there were gardens with a thousand statues, ornamental waters and a park, and even on the main courtyard where Pauquet had erected an

allegorical monument to his king, who was in the habit of making him disgorge his booty every five or six years, after which he was left for another term to stuff himself again with gold.

This courtyard, which was flanked by a splendid Tuscan portico, had vanished in 1857 when the Rue des Tintelleries was widened. Now Pauquet de Sainte-Croix's mansion was nothing but an ugly tenement-house badly neglected by two old caretakers, Gaubert by name, who despised M. Bergeret for his quietness and had no sense of his true generosity, because it was that of a man of moderate means. Yet whatever M. Raynaud gave they regarded with respect, although he gave little when he was well able to give much: to the Gauberts, his hundred-sou piece was valuable because it came from great wealth.

M. Raynaud, who owned the land near the new railway station, lived on the first storey. Over the doorway of this there was a bas-relief which, as usual, caught M. Bergeret's eye as he passed. It depicted old Silenus on his ass surrounded by a group of nymphs. This was all that remained of the interior decoration of the mansion which, belonging to the reign of Louis XV, had been built at a period when the French style was aiming at the classic, but, lucky in missing its aim, had acquired that note of chastity, stability and noble elegance which one associates more especially with Gabriel's designs. As a matter of fact Pauquet de Sainte-Croix's mansion had actually been designed by a pupil of that great architect. Since then it had been systematically disfigured. Although, for economy's sake and just to save a little trouble and expense, they had not torn down the little bas-relief of Silenus and the nymphs, they had at any rate painted it, like the rest of the staircase, with a sham decoration of red granite. The tradition of the place would have it that in this Silenus one might see a portrait of Pauquet himself, who was reputed to have been the ugliest man of his time, as well as the most popular with women. M. Bergeret, although no great connoisseur in art, made no such mistake as this, for in the grotesque, yet sublime, figure of the old god he recognised a type well known in the Renaissance, and transmitted from the Greeks and Romans. Yet, whenever he saw this Silenus and his nymphs, his thoughts naturally turned to Pauquet, who had enjoyed all the good things of this world in the very house where he himself lived a life that was not only toilsome, but thankless.

"This financier," he thought as he stood on the landing, "merely sucked money from a king who in turn sucked it from him. This made them quits. It is unwise to brag about the finances of the monarchy, since, in the end, it was the financial deficit that brought about the downfall of the system. But this point is noteworthy, that the king was then the sole owner of all property, both real and personal, throughout the kingdom. Every house belonged to the king, and in

proof of this, the subject who actually enjoyed the possession of it had to place the royal arms on the slab at the back of the hearth. It was therefore as owner, and not in pursuance of his right of taxation, that Louis XIV sent his subjects' plate to the Mint in order to defray the expenses of his wars. He even had the treasures of the churches melted down, and I read lately that he carried off the votive-offerings of Notre-Dame de Liesse in Picardy, among which was found the breast that the Queen of Poland had deposited there in gratitude for her miraculous recovery. Everything then belonged to the king, that is to say, to the state. And yet neither the Socialists, who to-day demand the nationalisation of private property, nor the owners who intend to hold fast their possessions, pay any heed to the fact that this nationalisation would be, in some respects, a return to the ancient custom. It gives one a philosophic pleasure to reflect that the Revolution really was for the benefit of those who had acquired private ownership of national possessions and that the Declaration of the Rights of Man has become the landlords' charter.

"This Pauquet, who used to bring here the prettiest girls from the opera, was no knight of Saint-Louis. To-day he would be commander of the Legion of Honour and to him the finance ministers would come for their instructions. Then it was money he enjoyed; now it would be honours. For money has become honourable. It is, — in fact, the only nobility we possess. We have destroyed all the others to put in their place the most oppressive, the most insolent, and the most powerful of all orders of nobility."

M. Bergeret's reflections were distracted at this point by the sight of a group of men, women, and children coming out of M. Raynaud's flat. He saw that it was a band of poor relations who had come to wish the old man a happy New Year: he fancied he could see them smelling about, under their new hats, for some profit to themselves. He went on up the stairs, for he lived on the third floor, which he delighted to call the third "room," using the seventeenth-century phrase for it. — And to explain this ancient term he loved to quote La Fontaine's lines:

Where is the good of life to men of make like you,
To live and read for ever in a poor third room?
Chill winter always finds you in the dress of June,
With for lackey but the shadow that is each man's due.

Possibly the use he made of this quotation and of this kind of talk was unwise, for it exasperated Madame Bergeret, who was proud of living in a flat in the middle of the town, in a house that was inhabited by people of good position.

“Now for the third ‘room,’” said M. Bergeret to himself. Drawing out his watch, he saw that it was eleven o’clock. He had told them not to expect him before noon, as he had intended to spend an hour in Paillot’s shop. But there he had found the shutters up: holidays and Sundays were days of misery to him, simply because the bookseller’s was closed on those days. To-day he had a feeling of annoyance, because he had not been able to pay his usual call on Paillot.

On reaching the third storey he turned his key noiselessly in the lock and entered the diningroom with his cautious footstep. It was a dismal room, concerning which M. Bergeret had formed no particular opinion, although in Madame Bergeret’s eyes it was quite artistic, on account of the brass chandelier which hung above the table, the chairs and sideboard of carved oak with which it was furnished, the mahogany whatnot loaded with little cups, and especially on account of the painted china plates that adorned the wall. On entering this room from the dimly lit hall one had the door of the study on the left, and on the right the drawingroom door. Whenever M. Bergeret entered the flat he was in the habit of turning to the left into his study, where solitude, books and slippers awaited him. This time, however, for no particular motive or reason, without thinking what he was doing, he went to the right. He turned the handle, opened the door, took one step and found himself in the drawingroom.

He then saw on the sofa two figures linked together in a violent attitude that suggested either endearment or strife, but which was, as a matter of fact, very compromising. Madame Bergeret’s head was turned away and could not be seen, but her feelings were plainly expressed in the generous display of her red stockings. M. Roux’s face wore that strained, solemn, set, distracted look that cannot be mistaken, although one seldom sees it; it agreed with his disordered array. Then, the appearance of everything changed in less than a second, and now M. Bergeret saw before him two quite different persons from those whom he had surprised; two persons who were much embarrassed and whose looks were strange and even rather comical. He would have fancied himself mistaken had not the first picture engraved itself on his sight with a strength that was only equalled by its suddenness.

VI

M. BERGERET'S first impulse at this shameful sight was to act violently, like a plain man, even with the ferocity of an animal. Born as he was of a long line of unknown ancestors, amongst whom there were, of course, many cruel and savage souls, heir as he was of those innumerable generations of men, apes, and savage beasts from whom we are all descended, the professor had been endowed, along with the germ of life, with the destructive instinct of the older races. Under this shock these instincts awoke. He thirsted for slaughter and burned to kill M. Roux and Madame Bergeret. But his desire was feeble and evanescent. With the four canine teeth which he carried in his mouth and the nails of the carnivorous beast which armed his fingers, M. Bergeret had inherited the ferocity of the beast, but the original force of this instinct had largely disappeared. He did, it is true, feel a desire to kill M. Roux and Madame Bergeret, but it was a very feeble one. He felt fierce and cruel, but the sensation was so short-lived and so weak that no act was born of the thought, and even the expression of the idea was so swift that it entirely escaped the notice of the two witnesses who were most concerned in its manifestation. In less than a second M. Bergeret had ceased to be purely instinctive, primitive, and destructive, without, however, ceasing at the same time to be jealous and irritated. On the contrary, his indignation went on increasing. In this new frame of mind his thoughts were no longer simple; they began to centre round the social problem; confusedly there seethed in his mind fragments of ancient theologies, bits of the Decalogue, shreds of ethics, Greek, Scotch, German and French maxims, scattered portions of the moral code which, by striking his brain like so many flint stones, set him on fire. He felt patriarchal, the father of a family after the Roman style, an overlord and justiciar. He had the virtuous idea of punishing the guilty. After having wanted to kill Madame Bergeret and M. Roux by mere bloodthirsty instinct, he now wanted to kill them out of regard for justice. He mentally sentenced them to terrible and ignominious punishments. He lavished upon them every ignominy of mediaeval custom. This journey across the ages of civilisation was longer than the first. It lasted for two whole seconds, and during that time the two culprits so discreetly changed their attitude that these changes, though imperceptible, were fundamental, and completely altered the character of their relationship.

Finally, religious and moral ideas becoming completely confounded with one another in his mind, M. Bergeret felt nothing but a sense of misery, while

disgust, like a vast wave of dirty water, poured across the flame of his wrath. Three full seconds passed; he was plunged in the depths of irresolution and did nothing. By an obscure, confused instinct which was characteristic of his temperament, from the first moment he had turned his eyes away from the sofa and fixed them on the round table near the door. This was covered with a tablecloth of olive-green cotton on which were printed coloured figures of mediaeval knights in imitation of ancient tapestry. During these three interminable seconds M. Bergeret clearly made out a little page-boy who held the helmet of one of the tapestry knights. Suddenly he noticed on the table, among the gilt-edged, red-bound books that Madame Bergeret had placed there as handsome ornaments, the yellow cover of the *University Bulletin* which he had left there the night before. The sight of this magazine instantly suggested to him the act most characteristic of his turn of mind: putting out his hand, he took up the *Bulletin* and left the drawing-room, which a most unlucky instinct had led him to enter.

Once alone in the dining-room a flood of misery overwhelmed him. He longed for the relief of tears, and was obliged to hold on by the chairs in order to prevent himself from falling. Yet with his pain was mingled a certain bitterness that acted like a caustic and burnt up the tears in his eyes. Only a few seconds ago he had crossed this little dining-room, yet now it seemed that, if ever he had set eyes on it before, it must have been in another life. It must surely have been in some far-off stage of existence, in some earlier incarnation, that he had lived in intimate relations with the small sideboard of carved oak, the mahogany shelves loaded with painted cups, the china plates on the wall, that he had sat at this round table between his wife and daughters. It was not his happiness that was dead, for he had never been happy; it was his poor little home life, his domestic relations that were gone. These had always been chilly and unpleasant, but now they were degraded and destroyed; they no longer even existed.

When Euphémie came in to lay the cloth he trembled at the sight of her; she seemed one of the ghosts of the vanished world in which he had once lived.

Shutting himself up in his study, he sat down at his table, and opening the *University Bulletin* quite at random, leant his head deliberately between his hands and, through sheer force of habit, began to read.

He read:

“Notes on the purity of language . — Languages are like nothing so much as ancient forests in which words have pushed a way for themselves, as chance or opportunity has willed. Among them we find some weird and even monstrous forms, yet, when linked together in speech, they compose into splendid harmonies, and it would be a barbarous act to prune them as one trims the lime-

trees on the public roads. One must tread with reverence on what, in the grand style, is termed *the boundless peaks* ...

“And my daughters!” thought M. Bergeret. “She ought to have thought of them. She ought to have thought of our daughters...”

He went on reading without comprehending a word:

“Of course, such a word as this is a mere abortion. We say *le lendemain*, that is to say, *le le en demain*, when, evidently, what we ought to say is *l’en demain*; we say *le lierre* for *Pierre*, which alone is correct. The foundations of language were laid by the people. Everywhere in it we find ignorance, error, whim; in its simplicity lies its greatest beauty. It is the work of ignorant minds, to whom everything save nature is a sealed book. It comes to us from afar, and those who have handed it down to us were by no means grammarians after the style of Noël and Chapsal.”

Then he thought:

“At her age, in her humble, struggling position.... I can understand that a beautiful, idle, much idolised woman... but she!”

Yet, as he was a reader by instinct, he still went on reading:

“Let us treat it as a precious inheritance, but, at the same time, let us never look too closely into it. In speaking, and even in writing, it is a mistake to trouble too much about etymology....”

“And he, my favourite pupil, whom I have invited to my house... ought he not?..

“Etymology teaches us that God is *He Who shines*, and that the *soul* is a *breathy* but into these old words men have read meanings which they did not at first possess.”

“Adultery!”

This word came to his lips with such force that he seemed to feel it in his mouth like a coin, like a thin medal. Adultery!...

Suddenly he saw a picture of all that this word implied, its associations — commonplace, domestic, absurd, clumsily tragic, sordidly comic, ridiculous, uncouth; even in his misery he chuckled.

Being well read in Rabelais, La Fontaine, and Molière, he called himself by the downright, outspoken name that he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt was fitted to his case. But that stopped his laugh, if it could be truthfully said that he had laughed.

“Of course,” said he to himself, “it is a petty, commonplace incident in reality. But I am myself suitably proportioned to it, being but an unimportant

item in the social structure. It seems, therefore, an important thing to me, and I ought to feel no shame at the misery it brings me."

Following up this thought, he drew his grief round him like a cloak, and wrapped himself in it. Like a sick man full of pity for himself, he pursued the painful visions and the haunting ideas which swarmed endlessly in his burning head. What he had seen caused him physical pain; noticing this fact, he instantly set himself to find the cause of it, for he was always ruled by the philosophical bent of his temperament.

"The objects," thought he, "which are associated with the most powerful desires of the flesh cannot be regarded with indifference, for when they do not give delight, they cause disgust. It is not in herself that Madame Bergeret possesses the power of putting me between these two alternatives; it is as a symbol of that Venus who is the joy of gods and men. For to me, although she may indeed be one of the least lovable and least mysterious of these symbols of Venus, yet at the same time she must needs be one of the most characteristic and vivid. And the sight of her linked in community of act and feeling with my pupil, M. Roux, reduced her instantly to that elementary type-form which, as I said, must either inspire attraction or repulsion. Thus we may see that every sexual symbol either satisfies or disappoints desire, and for that reason attracts or repels our gaze with equal force, according to the physiological condition of the spectators, and sometimes even according to the successive moods of the same witness.

"This observation brings one to the true reason for the fact that, in all nations and at all periods, sexual rites have been performed in secret, in order that they might not produce violent and conflicting emotions in the spectators. At length it became customary to conceal everything that might suggest these rites. Thus was born Modesty, which governs all men, but particularly the more lascivious nations."

Then M. Bergeret reflected:

"Accident has enabled me to discover the origin of this virtue which varies most of all, merely because it is the most universal, this Modesty, which the Greeks call Shame. Very absurd prejudices have become connected with this habit which arises from an attitude of mind peculiar to man and common to all men, and these prejudices have obscured its true character. But I am now in a position to formulate the true theory of Modesty. It was at a smaller cost to himself that Newton discovered the laws of gravitation under a tree."

Thus meditated M. Bergeret from the depths of his arm-chair. But his thoughts were still so little under control that he rolled his bloodshot eyes, gnashed his teeth and clenched his fists, until he drove his nails into his palms.

Painted with merciless accuracy on his inner eye was the picture of his pupil, M. Roux, in a condition which ought never to be seen by a spectator, for reasons which the professor had first accurately deduced. M. Bergeret possessed a measure of that faculty which we call visual memory. Without possessing the rich power of vision of the painter, who stores numberless vast pictures in a single fold of his brain, he could yet recall, accurately and easily enough, sights seen long ago which had caught his attention. Thus there lived in the album of his memory the outline of a beautiful tree, of a graceful woman, when once these had been impressed on the retina of his eye. But never had any mental impression appeared to him as clear, as exact, as vividly, accurately and powerfully coloured, as full, compact, solid and masterful, as there appeared to him at this moment the daring picture of his pupil, M. Roux, in the act of embracing Madame Bergeret. This accurate reproduction of reality was hateful; it was also false, inasmuch as it indefinitely prolonged an action which must necessarily be a fleeting one. The perfect illusion which it produced showed up the two characters with obstinate cynicism and unbearable permanence. Again M. Bergeret longed to kill his pupil, M. Roux. He made a movement as if to kill; the idea of murder that his brain formulated had the force of a deed and left him overwhelmed.

Then came a moment of reflection and slowly, quietly he strayed away into a labyrinth of irresolution and contradiction. His ideas flowed together and intermingled, losing their distinctive tints like specks of paint in a glass of water. Soon he even failed to grasp the actual event that had happened.

He cast miserable looks around him, examined the flowers on the wall-paper and noticed that there were badly-joined bunches, so that the halves of the red carnations never met. He looked at the books stacked on the deal shelves. He looked at the little silk and crochet pin-cushion that Madame Bergeret had made and given him some years before on his birthday. Then he softened at the thought of the destruction of their home life. He had never been deeply in love with this woman, whom he had married on the advice of friends, for he had always found a difficulty in settling his own affairs. Although he no longer loved her at all, she still made up a large part of his life. He thought of his daughters, now staying with their aunt at Arcachon, especially of his favourite Pauline, the eldest, who resembled him. At this he shed tears.

Suddenly through his tears he caught sight of the wickerwork woman on which Madame Bergeret draped her dresses and which she always kept in her husband's study in front of the book-case, disregarding the professor's resentment when he complained that every time he wanted to put his books on the shelves, he had to embrace the wickerwork woman and carry her off. At the

best of times M. Bergeret's teeth were set on edge by this contrivance which reminded him of the hen-coops of the cottagers, or of the idol of woven cane which he had seen as a child in one of the prints of his ancient history, and in which, it was said, the Phoenicians burnt their slaves. Above all, the thing reminded him of Madame Bergeret, and although it was headless, he always expected to hear it burst out screaming, moaning, or scolding.

This time the headless thing seemed to be none other than Madame Bergeret herself, Madame Bergeret, the hateful, the grotesque. Flinging himself upon it, he clasped the thing in his arms and made its wicker breast crack under his fingers, as though it were the gristles of ribs that broke. Overturning it, he stamped on it with his feet and carrying it off, threw it creaking and mutilated, out of window into the yard belonging to Lenfant, the cooper, where it fell among buckets and tubs. In doing this, he felt as though he were performing an act that symbolised a true fact, yet was at the same time ridiculous and absurd. On the whole, however, he felt somewhat relieved, and when Euphémie came to tell him that déjeuner was getting cold, he shrugged his shoulders, and walking resolutely across the still deserted dining-room, took up his hat in the hall and went downstairs.

In the gateway he remembered that he knew neither where to go nor what to do and that he had come to no decision at all. Once outside, he noticed that it was raining and that he had no umbrella. He was rather annoyed at the fact, though the sense of annoyance came quite as a relief. As he stood hesitating as to whether he should go out into the shower or not, he caught sight of a pencil drawing on the plaster of the wall, just below the bell and just at the height which a child's arm would reach. It represented an old man; two dots and two lines within a circle made the face, and the body was depicted by an oval; the arms and legs were shown by single lines which radiated outwards like wheel-spokes and imparted a certain air of jollity to this scrawl, which was executed in the classic style of mural ribaldry. It must have been drawn some time ago, for it showed signs of friction and in places was already half rubbed out. But this was the first time that M. Bergeret had noticed it, doubtless because his powers of observation were just now in a peculiarly wide-awake condition.

"A *graffito*," said the professor to himself.

He noticed next that two horns stuck out from the old man's head and that the word *Bergeret* was written by the side, so that no mistake might be made.

"It is a matter of common talk, then," said he, when he saw this name. "Little rascals on their way to school proclaim it on the walls and I am the talk of the town. This woman has probably been deceiving me for a long time, and with all

sorts of men. This mere scrawl tells me more of the truth than I could have gained by a prolonged and searching investigation.”

And standing in the rain, with his feet in the mud, he made a closer examination of the *graffito*; he noticed that the letters of the inscription were badly written and that the lines of the drawing corresponded with the slope of the writing.

As he went away in the falling rain, he remembered the *graffiti* once traced by clumsy hands on the walls of Pompeii and now uncovered, collected and expounded by philologists. He recalled the clumsy furtive character of the Palatine *graffito* scratched by an idle soldier on the wall of the guard-house.

“It is now eighteen hundred years since that Roman soldier drew a caricature of his comrade Alexandros in the act of worshipping an ass’s head stuck on a cross. No monument of antiquity has been more carefully studied than this Palatine *graffito*: it is reproduced in numberless collections. Now, following the example of Alexandros, I, too, have a *graffito* of my own. If to-morrow an earthquake were to swallow up this dismal, accursed town, and preserve it intact for the scientists of the thirtieth century, and if in that far distant future my *graffito* were to be discovered, I wonder what these learned men would say about it. Would they understand its vulgar symbolism? Or would they even be able to spell out my name written in the letters of a lost alphabet?”

With a fine rain falling through the dreary dimness, M. Bergeret finally reached the Place Saint-Exupère. Between the two buttresses of the church he could see the stall which bore a red boot as a sign. At the sight, he suddenly remembered that his shoes, being worn out by long service, were soaked with water; now, too, he remembered that henceforth he must look after his own clothes, although hitherto he had always left them to Madame Bergeret. With this thought in his mind, he went straight into the cobbler’s booth. He found the man hammering nails into the sole of a shoe.

“Good-day, Piédagnel!”

“Good-day, Monsieur Bergeret! What can I do for you, Monsieur Bergeret?”

So saying, the fellow, turning his angular face towards his customer, showed his toothless gums in a smile. His thin face, which ended in a projecting chin and was furrowed by the dark chasm of his eyes, shared the stern, poverty-stricken air, the yellow tint, the wretched aspect of the stone figures carved over the door of the ancient church under whose shadow he had been born, had lived, and would die.

“All right, Monsieur Bergeret, I have your size and I know that you like your shoes an easy fit. You are quite in the right, Monsieur Bergeret, not to try to

pinch your feet.”

“But I have a rather high instep and the sole of my foot is arched,” protested M. Bergeret. “Be sure you remember that.”

M. Bergeret was by no means vain of his foot, but it had so happened one day that in his reading he came upon a passage describing how M. de Lamartine once showed his bare foot with pride, that its high curve, which rested on the ground like the arch of a bridge, might be admired. This story made M. Bergeret feel that he was quite justified in deriving pleasure from the fact that he was not flat-footed. Now, sinking into a wicker chair decorated with an old square of Aubusson carpet, he looked at the cobbler and his booth. On the wall, which was whitewashed and covered with deep cracks, a sprig of box had been placed behind the arms of a black, wooden cross. A little copper figure of Christ nailed to this cross inclined its head over the cobbler, who sat glued to his stool behind the counter, which was heaped with pieces of cut leather and with the wooden models which all bore leather shields to mark the places where the feet that the models represented were afflicted with painful excrescences. A small cast-iron stove was heated white-hot and a strong smell of leather and cookery combined was perceptible.

“I am glad,” said M. Bergeret, “to see that you have as much work as you can wish for.”

In answer to this remark, the man began to give vent to a string of vague, rambling complaints which yet had an element of truth in them. Things were not as they used to be in days gone by. Nowadays, nobody could stand out against factory competition. Customers just bought readymade shoes, in stores exactly like the Paris ones.

“My customers die, too,” added he. “I have just lost the curé, M. Rieu. There is nothing left but the resoling business and there isn’t much profit in that.”

The sight of this ancient cobbler groaning under his own little crucifix filled M. Bergeret with sadness. He asked, rather hesitatingly:

“Your son must be quite twenty by now. What has become of him?”

“Firmin? I expect you know,” said the man, “that he left the seminary because he had no vocation. But the gentlemen there were kind enough to interest themselves in him, after they had expelled him. Abbé Lantaigne found a place for him as tutor at a Marquis’s house in Poitou. But Firmin refused it just out of spite. He is in Paris now, teaching at an institution in the Rue Saint-Jacques, but he doesn’t earn much.” And the cobbler added sadly:

“What I want...”

He stopped and then began again. “I have been a widower for twelve years. What I want is a wife, because it needs a woman to manage a house.”

Relapsing into silence, he drove three nails into the leather of the sole and added:

“Only I must have a steady woman.”

He returned to his task. Then suddenly raising his worn and sorrowful face towards the foggy sky, he muttered:

“And besides, it is so sad to be alone!”

M. Bergeret felt pleased, for he had just caught sight of Paillot standing on the threshold of his shop. He got up to leave:

“Good-day, Piédagnel!” said he. “Mind and keep the instep high enough!”

But the cobbler would not let him go, asking with an imploring glance whether he did not know of any woman who would suit him. She must be middle-aged, a good worker, and a widow who would be willing to marry a widower with a small business.

M. Bergeret stood looking in astonishment at this man who actually wanted to get married; Piédagnel went on meditating aloud:

“Of course,” said he, “there’s the woman who delivers bread on the Tintelleries. But she likes a drop. Then there’s the late curé of Sainte-Agnès’s servant, but she is too haughty, because she has saved a little.”

“Piédagnel,” said M. Bergeret, “go on resoling the townfolks’ shoes, remain as you are, alone and contented in the seclusion of your shop. Don’t marry again, for that would be a mistake.”

Closing the glazed door behind him, he crossed the Place Saint-Exupère and entered Paillot’s shop.

The shop was deserted, save for the bookseller himself. Paillot’s mind was a barren and illiterate one; he spoke but little and thought of nothing but his business and his country-house on Duroc Hill. Notwithstanding these facts, M. Bergeret had an inexplicable fondness both for the bookseller and for his shop. At Paillot’s he felt quite at ease and there ideas came on him in a flood.

Paillot was rich, and never had any complaints to make. Yet he invariably told M. Bergeret that one no longer made the profit on educational books that was once customary, for the practice of allowing discount left but little margin. Besides, the supplying of schools had become a veritable puzzle on account of the changes that were always being made in the curricula.

“Once,” said he, “they were much more conservative.”

“I don’t believe it,” replied M. Bergeret. “The fabric of our classical instruction is constantly in course of repair. It is an old monument which embodies in its structure the characteristics of every period. One sees in it a pediment in the Empire style on a Jesuit portico; it has rusticated galleries, colonnades like those of the Louvre, Renaissance staircases, Gothic halls, and a

Roman crypt. If one were to expose the foundations, one would come upon *opus spicatum* (Brickwork laid in the shape of ears of corn.) and Roman cement. On each of these parts one might place an inscription commemorating its origin: ‘The Imperial University of 1808 — Rollin — The Oratorians — Port-Royal — The Jesuits — The Humanists of the Renaissance — The Schoolmen — The Latin Rhetoricians of Autun and Bordeaux.’ Every generation has made some change in this palace of wisdom, or has added something to it.”

M. Paillot rubbed the red beard that hung from his huge chin and looked stupidly at M. Bergeret. Finally he fled panic-stricken and took refuge behind his counter. But M. Bergeret followed up his argument to its logical conclusion:

“It is thanks to these successive additions that the house is still standing. It would soon crumble to pieces if nothing were ever changed in it. It is only right to repair the parts that threaten to fall in ruin and to add some halls in the new style. But I can hear some ominous cracking in the structure.”

As honest Paillot carefully refrained from making any answer to this occult and terrifying talk, M. Bergeret plunged silently into the corner where the old books stood.

To-day, as always, he took up the thirty-eighth; volume of *l’Histoire Générale des Voyages* . To-day, as always, the book opened of its own accord at page 212. Now on this page he saw the picture of M. Roux and Madame Bergeret embracing.... Now he re-read the passage he knew so well, without paying any heed to what he read, but merely continuing to think the thoughts that were suggested by the present state of his affairs:

“‘a passage to the North. It is to this check,’ said he (I know that this affair is by no means an unprecedented one, and that it ought not to astonish the mind of a philosopher), ‘that we owe the opportunity of being able to visit the Sandwich Islands again’ (It is a domestic event that turns my house upside down. I have no longer a home), ‘and to enrich our voyage with a discovery (I have no home, no home any more) which, although the last (I’ am morally free though, and that is a great point), seems in many respects to be the most important that Europeans have yet made in the whole expanse of the Pacific Ocean....’”

M. Bergeret closed the book. He had caught a glimpse of liberty, deliverance, and a new life. It was only a glimmer in the darkness, but bright and steady before him. How was he to escape from this dark tunnel? That he could not tell, but at any rate he perceived at the end of it a tiny white point of light. And if he still carried about with him a vision of Madame Bergeret embraced by M. Roux, it was to him but an indecorous sight which aroused in him neither anger nor disgust — just a vignette, the Belgian frontispiece of some lewd book. He drew

out his watch and saw that it was now two o'clock. It had taken him exactly ninety minutes to arrive at this wise conclusion.

VII

AFTER M. Bergeret had taken the *University Bulletin* from the table and gone out of the room without saying a word, M. Roux and Madame Bergeret together emitted a long sigh of relief.

“He saw nothing,” whispered M. Roux, trying to make light of the affair.

But Madame Bergeret shook her head with an expression of anxious doubt. For her part, what she wanted was to throw on her partner’s shoulders the whole responsibility for any consequences that might ensue. She felt uneasy and, above all, thwarted. She was also a prey to a certain feeling of shame at having allowed herself, like a fool, to be surprised by a creature who was so easily hoodwinked as M. Bergeret, whom she despised for his credulity. Finally, she was in that state of anxiety into which a new and unprecedented situation always throws one.

M. Roux repeated the comforting assurance which he had first made to himself:

“I am sure he did not see us. He only looked at the table.”

And when Madame Bergeret still remained doubtful, he declared that anyone sitting on the couch could not be seen from the doorway. Of this Madame Bergeret tried to make sure. She went and stood in the doorway, while M. Roux stretched himself on the sofa, to represent the surprised lovers.

The test did not seem conclusive, and it fell next to M. Roux’s turn to go to the door, while Madame Bergeret reconstructed their love scene.

Solemnly, coldly, and even with some show of sulkiness to each other, they repeated this process several times. But M. Roux did not succeed in soothing Madame Bergeret’s doubts.

At last he lost his temper and exclaimed:

“Well! if he did see us, anyway he’s a precious —

Here he used a word which was unfamiliar to Madame Bergeret’s ears, but which sounded to her coarse, unseemly and abominably offensive. She was disgusted with M. Roux for having permitted himself to use such a term.

Thinking that he would only injure Madame Bergeret more by remaining longer in her company, M. Roux whispered a few consoling phrases in her ear and then began to tiptoe towards the door. His natural sense of decorum made him unwilling to risk a meeting with the kindly master whom he had wronged. Left alone in this way, Madame Bergeret went to her own room to think.

It did not seem to her that what had just taken place was important in itself. In the first place, if this was the first time that she had permitted herself to be compromised by M. Roux, it was not the first time that she had been indiscreet with others, few in number as they might be. Besides, an act like this may be horrible in thought, while in actual performance it merely appears commonplace, dependent upon circumstances and naturally innocent. In face of reality, prejudice dies away. Madame Bergeret was not a woman carried away from her homely, middle-class destiny by invincible forces hidden in the secret depths of her nature. Although she possessed a certain temperament, she was still rational and very careful of her reputation. She never sought for adventures, and at the age of thirty-six she had only deceived M. Bergeret three times. But these three occasions were enough to prevent her from exaggerating her fault. She was still less disposed to do so, since this third adventure was in essentials only a repetition of the first two, and these had been neither painful nor pleasurable enough to play a large part in her memory. No phantoms of remorse started up before the matron's large, fishy eyes. She regarded herself as an honourable woman in the main, and only felt irritated and ashamed at having allowed herself to be caught by a husband for whom she had the most profound scorn. She felt this misfortune the more, because it had come upon her in maturity, when she had arrived at the period of calm reflection. On the two former occasions the intrigue had begun in the same way. Usually Madame Bergeret felt much flattered whenever she made a favourable impression on any man of position. She watched carefully for any signs of interest they might show in her, and she never considered them exaggerated in any way, for she believed herself to be very alluring. Twice before the affair with M. Roux, she had allowed things to go on up to the point where, for a woman, there is henceforth neither physical power to put a stop to them, nor moral advantage to be gained by so doing. The first time the intrigue had been with an elderly man who was very experienced, by no means egotistic, and very anxious to please her. But her pleasure in him was spoilt by the worry which always accompanies a first lapse. The second time she took more interest in the affair, but unfortunately her accomplice was lacking in experience, and now M. Roux had caused her so much annoyance that she was unable even to remember what had happened before they were surprised. If she attempted to recall to herself their posture on the sofa, it was only in order to guess at what M. Bergeret had been able to deduce from it, so that she might make sure up to what point she could still lie to him and deceive him.

She was humiliated and annoyed, and whenever she thought of her big girls, she felt ashamed: she knew that she had made herself ridiculous. But fear was

the last feeling in her mind, for either by craft or audacity, she felt sure she could manage this gentle, timid man, so ignorant of the ways of the world, so far inferior to herself.

She had never lost the idea that she was immeasurably superior to M. Bergeret. This notion inspired all her words and acts, nay, even her silence. She suffered from the pride of race, for she was a Pouilly, the daughter of Pouilly, the University Inspector, the niece of Pouilly of the Dictionary, the great-granddaughter of a Pouilly who, in 1811, composed *la Mythologie des Demoiselles* and *l'Abeille des Dames*. She had been encouraged by her father in this sentiment of family pride.

What was a Bergeret by the side of a Pouilly? She had, therefore, no misgivings as to the result of the struggle which she foresaw, and she awaited her husband's return with an attitude of boldness dashed with cunning. But when, at lunch time, she heard him going downstairs, a shade of anxiety crept over her mind. When he was out of her sight, this husband of hers disquieted her: he became mysterious, almost formidable. She wore out her nerves in imagining what he would say to her and in preparing different deceitful or defiant answers, according to the circumstances. She strained and stiffened her courage, in order to repel attack. She pictured to herself pitiable attitudes and threats of suicide followed by a scene of reconciliation. By the time evening came, she was thoroughly unnerved. She cried and bit her handkerchief. Now she wanted, she longed for explanations, abuse, violent speeches. She waited for M. Bergeret with burning impatience, and at nine o'clock she at last recognised his step on the landing. But he did not come into her room; the little maid came instead:

"Monsieur says," she announced, with a sly, pert grin, "that I'm to put up the iron bedstead for him in the study."

Madame Bergeret said not a word, for she was thunderstruck.

Although she slept as soundly as usual that night, yet her audacious spirit was quelled.

VIII

THE curé of Saint-Exupère, the archpriest Laprune, had been invited to déjeuner by Abbé Guitrel. They were now both seated at the little round table on which Joséphine had just set a flaming rum omelette.

M. Guitrel's maid had reached the canonical age some years ago; she wore a moustache; and assuredly bore no resemblance to the imaginary portrait of her which set the town guffawing in the ribald tales of the old Gallic type that were bandied about. Her face gave the lie to the jovial slanders which circulated from the Café du Commerce to Paillot's shop, and from the pharmacy of the radical M. Mandar, to the jansenist salon of M. Lerond, the retired judge. Even if it were true that the professor of rhetoric used to allow his servant to sit at table with him when he was dining alone, if he was in the habit of sharing with her the little cakes that he chose with such anxious care at Dame Magloire's, it was only because of his pure and innocent regard for a poor old woman, who was, in truth, both illiterate and rough, but at the same time full of crafty wisdom and devoted to her master. She was, in fact, filled with ambition for him and ready in her loyalty to betray the whole world for his sake.

Unfortunately Abbé Lantaigne, the principal of the high seminary, paid too much heed to these prurient tales about Guitrel and his domestic, which everyone repeated and which no one believed, not even M. Mandar, the chemist of the Rue Culture, the most rabid of the town councillors. He had, in fact, added too much out of his own stock-in-trade to these merry tales not to suspect in his own mind the authenticity of the whole collection. For quite a voluminous cycle of romance had grown up round these two prosaic people. Had he only known the *Decameron*, the *Heptameron* and the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* better, M. Lantaigne would frequently have discovered the source of this droll adventure, or of that weird anecdote, which the county town generously added to the legend of M. Guitrel and his servant Joséphine. M. Mazure, the keeper of the municipal archives, never failed for his part, whenever he had found some lewd story of a Churchman in an old book, to assign it to M. Guitrel. Only M. Lantaigne actually swallowed what everyone else said without believing.

"Patience, Monsieur l'abbé!" said Joséphine; "I will go and fetch a spoon to baste it with."

So saying she took a long-handled pewter spoon from the sideboard drawer and handed it to M. Guitrel. Whilst the priest poured the flaming spirit over the frizzling sugar, which gave out a smell of caramel, the servant leant against the

sideboard with her arms crossed and stared at the musical clock which hung on the wall in a gilt frame; a Swiss landscape, with a train coming out of a tunnel, a balloon in the air, and the enamelled dial affixed to a little church tower. The observant woman was really watching her master, for his short arm was beginning to ache with wielding the hot spoon. She began to spur him on:

“Look sharp, Monsieur l’abbé! Don’t let it go out.”

“This dish,” said the archpriest, “really gives out a most delicious odour. The last time I had one like it made for me, the dish split on account of the heat and the rum ran over the table-cloth. I was much vexed, and what annoyed me still more was to see the consternation on M. Tabarit’s face, for it happened when he was dining with me.”

“That’s just it!” exclaimed the servant. “M. l’archiprêtre had it served on a dish of fine porcelain. Of course, nothing could be too fine for Monsieur. But the finer the china is, the worse it stands fire. — This dish here is of earthenware, and heat or cold makes no odds to it. When my master is a bishop he’ll have his omelettes soufflées served on a silver dish.”

All of a sudden the flame flickered out in the pewter spoon and M. Guitrel stopped basting the omelette. Then he turned towards the woman and said with a stern glance:

“Joséphine, you must never, in future, let me hear you talk in that fashion.”

“But, my dear Guitrel,” said the curé of Saint-Exupère, “it is only you yourself who can take exception to such words, for to others it would seem only natural. You have been endowed with the precious gift of intelligence. Your knowledge is profound and, were you raised to a bishopric, it would only seem a fitting thing. Who knows whether this simple woman has not uttered a true prophecy? Has not your name been mentioned among those of the priests considered eligible for the episcopal chair of Tourcoing?”

M. Guitrel pricked up his ears and gave a sidelong glance, with one eye full on the other’s profile.

He was, indeed, feeling very anxious, for his affairs were by no means in a promising state. At the nunciature he had been obliged to content himself with vague promises and he was beginning to be afraid of their Roman caution. It seemed to him that M. Lantaigne was in good odour at the Department of Religion, and, in short, his visit to Paris had only filled him with disquieting fancies. And now, if he was giving a lunch to the curé of Saint - Exupère, it was merely because the latter had the key to all the wire-pulling in M. Lantaigne’s party. M. Guitrel hoped, therefore, to worm out of the worthy curé all his opponent’s secrets.

“And why,” continued the archpriest, “should you not be a bishop one of these days, like M. Lantaigne?”

In the silence that followed the utterance of this name, the musical clock struck out a shrill little tune of the olden days. It was the hour of noon.

The hand with which Abbé Guitrel passed the earthenware dish to the archpriest trembled a little.

“There is,” said the latter, with a mellowness about this dish, a mellowness that is not insipid. Your servant is a first-rate cook.”

“You were speaking of M. Lantaigne?” queried Abbé Guitrel.

“I was,” replied the archpriest. “I don’t mean to say that at this precise moment M. Lantaigne is the bishop-designate of Tourcoing, for to say that would be to anticipate the course of events. But I heard this very morning from someone who is very intimate with the Vicar-General that the nunciature and the ministry are practically in agreement as to the appointment of M. Lantaigne. But this, of course, still lacks confirmation and it is quite possible that M. de Goulet may have taken his hopes for accomplished facts, for, as you know, he ardently desires M. Lantaigne’s success. But that the principal will be successful seems quite probable. It is true that some time ago a certain uncompromising attitude, which it was believed might be justly attributed to M. Lantaigne’s opinions, may perchance have given offence to the powers that be, inspired as they were with a harassing distrust of the clergy. But times are changed. These heavy clouds of mistrust have rolled away. Certain influences, too, that were formerly considered outside the sphere of politics are beginning to work now, even in governmental circles. They tell me, in fact, that General Cartier de Chalmot’s support of M. Lantaigne’s candidature has been all-powerful. This is the gossip, the still unauthenticated report, that I have heard.”

The servant Joséphine had left the room, but her anxious shadow still flashed from moment to moment through the half-open door.

M. Guitrel neither spoke nor ate.

“This omelette,” said the archpriest, “has a curious mixture of flavours which tickles the palate without allowing one to distinguish just what it is that is so delightful. Will you permit me to ask your servant for the recipe?”

An hour later M. Guitrel bade farewell to his guest, and set out, with shoulders bent low, for the seminary. Buried in thought, he descended the winding, slanting street of the Chantres, crossing his great-coat over his chest against the icy wind which was buffeting the gable of the cathedral. It was the coldest, darkest corner of the town. He hastened his pace as far as the Rue du Marché, and there he stopped before the butcher’s shop kept by Lafolie.

It was barred like a lion's cage. Under the quarters of mutton hung up by hooks, the butcher lay asleep on the ground, close against the board used for cutting up the meat. His brawny limbs were now relaxed in utter weariness, for his day's work had begun at daybreak. With his bare arms crossed, he lay slowly nodding his head. His steel was still hanging at his side and his legs were stretched out under a blood-stained white apron. His red face was shining, and under the turned down collar of his pink shirt the veins of his neck swelled up. From the recumbent figure breathed a sense of quiet power. M. Bergeret, indeed, always used to say of Lafolie that from him one could gather some idea of the Homeric heroes, because his manner of life resembled theirs since, like them, he shed the blood of victims.

Butcher Lafolie slept. Near him slept his son, tall and strong like his father, and with ruddy cheeks. The butcher's boy, with his head in his hands, was asleep on the marble slab, with his hair dangling among the spread-out joints of meat. Behind her glazed partition at the entrance of the shop sat Madame Lafolie, bolt upright, but with heavy eyes weighed down by sleep. She was a fat woman, with a huge bosom, her flesh saturated with the blood of beasts. The whole family had a look of brutal, yet masterly, power, an air of barbaric royalty.

With his quick glance shifting from one to the other, M. Guitrel stood watching them for a long while. Again and again he turned with special interest towards the master, the colossus whose purpled cheeks were barred by a long reddish moustache, and who, now that his eyes were shut, showed on his temples the little wrinkles that speak of cunning. Then, surfeited of the sight of this violent, crafty brute, and gripping his old umbrella under his arm, he crossed his great-coat over his chest once more, and continued his way. He was quite in good spirits once more, as he thought to himself:

"Eight thousand, three hundred and twenty-five francs last year. One thousand, nine hundred and six this year. Abbé Lantaigne, principal of the high seminary, owes ten thousand, two hundred and thirty-one francs to Lafolie the butcher, who is by no means an easy-going creditor. Abbé Lantaigne will not be a bishop."

For a long while he had been aware that M. Lantaigne was in financial straits, and that the college was heavily in debt. To-day his servant Joséphine had just informed him that Lafolie was showing his teeth and talking of suing the seminary and the archbishopric for debt. Trotting along with his mincing step, M. Guitrel murmured:

"M. Lantaigne will never be a bishop. He is honest enough, but he is a bad manager. Now a bishopric is just an administration. Bossuet said so in express terms when he was delivering the funeral oration of the Prince de Condé."

And in mentally recalling the horrible face of Lafolie the butcher, M. Guitrel felt no repugnance whatever.

IX

MEANWHILE M. Bergeret was rereading the meditations of Marcus Aurelius. He had a fellow-feeling for Faustina's husband, yet he found it impossible really to appreciate all the fine thought contained in this little book, so false to nature seemed its sentiments, so harsh its philosophy, so scornful of the softer side of life its whole tone. Next he read the tales of Sieur d'Ouville, and those of Eutrapel, the *Cymbalum* of Despériers, the *Matinées* of Cholière and the *Series* of Guillaume Bouchet. He took more pleasure in this course of reading, for he perceived that it was suitable to one in his position and therefore edifying, that it tended to diffuse serene peace and heavenly gentleness in his soul. He returned grateful thanks to the whole band of romance-writers who all, from the dweller in old Miletus, where was told the Tale of the Wash-tub, to the wielders of the spicy wit "of Burgundy, the charm of Touraine, and the broad humour of Normandy, have helped to turn the sorrow of harassed hearts into the ways of pleasant mirth by teaching men the art of indulgent laughter. (In his study of mediaeval romances, M. Bergeret devotes himself to the *Conte badin*, or jesting tale of ludicrous adventure by which so much of Chaucer's work was inspired. This school of short s tones starts with the tales of Aristides of Miletus, a writer of the second century B.C. His *Milésiaques*, as they are called, were followed by the fabliaux of the Middle Ages, and in the fifteenth century and onwards by the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* of Louis XI's time, by the *Heptaméron* of the Queen of Navarre, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio and the *Contes* of Desperiers, of Guillaume Bouchet, of Noël du Fail and others. La Fontaine retold many of the older tales in verse and Balzac tried to revive the Gallic writ and even the language of the fabliaux in his *Contes drolatiques*.)

"These romancers," thought he, "who make austere moralists knit their brows, are themselves excellent moralists, who should be loved and praised for having gracefully suggested the simplest, the most natural, the most humane solutions of domestic difficulties, difficulties which the pride and hatred of the savage heart of man would fain solve by murder and bloodshed. O Milesian romancers! O shrewd Petronius! O Noël du Fail," cried he, "O forerunners of Jean de La Fontaine! what apostle was wiser or better than you, who are commonly called good-for-nothing rascals? O benefactors of humanity! you have taught us the true science of life, a kindly scorn of the human race!"

Thus did M. Bergeret fortify himself with the thought that our pride is the original source of all our misery, that we are, in fact, but monkeys in clothes, and

that we have solemnly applied conceptions of honour and virtue to matters where these are ridiculous. Pope Boniface VIII, in fact, was wise in thinking that, in his own case, a mountain was being made out of a mole-hill, and Madame Bergeret and M. Roux were just about as worthy of praise or blame as a pair of chimpanzees. Yet, he was too clear-sighted to pretend to deny the close bond that united him to these two principal actors in his drama. But he only regarded himself as a meditative chimpanzee, and he derived from the idea a sensation of gratified vanity. For wisdom invariably goes astray somewhere.

M. Bergeret's, indeed, failed in another point: he did not really adapt his conduct to his maxims, and although he showed no violence, he never gave the least hint of forbearance. Thus he by no means proved himself the follower of those Milesian, Latin, Florentine, or Gallic romance-writers whose smiling philosophy he admired as being well suited to the absurdity of human nature. He never reproached Madame Bergeret, it is true, but neither did he speak a word, or throw a glance in her direction. Even when seated opposite her at table, he seemed to have the power of never seeing her. And if by chance he met her in one of the rooms of the flat, he gave the poor woman the impression that she was invisible.

He ignored her, he treated her not only as a stranger, but as non-existent. He ousted her both from visual and mental consciousness. He annihilated her. In the house, among the numberless preoccupations of their life together, he neither saw her, heard her, nor formed any perception of her. Madame Bergeret was a coarse-grained, troublesome woman, but she was a homely, moral creature after all; she was human and living, and she suffered keenly at not being allowed to burst out into vulgar chatter, into threatening gestures and shrill cries. She suffered at no longer feeling herself the mistress of the house, the presiding genius of the kitchen, the mother of the family, the matron. Worst of all, she suffered at feeling herself done away with, at feeling that she no longer counted as a person, or even as a thing. During meals she at last reached the point of longing to be a chair or a plate, so that her presence might at least be recognised. If M. Bergeret had suddenly drawn the carving-knife on her, she would have cried for joy, although she was by nature timid of a blow. But not to count, not to matter, not to be seen, was insupportable to her dull, heavy temperament. The monotonous and incessant punishment that M. Bergeret inflicted on her was so cruel that she was obliged to stuff her handkerchief into her mouth to stifle her sobs. And M. Bergeret, shut up in his study, used to hear her noisily blowing her nose in the dining-room while he himself was placidly sorting the slips for his *Virgilius nauticus*, unmoved by either love or hate.

Every evening Madame Bergeret was sorely tempted to follow her husband into the study that had now become his bedroom as well, and the impregnable fastness of his impregnable will. She longed either to ask his forgiveness, or to overwhelm him with the lowest abuse, to prick his face with the point of a kitchen-knife or to slash herself in the breast — one or the other, indifferently, for all she wanted was to attract his notice to herself, just to exist for him. And this thing which was denied her, she needed with the same overpowering need with which one craves bread, water, air, salt.

She still despised M. Bergeret, for this feeling was hereditary and filial in her nature. It came to her from her father and flowed in her blood. She would no longer have been a Pouilly, the niece of Pouilly of the Dictionary, if she had acknowledged any kind of equality between herself and her husband. She despised him because she was a Pouilly and he was a Bergeret, and not because she had deceived him. She had the good sense not to plume herself too much on this superiority, but it is more than probable that she despised him for not having killed M. Roux. Her scorn was a fixed quantity, capable neither of increase nor decrease. Nevertheless, she felt no hatred for him, although until lately, she had rather enjoyed tormenting and annoying him in the ordinary affairs of every day, by scolding him for the untidiness of his clothes and the tactlessness of his behaviour, or by telling him interminable anecdotes about the neighbours, trivial and silly stories in which even the malice and ill-nature were but commonplace. For this windbag of a mind produced neither bitter venom nor strange poison and was but puffed up by the breath of vanity.

Madame Bergeret was admirably calculated to live on good terms with a mate whom she could betray and brow-beat in the calm assurance of her power and by the natural working of her vigorous physique. Having no inner life of her own and being exuberantly healthy of body, she was a gregarious creature, and when M. Bergeret was suddenly withdrawn from her life, she missed him as a good wife misses an absent husband. Moreover, this meagre little man, whom she had always considered insignificant and unimportant, but not troublesome, now filled her with dread. By treating her as an absolute nonentity, M. Bergeret made her really feel that she no longer existed. She seemed to herself enveloped in nothingness. At this new, unknown, nameless state, akin to solitude and death, she sank into melancholy and terror. At night, her anguish became cruel, for she was sensitive to nature and subject to the influence of time and space. Alone in her bed, she used to gaze in horror at the wicker-work woman on which she had draped her dresses for so many years and which, in the days of her pride and light-heartedness, used to stand in M. Bergeret's study, proudly upright, all body and no head. Now, bandy-legged and mutilated, it leant wearily against the

glass-fronted wardrobe, in the shadow of the curtain of purple rep. Lenfant the cooper had found it in his yard amongst the tubs of water with their floating corks, and when he brought it to Madame Bergeret, she dared not set it up again in the study, but had carried it instead into the conjugal chamber where, wounded, drooping, and struck by emblematic wrath, it now stood like a symbol that represented notions of black magic to her mind.

She suffered cruelly. When she awoke one morning a melancholy ray of pale sunlight was shining between the folds of the curtain on the mutilated wicker dummy and, as she lay watching it, she melted with self-pity at the thought of her own innocence and M. Bergeret's cruelty. She felt instinct with rebellion. It was intolerable, she thought, that Amélie Pouilly should suffer by the act of a Bergeret. She mentally communed with the soul of her father and so strengthened herself in the idea that M. Bergeret was too paltry a man to make her unhappy. This sense of pride gave her relief and supplied her with confidence to bedeck herself, buoying her mind with the assurance that she had not been humiliated and that everything was as it always had been.

It was Madame Leterrier's At Home day, and Madame Bergeret set out, therefore, to call on the rector's highly respected wife. In the blue drawing-room she found her hostess sitting with Madame Compagnon, the wife of the mathematical professor, and after the first greetings were over, she heaved a deep sigh. It was a provocative sigh, rather than a down-trodden one, and while the two university ladies were still giving ear to it, Madame Bergeret added:

"There are many reasons for sadness in this life, especially for anyone who is not naturally inclined to put up with everything.... You are a happy woman, Madame Leterrier, and so are you, Madame Compagnon!..."

And Madame Bergeret, becoming humble, discreet and self-controlled, said nothing more, though fully conscious of the inquiring glances directed towards her. But this was quite enough to give people to understand that she was ill-used and humiliated in her home. Before, there had been whispers in the town about M. Roux's attentions to her, but from that day forth Madame Leterrier set herself to put an end to the scandal, declaring that M. Roux was a well-bred, honourable young man. Speaking of Madame Bergeret, she added, with moist lips and tear-filled eyes:

"That poor woman is very unhappy and very sensitive."

Within six weeks the drawing-rooms of the county town had made up their minds and come over to Madame Bergeret's side. They declared that M. Bergeret, who never paid calls, was a worthless fellow. They suspected him of secret debauchery and hidden vice, and his friend, M. Mazure, his comrade at the academy of old books, his colleague at Paillot's, was quite sure that he had

seen him one evening going into the restaurant in the Rue des Hebdomadiers, a place of questionable repute.

Whilst M. Bergeret was thus being tried by the tribunal of society and found wanting, the popular voice was crowning him with quite a different reputation. Of the vulgar symbol that had lately appeared on the front of his own house only very indistinct traces remained. But phantoms of the same design began to increase and multiply in the town, and now M. Bergeret could not go to the college, nor on the Mall, nor to Paillot's shop, without seeing his own portrait on some wall, drawn in the primitive style of all such ribaldries, surrounded by obscene, suggestive, or idiotic scrawls, and either pencilled or chalked or traced with the point of a stone and accompanied by an explanatory legend.

M. Bergeret was neither angered nor vexed at the sight of these *graffiti*; he was only annoyed at the increasing number of them. There was one on the white wall of Goubeau's cow-house on the Tintelleries; another on the yellow frontage of Deniseau's agency in the Place Saint-Exupère; another on the grand theatre under the list of admission rates at the second pay-box; another at the corner of the Rue de la Pomme and the Place du Vieux-Marché; another on the outbuildings of the Nivert mansion, next to the Gromances' residence; another on the porter's lodge at the University; and yet another on the wall of the gardens of the prefecture. And every morning M. Bergeret found yet newer ones. He noted, too, that these *graffiti* were not all from the same hand. In some, the man's figure was drawn in quite primitive style; others were better drawn, without showing, however, upon examination, any approach to individual likeness or the difficult art of portraiture. But in every case the bad drawing was supplemented by a written explanation, and in all these popular caricatures M. Bergeret wore horns. He noticed that sometimes these horns projected from a bare skull, sometimes from a tall hat.

"Two schools of art!" thought he.

But his refined nature suffered.

X

WORMS-CLAVELIN had insisted on his old friend, Georges Frémont, staying to déjeuner. Frémont, an inspector of fine art, was going on circuit through the department. When they had first met in the painters' studios at Montmartre, Frémont was young and Worms-Clavelin very young. They had not a single idea in common, and they had no points of agreement at all. Frémont loved to contradict, and Worms-Clavelin put up with it; Frémont was fluent and violent in speech, Worms-Clavelin always yielded to his vehemence and spoke but little. For a time they were comrades, and then life separated them. But every time that they happened to meet, they once more became intimate and quarrelled zestfully. For Georges Frémont, middle-aged, portly, beribboned, well-to-do, still retained something of his youthful fire. This morning, sitting between Madame Worms-Clavelin in a morning gown and M. Worms-Clavelin in a breakfast jacket, he was telling his hostess how he had discovered in the garrets at the museum, where it had been buried in dust and rubbish, a little wooden figure in the purest style of French art. It was a Saint Catherine habited in the garb of a townswoman of the fifteenth century, a tiny figure with wonderful delicacy of expression and with such a thoughtful, honest look that he felt the tears rise to his eyes as he dusted her. M. Worms-Clavelin inquired if it were a statue or a picture, and Georges Frémont, glancing at him with a look of kindly scorn, said gently:

"Worms, don't try to understand what I am saying to your wife! You are utterly incapable of conceiving the Beautiful in any form whatever. Harmonious lines and noble thoughts will always be written in an unknown tongue as far as you are concerned."

M. Worms-Clavelin shrugged his shoulders:

"Shut up, you old communard!" said he. Georges Frémont actually was an old communard. A Parisian, the son of a furniture maker in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and a pupil at the Beaux-Arts, he was twenty at the time of the German invasion, and had enlisted in a regiment of *francs-tireurs* who never saw service. For this slight Frémont had never forgiven Trochu. At the time of the capitulation he was one of the most excited, and shouted with the rest that Paris had been betrayed. But he was no fool, and really meant that Paris had been badly defended, which was true enough, of course. He was for war to the knife. When the Commune was proclaimed, he declared for it. On the proposition of one of his father's old workmen, a certain citizen Charlier, delegate for the Beaux-Arts, he was appointed assistant sub-director of the Museum of the

Louvre. It was an honorary appointment and he performed his duties booted, with cartridges in his belt, and on his head a Tyrolese hat adorned with cock feathers. At the beginning of the siege the canvases had been rolled up, put into packing-cases and carried away to warehouses from which he never succeeded in unearthing them. The only duty that remained to him was to smoke his pipe in galleries that had been transformed into guardrooms and to gossip with the National Guard, to whom he denounced Badinguet for having destroyed the Rubens pictures by a cleaning process which had removed the glaze. He based his grounds for this accusation on the authority of a newspaper article, backed up by M. Vitet's opinion. The federalists sat on the benches and listened to him, with their guns between their legs, whilst they drank their pints of wine in the palace precincts, for it was warm weather. When, however, the people of Versailles forced their way into Paris by the broken-down Porte du Point-du-Jour and the cannonade approached the Tuileries, Georges Frémont was much distressed to see the National Guard of the federalists rolling casks of petroleum into the Apollo gallery. It was with great difficulty that he at length succeeded in dissuading them from saturating the wainscoting to make it blaze. Then, giving them money for drink, he got rid of them. After they had gone, he managed, with the assistance of the Bonapartist guards, to roll these dangerous casks to the foot of the staircase and to push them as far as the bank of the Seine. When the colonel of the federalists was informed of this, he suspected Frémont of betraying the popular cause and ordered him to be shot. But as soon as the Versailles mob was approaching and the smoke of the blazing Tuileries rising into the air, Frémont fled, cheek by jowl with the squad that had been ordered out to execute him. Two days later, being denounced to the Versailles party, he was a fugitive from the military tribunal for having taken part in a rebellion against the established Government. And it was perfectly certain that the Versailles party was in direct succession, since having followed the Empire on September 4th, 1870, it had adopted and retained the recognised procedure of the preceding Government, whilst the Commune, which had never succeeded in establishing those telegraphic communications that are absolutely essential to a recognised government, found itself undone and destroyed — and, in fact, very much in the wrong. Besides, the Commune was the outcome of a revolution carried out in face of the enemy, and this the Versailles administration could never forgive, for its origin recalled their own. It was for this reason that a captain of the winning side, being employed in shooting rebels in the neighbourhood of the Louvre, ordered his men to search for Frémont and shoot him. At last, after remaining in hiding for a fortnight with citizen Charlier, a member of the Commune, under a roof in the Place de la Bastille, Frémont left

Paris in a smock-frock, with a whip in his hand, behind a market-gardener's cart. And whilst a court-martial at Versailles was condemning him to death, he was earning his livelihood in London by drawing up a complete catalogue of Rowlandson's works for a rich City amateur. Being an intelligent, industrious and honourable man, he soon became well known and respected among the English artists. He loved art passionately, but politics scarcely interested him at all. He remained friendly towards the Commune through loyalty alone and in order to avoid the shame of deserting vanquished friends. But he dressed well and moved in good society. He worked strenuously and, at the same time, knew how to profit by his work. His *Dictionnaire des monogrammes* not only established his reputation, but brought him in some money. After the amnesty had been passed and the last fluttering rags of civil strife had blown away, there landed at Boulogne, after Gambetta's motion, a certain gentleman, haughty and smiling, yet not unsociable. He was youngish, but a little worn by work, and with a few grey hairs; he was correctly dressed in a travelling costume and carried a portmanteau packed with sketches and manuscripts. Establishing himself in modest style at Montmartre, Georges Frémont quickly became intimate with the artist colony there. But the labours upon the emoluments from which he had mainly supported himself in England only brought him the satisfaction of gratified vanity in France. Then Gambetta obtained for him an appointment as inspector of museums, and Frémont fulfilled his duties in this department both conscientiously and skilfully. He had a true and delicate taste in art. The nervous sensitiveness which had moved him deeply in his youth before the spectacle of his country's wounds, still affected him, now that he was growing old, when confronted by unhappy social conditions, but enabled him, too, to derive delight from the graceful expression of human thought, from exquisite shapes, from the classic line, and the heroic cast of a face. With all this he was patriotic even in art, never jesting about the Burgundian school, faithful to political sentiment, and relying on France to bring justice and liberty to the universe.

"You old communard!" repeated M. Worms-Clavelin.

"Hold your tongue, Worms! Your soul is ignoble and your mind obtuse. You have no meaning in yourself, but, in the phrase of to-day, you are a representative type. Just Heavens! how many victims were butchered during a whole century of civil war just that M. Worms-Clavelin might become a republican *préfet*! Worms, you are lower in the scale than the *préfets* of the Empire."

"The Empire!" exclaimed M. Worms-Clavelin "Blast the Empire! First of all it swept us all into the abyss, and then it made me an official. But, all the same,

wine is made, corn is grown, just as in the time of the Empire; they bet on the Bourse, as under the Empire; one eats, drinks, and makes love, as under the Empire. At bottom, life is just the same. How could government and administration be different? There are certain shades of difference, I grant you. We have more liberty; we even have too much of it. We have more security. We enjoy a government which suits the ideals of the people. As far as such a thing is possible, we are the masters of our fate. All the social forces are now held in just balance, or nearly so. Now just you show me what there is that could be changed. The colour of our postage stamps perhaps... and after that!... As old Montessuy used to say, 'No, no, friend, short of changing the French, there is nothing in France to change.' Of course, I am all for progress. One must talk about moving, were it only in order to dispense with movement. 'Forward! forward!' The *Marseillaise* must have been useful in *not* carrying one to the frontier!..

The look which Georges Frémont turned on the *préfet* was full of deep, affectionate, kindly, thoughtful scorn:

"Everything is as perfect as it can be, then, Worms?"

"Don't make out that I speak like an utter dolt. Nothing is perfect, but all things cling together, prop one another up, dovetail with one another. It is just like père Mulot's wall which you can see from here behind the orangery. It is all warped and cracked and leans forward. For the last thirty years that fool of a Quatrebarbe, the diocesan architect, has been stopping dead in front of Mulot's house. Then, with his nose in air, his hands behind his back and his legs apart, he says: 'I really don't see how that holds together!' The little imps coming out from school stand behind him and shout in mockery of his gruff tones: 'I really don't see how that holds together!' He turns round and, seeing nobody, looks at the pavement as though the echo of his voice had risen from the earth. Then he goes away repeating, 'I really don't see how that holds together!' It holds together because nobody touches it; because père Mulot summons neither masons nor architects; above all, because he takes good care not to ask M. Quatrebarbe for his advice. It holds together because up till now it has held together. It holds together, you old dreamer, because they neither revise the taxes nor reform the Constitution."

"That is to say, it holds together through fraud and iniquity," said Georges Frémont. "We have fallen into a cauldron of shame. Our finance ministers are under the thumb of the cosmopolitan banking-houses. And, sadder still, it is France — France, of old the deliverer of the nations — that has no care in European politics save to avenge the rights of titled sovereigns. Without even daring to shudder, we permitted the massacre of three hundred thousand

Christians in the East, although, by our traditions, we had been constituted their revered and august protectors. We have betrayed not only the interests of humanity, but our own; and now you may see the Republic floating in Cretan waters among the Powers of Europe, like a guinea-fowl amid a flock of gulls. It was to this point, then, that our friendship with our ally was to lead us."

The *préfet* protested:

"Don't attack the Russian entente, Frémont. It's the very best of all the electioneering baits."

"The Russian alliance," replied Frémont, waving his fork, "I hailed the birth of it with joyful expectation. But, alas, did it not, at the very first test, fling us into the arms of that assassin the Sultan and lead us to Crete, there to hurl melinite shell at Christians whose only fault was the long oppression they had suffered? But it was not Russia that we took such pains to humour, it was the great bankers interested in Ottoman bonds. And you saw how the glorious victory of Canea was hailed by the Jewish financiers with a burst of generous enthusiasm."

"There you go," cried the *préfet*, "that's just sentimental politics! You ought to know, at any rate, where that sort of thing leads. And why the deuce you should be excited about the Greeks, I don't see. They're not at all interesting."

"You are right, Worms," said the inspector of fine arts. "You are perfectly right. The Greeks are not interesting, for they are poor. They have nothing but their blue sea, their violet hills and the fragments of their statues. The honey of Hymettus is never quoted on the Bourse. The Turks, on the contrary, are well worthy of the attention of European financiers. They have internal dissensions; above all they have resources. They pay badly and they pay much. One can do business with them. Stocks rise. All is well then. Such are the ideals of our foreign policy!"

M. Worms-Clavelin interrupted him hurriedly, and casting on him a reproachful look, said:

"Ah, now! Georges, don't be disingenuous. You know well enough that we neither have, nor can have, any foreign policy."

XI

“It seems that it is fixed for tomorrow,” said M. de Terremondre as he entered Paillot’s shop.

Everyone understood the allusion: he was referring to the execution of Lecœur, the butcher’s assistant, who had been sentenced to death on the 27th of November, for the murder of Madame Houssieu. This young criminal supplied the entire township with an interest in life. Judge Roquincourt, who had a reputation in society as a ladies’ man, had courteously admitted Madame Dellion and Madame de Gromance to the prison and allowed them a glimpse of the prisoner through the barred grating of the cell where he was playing cards with a gaoler. In his turn, the governor of the prison, M. Ossian Colot, an officer of the Academy, gladly did the honours of his condemned prisoner to journalists as well as to prominent townsmen. M. Ossian Colot had written with the knowledge of an expert on various questions of the penal code. He was proud of his establishment, which was run on the most up-to-date lines, and he by no means despised popularity. The visitors cast curious glances at Lecœur, while they speculated; on the relationship between this youth of twenty and the nonagenarian widow who had become his victim. They stood stupefied by astonishment before this monstrous brute. Yet Abbé Tabarit, the prison chaplain, told with tears in his eyes how the poor lad had expressed the most edifying sentiments of repentance and piety. Meanwhile, from morning to night throughout three whole months, Lecœur played cards with his gaolers and disputed the points in their own slang, for they were of the same class. His darkened soul never revealed its sufferings in words, but the rosy, chubby lad who, only ten months before, was to be met whistling in the street with his basket on his head, and his white apron knotted round his muscular loins, now shivered in his strait waistcoat with pale, cadaverous face and looked like a sick man of forty. His herculean neck was wasted and now protruded from his drooping shoulders, thin and disproportionately long. By this time it was agreed on all sides that he had exhausted the abhorrence, the pity and the curiosity of his fellow-citizens, and that it was high time to put an end to him.

“For six o’clock tomorrow. I heard it from Surcouf himself,” added M. de Terremondre. “They’ve got the guillotine at the station.”

“That’s a good thing,” said Dr. Fornerol. “For three nights the crowd has been congregating at the cross-roads of les Evées and there have been several

accidents. Julien's son fell from a tree on his head and cracked his skull. I'm afraid it's impossible to save him.

"As for the condemned," continued the doctor, "nobody, not even the President of the Republic, could prolong his life. For this young lad who was vigorous and sound up to the time of his arrest is now in the last stage of consumption."

"Have you seen him in his cell, then?" asked Paillot.

"Several times," answered Dr. Fornerol, "and I have even attended him professionally at Ossian Colot's request, for he is always deeply interested in the moral and physical well-being of his boarders."

"He's a real philanthropist," answered M. de Terremondre. "And the fact ought to be recognised that, in its way, our municipal prison is an admirable institution, with its clean, white cells, all radiating from a central watch-tower, and so skilfully arranged that all the occupants are constantly under observation without being aware of the fact. Nothing can be said against it, it is complete and modern and all on the newest lines. Last year, when I was on a walking tour in Morocco, I saw at Tangier, in a courtyard shaded by a mulberry tree, a wretched building of mud and plaster, with a huge negro dressed in rags lying asleep in front of it. Being a soldier, he was armed with a cudgel. Swarthy hands clasping wicker baskets were projecting from the narrow windows of the building. These belonged to the prisoners, who were offering the passers-by the products of their lazy efforts, in exchange for a copper or two. Their guttural voices whined out prayers and complaints, which were harshly punctuated at intervals by curses and furious shouts. For they were all shut up together in a vast hall and spent the time in quarrelling with one another about the apertures, through which they all wanted to pass their baskets. Whenever a dispute was too noisy, the black soldier would wake up and force both baskets and suppliant hands back within the walls by a vigorous onslaught of his cudgel. In a few seconds, however, more hands would appear, all sunburnt and tattooed in blue like the first ones. I had the curiosity to peep into the prison hall through the chinks in an old wooden door. I could see in the dim-lit, shadowy place a horde of tatterdemalions scattered over the damp ground, bronzed bodies sleeping on piles of red rags, solemn faces with long venerable beards beneath their turbans, nimble blackamoors weaving baskets with shouts of laughter. On swollen limbs here and there could be seen soiled linen bandages barely hiding sores and ulcers, and one could see and hear the vermin wave and rustle in all directions. Sometimes a laugh passed round the room. And a black hen was pecking at the filthy ground with her beak. The soldier allowed me to watch the prisoners as long as I liked, waiting for me to go, before he begged of me. Then I thought of the governor of our splendid

municipal prison, and I said to myself: 'If only M. Ossian Colot were to come to Tangier he would soon discover and sweep away this crowding, this horrible promiscuity.'"

"You paint a picture of barbarism which I recognise," answered M. Bergeret. "It is far less cruel than civilisation. For these Mussulman prisoners have no sufferings to undergo, save such as arise from the indifference or the occasional savagery of their gaolers. At least the philanthropists leave them alone and their life is endurable, for they escape the torture of the cell system, and in comparison with the cell invented by the penal code of science, every other sort of prison is quite pleasant.

"There is," continued M. Bergeret, "a peculiar savagery in civilised peoples, which surpasses in cruelty all that the imagination of barbarism can conceive. A criminal expert is a much fiercer being than a savage, and a philanthropist will invent tortures unknown in China or Persia. A Persian executioner kills his prisoners by starving them, but it required a philanthropist to conceive the idea of killing them with solitude. It is on the principle of solitude that the punishment of the cell system depends, and no other penalty can be compared with it for duration and cruelty. The sufferer, if he is lucky, becomes mad through it, and madness mercifully destroys in him all sense of his sufferings. People imagine they are justifying this abominable system when they allege that the prisoner must be withdrawn from the bad influence, of his fellows and put in a position where he cannot give way to immoral or criminal instincts. People who reason in this way are really such great fools that one can scarcely call them hypocrites."

"You are right," said M. Mazure. "But let us be just to our own age. The Revolution not only accomplished a reform in judicial procedure, but also much improved the lot of the prisoner. The dungeons of the olden times were generally dark, pestilential dens."

"It is true," replied M. Bergeret, "that men have been cruel and malicious in every age and have always delighted in tormenting the wretched. But before philanthropists arose, at any rate, men were only tortured through a simple feeling of hatred and desire for revenge, and not for the good of their morals."

"You forget," answered M. Mazure, "that the Middle Ages gave birth to the most accursed form of philanthropy ever known — the spiritual. For it is just this name that suits the spirit of the holy Inquisition. It was through pure charity alone that this tribunal handed heretics over to the stake, and if it destroyed the body, it was, so they said, only in order to save the soul."

"They never said that," answered M. Bergeret, "and they never thought it. Victor Hugo did, indeed, believe that Torquemada ordered men to be burnt for

their good, in order that their eternal happiness might be secured at the price of a short pain. On this theory he constructed a drama that sparkles with the play of antithesis. But there is no foundation whatever for this idea of his, and I should never have imagined that a scholar like you, fattening, as you have done, on old parchments, would have been led astray by a poet's lies. The truth is that the tribunal of the Inquisition, in handing the heretic over to the secular arm, was simply cutting away a diseased limb from the Church, for fear lest the whole body should be contaminated. As for the limb thus cut off, its fate was in the hands of God. Such was the spirit of the Inquisition, frightful enough, but by no means romantic. But where the Holy Office showed what you rightly call spiritual philanthropy was in the treatment it meted out to those converted from the error of their ways. It charitably condemned them to perpetual imprisonment, and immured them for the good of their souls. But I was merely referring to the State prisons, just now, such as they were in the Middle Ages and in modern times up to the reign of Louis XIV."

"It is true," said M. de Terremonde, "that the system of solitary confinement has not produced all the happy results that were expected from it in the reformation of prisoners."

"This system," said Dr. Fornerol, "often produces rather serious mental disorders. Yet it is only fair to add that criminals are naturally predisposed to troubles of this kind. We recognise to-day that the criminal is a degenerate. Thus, for instance, thanks to M. Ossian Colot's courtesy, I have been allowed to make an examination of our murderer, this fellow Lecœur. I found many physiological defects in him.... His teeth, for instance, are: quite abnormal. I argue from that fact that he is only partially responsible for his acts."

"Yet," said M. Bergeret, "one of the sisters of Mithridates had a double row of teeth in each jaw, and in her brother's estimation at any rate, she was a woman of noble courage. So dearly did he love her that when he was a fugitive pursued by Lucullus, he gave orders that she should be strangled by a mute to prevent her falling alive into the hands of the Romans. Nor did she then fail to live up to her brother's lofty estimation of her character, but suffering death by the bowstring with joyous calmness, said: 'I thank the king, my brother, for having had a care to my honour, even in the midst of his own besetting troubles.' You see from this example that heroism is not impossible even with a row of abnormal teeth."

"Lecœur's case," replied the doctor, "presents many other peculiarities which cannot fail to be significant in the eyes of a scientist. Like so many born criminals his senses are blunted. Thus I found, when I examined him, that he

was tattooed in every part of his body. You would be surprised at the lewd fancy shown in the choice of scenes and symbols painted on his skin.”

“Really?” said M. de Terremondre.

“The skin of this patient,” said Dr. Fornerol, “really ought to be properly prepared and preserved in our museum. But it is not the character of the tattooing that I want to insist upon, but rather the number of the pictures and their arrangement on the body. Certain parts of the operation must have caused the patient an amount of pain which could scarcely have been bearable to a person of ordinary sensibility.”

“There you are making a mistake!” exclaimed M. de Terremondre. “It is evident that you don’t know my friend Jilly. Yet he is a very well-known man. Jilly was quite young when, in 1885 or ’86, he made the tour of the world with his friend Lord Turnbridge on the yacht *Old Friend*. Jilly swears that throughout the whole voyage, through storms and calm, neither Lord Turnbridge nor himself ever put foot on deck for a single moment. The whole time they remained in the cabin drinking champagne with an old top-’ man of the marines who had been taught tattooing by a Tasmanian chief. In the course of the voyage this old top-man covered the two friends from head to foot with tattoo marks, and Jilly returned to France adorned with a fox-hunt that comprises as many as three hundred and twenty-four figures of men, women, horses and dogs. He is always delighted to show it when he sups with boon companions at an inn. Now I really cannot say whether Jilly is abnormally insensitive to pain, but what I can tell you is that he is a fine fellow, and a man of honour and that he is incapable of..

“But,” asked M. Bergeret, “do you think it right that this butcher’s boy should be guillotined?”

For you confess that there are such things as born criminals, and in your own phrase it seems that Lecoœur was only partially responsible for his acts, through a congenital predisposition to crime.”

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

“Then what would you do with him?” he asked.

“As a matter of fact,” replied M. Bergeret, “I am but little interested in the fate of this particular man. But I am, nevertheless, opposed to the death penalty.”

“Let’s hear your reasons, Bergeret,” said Mazure, the archivist, for to him, living as he did in admiration of ’93 and the Terror, the idea of the guillotine carried with it mystic suggestions of moral beauty. “For my part, I would prohibit the death penalty in common law, but re-establish it in political cases.”

M. de Terremondre had appointed Paillot’s shop as a rendezvous for M. Georges Frémont, the inspector of fine arts, and just at the moment when this

civic discussion was in progress, he entered the shop. They were going together to inspect Queen Marguerite's house. Now, M. Bergeret stood rather in awe of M. Frémont, for he felt himself a poor creature by the side of such a great man. For M. Bergeret, who feared nothing in the world of ideas, was very diffident where living men were concerned.

M. de Terremondre had not got the key of the house, so he sent Léon to fetch it, while he made M. Georges Frémont sit down in the corner among the old books.

"Monsieur Bergeret," said he, "is singing the praises of the old-fashioned prisons."

"Not at all," said M. Bergeret, a little annoyed, "not at all. They were nothing but sewers where the poor wretches lived chained to the wall. But, at any rate, they were not alone — they had companions — and the citizens, as well as the lords and ladies, used to come and visit them. Visiting the prisons was one of the seven works of mercy. Nobody is tempted to do that now, and if they were, the prison regulations would not allow it."

"It is true," said M. de Terremondre, "that in olden times it was customary to visit the prisoners. In my portfolios I have an engraving by Abraham Bosse, which represents a nobleman wearing a plumed felt hat, accompanying a lady in a veil of Venice point and a peaked brocade bodice, into a dungeon which is swarming with beggars clothed | in a few shreds of filthy rags. The engraving is one of a set of seven original proofs which I possess. And with these one always has to be! on one's guard, for nowadays they reprint them from the old worn plates."

"Visiting the prisons," said Georges Frémont, "is a common subject of Christian art in Italy, Flanders and France. It is treated with peculiar vigour and truth in the Della Robbias on the frieze of painted terra-cotta that surrounds the hospital at Pistoia in its superb embrace.... You know Pistoia, Monsieur Bergeret?. — .."

The Professor had to acknowledge that he had never been in Tuscany.

Here M. de Terremondre, who was standing near the door, touched M. Frémont's arm.

"Look, Monsieur Frémont," said he, "towards the square at the right of the church. You will see the prettiest woman in the town go by."

"That's Madame de Gromance," said M. Bergeret. "She is charming."

"She occasions a lot of gossip," said M. Mazure. "She was a Demoiselle Chapon. Her father was a solicitor, and the greatest skinflint in the department. Yet she is a typical aristocrat."

“What is called the aristocratic type,” said Georges Frémont, “is a pure conception of the brain. There is no more reality in it than in the classic type of the Bacchante or the Muse. I have often wondered how this aristocratic type of womanhood arose, how it managed to root itself in the popular conception. If it takes its origin, I think, from several elements of real life. Among these I should point to the actresses in tragedy and comedy, both those of the old Gymnase and of the Théâtre-Français, as well as of the Boulevard du Crime and the Porte-Saint-Martin. For a whole century these actresses have been presenting to our spectacle-loving people numberless studies of princesses and great ladies. Besides these, one must include the models from whom painters create queens and duchesses for their genre, or historical pictures. Nor must one overlook the more recent and less far-reaching, yet still powerful, influence of the mannequins, or lay-figures, of the great dressmakers, those beautiful girls with tall figures who show off a dress so superbly. Now these actresses, these models, these shopgirls, are all women of the lower class. From this I deduce the fact that the aristocratic type proceeds entirely from plebeian elegance. Hence there is nothing surprising in the fact that Madame de Gromance, *nie* Chapon, should be found to belong to this type. She is graceful, and what is a rare thing in our towns, with their sharp paving-stones and dirty footpaths — she walks well. But I rather fancy she falls a little short of perfection as regards the hips. That’s a serious defect!”

Lifting his nose from the thirty-eighth volume of *l’Histoire générale des Voyages*, M. Bergeret looked with admiring awe at this red-bearded Parisian who could thus pass judgment on Madame de Gromance’s delicious beauty and worshipful shape in the cold and measured accents of an inquisitor.

“Now I know your tastes,” said M. de Terremonde, “I will introduce you to my aunt Courtrai. She is heavily built and can only sit down in a certain family arm-chair, which, for the past three hundred years, has been in the habit of receiving all the old ladies of Courtrai-Maillan within its capaciously wide and complacent embrace. As for her face, it suits well with the rest of her, and I hope you will like it. My aunt Courtrai is as red as a tomato, with fair moustaches that wave negligently in their beauty. Ah! my aunt Courtrai’s type has no connection with your actresses, models, and dressmakers’ dummies.”

“I feel myself,” said M. Frémont, “already much enamoured of your worthy aunt.”

“The ancient nobility,” said M. Mazure, “used to live the life of our large farmers of to-day, and, of course, they could not avoid resembling those whose lives they led.”

“It is a well-proved fact,” said Dr. Fornerol, “that the human race is

degenerating.”

“Do you really think so?” asked M. Frémont. “Yet in France and Italy, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the flower of their chivalry must have been very slender. The royal coats of mail belonging to the end of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance times were skilfully wrought, and damascened and chased with exquisite art, yet so narrow in the shoulders are they and so meagre in figure, that a man of our day could only wear them with difficulty. They were almost all made for small, slight men, and in fact, French portraits of the fifteenth century, and the miniatures of Jehan Foucquet show us a world of almost stunted folk.” Léon entered with the key, in a great state of excitement.

“It is fixed for tomorrow,” he said to his master. “Deibler and his assistants came by the half-past three train. They went to the Hôtel de Paris, but there they wouldn’t take them in. Then they went to the inn at the bottom of Duroc Hill, *le Cheval Bleu*, a regular cut-throat place.”

“Ah, yes,” said Frémont, “I heard this morning at the prefecture that there was an execution in your town. The topic was in everybody’s mouth.”

“There are so few amusements in the provinces I” said M. de Terremonde.

“But that spirit,” said M. Bergeret, “is revolting. A legal execution takes place in secret. But why should we still carry it on at all, if we are ashamed of it? President Grévy, who was a man of great insight, practically abolished the death penalty, by never passing a sentence of death. Would that his successors had followed his example! Personal security in the modern state is not obtained by mere fear of punishment. Many European nations have now abolished the death penalty, and in such countries crime is no more common than in the nations where this base custom yet exists. And even in countries where this practice is still found, it is in a weak and languishing condition, no longer retaining power or efficacy. It is nothing but a piece of useless unseemliness, for the practice is a mere survival of the principle on which it rested. Those ideas of right and justice which formerly laid men’s heads low in majestic fashion are now shaken to their roots by the morality which has blossomed upon the natural sciences. And since the death penalty is visibly on the point of death, the wisest thing would be to let it die.”

“You are right,” said M. Frémont. “The death penalty has become an intolerable practice, since now we no longer connect any idea of expiation with it, for expiation is a purely theological notion.”

“The President would certainly have sent a pardon,” said Léon, with a consequential air. “But the crime was too horrible.”

“The power of pardon,” said M. Bergeret, “was one of the attributes of divine right. The king could only exercise it because, as the representative of God on

earth, he was above the ordinary human justice. In passing from the king to the President of the Republic, this right lost its essential character and therefore its legality.

It thenceforth became a flimsy prerogative, a judicial power outside justice and yet no longer above it; it created an arbitrary jurisdiction, foreign to our conception of the lawgiver. In practice it is good, since by its action the wretched are saved. But bear in mind that it has become ridiculous. The mercy of the king was the mercy of God Himself, but just imagine M. Félix Faure invested with the attributes of divinity! M. Thiers, who did not fancy himself the Lord's Anointed, and who, indeed, was not consecrated at Rheims, released himself from this right of pardon by appointing a commission which was entrusted with the task of being merciful for him."

"It was only moderately so," said M. Frémont.

Here a young soldier entered the shop and asked for *Le Parfait Secrétaire* .

"Remains of barbarism," said M. Bergeret, "still persist in modern civilisation. Our code of military justice, for instance, will make our memory hateful in the eyes of the near future. That code was framed to deal with the bands of armed brigands who ravaged Europe in the eighteenth century. It was perpetuated by the Republic of '92 and reduced to a system during the first half of this century. When a nation had taken the place of an army, they forgot to change the code, for one cannot think of everything. Those brutal laws which were framed in the first place to curb a savage soldiery are now used to govern scared young peasants, or the children of our towns, who could easily be led by kindness. And that is considered a natural proceeding!"

"I don't follow you," said M. de Terremonde. "Our military code, prepared, I believe, at the Restoration, only dates from the Second Empire. About 1875 it was revised and made to suit the new organisation of the army. You cannot, therefore, say that it was framed for the armies of former times."

"I can with truth," answered M. Bergeret, "for this code is nothing more than a mere collection of orders respecting the armies of Louis XIV and Louis XV. Everyone knows what these armies were, a conglomeration of kidnappers and kidnapped, the scourings of the country, divided into lots which were bought by the young nobles, often mere children. In such regiments discipline was maintained by perpetual threats of death. But everything is now changed: the soldiery of the monarchy and the two Empires has given place to a vast and peaceful national guard. There is no longer any fear of mutiny or violence. Nevertheless, death at every turn still threatens these gentle flocks of peasants and artisans clumsily disguised as soldiers. The contrast between their harmless conduct and the savage laws in force against them is almost laughable. And a

moment's reflection would prove that it is as absurd as it is hateful to punish with death crimes which could easily be dealt with by the simple penal code devised for the maintenance of public order."

"But," said M. de Terremonde, "the soldiers of to-day are armed as were the soldiers of former ages, and it is quite necessary that a small, unarmed body of officers should be able to ensure obedience and respect from a mob of men armed with muskets and cartridges. That's the gist of the whole matter."

"It is an ancient prejudice," said M. Bergeret, "to believe in the necessity of punishment and to fancy that the severer the punishment the more efficacious it is. The death penalty for assaulting a superior officer is a survival of the time when the officers were not of the same blood as the soldiers. These penalties were still retained in the republican armies. Brindamour, who became a general in 1792, employed the customs of bygone days in the service of the Revolution and shot volunteers in grand style. At any rate, it may be said that Brindamour waged war and fought strenuously from the time that he became general. It was a matter of keeping the upper hand: it was not a man's life that was at stake, but the safety of the country."

"It was theft especially," said M. Mazure, "that the generals of the year II punished with relentless severity. A light-infantry man in the Army of the North, who had merely exchanged his old hat for a new one, was shot. Two drummers, the eldest of whom was only eighteen, were shot in sight of their comrades for having stolen some worthless ornaments from an old peasant. It was the heroic age."

"It was not only thieves," answered M. Bergeret, "who were shot down from day to day in the republican armies, it was also mutineers. And those soldiers, who have been so much belauded since, were dragooned like convicts, even to the point of semi-starvation. It is true that they were occasionally in an awkward mood. Witness the three hundred gunners of the 33rd demi-brigade who, at Mantua in the year IV, demanded their pay by turning their cannon on the generals."

"They were jolly dogs with whom jesting was not safe! If enemies were not come-at-able they were capable of spitting a dozen of their superior officers. Such is the heroic temperament. But Dumanet is not a hero nowadays, since peace no longer produces such beings. Sergeant Bridoux has nothing to fear in his peaceful quarters, yet it pleases him to be still able to say that a man cannot raise a hand against him without being immediately shot with musical honours. However, in the present state of our manners and in time of peace, such a circumstance is out of proportion, although nobody can see it. It is true that when a sentence of death has been passed by court-martial it is never carried out, save

in Algeria, and that, as far as possible, we avoid giving these martial and musical entertainments in France. It is recognised that here they would produce a bad effect: and in that fact you have a tacit condemnation of the military code.”

“Take care,” said M. de Terremonde, “lest you impair discipline in any way.”

“If,” answered M. Bergeret, “you had only seen a batch of raw recruits filing into the barrack yard, you would no longer think it necessary to be for ever hurling threats of death at these sheeplike creatures in order to maintain discipline among them. They are thinking of nothing but of how to get through their three years, as they put it, and Sergeant Bridoux would be touched even to tears by their pitiful docility, were it not that he thirsts to terrify them in order that he may enjoy his own sense of power. It is not that Sergeant Bridoux was born with a more callous heart than anyone else. But he is doubly perverted, both as slave and tyrant, and if Marcus Aurelius had been a non-commissioned officer I would not go so far as to promise that he would never have tyrannised over his men. However that may be, this tyranny suffices to produce that submission tempered by deceit that is the soldier’s most useful virtue in time of peace.

“It is high time that our military codes of law, with their paraphernalia of death, should be seen no more, save in the chamber of horrors, by the side of the keys of the Bastille and the thumbscrews of the Inquisition.”

“Army affairs,” said M. de Terremonde, “require most cautious handling. The army means safety and it means hope. It is also the training school of duty. Where else, save there, can be found self-sacrifice and devotion?”

“It is true,” said M. Bergeret, “that men consider it the primary social duty to learn to kill their fellows according to rule, and that, in civilised nations, the glory of massacre is the greatest glory known. And, after all, though man may be irredeemably evil and mischievous, the bad work he does is but small in comparison with the whole universe. For this planet is but a clod of earth in space and the sun but a gaseous bubble that will soon dissolve.”

“I see,” said M. Fremont, “that you are no positivist. For you treat the great fetich but scornfully.”

“What is the great fetich?” asked M. de Terremonde.

“You know,” answered M. Frémont, “that the positivists classify man as the worshipping animal. Auguste Comte was very anxious to provide for the wants of this worshipping animal and, after long reflection, supplied him with a fetich. But his choice fell on the earth and not on God. This was not because he was an atheist. On the contrary, he held that the existence of a creative power is quite probable. Only he opined that God was too difficult for comprehension, and therefore his disciples, who are very religious men, practise the worship of the

dead, of great men, of woman, and of the great fetich, which is the earth. Hence it comes about that the followers of this cult make plans for the happiness of men and busy themselves in regulating the affairs of the planet with a view to our happiness.”

“They will have a great deal to do,” said M. Bergeret, “and it is quite evident that they are optimists. They must be optimistic to a degree, and this temperament of theirs fills me with astonishment, for it is difficult to realise that intelligent and thoughtful men such as these can cherish the hope of some day making our sojourn on this petty ball bearable to us. For this earth, revolving clumsily round a yellow, half-darkened sun, carries us with it as though we were vermin on a mouldy crust. The great fetich does not seem to me in any way worshipful.”

Dr. Fornerol stooped down to whisper in M. de Terremondre’s ear:

“Bergeret wouldn’t gird at the universe in this way if he hadn’t some special trouble. It isn’t natural to see the seamy side of everything.”

“You’re right,” said M. de Terremondre.

XII

THE elm-trees on the Mall were slowly clothing their dusky limbs with a delicate drapery of pale gauzy green. But on the slope of the hill crowned with its ancient ramparts, the flowering trees of the orchards showed their round white heads, or distaffs of rosy bloom, against a background of cloudless, sunny sky that smiled between the showers. In the distance flowed the river, swollen with spring rains, a line of bare, white water, that fretted with its rounded curves the rows of slender poplars which outlined its course. Beautiful, invincible, fruitful and eternal, flowed the river, a true goddess, as in the days when the boatmen of Roman Gaul made their offerings of copper coins to it and raised, before the temple of Venus and Augustus, a votive pillar on which they had roughly carved a boat with its oars. Everywhere in this open valley, the sweet, trembling youth of the year shivered along the surface of the ancient earth. Under the elm-trees on the Mall walked M. Bergeret with slow, irregular steps. As he wandered on, his mind glanced hither and thither; shifting it was and confused; old as the earth itself, yet young as the flowers on the apple-boughs; empty of thought, yet full of vague visions; lonely, yet full of desire; gentle, innocent, wanton, melancholy; dragging behind it a weight of weariness, yet still pursuing Hopes and Illusions whose very names, shapes and faces were unknown to him.

At last he drew near the wooden bench on which he was in the habit of sitting in summer time, at the hour when the birds are silent on the trees. Here, where he often sat resting with Abbé Lantaigne, under the beautiful elm that overheard all their grave talk, he saw that some words had been recently traced by a clumsy hand in chalk on the green back of the seat. At first he was seized with a fear lest he should find his own name written there, for it was quite familiar by now to all the blackguards of the town. But he soon saw that he need have no trouble on that score, since it was merely a lewd inscription in which Narcissus announced to the world the pleasures he had enjoyed on this very bench in the arms of his Ernestine, doubtless under cover of the kindly night. The style of the legend was simple and concise, but coarse and uncomely in its terms.

M. Bergeret was just about to sit down in his accustomed place, but he changed his mind, since it did not seem a fitting action for a decent man to lean publicly against this obscene memorial, dedicated to the Venus of cross-roads and gardens, especially as it stood on the very spot where he had expressed so

many noble and ironic thoughts and had so often invoked the muse of seemingly meditation. Turning away, therefore, from the bench, he said to himself:

“O vain desire for fame! We long to live in the memory of men, and unless we are consummately well-bred men of the world, we would fain publish in the market-place our loves, our joys, our sorrows and our hates. Narcissus, here, can only really believe that he has actually won his Ernestine, when all the world has heard of it. It was the same spirit that drove Phidias to trace a beloved name on the great toe of the Olympian Jove. O thirst of the soul to unburden itself, to plunge into the ocean of the not-self! *‘To-day , on this bench , Narcissus ...’*

“Yet,” thought M. Bergeret once more, “the first virtue of civilised man and the corner-stone of society is dissimulation. It is just as incumbent on us to hide our thoughts as it is for us to wear clothes. A man who blurts out all his thoughts, just as they arise in his mind, is as inconceivable as the spectacle of a man walking naked through a town. Talk in Paillot’s shop is free enough, yet were I, for instance, to express all the fancies that crowd my mind at this moment, all the notions which pass through my head, like a swarm of witches riding on broomsticks down a chimney, if I were to describe the manner in which I suddenly see Madame de Gromance, the incongruous attitudes in which I picture her, the vision of her which comes to me, more ludicrous, more weird, more chimerical, more quaint, more monstrous, more perverted and alien to all seemingly conventions, a thousand times more waggish and indecent than that famous figure introduced in the scene of the Last Judgment on the north portal of Saint-Exupère by a masterly craftsman who had caught a glimpse of Lust himself as he leant over a vent-hole of hell; if I were accurately to reveal the strangeness of my dream, it would be concluded that I am a prey to some repulsive mania. Yet, all the same, I know that I am an honourable man, naturally inclined to purity, disciplined by life and reflection to self-control, a modest man wholly dedicated to the peaceful pleasures of the mind, a foe to all excess, and hating vice as a deformity.”

As he walked on, deep in this singular train of thought, M. Bergeret caught sight, along the Mall, of Abbé Lantaigne,- the principal of the high seminary, and Abbé Tabarit, the chaplain of the prison. The two were in close conversation and M. Tabarit was waggling his long body, with his little pointed head, while he emphasised his words by sweeping gestures of his bony arms. Abbé Lantaigne, with head erect and chest projecting, held his breviary under his arm and listened gravely with far-away gaze and lips locked tightly between stolid cheeks that were never distended by a smile.

M. Lantaigne answered M. Bergeret’s bow by a gesture and a word of greeting:

“Stop, Monsieur Bergeret,” he cried, “M. Tabarit is not afraid of infidels.”

But the prison chaplain was not to be interrupted in the full tide of his thoughts.

“Who,” said he, “could have remained unmoved at what I saw? This lad has taught every one of us a lesson by the sincerity of his repentance, by the simple, truthful expression of the most Christian sentiments. His bearing, his looks, his words, his whole being spoke plainly enough of gentleness and humility, of utter submission to the will of God. He never ceased to offer a most consoling spectacle, a most salutary example. Perfect resignation, an awakened faith too long stifled in his heart, a supreme abasement before the God who pardons: such were the blessed fruits of my exhortations.”

The old man was moved with the easy earnestness of the blameless, buoyant, self-absorbed nature. Real grief stirred in his great, prominent eyes and his poor, meagre red nose. After a momentary sigh, he began again, this time turning towards M. Bergeret:

“Ah, sir,” said he, “in the course of my painful ministry I have encountered many thorns. But also what fruit I find! Many times in the course of my long life have I snatched lost souls from the devil, who was on the alert to lay hold of them. But none of the poor creatures with whom I have journeyed to the gates of death presented such an edifying spectacle in their last moments as this young Lecœur.”

“What!” cried M. Bergeret, “you surely are not speaking like this of the murderer of Madame Houssieu? Isn’t it well known that—”

He was just going on to say that, according to the unanimous account of all those who had witnessed the execution, the poor wretch had been carried to the scaffold, already half dead with fear. He stopped short, however, lest he should afflict the old man, who continued in his own way:

“It is true that he made no long speeches and indulged in no noisy demonstrations. But if you had only heard the sighs, the ejaculations, by which he testified to his repentance! In his melancholy journey from the prison to the place of expiation, when I reminded him of his mother and his first communion, he wept.”

“Certainly,” said M. Bergeret, “Madame Houssieu didn’t die so edifyingly.”

At these words M. Tabarit rolled his great eyes from east to west. He always sought for the solution of metaphysical problems, not within himself, but without, and whenever he fell into a day dream at table his old servant, misunderstanding his look, would inquire: “Are you looking for the cork of the bottle, sir? It’s in your hand.”

But M. Tabarit's roving glance had fallen on a great bearded man in cyclist's dress who was passing along the Mall. This was Eusèbe Boulet, editor in chief of the radical paper *le Phare*. Instantly M. Tabarit bade a hasty good-bye to the professor and the head of the seminary, and hurrying up to the journalist with great strides, wished him good-day. Then, with a face reddened by excitement, he drew some crumpled papers out of his pocket and handed them to him with a hand that trembled. These were rectifications and supplementary communications as to the last moments of young Lecoœur. For at the end of his secluded life and humble ministry, a passion for print, a thirst for interviews and articles, had come upon this holy man.

It was with something approaching a smile that M. Lantaigne watched the poor old fellow, with his quick, birdlike movements, handing up his scrawls to the radical editor.

"Look!" said he to M. Bergeret, "the miasma of this age has even infected a man who was marching deathwards by a path long paved with goodness and virtue. This old fellow, though he is humble and modest about everything else, is craving for notoriety. He yearns to appear in print at any cost, even though it be in the pages of an anti-clerical paper."

Then, vexed at having betrayed one of his own people to the enemy, M. Lantaigne added with a brisk air of indifference:

"Not much harm done. It's absurd, that's all."

Thereupon, relapsing into silence, he was his own gloomy self once more.

M. Lantaigne was a masterful man, and his will forced M. Bergeret towards their usual seat. Entirely indifferent to the vulgar phenomena by which the world outside themselves is manifested to the generality of men, he scorned to notice the lewd inscription of Narcissus and Ernestine, written in chalk in large running characters on the back of the seat. Sinking down on the bench with a placid air of mental detachment, he covered a third of this inscribed memorial with his broad back. M. Bergeret sat down by M. Lantaigne's side, first, however, spreading out his newspaper over the back, so as to conceal that part of the text which seemed to him the most outspoken. In his estimation this was the verb — a word which, according to the grammarians, denotes the existence of an attribute to the subject. But inadvertently, he had merely substituted one inscription for another. The paper, in fact, announced in a side-note one of those episodes that have become so common in parliamentary life since the memorable triumph of democratic institutions. This spring the scandal period had come round once more with astronomical exactitude, following the change of the Seasons and the Dance of the Hours, and during the month several deputies had been prosecuted, according to custom. "The sheet unfolded by M.

Bergeret bore in huge letters this notice: "A Senator at Mazas. Arrest of M. Laprat-Teulet." Although there was nothing unusual about the fact itself, which merely indicated the regular working of the parliamentary machine, it struck M. Bergeret that there was perhaps an uncalled-for display of indifference in posting up this notice on a bench on the Mall, in the very shadow of those elms under, which the honourable M. Laprat-Teulet had so often been the recipient of the honours which democracy loves to bestow on her greatest citizens. Here on the Mall, M. Laprat-Teulet, sitting at the right hand of the President of the Republic, on a rostrum draped in ruby velvet beneath a trophy of flags, had, on different ceremonial occasions in honour of great local or national rejoicings, uttered those words which are so well calculated to exalt the blessings of government, while at the same time they recommend patience to the toiling and devoted masses. Laprat-Teulet, who had started as a republican, had now been for five-and-twenty years the powerful and highly respected leader of the opportunist party in the department. Now that his hair had grown white with age and parliamentary toil, he stood out in his native town like an oak adorned with tricoloured garlands. His enemies had been ruined and his friends enriched through his exertions and he was loaded with public honours. He was, moreover, not only august, but also affable, and every year at prize distributions, he spoke of his poverty to the little children: he could call himself poor without injuring himself in any way, for no one believed him, and everyone felt certain that he was very rich; The sources of his wealth, in fact, were well known, the thousand channels by means of which his labour and his astuteness had drained off the money into his own pockets. They could calculate perfectly what funds had poured into his coffers from the undertakings that were based on his political credit and from all the concessions granted on account of his parliamentary interest. For he was a deputy with famous business capacities, a capital financial orator, and his friends knew, as well as, and even better, than his enemies, what he had pocketed through the Panama affair and similar enterprises. Very far-seeing, moderate in his desires and, above all, anxious not to tempt fortune too far, this great guardian of our industrious and intelligent democracy had given up high finance for the last ten years, thus bowing before the first breath of the storm. He had even left the Palais-Bourbon and retired to the Luxembourg, to that great Council of the Commons of France where his wisdom and devotion to the Republic were duly appreciated. There he was able to pull the strings without being seen by the public. He only spoke on secret commissions. But there he still showed those brilliant qualities which for many years the princes of cosmopolitan finance had justly learnt to appraise at a high value. He remained the outspoken defender of the fiscal system introduced at the Revolution and

founded, as we are all aware, on the principles of liberty and justice. He upheld the rights of capital with that emotion which is always so touching in an old hand at the game. Even the turn-coats themselves revered in the person of Laprat-Teulet a pacific and truly conservative mind, regarding him as the guardian angel of personal property.

“His notions are honourable enough,” said M. de Terremondre. “But the worst aspect of it is that to-day he is burdened with the weight of a difficult past.” But Laprat-Teulet had enemies who were implacable in their hatred of him. “I have earned this hatred,” said he magnanimously, “by defending the interests which were entrusted to me.”

His enemies pursued him even into the sacred precincts of the Senate, where his misfortunes gave him an air of still greater dignity, for he had once before been in difficulties and even actually on the verge of ruin. This came about through a mistake made by a Keeper of the Seals who was not a member of the syndicate and who had rashly handed him over into the astonished hands of justice. Neither the honourable M. Laprat-Teulet, nor his examining judge, nor his barrister, nor the Public Prosecutor, nor the Keeper of the Seals himself, was capable of foreseeing, or even understanding, the cause of those sudden partial cleavages in the machine of government, those catastrophes, farcical as the collapse of a platform at a show and terrible as the outcome of what the orator called immanent justice, catastrophes which sometimes hurl the most respected statesmen from their seats in both Chambers. M. Laprat-Teulet felt a melancholy surprise at his fate and he scorned to give any explanation to the authorities, but the number and splendour of his connections saved him. A plea that there was not sufficient cause for prosecution was interposed. At first Laprat-Teulet accepted it with humble gratitude, and next he bore it into the official world as a regular certificate of innocence. “Almighty God,” said Madame Laprat-Teulet, who was pious, “Almighty God has been very merciful to my husband, for to him He has granted the stay of proceedings he so much desired.” It is matter of common knowledge that Madame Laprat-Teulet was so grateful that she had a votive-offering hung up in the chapel of Saint-Antoine, a marble slab bearing the following inscription: “From a Christian wife, in gratitude for an unhoped-for blessing.”

This stay of proceedings reassured Laprat-Teulet’s political friends, the crowd of ex-ministers and big officials who had shared with him, not only the time of struggle, but the fruitful years, who had known both the seven lean kine and the seven fat kine. This stay was a safeguard, or at any rate was regarded as such. It could be relied upon for several years to come. Then suddenly, by a stroke of bad luck, by one of those ill-omened and unforeseen accidents that

come secretly and from underneath, like sudden leaks in rotten vessels, without any political or moral reason, in the full glory of his honours, this old servant of the democracy, this heir of its achievements whom M. Worms-Clavelin had instanced only the night before in the comitia as a shining light to the whole department, this man of order and progress, this defender of capital and opponent of clericalism, this intimate friend of ex-ministers and ex-presidents, this Senator Laprat-Teulet, this man, though exculpated on the former occasion, was sent to prison with a batch of members of parliament. And the local paper announced in large type: "A Senator at Mazas. Arrest of M. Laprat-Teulet." M. Bergeret, being a man of delicacy, turned the paper round on the back of the seat.

"Well," said M. Lantaigne in a morose voice, "do you like the look of what you see there, and do you think it can last long?"

"What do you mean?" asked M. Bergeret. "Are you referring to the parliamentary scandals? But let us first ask what a scandal really is. A scandal is the effect that usually results from the revelation of some secret deed. For men don't in general act furtively, save when they are doing something that runs counter to morality and public opinion. It is also noticeable that, although public scandals occur in every period and every nation, they happen most frequently when the Government is least skilled in dissimulation. It is also evident that state secrets are never well kept in a democracy. The number of people concerned, indeed, and the powerful party jealousies invite revelations, sometimes hushed up, sometimes startling. It should also be observed that the parliamentary system actually multiplies the number of those who betray trusts, by putting a crowd of people in a position where they can do it easily. Louis XIV was robbed by Fouquet on a large and splendid scale. But in our days, all the while the melancholy President, who had been chosen merely as a creditable figure-head, confronted the chastened departments with the mute countenance of a bearded Minerva, he was distributing largesse at the Palais Bourbon at a rate past checking. In itself this was no great evil, for every Government always has a number of needy folks hanging about it, and it is too much to demand of human nature to ask that they shall all be honest. Besides, what these paltry thieves have taken is very little in comparison with what our honest administration wastes every hour of the day. One point alone should be observed, for it is of primary importance. The revenue farmers of olden days, this Pauquet de Sainte-Croix, for instance, who in the time of Louis XV heaped up the wealth of the province in the very mansion where I now live 'in the third room,' those shameless plunderers robbed their nation and their king without being in collusion with any of their country's enemies. Now, on the contrary, our parliamentary sharks are

betraying France to a foreign power, Finance, to wit. For it is true that Finance is to-day one of the Powers of Europe, and of her it may be said, as was formerly said of the Church, that among the nations she remains a splendid alien. Our representatives, whom she buys over, are not only robbers but traitors. And, in truth, they rob and betray in paltry, huckstering fashion. Each one in himself is merely an object of pity: it is their rapid swarming that alarms me.

“Meanwhile the honourable M. Laprat-Teulet is at Mazas! He was taken there on the morning of the very day on which he was due here to preside over the Social Defence Leaguist banquet. This arrest, which was carried out on the day after the vote that authorised the prosecution, has taken M. Worms-Clavelin completely by surprise. He had arranged for M. Dellion to preside at the banquet, since his integrity, guaranteed by inherited wealth and by forty years of commercial prosperity, is universally respected. Though the *préfet* deplores the fact that the most prominent officials of the Republic are continually subject to suspicion, yet, at the same time, he congratulates himself on the loyalty of their constituents, who remain true to the established system, even when it seems the general wish to bring it into disrepute. He declares, in fact, that parliamentary episodes such as the one which has just occurred, even when they follow on others of the same kind, leave the working-classes of the department absolutely indifferent. And M. Worms-Clavelin is quite right: he is by no means exaggerating the phlegmatic calm of these classes, which seem no longer capable of surprise. The herd of nobodies read in the newspapers that Senator Laprat-Teulet has been sent to solitary confinement; they manifest no surprise at the news, and they would have received with the same phlegm the information that he had been sent as ambassador to some foreign court. It is even probable that, if the arm of justice sends him back to parliamentary life, M. Laprat-Teulet will sit next year on the budget commission. There is, at any rate, no doubt whatever that at the end of his sentence he will be re-elected.”

The abbé here interrupted M. Bergeret.

“There, Monsieur Bergeret, you put your finger on the weak point; there you make the void to echo. The public is becoming used to the spectacle of wrongdoing and is losing the power to discriminate between good and evil. That’s where the danger lies. Now one public scandal after another arises, only to be at once hushed up. Under the Monarchy and the Empire there was such a thing as public opinion; there is none to-day. This nation, once so high-spirited and generous, has suddenly become incapable of either hatred or love, of either admiration or scorn.”

“Like you,” said M. Bergeret, “I have been struck by this change and I have sought in vain for the causes of it. We read in many Chinese fables of a very

ugly spirit, of lumpish gait, but subtle mind, who loves to play pranks. He makes his way by night into inhabited houses, then opening a sleeper's brain, as though it were a box, he takes out the brain, puts another in its place and softly closes the skull. He takes infinite delight in passing thus from house to house, interchanging brains as he goes, and when, at dawn, this tricky elf has returned to his temple, the mandarin awakes with the mind of a courtesan, and the young girl with the dreams of a hardened opium-eater. Some spirit of this sort must assuredly have been busy bartering French brains for those of some tame, spiritless people, who drag out a melancholy existence without rising to the height of a new desire, indifferent alike to justice and injustice. For, indeed, we are no longer at all like ourselves."

Stopping suddenly, M. Bergeret shrugged his shoulders. Then he went on, in a tone of gentle sadness:

"Yet, it is the effect of age and the sign of a certain wisdom. Infancy is the age of awe and wonder; youth, of fiery revolt. It is the mere passing of the years that has brought us this mood of peaceful indifference: I ought to have understood it better. Our condition of mind, at any rate, assures us both internal and external peace."

"Do you think so?" asked Abbé Lantaigne. "And have you no presentiment of approaching catastrophe?"

"Life in itself is a catastrophe," answered M. Bergeret. "It is a constant catastrophe, in fact, since it can only manifest itself in an unstable environment, and since the essential condition of its existence is the instability of the forces which produce it. The life of a nation, like that of an individual, is a never-ceasing ruin, a series of downfalls, an endless prospect of misery and crime. Our country, though it is the finest in the world, only exists, like others, by the perpetual renewal of its miseries and mistakes. To live is to destroy. To act is to injure. But at this particular moment, Monsieur Lantaigne, the finest country in the world is feeble in action, and plays but a sluggard's part in the drama of existence. It is that fact which reassures me, for I detect no signs in the heavens. I foresee no evils approaching with special and peculiar menace to our peaceful land. Tell me, Monsieur l'abbé, when you foretell catastrophe, is it from within or from without that you see it coming?"

"The danger is all round us," answered M. Lantaigne, "and yet you laugh."

"I feel no desire whatever to laugh," answered M. Bergeret. "There is little enough for me to laugh at in this sublunary world, on this terrestrial globe whose inhabitants are almost all either hateful or ridiculous. But I do not believe that either our peace or our independence is threatened by any powerful neighbour. We inconvenience no one. We are not a menace to the comity of nations. We are

restrained and reasonable. So far as we know, our statesmen are not formulating extravagant schemes which, if successful, would establish our power, or if unsuccessful, would bring about our ruin. We make no claim to the sovereignty of the globe. Europe of to-day finds us quite bearable: the feeling must be a happy novelty.

“Just look for a moment at the portraits of our statesmen that Madame Fusellier, the stationer, keeps in her shop-window. Tell me if there is a single one of them who looks as if he were made to unleash the dogs of war and lay the world waste. Their talents match their power, for both are but mediocre. They are not made to be the perpetrators of great crimes, for, thank God! they are not great men. Hence, we can sleep in peace. Besides, although Europe is armed to the teeth, I believe she is by no means inclined to war. For in war there breathes a generous spirit unpopular nowadays. True, they set the Turks fighting the Greeks: that is, they bet on them, as men bet on cocks or horses. But they will not fight between themselves. In 1840 Auguste Comte foretold the end of war and, of course, the prophecy was not exactly and literally fulfilled. Yet possibly the vision of this great man penetrated into the far-distant future. War is, indeed, the everyday condition of a feudal and monarchical Europe, but the feudal system is now dead and the ancient despotisms are opposed by new forces. The question of peace or war in our days depends less on absolute sovereigns than on the great international banking interests, more influential than the Powers themselves. Financial Europe is in a peaceful temper, or, if that be not quite true, she certainly has no love for war as war, no respect for any sentiment of chivalry. Besides, her barren influence is not destined to live long and she will one day be engulfed in the abyss of industrial revolution. Socialistic Europe will probably be friendly to peace, for there will be a socialistic Europe, Monsieur Lantaigne, if indeed that unknown power which is approaching can be rightly called Socialism.”

“Sir,” answered Abbé Lantaigne, “only one Europe is possible, and that is Christian Europe. There will always be wars, for peace is not ordained for this world. If only we could recover the courage and faith of our ancestors! As a soldier of the Church militant, I know well that war will only end with the consummation of the ages. And, like Ajax in old Homer, I pray God that I may fight in the light of day. What terrifies me is neither the number nor the boldness of our enemies, but the weakness and indecision which prevail in our own camp. The Church is an army, and I grieve when I see chasms and openings right along her battle-front; I rage when I see atheists slipping into her ranks and the worshippers of the Golden Calf volunteering for the defence of the sanctuary. I groan when I see the struggle going on all around me, amidst the confusion of a

great darkness propitious to cowards and traitors. The will of God be done! I am certain of the final triumph, of the ultimate conquest of sin and error at the last day, which will be the day of glory and justice.”

He rose with firm and steady glance, yet his heavy face was downcast. His soul within him was sorrowful, and not without good reason. For under his administration the high seminary was on its way to ruin. There was a financial deficit, and now that he was being prosecuted by Lafolie the butcher, to whom he owed ten thousand, two hundred and thirty-one francs, his pride lived in perpetual dread of a rebuke from the Cardinal-Archbishop. The mitre towards which he had stretched out his hand was eluding his grasp and already he saw himself banished to some poor country benefice. Turning towards M. Bergeret, he said:

“The most terrible storm-cloud is ready to burst over France,”

XIII

JUST now M. Bergeret was on his way to the restaurant, for every evening he spent an hour at the Café de la Comédie. Everybody blamed him for doing so, but here he could enjoy a cheery warmth which had nothing to do with wedded bliss. Here, too, he could read the papers and look on the faces of people who bore him no ill-will. Sometimes, too, he met M. Goubin here — M. Goubin, who had become his favourite pupil since M. Roux's treachery. M. Bergeret had his favourites, for the simple reason that his artistic soul took pleasure in the very act of making a choice. He had a partiality for M. Goubin, though he could scarcely be said to love him, and, as a matter of fact, M. Goubin was not lovable. Thin and lank, poverty-stricken in physique, in hair, in voice, and in brain, his weak eyes hidden by eye-glasses, his lips close-locked, he was petty in every way, and endowed, not only with the foot, but with the mind of a young girl. Yet, with these characteristics, he was accurate and painstaking, and to his puny frame had been fitted vast and powerful protruding ears, the only riches with which nature had blessed this feeble organism. M. Goubin was naturally qualified to be a capital listener.

M. Bergeret was in the habit of talking to M. Goubin, while they sat with two large beer-glasses in front of them, amidst the noise of the dominoes clicking on the marble tables all around them. At eleven o'clock the master rose and the pupil followed his example. Then they walked across the empty Place du Théâtre and by back ways until they reached the gloomy Tintelleries.

In such fashion they proceeded one night in May when the air, which had been cleared by a heavy storm of rain, was fresh and limpid and full of the smell of earth and leaves. In the purple depths of the moonless, cloudless sky hung points of light that sparkled with the white gleam of diamonds. Amid them, here and there, twinkled bright facets of red or blue. Lifting his eyes to the sky, M. Bergeret watched the stars. He knew the constellations fairly well, and, with his hat on the back of his head and his face turned upwards, he pointed out Gemini with the end of his stick to the vague, wandering glance of M. Goubin's ignorance. Then he murmured: "Would that the clear star of Helen's twin brothers Might 'neath thy barque the wild waters assuage, Would that to Pæstum o'er seas of Ionia..."

("Oh! soit que l'astre pur des deux frères d'Hélène Calme sous ton vaisseau la vague ionienne,

Soit qu'aux bords de Pæstum...")

Then he said abruptly:

"Have you heard, Monsieur Goubin, that news of Venus has reached us from America and that the news is bad?"

M. Goubin tried obediently to look for Venus in the sky, but the professor informed him that she had set.

"That beautiful star," he continued, "is a hell of fire and ice. I have it from M. Camille Flammarion himself, who tells me every month, in the excellent articles he writes, all the news from the sky. Venus always turns the same side to the sun, as the moon does to the earth. The astronomer at Mount Hamilton swears that it is so. If we pin our faith to him, one of the hemispheres of Venus is a burning desert, the other, a waste of ice and darkness, and that glorious luminary of our evenings and mornings is filled with naught but silence and death."

"Really!" said M. Goubin.

"Such is the prevailing creed this year," answered M. Bergeret. "For my part, I am not far from being convinced that life, at any rate in the form which it presents on earth, is the result of a disease in the constitution of the planet, that it is a morbid growth, a leprosy, something loathsome, in fact, which would never be found in a healthy, well-constituted star. By life I mean, of course, that state of activity manifested by organic matter in plants and animals. I derive pleasure and consolation from this idea. For, indeed, it is a melancholy thing to fancy that all these suns that flame above our heads bring warmth to other planets as miserable as our own, and that the universe gives birth to suffering and squalor in, never-ending succession.

"We cannot speak of the planets attendant on Sirius or Aldebaran, on Altair or Vega, of those dark masses of dust that may perchance accompany these points of fire that lie scattered over the sky, for even that they exist is not known to us, and we only suspect it by virtue of the analogy existing between our sun and the other stars of the universe. But if we try to form some conception of the planets in our own system, we cannot possibly imagine that life exists there in the mean forms which she usually presents on our earth. One cannot suppose that beings constructed on our model are to be found in the weltering chaos of the giants Saturn and Jupiter. Uranus and Neptune have neither light nor heat, and therefore that form of corruption which we call organic life - cannot exist on them. Neither is it credible that life can be manifested in that star-dust dispersed in the ether between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, for that dust is but the scattered material of a planet. The tiny ball Mercury seems too blazing hot to produce that mouldy dampness which we call animal and vegetable life. The

moon is a dead world, and we have just discovered that the temperature of Venus does not suit what we call organic life. Thus, we can imagine nothing at all comparable with man in all the solar system, unless it be on the planet Mars, which, unfortunately for itself, has some points in common with the earth. It has both air and water; it has, alas! maybe, the materials for the making of animals like ourselves.”

“Isn’t it true that it is believed to be inhabited?” asked M. Goubin.

“We have sometimes been disposed to imagine so,” answered M. Bergeret. “The appearance of this planet is not very well known to us. It seems to vary and to be always in confusion. On it canals can be seen, whose nature and origin we cannot understand. We cannot be absolutely certain that this neighbour of ours is saddened and degraded by human beings like ourselves.”

M. Bergeret had reached his door. He stopped and said: “I would fain believe that organic life is an evil peculiar to this wretched little planet of ours. It is a ghastly idea that in the infinitude of heaven they eat and are eaten in endless succession.”

XIV

THE cab which was carrying Madame Worms-Clavelin into Paris passed through the Porte Maillot between the gratings crowned in civic style with a hedge of pike-heads. Near these lay dusty custom-house officers and sunburnt flower-girls asleep in the sun. As it passed, it left, on the right, the Avenue de la Révolte, where low, mouldy, red-bedaubed inns and stunted arbours face the Chapel of Saint-Ferdinand, which crouches, lonely and dwarfish, on the edge of a gloomy military moat covered with sickly patches of scorched grass. Thence it emerged into the melancholy Rue de Chartres, with its everlasting pall of dust from the stone-cutting yards, and passed down it into the beautiful shady roads that open into the royal park, now cut up into small, middle-class estates. As the cab rumbled heavily along the causeway down an avenue of plane-trees, every second or so, through the silent solitude, there passed lightly-clad bicyclists who skimmed by with bent backs and heads cutting the air like quick-moving animals. With their rapid flight and long, swift, bird-like movements, they were almost graceful through sheer ease, almost beautiful by the mere amplitude of the curves they described. Between the bordering tree-trunks Madame Worms-Clavelin could see lawns, little ponds, steps, and glass-door canopies in the most correct taste, cut off by rows of palings. Then she lost herself in a vague dream of how, in her old age, she would live in a house like those whose fresh plaster and slate she could see through the leaves. She was a sensible woman and moderate in her desires, so that now she felt a dawning love of fowls and rabbits rising in her breast. Here and there, in the larger avenues, big buildings stood out, chapels, schools, asylums, hospitals, an Anglican church with its gables of stern Gothic, religious houses, severely peaceful in appearance, with a cross on the gate and a very black bell against the wall and, hanging down, the chain by which to ring it. Then the cab plunged into the low-lying, deserted region of market-gardens, where the glass roofs of hot-houses glittered at the end of narrow, sandy paths, or where the eye was caught by the sudden appearance of one of those ridiculous summer-houses that country builders delight to construct, or by the trunks of dead trees imitated in stoneware by an ingenious maker of garden ornaments. In this Bas-Neuilly district one can feel the freshness of the river hard by. Vapours rise there from a soil that is still damp with the waters which covered it, up to quite a late period, according to the geologists — exhalations from marshes on which the wind bent the reeds scarcely a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago.

Madame Worms-Clavelin looked out of the carriage window: she had nearly arrived. In front of her the pointed tops of the poplars which fringe the river rose at the end of the avenue. Once more the surroundings were varied and bustling. High walls and zigzag roof-ridges followed one another uninterruptedly. The cab stopped in front of a large modern house, evidently built with special regard to economy and even stinginess, in defiance of all considerations of art or beauty. Yet the effect was neat and pleasant on the whole. It was pierced with narrow windows, among which one could distinguish those of the chapel by the leaden tracery that bound the window-panes. On its dull, plain façade one was discreetly reminded of the traditions of French religious art by means of triangular dormer windows set in the woodwork of the roof and capped with trefoils. On the pediment of the front door an ampulla was carved, typifying the phial in which was contained the blood of the Saviour that Joseph of Arimathæa had carried away in a glove. This was the escutcheon of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, a confraternity founded in 1829 by Madame Marie Latreille, which received state recognition in 1868, thanks to the goodwill of the Empress Eugénie. The Sisters of the Precious Blood devoted themselves to the training of young girls.

Jumping from the carriage, Madame Worms-Clavelin rang at the door, which was carefully and circumspectly half opened for her. Then she went into the parlour, while the sister who attended to the turnstile gave notice through the wicket that Mademoiselle de Clavelin was wanted to come and see her mother. The parlour was only furnished with horsehair chairs. In a niche on the whitewashed wall there stood a figure of the Holy Virgin, painted in pale colours. There was a certain air of archness about the figure, which stood erect, with the feet hidden and the hands extended. This large, cold, white room carried with it a suggestion of peace, order and rectitude. One could feel in it a secret power, a social force that remained unseen.

Madame Worms-Clavelin sniffed the air of this parlour with a solemn sense of satisfaction, though it was damp, and suffused with the stale smell of cooking. Her own girlhood had been spent in the noisy little schools of Montmartre, amidst daubs of ink and lumps of sweetmeats, and in the perpetual interchange of offensive words and vulgar gestures. She therefore appreciated very highly the austerity of an aristocratic and religious education. In order that her daughter might be admitted into a famous convent, she had had her baptized, for she thought to herself, "Jeanne will then be better bred and she will have a chance of making a better marriage."

Jeanne had accordingly been baptized at the age of eleven and with the utmost secrecy, because they were then under a radical administration. Since

then the Church and the Republic had become more reconciled to each other, but in order to avoid displeasing the bigots of the department, Madame Worms-Clavelin still concealed the fact that her daughter was being educated in a nunnery. Somehow, however, the secret leaked out, and now and then the clerical organ of the department published a paragraph which M. Lacarelle, counsel to the prefecture, blue-pencilled and sent to M. Worms-Clavelin. For instance, M. Worms-Clavelin read:

“Is it a fact that the Jewish persecutor whom the freemasons have placed at the head of our departmental administration, in order that he may oppose the cause of God among the faithful, has actually sent his daughter to be educated in a convent?”

M. Worms-Clavelin shrugged his shoulders and threw the paper into the waste-paper basket. Two days later the Catholic editor inserted another paragraph, as, after reading the first, one would have prophesied his doing.

“I asked whether our Jewish *préfet*, Worms-Clavelin, was really having his daughter educated in a convent. And now that this freemason has, for good reasons of his own, avoided giving me any answer, I will myself reply to my own question. After having had his daughter baptized, this dishonourable Jew sent his daughter to a Catholic place of education.

“Mademoiselle Worms-Clavelin is at Neuilly-sur-Seine, being educated by the Sisters of the Precious Blood.”

“What a pleasure it is to witness the sincerity of jesters like these!

“A lay, atheistic, homicidal education is good enough for the people who maintain them! Would that our people’s eyes were opened to discern on which side are the Tartuffes!”

M. Lacarelle, the counsel to the prefecture, first blue-pencilled the paragraph and then placed the open sheet on the *préfet*’s desk. M. Worms-Clavelin threw it into his waste-paper basket and warned the meddlesome papers not to engage in discussions of that sort. Hence this little episode was soon forgotten and fell into the bottomless pit of oblivion, into that black darkness of night which, after one outburst of excitement, swallows up the shame and the honour, the scandals and the glories of an administration. In view of the wealth and power of the Church, Madame Worms-Clavelin had stuck energetically to her point that Jeanne should be left to these nuns who would train the young girl in good principles and good manners.

She modestly sat down, hiding her feet under her dress, like the red, white and blue Virgin of the niche, and holding in her finger-tips by the string the box of chocolates she had brought for Jeanne.

A tall girl, looking very lanky in her black dress with the red girdle of the Middle School, burst into the room.

“Good morning, mamma!”

Madame Worms-Clavelin looked her up and down with a curious mixture of motherly solicitude and horse-dealer’s curiosity. Drawing her close, she glanced at her teeth, made her stand upright; looked at her figure, her shoulders and her back, and seemed pleased.

“Heavens! how tall you are!” she exclaimed. “You have such long arms!..

“Don’t worry me about them, mamma! As it is, I never know what to do with them.”

She sat down and clasped her red hands across her knees. She replied with a graceful air of boredom to the questions which her mother asked about her health, and listened wearily to her instructions about healthy habits and to her advice in the matter of cod-liver oil. Then she asked:

“And how is papa?”

Madame Worms-Clavelin was almost astonished whenever anyone asked her about her husband, not because she was herself indifferent to him, but because she felt it was impossible to say anything new about this firm, unchangeable, stolid man, who was never ill and who never said or did anything original.

“Your father? What could happen to him? We have a very good position and no wish to change it.”

All the same, she thought it would soon be advisable to look out for a suitable sinecure, either in the treasury, or, perhaps rather, in the Council of State. At the thought her beautiful eyes grew dim with reverie.

Her daughter asked what she was thinking about.

“I was thinking that one day we might return to Paris. I like Paris for my part, but there we should hardly count.”

“Yet papa has great abilities. Sister Sainte—

Marie-des-Anges said so once in class. She said: ‘Mademoiselle de Clavelin, your father has shown great administrative talents.’”

Madame Worms-Clavelin shook her head. “One wants so much money to live in style in Paris.”

“You like Paris, mamma, but for my part I like the country best.”

“You know nothing about it, pet.”

“But, mamma, one doesn’t care only for what one knows.”

“There is, perhaps, some truth in what you say.”

“You haven’t heard, mamma?... I have won the prize for history composition. Madame de Saint-Joseph said I was the only one who had treated the subject thoroughly.”

Madame Worms-Clavelin asked gently:

“What subject?”

“The Pragmatic Sanction.”

Madame Worms-Clavelin asked, this time with an accent of real surprise:

“What is that?”

“It was one of Charles VII’s mistakes. It was, indeed, the greatest mistake he ever made.”

Madame Worms-Clavelin found this answer by no means enlightening. But since she took no interest in the history of the Middle Ages, she was willing to let the matter drop. But Jeanne, who was full of her subject, went on in all seriousness:

“Yes, mamma. It was the greatest crime of that reign, a flagrant violation of the rights of the Holy See, a criminal robbery of the inheritance of St. Peter. But happily the error was set right by Francis I. And whilst we are on this subject, mamma, do you know we have found out that Alice’s governess was an old wanton?..

Madame Worms-Clavelin begged her daughter anxiously and earnestly not to join her young friends in research work of this kind. Then she flew into a rage:

“You are perfectly absurd, Jeanne, for you use words without paying any heed..

Jeanne looked at her in mysterious silence. Then she said suddenly:

“Mamma, I must tell you that my drawers are in such a state that they are a positive sight. You know you have never been overwhelmingly interested in the question of linen. I don’t say this as a reproach, for one person goes in for linen, another for dresses, another for jewels. You, mamma, have always gone in for jewels. For my part it’s linen that I’m mad about.... And besides, we’ve just had a nine days’ prayer. I prayed hard both for you and for papa, I can tell you! And, then, I’ve earned four thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven days of indulgence.”

XV

"I AM rather religiously inclined," said M. de Terremondre, "but I still think that the words spoken in Notre Dame by Père Ollivier were ill advised. And that is the general opinion."

"Of course," replied M. Lantaigne, "you blame him for having explained this disaster as a lesson given by God against pride and infidelity. You think him wrong in describing the favoured people as being suddenly punished for their faithlessness and rebellion. Ought one, then, to give up attempting to trace a cause for such terrible events?"

"There are," answered M. de Terremondre, "certain conventions which ought to be observed. The mere fact that the head of the State was present made a certain reserve incumbent on him."

"It is true," said M. Lantaigne, "that this monk actually dared to declare before the President and the ministers of the Republic, and before the rich and powerful, who are either the authors or accomplices of our shame, that France had failed in her age-long vocation, when she turned her back on the Christians of the East who were being massacred by thousands, and, like a coward, supported the Crescent against the Cross. He dared to declare that this once Christian nation had driven the true God from both its schools and its councils. This is the speech that you consider a crime, you, Monsieur de Terremondre, one of the leaders of the Catholic party in our department."

M. de Terremondre protested that he was deeply devoted to the interests of religion, but he still persisted in the opinion he had first held. In the first place, he was not for the Greeks, but for the Turks, or, if he could not go so far as that, he was at least for peace and order. And he knew many Catholics who regarded the Eastern Church with absolute indifference. Ought one, then, to give offence to them by attacking perfectly lawful convictions? It is not incumbent on everyone to be friendly towards Greece. The Pope, for one, is not.

"I have listened, M. Lantaigne," said he, "with all the deference in the world to your opinions. But I still think one ought to use a more conciliatory style when one has to preach on a day which was one of mourning and yet, at the same time, one full of a hope that bade fair to bring about the reconciliation of opposing classes...."

"Especially while stocks are going up, thus proving the wisdom of the course pursued by France and Europe on the Eastern question," added M. Bergeret, with a malicious laugh.

“Exactly so,” answered M. de Terremondre. “A Government which fights the Socialists and in which religious and conservative ideas have made an undeniable advance ought to be treated with respect. Our *préfet*, M. Worms-Clavelin, although he is both a Jew and a freemason, shows keen anxiety to protect the rights of the Church. Madame Worms-Clavelin has not only had her daughter baptized, but has sent her to a Parisian convent, where she is receiving an excellent education. I know this to be the case, for Mademoiselle Jeanne Clavelin is in the same class as my nieces, the d’Ansey girls. Madame Worms-Clavelin is patroness of several of our institutions, and in spite of her origin and her official position, she scarcely attempts the slightest concealment of her aristocratic and religious sympathies.”

“I don’t doubt what you say in the least,” said M. Bergeret, “and you might even go so far as to say that at the present time French Catholicism has no stronger support than among the rich Jews.”

“You are not far wrong,” answered M. de Terremondre. “The Jews give generously in support of Catholic charities.... But the shocking part of Père Ollivier’s sermon is that he was ready, as it were, to imply that God Himself was the original author and inspirer of this disaster. According to his words, it would seem that the God of mercy Himself actually set fire to the bazaar. My aunt d’Ansey, who was present at the service, came away in a great state of indignation. I feel sure, Monsieur l’abbé, that you cannot approve of such errors as these.”

Usually M. Lantaigne refused to rush into random theological discussions with worldly-minded people who knew nothing about the subject, and although he was an ardent controversialist, his priestly habit of mind deterred him from engaging in disputes on frivolous occasions, such as the present one. He therefore remained silent, and it was M. Bergeret who replied to M. de Terremondre:

“You would have preferred then,” said he, “that this monk should make excuses for a merciful God who had carelessly allowed a disaster to happen in a badly-inspected point in His creation. You think that he should have ascribed to the Almighty the sad, regretful, and chastened attitude of a police inspector who has made a mistake.”

“You are making fun of me now,” said M. de Terremondre. “But was it really necessary to talk about expiatory victims and the destroying angel? Surely these are ideas that belong to a past age?”

“They are Christian ideas,” said M. Bergeret. “M. Lantaigne won’t deny that.”

But as the priest was still silent, M. Bergeret continued:

"I advise you to read, in a book of whose teaching M. Lantaigne approves, in the famous *Essai sur l'indifférence*, a certain theory of expiation. I remember one sentence in it which I can quote almost verbatim: "We are ruled," said Lamennais, "by one law of destiny, an inexorable law whose tyranny we can never avoid: this law is expiation, the unbending axis of the moral world on which turns the whole destiny of humanity."

"That may be so," said M. de Terremondre. "But is it possible that God can have actually willed to aim a blow at honourable and charitable women like my cousin Courtrai and my nieces Laneux and Felissay, who were terribly burnt in this fire? God is neither cruel nor unjust."

M. Lantaigne gripped his breviary under his left arm and made a movement as if to go away. Then, changing his mind, he turned towards M. de Terremondre and lifting his right hand said solemnly:

"God was neither cruel nor unjust towards these women when, in His mercy, He made them sacrificial offerings and types of the Victim without stain or spot. But since even Christians have lost, not only the sentiment of sacrifice, but also the practice of contrition, since they have become utterly ignorant of the most holy mysteries of religion, before we utterly despair of their salvation, we must expect warnings still more terrible, admonitions still more urgent, portents of still greater significance. Good-bye, Monsieur de Terremondre. I leave you with M. Bergeret, who, having no religion at all, at any rate avoids the misery and shame of an easy-going faith, and who will play at the game of refuting your arguments with the feeble resources of the intellect unsupported by the instincts of the heart."

When he had finished his speech, he walked away with a firm, stiff gait.

"What is the matter with him?" said M. de Terremondre, as he looked after him. « I believe he has a grudge against me. He is very difficult to get on with, although he is a man worthy of all respect. The incessant disputes he engages in have soured his temper and he is at loggerheads with his Archbishop, with the professors at the college, and with half the clergy in the diocese. It is more than doubtful if he will get the bishopric, and I really begin to think that, for the Church's sake, as well as for his own, it is better to leave him where he is. His intolerance would make him a dangerous bishop. What a strange notion to approve of Père Ollivier's sermon!"

"I also approve of his sermon," said M. Bergeret.

"It's quite a different matter in your case," said M. de Terremondre. "You are merely amusing yourself. You are not a religious man."

"I am not religious," said M. Bergeret, "but I am a theologian."

“On my side,” said M. de Terremonde, “it may be said that I am religious, but not a theologian; and I am revolted when I hear it said in the pulpit that God destroyed some poor women by fire, in order that He might punish our country for her crimes, inasmuch as she no longer takes the lead in Europe. Does Père Ollivier really believe that, as things now are, it is so very easy to take the lead in Europe?”

“He would make a great mistake if he did believe it,” said M. Bergeret. “But you are, as you have just been told, one of the leading members of the Catholic party in the department, and therefore you ought to know that your God used in Biblical times to show a lively taste for human sacrifices and that He rejoiced in the smell of blood. Massacre was one of His chief joys, and He particularly revelled in extermination. Such was His character, Monsieur de Terremonde. He was as bloodthirsty as M. de Gromance, who, from the beginning of the year to the end, spends his time in shooting deer, partridges, rabbits, quails, wild ducks, pheasants, grouse and cuckoos — all according to the season. So God sacrificed the innocent and the guilty, warriors and virgins, fur and feather. It even appears that He savoured the blood of Jephthah’s daughter with delight.”

“There you are wrong,” said M. de Terremonde. “It is true that she was dedicated to Him, but that was not a sacrifice of blood.”

“They argue so, I know,” said M. Bergeret; “but that is just out of regard for your sensitiveness. But, as a matter of actual fact, she was butchered, and Jehovah showed Himself a regular epicure for fresh meat. Little Joas, who had been brought up in the temple, knew perfectly well the way in which this God showed His love for children, and when good Jehosheba began to try on him the kingly fillet, he was much disturbed, and asked this pointed question:

‘Must then a holocaust to-day be offered,
And must I now, as once did Jephthah’s daughter,
By death assuage the fervent wrath of God?’

(Est-ce qu’en holocauste aujourd’hui présente,
Je dois, comme autrefois la fille de Jephté,
Du Seigneur par un mort apaiser la colère?)

“At this time Jehovah bears the closest resemblance to His rival Chamos; he was a savage being, compact of cruelty and injustice. This was what he said: ‘You may know that I am the Lord by the corpses laid out along your path.’ Don’t make any mistake about this, Monsieur de Terremonde — in passing down from Judaism to Christianity, He still retains His savagery, and about Him

there still lingers a taste for blood. I don't go so far as to say that in the present century, at the close of the age, He has not become somewhat softened. We are all, nowadays, gliding downwards on an inclined plane of tolerance and indifference, and Jehovah along with us. At any rate, He has ceased to pour out a perpetual flood of threats and curses, and at the present moment He only proclaims His vengeance through the mouth of Mademoiselle Deniseau, and no one listens to her. But His principles are the same as of old, and there has been no essential change in His moral system.

"You are a great enemy to our religion," said M. de Terremondre.

"Not at all," said M. Bergeret. "It is true that I find in it what I will call moral and intellectual stumbling-blocks. I even find cruelty in it. But this cruelty is now an ancient thing, polished by the centuries, rolled smooth like a pebble with all its points blunted. It has become almost harmless. I should be much more afraid of a new religion, framed with scrupulous exactitude. Such a religion, even if it were based on the most beautiful and kindly morality, would act at first with inconvenient austerity and painful accuracy. I prefer intolerance rubbed smooth, to charity with a fresh edge to it. Taking one thing with another, it is Abbé Lantaigne who is in the wrong, it is I who am wrong, and it is you, Monsieur de Terremondre, who are right. Over this ancient Judaic-Christian religion so many centuries of human passions, of human hatreds and earthly adorations, so many civilisations — barbaric or refined, austere or self-indulgent, pitiless or tolerant, humble or proud, agricultural, pastoral, warlike, mercantile, industrial, oligarchical, aristocratic, democratic — have passed, that all is now rolled smooth. Religions have practically no effect on systems of morality and they merely become what morality makes them....—"

XVI

MADAME Bergeret had a horror of silence and solitude, and now that M. Bergeret never spoke to her and lived apart from her, her room was as terrifying as a tomb to her mind. She never entered it without turning white. Her daughters would, at least, have supplied the noise and movement needed if she were to remain sane; but when an epidemic of typhus broke out in the autumn she sent them to visit their aunt, Mademoiselle Zoé Bergeret, at Arcachon. There they had spent the winter, and there their father meant to leave them, in the present state of his affairs. Madame Bergeret was a domesticated woman, with a housewifely mind. To her, adultery had been nothing more than a mere extension of wedded life, a gleam from her hearth-fire. She had been driven to it by a matronly pride in her position far more than by the wanton promptings of the flesh. She had always intended that her slight lapse with young M. Roux should remain a secret, homely habit, just a taste of adultery that would merely involve, imply, and confirm that state of matrimony which is held in honour by the world, as well as sanctified by the Church, and which secures a woman in a position of personal safety and social dignity. Madame Bergeret was a Christian wife and knew that marriage is a sacrament whose lofty and lasting results cannot be effaced by any fault such as she had committed, for serious though it might be, it was yet a pardonable and excusable lapse. Without being in a position to estimate her offence with great moral perspicuity, she felt instinctively that it was trifling and simple, being neither malicious, nor inspired by that deep passion which alone can dignify error with the splendour of crime and hurl the guilty woman into the abyss. She not only felt that she was no great criminal, but also that she had never had the chance of being one. Yet now she had to stand watching the entirely unforeseen results of such a trifling episode, as to her terror they slowly and gloomily unfolded themselves before her. She suffered cruel pangs at finding herself alone and fallen within her own house, at having lost the sovereignty of her home, and at having been despoiled, as it were, of her cares of kitchen and store-cupboard. Suffering was not good for her and brought no purification in its train; it merely awoke in her paltry mind, at one moment the instinct of revolt, and at another, a passion for self-humiliation. Every day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, she went out and paid visits at her friends' houses. On these expeditions she walked with great strides, a grim, stiff figure with bright eyes, flaming cheeks and gaudy dress. She called on all the lower-middle-class ladies of the town, on Madame Torquet, the dean's wife;

on Madame Leterrier, the rector's wife; on Madame Ossian Colot, the wife of the prison governor, and on Madame Surcouf, the recorder's wife. She was not received by the society ladies, nor by the wives of the great capitalists. Wherever she went, she poured out a flood of complaints against M. Bergeret, and charged her husband with every variety of fantastic crime that occurred to her feeble imagination, focussed on the one point only. Her usual accusations were that he had separated her from her daughters, had left her penniless, and finally had deserted his home to run about in cafés and, most probably, in less reputable resorts. Wherever she went, she gained sympathy and became an object of the tenderest interest. The pity she aroused grew, spread, and rose in volume. Even Madame Dellion, the ironmaster's wife, although she was prevented from asking her to call, because they belonged to different sets, yet sent a message to her that she pitied her with all her heart, and felt the deepest disgust at M. Bergeret's shameful behaviour. In this way Madame Bergeret went about the town every day, fortifying her hungry soul with the social respect and fair reputation that it craved. But as she mounted her own staircase in the evening, her heart sank within her. Her weak knees would hardly sustain her and she forgot her pride, her longing for vengeance, forgot even the abuse and frivolous scandal that she had spread through the town. To escape from loneliness she longed sincerely to be on good terms with M. Bergeret once more. In such a shallow soul as hers this desire was absolutely sincere and arose quite naturally. Yet it was a vain and useless thought, for M. Bergeret went on ignoring the existence of his wife.

This particular evening Madame Bergeret said as she went into the kitchen:

"Go and ask your master, Euphémie, how he would like his eggs to be cooked."

It was quite a new departure on her side to submit the bill of fare to the master of the house. For of old, in the days of her lofty innocence, she had habitually forced him to partake of dishes which he disliked and which upset the delicate digestion of the sedentary student. Euphémie's mind was not of wide range, but it was impartial and unwavering, and she protested to Madame Bergeret, as she had done several times before on similar occasions, that it was absolutely useless for her mistress to ask Monsieur anything. He never answered a word, because he was in a "contrairy" mood. But Madame, turning her face away and dropping her eyelids as a sign of determination, repeated the order she had just given.

"Euphémie," she said, "do as I tell you. Go and ask your master how he would like the eggs cooked, and don't forget to tell him that they are new-laid and come from Trécul's."

M. Bergeret was sitting in his study at work on the *Virgilius nauticus*, which a publisher had commissioned him to prepare as an extra embellishment of a

learned edition of the *Æneid*, at which three generations of philologists had been working for more than thirty years, and the first sheets of which were already through the press And now, slip by slip, the professor sat compiling this special lexicon for it. He conceived a sort of veneration for himself as he worked at it, and congratulated himself in these words:

“Here am I, a land-lubber who has never sailed on anything more important than the Sunday steamboat which carries the townsfolk up the river to drink sparkling wine on the slopes of Tuillières in summer time; here am I; a good Frenchman, who has never seen the sea except at Villers; here am I, Lucien Bergeret, acting as the interpreter of Virgil, the seaman. Here I sit in my study explaining the nautical terms used by a poet who is accurate, learned and exact, in spite of all his rhetoric, who is a mathematician, a mechanician, a geometrician, a well-informed Italian, who was trained in seafaring matters by the sailors who basked in the sun on the sea-shores of Naples and Misenum, who had, maybe, his own galley, and under the clear stars of Helen’s twin-brothers, ploughed the blue furrows of the sea between Naples and Athens. Thanks to the excellence of my philological methods I am able to reach this point of perfection, but my pupil, M. Goubin, would be as fully equipped for the task as I.”

M. Bergeret took the greatest pleasure in this work, for it kept his mind occupied without any accompanying sense of anxiety or excitement. It filled him with real satisfaction to trace on thin sheets of pasteboard his delicate, regular letters, types and symbols as they were of the mental accuracy demanded in the study of philology. All his senses joined and shared in this spiritual satisfaction, so true is it that the pleasures which man can enjoy are more varied than is commonly supposed. Just now M. Bergeret was revelling in the peaceful joy of writing thus:

Servius believes that Virgil wrote *Attolli malos* (for the masts to be raised) in mistake for *Attolli vela*, (for the sails to be raised) and the reason which he gives for this rendering is that *cum navigarent , non est dubium quod olli erexerant arbores* .(when they were at sea, there is no doubt that the masts were already up) Ascencius takes the same side as Servius, being either forgetful or ignorant of the fact that, on certain occasions, ships at sea are dismasted. When the state of the sea was such that the masts..?

M. Bergeret had reached this point in his work when Euphémie opened the study door with the noise that always accompanied her slightest movement, and repeated the considerate message sent by Madame Bergeret to her husband:

“Madame wants to know how you would like your eggs cooked?”

M. Bergeret's only reply was a gentle request to Euphémie to withdraw. He went on writing:

"ran the risk of breaking, it was customary to lower them, by lifting them out of the well in which their heels were inserted...

Euphémie stood fixed against the door, while M. Bergeret finished his slip.

"The masts were then stored abaft either on a crossbar or a bridge."

"Sir, Madame told me to say that the eggs come from Trécul's."

"Una omnes fecere pedem." (then with one accord they veered out the sheet)

Filled with a sense of sadness M. Bergeret laid down his pen, for he was suddenly overwhelmed with a perception of the uselessness of his work. Unfortunately for his own happiness, he was intelligent enough to recognise his own mediocrity, and, at times, it would actually appear to him in visible shape, like a thin, little, clumsy figure dancing about on his table between the inkstand and the file. He knew it well and hated it, for he would fain have seen his personality come to him under the guise of a lissom nymph. Yet it always appeared to him in its true form, as a lanky, unlovely figure. — It shocked him to see it, for he had delicate perceptions and a taste for dainty conceits.

"Monsieur Bergeret," he said to himself, "you are a professor of some distinction, an intelligent provincial, a university man with a tendency to the florid, an average scholar shackled by the barren quests of philology, a stranger to the true science of language, which can be plumbed only by men of broad, unbiassed and trenchant views. Monsieur Bergeret, you are not a scholar, for you are incapable of grasping or classifying the facts of language. Michel Bréal will never mention your poor, little, humble name. You will die without fame, and your ears will never know the sweet accents of men's praise."

"Sir... Sir," put in Euphémie in urgent tones, "do answer me. I have no time to hang about. I have my work to do. Madame wants to know how you'd like your eggs done. I got them at Trécul's and they were laid this morning."

Without so much as turning his head, M. Bergeret answered the girl in a tone of relentless gentleness:

"I want you to go and never again to enter my study — at any rate, not until I call you."

Then the professor returned to his day-dream: "How happy is Torquet, our dean! How happy is Leterrier, our rector! No distrust of themselves, no rash misgivings to interrupt the smooth course of their equable lives! They are like that old fellow Mesange, who was so beloved by the immortal goddesses that he survived three generations and attained to the Collège de France and the Institute

without having learnt anything new since the holy days of his innocent childhood. He carried with him to his grave the same amount of Greek as he had at the age of fifteen. He died at the close of this century, still revolving in his little head the mythological fancies that the poets of the First Empire had turned into verse beside his cradle.

But I — how comes it that I have such a cruel sense of my own inadequacy and of the laughable folly of all I undertake? For I have a mind as weak as that Greek scholar's, who had a bird's brain as well as a bird's name; I am fully as incapable as Torquet the dean, and Leterrier, the rector, of either system or initiative. I am, in fact, but a foolish, melancholy juggler with words. May it not be a sign of mental supereminence and a mark of my superiority in the realm of abstract thought? This *Virgilius nauticus*, which I use as the touchstone of my powers, is it really my own work and the fruit of my mind? No, it is a task foisted on my poverty by a grasping bookseller in league with a pack of pseudo-scholars who, on the pretext of freeing French scholarship from German tutelage, are bringing back the trivial methods of former times, and forcing me to take part in the philological pastimes of 1820. May the responsibility for it rest on them and not on me! It was no zeal for knowledge, but the thirst for gain, that induced me to undertake this *Virgilius nauticus*, at which I have now been working for three years and which will bring me in five hundred francs: to wit, two hundred and fifty francs on delivery of the manuscript, and two hundred and fifty francs on the day of publication of the volume containing this article. I determined to slake my horrible thirst for gold! I have failed, not in brain power, but in force of character. That's a very different matter!"

In this way did M. Bergeret marshal the flock of his wandering thoughts. All this time Euphémie had not moved, but at last, for the third time, she spoke to her master:

"Sir.... Sir...."

But at this attempt her voice stuck in her throat, strangled by sobs.

When M. Bergeret at last glanced at her, he could see the tears rolling down her round, red, shining cheeks.

She tried to speak, but nothing came from her throat save hoarse croaks, like the call that the shepherds of her native village sound on their goat-horns of an evening. Then she crossed her two arms, bare to the elbow, over her face, showing the fat, white flesh furrowed with long red scratches, and wiped her eyes with the back of her brown hands. Sobs tore her narrow chest and shook her stomach, abnormally enlarged by the tabes from which she had suffered in her seventh year and which had left her deformed. Then she dropped her arms to her

side, hid her hands under her apron, stifled her sobs, and exclaimed peevishly, as soon as she could get the words out:

“I cannot live any longer in this house. I cannot any more. Besides, it isn’t a life at all. I would rather go away than see what I do.”

There was as much rage as misery in her voice, and she looked at M. Bergeret with inflamed eyes.

She was really very indignant at her master’s behaviour, and this not at all because she had always been attached to her mistress. For till quite recently, in the days of her pride and prosperity, Madame Bergeret had overwhelmed her with insult and humiliation and kept her half starved. Neither was it because she knew nothing of her mistress’s lapse from virtue, and believed, with Madame Dellion and the other ladies, that Madame Bergeret was innocent. She knew every detail of her mistress’s liaison with M. Roux, as did the concierge, the bread-woman, and M. Raynaud’s maid. She had discovered the truth long before M. Bergeret knew it. Neither, on the other hand, was it because she approved of the affair; for she strongly censured both M. Roux and Madame Bergeret. For a girl who was mistress of her own person to have a lover seemed a small thing to her, not worth troubling about, when one knows how easily these things happen. She had had a narrow escape herself one night after the fair, when she was close pressed by a lad who wanted to play pranks at the edge of a ditch. She knew that an accident might happen all in a moment. But in a middle-aged married woman with children such conduct was disgusting. She confessed to the bread-woman one morning that really mistress turned her sick. Personally, she had no hankering after this kind of thing, and if there were no one but her to supply the babies, why then, the world might come to an end for all she cared. But if her mistress felt differently, there, was always a husband for her to turn to. Euphémie considered that Madame Bergeret had committed a horribly wicked sin, but she could not bring herself to feel that any sin, however serious, should never be forgiven and should always remain unpardoned. During her childhood, before she hired herself out to service, she used to work with her parents in the fields and vineyards. There she had seen the sun scorch up the vine-flowers, the hail beat down all the corn in the fields in a few minutes; yet, the very next year, her father, mother and elder brothers would be out in the fields, training the vine and sowing the furrow. There, amid the eternal patience of nature, she had learnt the lesson that in this world, alternately scorching and freezing, good and bad, there is nothing that is irreparable, and that, as one pardons the earth itself, so one must pardon man and woman.

It was according to this principle that the people at home acted, and after all, they were very likely quite as good as townsfolk. When Robertet’s wife, the

buxom Léocadie, gave a pair of braces to her footman to induce him to do what she wanted, she was not so clever that Robertet did not find out the trick. He caught the lovers just in the nick of time, and chastised his wife so thoroughly with a horsewhip that she lost all desire to sin again for ever and ever. Since then Léocadie has been one of the best women in the country: her husband hasn't *that* to find fault with her for. M. Robertet is a man of sense and knows how to drive men as well as cattle: why don't people just do as he did?

Having been often beaten by her respected father, and being, moreover, a simple, untamed being herself, Euphémie fully understood an act of violence. Had M. Bergeret broken the two house brooms on Madame Bergeret's guilty back, she would have quite approved of his act. One broom, it is true, had lost half its bristles, and the other, older still, had no more hair than the palm of the hand, and served, with the aid of a dishcloth, to wash down the kitchen tiles. But when her master persisted in a mood of prolonged and sullen spite, the peasant girl considered it hateful, unnatural and positively fiendish. What brought home to Euphémie all M. Bergeret's crimes with still greater force, was that his behaviour made her work difficult and confusing. For since Monsieur refused to take his meals with Madame, he had to be served in one place and she in another, for although M. Bergeret might stubbornly refuse to recognise his wife's existence, yet she could not sustain even non-existence without sustenance of some sort. "Its like an inn," sighed the youthful Euphémie. Then, since M. Bergeret no longer supplied her with housekeeping money, Madame Bergeret used to say to Euphémie: "You must settle with your master." And in the evening Euphémie would tremblingly carry her book to her master, who would wave her off with an imperious gesture, for he found it difficult to meet the increased expenditure. Thus lived Euphémie, perpetually overwhelmed by difficulties with which she could not cope. In this poisoned air she was losing all her cheerfulness: she was no longer to be heard in the kitchen, mingling the noise of laughter and shouts with the crash of saucepans, with the sizzling of the frying-pan upset on the stove, or with the heavy blows of the knife, as on the chopping-block she minced the meat, together with one of her finger-tips. She no longer revelled in joy, or in noisy grief. She said to herself: "This house is driving me crazy." She pitied Madame Bergeret, for now she was kindly treated. They used to spend the evening, sitting side by side in the lamp-light, exchanging confidences. It was with her heart full of all these emotions that Euphémie said to M. Bergeret:

"I am going away. You are too wicked. I want to leave."

And again she shed a flood of tears.

M. Bergeret was by no means vexed at this reproach. He pretended, in fact, not to hear it, for he had too much sense not to be able to make allowances for the rudeness shown by an ignorant girl. He even smiled within himself, for in the secret depths of his heart, beneath layers of wise thoughts and fine sayings, he still retained that primitive instinct which persists even in modern men of the gentlest and sweetest character, and which makes them rejoice whenever they see they are taken for ferocious beings, as if the mere power of injuring and destroying were the motive force of living things, their essential quality and highest merit. This, on reflection, is indeed true, since, as life is supported and nourished only upon murder, the best men must be those who slaughter most. Then again, those who, under the stimulus of racial and food-conquering instincts, deal the hardest knocks, obtain the reputation of magnanimity, and please women, who are naturally interested in securing the strongest mates, and who are mentally incapable of separating the fruitful from the destructive element in man, since these two forces are, in actual fact, indissolubly linked by nature. Hence, when Euphémie in a voice as countrified as a fable by Æsop, told him he was wicked, M. Bergeret, by virtue of his philosophical temperament, felt flattered and fancied he heard a murmur which filled out the gaps in the maid's simple speech, and said: "Learn, Lucien Bergeret, that you are a wicked man, in the vulgar sense of the word — that is to say, you are able to injure and destroy; in other words, you are in a state of defence, in full possession of life, on the road to victory. In your own way, you must know, you are a giant, a monster, an ogre, a man of terror." But, being a sceptical man and never given to accepting men's opinions unchallenged, he began to ask himself if he were really what Euphémie said. At the first glance into the inner recesses of his nature he concluded that, on the whole, he was not wicked; that, on the contrary, he was full of pity, highly sensitive to the woes of others, and full of sympathy for the wretched; that he loved his fellow-men, and would have gladly satisfied their needs by fulfilling all their desires, whether innocent or guilty, for he refused to trammel his human charity with the nets of any moral system. and for every kind of misery he had compassion at his call. And to him everything that harmed no one was innocent. In this way his heart was kinder than it ought to have been, according to the laws, the morals, and the varying creeds of the nations. Looking at himself in this way, he perceived the truth — that he was not wicked, and the thought caused him some bewilderment. It pained him to recognise in himself those contemptible qualities of mind which do nothing to strengthen the life-force.

With praiseworthy thoroughness, he next set himself to inquire whether he had not thrown off his kindly temper and his peaceable disposition in certain

matters, and particularly in this affair of Madame Bergeret. He saw at once that on this special occasion he had acted in opposition to his general principles and habitual sentiments, and that on this point his conduct presented several marked singularities of which he noted down the strangest.

“Chief singularities: I feign to consider her a criminal, and I act as if I had really fallen into this vulgar error. And all the time that her conscience condemns her for having committed adultery with my pupil, M. Roux, I myself regard her adultery as an innocent act, since it has harmed no one. Hence Madame Bergeret’s morality is higher than mine, for, although she believes herself guilty, she forgives herself, while I, who do not consider her guilty at all, refuse to forgive her. My judgment of her is immoral, but merciful; my conduct, however, is moral, but cruel. What I condemn so pitilessly is not her act, which I consider to be merely ridiculous and unseemly: it is herself that I condemn, as being guilty, not of what she has done, but of what she is. The girl Euphémie is in the right: I *am* wicked!”

He patted himself on the back, and revolving these new considerations, said again to himself:

“I am wicked because I act. I knew, before this experience happened to me, that there is no such thing as an innocent action, for to act is to injure or destroy. As soon as I began to act, I became a malefactor.”

He had an excellent excuse for speaking thus to himself, since all this time he had been performing a systematic, continuous, and consistent act, in making Madame Bergeret’s life unbearable to her, by depriving her of all the comforts needed by her homely common nature, her domesticated character, and her gregarious mind. In a word, he was engaged in driving from his house a disobedient and troublesome wife who had done him good service by being unfaithful to him.

The opportunity she gave he seized gladly, doing his work with wonderful vigour, considering the weak character he showed in ordinary affairs. For, although M. Bergeret was usually vacillating in purpose and without a will of his own, at this crisis he was driven on by desire, by an invincible Lust. For it is desire, far stronger than will, that, having created the world, now upholds it. In this undertaking of his, M. Bergeret was sustained by unutterable desire, by a masterful Lust to see Madame Bergeret no more. And this untempered, transparent desire had the happy force of a great love, for it was ruffled by no feeling of hatred.

All this time Euphémie stood waiting for her master to answer her, or, at any rate, to hurl furious words at her. For on this point she agreed with Madame Bergeret, and considered silence far more cruel than insult and invective.

At last M. Bergeret broke the silence. He said in a quiet voice: "I discharge you. You will leave this house in a week's time."

Euphémie's sole response was a plaintive, animal cry. For a moment she stood motionless. Then, thunderstruck, heart-broken and wretched, she returned to her kitchen and gazed at the saucepans, now dented like battle-armour by her valiant hands. She looked at the chair which had lost its seat — without causing her any inconvenience, however, for the poor girl hardly ever sat down; at the cistern whose waters had often swamped the house at night by overflowing from a tap left full on; at the sink with its wastepipe perpetually choked; at the table notched by the chopping-knife; at the cast-iron stove all eaten away by the fire; at the black coal-hole; at the shelves adorned with paper-lace; at the blacking-box and the bottle of brass-polish. And standing in the midst of all these witnesses of her weary life, she wept.

On the next day — that is, as they used to say, *l'en demai*, which happened to be market-day — M. Bergeret set out early to call on Deniseau, who kept a registry office for country servants in the Place Saint-Exupère. In the waiting-room he found a score of country girls waiting, some young, some old, some short, ruddy and chubby-cheeked, others tall, yellow and wizened, all differing in face and figure, but all alike in one respect — that is, in the anxious fixity of their gaze, for they all saw their own fate in the person of every caller who happened to open the door. For a moment M. Bergeret stood looking at the group of girls who waited to be hired. Then he passed on into the office adorned with calendars, where Deniseau sat at a table covered with dirty registers and old horse-shoes that served as paper-weights.

He told the man that he required a servant, and apparently he wanted one with quite unusual qualities, for after ten minutes' conversation he came out in very low spirits. Then, as he crossed the waiting-room a second time, he caught sight of a woman in a dark corner whom he had not noticed the first time. It was a long, thin shape that he beheld, ageless and sexless, crowned by a bald, bony head, with a forehead set like an enormous sphere on a short nose that seemed nothing but nostril. Through her open mouth her great horse-teeth were visible in all their nakedness, and under her drooping lip there was no chin to speak of. She stayed in her corner, neither moving nor looking, perhaps realising that she would not easily find anyone to hire her, and that others would be taken in preference to her. Yet she seemed quite satisfied with herself and quite easy in her mind. She was dressed like the women of the lowlying, agueish lands, and to her wide-brimmed, knitted hat clung pieces of straw.

For a long time M. Bergeret stood looking at her with saturnine admiration. Then, pointing her out to Deniseau, he said: "The one over there will suit me."

“Marie?” asked the man in a tone of surprise.

“Marie,” answered M. Bergeret.

XVII

NOW that M. Mazure, the archivist, had at last attained to academic honours, he began to regard the government with genial tolerance. But, as he was never happy unless he was at variance with someone, he now turned his wrath against the clericals, and began to denounce the scheming of the bishops. Meeting M. Bergeret in the Place Saint-Exupère, he warned him of the peril threatening from the clerical party.

“Finding it impossible,” said he, “to overturn the Republic, the curés now want to divert it to their own ends.”

“That is the ambition of every party,” answered M. Bergeret, “and the natural result of our democratic institutions, for democracy itself consists entirely in the struggle of parties, since the nation itself is not at one either in sentiments or interests.”

“But,” answered M. Mazure, “the unbearable part of this is that the clericals should put on the mask of liberty in order to deceive the electors.” To this M. Bergeret replied:

“Every party which finds itself shut out from the Government demands liberty, because to do so strengthens the opposition and weakens the party in power. For the same reason the party in power curtails liberty as much as possible and it passes, in the sacred name of the sovereign people, the most despotic laws. For there is no charter which can safeguard liberty against the acts of the sovereign nation. Democratic despotism theoretically has no limits, but in actual fact, and considering only the present period, I grant that its power is not boundless. Democracy has given us ‘the black laws,’ but it never puts them in force.”

“Monsieur Bergeret,” said the archivist, “let me give you a piece of good advice. You are a Republican: then don’t fire on your own friends. If we don’t look out, we shall fall back into the rule of the Church. Reaction is making terrible progress. The whites are always the whites; the blues are always the blues, as Napoleon said. You are a blue, Monsieur Bergeret. The clerical party will never forgive you for calling Jeanne d’Arc a mascotte, and even I can scarcely pardon you for it, for Jeanne d’Arc and Danton are my two special idols. You are a free-thinker.

Then join us in our anti-clerical campaign! Let us unite our forces! It is union alone that can give us the strength to conquer. The highest interests are at stake in the fight against the church party.”

“It is just party interest that I see mainly at work in that conflict,” answered M. Bergeret. “But if I were obliged to join a party at all, it must needs be yours, since it is the only one I could help without too much hypocrisy. But, happily, I am not reduced to this extremity, and I am by no means tempted to clip the wings of my mind in order to force it into a political compartment. To tell the truth, I am quite indifferent to your disputes, because I feel how empty they are. The dividing line between you and the clericals is a trifling matter at bottom. They would succeed you in office, provided there were no change in the position of the individual. And in the State it is the position of the individual that alone matters. Opinions are but verbal jugglery, and it is only opinions that separate you from the church party. You have no moral system to oppose to theirs, for the simple reason that in France we have no religious code existing in opposition to a code of civil morality. Those who believe that we have these two opposing systems of morality are merely deceived by appearances. I will prove this to you in a few words.

“In every era we find that there are habits of life which determine a line of thought common to all men. Our moral ideas are not the fruit of thought, but the result of habit. No one dares openly to resist these ideas, because obedience to them is followed by honours, and revolt against them by humiliation. They are adopted by the entire community without question, independently of religious creeds and philosophic opinions, and they are as keenly upheld by those whose deeds by no means conform to their dictates, as they are by those who constrain themselves to live according to the rules laid down by them. The origin of these ideas is the only point that admits of discussion: so-called free-thinkers believe that the rules which direct their conduct are natural in origin, whilst pious souls discern the origin of the rules they obey in their religion, and these rules are found to agree, or nearly so, not because they are universal, that is, divine and natural, as people delight to say, but, on the contrary, because they are the product of the period and clime, deduced from the same habits, derived from the same prejudices. Each epoch has its predominant moral idea, which springs neither from religion nor from philosophy, but from habit, the sole force that is capable of linking men in the same bond of feeling, for the moment we touch reason we touch the dividing principle in humanity, and the human race can only exist on condition that it never reflects on what is essential to its own existence. Morality governs creeds, which are ever matters of dispute, whilst morality itself is never analysed..

“And simply because a moral code is the sum-total of the prejudices of the community, there cannot possibly exist two rival codes at the same time and in the same place. I could illustrate this truth by a great number of examples, but

none of them could be more to the point than that of the Emperor Julian, with whose works I have lately been making myself somewhat familiar. Julian, who fought on the side of the Pagan gods with such staunchness and magnanimity — Julian, who was a sun-worshipper, yet professed all the moral sentiments of the Christians. Like them, he scorned the pleasures of the flesh and vaunted the efficacy of fasting, because it brings a man into union with the divine. Like them, he upheld the doctrine of atonement and believed in the purifying effect of suffering. He had himself initiated, too, into mysteries which satisfied his keen desire for purity, renunciation and divine love, quite as efficaciously as the mysteries of the Christian religion. In a word, his neo-paganism was, morally, speaking, own brother to the rising cult of Christianity. And what is there surprising in that? The two creeds were the twin children of Rome and of the East. They both corresponded to the same human habits, to the same deep instincts in the Asiatic and Latin worlds. Their souls were alike, though in name and phraseology they differed from each other. This difference was enough to make them deadly enemies, for it is about mere words that men usually quarrel. It is for the sake of words that they most willingly kill and are killed. Historians are in the habit of asking anxiously what would have become of civilisation, if the philosopher-emperor had conquered the Galilean by winning a victory that he had rightly earned by his constancy and moderation. It is no easy game thus to reconstruct history. Yet it seems clear enough that in this case, polytheism, which had already by the reign of Julian been reduced to a species of monotheism, would have submitted to the new mental habits of the time and would have assumed precisely the same moral form that one sees it taking under Christianity. Look at all the great revolutionary leaders and tell me if there is a single one who showed himself in any way an original thinker, as far as morality is concerned. Robespierre's ideas of righteousness were to the end those in which he had been trained by the priests of Arras.

"You are a free-thinker, Monsieur Mazure and you think that man's object on this planet ought to be to get the maximum amount of happiness out of it. M. de Terremondre, who is a Catholic, believes, on the contrary, that we are all here in a place of expiation in order that we may gain eternal life through suffering. Yet, notwithstanding the contradiction in your creeds, you have both practically the same moral code, because morality is independent of creeds."

"You make fun of things," said M. Mazure, "and you make me want to swear like a trooper. Religious ideas, when all is said and done, enter into the formation of moral ideas to a degree that one cannot ignore. I am therefore right in saying that there is such a thing as Christian morality, and that I heartily disapprove of it."

“But, my dear sir,” answered the professor gently, “there are as many Christian codes of morality as there are ages during which Christianity has lasted and countries into which she has penetrated. Religions, like chameleons, copy the colours of the soil over which they run. Morality, though it is peculiar to each generation, since it is the one link to bind it together, changes incessantly along with the habits and customs of which she is the most striking representative, like an enlarged reflection on a wall. So true is this fact that it may actually be affirmed that the morality of these Catholics who offend you resembles your own very closely, and yet differs widely from that of a Catholic at the time of the League — to say nothing of those Christians of the apostolic ages who would seem to M. de Terremonde most extraordinary beings, were it possible for him to see them at close quarters. Be impartial and just, if you can, and tell me this: in what essential respect does your morality as a free-thinker differ from the morality of those good people who to-day go to Mass? They profess, as the bedrock of their creed, the doctrine of the atonement, but they are as indignant as you when that doctrine is put before them in a striking manner by their own priests. They profess to believe that suffering is good and pleasing to God. But — do you ever see them sit down on nails? You have proclaimed toleration for every creed: they marry Jewesses and have stopped burning their fathers-in-law. What ideas have you which they do not share with you about sexual questions, about the family, about marriage, except that you allow divorce, though you take good care not to recommend it? They believe it is damnation to look at a woman and lust after her. Yet at dinners and parties are the necks of their women any less bare than the necks of yours? Do they wear dresses that reveal less of their figures? And do they bear in mind the words of Tertullian about widows’ raiment? Are they veiled and do they hide their hair? Do you not settle their fashions? Do you insist that they shall go naked because you don’t believe that Eve covered herself with a branch of a fig-tree under the curse of Javeh? In what way do your ideas about your country differ from theirs? For they exhort you to serve and defend it, just as if their own abiding city were not in the heavens. Or about forced military service, to which they submit, with the solitary reservation of one point in ecclesiastical discipline, which in practice they yield? Or on war, in which they will fight side by side with you, whenever you wish, although their God gave them the command: “Thou shalt not kill.” Are you anarchical and cosmopolitan enough to separate from them on these important questions in practical life? What can you name which is peculiar to you alone? You cannot even adduce the duel, which, on account of its being fashionable, is a part of their code as of yours, although it is neither in accordance with their principles, since both their kings and priests forbid it, nor

with yours, for it is based on the incredible intervention of God Himself. Have you not the same moral code with respect to the organisation of labour, to private property and capital, to the whole organisation of society as it is to-day, under which you both endure injustice with equal patience — as long as you don't personally suffer from it? You would have to become Socialists for things to be otherwise, and were you to become socialistic, so doubtless would they. You are willing to tolerate injustice that survives from bygone days, every time that it works in your favour. And, on their side, your ostensible opponents gratefully accept the results of the Revolution, whenever it is a question of acquiring a fortune derived from some former impropiator of national property. They are parties to the Concordat, and so are you; so that even religion links you together.

“Their creed has so little effect on their feelings that they love the life they ought to despise, quite as much as you do; and they cling as closely to their possessions, which are a stumbling-block in the way of their salvation. Having practically the same customs as you, they have practically the same moral code. You quibble with them as to matters which only interest politicians and which have no connection with the organisation of a society which cares not a whit about your rival claims. Faithful to the same traditions, ruled by the same prejudices, living in the same depths of ignorance, you devour one another like crabs in a basket. As one watches your conflicts of frogs and mice, one no longer craves for undiluted civil government.”

XVIII

THE coming of Marie was like the entrance of death into the house. At the very first sight of her, Madame Bergeret knew that her day was over.

Euphémie sat for a long while on her caneless chair, silent and motionless, but with flushed cheeks. Her deep-rooted attachment to her employers and her employers' house was instinctive, but sure, and, like a dog's love, not dependent on reason. She shed no tears, but fever spots came out on her lips. Her good-bye to Madame Bergeret was said with all the solemnity of a pious, countrified heart. During the five years of her service in the house she had endured at Madame Bergeret's hands, not only abusive violence, but hard avarice, for she was fed but meagrely; on her side, she had given way to fits of insolence and disobedience, and she had slandered her mistress among the other servants. But she was a Christian, and at the bottom of her heart she revered her pastors and masters as she did her father and mother. Snivelling with grief, she said:

"Good-bye, Madame. I will pray to the good God for you, that He may make you happy. I wish I could have said good-bye to the young ladies."

Madame Bergeret knew that she was being hunted out of the house, like this young girl, but she would not show how moved she was, for fear of seeming undignified.

"Go, child," said she, "and settle your wages with Monsieur."

When M. Bergeret handed her her wages, she slowly counted out the amount and moving her lips as though in prayer, made her calculations three times over. She examined the coins anxiously, not being sure of her bearings among so many different varieties. Then she put this little property, her sole wealth in all the world, into the pocket of her skirt, under her handkerchief. Next she dug her hand deep into her pocket, and having taken all these precautions, said:

"You have always been good to me, Monsieur, and I wish you every happiness. But, all the same, you have driven me away."

"You think I am a wicked man," answered M. Bergeret. "But if I send you away, my good girl, I do it regretfully and only because it is absolutely necessary. If I can help you in any way, I shall be very glad to do so."

Euphémie passed the back of her hand over her eyes, sniffed aloud and said softly, with big tears flowing down her cheeks:

"There's nobody wicked here."

She went out, closing the door behind her as noiselessly as possible, and M. Bergeret began to picture her standing at the bottom of the waiting-room in

Deniseau's office, with anxious looks fixed on the door, among the melancholy crowd of girls waiting to be hired, in her white head-dress with her blue cotton umbrella stuck between her knees.

Meanwhile Marie, the stable-girl, who had never in her life waited on anything but beasts, was filled with amazement and stupefaction at the ways of these townsfolk, till the terror that she communicated to others began to overwhelm her own mind. She squatted in her kitchen and gazed at the saucepans. Bacon soup was the only thing she could make and dialect the only language she understood. She was not even well recommended, for it turned out that she had not only lived loosely, but was in the habit of drinking brandy and even spirits of wine.

The first visitor to whom she opened the door was Captain Aspertini, who, in passing through the town, had called to see M. Bergeret. She evidently made a deep impression on the Italian savant's mind, for no sooner had he greeted his host than he began to speak of the maid with that interest which ugliness always inspires when it is overwhelmingly terrible.

"Your maid, Monsieur Bergeret," said he, "reminds me of that expressive face which Giotto has painted on an arch of the church at Assisi. It represents that Being to whom no one ever opens the door with a smile, and was suggested by a verse in Dante.

"That reminds me," continued the Italian; "have you seen the portrait of Virgil in mosaic that your compatriots have just discovered at Sousse in Algeria? It is a picture of a Roman with a wide, low forehead, a square head and a strong jaw, and is not in the least like the beautiful youth whom they used to tell us was Virgil. The bust which for a long time was taken for a portrait of the poet is really a Roman copy of a Greek original of the fourth century and represents a young god worshipped in the mysteries of Eleusis. I think I may claim the honour of being the first to give the true explanation of this figure in my pamphlet on the child Triptolemus. But do you know this Virgil in mosaic, Monsieur Bergeret?"

"As well as I can judge from the photograph I have seen," answered M. Bergeret, "this African mosaic seems the copy of an original full of character. This portrait might quite stand for Virgil, and it is by no means impossible that it is an authentic portrait of him. Your Renaissance scholars, Monsieur Aspertini, always depicted the author of the *Æneid* with the features of a sage. The old Venetian editions of Dante that I have turned over in our library are full of wood engravings in which Virgil wears the beard of a philosopher. The next age made him as beautiful as a young god. Now we have him with a square jaw and wearing a fringe of hair across his forehead in the Roman style. The mental

effect produced by his work has varied just as much. Every literary age creates pictures from it which are entirely different according to the period. And without recalling the legends of the Middle Ages about Virgil the necromancer, it is a fact that the Mantuan is admired for reasons that change according to the period. In him Macrobius hailed the Sibyl of the Empire. It was his philosophy that Dante and Petrarch seized upon, while Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo discovered in him the forerunner of Christianity. For my part, being but a juggler with words, I only use his works as a philological pastime. You, Monsieur Aspertini, see him in the guise of a great storehouse of Roman antiquities, and that is perhaps the most solidly valuable part of the *Æneid*. The truth is that we are in the habit of hanging our ideas upon the letter of these ancient texts. Each generation forms a new conception of these masterpieces of antiquity and thus endows them with a kind of progressive immortality. My colleague Paul Stapfer has said many good things on this head."

"Very noteworthy things indeed," answered Captain Aspertini. "But he does not entertain such hopeless views as yours as to the ebb and flow of human opinions."

Thus did these two good fellows toss from one to the other those glorious and beautiful ideas by which life is embellished., "Do tell me what has become," asked Captain Aspertini, "of that soldierly Latinist whom I met here, that charming M. Roux, who seemed to value military glory at its true worth, for he disdained to be a corporal."

M. Bergeret replied curtly that M. Roux had returned to his regiment.

"When last I passed through the town," continued Captain Aspertini, "on the second of January I think it was, I caught this young savant under the lime-tree in the courtyard of the library, chatting with the young portress, whose ears, I remember, were very red. And you know that is a sign that she was listening with pleased excitement. There could be nothing prettier than that dainty little ruby shell clinging above the white neck. With great discretion I pretended not to see them, in order that I might not be like the Pythagorean philosopher who used to harass lovers in Metapontus. That is a very charming young girl, with her red, flame-like hair and her delicate skin, faintly dappled with freckles, yet so pearly that it seems lit up from within. Have you ever noticed her, Monsieur Bergeret?"

M. Bergeret replied by a nod, for he had often noticed her, and found her very much to his taste. He was too honourable a man and had too much prudence and respect for his position ever to have taken any liberty with the young portress at the library. But the delicate colouring, the thin, supple figure, the graceful beauty of this girl had more than once floated before his eyes in the yellow pages of Servius and Domat, when he had been sitting over them a long while. Her name

was Mathilde and she had the reputation of being fond of pretty lads. Although M. Bergeret was usually very indulgent towards lovers, the idea of M. Roux finding favour with Mathilde was distinctly distasteful to him.

“It was in the evening, after I had been reading there,” continued Captain Aspertini. “I had copied three unpublished letters of Muratori, which were not in the catalogue. As I was crossing the court where they keep the remains of ancient buildings in the town, I saw, under the lime-tree near the well and not far from the pillar of the Romano-Gallic boatmen, the young portress with the golden hair. She was listening with downcast eyes to the remarks of your pupil, M. Roux, while she balanced the great keys at the end of her fingers. What he said was doubtless very like what the herdsman of the Oaristys (First idyll of André Chénier) said to the goat-girl. There was little doubt as to the gist of his remarks. I felt sure, in fact, that he was making an assignation. For, thanks to the skill I have acquired in interpreting the monuments of ancient art, I immediately grasped the meaning of this group.”

He went on with a smile:

“I cannot, Monsieur Bergeret, really feel all the subtleties, all the niceties of your beautiful French tongue, but I do not like to use the word ‘girl’ or ‘young girl’ to describe a child like this portress of your municipal library. Neither can one use the word maid, (*Pucelle*) which is obsolete and has degenerated in meaning. And I would say in passing, it is a pity that this is the case. It would be ungracious to call her a young person, and I can see nothing but the word nymph to suit her. But, pray, Monsieur Bergeret, do not repeat what I told you about the nymph of the library, lest it should get her into trouble. These secrets need not be divulged to the mayor or the librarians. I should be most distressed, if I thought I had inadvertently done the slightest harm to your nymph.”

“It is true,” thought M. Bergeret, “that my nymph is pretty.”

He felt vexed, and at this moment could scarcely have told whether he was more angry with M. Roux for having found favour in the eyes of the library portress, or for having seduced Madame Bergeret.

“Your nation,” said Captain Aspertini, “has attained to the highest mental and moral culture. But it still retains, as a relic of the barbarism in which it was so long plunged, a kind of uncertainty and awkwardness in dealing with love affairs. In Italy love is everything to the lovers, but of no concern to the outside world. Society in general feels no interest in a matter which only concerns the chief actors in it. An unbiassed estimate of licence and passion saves us from cruelty and hypocrisy.”

For some considerable time Captain Aspertini continued to entertain his French friend with his views on different points in morals, art and politics. Then

he rose to take leave, and catching sight of Marie in the hall, said to M. Bergeret:
“Pray don’t take offence at what I said about your cook. Petrarch also had a servant of rare and peculiar ugliness.”

XIX

AS soon as he had removed from Madame Bergeret, deposed, the management of his house, M. Bergeret himself took command, and a very bad job he made of it. Yet in excuse it should be said that the maid Marie never carried out his orders, since she never understood them. But since action is the essential condition of life and one can by no means avoid it, Marie acted, and was led by her natural gifts into the most unlucky decisions and the most noxious deeds. Sometimes, however, the light of her genius was quenched by drunkenness. One day, having drunk all the spirits of wine kept for the lamp, she lay stretched unconscious on the kitchen tiles for forty hours. Her awaking was always terrible, and every movement she made was followed by catastrophe. She succeeded in doing what had been beyond the powers of anyone else — in splitting the marble chimney-piece by dashing a candlestick on it. She took to cooking all the food in a frying-pan, amid deafening clamour and poisonous smells, and nothing that she served was eatable.

Shut up alone in the solitude of her bedroom, Madame Bergeret screamed and sobbed with mingled grief and rage, as she watched the ruin of her home. Her misery took on strange, unheard-of shapes that were agony to her conventional soul and became ever more formidable. Until now M. Bergeret had always handed over to her the whole of his monthly salary, without even keeping back his cigarette money from it. But she no longer received a penny from him, and as she had dressed expensively during the gay time of her liaison with M. Roux, and even more expensively during her troublous times when she was upholding her dignity by constantly visiting her entire circle, she was now beginning to be dunned by her milliner and dressmaker, and M^{essrs}. Achard, a firm of outfitters, who did not regard her as a regular customer, actually issued *à writ* against her, which on this particular evening struck consternation into the proud heart of the daughter of Pouilly. When she perceived that these unprecedented trials were the unexpected, but fatal, results of her sin, she began to perceive the heinousness of adultery. With this thought came a memory of all she had been taught in her youth about this unparalleled, this unique crime; for, in truth, neither envy, nor avarice, nor cruelty bring such shame to the sinner as this one offence of adultery.

As she stood on the hearthrug before stepping into bed, she opened the neck of her nightdress, and dropping her chin, looked down at the shape of her body. Foreshortened in this way beneath the cambric, it looked like a warm white mass

of cushions and pillows, lit up by the rays of the lamplight. She knew nothing of the beauty of the simple human form, having merely the dressmaker's instinct for style, and never asked herself whether these outlines below her eyes were lovely or not. Neither did she find grounds for humiliation or self-glorification in this fleshly envelope; she never even recalled the memory of past pleasures: the only feeling that came was one of troubled anxiety at the sight of the body whose secret impulses had worked such consequences in her home and outside it.

She was a being of moral and religious instincts, and sufficiently philosophic to grasp the absolute value of the points in a game of cards: the idea came to her then that an act in itself entirely trivial might be great in the world of ideas. She felt no remorse, because she was devoid of imagination, and having a rational conception of God, felt that she had already been sufficiently punished.

But, at the same time, since she followed the ordinary line of thought in morality and conceived that a woman's honour could only be judged by the common criterion, since she had formed no colossal plan of overthrowing the moral scheme in order to manufacture for herself an outrageous innocence, she could feel no quietness, no satisfaction in life, nor could she enjoy any sense of the inner peace that sustains the mind in tribulation.

Her troubles were the more harassing because they were so mysterious, so indefinitely prolonged. They unwound themselves like the ball of red string that Madame Magloire, the confectioner in the Place Saint-Exupère, kept on her counter in a boxwood case, and which she used to tie up hundreds of little parcels by means of the thread that passed through a hole in the cover. It seemed to Madame Bergeret that she would never see the end of her worries; she even, under sadness and regret, began to acquire a certain look of spiritual beauty.

One morning she looked at an enlarged photograph of her father, whom she had lost during the first year of her married life, and standing in front of it, she wept, as she thought of the days of her childhood, of the little white cap worn at her first communion, of her Sunday walks when she went to drink milk at the Tuilerie with her cousins, the two Demoiselles Pouilly of the Dictionary, of her mother, still alive, but now an old lady living in her little native town, far away at the other end of France in the *département du Nord*. Madame Bergeret's father, Victor Pouilly, a headmaster and the author of a popular edition of Lhomond's grammar, had entertained a lofty notion of his social dignity in the world and of his intellectual prowess. Being overshadowed and patronised by his elder brother, the great Pouilly of the Dictionary, being also under the thumb of the University authorities, he took it out of everybody else and became prouder and prouder of his name, his Grammar, and his gout, which was severe. In his

pose he expressed the Pouilly dignity, and to his daughter his portrait seemed to say: "My child, I pass over, I purposely pass over everything in your conduct which cannot be considered exactly conventional. You should recognise the fact that all your troubles come from having married beneath you. In vain I flattered myself that I had raised him to our level. This Bergeret is an uneducated man, and your original mistake, the source of all your troubles, my daughter, was your marriage." And Madame Bergeret gave ear to this speech, while the wisdom and kindness of her father, so clearly stamped on it, sustained her drooping courage in a measure. Yet, step by step, she began to yield to fate. She ceased to pay denunciatory visits in the town, where, in fact, she had already tired out the curiosity of her friends by the monotonous tenour of her complaints. Even at the rector's house they began to believe that the stories which were told in the town about her liaison with M. Roux were not entirely fables. She had allowed herself to be compromised, and she wearied them; they let her plainly see both facts. The only person whose sympathy she still retained was Madame Dellion, and to this lady she remained a sort of allegorical figure of injured innocence. But although Madame Dellion, being of higher rank, pitied her, respected her, admired her, she would not receive her. Madame Bergeret was humiliated and alone, childless, husbandless, homeless, penniless.

One last effort she made to resume her rightful position in the house. It was on the morning after the most miserable and wretched day that she had ever spent. After having endured the insolent demands of Mademoiselle Rose, the modiste, and of Lafolie, the butcher, after having caught Marie stealing the three francs seventy-five centimes left by the laundress on the dining-room sideboard, Madame Bergeret went to bed so full of misery and fear that she could not sleep. Her overwhelming troubles brought on an attack of romantic fancy, and in the shades of night she saw a vision of Marie pouring out a poisonous potion that M. Bergeret had prepared for her. With the dawn her fevered terrors fled, and having dressed carefully, she entered M. Bergeret's study with an air of quiet gravity. So little had he expected her that she found the door open.

"Lucien! Lucien!" said she.

She called upon the innocent names of their three daughters. She begged and implored, while she gave a fair enough description of the wretched state of the house. She promised that for the future she would be good, faithful, economical and good-tempered. But M. Bergeret would not answer.

Kneeling at his feet, she sobbed and twisted the arms that had once been so imperious in their gestures. He deigned neither to see nor to hear her.

She showed him the spectacle of a Pouilly at his feet. But he only took up his hat and went out. Then she got up and ran after him, and with outstretched fist

and lips drawn back shouted after him from the hall:

“I never loved you. Do you hear that? Never, not even when I first married you! You are hideous, you are ridiculous and everything else that’s horrid. And everyone in the town knows that you are nothing but a ninnyhammer.... yes, a ninnyhammer....”

She had never heard this word save on the lips of Pouilly of the Dictionary, who had been in his grave for more than twenty years, and now it recurred to her mind suddenly, as though by a miracle. She attached no definite meaning to it, but as it sounded excessively insulting, she shouted down the staircase after him, “Ninnyhammer, ninnyhammer!”

It was her last effort as a wife. A fortnight after this interview Madame Bergeret appeared before her husband and said, this time in quiet, resolute tones, “I cannot remain here any longer. It is your doing entirely. I am going to my mother’s; you must send me Marianne and Juliette. Pauline I will let you have...

Pauline was the eldest; she was like her father, and between them there existed a certain sympathy.

“I hope,” added Madame Bergeret, “that you will make a suitable allowance for your two daughters who will live with me. For myself I ask nothing.”

When M. Bergeret heard these words, when he saw her at the goal whither he had guided her by foresight and firmness, he tried to conceal his joy, for fear lest, if he let it be detected, Madame Bergeret might abandon an arrangement that suited him admirably.

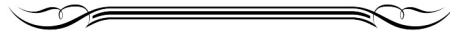
He made no answer, but he bent his head in sign of consent.

La nymphe blanche
Qui coule à pleines hanches,

Le long du rivage arrondi
Et de l'île où les saules grisâtres
Mettent à ses flancs la ceinture d'Ève,
En feuillages ovales,
Et qui fuit pâle.

(Que sert à vos pareils de lire incessamment?
Ils sont toujours logés à la troisième chambre,
Vêtus au mois de juin comme au mois de décembre,
Ayant pour tout laquais leur ombre seulement.)

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES III: THE AMETHYST RING



Translated by B. Drillien **CONTENTS**

[CHAPTER I](#)
[CHAPTER II](#)
[CHAPTER III](#)
[CHAPTER IV](#)
[CHAPTER V](#)
[CHAPTER VI](#)
[CHAPTER VII](#)
[CHAPTER VIII](#)
[CHAPTER IX](#)
[CHAPTER X](#)
[CHAPTER XI](#)
[CHAPTER XII](#)
[CHAPTER XIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIV](#)
[CHAPTER XV](#)
[CHAPTER XVI](#)
[CHAPTER XVII](#)
[CHAPTER XVIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIX](#)
[CHAPTER XX](#)
[CHAPTER XXI](#)
[CHAPTER XXII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIV](#)
[CHAPTER XXV](#)
[CHAPTER XXVI](#)

CHAPTER I

TRUE to her word, Madame Bergeret quitted the conjugal roof and betook herself to the house of her mother, the widow Pouilly.

As the time for her departure drew near, she had half a mind not to go, and with a little coaxing would have consented to forget the past and resume the old life with her husband, at the same time vaguely despising M. Bergeret as the injured party.

She was quite ready to forgive and forget, but the unbending esteem in which she was held by the circle in which she moved did not allow of such a course. Madame Dellion had made it clear to her that any such weakness on her part would be judged unfavourably; all the drawing-rooms in the place were unanimous upon that score. There was but one opinion among the tradespeople: — Madame Bergeret *must* return to her mother. In this way did they uphold the proprieties and, at the same time, rid themselves of a thoughtless, common, compromising person, whose vulgarity was apparent even to the vulgar, and who was a burden on everybody about her. They made her believe there was something heroic in her conduct.

“I have the greatest admiration for you, my child,” said old Madame Dutilleul from the depths of her easy chair, she who had survived four husbands, and was a truly terrible woman. People suspected her of everything, except of ever having loved, and in her old age she was honoured and respected by all.

Madame Bergeret was delighted at having inspired sympathy in Madame Dellion and admiration in Madame Dutilleul, and still she could not finally make up her mind to go, for she was of a homely disposition and accustomed to regular habits and quite content to live on in idleness and deceit. Having grasped this fact, M. Bergeret redoubled his efforts to ensure his deliverance. He stoutly upheld Marie, the servant, who kept every one in the house in a state of wretchedness and trepidation, was suspected of harbouring thieves and cut-throats in her kitchen, and only brought herself into prominence by the catastrophes she caused.

Four days before the time appointed for Madame Bergeret’s departure, this girl, who was drunk as usual, upset a lighted lamp in her mistress’s room and set fire to the blue chintz bed-curtains. Madame Bergeret was spending the day with her friend, Madame Lacarelle. She returned and, amid the dreadful stillness of the house, beheld on entering her room the evidences of the disaster. She called and called in vain for her stony-hearted husband and her besotted maid, then

stood gazing at the smoke-blackened ceiling and the dismal ravages of the fire. This commonplace accident assumed in her eyes a mystic significance that frightened her. But presently as the candle began to flicker she lay down, tired out and very cold, upon her bed under the skeleton of the charred canopy whose black shreds fluttered like the wings of a bat. The next morning, on waking, she wept for her blue curtains, the souvenir and symbol of her youth; bare-footed, with dishevelled hair, smothered with blacks and clad only in her nightdress, she ran desperately about the rooms, crying and moaning. M. Bergeret took no notice of her; for him she had ceased to exist.

That evening, with the help of the girl Marie, she drew her bed into the middle of the dreary room. But now she realised that this room could never again be a resting-place for her, and that she must leave the room where for fifteen years she had fulfilled the duties of daily life.

Moreover, the ingenious Bergeret, having taken rooms for his daughter Pauline and himself in a little house in the Place Saint-Exupère, was busy moving out and moving in.

He went backwards and forwards ceaselessly between the two houses, keeping close to the walls, and trotting along with the agility of a mouse suddenly unearthed in a heap of debris. His heart was glad within him, but he concealed his joy, for he was a prudent man.

Having been told that, at an early date, she must hand over the keys of the house to the landlord, Madame Bergeret in like manner set about despatching her furniture to her mother, who lived in a maisonnette on the ramparts of a little northern town. She made bundles of clothes and of linen, pushed the furniture about, gave orders to the men, sneezed in the dusty atmosphere, and wrote out labels addressed to "Madame Veuve Pouilly."

From her labours Madame Bergeret derived moral assistance, for it is good for mankind to work. It takes a man's mind off his own life and turns him away from dreadful self-examination; it keeps him from that which makes solitude unbearable, the contemplation of that other being, his real self. It is the sovereign remedy for moral and aesthetic obsessions. Work is also excellent, in that it panders to our vanity, hides from us our impotence, and flatters us with the hope of something good to come. We imagine that it enables us to steal a march on Fate.

Failing to realise the necessary relation between individual endeavour and the mechanism of the universe, we fondly imagine that our efforts are directed to our own advantage against the rest of the machine. Work gives us illusory determination, strength and independence, and makes us as gods in our own eyes. We appear to ourselves as so many heroes, genii, demons, demiurges, gods

— yes, as God Himself. And, in fact, man has always conceived of God as a worker. Thus it was that the removal restored Madame Bergeret's natural gaiety and the joyous energy of her physical strength. She sang songs as she tied up parcels; the rapid flow of blood in her veins made her content, and she looked forward to a happy future.

She painted in glowing colours her life in the little Flemish town where she would live with her mother and her two younger daughters. There she hoped to grow young again, to be brilliant and admired, to have attention offered her, and to find sympathy. Who could say whether, once the decree *nisi* was granted in her favour, a second and wealthy marriage were not awaiting her in her native town? Was it not quite possible that she might marry a good-tempered, sensible man, a country gentleman, an agriculturist or a Government official, somebody quite different from M. Bergeret?

The packing-up also afforded her peculiar satisfaction, for from it she derived some solid advantages in the way of gain. Not satisfied with the appropriation of what she had brought as her marriage portion, and a large share of the common property, she heaped into her trunks things which she ought in ordinary fairness to have left to others. In this way she packed among her underclothes a silver cup which had belonged to M. Bergeret's maternal grandmother. Again, she added to her own jewels which, be it said, were of no great value, the watch and chain of M. Bergeret's father, a professor at the University, who, having refused in 1852 to swear fidelity to the Empire, had died in 1873, poor and forgotten.

Madame Bergeret interrupted her packing only to go and pay her farewell calls, visits both sad and triumphant. Public opinion was in her favour. Men's judgments are diverse, and there is no place in the world where there is undivided and unanimous opinion on any single subject. *Tradidit mundum disputationibus eorum*. Madame Bergeret herself was the subject of polite discussion and of secret dissent. The greater number of the ladies of her acquaintance considered her irreproachable, otherwise they would not have received her at their houses. There were a few, however, who suspected that her adventure with M. Roux had not been quite blameless; some of them even went so far as to say so. One blamed her, another excused her, a third approved of her, casting all the blame upon M. Bergeret, as being a spiteful man.

That point, too, was open to doubt. Some people declared M. Bergeret to be a nice, quiet man, the only thing to dislike in him being his too subtle mind, which was at variance with public opinion.

M. de Terremondre said that M. Bergeret was a very nice sort of man; to which Madame Dellion replied that if he were really a good man he would have stood by his wife, however wicked she was.

“There would be some merit in that,” she said. “There is nothing noble in putting-up with a charming woman.”

Another opinion of Madame Dellion’s was: “M. Bergeret is doing his utmost to keep his wife, but she is leaving him, and quite right too! It serves M. Bergeret right.”

Thus did Madame Dellion express opinions which were inconsistent, for human thought has ever depended not upon force of reason but on violence of feeling.

Although the world is known to be uncertain in its judgment, Madame Bergeret would have gone from the town in possession of a good reputation, if on the very eve of her departure, when paying her farewell visit to Madame Lacarelle, she had not met M. Lacarelle alone in the drawing-room.

M. Gustave Lacarelle, chief clerk at the *préfecture*, had a long, thick, fair moustache, which, while the chief characteristic of his countenance, was also destined to determine his character. In his student days at the Law Schools, his comrades had discovered in him a resemblance to the ancient Gauls, as depicted in the sculpture and paintings of the later romanticists. Other more careful observers, remarking that the long strands of hair were situated under the snub nose and placid eyes, gave Lacarelle the name of “The Seal.” The latter, however, did not prevail against that of “The Gaul.” Lacarelle became “The Gaul” to his companions, who consequently made up their minds that he ought to be a great drinker, a great fighter, and a devil with the women, in order that he might conform in reality to the Frenchman of immemorial tradition. At the Corps dinners he was forced to drink far more than he wanted, and he could never go into a *brasserie* with his friends without being pushed, up against some tray-laden waitress. When he married and returned to his native town, and, by what was a great stroke of fortune in those days, obtained a post in the Central Administration of the department from which he hailed, Gustave Lacarelle continued to be called “The Gaul” by the most important of the magistrates, lawyers, and Government officials who frequented his house. The ignorant mob, however, did not bestow this name upon him until 1895, in which year a statue to Eporedorix was erected and unveiled on the Pont National.

Twenty-two years previously, under the presidency of M. Thiers, it had been decided that subscriptions should be invited for the erection of a statue to the Gaulish chief Eporedorix, who, in the year 52 B.C., led the river tribes against Caesar, and imperilled the small Roman garrison by cutting down the wooden bridge built by them to ensure communication with the rest of the Army. The archaeologists of the little county town firmly believed that this feat of arms had been accomplished in the *Commentaries* which all the learned societies of the

district quoted as a proof of the fact that the wooden bridge cut down by Eporedorix was situated in *their* particular town. There is a great deal of uncertainty with regard to Caesar's geography, and local patriotism is both fierce and jealous. The chief town of the department, three *sous-préfectures*, and four smaller towns quarrelled for the glory of having slaughtered the Romans by the hand of Eporedorix.

Competent authority decided the question in favour of the capital town of the department. It was an unfortified town, which much to its sorrow and anger had been forced in 1870 after one hour's bombardment to allow the enemy to enter its walls, walls which in the time of Louis XI had been crumbling to pieces, and now lay concealed beneath the ivy that had overgrown them.

The town had undergone the hardships and privations of military occupation. It had suffered and atoned. The project of erecting a monument to the memory of the Gaulish chief was received with enthusiasm by the townspeople, who were experiencing the humiliation of defeat, and were all the more grateful to their long-dead compatriot for providing them with something of which they could be proud. Resuscitated after fifteen hundred years of oblivion, Eporedorix united all the citizens in a bond of filial devotion. The name of the hero roused no distrust in any of the different political parties which were then dividing France. Opportunists, Radicals, Constitutionalists, Royalists, Orleanists, Bonapartists, they all gave to the scheme; half the cost was subscribed within the year, and deputies of the department obtained from the Government what was wanting to make up the required sum.

The order for the statue of Eporedorix was given to Mathieu Michel, David d'Angers' youngest pupil, he whom the Master had called his Benjamin. Mathieu Michel, who was then in his fiftieth year, at once set to work, and attacked the clay with a generous, if somewhat cramped, hand, for the republican sculptor had done but little work during the Empire. In less than two years, however, he finished the figure, a plaster model of which was exhibited in the Salon of 1873, among many other Gaulish chiefs gathered together among the palms and begonias under the huge glass dome. Owing to the endless formalities insisted upon by the authorities, the statue was not finally completed in marble for another five years. After this, so many administrative difficulties, so many disputes arose, between the town and the Government, that it looked as though the statue of Eporedorix would never be erected upon the Pont National.

In 1895, however, the work was accomplished, and the statue, arriving from Paris, was received by the *préfet*, who solemnly handed it over to the mayor of the town. Mathieu Michel accompanied his work. He was then over seventy, and

the whole town turned out to look at the old man with his lionlike head and long, flowing, white hair.

The inauguration took place on the 7th of June, when M. Dupont was Minister of Public Instruction, M. Worms-Clavelin *préfet* of the department, and M. Trumelle mayor of the town. Doubtless the enthusiasm was not what it would have been on the morrow of the invasion, when indignation was at its height, but at any rate everybody was satisfied. The speeches and also the uniforms of the officers met with applause, and when the green veil which hid Eporedorix from view was withdrawn the whole town cried as with one voice, "Lacarelle! it is Lacarelle! it is the image of Lacarelle!"

This, to tell the truth, was by no means correct. Mathieu Michel, the pupil and emulator of David d'Angers, he whom the venerable master called the child of his old age, the republican sculptor and patriot, insurgent in '48, volunteer in '70, had not portrayed M. Gustave Lacarelle in this marble hero. No, indeed! This chief, with his shy and gentle look, clasping his lance, and seeming, under his wide-winged helmet, to be meditating upon the poetry of Chateaubriand and the historic philosophy of Henri Martin, this warrior, steeped in romantic melancholy, was not, in spite of what the people cried, the true portrait of M. Lacarelle.

The *préfets* secretary had big, prominent eyes, a short, snub nose, flabby cheeks, and a double chin. Mathieu Michel's Eporedorix gazed with deep-set orbs into the distance. His nose was Grecian, and the contour of his face pure and classical. But, like M. Lacarelle, he had a tremendous moustache, the long, curving branches of which were visible from every point of view.

Struck by this resemblance, the crowd unanimously bestowed upon M. Lacarelle the glorious name of Eporedorix, and from that time the secretary of the *préfet* found himself compelled to personate in public the popular idea of the Gaul, and to conform to it by word and deed under all circumstances. Lacarelle was fairly successful, for he had had plenty of practice since his student days, and all that was required of him was to be hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, keen on the Army, and a teller of broad stories when necessary. He was considered to be an adept at kissing women, and so he became a great embracer. He kissed them all and he kissed them always. It did not matter who they were: women, young girls, and little girls, pretty ones and plain, old and young, he embraced them out of pure Gaulishness, and with no evil intentions, for he was a moral man.

And that is why, coming unexpectedly upon Madame Bergeret waiting in the drawing-room for his wife, he immediately embraced her. Madame Bergeret was not ignorant of M. Lacarelle's little habit, but her vanity, which was great,

confounded her judgment, which was scanty. She thought he kissed her because he loved her, and straightway fell into so great an emotion that her bosom heaved stormily, her legs gave way beneath her, and she sank panting into the arms of M. Lacarelle. The latter was both surprised and embarrassed, but his amour-propre was flattered. He placed Madame Bergeret as comfortably as he could upon the couch, and, bending over her, said in a voice filled with sympathy:

“Poor lady! So charming and so unhappy! And so you are leaving us? You are going to-morrow?”

And he imprinted upon her brow a chaste kiss. But Madame Bergeret, whose nerves were all unstrung, burst into a fit of sobs and tears; then slowly, solemnly, and sorrowfully she returned his kiss at the very moment that Madame Lacarelle entered the room.

The next day the whole town sat in judgment upon Madame Bergeret, who had remained among them just one day too long.

CHAPTER II

THAT day the Duc de Brécé was entertaining General Cartier de Chalmot, Abbé Guitrel, and Lerond, the ex-deputy, at Brécé. They had visited the stables, the kennels, the pheasantry, and had been talking, all the time, about the Affair.

As the twilight fell, they commenced to stroll slowly along the great avenue of the park. Before them the chateau rose up, in the dapple grey sky, with its heavy façade laden with pediments and crowned with the high-pitched roofs of the Empire period.

"I am convinced," said M. de Brécé, "as I said before, that the fuss made over this affair is, and can only be, some abominable plot instigated by the enemies of France."

"And of religion," gently added Abbé Guitrel. "It is impossible to be a good Frenchman without being a good Christian. And it is clear that the scandal was started in the first place by freethinkers and freemasons, by Protestants."

"And Jews," went on M. de Brécé, "Jews and Germans. What unheard-of audacity to question the decision of a court-martial! For when all is said and done, it is quite impossible for seven French officers to have made a mistake."

"No, of course, that is not to be thought of," said the Abbé Guitrel.

"Generally speaking," put in M. Lerond, "a miscarriage of justice is a most improbable thing. I would even go so far as to say an impossible thing, inasmuch as the law protects the accused in so many ways. I am speaking of civil law, and I say the same of martial law. As far as courts-martial are concerned, even supposing the prisoner's interest to be less thoroughly safeguarded owing to the comparatively summary form of procedure, he finds all necessary security in the character of his judges. To my mind it is an insult to the Army, to doubt the legality of a verdict delivered by a court-martial."

"You are quite correct," replied the Duke. "Besides, can any one really believe seven French officers to be mistaken? Is such a thing conceivable, General?"

"Hardly," replied General Cartier de Chalmot. "It would take a great deal to make me believe it."

"A syndicate of treachery!" cried M. de Brécé. "The thing is unheard of!"

Conversation flagged and fell. The Duke and the General had just caught sight of some pheasants in a clearing, and, smitten simultaneously with the burning and instinctive desire to kill, mentally recorded a regret at having no guns with them.

“You have the finest coverts in the district,” said the General to the Duc de Brécé.

The Duke was deep in thought.

“I don’t care what any one says,” he remarked, “the Jews will never be any good to France.”

The Duc de Brécé, eldest son of the late Duke — who had cut a dash among the light-horse at the Assemblée de Versailles — had entered public life after the death of the Comte de Chambord. He had never known the days of hope, the hours of ardent struggle, of monarchical enterprises as exciting as a conspiracy and as impassioned as an act of faith. He had never seen the tapestried bed offered to the Prince by noble ladies, nor the banners, the flags and the white horses which were to bring the King to his own again. By right of birth as a Brécé he took his place as deputy at the Palais-Bourbon, nourishing a secret enmity against the Comte de Paris, and a hidden wish never to see the restoration, if it were to be in favour of the younger branch of the Royal Family. With this one exception he was a loyal and faithful Royalist. He was drawn into intrigues which he did not understand, made a hopeless muddle of his votes, spent his money freely in Paris, and when the elections took place found himself defeated at Brécé by Dr. Cotard.

From that day onward he devoted his time to farming, to his family and to religion. All that remained of his hereditary domain, which in 1789 was composed of one hundred and twelve parishes, comprising one hundred and seventy “Hommages,” four “Terres titrés,” and eighteen manors, was about two thousand acres of land and forest around the historic castle of Brécé. In his department the Brécé coverts invested him with a lustre that he had never enjoyed at the Palais-Bourbon. The forests of Brécé and La Guerche, in which Francis I had hunted, were also celebrated in the ecclesiastical history of the district, for in these woods was situated the time-honoured chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles.

“Now mark what I tell you,” repeated the Duc de Brécé, “the Jews will bring misfortune upon France. Why don’t we get rid of them? Nothing would be easier!”

“It would be a great thing,” replied the magistrate, “but not so easy as you imagine, M. le Duc.

In the first place, if you wish in any way to affect the position of the Jews in this country, you must make new laws on naturalisation. Now it is always difficult to make a law which will satisfactorily fulfil the intentions of the legislator, and laws such as these would affect the whole of our legal system, and would, moreover, be extremely difficult to draft. Then, unfortunately, we could

never be certain of finding a Government ready to propose or support them, nor a Parliament to carry them. The Senate is no good. As history unrolls itself before our eyes we make the discovery that the eighteenth century is one huge error of the human understanding, and that social as well as religious truths are to be found in their full completeness only in the traditions of the Middle Ages. By and by France will find it necessary — as Russia has done with regard to the Jews — to revert to the procedure adopted in those feudal times which offer the best example of the typical Christian state.”

“Naturally,” said the Duke, “Christian France should belong to Frenchmen and Christians, not to Jews and Protestants.”

“Bravo!” cried the General.

“There was a younger son in our family,” went on the Duke, “called Nez-d’Argent — I don’t know why — who fought in the provinces during the reign of Charles IX. On that tree whose leafless top you see over there, he hanged six hundred and thirty-six Huguenots. Well, I must confess I am proud of being a descendant of Nez-d’Argent. I have inherited his hatred of heretics, and I hate Jews in the same way that he hated Protestants.”

“Such sentiments are most praiseworthy, M. le Duc,” remarked the Abbé, “most laudable, and worthy of the great name you bear. But, if you will allow me, I will make a comment on just one point. In the Middle Ages the Jews were not considered heretics, and, properly speaking, they are not heretics. The heretic is a man who, having been baptised, and instructed in the doctrines of the faith, misrepresents or denies them. Such are, or rather were, the Arians, the Albigenses, the Novatians, the Montanists, the Priscillianists, the Waldenses, the Anabaptists, and the Calvinists, so cleverly disposed of by your illustrious ancestor, Nez-d’Argent; not to mention many other sects who upheld doctrines contrary to the beliefs of the Church. The number of them is very great, for variety is a characteristic of error. There is no stopping on the downward path of heresy; and schism reproduces and multiplies itself *ad infinitum*. All that one finds opposing the true Church is the dust and ashes of churches. The other day, when reading Bossuet, I came across an admirable definition of a heretic. ‘A heretic,’ says Bossuet, ‘is one who holds an opinion of his own; one who acts according to his own ideas and his own feelings.’ Now the Jew, who has never received baptism nor been instructed in the truth, cannot rightly be called a heretic.

“And again we see that the Inquisition never chastised a Jew as such, and if a Jew was handed over to earthly justice it was because he was a blasphemer, a profane person, or a corrupter of the faithful. A better name for the Jew would be infidel, because that is the name we give to those who, being unbaptised, do not

believe in the truths of the Christian religion. Again, we must not, strictly speaking, look upon the Jew as an infidel, in the same way as we should a Mohammedan or an idolater. The Jews occupy a unique and singular position in the economy of the eternal verities. Theology bestows upon them a designation conformable to their rôle in history. They were called 'witnesses' in the Middle Ages, and we must admire the force and precision of such a term. The reason why God allows them to live is that they may serve as witnesses and sureties for the words and deeds upon which our religion is founded. We must not go so far as to say that God purposely makes the Jews obstinate and blind to serve as living proofs of Christianity; but He utilizes their free and voluntary stubbornness to confirm us in our belief. It is for that reason that He allows them a place among the nations."

"But in the meanwhile," put in the Duke, "they rob us of our money and destroy our national energy."

"And they insult the Army," said General Cartier de Chalmot. "Or rather it is insulted by the wretches in their pay."

"And that is a crime," remarked the Abbé gently. "The salvation of France depends upon the alliance of the Church and the Army."

"Well, then, M. l'Abbé, why do you defend the Jews?" demanded the Duc de Brécé.

"Far from defending them," replied the Abbé Guitrel, "I condemn their unpardonable sin, which is to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. On this point their obstinacy is invincible. Their own belief is rational enough, but they do not believe all that they should, and that is why they have drawn so heavy a blame upon themselves. This blame rests upon the Jews as a nation, and not as individuals, and cannot touch any who have been converted to Christianity."

"For my part," said the Duke, "converted Jews are just as odious to me, more odious even, than other Jews. It is the race I dislike."

"Allow me to say I do not believe you, M. le Duc," said the Abbé. "For that would be to sin against charity and the teaching of the Church. I am sure that, like myself, you are grateful to a certain extent to some unconverted Jews for their liberal donations towards our charities. It is impossible to deny, for instance, that families like the R — and the F — have, in this respect, shown an example which might well be followed by all Christian families. I will go so far as to say that Madame Worms-Clavelin, although not openly converted to Catholicism, has on several occasions given proof of truly divine inspiration. It is to the *préfets* wife that we owe the tolerance with which in the midst of general persecution our Church schools are regarded in this department. As for Madame de Bonmont, who is a Jewess by birth, she is a true Christian indeed,

and takes pattern to a certain extent by those holy widows who in centuries past gave a part of their riches to the churches and the poor."

"The Bonmonts' real name is Gutenberg," put in M. Lerond. "They are of German extraction. The grandfather amassed his riches by the manufacture of the two poisons, absinth and vermouth, and was imprisoned no less than three times for infringement and adulteration. The father, who was a manufacturer and a financier, made a scandalous fortune through speculation and monopoly. Subsequently his widow presented a golden ciborium to Monseigneur Chariot. That sort of people always makes me think of the two attorneys who, after listening to a sermon by good Father Maillard, said to each other at the church door, 'Well, neighbour, have we got to disgorge?'"

"It is an extraordinary thing," said M. Lerond, "that the Semitic question has never arisen in England."

"That is because the English are not made the same as we are," said the Duke. "Their blood is not so hot as ours."

"True," said M. Lerond. "I fully appreciate that remark; but it may arise from the fact that the English engage all their capital in trade, while our hard-working population save theirs for speculation; in other words, for the Jews. The whole trouble arises from having to submit to the laws and customs of the Revolution. Salvation lies in a speedy return to the old régime."

"That's true," said the Duc de Brécé thoughtfully.

They walked along, chatting as they went. Suddenly a char-à-banc passed them, bowling along the road thrown open to the inhabitants of the town by the late Duke. Filled with laughing, noisy people, it went swiftly past them; amongst the countrywomen with their flower-bedecked hats, and the farmers in blouses, sat a jovial red-bearded fellow smoking a pipe. He was pretending to aim at imaginary pheasants with his cane as they passed by. It was Dr. Cotard, member for the Brécé district, member for the ancient seignior of Brécé.

"That, at any rate, is a strange sight," said M. Lerond, brushing off the dust raised by the char-à-banc, "to see Cotard, the medical officer of health, representing this district, upon which your ancestors, M. le Duc, showered benefits and glories for eight hundred years. Only yesterday I was rereading in M. de Terremondre's book the letter which your great-great-grandfather, the Duc de Brécé, wrote in 1787 to his steward, and which proves how kind-hearted he was. You remember the letter, do you not?"

The Duke replied that he remembered the letter in question, but could not be sure of the precise terms employed.

M. Lerond immediately began to recite by heart the principal phrases of this touching letter. "I have learned," wrote the Good Duke, "that the inhabitants of

Brécé are forbidden to gather strawberries in the woods. People are evidently doing their best to make me disliked, and that would be a terrible grief to me.”

“I have also found,” continued M. Lerond, “some interesting details on the life of the good Duc de Brécé in M. de Terremondre’s summary. The Duke spent the worst days of the Revolution here on his estate without being in any way molested, for his good deeds gained him the love and respect of his old retainers. In exchange for the titles of which by a decree of the National Assembly he was deprived he received that of Commander of the National Guard of Brécé. M. de Terremondre goes on to tell us that on the 20th of September, 1792, the municipality of Brécé assembled in the courtyard of the castle, and there planted a tree to Liberty, to which was suspended this inscription, ‘Hommage à la vertu!’”

“M. de Terremondre,” returned the Duke, “drew his information from the archives of my family. I myself asked him to go into them, for, unfortunately, I have never had the time to do so. Duke Louis de Brécé, of whom you were speaking, surnamed ‘the Good Duke,’ died of grief in 1794. He was gifted with a kindness of disposition which even the Revolutionists themselves delighted to honour. Every one recognises the fact that he distinguished himself by his loyalty to his King; that he was a good master, a good father, and a good husband. You must take no notice of the so-called revelations of a man called Mazure, who is keeper of the departmental archives. According to him the ‘Good Duke’s benevolence was confined to his prettiest vassals, on whom he liked to exercise his ‘droit de jambage.’ As far as that goes, this particular right to which I allude is of a very problematical nature, and I have never been able to discover a trace of it among the Brécé archives, which, by the way, have been in part destroyed.”

“This right,” said M. Lerond, “if it ever did exist at all, was nothing more nor less than a payment in meat or wine which serfs were called upon to bring to their lord before contracting marriage. If I remember rightly, there were certain localities where this tax existed, and was paid in ready money to the value of three halfpence.”

“With regard to that,” went on the Duke, “I consider my ancestor entirely exonerated from the accusations brought against him by this M. Mazure, who, I am told, is a dangerous man. Unfortunately—” The Duke heaved a slight sigh, and continued in a lower and mysterious voice:— “Unfortunately, the Good Duke was in the habit of reading pernicious books. Whole editions of Voltaire and Rousseau, bound in morocco and stamped with the Brécé coat of arms, have been discovered in the castle library. He fell, to a certain extent, under the detestable influence of the philosophical thought that was rampant among all

classes of people towards the end of the eighteenth century, even among those in the highest society. He was possessed of a mania for writing, and was the author of certain Memoirs, the manuscript of which is still in my possession. Both the Duchess and M. de Terremondre have glanced through it. It is surprising to find there traces of the Voltairian spirit, and the Duke now and then shows his partiality for the Encyclopaedists. He used, in fact, to correspond with Diderot. That is why I have thought it wise to withhold my consent to the publication of these Memoirs, in spite of the request of some of the savants of the districts, and of M. de Terremondre himself. —

“The Good Duke could turn a rhyme quite prettily, and he filled whole books with madrigals, epigrams, and stories. That is quite excusable. A far more serious matter, however, is that he sometimes permitted himself to jeer at the ceremonies of our holy religion, and even at the miracles performed by the intervention of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles. I beg, gentlemen, that you will say nothing of all this; it must remain strictly between ourselves. I should be very sorry to hand over anecdotes such as these to feed the unhealthy curiosity of men like M. Mazure, and the malice of the public in general. The Duc de Brécé in question was my great-great-grandfather, and my family pride is great. I am sure you will not blame me for this.”

“Much valuable instruction and great consolations are to be derived from what you have just related to us, Monsieur,” said the Abbé. “The conclusion we arrive at is that France, which in the eighteenth century had turned away from Christianity, and was so steeped in wickedness, even to the very greatest in the land, that good men, such as your noble great-great-grandfather, pandered to the false philosophy; France, I say, punished for her crimes by a terrible revolution, is now amending her evil ways, and witnessing the return to piety of all classes of the nation, especially in the highest circles. Examples such as yours, Monsieur, are not to be ignored, and if the eighteenth century, taken altogether, appears as the century of crime, the nineteenth, judging by the attitude of the aristocracy, may, if I mistake not be called the century of public penance.”

“God grant that you are right,” sighed M. Lerond. “But I dare not allow myself to hope. My profession as a man of law brings me into contact with the masses, and I invariably find them indifferent, and even hostile to religion. Let me tell, you, M. l’Abbé, that my experience of the world leads me to share in the deep sorrow of the Abbé Lantaigne, and not in your optimistic view of things. Now, without going further afield, do you not see that this Christian land of Brécé has become the fief of the atheist and freemason, Dr. Cotard?”

“And who can say,” demanded the General, “whether the Duke will not unseat Dr. Cotard at the next elections? I am told that a contest is more than

probable, and that a good number of electors are in favour of the château.”

“My decision is unalterable,” replied the Duke, “and nothing can make me change it. I shall not stand again. I have not the necessary qualifications to represent the electors of Brécé, and the electors of Brécé have not the necessary qualifications for me to wish to represent them.”

This speech had been composed by his secretary, M. Lacrisse, at the time of his electoral reverse, and since then he had made a point of quoting it on every possible occasion.

Just at that moment three ladies, descending the terrace steps, came along the great drive towards them.

They were the three Brécé ladies, the mother, wife, and daughter of the present Duke. They were all tall, massive, and freckled, with smooth hair tightly plastered back, and clad in black dresses and thick boots. They were on their way to the church of Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles, situated by the side of a well half-way between the town and the château.

The General suggested that they should accompany the ladies.

“Nothing could be more delightful,” said M. Lerond.

“True,” assented the Abbé, “and all the more so because the sacred edifice, which has lately been restored and richly redecorated by the care of the Duke, is most delightful to see.”

The Abbé Guitrel took a special interest in the chapel of Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles, of which, in archaeological and pious vein, he had written a history, for the purpose of attracting pilgrims to the shrine. According to him the church dated from the reign of Clotaire II. “At this period,” wrote the historian, “St. Austrégisile, full of years and good works, and exhausted by his apostolic labours, built with his own hands in this desert spot a hut, where he could pass his days in meditation, and await the approach of blessed death; he also erected an oratory, in which he placed a miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin.”

This assertion had been vigorously contested by M. Mazure in the *Phare*. The keeper of the departmental archives maintained that the worship of Mary came well after the sixth century, and that at the time in which St. Austrégisile was supposed to have lived there were no statues of the Virgin. To which the Abbé Guitrel replied in the *Semaine Religieuse* that before the birth of Jesus Christ the Druids themselves worshipped the image of the Virgin who was to bear a son, and thus our old earth that was to witness the remarkable spread of the worship of Mary contained her altars and images, prophetic in significance as the warnings of the sibyls, to herald her appearance upon it. Therefore, argued he, there was nothing strange in St. Austrégisile’s possessing an image of the Blessed Virgin as early as the reign of Clotaire II. M. Mazure had treated the

arguments of the Abbé as idle fancies, and no one, save M. Bergeret, whose curiosity was unbounded, had read the record of this logomachy.

“The sanctuary erected by the holy apostle,” went on the Abbé Guitrel’s pamphlet, “was rebuilt with great magnificence in the thirteenth century. At the time of the wars of religion that devastated the country during the sixteenth century, the Protestants fired the chapel, without, however, being able to destroy the statue, which by a miracle escaped the flames. The church was rebuilt at the behest of King Louis XIV and his pious mother, but during the Reign of Terror was totally destroyed by the commissioners of the Convention, who carried the miraculous statue, together with the furniture of the chapel, into the courtyard at Brécé and made a bonfire of the whole. Fortunately, however, one of the Virgin’s feet was saved from the flames by a good peasant-woman, who wrapped it carefully in old rags and hid it in a cauldron, where it was discovered in 1815. This foot was included in a new statue which, thanks to the generosity of the Duke, was executed in Paris in 1852.”

The Abbé Guitrel went on to enumerate the miracles accomplished from the sixth century up to the present time by the intervention of Notre-Dames-desBelles-Feuilles, who was in particular request for the cure of diseases of the respiratory organs and the lungs. And he further affirmed that in 1871 she had turned the Germans aside from the town and miraculously healed of their wounds two soldiers quartered at the château of Brécé, which had been turned into a hospital.

They reached the bottom of a narrow valley with a stream flowing between moss-grown stones. On an irregular platform of sandstone, surrounded by dwarf oak trees, rose the oratory of Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles, newly constructed from the plans of M. Quatrebarbe, the diocesan architect, in that modern namby-pamby style which people fondly imagine to be Gothic.

“This oratory,” said the Abbé Guitrel, “was burned down in 1559 by the Calvinists, and again in 1793 by the revolutionaries, and nothing remained but a mass of ruins. Like another Nehemiah, the Duc de Brécé has rebuilt the sanctuary. The Pope this year, has granted to it numerous indulgences, no doubt with the object of quickening the worship of the Blessed Virgin in this country. Monseigneur Chariot himself celebrated the Holy Eucharist here, and since then pilgrims have flocked to the shrine. They come from all parts of the diocese, and even farther. There is no doubt that such co-operation and zeal must draw special blessings on the country. I myself had the felicity of bringing to the feet of la Vierge des Belles-Feuilles several respectable families of the Tintelleries. And, with the permission of the Duke, I have more than once celebrated Mass at this favoured altar.”

"That is true," said the Duchess. "And it is noticeable that the Abbé takes more interest in our chapel than the Curé of Brécé himself."

"Good M. Traviès!" said the Duke. "He is an excellent priest, but an inveterate sportsman, and all he thinks of is shooting. The other day, on returning from the administration of extreme unction to a dying man, he brought down three partridges."

"Now that the branches are devoid of leaves," said the Abbé, "you can see the chapel, which in the summer, is entirely hidden by the thick foliage."

"One of the reasons which made me determine to rebuild the chapel of Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles," said the Duke, "was that on examining the family archives, I found that the battle-cry of the Brécés was 'Brécé Notre-Dame!'"

"How very strange!" remarked General Cartier de Chalmot.

"Is it not?" replied Madame de Brécé.

Just as the ladies, followed by M. Lerond, were crossing the rustic bridge that spans the stream, a ragged girl of thirteen or fourteen, with hair of the same dirty white colour as her face, slipping from a copse on the opposite side of the hollow, ran up the steps and rushed into the oratory.

"There's Honorine," said Madame de Brécé. "I've been wanting to see her for a long time," said M. Lerond, "and I must thank you, Madame, for being the means of satisfying my curiosity. I have heard so much about her!"

"Yes, indeed," said General Cartier de Chalmot. "The young girl in question has been subjected to many and searching inquiries."

"M. de Goulet," put in the Abbé, "comes regularly to the sanctuary of Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles. It is his pleasure and delight to spend long hours in adoration of her whom he calls his mother."

"We are very fond of M. de Goulet," said Madame de Brécé. "What a pity it is that he should be so delicate."

"Yes, alas!" replied the Abbé. "His strength diminishes from day to day!"

"He ought to take more care of himself," went on the Duchess, "and rest as much as possible."

"How can he, Madame?" asked the Abbé. "The management of the diocese fills up every moment of his time."

As the three ladies, the General, M. Guitrel, M. Lerond, and the Duke entered the chapel, they saw Honorine, as in an ecstasy, kneeling at the foot of the altar.

With clasped hands, and uplifted head, the child knelt there motionless. Out of respect for her mysterious condition, they crossed themselves silently with holy water, letting their gaze wander from the Gothic tabernacle and fall upon the stained-glass windows, in which the Comte de Chambord appeared in the guise of St. Henry, while the faces of St. John the Baptist and St. Guy were

executed from photographs of Comte Jean, who died in 1867, and the late Comte Guy, who, in 1871, was a member of the Bordeaux Assembly.

The miraculous statue was covered by a veil, and stood just over the altar. But above the holy-water stoup, painted in bright colours upon the wall was a full-length figure of Notre-Dame de Lourdes, girdled with blue.

The General looked at her with a set expression derived from fifty years of mechanical respect, and gazed at her blue scarf as though it had been the flag of a friendly nation. He had always been looked upon as something of a mystic, and had considered a belief in the future life to be the very base and foundation-stone of military regulations. Age and ill-health were making a devotee of him. For some days past, though he did not betray it, he had been, if not worried, at any rate grieved, by the recent scandals. His simple-mindedness had taken fright at such a tumult of words and passions, and he was obsessed by vague misgivings. He sent up a voiceless prayer to Notre-Dame de Lourdes, imploring her protection for the French Army.

All of them, the women, the Duke, the lawyer, and the priest, had by this time riveted their gaze upon the worn shoes of the motionless Honorine, and these sombre, solemn, solid folk fell into an ecstasy of admiration at the sight of the lithe young body, now stiff and rigid; M. Lerond, who prided himself on being very observant, made sundry observations.

At last, however, Honorine came out of her trance. She rose to her feet, bowed to the altar, and turned round; then, as though astonished at the sight of so many people, stood stock still and brushed away with both hands the hair that had fallen over her eyes.

“Well, my child, did you see the Blessed Virgin to-day?” asked Madame de Brécé.

In the shrill sing-song voice of a child in the catechism class answering by rote, Honorine replied: “Yes, Madame. The good Virgin remained for one moment, then rolled up like a piece of calico, and I didn’t see her any more.”

“Did she speak to you?”

“Yes, Madame.”

“What did she say?”

“She said, There is much misery in your home.”

“Is that all she said?”

“She said, There will be much misery in the country over the harvests and the cattle.”

“Did she not tell you to be good?”

“‘Pray continually,’ she said to me, and then she said like this, ‘I greet you. There is much misery in your home.’”

And the words of the child rang out in the imposing silence.

"Was the Blessed Virgin very beautiful?" again questioned Madame de Brécé.

"Yes, Madame. But one eye and one cheek were missing, because I had not prayed long enough."

"Had she a crown upon her head?" asked M. Lerond, who, as an ex-member of the magistracy, was inquisitive and fond of asking questions.

Honorine hesitated, and then, with a cunning look, replied:

"Her crown was on one side."

"Right or left?" asked M. Lerond.

"Right and left," answered Honorine.

Madame de Brécé intervened.

"What do you mean, my child, that it was first on the right and then on the left? Isn't that what you mean?" But Honorine would not answer.

She was in the habit sometimes of indulging in obstinate silences, standing, as now, with lowered eyes, rubbing her chin on her shoulder and fidgeting. They stopped questioning her, and she slipped out and away, when the Duke began forthwith to explain her case.

Honorine Porrichet, the daughter of a small farmer who had lived all his life at Brécé and had fallen into the direst poverty, had always been a sickly child. Her intelligence had developed so slowly and tardily, that at first she was looked upon as an idiot. The Curé used to reproach her for her wild disposition and the habit she had of hiding in the woods; he did not like her. But some enlightened priests who saw and questioned her could find in her nothing evil. She frequented churches, and would linger there lost in dreams unusual in a child of her age. Her zeal grew at the approach of her first communion. At that time she fell a victim to consumption, and the doctors gave her up. Dr. Cotard, among others, said there was no hope for her. When the new oratory of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles was inaugurated by Monseigneur Chariot, Honorine assiduously frequented it. She fell into ecstasies when there, and saw visions. She saw the Blessed Virgin, who said to her, "I am Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles!" One day Mary approached her, and, laying a finger upon her throat, told her she was cured.

"It was Honorine herself who came back with this remarkable story," added the Duke, "and she related it several times with the utmost simplicity. People have said that her story was never twice the same; what is certain, however, is that any inconsistency on her part only concerned the minor details of the narrative. What is also certain is that she suddenly ceased to suffer from the disease that was killing her. The doctors who examined and sounded her

immediately after the miraculous apparition found nothing wrong either with the bronchial tubes or the lungs. Dr. Cotard himself confessed that he could make nothing of the cure."

"What do you think of these facts?" said M. Lerond to the Abbé.

"They are worthy of attention," replied the priest, "and give rise, in all honest observers, to more than one reflexion. It would certainly be impossible to study them too assiduously. I can say no more. I should certainly never put aside such interesting and consoling facts with bold contempt like M. Lantaigne, neither should I dare, like M. de Goulet, to call them miracles. I reserve my opinion."

"In Honorine Porrichet's case," said the Duke, "we must consider both the remarkable cure, which I am right in saying was directly opposed to medical knowledge, and the visions which she declares to be vouchsafed to her. Now you are aware, M. l'Abbé, that when the girl's eyes were photographed, during one of her trances, the negatives obtained by the photographer, of whose good faith there is not the shadow of a doubt, contained the figure of the Blessed Virgin, imprinted upon the pupil of the eye. Certain persons whose evidence can be relied on swear to having seen the photographs, and to having distinguished, with the aid of a strong magnifying-glass, the statue of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles."

"These facts are worthy of notice," repeated the Abbé, "worthy of the most careful attention. But one must be able to suspend judgment, and not rush to premature conclusions. Let us not, like the unbelievers, form hasty conclusions, prompted by passion. In the matter of miracles, the Church exercises the greatest caution; she requires proofs, indisputable proofs."

M. Lerond asked whether it were possible to obtain the photographs which portrayed the image of the Blessed Virgin in the eyes of little Honorine Porrichet, and the Duke promised to write on the subject to the photographer, whose studio, he thought, was in the Place Saint-Exupère.

"Anyhow," put in Madame de Brécé, "little Honorine is a very good, nice little girl. She must be under the special protection of Providence, for her parents, who are overcome with illness and want, have abandoned her. I have made inquiries, and understand that her conduct is good."

"That is more than can be said of all the village girls of her age," added the dowager duchess.

"That is only too true," said the Duke. "The peasant classes are growing more and more demoralised. I will tell you of some terrible instances, General, but as for little Honorine, she is innocence itself."

While the foregoing conversation was being held on the threshold of the church, Honorine had rejoined Isidore in the copses of La Guerche. He was lying on a bed of dead leaves, waiting impatiently, partly because he thought she would bring him something to eat, or some coppers, partly because he loved her, for she was his sweetheart. It was he who had seen the ladies and gentlemen from the chateau on their way to the church, and had immediately sought out Honorine, to give her time to reach the church before them, and to fall into a trance.

“What have they given you?” he demanded. “Let me see.”

And, as she had brought nothing, he struck her, but without hurting her very much. In return she scratched and bit him, then said:

“What’s that for?”

“Swear that they didn’t give you anything!” he said.

She swore, and, having sucked away the blood that was trickling down their thin arms, they were reconciled. Then, for the want of something better to do, they fell back upon the pleasure that each was able to bestow upon the other.

Isidore, whose mother was a widow, a bad woman given to drink, had no recognised father. He spent all his time in the woods, and nobody bothered about him. Although he was two years younger than Honorine, he was well versed in the practices of love, about the only need in his life of which he found no lack, under the trees of La Guerche, Lénonville, and Brécé. His love-making with Honorine was only by way of killing time, and for want of something better to do. Occasionally Honorine would be roused to a certain amount of interest, but she could not attach much importance to such commonplace, everyday actions, and a rabbit, a bird, or an uncommon-looking insect, would often be enough to change the entire current of their thoughts.

M. de Brécé returned to the chateau with his guests. The cold walls of the hall bristled with the evidences of massacre; antlers of deer, heads of young stags and of old veterans, which, in spite of the taxidermist’s care, were moth-eaten, and retained in their staring glass eyes something of the agonised sweat of a creature at bay, equivalent to human tears.

Horns, antlers, bleached bones, severed heads, trophies, by means of which the victims honoured their illustrious slayers, the noblemen of France, and Bourbons of Naples and Spain. Under the great staircase stood a sort of amphibious chariot, shaped like a boat, the body of which could be removed, and was used for the purpose of crossing rivers when hunting. It was looked upon as sacred, because it had once been used by exiled kings.

The Abbé Guitrel carefully placed his big cotton umbrella beneath the black visage of a ferocious wild boar, and led the way through a door on the left, flanked by two tortured-looking caryatides by Ducereau, to a drawing-room, where the three Brécé ladies, who had been the first to return, were already sitting with their friend and neighbour, Madame de Courtrai.

Dressed in black, owing to the interminable series of deaths in their own and the Royal Family, they sat there, nunlike and rustic in their extreme simplicity, chatting of marriages and deaths, of illnesses and their remedies.

On the painted ceiling above them, and on the panelled walls, amid the sombre rows of portraits, one caught an occasional glimpse of a grey-bearded Henri IV in the embrace of a full-bosomed Minerva; or the pale face of Louis XIII in close juxtaposition to the heavy Flemish figures of Victory and Mercy in loosely flowing robes; or, again, the naked body, brick-red in hue, of an old man, Father Time, sparing the fleurs de lis; and anywhere and everywhere the dimpled legs of little boys supporting the Brécé coat of arms with the three golden torches.

All the while the dowager duchess was busy knitting black woollen scarves for the poor. Since those far off days when she had embroidered a counterpane for the bed at Chambord on which the king was to sleep, she had knitted continuously, occupying her hands, and satisfying her heart withal.

The tables and consoles were covered with photographs, in frames of all colours and sizes, some resembling easels, some of porcelain or plush, others of crystal, nickel, shagreen, carved wood or stamped leather-work. There were some, again, like gilded horse-shoes, others like palettes covered with colours and brushes, some shaped like chestnut leaves or butterflies.

In this assortment of frames were portraits of men, women, and children, relations by blood or by marriage; of princes belonging to the house of Bourbon, of Church dignitaries, of the Comte de Chambord, and Pope Pius IX. On the right of the fire-place in the middle of an old console supported by gilded Turks, like a spiritual father, Monseigneur Chariot smiled all over his broad face at the young soldiers grouped closely around him, officers, brigadiers, and privates, wearing upon their heads, their necks, and their breasts all the martial decoration allowed by a democratic army to her cavalry. He smiled at young men dressed in cycling or polo kit; he smiled at young girls. Ladies covered the folding tables, ladies of all ages, some of them with the decided features of men, but a few among them quite pretty.

“‘Marne’ de Courtrai!” cried M. de Brécé, as he entered the room behind the General. “How are you, dear ‘Marne’?”

He then returned to the conversation he had commenced with M. Lerond in the park, and drawing him aside to one of the corners of the huge room, he concluded:

“For, when all’s said and done, the Army is all that is left us. All that formerly made up the glory and strength of France has vanished, leaving us the Army alone. The Republican Parliament has overthrown the Government, compromised the magistracy, and corrupted public life. The Army alone rears its head above the ruins. That is why I insist that to meddle with it is nothing short of sacrilege.”

He stopped. He was never in the habit of grappling with any question, and usually contented himself with generalities. The nobility of his sentiments was contested by none.

Madame de Courtrai, who until then had been lost in reflection as to the best way of preparing cooling draughts, suddenly looked up, turning her old gamekeeper’s face to the Duke, and remarked: “I do trust you have written to the proprietors of that paper which is in league with the enemies of France and the Army, saying that you intend to discontinue it. My husband sent back the number containing that article. You know the one I mean — that disgraceful article.”

“My nephew writes to me,” replied the Duke, “that a notice has been posted up at his club, insisting that the subscription to it shall be given up, and I hear that signatures are coming in thick and fast. Nearly all the members fall in with the suggestion, reserving the right to buy any single number.”

“The Army is above all attack,” said M. Lerond. General Cartier de Chalmot at length broke the silence, in which, until then, he had been wrapped: “I like to hear you say that. And if, like myself, you had spent the greater part of your life among soldiers, you would be agreeably surprised to note the qualities of endurance, good discipline, and good temper, which make of the French trooper a first-class implement of war. I never tire of repeating it: such units are equal to any task. With the authority of an officer whose life’s career is drawing to a close, I maintain that any one who takes the trouble to inquire into the spirit which animates the French Army will find it worthy of the highest praise. In the same way, it is a pleasure to me to testify to the persevering effort of several officers of high standing and great capacity who have devoted much time and thought to the organisation of the Army, and I declare that their efforts have been crowned with brilliant success.”

In a lower and more serious voice he added: “All that now remains for me to say is, that as far as the men are concerned, quality is to be preferred to quantity, and what should be aimed at is the formation of crack corps. I feel certain that no

capable officer would contradict such an assertion. My last military will and testament is contained in this formula: 'Quantity is nothing, quality is everything.' I might add that unity of command is indispensable to an army, and that a great body of men must obey one unique, sovereign, and immutable will, and one only."

He ceased speaking, his pale eyes full of tears. Confused, inexplicable feelings filled the soul of the honest, simple-minded old man, who in former days had been the most dashing captain of the Imperial Guard. His health was failing, his strength exhausted, and he felt himself lost amongst the officers of the modern school, whom he could not understand.

Madame de Courtrai, who did not care for theories, turned her fierce, masculine old face towards the General:

"Well, General, as, thank God, the Army is respected by every one, as you say it is the only force that keeps us together, why should it not also rule us? Why not send a colonel with his regiment to the Palais Bourbon and the Élysée — ?"

She stopped short, as she saw the clouded brow of the General.

The Duke beckoned to M. Lerond.

"You have never seen the library, have you, M. Lerond? I will show it to you. You are fond of old books, and I am sure you will be interested."

Traversing a long, bare gallery, the ceiling of which was covered with clumsy painting, depicting Louis XIII and Apollo destroying the enemies of the kingdom, as represented by Furies and Hydras, they arrived at a door through which the Duke ushered the counsel for the defence of the religious communities into the room where, in 1605, Duc Guy, Grand-Marshal of France and governor of the province, had founded the library for the solace of his declining years and fortunes.

It was a square room, occupying the whole of the ground floor of the west wing, lighted on the north, west, and south, by three uncurtained windows, offering three charming and magnificent pictures to the eye. Stretching away to the south was the lawn, in the centre of which was a marble vase, with a pair of ring-doves perching upon it. The trees of the park were visible, bared by the winter of their leaves, and in the purple depths of the dark walk glimmered the white statues of the pool of Galatea. To the west was a stretch of flat country, a wide expanse of sky, and the setting sun, which, like a mythological egg of light and of gold, had broken and spread its glory over the clouds. To the north were the ploughed red earth of the hills, the slate roofs and distant smoke of Brécé, and the delicate pointed steeple of the little church standing out in the cold, clear light.

A Louis XIV table, two chairs, and a seventeenth-century globe with a wind-rose relating to the unexplored regions of the Pacific comprised the only furniture of this severe-looking room, the walls of which were lined from floor to ceiling with bookcases, enclosed by wire gratings. Even upon the red marble mantelpiece the grey-painted shelves encroached, and through the mesh of gilded wire peeped the richly decorated backs of ancient volumes.

"The library was founded by the Marshal," said M. de Brécé. "His grandson, Duc Jean, added many treasures to it during the reign of Louis XIV, and it was he who fitted it up as you see it to-day. It has not been much altered since."

"Have you a catalogue?" inquired M. Lerond.

The Duke said that he had not, that M. de Terremondre, who was a great lover of valuable books, had warmly recommended him to have them catalogued, but he had never yet found time to have it done.

He opened one of the cases, and M. Lerond drew out several volumes in succession, octavo, quarto, and folio, bound in marbled, stippled or tree-calf, parchment, and red and blue morocco, all bearing on their covers the coat of arms with the three torches surmounted by a ducal crown. M. Lerond was not a keen book-lover, but on opening a beautifully written manuscript on Royal Tithes, presented to the Marshal by Vauban, his astonishment and admiration knew no bounds.

The manuscript was further embellished with a frontispiece, besides several vignettes and tailpieces.

"Are these original drawings?" asked M. Lerond.

"Very probably," replied M. de Brécé.

"They are signed," went on M. Lerond, "and I think I can decipher the name of Sebastian Leclerc."

"Maybe," answered M. de Brécé.

These priceless shelves contained, as M. Lerond remarked, books by Tillemont on Roman and Church history, the statute book of the province, and innumerable *Fader a* by old doctors at law; he unearthed works on theology, on controversy, and on hagiology, long genealogical histories, old editions of Greek and Latin classics, and some of those enormous books, bigger than atlases, written on the occasion of the marriage of a king or his entry into Paris, or to celebrate his convalescence or his victories.

"This is the oldest part of the library," said M. de Brécé, "the Marshal's collection. Here," he added, opening two or three other cases, "are the additions of Duc Jean."

"Louis XVI's minister, surnamed the 'Good Duke'?" asked M. Lerond.

"Just so," replied M. de Brécé.

Duc Jean's collection took up all that side of the wall containing the mantelpiece and also the side looking out upon the little town. M. Lerond read out the titles stamped in gold between two bands, that decorated the backs of the volumes: *Encyclopédie méthodique*; *Œuvres de Montesquieu*; *Œuvres de Voltaire*; *Œuvres de Rousseau, de l'abbé Mably, de Condillac*; and *Histoire des Établissements Européens dans les Indes*, by Raynal. He then glanced through the lesser poets and romancers with the vignettes of Grécourt, Dorât, and Saint-Lambert; the Boccaccio illustrated by Marillier, and the edition of La Fontaine, published by the "Fermiers Généraux."

"The pictures are rather free," remarked the Duke. "I have been compelled to destroy certain works of the same period, the illustrations of which were really licentious."

M. Lerond, however, discovered, side by side with these frivolous books, a lengthy series of political and philosophical works, essays on slavery, printed accounts of the American War of Independence. He opened *Vœux d'un solitaire*, and saw that the margins were covered with notes in Duc Jean's handwriting. He read aloud:

"The author is right; man is naturally good, and the mistaken social laws alone are responsible for his evil deeds." — .

"That," he added, "is what your great-great-grandfather wrote in 1790."

"How very curious!" remarked the Duke, replacing the book upon its shelf. Then, opening the cases upon the north side of the room, he said: "These are the books collected by my grandfather, who was page to Charles X."

Here M. Lerond discovered, bound in sombre sheepskin, tan calf and black shagreen, the works of Chateaubriand, a series of "Mémoires" on the Revolution, the Histories of Anquetil, Guizot, and Augustin Thierry; La Harpe's *Cours de littérature*, Marchangy's *Gaule poétique*, and the *Discours* of Lainé.

Close to this literature dealing with the Restoration, and the Government of July, was a shelf on which lay two or three tattered papers on Pope Pius IX and temporal power, a few dilapidated novels, a pamphlet in praise of Joan of Arc, which had been read by Monseigneur Chariot in the church of Saint-Exupère on the 8th of June, 1890, and a few religious books written for ladies of high degree. This was the contribution of the late Duke, member of the National Assembly in 1871, and of the present Duc de Brécé, to the library created by the marshal in 1605.

"I must lock up these books," said M. de Brécé. "I cannot be too careful, for my sons are growing up, and at any moment may be seized with the desire to come and examine the library for themselves. There are books among these

which should never fall into the hands of any young man, nor of any self-respecting woman, no matter what her age may be.”

And so, in his honest zeal for doing good, and in the happy conviction that he was imprisoning lust, doubt, impiety, and evil thoughts, he turned his key upon them; and this sentiment, which, when analysed, had its share of simple complacency and the secret jealousy of an ignorant man, was not without its beauty and purity also.

Having thrust the bunch of keys into his pocket again, the Duke turned a satisfied countenance to M. Lerond.

“Overhead,” he said, “is the King’s room. The old inventories give this name to all the upper story. The room properly so-called, however, contains the bed in which Louis XIII slept, and it is still hung with the same silk embroidery. It is well worth a visit.”

M. Lerond was so tired that he could hardly stand. His legs, accustomed all the year round to be tucked away under a desk, had had hard work to carry him through the walk on the slippery paths of the park, the tramp round the stables, and the stroll along the woods to the church; they felt limp and weak, and his feet were hot and painful, for the poor man, anxious to do the right thing, had, unfortunately, put on patent-leather boots. Casting an uneasy glance at the ceiling, he stammered:

“It grows late. Would it not be better to join the ladies in the drawing-room?”

M. de Brécé was only adamant with regard to the visit to the stables; as far as the remainder of his property was concerned he was reasonable enough.

“Yes, the light is going,” he said. “We will see the rest another time. To the right, M. Lerond; to the right, please.”

“What walls!” cried the ex-deputy, as he reached the doorway. “What tremendously thick walls!”

His thin face, the calm and cold expression of which had not altered one whit at the sight of the hunting trophies in the hall, the historic paintings in the drawing-room, the rich tapestries, the magnificent ceiling of the gallery, and the beautiful books with their tooled morocco bindings, now grew animated, interested, and full of admiration. He had at last discovered something to stir and amaze him, something which afforded him both food for thought and mental satisfaction — a wall! His legal mind, struck down in its flower at the time of the new regulations, and his heart, too soon bereaved of the joy of administering punishment, rejoiced at the sight of a wall, a deaf, dumb, sombre thing, which recalled to his eager mind thoughts of prison cells, of sentences and public prosecutions, of codes, laws, justice, and morals — a wall!

“Yes,” replied the Duke, “the wall at this particular spot between the gallery and the next wing is tremendously thick. It is the outer wall of the old castle, built in 1405.”

M. Lerond gazed lingeringly at the wall, measured it with his eyes, felt it with his little, crooked, yellow hands, studied, worshipped, loved, and possessed it.

“Mesdames,” he said to the ladies on his return to the drawing-room, “the Duke has very kindly shown me his wonderful library. On my way back I noticed the remarkable wall that separates the gallery from the wing. I don’t think there is anything to equal it even at Chambord.”

But neither the Brécé ladies nor Madame de Courtrai was listening; their united attention was given to another matter.

“Jean,” cried the Duchess to her husband, “Jean, look at this!” And she pointed to a red leather case lying on the table near the lamp which a servant had just brought in. The case was round in shape, topped with a kind of knob like a thimble, and divided at the base in the shape of a clover leaf. A visiting card lay beside it. All around the table were heaps of tissue paper, that made one think of little white dogs tied up with pale blue ribbon.

“Do look, Jean!”

The Abbé Guitrel, who was standing near the table, opened the case with reverent hands, and displayed a golden ciborium.

“Who sent it?” asked M. de Brécé.

“Look at the card. I am horribly worried — I don’t know what to do.”

M. de Brécé put on his glasses, picked up the card, and read aloud:

BARONNE JULES DE BONMONT.

For Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles He replaced the card upon the table, took off his glasses and murmured:

“How very annoying!”

“A ciborium, a beautiful ciborium,” said the Abbé.

“When I used to sing in the choir as a boy,” said the General, “I always heard the Fathers call it a custodial.”

“Yes, you can call it either a custodial or a ciborium,” replied the Abbé. “These are the names given to the receptacles which hold the reserved Eucharist. But the custodial is formed like a cylinder and has a conical cover.”

With frowning brow M. de Brécé stood wrapped in thought; then with a deep sigh he said:

“Why should Madame de Bonmont, who is a Jewess, give a ciborium to Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles? Why have these people a mania for forcing themselves into our churches?”

The Abbé Guitrel, with his fingers thrust into the sleeves of his coat, moistened his lips and said gently: "Allow me to point out, Monsieur, that Madame Jules de Bonmont is a Catholic."

"Nonsense!" cried the Duke. "She is an Austrian Jewess, and her maiden name was Wallstein. The real name of her late husband, the Baron de Bonmont, was Gutenberg."

"Allow me, Monsieur," said the Abbé. "I do not deny that the Baronne de Bonmont is of Jewish descent. What I mean is that she has been converted and baptised, and is therefore a Christian. She is a good Christian, I might add, and gives largely to our charities, in fact, she is an example to—"

"I am acquainted with your ideas," interrupted the Duke, "and I respect them as I respect your cloth. But to me a converted Jew remains a Jew; I cannot make any distinction between the two."

"Neither can I," said Madame de Brécé.

"To a certain extent your feelings are legitimate, Madame la Duchesse," replied the Abbé. "But you cannot be unaware of the teaching of the Church, that the curse pronounced against the Jews was inspired by their crime, and not their race, and that therefore the attendant results cannot affect them if—"

"It is heavy," said the Duke, lifting the ciborium from its case, and holding it out.

"I am most annoyed," said the Duchess.

"It is very heavy!" repeated the Duke.

"And, what is more," added the Abbé, "it is a beautiful piece of work, and possesses the refined characteristics which are, so to speak, the seal and stamp of the work of Rondonneau the younger. None but the Archbishop's goldsmith could have displayed such judgment in the selection of a model from traditional Christian art, or have reproduced the shape and decoration with such skill and fidelity. This ciborium is a work of the highest merit, and is in the style of the thirteenth century."

"The bowl and cover are in solid gold," said M. de Brécé.

"According to liturgical regulations the bowl of the ciborium must be of gold, or, at any rate, of silver, gilded inside," said the Abbé.

M. de Brécé, who was holding it upside down, remarked:

"The foot is hollow."

"That's a good thing!" cried the Duchess.

The Abbé Guitrel looked lovingly at the work of Rondonneau the younger.

"There is no doubt about it," he said, "it is thirteenth century, and a better period could not have been selected. The thirteenth century is the golden age of this particular kind of work. At that epoch the ciborium was made in the

beautiful shape of a pomegranate, which you recognise in this delicious example. The firm, strong foot is further enriched with enamels and inset with precious stones.”

“Mercy upon us! precious stones!” cried the Duchess.

“Figures of angels and prophets are finely chased on the lozenge-shaped panels, giving the most delightful effect to the whole.”

“That Bonmont was a rogue,” said Madame de Courtrai suddenly. “He was a thief; and his widow has not yet made restitution.”

“You see that she is beginning to do so, however,” said the Duke, pointing to the shining ciborium. “What shall we do?” asked the Duchess.

“We cannot return her gift,” said the Duke. “Why not?” asked his mother.

“Well, mother, because it is impossible.”

“Then we’ve got to keep it?” asked the Duchess. “Well — yes, I suppose so.”

“And thank her?”

“What else can we do?”

“Don’t you agree with me, General?”

“It would have been fitter,” said the General, “if this lady, who is a stranger to you, had refrained from making you a present. But there is no reason to respond to her civility with an insult.”

Taking the ciborium in his venerable hands, the Abbé Guitrel said:

“Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles will, I feel sure, look with kindness upon this gift, presented by a pious soul to the tabernacle of her altar.”

“But, hang it all,” put in the Duke, “I am Notre-Dame-desBelles-Feuilles in this case. If Madame de Bonmont and young Bonmont want to be invited to my house — and they certainly will want to — I shall be obliged to receive them now.”

CHAPTER III

IN their efforts to escape the sudden shower that had overtaken them outside the ramparts of the castle, Madame Jules de Bonmont and Madame Hortha ran along the sentry path up to the gate house, upon the debased vault of which could be seen the peacock, emblem of the extinct house of Paves. M. de Terremondre and Baron Wallstein soon caught them up, and the four of them stood still, trying to regain their breath.

"Where is the Abbé?" asked Madame de Bonmont. "Arthur, did you leave the Abbé sheltering by the hedge?"

Baron Wallstein told his sister that the Abbé was coming along behind them.

And soon they saw the Abbé Guitrel walking up the stone steps, damp but cheerful. He alone had managed to display a perfect dignity at the sudden alarm, and had preserved the calm suitable to his years and his corpulence; he had, in fact, maintained a truly episcopal solemnity.

The race had deepened the roses in Madame de Bonmont's cheeks; her full bosom rose and fell under her light blouse, as she stood drawing her skirts tightly around her plump hips. In her rich maturity, with her disordered hair, lustrous eyes, and ripe lips — a sort of Viennese Erigone — she reminded one of a golden cluster of juicy grapes.

"Are you wet, M. l'Abbé?" she inquired, in that rather coarse voice of hers, so much less sweet than her lips.

The Abbé removed his wide-brimmed hat, the dusty pile of which was spotted with rain, looked with his little grey eyes at each member of the breathless group scared by a few drops of rain, and replied, not without a certain gentle slyness:

"I am wet, but not out of breath," adding, "It's nothing but a harmless shower, the rain has not even penetrated my coat."

"Let us go in," said Madame de Bonmont.

This was her home, this château of Montil, built in 1508 by Bernard de Paves, Grand-Master of Artillery, for Nicolette de Vaucelles, his fourth wife.

"The house of Paves flourished for nine hundred years," writes Perrin du Verdier, in the first volume of his *Trésor des généalogies*. "And the Royal Families of Europe were all connected by marriage at some time or other with the said house, more especially the kings of Spain, England, Sicily and Jerusalem, the dukes of Brittany, Alençon, Vendôme, and others, as well as the Orsini, the Colonnas and the Cornaros." And Perrin du Verdier discourses both

lengthily and complacently on the celebrity of this “tant indite maison” which gave to the Church eighteen cardinals and two popes, and to the throne of France three constables, six marshals and a king’s mistress.

From the reign of Louis XII down to the Revolution the heads of the elder branch of Paves had resided at the chateau of Montil. Philippe VIII, prince of Paves, lord of Montil, Toche, Les Ponts, Rougeain, La Victoire, Berlogue, and other places, first Lord in Waiting to the King, was the last of that branch of the family. He died in 1795, in London, whither he had emigrated, to set up as a perruquier in a little shop in Whitecross Street. His estates, which had been totally neglected during his lifetime, were, at the time of the Directoire, sold as national property, and divided among a number of peasants who lived there, and founded a line of bourgeois. The rogues who had acquired the chateau in exchange for a mere handful of paper money, decided in 1813 to demolish it. However, soon after the destruction of the Galerie des Faunes, their work of demolition was interrupted and never completed. For two years the country people helped themselves, when so inclined, to the lead roofing of the château. In 1815 M. de Reu, an old officer of the King’s navy and a secret agent of the Comte de Provence in Holland — it is said that he was also an accomplice of George in the affair of the Rue Saint-Nicaise — desirous of ending his days in his native country, managed to extort a few hundred crowns from the ungrateful Prince, and purchased the château of Montil.

There, poor and unsociable, he with his eleven children, both legitimate and illegitimate, lived within the walls which threatened to fall in and bury them all beneath the ruins. After his death, one of his daughters, who never married, lived there, and filled those halls of beauty and glory with plums picked in the castle gardens, which she placed there to dry. In the year 1875 Mademoiselle Reu, aged ninety-nine years and three months, was found one winter’s morning lying dead upon a torn and rotting mattress, in the room adorned with monograms, devices, and emblems in the honour of Nicolette de Vaucelles.

At this time Baron Jules de Bonmont, son of Nathan, son of Seligmann, son of Simon, came over from Austria, where he had negotiated the loans during the dark days of the Empire. He now made France the headquarters of his financial operations, bringing to the Republic the benefit of his financial genius. M. Laprat-Teulet, a member of Parliament, who at that time represented the district of Montil, became one of the first and surest of his friends and allies. He discovered that, the era of ideas and strife having gone by, the time had come for big business deals. He bestowed upon the Baron his warmest sympathy and his extremely useful devotion, and the Baron, on his side, was always ready to commend Laprat-Teulet as a clever fellow.

It was by the advice of Laprat-Teulet that Baron Jules bought the château of Montil. It was then a dignified and beautiful ruin, well worth restoring and preserving. The task of its restoration was confided to a pupil of Viollet-le-Duc, M. Quatrebarbe, the diocesan architect. He removed all the old stone and replaced it with new. In the new building the Baron, who astonished his political friends by his taste in art, promptly installed his collection of pictures, furniture, and armoury, all of which were of enormous value.

“And thus the chateau of Montil,” to use the words of M. de Terremondre, “was preserved to the lovers of our national art, and transformed into a marvellous museum by the care and generosity of a great seignior, who, at the same time, was a great connoisseur.”

The Baron was not long permitted to enjoy the proud possession of Montil, with its towers ornamented with medallions, its tracery staircase, and the delicately carved woodwork of its interior. After reaching the zenith of his financial prosperity, he died suddenly of an attack of apoplexy, just on the eve of all the ruin and scandal that followed. He died in possession of all his wealth, leaving behind him a gay young widow, and a boy, who, with his short, squat figure, lowering brows, and already pitiless heart, closely resembled his father. Madame de Bonmont had kept Montil, of which she was very fond.

She led Madame Hortha to the spiral staircase, the interlacing stonework of which repeated interminably in its intertwining the emblematic peacock of Bernard de Paves tied by the foot to the lute of Nicolette de Vaucelles. Then, picking up her skirts with a sudden, abrupt gesture, not without a charm of its own, she followed her. M. de Terremondre, President of the Archaeological Society, and formerly a great lady-killer, came closely behind her with an eye upon the rhythmic movement of her engaging figure.

At the age of forty she had retained the wish and the capacity to please, and M. de Terremondre thoroughly appreciated this, for he was a susceptible man; yet he did not attempt to make love to her, knowing that she herself was greatly infatuated with Raoul Marcien, a handsome, choleric man who had fallen into disrepute.

“Let us go into the armoury,” said Madame de Bonmont, pushing open the door. “It is warmed with hot-air pipes.”

It was true that the armoury was so heated. Amidst the grotesque encaustic tiles of M. Quatrebarbe, designed after the manner of the old paving he had torn up, the hot-air gratings opened their bright brazen mouths.

Madame de Bonmont was careful to invite the Abbé Guitrel to a seat near one of the radiators, and to ask him if his feet were damp, and whether he would not have a glass of something hot.

Under the ribbed vault of its roof, the huge room glittered with a display of iron and steel such as not even the Armeria in Madrid could boast. One or two of the financier's brilliant business coups had resulted in a collection of armour not to be equalled by that of Spitzer himself.

Examples of the three centuries of plate armour were there in every form known to Europe. On the gigantic chimney-piece, guarded by two Brabançons in magnificent cuisses, a condottiere's Suit of mail bestrode that of a horse, with open chamfron, horse muzzle, mane-guard, tail-guard, and poitrel. The walls were covered from floor to ceiling with dazzling suits of armour, casques, basinets, helmets, salades, morions, skull caps, iron hats, hauberks, coats of armour, brigantines, greaves, solerets, and spurs.

From the shields, bucklers, and targes, of all descriptions, radiated flambergs, Konigsmark swords, partisans, gisarmes, war-scythes, two-edged swords, Toledo rapiers, poniards, stylets, and daggers.

All around the room stood phantom figures clothed in polished and unpolished steel; in steel, engraved, inlaid, chased, and damascened. Maximiliennes with fluted and bowed cuirasses, puffed and bell-shaped suits of armour, the "polichinelle" of Henri III, and the "écrevisse" of Louis XIII. Panoplies of war that had adorned French, Spanish, Italian, German, and English princes; coats of mail worn by knights, captains, sergeants, crossbowmen, reiters, veterans, by soldiers of fortune from every country in Europe, by mercenaries and Switzers.

Here was steel armour that had figured at the Field of the Cloth of Gold; at the jousts and tourneys of England, France, and Germany; armour from Poitiers, Verneuil, Granson, Fomovo, Ceresole, Pavia, Ravenna, Pultava, and Culloden; worn by nobles or mercenaries, by knights or caitiffs, by victor or vanquished, by friend or foe — all collected by the Baron and displayed in this room.

After dinner, while pouring out the coffee, Madame de Bonmont offered no sugar to the Abbé, who always took it, and gave it to Baron Wallstein, who suffered from diabetes and had to be very careful in his diet. She did not do this with any malice aforethought, but her mind was full of other matters that engaged her undivided attention. Her depression, which, simple soul that she was, she was incapable of hiding, was caused by a telegram from Paris, worded with a twofold meaning; one literal and commonplace, obvious to all, referring to a delay in forwarding some plants; the other, the real and ingenious one, understood, to her unhappiness, by herself alone, indicated that her lover could not come to Montil but was in dire straits and forced to remain in Paris.

It was nothing new for Raoul Marcien to be in need of money. Since he attained his majority, fifteen years previously, he had just managed to keep himself going by a series of bold and clever *coups*. But this year, his difficulties, which had continued to increase and multiply, were positively appalling.

Madame de Bonmont was nearly always worried and depressed about him and his affairs, for she loved him truly and tenderly with all her soul and with all her body.

“Two lumps for you, M. de Terremondre?”

Yes, she adored her Raoul, her Rara, with all the strength of her placid soul. She would have liked him to be loving and faithful, pure-minded and studious. He was not what she wished him to be, and in her grief and fear of losing him, she regularly burned candles for his benefit in the church of Saint-Antoine.

M. de Terremondre, who was by way of being a connoisseur, examined the pictures. They were all modern works of art, paintings by Daubigny, Theodore Rousseau, Jules Dupré, Chintreuil, Diaz, and Corot, and consisted of mournful-looking pools bordered by deep woods, dew-brushed meadows, village streets, forest glades bathed in the golden light of the setting sun, and willows emerging from the silver mists of morning. The prevailing tones were white, fawn, green, blue, and grey. In massive gilt frames they stood out against the crimson damask hangings that accorded ill with the gigantic Renaissance chimney-piece, with the loves of the nymphs and the metamorphoses of the gods sculptured in the stone. The pictures undoubtedly marred the effect of the wonderful old ceiling, the painted compartments of which reproduced in infinite variety the peacock of Bernard de Paves tied by the foot to the lute of Nicolette de Vaucelles.

“That’s a fine Millet,” said M. de Terremondre, coming to a standstill before a goosegirl, whose ‘figure stood out, terrible in its rustic solemnity, against a background of pale gold.

“It’s a pretty picture,” answered Baron Wallstein. “I have the same thing at my house in Vienna, but mine is a shepherd, not a goosegirl. I don’t know what my brother gave for this one.” Cup in hand, he began to stroll round the gallery. “This Jules Dupré cost my brother-in-law 50,000 francs; this Theodore Rousseau 60,000 and this Corot 100,000.”

“I am acquainted with the views of the late Baron in regard to pictures,” replied M. de Terremondre, following the Baron round the room. “One day he met me going down the staircase of the Hôtel des Ventes, with a little picture under my arm. He caught hold of my sleeve, as he was fond of doing, and said, ‘What are you carrying off there?’ With the satisfied pride of the complacent dabbler in art I replied, ‘A Ruisdael, M. de Bonmont, a genuine Ruisdael. It has been engraved and I happen to have a print in my portfolio. “What did you give

for your Ruisdael?’ ‘The sale was in a dark room on the ground floor and the dealer did not know what he was selling. Thirty francs!’”

“‘What a pity! What a pity!’ he ejaculated, and, seeing my surprise, gave another tug at my sleeve. ‘My dear M. de Terremondre, you ought to have given 10,000 francs for it; if you had paid as much as that it would have been worth 30,000 francs to you. The little picture only cost you thirty francs and will never fetch a high price, say twenty-five louis at the most. The value of a thing cannot rise at a jump from thirty francs to 30,000!’ ‘Ah!’” concluded M. de Terremondre, “the Baron was a clever man!”

“He was indeed,” replied Wallstein, “and he also liked taking a rise out of people.”

The two cronies looked up, and saw, right before their eyes, the very Baron they had been discussing, the man who had been so clever all his life. There he was, painted by Delaunay, amongst a lot of costly pictures, his cunning animal-like face leering out of a glittering frame.

Madame de Bonmont and the Abbé, seated together in the huge chimney corner before the fire, were chatting about the weather and day-dreaming. Madame de Bonmont was thinking how sweet life might be, if only Rara willed it so. She loved him so simply and so ingenuously. All the ancient and modern moralists, all the fathers of the Church, the doctors and theologians, the Abbé Guitrel and Monseigneur Chariot, the Pope and the whole of the Church Council, the archangel Michael with his great trumpet, and Christ come again in His glory to judge both the quick and the dead — all of them put together would never have succeeded in making her believe that it was a sin for her to love Rara. She was thinking that she would not see him at Montil, and that perhaps, at that very moment, he was unfaithful to her. She knew he was almost as familiar with women as he was with the bailiffs; she had seen him at the races with ladies of easy virtue and uncertain age, at whom he had cast leering glances as he handed them the field-glasses or helped them on with their cloaks. The poor dear could not get rid of a whole host of tiresome people, to whom he was bound for reasons she found it impossible to understand, even when he explained them at length. She felt very unhappy and heaved a deep sigh.

The Abbé was thinking of the bishopric of Tourcoing. His rival, the Abbé Lantaigne, was done for. He was going under in the ruin of his seminary, smothered beneath bills of the butcher Lafolie. But there were many rivals in the field. A senior curate from Paris and a curé from Lyons seemed to be the Government favourites; the Nunciature as usual lay low. The Abbé Guitrel heaved a sigh.

Hearing the sigh, Madame de Bonmont, who was very kind-hearted, reproached herself for selfishly thinking of her own affairs. She made an effort to appear interested in the Abbé Guitrel's concerns, and affectionately inquired whether he would not soon be made a bishop.

"You are a candidate for Tourcoing," she said. "Would you not dislike living in so small a town?"

The Abbé declared that the care of his flock would be sufficient to occupy him, and that, moreover, the diocese of Tourcoing was one of the oldest and most important in Northern France. "It is the see," he added, "of the blessed St. Loup, the apostle of Flanders."

"Indeed?" remarked Madame de Bonmont.

"We must be careful," went on the Abbé, "not to confound St. Loup, the apostle of Flanders, with St. Loup, Bishop of Lyons, St. Leu or Loup, Bishop of Sens, and St. Loup, Bishop of Troyes. The latter had been married seven years to Pimentola, a sister of the Bishop of Arles, when he left her, to retire in solitude to Lerins and devote himself entirely to works of ascetic piety."

And Madame de Bonmont was thinking:

"He's been losing heavily again. In one way it is good for him, because he has been winning too frequently at the club lately, and people were getting suspicious. On the other hand it's a great nuisance. I shall have to pay up."

And Madame de Bonmont was much annoyed at having to pay Rara's debts. In the first place she never liked paying and, in the second, she disliked lending money to Rara as much as a matter of principle as from fear of not being loved for herself alone. At the same time she knew that when she saw her Rara, gloomy and terrible, tying a wet towel round his fevered cranium — which was beginning to be discernible through the fast-thinning hair — and when she heard the poor darling crying amidst a torrent of blasphemies that the only thing for him to do was to blow out his brains, she knew she would have to pay. You see Rara was a man of honour; in fact, he lived on honour; since he had left the Army his profession had been that of witness or umpire, and, in the smartest circles, no duel ever took place without his presence.

And to think that she would have to part with more money. If only he belonged entirely to her and was loving and attentive. As it was, he was in a perpetual state of agitation, desperation, and fury, and always seemed like a man laying about him in the thick of a fight.

"The saint of whom I am speaking, Madame la Baronne," went on the Abbé, "the blessed St. Loup, or Lupus, preached the gospel in Flanders, and his apostolic labours were often fraught with many trials. In his biography we find an instance which will touch you by its naïve beauty. One frosty day in winter he

was traversing the frozen countryside, and stopped at the house of a senator to warm himself. The latter, who was entertaining some of his boon companions, continued to hold unseemly conversation with them in the presence of the apostle. St. Loup made an attempt to stop the conversation. ‘My sons,’ said he to the senator and his guests, ‘are you not aware that on the day of judgment you will have to answer for every vain speech you have uttered? Treating the exhortations of the holy man with contempt, however, they returned with redoubled zest to their indecent and impious talk. Shaking the dust from off his feet, the blessed saint said to them, ‘I desired to warm my tired body against the bitter cold, but your sinful talk forces me, though still numb with cold, to quit your company.’”

Madame de Bonmont was sadly reflecting that lately, with teeth set and eyes flashing, Rara had been threatening the destruction of the Jews. He had always been against the Jews, and so had she for that matter. However, she preferred not to discuss the subject, and in her opinion Rara, being the lover of a Catholic lady of Jewish origin, was wanting in tact when he swore, as he invariably did, that he would like to rip open every “sheeny” in Christendom. She would have preferred more gentleness and sympathy, calmer views and more amiable desires. As for herself, her thoughts of love were mingled with innocent dreams of sweetmeats and poetry.

“The mission of the blessed St. Loup,” continued the Abbé Guitrel, “bore fruit. The inhabitants of Tourcoing were baptised by him, and chose him by acclamation for their bishop. His end was accompanied by circumstances which I feel sure will impress you, Madame. One December day, in the year of our Lord 397, St. Loup, then full of years and good deeds, made his way to a tree surrounded by briars, where it was his habit to pray. Fixing two stakes into the ground, he marked out a space as long as his body, and said to the disciples he had asked to accompany him, ‘When, by God’s will, I end my exile in this world, it is there I desire to be laid.’

“St. Loup died on the Sunday following the day on which he had marked out his last resting-place, and it was done as he had commanded. Blandus came to inter the body of the blessed saint, whom he was afterwards to succeed as Bishop of Tourcoing.”

She felt sad and full of compassion. She understood the reason for Rara’s anti-Jewish frenzies, and excused them. The fact was that latterly, to re-establish his reputation among his fellows as a man of honour, Rara had warmly espoused the cause of the Army, in which he had formerly served as a cavalry officer. He had greatly tightened the bonds that united him with one great family — the

Army, and had even struck a Jew whom he had overheard in a café asking for the Army list.

Madame de Bonmont loved and admired him, but she was far from happy.

Raising her head and opening her flower-like eyes she said:

“The see of the blessed St. Loup, apostle to — Please go on, M. l’Abbé. I am very interested.”

It was Madame de Bonmont’s fate to seek; in hearts little fitted to give it her, the sweetness of peaceful love. The sentimental Elizabeth had always bestowed her heart upon arrant adventurers. During her husband’s lifetime she had fondly loved the son of an obscure senator, young X — , famous for having appropriated to his own use a whole year’s secret funds of a certain government department. Close upon this she had given her confidence to an extremely fascinating man who was one of the bright particular stars of the government press, and who suddenly disappeared from view in a tremendous financial catastrophe. These two, at any rate, had been introduced to her by the Baron himself. You cannot blame a woman if she has lovers belonging to her own set. But her newest, dearest, her one and only love, Raoul Marcién, had not been one of the Baron’s friends. He did not belong to the world of sale and barter. She had met him in a most select circle of Catholic Royalist society somewhere in the provinces. He was himself as good as a nobleman. This time she had firmly believed she was going to satisfy her desire for love, and delicate, refined intimacy, that at last she had found the chivalrous lover with noble and beautiful feelings of whom she had so long dreamed.

And now she found that he was like all the others, alternately frozen with fear and burning with rage, torn with anguish of mind and agitated by the extraordinary adventures of a life devoted to fraud and blackmail. But he was so much more picturesque and amusing than any one else! He would, for instance, be summoned as witness in some serious and delicate affair, and at the same time be served with a judgment-summons at his club; or again, he might one day be made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and the same morning be haled before the court on a charge of embezzlement. Moreover, with erect carriage, and well-waxed moustache, he defended his honour at the point of his sword. But for some months past he had seemed to be losing his sang-froid; he spoke too loudly, and gesticulated too much, in fact he compromised his case by his desire for vengeance, for he was always complaining of betrayal.

It was with real anxiety that Elizabeth saw Rara’s temper grow daily more unmanageable. When she went to see him of a morning she would find him in his shirt-sleeves, bending over his old military trunk crammed full of writs, swearing and blaspheming with crimson face. “Rogues! scoundrels! scum!

wretches!" he would shout, vociferating that they should hear from him to their cost. She would snatch a kiss in the middle of the curses, and be sent away with the usual remark that he would blow out his brains.

No, it was not the love of which Elizabeth had dreamed.

"You were saying, M. l'Abbé, that the blessed St. Loup — ?"

But the Abbé, with his head inclined at a gentle angle and hands clasped upon his portly frame, was fast asleep in his chair.

So Madame de Bonmont, who was as kind to herself as she was to others, also fell asleep in her easy chair; fell asleep, thinking that perhaps after all Rara would come to an end of his worries soon, that she might only have to give him quite a little money, and that after all she was beloved by the handsomest of men.

"My dear, my dear," cried the much-travelled Madame Hortha, in her trumpet-like voice, calculated to strike terror into the heart of a Turk, "are we not to see M. Ernest to-night?"

Standing there, with her big limbs and heavy features, she looked like a warrior virgin left behind and forgotten for twenty years in the wings of the theatre at Bayreuth; she was terrible to look upon, clothed and girdled with jet and steel that flashed, gleamed, and clanked as she moved, but, in spite of it all, quite a good sort of woman, and the mother of numerous children.

Awakened with a start by the magic blast that blared from the bosom of the excellent Madame Hortha, the Baronne replied that her son, who had obtained sick leave, was to arrive that evening at Montil, and the carriage had gone to the station to meet him.

The Abbé Guitrel, whose slumbers, too, had been pierced by this nocturnal flourish of trumpets, adjusted his spectacles, and, moistening his lips, that they might have the necessary unction, murmured with heavenly sweetness:

"Yes, Loup — Loup."

"And so," said Madame de Bonmont, "you will wear the mitre, you will hold the crosier, and have a big ring on your finger."

"I do not know yet, Madame," replied M. Guitrel.

"Yes, yes! You will be appointed!" She leaned forward slightly, and, in a low voice, asked: "Monsieur l'Abbé, must the Bishop's ring be of any particular design?"

"Not exactly, Madame," replied M. Guitrel. "The Bishop wears the ring as a symbol of his spiritual union with the Church; it is therefore fitting that the ring should suggest by its appearance thoughts of austerity and purity."

"Ah!" said Madame de Bonmont. "What about the stone?"

“In the Middle Ages,” replied the Abbé, “the bezel was sometimes of gold like the ring, and sometimes consisted of a precious stone. It seems that the amethyst is a very suitable stone with which to adorn the pastoral ring, it gleams with a gentle lustre, and is one of the twelve stones that formed the breastplate worn by the High Priest of the Jews. In Christian symbolism it stands for modesty and humility; Narbode, Bishop of Rennes in the eleventh century, makes it the emblem of those who give themselves to be crucified on the cross of Jesus Christ.”

“Indeed!” said Madame de Bonmont.

She had made up her mind that when M. Guitrel became Bishop of Tourcoing she would make him a present of an episcopal ring set with a large amethyst.

Madame Hortha’s trumpets again rang out:

“My dear, my dear, are we not to see M. Raoul Marcien to-night? Are we not to have the pleasure of seeing the dear man?”

The cosmopolitan lady was well worthy of admiration, in that, although acquainted with every grade of society under the sun, she avoided making a hopeless muddle of them all. Her brain was a directory of all the drawing-rooms of all the capitals of Europe, and she was not wanting in a certain worldly judgment; her kindness of heart, too, was universal. If she had mentioned Raoul Marcien, it was in all innocence. She was innocence personified, and knew nothing of evil. She was a good wife and a good mother, whose home was a sleeping-car or a *wagon-lit*, yet a domesticated woman for all that. Under the corsage of jet and steel that glittered as she moved with a sound as of hail, she wore coarse grey cotton stays. Even her lady’s-maids never questioned her virtue.

“My dear, my dear, of course you know that M. Raoul Marcien has fought a duel with M. Isidore Mayer?”

And in a voice that made one think of international bureaux and tourist inquiry offices, she related the story which Madame de Bonmont knew by heart.

She told how M. Isidore Mayer, a Jew, both well known and highly respected in the financial world, went into a café in the Boulevard des Capucines, sat down at a table and asked for the Army List. Having a son in the Army, he wished to make sure of the names of the officers in his regiment. Just as he was about to take the book from a waiter M. Raoul Marcien strode up, and said: “Monsieur, I forbid you to lay a hand on that book. It is sacred to the French Army!”

“Why?” asked M. Isidore Mayer. “Because you are of the same religion as the traitor!”

M. Isidore Mayer shrugged his shoulders, upon which M. Raoul Marcien struck him full in the face. An encounter was arranged, and two shots fired

without effect.

“My dear, my dear, do you understand why he did it? I must say I do not.”

Madame de Bonmont did not reply, and her silence was prolonged by that of M. de Terremondre and Baron Wallstein.

“I believe,” said Madame de Bonmont, listening intently to the distant sounds of horses’ hoofs and the rumble of wheels, “that Ernest is coming.”

At this point a servant came in with the newspapers. M. de Terremondre took one of them and glanced casually at it.

“Still the Affair!” he murmured. “More professors protesting! Why will they insist on meddling with what does not concern them! It is only right that the Army should settle its own affairs, as it always has done. Moreover, it seems to me that when seven officers—” —

“Of course,” replied the Abbé, “when seven officers have given judgment, I will even go so far as to say that it is unseemly to raise any doubts as to their decision. It is highly indecorous and incongruous!”

“Are you speaking of the Affair?” asked Madame de Bonmont. “Well, I can assure you that Dreyfus is guilty. I have it from an authentic source.”

She blushed as she spoke, for it was Raoul to whom she had referred.

Ernest entered the drawing-room, sulky and morose.

“Good evening, mother! Good evening, M. l’Abbé!”

He took very little notice of the others, but threw himself upon the cushions of a couch which stood just beneath the portrait of his father, whom he much resembled. He was the Baron over again, but shrunken, diminished, and sickly, the wild boar grown small, pale, and flabby. The likeness, however, was striking, and M. de Terremondre drew attention to it:

“It is surprising, M. de Bonmont, how like you are to the portrait of the late Baron, your father.”

Ernest lifted his head and glanced at the picture by Delaunay.

“Ah yes, the pater! Clever chap, the pater. I’m all there myself, too, but pretty well played out. How are you, M. l’Abbé? You and I are good friends, aren’t we? I want to have a little talk with you presently.” Then, turning to M. de Terremondre, who was still holding the newspaper: “What do they say there? As far as we fellows are concerned, we are not allowed an opinion of any description, you bet! Only a bourgeois is permitted the luxury of an idea, though it may be an idiotic one. Then, good Lord, the things that interest the big bugs, how should they interest us?” He sneered. His life in the regiment afforded him endless amusement. Although he did not appear so, he was exceedingly shrewd, prudent, and cunning; he also knew when to hold his tongue, and took the keenest delight in the great and demoralising power he possessed. In spite of

himself, he corrupted every one that he approached, and was extremely pleased when he could swindle them in some way, as, for instance, when he succeeded in prevailing upon a poor and vain companion to present him with a meerschaum pipe. His greatest joy was to despise and hate his superiors, and to see how some of the more covetous among them would absolutely sell him their very souls, while others, more timorous and fearful of compromising themselves by showing him any leniency, would deny him, not a favour even, but the enjoyment of some right which they would never refuse to the son of a peasant. Full of craft and cunning, young Ernest de Bonmont came and sat by the Abbé Guitrel, and began to talk coaxingly to him:

“M. l’Abbé, you often see the Brécés, don’t you? You know them very well?”

“You must not imagine, my son,” replied the Abbé, “that I am an intimate friend of the Duc de Brécé. That is not the case. The utmost I can say is that I often have the privilege of visiting in the family circle. On certain festival days I say Mass in the chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles, which, as you know, is situated in the woods of Brécé. This, as I was just telling your mother, is a source of consolation and thankfulness to me. After mass I lunch, either at the Presbytery, with M. le curé Traviès, or at the château, where, I am bound to say, they treat me with the greatest kindness. The Duke’s manner towards me is always simple and natural, and the ladies are amiable and pleasant. They do a great deal of good around here, and would do still more were it not for the unjustified prejudices, blind hatred, and bitter feelings of the people.”

“Do you happen to know what effect was produced by the utensil Mother sent to the Duchess for the chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles?”

“What utensil do you mean? Do you refer to the golden ciborium? I can assure you that M. and Madame de Brécé were much touched by your mother’s simple act of homage to the miraculous Virgin.”

“So it was a good idea, wasn’t it, M. l’Abbé? Well, it was my notion. Mother isn’t particularly bright in the way of ideas, you know — oh, I’m not reproaching her. However, let us talk seriously. You are very fond of me, are you not, M. l’Abbé?”

M. Guitrel took young Bonmont’s hands in both his.

“Never doubt my affection for you, my son; it is the love of a father for his child; I might even say that it is a maternal love as well, and thus express more fully all that it contains both of strength and tenderness. I have watched you grow up, my dear Ernest, since that day on which you made so excellent a first communion, to this moment, in which you are accomplishing your noble duty as a soldier in our great French Army, which, day by day, I am thankful to say, grows more Christian and more pious. And it is my firm conviction, my dearest

boy, that amid the distractions, the errors even of your age, you have kept the faith. Your actions speak for themselves. I know you have always looked upon it as your duty to contribute towards our works of charity. You are my favourite child."

"Well, then, M. l'Abbé, do your child a good turn. Tell the Duc de Brécé to give me permission to wear the Brécé Hunt badge."

"The Hunt badge? But, my son, what do I know of such matters? I am not, like M. de Traviès, a great hunter before the Lord. I have followed St. Thomas far more than St. Hubert. The Hunt badge? Is that not a figurative expression, a kind of metaphor to express the idea of membership of the Hunt? Anyway, my son, what you desire is an invitation to the Brécé meets."

Young Bonmont gave a jump.

"Don't, for heaven's sake, get mixed, M. l'Abbé. That's not it — oh, not a bit of it. An invitation — I'm pretty sure to get an invitation to the de Brécé meets, in exchange for the utensil."

"Ciborium, ciborium, remember the Latin *ciborium*! I also think, my dear child, that the Duke and Duchess will make a special point of sending you an invitation as soon as they realise that it will please you and your mother to accept it."

"I believe you! As soon as they stuck to the plate. But you can tell them from me that I don't care a flip for an invitation to see a meet. I don't want to stay and rot at some crossroads where there is nothing to be seen, where you are sure to get all the mud kicked up by the horses full in your face, and then be sworn at by a huntsman for obstructing the way. No, I am not particularly keen on such amusements. The Brécés can keep their invitation!"

"In that case, my son, I do not understand your idea."

"And yet my idea is clear enough, M. l'Abbé. I do not intend the Brécés to laugh up their sleeve at me, that's what I'm driving at."

"Pray explain yourself!"

"Well, M. l'Abbé, just imagine being planted down on the Carrefour du Roi, together with the village doctor, the wife of the Chief of Police, and M. Irvoy's head clerk! No, such a situation is not to be thought of for one moment. But if I wear the Hunt badge, I can follow the hounds, and, although I may look a bit off colour sometimes, I'll soon show them whether I can ride or not. Now you can get me what I want, M. l'Abbé; the Brécés will not refuse you anything. All you have to do is to ask it in the name of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles."

"I beg of you, my child, not to bring Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles into such a matter, which cannot interest her in the very slightest. The miraculous Virgin of Brécé has enough to do in answering the prayers of widows and

orphans, not to mention those of our brave soldiers in Madagascar. But, my dear Ernest, is there really so much to be gained by the possession of this badge? Is it then such a precious talisman? No doubt strange privileges are attached to its possession. Tell me all about them. I am far from despising the noble and ancient art of hunting, for I belong to the clergy of an eminently sporting diocese, and would be glad of any information on the subject."

"You do amuse me, M. l'Abbé, and I know you must be joking. You know as well as I do what is understood by the Hunt badge: it is the right to wear the colours of any particular hunt. I am going to speak frankly to you; I am candid, because I can afford to be so. I want to be made a member of the Brécé Hunt, because it is the correct thing, and I like to be in the swim. I want it because I am a snob and a vain man. I also want it because it would amuse me to dine with the Brécés on St. Hubert's Day. The Brécé badge would be just about my mark. I want it very badly, and I'm not going to disguise the fact. I have no false shame — no shame of any kind, for the matter of that. Listen to me, M. l'Abbé, I have something of great importance to say to you. You must understand that in broaching the subject to the Duc de Brécé, you will only be claiming what is my due; you understand — my due! I have property round here; I do not shoot the deer; I let people hunt and kill on my estates, all of which deserves both consideration and gratitude. M. de Brécé is really under obligations to his kind little neighbour Ernest."

The Abbé said nothing. It was evident that he did not like the idea, and was prepared to refuse to do what was asked of him. Young Bonmont went on:

"I need hardly say, M. l'Abbé, that, in case the Brécés demand a price in return for the privilege, I should not stick at such a trifle."

M. l'Abbé Guitrel made a movement of protest. "Banish that supposition, my son! It ill accords with the character of the Duc de Brécé."

"That may be, M. l'Abbé. Whether it be given or sold, depends upon the owner's ideas and the state of his banking account. Some packs cost the master 80,000 francs a year; others bring him in as much as 30,000 francs a year. In saying this I am not in any way blaming the man who expects people to pay for their privileges. Personally, I should prefer to do so, indeed, I consider it only fair. Then there are districts where hunting costs so much, that the master, even if he is a rich man, cannot keep things going alone. Just suppose for instance, M. l'Abbé, that you kept a pack in the neighbourhood of Paris. Can you see yourself meeting all expenses and finding your purse sufficient to pay the heavy claims entailed? But I think I have heard that the Brécé badge is not to be bought with money. The Duke hasn't the gumption to make a profit out of his pack. Well, M.

l'Abbé, you will get it for me, gratis and for nothing! It will all be so much to the good."

Before replying, the Abbé reflected long and deeply, and this display of prudence worried young Bonmont not a little. At last, however, the Abbé opened his lips:

"My son, I have said so once, and will say it again. I have a great affection for you, and should like both to please and to aid you. I would welcome any opportunity of doing you a service. But I really have not the necessary qualifications to solicit on your behalf the worldly distinction to which you refer. Just think for a moment. Suppose that, after hearing my request, M. de Brécé should refuse or make some difficulty about granting it? I should be powerless to bring any pressure to bear upon him. What chance would a humble professor of elocution at the Grand Séminaire have of overcoming resistance, removing difficulty, and obtaining consent, so to speak, by main force? I have nothing with which to convince and hold parley with the great ones of the earth. I cannot, must not, even in so paltry a matter as this, undertake anything without being assured of its success."

Young Bonmont looked at the Abbé with surprise mingled with admiration, and said:

"I understand, M. l'Abbé. You cannot manage it for the time being. But when you are made a bishop you will carry off the badge with the same ease as a man at a fair carries off the ring, when tilting upon the wooden horses of the roundabouts. Of course you will!"

"It is quite possible," returned M. Guitrel, with the greatest gravity, "that if a bishop were to ask for the Hunt badge for you, the Duke would not refuse him."

CHAPTER IV

THAT evening M. Bergeret, having done a hard day's work, was feeling tired. He was taking his customary stroll in the town, accompanied by M. Goubin, his favourite disciple since the treachery of M. Roux, and as he ruminated over the work he had accomplished he fell to wondering, like so many others before him, what profit a man hath of all his labours. M. Goubin asked:

"Master, do you think that Paul Louis Courier would be a good subject to choose for an essay?"

M. Bergeret made no reply. He was just then passing the shop of Madame Fusellier, the stationer, and, stopping in front of the window in which sundry drawing models were displayed, he looked with interest at the Farnese Hercules who was showing off his muscles amid these examples of scholastic art.

"I feel kindly disposed towards him," remarked M. Bergeret.

"Towards whom?" asked M. Goubin, wiping his glasses.

"Hercules," replied M. Bergeret. "He was a good man. He himself said: 'My life is laborious and tends to a high ideal.' He toiled much upon this earth ere he received the reward of death, which, in truth, is the only guerdon of life. He had no time to give to meditation, and prolonged thought never marred the simplicity of his soul. But when evening came a feeling of melancholy would steal over him, and, in default of an enquiring mind, his great heart would reveal to him the vanity of effort, and the necessity which compels all men, even the best, to do evil even when they do good. This man of might was extraordinarily gentle. Like the rest of us when we commit ourselves to action, he found that he destroyed indiscriminately both the innocent and the guilty, the meek and the violent, and, when he mused over all this, it doubtless caused him more than one regret. Perhaps he even felt compassion for the unhappy monsters he had destroyed for the benefit of mankind: the poor Cretan bull, the poor Lernæan hydra, or the beautiful lion who, when he died, provided him with such an excellently warm cloak. More than once, when the day was over and his work done, his club must have weighed heavily upon him." M. Bergeret raised aloft his umbrella with an effort as though it had been a heavy weapon. Then he continued his discourse. "He was strong, yet weak. We love him because he is like ourselves."

"Hercules?" asked M. Goubin.

"Yes," replied M. Bergeret. "Like ourselves, he was born unhappy, the child of a god and a woman. From this mixed origin he derived the sadness of a thoughtful spirit and the cravings of a ravening body. All his life long he was

subject to the caprices of a whimsical king. Are not we too the children of Zeus and the hapless Alcmena, and the slaves of Eurystheus? I am at the mercy of the Minister of Public Instruction, who may take it into his head at any moment to ship me off to Algiers, just as Hercules was sent to the land of the Nasamones.”

“You are not leaving us, dear Master?” asked M. Goubin anxiously.

“See how sad he is!” went on M. Bergeret. “How wearily he leans upon his club, letting his arm hang limply at his side! His head is bowed, he is thinking of his heavy labours. The Farnese Hercules was certainly conceived after the statue by Lysippus, who was a blacksmith’s apprentice before becoming a sculptor, and it is undoubtedly that sturdy sculptor of a sturdy hero who fixed the type of Hercules.”

Having wiped his glasses once again with his handkerchief, M. Goubin tried to catch a glimpse of the principal points mentioned by the master, and while he was thus engaged Madame Fusellier, the proprietress of the shop, on hearing the clock strike nine, extinguished the gas under the disciple’s peering eyes. The poor man had no idea why he could see nothing, for he was so short-sighted as to be an utter stranger to that imaginary world in which most men have their being.

And, as M. Bergeret continued to walk and talk, he followed the sound of his voice, for he trusted only to what he heard others say to guide him along those pathways of the earth whereon his youthful prudence told him he might venture.

“His strength,” continued the Professor, “was the cause of his weakness. He was under the yoke of his own strength, subject to the exigencies of his nature, which compelled him to devour whole sheep, drink great jars of dark wine, and to do foolish deeds for women of little worth. The hero whose club brought peace and happiness and justice to the world, the son of the great god Zeus, would seek sleep anywhere like a mere tramp, or tarry for weeks and weeks with a wench whose lover he was. And this was the cause of his melancholy. With his simple soul, his submissiveness, his love of justice, and his mighty muscles, it was to be feared that he could be nothing more than an excellent soldier or a glorified gendarme. But his very weaknesses, his errors, his unhappy experiences broadened his soul, opened out his vision upon the manifold diversity of life and mellowed with gentleness his terrible capacity for good works.”

“Dear Master,” said M. Goubin, “do you not think that Hercules is the sun, that his twelve labours are the signs of the zodiac, and that Dejanira’s fiery robe represents the flaming clouds of the setting sun?”

“That is possible,” replied M. Bergeret, “but I do not wish to believe it. It pleases me to have the same idea of Hercules that a barber of Thebes or a herb-

vendor of Eleusis would have had in the time of the Median wars. I think this idea from the point of view of force, fulness and vivacity is worth all your systems of comparative mythology put together. Hercules was a kind-hearted man. When he went to seek the steeds of Diomedes he crossed through Phææ and stayed his steps before the palace of Admetus. He called for food and drink, and spoke very roughly to the servants, who had never set eyes on such an uncouth guest. He crowned himself with myrtles, and drank enormous quantities of wine, and, being very drunk, and not at all proud, he tried to force the cup-bearer to drink with him; but the latter, very shocked at such manners, replied severely that it was no time for eating and drinking, when the good Queen Alcestis had just been borne to the grave. She had consecrated herself to Thanatos in place of her husband Admetus. It was, therefore, not an ordinary death, but a kind of spell which had been cast over her.

“Good Hercules immediately recovered from his drunkenness, and asked whither they had taken Alcestis. Beyond the suburb on the way to Larissa she lay in a tomb of polished marble. Thither hastened Hercules, and when Thanatos, robed in black, came to taste of the offering of cakes dipped in blood, the hero, who was lying in ambush behind the funeral pile, threw himself upon the King of Darkness, held him prisoner in the circle of his arms, and forced him, all bruised and broken, to give up Alcestis, who, veiled and silent, returned with him to the palace of Admetus. This time he would accept no refreshment, he was in haste, for he had barely time to fetch the steeds of Diomedes.

“That was a wonderful adventure, but I think I prefer the tale about the Cercopes. Do you know the story of the two brothers, M. Goubin? One was called Andolous and the other Atlantos, and they had faces like monkeys. Their name leads me to believe that they were also possessed of tails like the smaller species of the monkey tribe. They were very cunning thieves, and robbed the orchards, and their mother was continually warning them to beware of the hero, Melampyges. This, you know, was the name familiarly given to Hercules, whose skin was not white. The two rash little creatures disdained their mother’s wise counsels, and one day, having surprised the ‘Melampyges’ asleep on the mossy banks of a stream, they crept up to him to try and steal his club and lionskin. But the hero, waking suddenly, seized them, tied them by the feet to the branch of a tree, and slinging them over his shoulder went upon his way. The Cercopes were doubtless very uncomfortable, both in mind and body, but as the latter was extremely supple and the former happy-go-lucky, they were amused and interested in everything they could see, and what they chiefly saw was the reason for the hero’s nickname of *mélampyge*. Atlantos pointed this out to his brother Andolous, who replied that their captor was indeed the hero of whom their

mother had spoken. And as they hung like squirrels from a hunter's, spear they whispered, 'Melampyges! Melampyges!' with a mocking laugh like the cry of the forest lapwing.

Hercules was a very irritable man, and did not like being made fun of, but he was not over proud, and never imagined that the whole of his body was as white as that of poor little Hylas. The name that had been bestowed upon him appeared to him an honourable one, and quite worthy of a strong man who journeyed about accomplishing great labours. He was a simple soul and easily moved to laughter. The remarks of the two Cercopes struck him as so funny that he stopped short, and, placing his game upon the ground, sat down by the wayside and began to shout with laughter. For a long time he remained there filling the valley with the sounds of his mirth. The setting sun spread his crimson rays over the clouds and gleamed on the mountain tops, and still the hero's laughter rang out from beneath the dark pines and tufted larches. At last, however, he rose, untied the two little monkey-men, and, having admonished them, let them go, while in the falling darkness he continued his rough journey across the mountains. You see he was a kind-hearted man!"

"Dear Master," said M. Goubin, "allow me to ask you a question. Do you consider Paul Louis Courier a good subject for my essay? Because as soon as I have got my degree—"

CHAPTER V

AS they were discussing the Affair at Paillot's library, in a corner devoted to old books, M. Bergeret, who was of a speculative turn of mind, gave expression to ideas upon the subject that were not in accord with popular sentiment.

"This hearing of cases in camera is a detestable practice," he said.

And as M. de Terremondre offered in defence reasons of State, he replied:

"We have no State. We have administrations. What we call reasons of State are simply the reasons of government departments. We are told that such reasons are sacred; as a matter of fact, they afford the department the opportunity to hide its errors, and at the same time to aggravate their consequences."

"I am a republican, a Jacobin, a terrorist — and a patriot," remarked M. Mazure solemnly. "I am quite willing to send the generals to the guillotine, but I allow no one to dispute the decisions of military justice."

"And you are right," replied M. de Terremondre, "for if any justice is worthy of respect, it is that above all others. And, knowing the army as I do, I can assure you that there are no judges so indulgent or so merciful as military judges."

"I am very glad to hear you say so," replied M. Bergeret. "But as the army is a department just the same as agriculture, finance or public instruction, one cannot conceive of there being such a thing as military courts, when there are neither agricultural, financial, nor university courts. Any peculiar form of justice is directly opposed to the fundamental principles of modern law. The military provostships will appear as old-fashioned and barbarous to our descendants as seigniorial and ecclesiastical courts appear to us to-day."

"You are joking!" said M. de Terremondre. "That is what has been said of every prophet," replied M. Bergeret.

"But if you attack the courts martial," cried M. de Terremondre, "it means the end of the Army, and therefore the end of the country."

M. Bergeret's reply was as follows:

"When the priests and seigniors were deprived of the right of hanging their serfs, people thought it meant the end of all law and order. Soon, however, a new order of government sprang up, better than the old one. What I say is this: in times of peace let the soldier be judged by a civil court. Do you imagine that since the time of Charles VII, or even since Napoleon, the Army has not survived more drastic innovations than that?"

"I am an old Jacobin," repeated M. Mazure. "I am in favour of courts martial, and would have the heads of the Army subject to the authority of a committee of

public safety. There is nothing more calculated to keep them up to the mark.”

“That’s another matter altogether,” said M. de Terremondre. “I return to our original subject and ask M. Bergeret whether he honestly believes it possible that seven officers could make a mistake?”

“Fourteen!” cried M. Mazure.

“Fourteen,” repeated M. de Terremondre.

“I do believe it possible,” said M. Bergeret. “Fourteen French officers!” ejaculated M. de Terremondre.

“Oh, well,” said M. Bergeret, “they might have been Swiss, Belgian, Spanish, German, or Dutch, and have made just as bad a blunder.”

“Impossible!” cried M. de Terremondre.

The librarian Paillot shook his head, thereby meaning to express the fact that he also considered it impossible. And his clerk, Léon, looked at M. Bergeret with indignant surprise.

“I do not know whether you will ever be enlightened,” went on M. Bergeret sweetly. “I do not think so, although all things are possible, even the triumph of truth.”

“You mean the Revision,” said M. de Terremondre. “That, never! You will never succeed in getting the Revision; I have been told as much by three Ministers and twenty deputies.”

“The poet Bouchor,” replied M. Bergeret, “teaches us that it is better to endure the horrors of war than to commit an unjust action. But such an alternative does not confront you, gentlemen, and you are being scared with lies.”

Just as M. Bergeret was saying this a great noise was heard in the square outside. A band of little boys was marching past and shouting, “*A bas Zola! Mort aux juifs!*” They were on their way to break the windows of Meyer, the bootmaker, who was supposed to be a Jew, and the townsmen indulgently watched them go by.

“Fine little chaps!” cried M. de Terremondre, when the demonstrators had filed by.

M. Bergeret, with his nose buried in a ponderous volume, slowly remarked:

“The cause of liberty had only the very smallest minority of educated people upon her side. The clergy almost to a man, the generals and the ignorant and fanatical mob clamoured for a master.”

“What is that you are saying?” asked M. Mazure excitedly.

“Nothing,” replied M. Bergeret. “I am reading a chapter of Spanish history which describes the manners and customs of the people at the time of the restoration of Ferdinand VII.”

The bootmaker, Meyer, was half killed, nevertheless. He did not complain, for fear of being killed outright, and also because the justice of the people, together with that of the Army, filled him with mute admiration.

CHAPTER VI

M. BERGERET was not unhappy, for he rejoiced in that true independence which comes from within, and his soul was unfettered. Since the departure of his wife he was also enjoying the sweets of solitude, while awaiting the arrival of his daughter Pauline, who was shortly expected from Arcachon with his sister, Mademoiselle Bergeret.

He looked forward to a happy life with his daughter, who resembled him in certain turns of mind and speech, so that it flattered his vanity when people praised her.

He was pleased at the idea of seeing his sister Zoe, an old maid, who, having never had any pretensions to good looks, had not lost her natural frankness of disposition, to which was added a secret delight in making herself unpleasant, but who lacked neither wit nor kindness.

For the time being, however, M. Bergeret was busy settling down in his new quarters. He hung his views of Naples and Vesuvius, legacies both, on the walls of his study. Now of all the delights permitted to a respectable man, there is perhaps none which procures him such tranquil enjoyment as that of knocking nails into a wall. The keenest pleasure of that experienced voluptuary, Comte de Caylus, was unpacking cases of Etruscan pottery. Thus M. Bergeret proceeded to hang up on his wall an old water-colour representing Vesuvius, adorned with an aigrette of flame and smoke, standing out against the dark blue sky of midnight. This picture reminded him of the days of his wondering and enchanted childhood.

He was not sad, neither was he glad. He had money worries, he knew the unloveliness of poverty. "Money makes the man," as Pindar says (*Isth.* II).

He did not get on with his colleagues or his pupils. He did not get on with the townspeople; incapable as he was of comprehending either their thoughts or their feelings, he had been obliged to withdraw from human fellowship, and his peculiar way of thinking had deprived him of the enjoyment of that genial feeling of comradeship which even high walls and closed doors cannot exclude.

The mere fact that he was a thinker made him a strange and disturbing element suspected by all. He was even a source of worry to Paillot, the bookseller, and his asylum and refuge, the corner where the old books were kept, was no longer to be counted on. In spite of all this he was not unhappy. He set about arranging his books on the deal shelves put up by the carpenter, and took pleasure in handling these little memorials of his humble contemplative life. He

worked with zeal at his task of getting things straight, and when he tired of hanging pictures or arranging furniture, he buried himself deep in some book, with a lurking feeling, however, that he ought not to enjoy it because it was a human product, yet enjoying it notwithstanding. He read a few pages on "the progress realised by modern society," and his reflections ran as follows:

"Let us be humble and believe ourselves in no way excellent, for we are not excellent. As we examine ourselves, let us uncover our true countenance, which is rough and violent like that of our forefathers, and, as we have the advantage over them of a longer tradition, let us at least recognise the sequence and continuity of our ignorance."

Thus pondered M. Bergeret, as he settled himself in his new abode. He was not sad, neither was he glad, as he reflected that he would always yearn in vain for Madame de Gromance, not realising the fact that she was only precious to him by virtue of the craving which she inspired. But the very derangement of his feelings prevented him from clearly grasping this philosophical truth. He was not handsome, he was not young, he was not rich; he was not sad, because his wisdom approached the happy state of ataraxy, without, however, finally attaining it, and he was not glad, because he was somewhat of a sensualist, and his soul was not free from illusions and desires.

The servant Marie, who had fulfilled her task of bringing terror and misery into the house, had been dismissed, and in her place he had engaged a decent woman from the town, whom he called Angélique, but who was spoken of as Madame Borniche by the shopkeepers and the country-people in the market-place.

Her husband, Nicolas Borniche, a good coachman, but a bad man, had deserted her when she was still young and ugly. She had been in service with various families. Her status as a married woman still filled her with a certain pride not always concealed, and with a great fondness for managing. Finally, she was by way of being a herbalist and a healer, something of a sorceress, and filled the house with a pleasant odour of herbs. Full of genuine zeal, she was obsessed by an eternal longing for affection and approval. From the very first she had taken to M. Bergeret, on account of the distinction of his mind and the gentleness of his manner, but she awaited the arrival of Mademoiselle Bergeret with foreboding, for a secret presentiment told her that she would not get on well with the sister from Arcachon. On the other hand, she pleased M.

Bergeret, who was at last enjoying peace in his house and deliverance from all his troubles.

His books, which heretofore had been despised and thrown about, were now displayed upon long shelves in the big sunny room. There he could work in quiet

at his *Virgilius nauticus*, and indulge freely in silent orgies of meditation. Before the window a young plane tree gently waved its pointed leaves, and, farther away, a dark buttress of Saint-Exupère reared its jagged pinnacle, in which grew a cherry tree, doubtless planted there by a bird.

Seated at his table one morning in front of the window, against which the leaves of the plane tree quivered, M. Bergeret, who was trying to discover how the ships of Æneas had been changed into nymphs, heard a tap at the door, and forthwith his servant entered, carrying in front of her, opossumlike, a tiny creature whose black head peeped out from the folds of her apron, which she had turned up to form a pocket. With a look of anxiety and hope upon her face, she remained motionless for a moment, then she placed the little thing upon the carpet at her master's feet.

"What's that?" asked M. Bergeret.

It was a little dog of doubtful breed, having something of the terrier in him, and a well-set head, a short, smooth coat of a dark tan colour, and a tiny little stump of a tail. His body retained its puppylike softness and he went sniffing at the carpet.

"Angélique," said M. Bergeret, "take this animal back to its owner."

"It has no owner, Monsieur."

M. Bergeret looked silently at the little creature who had come to examine his slippers, and was giving little sniffs of approval. M. Bergeret was a philologist, which perhaps explains why at this juncture he asked a vain question.

"What is he called?"

"Monsieur," replied Angélique, "he has no name."

M. Bergeret seemed put out at this answer: he looked at the dog sadly, with a disheartened air.

Then the little animal placed its two front paws on M. Bergeret's slipper, and, holding it thus, began innocently to nibble at it. With a sudden access of compassion M. Bergeret took the tiny nameless creature upon his knee. The dog looked at him intently, and M. Bergeret was pleased at his confiding expression.

"What beautiful eyes!" he cried.

The dog's eyes were indeed beautiful, the pupils of a golden-flecked chestnut set in warm white. And his gaze spoke of simple, mysterious thoughts, common alike to the thoughtful beasts and simple men of the earth.

Tired, perhaps, with the intellectual effort he had made for the purpose of entering into communication with a human being, he closed his beautiful eyes, and, yawning widely, revealed his pink mouth, his curled-up tongue, and his array of dazzling teeth.

M. Bergeret put his hand into the dog's mouth, and allowed him to lick it, at which old Angélique gave a smile of relief.

"A more affectionate little creature doesn't breathe," she said.

"The dog," said M. Bergeret, "is a religious animal. In his savage state he worships the moon and the lights that float upon the waters. These are his gods, to whom he appeals at night with long-drawn howls. In the domesticated state he seeks by his caresses to conciliate those powerful genii who dispense the good things of this world — to wit, men. He worships and honours men by the accomplishment of the rites passed down to him by his ancestors; he licks their hand, jumps against their legs, and when they show signs of anger towards him he approaches them crawling on his belly as a sign of humility, to appease their wrath."

"All dogs are not the friends of man," remarked Angélique. "Some of them bite the hand that feeds them."

"Those are the ungodly, blasphemous dogs," returned M. Bergeret, "insensate creatures like Ajax, the son of Telamon, who wounded the hand of the golden Aphrodite. These sacrilegious creatures die a dreadful death or lead wandering and miserable lives. They are not to be confounded with those dogs who, espousing the quarrel of their own particular god, wage war upon his enemy, the neighbouring god. They are heroes. Such, for example, is the dog of Lafolie, the butcher, who fixed his sharp teeth into the leg of the tramp Pied-d'Alouette. For it is a fact that dogs fight among themselves like men, and Turk, with his snub nose, serves his god Lafolie against the robber gods, in the same way that Israel helped Jehovah to destroy Chamos and Moloch."

The puppy, however, having decided that M. Bergeret's remarks were the reverse of interesting, curled up his feet and stretched out his head, ready to go to sleep upon the knees that harboured him.

"Where did you find him?" asked M. Bergeret.

"Well, Monsieur, it was M. Dellion's *chef* gave him to me."

"With the result," continued M. Bergeret, "that we now have this soul to care for."

"What soul?" asked Angélique.

"This canine soul. An animal is, properly speaking, a soul; I do not say an immortal soul. And yet, when I come to consider the positions this poor little beast and I myself occupy in the scheme of things, I recognise in both exactly the same right to immortality."

After considerable hesitation, old Angélique, with a painful effort that made her upper lip curl up and reveal her two remaining teeth, said:

"If Monsieur does not want a dog, I will return him to M. Dellion's *chef*; but you may safely keep him, I assure you. You won't see or hear him."

She had hardly finished her sentence when the puppy, hearing a heavy van rolling down the street, sat bolt upright on M. Bergeret's knees, and began to bark both loud and long, so that the window-panes resounded with the noise.

M. Bergeret smiled.

"He's a watch-dog," said Angélique, by way of excuse. "They are by far the most faithful."

"Have you given him anything to eat?" asked M. Bergeret."

"Of course," returned Angélique.

"What does he eat?"

"Monsieur must be aware that dogs eat bread and meat."

Somewhat piqued, M. Bergeret retorted that in her eagerness she might very likely have taken him away from his mother before he was old enough to leave her, upon which he was lifted up again and re-examined, only to make sure of the fact that he was at least six months old.

M. Bergeret put him down on the carpet, and regarded him with interest.

"Isn't he pretty?" said the servant.

"No, he is not pretty," replied M. Bergeret. "But he is engaging, and has beautiful eyes. That is what people used to say about me," added the professor, "when I was three times as old, and not half as intelligent. Since then I have no doubt acquired an outlook upon the universe which he will never attain. But, in comparison with the Absolute, I may say that my knowledge equals his in the smallness of its extent. Like his, it is a geometrical point in the infinite." Then, addressing the little creature who was sniffing the waste-paper basket, he went on: "Smell it out, sniff it well, take from the outside world all the knowledge that can reach your simple brain through the medium of that black truffle-like nose of yours. And what though I at the same time observe, and compare, and study? We shall never know, neither the one nor the other of us, why we have been put into this world, and what we are doing in it. What are we here for, eh?"

As he had spoken rather loudly, the puppy looked at him anxiously, and M. Bergeret, returning to the thought which had first filled his mind, said to the servant:

"We must give him a name."

With her hands folded in front of her she replied laughingly that that would not be a difficult matter.

Upon which M. Bergeret made the private reflection that to the simple all things are simple, but that clear-sighted souls, who look upon things from many and divers aspects, invisible to the vulgar mind, experience the greatest difficulty

in coming to a decision about even the most trivial matters. And he cudgelled his brains, trying to hit upon a name for the little living thing who was busily engaged in nibbling the fringe of the carpet.

“All the names of dogs,” thought he, “preserved in the ancient treatises of the huntsmen of old, such as Fouilloux, and in the verses of our sylvan poets such as La Fontaine — Finaud, Miraut, Briffaut, Ravaud, and such-like names, are given to sporting dogs, who are the aristocracy of the kennel, the chivalry of the canine race. The dog of Ulysses was called Argos, and he was a hunter too, so Homer tells us. ‘In his youth he hunted the little hares of Ithaca, but now he was old and hunted no more.’ What we require is something quite different. The names given by old maids to their lap-dogs would be more suitable were they not usually pretentious and absurd. Azor, for instance, is ridiculous!”

So M. Bergeret ruminated, calling to memory many a dog name, without being able to decide, however, on one that pleased him. He would have liked to invent a name, but lacked the imagination.

“What day is it?” he asked at last.

“The ninth,” replied Angélique, “Thursday, the ninth.”

“Well, then!” said M. Bergeret, “can’t we call the dog Thursday, like Robinson Crusoe who called his man Friday, for the same reason?”

“As Monsieur pleases,” said Angélique. “But it isn’t very pretty.”

“Very well,” said M. Bergeret, “find a name for the creature yourself, for, after all, you brought him here.”

“Oh, no,” said the servant. “I couldn’t find a name for him, I’m not clever enough. When I saw him lying on the straw in the kitchen, I called him Riquet, and he came up and played about under my skirts.”

“You called him Riquet, did you?” cried M. Bergeret. “Why didn’t you say so before? Riquet he is and Riquet he shall remain, that’s settled. Now be off with you, and take Riquet with you. I want to work.”

“Monsieur,” returned Angélique, “I am going to leave the puppy with you; I will come for him when I get back from market.”

“You could quite well take him to market with you,” retorted M. Bergeret.

“Monsieur, I am going to church as well.”

It was quite true that she really was going to church at Saint-Exupère, to ask for a Mass to be said for the repose of her husband’s soul. She did that regularly once a year, not that she had ever been informed of the decease of Borniche, who had never communicated with her since his desertion, but it was a settled thing in the good woman’s mind that Borniche was dead. She had therefore no fear of his coming to rob her of the little she had, and did her best to fix things up to his advantage in the other world, so long as he left her in peace in this one.

“Eh!” ejaculated M. Bergeret. “Shut him up in the kitchen or some other convenient place, and do not wor—”

He did not finish his sentence, for Angélique had vanished, purposely pretending not to hear, that she might leave Riquet with his master. She wanted them to grow used to one another, and she also wanted to give poor, friendless M. Bergeret a companion. Having closed the door behind her, she went along the corridor and down the steps.

M. Bergeret set to work again and plunged head foremost into his *Virgilius nauticus*. He loved the work; it rested his thoughts, and became a kind of game that suited him, for he played it all by himself. On the table beside him were several boxes filled with pegs, which he fixed into little squares of cardboard to represent the fleet of Æneas. Now while he was thus occupied he felt something like tiny fists tapping at his legs. Riquet, whom he had quite forgotten, was standing on his hind legs patting his master’s knees, and wagging his little stump of a tail. When he tired of this, he let his paws slide down the trouser leg, then got up and began his coaxing over again. And M. Bergeret, turning away from the printed lore before him, saw two brown eyes gazing up at him lovingly.

“What gives a human beauty to the gaze of this dog,” he thought, “is probably that it varies unceasingly, being by turns bright and vivacious or serious and sorrowful; because through these eyes his little dumb soul finds expression for thought that lacks nothing in depth nor sequence. My father was very fond of cats, and, consequently, I liked them too. He used to declare that cats are the wise man’s best companions, for they respect his studious hours. Bajazet, his Persian cat, would sit at night for hours at a stretch, motionless and majestic, perched on a corner of his table. I still remember the agate eyes of Bajazet, but those jewel-like orbs concealed all thought, that owl-like stare was cold, and hard, and wicked. How much do I prefer the melting gaze of the dog!”

Riquet, however, was agitating his paws in frantic fashion, and M. Bergeret, who was anxious to *return* to his philological amusements, said kindly, but shortly:

“Lie down, Riquet!”

Upon which Riquet went and thrust his nose against the door through which Angélique had passed out. And there he remained, uttering from time to time plaintive, meek little cries. After a while he began to scratch, making a gentle rasping noise on the polished floor with his nails. Then the whining began again followed by more scratching. Disturbed by these sounds, M. Bergeret sternly bade him keep still.

Riquet peered at him sorrowfully with his brown eyes, then, sitting down, he looked at M. Bergeret again, rose, returned to the door, sniffed underneath it, and

wailed afresh.

“Do you want to go out?” asked M. Bergeret.

Putting down his pen, he went to the door, which he held a few inches open. After making sure that he was running no risk of hurting himself on the way out, Riquet slipped through the doorway and marched off with a composure that was scarcely polite. On returning to his table, M. Bergeret, sensitive man that he was, pondered over the dog’s action. He said to himself:

“I was on the point of reproaching the animal for going without saying either good-bye or thank you, and expecting him to apologise for leaving me. It was the beautiful human expression of his eyes that made me so foolish. I was beginning to look upon him as one of my own kind.”

After making this reflection M. Bergeret applied himself anew to the metamorphosis of the ships of Æneas, a legend both pretty and popular, but perhaps a trifle too simple in itself for expression in such noble language. M. Bergeret, however, saw nothing incongruous in it. He knew that the nursery tales have furnished material for nearly all epics, and that Virgil had carefully collected together in his poem the riddles, the puns, the uncouth stories, and the puerile imaginings of his forefathers; that Homer, his master and the master of all the bards, had done little more than tell over again what the good wives of Ionia and the fishermen of the islands had been narrating for more than a thousand years before him. Besides, for the time being this was the least of his worries; he had another far more important preoccupation. An expression, met with in the course of the charming story of the metamorphosis, did not appear sufficiently plain to him. That was what was worrying him.

“Bergeret, my friend,” he said to himself, “this is where you must open your eyes and show your sense. Remember that Virgil always expresses himself with extreme precision when writing on the technique of the arts; remember that he went yachting at Baïae, that he was an expert in naval construction, and that therefore his language, in this passage, must have a precise and definite signification.”

And M. Bergeret carefully consulted a great number of texts, in order to throw a light upon the word which he could not understand, and which he had to explain. He was almost on the point of grasping the solution, or, at any rate, he had caught a glimpse of it, when he heard a noise like the rattling of chains at his door, a noise which, although not alarming, struck him as curious. The disturbance was presently accompanied by a shrill whining, and M. Bergeret, interrupted in his philological investigations, immediately concluded that these importunate wails must emanate from Riquet.

As a matter of fact, after having looked vainly all over the house for Angélique, Riquet had been seized with a desire to see M. Bergeret again. Solitude was as painful to him as human society was dear. In order to put an end to the noise, and also because he had a secret desire to see Riquet again, M. Bergeret got up from his arm-chair and opened the door, and Riquet re-entered the study with the same coolness with which he had quitted it, but as soon as he saw the door close behind him he assumed a melancholy expression, and began to wander up and down the room like a soul in torment.

He had a sudden way of appearing to find something of interest beneath the chairs and tables, and would sniff long and noisily; then he would walk aimlessly about or sit down in a corner with an air of great humility, like the beggars who are to be seen in church porches. Finally he began to bark at a cast of Hermes which stood upon the mantelshelf, whereupon M. Bergeret addressed him in words full of just reproach.

“Riquet! such vain agitation, such sniffing and barking were better suited to a stable than to the study of a professor, and they lead one to suppose that your ancestors lived with horses whose straw litters they shared. I do not reproach you with that. It is only natural you should have inherited their habits, manners, and tendencies as well as their close-cropped coat, their sausage-like body, and their long, thin nose. I do not speak of your beautiful eyes, for there are few men, few dogs even, who can open such beauties to the light of day. But, leaving all that aside, you are a mongrel, my friend, a mongrel from your short, bandy legs to your head. Again I am far from despising you for that. What I want you to understand is that if you desire to live with me, you will have to drop your mongrel manners and behave like a *scholar*, in other words, to remain silent and quiet, to respect work, after the manner of Bajazet, who of a night would sit for four hours without stirring, and watch my father’s pen skimming over the paper. He was a silent and tactful creature. How different is your own character, my friend! Since you came into this chamber of study your hoarse voice, your unseemly snufflings and your whines, that sound like steam whistles, have constantly confused my thoughts and interrupted my reflections. And now you have made me lose the drift of an important passage in Servius, referring to the construction of one of the ships of Æneas. Know then, Riquet, my friend, that this is the house of silence and the abode of meditation, and that if you are anxious to stay here you must become literary. Be quiet!”

Thus spoke M. Bergeret. Riquet, who had listened to him with mute astonishment, approached his master, and with suppliant gesture placed a timid paw upon the knee, which he seemed to revere in a fashion that savoured of long ago. Then a kind thought struck M. Bergeret. He picked him up by the scruff of

his neck, and put him upon the cushions of the ample easy chair in which he was sitting. Turning himself round three times, Riquet lay down, and then remained perfectly still and silent. He was quite happy. M. Bergeret was grateful to him, and as he ran through Servius he occasionally stroked the close-cropped coat, which, without being soft, was smooth and very pleasant to the touch. Riquet fell into a gentle doze, and communicated to his master the generous warmth of his body, the subtle, gentle heat of a living, breathing thing. And from that moment M. Bergeret found more pleasure in his *Virgilius nauticus*.

From floor to ceiling his study was lined with deal shelves, bearing books arranged in methodical order. One glance, and all that remains to us of Latin thought was ready to his hand. The Greeks lay half-way up. In a quiet corner, easy of access, were Rabelais, the excellent story-tellers of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, Bonaventure des Périers, Guillaume Bouchet, and all the old French “conteurs” whom M. Bergeret considered better adapted to humanity than writings in the more heroic style, and who were the favourite reading of his leisure. He only possessed them in cheap modern editions, but he had discovered a poor bookbinder in the town who covered his volumes with leaves from a book of anthems, and it gave M. Bergeret the keenest pleasure to see these free-spoken gentlemen thus clad in Requiems and Misereres. This was the sole luxury and the only peculiarity of his austere library. The other books were paper-backed or bound in poor and worn-out bindings. The gentle friendly manner in which they were handled by their owner gave them the look of tools set out in a busy man’s workshop. The books of archaeology and art found a resting-place on the highest shelves, not by any means out of contempt, but because they were not so often used.

Now while M. Bergeret worked at his *Virgilius nauticus* and shared his chair with Riquet, he found, as chance would have it, that it was necessary to consult Ottfried Miiller’s little *Manual*, which happened to be on one of the topmost shelves.

There was no need of one of those tall ladders on wheels topped by railings and a shelf, to enable him to reach the book; there were ladders of this description in the town library, and they had been used by all the great book-lovers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; indeed, several of the latter had fallen from them, and thus died honourable deaths, in the manner spoken of in the pamphlet entitled: *Des bibliophiles qui moururent en tombant de leur échelle*

No, indeed! M. Bergeret had no need of anything of the sort. A small pair of folding steps would have served his purpose excellently well, and he had once

seen some in the shop of Clérambaut, the cabinet-maker, in the Rue de Josde. They folded up, and looked just the thing with their bevelled uprights each pierced with a trefoil as a grip for the hand. M. Bergeret would, have given, anything to possess them, but the state of his finances, which were somewhat involved, forced him to abandon the idea. No one knew better than he did that financial ills are not mortal, but, for all that, he had no steps in his study.

In place of such a pair of steps he used an old cane-bottomed chair, the back of which had been broken, leaving only two horns or antennae, which had shewn themselves to be more dangerous than useful. So they had been cut to the level of the seat, and the chair had become a stool. There were two reasons why this stool was ill-fitted to the use to which M. Bergeret was wont to put it. In the first place the woven-cane seat had grown slack with long use, and now contained a large hollow, making one's foothold precarious. In the second place the stool was too low, and it was hardly possible when standing upon it to reach the books on the highest shelf, even with the finger-tips. What generally happened was that in the endeavour to grasp one book several others fell out, and it depended upon their being bound or paper-covered? whether they lay with broken corners, or sprawled with leaves spread like a fan or a concertina.

Now with the intention of getting down the *Manual* of Ottfried Müller, M. Bergeret quitted the chair he was sharing with Riquet, who, rolled into a ball with his head tight pressed to his body, lay in warm comfort, opening one voluptuous eye, which he reclosed as quickly. Then M. Bergeret drew the stool from the dark corner where it was hidden and placed it where it was required, hoisted himself upon it, and managed by making his arm as long as possible, and straining upon tiptoe to touch, first with one then with two fingers, the back of a book which he judged to be the one he was needing. As for the thumb it remained below the shelf and rendered no assistance whatever. M. Bergeret, who found it therefore exceedingly difficult to draw out the book, made the reflection that the reason why the hand is a precious implement is on account of the position of the thumb, and that no being could rise to be an artist who had four feet and no hands.

"It is to the hand," he reflected, "that men owe their power of becoming engineers, painters, writers, and manipulators of all kinds of things. If they had not a thumb as well as their other fingers, they would be as incapable as I am at this moment, and they could never have changed the face of the earth as they have done. Beyond a doubt it is the shape of the hand that has assured to man the conquest of the world."

Then, almost simultaneously, M. Bergeret remembered that monkeys, who possess four hands, have not, for all that, created the arts, nor disposed the earth

to their use, and he erased from his mind the theory upon which he had just embarked. However, he did the best he could with his four fingers. It must be known that Ottfried Müller's *Manual* is composed of three volumes and an atlas. M. Bergeret wanted Volume I. He pulled out first the second volume, then the atlas, then volume three, and finally the book that he required. At last he held it in his hands. All that now remained for him to do was to descend, and this he was about to do when the cane seat gave way beneath his foot, which passed through it. He lost his balance and fell to the ground, not as heavily as might have been feared, for he broke his fall by grasping at one of the uprights of the bookshelf.

He was on the ground, however, full of astonishment, and wearing on one leg the broken chair; his whole body was permeated and as though constricted by a pain that spread all over it, and that presently settled itself more particularly in the region of the left elbow and hip upon which he had fallen. But, as his anatomy was not seriously damaged, he gathered his wits together; he had got so far as to realise that he must draw his right leg out of the stool in which it had so unfortunately become entangled, and that he must be careful to raise himself up on his right side, which was unhurt. He was even trying to put this into execution when he felt a warm breath upon his cheek, and, turning his eyes, which fright and pain had for the moment fixed, he saw close to his cheek Riquet's little face.

At the sound of the fall Riquet had jumped down from the chair and run to his unfortunate master; he was now standing near him in a state of great excitement; then he commenced to run round him. First he came near out of sympathy, then he retreated out of fear of some mysterious danger. He understood perfectly well that a misfortune had taken place, but he was neither thoughtful nor clever enough to discover what it was; hence his anxiety. His fidelity drew him to his suffering friend, and his prudence stopped him on the very brink of the fatal spot. Encouraged at length by the calm and silence which eventually reigned, he licked M. Bergeret's neck and looked at him with eyes of fear and of love. The fallen master smiled, and the dog licked the end of his nose. It was a great comfort to M. Bergeret, who freed his right leg, stood erect, and limped good-humouredly back to his chair.

Riquet was there before him. All that could be seen of his eyes was a gleam between the narrow slit of the half-closed lids. He seemed to have forgotten all about the adventure that a moment before had so stirred them both. The little creature lived in the present, with no thought of time that had run its course; not that he was wanting in memory, inasmuch as he could remember, not his own past alone, but the far-away past of his ancestors, and his little head was a rich

storehouse of useful knowledge; but he took no pleasure in remembrance, and memory was not for him, as it was for M. Bergeret, a divine muse.

Gently stroking the short, smooth coat of his companion, M. Bergeret addressed him in the following affectionate terms:

“Dog! at the price of the repose which is dear to your heart, you came to me when I was dismayed and brought low. You did not laugh, as any young person of my own species would have done. It is true that however joyous or terrible nature may appear to you at times, she never inspires you with a sense of the ridiculous. And it is for that very reason, because of your innocent gravity, that you are the surest friend a man can have. In the first instance I inspired confidence and admiration in you, and now you show me pity.

“Dog! when we first met on the highway of life, we came from the two poles of creation; we belong to different species. I refer to this with no desire to take advantage of it, but rather with a strong sense of universal brotherhood. We have hardly been acquainted two hours, and my hand has never yet fed you. What can be the meaning of the obscure love for me that has sprung up in your little heart? The sympathy you bestow on me is a charming mystery, and I accept it. Sleep, friend, in the place that you have chosen!”

Having thus spoken, M. Bergeret turned over the leaves of Ottfried Müller’s *Manual*, which with marvellous instinct he had kept in his hand both during and after his fall. He turned over the pages, and could not find what he sought.

Every movement, however, seemed to increase the pain he was feeling.

“I believe,” he thought, “that the whole of my left side is bruised and my hip swollen. I have a suspicion that my right leg is grazed all over and my left elbow aches and burns, but shall I cavil at pain that has led me to the discovery of a friend?” His reflexions were running thus when old Angélique, breathless and perspiring, entered the study. She first opened the door, and then she knocked, for she never permitted herself to enter without knocking. If she had not done so before she opened the door, she did it after, for she had good manners, and knew what was expected of her. She went in therefore, knocked, and said:

“Monsieur, I have come to relieve you of the dog.”

M. Bergeret heard these words with decided annoyance. He had not as yet inquired into his claims to Riquet, and now realised that he had none. The thought that Madame Borniche might take the animal away from him filled him with sadness, yet, after all, Riquet did belong to her. Affecting indifference, he replied:

“He’s asleep; let him sleep!”

“Where is he? I don’t see him,” remarked old Angélique.

“Here he is,” answered M. Bergeret. “In my chair.”

With her two hands clasped over her portly figure, old Angélique smiled, and, in a tone of gentle mockery, ventured:

“I wonder what pleasure the creature can find in sleeping there behind Monsieur!”

“That,” retorted M. Bergeret, “is his business.” Then, as he was of inquiring mind, he immediately sought of Riquet his reasons for the selection of his resting-place, and lighting on them, replied with his accustomed candour:

“I keep him warm, and my presence affords a sense of security; my comrade is a chilly and homely little animal.” Then he added: “Do you know, Angélique? I will go out presently and buy him a collar.”

CHAPTER VII

MONSIEUR LETERRIER, the rector, who was of an arbitrary turn of mind, and whose philosophy leaned towards spiritualism, had never felt much sympathy for the critical intellect of M. Bergeret. A circumstance, memorable enough, had, however, brought them together. M. Leterrier had taken part in the Affair. He had signed a protest against the verdict, which he conscientiously considered illegal and mistaken. No sooner had he done so than he became the object of public anger and contempt.

The town, which numbered 150,000 inhabitants, only contained five people of the same opinion as himself with regard to the Affair; these were M. Bergeret, his colleague at the Faculté, two artillery officers, and M. Eusèbe Boulet. The two officers maintained the strictest silence on the subject, and the position of M. Eusèbe Boulet, as editor of the *Phare*, compelled him to express daily, and with no little violence, ideas which were contrary to his convictions, to rail at M. Leterrier, and hold him up to the scorn of all right-minded people.

M. Bergeret had written a letter of congratulation to his rector, and M. Leterrier called upon him.

“Do you not think,” said M. Leterrier, “that truth contains a power that renders her invincible, and, sooner or later, ensures her final triumph? This was the belief of the great Ernest Renan; it has also been expressed more recently in words worthy to be engraved in bronze.”

“It is precisely what I, personally, do not think,” returned M. Bergeret. “On the contrary, I opine that in the majority of cases truth is likely to fall a victim to the disdain or insults of mankind and to perish in obscurity. I could give you many instances of this. Remember, my dear sir, that truth has so many points of inferiority to falsehood as practically to be doomed to extinction. To begin with, truth stands alone; she stands alone as M. F Abbé Lantaigne says; for which reason he admires her. But there are no real grounds for such admiration, for falsehood is manifold, and so truth has numbers arrayed against her. That is not her only shortcoming. She is inert, is not capable of modification, is not adapted to those machinations which would enable her to win her way into the hearts and minds of men. Falsehood, on the other hand, possesses the most wonderful resources. She is pliant and tractable, and, what is more (we must not shrink from admitting as much), she is natural and moral. She is natural, as being the product of the working of the senses, the source and fountainhead of all illusion; she is moral, because she fits in with the habits and customs of the human race,

who, living in common as they do, founded their ideas of good and evil, their human and divine laws, upon the oldest, most sacred, most irrational, most noble, most barbarous, and most erroneous interpretations of natural phenomena. Falsehood is the principle of all that is beautiful and of good report amongst men. Do we not see winged figures and mythical pictures adorning their gardens, their palaces, and their temples? They lend a willing ear only to the lies of the poets. What makes you wish to destroy falsehood and to seek truth? Such an enterprise can only be inspired by decadent curiosity and culpable intellectual temerity. It is an attempt against the moral nature of man and the laws of society. It is a sin against the sentiments as well as the virtues of the nations. The growth of so many a calamity might well be fatal; were it possible to precipitate matters in that direction, everything would go to rack and ruin. But we know quite well that, as a matter of fact, the progress of truth is very slight and very slow, and encroaches but little upon falsehood."

"You are evidently not here referring to scientific truths," said M. Leterrier. "Their progress is rapid, irresistible, and salutary."

"It is, unfortunately, beyond all question," replied M. Bergeret, "that the scientific verities which penetrate the average mind sink as though in a swamp, and drown. They cause no upheaval and are powerless to destroy error and prejudice. Truths of the laboratory which hold sovereign sway over you and me, Monsieur; have no authority over the minds of the general public. I will mention one example only, to prove this. The system of Copernicus and Galileo is absolutely irreconcilable with Christian philosophy, and yet you know that, both in France itself and the world over, it has penetrated even into the elementary schools without the very smallest modification being made in the theological conceptions it was calculated to annihilate. It is certain that the ideas of a man like Laplace make the old Judæo-Christian cosmogony appear as puerile as the painting upon the dial of a Swiss clock. And yet the theories of Laplace have been clearly exposed for nearly a century without in the least depreciating the value of the little Jewish or Chaldean legends which are still found in the Christian books on religion. Science has never harmed religion, and the absurdity of a religious practice may be clearly demonstrated without lessening the number of the persons who indulge in it. Scientific truths are not acceptable to the public. Nations live on mythology, Monsieur; from legends they draw all the ideas necessary to their existence. They do not need many, and a few simple fables suffice to gild millions of lives. In short, truth has no hold on mankind, and it would be a pity if she had, for her ways are contrary to their nature, as well as to their interests."

“You are like the Greeks, M. Bergeret,” said M. Leterrier. “You indulge in fine sophisms, and your reasonings are tuned to the flute of Pan. And yet, I believe with Renan, I believe with Émile Zola, that truth possesses within herself a penetrating force, unknown alike to error and to falsehood. I say ‘truth,’ and you understand my meaning, M. Bergeret. For the beautiful words, truth and justice, need not be defined in order to be understood in their true sense. They bear within them a shining beauty and a heavenly light. I firmly believe in the triumph of truth; that is what upholds me in the time of trial through which I am now passing.”

“And may you be right, Monsieur le Recteur,” replied M. Bergeret. “But, generally speaking, I think that the knowledge we have of men and facts seldom corresponds to the men themselves, or to the facts accomplished; that the means by which our minds can attain this correspondence are incomplete and insufficient, and that if time reveals new ways of doing so, it destroys more than it produces. Madame Roland in prison displayed, to my mind, a somewhat childlike trust in human justice when she appealed with so firm a faith and so confident a mind to impartial posterity. Posterity is never impartial unless it is indifferent, and what ceases to interest it it straightway forgets. It is no judge, as Madame Roland fondly believed. It is a mob, as blind, wonder-stricken, miserable, and violent as any other. It has its likes, and, more especially, its dislikes. It is prejudiced, and lives in the present, knowing nothing of the past. There is no such thing as posterity.”

“But,” objected M. Leterrier, “there is such a thing as the hour of justice and reparation.”

“Do you think,” demanded M. Bergeret, “that the hour of justice and reparation ever sounded for Macbeth?”

“Macbeth?”

“Yes, Macbeth, son of Finleg, King of Scotland. Two great powers, legend and Shakespeare, have made of him a criminal. Now I am convinced, Monsieur, that he was a most excellent man. He protected the people and the clergy against the violence of the nobles. He was a thrifty king, a just judge, and the friend of the working classes. History bears witness to it. He did not murder King Duncan; his wife was not a wicked woman. She was called Gruoch, and had three vendettas against the family of Malcolm. Her first husband had been burned alive in his castle. I have here on my table an English review containing materials which prove the goodness of Macbeth and the innocence of his wife. Do you think that if I were to publish these proofs I should succeed in altering public opinion?”

“I do not think so,” replied M. Leterrier.

“Neither do I,” said M. Bergeret, with a sigh.

At this moment a great clamour arose from the market-place. Some citizens, actuated by zeal for the Army, and in conformity with their recently formed custom, were on their way to break the windows of Meyer the bootmaker.

“Mort à Zola! Mort à Leterrier! Mort à Bergeret! Mort aux juifs!” they shouted; and as the rector gave way to some symptoms of distress and indignation, M. Bergeret pointed out to him that he must try and comprehend the enthusiasm of mobs such as this one.

“These people,” he said, “are going to break the windows of a bootmaker, and will succeed in doing so without any trouble. Do you think they would be as successful, if, for instance, they had to put in windows or bells at General Cartier de Chalmot’s? No, indeed! Popular enthusiasm is never constructive, but, on the contrary, essentially destructive.

This time it aims at our destruction; you must not attach too much importance to this particular instance, but rather seek out the laws which govern it.”

“No doubt,” replied M. Leterrier, who was frankness personified. “But, all the same, these events fill me with consternation. Can we callously look on at the overthrow of justice and truth by a people from whom Europe first learned the law, and who taught the meaning of justice to the whole world?”

CHAPTER VIII

MONSIEUR LE PREMIER PRESIDENT CASSIGNOL died in his ninety-second year, and, in accordance with his expressed wish, was carried to his grave upon a pauper's hearse. This clause in his will was silently condemned. All present were inwardly offended, as though the injunction were intended as a slur upon that object of universal respect, money, and as the ostentatious relinquishment of a privilege appertaining to the bourgeois class. They called to mind that M. Cassignol had always lived in very good style, observing, even in extreme old age, a punctilious nicety with regard to his personal habits, and, although he had been unceasingly employed in charitable works, none would ever have dreamed of saying, in the words of a Christian orator, "He loved the poor even to becoming as one of them." They did not believe the thing was done out of religious zeal, and looked upon it as a paradoxical piece of pride, the elaborate display of humility being received with the utmost coldness.

They regretted, too, that the deceased, who had been an officer of the Legion of Honour, had directed that no military honours should be paid him. The state of the public mind, inflamed by the nationalist papers, was such, that open complaints at the absence of the military were heard among the crowd. General Cartier de Chalmot, who came in civilian attire, was greeted with profound respect by a deputation of lawyers. A great number of magistrates and clergy thronged around the house of mourning, and when, preceded by the Cross, and to the sound of bells and liturgical chants, the hearse moved slowly towards the cathedral accompanied by twelve white-coiffed nuns, and followed by a long grey and black line of boys and girls from the church schools, which stretched as far as the eye could see, the meaning of this long life entirely consecrated to the triumph of the Catholic Church was at once revealed. The whole town was there. M. Bergeret was among the stragglers following the procession, and M. Mazure, coming up to him, whispered in his ear:

"I knew that old Cassignol had been a fanatical zealot all his life, but I didn't know he was such a prig. He called himself a Liberal!"

"And so he was," answered M. Bergeret. "He had to be, because his ambition was to govern. Is it not through liberty that we progress along the road to domination? My dear M. Mazure, I am indeed sorry for you!"

"Why?" asked the keeper of the records.

"Because, being in sympathy with the mob, you constantly display the same pathetic faculty for being deceived, and zealously march along in the procession

of triumphant dupes.”

“Oh, if you mean the Affair,” replied M. Mazure, “I may as well warn you that we shall not agree at all.”

“Bergeret, do you know that parson?” inquired Dr. Fornerol, glancing at a fat and agile priest who was sidling in among the crowd.

“Abbé Guitrel,” exclaimed M. Bergeret. “Who does not know of Guitrel and his servant? Adventures recounted in days of yore by La Fontaine and Boccaccio are attributed to them. As a matter of fact, the Abbé’s servant is of the age stipulated by the canons of the Church. A little while ago this priest, who will soon be a bishop, said something which was retailed to me, and which I in turn repeat to you. He said, ‘If the eighteenth century may be called the century of crime, perhaps the nineteenth will be spoken of as the century of atonement.’ What do you think of that? Suppose Guitrel were right.”

“No,” replied the keeper of the records. “The number of the emancipated increases from day to day, and liberty of conscience has been set up once for all. The empire of science has been established. I am not, however, without some fears of a renewed attack by the clerical party, present circumstances favouring reaction. It really worries me, for I am not, like you, a dilettante. I have a fierce and anxious love for the Republic.”

Chatting thus, they reached the open space in front of the cathedral. Over the heads of the people, bald, black, or hoary, the swell of the organ and the odour of incense were wafted through the great open doors from the warm twilight within. “I’m not going inside,” said M. Mazure.

“I will go in for a few minutes,” said M. Bergeret. “I have a taste for ritual.”

As he entered, the *Dies Ira* was rolling out its spacious phrases. M. Bergeret was behind M. Laprat-Teulet. On the gospel side, in the part reserved for women, sat Madame de Gromance, lily-white in her black garments; her flower-like eyes void of all thought, which only made her all the more desirable in M. Bergeret’s mind. The cantor’s voice rang out in the great nave, singing a verse of the funeral chant:

“Qui latronem exaudisti

Et Mariam absolvisti
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.”

“You hear, Fornerol,” said M. Bergeret,”

“‘*Qui latronem exaudisti* — Thou, who didst pardon the thief, and absolve the adulteress, has given hope to me also.’ No doubt the recital of such words to a large assembly of people is not without its impressive side, and the praise is due to those untutored and gentle visionaries of the Abruzzi, those humble servants of the poor, those amiable enthusiasts who renounced riches in order to escape from the hatred and ill-will that they engender. They were bad economists, these companions of St. Francis; M. Méline would show his contempt for them, if by any chance he ever heard them spoken about.”

“Ah,” said the doctor, “the companions of St. Francis were able to look ahead and to see of what material an assembly such as this of to-day would be composed.”

“I believe the *Dies Ira* was written during the thirteenth century in a Franciscan convent,” replied M. Bergeret. “I must consult my friend, Commander Aspertini, on the subject.”

In the meanwhile the burial service was drawing to a close.

While they followed the hearse that bore the magistrate’s remains to the cemetery, M. Mazure, Dr. Fornerol, and M. Bergeret continued their conversation. As they were passing the house of Queen Marguerite, M. Mazure remarked:

“The agreement is signed. M. de Terremondre is owner of the ancient dwelling of Philippe Tricouillard, and intends to house his collection there, in the secret hope of selling it at a tremendous price some day to the town, whose benefactor he will thus become. By the way Terremondre has made up his mind; he is going to offer himself as progressive republican candidate for Seuilly, but every one knows in what direction his progress will tend. He is a turncoat from the Royalists.”

“Hasn’t he got the Government behind him?” asked M. Bergeret.

“He is supported by the *préfet*, and opposed by the *sous-préfet*” replied M. Mazure. “The *sous-préfet* of Seuilly is led by the President of the Council, and Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, acts upon the instructions of the Minister of the Interior.”

“Do you see that shop?” asked the doctor.

“The dyer’s and cleaner’s shop that belongs to the widow Leborgne?” said M. Mazure.

“Yes,” replied Dr. Fornerol. “Her husband died six weeks ago in the most extraordinary way. He literally died of fright and nervous shock at sight of a dog which he believed to be mad, and which was as healthy as I am myself.”

At the thought of death M. Mazure, who was a freethinker, felt a sudden longing come over him to possess an immortal soul.

“I do not believe a word of what is taught by the different churches that share in the spiritual guidance of the people,” he said. “I know, none better, how dogma is formed, transformed, and elaborated. But why should we not possess a thinking principle, and why should not that principle survive the association of organic elements that we call life?”

“I should like,” replied M. Bergeret, “to ask you what you mean by a thinking principle, but no doubt you would find it difficult to define.”

“Not at all,” returned M. Mazure. “I give the name to the cause of thought, or, if you prefer it, to thought itself. Why should not thought be immortal?”

“Yes, why not?” returned M. Bergeret.

“The supposition is by no means absurd,” said M. Mazure, warming to his subject.

“And why,” returned M. Bergeret, “should not a certain house in the Tintelleries, bearing the number 38, be inhabited by a M. Dupont? Such a supposition is by no means absurd. The name of Dupont is common enough in France, and the house of which I am speaking is divided into three parts.”

“Now, of course, you’re joking!” said M. Mazure.

“In a way I’m a spiritualist,” said Dr. Fornerol. “Spiritualism is a therapeutic agent which must be reckoned with in the present state of medical science.

All my patients believe in the immortality of the soul, and dislike hearing it ridiculed. The good people of the Tintelleries quarter and elsewhere insist on being immortal, and it would grieve and wound them if any one were to suggest anything to the contrary. Madame Péchin, to wit, coming out of the greengrocer’s over there with a basketful of tomatoes — if you were to go to her and say: ‘Madame Péchin, you will taste the joys of heaven for hundreds of millions of centuries, but you are not immortal. You will live longer than the stars, you will still exist when the nebulae have turned into suns, and after the light of those suns has died; you will live on in perfect happiness and glory during inconceivable ages, but you are not immortal, Madame Péchin!’ If you were to say such things to her, she would not look upon them as good tidings, and if, by chance, your words were backed up by proofs infallible enough to convince her, she would be miserable; the poor old thing would be in despair, and would mingle tears with her tomatoes. Madame Péchin insists on being immortal; all my patients have a similar craving. You, M. Mazure, and you, too,

M. Bergeret, have the same desire. Now I will confess to you that instability is the essential characteristic of the combined elements that go to form life. Shall I give you a scientific definition of life? It's a damned callous mystery!"

"Confucius," said M. Bergeret, "was a very sensible man. One day his disciple, Ki-Lou, asked him how to serve the demons and the spirits, to which the master replied, 'Man is not yet in a fit state to serve humanity; so how can he serve the demons and the spirits?'"

'Permit me,' went on the disciple, 'to ask you what is death.' And Confucius replied, 'We do not know the meaning of life, how, then, can we understand death?'"

The procession skirted the Rue Nationale, and passed in front of the college. Dr. Fornerol, being thereby reminded of his youthful days, began:

"That is where I studied. It is a long time ago now. I am much older than either of you. In a week I shall be fifty-six!"

"And so Madame Péchin really insists on being immortal?" asked M. Bergeret.

"She is convinced that she is immortal," answered the doctor. "If you told her that she was not, she would take a dislike to you, and disbelieve you all the same." — .

"And the idea of having to go on for ever amid the universal passing of things does not astonish her? She does not tire of nourishing such exaggerated hopes? Perhaps she has not given much thought to the nature of man and the conditions of life?"

"What does that matter?" replied the doctor.

"I cannot understand your surprise, my dear M. Bergeret. This good lady is a religious woman; religion, indeed, is her only possession. Having been born in a Catholic country, she is a Catholic, and she believes what she has been taught. It's only nature!"

"Doctor, you are talking like Zaïre," said M.

Bergeret— "Had I lived on the banks of the Ganges. Besides, the belief in immortality is common in Europe, America, and a part of Asia; it spreads in Africa with the wearing of clothes."

"So much the better," replied the doctor, "for it is necessary to civilisation. Without it the unfortunate would never resign themselves to their fate."

"Yet," retorted M. Bergeret, "the Chinese coolies work for paltry wages. They are patient and resigned, and they are not spiritualists."

"That is because they are yellow," replied the doctor. "The white races have far less resignation. They have conceived an ideal of justice, and formed great hopes. General Cartier de Chalmot is quite right in saying that belief in a future

life is necessary to an army. It is also very useful with regard to social intercourse; people would be worse than they are but for the fear of hell."

"Doctor," demanded M. Bergeret, "do you believe you will rise again?"

"It's different for me," replied the doctor. "I do not find it necessary to believe in God in order to be an honest man. As a scientist I know nothing; as a citizen I believe everything. I am a Catholic by policy, and consider that religious belief is essentially an improving element that helps to humanise the masses."

"That is a very widespread opinion," said M. Bergeret, "and its general acceptance renders it suspect in my eyes. Popular opinions hold good as a matter of course, without analysis, and if they were inquired into, generally speaking they would not pass muster. They are like the theatre-lover who for thirty years was able to attend the plays at the Comédie-Française by simply muttering 'feu Scribe' as he went in, to the man at the ticket-office. If investigated, his right of entry would never have been allowed to pass, but it never was investigated. How can one really believe religion to have a moralising effect when one reads the history of the Christian nations, and realises it to be a succession of wars, massacres and tortures. You cannot expect people to be more pious than cloistered monks, and yet monks of every order, black, white, brown, and pied, have been guilty of the most abominable crimes. The agents of the Inquisition and the priests of the League were pious, yet they were cruel. I do not mention the popes who drowned the world in blood, for it is by no means certain that they really believed in a future life. The truth of the matter is that men are evil animals, and remain evil, even when they expect to go from this world into another, which is somewhat unreasonable, when one comes to think of it. All the same, I do not want you to imagine, doctor, that I deny Madame Péchin the right to believe herself immortal. I will even go so far as to say that she will not be disappointed when she departs this life, for a lasting illusion has some of the attributes of truth, and a person who is never disabused is never deceived."

By this time the head of the cortège had entered the cemetery, and the three gossips slackened their pace.

"If you were in my position, M. Bergeret," said the doctor, "and visited each morning a dozen or so of sick folk, you would realise, as I do, the power of the clergy. Come now, do you never find yourself desiring, if not believing in, immortality?"

"Doctor," replied M. Bergeret, "my thoughts on this subject are the same as those of Madame Dupont-Delagneau. Madame Dupont-Delagneau was very old when my father was very young. She was fond of him, and used to enjoy a chat with him; she was a link with the eighteenth century. I have heard him quote her

again and again, and this, amongst others, is an anecdote I have heard him relate. Once, when she was ill in the country, her parish priest went to visit her, and began to talk of a future life. With a little disdainful grimace, she retorted that she had her misgivings about the next world. 'You tell me,' she said, 'that the Creator of this world made the next too. All I can say is that I am already too well acquainted with His handiwork!' Thus, doctor, I am at least as mistrustful of the next world as was Madame Dupont-Delagneau."

"But," asked the doctor, "have you never dreamed of immortality achieved by science, or life on another star?"

"I always come back to the saying of Madame Dupont-Delagneau," replied M. Bergeret. "I should be too much afraid that the systems of Altair or Aldebaran would resemble our solar system, and that it would not be worth while changing. And as for being born again on this terrestrial globe — I think not, doctor, thank you!"

"But come now, really!" persisted the doctor. "Would you not, like Madame Péchin, like to be immortal, somehow or other?"

"All things considered," replied M. Bergeret, "I am content with being eternal, and, in my essence, I am that. As for the consciousness I enjoy, that is a mere accident, doctor, a momentary phenomenon, like a bubble formed on the surface of the waters."

"Agreed! But it is better not to say so," replied the doctor.

"Why?" asked M. Bergeret.

"Because such notions are not suited to the masses, with whom you must agree outwardly, though inwardly you hold other views. It is community of belief that makes strong nations."

"The truth is," replied M. Bergeret, "that men of a common faith have no more urgent desire than to exterminate those who think differently, particularly if the difference is very slight."

"We are going to hear three speeches," said M. Mazure.

He was mistaken. Five speeches were made and no one heard a word. Cries of "*Vive l'armée!*" broke out as General Cartier de Chalmot went by, while Messieurs Leterrier and Bergeret were pursued by the hooting of the youthful Nationalists of the place.

CHAPTER IX

ON a wet evening in May, the Brécé ladies were sitting together in the big drawing-room, knitting woollen bodices for the poor children of the village. Old Madame de Courtrai was standing with her back to the fire, holding up her skirts and warming her legs. The Duke, General Cartier de Chalmot, and M. Lerond were chatting, prior to a game of whist. The Duke opened the previous day's paper that was lying upon the table.

"Hostilities between the Americans and the Spanish have not yet started in earnest," he said. "What do you anticipate will be the outcome of it all, General? I should be very glad to have the opinion of so eminent a military authority as yourself."

"It would certainly be very instructive if you would tell us what you think about the forces that are about to try their strength in the Antilles and in the China seas, General," put in M. Lerond.

General Cartier de Chalmot passed his hand over his forehead, opened his mouth some time before he spoke, and then said in an authoritative manner:

"The Americans have committed a very imprudent act in declaring war on Spain, and it may well cost them dear. Having no army and no navy, it would be a difficult matter for them to keep up a struggle against an efficient army and a well-trained navy. They have their stokers and their enginemen, but stokers and enginemen do not make a battle fleet."

"Do you think the Spaniards will win, General?" asked M. Lerond.

"Generally speaking, the success of a campaign depends upon circumstances impossible to prophesy," replied the General. "But it may at once be stated that the Americans are not ready for war, and war necessitates long and careful preparation."

"Come, General," cried Madame de Courtrai, "tell us that these American wretches will be beaten!"

"Their success is doubtful," replied the General. "I might even go so far as to say that it would be paradoxical, and an insolent contradiction of every system employed by those nations which are essentially military nations. As a matter of fact, the victory of the United States would constitute a condemnation of the principles adopted throughout Europe by the most competent soldiers, and such a result is neither likely nor desirable."

"Good!" cried Madame de Courtrai, smacking her withered sides with her bony hands, and shaking her head, with its rough, grey locks that looked like a

fur cap. "Good! our friends the Spaniards will be victorious! *Vive le roi!* "

"General," said M. Lerond, "I am most interested in what you say. The success of our friends would be well received in France, and who knows if they might not be the means of stirring up a Royalist and clerical movement in this country!"

"Pardon me," said the General. "I make no prophecy regarding the future. As I have said before, the success of a campaign depends upon circumstances impossible to foresee. All I can do is to take into consideration the quality of the conflicting elements, and from this point of view the advantage is certainly with Spain, although her fleet does not include a sufficiency of naval units."

"Certain symptoms," said the Duke, "would point to the fact that the Americans have already begun to repent of their temerity. I have heard it positively stated that they are panic-stricken. They live in daily dread of seeing the Spanish ironclads appear on their coasts. The inhabitants of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia are fleeing inland *en masse*; in fact, a general panic exists."

"*Vive le roi!* " repeated Madame de Courtrai, with fierce delight.

"What about little Honorine?" asked M. Lerond. "Is she still favoured with the visitations of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles?"

"Yes," replied the dowager duchess, with some embarrassment.

"It would be a good idea," ventured the ex-deputy, "to make an official report of the child's statements of what she sees and hears when in her trances." — .

No reply was forthcoming to this remark, the reason being that, having undertaken to note down the words attributed by Honorine to the Blessed Virgin, Madame de Brécé very soon stopped doing so: the child's expressions were not nice. Besides, M. le Curé Traviès, who was in the habit of shooting rabbits every evening in the woods of Lénonville, had too often surprised Isidore and Honorine lying among the dead leaves to be any longer in doubt as to why they were there. M. Traviès was something of a poacher, but both his morals and his doctrine were sound. He gathered from repeated observations that it was hardly likely the Blessed Virgin would appear to Honorine.

He had spoken on the matter to the ladies of the castle, who were, if not convinced, at least somewhat perplexed. So when M. Lerond asked them for details of the latest ecstasies, they changed the subject.

"If you care to hear news from Lourdes," said the dowager duchess, "we have some."

"My nephew writes me that many miracles take place in the grotto," said M. de Brécé.

"I have heard the same thing from one of my officers," replied the General.

“He is a promising young fellow, and has come back amazed at the wonderful things he saw there.”

“You know that the doctors in attendance at the piscina report the most miraculous cures?” said the Duke.

“We do not need the opinion of learned men to make us believe in miracles,” said Madame de Brécé with a limpid smile. “I have far more confidence in the Blessed Virgin than in any doctors.”

They then began to talk of the Affair, amazed, so they said, that the “syndicate of treachery” should continue its audacious manifestations unpunished. With much emphasis the Duke expressed himself as follows:

“When two courts martial have given their verdict, the smallest doubt can no longer exist.”

“Have you heard,” said Madame Jean, “that Mademoiselle Deniseau, the local prophetess, has learned from the mouth of St. Radegonde herself that Zola is going to become a naturalised Italian, and will not return to France?”

This prophecy was received with much favour. A servant entered, bringing the letters.

“Perhaps there will be some news of the war,” said the Duke, opening a paper.

And in dead silence he read the following:

“Commodore Dewey has destroyed the Spanish fleet in the port of Manilla. The Americans have not lost a man.”

This telegram caused much depression in the drawing-room. The only person who continued to look confident was Madame de Courtrai, who cried:

“It’s not true!”

“The telegram,” said M. Lerond, “is an American one.”

“Yes,” said M. de Brécé, “we must beware of false news.”

All endorsed this prudent view of things, and yet were aghast at the sudden vision of a fleet, blessed by the Pope, bearing the flag of His Catholic Majesty, and carrying on the prow of her vessels the names of the Virgin and the saints, disabled, shattered, and sunk by the guns of bacon merchants, sewing-machine manufacturers, and heretics, by a nation without kings, without princes, without a history, without national traditions, and without an army.

CHAPTER X

BERGERET'S affairs were worrying him; he was beginning to fear he might be asked to resign his position at the Faculté, when, to his surprise he received the intimation that he had been appointed honorary professor there.

The news came to him one day, after his removal to his new rooms in the Place Saint-Exupère, at the very moment when he least expected it. His joy at the event was greater than his progress in ataraxy should have allowed. Vague and flattering hopes arose within him, and when M. Goubin, who had become his favourite pupil since the betrayal of M. Roux, came that same evening to take him for their usual stroll to the Café de la Comédie, he found him beaming all over with smiles.

The night was bright with stars, and as he went along the uneven pavements, M. Bergeret studied the sky. He was interested in the lighter side of astronomy, and pointed out to M. Goubin a beautiful red star over against Gemini.

"That is Mars," he said. "I wish there were such things as glasses strong enough to see its inhabitants and their industries."

"But, dear Master," said M. Goubin, "were you not telling me some short time ago that the planet Mars was not inhabited, that none of the celestial bodies were inhabited, and that life, such as we conceive it, was a disease confined to our planet alone, a kind of decay spread over the surface of our rotting world?"

"Did I say that?" asked M. Bergeret.

"As far as I can remember that is what you said, dear Master," replied M. Goubin.

And his memory had not played him false. After the betrayal of M. Roux, M. Bergeret had asserted that organic life was but decay eating into the surface of our diseased world. He had also added that he hoped for the greater glory of the heavens that life in the distant worlds produced itself normally, by means of the geometrical forms of crystallisation. "Otherwise," he had added, "I could derive no pleasure from the contemplation of the star-spangled sky." Now, however, he was of a different opinion.

"You surprise me," he said to M. Goubin. "There are several reasons for concluding that all those stars now sparkling overhead contain life and thought. Even on this earth of ours, life occasionally has its pleasant side, and thought is divine. I should much like to know something about you sister star floating in thin ether in the face of the sun. She is our neighbour, and only separated from us by fourteen millions of leagues, which, astronomically speaking, is a very

small distance indeed. I should like to know if the living beings upon the planet Mars are more beautiful than we humans are, and whether their intellect is vaster than our own.”

“That is a thing we shall never know,” replied M. Goubin, wiping his glasses.

“At any rate,” went on M. Bergeret, “astronomers have studied the shape of that red planet by means of powerful telescopes, and they all agree in saying that they are able to distinguish innumerable canals upon its surface. Now, the hypotheses taken as a whole, hypotheses that are closely interdependent and form a great cosmic system, lead us to believe that this near neighbour of ours is older than the earth, from which we may deduce that her inhabitants, with a longer experience behind them, are wiser than ourselves. The canals of which I was speaking give to the huge tracts of land they traverse the appearance of Lombardy. To be quite correct, we can see neither the water nor the banks, but only the vegetation that grows along them, and which, to the observer, appears as a thin scattered line, pale or dark according to the season of the year. It is especially to be remarked at the equator of the planet. We give the canals the earthly names of Ganges, Euripus, Phison, Nile, and Orcus. They appear to be irrigating canals, like those at which, it is said, Leonardo da Vinci worked with the skill of an excellent engineer. Their undeviating course, and the circular basins in which they terminate, are sufficient proof that they are both artificial and the result of mathematical calculation. Nature is mathematical, it is true, but not in the same manner.

“The canal which we call Orcus is very wonderful. Its course lies through a number of little round lakes, set at equal distances from one another, which give it the appearance of a rosary. We cannot doubt but that the canals of Mars have been constructed by intelligent beings.”

Thus did M. Bergeret people the universe with seductive forms and sublime thoughts. He filled the empty spaces of the boundless heavens because he had been made an honorary professor. He was very wise, but also very human.

When he returned home, he found the following letter awaiting him:

“MILAN.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“You have relied too much upon my knowledge. I am sorry not to be able to satisfy the curiosity which you tell me stirred you during the funeral of M. Cassagnol.

“The only interest I have taken in the old Church liturgies lies in their connection in one way and another with the writings of Dante, and I can tell you nothing upon the subject that you do not already know.

“The oldest mention of the chant is made about 1401 by Bartolommeo Pisano. Maroni attributes the *Dies Ira* to Frangipani Malabranca Orsini, who was cardinal in 1278. Wadding, the biographer of the Franciscan Order Séraphique, ascribes it to Fra Tomaso da Celano, *qui floruit sub anno* 1250. Such attributions are altogether destitute of proof, but it is at any rate probable that it was composed in Italy during the twelfth century.

“In the seventeenth century the defective text of the Roman Missal was further impaired. A marble tablet preserved in the church of San Francesco at Mantua offers an older and more perfect version of the poem. If you would like me to do so, I will have the *Marmor Mantuanum* copied for you. I shall be delighted if you will make use of me in this as in other ways; nothing would give me more pleasure than to be able to serve you.

“In return, please be good enough to copy for me a letter, written by Mabillon and preserved in the town library; it is one of the Joliette bequest, collection B, No. 3715, folio 70. The passage that particularly interests me refers to the *Anecdota* of Muratori. Coming from you I shall value it still more.

“It is my opinion, by the way, that Muratori did not believe in God. It has always been my wish to write a book on the atheist-theologians, the number of whom is considerable. Forgive me for the trouble to which I am putting you by asking you to visit the public library; I trust that you may be rewarded by a meeting with the golden-haired fairy who guards the entrance, and whose dainty ears listen to your flattering remarks the while she swings in her fingers the huge keys that lock away the ancient treasures of your town. Speaking of this fairy reminds me that my days of love are over, and that it is high time for me to cultivate some favourite vice. Life would be sad indeed if the rosy swarm of errant thoughts did not come sometimes to console the old age of the most respectable folk. I am safe in sharing such sound wisdom with a mind as rare and capable of comprehension as your own.

“When you come to Florence I will introduce you to a nymph who guards the house of Dante, and who is well worth your fairy. You will admire her chestnut hair, her black eyes, her full bust, and her nose you will consider a miracle of loveliness. It is of medium size, straight and fine, with delicate nostrils. I mention this particularly because you know that nature is not good at noses, and too often spoils a pretty face by her clumsiness in that direction.

“Mabillon’s letter, which I have asked you to copy for me, commences thus:

‘Ni les fatigues de l’âge, monsieur.. Forgive me for worrying you, and believe me to be your sincere friend,

“CARLO ASPERTINI.

“P.S. — Why will the French persist in upholding an error of justice which is now beyond all question, and which they could quite easily set right without harming any one? I can find no solution to their conduct in this matter. All my countrymen, all Europe, and the whole world share my amazement. I should very much like to have your opinion regarding this extraordinary affair.

“C. A.”

CHAPTER XI

IN the clear light of early morning the quarters were full of the passing to and fro of the men on duty, sweeping the cobbles, or grooming down the horses. At the far end of the yard, clothed in his canvas trousers and dirty blouse, stood Private Bonmont, with his comrades, Privates Cocot and Briqueballe, peeling potatoes in front of a cauldron full of water. Now and then a squad, under the conduct of a non-commissioned officer, rushed down the stairs like a torrent, scattering on its way the invincible gaiety of the young.

The most characteristic feature of these men who had been taught to march was their step, a heavy, laboured step, crushing and sonorous. Important looking pay-sergeants continually passed by with account-books of all sizes under their arms. Privates Bonmont, Cocot and Briqueballe were peeling potatoes and throwing them into the cauldron, and as they did so they gave vent to the most harmless of thoughts in words that were few but of an exceeding coarseness. Private Bonmont was thinking deeply.

In front of him, beyond the barrack gates that closed in the courtyard of the huge building, stretched a circle of hills with villas nestling in the purple branches of the trees, and sparkling in the morning sun. There resided the actresses and light women brought to the town by the presence of Private Bonmont. A whole swarm of women, bookmakers, journalists belonging to sporting and military papers, jockeys, procurers, male and female, and swindlers of all descriptions, had settled down in the vicinity of the barracks where the rich conscript was serving his time. As he peeled the potatoes, he might have congratulated himself on being able to bring together so Parisian a society at so great a distance from Paris. But he knew life well and men better, so his pride was in no way flattered by the achievement. He was worried and morose. Life held only one ambition for him, and that was the badge of the Brécé Hunt. He longed for it with inherited tenacity, with the forcefulness that his father, the great Baron, had shown in his conquest of souls, bodies, and things, but not with the deep, clear-sighted thought or genius of his stupendous parent. He felt himself inferior to his wealth; this made him unhappy, and, in consequence, spiteful.

“They only give their blessed badge to dukes and peers, I know,” he reflected. “The Brécés are overrun with Americans and Jewesses, and I’m as good as they any day!”

He threw his peeled potato angrily into the cauldron, at which Private Cocot, with a big laugh and a big oath, cried out:

“There he goes, upsetting the broth, damn him!”

And Briqueballe, who was a simple soul, and of the same year, made merry at the jest. He rejoiced, too, at the thought that he would soon see his father, who was a harness-maker at Cayeux, and his home again.

“That old hypocrite Guitrel will do nothing for me,” thought Private Bonmont. “He is a clever chap, is Guitrel, cleverer than I ever thought. He has made his own conditions. So long as he is not bishop he will not say anything to his friends, the Brécés. He is a deep beggar, and no mistake!”

“Bonmont,” said Briqueballe, “stop chucking the peelings into the pot!”

“It’s a dirty trick!” said Cocot.

“I’m not on duty this week,” objected Bonmont.

Thus spoke these three men because they were on an equal footing.

Bonmont went on thinking:

“I can do without Guitrel. There are plenty of others who will get the badge for me. Terremondre, for instance; he knows the Brécés well. His family is quite good, and he’s all right — but not to be relied upon; he’s a dodger, a regular dodger! He’ll promise everything and do nothing.”

“I couldn’t very well ask old Traviès, who goes out helping Rivoire the poacher. There is General Cartier de Chalmot; he’d only have to open his mouth — but the old crock hates me.”

These were Private Bonmont’s opinions, and they were not altogether unfounded. General Cartier de Chalmot did not like him. “If little Bonmont were under me I’d make him sit up,” he was in the habit of saying. As for the General’s wife, her indignation regarding him knew no bounds since the day she had heard him say at a ball: “Putting all sentiment aside, mother is too damned lazy.” No, young Bonmont was not mistaken, it was no good looking for help either from the General or his wife.

He searched his memory to try and discover some one to render him the service which Guitrel had refused him. M. Lerond? He was too cautious. Jacques de Courtrai? He was in Madagascar.

Young Bonmont heaved a deep sigh. As he peeled his last potato a sudden inspiration came to him.

“Supposing I made Guitrel a bishop! That would be rich!”

As this idea flashed through his brain a torrent of curses sounded in his ears.

“*Nom de Dieu! Nam de Dieu,! Misère de misère!* ” yelled Briqueballe and Cocot, as a shower of soot fell suddenly upon them, around them, and into the

cauldron, soiling their wet fingers, and blackening the potatoes, which a moment before had been ivory white.

Looking up to seek the cause of their trouble, they espied through the black shower some of their comrades upon the roof removing a long chimney flue, and shaking out the soot with which it was filled. As they caught sight of them, Cocot and Briqueballe cried as with one voice:

“Hi! you up there! what the devil are you doing?”

And they hurled at their comrades all the curses their simple souls could conjure up. They were innocent curses, full of genuine anger, and they filled the barrack yard with echoes in the accents of Picardy and Burgundy. Then the face of Sergeant Lafille, with its slight moustache, appeared over the edge of the roof, and, amid the sudden silence, a sarcastic voice rasped out these words: — .

“Three days for you two down there. Do you understand?”

Briqueballe and Cocot stood overwhelmed by the hard blows of fate and discipline, while their companion, Private Bonmont, reflected:

“I can make a bishop right enough. I’ve only got to speak to Huguet, and it’s done!”

Huguet was then president of the council. His cabinet was a moderate one, supported by the Conservatives. When forming it, Huguet had been careful to safeguard capital, gaining thereby a calm self-confidence and not a little pride. He was Minister of Finance, and was supposed to have given stability to the public credit, which had been shaken by his Radical predecessor.

He had not always been so clever a statesman. He had been a Radical in his hard-working youth, a Radical, and a revolutionary even. He had been private secretary to the late Baron de Bonmont, for whom he wrote books and edited papers. In those days he was a democrat, and a dreamer in matters of finance. That was the baron’s wish, for the great man was anxious to conciliate the progressive factions of Parliament, and therefore liked to appear generous and even something of a dreamer too. This was what he called “giving himself room.” It was he who made his secretary member for Montil; Huguet owed everything to him, and young Bonmont realised all this.

“I shall only have to say the word to Huguet,” he thought. That was how he put it to himself, at any rate. But he was not really sure of it, for he knew that M. Huguet, President of the Council, was careful to avoid any encounter with Private Bonmont, and did not like to be reminded of the old ties that had associated him with the great baron, who had died so opportunely, amid dawning rumours of scandal. So, on second thoughts, Private Bonmont sagely decided that it would be necessary to find some one else.

He sat down upon the ground beside the pump, that he might be able to think more at his ease, and was soon lost in meditation. In his imagination every person who might, he thought, prove capable of disposing of the episcopal crozier and mitre filed in a long procession before him. Monseignor Chariot, M. de Goulet, Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*, Madame Worms-Clavelin, and M. Lacarelle crossed his mental vision, and many others beside. He was awakened from his reverie by Private Jouvencie, licentiate in law, pumping water down his back.

“Jouvencie,” said Bonmont solemnly, wiping his neck, “what is Loyer minister of?”

“Loyer? Minister of Public Instruction and Public Worship,” replied Jouvencie.

“Does he appoint the bishops?”

“Yes.”

“You are sure?”

“Yes, why?”

“Oh, nothing,” replied Bonmont.

But to himself he said:

“I’ve got it — Madame de Gromancel.”

CHAPTER XII

THAT same evening M. Leterrier came to see M. Bergeret.

At the sound of the bell Riquet leapt down from the couch he was sharing with his master, and, with one eye on the door, set up a terrific barking. When M. Leterrier came into the room, the dog received him with hostile growls; the portly form and full, grave countenance fringed with grey beard, were not familiar to him.

“You too!” murmured the rector gently.

“Please excuse him,” said M. Bergeret. “He is a domesticated animal. When men undertook the training of his forefathers, and, in so doing, formed the characteristics he has inherited, they themselves regarded a stranger as an enemy. They did not inculcate in dogs charity towards the human race. Thoughts of universal brotherhood have not entered the soul of Riquet; he stands for the old order of things.”

“And a very ancient one,” replied the rector, “for it is, of course, clear that nowadays we live in unity, peace and concord, with one another!”

He spoke these words with a bitterness not natural to him, but for some time past his thoughts and speech had changed.

However, Riquet continued to bark and growl; he was evidently doing his best to scare away the stranger by his voice and fearsome appearance, but, as fast as the enemy advanced, he retreated. He was a faithful house-dog, but cautious withal.

At last his master, growing impatient, picked him up by the scruff of the neck, and gave him two or three taps on his nose, whereupon Riquet immediately stopped barking, wriggled, and put out a pink, curling tongue to lick the hand that had chastised him, his beautiful eyes full of gentle sadness the while.

“Poor Riquet,” sighed M. Leterrier, “that is all you get for your zeal.”

“I must drive things into his head,” replied M. Bergeret, pushing him behind him at the back of his chair. “Now he knows he was wrong to greet you in such fashion. Riquet conceives of one evil only, physical suffering, and of but one happiness, the absence of suffering. He identifies crime and punishment, inasmuch as for him a misdeed is a deed that is punished. If by accident I step on his paw, he feels himself to be the guilty party, and begs my pardon; justice and injustice do not trouble his infallible wisdom.”

“Such philosophy spares him the mental anguish some of us are experiencing to-day,” said M. Leterrier.

Since the day he had signed the protest of the "Intellectuals" M. Leterrier lived in a state of perpetual astonishment. He had set forth his reasons in a letter to the local newspapers, and could not understand his opponents who called him a Jew, a Prussian, an "Intellectual," and said that he had been bought. What also surprised him was that Eusèbe Boulet, the editor of the *Phare*, referred to him daily as a disloyal citizen and an opponent of the Army.

"Would you believe it?" he cried. "They have dared to put in the *Phare* that I insult the Army! *I* insult the Army! I who have a son serving with the colours!"

The two professors spoke at length of the Affair, and M. Leterrier, of the still guileless soul, repeated:

"I cannot understand why political considerations and party passions should be brought into the affair at all. It is a question of moral right, and far above such things!"

"Exactly!" replied M. Bergeret. "But you would not be in a state of perpetual astonishment if you would only remember that the passions of the mob are simple and violent, and that it is impossible to reason with such people. Few men are clever enough to keep control of their minds during difficult investigations, and it has required sustained attention on our part to discover the truth of the matter. It has required sustained attention, and the force of minds trained to the examination of facts with method and sagacity. Advantages such as these, and the satisfaction of knowing oneself in possession of them are well worth a few contemptible insults."

"When will it all end?" asked M. Leterrier.

"In six months, perhaps, or twenty years — or never," replied M. Bergeret.

"Where will they draw the line?" asked M. Leterrier. "*Scelere velandum est scelus*. It is killing me, my friend, it is killing me!"

It was true. His sense of right and wrong had gone awry, he was feverish and his liver was out of order.

For the hundredth time he expounded the proofs which he had amassed, with all the prudence of his mind and all the zeal of his heart. He exposed the first causes of the error, which slowly but surely appeared behind the masses of untruth which had veiled it. Then, strong in the conviction of right, he vigorously demanded:

"What answer can they give?"

At this point of the conversation the two professors heard a great clamour rising from the street. Riquet lifted up his head and listened anxiously.

"What is it now?" asked M. Leterrier.

"It is nothing," replied M. Bergeret, "only *Pecus*!"

It was, indeed, as he had said a crowd of people uttering loud cries.

"I think I hear '*Conspuez Leterrier!*' " said the rector. "They must have heard that I am here!"

"I think so too," said M. Bergeret, "and I believe that they'll soon be shouting '*Conspuez Bergeret!*' " Pecus is fed on ancient ideas, and his aptitude for error is considerable. Feeling himself incapable of bringing reason to bear upon hereditary prejudices, he prudently sticks to the heritage of nursery tales, handed down by his forefathers. This particular kind of wisdom preserves him from errors that would otherwise do him harm. He keeps to the old and tried errors. He is imitative, and would be more so, were it not that he involuntarily deforms everything he imitates, such deformations going by the name of Progress. Pecus never thinks, and it is unjust to say that he deceives himself. To his unhappiness, be it said, everything combines to deceive him. He knows not the meaning of doubt, for doubt springs from thought. Yet his ideas are ever changing, and at times his stupidity turns to violence. He excels in nothing, for everything that is in any way excellent flies before him, and ceases to be his. He wanders and languishes and suffers. We must give him deep, sorrowful sympathy; we must even venerate him, for it is from him that all virtue, all beauty, and all human glory spring. Poor Pecus!"

As M. Bergeret was pronouncing these words, a stone came hurtling through the window and fell upon the floor.

"There is an argument!" said the rector, picking up the stone.

"And rhomboid in shape," said M. Bergeret.

"It bears no inscription," said the rector.

"That is a pity!" answered M. Bergeret. "Commander Aspertini found at Modena some sling stones used by the soldiers of Hirtius and of Pansa against the followers of Octavius, in the year 43 B.C. These stones bore inscriptions, indicating whom they were intended to strike. M. Aspertini showed me one destined for Livy. I leave you to guess in what form the soldier's humour couched the terms of the inscription."

His voice was drowned at this point by cries of "*Conspuez Bergeret! Mort aux juifs!*" which rose from the square.

Taking the stone from the hands of the rector, M. Bergeret placed it upon his table to serve as a letter-weight, and as soon as he could hear himself speak, went on with his remarks:

"Horrible cruelties were committed after the defeat of the two consuls at Modena. It cannot be denied that society has improved since then."

The crowd went on yelling, however, and Riquet replied to it with heroic barks.

CHAPTER XIII

BEING in Paris on sick leave, young Bonmont went to see the Automobile Exhibition that was being held near the Terrasse des Feuillants, in the Jardin des Tuileries. As he walked down one of the side galleries reserved for parts and accessories, he examined the Pluto Carburettor, the Abeille Motor, and the Alphonse Lubricator, with an unenthusiastic eye and a weary curiosity. With a curt nod or wave of the hand he returned the greetings of timid young men and obsequious old ones. He was neither proud nor triumphant, but simple, rather common-looking, and armed only with the undeviating and tranquil air of malevolence that stood him in such good stead in his dealings with men; he went his way, a short, hunched-up, rather hump-backed little figure, broad shouldered, strong and vigorous enough, although already attacked by disease.

He went down the steps of the terrace, and while examining the trade-marks distinguishing the different lubricating oils, he came upon one of the statues of the gardens, which had been shut in the tent enclosure; it was a classical study in the French style, a bronze hero whose academic nudity displayed the sculptor's skill, and who in a fine gymnastic attitude was felling a monster to the ground. Misled, no doubt, by the apparently sporting air of the group, and never reflecting that the statue had probably been in the garden long before the Exhibition, Bonmont instinctively began to wonder what connexion it could have with motoring. He thought that the monster, a serpent, which, as a matter of fact, did look like a tube, was intended to represent a pneumatic tyre, but his thoughts were very hazy and confused. He turned aside his lack-lustre gaze almost immediately, and entered the great hall where the cars on platforms complacently displayed the clumsy, imperfectly developed, and still ill-balanced forms which at the same time struck the onlooker with an irritating impression of self-satisfaction and conceit.

Young Bonmont was not enjoying himself there; he never enjoyed himself anywhere. But he might have found a certain pleasure in inhaling the odour of rubber and oils that filled the air; he might have examined the autocars and autolettes with a little interest, but that for the moment he was possessed by one single idea. He was thinking of the Brécé Hunt, and the longing to obtain the badge filled his very soul. From his father he had inherited this tenacious will and the burning intensity with which he coveted the Brécé badge was mingled in his veins with the fever of incipient phthisis. He longed for it with all the impatience of a child — for his mind was still very childish — and he longed for

it with the cunning tenacity of a calculating and ambitious man — for he knew human nature well, having in a few years learned many things.

He knew that, as far as the Duc de Brécé was concerned, he, with his French name and his Roman title, was still Gutenberg, the Jew. He also realised the power of his millions, and he knew more upon this subject than will ever be grasped by peoples or their rulers. So he was neither deluded nor discouraged. He took in the situation accurately, for he was clear-headed. True the anti-Jewish campaign had been conducted with the utmost vehemence in agricultural districts like his own, which contained no Jews, but a large number of clergy. Recent events and the newspaper articles had been a great strain upon the feeble head of the Duc de Brécé, the leader of the Catholic party in his Department. Doubtless, the Bonmonts were of the same way of thinking as the grandsons of *émigrés*, and were as full of Royalist devotion and quite as zealous Catholics as himself. But the Duke could not forget their origin — he was a simple, obstinate man, and young Bonmont was well aware of this. He reviewed the situation once again in front of the Dubos-Laquille motor omnibus, and came to the conclusion that the best way of obtaining the de Brécé badge was to procure the bishop's crozier for M. l'Abbé Guitrel.

"I must have him nominated," he reflected. "It is absolutely necessary. It will be easy enough once I know how to set about it." And, full of regret, he added, "Father would have advised me in the matter if he had lived. He must have made more than one bishop in Gambetta's time."

Although he was not quick at generalisation, he went on to remind himself that anything could be bought for money, a thought which imbued him with great confidence in the success of his enterprise. Reflecting thus, he looked up and saw young Gustave Dellion a little in front of him, looking at a yellowwheeled car.

Dellion caught sight of Bonmont at the same moment, but pretending he had not seen him, he beat a retreat behind the body of the vehicle. He was under long-standing financial obligations to Bonmont, and, for the present, was in no way prepared to discharge them. The mere sight of his friend's blue eye gave him a hollow feeling in the pit of his stomach, for it was Bonmont's habit to stare silently and terribly at those of his friends who owed him money. Dellion knew all about that, and was much surprised when the little bull, as he termed him, joined him in his retreat between the canvas wall of the tent and the yellowwheeled car, holding out a friendly hand, and saying with a pleasant smile: "How are you? Nice car! A bit long in the body, but not so bad, is it? That's what you want for Valcombe, my dear Gustave. Yes, indeed! There's a pretty puff-puff that would rip along nicely between Valcombe and Montil."

The mechanic who was standing by the motor thought good to intervene, and to point out to M. le Baron that the vehicle could be turned into an open six-seater, or a closed phaeton with seats for four. Seeing that he was dealing with connoisseurs, he launched out into technical explanations.

“The motor is composed of two horizontal cylinders; each piston works a crank inclined at 180 to its neighbour.”

In businesslike terms he demonstrated the advantages of such a combination. Then, in answer to a question by Gustave Dellion, he said that the carburettor was automatic, and to be regulated once for all at the moment of starting.

He stopped speaking, and the two young fellows stood there silent and attentive. At last, pushing his stick between the spokes of one of the wheels, Gustave Dellion remarked:

“Do you see, Bonmont? Steering is done by differential gear!”

“It is very easy to handle,” said the mechanic. Gustave Dellion loved an automobile, and not, like Bonmont, with an already satiated love. He gazed at the vehicle which, in spite of the stiffness of modern body-work, looked like a great animal, a conventional, banal, though well-behaved monster, with an apology for a head between the lamps that looked like two huge eyes.

“Not such a bad puff-puff,” whispered young Bonmont to his friend. “Why don’t you buy it?”

“Buy it? Can you do anything you like when you are so unfortunate as to possess a father!” sighed Gustave Dellion. “You don’t know what a nuisance a family is — what a worry.” Then, with feigned assurance, he added, “And that, my dear Bonmont, reminds me that I owe you a small—”

A friendly hand fell upon his shoulder, cutting him short, and to his surprise there stood at his side a little fair man, his head sunk between his shoulders, giving him the appearance of a slight hump, broad-chested, and strong-backed — a little, simple-looking, fair man, who regarded him with extraordinarily kind blue eyes and a sweet smile.

“You old fool!” said this little man, suggesting a good-natured little buffalo shedding his wool on the bushes out of pure kindness of heart.

Gustave no longer recognised the Bonmont he had known, and was both touched and surprised. Jumping into the car, the little Baron began to handle the steering-wheel under the benevolent eye of the mechanic.

“So you drive, Bonmont?” ventured Gustave with deference.

“Occasionally,” returned young Bonmont.

Then, with one hand upon the steering-wheel, he related a motor-tour he had made in Touraine during one of his absences on sick leave, from which he always returned worse than he went away. He had done thirty miles an hour. Of

course, the roads were dry and in good condition, but there were cattle, children, and frightened horses to pass, all of which might have caused trouble. You had to keep your eyes about you, and never let the other fellow touch the wheel. He related a few incidents of the tour, one adventure with a milkwoman standing out particularly in his mind.

"I saw the old woman coming along," he said, "taking up the whole of the road with her horse and cart. I sounded my horn, but the old creature never moved aside. Then I made straight for her. She was new to that trick. She drew up by the side of the road, pulling so hard at her horse that he fell in a heap with the cart, milk-pails, old woman and all, upon a pile of stones; so I left them to it and went on," concluded young Bonmont, as he jumped out of the car. "And, in spite of the dust and the noise, motoring is a very pleasant way of getting about. You try it, my dear fellow."

"He is a good sort, after all," thought young Dellion admiringly. And his wonder grew when, dragging him along by the arm through the great hall, Bonmont said to him:

"You are quite right. Don't buy that motor. I'll lend you my runabout. I shan't want it, because I've got to go back, my leave is nearly up. Besides — By the way, do you know if Madame de Gromance is in Paris?"

"I believe so, but I am not quite sure," replied Gustave. "It is some time since I saw her."

This was in one way an honourable falsehood, for at ten minutes past seven on the preceding evening he had left Madame de Gromance in her room at the hotel where they had their rendezvous.

Bonmont did not reply, but, coming to a full stop before a notice in two languages, forbidding smoking, he gazed at it silently and thoughtfully. Gustave, following his example, remained speechless, thinking it would not be prudent to bring the interview to an end. So he added:

"But I may see her again soon. I *can* see her, if you will tell me—"

The little Baron looked him straight in the eyes, and said:

"Would you like to do me a favour?"

Gustave assented with the enthusiasm of a good-natured soul and the uneasiness of a person suddenly embarked upon a difficult enterprise. It was none the less true that Gustave could do Ernest de Bonmont a favour, and the latter proceeded to enlighten him on the subject.

"If you would like to do me a favour, my dear Gustave, get Madame de Gromance to go and see Loyer, and ask him to make Abbé Guitrel a bishop." And he added, "You would do me a genuine service."

To this request Gustave replied by a stupefied silence and a startled look, not that he intended to refuse, but because he had not grasped the situation. Young Bonmont had to repeat the same words twice over, and to explain that Loyer was Minister of Public Worship and nominated the bishops. He was very patient, and little by little Gustave understood what was required of him; he even managed to repeat what he had heard without making a single mistake:

“You want me to tell Madame de Gromance to go and ask Loyer, who is Minister of Public Worship, to make Guitrel a bishop?”

“Bishop of Tourcoing.”

“Tourcoing! Is that in France?”

“Of course.”

“Ah!” said Gustave thoughtfully, and he fell into a reverie.

Serious objections came to him, and, at the risk of appearing disobliging, he would mention them. It seemed to him that the request entailed a good deal, and he did not want to enter upon it lightly. Timidly and hesitatingly he formulated his first objection, which was a natural one.

“It isn’t a trick, is it?” he asked.

“What do you mean by a trick?” said Bonmont shortly.

“No, really,” protested Gustave, “you aren’t pulling my leg?”

He was still in doubt, but the contemptuous look of the little fair man dispersed all doubt.

With great firmness and decision he declared:

“As long as I know it is a serious matter, you can rely upon me. I can be serious when necessary.”

He was silent awhile, and the difficulties confronting him again rose in his mind. Gently and timidly he said:

“Do you think that Madame de Gromance knows the minister well enough to ask such a — a — favour? Because, you know, she never mentions Loyer to me.”

“And that,” replied the little Baron, “is probably because she has other subjects to discuss with you. I don’t mean that she is keen on Loyer, but she thinks him a good old sort, and no fool. They got to know each other three years ago on the platform at the unveiling of the statue to Jeanne d’Arc. Loyer would be only too delighted to do anything to please Madame de Gromance, and I can assure you he isn’t a bad sort. When he puts on his best coat he looks like a retired fencing-master. She can go and see him all right, he will be quite nice to her — and he will most certainly do her no harm!”

“In that case,” said Gustave, “she is to ask him to make Guitrel a bishop.”

“Yes.”

“Bishop of where did you say?”

“Bishop of Tourcoing,” repeated young Bonmont. “I’d better write it down for you.”

Picking up from a table before him the trade card of the builder of the “Reine des Pygmées,” he wrote upon it with his little gold pencil, “Make Guitrel Bishop of Tourcoing.”

Gustave took the card, and the idea which at first had appeared to him so strange and weird now seemed a simple and natural one. His mind had grown accustomed to it, and as he put the card in his pocket he repeated in the glibbest way:

“Make Guitrel Bishop of Tourcoing. Right you are! You can rely on me.”

In this manner the words of Madame Dellion were fulfilled, who speaking of her son one day had said, “Gustave does not learn quickly, but he remembers what he has learned, and that is perhaps best.”

“You know,” said Ernest seriously, “I can answer for Guitrel making a good bishop.”

“So much the better,” replied Gustave, “because—” And he did not finish his sentence.

They had now reached the exit, however.

“I shall be in Paris until the end of the week,” said Bonmont. “Let me know how things are going; there is no time to lose, for the candidates are being chosen now. We will speak of the car at another time.”

As they reached the flight of flag-decorated steps, he took Gustave’s hand in his and, holding it, impressed upon him:

“No one must know. The thing is of the utmost moment, my dear Dellion, that no one shall know; not a soul must know that Madame de Gromance is going to Loyer at your request. Now that is understood, is it not?”

“Quite,” replied Gustave, heartily shaking his friend’s hand.

The same evening at eight o’clock young Bonmont went to visit his mother, whom he did not often see, but with whom he was on the friendliest possible terms, and found her finishing her toilet in the dressing-room.

While her maid was arranging her hair she looked away from her reflection in the glass, and turning to her son:

“You don’t look well,” she said.

Ernest’s health had been worrying her for some time. Rara provided her with other more painful worries, but her son was, for all that, a source of anxiety.

“How are you, mother?”

“Oh, I’m very well.”

“You look it.”

“Did you know that your Uncle Wallstein has had a slight stroke?”

“I’m not surprised; he shouldn’t be so gay at his time of life, it’s unnatural.”

“He is not so very old, only fifty-two.”

“Fifty-two is not what you might call youthful, exactly. By the way, what about the Brécés?”

“The Brécés? What about them?”

“Did they thank you for the ciborium?”

“They sent their card, with a pencilled word of thanks.”

“That’s not much.”

“Well, *mon petit*, what else did you expect?”

She rose to her feet and raised her hands above her head to fix a diamond cluster in her hair; standing thus her bare arms looked like two handles springing from a beautifully shaped amphora. Her shoulders gleamed under the electric light which shone through transparent shades shaped like bunches of fruit, and in the golden whiteness of the skin delicate blue veins ran down to the swell of her bosom. Her cheeks were rouged and her lips painted, but her face was still youthful in its health and vigour. The lines of her neck, which might have betrayed the passage of the years, were lost in the beauty of the skin.

Young Bonmont studied her carefully for a few moments, and then said:

“Mother, suppose you go and see Loyer too, and ask him about Abbé Guitrel?”

CHAPTER XIV

MADAME DE BONMONT, who had chosen Raoul Marcien from among all others, and who loved him with deep affection, was justified for the space of a few weeks in congratulating herself upon her choice, and in believing herself a happy woman. A tremendous change had taken place in the order of things. Raoul, who had formerly been despised or disliked in all circles of society, who had been rejected by his regiment, cut by his friends, cast off by his relations, expelled from his club; who was known in all the courts of law by reason of the repeated charges of swindling brought against him, had suddenly become cleansed of all stain and purified of all dishonour. Certain events, guessed at, no doubt, and soon to be made clear, had interested the Government on his behalf. It was exceedingly necessary that Raoul should pass for an honourable man. In public and in private, ministers maintained that the power and glory of France and the peace of the whole world depended upon this.

His honour was of public utility, and each and all did their best to make it an established fact. The Government worked to this end, as did the lawyers and the newspapers, in fact all good citizens worked joyfully for its establishment. Madame de Bonmont experienced both pleasure and uneasiness at the sudden transformation of her lover into an example and a model for all Frenchmen. She was made for the enjoyment of tranquil joys and pleasures *à deux*, and all this fame astonished and made her ill at ease. When with Raoul she had the fatiguing sensation of living perpetually in a lift.

Evidences of the esteem in which he was held amazed the simple Elizabeth both by their number and extent. Congratulations, flattering pledges, good-conduct certificates, compliments, and praises poured in from all the bodies known and unknown, and from all the public societies in town and country. They came from the courts, the barracks, the archbishops' palaces, from the town halls, *préfectures* and great houses of France. They rang out in the street riots, and resounded with the bugles during torchlight processions. His honour shone proudly forth nowadays; it flamed into being like a huge cross at an illuminated fête. Whether he went to the Palais de Justice, or to the Moulin-Rouge, he was greeted by the acclamations of the crowd, and princes begged for the honour of touching his hand.

And, in spite of all this, Raoul was not at peace.

When in the little first-floor apartment hung with sky-blue draperies, intended by Madame de Bonmont to shelter their mutual love, he was always sombre and

violent. When he heard his worth and praises shouted in the streets, when he could not listen to the rumbling wheels of an omnibus or the shriek of a tram without knowing that both vehicles contained the supporters and guardians of his honour, he still remained plunged in the bitterest, most dismal thoughts and cherished terrible designs. With frowning brows and clenched teeth he muttered curses; he chewed threats as a sailor chews his tobacco. "Scoundrels! Wretches! I'll run them through the body!" It may seem almost impossible, but is, nevertheless, true, that he was unconscious of the people's acclamations; he did not hear them, and the only people he thought of were his few accusers, all of whom were believed to be dispersed, destroyed and reduced to powder. In his imagination he saw them standing before him, with threatening faces, and at sight of them terror made his yellow eyes start from his head.

His fury was a source of consternation to poor Madame de Bonmont, who only heard hoarse cries of hatred and vengeance coming from the lips which should have given her kisses and words of love. And she was the more surprised and uncomfortable because her lover's threats were directed as much against friend as against foe. For when he spoke of "running them through," Raoul never stopped to make the subtle distinction between his defenders and his adversaries. His great mind took in the whole of his country, yes, and the whole of the human race.

He would spend hours every day pacing up and down like a caged lion or panther in the two little rooms that Madame de Bonmont had hung with blue silk and furnished with cosy lounges in the hope of better things. "I'll do for them!" he muttered as he strode up and down.

Seated in one corner of the big couch she would follow his movements with a timid look, and listen anxiously to his words; not that the sentiments expressed by him appeared to her in any way unworthy of her beloved; instinctively submissive, naturally docile, she admired strength in all its forms, and flattered herself with the vague hope that a man who was capable of such wholesale slaughter, might also, at another time, be capable of wonderful embraces. And sitting at one end of the couch, she waited with half-closed eyes and gently heaving bosom for her Raoul's mood to change.

She waited in vain! The vociferations continued to make her start:

"I'll do for them!"

Occasionally she would timidly try to appease his fury; in a voice as full as her figure she would murmur:

"But they are doing you full justice, dearest — every one knows you to be a man of honour!"

It may be true that the slender, dark-haired David succeeded in calming the fury of Saul with his shepherd's lute, the sound of which was thinner than a cricket's chirrup; Elizabeth, less fortunate than he, vainly offered to Raoul the Nirvana of her sighs and the splendour of her pink and white self. Without daring to look at him, she ventured to say: "I cannot understand you, *mon ami*. You have confounded your detractors, the General embraced you in the middle of the street the other day, and the ministers..."

She got no further; he burst out:

"You mention those blackguards to me! They are only trying to find some way of getting at me. They would like to see me a hundred feet under the ground. But they had better be careful! I will devour them piecemeal!"

Then he came back to his dear, familiar thought: "I must do for them!"

This was his dream:

"I should like to be in an immense marble hall full of people, and to lay about me with a big stick, to strike for days and nights, until the floor, the ceiling, and the walls were red with blood!"

She vouchsafed no reply, but only looked in silence at her breast, where lay the little bunch of violets she had bought for him and dared not offer.

He gave her no more love. It was over and done with. The hardest-hearted man would have taken pity on the pretty, gentle creature who, with her voluptuous body and skin of milk and roses, resembled some big, warm flower in its beauty, neglected, abandoned, and left without care or culture.

She was suffering, and, being piously inclined, she sought a remedy in religion. Thinking that an interview with Abbé Guitrel would be of great service to Raoul, she resolved to bring the priest and her lover together.

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE dressing, Philippe Dellion pulled aside the window-curtains, and, looking out into the light-spangled night, watched the carriage lamps passing to and fro in the busy street. For a moment or two the sight pleased him; he had been in this room, separated from the outer world, for the space of two hours.

“What are you looking at, *mon petit*? ” asked Madame de Gromance, sitting up in the bed and arranging her tumbled hair. “Do strike a light, it is impossible to see a thing.”

He lighted the candles that stood in little copper stands on either side of a gilded clock adorned with shepherds and shepherdesses. The gentle light reflected itself in the wardrobe and made the rosewood cornice glisten. Little rays flickering everywhere in the room, lit up the scattered garments and died gently away in the curtains’ folds.

The room was an apartment in a highly respectable hotel, in a street near the Boulevard des Capucines. Madame de Gromance, in her wisdom, had selected it, refusing to have anything to do with the less subtle arrangements of Philippe, who had hired a little *rez-dechaussée*, in the lonely Avenue Kléber. It was her opinion that a woman who wished to keep her affairs to herself must see that they take place in the very heart of Paris, in some respectable hotel frequented by people of divers races and tongues. She hardly ever spent more than two consecutive months in Paris, but she frequently met Philippe there, and in far greater security than she could have done in the provinces.

As she sat on the edge of the bed, the soft light fell upon her fair fluffy hair, the milk-white skin of her sloping shoulders, and her pretty but somewhat drooping breast.

“I am sure I shall be late again,” she said. “Tell me the time, *mort petit*, and don’t make a mistake. It’s really important!”

“Why do you always call me ‘*mon petit* ’? Ten past six,” he returned in a surly voice.

“Ten past six? Are you quite sure? I call you ‘*mon petit* ’ because I love you. What would you have me call you?”

“I call you Clotilde, you might occasionally call me Philippe.”

“I never do call people by their names.”

“Oh, well! no matter!” he said bitterly. “I don’t presume to imagine that I shall change your habits.”

She picked up her stockings from the floor, stretching her back like a cat about to pounce upon a mouse.

“What does it matter? I never think of calling you by your Christian name, as I do my husband, or my brother, or my cousins.”

“All right! all right!” he replied. “I will conform to custom.”

“What custom?”

Jumping up with her stockings in her hand, she came across the room and kissed him upon the neck.

Though by no means a clever man, he was suspicious, and an idea that had lately struck him was worrying him; he suspected that Madame de Gromance was careful to avoid making use of his name, or of the name of any other lover, for fear of getting mixed in a moment of supreme excitement, for she was a sensitive soul!

He was not exactly jealous, but he had a certain amount of proper pride. Had he known that Madame de Gromance was unfaithful to him, his vanity would have suffered. On the other hand, the desire he had for the pretty creature was proportionate only to the desire he believed her to inspire in others. He was not at all sure that it was considered necessary to be the lover of Madame de Gromance, or of any other society woman; many of his intimate friends preferred an automobile to a mistress. He liked her well enough, and had no objection to being her lover so long as it was considered the thing, but if it was not, he could not see why he should persist in the matter. The deep animal instinct in him and his outlook as a man of the world scarcely agreed, and he was not clever enough to conciliate such conflicting elements, the result being that there was an imperfect, indeterminate tone about his remarks that rather fascinated Madame de Gromance, who would not take the trouble of finding the solution and making things clear. If it came to the point, his charmer would say to him, “Of course I’ve never loved any man but you!” but that was less in the hope of convincing him than in the desire to say the thing most fitting the occasion. And at such moments when reflection is at a disadvantage the tremendous difficulty presented by belief in such a statement never occurred to him. Later, when he began to reason, doubt assailed him.

His doubt found expression in cruel and sarcastic remarks, and he practised the art of keeping his mind in a state of vague unrest. On this particular occasion he was less sulky and bitter than usual, and hardly even jealous or mistrustful. He merely displayed the ill-humour that naturally follows gratified desire.

Madame de Gromance, on the contrary, was quite prepared for the blackest fit of spite and unkindness, for on that very day her strength, combined with her weakness, her natural inspiration and deep artifice, had obtained from him a

more liberal display of affection than that which on principle he usually vouchsafed. She had led him to overstep the bounds of moderation, a thing he did not easily forgive, for he was solicitous of his health, and keen on keeping in condition for exercise and sport. Whenever Madame de Gromance led him further than he wished, he afterwards avenged himself by unkind words and a still more unkind silence. She did not mind, for she loved love, and experience had taught her that all men are disagreeable as soon as they get what they want. So she calmly awaited the reproaches she knew she deserved. She was disappointed in her expectations, however, for a remark from Philippe showed her that his mind was quiet and at rest.

“My shirtmaker is an ass,” he said.

He carefully dressed himself before the glass, and turned great thoughts over and over in his mind. After a few moments of silence he asked in quite a pleasant tone:

“You know Loyer, don’t you?”

Fresh-complexioned and slightly flushed with her white figure thrown into relief by the dark velvet of the arm-chair, she was sitting buttoning her boots. As she sat there, with her head and neck bent over her crossed legs, the light shone upon her hair and upon the bare limbs revealed by the short garment she wore, making one think of an allegorical figure from some painted Venetian ceiling. This resemblance did not, however, strike Philippe. He repeated his question:

“Do you know Loyer?”

She lifted her head, dangling the buttonhook from the tips of her fingers.

“Loyer, the Cabinet Minister? Yes, I know him.”

“Do you know him well?”

“Not very well, but I do know him.”

The man under discussion, Loyer the senator, keeper of the seals and Minister of Public Worship, was an insignificant-looking old bachelor, honest enough outside politics, a bit of a lawyer, and a philosopher, whose hair had turned grey in the enjoyment of clandestine love and tavern nights. As he had not made his entry into society until somewhat late in life, the women he met there were a continual source of wonder to him, as he devoured them with gold-spectacled eyes.

He was very young for his sixty years, and had known how to appreciate Madame de Gromance at her true value when he had first met her in the drawing-rooms of the *préfecture*. That was seven years ago.

Loyer had come to the town of M. Worms-Clavelin to unveil a statue to Joan of Arc, and had then pronounced the memorable speech that terminated magnificently with a comparison between the Maid and Gambetta, each of

whom was transfigured, said the orator, “by the sublime light of patriotism.” The Conservatives, who already were secretly siding with the Radicals, because of their financial policy, were grateful to the minister for binding them anew to the old régime with the honourable bonds of a generous sentiment.

M. de Gromance had offered him his hand, saying: “As an old Royalist, Monsieur le Ministre, I thank you for Jeanne and for France!”

When Loyer walked that evening with Madame de Gromance in the gardens of the *préfecture*, lighted up by hundreds of Chinese lanterns, fixed to the trees — trees that had been planted in 1690 by the Benedictines of Sillé, so that two centuries later Madame Worms-Clavelin might enjoy their shade — the minister, who had been told by the Préfet himself that the “old Royalist” was the most deluded husband in the Department, whispered a few gallantries into the young woman’s pink ear. He was a Burgundian, and prided himself on being a daring one at that. Impressed by the beauty of the historic evening, he remarked as he took leave of Madame de Gromance that the illuminations made him inclined to dream. Madame de Gromance liked Loyer, and subsequently begged of him several little favours on behalf of her parish and district, which the old fellow granted, demanding nothing in return, quite content with being allowed to pat the arms and shoulders of the beautiful *ralliée* and to ask in a jocular manner after her “Old Royalist.”

She could therefore quite well allow that she knew Loyer, who was in the Radical Cabinet as Minister of Public Worship.

“I know Loyer as one knows a person who does not belong to the same set as oneself. Why do you ask?”

“Because if you know him well enough, I want you to ask him to do something for me.”

“What! Do you want to bear off the academic honours like M. Bergeret?”

“No,” said Philippe seriously. “It is something more important. I want you to speak to him about Abbé Guitrel.”

In her surprise she stood up, revealing a glimpse of dazzling flesh above her stockings. Astonishment gave her the semblance of innocence.

“Why?” she demanded.

He was carefully knotting his tie.

“I want Loyer to make him bishop.”

“Bishop!”

The word produced abundant and definite ideas in the mind of Madame de Gromance.

For years and years she had seen the short, fat figure, mitre-crowned and covered with the gold-embroidered cope, rubicund, shapeless, dignified, of

Monseigneur Chariot, officiating on fete-days at the cathedral. She had often dined with him and had received him at her own table. In common with all the other ladies of the diocese, she admired the clever repartee and handsome red-stockinged calves of the cardinal-archbishop. She also knew a considerable number of bishops, all of whom were worthy men, but she had never reflected on the influences that confer episcopal dignity upon a priest. It seemed to her strange that a kind-hearted but common and coarse-minded man like Loyer should have the power to create a prelate like Monseigneur Chariot.

She sat there, thoughtful, looking around the room, from the tumbled bed to the little table, upon which were placed a bottle of sherry and some biscuits; from the chair on which she had thrown some of her garments to the untidy dressing-table, her beautiful, unintelligent eyes wandered, seeing nothing but lace rochets, crosiers, crosses, and amethyst rings. Feeling absolutely at a loss, she inquired:

“Do you think bishops are made like that?”

“Of course,” he replied with assurance.

“And so you think, *mon petit*, that if I were to ask Loyer to make Abbé Guitrel a bishop—”

He assured her that Loyer, who was an old gallant, would not refuse that to a pretty woman.

She fixed her pink silk knickers to a hook on her silk stays. Then, as he pressed for a reply, and insisted upon her going immediately to see the minister, she grew exceedingly curious, and not a little suspicious.

“But, *mon petit*, why do you want Abbé Guitrel to be made a bishop? Why?”

“To please Mother. And because I like the fellow; he is intelligent and up to date — there aren’t so many like him. Yes, he really is advanced and in the Pope’s good books besides. And Mother would be so delighted.”

“Then why doesn’t she go herself and settle the business with Loyer?”

“In the first place, darling, it wouldn’t be at all the same. Besides, my parents are not in very great favour with this Cabinet. My father, as President of the *Chambre Syndicale des Métaux*, has been protesting against the new tariffs. You cannot imagine how irritating these economic questions can be.”

But she knew quite well that he was deceiving her, and that it was not filial love that made him dabble in ecclesiastical affairs.

She went round the room in her pink knickers of flowered silk, lithe, agile, and pliable, stooping here and there over the scattered garments, searching for her petticoat.

“*Mon petit*, I want your advice—”

“What about?”

After spending an unconscionable time arranging his tie in front of the glass, and lighting a cigarette, he complacently sat watching her as she flitted about the room in a costume that exaggerated so prettily all that was feminine in her exceedingly feminine body. He did not know whether to think her graceful or ridiculous. He did not know whether he ought to think such things really unbeautiful, or whether he should experience some slight artistic pleasure in beholding them. His doubt arose from the recollection of a long discussion which had taken place the winter before in the smoking-room at his father's house, between two old gallants, M. de Terremondre, who could think of nothing more adorable than a pretty woman in her knickers and stays, and Paul Flin, who, on the contrary, pitied a woman for her ungraceful appearance at this particular stage of her toilet. Philippe had followed this entertaining discussion, and could not make up his mind which of the two was right. Terremondre was a man of experience, but he was old-fashioned and too artistic. Paul Flin was considered less clever, but very smart. Philippe's natural malevolence and elective affinities were making him incline to the latter's theory when Madame de Gromance put on her pink silk petticoat.

"*Mon petit*, do advise me. This year fur dresses are all the rage, but what do you say to a red cloth dress — a rich red, say ruby — a fur coat and a fur toque with a bunch of Parma violets?" He did not speak, and only betrayed his thought by a nod of the head. At last he opened his mouth, whence issued, instead of words, the smoke of his cigarette.

Deep in her dream she continued:

"With buttons of old paste, very narrow sleeves and a tight skirt."

He spoke at last:

"A tight skirt — yes, that would be all right." Then she remembered that he knew nothing about skirts or bodices. An idea flashed into her mind and matured.

"It is funny!" she cried. "Only the men who do not care about women are interested in women's dress. And the men who like them never notice what they wear. Now you, for instance. I am sure you could not tell me what dress I had on last Saturday at your mother's, while little Suequet, whose tastes, as everybody knows, are different, talks *lingerie* and *chiffons* quite prettily. He is a born dressmaker and milliner, that boy! Tell me, how do you account for it?"

"It would take too long."

"You are sitting on my skirt, *mon petit*. While I think of it, Emmanuel says that you are neglecting him. Yesterday he expected you to come and see a horse that he wants to buy, and you didn't turn up. He's awfully annoyed!"

At these words Philippe broke into a torrent of abuse.

“Your husband bores me to tears! He’s a grotesque fool — and the most awful bore! You must admit yourself that pottering about all day in his stables, his kennels, and his kitchen garden — for he goes in for gardening too, the duffer — looking at the dogs’ food, the horses, and such-like isn’t what you might call exciting. And then when one comes to think of you and me, I must say it is a bit thick for your husband to hang on to me as he does. He’s such a fool that he makes people talk. It’s perfectly true, I tell you, people are beginning to talk.”

She answered him gently and seriously while she slipped on her skirt.

“Don’t abuse my husband, Philippe. As I am obliged to have a husband of some sort, it is a very good thing mine is like he is. Just think for a moment, *mon petit*, we might have somebody much worse to deal with.”

Philippe’s anger would not be calmed.

“And he loves you, the beast!”

She made a little grimace and shrugged her shoulders, as if to imply that that was not worth mentioning. That is how Philippe chose to interpret it, for he went on to enlarge upon the subject.

“As far as that goes, any one can see at a glance that he’s not much of a man with the women, but, even then, some things don’t bear thinking about.” Madame de Gromance turned to Philippe a beautiful look full of happiness and peace, a look that counselled the banishment of all painful thoughts, and going up to him placed full upon his lips a kiss, magnificent as a royal scarlet seal.

“Mind my cigarette,” he said.

By this time she was clothed in a very simple grey dress, and was arranging her toque upon her fluffy hair. Suddenly she broke into a laugh, and he inquired the cause of her amusement.

“Oh, nothing!”

Then, as he persisted in his inquiry:

“Well, I was only thinking that when your mother went to see her lover — years ago, you know — she must have found her hair a terrible nuisance, that is if she wore it as it is in that portrait you have of her at home.”

He made no reply, not quite knowing how to treat a joke of this description, which inwardly shocked him.

“You’re not angry, surely,” she went on. “You do love me, don’t you?”

No, he was not angry; yes, he loved her; and she returned to her original idea.

“It is strange, you know. Sons always believe in the virtue of their mothers; daughters, too, but not so implicitly. And yet the fact of a woman having had children is surely not sufficient to prove that she has never had lovers.”

She reflected a moment, and then went on:

“Things are complicated in this world. Good’ bye, *mon petit* . I am walking, and have only just time to get there.”

“Why are you walking?”

“Because it is good for my health, and then it explains my not having the carriage. And it’s rather fun.”

She scrutinised herself in the looking-glass, first three-quarter-ways, then sideways, finally glancing at her back view.

“At this hour of the day, for instance, I am sure to collect a good number of followers.”

“Why?”

“Because I look rather nice.”

“What I mean is, why at this hour specially?”

“Because it is evening. The streets are always full just before dinner-time.”

“But who follows you? What sort of people?”

“All sorts. Men about town, workmen and priests. Yesterday a nigger followed me. He had on a hat that shone like a mirror. He was awfully sweet.”

“Did he speak to you?”

“Oh, yes. He said: ‘Madame, will you go for a drive with me? Or are you afraid of losing your reputation’?”

“What a silly remark!”

“Some of them say much sillier things,” she answered gravely. “Adieu, *mon petit*, we’ve had a lovely time to-day.”

Her hand was already on the key of the door when he stopped her.

“Clotilde,” said he, “promise me you will go and see Loyer, and that you will say to him very nicely, ‘M. Loyer, you have a vacant see to dispose of. Make Abbé Guitrel bishop, you cannot do better. The Pope thinks very highly of him.’”

She shook her pretty head.

“Go and see Loyer for that? Can you imagine me in the cage of that old gorilla? We must make some special arrangement, meet him at some friend’s house, or something of the sort.”

“But,” objected Philippe, “it’s very important.

At any moment Loyer may sign the appointments now. There are several vacant sees.”

She reflected a moment, and, making a special effort to think clearly, said:

“You must be mistaken, *mon petit*, ” said she. “It’s *not* Loyer who appoints the bishops. It’s the Pope, really it is, or the Nuncio. I can prove that, for the

other day Emmanuel said, 'The Nuncio ought to overcome the modesty of M. de Goulet, and offer him a bishopric.' So you see."

He tried to convince her to the contrary, taking the trouble to explain the reason why.

"Listen to me! The minister chooses the bishops, and the Nuncio confirms the minister's choice. That is what is called the Concordat. You must say *to Loyer*: 'I know of an intelligent liberal-minded priest, one that the Pope thinks of very highly'—"

"Yes, yes, I know!" She opened wide eyes of wonder. "It's an extraordinary thing you are asking of me, *mon petit!* "

Her amazement came from the fact that she was religious, and had the greatest veneration for holy things. He was a little less religious than she, but perhaps a trifle more scrupulous, and in his innermost self he recognised that she was right, and that it was an extraordinary thing to ask of her. But he was so anxious for the matter to be concluded that he hastened to reassure her.

"I am not asking you to do anything forbidden by religion," he protested.

In the meanwhile her first curiosity had returned. "But why do you want M. Guitrel to be chosen, *mon petit?* " she asked.

He answered confusedly, as he had done before: "Mother would be pleased, and other people too."

"What other people?"

"Oh, heaps of them — the Bonmonts."

"The Bonmonts? But they are Jews!"

"That doesn't matter; there are Jews even among the clergy."

Madame de Gromance grew more suspicious as soon as she learned that the Bonmonts were mixed up in the singular affair, but being affectionate and easily led she promised Philippe she would do as he asked.

CHAPTER XVI

M. L'ABBÉ GUITREL, candidate for the episcopacy, was ushered into the study of the Nuncio, Monseigneur Cima, whose appearance at first sight came as a surprise, for his pale, large-featured countenance, on which the years had left traces of fatigue, showed no signs of age. At forty, he looked rather like a sickly youth, and when he cast down his eyes his face was as the face of a dead man. He signed to the visitor to be seated, and, assuming his usual attitude, leaned back in his easy chair, and prepared to listen to him. With his right elbow in his left hand, and his head resting in the hollow of his right hand, he had a grace that struck one as vaguely funereal, and called to mind certain figures on ancient bas-reliefs. When in repose his face was veiled in melancholy, but as soon as he smiled it radiated humour. The gaze of his beautiful dark eyes gave one a feeling of discomfort; at Naples he was said to possess the evil eye; in France he passed for a clever politician.

M. l'Abbé Guitrel thought it advisable to make only a passing allusion to the object of his visit.

Mother Church in her wisdom might dispose of him as she judged good. All his feelings of love for her were blended in an entire obedience to her will!

"Monseigneur," he added, "I am a priest, in other words a soldier, and I aspire to the glory of obedience!"

Slowly bending his head, as a sign of approbation, Monseigneur Cima asked the Abbé if he had been in any way acquainted with M. Duclou, the late Bishop of Tourcoing.

"I knew him when he was Curé at Orleans, Monseigneur."

"Orleans? A pleasant town, I have relations there, distant cousins of mine. M. Duclou was very old when he died. Do you know what caused his death?"

"Stone, Monseigneur."

"The cause of the death of many old men, although science has discovered many things to mitigate this terrible malady."

"Yes, indeed, Monseigneur!"

"I used to know M. Duclou at Rome; he often had a rubber of whist with me. Have you ever been to Rome, M. Guitrel?"

"Monseigneur, that is a joy so far denied me, but I have long sojourned there in thought. My spirit has outstripped my body in its journey to the Vatican."

"Yes, yes; the Pope would be very pleased to see you. He likes France very much. The best time for a visit to Rome is during the spring, for in summer

malaria is rife in the countryside, and in some parts of the city even.”

“I do not fear malaria.”

“Of course not. Besides, provided one takes certain precautions, one can always ward off fevers; you must never go out at night without your cloak, and foreigners especially should never go out in open vehicles after the sun has set.”

“I have heard, Monseigneur, that the Coliseum by moonlight is a truly wonderful sight.”

“The air is treacherous in that district, and the gardens of the Villa Borghese are also to be avoided for the same reason.”

“Really, Monseigneur?”

“Yes, yes! I, who am Roman-born, cannot endure the climate of Rome. I prefer to go to Brussels. I was there for a year some time ago, and can think of no town that I like better. I have relations there. Tourcoing, is that a large town?”

“About 40,000 inhabitants, I believe, Monseigneur. It is a manufacturing town.”

“I know! I know! M. Duclou used to tell me in Rome that he could only find one fault with his flock: they drank beer. He used to say that if they would only drink the light wines of Orleans they would be the most perfect Christians in the world, but hops made them melancholy.”

“M. Duclou was a very witty man.”

“He disliked beer, and once I surprised him very much by telling him that it was quite popular in Italy nowadays. There are very prosperous German beer-houses in Florence, Rome, Naples, and most of the other towns. Do you like beer, M. Guitrel?”

“I do not dislike it, Monseigneur.”

The Nuncio gave his ring to the priest, who kissed it and took a respectful leave.

The Nuncio rang the bell.

“Show M. Lantaigne in.”

Having kissed the ring, the director of the Grand Séminaire was invited to sit down and state his business.

He said:

“Monseigneur, I have sacrificed to the Pope and to necessity all the ties that bound me to the Royal House of France; I have trampled down the nearest hopes of my heart, which was only what I owed to the Father of the Faithful and the unity of the Church. If His Holiness raises me to the see of Tourcoing, I will rule it in his interest and in the interest of France. A bishop is a ruling power, and I can answer for my steadfastness and devotion.” Slowly bending his head as a

sign of approbation, Monseigneur Cima asked Abbé Lantaigne whether he had been in any way acquainted with M. Duclou, the late Bishop of Tourcoing.

"I only knew him slightly," replied M. Lantaigne, "and long before his elevation to the bishopric. I remember having lent him some of my sermons when I had more of them than I knew what to do with."

"He was not young when we lost him. Do you know what caused his death?"

"I do not know."

"I knew M. Duclou in Rome; he often used to play a rubber of whist with me. Have you ever been to Rome, M. Lantaigne?"

"Never, Monseigneur."

"You should go. The Pope would be very pleased to see you; he likes France very much. But you must be careful when you go; the climate of Rome is bad for foreigners. During the summer malaria is rife in the countryside, and even in some parts of the city. The best season to visit Rome is the spring. I was born in Rome, of Roman parents, and I much prefer Paris or Brussels. Brussels is a very pleasant town. I have relations there. Tell me, Tourcoing, is it a very large town?"

"It is one of the oldest sees of Northern France, Monseigneur, and is notorious for its long line of saintly bishops, from the blessed St. Loup to Monseigneur de la Thumellière, the immediate predecessor of M. Duclou."

"Tell me, what are the people of Tourcoing like?"

"They are good Church people, Monseigneur, and tend more to the Belgian form of Catholicism than to the French."

"Yes, yes, I know. M. Douclou, the late lamented Bishop of Tourcoing, told me one day in Rome that he had only one fault to find with his flock; they drank beer. He used to say that if they would only drink the light wines of Orleans, they would be the most perfect Christians in the world, but the juice of the hop filled them with its melancholy and bitterness."

"Monseigneur, allow me to say one thing: Monseigneur Duclou was both weak, and brainless. He never brought out the energetic qualities of the sturdy northerners under his care. He was not a bad man, but his dislike of evil was only moderate. The Catholic town of Tourcoing must shine out on the whole of the Catholic world. Should His Holiness judge me worthy to fill the seat of the blessed St. Loup, I swear in ten years' time to have won all hearts by the sacred energy of good works; to have stolen back all the souls gone over to the enemy and to re-establish around me the oneness of belief. In the depths of her innermost soul, France is Christian, and only needs energetic leaders. The Church is dying from sheer inanition."

CHAPTER XVII

THE drawing-room of the house in the grey Batignolles quarter was humble, the only decorations being copies of the engravings in the Louvre, little statues, cups and dishes of Sèvres china, trivial-looking ornaments, which somehow proclaimed the fact that the lady of the house was connected with Government officials.

Madame Cheiral, *née* Loyer, was the sister of the Minister of Justice and Public Worship. She was the widow of a commission-agent in the Rue d'Hauteville, who had died without leaving a penny, and she had attached herself to her brother, partly for the sake of a home, and partly out of maternal ambition. She ruled the old bachelor, who ruled the country, and had forced him to take as his secretary-in-chief her son Maurice, who was not fitted for anything in particular, and was good for nothing except some public office.

Uncle Loyer had a room in the little flat of the Avenue de Clichy, where he came to stay for a while every spring, at which season he was subject to attacks of giddiness and drowsiness, for he was getting old. As soon, however, as his head felt better and his tread became more assured, he returned to the attic-room, where he had lived for half a century, a room where he had twice been arrested by the agents of the Empire, and from which he could see the trees of the Luxembourg. He still kept the pipe of Jules Grévy in this garret of his.

This pipe was perhaps the most treasured possession of the old fellow, who had gone through many phases as a Member of Parliament: the days of eloquence and the days of affairs. He had controlled as Minister of the Interior the secret funds of three budgets. He had bought many a conscience for his party, a corrupter of others, but incorruptible himself. He had always had an infinite indulgence for the hypocrisies of his friends, but was jealous himself of retaining in the midst of his power the vantage-ground of a simulated poverty that was at once cynical, obstinate, deep-rooted, and honourable.

His eye was dim now and his mind inactive, but in the intervals, when his old skill and decisive spirit returned to him, he applied all his remaining vigour to concentrated thought, and the game of billiards. Madame Cheiral, whose intelligence was limited and whose skill but moderate, did what she liked with the cunning, quiet, silent, and coarse-minded old man, who for the sixth time in his career had been selected as a member of the cabinet that had followed upon the heels of the clerical cabinet, and who saw his nephew fulfilling the indefinite duties of secretary-in-chief without an idea of leadership, nor a glimmer of moral

principle. No doubt, Loyer was somewhat surprised to find that his nephew had reactionary and clerical tendencies, but he was too much inclined to apoplexy to run the risk of thwarting his sister.

Madame Cheiral was staying at home that day, and when Madame Worms-Clavelin called to see her somewhat late in the afternoon, when no further callers were expected, she received her very cordially. They wished each other good-bye, for the *préfet*'s wife was returning home on the morrow.

"Going already, darling?"

"I must," replied Madame Worms-Clavelin sweetly, looking quite innocent in her black feather-trimmed hat.

She always affected this hat when paying calls, likening herself to a plume-bedecked horse attached to a funeral car.

"You must stay and dine with us, dear; we so seldom see you in Paris. We shall be quite alone. I don't think my brother will be here. He is so busy and engrossed in his work just now! But perhaps Maurice will be with us; the young men of to-day are much steadier than they used to be. Maurice often spends an evening home with me."

She began to try to prevail upon Madame Worms-Clavelin with all the persuasive eloquence of a sociable soul.

"We shall be quite among ourselves. Your dress will do very nicely. I assure you we shall be absolutely *en famille*."

Now Madame Worms-Clavelin had obtained from the Minister of the Interior the Cross of the Legion of Honour for her husband; she had exacted from the Minister of Instruction and Public Worship a promise that the name of M. Guitrel, as candidate for the bishopric of Tourcoing, should be on the list of candidates selected for the six vacant sees, so there was nothing to keep her any longer in Paris. She had intended to return home that very evening.

She excused herself, saying that she had "so many things to see to," but Madame Cheiral insisted; then, as Madame Worms persisted in her refusal, she showed her displeasure by tightened lips and acid tones, so Madame Worms-Clavelin, who had no wish to annoy her, gave in.

"That's right; and, as I said before, we shall be quite by ourselves."

They were by themselves, for Loyer never came, and Maurice, who was expected, did not turn up either. But in their place came a lady tobacconist (The sale of tobacco in France is controlled by the State, and given to the widows and daughters of Government officials, military and naval officers, etc.) and a well-known elementary school teacher. The conversation was deep and serious. Madame Cheiral, who really was only interested in her own affairs, and who had no spite against any one except her dearest friends, picked out the men whom

she thought worthy of the Senate, the Chamber, and the Institute, not that she cared about politics, science, or literature, but because she thought it her duty, as the sister of a Cabinet Minister, to hold opinions on everything that contributed to the moral and intellectual greatness of her country.

Madame Worms-Clavelin listened to her with charming deference, always retaining the same air of innocence that she reserved for people who bored her. When in society she had a way of looking down which gave old gentlemen a thrill, and which to-day excited the admiration of the hoary-headed instructor of grammar and gymnastics, who endeavoured to press her foot with his own under the table. However, she had made up her mind to return by train from the Avenue de Clichy to the Arc-de-Triomphe, where, among the radiating avenues that look like an enormous cross of honour, her boarding house was situated. But when she returned to the drawing-room on the arm of the old gentleman who had rendered such signal services to elementary instruction she found Maurice Cheiral, who had been detained at the ministry, and who, after dining at a restaurant, had returned home to dress, prior to spending the evening at a theatre.

He examined Madame Worms-Clavelin with interest, and sat down beside her on the comfortable old couch that stood under a great Sèvres dish decorated in neo-Chinese style, and suspended on the wall in a blue plush frame.

“Madame Clavelin! You are the very person I wanted to see!”

In her younger days Madame Worms-Clavelin had been thin and dark, and in such guise had not been unattractive to men. As time went on she became fat and fair, and in this guise she was again not unattractive to men.

“Did you see my uncle yesterday?”

“Yes. He was so sweet to me. How is he today?”

“Tired, very tired. He gave me the papers.”

“What papers?”

“The papers referring to the candidatures for the six vacant sees. You are very anxious for Abbé Guitrel to be elected, are you not?”

“My husband is anxious. Your uncle told me that the thing was settled.”

“My uncle; you should not take any notice of what he says — he is a Minister and cannot know. People are always fooling him, and then he often says what he does not mean. Why didn’t you come to me?”

With charming modesty Madame Worms-Clavelin replied in a low voice:

“Well, I do come to you!”

“And you are wise to do so,” replied the secretary-in-chief. “All the more so because the business is not going on as you wish, and it depends upon me whether it proceeds or not. My uncle told you, no doubt, that he was going to present the six applications to the Pope?”

“Yes.”

“Well, they have already been presented. I know that, for I sent them. I take a special interest in Church matters. My uncle is one of the old school; he does not understand the importance of religion, while I realise it thoroughly. Now this is how things stand: the six candidates have been presented to the Pope, and the Holy Father has only accepted four. As far as the other two are concerned, that is M. Guitrel and M. Morrue, he does not absolutely reject them, but he says he has not yet sufficient information concerning them.” Maurice Cheiral shook his head gravely. “He has not sufficient information! And when -he gets more I do not know what he will say. Between ourselves, dear lady, Guitrel looks to me a bit of a rogue, and we cannot be too careful in choosing our bishops. The clergy is a force upon which a prudent Government should be able to rely; we are just beginning to realise that.”

“You are quite right,” said Madame Clavelin.

“On the other hand,” went on the secretary-in-chief, “your candidate seems learned, well read, and open-minded.”

“Well?” asked Madame Worms-Clavelin, with a delightful smile.

“It is difficult!” replied Cheiral.

Cheiral was not a very clever man. He took few things into consideration, and always acted on reasons so futile that they were difficult to unravel. And so it was thought, that, being still young, he was swayed by personal motives. At the present time he had just finished reading a book by M. Imbert de Saint-Amand on the Tuileries during the second Empire; the splendour of the brilliant court had particularly taken his fancy, and the book had fired him with the desire to live, like the Duc de Morny, a life in which politics should be combined with pleasure and power of every description. He looked at Madame Worms-Clavelin in a manner the significance of which she thoroughly comprehended as she sat there silent with lowered gaze.

“My uncle,” went on Cheiral, “gives me a free hand in this matter, which does not interest him at all. I can set about it in two ways. I can propose without further delay the four candidates accepted by the Holy Father, or I can tell the Nuncio that things will remain at a standstill until the Holy See has approved of six candidates. I have not yet made up my mind, but should be delighted to talk the matter over with you. Shall I expect you tomorrow afternoon at five o’clock, and wait for you in a closed carriage at the end of the Rue Vigny by the gates of the Park Monceau?”

“There’s not much risk in that,” thought Madame Worms-Clavelin, her only reply a slight quivering of her downcast lids.

CHAPTER XVIII

MADAME DE BONMONT had no difficulty in bringing Raoul Marcien and M. l'Abbé Guitrel together at her house. The meeting was all that could be desired, for on his part M. l'Abbé Guitrel was full of unction, and Raoul, being a society man, knew what was due to the Church.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," he said, "I come of a family of priests and soldiers. I have been a soldier myself, and that means—"

"He did not finish his sentence, for M. Guitrel held out his hand with a smile, saying:

"We may call it the alliance of the sword and the aspersion." Then immediately resuming his priestly gravity: "And that is the most natural and the best of all alliances. We priests are soldiers too, and as far as I am concerned I am very fond of the army."

Madame de Bonmont gazed with sympathetic eyes at the Abbé, who continued:

"In the diocese to which I belong we have started clubs, where the soldiers can read good books as they smoke their cigars. The work is under the patronage of Monseigneur Chariot, and is both flourishing and useful. Let us not be unjust toward the age in which we live; if it contains much evil it also holds much that is good. We are engaged in a great fight, and that is, perhaps, to be preferred to the lukewarm state of those whom a great Christian poet has described as being shut out from both Heaven and Hell."

Raoul approved of this speech, but ventured no reply. He did not answer, by virtue of the fact that he had few ideas upon the subject, and also because his whole mind was absorbed in the thought of the three charges of cheating brought against him during the past week, which made it impossible for him to follow any abstract or general train of ideas.

Madame de Bonmont but dimly divined the real reason of his silence, and M. Guitrel did not understand it at all. With an honest desire to do the right thing, and keep the ball of conversation going, he asked M. Marcien if he knew Colonel Gandouin.

"He is an excellent man in every way," added the priest. "A fine example of the Christian and the soldier. He is respected by every right-thinking man in our diocese."

"Do I know Colonel Gandouin!" cried Raoul. "I know him only too well. I've had enough of him! I can't bear the man!"

This outburst grieved Madame de Bonmont and startled M. Guitrel. Neither of them knew that four years before Colonel Gandouin, with six other officers, had ordered Captain Marcien to be placed on half-pay for habitual dereliction of duty, that offence, selected from many others, being the reason assigned.

From this moment the gentle Elizabeth gave up hoping that any good would come of the interview which she had arranged to calm her Raoul, to turn him away from thoughts of violence and bring him back to thoughts of love. She opened her heart, however, and in a tearful voice said to the Abbé:

“Don’t you think, M. l’Abbé, that when a man is young and has a fine future before him, he ought not to give way to discouragement and depression? Ought he not, on the contrary, to avoid all sad thoughts?”

“Certainly, Madame la Baronne, certainly,” replied M. l’Abbé Guitrel. “We must never give way to discouragement, or abandon ourselves to grief without cause. A good Christian never encourages gloomy thoughts, Madame la Baronne, that is quite certain.”

“Do you hear, M. Marcien?” asked Madame de Bonmont.

But Raoul did not hear, and so the conversation dropped. Then Madame de Bonmont, being a kind-hearted woman, and anxious in the midst of her own worries to give a little pleasure to M. Guitrel, turned the topic of conversation.

“And so, M. l’Abbé,” she said, “your favourite stone is the amethyst.”

Guessing the drift of her remark, the priest answered severely and even harshly:

“Do not speak of that, Madame, I beg. Do not speak of that!”

CHAPTER XIX

HAVING risen early one morning, M. Bergeret, Professor of Latin literature, went for a walk into the country with Riquet. The two loved each other dearly, and were nearly always together. They had the same tastes, and both preferred a quiet, uneventful, and simple life.

Riquet's eyes always followed his master closely on these walks. He was afraid to let him out of his sight one instant, because he was not very sharp-scented, and, had he lost his master, could not have tracked him again. His beautiful, loving look was very engaging as he trotted by the side of M. Bergeret with an important air quite pretty to see. The Professor of Latin literature walked slowly or quickly according to the trend of his capricious fancy.

As soon as Riquet was a stone's throw ahead of his master, he turned round and waited for him with his nose in the air, and one of his front paws lifted in an attitude of attention and watchfulness.

It did not take much to amuse either of them.

Riquet plunged into gardens and shops alike, coming out again as hastily as he had entered. On this particular day he bounded into the coal-seller's office, to find himself confronted by a huge snow-white pigeon that flapped its wings in the darkness, to his extreme terror.

He came as usual to relate his adventure, with eyes and paws and tail, to M. Bergeret, who said jokingly:

"Yes, indeed, my poor Riquet, we have had a terrible encounter, and have escaped the claws and beak of a winged monster. That pigeon was an awe-inspiring creature!"

And M. Bergeret smiled. Riquet knew that smile, and knew that his master was making fun of him. This was a thing he could not bear. He stopped wagging his tail, and walked with hanging head, hunched-up back, and legs wide apart, as a sign of annoyance.

"My poor Riquet," said M. Bergeret to him again, "that bird, which your ancestors would have eaten alive, alarms you. You are not hungry, as they would have been, and you are not as brave as they were; the refinement of culture has made a coward of you. It is questionable whether civilisation does not tend to make men less courageous as well as less fierce. But civilised man, out of respect for his species, affects courage and makes of it an artificial virtue far more beautiful than the natural one. While, as for you, you shamelessly display your fear."

Riquet's annoyance, to tell the truth, was but slight, and only lasted a few minutes. All was forgiven and forgotten when the man and the dog entered the Josde woods just at the hour when the grass is wet with dew and light mists rise from the hills.

M. Bergeret loved the woods, and at sight of a blade of grass would lose himself in boundless reveries. Riquet, too, loved the woods. As he sniffed at the dead leaves his soul was filled with strange delight. In deep meditation, therefore, they followed the pathway leading to the Carrefour des Demoiselles, when they met a horseman returning to the town. It was M. de Terremondre, the county councillor.

"Good day, M. Bergeret," he cried, reining in his horse. "Well! Have you thought over my arguments of yesterday?"

He had explained the evening before at Paillot's the reason why he was against the Jews.

When in the country, especially during the hunting season, M. de Terremondre's proclivities were anti-Jewish. When in Paris he dined with rich Jews, whom he tolerated to the extent of inducing them to buy pictures at a profit to himself. At County Council meetings, with due consideration to the feelings that were paramount in his county town, he was a Nationalist and an Anti-Semite. But as there were no Jews in that town the anti-Jewish crusade consisted principally in attacks upon the Protestants, who formed a small, austere, and exclusive community of their own.

"So we are enemies," went on M. de Terremondre. "I am sorry for that, because you are a clever man, but you live quite outside the social movement, and are not mixed up in public life. If you did as I do, and entered into it, your sympathies would be anti-Jewish."

"You flatter me," said M. Bergeret. "The Jewish race which peopled Chaldea, Assyria, and Phoenicia in former times, and which founded cities all along the Mediterranean coast, is composed today of Jews scattered the world over, and also of the countless Arab populations of Asia and Africa. My heart is not great enough to contain so many hatreds. Old Cadmus was a Jew, but I really couldn't be the enemy of old Cadmus!"

"You are joking," replied M. de Terremondre, holding in his horse, who was nibbling at the bushes. "You know as well as I do that the anti-Jewish movement is directed solely against the Jews who have settled in France."

"Therefore I must hate 80,000 persons," said M. Bergeret. "That is still too many; I have not the strength for it!"

"No one asks you to hate them," said M. de Terremondre. "But Jews and Frenchmen cannot live together. The antagonism is ineradicable, it is in the

blood.”

“I believe, on the contrary,” said M. Bergeret, “that the Jews are particularly assimilable, and have the most plastic and malleable natures in the world. With the same readiness that the niece of Mardocheus entered the harem of Ahasuerus in bygone days, so the daughters of our Jewish financiers marry nowadays the heirs to the greatest names in Christian France. After marriages such as these it is rather late in the day to speak of incompatibility of race. Then, I think it is a bad thing to make a distinction of race in any country; it is not the race that makes the nation, and there is not a single country in Europe that has not been founded on a multitude of mixed and different races. When Caesar entered Gaul it was peopled by Celts, Gauls, Iberians, all differing in origin and religion. The tribes that set up the cromlechs were not of the same blood as those who honoured bards and druids. Into this human mixture the different invasions poured Germans, Romans, Saracens, and out of the whole a nation arose, the brave and lovable people of France, who, not so very long ago, were the teachers of justice, liberty, and philosophy to the entire world. Think of the beautiful words of Renan; I wish I could remember them exactly: ‘What makes a nation is the memory of the great things its people have done together, and the will they have to accomplish others.’”

“Excellent!” said M. de Terremondre. “But as I have not the will to accomplish great things with the Jews, I remain an Anti-Semite.”

“Are you quite sure that it is possible for your feelings to be wholly anti-Jewish?” asked M. Bergeret.

“I do not understand you,” replied M. de Terremondre.

“Then I will explain myself,” said M. Bergeret. “There is one fact that never varies: each time there is an attack on the Jews, a goodly number of them side with the enemy. That is just what happened to Titus.”

At this point in the conversation Riquet sat down in the middle of the road and looked resignedly at his master.

“You will agree,” went on M. Bergeret, “that between the years 67 and 70 A.D. Titus was a strong Anti-Semite. He took Jotapate, and exterminated its inhabitants. He conquered Jerusalem, burned the Temple, and reduced to ashes and ruins the city which afterwards received the name of *Ælia Capitolina*. The seven-branched candlestick was carried in his triumphal procession to Rome, and, I think, without doing you an injustice, I may say that that was Anti-Semitism carried to a degree which you people can never hope to attain. Well! Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem, had many friends among the Jews. Berenice was deeply attached to him, and you know as well as I do that it was against his will and against hers that he left her. Flavius Josephus was his friend, and

Flavius was not one of the least of his nation. He was descended from the Asmonean kings, lived the life of a strict Pharisee, and wrote Greek correctly enough. After the demolition of the temple and holy city he followed Titus to Rome, and became the intimate friend of the Emperor. He received the freedom of the city, the title of Roman Knight, and a pension. And do not imagine, monsieur, that in so doing he was betraying his race. On the contrary, he remained faithful to the law, and applied himself to the collection of national antiquities. In short, he was a good Jew in his own way and a friend of Titus. Now there have always been men like Flavius in Israel. As you pointed out, I live a secluded life and know nothing of what goes on in the world, but it would be a great surprise to me if at the present crisis the Jews were not divided amongst themselves, and if a great number of them were not on your side.”

“Some of them are with us, as you say,” replied M. de Terremondre. “All the more credit to them.”

“I thought as much,” said M. Bergeret. “And what is more, I am sure that there are some clever ones among them who will make their mark in this crusade against themselves. About thirty years ago a senator, a very clever man, who admired the Jewish faculty for getting on, and who cited as an example a certain court chaplain of Jewish origin, used the following words, which have since been much quoted. ‘See,’ said he, ‘here is a Jew who has gone into the Church, and now he is a Monseigneur. Let us not revive the prejudices of barbaric times. Let us not ask if a man is a Jew or Christian, but only if he is an honest man and capable of serving his country.’”

M. de Terremondre’s horse began to plunge, and Riquet, coming up to his master, begged him, with gentle, loving look, to continue the interrupted walk.

“Do not run away with the idea,” went on M. de Terremondre, “that I include all Jews in the same blind feeling of dislike. I have many excellent friends among them, but my love for my country makes an Anti-Semite of me.”

He held out his hand to M. Bergeret, and turned his horse around. He was quietly proceeding on his way when the professor called him back.

“Hi! A word in your ear, dear M. de Terremondre. Now that the die is cast, and that you and your friends have quarrelled with the Jews, be very careful that you owe them nothing, and give them back the God you have taken from them — for you have taken their God.”

“Jehovah?” asked M. de Terremondre.

“Yes, Jehovah! If I were in your place, I would beware of Him. He was a Jew at heart, and who knows whether He has not always remained a Jew? Who knows whether at this moment He is not avenging His people? All that we have seen lately, the confessions that burst forth like thunderclaps, the plain speaking,

the revelations proceeding from all parts, the assembly of red-robed judges which you were not able to hinder even when you seemed all-powerful, who can tell whether Jehovah has not dealt these crushing blows? They savour of His old biblical style, and I seem to recognise His handiwork.”

M. de Terremondre’s horse was already disappearing behind the bushes round the bend of the path, and Riquet trotted along contentedly through the grass.

“Beware!” repeated M. Bergeret. “Do not keep their God.”

CHAPTER XX

MADAME WORMS-CLAVELIN came along through the rainy darkness, holding up her umbrella, and walking with the brisk, decided step which, for a wonder, had not grown heavy from long years spent in provincial towns. The door of the carriage that was waiting for her in front of the gates of the Park Monceau, opened a little, and then stood wide, and Madame Worms-Clavelin slipped calmly in and took a seat beside the young secretary, who immediately inquired as to her health.

"I am always well," she replied, adding, "What awful weather!"

Streams of rain were running down the carriage windows; the street noises were drowned in the damp air, and all that could be heard was the gentle drip of the raindrops.

When the carriage began to roll with a muffled sound over the paved road, she asked:

"Where are we going?"

"Where you like."

"I don't mind — Neuilly way, I should think."

Having given instructions to the driver, Maurice Cheiral turned to the *préfet*'s wife and said:

"I have much pleasure in informing you that the appointment of Abbé Guitrel (Joachim) to the See of Tourcoing will be announced in to-morrow's *Officiel*. I do not want to boast, but I can assure you that it has not been a very easy matter to arrange. The Nuncio is great at procrastination. People of that description make use of a prodigious amount of inactivity — Well, anyhow, everything is settled."

"That's good," replied Madame Worms-Clavelin. "I am sure you have rendered a service to the progressive republican party, and that the Moderates will have every reason to be pleased with their new bishop."

"At any rate," went on Maurice Cheiral, "you are satisfied."

After a long silence he continued:

"Just think, I never slept all night. I was thinking of you, and longing to see you again."

The strange thing was that he was speaking the truth, and that the expectation of this rendezvous had excited him. But he spoke in a joking tone and drawling voice that made his words appear false, besides which he was wanting both in assurance and decision.

Madame Worms-Clavelin quite thought she would leave the carriage as she had entered it. Assuming a serious and gentle expression, she said in a sympathetic tone:

“Thank you, dear M. Cheiral. Put me down here, if you please, and remember me to your mother.”

And she held out her hand, a little, stumpy hand clad in an exceedingly dirty glove. But he held it tightly, becoming tender and insistent, full of desire and amour-propre.

“I am as muddy as a water spaniel,” she remarked, just as he was about to find that out for himself.

While he adhered to his resolve, in spite of the obstacles of circumstances and environment, she showed the most perfect good taste and simplicity. With wonderful tact, she avoided all the unpleasantness arising from an over-prolonged resistance or a too rapid resignation. In like manner she avoided any remark that might reveal either ironical indifference or interested participation. She behaved perfectly. She had no feeling of dislike for the young statesman, who was so innocent at the very moment when he believed himself to be so wicked, and feelings of real regret came over her as she reflected that she might have been more careful in selecting her *lingerie* for the occasion; she never had been careful enough of that, but of late years her carelessness had become somewhat excessive. Her greatest merit on this occasion was in keeping clear of all emphasis and exaggeration.

After a while, Maurice suddenly became quiet, indifferent, even a trifle bored. He talked of things quite foreign to their present situation, and peered through the blurred window-panes at the streets that looked as though the carriage were going along at the bottom of an aquarium; all that could be seen through the rain was the gas-jets, and here and there the glass jars in the windows of the chemists' shops.

“What awful rain!” sighed Madame Worms-Clavelin.

“The weather has been dreadful for the last week,” said Maurice Cheiral, “simply rotten. Is it the same in your part of the country?”

“We get more rain in our department than in any other in France,” replied Madame Worms-Clavelin with charming sweetness. “But there is never any mud on the broad, gravelled garden paths of the Préfecture. Then we country people wear clogs.”

“Do you know,” said Cheiral, “that I have never been to your town?”

“There are beautiful walks there,” replied Madame Worms-Clavelin, “and the surroundings are charming. Do come and see us. My husband would be delighted.”

“Does your husband like living there?”

“Yes, he likes it because he has been successful there.”

In her turn, she tried to see through the clouded panes and to pierce the thick darkness that was full of fugitive glimmers of light.

“Where are we?” she asked.

“Far away from everywhere, I should think,” he replied eagerly. “Where would you like me to put you down?”

She asked him to stop at a station, and he did not attempt to disguise his anxiety to leave her.

“I must go to the *Chambre*,” he said. “I do not know what they have been doing to-day.”

“Ah, they were sitting to-day?”

“Yes,” he replied, “but there was nothing of importance, I believe — an increase of tariff. But one never knows. I had better just look in.”

They took leave of one another easily and amicably. As Madame Worms-Clavelin stepped into a fiacre in the Boulevard de Courcelles, near the fortifications, she heard the newsboys crying the evening papers, and holding them out to the passers-by as they hurried along. She caught sight of a heading in huge letters— “Fall of the Government.”

Madame Worms-Clavelin stood for a moment looking at the men, and listening to the voices dying away in the rainy night. She reflected that, if Loyer were really going to send in his resignation to the President of the Republic, there would be in all probability no notice in to-morrow’s *Officiel* of the new appointments in the Church. She reflected that her husband’s decoration would not be included in the last will and testament of the Minister of the Interior, and that hence the half-hour she had spent in the blue-curtained fiacre was of no avail. She had no regret over what had happened, but did not like doing things to no purpose.

“Neuilly,” she said to the driver, “Boulevard Bineau, the Convent of the Dames du Saint-Sang.”

And she sat pensive and solitary, while the cries of the newsvendors filled her ears, and she tried to convince herself that the news was true. She would not buy a paper, however, partly out of mistrust and contempt for all newspaper matter, and partly because she was determined not to rob herself of so much as a half-penny. She reflected that if the Ministry really had fallen, just at the moment when she was being so prodigal of her favours, it was a striking example of the irony of things and the spite that hovers ceaselessly about us, like the very atmosphere we breathe. She asked herself whether Loyer’s secretary-in-chief had not known the news that was now being shouted abroad while he waited for

her at the park gates. At this thought she grew scarlet, as though her chastity had been outraged and her faith betrayed, for if that were the case Maurice Cheiral had been making game of her, and that she could not endure. However, her sound common sense and wide experience soon came to her aid, assuring her that it was never safe to trust the newspapers. She thought of Abbé Guitrel without a qualm, and congratulated herself on having contributed in ever so small a degree to the elevation of the excellent priest to the See of the Blessed Saint Loup. She arranged a few little details of her toilet the while, so that she might present a good appearance in the parlour of the Dames du Saint-Sang who were charged with the education of her daughter.

The fog was paler and less dense in the deserted avenues, and the low, damp streets of Neuilly. Through the gentle rain, the strong, graceful outlines of the great bare trees were visible. Madame Worms-Clavelin caught a glimpse of some poplars, and they reminded her of the country which she loved more dearly every day.

She reached the barred doorway crowned with a stone shield bearing the glove in which Joseph of Arimathea received the sacred blood of the Saviour, and rang the bell. At her request, the portress sent for Mademoiselle de Clavelin, and Madame Worms-Clavelin entered the bright parlour with its horsehair chairs. As she sat there before a picture of the Virgin extending her blessing-laden hands, the *préfets* wife was filled with a strong, sweet feeling of religion. She was not wholly a Christian, because she had never been baptised. But her daughter had been baptised, and was being brought up in the Catholic faith. Together with the Republic, Madame Worms-Clavelin felt strong leanings towards a conventional piety, and with a sincere uplifting of the heart she saluted the kind, blue-veiled Virgin, to whom well-to-do ladies like herself poured out their troubles and necessities. She thanked Providence for all her blessings, as she sat before the picture of Mary, with her outstretched arms, and she thanked the Virgin with a mystical intensity that the Jewish religion had never been able to satisfy. She was full of gratitude to God, who had guided her from the miserable days of her childhood in Montmartre, when she had run about the greasy streets of the outer boulevards in her worn-out shoes, until the present time, when she mixed in the best society, belonged to the ruling classes, and had a share in the affairs that governed the country; and she thanked God that in all her negotiations — for life is difficult, and one often needs the help of others — she had, at any rate, never had to come into contact with any but men of position in the world. “Good evening, mother!”

Madame Worms-Clavelin drew her daughter under the lamp and examined her teeth; that was always her first care. Then she looked at her eyes, to see

whether she was anaemic or not, saw that her back was straight and that she did not bite her nails. When satisfied on all these points, she inquired as to her work and her conduct. Her solicitude was full of sound common sense and much experience, and altogether she was an excellent mother.

When at last the bell rang for evening study, and it was time to say good-bye, Madame Worms-Clavelin drew from her pocket a box of chocolates. The box was crushed, broken, dilapidated, and as flat as a pancake.

Mademoiselle de Clavelin took it, saying with a laugh:

“Oh, mother! It looks as if it had been in the wars!”

“It is this dreadful weather!” said Madame Worms-Clavelin, with a shrug of her shoulders.

That evening after dinner at the boarding-house she found on the drawing-room table a well-known evening paper whose information she knew to be well authenticated. On reading it, she learned that the Government had not fallen, and was not even in difficulties. It is true that it had been in the minority at the commencement of the sitting, but that was only on the order of the day, and it had immediately been followed by a majority of 105.

The news delighted her, and as she thought of her husband, she said to herself, “Lucien will be pleased to hear that Guitrel has been made bishop.”

CHAPTER XXI

“ASK M. Guitrel to come in,” said Loyer.

Seated at his desk, the Minister was hardly visible behind the heaps of paper piled upon it; he was a little spectacled old man, with a grey moustache, watery eyes, and a sniff — a cynical, cantankerous old fellow, but an honest man who, in spite of the power and honour that had fallen to his lot, still had the appearance and manner of a professor of the law. He took off his spectacles and wiped them, for he was curious to see the Abbé, the candidate to the episcopal dignity, who had been backed by so many brilliant society women.

Madame de Gromance, the pretty provincial, had been the first to call upon him at the end of December. She had told him, without beating about the bush, that he must appoint the Abbé Guitrel to the See of Tourcoing. The old Minister, who still loved the perfume that clings to a pretty woman, had kept the little hand of Madame de Gromance for a long time between his, stroking with his thumb the bare space between the glove and the sleeve where over the blue veins the skin is softest. He had not gone further, however, because he was getting old, and everything was an effort to him, and also he was afraid of appearing ridiculous in her eyes, for he still had his share of vanity. His words alone savoured of impropriety, and, according to his invariable custom, he inquired for Madame de Gromance’s “old Royalist,” as he familiarly called her husband. His eyes had become tearful behind their bluish glasses, and his face had creased itself into a thousand little wrinkles at the excellence of the jest.

The idea that the “old Royalist” was a wronged husband filled the Minister of Justice and Public Worship with what really was inordinate glee. As he thought of it, he looked at Madame de Gromance with more curiosity, interest, and pleasure than was perhaps in the case justifiable, but from the ruins of his amorous nature he was building a series of mental amusements, the most intense of which was to gloat over the misfortune of M. de Gromance in the very presence of its voluptuous cause.

During the six months in which he had been Minister of the Interior in a former Radical Cabinet, he had received from Worms-Clavelin private and confidential notes, telling him all about the Gromance ménage, so that he knew all there was to know about Clotilde’s lovers, and delighted in the knowledge that they were numerous. He had received the beautiful petitioner with every kindness, promising to look into M. Guitrel’s case, but committing himself no

further, for he was a good Republican, and did not believe in subordinating affairs of state to a woman's caprice.

Then, too, the Baronne de Bonmont, who was reputed to have the most beautiful shoulders in Paris, had spoken in favour of Abbé Guitrel at the Élysée soirées. Finally, Madame Worms-Clavelin, the *préfet*'s wife, a very charming woman, had whispered a word in his ear concerning the good Abbé.

Loyer was very curious to see the priest who had fluttered so many feminine hearts. He wondered whether he was about to behold one of the great sturdy becassocked fellows that of latter days the Church has thrown into public gatherings, sending them as far even as the Chamber of Deputies, one of those young, full-blooded, outspoken clerical tribunes of the people — headstrong and shrewd, with a power over simple men and women.

The Abbé Guitrel entered the study, his head upon one side, and holding his hat before him in his clasped hands. He was not unprepossessing, but his desire to please, and his respect for the powers that be, made his habitual carefully assumed priestly dignity less apparent than usual.

Loyer noticed his three chins and domed head, his portly form, his narrow shoulders, and his unctuousness. He was quite an old man too.

“What do the women want with him?” he thought.

The interview was trifling on either side; but, after questioning M. Guitrel on some points of ecclesiastical administration, Loyer gathered from the fat man's replies that his views were both sensible and fair.

He remembered that the Director of Public Worship, M. Mostart, was not against the nomination of Abbé Guitrel to the See of Tourcoing. Truth to tell, M. Mostart had not given him much information on the subject. Since there had been such a rapid succession of clerical and anti-clerical cabinets, the Director of Public Worship had not dabbled overmuch in the making of bishops; the matter had become too delicate of handling. He had a house at Joinville, and was fond of gardening and fishing. His dearest dream was to write a chatty history of the Bobino Theatre, which he had known in its palmy days. He was growing old, was a prudent man, and did not stick obstinately to his own opinion. The evening before he had said to Loyer, “I propose Abbé Guitrel, but there's nothing to choose between Abbé Guitrel and Abbé Lantaigne, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other I”

Those were the very words of the Director of Public Worship, but Loyer was himself an old doctor at law, and always able to make nice distinctions.

M. Guitrel seemed to him sensible enough, and not too fanatical.

“You are not ignorant of the fact, Monsieur l'Abbé,” he said, “that the late Bishop of Tourcoing, M. Duclou, tended to become intolerant in the latter part of

his life, and gave an unreasonable amount of work to the Council of State. What is your opinion on the subject?"

"Alas," replied the Abbé Guitrel, with a sigh, "it is quite true that in his declining years, as he neared the period of eternal blessedness, Monseigneur Duclou made some rather unfortunate declarations. The situation was a difficult one then, but things have greatly altered, and his successor will be able to labour quietly towards the establishment of peace. What he will have to aim at is real peace. The road to it is marked; he will have to enter upon it resolutely and follow it to the end. As a matter of fact, laws dealing with education and the Army do not give rise nowadays to any difficulties, and all that really remains is the question of the taxation of religious communities. This question, we must allow, is peculiarly important in a diocese like Tourcoing, which, if I may say so, is plastered with all kinds of religious institutions. I have studied it at length, and, if you wish, can speak of the conclusions to which this study has led me."

"The clergy," said Loyer, "dislike parting with their money. That is the truth."

"Nobody likes it, Monsieur le Ministre," returned Abbé Guitrel, "and Your Excellency, such an adept in all that relates to finance, must realise that there is a way of shearing the ratepayer without making him complain. Why not use the same method with our poor monks, who are too good Frenchmen not to be good ratepayers? You must bear in mind, Monsieur le Ministre, that they are subject in the first case to the ordinary taxes that everybody pays."

"Naturally," put in Loyer.

"Secondly, to taxes on inalienable property."

"And do you complain of that?" inquired the Minister.

"Not at all," replied the Abbé. "I am merely enumerating them all — quick reckonings make long friends. Thirdly, to a tax of four per cent on the income accruing from lands, houses, furniture, and money; and, fourthly, they are liable to the increment duty, as established by the laws of the 28th of December, 1880, and the 29th of December, 1884. It is only the principle underlying this last tax, as you know, Monsieur le Ministre, that has been contested by several communities. The agitation has not yet died down everywhere, and it is on this point, Monsieur le Ministre, that I take the liberty of expressing the views which would actuate me, were I to have the honour of occupying the see of the Blessed Saint Loup."

As a sign of attention, the Minister turned round in his chair, and faced the Abbé, who went on in the following terms:

"As a matter of principle, Monsieur le Ministre, I disapprove of the spirit of revolt, and dislike any tumultuous or systematic claiming of rights, and in this I only comply with the Encyclical beginning '*Diuturnum illud*, ' in which Leo

XIII, following the example of St. Paul, exhorts his people to obedience towards the civil authorities. So much for principle; let us now look fact in the face. As a matter of fact, I find that the religious in the diocese of Tourcoing are placed in such different positions with regard to rates and taxes that universality of action is thereby rendered exceedingly difficult. In this diocese there are authorised and unauthorised communities, some communities dedicated to works of charity among the poor, the aged, and the orphan, and some whose sole aim and object is a life of spiritual contemplation. They are taxed differently, according to their different purposes. It is my opinion that the very opposition of their interests breaks down resistance, unless their bishop himself directs the tenor of their claims, a thing which, for my part, I should avoid, if I were their spiritual head. I would willingly see uncertainty and division among the communities of my diocese if by so doing I could ensure the peace of the Church as a whole. As far as my secular clergy were concerned," added the priest in a firm voice, "I would answer for them as a general answers for his troops."

Having thus spoken, M. Guitrel apologised for having given such free vent to his thoughts, and wasted the precious time of His Excellency.

Old Loyer made no answer, but he nodded approval. For a parson, Guitrel was not so difficult, to get on with after all, he thought.

CHAPTER XXII

MADAME DE BONMONT dismissed her carriage, and, hailing a cab, drove to the street where, amid the rumble of drays and the whistle of engines, she carried on her love affair. She would have preferred to see her Rara in a region adorned with gardens, but love is sometimes shy under the myrtles or by the murmuring fountains. Madame de Bonmont's thoughts were sad as she drove along the streets where the lamps were just beginning to glimmer through the misty evening light. Guitrel had indeed been appointed Bishop of Tourcoing, and she rejoiced thereat, but joy did not possess her soul completely. Rara, with his black humour and ferocious desires, worried her terribly. Now she went in fear and trembling to the rendezvous, to which in former times she had so eagerly looked forward. Confiding and retiring by nature, she dreaded, on his account as well as her own, anything in the nature of danger, catastrophe, or scandal. Her lover's mental attitude, which had never been satisfactory, had quite suddenly grown worse. Since the suicide of Colonel Henry he had become dreadful to look upon. The bitterness in his blood had acted like vitriol upon his countenance, as it were searing his forehead, his eyelids, his cheeks, with marks of fire and brimstone. For the last fortnight mysterious causes had kept her dear one absent from the flat which he rented opposite the Moulin-Rouge, and which was his legal domicile. He had his letters forwarded to him, and received visitors in the little suite which Madame de Bonmont had taken for quite a different use.

Slowly and sadly she went up the stairs, but even on the very threshold of the door the hope of finding the delightful Rara of former days stirred her heart. Alas, her hope was vain, she was greeted with bitter words:

"What do you come here for? You despise me like all the rest."

She protested at such cruelty.

She did not despise him — on the contrary, her loving animal nature led her to admire him. She put her painted, yet youthful, lips to her lover's mouth, and kissed him sobbingly; but, pushing her away, he began to pace furiously up and down the two blue-tapestried rooms.

Noiselessly she untied the little parcel of cakes she had brought with her, and said in a hopeless, toneless voice:

"Will you have a *baba*? It is kirsch, just as you like them," and she handed him the cake between two dainty sugary fingers. But he refused to see or hear her, and continued his fierce, monotonous promenade.

Then, with tear-dimmed eyes and bosom that heaved with sighs, she lifted the thick black veil which, mask-like, covered the upper part of her face, and silently commenced to eat a chocolate *éclair*.

At last, however, not knowing what to do or to say, she took a jewel-case from her pocket, and opening it, displayed for Rara the bishop's ring; which it contained, saying in a timid voice:

"Look at M. Guitrel's ring. It is a pretty stone, isn't it? It is an Hungarian amethyst. Do you think M. Guitrel will like it?"

"I don't care a damn!"

She put the case down on the toilet table in despair, while he, resuming the usual current of his thoughts, growled out:

"There's no mistake about it! I will do for one of them!"

She looked at him doubtfully, for she had noticed that he was always threatening to kill everybody, and that he killed no one. He divined her hidden thought. It was dreadful.

"I knew that you despised me too," he said.

He nearly struck her, and she wept bitterly; eventually he calmed down, however, and drew her a terrible picture of his financial embarrassments.

She wept at the picture, but did not promise to give him much, because it was against her principles to give money to a lover, and, besides, she feared he might go away altogether if he had the means to do so.

When she left the little blue rooms she was so upset that she quite forgot the amethyst ring lying on the toilet table.

CHAPTER XXIII

“ARE you working, dear Master, do I disturb you?” asked M. Goubin, entering M. Bergeret’s study.

“Not at all,” replied the professor. “I was amusing myself by translating a Greek text of the Alexandrine period, discovered in a tomb at Philæ.”

“I should be very glad if you would read me your translation, dear Master,” said M. Goubin.

“With pleasure,” replied M. Bergeret, and he began:

CONCERNING HERCULES ATIMOS.

Deeds are commonly ascribed to the one and only Hercules which in reality have been accomplished by other heroes bearing the same name. That which Orpheus teaches us concerning the Thracian Hercules relates to the god rather than to the hero. I will not dwell upon this. The Tyrians tell of another Hercules to whom they attribute labours so prodigious that they are difficult to accept. What is less known is that Alcmena gave birth to twins who were exactly alike, and who each received the name of Hercules. The one was the son of Jupiter and the other of Amphitryon. On account of his great deeds, the former attained the right to drink from the cup of Hebe at the table of the gods, and we look upon him as a god. The second was unworthy, that is why he was called Hercules Atimos.

What I know of him I have learned from an inhabitant of Eleuis, a wise and prudent man who has collected together many ancient legends. This is what he told me:

Hercules Atimos, the son of Amphitryon, when nearing manhood, received from his father a bow and arrows, forged by Vulcan, which dealt certain death to any creature whom they struck.

Now one day, when shooting wild cranes on the slopes of Cithæron, he met a herdsman who addressed him thus:

“Son of Amphitryon, there is an evil man who daily steals some of our cattle. Thou art full of youth and vigour. If thou canst find the thief and strike him with one of thy magic arrows, thou wilt gain great praise. But he is not easy of approach, for his feet are larger than the feet of other men, and he is very fleet.”

Atimos promised the herdsman that he would punish the brigand, and went upon his way. Hiding in the mountain gorges, he saw at a distance the figure of a man who appeared to him evil. Thinking it was the cattle-stealer, he killed him

with his arrows. But while the man's blood was still fresh upon the wild anemones, Pallas Athene, the brighteyed goddess, descended from Olympus, and came to meet Atimos, who did not recognise her, for she was disguised as an old servant of King Amphitryon. And the goddess spoke to him thus:

"Divine son of Amphitryon, the man thou hast killed was not a stealer of cattle, but a good man. The guilty man is easily recognised by the print of his feet in the dust, for they are larger than those of other men. The dead man's conduct was irreproachable, and his life a life of innocence. Therefore shalt thou pray with tears to the divine Apollo to restore him to life. Apollo will not refuse thy request if thou pleadest with outstretched supplicating hands."

Full of anger, however, Atimos replied:

"I have punished this man for his wickedness. Dost thou think, old man, that I know not what I do and strike at random? Peace! Get thee gone, thou madman, or thou shalt repent thy audacity."

Some young shepherds who were gambolling with their goats upon the slopes of Cithæron hearing the words of Atimos, received them with such shouts of praise that the mountain resounded and the ancient pine trees stirred and quivered. And Pallas Athene, the brighteyed goddess, returned to snowy Olympus.

Atimos, however, had resumed his journey, and soon found himself upon the tracks of the cattle-thief, whom he could see at a little distance ahead. He recognised him quite easily by his footprints in the sand, for they were much greater than those of other men.

Then thought the hero to himself, "It is necessary that men believe in the innocence of this man, so that they may believe I have slain the guilty one, and that my glory be made known among men." With this thought in his mind, he called the man and said to him: "Friend, I honour thee because thou art good and thy thoughts just." Then, drawing from his quiver one of the arrows made by Vulcan, he gave it to the man with these words, "Take this arrow made by Vulcan. All those who see thee with it will honour thee, and thou wilt be judged worthy of the friendship of a hero."

Thus spoke he. The thief took the arrow and went away. And divine Athene, the brighteyed goddess, descended from snowy Olympus. She disguised herself as a gentle shepherd, and, coming up to Atimos, said: "Son of Amphitryon, in absolving the guilty man thou hast killed the innocent a second time. And this action shall not bring thee glory among men."

But Atimos did not recognise the goddess, and believing her to be a shepherd, he cried in fury:

“Chicken-heart, vain babbler, dog, I will tear out thy soul!” And he lifted against Pallas Athene his bow, the wood of which was harder than the iron of the arrows forged by Vulcan.

“The rest is missing,” said M. Bergeret, replacing the papers upon his table.

“What a pity!” said M. Goubin.

“It is a pity,” said M. Bergeret. “I have been much interested in translating this Greek text; one must have a change sometimes from everyday affairs.”

CHAPTER XXIV

AS evening fell, Madame de Bonmont with anxious heart hailed a cab and drove to Rara's rooms, for she wished to see him again and to recover the amethyst ring. But she feared some disaster. When the cab crossed the Pont de l'Europe and stopped in front of her lover's door she saw that the road was black with hats and coats. Something was going on that reminded her of a funeral or a removal. Men were heaping portfolios and piles of papers into a cab, others were bringing along a little box which Madame de Bonmont recognised as the old military trunk filled with stamped papers in which Rara had so often plunged his flushed arms and his furious, hairy visage.

As she stood there, frozen with terror, she heard the voice of the dishevelled *concierge* whisper in her ear:

"Don't come in. Be off as fast as you can! The police are here with the magistrate and the commissioner. They have seized your gentleman's papers and sealed up everything."

The cab carried away a prostrate Madame de 283

Bonmont. In the depths of despair at her lost love she was, however, conscious of this thought: "And Monseigneur Guitrel's ring, which has been sealed with the rest!"

CHAPTER XXV

PEOPLE had been talking about it for three months. M. Bergeret learned that he had friends in Paris who had never seen him, and friends such as these are the surest; their actions are governed by sensible, masterly, positive reasons, and, if only their report is favourable, they are sure of a hearing. M. Bergeret's friends thought that his place was in Paris, and suggested bringing him there. M. Leterrier did all he could to bring this about, and at last it was arranged.

M. Bergeret was appointed Professor at the Sorbonne. As he left the house of M. le Doyen Torquet, who had apprised him in the most formal terms of his nomination, M. Bergeret, finding himself in the street again, looked at the slate roofs, the familiar free-stone walls, the shaving basin that swung gently to and fro over the door of the hairdresser, the sign of the red cow over the milkman's, and the little bronze Triton, with water streaming from his mouth, at the corner of the Faubourg de Josde; and all these familiar things appeared suddenly strange in his eyes. His feet had suddenly become unacquainted with the pavements on which he had so long and so often gone his way, with feet rendered heavy by sadness or fatigue, or made light by some slight happiness or amusement. The town, with its towers and steeples standing up against the grey sky, looked to him like some strange, faraway dream city, rather the picture of a city than the reality. And the picture grew smaller and smaller. People, as well as things, seemed faraway and diminished in his eyes. The postman, two women, and the clerk of the court whom he met, looked, to him, like people on a cinematograph screen, absolutely unreal and belonging to quite another world than his.

After a few minutes of this strange feeling, he pulled himself up, for he was both thoughtful and quick to read his own motives, thus providing himself with an inexhaustible subject for surprise, sarcasm, and pity.

"Come now," he said to himself, "here is a town in which I have lived for fifteen years, and which suddenly becomes strange to me because I am about to leave it. More than that, it has, to a certain extent, already become unreal to me. Now that it is no longer my own town, it ceases to exist, and is nothing but a vain image. The reason is that the many interesting things it contains were only interesting in so far as they directly affected me. As soon as they cease to do that, they practically do not exist as far as I am concerned. And thus, this populous city, situated on the hills that border a great river, this ancient Gaulish town, this colony where the Romans built temples and a circus; this strong city

that went through three memorable sieges, where two councils were held, which was enriched with a basilica, the crypt of which is still in existence, a cathedral, a college, sixteen parish churches, plus sixty chapels, a town hall, markets, hospitals, and palaces; this town which in very ancient times formed a part of the royal domain, became the capital of a vast province, and still bears on the fronton of the governor's palace, now turned into barracks, the civic coat of arms surrounded by lions and the Virtues; this town which to-day contains an archbishop's palace, a Faculty of Letters, a Faculty of Science, a Court of Appeal, and a Court of Justice; the chief town of a rich department only existed in reference to myself. It was peopled by myself alone; I was the only cause of its existence. It is high time for me to go; the town is fading away. I never knew that my mind was subjective to such a mad extent. A man never knows himself, and is a monster without realising it."

Thus did M. Bergeret examine himself with praiseworthy sincerity. As he was passing the church of Saint-Exupère, however, he stopped under the porch of the Last Judgment. He had always loved the old legendary sculptures, and taken an interest in the stories graven upon the stone. One devil in particular, who had a dog's head on his shoulders, and a man's face on the nether portion of his anatomy, had a peculiar fascination for him. He was occupied in dragging a long file of damned souls chained together, and his two countenances expressed absolute contentment. There was also a little monk whom an angel was trying to draw up by his hands, while a devil dragged him down by the feet. M. Bergeret loved that one, but he had never before looked with so much interest at these objects which he was now on the point of leaving.

He could not take his eyes away from them. The naïve idea of the universe expressed in stone by men who had been dead for more than five hundred years touched him, and seemed to him lovable in its absurdity. He regretted never having studied it more closely or examined it more sympathetically. He remembered that this porch of the Last Judgment which he had seen gilded by the rays of the sun and whitened by the moonbeams, in the joyous summer time and the dark winter days, would be with him only a little longer, and then he would see it no more.

He realised then that he was attached to things by invisible links not to be broken asunder without pain, and his heart was suddenly filled with great veneration for his town. He loved her old walls and her old trees. He went out of his way to go up the Mall and look at a favourite elm that grew there, the one he always sat beneath at the close of the long summer days. The beautiful tree was now bare of foliage, and its strong, slender framework stood out naked and black against the sky. M. Bergeret gazed at it long. The tranquil giant was motionless

and silent, and the mystery of its peaceful life gave rise to deep meditation on the part of the man who was about to enter upon a new phase of his destiny.

It was thus M. Bergeret learned that he loved his mother soil and the town where he had suffered tribulation and tasted quiet happiness.

CHAPTER XXVI

MONSEIGNEUR GUITREL, Bishop of Tourcoing, addressed to the President of the Republic the following letter, the text of which was published *in extenso* by the *Semaine religieuse*, the *Vérité*, the *Étendard*, the *Études sérieuses*, and several other diocesan papers:

“MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT,

“Before bringing to your notice several just causes for complaint and divers claims which are only too well founded, allow me for one short instant to enjoy the keen delight of feeling that I am in perfect accord with you on a point which must affect us both; allow me, realising as I do the feelings that must have swayed you during these long days of trial and of consolation, to join with you in an outburst of patriotic gratitude. Oh, how your generous soul must have suffered when you saw that handful of misguided men cast insult at the Army under the pretext of defending justice and truth, as though justice and truth could exist in opposition to social order and the hierarchy of power established by God Himself upon this earth! And how that heart of yours must have rejoiced at the sight of the whole nation, without exception of party, rising as one man to acclaim our brave Army, the Army of Clovis, Charlemagne, and St. Louis, of Godefroy de Bouillon, Jeanne d'Arc and Bayard; to embrace her cause and avenge her wrongs. Oh, with what satisfaction must you have witnessed the watchful wisdom of the nation as it frustrated the devices of the proud and the evil-doer!

“Certainly one cannot deny that the honour of such praiseworthy conduct is due to France as a whole. But you are too clear-sighted, M. le Président, not to have recognised the Church and her faithful members in the van of the supporters of law and authority. They were in the front rank of the battle, saluting with confidence and respect the Army and her chiefs. And was it not the right place for the servants of Him Who has called Himself the God of Armies, and Who, to use the words of Bossuet, has sanctified them in calling Himself by that name? Thus you will always find in us the surest upholders of law and order, and the obedience which we have not refused even to princes that persecuted us will never tire. In return for this may your Government ever look peacefully upon us, and so make our obedience a joy! Our hearts must exult at sight of the warlike array which makes us feared by other nations, and at sight of

you yourself in your place of honour, surrounded by your brilliant staff, like King Saul, that great and courageous man who always attached the bravest warriors to his person. *Nam quemcumque viderat Saul virum fortem et aptum ad praelium, sociabat eum sibi* (I Kings xiv. 52).

“Oh, would that I could end this letter as I have commenced it, with words of joy and gladness, and how happy should I be, M. le Président, if I could associate your venerated name with the declaration of peace in the Church as I have associated it with the victories gained before our eyes by the spirit of authority over the spirit of discord. But, alas, it cannot be! I must bring to your notice a subject of great sorrow; must afflict your soul by the spectacle of a great grief. I shall accomplish an irresistible duty in bringing your mind to bear upon an open and bleeding wound which must be healed. It is to my interest to tell you certain painful truths, and to your interest to listen. My pastoral duty compels me to speak. Placed by the grace of the Sovereign Pontiff upon the See of the Blessed Saint Loup, successor as I am of so many holy apostles and vigilant pastors, should I be the legitimate heir of their devoted labours if I had not the courage to continue them? *Alii labor averunt, et vos in labor es eorum introistis* (Ecc viii. 9). It is therefore fitting that my feeble voice should uplift itself until it reach your ears. It is also fitting that you lend an attentive ear to my words, for the subject I am about to discuss is worthy the thought of a ruler. *Princeps vero ea, qua digna sunt principe, cogitabit* (Is xxxii.).

“But how can I broach the subject without immediately feeling myself overcome by overwhelming grief? How can I, without weeping, point out to you the state of the religious whose spiritual head I am? For it is of them I would speak, M. le Président. As I entered my diocese, how heart-rending were the sights that met my gaze on all sides. In the sacred buildings consecrated to the education of children, the cure of the sick, and the care of the aged, the instruction of our priests and the contemplation of the divine mysteries, I found nothing but anxious faces and sad looks. There, where the joy of innocence and the quietude of labour formerly reigned, a dark anxiety has settled. Sighs go up to heaven, and from all lips the same cry of anguish, ‘Who will care for our sick and aged? What will become of our little children? Where shall we retire to pray?’ These were the words that greeted the shepherd of the diocese of Tourcoing, such were the words of the monks and nuns who knelt at his feet and kissed his hands, for they have been robbed of that which is theirs by right, of that which is also the right of our poor, our widows and orphans, the bread of our clergy, and the viaticum of our missionaries. Thus, at the moment of total ruin, our monks and nuns bewailed their fate while they waited for the tax-collectors

to outrage the sanctuary of our cloistered virgins, and even to seize the sacred vessels on the altar.

“This, then, is the state to which our religious communities are reduced by the enforcement of the different taxation laws to which I have referred, if such mad and criminal enactments can be called laws. If you will but examine the position in which our religious orders are placed by these spoliative measures, dignified by the name of laws, the expressions of which I make use will not appear to you excessive, and a moment’s attention on your part will make you share my feelings. Having regard to the fact that religious bodies are subject to the general taxation, it is iniquitous to force further taxes upon them; that will at once strike you as an injustice, and I can point out others equally unjust. But as regards this thing in particular, M. le Président, allow me to protest both firmly and respectfully. I have not sufficient authority to speak in the name of the entire Church, but I am sure that I do not stray from the right path when I declare as an essential principle of justice that the State has no right to impose burdens upon the Church. The Church pays what is demanded of her, she pays as an act of grace, but she is under no obligation to do so. Her ancient exemption from taxation proceeded from her sovereignty, for the sovereign pays no tribute. She can always enter a claim to those ancient rights when and where it suits her convenience; she can no more renounce her just claims than she can renounce her duties and sovereign privileges, and, as matters are, she gives proof of the most admirable powers of renunciation. That is all. Having stated my objections, I will now proceed with my evidence.

“The religious bodies are subject to the following duties:

“Firstly, general taxation, as I have just stated.

“Secondly, taxes on inalienable property.

“Thirdly, a tax of four per cent on income (Acts of 1880 and 1884).

“Fourthly, liability under the ‘droit d’accroissement,’ the monstrous effects of which are supposed to have been modified by what is called the ‘droit d’abonnement,’ which the Government annually deducts from the estimated portion of deceased members the sum of eleven francs twenty-five per cent, including the decimes. It is true that, by a mock kindness which is in reality merely a refinement of perfidy and injustice, the law allows the charitable and educational institutions to be relieved of this charge, on account of their utility, as though the houses where our holy women pray God to pardon the crimes of France and to enlighten her blinded rulers were not as useful, more useful even, than schools and hospitals!

“But it was necessary to disunite the common interests, and in order to do so differential treatment had to be meted out. The idea was to distintegrate and

paralyse resistance; this again was the idea that actuated the Government when they fixed the tax of 30 per cent for recognised religious institutions, and at 40 per cent for the unrecognised, payable annually, on the value of property both real and personal, so that the latter, who are not permitted to hold property, are judged liable to pay, and to pay even more than the others.

“To sum up, for the further burden of our religious bodies to the common taxes are added the tax on inalienable property, the income tax of 4 per cent, and the so-called increment duties, which are not modified but accentuated by what is called the ‘droit d’abonnement’ or subscription duty. Is this endurable? Is it possible to find in the whole world another such abominable example of spoliation? No, you must admit, M. le Président, that it is not.

“And when the religious orders of my diocese asked me what they were to do, could I give them any other reply than the following: ‘Resist the law!’

It is your right and duty to oppose injustice! Resist the law! Say to them, “We cannot do it. *Non possumus*”

“They are resolved so to do, M. le President, and all our religious bodies, recognised or unrecognised, teaching, charitable or cloistered, destined to foreign missions or to lives of monastic retreat, are agreed, in spite of the inequality with which they are assessed, upon a stubborn resistance. They have realised that the different forms of treatment meted out to them by your so-called laws are uniformly iniquitous, and that it behoves them to join together in a common defence. Their resolve is unshakable. After having paved the way to it, I support their resolution, and in so doing feel assured that I am not failing in the obedience I owe to authority and to the law, and which I whole-heartedly render to you both as a matter of conscience and religion. I feel sure that I am not misjudging your power, which can only be exercised for the maintenance of justice. *Ecce in justitia regnabit rex* (Paralip xxii. 22).

“In his pastoral letter *Diuturnum illud* His Holiness Leo XIII has expressly declared that the faithful may dispense with obedience to civil power if the latter issue orders that openly disregard natural and divine rights. ‘If a man,’ he has said in this admirable letter, ‘finds himself forced to infringe either the law of God or the law of man, he should follow the precepts of Jesus Christ, and reply like the apostles, “It is better to obey God than man.” To act thus is not to merit the reproach of disobedience, for as soon as the will of a ruler is in opposition to the will and law of God he exceeds his power, justice is corrupted, and henceforth his authority is impotent because, in so far as it is unjust, it ceases to exist.’

“Believe me it is not without deep and protracted meditation that I have encouraged the religious bodies under my control to make the necessary

resistance. I have weighed the temporal loss that may, perhaps, result, and such consideration has not stopped me. When we reply to your tax-gatherers, *Non possumus*, ' you will attempt to overcome our resistance by force. But how will you achieve your end? Will you lay hands upon our recognised bodies? Dare you? Upon our non-recognised bodies? Can you? Will you show a pitiful courage and sell our goods and the objects dedicated to divine worship? And if it is indeed true that neither the poverty of the former nor the sacred nature of the latter will preserve them, from your rapacity, you must learn, and the wives and children of those who aid and abet you must learn, that those who enter upon such a course run the risk of excommunication, the terrible effects, of which strike fear into even the most hardened sinners. And all those who consent to buy anything proceeding from any such unlawful sale expose themselves to the same penalty.

“And if we are robbed of our belongings, hunted from our dwellings, the injury will not be to us, but to you, who will be covered with the shame of unprecedented scandal. You can retaliate most cruelly upon us, but no threat can frighten us; we fear neither prisons nor chains. The manacled hands of priests and confessors have delivered the Church ere now. Come what may, we shall pay nothing, we may not, we cannot. *Non possumus*.

“Before arriving at such an extremity I thought it only right, M. le Président, to place the matter before you, in the hope that you would inquire into it with the whole-hearted firmness God bestows upon the rulers who place their trust in Him. May you, with His help, find a remedy for the crying evils I have placed before you. God grant, M. le Président, God grant that, when you have examined the injustice of the taxation as regards our religious bodies, you may be guided less by your counsellors than by your own sense of justice. For, if the chief may take counsel of others, it is his own counsel he should follow. As Solomon has said, ‘Counsel in the heart of a man is like unto deep water.’ *Sicut aqua profunda, sic consilium in corde viri* (Prov xx. 5).

“With the deepest respect, etc., I have the honour, M. le Président, to be

Your obedient servant,

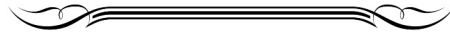
“JOACHIM,
“Bishop of Tourcoing.”

The letter of the Bishop of Tourcoing was published on January 14th.

On the 30th of the same month the *Agence Hava* sent the following communication to the papers:

“The cabinet met yesterday at the Élysée. It was decided at the meeting that the Minister of Public Worship should apply to the Council d’État for a writ against Monseigneur Guitrel, Bishop of Tourcoing, in connexion with a letter addressed by him to the President of the Republic.”

A CHRONICLE OF OUR OWN TIMES IV: MONSIEUR BERGERET IN PARIS



Translated by B. Drillien **CONTENTS**

[CHAPTER I](#)
[CHAPTER II](#)
[CHAPTER III](#)
[CHAPTER IV](#)
[CHAPTER V](#)
[CHAPTER VI](#)
[CHAPTER VII](#)
[CHAPTER VIII](#)
[CHAPTER IX](#)
[CHAPTER X](#)
[CHAPTER XI](#)
[CHAPTER XII](#)
[CHAPTER XIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIV](#)
[CHAPTER XV](#)
[CHAPTER XVI](#)
[CHAPTER XVII](#)
[CHAPTER XVIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIX](#)
[CHAPTER XX](#)
[CHAPTER XXI](#)
[CHAPTER XXII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIV](#)
[CHAPTER XXV](#)
[CHAPTER XXVI](#)
[CHAPTER XXVII](#)

CHAPTER I

MONSIEUR BERGERET was seated at table taking his frugal evening meal. Riquet lay at his feet on a tapestry cushion. Riquet had a religious soul; he rendered divine honours to mankind. He regarded his master as very good and very great. But it was chiefly when he saw him at table that he realized the sovereign greatness and goodness of Monsieur Bergeret.

If, to Riquet, all things pertaining to food were precious and impressive, those pertaining to the food of man were sacred. He venerated the diningroom as a temple, the table as an altar. During meals he kept his place at his master's feet, in silence and immobility.

"It's a spring chicken," said old Angélique as she placed the dish upon the table.

"Good. Be kind enough to carve it, then," said Monsieur Bergeret, who was a poor hand with weapons and quite hopeless as a carver.

"Willingly," said Angélique, "but carving isn't woman's work, it's the gentlemen who ought to carve poultry."

"I don't know how to carve."

"Monsieur ought to know."

This dialogue was by no means new. Angélique and her master exchanged similar remarks every time that game or poultry came to the table. It was not flippantly, it was certainly not to save herself trouble, that the old servant persisted in offering her master the carving-knife as a token of the respect which was due to him. In the peasant class from which she had sprung and also in the little middle-class households where she had been in service, it was a tradition that it was the master's duty to carve. The faithful old soul's respect for tradition was profound. She did not think it right that Monsieur Bergeret should fall short of it, that he should delegate to her the performance of so authoritative a function, that he should fail to carve at his own table, since he was not grand enough to employ a butler to do it for him, like the Brécés, the Bonmonts and other such folk in town or country. She knew the obligations which honour imposes on a citizen who dines at home, and she never failed to impress them upon Monsieur Bergeret.

"The knife has just been sharpened; Monsieur can easily cut off a wing. It's not difficult to find the joint when the chicken is tender."

"Angélique, be so good as to carve this chicken."

Reluctantly she obeyed, and, slightly crestfallen, she carved the chicken on a corner of the sideboard. With regard to human food she had ideas which were more accurate but no less respectful than those of Riquet.

Meanwhile Monsieur Bergeret revolved within himself the reasons of the prejudice which had induced the worthy woman to believe that the right of wielding the carving-knife belonged to the master of the house alone. He did not look to find them in any gracious and kindly feeling on the man's part that he should reserve to himself a tedious and unattractive task. It is, as a matter of fact, to be observed that throughout the ages the more laborious and distasteful household tasks have, by the common consent of all nations, been assigned to women. On the contrary, he attributed the tradition cherished by old Angélique to the ancient idea that the flesh of animals, prepared for the sustenance of man, is a thing so precious that the master alone may and should apportion and distribute it. And he called to mind the godlike swine-herd Eumæus receiving Ulysses in his pig-sty. He did not recognize him, but honoured him as a guest sent by Zeus: "Eumæus rose to divide the portions among his guests, for he had an equitable mind. He made seven portions, whereof he dedicated one to the Nymphs and — to Hermes, — son of Maia, — and of the rest he gave one portion to each of his table companions; but to honour his guest Ulysses he offered him the whole chine of the pig. And the subtle Ulysses rejoiced thereat and said to Eumæus: 'Eumæus, mayst — thou — remain for ever dear to our father Zeus — for that thou hast honoured me, such as I am, by giving me the best portion!'"

Thus Monsieur Bergeret, when in the company of his old servant, daughter of Mother Earth, felt himself carried back to the days of antiquity.

"Will Monsieur help himself to a little more?"

But he had not, like the divine Ulysses and the kings of Homer, an heroic appetite; and, as he ate, he read — his — paper, which lay open upon the table. This was another habit of which the servant did not approve.

"Would you like a bit of chicken, Riquet?" asked Monsieur Bergeret. "It is very good."

Riquet made no reply. He never asked for food as long as he lay under the table. However good the dishes might smell he did not claim his share of them, and, what is more, he dared not touch anything that was offered him. He refused to eat in a human diningroom. Monsieur Bergeret, an affectionate and kindly man, would have liked to share his meals with his comrade. At first he had tried to smuggle down to him a few little scraps. He had spoken to him gently, but not without that arrogance which so often accompanies beneficence. He had said:

“Lazarus, receive the crumbs of the good rich man, since for you, at all events, I am the good rich man.”

But Riquet had always refused. The majesty of the place over-awed him; and perhaps in his former condition he had received a lesson that taught him to respect the master’s food.

One day Monsieur Bergeret had been more pressing than usual. For a long while he had held a delicious piece of meat under his friend’s nose. Riquet had averted his head, and, emerging from beneath the table-cloth, had gazed at his master with his beautiful, humble eyes, full of gentleness and reproach; eyes that said: “Master, wherefore dost thou tempt me?”

And with drooping tail and crouching legs he had dragged himself upon his belly as a sign of humility, and had gone dejectedly to the door, where he sat upon his haunches. He had remained there throughout the meal. And Monsieur Bergeret had marvelled at the saintly patience of his little black friend.

He knew, then, what Riquet’s feelings were, and that is why he did not insist on this occasion. Moreover, he knew that Riquet, after the dinner at which he was a reverential spectator, would presently go to the kitchen and greedily devour his own mess under the kitchen sink, snuffling and blowing, entirely at his ease. His mind at rest on this point, he resumed the thread of his thoughts.

“The heroes,” he reflected, “used to make a great business of eating and drinking. Homer does not forget to tell us that in the palace of the fair-haired Menelaus, Eteonteus, the son of Boëthus, was wont to carve the meats and distribute the portions. A king was worthy of praise when, at his table, every man received his due portion of the roasted ox. Menelaus knew the customs of his times. With the aid of her servants the white armed Helen saw to the cooking and the great Eteonteus carved the meats. The pride of so noble a function still shines upon the smooth faces of our butlers and *maîtres d’hôtel*. We are deep-rooted in the past. But I am not a hungry man: I am only a small eater, and Angélique Borniche, primitive woman that she is, makes that too a grievance against me. She would think far more of me had I the appetite of a son of Atreus or a Bourbon.”

Monsieur Bergeret had just reached this stage in his reflections when Riquet got up from his cushion and ran barking to the door.

This action was remarkable because it was unusual. Riquet never left his cushion until his master rose from table. He had been barking for some moments when old Angélique, putting a bewildered face in at the door, announced that “those young ladies” had arrived.

Monsieur Bergeret understood her to allude to his sister Zoe and his daughter Pauline, whom he had not expected so soon. He knew that his sister Zoe was

brusque and sudden in her actions. He rose from the table; but Riquet, at the sound of footsteps, which were now heard in the passage outside, uttered terrible cries of warning; his aboriginal caution, unconquered by a liberal education, leading him to believe that every stranger must of necessity be an enemy. He scented a great danger, a hideous invasion of the diningroom, with the menace of ruin and desolation.

Pauline flung her arms around her father's neck. Napkin in hand, he kissed her, and then stood back to gaze at this young girl, a mysterious being, like all young girls, whom, after a year's absence, he hardly recognized. She was at once very near and almost a stranger to him. She was his by virtue of the obscure sources of life, but she eluded him in the dazzling energy of youth.

"How do you do, papa?"

Her very voice had changed; it was lower and less uneven.

"How you have grown, my child!"

He thought her pretty, with her dainty nose, intelligent eyes and quizzical mouth. But this feeling was at once marred by the reflection that there is little peace in this world of ours, and that young people, seeking for happiness, are entering upon a difficult and uncertain enterprise.

He gave Zoe a hasty kiss upon either cheek.

"You have not altered, Zoe, my dear. I did not expect you to-day, but I am very glad to see you both again."

Riquet could not understand why his master gave so warm a welcome to strange folk. Had he violently driven them forth, he could have understood. However, he was used to not understanding all the ways of men. Suffering Monsieur Bergeret to do as he would, he continued to perform his duty, barking furiously to scare the evildoers. Then, from the depths of his throat, he drew growls of hatred and anger; and a frightful contraction of his lips uncovered his white teeth. Backing away from his enemies, he hurled threats at them.

"Is that your dog, papa?"

"You were to have come on Saturday," remarked Monsieur Bergeret.

"Didn't you get my letter?" inquired Zoe.

"Yes," replied Monsieur Bergeret.

"No, I mean the other one."

"I received only one."

"One cannot hear oneself speak here!"

It is true that Riquet was barking at the top of his voice.

"Your sideboard is dusty," remarked Zoe, putting her muff on it. "Doesn't your servant ever do any dusting?"

Riquet could not bear any one to lay hold of the sideboard like that. Either he had conceived a special aversion for Mademoiselle Zoe or he judged her the more important of the two, for it was to her that he addressed his loudest barks and growls. When he saw her place a hand upon the receptacle in which the human nutriment was stored he barked so shrilly that the glasses upon the table rang again. Mademoiselle Zoe, turning upon him suddenly, inquired ironically: "Are you going to eat me up?"

Riquet fled in terror.

"Is your dog vicious, papa?"

"No, he is intelligent; he isn't vicious."

"I don't think he's particularly intelligent," said Zoe.

"Yes, he is," said Monsieur Bergeret. "He does not understand all our ideas; but we don't understand all his. No one can enter into the mind of another."

"You, Lucien, are no judge of persons," said Zoe.

Monsieur Bergeret turned to Pauline.

"Come, let me have a look at you. I can hardly recognise you."

A bright idea struck Riquet. He made up his mind to go to the kitchen, to the kindly Angélique, and to warn her, if possible, of the disturbance taking place in the diningroom. She was his last hope for the restoration of order and the expulsion of the intruders.

"What have you done with Father's portrait?" inquired Mademoiselle Zoe.

"Sit down and have something to eat," said Monsieur Bergeret. "There is some chicken and various other things."

"Papa, is it really true that we are going to live in Paris?"

"Next month, my child. Are you glad?"

"Yes, but I should be just as happy in the country if I could have a garden."

She stopped eating her chicken and said:

"I do admire you, papa. I'm proud of you. You are a great man."

"That is what my little dog Riquet thinks too," replied Monsieur Bergeret.

CHAPTER II

UNDER the supervision of Mademoiselle Zoe, the professor's furniture was packed and taken to the railway station.

During the days of the removal Riquet roamed sadly through the devastated rooms. He regarded Zoe and Pauline with suspicion, as their arrival had been closely followed by the complete upheaval of his formerly peaceful home. The tears of old Angélique, who wept all day long in her kitchen, increased his depression. His most cherished habits were set at naught; the strange, ill-clad, fierce and insulting men troubled his repose; they even went so far as to enter the kitchen and kick away his plate of food and bowl of fresh water. Chairs were taken from him as soon as he lay upon them, and carpets were abruptly dragged from beneath his persecuted body, so that in his own home he no longer knew where to lay his head.

To his honour be it said that at first he had sought to resist. When the water-tank was removed he had barked furiously at the enemy, but no one heeded the alarm. No one gave him any encouragement; nay, he was, indeed, actually opposed. "Be quiet," rapped out Mademoiselle Zoe, and Pauline had added, "Riquet, you are perfectly absurd!"

Thenceforth he decided not to waste his time in giving warnings that fell on deaf ears or to labour unaided for the common good, and he grieved silently over the ruined house, and wandered from room to room vainly seeking a little peace. When the pantehnicon men entered the room in which he had taken refuge he would prudently hide beneath some table or sideboard which had not yet been taken away. But this precaution was more harmful than helpful to him, for presently the piece of furniture tottered above him, rose, and fell again, creaking ominously and threatening to crush him. With bristling coat and haggard features he took to his heels only to seek another place of refuge as precarious as the last.

But these material inconveniences, nay, these perils, were trifling matters in comparison with the pain that filled his heart. It was his *moral*, so to speak, that was most affected.

To him the articles of furniture were not inanimate objects but living and kindly beings, favourable *genii* whose departure was a presage of dire misfortune. Dishes and frying-pans, saucepans and sugar-basins, all the divinities of the kitchen; arm-chairs, carpets, cushions, all the fetishes of the fireside, his Lares and his household gods, had disappeared. He did not believe that so great a disaster could ever be made good, and his little soul grieved over

it to the very limit of its capacity. Happily, like the human soul, it was easily distracted and quick to forget its woes. During the lengthy absences of the thirsty removers, when old Angélique's broom stirred up the ancient dust upon the floor, Riquet scented the smell of mice, or watched a scurrying spider, and his fickle fancy was diverted awhile; but he soon relapsed into melancholy.

On the day of departure, seeing that matters were growing worse from hour to hour, he was utterly miserable. It seemed to him a peculiarly ominous thing that they should thrust the linen into dismal-looking chests. Pauline was packing her own boxes with joyful eagerness. He turned from her as though she were doing an evil thing, and huddled against the wall. "The worst has come," he thought. "This is the end of all things!"

Whether he believed that things ceased to exist when he saw them no longer, or whether he was only anxious to avoid a painful spectacle, he was careful not to look in Pauline's direction. As she went to and fro she chanced to notice Riquet's attitude, and its melancholy struck her as comical. Laughing, she called him: "Here, Riquet, here!" But he would neither stir from his corner nor turn his head. He hadn't at that moment the heart to caress his young mistress, and a secret instinct, a kind of foreboding, warned him not to go too near to the gaping trunk. Pauline called him several times, and as he did not respond she went over to him and picked him up in her arms.

"How miserable we are!" she said. "How much to be pitied!"

Her tone was ironical; Riquet did not understand irony. He lay motionless and dejected in her arms, feigning to see nothing, to hear nothing.

"Look at me, Riquet!" she demanded. Three times she bade him look at her, but in vain. Then, simulating violent anger, she threw him into the trunk, crying, "In you go, stupid!" and banged the lid on him. At that moment her aunt called her, and she went out of the room, leaving Riquet in the trunk.

He felt exceedingly uneasy, for it never entered his head that Pauline had put him there for fun, and merely to tease him. Judging that his position was quite bad enough already, he endeavoured not to aggravate it by thoughtless behaviour. For some moments, therefore, he remained motionless without even drawing a breath. Then, feeling that no fresh disaster threatened him, he thought he had better explore his gloomy prison. He pawed the petticoats and chemises upon which he had been so cruelly precipitated, seeking some outlet by which he might escape. He had been busy for two or three minutes when Monsieur Bergeret, who was getting ready to go out, called him:

"Riquet! Riquet! Here! we're going to the bookshop to say good-bye to Paillot! Here! Where are you?"

Monsieur Bergeret's voice comforted Riquet greatly. He replied to it by a desperate scratching at the wicker sides of the trunk.

"Where is the dog?" inquired Monsieur Bergeret of Pauline, who at that moment returned, carrying a pile of linen.

"In my trunk, papa."

"Why in the trunk?"

"Because I put him there."

Monsieur Bergeret went up to the trunk, and remarked:

"It was thus that the child Comatas, who played upon the flute as he kept his master's goats, was imprisoned in a chest, where he was fed on honey by the bees of the Muses. — But not so with you, Riquet; you would have died of hunger in this trunk, for you are not dear to the immortal Muses."

Having spoken, Monsieur Bergeret freed his little friend, who with wagging tail followed him as far as the hall. Then a thought appeared to strike him. He returned to Pauline's room, ran to her and jumped up against her skirt, and only when he had riotously embraced her as a sign of his adoration did he rejoin his master on the stairs. He would have felt that he was lacking in wisdom and piety had he failed to bestow these tokens of affection on a being whose power had plunged him into the depths of a trunk.

Monsieur Bergeret thought Paillot's shop a dismal, ugly place. Paillot and his assistant were busy "calling over" the list of goods supplied to the Communal School. This task prevented him from prolonging his farewell to the professor. He had never had very much to say for himself and as he grew older he was gradually losing the habit of speech. He was weary of selling books; he saw that it was all over with the trade and was longing for the time to come when he could give up his business and retire to his place in the country, where he always spent his Sundays.

As was his wont, Monsieur Bergeret made for the corner where the old books were kept and took down volume XXXVIII of *The World's Explorers*. The book opened as usual at pages 212 and 213, and once more he perused these uninspiring lines:

"... towards a northerly passage. 'It was owing to this check,' said he, 'that we were able to revisit the Sandwich Islands and enrich our voyage by a discovery which, although the last, seems in many respects to be the most important which has yet been made by Europeans in the whole extent of the Pacific Ocean.' The happy anticipations which these words appeared to announce were, unhappily, not realized...."

These lines, which he was reading for the hundredth time, and which reminded him of so many hours of his commonplace and laborious existence which was embellished, nevertheless, by the fruitful labours of the mind; these lines, for whose meaning he had never sought, filled him, on this occasion, with melancholy and discouragement, as though they contained a symbol of the emptiness of all human hopes, an expression of the universal void. He closed the book, which he had opened so often and was never to open again, and dejectedly left the shop.

In the Place Saint-Exupère he cast a last glance at the house of Queen Marguerite. The rays of the setting sun gleamed upon its historic beams, and in the violent contrast of light and shade the escutcheon of Philippe Tricouillard proudly displayed the outlines of its gorgeous coat of arms, placed there as an eloquent example and a reproach to the barren city.

Having re-entered the empty house, Riquet pawed his master's legs, looking up at him with his beautiful sorrowing eyes, that said: "You, formerly so rich and powerful, have you, O master, become poor? Have you grown powerless? You suffer men clad in filthy rags to invade your study, your bedroom and your dining-room, to fall upon your furniture and drag it out of doors. They drag your deep arm-chair down the stairs, your chair and mine, in which we sat to rest every evening, and often in the morning, side by side. In the clutch of these ragged men I heard it groan, that chair which is so great a fetish and so benevolent a spirit. And you never resisted these invaders. If you have lost all the *genii* that used to fill your house, even to the little divinities, that you used to put on your feet every morning when you got out of bed, those slippers which I used to worry in my play, if you are poor and miserable, O my master, what will become of me?"

"Lucien, we have no time to lose," said Zoe. "The train goes at eight and we have had no dinner. Let us go and dine at the station."

"To-morrow you will be in Paris," said Monsieur Bergeret to Riquet. "Paris is a famous and a generous city. To be honest, however, I must point out that this generosity is not vouchsafed alike to all its inhabitants. On the contrary, it is confined to a very small number of its citizens. But a whole city, a whole nation resides in the few who think more forcefully and more justly than the rest. The others do not count. What we call the spirit of a race attains consciousness only in imperceptible minorities. Minds which are sufficiently free to rid themselves of vulgar terrors and discover for themselves the veiled truths are rare in any place!"

CHAPTER III

UPON Monsieur Bergeret's arrival in Paris, with his daughter Pauline and his sister Zoe, he had lodged in a house which was soon to be pulled down, and which he began to like as soon as he knew that he could not remain in it. He was unaware of the fact that in any case he would have left it at the same time. Mademoiselle Bergeret had made up her mind as to that. She had taken these rooms only to give herself time to find better, and was opposed to the spending of any money upon the place.

It was a house in the Rue de Seine, a hundred years old at least. Never beautiful, it had grown uglier with age. The *porte cochère* opened humbly on a damp courtyard between a shoemaker's shop and a carrier's office. Monsieur Bergeret's rooms were on the second floor, and on the same floor lived a picture-restorer through whose open door glimpses could be caught of little unframed canvases set about an earthenware stove, landscapes, old portraits, and an amber-skinned woman asleep in a dark wood under a green sky. The staircase was fairly well lighted. Cobwebs hung in the corners, and at the turns the wooden stairs were embellished with tiles. Stray lettuce-leaves, dropped from some housewife's string bag, were to be found there of a morning.

Such things had no charm for Monsieur Bergeret, but he could not help feeling sad at the thought that he would become oblivious of these things as he had of so many others which, though they were not of any value, had made up the course of his life. —

Every day, when his work was done, he went house-hunting. He thought of living for preference on the left bank of the Seine, where his father had dwelt before him, where it seemed to him one breathed an atmosphere of quiet life and peaceful study. What made his search more difficult was the state of the roads, broken with deep trenches and covered with mounds of earth. There were also the impassable and eternally disfigured quays.

It will, of course, be remembered that, in the year 1899, the surface of Paris underwent a complete upheaval, either because the new conditions of life necessitated the execution of a great number of municipal undertakings, or because the approach of a huge international exhibition gave rise on every side to an exaggerated activity and a sudden ardour of enterprise. Monsieur Bergeret was grieved to see the town upset, for he did not sufficiently understand the necessity of such a proceeding, but, as he was a wise man, he endeavoured to console himself, to reassure himself by meditation. When he passed along his

beautiful Quai Malaquais, so cruelly ravaged by merciless engineers, he pitied the uprooted trees and the banished keepers of bookstalls, and he reflected, not without a certain depth of feeling:

“I have lost my friends, and now all that gave me delight in this city, her peace, her grace and her beauty, her old-time elegance and her noble historical vistas, is being violently swept away. It is always right and fitting, however, that reason should prevail over sentiment. We must not dally with vain regrets for the past, nor commiserate with ourselves over the changes that thrust themselves upon us, since change is the very condition of life. Perhaps these upheavals are necessary; it is needful that this city should lose some of her traditional beauty, so that the lives of the greater number of her inhabitants may become less painful and less hard.”

And, in the company of idle errand-boys and indolent police-sergeants, Monsieur Bergeret would watch the navvies digging deep into the soil of the famous quay, and once again he would tell himself:

“Here I see a vision of the city of the future, whose noblest buildings are as yet indicated only by deep excavations, which would suggest, to a shallow mind, that the labourers who are toiling to rear the city which we shall never behold are merely excavating abysmal pits, when in reality they may be laying the foundations of a prosperous home, the abode of joy and peace.”

Thus did Monsieur Bergeret, who was a man of goodwill, look with a favouring eye upon the building of the ideal city; but he was much less at home amid the building operations of the real city, seeing that at every step he risked falling, through absence of mind, into a pit.

Nevertheless he continued to go house-hunting, but he did so in a whimsical fashion. Old houses pleased him, in that their stones had for him a tongue. The Rue Gît-le-Cœur had a particular attraction for him, and whenever he saw beside the keystone of a gateway or on a door which had once been flanked by a wrought-iron railing a notice to the effect that there was a flat to let, he would mount the stairs, accompanied by a sordid concierge, in an atmosphere that reeked of countless generations of rats, which was aggravated from floor to floor by the smell of cooking from poverty-stricken kitchens. The workshops of bookbinders or box-makers enriched it at times with the horrible odour of sour glue, and Monsieur Bergeret would depart filled with sadness and discouragement.

Home again, he would tell his sister and daughter, at the dinner-table, of the unfavourable results of his inquiries; Mademoiselle Zoe would listen calmly to his story. She had made up her mind to seek and to find a house herself. She

regarded her brother as a superior person, but as one quite incapable of reasonable ideas concerning the practical affairs of life.

"I went over a flat to-day on the Quai Conti. I don't know what you would think of it. It looks out on a courtyard with a well, some ivy, and a statue of Flora, moss-grown, mutilated, and headless, perpetually weaving a garland of flowers. I also saw a small flat in the Rue de la Chaise. That looks out on a garden with a great lime-tree, one branch of which, when the leaves have grown, would enter my study. There is a big room that Pauline could have; she would make it charming with a few yards of coloured cretonne."

"What about my room?" demanded Mademoiselle Zoe. "You never think of my room. Besides—"

She did not finish her sentence, as she took no particular notice of her brother's reports.

"We may be obliged to move into a new house," said Monsieur Bergeret, for he was a sensible man accustomed to subject his desires to reason.

"I'm afraid so, papa," said Pauline. "But never mind, we will find you a tree reaching up to your window, I promise you."

She followed her father's investigations with perfect good nature, but without much personal interest, as a young girl undismayed by change, who vaguely feels that her fate is not yet determined, and lives the while in a species of anticipation.

"The new houses are better fitted up than the old ones," continued Monsieur Bergeret, "but I do not like them, perhaps because I am more conscious, in the midst of a luxury that one can measure, of the vulgarity of a straitened life. Not that the mediocrity of my fortune distresses me, even on your account. It is the banal and commonplace that I detest.... But you will think me absurd."

"Oh, no, papa."

"What I dislike in new houses is the precise sameness of their arrangement. The structure of the apartment is only too visible from the outside. For a long while dwellers in cities have been accustomed to live one above another, and as your aunt won't hear of a small house in the suburbs I am quite willing to put up with a third or fourth-story flat, and that is precisely why I cannot but regret giving up the idea of an old house. The irregularity of old houses makes the piling of flat upon flat more endurable. When I walk down a new street I find myself thinking that this superposition of households in modern buildings is, in its uniformity, ridiculous. The small dining rooms perched one above the other with the same little windows and the self-same copper gaselier lighted every evening at exactly the same time; the same tiny kitchens with larders looking on the yard, the same extremely dirty maidservants; the same drawing-rooms, with

their pianos one over the other. To my mind, the precision of modern houses reveals the daily functions of the creatures enclosed in them as plainly as though the floors and ceilings were of glass. And all these people who dine one above another, play the piano one above another, and go to bed one above another, in a perfectly symmetrical fashion — when one thinks of it, they offer a spectacle both comical and humiliating.”

“The tenants themselves would hardly think so,” said Mademoiselle Zoe, who had quite decided to settle in a new house.

“It is true,” said Pauline thoughtfully, “it is true, it is comical.”

“Of course, here and there, I see rooms that I like,” continued Monsieur Bergeret. “But the rent is always too high. And that makes me doubt the truth of a principle laid down by the admirable Fourier, which assures us that our tastes are so diverse that if only we lived in harmony with one another hovels would be as much in demand as palaces. It is quite true that we do not live in harmony; or we should all possess prehensile tails, so that we could hang suspended from the trees. Fourier has expressly said so. Another man of equal merit, the gentle Prince Kropotkin, has assured us more recently that some day we shall live rent-free in the mansions on the great avenues, for their owners will abandon them when they can no longer procure servants to keep them up. In those days, says the benevolent prince, they will be delighted to hand them over to the worthy women of the working-classes who will not object to a kitchen in the basement. In the meanwhile, the question of a house is both arduous and difficult. Zoe, please come with me to see that suite of rooms on the Quai Conti of which I told you. — It is rather dilapidated, having served for thirty years as a chemical warehouse. The landlord won’t do any repairs as he expects to let the place as a warehouse. The windows are oval dormer-windows, but from them you see an ivy-covered wall, a moss-grown well and a headless statue of Flora which still seems to smile. Such things are not easily found in Paris.”

CHAPTER IV

“It is to let,” said Mademoiselle Zoe, as they stopped before the gate. “It is to let, but we will not take it. It is too big. Besides—”

“No, we will not take it, but will you look over it? I should be interested to see it again,” said Monsieur Bergeret timidly.

They hesitated a moment. It seemed to them that in entering the deep dark vaulted way they were entering the region of the shades.

Scouring the streets in search of a flat, they had chanced to cross the narrow Rue des Grands-Augustins, which has preserved its old-world aspect, and whose greasy pavements are never dry. They remembered that they had passed six years of their childhood in one of the houses in this street. Their father, a professor at the University, had settled there in 1856, after having led for four years a wandering and precarious existence, ceaselessly hunted from town to town by an inimical Minister of Instruction. And, as witnessed the battered notice-board, the very flat in which Lucien and Zoe had first seen the light of day, and tasted the savour of life, was now to let.

As they passed down the path which led under the massive forefront of the building, they experienced an inexplicable feeling of melancholy and reverence. The damp courtyard was hemmed in by walls which since the minority of Louis XIV had slowly been crumbling in the rains and the fogs rising from the Seine. On the right as they entered was a small building, which served as a porter’s lodge. There, on the window-sill, a magpie hopped about in a cage, and in the lodge, behind a flowering plant, a woman sat sewing.

“Is the second floor on the courtyard to let?”

“Yes, do you wish to see it?”

“Yes, we should like to see it.”

Key in hand, the concierge led the way. They followed her in silence. The gloomy antiquity of the house caused the memories which the blackened stones evoked for the brother and sister to recede into an unfathomable past. They climbed the stone stairs in a state of sorrowful eagerness, and when the concierge opened the door of the flat they remained motionless upon the landing, afraid to enter the rooms that seemed to be haunted by the host of their childish memories, like so many little ghosts.

“You can go in; the flat is empty.”

At first they could find nothing of the past in the wide empty rooms, freshly papered. They were amazed to find that they had become strangers to things

which had formerly been so familiar.

“Here is the kitchen,” said the concierge, “and here are the dining-room and the drawing-room.” A voice cried from the courtyard:

“M’ame Falempin!”

The concierge looked out of the window, apologized, and grumbling to herself went down the stairs with feeble steps, groaning. Then the brother and sister began to remember. Memories of inimitable hours, of the long days of childhood, began to return to them.

“Here is the dining-room,” said Zoe. “The sideboard used to be there, against the wall.”

“The mahogany sideboard, ‘battered by its long wanderings,’ as our father used to say, when he and his family and his furniture were ceaselessly hunted from north to south and from east to west by the Minister of the 2nd of December. It remained here a few years, however, maimed and crippled.”

“There is the porcelain stove in its old corner.”

“The flue is different.”

“Do you think so?”

“Yes, Zoe. Ours had a head of Jupiter Trophonius upon it. In those far-off days it was the custom of the stove-makers in the Cour du Dragon to decorate porcelain flues with a head of Jupiter Trophonius.”

“Are you sure?”

“Sure. Don’t you remember a crowned head with a pointed beard?”

“No.”

“Oh, well that is not surprising; you were always indifferent to the shapes of things. You don’t look at anything.”

“I am more observant than you, my poor Lucien; it is you who never notice things. The other day, when Pauline had waved her hair, you didn’t notice it. If it were not for me—”

She did not finish her sentence, but peered about the empty room with her green eyes and sharp nose.

“Over there in that corner near the window, Mademoiselle Verpie used to sit with her feet on her foot-warmer. Saturday was the sewing-woman’s day, and Mademoiselle Verpie never missed a Saturday.”

“Mademoiselle Verpie,” said Lucien with a sigh: “how old would she be to-day? She was getting on in life when we were children. She used to tell a story about a box of matches. I have always remembered that story and can repeat it now word for word just as she used to tell it. ‘It was when they were placing the statues on the Pont des Saints Pères. It was so cold that my fingers were quite numb. Coming back from doing my marketing, I was watching the workmen.

There was a whole crowd of people waiting to see how they would lift such heavy statues. I had my basket on my arm. A well-dressed gentleman said to me, "Mademoiselle, you are on fire." Then I smelt a smell of sulphur and saw smoke pouring out of my basket. My threepenny box of matches had caught fire.' That was how Mademoiselle Verpie related the adventure," added Monsieur Bergeret. "She often used to tell us of it. Probably it was the greatest adventure of her life."

"You've forgotten an important part of the story, Lucien. These were Mademoiselle Verpie's exact words: 'A well-dressed gentleman said to me, "Mademoiselle, you are on fire." I answered "Go away and leave me alone."

"Just as you like, Mademoiselle." Then I smelt a smell of sulphur.'"

"You are quite right, Zoe. I was mutilating the text and omitted an important passage. By her reply, Mademoiselle Verpie, who was hump-backed, showed that she was a virtuous woman. It is a point that one should bear in mind. I seem to recollect, too, that she was very easily shocked."

"Our poor mother," said Zoe, "had a mania for mending. What an amount of darning used to be done!"

"Yes, she was fond of her needle. But what I thought so charming was that before she sat down to her sewing she always placed a pot of wallflowers or daisies or a dish of fruit and green leaves on the table before her just where the light caught it. She used to say that rosy apples were as pretty as roses. I never met any one who appreciated as she did the beauty of a peach or a bunch of grapes. When she went to see the Chardins at the Louvre, she knew by instinct that they were good pictures, but she could not help feeling that she preferred her own groups. With what conviction she would say to me: 'Look, Lucien, have you ever seen anything so beautiful as this feather from a pigeon's wing?' I think no one ever loved nature more simply and frankly than she."

"Poor Mother," sighed Zoe, "and in spite of that her taste in dress was dreadful. One day she chose a blue dress for me at the Petit-Saint-Thomas. It was called electric blue, and it was terrible. That frock was the burden of my childish days."

"You were never fond of dress, you."

"You think so, do you? Well, you are mistaken. I should have loved to have pretty dresses, but the elder sister had to go short because little Lucien needed tunics. It couldn't be helped."

They passed into a narrow room, more like a passage.

"This was Father's study," said Zoe.

"Hasn't it been cut in two by a partition? I thought it was much larger than this."

“No, it was always the same as it is now. His writing-desk was there, and above it hung the portrait of Monsieur Victor Leclerc. Why haven’t you kept that engraving, Lucien?”

“What! do you mean to say that this narrow room held his motley crowds of books and contained whole nations of poets, orators and historians? When I was a child I used to listen to the silent eloquence that filled my ears with a buzz of glory. No doubt the presence of such an assembly pressed back the walls. I certainly remember it as a spacious room.”

“It was very overcrowded. He would never let us tidy anything in his study.”

“So it was here that our father used to work, seated in his old red arm-chair with his cat Zobeide on a cushion at his feet. Here it was that he used to look at us with the same slow smile that he never lost all through his illness, even up to the very last. I saw him smile gently at death itself, as he had smiled at life.”

“You are mistaken in that, Lucien. Father did not know he was going to die.”

Monsieur Bergeret did not speak for a moment, then he said:

“It is strange. I can see him now, in memory, not worn out and white with age, but still young as he was when I was quite a little child. I can see his slight, supple figure and his long black wind-tossed hair. Such mops of hair, that seemed as though whipped up by a gust of wind, crowned many of the enthusiastic heads of the men of 1830 and ’48. I know it was only a trick of the brush that arranged their hair like that, but it made them look as though they lived upon the heights and in the storm. Their thoughts were loftier and more generous than ours. Our father believed in the advent of social justice and universal peace. He announced the triumph of the Republic and the harmonious formation of the United States of Europe. He would be cruelly disappointed were he to come back among us.”

He was still speaking although Mademoiselle Bergeret was no longer in the study. He followed her into the empty drawing-room. There they both recalled the arm-chairs and sofa of green velvet, which as children, in their games, they used to turn into walls and citadels.

“Oh, the taking of Damietta!” cried Monsieur Bergeret. “Do you remember it, Zoe? Mother, who allowed nothing to be wasted, used to collect all the silver paper round the bars of chocolate, and one day she gave me a pile which pleased me as much as if it had been a magnificent present. I gummed it to the leaves of an old atlas and made it into helmets and cuirasses. One day when Cousin Paul came to dinner I gave him one of these sets of armour, a Saracen’s, and put the other on myself: it was the armour of St. Louis. If one goes into the matter, neither Saracens nor Christian knights wore such armour in the thirteenth century, but such a consideration did not trouble us, and I took Damietta.

“That recollection reminds me of the cruellest humiliation of my life. As soon as I had made myself master of Damietta, I took Cousin Paul prisoner and tied him up with skipping-ropes; then I pushed him with such enthusiasm that he fell on his nose, uttering piercing shrieks in spite of his courage. Mother came running in when she heard the noise, and when she saw Cousin Paul bound and prostrate on the floor she picked him up, kissed him and said: ‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Lucien, to hit a child so much smaller than yourself.’ And as a matter of fact Cousin Paul, who never grew very big, was then very small. I did not say that it had happened in the wars. I said nothing at all, and remained covered with confusion. My shame was increased by the magnanimity of Cousin Paul who said, between his sobs, ‘I haven’t hurt myself.’

“Ah our beautiful drawing-room,” sighed Monsieur Bergeret. “I hardly know it with this new paper. How I loved the ugly old paper with its green boughs! What a gentle shade, what a delicious warmth dwelt in the folds of the hideous claret-coloured rep curtains! Spartacus with folded arms used to look at us indignantly from the top of the clock on the mantelpiece. His chains, which I used idly to play with, came off one day in my hand. Our beautiful drawing-room! Mother would sometimes call us in there when she was entertaining old friends. We used to come here to kiss Mademoiselle Lalouette. She was over eighty years of age; her cheeks were covered with a mossy growth and her chin was bearded. One long yellow tooth protruded from her lips. They were spotted with black. What magic makes the memory of that horrible little old woman full of an attractive charm for me now? What force compels me to recall details of her queer far-away personality? Mademoiselle Lalouette and her four cats lived on an annuity of fifteen hundred francs, one half of which she spent in printing pamphlets on Louis XVII. She always had about a dozen of them in her hand-bag. The good lady’s mania was to prove that the Dauphin escaped from the Temple in a wooden horse. Do you remember the day she gave us lunch in her room in the Rue de Verneuil, Zoe? There, under layers of ancient filth, lay mysterious riches, boxes full of gold and embroideries.”

“Yes,” said Zoe, “she showed us some lace that had belonged to Marie Antoinette.”

“Mademoiselle Lalouette’s manners were excellent,” continued Monsieur Bergeret. “She spoke the purest French and adhered to the old pronunciation. She used to say ‘un *segret*, un *fil*, une *do* ’; she made me feel as though I were living in the reign of Louis XVI. Mother used to send for us also to speak to Monsieur Mathalène who was not so old as Mademoiselle Lalouette; but he had a hideous face. Never did a gentler soul reveal itself in a more frightful shape. He was an inhibited priest whom my father had met in the clubs in 1848 and

whom he esteemed for his Republican opinions. Poorer than Mademoiselle Lalouette, Monsieur Mathalène would go without food in order, like her, to print his pamphlets; but his went to prove that the sun and the moon move round the earth and are in reality no bigger than cheeses. That, by the way, was the opinion of Pierrot, but Monsieur Mathalène arrived at his conclusion only after thirty years of meditation and calculation. One still comes upon one of his pamphlets occasionally on the old bookstalls. Monsieur Mathalène was full of zeal for the happiness of mankind, whom he terrified by his dreadful ugliness. The only exceptions to his universal love were the astronomers, whom he suspected of the blackest designs on himself. He imagined that they wanted to poison him, and insisted on preparing his own food as much out of prudence as on account of his poverty.”

Thus in the empty rooms, like Ulysses in the land of the Cimmerii, did Monsieur Bergeret evoke the shades. For a moment he remained sunk in thought; then he said:

“Zoe, it must be one of two things; either in the days of our childhood there were more maniacs about than there are now, or our father befriended more than his fair share. I think he must have liked them. Pity probably drew him to them, or maybe he found them less tedious than other people; anyhow, he had a great following of them.”

Mademoiselle Bergeret shook her head.

“Our parents used to receive very sensible and deserving people. I should say rather that the harmless peculiarities of some old people impressed you, and that you have retained a vivid memory of them.”

“Zoe, make no mistake; we were both brought up among people who did not think in a common or usual fashion. Mademoiselle Lalouette, Abbé Mathalène and Monsieur Grille were wanting in ordinary common sense, that is certain. Do you remember Monsieur Grille? He was tall and stout, with a red face and a close-clipped white beard. He had lost both his sons in an Alpine accident in Switzerland, and ever since, summer and winter alike, he had worn garments made of bed-ticking. Our father considered him an exquisite Hellenist. He had a delicate feeling for the poetry of the Greek lyrics. He touched with a light and sure hand the hackneyed text of Theocritus. It was his happy mania never to believe in the certain death of his two sons, and while with crazy confidence he awaited their return he lived, clad in the raiment of a carnival clown, in loving intimacy with Alcaeus and Sappho.”

“He used to give us caramels,” said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

“His remarks were always wise, well-expressed and beautiful,” went on Monsieur Bergeret, “and that used to frighten us. Logic is what alarms us most

in a madman.”

“On Sunday nights the drawing room was ours,” said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

“Yes,” said Monsieur Bergeret. “It was there we used to play games after dinner. We used to write verses and draw pictures, and mother would play forfeits with us. Oh, the candour and simplicity of those bygone days! The simple pleasures, the charm of the old-world manners! We used to play charades; we ransacked your wardrobes, Zoe, in search of things to dress up in.”

“One day you pulled the white curtains off my bed.”

“That was to make robes for the Druids in the mistletoe scene, Zoe. The word we chose was *guimauve*. We were very good at charades, and Father was such a splendid audience. He did not listen to a word, but he smiled at us. I think I should have been quite a good actor, but the grownups never gave me a chance; they always wanted to do all the talking.”

“Don’t labour under any delusions, Lucien; you were incapable of playing your part in a charade. You are too absent-minded. I am the first to recognise your intellect and your talents, but you never had the gift of improvisation. You must not try to go outside your books and manuscripts.”

“I am just to myself, Zoe, and I know I am not eloquent; but when Jules Guinaut and Uncle Maurice played with us one could not get a word in.”

“Jules Guinaut had a real talent for comedy,” said Mademoiselle Bergeret, “and an unquenchable spirit.”

“He was studying medicine,” said Monsieur Bergeret. “A good-looking fellow!”

“So people used to say.”

“I think he was in love with you.”

“I don’t think so.”

“He paid you a great deal of attention.”

“That’s quite a different matter.”

“Then, quite suddenly, he disappeared.”

“Yes.”

“Don’t you know what became of him?”

“No. Come, Lucien, let us go.”

“Yes, let us go, Zoe; here we are the prey of the shades.”

And, without turning their heads, the brother and sister stepped over the threshold of their childhood’s old home and went silently down the stone staircase. When they found themselves again in the Rue des Grands-Augustins, amid the cabs and drays, the housewives and the artisans, the noise and movement of the outer world bewildered them as though they had just emerged from a long period of solitude.

CHAPTER V

MONSIEUR PANNETON DE LA BARGE had prominent eyes and a shallow mind. But his skin was so shiny that you could not help thinking that his mind must of necessity be of a fatty nature. His whole being was eloquent of arrogance, brusqueness and a pride that apparently had no fear of being importunate. Monsieur Bergeret guessed that the man had come to ask a favour of him.

They had known one another in the country. The professor, taking a walk beside the sluggish river, had often noted, on a green hillside, the slated roof of the chateau inhabited by Monsieur de La Barge and his family. Monsieur de La Barge himself he saw less frequently, for the latter was on visiting terms with the aristocracy of the countryside, without being sufficiently grand himself to receive the humbler folk. In the country he knew Monsieur Bergeret only on those critical days when one or another of his sons was going in for some examination; but now, in Paris, he wished to be friendly, and he made an effort to be so.

“Dear Monsieur Bergeret, I must first of all congratulate you.”

“Please do not trouble,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, with a little gesture of refusal that Monsieur de La Barge quite wrongly interpreted as inspired by modesty.

“I beg your pardon, Monsieur Bergeret, a professorship at the Sorbonne is a much-coveted position, and one that you well deserve.”

“How is your son Adhémar?” inquired Monsieur Bergeret, remembering the name as that of a candidate for the bachelor’s degree who had interested in his incompetence the authorities of civil, military and ecclesiastical society.

“Adhémar? He is doing well, very well; a little wild perhaps, but what would you have? He has nothing to do. In some ways it might be better for him to have some settled occupation. However, he is very young; there is plenty of time; he takes after me; he will settle down once he has found his vocation.”

“Didn’t he do a little demonstrating at Auteuil?” asked Monsieur Bergeret gently.

“For the army, for the army,” answered Monsieur de La Barge, “and I must confess that I could not find it in my heart to blame him. It can’t be helped. I am connected with the army through my father-in-law, the general, my brothers-in-law, and my cousin, the commandant.”

He was too modest to mention his father, the eldest of the Panneton brothers, who was also connected with the army through the supply department, and who, in 1872, as the result of an annoying charge in the police courts, was given a light sentence, for having supplied to the Army of the East, which was marching through the snow, shoes with cardboard soles.

He died ten years later, in his chateau of La Barge, rich and honoured.

"I was brought up to venerate the army," continued Monsieur Panneton de La Barge. "When quite a child I worshipped a uniform. It is a family tradition. I do not attempt to hide the fact that I hold by the old style of things. I can't help it, it is in my blood. I am a Monarchist and authoritarian by temperament. I am a Royalist. Now the army is all that is left us of the Monarchy; all that is left of a glorious past. It consoles us for the present and fills us with hope for the future."

Monsieur Bergeret might have interposed with some observations of historical interest; but he did not do so, and Monsieur de La Barge continued:

"That is why I regard those who attack the army as criminals, and those who would dare to interfere with it as fools."

"When Napoleon wished to praise one of the plays of Luce de Lancival," replied the professor, "he called it a headquarters tragedy. May I say that your philosophy is that of a General Staff? However, seeing that we live under the rule of liberty, it may perhaps be as well to conform to its customs. When one lives with men who have the habit of speech one must accustom oneself to hear anything. Do not hope that the right to discuss any subject will ever again be denied in France. Consider, too, that the army is by no means immutable; nothing in the world is that. Institutions can exist only by ceaseless modifications. The army has undergone such transformations in the course of its existence that it will probably undergo even greater changes in the future, and it is conceivable that in twenty years' time it will be quite another thing than what it is to-day."

"I prefer to tell you at once," replied Monsieur Panneton de La Barge, "that where the army is concerned I admit of no discussion. I repeat, it must not be interfered with. It represents, as it were, the battle-axe, and as such it must not be touched. During the last session of the Conseil Général of which I have the honour to be president, the Radical-Socialist minority put forward a vote in favour of two years' service. I protested against so unpatriotic a suggestion. I had no difficulty in proving a two years' service would mean the end of the army. You cannot make an infantryman in two years, much less a cavalryman. Perhaps you will style those who clamour for the two years' service reformers. I call them wreckers. And it is the same with all other reforms. They are machinations directed against the army. If only the Socialists would say that

their desire is to replace the army by a vast national guard, they would at least be honest.”

“The Socialists,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, “are against all attempts at territorial conquest; they propose to organize militia solely for purposes of home defence. They do not hide their views, they spread them broadcast. And possibly their views are worth some examination. You need not fear that their desires will be too quickly realized. All progress is slow and uncertain, and is followed, more often than not, by retrograde movements. The advance toward a better order of things is vague and indeterminate. The profound and innumerable forces which chain man to the past cause him to cherish its errors, superstitions, prejudices and cruelties as precious symbols of his security. Salutory innovation terrifies him. Prudence makes him imitative, and he dare not quit the tumble-down shelter that protected his fathers and which is about to fall in upon him. Do you not agree with me, Monsieur Panneton?” inquired Monsieur Bergeret, with a charming smile.

Monsieur Panneton de La Barge’s reply was that he defended the army. He represented it as misunderstood, persecuted and menaced, and in rising tones he continued:

“This campaign in favour of the Traitor, obstinate and enthusiastic as it is, whatever may be the intentions of its leaders, has a certain visible and undeniable effect. It weakens the army and injures its chiefs.”

“I am going to tell you some very simple facts,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “If the army is attacked in the person of certain of its chiefs, that is not the fault of those who have asked for justice; it is the fault of those who have so long refused it. It is not the fault of those who demanded an explanation, but of those who have obstinately avoided one with extraordinary stupidity and abominable wickedness. After all, if crimes have been committed the evil is not that they have been made known but that they have been committed. They have concealed themselves in all their enormity and in all their deformity. They were not recognisable; they passed over the crowds like dark clouds. Did you imagine they would never burst? Did you think the sun would never shine again upon the classic land of Justice, upon the country that taught the Law to Europe and the world?”

“Don’t let us speak of the Affair,” replied Monsieur de La Barge. “I know nothing of it. I wish to know nothing. I did not read a word of the Inquiry. Commandant de La Barge, my cousin, assured me that Dreyfus was guilty. That affirmation was enough for me. I came, dear Monsieur Bergeret, to ask your advice about my son Adhémar, whose prospects in life are now engaging my attention. A year of military service is a long time for a young fellow of good

family. Three years would be nothing short of disaster. It is essential to find a means of exemption. I had thought of letting him take his degree in literature, but I'm afraid it is too difficult. Adhémar is intelligent, but he has no taste for literature."

"Well," said Monsieur Bergeret, "try the School of Higher Commercial Studies; or the Commercial Institute, or the School of Commerce. I do not know if the Watchmakers' College at Cluses would still furnish means of exemption. It used not to be difficult, I've been told, to obtain the certificate."

"But Adhémar cannot very well make watches," replied Monsieur de La Barge with a certain modesty.

"Then try the School of Oriental Languages," said Monsieur Bergeret obligingly. "It was an excellent institution to begin with."

"It has gone down since," sighed Monsieur de La Barge.

"It still has its good points. What about Tamil, for instance?"

"Tamil, do you think?"

"Or Malagasy."

"Malagasy, perhaps."

"There is also a certain Polynesian language which was spoken, at the beginning of this century, by only one old yellow woman. She died, leaving behind her a parrot. A German scholar collected a few words of the language from the parrot, and from these he compiled a dictionary. Perhaps this language is still taught at the School of Oriental Languages. I should advise your son to find out."

Upon this advice, Monsieur Panneton de La Barge made his adieux and thoughtfully took his departure.

CHAPTER VI

EVENTS followed their due course. Monsieur Bergeret continued to look for a flat; it was his sister who found one. Thus the positive mind has the advantage over the speculative mind. It must be admitted that Mademoiselle Bergeret made an excellent choice. She was lacking neither in experience of life nor in common sense. Having been a governess, she had lived in Russia, and had travelled about Europe. She had observed the manners and customs of the different nations. She knew the world, and that helped her to know Paris.

"That's it," she said to her brother, stopping before a new house overlooking the Luxembourg garden.

"The stairs look decent enough," said Monsieur Bergeret, "but it's rather a stiff climb."

"Nonsense, Lucien. You are quite young enough to go up five short flights of stairs without getting exhausted."

"Do you really think so?" said Lucien, flattered.

She was careful to point out that the stair-carpet ran right to the top of the house, and he smilingly accused her of being susceptible to trifling vanities.

"But it is possible," he added, "that I myself should feel slightly offended were the carpet to stop short at the floor below ours. We profess to be wise, but we still have our weak points. That reminds me of what I noticed yesterday, after lunch, as I was passing a church. The outer steps were covered with a red carpet which had been trodden, after the ceremony, by the guests at some great wedding. A working-class couple with their party were waiting for the last of the wealthy company to leave so that they might enter the church. They were laughing at the idea of climbing the steps upon this unexpected splendour. The little bride's white feet were already on the edge of the carpet when the beadle waved her away. The men in charge of the trappings of the wealthy wedding slowly rolled up the carpet of honour, and only when it formed a huge cylinder did they allow the humble wedding party to mount the bare steps. I stood for a moment and watched the worthy folk, who seemed greatly amused by the incident. Humble folk surrender with admirable equanimity to social inequality, and Lamennais was quite right to say 'that the whole social order rests on the resignation of the poor.'"

"Here we are," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"I'm out of breath," remarked Monsieur Bergeret.

“Because you would talk,” replied Mademoiselle Bergeret. “You shouldn’t tell anecdotes while you are going upstairs.”

“After all,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “it is the common destiny of men of learning to live close under the roof. Science and meditation are often hidden away in garrets, and when we come to think of it, no marble hall is worth an attic filled with beautiful thoughts.”

“This room,” replied Mademoiselle Bergeret, “is not a garret. It is lighted by a big window and is to be your study.”

On hearing this, Monsieur Bergeret looked at the four walls in alarm, like a man on the brink of a precipice.

“What is the matter?” asked his sister uneasily.

But he did not reply. The little square room, hung with light paper, seemed to him dark with the unknown future. He entered with a slow and fearful step as though he were entering upon a hidden destiny. Then, measuring on the floor the position of his work-table, he said:

“I shall sit there. It is a mistake to be too sentimental over the past and the future. They are nothing but abstract ideas, which were not originally possessed by primitive man; he acquired them only after long effort, to his great misfortune. The thought of the past in itself is sufficiently painful. I do not think any one would be willing to begin life again if he had to go over precisely the same ground. That there are delightful hours and exquisite moments I do not deny, but they are pearls and precious stones sparsely sprinkled on the harsh and dismal web of life. The course of the years is, for all its brevity, of tedious slowness, and if it be sometimes sweet to remember it is because we are able to make our minds dwell upon certain moments. And even then the sweetness is pale and melancholy. As for the future, we dare not look it in the face, so threatening is its gloomy countenance. And when you told me a moment since, Zoe, that this was to be my study, I saw myself in the future, and I could not bear the sight. I am not without courage, I think, but I am given to reflection, and reflection and fearlessness are not the best of friends.”

“The most difficult thing of all,” put in Zoe, “was to find three bedrooms.”

“It is certain,” rejoined Monsieur Bergeret, “that humanity, in its youth, did not conceive of the future and the past as we do. Now these ideas that devour us have no reality outside ourselves.

We know nothing of life, and the theory of its development through time is pure illusion. It is by some infirmity of our senses that we do not see to-morrow realised as we see yesterday. We can very well conceive of beings so organized as to be capable of the simultaneous perception of phenomena which to us appear to be separated from | one another by an appreciable interval of time. We

ourselves do not perceive light and sound in the order of time. We ourselves take in at a single glance, when we raise our eyes to the sky, aspects which are by no means contemporaneous. The beams of light from the stars seem indistinguishable to our eyes, yet they mingle in them, in a fraction of a second, centuries and thousands of centuries. With instruments other than those we now possess we might see ourselves lying dead in the very midst of our own life. For, as time does not in reality exist, and as the succession of facts is only an appearance, all facts are realized simultaneously and there is no such thing as the future. The future has already been; we merely discover it. Now, perhaps, you have some idea, Zoe, why I stopped short at the door of the room where I am to live. Time is a pure idea, and space is no more real than time."

"That may be," remarked Zoe, "but it is very expensive in Paris at any rate. You must have noticed that while you were house-hunting. I don't expect you care to see my room; come, Pauline's will interest you more."

"Let us go and see them both," said Monsieur Bergeret, as he obediently promenaded his animal mechanism through the little square rooms hung with flowered paper, pursuing the course of his reflections the while.

"The savages," he said, "make no distinction between past, present and future. Languages, which are undoubtedly the oldest monuments of the human race, permit us to go back to the days when our ancestors had not yet accomplished this metaphysical operation. Monsieur Michel Bréal, who has just published an admirable essay on the subject, shows that the verb, so rich to-day in its resources for marking the priority of an action, had originally no means of expressing the past, and in order to perform this function forms were employed which implied a double affirmation of the present."

As he spoke, he returned to the room which was to be his study, which had at first sight seemed, in its emptiness, to be filled with the shadows of the ineffable future.

Mademoiselle Bergeret opened the window.

"Look, Lucien."

And, seeing the bare tops of the trees, Monsieur Bergeret smiled.

"These black boughs," he said, "will assume, in the timid April sunlight, the purple hue of their buds; then they will break forth into soft green foliage. That will be delightful. It will, indeed, be charming. Zoe, you are full of wisdom and kindness, a worthy steward and a most endearing sister. Let me kiss you."

Monsieur Bergeret kissed his sister, repeating: "You are a good creature, Zoe."

And Mademoiselle Bergeret's reply was:

“Our father and mother were both good.” Monsieur Bergeret would have embraced her a second time, but she protested:

“You’ll make my hair untidy, Lucien, and that I can’t bear.”

Monsieur Bergeret stretched out his hand as he stood by the open window.

“Look, Zoe, to the right. On the site of those ugly buildings used to be the Pépinière. There, our elders have told me, was a maze of paths bordered by green trelliswork windows among the shrubs. Our father used to walk there when he was a young man. He used to read the philosophy of Kant and the novels of George Sand, seated on a bench behind the statue of Velléda. A dreaming Velléda, with hands folded over her mystic sickle, and crossed legs, who was the object of much generous and youthful adoration. The students used to sit at her feet discussing love, justice and liberty. They did not enlist in those days in the party of untruth, injustice and tyranny.

“The Empire destroyed the Pépinière. It was an evil deed, for there is a soul even in inanimate things. The noble ideas of many young men perished with the gardens. How many beautiful dreams and stupendous hopes have taken shape under the shadow of Maindron’s romantic Velléda! To-day our students have palaces with a bust of the President of the Republic over the mantelpiece in the principal room. Who will restore to them the winding alleys of the Pépinière, where they were wont to discuss the establishment of peace and happiness and the liberty of the world? Who will give back to them the garden where, amid the joyous songs of the birds, they repeated the generous sayings of their masters, Quinet and Michelet?”

“No doubt they were enthusiastic enough,” said Mademoiselle Bergeret, “but in the end they became doctors and lawyers in their own provinces. One must resign oneself to the mediocrity of life. You know well enough, it is very difficult to live, and one must not expect too much of one’s fellow-creatures. Anyhow, do you like the rooms?”

“Yes, and I’m sure Pauline will be delighted. She has a charming room.”

“She has, but young girls are never delighted with anything.”

“Pauline is not unhappy with us.”

“No, indeed. She is very happy, but she does not realize it.”

“I am going to the Rue Saint-Jacques,” announced Monsieur Bergeret, “to ask Roupart to put up some shelves in my study.”

CHAPTER VII

MONSIEUR BERGERET had a great liking and esteem for craftsmen. As he did not indulge in any elaborate appointments, he rarely employed workmen, but, when he did employ one, he tried to enter into conversation with him, being sure of hearing something worth listening to.

So he extended a gracious welcome to Roupart, the carpenter, who came one morning to put up some bookshelves in his study.

Riquet, as was his custom, lay in the depths of his master's arm-chair, peacefully slumbering. But the immemorial recollection of the perils which surrounded his wild forbears in the forests makes the domestic dog sleep lightly. It should further be said that this hereditary readiness to awaken promptly was fostered in Riquet by the sense of duty. Riquet regarded himself as a watch-dog. Firmly convinced that his mission in life was to guard the house, he was proud and happy in his vocation.

Unfortunately, however, he thought of all houses as being what they are in the country or the fables of La Fontaine, standing betwixt courtyard and garden, of which a dog could make the circuit, sniffing a soil redolent of the odours of cattle and manure. He had formed no idea of the plan of the flat occupied by his master on the fifth story of a great block of buildings. So, unacquainted with the limits of his domain, he was not quite clear as to what he had to guard. And he was a ferocious guardian. Supposing that the appearance of this stranger clad in patched blue trousers, smelling of perspiration and carrying his load of planks, was imperilling the house, he leaped from his chair and proceeded to bark at the man, retreating before him with heroic deliberation. Monsieur Bergeret bade him be silent, and he regretfully obeyed, sad and surprised to see his devotion useless and his signals disregarded. His earnest gaze, turned upon his master, seemed to say:

“So you allow this anarchist to enter, dragging his infernal machine behind him. Well, come what may, I've done my duty.”

Then he went back to his chair and slept again. Monsieur Bergeret, abandoning the scholiasts of Virgil, entered into conversation with the carpenter. First he questioned him as to the purchasing, cutting and polishing of different woods and the joining of the planks. He loved to obtain fresh information and he realized the excellence of the vulgar tongue.

His face to the wall, Roupart answered him between intervals of long silence, during which he took measurements. It was then that he discussed panelling and

the making of joints.

“A tenon and mortice joint needs no glue if the work is properly done.”

“Is there not also such a thing as a dovetail joint?” inquired Monsieur Bergeret.

“It’s an old-fashioned affair; they don’t make ’em now,” replied the carpenter.

Thus the professor learned something by listening to the artisan. Having made sufficient headway with his work, the carpenter turned to Monsieur Bergeret. His sunken, large-featured face, his brown complexion, his hair matted over his forehead, and his little goatee, grey with dust, gave him the look of a bronze figure. His smile, which was gentle, but came with difficulty, showed his white teeth and gave him a youthful look.

“I know you, Monsieur Bergeret.”

“Do you really?”

“Oh yes, I know you. That was something a bit out of the common what you did, and no mistake. You don’t mind my mentioning it, I hope?”

“Not in the least.”

“Well, then, you did something quite out of the common. You cut your own class, refused to have any truck with the brass hats and sky pilots.”

“I hate forgers, my friend,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “Surely that is permissible in a philologist. I have made no secret of my opinions, but I have not gone out of my way to spread them. How did you get to know of them?”

“I will tell you. One sees all sorts of people at the workshop in the Rue Saint-Jacques. All sorts and conditions, big and little. One day I was planing some wood, and I heard Pierre say: ‘That low-down cur of a Bergeret.’ And Paul asks him, ‘Won’t somebody smash his jaw for him?’ And then I realized that you were on the right side in the Affair. There aren’t many like you in this part of Paris.”

“And what do your friends say?”

“There aren’t many Socialists hereabouts, and the few there are don’t agree. Last Saturday at the club there was a lot of tag-rag and bobtail and the whole lot of us started quarrelling. Old Fléchier, who fought in 1870, a Communard, who was deported — he’s a man, he is — he got up on the platform and said: ‘Citizens, keep your hair on! The intellectual bourgeois are no less bourgeois than the military bourgeois. Let the capitalists scratch each other’s eyes out. Fold your arms and keep your eyes on the anti-Semites. At present they are drilling with sham guns and wooden swords, but when the time comes to expropriate the capitalists I don’t see why we shouldn’t make a start with the Jews.’

“That pretty well brought the house down. But, I ask you, should an old Communard, a good revolutionary, talk in that way? I am not educated like old Fléchier, who has read Marx, but I could see well enough that his arguments were all wrong. It seems to me that Socialism, which stands for truth, should also stand for justice and kindness, that everything just and kindly must come from it as naturally as the apple comes from the apple-tree. I take it that when we fight against injustice we are fighting for ourselves, for the working-classes, because it’s on us that all injustice lies so heavy. In my opinion, everything that is equitable is a beginning of Socialism. Like Jaurès, I believe that to take sides with the upholders of violence and falsehood is to turn one’s back upon the social revolution. I know nothing of Jews or Christians. I recognize only men — and there again the only distinction I make is between the just and the unjust. Jews or Christians, it is difficult for the rich to be just; but when the laws are just, men will be just too. Even now the Collectivists and Anarchists are preparing for the future by fighting against tyranny and inspiring the people with hatred of war and love for their fellow-men. Even now we can do something. It’ll keep us from dying desperate with the bitterness of rage in our hearts. For sure enough we shan’t see the triumph of our ideas, and when Collectivism is established all over the world I shall have been carried feet foremost from my garret a long while before. But there! I’m jawing and the time’s going.”

He pulled out his watch, and seeing that it was eleven o’clock he put on his waistcoat, picked up his tools, and ramming his cap on the back of his head, said, without turning round:

“It’s a sure thing that the middle classes are rotten. The Dreyfus case showed that plainly enough.”

With that, he went off to his dinner.

Then, with wide-open mouth, bristling hair and flaming eyes, Riquet rushed at Roupart’s departing heels, pursuing them with frantic barks. It may have been that a bad dream had troubled his light slumber and caused him to take advantage of the enemy’s retreat, or, as his master feigned to believe, that his anger had been aroused by the name which had just been pronounced.

Alone with Riquet, Monsieur Bergeret addressed him gently in these sorrowful words:

“You, too, poor little blackamoor, so feeble in spite of your sharp teeth and your deep bark, the apparent strength of which renders your weakness ridiculous and your cowardice amusing — you, too, worship the pomps of the flesh. You bow to the old iniquities and worship injustice out of respect for the social order that gives you food and a roof over your head. You, too, would uphold an illegal judgment obtained by fraud and untruth; you, too, are the plaything of

appearances and allow yourself to be seduced by lies. You have been brought up on clumsy falsehoods and your darkened mind feeds on the works of darkness. You deceive and are deceived with delightful thoroughness, and you, too, have your racial hatreds, your cruel prejudices and your contempt for the unfortunate.”

And as Riquet gazed at his master with a look of innocence Monsieur Bergeret continued still more gently:

“Yes, I know: you have a vague goodness, the goodness of a Caliban. You are a pious dog; you have your theology and your morality, and you try to do well. But then you know nothing. You keep watch over the house, guarding it even against its friends and those who would make it more beautiful. The workman whom you wanted to drive out of the house has, in his simple fashion, some admirable ideas. But you did not listen to him.

“Your shaggy ears are turned not to him whose words are wisest but to him who makes the most noise; and the natural fear which in the days of the cave-dwellers was the wise counsellor of your ancestors and of mine — the fear that created the gods and crime — makes you turn from the unfortunate and deprives you of pity. And you do not even want to be just. The white face of the new goddess Justice is strange to you, and you prostrate yourself before the old gods, black like yourself with fear and violence. You admire brute force, thinking it the sovereign power, because you do not know that it destroys itself. You do not know that all chains must fall before a just idea.

“You do not know that true strength lies in wisdom and that through wisdom alone the nations rise to greatness. You do not know that that which makes the glory of the nations is not the senseless clamour raised in public places, but the noble thought concealed in some garret, which, spreading one day over the whole world, will change its face. You do not know that those who have suffered imprisonment, outrage and exile, for justice’ sake, have honoured their country in the act You do not understand.”

CHAPTER VIII

MONSIEUR BERGERET was in his study chatting with his pupil, Monsieur Goubin.

"I found to-day," he said, "in a friend's library, a little book which is extremely rare and perhaps unique. Whether he is ignorant of its existence, or thinks it of little value, Brunet does not mention it in his Manual. It is a little duodecimo entitled: *Les caractères et pourtraictures tracés d 'après les modèles antiques* . It was printed in the year 1538 in the learned Rue Saint-Jacques."

"Do you know the author?" inquired Monsieur Goubin.

"The author is a certain Master Nicole Langelier, a Parisian," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "His style is not so pleasant as that of Amyot, but it is clear and full of meaning. I enjoyed reading his book, and copied out a chapter that struck me as very curious. Would you care to hear it?"

"Very much," replied Monsieur Goubin.

Monsieur Bergeret took some papers from the table and read the heading: "Concerning the Trublions which arose in the time of the Republick."

Monsieur Goubin inquired who these Trublions were. Monsieur Bergeret replied that he would no doubt discover that from what followed, and that it was a good plan to read a text before commenting on it. And he read as follows: "In those days there appeared in the city folk that uttered loud cries and were named Trublions, inasmuch as they served a chief named Trublion, who was of high lineage but small understanding and full of the arrogance of youth. And the Trublions also had another chief named Tintinnabule who made excellent speeches and marvellous songs and had been cast forth from the republick by the law and usage of ostracism. In truth the said Tintinnabule was adverse to Trublion; when the one pulled up stream the other pulled down. But the Trublions cared nothing for that, being so crazy that they did not know whither they were steering.

"At that time there lived in the mountains a villager named Robin Honeyman, who had already a hoary head, like a shock of hay or straw; a person full of guile and subtlety, and very expert in the art of feigning, who believed that he could govern the State by means of these Trublions, and he flattered them to draw them about him, whistling to them as sweetly as a flute, after the guise of the fowler piping to little birds. And the good Tintinnabule fell into great

amazement and affliction by reason of this piping and had a great fear lest Robin Honeyman should entice his goslings.

“Under Trublion, Tintinnabule and Robin Honeyman there held command over the Trublion troops: “Four palmers of exceeding sourness.

“Twenty-one baptized Jews.

“Twenty-five worthy begging friars.

“Eight makers of almanacks.

“Forty demagogues, misoxenes, xenophobes, xenoctones and xenophages; and six bushels of noblemen professing devotion to the beauteous lady of Bourdes in Navarre.

“In this fashion did sundry and contrary chiefs govern the Trublions. They were a right unmannerly race, and even as the Harpies, as Virgil reports, sat upon trees and shrieked horribly, and spoiled all that lay beneath them, in like fashion these froward Trublions climbed upon the cornices and pinnacles of the churches and houses, thence to do despite to the courteous citizens, to drop filth upon them and to piss upon them.

“And they diligently chose an old colonel named Gelgopole, who was the most inept in war that could be found, an enemy of justice and a disdainer of the laws, and made of him their idol and paragon, and went about the city crying, ‘Long life to the old Colonel!’ And the little school-urchins likewise squealed at their heels, ‘Long life to the old Colonel!’ Then the aforesaid Trublions gathered together in many assemblies and conventicles in which they cried: ‘Health to the old Colonel’ with such loudness of voice that the elements themselves were astounded and the birds flying above their heads fell to earth benumbed and dead. In sooth this was a very base madness and a most horrible frenzy.

“Then the said Trublions proclaimed that he who would faithfully serve the city and merit the civic crown, which was fashioned of the leaves of the oak-tree bound with a fillet of wool and naught besides, and honourable among all crowns, should utter furious cries and insane discourses, likewise j those that guided the plough, and those that I reaped and gathered the harvest, and led their flocks to the pasture and grafted their pear-trees in this fair land of vine and corn, of green meadows and fruitful gardens, did not serve the State. Neither did their fellows that hewed the stone and builded in the cities and villages houses with roofs of red tiles and fine slate, nor the weavers, nor the glass-workers, nor the stone-cutters that laboured within the bowels of Cybele. Nor the wise men who laboured in their closed studies and spacious libraries knowing many wondrous secrets of Nature: nor the mothers giving milk unto their babes, nor the good old wives spinning with their distaffs in the chimney-corner, telling tales to the little children.

But, said they, the Trublions served the State by braying like asses at a fair. And be it said for justice' sake that in so doing they thought to do well, for they had naught but the clouds of their brains and the breath of their mouths for their own, and they expended their breath with great force for the public weal and common profit.

“And they cried not only ‘Long life to the old Colonel!’ but they also cried without respite that they loved the State. In which they grievously offended the other citizens, for thus they gave men to understand that those folk who shouted not did not love their mother the State nor the fair land of their birth, which was a manifest imposture and an injury not to be suffered, for men drink with their mother’s milk this natural love and it is sweet to breathe one’s natal air.

“Now there were living at this time in the city and country many wise and prudent men, who loved their city and republick with a dearer and purer love than ever the Trublions bare them.

“For the said wise men desired that their city should remain wise and virtuous as themselves, blooming with graces and virtues, bearing fitly in her right hand the golden rod of justice, and that their city should be glad, careful and free, and not (as the Trublions contrary-wise desired) bearing in her hands a great club wherewith to belabour the good citizens and a blessed chaplet to mutter Aves , and filthily and miserably subject to the old Colonel Gelgopole and the said Tintinnabule. For in sooth these latter wished her subject to monks, hypocrites, bigots, canting rogues and impostors; lousy, filthy, frocked and hooded, shaven and barefoot; for devourers of crucifixes, bleaters of requiems, beggars, defrauders and cozeners of testaments swarmed in those days and had already by secret means acquired in houses and woods, fields and meadows well-nigh one third part of the land of France. And they diligently laboured (these Trublions) to render the city yet more rude and uncomely. For they conceived a great aversion to meditation and philosophy and all arguments deduced from upright feeling and shrewd reasoning, and all subtle thoughts, and condemned everything save force, only esteeming this latter because it was wholly brutish. Thus did the Trublions love their State and the country of their birth.”

As he read this old French text, Monsieur Bergeret was careful not to sound all the letters with which it was’ bristling after the fashion of the Renaissance. He had a feeling for the beauty of his native language. He paid no attention to orthography, considering it a negligible thing: but he had, on the other hand, the greatest respect for the old pronunciation, so light and fluent, which in our days, unfortunately, is becoming heavier and more clumsy. Monsieur Bergeret read his text according to the traditional pronunciation, and in so doing restored their

youth and novelty to the old words. Their meaning emerged clear and limpid, causing Monsieur Goubin to remark: "What I like about that passage is the style; it is so naïve."

"Do you think so?" said Monsieur Bergeret.

And he continued:

"And the Trublions said that they would defend the colonels and soldiers of the State and republick, which was mockery and derision, for the colonels and soldiers, who are armed with guns, muskets, artillery and other very terrible engines, are employed to defend and not to be defended by the unarmed citizens, and it did not seem possible that there were in the city folk fond enough to attack their own defenders, and the prudent men opposed to the Trublions asked only that the colonels should be honourably subject to the august and holy laws of the State and republick. But the said Trublions continued to shout and would hear nothing for that niggardly nature had deprived them of understanding.

"And the Trublions nourished a great hatred of foreign nations. The names alone of the said nations and peoples made their eyes stand out of their heads like those of cray-fish, very horrible to behold; they waved their arms like the sails of windmills, so that there was not among them a notary's clerk nor a butcher's 'prentice but wished to send a challenge to a king or queen or emperor of some great country, and the least hatmaker or taverner made as though he were ready at any moment to go to the wars, but in the end he remained in his chamber.

"And as it is true that fools, who are ever greater in number than the wise, march to the sound of vain cymbals, so people of little knowledge and understanding (and there are many such among rich folk as well as among the poor) joined the company of the Trublions and were Trublions with them. And there was a horrible uproar in the State, so that the wise maiden Minerva, sitting in her temple, that she might not have her ear-drums broken by such bangers of saucepans and infuriated popinjays, filled her ears with the wax brought her by her well-beloved bees, thus giving her faithful ones, wise men, philosophers and good law-givers of the State, to understand that it were waste of time to enter into wise dispute and learned argument with these trublioning and tintinnabulating Trublions. And some persons in the realm, and not the least important, being astounded by this hurly-burly, perceived that these crazy loons were on the point of over-throwing the republick and over-turning the noble and glorious State, which would have been a most lamentable happening. But a day came when the Trublions burst asunder, for they were full of wind."

His reading finished, Monsieur Bergeret replaced the pamphlet upon the table.

“These old books,” he said, “amuse and divert our minds, they make us forget the present day.”

“That is true,” replied Monsieur Goubin.

But he smiled; a thing he seldom did.

CHAPTER IX

DURING the holidays, Monsieur Mazure, a keeper of departmental archives, came for a few days to Paris to canvass the offices of the Ministry for the Cross of the Legion of Honour, to make certain historical researches among the National Archives, and to see the Moulin-Rouge. Before entering upon his labours, on the day after his arrival, he called, about six o'clock in the evening, upon Monsieur Bergeret, who welcomed him benevolently. As the heat of the day was overwhelming to those who were detained in the city, under the scorching roofs and in the streets filled with acrid dust, a bright idea occurred to Monsieur Bergeret. He took Monsieur Mazure to the Bois, to a *cabaret*, where tables were set out under the trees, by the brink of a slumbering sheet of water.

There, in the cool shade and the peace of the foliage, they enjoyed an excellent dinner, and exchanged views upon familiar topics, discoursing in turn upon learning and the divers fashions of loving. Then, without preconceived design, they yielded to an inevitable impulse and spoke of the Affair.

Monsieur Mazure was greatly perturbed by the Affair. Being both by persuasion and temperament a Jacobin and a patriot, after the manner of Barère and Saint-Just, he had joined the Nationalist hosts of his own department, and in company with Royalists and clerics, his *bêtes noires*, he had, in the superior interest of his country, uplifted his voice for the unity and indivisibility of the Republic. He had even become a member of the league of which Monsieur Panneton de La Barge was the president, and as this league had voted an address to the King it was slowly dawning upon him that it was antirepublican, and he no longer felt easy in respect of its principles. As a matter of fact, being accustomed to dealing with documents, and quite capable of bringing his intelligence to bear upon a critical inquiry of a fairly simple character, he experienced some difficulty in upholding a system that displayed an audacity hitherto unexampled in the fabrication and falsification of documents intended to ruin an innocent man. He felt that he was surrounded by imposture, and yet he would not admit the fact that he had made a mistake, such an admission being possible only to minds of unusual quality.

He protested, on the contrary, that he was right, and it is only fair to admit that he was kept in ignorance, constrained, crushed and compressed by the compact mass of his fellow-citizens. The knowledge of the inquiry and the discussion of the documents had not yet reached his little town, comfortably situated on the green banks of a sluggish river. There, obstructing the light,

filling public offices and sitting on the bench, was that host of politicians and churchmen, whom Monsieur Méline had formerly sheltered beneath the skirts of his provincial frock-coat, waxing prosperous in acquiescent ignorance of the truth. This elect society, which enlisted crime in the interests of patriotism and religion, made it respectable for all, even for the Radical-Socialist chemist Mandar.

The department was all the more safely protected against any revelation of the most notorious facts in that it was administered by an Israelitish prefect.

Monsieur Worms-Clavelin held himself bound, by the very fact that he was a Jew, to serve the interests of the anti-Semites of his administration with greater zeal than a Catholic prefect would have displayed in his place. With a prompt and sure hand he stifled in his department the growing faction in favour of revision. He favoured the leagues of the clerical agitators, causing them to prosper so wonderfully that citizens Francis de Pressensé, Jean Psichari, Octave Mirbeau and Pierre Quillard, who came to the departmental capital to speak their minds as free men, felt as though they had stepped straight into a city of the sixteenth century. They encountered none but idolatrous papists, howling for their death, who wanted to massacre them. And as Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, who since the judgment of 1894 was fully convinced that Dreyfus was innocent, made no mystery of that conviction after dinner, as he smoked his cigar, the Nationalists whose cause he favoured had good reason to count on a loyal support which was not dependent upon personal feeling.

This firm hold over the department whose archives he kept profoundly impressed Monsieur Mazure, who was an ardent Jacobin and capable of heroism, but who, like the company of heroes, marched only to the sound of the drum. Monsieur Mazure was not a brute. He felt that he owed it to others and to himself to explain his attitude.

After the soup, as they were waiting for the trout, he leaned his arms on the table and remarked:

“My dear Bergeret, I am a patriot and a republican; I do not know whether Dreyfus is guilty or innocent. I do not want to know; it’s not my business. He may be innocent, but there is no doubt that the Dreyfusites are guilty. They have been guilty of a great impertinence in substituting their own personal opinion for a decision given by republican justice. Besides, they have stirred up the whole country. Trade is suffering.”

“There’s a pretty woman,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “tall, straight and slender as a young tree.”

“Pooh!” said Monsieur Mazure. “A mere doll.”

“You speak very frivolously,” returned Monsieur Bergeret. “A doll, when alive, is a great force of Nature.”

“I don’t trouble my head about that woman or any other,” said Monsieur Mazure. “Perhaps because my own wife is a very well-made woman.”

So he said and did his best to believe. The truth was he had married the old servant and mistress of his two predecessors. Bourgeois society had kept aloof from her for ten years, but as soon as Monsieur Mazure joined the Nationalist leagues of the department she found herself received in the best society of the town. General Cartier de Chalmot’s wife went about with her, and the wife of Colonel Despautères could hardly tear herself away from her.

“The reason why I attach special blame to the Dreyfusites,” added Monsieur Mazure, “is that they have weakened our national defence and lowered our prestige in the eyes of other nations.”

The sun was shedding his last crimson rays between the black tree-trunks. Monsieur Bergeret felt that he must in honesty reply:

“Just consider, my dear Mazure,” he said, “that if the affairs of an obscure captain have become a matter of national importance the fault is not ours, but that of the ministers who erected the support of an erroneous and illogical sentence into a system of government. If the Keeper of the Seals had done his duty and proceeded to the revision of the trial as soon as it was clearly proved to be necessary, no one would have said anything. It was during this lamentable evasion of justice that protests began to make themselves heard. What upset the whole country, what is calculated to injure us abroad and at home, was that those in authority obstinately persisted in a monstrous piece of wickedness which increased day by day under the covering of lies with which they strove to hide it.”

“What else would you expect?” said Monsieur Mazure. “I am a good patriot and a republican.”

“Then since you are a republican,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “you must feel an alien, a solitary, among your fellow-citizens. There are few republicans left in France to-day. The Republic herself has created none. It’s absolute government that makes republicans. The love of liberty is sharpened on the grinding-stone of royalty or imperialism, but it grows blunt in a country where people believe they are free. People seldom care much for what they possess. Reality as a rule is not a very pleasant thing. One needs wisdom to be content with it. We can safely say that to-day Frenchmen under fifty are not republicans.”

“They are not monarchists.”

“No, they are not monarchists either, for while as a rule men care little for what they have, because what they have is not usually pleasant, they fear change

because it contains the Unknown. It is the Unknown that frightens them most; that is the source and fountain-head of all fear. You see that in universal suffrage, which would produce an incalculable effect but for this terror of the Unknown, which annihilates it. It contains a force which ought to perform prodigies of good or evil, but the fear of the change contained in the Unknown gives it power, and the monster bows his head to the yoke.”

“Would the gentlemen care for a *pêche au marasquin*? ” inquired the head waiter.

His voice was gentle and persuasive, and none of the occupied tables escaped his vigilant gaze. But Monsieur Bergeret did not reply; he was watching a lady who was advancing along the sandy path, wearing a Louis XIV “church-lamp” hat of rice-straw, covered with roses, and a white muslin gown, the body of which was loose and floating, drawn in at the waist by a pink sash. The ruche round her neck looked like the collar of wings enclosing the face of an angel. Monsieur Bergeret recognized Madame de Gromance, whom he had more than once met, to his secret agitation, in the dull monotony of provincial streets. He saw that she was accompanied by a very smart young man, whose attitude was altogether too correct for him to appear anything but bored.

He stopped at the table next to that occupied by Monsieur Bergeret and his friend, when Madame de Gromance happened to glance round and see Monsieur Bergeret. An expression of displeasure came over her face, and she led her companion to the remotest corner of the lawn, where they sat down under the shade of a large tree. The sight of Madame de Gromance filled Monsieur Bergeret with that bitter-sweet feeling of which a pleasure-loving soul is conscious at the sight of the beauty of living forms.

He asked the head waiter whether he knew the lady and gentleman.

“I know them in a kind of way,” replied the waiter. “They often come here, but I don’t know their names. We see so many people! On Saturday the place was crowded. There were covers all over the grass and under the trees, as far as the hedge that encloses the lawn.”

“Really?” said Monsieur Bergeret. “There were covers under all those trees?”

“Yes, and on the terrace as well, and in the kiosk.”

Busily cracking almonds, Monsieur Mazure had not noticed the muslin dress. He inquired which lady they were speaking of. Monsieur Bergeret, however, decided to keep Madame de Gromance’s secret, and made no reply.

Night had fallen. Here and there a lamp whose radiance was softened by a shade of white or pink paper marked the position of a table and revealed shapes surrounded by faint haloes of light. Beneath one of these discreet lights the little white plume surmounting a straw hat was drawing closer and closer to the

gleaming cranium of an elderly man. At the next table were two youthful faces, more unsubstantial than the moths that fluttered around them. Not in vain was the white round shape of the moon ascending the paling sky.

"I trust you are satisfied, gentlemen," said the head waiter.

And without waiting for a reply he directed his vigilant steps elsewhere.

"Look at those people dining in the kindly darkness," said Monsieur Bergeret with a smile. "Those little white plumes, and right at the back, under that great tree, those roses on a Louis Quatorze straw hat. They are eating, drinking and making love, and to this man they are nothing but covers! They have instincts and desires, even thoughts perhaps, and they are covers! What strength of mind and of language! This knight of the appetite is a great man."

"We have had a very pleasant dinner," said Monsieur Mazure, rising. "This restaurant is frequented by the very smartest people."

"Their smartness," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "was possibly not of the highest category. But some of them, certainly, were graceful and charming enough. I must confess, however, that it gives me less pleasure to contemplate these fashionable folk since a vile conspiracy has aroused the sickly fanaticism and thoughtless cruelty of their poor little brains. The Affair has revealed the moral sickness with which our fashionable society is afflicted, just as the vaccine of Koch discovers the lesions of tuberculosis in an infected organism. Fortunately the depths of the human ocean lie beneath this gilded scum. But when will my country be delivered from ignorance and hatred?"

CHAPTER X

THE Baronne Jules, the widow of the great Baron and the mother of the little Baron, had lost, under circumstances which are familiar to us, her lover Raoul Marcien. She was too tender-hearted to live alone, and it would have been a pity had she done so. It came to pass that one summer night, between the Bois and the Étoile, she took unto herself a new lover. It is fitting to record this fact, as it is not unconnected with public affairs.

The Baronne Jules de Bonmont, who had spent the month of June at Montil, on the banks of the Loire, was passing through Paris on her way to Gmunden. Her house being shut up, she dined at one of the restaurants in the Bois with her brother, Baron Wallstein, Monsieur and Madame de Gromance, Monsieur de Terremondre, and young Lacrisse, who like herself were passing through Paris.

As they all moved in good society they were all Nationalists, Baron Wallstein as much as any of them. An Austrian Jew, expelled from his country by the Viennese anti-Semites, he had settled in France, where he founded a well-known anti-Semite paper and took refuge in the friendship of the Church and the Army. Monsieur de Terremondre, a gentleman of the lesser nobility, and a small landowner, displayed just enough clerical and military enthusiasm to be able to identify himself with the superior territorial aristocracy with which he associated. The Gromances had too much interest in the return of the monarchy not to desire it seriously. Their financial situation was very precarious. Madame de Gromance, who was pretty, well-made, and mistress of her own actions, had so far kept free of the Affair, but her husband, who was no longer young, and was fast approaching the age when a man feels the need of comfort, security and consideration, sighed for better days and impatiently awaited the advent of the King. He was confident that he would be created a peer of France by the restored Philippe. He based his right to a seat in the Luxembourg on his loyalty to the Throne, and entered the ranks of Monsieur Méline's republicans, whom the King, if he wished to secure them, would have to reward. Young Lacrisse was secretary to the league of the Royalist youth of the department in which the Baronne had estates and the Gromances creditors. Seated at the little table under the trees, lit by candles whose pink shades were surrounded by swooping moths, these five felt that they were united by a single idea, which Joseph Lacrisse happily expressed by saying:

“France must be saved.”

It was the day of vast projects and stupendous hopes. They had, it is true, lost President Faure and the Minister Méline, who — the former strutting in dress-coat and pumps, the latter in a frock-coat made by a village tailor, taking short steps in his heavy hob-nailed shoes — were leading the Republic and Justice to their downfall. Méline had left the Government and Faure had left the world of the living at the very height of the banquet. It must also be recognized that the obsequies of the latter had not produced all that was expected of them, and that the *coup* they had hoped to bring off at the lying-in-state had proved abortive. It was also true that after smashing President Loubet's hat the gentry of the cornflower and the white carnation had received their chastisement at the hands of the Socialists. It is true that a Republican Ministry was formed, and obtained a majority. But in the ranks of the reactionary party were the clergy, the magistracy, the army, the landed gentry, industry, commerce, part of the Chamber, and almost the whole of the Press. And as young Lacrisse remarked, if the Keeper of the Seals had taken it into his head to order a search to be made at the headquarters of the Royalist and Anti-Jewish Committees they would not have found one police commissary in the whole of France to seize the compromising documents.

"Anyhow," said Monsieur de Terremondre, "poor Monsieur Faure was of great service to us."

"He loved the army," sighed Madame de Bonmont.

"Assuredly," continued Monsieur de Terremondre. "And then by his display he prepared people for the monarchy. Coming after him, the King will not seem to be a burden upon the people; his establishment will not seem ridiculous."

Madame de Bonmont was anxious to be assured that the King would enter Paris in a coach drawn by six white horses.

"One day last summer," continued Monsieur de Terremondre, "as I was walking down the Rue Lafayette, I found all the traffic stopped, with groups of police here and there, and the pavements lined with people. I asked a citizen what this meant, and he solemnly replied that they had been waiting an hour for the President, who was returning to the Élysée after a visit to Saint-Denis. I looked at the respectful idlers and at the well-to-do people, who, with little parcels in their hands, were sitting quiet and watchful in their waiting fiacres, deferentially losing their trains. I was pleased to note that all these people adapted themselves so easily to the customs of a monarchy, and that the Parisians were quite ready to welcome their sovereign."

"The city of Paris is no longer republican. All is going well," said Joseph Lacrisse.

"So much the better," remarked Madame de Bonmont.

“Does your father share your hopes?” said Monsieur de Gromance of the youthful secretary of the Young Royalists.

As a matter of fact, the opinion of Maître Lacrisse, advocate to the Church authorities, was not to be despised. Maître Lacrisse was working with the Headquarters Staff and preparing for the Rennes trial. He had to go through the depositions of the generals and get them to repeat their evidence. A Nationalist, and one of the leading lights of the Bar, he was, however suspected of having little confidence in the issue of the Monarchist plots. The old man had worked in former days for the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris, and he knew from experience that the Republic would not easily be ousted, and that she was not so docile as she appeared. He had no faith in the Senate, and as he made money at the Palais he resigned himself willingly enough to living in France under a kingless monarchy. He did not share the hopes of his son Joseph, but was too indulgent to condemn the ardour of enthusiastic youth.

“My father,” replied Joseph Lacrisse, “has his own work; I have mine; but our efforts are convergent.” And leaning towards Madame de Bonmont he whispered, “We shall strike our blow during the Rennes trial.”

“May God help you,” said Madame de Gromance, with a pious sigh. “It is time, if we want to save France.”

It was very hot and they ate their ices in silence. Then the conversation languidly revived. It progressed fitfully, consisting of commonplace remarks and private observations. Madame de Gromance and Madame de Bonmont discussed clothes.

“There is a hint this year of pleated skirts coming into fashion,” said Madame de Gromance, with inward satisfaction as she pictured the plump proportions of the Baronne in a full skirt.

“You would never guess,” said Gromance, “where I went to-day. I went to the Senate. They were not sitting, and Laprat-Teulet took me all over the building. I saw everything — the hall, the gallery of Busts, the library. It is a very fine building.”

What he did not tell them was that, in the semicircle where the peers were to sit when the King came to his own once more, he had felt the velvet chairs and chosen his place in the centre. And before he went out he had asked Laprat-Teulet where the treasury was. This visit to the palace of the future peers had revived his covetousness. He repeated with heartfelt and sincere conviction:

“We must save France, Monsieur Lacrisse, we must save France, and it will only be in the nick of time.”

Lacrisse would see to that. He displayed much confidence and affected great discretion. According to him, everything was in readiness. They would no doubt

be forced to smash Worms-Clavelin's head for him and perhaps do the same for two or three more of the Dreyfusites of the department. And he added, swallowing a piece of crystallized peach:

"It's bound to come."

Then Baron Wallstein spoke. He spoke at length; he made them realize his knowledge of affairs; he gave them advice, and related a few stories from Vienna which greatly amused him. Then, in conclusion:

"It is all very satisfactory," he said, with his irrepressible German accent; "it is all very satisfactory, but you must admit that your *coup* at President Faure's funeral was a failure. If I speak like this it is because I am your friend. One owes the truth to one's friends. Do not make a second mistake, because in that case you would lose your following."

He looked at his watch, and seeing that he had barely time to get to the Opera before the close of the performance, lighted a cigar and rose from the table.

The position of Joseph Lacrisse demanded discretion; he was a conspirator. But he loved to display his power, to reveal the consideration in which he was held. He took from his pocket a blue morocco letter-case, which he carried against his breast, and drew from it a letter which he handed to Madame de Bonmont, saying with a smile:

"They can search my flat if they like; I carry all my documents about me."

Madame de Bonmont took the letter, read it in a whisper, and, flushing with respect and emotion, returned it with a hand that trembled slightly to Joseph Lacrisse. And when the august letter, returned to its blue morocco case, once more resumed its place next the secretary's heart, the Baroness gazed at his left breast with a lingering expression at once tearful and filled with fire. In her eyes young Lacrisse had suddenly become resplendent with romantic beauty.

The diners who still lingered under the trees of the restaurant began to feel the dampness and the chill of the night. The pink lights gleaming on the flowers and glass flickered out one by one on the deserted tables. At the request of Madame de Gromance and the Baroness, Joseph Lacrisse for the second time drew the royal letter from his letter-case and read in a low but distinct voice:

"MY DEAR JOSEPH, "I am greatly delighted by the patriotic enthusiasm which our friends are displaying, thanks to your efforts. I have seen G. D., who seemed to me to be excellently well disposed towards us.

"Cordially yours, "PHILIPPE."

After reading the note Lacrisse replaced the sheet of paper in his blue morocco letter-case against his heart, beneath the white carnation in his

buttonhole. Monsieur de Gromance murmured a few words of approval:

“Very nice indeed. Those are the words of a real leader, a true king.

“That is my feeling,” said Joseph Lacrisse. “It is a pleasure to execute the orders of such a master.”

“And the style is excellently concise,” continued Monsieur de Gromance. “The Duc d’Orléans certainly seems to have inherited the secret of the Comte de Chambord’s epistolary style. Of course you know, mesdames, that the Comte de Chambord wrote the most beautiful letters imaginable. A most able writer. That is really the truth. He excelled above all in letter-writing. There is a trace of his grand manner in the note which Monsieur Lacrisse? has just read to us. And the Duc d’Orléans has more enthusiasm; he has the fiery energy of youth. A fine figure of a man, a fine soldierly figure, and French to the backbone! He has a fascinating personality. I have been assured that in the working-class districts of Paris he is almost a popular favourite; he is known under the nickname of ‘Gamelle.’

“His cause has made great progress among the masses,” said Lacrisse. “The little brooches with the King’s head, of which we have distributed enormous quantities, are beginning to show themselves in the factories and workshops. The populace has more common sense than is commonly supposed. We are within reach of success.”

In a benevolent and authoritative tone Monsieur de Gromance continued:

“With zeal, prudence and devotion such as yours, Monsieur Lacrisse, any hopes are permissible, and I am sure you will not have to sacrifice many victims in order to obtain success. Your opponents will flock over to you of their own accord.”

His attitude as a supporter of the Republic, while not preventing him from expressing a desire for the restoration of the monarchy, did not permit him to express a too open approval of the violent methods which young Lacrisse had indicated at dessert.

Monsieur de Gromance, who went to balls given at the Prefecture and was carrying on a flirtation with Madame Worms-Clavelin, tactfully remained silent when the young secretary enlarged upon the necessity of doing for the “sheeny” prefect; but it was no breach of good taste on his part to praise the Prince’s letter as it deserved, and to give them all to understand that he was ready for any sacrifice to save his country.

Monsieur de Terremondre was no less patriotic and no less appreciative of Philippe’s epistolary style; but he was such an enthusiastic collector of curios and autographs that all he could think of was how he could get Lacrisse to give him the Prince’s letter, either in exchange for something else or as a free gift or a

so-called loan. By such methods he had got hold of several letters written by people mixed up in the Dreyfus affair and had formed an interesting collection. Now he was thinking of writing a pamphlet on the Monarchist Plot and putting in the Prince's letter as the principal feature. He realized that it would be difficult to obtain and his mind was full of the matter.

"Come and see me, Monsieur Lacrisse," he said. "Come and see me at Neuilly, where I shall be for the next few days. I will show you some interesting documents and we will speak again of that letter."

Madame de Gromance had listened with proper attention to the King's epistle. She was a woman of the world, and too well versed in its ways not to know what was due to royalty. She had bowed her head on hearing the words of Philippe as she would have bowed to the King's carriage if she had had the honour of seeing it pass. But she was wanting in enthusiasm and had no feeling of veneration. She knew all about princes and had been as intimate as it is possible to be with a relation of the Duc d'Orléans. This had occurred in an unobtrusive little house in the Champs-Élysées district, one afternoon. They had said all that they had to say, and the occasion had not had a sequel. Monseigneur had been pleasant but not at all magnificent. Of course she felt honoured, but she had never regarded the honour as either very special or very extraordinary. She respected princes; occasionally she loved them; but she did not dream about them, and the letter left her quite unmoved. As for young Lacrisse, the sympathy which she felt for him was neither ardent nor tumultuous. She understood and approved of this fair-haired young man. He was small, slender and agreeable enough, though he was not rich. He was doing his very utmost to profit by the Affair and acquire importance. She, too, knew by experience that it is not easy to live in Society if one is poor. They were both working to keep their footing in Society. This was one reason for a good understanding between them. They could help one another now and then. But that was all! —

"I congratulate you, Monsieur Lacrisse," she said, "and you have my very best wishes."

How much more chivalrous and tender were the feelings of Baronne Jules! The gentle Viennese was interested heart and soul in this fashionable plot, of which the white carnation was the emblem. And she, too, was so fond of flowers! To be mixed up in an aristocratic plot in favour of the King was to her to enter into and luxuriate in the old French nobility, to be received in the most exclusive houses, and later on, perhaps, to go to Court. She was excited, pleased and agitated. Being affectionate rather than ambitious, her susceptible heart was touched by what she was pleased to consider the poetry of the Prince's letter. And the innocent woman spoke as she thought:

“Monsieur Lacrisse, that is a poetical letter.”

“That is true,” returned Lacrisse.

And a long look passed between them.

After this nothing further memorable was said as they sat in the summer’s night before the flowers and candles of the little restaurant table.

The time came for them to go. As Monsieur Joseph Lacrisse placed her cloak round the Baronne’s plump shoulders, she held out her hand to Monsieur de Terremondre, who was saying goodbye. He was walking to Neuilly, where he was staying for the time being.

“It is quite near, only a quarter of a mile. I am sure, madame, that you don’t know Neuilly. I have discovered, at Saint-James, the remnant of an old park, with a group by Lemoyne in a trellis-work arbour. I must show it to you some day.”

And already his tall strongly-built figure was receding along the path that lay bathed in the blue moonlight.

The Baronne offered to give the Gromances a lift in the carriage which her brother Wallstein had sent for her from the club.

“Get in with me, there is plenty of room for three.”

But the Gromances were people of discretion. They hailed a cab which had stopped outside the restaurant gates and got into it before she had time to stop them. She and Joseph Lacrisse were left standing alone by the open door of the carriage. “Would you like a lift, Monsieur Lacrisse?”

“I am afraid I shall be in your way.”

“Not in the least. Where shall I drop you?”

“At the Étoile.”

They started along the blue road bordered by black foliage, in the silent night. And the drive came to an end.

The Baronne asked as the carriage stopped, in the voice of one awakening from a dream:

“Where are we?”

“At the Étoile, alas!” replied Joseph Lacrisse.

And when he had left her, the Baronne, bowling along the Avenue Marceau, alone in the now chilly carriage, held a torn white carnation between her bare fingers. With half-closed eyes and parted lips, she still felt the eager yet gentle embrace which, pressing the royal letter against her bosom, had filled her with the sweetness of love and the pride of glory. She felt that this letter endowed her little private adventure with a national greatness and the majesty of the history of France.

CHAPTER XI

IN a house in the Rue de Berri, at the back of the courtyard, there was a little entresol which was lit by a trickle of daylight as dismal as the stone walls between which it found its difficult way. Henry de Brécé, son of the Duc Jean de Brécé, president of the Executive Committee, was seated at his desk with a sheet of paper before him on which he was turning a round blot of ink into a balloon, by the addition of netting, ropes and a car. On the wall behind him was nailed a large photograph of the Prince, looking extremely feeble in his vulgar solemnity and heavy-witted youth. Tricoloured flags spangled with *fleurs de Us* surrounded the portrait. In the corners of the room banners were displayed on which loyal ladies had embroidered golden lilies and royalist mottoes. At the back of the room several cavalry sabres were fixed to the wainscot, with a cardboard scroll bearing the inscription: "*Vive l'armée!*" Below them, held in place by pins, was a caricature of Joseph Reinach as a gorilla. A chest for papers, a strong box, a couch and four chairs and a writing-desk in some black wood composed the furniture of this room, which looked both comfortable and business-like. Propagandist pamphlets were piled in heaps against the walls.

Joseph Lacrisse, secretary of the Departmental Committee of Young Royalists, was standing by the fireplace silently conning the list of affiliated members. Henri Léon, vice-president of the Royalist Committees of the South-West, was seated astride a chair, where, with stony gaze and knitted brows, he was unfolding his ideas. He was considered irrelevant and gloomy, a regular skeleton at the feast, but his inherited financial abilities made him of value to his associates. He was the son of that Léon-Léon, the banker of the Spanish Bourbons, who had come to grief in the smash of the *Union générale*.

"We are being hemmed in, I don't care what you say, we are being hemmed in, I feel it. Day by day the circle is closing upon us. When Méline was with us we had air and space, as much space as we wanted. We were free to do as we liked."

He jerked his elbows and moved his arms about as though to demonstrate the ease with which people manoeuvred in those happy days which were no more. He continued:

"With Méline we had everything. We Royalists held the Government, the army, the magistracy, the administrations and the police."

"We still have all that," said Henri de Brécé, "and public opinion is more than ever with us now that the Government is so unpopular."

“It’s no longer the same thing. With Méline we were pseudo-official, we were supporters of the Government, we were Conservatives; the conditions were ideal for conspiracy. Don’t make any mistake about that. France as a whole is conservative, and domestic and changes alarm her. Méline did us the enormous service of making us appear reassuring; we appeared to be kindly and benign, as benign as he himself appeared. He told the people that we were the true Republicans, and the people believed him. You had only to look into his face; you couldn’t suspect him of a jest. Through him we were accepted by public opinion, and that in itself is no small service.”

“Méline was a good sort,” sighed Henri de Brécé, “We must at least do him that justice.”

“He was a patriot,” said Joseph Lacrisse.

“With such a minister,” continued Henri Léon, “we had everything, we were everything and we could do everything. We had no need to conceal ourselves. We were not outside the Republic; we were above it, and we dominated it from the full height of our patriotism. We were everything; we were France herself! I must admit that the Republic is good enough at times, though I’m not smitten with the hussy. Under Méline the police — I don’t exaggerate — were exquisitely agreeable. During a Royalist demonstration which you very kindly organized, Brécé, I yelled ‘*Vive la police*’ till I was hoarse! And I meant it. The enthusiasm with which they clubbed the Republicans! Gerault-Richard was put in gaol for shouting ‘*Vive la République!*’ Ah, Méline spoiled us, made life too pleasant for us. A wet-nurse, positively! He rocked us to sleep. That’s a fact. General Decuir himself used to say, ‘Now that we’ve got all we can possibly want, what’s ‘the good of upsetting the whole caboodle and getting a nasty spill in doing it?’ Thrice-happy days when Méline led the dance! Nationalists, Monarchists, anti-Semites and Plebiscitarians, we all danced in unison to the sound of his rustic fiddle.

“We were all countrified and content. When Dupuy came along I was less pleased; with him things were not so honest and above-board; we were not so sure of ourselves. Of course he didn’t want to harm us, but he was not a true friend. He was not the kindly village fiddler leading the wedding procession. He was a fat coachman jogging us along in his cab. And we tore along, hanging on anyhow, always in danger of being upset. He had a hard hand on the reins. You will be telling me that his clumsiness was feigned; yes, but feigned clumsiness is tremendously like the real thing. Besides, he never knew where he wanted to go. There are people like that, fellows who don’t know your address but drive you indefinitely along impossible roads, winking maliciously as they do it. It unnerves one.”

“I don’t defend Dupuy,” said Henri de Brécé.

“I don’t attack him. I watch him, study him and classify him. I don’t dislike him; he’s been of great service to us. Don’t forget it. If it were not for him, we should all be doing time to-day. Oh yes, I mean it. I’m referring to Faure’s funeral, the great day fixed for simultaneous action. Well, my dear friends, after the failure of the great *coup* we should have been done for, had it not been for Dupuy.”

“It wasn’t us he wanted to spare,” said Joseph Lacrisse, with his nose in his ledger.

“I know that. He saw at a glance that he couldn’t do anything because there were some generals mixed up in the business. It was too big for him. But that doesn’t alter the fact that we owe him a jolly big candle.”

“Bah!” said Henri de Brécé. “We should have been acquitted, like Déroulède.”

“It’s possible, but Dupuy allowed us plenty of time to pull ourselves together after the funeral stampede, and I confess I am grateful to him for that. On the other hand, without ill will, possibly without intending it, he has done us a great deal of harm. Suddenly, just when we least expected such a thing, he appeared to be furiously angry with us. He made out that he was defending the Republic. His position demanded the attitude; I recognize that. It wasn’t a serious matter, but it had a bad effect. I get tired of telling you the same thing; that this country is conservative at heart. Unlike Méline, Dupuy did not tell people that we were the Republicans, that we were the Conservatives; for that matter, no one would have believed him if he had. During his ministry we lost something of our authority over the country. We were no longer on the side of the government. We were no longer reassuring; professional Republicans began to feel anxious about us. That was to our credit, but it was dangerous. Our position was not so good under Dupuy as under Méline, and it is worse today, under Waldeck-Rousseau, than it was under Dupuy. That’s the truth, the bitter truth.”

“Of course,” said Henri de Brécé, pulling his moustache, “of course the Waldeck-Millerand Ministry is actuated by the worst intentions, but I repeat it’s unpopular and it won’t last.”

“It may be unpopular,” returned Henri Léon, “but are you quite sure it won’t last long enough to do us harm? Unpopular governments last as long as popular ones. To begin with, no government is ever really popular. To govern is to displease. We are among ourselves and there is no need to mince matters. Do you for one moment imagine that we shall be popular when we form the government? Do you imagine, Brécé, that the people will weep with emotion when they see you attired as king’s chamberlain with a key hanging down your

back? And you, Lacrisse, do you suppose you'll be cheered in the working-class districts during a strike, when you are, say, prefect of police? Look at yourself in the glass and then tell me whether you look like an idol of the people. Don't let us deceive ourselves. We say that the Waldeck-Millerand Cabinet is composed of idiots; we are quite right to say so, but we should be wrong to believe it."

"What ought to encourage us," said Joseph Lacrisse, "is the weakness of a government which cannot enforce obedience."

"All our governments have been weak for many a long year," said Henri Léon, "but they have always been strong enough to defeat us."

"The Waldeck Ministry has not a single police-commissary at its disposal," said Joseph Lacrisse. "Not one!"

"So much the better for us," said Henri Léon, "for one would be enough to jug all three of us. I tell you the circle is closing in. Consider these words of a philosopher; they are worth the trouble: 'Republicans govern badly, but they defend themselves well.'"

But Henri de Brécé, bending over his desk, was turning a second blot of ink into a beetle by the addition of a head, two antennae and six legs. He gave a satisfied glance at his work, looked up and remarked:

"We still hold trump cards, the Army, the Church—"

Henri Léon interrupted him:

"The Army, the Church, the magistracy, the bourgeoisie, the butcher boys — in other words, the whole excursion train of the Republic. The train is travelling nevertheless, and will continue to do so until the driver stops the engine."

"Ah," sighed Joseph Lacrisse, "if only we had President Faure with us still."

"Félix Faure," resumed Henri Léon, "joined us out of sheer vanity. He became a Nationalist in order to get invitations to hunt with the Brécés, but he would have turned against us as soon as he saw us on the verge of success. It was not in his interest to restore the monarchy. *Dame!* What could the monarchy have offered him? We could not have offered him a Lord High Constable's bâton. We may regret him, for he loved the army; we may mourn him, but we must not allow ourselves to be inconsolable. He was not the driver; Loubet is not the driver either; the President of the Republic, whoever he may be, is never master of his engine. To me the ghastly part of it is that the Republican train is controlled by a phantom driver. He is invisible, and yet the train rushes on. It positively frightens me.

"Then there is another thing," he continued, "and that is the general indifference of the public. Speaking of that, reminds me of a very significant remark once made by Citizen Bissolo. It was when the anti-Semites and ourselves were organizing spontaneous manifestations against Loubet. Our

crowds went down the boulevards shouting ‘Panama! Resign! Long live the Army!’ It was magnificent. Young Ponthieu and General Decuir’s two sons headed the crowd, with glossy silk hats, white carnations in their buttonholes, and gold-headed canes in their hands. And the toughest hooligans of Paris made up the procession. We had seen to that, and as it was a case of good pay and no risk we had our pick. They would have been sorry to miss such a lark. Lord! what voices they had, and what fists, and what cudgels I “A countermanifestation quickly made its appearance; a smaller and more insignificant crowd, though warlike and determined enough, advanced to meet us amid shouts of ‘Long live the Republic! Down with the priests P with an occasional solitary cry for Loubet that seemed surprised to find itself in the air. Before it was over this unexpected disturbance aroused the anger of the police, who at that moment were barricading the boulevard and looking just like an austere border of black wool on a brightly variegated carpet. Soon, however, this black border, actuated by a movement of its own, hurled itself upon the van of the countermanifestation, while another body of police harassed them from the rear. In this way the police had soon dispersed the partisans of Monsieur Loubet, dragging the unrecognizable débris off to the insidious depths of the Drouot police-station. That was the way they did things in those troublous times. Was Monsieur Loubet, at the Élysée, ignorant of the methods employed by his police for enforcing in the streets of Paris respect for the head of the State? Or, if he knew of them, was he unable and unwilling to alter them? I do not know. Did he realize that his unpopularity, real and undoubted as it was, was fading into insignificance, almost disappearing in fact, before the strange and agreeable spectacle which was offered nightly to a witty and intelligent people? I do not think so, for in that case the man would have been a terrifying person; he would have been a genius, and I should no longer feel confident of sleeping outside the King’s door at the Élysée this winter. No, I believe Loubet was once again so fortunate as to be unable to do anything. Anyhow, it is certain that the police, who acted spontaneously and solely out of the goodness of their hearts, succeeded, by their sympathetic repression, in shedding over the advent of the President a little of that popular rejoicing which had been totally lacking. In so doing, if one considers the matter, they did us more harm than good, for they pleased the public, while it was to our advantage that the general discontent should increase.

“However, one night, one of the last of that eventful week, when the expected manœuvre was taking place from point to point, and the countermanifestation found itself attacked simultaneously in the van and in the rear by the police and in flank by us, I saw Bissolo extricate himself from the menaced van of the

Republicans and, with long strides and a desperate wriggling of his little body, reach the corner of the Rue Drouot, where I was standing with a dozen or so roughs who in response to my orders were shouting 'Panama! Resign!' It was a nice quiet little corner! I beat time, and my men pronounced each syllable with great distinctness— 'Pa-na-ma!' It was really done with taste. Bissolo took refuge between my legs. He feared me far less than the police; and he was right. For two years Citizen Bissolo and I had met face to face in all our manifestations: we had headed the processions at the beginning and end of every meeting. We had exchanged every imaginable sort of political insult: 'Hypocrite! Time-server! Forger! Traitor! Assassin! Outcast!' That sort of thing binds people together and creates a mutual sympathy. Besides, it pleased me to see a Socialist, almost a Libertarian, standing up for Loubet, who is in his own fashion a Moderate. I said to myself: 'The President must hate being acclaimed by Bissolo, a dwarf with a voice of thunder, who at all public meetings demands the nationalization of capital. Bourgeois that he is, the President would surely prefer a bourgeois like myself for a supporter. But he can feel in his pockets.' Panama! Panama! Resign! Resign! Long live the Army! Down with the Jews! Long live the King!

"All this made me treat Bissolo with courtesy. I had only to say 'Hullo, here's Bissolo,' and my dozen costers would promptly have cut him in pieces, but that wouldn't have done any good. I said nothing. We were very quiet; we stood beside one another and watched the march past of Joubet's supporters driven to the police-station in the Rue Drouot. Most of them, having previously been clubbed, staggered along beside the police like so many drunkards. Among them was a Socialist deputy, a very handsome man with a big beard; his sleeves had been tom off; there was a young apprentice sobbing and crying 'Mother! Mother!' and the editor of some trashy daily with two black eyes and his nose streaming with blood. And the *Marseillaise*! 'Qu'un sang impur.'... I noticed one man who was far more respectable and far more sorry for himself than the rest. He looked like a professor, a serious, middle-aged man. He had evidently made an attempt to explain his point of view; he had tried subtle and persuasive arguments on the police. Otherwise the way in which they were kicking him in the back with their hobnailed boots and banging him with their fists was quite inexplicable. And as he was very tall, very thin, anything but strong, and weighed very little, he skipped about under these blows in the most ridiculous fashion. He displayed a comical tendency to make his escape upwards. His bare head had a most pitiable appearance. He had that submerged expression which comes over a short-sighted man when he has lost his glasses. His face expressed

the infinite distress of a being whose only contact with the outside world comes through sturdy fists and hobnailed boots.

“As this unfortunate prisoner passed us, Bissolo, although he was on hostile territory, could not help sighing and saying: ‘It is a strange thing that Republicans should be so treated in a Republic.’ I politely replied that it was in truth somewhat amusing. “No, Citizen Monarchist,” replied Bissolo, ‘it is not amusing, it is sad. But that is not the chief misfortune. The chief misfortune, I tell you, is the lethargy of the public.’ Bissolo spoke these words with a confidence that did us both honour. I glanced at the crowd, and it is a fact that it seemed to me flabby and without energy. Now and then a cry rose from its depths like a firework let off by a child: ‘Down with Loubet! Down with the thieves! Down with the Jews! Long live the Army!’ And it seemed friendly enough towards the worthy police, but there was no electricity in the air — no storm brewing. Citizen Bissolo continued with melancholy philosophy: ‘The great evil is the lethargy of the public. We Republicans, Socialists and Libertarians are suffering from it to-day. You Monarchists and Imperialists will suffer from it tomorrow, and will learn in your turn that you may lead a horse to the water but you can’t make him drink. Republicans are arrested and no one stirs a finger; and when it is the turn of the Royalists to be arrested, no one will stir a finger, you may be sure of that. The crowd will not stir an inch to deliver you, Monsieur Henri Léon, or your friend Monsieur Déroulède.’

“I must admit that by the light of these words I seemed to catch a glimpse of a profoundly dismal future flashing across my vision. Somewhat ostentatiously, however, I replied: ‘Citizen Bissolo, there is nevertheless this difference between you and ourselves — that the crowd looks upon you as a mob of time-servers without love for your country, while we Monarchists and Imperialists enjoy the esteem of the public. We are popular.’ Citizen Bissolo smiled pleasantly at this and remarked: ‘Your horse is there, monseigneur, and you have only to mount her. But when you are on her back she will quietly lie down by the side of the road and will pitch you off. There is no sorrier jade anywhere, I warn you. Tell me which one of her riders has not had his back broken by popularity? In time of peril have the people ever been able to offer the least assistance to their idols? You Nationalists are not so popular as you profess, you and your candidate Gamelle are almost unknown to the general public. But if ever the mob enfolds you in its loving embrace, you will very quickly discover its stupendous impotence and cowardice.’

“I could not refrain from reproaching Bissolo severely for calumniating the French public. He replied that he was a sociologist, that his Socialism was based on science, and that he had a little box at home filled with actual facts minutely

classified, which enabled him to bring about a methodical revolution. And he added: 'Science, and not the people, possesses sovereign power. A stupidity repeated by thirty-six millions of mouths does not for that reason cease to be stupid. Majorities, as a general rule, display a superior capacity for servitude. Among the weak, weakness is multiplied in proportion to number. Mobs are always inert. They possess a little energy only when they are starving. I can prove to you that on the morning of the 10th of August, 1792, the people of Paris were still Royalists. I have been addressing public meetings for ten years and have had my share of hard blows. The education of the people has hardly commenced; that is the fact of the matter. In the brain of the working man, in the palace where the bourgeois carry their inept and brutal prejudices, there is a great cavity. That has got to be filled. We shall do it. It will take a long time. In the meanwhile it is better to have an empty head than one filled with toads and serpents. All this is scientific fact; it's all in my box. It is all in accordance with the laws of evolution. Nevertheless the general poltroonery disgusts me. And in your place it would frighten me. Look at your partisans, the defenders of the sword and the Church, did you ever see anything so flabby, so gelatinous?' Having spoken, he stretched out his arms, gave a wild cry of 'Long live Socialism!' plunged head foremost in the enormous crowd, and disappeared in the sea of people."

Joseph Lacrisse, who had listened without enthusiasm to this long story, asked whether Citizen Bissolo wasn't merely an animal.

"On the contrary, he is a very clever man," replied Henri Léon, "the sort of man one would like to have as a neighbour in the country, as Bismarck used to say of Lassalle. Bissolo spoke only too truly when he said that you may lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

CHAPTER XII

MADAME DE BONMONT conceived of love as an abyss of delight. After that dinner at the Madrid, glorified as it had been by the reading of the royal letter, she had said to Joseph Lacrisse as they returned from the Bois, while the carriage was still warm with an historic embrace: "This will be for ever!" and these words, meaningless as they will seem if we consider the impermanence of the elements which make up the substance of the erotic emotions, were none the less indicative of a proper spirituality and of longing for the infinite which conferred a certain distinction. "Quite!" had been the answer of Joseph Lacrisse.

Two weeks had passed since that happy night, two weeks during which the secretary of the Departmental Committee of Young Royalists had divided his time between the demands of his work and those of his love. Dressed in a tailor-made costume, her face covered with a white lace veil, the Baronne had come, at the appointed hour, to the first-floor flat of a discreet little house in the Rue Lord-Byron.

Here were three rooms which she had herself furnished with a heart full of tenderness, hanging them with that celestial blue which had formerly figured in her forgotten love-affair with Raoul Marcien.

She found Joseph Lacrisse well-mannered, proud and even a little shy. He was young and charming, but not exactly what she had wanted. He was gloomy and seemed uneasy. With his frowning brows and thin tightly-closed lips he would have reminded her of Rara, had she not possessed to the full the delightful faculty of forgetting the past. She knew that if he was anxious it was not without cause. She knew that he was a conspirator and that it fell to his share to hoodwink the prefect and the chief Republicans of a very populous department; and she knew that in this enterprise he was risking his liberty and his life for the sake of King and Church. It was precisely because he was a conspirator that she had first loved him. But now she would have liked him to be more cheerful and more affectionate. He welcomed her warmly enough, however, saying:

"It is an intoxication to see you! For the last fortnight I have positively been walking in a starry dream." And he had added: "How delicious you are!"

But he hardly looked at her, and at once went to the window, where he lifted a corner of the curtain, and for ten minutes remained there peering through the opening.

Then, without turning round, he remarked: —

"I told you that we ought to have two exits, and you wouldn't believe me. It's a good thing we are in front anyhow, but I can't see properly because of the tree."

"The acacia?" sighed the Baronne as she slowly untied her veil.

The house stood back from the road, facing a little courtyard, containing an acacia and a dozen spindle-trees, shut in by an ivy-covered railing. "Yes, the acacia, if you like."

"What are you looking at, *mon ami*?"

"At a man stuck against the wall opposite."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know. I'm looking to see if he is one of my detectives. I'm fed up. Since I've been in Paris I've had two of them at my heels all day. It gets on one's nerves in the end. But this time I quite thought I'd managed to give them the slip."

"Couldn't you complain?"

"To whom?"

"I don't know — to the Government."

He made no reply, but stood for awhile still watching. Then, having made sure that it was not one of his pursuers, his countenance cleared and he came over to her.

"How I love you! You are lovelier than ever. You are, truly, and I adore you. But what if they had put different men on to me this time! It's Dupuy who put them on my track. A tall fellow and a short one. The tall one wore black glasses and the short one had a nose like a parrot's beak and little bright eyes like a bird's that were always glancing sideways. I knew them well. They weren't much to be feared. They were always after me. When I went to the Club my friends would tell me as they came in, 'Lacrisse, I've just seen your two fellows at the door.' I used to send them out beer and cigars. Sometimes I would ask myself if Dupuy did not set them on me to protect me. He was brusque and queer and irritable, but a patriot all the same. He wasn't a bit like the men in power to-day. With them you've got to be on your guard. What if they've changed my detectives, the brutes!"

He went to the window again.

"No, it's only a coachman smoking his pipe. I didn't notice his yellow-striped waistcoat. Fear distorts objects, that certain! I must confess I was afraid — on your account, as you may imagine. You must not be compromised through me, you who are so charming, so delicious!"

He sat beside her and took her in his arms, covering her with vehement caresses. Presently she found that her dress was in such disorder that modesty

alone, in the absence of any other motive, would have forced her to remove it.

“Elisabeth, tell me you love me.”

“If I did not love you, it seems to me—”

“Do you hear that heavy, regular footfall in the street?”

“No, *mon ami*.

And it was true; plunged into a delicious oblivion she was not listening for sounds from the outer world.

“There’s no doubt this time, it’s he, my man, the little one, the bird. I know his step so well that I could pick it out among a thousand.”

And he returned to the window.

These alarms set his nerves on edge. Since the failure of the 28th of February he had lost his admirable assurance and was beginning to anticipate a long and difficult affair. Most of his companions were growing discouraged and he himself suspicious. Everything irritated him.

And now she made an unfortunate remark: “Don’t forget, *mon ami*, that I’ve got you an invitation to dinner to-morrow at my brother’s. It will be an opportunity of meeting.”

His irritation burst forth:

“Your brother Wallstein! Ah, yes, let’s talk of him! He’s a true Jew if you like. This week Henri Léon told him about an interesting undertaking, a propagandist newspaper which must be distributed gratuitously in large quantities throughout the country and in the manufacturing centres. He pretended not to understand what Léon was driving at and gave him advice — good advice! Does your brother imagine for a moment that it is his advice that we want?”

Elisabeth was an anti-Semite. She felt that she could not with decency defend her brother Wallstein, of Vienna, of whom she was exceedingly fond. She remained silent.

Lacrisse began to play with a small revolver which lay upon the table.

“If they attempt to arrest me here—” he said.

A fit of rage seized him. He cried out against the Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, Freethinkers, Parliamentarians, Republicans and Ministers. He would like to flog them in public, and bathe them in vitriol. He waxed eloquent and broke into the pious language of the *Croix*.

“The Jews and Freemasons are ruining France, ruining us, eating us up. But patience! Wait until after the Rennes trial, and then you will see how we will bleed them, split them up, smoke their hams, singe their hides and hang their heads in the pork-butchers’ shops! Everything is ready. The movement will break out simultaneously in Rennes and in Paris. The Dreyfusards will be

trampled in the streets. Loubet will be roasted in the flames of the Élysée, and none too soon either.”

Madame de Bonmont conceived of love as an abyss of delight. She did not hold it sufficient unto the day to forget the world once only in this room of sky-blue hangings. She sought to lead her lover back to gentler thoughts. So she said:

“What beautiful eyelashes you have!”

And she covered his eyelids with tiny kisses.

When she languidly opened her eyes again, languishing and recalling to her happy mind the infinity that had filled it for a moment, she noticed that Joseph was anxious and seemed far away from her, although she still held him with one of her soft, beautiful, supple arms. With a voice tender as a sigh, she asked him:

“What is the matter, *mon ami*? We were so happy just now.”

“Of course we were,” replied Joseph Lacrisse. “But I’ve just remembered three telegrams in cipher which have to be sent off before night. It is a complicated matter, and a dangerous one. We really thought for a moment that Dupuy had intercepted our telegrams on February 22nd. There was enough in them to jug the lot of us.”

“But he did not intercept them, *mon ami*? ”

“We must suppose not, as we were not molested. But I have my reasons for believing that for the last fortnight the Government have had an eye on us, and until this wretched Republic is done for I shan’t have a moment’s peace.”

Tender and radiant, she put her arms about his neck, like a scented garland of flowers, and gazing at him with her moist sapphire eyes she said, with a smile upon her fresh, ardent mouth:

“Do not be anxious, *mon ami*. Do not worry so. I am sure you will succeed. Their Republic is done for. How could it resist you? The people have had enough of Parliamentarians. They don’t want any more of them, I’m certain. Nor of the Freemasons, and Freethinkers, and all those horrible godless people who have neither religion nor country. For one’s country and one’s religion are the same thing, aren’t they? There is a wonderful spiritual impulse abroad. On Sunday, at Mass, the churches are full. And not only of women, as the Republicans would have us believe. There are gentlemen and officers. Believe me, *mon ami*, you will succeed. Besides, I will burn candles for you in St. Anthony’s chapel.”

“Yes, we shall make a move early in September,” he replied, grave and thoughtful. “The public frame of mind is favourable. We have the good wishes and encouragement of the people. Oh, it is not sympathy we lack.”

She imprudently inquired what they did lack.

“What we lack, or at any rate might lack, if things were not settled quickly, is the sinews of war — money, deuce take it! We get a good deal, of course, but we shall need so much. Three ladies in the best set gave us three hundred thousand francs. Monseigneur was much impressed by a generosity so truly French. Do you not think that there is something charming, exquisite, fragrant of the old France, the old aristocratic society, in the offering of these women to royalty?”

Madame de Bonmont, dressing in front of the glass, did not appear to have heard the question.

He explained his meaning:

“But they are trickling, trickling away, the three hundred thousand francs presented by those white hands. Monseigneur told us, with chivalrous, grace: ‘Spend the money to the last sou.’ If some dainty little hand were to bring us another hundred thousand francs, how we should bless it! It would have helped to save France. There is still a place to be filled among the amazons of the cheque, in the squadron of fair Leaguers. I can safely promise to the fourth donor an autograph letter from the Prince and, what is more, a place at Court next winter.”

But the Baronne, feeling that he was trying to bleed her, received a painful impression. This was not the first time, but she could not get used to it.

Besides, she did not see that it would be in any way useful to give her money for the restoration of the monarchy. Of course she liked the handsome young Prince with his rosy face and his fair silky beard. She wished ardently for his return; she was impatient to witness his entry into Paris, and his coronation. But, she argued, with his income of two millions he had no need of anything but love, good wishes and flowers. When Joseph Lacrisse had finished what he had to say the silence became painful.

“*Mon Dieu!* how awful my hair looks!” she muttered to the mirror.

When she had finished dressing, she took from her little purse a piece of four-leaved clover, enclosed in a glass medallion framed in silver gilt, and handing it to him whispered sentimentally:

“It will bring you luck. Promise to keep it always.”

In order to divert the attention of any police-agents that might be on his track, Joseph Lacrisse was the first to leave the blue flat. As he reached the landing he muttered with a scowl:

“She’s a regular Wallstein! It was no good *her* being baptized. What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh!”

CHAPTER XIII

IN the warm luminous decline of day, the Luxembourg garden was as though bathed in a golden dust. Monsieur Bergeret sat on the terrace between Messieurs Denis and Goubin, at the foot of the statue of Marguerite d'Angouleme.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I should like to read you an article that appeared this morning in the *Figaro*. I shall not name the author, for I think you will recognize him for yourselves. Since chance will have it so, it gives me all the more pleasure to read it in the presence of this lovable woman who was a lover of sound doctrine and of open-hearted men, and who, because she was learned, sincere, tolerant and pitiful, and sought to deprive the torturers of their victims, raised against her all the monasteries and all the universities. They used even to incite the young scapegraces of the College of Navarre to insult her, and had she not been sister to the King of France they would have sewed her up in a sack and thrown her into the Seine. She was a gentle soul, profound yet cheerful. I cannot say whether when alive she had the coquettish and mischievous expression which she wears in this statue by a little-known sculptor, by name Lescorné, but she certainly has not in the hard, sincere pencil drawings of Clouet's pupils, who have left us her portrait. I would rather believe that her smile was often veiled in sadness, and that her lips drooped sorrowfully when she said: 'I have borne more than my share of the burden common to all persons of high estate.' In her private life she was anything but happy, and all around her she saw the wicked triumph amid the applause of the cowardly and ignorant. I believe that in the days when her ears were not of marble she would have listened with sympathy to what I am about to read."

And Monsieur Bergeret, having unfolded his paper, read as follows:

"THE GOVERNMENT.

"To see just where one stood in the Affair one needed, at the outset, some application, and a certain amount of critical method, together with sufficient leisure to apply it. So that we see that the light first dawned upon those who, by the quality of their minds and the nature of their occupation, were better adapted than others to the solution of difficult problems. After this, all that was needed was common sense and close attention. Common sense is enough to-day.

"We must not be surprised that the general public has held out so long against the obvious truth. Nothing should surprise us. There are reasons for everything,

and it is our place to discover these reasons. In the present instance little reflection is needed in order to perceive that the public has been utterly and absolutely deceived, and its touching credulity abused. The Press has largely helped the lie to succeed. Most of the newspapers have hurried to the assistance of the forgers, and have published forged or falsified documents, insults and lies. But we must admit that in most cases this was done to please their public and respond to the private opinions of their readers. It is certain that the battle against truth was in the first place based on the popular instinct.

“The crowd, by which I mean the crowd of people who are incapable of thinking for themselves, did not understand; they could not understand. Their idea of the Army was a simple one. For them the Army was parade, march past, review, manœuvres, uniforms, high boots, spurs, epaulets, guns and flags. It also meant conscription, with beribboned caps, litres of cheap wine, barracks, drill, the mess, the guard-room and the canteen. It meant, again, a national trade in pictures, the brilliant little sketches of our military painters with their spotless uniforms and nice tidy battle scenes. And finally it was a symbol of strength and security, of honour and glory. The officers who rode past on horseback with their swords in their hands, amid the glitter of gold and steel, to the sound of music and the roll of drums, how was it possible to believe that they would shortly be bending over a table, behind locked doors, *tête à tête* with anxious agents from the prefecture of police, handling the eraser and the india-rubber, handling the gum brush or sprinkling pounce, scratching out or putting in a name in a document, forging handwritings, to ruin an innocent man; or thinking out ridiculous disguises for mysterious appointments with the traitor they had to save?

“What made these crimes seem impossible to the public mind was that they did not smack of the open air, the early morning march, the field of manœuvres and the battle-field. They were all too stuffy, they savoured too much of the office; there was nothing military about them. And, in truth, all the practices which were resorted to in order to conceal the judicial error of 1895, all those infamous documents, all that vile and rascally trickery, reeks of the office, and a dirty office at that. All that the four green-papered walls, the china inkstand surrounded with sponge, the boxwood paper-knife, the water-bottle on the mantelpiece, the pigeon-holes, and the leather-seated chair could suggest in the way of ridiculous imaginings and evil thoughts to these stay-at-homes, these poor ‘sitters’ as a poet has called them, to vain, poor lazy, plotting scribblers, idle even in the accomplishment of their idle task, jealous of one another and proud of their occupation; all the equivocal, false, treacherous and stupid things that can be done with pen and paper in the service of wickedness and folly, came

out of a corner of that building on which are sculptured battle trophies and smoking hand-grenades.

“The jobs perpetrated in these offices during the space of four years, for the purpose of burdening a condemned prisoner with evidence which they had neglected to produce before his condemnation, and of acquitting the guilty man whom all accused, who inculpated himself, are so monstrous in their conception as to baffle the moderate mind of a Frenchman, and they exhale a spirit of tragic buffoonery most displeasing in a country whose literature abhors the confusion of styles. These documents and inquiries must be studied minutely before one can admit the reality of all these plots and intrigues, these prodigiously audacious tricks and inept manœuvres, and I can well understand that the careless, ill-informed public refused to believe in them even after they were divulged.

“And yet it is very true that at the end of a corridor in a Ministerial building, on thirty square yards of waxed flooring, a few military bureaucrats, some of them idle and crafty, others excited and unruly, betrayed justice and deceived a great people by their wicked, fraudulent documents. But if this Affair, which was above all the Affair of Mercier and the bureaux, has revealed a villainous morality, it has also raised up some noble characters.

“For even in this very office there was one man unlike the rest. His mind was broad, shrewd and lucid, his character noble, his heart patient, abundantly human and invincibly gentle. He was rightly looked upon as one of the most intelligent officers in the Army. And although the singularity of a spirit of too rare an essence might have been a stumbling-block, he had been the first among the officers of his age to be appointed lieutenant-colonel, and everything foretold for him the most brilliant future in the Army. His friends understood his rather quizzical indulgence and his genuine kindness. They knew him to be endowed with an unusual sense of beauty, apt to feel keenly all that was best in music and literature, and to live in the ethereal world of ideas. Like all men whose inner life is deep and meditative, he developed his great moral and intellectual faculties in solitude. This tendency to retire within himself, together with his natural simplicity, his spirit of renunciation and sacrifice, and the beautiful sincerity which sometimes seems to grace the minds of those most conscious of universal suffering and evil, combined to form in him the type of soldier known or dreamed of by Alfred de Vigny, the quiet hero of daily life who imparts some of his own nobility to the humblest tasks which he undertakes, and to whom the accomplishment of routine duty is the familiar poetry of life.

“This officer, who was appointed to the second committee of investigation, found one day that Dreyfus had been condemned for the crime of Esterhazy. He

informed his superior officers. They tried, quietly at first, and then by threats, to put a stop to his investigations, which, in proving the innocence of Dreyfus, would reveal their own crimes and errors. He knew that it meant ruin if he persevered. He persevered. With quiet reflection, slow and sure, with calm courage, he continued his work of justice. He was removed. He was sent to Gabès, and to the Tripoli frontier, on some wicked pretext, for no other reason than to get him murdered by the Arab brigands.

“Having failed to kill him, they set to work to dishonour him, to ruin him by the profusion of their slanders. With treacherous promises they tried to keep him from speaking at the Zola trial. He spoke, with the unruffled calm of the just man, with the serenity of a mind that knew neither fear nor desire. There was no exaggeration in his speech and no weakness; only the words of a man who was doing his duty on that day as on all other days, without thinking for a moment that there was a singular courage in the act. Neither threats nor persecution caused him to hesitate for a moment.

“Many have said that in order to accomplish the task which he had set himself, to establish the innocence of a Jew and the crime of a Christian, he had to get the better of clerical prejudices, to conquer a hatred of the Jews ingrained in him since his early youth, when he was growing to manhood in that land of Alsace and of France which gave him to the Army and the country. Those who know him best know that he heeded nothing of the kind, that he was incapable of any sort of fanaticism, that his ideals were never those of a sectary, that his great intelligence placed him above petty hatreds and partialities; in short, that his soul was free.

“This inward liberty, the most precious of all liberties, his persecutors could not take from him. In the prison to which they sent him, whose stones, in the words of Fernand Gregh, formed the pedestal of his statue, he was free, freer than they. His wide reading, his calm, benevolent speech, and his letters, full of serene and noble thoughts, bear witness (I know) to the freedom of his soul. Those others, his persecutors and calumniators, were the real prisoners — the prisoners of their lies and their crimes. People who saw him behind the bolts and bars testify to the fact that he was quiet, smiling and indulgent. When the great mental revolution took place during which those public meetings that united thousands of scholars, students and workingmen were organized, while petitions covered with signatures demanded an end to the scandal of his imprisonment, he said to Louis Havet, who went to see him: ‘I am much more easy in my mind than you.’ I think, however, that he suffered. I think he suffered intensely at the thought of so much baseness and treachery, of so monstrous an injustice, of that epidemic of crime and madness, of the execrable fury of the men who were

deceiving the crowd, and the pardonable fury of the ignorant mob. He, too, saw the aged woman bearing with saintly simplicity the faggots for the torture of the innocent. How could he do other than suffer, when he found that men were worse than his philosophy had pictured them, less courageous and less intelligent when put to the test than the psychologists imagined in their quiet studies? I believe he suffered inwardly in the secret places of his silent soul, veiled as by the Stoic's cloak. But I should be ashamed to pity him. I should be too much afraid lest that murmur of human pity should reach his ears and offend the rightful pride of his heart. Far from pitying him, rather will I say that he was happy; happy because on the sudden day of trial he was ready and without weakness; happy because unforeseen circumstances permitted him to give to the full measure of his great soul; happy that he proved himself to be an honest man, heroic in his simplicity; happy because he stands for ever as an example to soldiers and to citizens. Pity is for those who have failed. To Colonel Picquart we can offer nothing less than admiration."

Having come to an end of his reading, Monsieur Bergeret refolded his newspaper. The statue of Marguerite of Navarre was all rosy-pink. In the west the harshly brilliant sky clothed itself as with a suit of mail, a network of clouds like bars of red copper.

CHAPTER XIV

THAT same evening Monsieur Bergeret received in his study a visit from his colleague Jumage.

Alphonse Jumage and Lucien Bergeret were born on the same day, at the same hour, and were the children of two girl friends to whom, from that time, they became an inexhaustible source of conversation. They had grown up together. Lucien never troubled his head in any way concerning their simultaneous entry into the world, but Alphonse was more mindful of the fact, and dwelt upon it with some emphasis. He formed a mental habit of comparing the course of their two lives, which had started simultaneously, and he gradually persuaded himself that it was only just, equitable and salutary that their progress in life should be equal.

He took a great interest in the development of their twin careers, both of which were devoted to teaching, and, judging his own fortune by another's, he created for himself continual and futile anxieties which obscured the natural clearness of his vision.

The fact that Monsieur Bergeret was a professor at the University, while he himself taught grammar in a suburban *lycée* was not, to his mind, in conformity with the idea of divine justice engraven upon his heart. He was too fair-minded a man to bear a grudge against his friend; but when the latter was appointed lecturer at the Sorbonne Jumage felt it keenly.

A curious effect of this comparative study of their two lives was that Jumage formed an inveterate habit of thinking and acting, on every possible occasion, in a manner diametrically opposed to Monsieur Bergeret's way of thinking and acting; not that he had not a sincere and upright character, but he could not help suspecting that some malign influence was at work to ensure the success of careers which were of greater importance and merit than his own, and were therefore unrighteous. And thus, when he found that the professor was in favour of the Revision, he at once joined the ranks of the Nationals, because he conceived all manner of perfectly genuine reasons for doing so, and also because he had to be the antithesis, in a sense, the inverted self, of Monsieur Bergeret. He entered his name as a member of the League of the *Agitation française*, and even made speeches at its meetings. In the same way he opposed his friend on every topic under the sun, from systems of economical heating to the rules of Latin

Grammar, and as, after all, Monsieur Bergeret was not always wrong, Jumage was not always right.

This contrariety, which with years had assumed the exactitude of a rational system, did not in any way interfere with their life-long friendship. Jumage was really concerned at the misfortunes that dogged Bergeret in the course of his sometimes troubled career. He went to see him every time he heard of a fresh calamity. He was no fair-weather friend.

On this particular occasion, he came to his old friend with the worried and bewildered expression, the look of mingled pain and pleasure, that Lucien knew so well.

“You are quite well, Lucien? I’m not in your way, am I?”

“No. I was reading the story of the porter and the young girls in *The Arabian Nights*, newly translated by Dr. Mardrus. It is a literal translation and very different from *The Arabian Nights* of our old friend Galland.”

“I came to see you,” said Jumage, “because I wanted to speak to you about something. But it’s of no consequence. So you were reading *The Arabian Nights*? ”

“Yes,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, “and for the first time too. For the worthy Galland gives one no idea of the real thing. He is an excellent story teller who has carefully corrected the morals of the Arabs. His Scheherazada, like Coppel’s Esther, has her value; but here we have Arabia with all its perfumes.”

“I’ve brought you an article to read,” continued Jumage. “But, as I said before, it’s of no consequence.”

And he drew from his pocket a newspaper which Monsieur Bergeret slowly extended his hand to take. Jumage replaced it in his pocket. Monsieur Bergeret’s hand dropped to his side; then, with fingers that trembled slightly, Jumage spread the paper on the table.

“Again, I repeat, it’s of no importance, but I thought it better — perhaps it’s better for you to know — you have enemies, many enemies.”

“Flatterer I” said Monsieur Bergeret.

And picking up the paper he read the following lines marked in blue pencil:

“A common usher and a Dreyfussard, the intellectual Bergeret, who has been stagnating in the provinces, has just been appointed lecturer at the Sorbonne. The students of the faculty of letters have lodged an energetic protest against the appointment of this anti-French Protestant, and it does not surprise us to hear that many of them have decided to greet as he deserves, with howls of execration, the dirty German Jew whom the Minister of Treason has had the impudence to foist upon them as a teacher.”

And when Monsieur Bergeret had finished reading, Jumage said eagerly:

“Don’t read it, it’s not worth it. It’s so trivial.”

“Trivial, I admit,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “Yet you must not deprive me of this token, obscure and insufficient, but at the same time truthful and creditable, of what I did during a difficult period. I didn’t do a great deal; but I ran some risks. Stapfer, the Dean, was suspended for having spoken of justice during a funeral oration, in the days when Monsieur Bourgeois was Grand Master of the University. And we have known worse times than those for which Monsieur Bourgeois was responsible. If it hadn’t been for the generous firmness of my chiefs I should have been turned out of the University by an unwise Minister. I didn’t think about it then, but I can think of it now, and claim the reward of my actions. Now tell me what more worthy, what nobler, what more finely austere reward could I attain than the insults of the enemies of justice? I could wish that the writer who, despite himself, has given me this testimonial, had expressed his thought in a more memorable fashion. But that would be asking too much.”

Having thus spoken, Monsieur Bergeret placed the blade of his ivory paper-knife between the pages of *The Arabian Nights*. He enjoyed cutting the pages of his books, being a wise man who suited his pleasures to his condition. The austere Jumage envied him this innocent pastime. He pulled his sleeve.

“Listen, Lucien. I share none of your opinions with regard to the Affair. I have blamed and still blame your conduct. I fear it may have the most deplorable results upon your future. No true Frenchman will ever find it in his heart to forgive you. I should like to say, however, that I most forcibly disapprove of the style of controversy employed against you by certain newspapers. I condemn them. You believe that, do you not?”

“Yes.”

After a moment’s silence, Jumage went on: “You see, Lucien, you are slandered because of your position. You can summon your slanderers before a jury. But I don’t advise you to do so. They would be acquitted.”

“That is most probable,” said Monsieur Bergeret. “Unless I walk into court in a plumed hat, a sword at my side, spurs on my boots, and an army of twenty thousand paid hooligans at my heels. Then my plea would be heard by judge and jury. When Zola was found guilty by the jury of the Seine in respect of the very moderate letter which he addressed to a President of the Republic who was ill prepared to read it, their deliberations took place amid bestial cries, hideous threats, and unendurable clatter of ironmongery, amid all the phantoms of error and untruth. I have not so terrific an apparatus at my disposal, therefore it is more than probable that my defamer would be acquitted.”

“You cannot, however, remain indifferent to insults. What do you intend to do?”

“Nothing. I am satisfied. I would just as soon be subjected to the insults of the Press as to its praise. Truth has been served in the newspapers by her enemies as well as by her friends. When a mere handful of men, mindful of the honour of France, denounced the fraudulent condemnation of an innocent man, the Government and public opinion treated them as enemies. But they spoke out. And by their speech they proved themselves the stronger. You know how fervently the majority of the newspapers worked against them. But in spite of themselves they were serving the cause of truth, and by publishing the false documents—”

“There haven’t been so many false documents as you think, Lucien.”

“They made it possible to prove their falsity. Error had been scattered broadcast, and could no longer collect her scattered forces, and finally nothing was left save that which had sequence and continuity. Truth has a faculty of linking facts together which error does not possess. It formed, in the face of insult and impotent hatred, a chain that could not again be broken. We owe the triumph of our cause to the liberty, the licence of the Press.”

“But you are not victorious,” cried Jumage. “Neither are we defeated! Quite the contrary! The opinion of the whole country is against you. I regret to say it, but you and your friends are unanimously execrated, dishonoured, spat upon. We defeated? You are joking. The whole of France is with us.”

“And you are defeated from within. If I took appearances into consideration I might think you victorious, and despair of justice. There are criminals who go unpunished. Prevarication and perjury are publicly approved as praiseworthy actions. I have no hope that the enemies of truth will own themselves vanquished. Such an effort is possible only to the highest type of mind.

“There is very little change in the general state of mind. The ignorance of the public is still almost complete. There have been none of those sudden changes of opinion on the part of the crowd which are so amazing when they occur. Nothing striking or even noticeable has happened. Nevertheless the time is past when a President of the Republic could degrade, to the level of his own soul, justice, the honour of the country, and the alliances of the Republic, the power of whose ministers depended upon their understanding with the enemies of the very institutions of which they were the guardians. A season of brutal hypocrisy when contempt for intelligence and hatred of justice were at one and the same time a popular opinion and a State doctrine. A time when those in power upheld the rioters, when it was a crime to cry ‘*Vive la République!*’ Those days are already

remote, as though they had sunk into the limbo of the past and were plunged into the darkness of the age of barbarism.

“They may return. We are divided from them as yet by nothing tangible, nothing apparent or definite. They have faded away like the clouds of the error which created them, and the least breath may yet rekindle their ashes. But even if everything were to conspire to strengthen your cause, you are none the less irretrievably lost. You are conquered from within, and that is the irretrievable defeat. When you are conquered from without, you can continue to resist and hope for revenge. Your ruin is within you. The necessary consequences of your crimes and your errors are at hand in spite of your efforts to prevent them, and with amazement you see the beginning of your downfall. Unjust and violent, you will be destroyed by your own injustice and violence. And the monstrous party of unrighteousness, hitherto inviolable, respected and feared, is falling, breaking asunder of its own weight.

“What does it matter then if legal sanctions are dilatory or lacking? The only true and natural justice is contained in the very consequences of the act, not in external formulae, which are often narrow and sometimes arbitrary. Why complain that the greatest culprits evade the law and retain their despicable honours? That doesn’t matter either, under the present social system, any more than it mattered, in the days of the earth’s infancy, when the great saurians of the primeval oceans were disappearing to make way for creatures more beautiful and of happier instincts, that there still remained stranded, on the slime of the beaches, a few monstrous survivors of a doomed race.”

As Jumage reached the gate of the Luxembourg after his visit to his friend, he met young Goubin.

“I’ve just been to see Bergeret,” he said. “I’m sorry for him; he seems very cast-down and dejected. The Affair has crushed him.”

CHAPTER XV

AT the offices of the Executive Committee in the Rue de Berri, Henri de Brécé, Joseph Lacrisse and Henri Léon were dealing with the business of the day.

“My dear President,” said Joseph Lacrisse to Henri de Brécé. “I want you to find a prefecture for a good Royalist. I am sure you will not refuse when I have told you of my candidate’s qualification. His father, Ferdinand Dellion, an iron-master at Valcombe, is in every way deserving of the King’s favour. He is most careful of the moral and physical well-being of his workmen. He has a dispensary for them, and he sees that they go to Mass on Sundays and send their children to the church schools, and that they vote properly and abstain from trade unions. He is opposed, unfortunately, by the deputy Cothard and ill-supported by the sub-prefect of Valcombe. His son Gustave is one of the most active and energetic members of my Departmental Committee. He was most vigorous in the campaign against the Jews in our city, and was arrested at Auteuil for taking part in the demonstration against Loubet. You simply cannot refuse a prefecture to Gustave Dellion, my dear President!”

“A prefecture,” murmured Brécé, turning over his register, “a prefecture? We’ve only got Guéret and Draguignan left. Will you have Guéret?”

Joseph Lacrisse smiled imperceptibly as he replied:

“My dear President, Gustave Dellion is my collaborator. When the time is ripe he will proceed under my orders to the forcible suppression of Worms-Clavelin. It is only fair that he should take his place.”

With his eyes glued to the register, Henri de Brécé declared the thing to be impossible. Worms-Clavelin’s successor was already chosen. Monseigneur had appointed Jacques de Cadde, one of the first to subscribe to the Henry subscription-lists.

Lacrisse objected to Jacques de Cadde, saying that he was a stranger to the department. Henri de Brécé retorted that one did not dispute the King’s orders, and the discussion was growing somewhat heated when Henri Léon, astride a chair, put out his hand and remarked in a peremptory tone:

“Worms-Clavelin’s successor will be neither Jacques de Cadde nor Gustave Dellion. It will be Worms-Clavelin.”

Lacrisse and Brécé protested.

“It will be Worms-Clavelin,” repeated Henri Léon. “Worms-Clavelin, who will not await your arrival on the scenes to fly the royal standards from the roof of the prefecture, and whom the Minister of the Interior appointed by the King

will have notified by telephone of his retention at the head of the departmental administration.”

“Worms-Clavelin prefect under the monarchy!” said Brécé disdainfully. “I don’t seem to see him.”

“It would be a shocking thing, of course,” replied Henri Léon. “But if the Chevalier de Clavelin is appointed prefect there is nothing more to be said. Don’t let us have any illusions, the King won’t bestow all the plums on us. Ingratitude is the first duty of a sovereign, and no Bourbon has ever yet been found lacking in that respect. I say this to the praise of the House of France.

“Do you really think the King will govern with the white carnation, the cornflower and the rose of France, and take his ministers from the Jockey Club and from Puteaux, or make Christiani Grand Master of the Ceremonies? If so, you are vastly mistaken. The rose of France, the cornflower and the white carnation will be left on the ground, in the modest shade beloved of the violet. Christiani will be set at liberty, nothing more. People will look askance at him for staving in Loubet’s hat. Of course!

Once deposed, Loubet, who at present is nothing but a low Panamist, will be a predecessor when we have replaced him. The King will sit in his armchair at the Auteuil races and he will then consider that Christiani created a regrettable precedent and will bear him a grudge for doing so. Even we ourselves, we who are plotting for him, will become suspect; conspirators are not liked at Court. I am telling you this to save you from bitter disappointment. The secret of happiness is to live without illusions. As far as I am concerned, if my services are forgotten or despised, I shall not complain. Politics isn’t a matter of sentiment; I realize only too well what His Majesty will be forced to do when we have set him upon the throne of his fathers. Before rewarding gratuitous devotion, a good King pays for the services which have been sold to him. Don’t make any mistake about that! The greatest honours and the most lucrative positions will be given to the Republicans. The trimmers alone will form a third of our political personnel, and will receive their pay before we do. And that is only fair. Gromance, the old Chouan who went over to the Republic under Méline, explains his position very clearly when he tells us: ‘You have lost me a seat in the Senate, therefore you owe me one in the House of Peers.’ He’ll get it, and after all he deserves it. But the reward of the trimmers will be as nothing to that of the faithful Republicans who reserve their treachery for the supreme moment. Those are they who will get the portfolios and gold-laced coats, the titles and endowments. Do you know where to look for our Premier and half our Peerage at the present moment? Don’t look for them in our Royalist Committees where we hourly run the risk of being arrested like so many thieves, nor in the

wandering Court of our young and handsome Prince in his cruel exile. You will find them in the ante-chambers of the Radical ministers, in the drawing-rooms of the Elysée and in every institution in the pay of the Government. Have you never heard of Talleyrand and Fouché? Have you read no history, not even the works of Monsieur Imbert de Saint-Amand? It was not an *émigré* but a regicide who was appointed Minister of the Police by Louis XVIII in 1815. Our young King is certainly not so clever as Louis XVIII, but we must not think him devoid of intelligence. That would be disrespectful and, perhaps, too severe. When he is King he will realize the necessities of the situation. All the chiefs of the Republican party who are not slain, exiled, transported or incorruptible will have to be regarded, otherwise they will oppose him in a great and powerful party, and Méline himself will become a savage enemy. And since I have mentioned Méline, Brécé, tell me yourself, which would be most advantageous to the royal cause — that your father should preside over the peers, or Méline, Duc de Remiremont, Prince des Voges, with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, Knight of the Lily and Saint Louis? There can be no possible doubt. Duc Méline would bring far more adherents to the crown than the Duc de Brécé. Must I, then, teach you the A B C of restorations?

“All we shall get will be the titles and positions rejected by the Republicans. Our gratuitous devotion will be taken for granted. They will have no fear of displeasing us; they will feel assured that we shall remain inoffensive malcontents. It will never for a moment enter their heads that we might form an Opposition.

“Well, they will be mistaken. We shall be obliged to oppose them, and we shall do so. It will be profitable, and it won’t be difficult. Of course we shall not ally ourselves with the Republicans. That would be in execrable taste, and our loyalty would forbid such a thing. We cannot be less Royalist than the King, but we can be more so. Monsiegnur le Duc d’Orléans is no democrat, we must do him that justice. He does not interest himself in the conditions of the working-classes. He dates from before the Revolution. Nevertheless, although he dines in knee-breeches and a Breton waistcoat, with all his orders round his neck, he will turn Liberal when his ministers are Liberals. There is nothing to prevent us from becoming ‘Ultras.’ We shall pull to the right while the Republicans pull to the left; we shall become dangerous and they will treat us properly. And who can say whether the ‘Ultras’ will not be the means of saving the monarchy? We have already an incomparable army to-day which is more religious than the clergy. We have an incomparable bourgeoisie, anti-Semites every one of them, who think as men thought in the Middle Ages. Louis XVIII was not so fortunate. If they will give me the post of Minister of the Interior, with such admirable

elements as these I'll guarantee to make the monarchy last ten years. After that it will be the turn of Socialism. But ten years is a good lease of life."

Having thus spoken, Henri Léon lit a cigar. Still harping on the same theme, Joseph Lacrisse begged Henri de Brécé to see if he had not a good prefecture to dispose of; but the President repeated as before that he had nothing but Guéret and Draguignan.

"It will have to be Draguignan then," said Joseph Lacrisse with a sigh. "Gustave Dellion will not be best pleased, but I must make him see it's a foot in the stirrup."

CHAPTER XVI

THE Baronne de Bonmont had invited all the titled landowners and the big manufacturers and financiers of the district to a charity fête which she was giving on the 29th of the month, in the famous Château de Montil which Bernard de Paves, Grand Master of Artillery in the reign of Louis XII, had built in 1508 for Nicolette de Vaucelles, his fourth wife, and which had been bought by Baron Jules after the French loan of 1871. She had been tactful enough to send no invitation to the Jewish landowners, although she had friends and relations among them. After the death of her husband she was baptized, and had now been five years naturalized. She was wholly devoted to her religion and country. Like her brother Wallstein, of Vienna, she was careful to distinguish herself from her former co-religionists by a sincere anti-Semitism. She was quite unambitious, however, and her natural inclination was for the pleasures of domestic life. She would have been satisfied with a modest position among the Christian aristocracy of France, if her son had not urged her to "make a splash." It was the little Baron Ernest who had induced her to get in with the Brécés; it was he who had inscribed the entire aristocracy of the province on the list of the guests invited to the projected fête. It was he who brought the little Duchesse de Mausac to Montil to take part in the play. As she was given to remarking, she was of good enough birth to sup with circus-riders and drink with grooms.

The programme of the fête included a performance of *Joconde* by society amateurs, a fair in the park, a Venetian fête on the lake, and illuminations.

It was already the 17th. The preparations were proceeding hurriedly, amidst extreme confusion. The little company of actors were rehearsing their play in the long Renaissance gallery, the panels of whose ceiling bore, in an ingenious variety of design, the peacock of Bernard de Paves tied by the foot to the lute of Nicolette de Vaucelles.

Monsieur Germaine was accompanying the singers on the piano, while in the park the carpenters were putting together the framework of the booths with great blows of their mallets. Largillière, from the Opéra-Comique, was acting as stage manager.

"Your turn, Duchess."

Monsieur Germaine's hands, stripped of their rings, excepting one that remained on his thumb, struck a chord.

"La, la."

But, taking the glass handed her by young Bonmont, the Duchess cried: "Let me drink my cocktail first."

When she had finished, Largillière repeated: "Come, Duchess."

"Tout me seconde,
Je l'ai prévu...."

And Monsieur Germaine's hands, despoiled of gold and gems save for an amethyst on the thumb, once more struck a chord. But the Duchess did not sing. She was staring with interest at the accompanist.

"My dear Germaine, I am lost in admiration! You *have* grown a bust and hips! I congratulate you! You've really done something! While as for me — look!" She drew her hands down over her cloth costume. "I've got rid of all that!" She made a half-turn. "Nothing left! It's all gone! And in the meantime you've been growing them! Now that's really funny! But there's no harm in it. One thing makes up for another."

But René Chartier, who was playing Joconde, was standing motionless with his neck extended like a stove-pipe, thinking only of the velvet and pearls of his voice, which was deep and just a little gloomy. He grew impatient at last, remarking coldly: "We shall never be in time; it's deplorable!"

"Let us start from the quartette," said Largillière.

"Tout me seconde,
Je l'ai prévu;
Pauvre Joconde!
Il est vaincu."

"Come along, Monsieur Quatrebarbe."

Monsieur Gérard Quatrebarbe was the son of the diocesan architect. Since he had broken the windows of Mayer, the bootmaker, who was supposed to be a Jew, he was received everywhere in society. He had a good voice but he missed his cues, and René Chartier cast furious glances at him.

"You are not in your place, Duchess," said Largillière.

"No, I dare say not!" replied the Duchess.

René Chartier went up to young Bonmont and whispered in his ear: "For goodness' sake don't give the Duchess any more cocktails, she will spoil everything."

Largillière was grumbling too; the choruses were confused and unimpressive. However, they attacked the trio.

“Monsieur Lacrisse, you are not in your place.” Joseph Lacrisse was not in his place, and it is only fair to say that it was not his fault. Madame de Bonmont was perpetually enticing him into corners and murmuring to him: “Tell me you love me still; if you don’t still love me I feel I shall die!”

She also asked him for news of the plot, and as the latter was not going on at all well the question irritated him. He was annoyed with her, too, because she had not given any money to the cause. He strode off stiffly to join the chorus, while René Chartier sang as though he meant it: “Dans un délire extreme On veut fuir ce qu’on aime.”

Young Bonmont went up to his mother.

“Don’t trust Lacrisse, mother.”

She started. Then, in a tone of affected indifference: “What do you mean? He is very serious, more serious than is usual at his age. He is occupied with important matters. He—”

The young Baron shrugged his strong crooked shoulders.

“I tell you, don’t trust him. He wants to come down on you for a hundred thousand francs. He asked me to help to get the cheque out of you. But at the present time I don’t see that it’s necessary. I am for the King, but a hundred thousand francs is a large sum.”

René. Chartier sang:

“On devient infidèle,
On court de belle en belle.”

A servant brought the Baronne a letter. It was from the Brécés, who enclosed a contribution to the charity and expressed their regrets that they would not be able to attend the fête, being obliged to go away before the 29th.

She handed the letter to her son, who smiled unpleasantly, and asked: “What about the Courtrais?”

“They refused yesterday, and Madame Cartier de Chalmot as well.”

“The cats!”

“We shall have the Terremondres and the Gromances.”

“The deuce, it’s part of their business to come to our house.”

They reviewed the situation; it was unsatisfactory. Terremondre had not, as usual, promised to hunt up his cousins and his aunts and all the rest of the small gentry. The big manufacturers themselves seemed to be hesitating and seeking

excuses for not coming. Young Bonmont concluded: "It's all up with your fête, mother! We are in quarantine, that's very evident."

These words grieved the gentle Elisabeth. Her beautiful face, always adorned by a loving smile, seemed overcast.

At the other end of the room, above the confused babel of sounds, Largillière's voice reiterated: "Not like that! That's not the way! We shall never be ready in time."

"Do you hear?" said the Baronne. "He says we shall not be ready in time. Suppose we postpone the fête if it's not going to be a success."

"You are soft, mother! But I'm not blaming you. It's your nature. You are a forget-me-not and will always remain one. I am a fighting man, a strong man. I'm pretty well played out, as far as my health goes, but — I shall struggle on to the end."

"My child!"

"Don't let that worry you. I'm done for, but I shall struggle on."

René Chartier's voice flowed forth like a limpid fountain: "On pense, on pense encore

A celle qu'on adore,
Et l'on revient toujours
A ses premières a..."

Suddenly the accompanist ceased playing amidst a great uproar. Monsieur Germaine was chasing the Duchess who was running off with his rings. She fled into the monumental fireplace, where on the Angevin slate were engraven the loves of the nymphs and the metamorphoses of the gods. Then, pointing to a little pocket in her corsage she said: — "Here are your rings, my old Germaine. Come and fetch them. Look here! Here's a pair of Louis XIII tongs! You can use them!"

And she jangled an enormous pair of tongs under the musician's nose. René Chartier, savagely rolling his eyes, threw down his score, saying that he returned his part.

"I don't believe the Luzancourts are coming either," said the Baronne, with a sigh.

"All is not lost. I have an idea," said the little Baron. "One must know how to make a sacrifice when it's useful. Say nothing to Lacrisse!"

"Nothing to Lacrisse?"

"Nothing that matters. Leave it to me."

He left her and approached the noisy chorus. To the Duchess, who asked him for another cocktail, he gently remarked: "Don't bother me."

Then he sat down beside Joseph Lacrisse who was meditating apart, and spoke to him for some time in a low voice. His manner was serious and resolute.

"It's true enough," he said to the secretary of the Committee of Young Royalists. "We must overthrow the Republic and save France. And to do that we need money. My mother is of the same opinion. She is prepared to pay fifty thousand francs to the King's account for expenses of propaganda."

Joseph Lacrisse thanked him in the King's name.

"Monseigneur," he said, "will be happy to learn that your mother adds her patriotic offering to that of the three French ladies who displayed such chivalrous generosity. You may be sure that he will express his gratitude in a letter written by his own hand."

"It's not worth speaking of," said young Bonmont. — And after a short silence he added:

"When you see the Brécés and the Courtrais, my dear Lacrisse, you might tell them to come to our little fête."

CHAPTER XVII

IT was the first day of the New Year. Between two showers Monsieur Bergeret and his daughter Pauline wended their way along the streets still covered with fresh golden mud, to wish the compliments of the season to a maternal aunt of Monsieur Bergeret's who still survived, but lived alone, if living it could be called, in a little Beguine's cell which stood in a kitchen garden, amid the sound of convent bells. Pauline was happy without a reason simply because holidays such as these, which marked the flight of time, made her the more conscious of the delightful progress of her young life.

On this solemn day Monsieur Bergeret still observed his customary indulgence, no longer expecting much good from his fellow-creatures or from life itself, but knowing, like Monsieur Fagon, that one must forgive nature a great deal. All along the road beggars of every description, standing upright like candlesticks, or spread out like temporary altars, formed the decorations of this social fête. They had all come to help to adorn the bourgeois quarters, all our poor unfortunates, lame, halt and blind; crooks, tramps, pickpockets, malingerers, rogues, and hardened ruffians. Yielding, however, to the general tendency to obliterate individual character, and to conform with the universal mediocrity of manners, they did not expose to view horrible malformations and ghastly sores as in the days of the great Coësre. They did not bind their mutilated limbs with blood-stained rags; they were modest and affected only endurable infirmities. One of them hobbled nimbly after Monsieur Bergeret for some considerable distance. Then he stopped and took up his position once more like a lamp-post on the edge of the pavement. After which Monsieur Bergeret remarked to his daughter:

"I have just committed a wicked action; I have given alms. In giving a couple of sous to Monsieur Hobbler I tasted the shameful joy of humiliating my fellow-man. I was a partner to the odious pact that gives power to the strong and leaves the weak in their weakness. I have sealed with my own seal the injustice of ages and contributed my share to depriving this man of one half of his soul."

"You've done all that, papa?" asked Pauline incredulously.

"Almost all that," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "I have sold fraternity to my brother Hobbler, using false weights, and in humiliating him I have brought humiliation on myself, for almsgiving degrades both him who gives and him who takes. I have done wrong."

"I don't think so," said Pauline.

“You don’t think so,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, “because you have no philosophy and are incapable of tracing from an apparently innocent action the stupendous consequences which it bears within itself. This fellow induced me to offer him alms. I could not resist the importunity of his whining appeal. I pitied his bare thin neck, the knees of his trousers, which, baggy from too long wear, bear such a depressing resemblance to the knees of a camel, and his feet, on which his shoes were gaping at the toes like a couple of ducks. Seducer! Dangerous Hobbler! Through you my sous have produced their little share of baseness and shame. Through you I have created with ten centimes a little ugliness and evil. In handing you that tiny token of wealth and power, I have ironically made you a capitalist, and invited you, an unhonoured guest, to the banquet of society, the feast of civilization. And as I did it I felt that I was one of the mighty of this world as compared with you, a rich man compared with you, my gentle Hobbler, exquisite mendicant and flatterer. I rejoiced and was proud, exulting in my opulence and my greatness. O Hobbler, live for ever! *Pulcher hymnus divitiarum pauper immortalis*.

“An abominable practice, that of almsgiving! A barbarous pity, that of charity! An ancient error, that of the well-to-do who give a penny and think they are performing a good deed, who believe they have fulfilled their whole duty to their fellow-man by means of the most miserable, awkward, ridiculous, senseless and mean action which could possibly be committed with a view to a better distribution of wealth. This habit of almsgiving is contrary to beneficence and abhorrent to charity.”

“Really?” said Pauline good-humouredly.

“Almsgiving,” went on Monsieur Bergeret, “is no more to be compared to beneficence than a monkey’s grimace to the smile of the Joconda. Beneficence is as ingenious as almsgiving is inept. It is vigilant, and proportions its efforts to the need. That is precisely what I did not do with regard to brother Hobbler. The very name of beneficence evoked the most beautiful ideas in the sensitive minds of the century of the philosophers. It used to be believed that the name was first created by the good Abbé de Saint Pierre, but it is older still, and can be found in the old Balzac. In the sixteenth century men said *bénéfice*, not *bienfaisance*, but it is the same word. I must admit that I do not find its pristine beauty in the word *bienfaisance*; for me it has been spoiled by the Pharisees who have made too free a use of it. We have many charitable institutions in our country, pawnshops, provident societies, mutual aid and insurance societies. Some of these are useful and do good service. But their common defect is that they proceed to aggravate the very social iniquity which they are intended to correct; they are

poisonous remedies. Universal beneficence would have every one living by his own labours and not on the labours of others. Everything but fair exchange and solidarity is vile and shameful and unfruitful. Human charity is the co-operation of all in the production and division of the fruits of labour.

“Charity is justice; it is love, and the poor are more skilled in it than the rich. What rich man has ever practised human charity as fully as Epictetus or Benoît Malon? True charity is the gift of each man’s work to all; it is a beautiful kindness; it is the harmonious gesture of the soul which bows itself like a vase of precious ointment, pouring forth its benefits. It is Michael Angelo painting the Sistine Chapel, or the deputies in the National Assembly on the night of the 4th of August. It is giving, in all its happy completeness; it is money poured forth together with love and thought. We have nothing that belongs to us alone but ourselves; we truly give only when we give our work, our minds, our genius.

And this splendid offering of one’s whole self to all men enriches the giver as much as the community.”

“But,” objected Pauline, “you could not give love and beauty to Hobbler, so you gave him what was most convenient to him.”

“It is true that Hobbler has become a mere animal. Of all the good things that gratify man, he cares only for alcohol. I conclude as much from the fact that as he came towards me he reeked of brandy. But, such as he is, he is our work. Our pride fathered and our sin mothered him; he is the evil fruit of our vices. Every man in the world should both give and receive. He has not given enough, doubtless because he has not received enough.”

“He may be lazy,” said Pauline. “*Mon Dieu*, how can we do away with poverty and weakness and idleness! Don’t you believe that men are naturally good and that it is society that makes them wicked?”

“No, I don’t believe that men are naturally good,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “What I see is that they are emerging painfully and very slowly from their primitive barbarism, and that with great effort they are organizing a justice that is uncertain and a charity that is precarious. The time is yet far distant when they will be kind and gentle to one another. The time is yet far distant when they will not war upon one another, and when pictures representing battle scenes will be hidden away as affording an immoral and shameful spectacle. I believe that the reign of violence will last a long time yet, that for many years to come the nations will rend one another asunder for trivial reasons; that for many years to come the people of the same country will desperately snatch from one another the common necessities of life, instead of equitably dividing them. But I also believe that men are least ferocious when they are least wretched, that in the long run the progress of industry will produce a certain softening of manners. A

botanist has assured me that if a hawthorn be transplanted from a stony to a fruitful soil its thorns will change into flowers.”

“There you are! You are an optimist, papa; I knew you were!” cried Pauline, stopping short for a moment in the middle of the pavement to gaze at her father with her dawn-grey eyes, full of gentle radiance and morning coolness. “You are an optimist. You are working with a cheerful heart to build the house of the future. That is good! It is a fine thing to build the New Republic with men of good will.”

Monsieur Bergeret smiled at the hopeful words and youthful eyes.

“Yes,” he said, “it would be fine to lay the foundations for the new society, where each man would receive the just price of his labour.”

“It will happen, won’t it? But when?” asked Pauline innocently.

“Do not ask me to prophesy, my child,” answered Monsieur Bergeret sadly and gently. “It is not without reason that the ancients considered the power of piercing the future as the most fatal gift that could be bestowed upon man. If it were possible for us to see what is to come, there would be nothing left for us but to die; or perhaps we should fall stricken to death by grief or terror. We must work at the future like weavers who work at their tapestries without seeing what they accomplish.”

Thus conversing, the father and daughter proceeded on their way. In front of the square in the Rue de Sèvres they met a solitary beggar standing motionless on the pavement.

“I’ve no more change,” said Monsieur Bergeret. “Can you lend me a couple of sous, Pauline? That outstretched hand bars my way. If it were in the Place de la Concorde it would still bar my way. The outstretched hand of a beggar is a barrier that I cannot pass. It is a weakness that I cannot overcome. Give the man something. It’s pardonable. We must not let ourselves exaggerate the harm we do.”

“Papa, I’d like to know what you will do with Hobbler in your Republic. You can’t imagine he will live on the fruits of his labour?”

“My daughter,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “I think he will consent to disappear. He is already greatly diminished. Idleness and a passion for rest are urging him toward final elimination. He will return to oblivion easily.”

“I believe, on the other hand, that he thoroughly enjoys being alive.”

“True, he has his joys. No doubt he delights in swallowing the vitriol of the dram-shop. He will disappear altogether with the last drinking house. There will be no publicans in my Republic, no buyers and no sellers, no rich and no poor, and each will enjoy the fruits of his labours.”

“We all shall be happy, papa.”

“No; for without suffering the sacred flame of pity which makes for the beauty of the soul would perish. But that will never be. Moral and physical evil, incessantly opposed, will share with happiness and delight the empire of the earth, as day will follow night. Evil is necessary; like good, it has its roots deep in human nature, and the one cannot perish without the other. Suffering is the twin sister of joy, and as they breathe upon the chords of our being they cause them to vibrate harmoniously. The breath of happiness alone would produce but a dull and tedious sound, like silence. But the artificial ills arising out of social conditions will no longer be added to those that are inevitable, commonplace and august, which arise out of our human state. Men will no longer be deformed by iniquitous labours by which they die rather than live. The slave will come out of his cell and the factory will no longer devour the bodies of millions.

“And I anticipate that this delivery will come from machinery itself; the engine that has mangled so many men will come gently and generously to the aid of suffering human flesh. Cruel and hard to begin with, machinery will become kind, favourable and friendly. How can it change its soul? Listen. The spark that flashed from the Leyden jar, the little subtle star that revealed itself in the last century to the wonder-stricken philosopher, will accomplish this miracle. The Unknown which has allowed itself to be conquered without revealing its nature, the mysterious captive force, the intangible, seized by human hands, the obedient lightning, bottled and distributed over the innumerable wires that cover the face of the earth with their network — electricity will yield up its energy, will give its help wherever it is needed: in the houses, the rooms, the homes where father, mother, and children will henceforth never be separated. This is no dream. The cruel machine that crushes soul and body in the factory will become domestic, intimate and familiar. But it is useless, quite useless for the pulleys, wheels, connecting-rods, cranks, bearings and flywheels to become humanized if men themselves remain iron-hearted.

“We are waiting for and appealing to a yet more wonderful change. The day will come when the employer, growing in moral beauty, will become a worker among the liberated workers; when there will be no more wages, but only an exchange in kind. The great manufacturers, like the old nobility, whose place they have taken and whom they are imitating, will go through their 4th of August. They will abandon their disputed profits and threatened privileges. They will become generous when they feel that it is time to be so.

“What says the employer of to-day? That he is the mind and the thought, and that without him his army of workers would be like a body deprived of understanding. Well, if that be true, let him content himself with so much joy and honour. Because a man is thought and soul must he therefore gorge himself

with riches? When the great Donatello and his companions designed a bronze statue it was he who was the soul of the creation. He placed the price paid for the work by the prince and the citizens in a basket which hung from a pulley fixed to one of the rafters of the studio, and each of his companions untied the rope and took from the basket what he needed. Is not the joy of creative intelligence enough, and does such an advantage exempt the master worker from sharing the gain with his humble collaborators? But in my Republic there will be no gain, no wages, and all will belong to each."

"Papa, that's collectivism," said Pauline quietly.

"The most precious gifts," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "are common to all men and have always been so. Air and light are the common property of all that breathes and sees the light of day. After the secular labours of egoism and avarice, in spite of the violent efforts of individuals to seize and keep wealth, the individual possessions enjoyed by the wealthiest among us are little when compared with those that belong without distinction to mankind in general. And even in our society do you not notice that the most beautiful and splendid possessions, such as roads, rivers, forests, which were once royal, libraries and museums, belong to all? Not a single rich man has a greater claim than I to an old oak-tree at Fontainebleau or a picture in the Louvre. And they are more mine than the rich man's if I can appreciate them better. Collective property, dreaded like some remote monster, is already among us in a thousand familiar forms. When prophesied, it alarms, in spite of the fact that we already enjoy many of the advantages which it affords.

"The Positivists who meet in the house of Auguste Comte, under the leadership of the venerable Monsieur Pierre Laffitte, are in no hurry to become Socialists. But one of them made the judicious remark that all property springs from a social source. Nothing could be truer, for all property acquired by individual effort was created, and subsists, only by the co-operation of the whole community. And since private property springs from a social source we neither forget its origin nor corrupt its essence if we offer it to the community and entrust it to the State upon which it necessarily depends. And what is the State?"

Mademoiselle Bergeret hastened to answer that question:

"The State, papa, is a wretched cross-grained person sitting behind a counter-rail. You must see that no one will want to strip himself naked for such as he."

"I understand," said Monsieur Bergeret with a smile. "I have always tried to understand, and in so doing I have wasted much precious energy. I am discovering late in life that not to understand is a great faculty. It sometimes helps you to the conquest of the world. If Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza he would have lived in a garret and written four books. I understand.

But to return to this wretched cross-grained man behind the counter-rail, you trust your letters to him, Pauline, letters that you would not trust to the Tricoche Agency. He manages a portion of your property, not the least in extent or in value. He looks gloomy to you, but when he becomes everything he will cease to be anything, or rather he will only be ourselves. Annihilated by his universality, he will cease to appear tiresome. One is no longer wicked, my daughter, when one ceases to exist. What makes him unpleasant to-day is that he encroaches on individual property, that he goes along filing and scratching, taking a little bite from the fat and a big bite from the thin. That makes him unbearable. He is greedy; he is needy. In my Republic he will be without desires, like the gods. He will have all and nothing. We shall not notice him because he will be like ourselves, indistinguishable from ourselves; will be as though he didn't exist. And when you say that I sacrifice the individual to the State, the living man to an abstraction, I am, on the contrary, subordinating the abstraction to reality, to the State which I suppress, by identifying it with the activities of the whole social organism.

"Even were my Republic never to exist I should be glad that I had played with this idea of it. It is permissible to build in Utopia. And Auguste Comte himself, who flattered himself that he built only on the data of positive science, placed Campanella in the calendar of great men.

"The dreams of philosophers have in all ages raised up men of action who have set to work to realize those dreams. Our thought creates the future. Statesmen work on the plans which we leave behind us. No, my child, I am not building in Utopia. My dream, which in no way belongs to me, but is, at this very moment, the dream of thousands upon thousands of souls, is true and prophetic. All societies whose organs no longer correspond to the functions for which they were created, and whose members are not recompensed according to the useful work which they accomplish, die. Deep-rooted disturbances and inward disorder precede and proclaim their end.

"Feudal society was strongly constituted. When the clergy ceased to represent learning, and the nobility to defend the labourer and artisan by the sword, and these two orders became merely swollen and dangerous members, the whole body perished. An unexpected and necessary revolution carried off the patriot. Who can maintain that in modern society the organs correspond with their functions and that all the members are nourished in proportion to the useful work which they perform? Who can maintain that there is a fair distribution of wealth?

Who, I say, can believe in the permanence of unrighteousness?"

"And how can we put an end to it, papa? How can we change the world?"

“By the force of speech, my child. Nothing is more powerful than speech. The linking of powerful arguments and noble thoughts forms a chain that nothing can break. Speech, like the sling of David, lays low the violent and causes the mighty to fall. It is an invincible weapon, without which the world would belong to armed brutes. What keeps them in abeyance? Merely thought, naked and weaponless.

“I shall not see the new State. All changes in the social order, as in the natural order, are slow and almost imperceptible. A geologist of profound understanding, Charles Lyell by name, demonstrated that those fearful traces of the glacial period, those monstrous rocks carried into the valleys, the flora and the furry beasts of cold countries succeeding to the flora and fauna of hot countries, those apparent tokens of cataclysmic upheaval, were in reality only the effect of prolonged and multiple action, and that those great changes, produced with the merciful deliberation of natural forces, were not even suspected by the innumerable generations of living creatures that existed during their accomplishment. Social transformations operate in the same way, insensibly and incessantly. The timid man fears, as he would a future cataclysm, a change which began before he was born, which is going on before his unconscious eyes, and which will become noticeable only in a century’s time.”

CHAPTER XVIII

MONSIEUR FELIX PANNETON was sauntering up the Champs-Élysées on his way to the Arc de Triomphe, calculating the chances of his election to the Senate. His candidature had not yet been announced. And Monsieur Panneton reflected, like Bonaparte: "To act, to calculate, to act..." Two lists had already been offered to the electors of the department. The four retiring Senators, Laprat-Teulet, Goby, Mannequin and Ledru, were presenting themselves for re-election. The Nationalist candidates were the Comte de Brécé, Colonel Despautères, Monsieur Lerond the ex-magistrate, and Lafolie the butcher.

It was difficult to say which of the two lists would win the day. The retiring Senators found favour in the eyes of the peace-lovers because of their long experience of legislation, and because they were guardians of those liberal yet authoritative traditions which dated back to the foundation of the Republic and were connected with the legendary name of Gambetta. They won the public favour by intelligently-rendered services and abundant promises, and they had a large and well-disciplined body of supporters. These public men, who had lived in stirring times, remained faithful to their doctrine with a firmness that embellished the sacrifices which circumstances forced them to make to the exigencies of public opinion. Opportunists in former days, they now called themselves Radicals. At the time of the Affair they had all four testified to their profound respect for the court-martial, and in one of them this respect was mingled with genuine emotion.

The ex-attorney Goby could never speak of military justice without shedding tears. The oldest of them, Laprat-Teulet, a Republican who had taken part in the great conflicts of the heroic days, spoke of the Army in such loving and impassioned terms that, at any other period, his hearers would have judged his expressions more applicable to some poor orphan girl than to an institution so strong in men and in millions. These four Senators had voted for the law of deprivation and had expressed to the General Council the pious hope that the Government would take stringent measures to check the Revisionist agitation. These were the Dreyfusards of the department, and as there were no others they were furiously opposed by the Nationalists. They blamed Mannequin for being the brother-in-law of a councillor in the Court of Appeal. As for Laprat-Teulet, who headed the list, he was greeted with insults and venomous abuse that bespattered them all. Truth to tell, he had done a stroke or two of business on his own account. People recalled the time when, finding himself mixed up in the

Panama affair and threatened with arrest, he had grown a long beard that gave him a venerable appearance and was wheeled about in a little chair by his pious wife and his daughter, the latter, dressed as a nun. Every day, as part of this humble and saintly procession, he would pass by beneath the elm-trees of the Mall and have himself put in the sun, a poor paralytic who traced figures in the dust with the tip of his walking-stick, while with cunning skill he prepared his defence, which a verdict of "insufficient cause" had rendered useless. Since then he had recovered, but the fury of the Nationalists was hot against him. He was a Panamist, so they called him a Dreyfusard. "This man," said Ledru to himself, "will ruin the whole lot of us." He mentioned his apprehensions to Worms-Clavelin:

"Would it not be possible, monsieur le préfet, to make Laprat-Teulet, a man who has rendered such signal service to the Republic and the country, understand that the time has come for him to retire into private life?"

The prefect replied that they must think twice before decapitating the Republican list.

However, the newspaper *La Croix*, introduced into the department by Madame Worms-Clavelin, carried on a ferocious campaign against the retiring Senators. It supported the Republican list, which was cleverly constructed. Monsieur de Brécé rallied the Royalists, who were fairly strong in the department; Monsieur Lerond, as ex-magistrate and a clerical advocate, was favoured by the clergy; and Colonel Despautères, in himself an unimportant old man, represented the honour of the Army. He had praised the forgers and was among the subscribers to the fund for the widow of Colonel Henry. The butcher Lafolie pleased the working-people, who were half peasants, living on the outskirts of the town. It was believed that the Brécé list would obtain more than two hundred votes and that it might go right through. Monsieur Worms-Clavelin was uneasy, and when *La Croix* published the manifesto of the Nationalist candidates he became extremely anxious. It attacked the President of the Republic, called the Senate a poultry-run and a pigsty, and referred to the Cabinet as the "Ministry of Treason."

"If these fellows get in, I'm done," thought the prefect, and he remarked gently to his wife:

"You were wrong, my dear, to favour the diffusion of *La Croix* in the department."

"What else could I do?" she replied. "As a Jewess, I was obliged to exaggerate my Catholic opinions. And up to now that has helped us a good deal."

"True," replied the prefect; "but we have perhaps gone a little too far."

Monsieur Lacarelle, secretary to the prefecture, whose famous resemblance to Vercingetorix inclined him to Nationalism, spoke in favour of the Brécé list, and Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, a prey to gloomy meditation, forgot his cigars and left them, with chewed ends and still alight, on the arms of the chairs.

Just at this time Monsieur Felix Panneton called to see him.

Monsieur Felix Panneton, the younger brother of Monsieur Panneton de La Barge, was an army contractor. No one could suspect his love of the Army whose heads and feet he covered. He was a Nationalist, but a Government-Nationalist. He was a Nationalist with Monsieur Loubet and Monsieur Waldeck-Rousseau. He did not disguise the fact, and when he was told that such a thing was impossible he replied:

“It isn’t impossible; it isn’t even difficult; the main thing was the idea.”

Panneton the Nationalist remained loyal to the Government. “There is plenty of time to change,” he thought, “and all those who broke too soon with the Government have had cause to regret it. One is too apt to forget that even a prostrate Ministry has time to deal you a kick and break your jaw.” Such wisdom was the fruit of his common sense. He was ambitious, but did his best to satisfy his ambition without sacrificing his business or his pleasures, which were pictures and women. For the rest, he was a very energetic person, always running to and fro between his factories and Paris, where he had three or four addresses.

The idea of worming his way in between the Radicals and the pure Nationalists having dawned upon him one day, he went to see Monsieur Worms-Clavelin.

“The proposition I am about to make to you, monsieur le préfet, cannot but be agreeable to you. I therefore feel certain beforehand of your consent,” he said. “You are anxious for the success of the Laprat-Teulet list. It is your duty to be so. I respect your feelings in the matter, but I cannot second them. You are afraid of the success of the Brécé list. Nothing more legitimate. In this connection I may be useful to you. I am forming, with three of my friends, a list of Nationalist candidates. The department is Nationalist but it is moderate. My programme will be Nationalist and Republican. I shall have the clergy against me, but the bishops will be on my side. Do not contest my claim. Observe a benevolent neutrality toward me. I shall not take many votes from the Laprat list, but, on the other hand, I shall take a great many from the Brécé list. I will not disguise the fact that I quite expect to go through on the third scrutiny. But this will be to your advantage as well, because the extremists will be left in the cart.”

“Monsieur Panneton,” replied Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, “you have long been assured of my personal sympathies. I thank you for the interesting

communication which you have been kind enough to make. I will think it over and act in conformity with the interest of the Republican Party, endeavouring meanwhile to fathom the intentions of the Government.”

He offered Monsieur Panneton a cigar and in a friendly way asked him if he had not just come from Paris, and what he thought of the new piece at the Variétés. He asked this question because he knew that Panneton was keeping one of the actresses there. Felix Panneton was supposed to be a great lover of women. He was a big, ugly man of fifty, dark and bald, with high shoulders and a reputation for wit.

Some days after his interview with Worms-Clavelin, he was walking up the Champs-Élysées thinking of his candidature, which augured fairly well, and of the importance of making a start as soon as possible. But just at the moment of publishing the list, which he headed, one of the candidates, Monsieur de Terremondre, had backed out. Monsieur de Terremondre was too moderate to separate himself from the extremists. Hearing their cries redoubled, he had gone back to them. “Just what I expected,” thought Panneton. “It doesn’t much matter. I will put Gromance in Terremondre’s place. Gromance will do the trick, Gromance the landed proprietor — and every acre that he possesses mortgaged. But that will do him no harm except in his own district. He is in Paris. I’ll go and see him.”

He had reached this point in his reflections when he saw Madame de Gromance coming towards him in a mink coat that came down to her feet. Even under the thick fur she was still slim and dainty. He found her delicious.

“I am delighted to see you, dear lady. How is Monsieur de Gromance?”

“Oh — quite well.”

When people asked her for news of her husband she was always afraid of their doing so in an ill-bred spirit of irony.

“May I walk a little way with you, madame? I want to discuss some serious matters with you.

First—”

“Well?”

“That coat gives you a barbaric appearance, you look like a charming little savage.”

“Are these the serious matters?”

“I’m coming to them. It is absolutely necessary for Monsieur de Gromance to present himself as a candidate for the Senate, The interests of his country demand it. Monsieur de Gromance is a Nationalist, is he not?”

She looked at him with a touch of indignation.

“He certainly isn’t an Intellectual.”

“And is he a Republican?”

“Heavens, yes! I’ll explain. He’s a Royalist. So you understand—”

“Ah, dear lady, those are the best Republicans. We will put the name of Monsieur de Gromance prominently upon our list of Republican Nationalists.”

“And do you think that Dieudonné will get in?”

“Madame, I think so. We have the bishops with us and many senatorial electors who, although Nationalists by conviction, uphold the Government on account of their office or their interests. And in the event of failure, which could only be an honourable failure, Monsieur de Gromance can rely on the gratitude of the Government and the Administration. I’ll tell you a great secret. Worms-Clavelin is on our side.”

“Then I don’t see why Dieudonné—”

“Are you quite sure your husband will accept?”

“Go and see him yourself.”

“You are the only person with any influence over him.”

“Do you think so?”

“I am quite sure of it.”

“Then it’s settled.”

“No, it isn’t settled. There are very delicate details which we can’t settle like this in the street. Come and see me and I will show you my Baudouins. Come tomorrow.”

He whispered the address, the number of a house in a dull deserted street in the Quartier de l’Europe. There, at a respectable distance from his lawful and spacious domicile in the Champs-Élysées, he had a small house, built in former days for a fashionable painter.

“Is there any special hurry?”

“I should say so. Just think, my dear madame, we have only three weeks left for our electoral campaign and Brécé has been working the department for six months.”

“But is it quite necessary that I should come and see your — ?”

“My Baudouins? It is indispensable.”

“Is it really?”

“Listen and judge for yourself, dear lady. I do not deny that your husband’s name has a certain prestige among the rural population, especially in the parts where he is little known. But I cannot disguise the fact that when I proposed to add his name to our list I met with opposition. This opposition still exists. You must give me strength to overcome it. I must draw from your — your friendship the irresistible will to In short, I feel that if you do not give me your sympathy I shall not have the necessary energy to—”

“But is it quite proper for me to go and see your — ?”

“Oh, in Paris!”

“If I do, of course it will be for the sake of the country and the Army. We must save France.”

“That is my opinion.”

“Remember me to Madame Panneton.”

“I will not forget, dear madame. Until to-morrow.”

CHAPTER XIX

IN Monsieur Felix Panneton's little house there was a large room which had formerly been used as a studio by the fashionable painter, and which the new inmate had furnished with the magnificence of a great collector of curios and the discretion of an accomplished lover of women. Artistically and in methodical order Monsieur Panneton had strewn the room with couches, sofas and divans of all shapes and kinds.

Looking from right to left as you went in, you would first of all notice a little blue silk settee the arms of which, shaped like a swan's neck, reminded one of the time when Bonaparte in Paris, like Tiberius of old in Rome, was bent on improving the manners and customs of society. Then came another rather bigger couch upholstered in Beauvais cloth with tapestry-covered ends; then a settee in three divisions, covered in silk; then a little wooden settee *à la capucine* with a covering of Turkish tapestry; then a large sofa of gilded wood upholstered in crimson figured velvet with cushions of the same, which had belonged to Mademoiselle Damours; then a broad, low, luxuriously stuffed divan of flame-coloured silk; and finally a tottering mass of soft cushions on a very low Oriental divan which, bathed in a dim rose-coloured light, stood on the left near the Baudouin room.

As she entered the room, each charming visitor could thus take in with a glance the varied seats and choose the one that best suited her moral character and her present state of mind. Panneton, from the first, observed his new friends, noticed their expressions, took some trouble to discover their tastes, and was careful to ensure that they should sit only where they wished to sit. The more chaste of his lady friends went straight to the little blue settee, placing a gloved hand on the swan's neck. There was also a high straight-backed arm-chair of gilded wood and Genoa velvet, the former throne of a Duchess of Modena and Parma; that was for the haughty beauties. The Parisian ladies seated themselves calmly on the Beauvais couch; the foreign princesses generally preferred one of the two sofas. Thanks to the judicious arrangement of these aids to conversation, Panneton knew at a glance what he had to do. He was in a position to observe all the conventions, careful not to attempt too sudden a transition in the necessary succession of his attitudes, and was able to spare both his visitor and himself those long and useless pauses between the preliminary courtesies and the inspection of the Baudouins. His proceedings thereby gained a certainty and a mastery which did him honour.

Madame de Gromance gave immediate proof of a tact for which Panneton was grateful. Without so much as a glance at the throne of Parma and Modena, and leaving on the right the Napoleonic swan's neck, she sat on the flowered Beauvais sofa like a Parisienne. Clotilde had languished among the smaller landed gentry of the department and had had attentions paid to her by some rather underbred young men; but the meaning of life was dawning upon her. She had racked her brains over money matters and was beginning to understand what social duty entailed. She did not dislike Panneton excessively. Partially bald, with very black hair brushed smoothly over his temples, and large prominent eyes, he looked like a lovesick apoplectic, and made her feel rather inclined to laugh, satisfying that craving for the comic element in love of which she had always been conscious. No doubt she would have preferred a magnificent young man, but she was inclined to facile gaiety and the sort of amusement which a man derives from jokes of a rather highly salted nature and a certain kind of ugliness. After a moment of very natural shyness she felt that it would not be so terrible, nor even very tedious.

Everything went well. The transit from the Beauvais to the settee and from the settee to the big sofa took place with all due decorum. They judged it needless to linger on the Oriental cushions and went straight into the Baudouin room.

When Clotilde thought of looking at it the room, like the erotic painter's pictures, was strewn with women's garments and fine linen.

"Ah, there are the Baudouins, you have two of them."

"Just so."

He had the *Jardinier galant* and the *Carquois épuisé*, two little water-colours for which he had paid 60,000 francs apiece at the Godard sale, and which cost him considerably more than that because of the use to which he put them. Calm once more, and a little melancholy even, he gazed with the eye of a connoisseur at the slender, graceful, supple figure of the woman before him, and, finding her beautiful, was conscious of a little feeling of pride, which grew as she gradually reassumed her social characteristics together with her garments.

She demanded the list of candidates.

"Panneton, manufacturer; Dieudonné de Gromance, landed proprietor; Dr. Fornerol; Mulot, explorer."

"Mulot?"

"Young Mulot. He was running up bills in Paris, so his father sent him round the world. Désiré Mulot, explorer. That sounds well, an explorer candidate! The electors hope he will open up new fields for their goods. Above all, they feel flattered." Madame de Gromance was becoming serious. She wanted to hear the

address to the senatorial electors. He outlined it and repeated some parts which he knew by heart.

“First, we promise general pacification. Brécé and the pure Nationalists have not sufficiently insisted on pacification. Then we absolutely demolish the nameless party.”

She asked what the nameless party was.

“For us it’s the party of our adversaries; for our adversaries it is ourselves. There can be no mistake about that. We demolish the traitors, the creatures who have sold themselves. We fight against the power of gold — that is useful for the poor ruined aristocracy. Enemies of all reaction, we repudiate political adventure. France is resolved on peace, but the day when she draws the sword from the scabbard, *etc.* The country that regards with pride and affection her admirable national Army — I shall have to alter that sentence a little.”

“Why?”

“Because it is in both the other addresses, word for word; the Nationalists have it and so have the enemies of the Army.”

“And you promise me that Dieudonné will get in.”

“Dieudonné or Goby.”

“What! Dieudonné or Goby? If you were not any surer than that you ought to have told me. Dieudonné or Goby! To hear you one would think it was all one which got in.”

“It isn’t all one, but in either case Brécé goes under.”

“Brécé is one of our friends, you know.”

“And one of mine! In either case, as I said before, Brécé and his list will go under, and having contributed to his downfall the prefect and the Government will be under obligations to Monsieur de Gromance. After the elections, no matter how they result, you will come and see my Baudouins again and I will make of your husband — whatever you will.”

“An ambassador.”

At the scrutiny of the 28th of January, the list of Nationalist candidates, Comte de Brécé, Colonel Despautères, Lerond, ex-magistrate, La folie, butcher, obtained an average of about a hundred votes. The Progressive Republicans, Felix Panneton, manufacturer, Dieudonné de Gromance, landed proprietor, Mulot, explorer, and Dr. Fornerol, obtained an average of a hundred and thirty votes. Laprat-Teulet, implicated in the Panama affair, only succeeded in obtaining a hundred and twenty votes. The other three retiring Senators obtained an average of two hundred votes.

At the second scrutiny Laprat-Teulet’s votes fell to sixty. —

At the third scrutiny Goby, Mannequin and Ledru, the three retiring Radical Senators, and Felix Panneton, Republican Progressive, were elected.

CHAPTER XX

LOOK at the scene before you," said Monsieur Bergeret to his disciple Monsieur Goubin, who was polishing his eyeglass, as they stood on the steps of the Trocadero. "Look at the domes, minarets, spires, belfries, towers and pediments; the roofs of thatch, slate, glass, tile, wood, hide and coloured earthenware; the Italian and Moorish terraces, the palaces, temples, pagodas, kiosks, huts, hovels, and tents; the fountains and fire-works; the harmony and contrast of all these human habitations, the marvels of workmanship, the wonderful playthings of industry, the prodigious diversions of modern genius, which has brought together in this spot the arts and crafts of the whole world."

"Do you think," queried Monsieur Goubin, "that France will derive any profit from this huge Exhibition?"

"She may reap great advantages from it," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "provided it does not fill her with a barren and hostile pride. All this is only the decoration and envelope, it is the study of what it contains that will give us the opportunity of considering more minutely the exchange and circulation of products, their consumption at fair prices, the increase of work and wages and the emancipation of the worker. And do you not admire, Monsieur Goubin, one of the first kind offices of the Universal Exhibition, in scaring away Jean Coq and Jean Mouton? Where are they now? You neither see nor hear them nowadays, and formerly one saw nothing else. Jean Coq led the way, with his head high, his calves prominent. Jean Mouton followed him, fat and curly-headed. The whole city re-echoed to the sound of their cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa-baa, for they were eloquent. One day this winter I overheard Jean Coq say, 'We must have a war. This Government has made it inevitable by its cowardice!' And Jean Mouton replied:— 'I'd rather have a naval war.'

'Of course,' said Jean Coq, 'a sea-fight would be consistent with the enthusiasm of the Nationalists. But why not have war on land as well as on sea? Who's to stop us?'

'No one,' replied Jean Coq. 'I should like to see anyone try to stop us! But we must first exterminate all traitors and spies, all Jews and Freemasons. That is essential.'

'That's just what I think,' replied Jean Mouton. 'And I will not go to war until our land has been cleared of all her enemies.'

"Jean Coq is hot-headed, Jean Mouton mild and peaceful, but they both know only too well how to whet the national energies not to attempt by every means in

their power to assure to their country the benefits of war at home and abroad.

“Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are Republicans. Jean Coq votes at every election for the Imperialist candidate, and Jean Mouton for the Royalist, but they are both of them Republican Plebiscitarians, and can imagine nothing better for the consolidation of their chosen Government than to deliver it over to the hazards of an obscure and disorderly suffrage; in which they show themselves to be clever fellows. For it is, of course, a profitable thing, if you have a house, to stake it at dice against a truss of hay, because by so doing you run the chance of winning your own house, which of course would be a great advantage.

“Jean Coq is not pious, neither is Jean Mouton a clerical, although he is no Freethinker, but they venerate and cherish the monks who grow rich by the sale of miracles and who publish seditious, insulting and slanderous newspapers. And you know as well as I do how such people abound in this country of ours and how they prey upon it.

“Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are patriots. You think you, too, are a patriot, and I know that you are attached to your country by the tender and invincible ties of sentiment and reason. You are mistaken, however, and if it be your wish to live at peace with the world you are in league with the enemy. Jean Coq and Jean Mouton will prove that by falling upon you with their cudgels to the war-cry of ‘France for the French F ‘France for the French F is the slogan of Jean Coq and Jean Mouton, and as it is evident that these words exactly describe the position of a great nation in the midst of other nations, and express the necessary conditions of life, the universal law of exchange, the commerce of ideas and of products, just as they contain a great economical doctrine and a profound philosophy, Jean Coq and Jean Mouton have made up their minds to shut out all foreigners in order to keep France for the French, thus, by a stroke of genius, extending to human beings the system which Monsieur Méline applied only to the products of agriculture and industry, for the greater profit of a small number of landed proprietors. And this idea of Jean Coq’s, of closing the country to men of other nations, enforces, by its modest beauty, the admiration of quite a host of small middle-class people and coffee-house keepers.

“Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are not evil; they are only the innocent enemies of the human species. Jean Coq is the more ardent, Jean Mouton the more melancholy, but they are simple fellows both, and believe what their newspapers tell them. This throws a dazzling light upon their innocence, for it is not easy to believe what their newspapers tell them. I take you all to witness, all you famous impostors, you forgers of all time; you egregious liars, distinguished tricksters, notorious creators of fictitious errors and illusions; you whose time-honoured frauds have enriched literature, sacred and profane, by so many dubious

volumes; authors of apocryphal Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syrian and Chaldean writings which have so long deceived learned and ignorant alike; you, false Pythagoras, false Hermes-Trismegistus, false Sanchoniathon, fallacious editors of the Orphic poems and the Sibylline books; false Enoch, false Esdras, pseudo-Clement and pseudo-Timothy; and you lord abbots who, to assure yourselves of the possession of your lands and privileges, forged in the reign of Louis IX the charters of Clotaire and Dagobert; and you, doctors of canon law, who based the pretensions of the Holy See on a heap of sacred decretals composed by yourselves; and you, wholesale manufacturers of historical memoirs: — Soulavie, Courchamps, Touchard-Lafosse, lying Weber, lying Bourrienne; you, sham executioners and sham police-agents, who wrote the sordid memoirs of Samson and Monsieur Claude; and you, Vrain-Lucas, who with your own hand traced a letter said to be written by Mary Magdalene, and a note from the hand of Vercingetorix, I call you all to witness; and you whose whole life was a work of simulation; lying Smerdis, lying Neros, lying Maids of Orleans, who would have deceived the very brothers of Joan of Arc; lying Martin Guerre, lying Demetrius and fictitious Dukes of Normandy; I call you to witness, workers of spells, makers of miracles that seduced the mob: Simon the Magician, Apollonius of Tyana, Cagliostro, Comte de Saint-Germain; I call you to witness, travellers returning from far-off countries, who had every facility for lying and took full advantage of it; you who beheld the Cyclopes and the Læstrygones, the Magnetic Mountain, the Roc and the Fish-Bishop; and you, Sir John Maundeville, who saw in Asia devils vomiting fire; and you, makers of stories and fables and tales — Mother Goose, Tyl Eulenspiegel, Baron Munchausen! — and you, chivalrous and picturesque Spaniards, most notable babblers, I call you to witness! Bear witness, all of you! You have not accumulated, in the long course of the centuries, so many lies as Jean Coq and Jean Mouton read in their newspapers in a single day! And after that, how can we be surprised that they have so many bogies in their heads!”

CHAPTER XXI

FINDING himself implicated in the proceedings instituted against the authors of the plot against the Republic, Joseph Lacrisse put his person and his papers in a safe place. The police commissary whose duty it was to seize the correspondence of the Royalist Committee was too much of a gentleman not to give the members of the Committee due notice of his visit. He gave them twenty-four hours' warning, thus bringing his natural courtesy into line with his legitimate anxiety to do his duty properly, for in common with the majority he believed that the Republican Ministry would soon be overthrown, and that a Ribot or Méline Cabinet would take its place. When he appeared at the headquarters of the Committee all the drawers and pigeon-holes were empty. They were sealed by the magistrate. He also sealed a Bottin for 1897, an automobile catalogue, a packet of cigarettes and a fancing glove which were found on the mantelpiece. In this manner he obeyed the legal formalities, on which we must congratulate him; one should always observe the legal formalities. His name was Jonquille. He was a distinguished magistrate and a clever man; in his youth he had composed songs for cafés-concerts. One of his works, *Les Cancrelats dans le pain*, achieved a great success at the Champs-Élysées in 1885.

After the surprise caused by these unexpected proceedings, Joseph Lacrisse reassured himself. He soon saw that the conspirators under the present Government run less risk than under the First Empire or the Monarchy, and that the Third Republic is by no means bloodthirsty. Madame de Bonmont alone looked upon him as a victim, loving him the more for it, for she was generous. She showed her love by tears and sobs and fits of nerves, so that he spent a never-to-be-forgotten fortnight with her in Brussels. This was the extent of his exile. He benefited by one of the first verdicts pronounced by the Supreme Court. I do not complain of this, and if it had listened to me the Supreme Court would have condemned no one. Since they dared not prosecute all the offenders, it was not in very good taste to condemn only those of whom they were least afraid; to condemn them, moreover, for actions that were not, or at any rate did not seem, sufficiently distinguished from the actions for which they had already been prosecuted. Again, that the only persons implicated in an Army plot should have been civilians might well appear strange. To all of which some excellent people have replied: "People must do the best they can for themselves." Joseph Lacrisse had lost none of his energy. He was ready to mend the broken threads

of the plot, but that was soon recognized to be impossible, although the majority of the police commissaries who had received search warrants would have treated the Royalists with the same delicacy as Monsieur Jonquille. The irony of chance or the imprudence of the conspirators placed in their hands, in spite of themselves, enough documentary evidence to reveal the secret organization of the Committees to the Attorney-General of the Republic. They could no longer plot in safety, and had lost all hope of seeing the King return with the swallows.

Madame de Bonmont sold the six white horses she had bought with the intention of offering them to the Prince for his entry into Paris by the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. At the instigation of her brother Wallstein she sold them to Monsieur Gilbert, the director of the National Circus at the Trocadero. Nor had she the anguish of selling them at a loss; she even made a little profit on them. But the tears fell from her beautiful eyes when the six lily-white chargers left her stables, never to return. She felt as though they were harnessed to the funeral car of that Royalty whom they were to have drawn in triumph.

However, the Supreme Court, which had investigated the affair with languid curiosity, was still sitting.

One day at Madame de Bonmont's house young Lacrisse permitted himself the natural satisfaction of cursing the jury that had acquitted him while still retaining some of the accused men in custody.

"What bandits they are!" he cried.

"Ah," sighed Madame de Bonmont, "the Senate is in the pay of the Ministry. It is a frightful Government. Monsieur Méline would never have undertaken this abominable prosecution. He was a Republican, but he was an honest man. Had he remained in power, the King would be in France to-day."

"Alas, the King is far away from France to-day," said Henri Léon, who had never had many illusions.

Joseph Lacrisse shook his head, and a long silence ensued.

"It's perhaps a good thing for you," said Henri Léon.

"How so?"

"I say that in a way it is rather to your advantage, Lacrisse, that the King is in exile. You ought to be delighted, allowing, of course, for your patriotic feelings."

"I don't understand."

"It's very simple. If you were a financier like myself, the return of the Monarchy might have been profitable to you, if it were only for the Coronation loan. The King would have raised a loan shortly after his accession, for the dear man would have needed money to reign with. There would have been a good deal to be made out of the business for me; but what would you, an advocate,

have gained by the Restoration? A prefecture? A lot of good that would be! You can do better than that as a Royalist under the Republic. You speak exceedingly well — don't deny it — you speak with facility, gracefully. You are one of the twenty-five or thirty members of the junior bar whom Nationalism has brought into prominence. You can believe me. I'm not saying it to flatter you. A good speaker has everything to gain by keeping the King out of the country. With Philippe at the Élysée you would be given some post in the Government or Administration, and that sort of thing quickly does for a man. If you take up the people's interests you displease the King, and out you go. If you devote yourself to the King's interests the people complain, and the King dismisses you. He makes mistakes, and you make them, but you are punished for both; popular or unpopular, you are done for inevitably. But as long as the King is in exile you can do no wrong. You can do nothing; you have no responsibility! It is an excellent state of affairs. You need fear neither popularity nor unpopularity, you are above the one and the other. You cannot blunder; no blunder is possible to the defender of a lost cause. The advocate of misfortune is always eloquent. When hope has become impossible, you can be a Royalist with impunity in a Republic. You offer a calm opposition to those in power; you are liberal; you have the sympathy of all enemies of the existing system, and the respect of the Government which you harmlessly oppose. As a servant of the fallen Monarchy the veneration with which you kneel at the feet of your King will emphasize the nobility of your character, and without loss of dignity you can lavish upon him every sort of flattery. In the same way you can, without any inconvenience, read the Prince a lesson, speak to him with brusque frankness, reproach him for his abdications, his alliances, his private counsellors; you can say to him, for example:— 'Monseigneur, I must warn you, with due respect, that you are keeping low company.' The papers will seize upon these noble words; the fame of your devotion will increase, and you will dominate your own party from the lofty altitudes in which your soul is able to breathe. Advocate or Deputy, at the Palais or from the tribune, you will strike the noblest of attitudes; you are incorruptible, and the good Fathers will protect you. Come, realize your good fortune, Lacrisse,"

"What you say may be funny, Léon," replied Lacrisse coldly, "but I don't find it so. And! doubt whether your jokes are at all relevant."

"I am not joking."

"Yes, you are. You are a sceptic, and I loathe scepticism. It is the negation of action. I am all for action, always, and in spite of all."

Henri Léon protested:

"I assure you I am very much in earnest."

“Well then, my friend, I am sorry to tell you that you don’t in the least understand the spirit of your age. You have described a worthy of the type of Berryer. He would seem like a man stepped out of a family portrait. Your Royalist might have passed muster under the Second Empire, but I can assure you that to-day he would appear *vieux jeu* and devilishly out of date. The faithful courtier would be simply absurd in the twentieth century. One has no business to be beaten, and the weak are always in the wrong. That is the way we look at things, my dear fellow. Are we for Poland, or Greece, or Finland? No, no; we don’t dance to that tune. We are not simpletons. We shouted ‘Vivent les Boers,’ it’s true. But we knew what we were about. We wanted to worry the Government by stirring up trouble with England, and also we hoped that the Boers would win. However, I’m not discouraged. I have reason to hope that we shall overthrow the Republic with the help of the Republicans.

“What we can’t do alone we shall do with Nationalists of every shade of opinion. With them we’ll make an end of the Republic. And to begin with we must bring off the municipal elections.”

CHAPTER XXII

JOSEPH LACRISSE had spoken the truth when he called himself a man of action. Idleness was a burden to him. The Secretary of an extinct Royalist Committee, he became a member of a Nationalist Committee, which was very much alive. It was violent in tone, full of a malevolent love of France and a destructive patriotism. It was continually organizing rather savage demonstrations in the theatres or the churches. Joseph Lacrisse was the moving spirit of these demonstrations. When they took place in a church, Madame de Bonmont, who was religiously inclined, attended them, dressed in dark colours. *Domus mea domus orationis*. One day after joining the Nationalists in the Cathedral in order to pray in select company, Madame de Bonmont and Lacrisse mingled with a crowd of men in the square before the Cathedral who were expressing their patriotism by frantic and concerted shouts. Lacrisse joined his voice to that of the crowd, and Madame de Bonmont quickened their courage by the smile of her blue eyes and her rosy lips, gleaming behind her veil.

The noise was magnificent and formidable, and it was growing even louder when, on an order from the prefecture, a squad of police marched upon the demonstrators. Lacrisse watched them approaching without surprise, and as soon as they were within hearing he shouted, "Hurrah for the police!"

This enthusiasm was not lacking in prudence, and it was also sincere. Bonds of friendship had been formed between the brigades of the prefecture and the Nationalist demonstrators in the ever-to-be-regretted times, if I may say so, of the ploughman Minister who allowed cudgel-bearing roughs to club the silent Republicans in the streets. That is what he called acting with moderation. O gentle country customs! O primitive simplicity! O happy days! Who knew you not never knew the meaning of life! O simplicity of the man of the open fields, who vowed that the Republic had no enemies! Where were the Royalist conspirators and seditious monks? There were none. He had hidden them all under his long Sunday-go-to-meeting coat. Joseph Lacrisse had not forgotten those happy days, and relying on the old alliance of rioters and police he cheered the black brigades. Standing in the front rank of the Leaguers he waved his hat on the end of his stick in token of peace, shouting twenty times over, "Hurrah for the police!" But times had changed. Indifferent to this friendly welcome, deaf to these flattering shouts, the police charged. The shock was violent. The Nationalist ranks wavered and fell back. Human affairs are subject to time's revenges. Lacrisse, who had stopped cheering the attackers and had replaced his

hat on his head, found it knocked over his eyes by a vigorous blow. Indignant at the insult he broke his stick over a policeman's head, and had it not been for the efforts of friends who came to his assistance he would have been marched off to the police station and thrown into a cell like a Socialist.

The policeman whose head was cracked was taken to the hospital, where he received a silver medal from the prefect of police.

Joseph Lacrisse was chosen by the Nationalist Committee for the ward of the Grandes-Écuries as their candidate at the municipal elections of the 6th of May.

This was the former Committee of Monsieur Collinard, a Conservative who had been blackballed at the preceding elections, and was not standing on this occasion. The president of the Committee, Monsieur Bonnaud, a pork-butcher, undertook to assure Joseph Lacrisse of a triumphant return.

Raimondin, a Radical Republican, the retiring councillor, wished to be re-elected, but the electors had lost their faith in him. He had disappointed every one, and had neglected the interests of his ward. He had not even obtained the tramway which had been demanded for the last twelve years, and was even accused of favouring the Dreyfusards.

It was an excellent ward. The householders were all Nationalists, and the tradespeople severely condemned the Waldeck-Millerand Cabinet. There were some Jews among them, but they were anti-Semites. The religious communities, which were both rich and numerous, would do their best, and the Fathers who had opened the Chapel of Saint-Antoine were especially to be relied upon. Success was certain. It was merely necessary that Monsieur Lacrisse should not expressly and in so many words announce himself as a Royalist, in order to spare the feelings of the small shopkeepers, who feared a change of regime, particularly during the Exhibition.

Lacrisse objected to this. He was a Royalist and did not intend to put his colours in his pocket. Monsieur Bonnaud stuck to his point. He knew the elector. He knew what sort of animal he was, and how to manage him. If Monsieur Lacrisse would come forward as a Nationalist he, Bonnaud, would win the election for him. Otherwise the thing was impossible.

Joseph Lacrisse was puzzled, and wondered whether he should write to the King about the matter. But time pressed, and, besides, how could Philippe at such a distance be a competent judge of his own interests? Lacrisse consulted his friends.

"Our strength lies in our principles," replied Henri Léon. "A Monarchist cannot call himself a Republican, even during the Exhibition. But they are not asking you to call yourself a Republican. They do not even ask you to call yourself a Republican Progressive, or a Republican Liberal, which is quite

another thing than a Republican. They are asking you to call yourself a Nationalist. You can do that in all honesty, for you are a Nationalist. Don't hesitate. Success depends upon it, and it is of importance to the good cause that you should be elected."

Joseph Lacrisse gave in out of patriotism, writing to the Prince to explain the situation and to assure him of his devotion.

The terms of the programme were drawn up without difficulty. The National Army was to be defended against a mob of maniacs. Cosmopolitanism was to be combated. Paternal rights, jeopardized by the Government's proposal in respect of the Universities, were to be upheld. The peril of Collectivism was to be averted. A tramway was to connect the Grandes-Écuries with the Exhibition. The banner of France was to be held high, and the water supply improved.

There was no question of a plebiscite; people did not know what it was in the Grandes-Écuries ward. Joseph Lacrisse had not the trouble of reconciling his doctrine, which was that of Divine Right, with the doctrine of the Sovereignty of the People. Though he admired and loved Déroulède, he did not blindly follow him.

"I will have tricolour posters," he said to Monsieur Bonnaud. "It will look well, and we must neglect nothing that will take the people's fancy."

Bonnaud approved of this; but Raimondin, the retiring councillor, having managed to secure, at the last moment, the establishment of a steam-tramway from the Grandes-Écuries to the Trocadero, was publishing broadcast the news of his success. He, too, praised the Army in his circulars, and spoke of the wonders of the Exhibition as the triumph of the industrial and commercial genius of France and the glory of Paris. He was becoming a formidable rival.

Feeling that the struggle would be a hard one, the Nationalists did everything in their power to stimulate the courage of their adherents. They accused Raimondin, at innumerable meetings, of having allowed his old mother to die of starvation and of having voted that the municipality should subscribe for Urbain Gohier's book.

Every night they attacked Raimondin, the candidate of the Jews and Panamists. A group of Republican Progressives was formed to support Joseph Lacrisse, and published the following manifesto:

To the Electors

“GENTLEMEN,

“The critical circumstances through which we are now passing make it our duty to ask of the candidates at the forthcoming municipal elections a statement of their opinion as to the general policy, on which the future of the country depends. At an hour when some deluded persons entertain the criminal hope of stirring up an unseemly agitation calculated to weaken our beloved country, at an hour when Collectivism, audaciously installed in power, threatens our property, the sacred fruit of our thrift and labour; at an hour when a Government established against public opinion is preparing tyrannical laws, you will all vote for

“M. JOSEPH LACRISSE, “Advocate in the Court of Appeal, “Candidate for the Liberty of Conscience of an honest Republic.”

The Nationalist Socialists of the ward had thought at first of choosing their own candidates, whose votes, at the second scrutiny, would have gone to Lacrisse, but the danger was so imminent as to necessitate union. So the Nationalist Socialists of the Grandes-Écuries rallied round Lacrisse, and made the following appeal to the electors:

“CITIZENS, “We commend to you the definitely Republican, Socialist and Nationalist candidate, “CITIZEN LACRISSE.

“Down with the traitors! Down with the Dreyfusards! Down with the Panamists! Down with the Jews! Long live the National-Socialist Republic!”

The Fathers, who possessed a chapel and an enormous amount of house-property in the ward, strictly refrained from meddling in electoral affairs. They were too obedient to the Sovereign Pontiff to infringe his orders, and absorption in the works of piety kept them far removed from mundane affairs. But some of their lay friends composed a circular which exactly expressed the thoughts of the worthy Fathers. Here is the text of this circular, which was distributed throughout the ward:

“The Charity of ST. ANTHONY, for the restoration of lost property, jewels, valuables and objects of every description, such as land, houses, furniture, money, feelings, affections, etc., etc.

“GENTLEMEN, “It is chiefly during elections that the devil attempts to trouble our consciences. And to attain this object he has recourse to innumerable devices. Alas, has he not in his service the whole army of the Freemasons? But you will know how to defeat the wiles of the enemy. You will reject with horror and disgust the candidate of the incendiaries the burners of churches and other Dreyfusards.

“It is only by placing righteous men in power that you will put an end to the abominable persecution which is so cruelly being undertaken at the present moment, and will prevent an iniquitous Government from laying its hands upon the money of the poor. Vote for “M. JOSEPH LACRISSE, “Advocate in the Court of Appeal,— “St. Anthony’s Candidate.

“Gentlemen, do not grieve the good St. Anthony by inflicting upon him the unmerited grief of seeing his candidate defeated.

“Signed: Ribagou, advocate; Wertheimer, publicist; Florimond, architect; Bêche, retired captain; Molon, artisan.”

These documents will suffice to show to what intellectual and moral heights Nationalism elevated the discussion of the candidates for the Municipal Council of Paris.

CHAPTER XXIII

JOSEPH LACRISSE, the Nationalist candidate, was carrying on an active campaign in the Grandes-Écuries ward against the outgoing councillor, Anselme Raimondin. From the first he felt at his ease in the public meetings at which he spoke. Being a lawyer and very ignorant, he spoke profusely, and nothing ever stopped him. The rapidity of his delivery astonished the electors, with whom he was in sympathy because of the scarcity and simplicity of his ideas, and what he said was always what they would have said themselves, or at least would have tried to say. He was always speaking of his honesty, and of the honesty of his political friends; he insisted that they must elect honest men, and that his party was the party of honest men. As it was a new party, the people believed him.

Anselme Raimondin, at his meetings, replied that he himself was honest, extremely honest, but his protestations, coming after the others, seemed tedious. Since he had already been a councillor and had experience of municipal affairs, the electors did not find it easy to believe in his honesty, whereas Joseph Lacrisse was dazzling in his innocence.

Lacrisse was young, brisk, and had a soldierly appearance. Raimondin was short and stout, and wore spectacles. This difference was remarked upon at a moment when Nationalism had breathed into municipal elections some of the enthusiasm and poetry which are inseparable from it, together with an ideal of beauty perceptible to the small shopkeeper.

Joseph Lacrisse was totally ignorant of all questions concerning civic affairs, even to the attributions of municipal councils. This ignorance was useful to him. His eloquence was thereby the freer and more stirring. Anselme Raimondin, on the contrary, lost himself in the mazes of detail. He was accustomed to the use of business expressions, and to technical discussions; he had a love of figures, and a passion for documents, and although he knew his public he laboured under certain illusions with regard to the intelligence of the electors who had nominated him. He had a certain amount of respect for them; he dared not lie too grossly, and did his best to enter into explanations. All this made him appear cold, obscure and tedious.

He was no simpleton. He knew where lay his interests, and he understood minor politics. For two years his district had been submerged by Nationalist newspapers, posters and pamphlets; and he told himself that when the moment came he, too, could pretend to be a Nationalist, that it wasn't so difficult to demolish traitors and acclaim the National Army. He had not feared his enemies

sufficiently, thinking that he could always do as they did, in which he was mistaken. Joseph Lacrisse had an inimitable genius for expressing the Nationalist ideal. He had hit upon one special sentence which he frequently employed, and which always seemed new and beautiful. It was this: "Citizens, let us all rise to defend our admirable Army against a handful of cosmopolitans who have sworn to destroy it." This was just the thing to say to the electors of the Grandes-Écuries. Repeated nightly, the sentence aroused the whole meeting to great and formidable enthusiasm. Anselme Raimondin did not hit upon anything nearly so good; if patriotic phrases occurred to him he did not deliver them in the right tone, and they produced no effect.

Lacrisse covered the walls with tricolour posters. Anselme Raimondin also made use of tricolour posters, but either the colours were too washy or the sun faded them; at all events, his posters had a pallid appearance. Everything played him false, every one abandoned him. He lost his assurance; he humbled himself, showed himself prudent and humble. He shrank from notice; he became almost imperceptible.

Again, when he stood up to speak in the dancinghall of some third-rate drinking-house he seemed like a pale phantom from which proceeded a feeble voice drowned by pipe-smoke and the interruptions of the audience. He recalled his past. He had always been a fighter, he said. He stood up for the Republic; this remark, like the preceding one, caused no sensation, had no sonorous echo. The electors of the Grandes-Écuries ward wanted the Republic to be defended by Joseph Lacrisse, who had conspired against her. That was what they wanted.

The meeting did not discuss both sides of the question. Only once was Raimondin invited to put in an appearance at a Nationalist meeting. He went; but he was not allowed to speak; and was utterly crushed by a resolution put and carried amid darkness and disorder, for the landlord had cut off the gas as soon as the people started breaking up the benches. The meetings in the Grandes-Écuries ward, as in all the other wards of Paris, were only moderately rowdy. The people now and then displayed the languid violence peculiar to their day, which is the most noticeable characteristic of our political manners. The Nationalists, according to their habit, hurled forth the same monotonous insults in which the expressions "Spy,"

"Traitor" and "Rogue" had a feeble, exhausted sound. Their slogans told of an extreme physical and moral enervation, a vague discontent combined with profound lethargy, and a definite inability to think out the simplest problems. There were many insults and few blows. It was unusual if more than two or three per night were wounded or knocked about, counting both parties. Lacrisse's wounded were taken to the Nationalist chemist Delapierre, next door to the

riding-school, and Raimondin's to the Radical chemist Job, opposite the market-place, and by midnight there was not a soul left in the streets.

On Sunday, May the 6th, at six o'clock, Joseph Lacrisse, accompanied by his friends, was awaiting the result of the ballot in an empty shop decorated with flags and placards. This was their chief Committee Room. The pork-butcher, Monsieur Bonnaud, arrived, and announced that Lacrisse was elected by two thousand three hundred and nine votes against one thousand five hundred and fourteen for Monsieur Raimondin.

"Citizen," said Bonnaud, "we are much gratified. It is a victory for the Republic."

"And for honest men," replied Lacrisse, adding with dignified benevolence: "I thank you, Monsieur Bonnaud, and I beg you to thank in my name our valiant friends." Then, turning to Henri Léon who stood beside him, he whispered, "Léon, do me a favour, will you? Wire our success at once to Monseigneur."

Shouts were heard from the street.

"Long live Déroulède! Long live the Army! Long live the Republic! Down with the Jews!" Lacrisse entered his carriage amid the cheers of the crowd that barred his passage. Baron Golsberg the Jew, was standing at the carriage door; he seized the new councillor's hand:

"I gave you my vote, Monsieur Lacrisse. You understand, I gave you my vote, because, I tell you, anti-Semitism is mere humbug — you know it as well as I do — mere humbug, while Socialism is a serious matter."

"Yes, yes. Good-bye, Monsieur Golsberg."

But the Baron still held on.

"Socialism is the danger. Monsieur Raimondin favoured concessions to the Collectivists. That's why I voted for you, Monsieur Lacrisse."

And still the crowd yelled:

"Hurrah for Déroulède! Hurrah for the Army! Down with the Dreyfusards! Down with Raimondin! Death to the Jews!"

The coachman succeeded in making a way through the mass of electors.

Joseph Lacrisse found Madame de Bonmont at home, alone. She was excited and triumphant, having already heard the news.

"Elected!" she cried, her arms extended and her gaze directed heavenward.

And the word "elected" on the lips of so pious a lady seemed full of mystical meaning.

She put her beautiful arms around him and drew him to her.

"What makes me happiest is that you owe your election to me."

She had contributed nothing to his expenses. It is true that money had not been wanting, and Joseph Lacrisse had drawn upon more than one banking

account; but the gentle Elisabeth had given nothing, and Joseph Lacrisse could not understand what she meant. She explained herself:

“I had a candle burnt every day before St. Anthony; that is why you got in. St. Anthony grants all requests. Father Adéodat told me so, and I have proved it several times.”

She covered his face with kisses, and a beautiful idea occurred to her, which reminded her of the customs of chivalry.

“My dear,” she asked him, “do not municipal councillors wear a scarf? an embroidered scarf, isn’t it? I’ll embroider one for you.”

He was very tired and fell exhausted into a chair, but kneeling at his feet she murmured:

“I love you.”

And only the darkness heard the rest.

The same evening, in his modest apartments — the apartments of “a child of the quarter,” as he called them — Anselme Raimondin heard the result of the election. There were some dozen bottles of wine and a cold *pâté* on the dining-room table. His failure amazed him.

“It was only what I expected,” he said.

And he swung round in a pirouette, but he was clumsy and twisted his ankle.

“It’s your own fault,” said Dr. Maufle, by way of consolation. The Doctor was president of his Committee, an old Radical, with the face of a Silenus. “You allowed the Nationalists to poison the whole ward; you hadn’t the pluck to stand up against them. You made no attempt to unmask their falsehoods. On the contrary, like them, with them, you told every lie you could think of. You knew the truth, and you dared not undeceive the electors while there was still time. You’ve faked it, and you are beaten, and it serves you right!”

Anselme Raimondin shrugged his shoulders.

“You are a silly old fool, Maufle. You don’t understand the ins and outs of this election. Yet it’s clear enough. My failure was due to one thing only: the discontent of the small shopkeepers who are being crushed out of existence between the big shops and the co-operative societies. They are suffering and they made me pay for it. That’s all.” Then, with a faint smile, he added:

“They’ll find themselves nicely taken in.”

CHAPTER XXIV

MEETING his pupils Goubin and Denis, on one of the paths of the Luxembourg garden, Monsieur Bergeret said: "I have good news for you, gentlemen. The peace of Europe will not be disturbed. The Trublions themselves have assured me of it." And Monsieur Bergeret went on to relate the following story: "I met Jean Coq, Jean Mouton, Jean Laiglon and Gilles Singe at the Exhibition, where they were listening to the creaking of the footbridges. Jean Coq came up to me, and said sternly: 'Monsieur Bergeret, you said that we wanted war, and that we should make war, that Jean Mouton and I were going to land at Dover with an army and occupy London, and that then I should 'take Berlin and various other capitals. You said this, I know. You said it with malicious intent to harm us and make the French nation believe that we desire war. Understand, monsieur, that this is a lie. Our tendencies are not war-like; they are military, which is quite another thing. We desire peace, and when we have established the Imperial Republic in France we shall not go to war.'

"I told Jean Coq that I was quite ready to believe him, and, what was more, that I saw that I had been mistaken and that my mistake was obvious; that Jean Coq, Jean Mouton, Jean Laiglon and Gilles Singe had sufficiently proved their love of peace by refusing to go and fight in China, whither they had been invited by beautiful white placards. 'From that time forth,' said I, 'I realized the truly civil nature of your military sentiments, and the strength of your love for your country. You could not leave the soil of France. I beg you to accept my apologies, Monsieur Coq. I rejoice to see that you are as peacefully disposed as I.'

"Jean Coq looked at me with that eye that causes the world to tremble: 'I am peacefully disposed, Monsieur Bergeret, but, thank God, not as you are. The peace I desire is not your peace. You are slavishly content with the peace that is forced upon us to-day. Our spirit is too great to endure it without impatience. This feeble enervating peace which satisfies you, cruelly wounds the pride of our hearts. When we are the masters we shall make another peace; a terrible, clanking, spurred and booted, equestrian peace! We shall make a pitiless, savage peace, a threatening, horrible, blazing peace; a peace worthy of us; a peace which, more frightful than the most frightful war, will freeze the world with terror and kill all the English by inhibition. That, Monsieur Bergeret, is our manner of being pacific. In two or three months' time our peace will burst upon the world and will set it in a blaze.' "After this speech I was forced to admit that

the Trublions were peacefully disposed, and thus was confirmed the truth of the oracle written upon an ancient sycamore leaf by the sibyl of Panzoust: “Toi qui de vent te repais, Troublion, ma petite outre, Si vraiment tu veux la paix, Commence par nous la f..’”

CHAPTER XXV

MADAME DE BONMONT'S *salon* had been unusually lively and brilliant since the victory of the Nationalists in Paris and the election of Joseph Lacrisse for the ward of the Grandes-Écuries. The widow of the great Baron received at her house the flower of the new party. An old Rabbi of the Faubourg St. Antoine believed that the gentle Elisabeth attracted to herself the enemies of the chosen people by a special decree of the God of Israel. The hand, he thought, that placed Esther in the bed of Ahasuerus had been pleased to gather together the chiefs of the anti-Semites and the princes of the Trublions in the house of a Jewess. It is true that the Baronne had renounced the faith of her fathers, but who can fathom the designs of Jehovah! In the eyes of the artists, who, like Frémont, bethought themselves of the mythological figures in the palaces of Germany, her sumptuous beauty, the beauty of a Viennese Erigone, seemed symbolical of the Nationalist vintage.

Her dinners diffused an atmosphere of delight and power, and the smallest luncheon party at her house had a truly national significance. Thus, this morning she had gathered together at her table the most famous defenders of the Church and Army. There was Henri Léon, Vice-President of the Royalist Committees of the South-West, who had come to congratulate the Nationalists elected in Paris; Captain de Chalmot, the son of General Cartier de Chalmot, with his young American wife, who twittered to such an extent as she expressed her Nationalist propensities that one would have thought the very birds in their cages were taking part in our human disputes; Monsieur Tonnellier, the suspended professor of the fifth form at the Lycée Sully, who, as every one knows, had been convicted of defending, to his young pupils, an assault committed upon the person of the President of the Republic, had been condemned to pay a fine and was forthwith received in the best society, where he behaved very well, except that he was rather given to playing upon words; Frémont, an old Communard and an Inspector of the Fine Arts, who as he grew older became wonderfully reconciled to bourgeois and capitalist society, assiduously frequenting the houses of wealthy Jews, the guardians of the treasures of Christian art, and would gladly have lived under the dictatorship of a horse so long as he could spend the day caressing, with his delicate hands, finely wrought *bibelots* of precious material; and the old Comte Davant, dyed, waxed and varnished, handsome still, a trifle morose, who remembered the golden age of the Jews when he supplied the great financiers with furniture by Riesener and bronzes by Thomyres. When acting as

the Baron's collector he had gathered together fifteen millions' worth of old furniture and objects of art. To-day, ruined by unfortunate speculation, he lived among the sons, regretting the fathers, a sad, bitter old man, one of the most insolent of parasites, insolence, as he well knew, being a parasite's main passport to favour. She had also invited Jacques de Cadde, one of the promoters of the Henry subscription list; Philippe Dellion, Astolphe de Courtrai, Hugues Chassons des Aigues, President of the Nationalist Committee of Celle-Saint-Cloud, and Jambe-d'Argent in breeches and waistcoat of homespun, the white armlet with the golden lilies on his arm, and a wild shock of hair under his round hat, which, like his chaplet of olive-stones, he never removed. He was a Montmartre singer, by name Dupont, who having become a Chouan was received in the best society. He was taking a snack, with an old flint-gun between his legs, drinking copiously. Since the Affair a new classification had occurred in aristocratic French Society.

Young Baron Ernest sat facing his mother in the chair set for the master of the house. The conversation turned on politics.

"You are wrong," said Jacques de Cadde to Philippe Dellion. "Believe me, you are wrong not to employ Father François' move. No one knows what may happen after the Exhibition and as soon as we begin to hold public meetings."

"One thing is certain," said Astolphe de Courtrai, "and that is if we want to do well in the elections in twenty months' time we must prepare to begin a campaign. I can promise you that I shall be ready, I'm working hard every day at boxing and single-stick."

"Who's your trainer?" asked Dellion. "Gaudibert. He has brought French boxing to perfection. It's astonishing. He has some exquisite foot-work, some *coups de savate*, quite of his own. He's a first-class teacher, and understands the tremendous importance of training."

"Training is everything," said Jacques de Cadde. "Of course," continued Courtrai. "And Gaudibert has superior methods of training, a whole system, based on experience. Massage, friction and dieting followed by plenty of nourishment. His motto is: 'Keep down fat, build up muscle.' And in six months, my friends, he makes you a first-rate boxer, and gives your punch an elasticity and your kick a suppleness—"

Madame de Chalmot inquired:

"Can you overthrow this feeble Ministry?"

And at the bare idea of the Waldeck Cabinet she indignantly shook her pretty head — the head of an infant Samuel.

"Do not distress yourself, madame," said Lacrisse. "This Ministry will be replaced by another just like it."

“Another Ministry of Republican spendthrifts,” said Monsieur Tonnellier. “France will be ruined.”

“Yes,” said Léon, “another Ministry just like this one. But the new Ministry will be less unpopular, for it will no longer be the Ministry of the Affair. We shall need a campaign of at least six weeks with all our newspapers to make it hateful to the people.”

“Have you been to the Petit Palais, madame?” said Fremont to the Baronne.

She replied that she had been there and had seen some beautiful caskets and some pretty dance-engagement books.

“Émile Moliner,” replied the Inspector of Fine Arts, “has organized an admirable exhibition of French art. The Middle Ages are represented by the most valuable examples. The eighteenth century takes an honourable position too, but there is still space to fill up. You, madame, who possess so many treasures will not refuse us the loan of some of your masterpieces.”

It is true that the great Barorl had left his widow many art treasures. For him the Comte Davant had ransacked all the provincial chateaux on the banks of the Somme, Loire and Rhone, and had wrested from ignorant, needy and whiskered gentlemen portraits of ancestors, historic furniture, gifts from kings to their mistresses, imposing souvenirs of the Monarchy, the treasured possessions of the most illustrious families. In her castle at Montil and her house in the Avenue Marceau she had examples of the work of the finest French cabinetmakers and of the greatest wood-carvers of the eighteenth century: chests of drawers, cabinets for medals, secretaries, clocks of all descriptions, candlesticks and exquisite faded tapestries. But although Frémont, and Terremondre before him, had begged her to send some pieces of furniture, bronzes or hangings to the coming Exhibition, she had always refused. Vain of her riches and anxious to display them she had not intended, on this occasion, to lend anything. Joseph Lacrisse encouraged her in this refusal: “Have nothing to do with their Exhibition. Your things will be stolen or burned. And who knows if they will ever succeed in organizing their international fair? It’s better to have nothing to do with people like that.”

Frémont, who had already been refused on several occasions, persisted:

“You, madame, who possess such beautiful things and are so worthy of possessing them, show yourself to be what you are, liberal, generous and patriotic, for patriotism also is involved in this matter. Send to the Petit Palais your Riesener cabinet decorated with Sèvres in *pâte tendre* . With such a treasure you need fear no rival, for its equal is only to be found in England. We will put upon it your porcelain vases, which belonged to the Grand Dauphin,

those two marvellous sea-green vases mounted in bronze by Caffieri. It will be dazzling!”

The Comte Davant interrupted him:

“The mounts,” he said in a tone of melancholy wisdom, “are not by Philippe Caffieri. They are marked with a ‘C’ surmounted by a lily. That is Cressent’s mark. You may not know it, but you cannot deny it.”

“Madame, display your magnificence! Add to this your tapestry by Leprince, *La Fiancée moscovite*, and you will deserve the gratitude of the whole nation.”

She was ready to give way. But before consenting she questioned Lacrisse with a look. He said: “Lend them your eighteenth-century stuff, as they have none.”

Then, out of deference to the Comte Davant, she asked him what she should do. He replied: “Do as you like. I have no advice to give you. It will be all the same whether you send or do not send your things to the Exhibition. *Rien ne fait rien*, as my old friend Théophile Gautier used to say.”

“That’s done!” thought Frémont. “I’ll go presently and tell the Ministry that I’ve managed to secure the Bonmont collection. It’s well worth the rosette.”

And he smiled to himself. He was no fool, but he did not despise social distinctions, and it struck him as piquant that a man who had been imprisoned as a Communard should be made an officer of the Legion of Honour.

“I must go,” said Lacrisse. “I’ve got to prepare the speech for the banquet of the Grandes-Écuries next Sunday.”

“Oh,” sighed the Baronne, “I shouldn’t trouble to do that. It’s not necessary, you extemporize so wonderfully.”

“Besides, my dear fellow,” said Jacques de Cadde, “it’s not a difficult matter to address electors.”

“Not difficult exactly,” said the chosen candidate, “but delicate. Our enemies complain that we have no programme. That is not true, we have a programme, but—”

“Pheasant shooting, that’s the programme, messieurs,” said Jambe-d’Argent.

“But the elector,” continued Joseph Lacrisse, “is of a more complex nature than one would at first suppose. For instance, I’ve been elected to the Grandes-Écuries by the Monarchists, of course, and by the Bonapartists, and also by the — what shall I call them? — by the Republicans who are sick of the Republic but who still remain Republicans. That is a state of mind not infrequently met with in Paris among the small tradespeople. Thus the pork-butcher who presides over my Committee shouts in my face: ‘I’ve done with the Republic of the Republicans. If I could, I’d blow it up, even if I had to blow up with it; but for

your Republic, Monsieur Lacrisse, I would lay down my life for it.' Doubtless there are points on which we all agree. For instance: 'Rally round the flag.'

'No attacks on the Army!'

'Down with the traitors in the pay of the foreigner who work to the undoing of our national defence!' There we are on common ground."

"Then there is also anti-Semitism," said Henri Léon.

"Anti-Semitism," replied Joseph Lacrisse, "is very popular in the Grandes-Écuries because there are so many rich Jews in the ward who are on our side."

"And the anti-masonic campaign!" cried Jacques de Cadde, who was religious.

"All of us in the Grandes-Écuries are agreed to fight the Freemasons," replied Joseph Lacrisse. "The church-goers reproach them for not being Catholics. The Nationalist Socialists reproach them for not being anti-Semites, and all our meetings adjourn to the cry of 'Down with the Freemasons!' to which Citizen Bissolo yells: 'Down with the Cassocks!' Immediately he is knocked on the head, thrown down, trampled upon by our friends and dragged off to the police-station by the police. The spirit of the Grandes-Écuries is excellent, but there are false ideas which we shall have to eliminate. The small shopkeeper does not yet understand that the Monarchy alone will bring him any happiness. He does not yet feel that in bowing to the will of the Church he increases his own stature. The shopkeeper's mind has been poisoned by bad books and bad newspapers. He is against the abuses of the clergy and the intrusion of priests into politics. Many of my electors call themselves anti-clerical."

"Really?" cried Madame de Bonmont, saddened and surprised.

"Madame," said Jacques de Cadde, "it is the same in the provinces. And I call that being against religion. Anti-clericalism spells anti-religion."

"We must not attempt to disguise the fact,"

Lacrisse continued. "We have still a great deal to do. And how? This is what we have to find out."

"As far as I am concerned," said Jacques de Cadde, "I am in favour of violent measures."

"What measures?" asked Henri Léon.

There was a moment's silence, and Henri Léon continued:

"We have had prodigious successes — but so had Boulanger, and he wore himself out."

"He was worn out," said Lacrisse. "But we need not fear that we shall be worn out in the same way. The Republicans, who put up a very good defence against him, are defending themselves very badly against us."

“Besides,” said Léon, “it is not our enemies that I fear; it’s our friends. We have friends in the Chamber. And what are they doing? They haven’t even provided us with a nice little ministerial crisis complicated by a nice little presidential crisis.”

“That would have been desirable,” said Lacrisse, “but it wasn’t possible. If it had been possible Méline would have done it. We must be just. Méline does what he can.”

“Then,” said Léon, “we must wait patiently until the Republicans of the Senate and the Chamber make way for us. Is that your opinion, Lacrisse?”

“Ah,” sighed Jacques de Cadde, “I regret the days when we cracked one another’s heads. Those were the good old days.”

“They may return,” said Henri Léon.

“Do you think they will?”

“Yes, by Jove, if we bring them back!”

“True!”

“We have numbers on our side, as General Mercier said. Let us act.”

“Hurrah for Mercier!” cried Jambe-d’Argent. “Let us act,” repeated Henri Léon. “And let us lose no time about it. And, above all, let us be careful not to allow ourselves to get cold feet. Nationalism must be swallowed hot. As long as it is boiling it’s a cordial. Cold, it’s a drug.”

“What do you mean — a drug?” demanded Lacrisse severely.

“A salutary drug, an efficacious remedy, a good medicine, but one that the patient will not swallow willingly nor with pleasure. We must not let the mixture settle. Shake the bottle before pouring out the dose, according to the precept of the wise chemist. At the present moment our Nationalist mixture, which has been well shaken, is of a beautiful pink colour, pleasant to look upon and of a slightly acid flavour which pleases the palate. If we let the bottle rest, the mixture will lose much of its colour and flavour. A sediment will form. The best will go to the bottom. The monarchical and clerical ingredients which enter into its composition will stick to the bottom, and the wily patient will leave three-quarters of it in the bottle. Shake it up, gentlemen, shake it up.”

“What did I tell you?” cried young Cadde.

“It is easy to say ‘shake it up,’ but it must be done at the right time, otherwise you run the risk of upsetting the electors,” objected Lacrisse.

“Oh,” said Léon, “of course, if you are thinking of your re-election!”

“Who said I was thinking of it? I’m not!”

“You are right, one mustn’t meet trouble so much more than half-way.”

“What? Trouble? You think my electors will change their minds?”

“On the contrary, I fear they will not. They were discontented and they have elected you. They will be discontented again in four years’ time, and then it will be with you. Would you like a word of advice, Lacrisse?”

“Go on.”

“You were elected by two thousand votes.”

“Two thousand three hundred and nine.”

“Two thousand three hundred and nine. You cannot please two thousand three hundred and nine people. But you mustn’t think only of the quantity, you must think of the quality too. You have among your electors a fair number of anti-clerical Republicans, small shopkeepers and clerks. They are not the most intelligent.”

Lacrisse, who had become an earnest person, replied slowly and thoughtfully: “I will explain. They are Republicans, but, above all, they are patriots. They voted for a patriot whose ideas did not coincide with theirs, who did not think as they did on matters which they thought of secondary importance. Their conduct is perfectly honourable and I suppose you do not hesitate to approve of it.”

“Certainly I approve of it, but, between ourselves, we may confess that they are not particularly bright.”

“Not very bright!” replied Lacrisse bitterly. “Not very bright! I will not say that they are as bright as—” He searched his brain for the name of a brilliant man, but either he could not find one among his friends or his ungrateful memory refused the name he sought, or perhaps a natural malevolence caused him to reject each name that came into his mind. He did not finish his sentence, remarking rather crossly, “Anyway, I can’t see what’s the good of railing at them.”

“I’m not railing at them. I only say they are less intelligent than your Monarchist and Catholic electors who worked for you with the good Fathers. Well, your interest as well as your duty is to work for them, first of all because they think as you do, and also because you don’t hoodwink the good Fathers, while one does hoodwink fools.”

“That’s a mistake, a profound mistake!” cried Joseph Lacrisse. “Anyone can see, my dear fellow, that you don’t know the electors. But I know them! Fools are not more easily hoodwinked than others. They delude themselves, it’s true, and they delude themselves at every moment; but one doesn’t hoodwink them.”

“Yes, yes, one does, only one must know how to set about it.”

“Don’t you believe it!” replied Lacrisse, with sincerity. Then, on second thoughts, “Anyhow, I don’t want to hoodwink them.”

“Who’s asking you to? You must satisfy them. And you can do that easily enough. You don’t see enough of Father Adéodat. He’s a good adviser, and so

moderate! He will tell you, with his shrewd smile, his hands tucked into his sleeves, 'Keep your majority. Content them. We shall not take offence at an occasional vote on the indefeasibility of the rights of man and the citizen, or even against the clergy thrusting themselves into the Government. At public meetings think of your Republican electors, and think of us in the Committees. It is there, in peace and silence, that good work is done. That the greater part of the Council occasionally shows itself to be anti-clerical is an evil that we can bear with patience. But it is important that the large Committees should be profoundly religious. They will be more powerful than the Council itself; because an active compact minority is always worth more than a lifeless, confused majority.'

"That, my dear Lacrisse, is what Father Adéodat will tell you. He is admirably patient and serene. When our friends come and tell him with a shudder: 'Oh, Father, what fresh abominations the Freemasons are preparing! Compulsory University training for office; Article 7; the law relating to associations! Horrible!' — the good Father smiles and says nothing. He says nothing, but this is what he thinks: 'We've been through worse than this. We went through '89 and '93, the suppression of religious communities and the sale of Church property. And does anyone imagine that in former days, under the most Christian Monarchy, we kept or increased our property without effort or struggle? If so, they know very little of French history. Our rich abbeys, our towns and villages, our serfs, our meadows and mills, our woods and our ponds, our justice and our jurisdiction — powerful enemies, lords, bishops and kings were incessantly striving to dispossess us of them. We had to defend by force or before the courts a field or a road one day, the next a castle or a gibbet. To preserve our riches from the cupidity of secular power we had continually to produce those ancient charters of Clotaire and Dagobert, which the impious knowledge taught in the Government schools to-day calls forgeries. We pleaded for ten centuries against the king's servants. We have only been pleading thirty years against the justice of the Republic. And the people think we are growing weary! No, we are neither frightened nor discouraged. We have money and property. It is the inheritance of the poor. To keep and multiply it we count on two aids that will not fail us: the protection of God and the impotence of Parliament.'

"Such are the thoughts which take shape beneath the shining pate of Father Adéodat. Lacrisse, you were Father Adéodat's candidate; you are his chosen one. Go and see him. He is a great politician and will give you good advice. He will teach you how to satisfy the pork-butcher who is a Republican and how to

charm the umbrella-maker who is a Freethinker. Go and see Father Adéodat, see him again and again."

"I have spoken with him several times," said Lacrisse. "He is certainly very clever. These good Fathers have grown rich with surprising rapidity. They do a great deal of good in the ward."

"A great deal of good," repeated Henri Léon. "The whole of the enormous quadrilateral between the Rue des Grandes-Écuries, the riding-school Baron Golsberg's hôtel and the outer boulevard belongs to them. They are working patiently at a gigantic scheme. They have undertaken to erect, in the heart of Paris, in your ward, my dear fellow, another Lourdes, an immense basilica which will draw millions of pilgrims yearly. In the meanwhile they are covering their huge holdings with house-property."

"I know that," said Lacrisse.

"I know it too," put in Frémont. "I know their architect, a man called Florimond, an extraordinary fellow. You know the good Fathers are organizing pilgrimages in France and abroad. Florimond, with his long hair and flowing beard, accompanies the pilgrims on their visits to the cathedrals. He's got the head of a master-mason of the thirteenth century. He gazes at the spires and belfries with ecstatic eyes. He explains arches in tierce-point and Christian symbolism to the ladies. He shows them Mary, the flower of the tree of Jesse, at the heart of the great rose windows. Tearfully, with sighs and prayers, he calculates the resistance of the walls. At the table d'hôte, where monks and pilgrims sit together, his face and hands, still grey with the dust of the old stones which he has embraced, bear witness to the faith of the Catholic artisan. He tells them his dream: 'That I, a humble workman, may bring my stone to the building of the new sanctuary that will last as long as the world.' Then he goes back to Paris and builds mean houses, tenement houses, with bad mortar and hollow bricks laid on edge, miserable buildings that won't last twenty years."

"But," said Léon, "they are not required to last twenty years. They are the houses of the Grandes-Écuries of which I was speaking just now, and will one day give place to the great basilica of St. Anthony and its dependencies, a whole religious city that will spring up in the next fifteen years. Before fifteen years have elapsed the good Fathers will own the whole quarter of Paris that has elected our friend Lacrisse."

Madame de Bonmont rose, taking the Comte Davant's arm.

"You understand, I don't like parting with my things. Articles loaned run risks. It makes one so anxious. But if it is in the national interest — the country before all. You and Monsieur Frémont will choose what should be exhibited."

“All the same,” said Jacques de Cadde, as they left the table, “you are wrong, Dellion, not to try Father François’ expedient.”

Coffee was served in the small drawing-room.

Jambe-d’Argent, the Chouan singer, sat down at the piano. He had just added to his repertoire a few Royalist songs dating from the Restoration, which he thought would make a hit in fashionable drawing-rooms.

He sang to the tune of *La Sentinelle*:

“*Au champ d’honneur frappé d’un coup mortel,
Le preux Bayard, dans l’ardeur qui l’enflamme,
Fier de périr pour le sol paternel,
Avec ivresse exhalait sa grande âme:
Ah! sans regret je puis mourir,
Mon sort, dit-il, sera digne d’envie,
Puisque jusqu’au dernier soupir,
Sans reproche j’ai pu servir
Mon roi, ma belle et ma patrie.*”

Chassons des Aigues, the President of the Nationalist Committee of Action, went up to Joseph Lacrisse.

“Come now, my dear Councillor, are we really doing anything on the fourteenth of July?”

“The Council,” replied Lacrisse gravely, “cannot organize any demonstration of opinion. That is not within its province, but if spontaneous demonstrations occur—”

“Time passes and the danger increases,” replied Chassons des Aigues, who was expecting to be expelled from his Club, and against whom a charge of swindling had been lodged with a magistrate. “We must act.”

“Don’t get excited,” said Lacrisse. “We have the men and we have the money.”

“We have the money,” repeated Chassons des Aigues thoughtfully. —

“With men and money one wins elections,” continued Lacrisse. “In twenty months we come into power, and we shall remain in power for twenty years.”

“Yes, but until then—” sighed Chassons des Aigues, whose pensive eyes gazed anxiously into the vague future.

“Until then,” replied Lacrisse, “we shall canvass the provinces. We have begun already.”

“It would be better to bring things to a head at once,” declared Chassons des Aigues in accents of deep conviction. “We cannot allow this treacherous Government time to disorganize the Army and paralyse the national defence.”

“That is obvious,” said Jacques de Cadde. “Now, follow my reasoning carefully. Our cry is ‘Long live the Army!’”

“Rather!” said young Dellion.

“Let me speak. Our cry is ‘Long live the Army!’ It is our rallying cry. If the Government begins to replace the Nationalist generals by Republicans, we shall no longer be able to shout ‘Long live the Army!’”

“Why?” asked young Dellion.

“Because then we should be shouting ‘*Vive la Republique!*’ That’s plain enough.”

“There is no fear of that,” said Joseph Lacrisse. “The spirit among the officers is excellent. If the Ministry of Treason succeeds in placing one Republican out of ten in the high command, it will be the end of all things.”

“That will be unpleasant,” said Jacques de Cadde, “for then we shall be forced to cry ‘Hurrah for nine-tenths of the Army!’ And that’s too long for a slogan.”

“Be easy!” said Lacrisse. “When we shout ‘Hurrah for the Army!’ everybody knows that we mean ‘Hurrah for Mercier!’”

Jambe-d’Argent, at the piano, sang:

“Vive le Roi! Vive le Roi!
De nos vieux marins c’est l’usage,
Aucun d’eux ne pensait à soi,
Tout en succombant au naufrage,
Chacun criait avec courage:
Vive le Roi!”

“All the same,” said Chassons des Aigues, “the fourteenth of July is a good day to begin the row. There will be a crowd in the streets, an electrified crowd, returning from the review, and cheering the regiments as they pass! With method, one could do a great deal on that day, we could stir the inarticulate masses.”

“You are wrong,” said Henri Léon. “You don’t understand the psychology of crowds. The good Nationalist returning from the review has a baby in his arms, and is dragging another brat by the hand. His wife is with him, carrying wine, bread and ham in a basket. You try to stir up a man with his two kids and his wife carrying the family lunch! And then, don’t you see, the masses are inspired

by very simple associations of ideas. You won't get them to riot on a holiday. To crowds, the strings of lamps and the Bengal lights suggest cheerful and pacific ideas. They see a square of Chinese lanterns in front of the cafés, and a gallery decked with bunting for the musicians, and all they think about is dancing. If you want to see riots in the streets you must choose the psychological moment."

"I don't understand," said Jacques de Cadde. "Well, you must try to understand," said Henri Léon.

"Do you think I'm a blockhead?"

"What an idea!"

"You can say it if you think so; you won't annoy me. I don't pretend to be an intellectual. Besides, I've noticed that the clever men fight against our ideas and beliefs, that they want to destroy all that we cherish. So I should be exceedingly sorry to be what is called a clever man. I'd rather be a fool and think what I think and believe what I believe."

"And you are quite right," said Léon. "We have only to remain what we are. And if we are not fools we must behave as if we are. It is folly that succeeds best in this world. The clever men are the fools. They don't get anywhere."

"What you say is very true," cried Jacques de Cadde.

Jambe-d'Argent sang:

"Vive le Roi! ce cri de ralliement
Des vrais Français est le seul qui soit digne.
Vive le Roi! de chaque régiment
Que ces trois mots soient la seule consigne."

"All the same," said Chassons des Aigues, "you are wrong, Lacrisse, to reject revolutionary measures; they are the best."

"Children!" said Henri Léon. "We have only one means of action, one only, but it is certain, powerful and efficacious. It is the Affair. The Affair gave us birth; we Nationalists must not forget that. We have grown and prospered through the Affair. It alone has fed us and feeds us still. Thence comes our food and our drink; thence we derive the staff of our being. If, uprooted from the soil, it withers and dies, we shall languish and fade out of existence."

"We can pretend to uproot it, but in reality we shall cherish it carefully, nourish it and water it. The public is an ass; moreover, it is disposed in our favour. When it sees us digging and scraping and hoeing round the plant it will think we are doing our best to uproot it completely, and it will love and bless us for our zeal. It will never dream that we may be lovingly cultivating it. It has

flowered anew in the very middle of the Exhibition, and this simple-minded people does not see that it is our care that has achieved this result.”

Jambe-d’Argent sang:

“Puisqu’ici notre général
Du plaisir nous donn’ le signal,
Mes amis, poussons à la vente;
Si nous voulons bien le r’mercier,
Chantons, soldat, comme officier:

Moi,
Jamigoi!
Je suis soldat du Roi.
J’m’en pique, j’m’en flatte et j’m’en vante.”

“That’s a very pretty song,” murmured the Baronne, with half-closed eyes.

“Yes,” said Jambe-d’Argent, shaking back his rough mane, “it’s called *Cadet-Buteux enrégimenté*, ou *le Soldat du Roi*. It’s a little masterpiece. It was a bright idea of mine to unearth some of these old Royalist songs of the Restoration.

“Moi, Jarnigoi!

Je suis soldat du Roi.”

Then, suddenly bringing down his huge hand on the tail-piece of the piano, where he had laid his chaplet and his medals, he exclaimed: “*Nom de Dieu!* Lacrisse, don’t touch my rosary. It has been blessed by our Holy Father the Pope!”

“All the same,” said Chassons des Aigues, “we ought to have a manifestation in the streets. The streets are ours, and the people ought to know it. Let’s go to Longchamps on the 14th.”

“I’m on,” said Jacques de Cadde.

“So am I,” cried Dellion.

“Your manifestations are idiotic,” said the little Baron, who until then had been silent. He was rich enough to refrain from belonging to any political party. “Nationalism is beginning to bore me,” he added.

“Ernest!” said the Baronne with the gentle severity of a mother.

“It’s true,” went on Ernest, “your manifestations bore me to death.”

Young Dellion, who owed him money, and Chassons des Aigues, who wanted to borrow some, carefully avoided any direct reply. Chassons tried to

smile, as though charmed by his wife, and Dellion half assented.

“I don’t deny it, but what doesn’t bore one to death?”

This inspired Ernest with profound reflections, and after a moment’s silence he said, with a genuine accent of sincerity: “You are right, everything bores one.” And he continued, thoughtfully:— “Take motor-cars, for instance. They break down iust when you don’t want them to. Not that one minds being late, for all the fun one gets where one is going; but I was hung up five hours the other day between Marville and Boulay. Do you know that part of the country? It is just before you get to Dreux. Not a house, not a tree, not a dip in the ground to be seen; nothing but flat, yellow, open country all round, with a silly-looking sky stuck on top of it all like a bell-glass. One grows old in such localities. Never mind, I’m going to try a different make, seventy kilometres an hour, and runs as smoothly.... Will you come with me, Dellion? I’m starting to-night.”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE Trublions,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “fill me with the keenest interest, so it was not without pleasure that I discovered in the valuable book of Nicole Langelier of Paris a second chapter dealing with these little creatures. Do you remember the first, Monsieur Goubin?”

Monsieur Goubin replied that he knew it by heart.

“I congratulate you,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, “for it is a perfect breviary. I will now read you the second chapter, which you will like as well as the first.”

And the master read as follows:

“Of the hurly-burly and the great din raised by the Trublions and of a beauteous speech which Robin Honeyman made to them.

“In those days the Trublions made a great din in the town, city and university, each one of them smiting with an iron spoon upon a ‘trublio,’ that is to say, an iron pot or saucepan, and making a right tuneful noise. And went about shrieking, ‘Death to traitors and godmothers!’ They likewise hanged upon the walls and in secret places and privy chambers beauteous little scutcheons bearing such devices as ‘Death to the baptized Jews! Buy neither of Jews nor of Lombards! Long life to Tintinnabule P and armed themselves with firearms and swords, for they were of noble lineage. Nevertheless did they receive Martin Baton into their company, and were such excellent good princes withal that they smote with their fists and disdained not the sports of bondsmen.

“And all their converse was of hewing and splitting in twain, and they said in their language and idiom, which was most meet and congruous and corresponive to their manner of thinking, that it was their purpose to brain the folk, which is properly to draw forth the brain from the brain-pan wherein it doth lie by the order and disposition of nature. And they did always as they had said, always and whenever there was occasion. And being but simple souls they thought themselves to be virtuous men, and that apart from them there were none righteous, but all evil, which was a marvellously clear ordinance, a perfect distinction and a fair order of battle.

“And they had among them many beauteous and most gracious ladies in sumptuous apparel, the which very graciously and without blandishments and wantonness did incite the aforesaid gallant Trublions to belabour, break asunder, overthrow, transpierce and discomfort all who did not trublion.

“Be not amazed but recognize herein the natural inclination of fair ladies to cruelty and violence and the admiration of high courage and warlike valour as

was seen aforetime in the ancient histories, in which it is related that the god Mars was beloved of Venus and of goddesses and mortals in great store, and that, contrariwise, Apollo, although a blithesome player upon the viol, received naught but the disdain of nymphs and chamber-maids.

“And there was not held in the city any conventicle nor procession of the Trublions, nor feast nor burying, but that a poor man or twain or more was belaboured by them, and left half or three parts dead, yea, wholly dead upon the road, which is a most marvellous thing. For it was the custom that whenever the Trublions passed by they belaboured that man which did refuse to ‘trublion,’ and afterwards did pitifully bear him upon a bier unto the apothecary, and for this reason or for another were the apothecaries of the city upon the side of the Trublions.

“In these days there was a great fair held at Paris in France, more spacious and greater than were ever the fairs of Aix-la-Chapelle, or Frankfort, or the Lendit, or the great fair of Beaucaire. The said fair of Paris was so copious and abundant in merchandise and works of art and gentle inventions that a worthy man named Comely, who had seen much and was no homestayer, was wont to say that at the sight, practice and contemplation of the same he did lose the care for his eternal salvation and even the desire for meat and drink. The stranger peoples crowded into the city of the Parisians for to take their pleasure withal and to spend their gold. Kings and princes came at will, causing both men and women to wag their heads and say, ‘This is a great honour.’

“As for the merchants, from the greatest to the least, from All-profit to Earn-little, and the men of trades and industries, they understood right well how to sell much merchandise to the strangers which had come to their city for the fair. Journeymen and beggars unfolded their packs, the keepers of eating-houses and ale-houses set out their tables, and the whole city from end to end was in truth an abundant market-place and a joyous refectory.

“It must also be said that the aforesaid merchants, not all, but the greater number, loved the Trublions, whom they admired for their great power of voice and their many antics; yea, there were none, even unto the Jewish merchants and usurers, who did not look upon them with respect and an exceeding humble desire not to be ill-treated of them.

“Thus did the common people and the merchants love the Trublions, but thereto they naturally loved their merchandise and means of livelihood, and were thereby cast into great fear lest by lusty sallies, sudden breaking forth, kicks, blows, noise and trublionage, they should overturn their stalls and booths throughout all the four quarters, gardens and ramparts of the city, and lest the said Trublions, by furious and speedy slaughter, might affright the stranger

peoples and cause them to flee the city with their pouches yet full. Truth to tell this danger was not great. The Trublions did utter the most horrible and terrible threats, also they slew the folk in small numbers, one, two, or three at one time, as has been said, and people of the city: never did they attack Englishmen, nor Germans, nor other peoples, but always their own countrymen. They killed in one place, and the city was great, and there they hardly appeared. And it seemed that their love for these crimes did but increase, and likewise their desire to overthrow yet more. It seemed not meet or seemly that, in this great fair of the world and great brotherhood, the Trublions should appear gnashing their teeth, rolling their fiery eyes, clenching their fists, throwing their legs abroad, yelping like mad dogs with horrible howlings, so that the Parisians were in great fear lest the Trublions should perform at an unseasonable time that which they might perform without let or hindrance after the festival and the trading, to wit, the slaughter here and there of a poor devil or so.

“Then began the citizens to say that they must have peace among themselves, and the public order was given forth that there should be peace throughout the city, to which the Trublions hearkened with but one ear and made reply: ‘Yea, but to live without discomfiting an enemy or even only a stranger, is that content? If we leave the Jews unbaited we shall not win to Paradise. Are we to fold our arms? God hath said that we must labour that we may live.’ And pondering in their minds the universal feeling and common purpose they were greatly perplexed.

“Then did an ancient Trublion, hight Robin Honeyman, gather together the chiefs of the Trublions, being esteemed, venerated and well-accepted of them, for they knew him to be expert in deception and profuse in cunning ruses and guileful devices. Opening his mouth, which was fashioned like that of some ancient pike-fish the which hath lost some teeth but hath yet teeth enough to bite the little fishes, he said very sweetly:

“‘Hearken, friends! Give ear, all! We be honest folk and good fellows, we be not mad. We ask for peace, we desire peace. Peace is sweet, peace is a precious ointment; peace is an electuary of Hippocrates, an Apollonian dittany. It is a fair medicinal infusion, it is flower of the lime, mallow and marshmallow. It is sugar and honey. Honey say I? Am I not Robin Honeyman? I do feed on honey. Let the golden age return and I will e’en lick the honey from the trunks of the ancient oak-trees. I speak sooth. I desire peace; ye desire peace.’” Hearing such words from Robin Honeyman, then did the Trublions begin to make churlish grimaces and whispered among themselves: ‘Is this Robin Honeyman our friend that speaketh in this wise? He loves us no longer, he would deal treacherously with us. He seeketh to do us a hurt; or maybe his wits have gone wool-

gathering.’ And the most trublioniactal among them said:— ‘What saith this old wheezer? Doth he think we shall put away our staves, cudgels, hammers, and mallets and the beauteous little fire-sticks in our pockets? What are we in time of peace? Naught. We are worth nothing but by reason of the blows we deal. Would he have us smite no more? Would he have us trublion no more?’ And a great clamour and murmuring arose in the assembly, and the council chamber of the Trublions was an angry sea.

“Then did the good Robin Honeyman spread forth his little yellow hands above the wagging heads, like unto a Neptune calming the tempest, and when he had restored the Trublion ocean to its serene and tranquil estate, or well-nigh so, he spoke most courteously:

“‘I am your friend, my sweetings, and your good counsellor. Hearken what I would say before ye wax angry. When I say we wish for peace it is plain that I speak of the pacification of our enemies, adversaries, and all contentious persons who think, speak and act contrariwise unto us. It is visible and apparent that I mean the pacification of all save ourselves; of the police and magistrates opposed to us. Pacification of the civil officers of the peace invested with the power and office to impeach, restrain, repress and contain Trublionage. Pacification of that justice and law by which we be menaced. We desire that these be plunged into a profound and deadly peace. We desire for all that are not Trublions the gulf and abyss of pacification and deadly repose. *Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine* . This is our desire. We do not demand our own pacification. We are not pacified. When we sing *Requiescat*, is it for ourselves? We do not desire to sleep. When we are dead it is for a long time. *Nos qui vivimus* , we bestow peace on others, not in this world but in the next; this is the more certain. I desire peace. Am I then a simple fellow? Know yc not Robin Honeyman? My sweetings, I carry more than one trick in my juggler’s pocket. My lambkins, are you then less wary than the urchins and schoolboys that sport together, who, playing together, when the one desireth to gain the advantage over the other, straightway he crieth “Pax!” which is truce and suspension of hostilities, and having thus deprived him of all defiance and defence he doth easily defeat him and leave him abashed.

“Thus do! Robin Honeyman, King’s Attorney. When as doth often hap I have quiet and cunning enemies in the council chamber, I speak to them in this wise: — “Peace, peace, peace, gentlemen! *Pax vobiscum!* ” and very softly slip a pot of gunpowder and old nails beneath the bench whereon they sit, with a fair wick of which I hold the end. Then, while I feign a peaceful sleep, I light the wick at a seasonable moment, and if they do not all leap into the air the fault is none of my

making. Doubtless the powder was discovered, and I await the next good occasion.

“My good friends, follow the example and behold a model in your chiefs, masters and rulers. See ye not that Tintinnabule remaineth still and doth not for the present tintinnabulate? He awaits a fit and favourable occasion. Is he then pacified? You do not think so. And the young Trublio, doth he desire peace? Nay, he likewise waiteth. Hearken diligently. It is good, profitable and necessary that you appear to desire a favourable, kind, assuaging and purging pacification. What doth it cost you?

Naught. And you shall derive therefrom great profit. You that are not pacified shall appear pacified, and the other folk (those that do not trublion), who are in truth pacified, shall appear unpacified, corrupted, wayward, furious, wholly opposed and contrary to a gracious peace, so covetable, pleasant and desirable. Thus it shall be made manifest that you have great zeal and love for the public peace and welfare, and also that, on the contrary, your opponents have a malign desire to trouble and destroy the city and all that lies about it. And say not that this is difficult. It will be as you desire and you will make the simple folk believe that you desire peace. They will believe what you tell them, for they hearken unto you. If you say “I desire peace” they will straightway believe that you do truly desire it. Say it then to give them pleasure, for ‘twill cost you naught.

“Nevertheless, for your enemies and adversaries which at first so piteously bleated “Peace! Peace!” (for they be as gentle as sheep, which cannot be gainsaid) it shall be lawful for you to brain them and to say: “They desired not peace therefore we have overthrown them. We do desire peace and will bring the same to pass when we are your ministers.”

“It is worthy of all praise pacifically to wage war. Cry “Peace, Peace!” and smite the while. This is Christian-like. “Peace, Peace! This man is dead! Peace, Peace! I have slain three men!” The intention was pacific and you will be judged according to your intention. Go then, cry “Peace!” and smite stoutly. The bells of the monasteries will ring a merry peal for you that love peace, and the praise of the peaceful citizens will follow you. They seeing your victims with gaping bellies lying upon the highways will say: “That is well done. It is for peace’ sake. Long live peace! Without peace no man can live at ease” “

CHAPTER XXVII

MADAME DE BONMONT knew the Exhibition well, having dined there on several occasions. That evening she was dining at the “Belle Chocolatière” — a Swiss restaurant situated, as every one knows, on the bank of the Seine — together with the militant élite of Nationalism, Joseph Lacrisse, Henri Léon, Gustave Dellion, Jacques de Cadde, Hugues Chassons des Aigues and Madame de Gromance, who, as Henri Léon remarked, was very like the pretty servant in Liotard’s pastel, a greatly enlarged copy of which served as a sign for the restaurant. Madame de Bonmont was gentle and tender-hearted. It was love, relentless love that had placed her among these warriors, and, like the Antigone of Sophocles, she brought among them a soul fashioned not for hatred but for sympathy. She pitied the victims. Jamont seemed to her the most pathetic of these, and the premature retirement of this general moved her to tears. She thought of embroidering a cushion for him, on which he could lay his glorious head. She loved making such presents, the value of which consisted solely in the feeling that prompted them. Her love, strengthened by admiration, for Municipal Councillor Lacrisse, left her a good deal of leisure, which she employed in weeping over the misfortunes of the Army and in eating sweets. She was fast putting on flesh and was becoming quite an imposing figure.

The thoughts of young Madame de Gromance were of a less generous kind. She had loved and deceived Gustave Dellion, and then she had loved him no longer. But as he removed her light pink-flowered cloak under the respectfully-lowered eyes of the ‘ head-waiter on the terrace of the “Belle Chocolatière,” Gustave muttered in her ears words that sounded strangely like “jade” and “beastly strumpet.” She did not allow the least distress to appear on her face, but inwardly she thought him rather sweet, and felt that she was about to love him again. And Gustave thoughtfully realized that for the first time in his life he had spoken like a lover. He sat down solemnly beside Clotilde. The dinner, which was the last of the season, was by no means a merry one. The sadness of farewell was felt and a certain Nationalist melancholy. Doubtless they still hoped — what am I saying? — they still cherished infinite hopes, but it is painful, when one has everything, both men and money, to await the future, the dim, distant future, the realization of long-cherished desires and urgent ambitions. Joseph Lacrisse alone remained calm, thinking that he had done enough for his King in being elected municipal councillor by the Nationalist Republicans of the Grandes-Écuries.

“Taking it altogether,” he said, “everything went very well at Longchamps on the 14th. The Army was cheered. There were shouts of ‘Hurrah for Jamont! Hurrah for Bougon!’ There was a great deal of enthusiasm.”

“Doubtless, doubtless,” said Henri Léon; “but Loubet returned unmolested to the Élysée, and the day did not forward our affairs overmuch.”

Hugues Chassons des Aigues, who had a fresh scar on his nose — which was of the big and royal order — frowned and said proudly:

“I can tell you things were hot at the Cascades. When the Socialists cheered the Republic and the Army—”

“The police,” put in Madame de Bonmont, “ought not to allow things to be shouted.”

“When the Socialists cheered the Republic and the Army we replied, ‘Long live the Army! Death to the Jews!’ The ‘white carnations,’ whom I had hidden in the crowd, rallied to my cry. They charged the ‘red eglantines’ under a hail of iron chairs. They were magnificent. But it was no good, the crowd would not respond. The Parisians had come with their wives and children, with baskets and string bags full of food, and the place swarmed with country cousins come to see the Exhibition. Old farmers with stiff legs who looked on with fishy eyes, peasant women in shawls, looking as scared as owls! How could we stir up a family party of that sort?”

“Doubtless,” said Lacrisse, “the moment was ill-chosen. Besides, to a certain extent, we have to respect the Exhibition truce.”

“All the same,” said Chassons des Aigues, “we hit pretty hard at the Cascades. I gave Citizen Bissolo a crack on the head that sent it down into his hump. I saw him fall to the ground; he looked just like a tortoise. Then, ‘Hurrah for the Army! Death to the Jews P’”

“Doubtless, doubtless,” said Henri Léon gravely. “But ‘Hurrah for the Army!’ and ‘Death to the Jews!’ is a trifle subtle for crowds. It is — if I may say so — too literary, too classical, and it is not sufficiently revolutionary. ‘Hurrah for the Army!’ It is fine, it is noble, it is proper, it is cold — yes, it is cold. Let me tell you, there is only one way to excite a crowd, and that is by panic. Believe me, the only way to get a mob of unarmed people on the run is to put fear into their bellies. You should have run, crying — what shall I say?— ‘Save yourselves! Look out! You are betrayed! Frenchmen, you are betrayed!’ If you had shouted that or something like it, in a lugubrious voice, running along the lawn, five hundred thousand people would have run along with you, would have run quicker than you, until they dropped. It would have been terrible and magnificent. You would have been knocked down and trampled to death, mashed to a pulp, but you would have started the revolution.”

“Do you really think so?” asked Jacques de Cadde.

“I am certain of it,” replied Henri Léon. “‘Treachery!’ that is the true cry of riot, the cry that gives wings to the crowd and sets brave men and cowards alike going at the same pace, fills a hundred thousand hearts with one emotion and restores the use of his legs to the paralytic. Ah, my dear Chassons, if you had shouted at Longchamps ‘We are betrayed!’ you would have seen your old screech-owl with her basket of hard-boiled eggs and her umbrella and your old fellow with the stiff legs running like hares.”

“Running where?” asked Lacrisse.

“I don’t know. Who knows where a panic-stricken crowd runs to? They don’t know themselves. But what does that matter? They’ve been set going, and that’s enough. You can’t cause riots with method. To occupy strategical points was well enough in the far-off days of Barbés and Blanqui, but to-day, what with the telegraph, telephone or merely the police and their bicycles, any sort of concerted action is out of the question. Can you see Jacques de Cadde occupying the police-station in the Rue de Grenelle, for instance? No. All that is possible nowadays is a vague, immense, tumultuous demonstration. And fear, unanimous, tragical fear alone is capable of carrying away the enormous human masses that frequent public fêtes or open-air shows. You ask me where the crowd of the 14th of July would have run to, spurred on as by a big black flag at the cries of ‘Treachery! Treachery! The foreigner! Treachery!’ Where would they have run to? Into the lake, I suppose.”

“Into the lake,” repeated Jacques de Cadde. “Well, they would have been drowned, that’s all.”

“Well,” returned Henri Léon, “would thirty thousand drowned citizens have counted for nothing? Would not the Ministry and the Government have experienced serious difficulty and real danger in the matter? Wouldn’t that have been a good day’s work? Look here, you are no politicians. You don’t care a damn whether you overthrow the Republic or not.”

“You’ll see that after the Exhibition,” said young Cadde with the simplicity of faith. “I myself smashed one of them at Longchamps for a start.”

“Ah, you smashed one of them, did you?” asked young Dellion with interest. “What sort of a specimen?”

“A mechanic. It would have been better if he had been a Senator, of course; but in a crowd you are more likely to chance on a workman.”

“What was your mechanic doing?” asked Léon.

“He was shouting ‘Hurrah for the Army!’ so I bashed him.”

Thereupon, fired with generous emulation, young Dellion told them that on hearing a Socialist-Dreyfusard shout for Loubet, he had bashed his jaw for him.

“All goes well!” said Jacques de Cadde.

“There are some things that might go better,” said Hugues Chassons des Aigues. “Don’t let us be too pleased with ourselves. On July the 14th, Loubet, Waldeck, Miller and André each returned home safe and sound. They would not have returned had my advice been heeded. But no one will act, we are lacking in energy.”

Joseph Lacrisse answered gravely:

“No, no, we are not wanting in energy, but for the moment there’s nothing to be done. After the Exhibition we shall enter upon a vigorous course of action. It will be a favourable moment. After her fête France will be suffering from a bad head and a bad temper. There will be lock-outs and strikes.

Nothing simpler than to provoke a Ministerial crisis, even a Presidential crisis. Don’t you agree with me, Léon?”

“Doubtless, doubtless,” replied Henri Léon. “But we must not forget that in three months’ time we shall be a little less numerous and Loubet a little less unpopular.”

Jacques de Cadde, Chassons des Aigues, Dellion, Lacrisse and all the Trublions tried to drown with their protestations so dismal a prediction, but in a very quiet voice Henri Léon proceeded:

“It is inevitable. Loubet will become less unpopular daily. He was primarily disliked because of the reports that we spread about him, but he will not live up to all of them. He is not great enough to equal the picture we drew of him, to the terror of the crowd. We showed them a Loubet of a hundred cubits’ stature, protecting the thieves in Parliament and destroying the Army. The reality will seem much less terrible. They will see that he does not always protect the thieves or disorganize the Army. He will hold reviews. That will produce an impression. He will ride in a carriage. That is more dignified than going on foot. He will bestow crosses and an abundance of academic palms, and those who receive the cross or the palms will refuse to believe that he intends to betray France. He will make tactful speeches; you may be sure of that; tactful because utterly inane. If he wants to be acclaimed he has only to travel about. The country people will cheer for the President as he passes, just as though he were the kind-hearted tanner whose loss we all deplore because he loved the Army. And if the Russian alliance were pulled off — the bare idea of such a thing makes me shudder — you would see our Nationalist friends unharness his carriage and drag it through the streets. I don’t say he’s a genius, but he’s not a bigger fool than the rest of us, and he is trying to improve his position. That’s only natural. We want to overthrow him and he is wearing us out.”

“I defy him to wear us out,” cried young Cadde.

“Time alone will suffice to wear us out,” replied Henri Léon. “How fine our Municipal Council was on the evening of the poll that gave us the majority! ‘Hurrah for the Army! Death to the Jews!’ yelled the electors, drunk with joy, pride and love. And the successful candidates, beaming, replied, ‘Death to the Jews! Hurrah for the Army!’ But as the new Council can neither free the sons of the electors from military service nor distribute the money of the rich Jews among the small shopkeepers nor even spare the working-man the horrors of slack times, it will betray vast hopes and become as odious as it was once desirable. It will shortly run the risk of becoming unpopular over questions of monopoly, gas, water and omnibuses.”

“You are wrong, my dear Léon,” cried Joseph Lacrisse. “There is nothing to fear with regard to the renewal of monopolies. We say to the electors, ‘We are giving you cheap gas,’ and the electors will not complain. The Municipal Council of Paris, elected on an exclusively political programme, will exercise a decisive influence on the political and national crises that will follow immediately after the closing of the Exhibition.”

“Yes, but in order to do that,” said Chassons des Aigues, “it will have to place itself at the head of the revolutionary movement. If it is moderate, prudent, conciliatory, considerate, all is lost. The Council must realize that it has been elected to overthrow and smash Parliamentarianism.”

“Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!” cried Jacques de Cadde.

“Little must be said, but that little to the point,” continued Chassons des Aigues.

“Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!”

Chassons des Aigues disdained the interruption.

“A pledge, a simple pledge should be expressed from time to time. Such as: ‘Impeachment of the Ministers—’”

“Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!” cried young Cadde louder than ever.

Chassons des Aigues tried to make him listen to reason.

“I am not opposed on principle to our friends sounding the *hallali* of the parliamentarians, but in public gatherings the trumpet is the supreme argument of the minority. We must keep it for the Luxembourg and Palais Bourbon. I should like to point out, my dear fellow, that at the Hôtel de Ville we are in the majority.”

This consideration did not move young Cadde, who continued to vociferate:

“Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet! Do you know how to blow the trumpet, Lacrisse? If you don’t, I’ll teach you; it is quite essential for a municipal councillor to know how to blow the trumpet.”

“To resume,” said Chassons des Aigues, as solemn as a judge, “the first pledge of the Council should be the impeachment of the Ministers; the second, the impeachment of the Senators; and the third, the impeachment of the President of the Republic. After a few resolutions of this description the Ministry will proceed to the dissolution of the Council. The Council resists, and makes a vehement appeal to public opinion. Outraged Paris rises—”

“Do you think so?” asked Henri Léon quietly. “Do you really think, Chassons, that outraged Paris will rise?”

“I do think so,” replied Chassons des Aigues.

“I do not think so,” said Henri Léon. “You know Citizen Bissolo — since it was you who nearly brained him on the fourteenth of July at the review — I know him too. One night, on the boulevard, during a demonstration following the election of the deplorable Loubet, Citizen Bissolo came to me as the most constant and most generous of his enemies. We exchanged a few words. All our paid roughs were shouting at the top of their voices. Shouts of ‘Hurrah for the Army!’ resounded from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Smiling and amused, the passers-by were on our side. Bissolo stretched out his long hunchback’s arm like a scythe in the direction of the crowd and remarked: ‘I know the jade. Mount her, and she’ll break your back by suddenly lying down when you aren’t expecting it.’ Those were the words of Citizen Bissolo as we stood at the corner of the Rue Drouot on the day when Paris offered herself to us.”

“But this Bissolo of yours is a rogue,” cried Joseph Lacrisse. “He insults the people.”

“He is a prophet,” replied Henri Léon.

Young Jacques de Cadde chanted, in his thick voice:

“Blow the trumpet! It’s the only way!”

THE END

A MUMMER'S TALE



Translated by Charles E. Roche

A Mummer's Tale was first published in 1903, before being translated into English and released by John Lane of London in 1921. The novel is set in the theatre world of Paris and explores ideas of love, death and religion. A prominent figure in the work is the actress Felicie Nanteuil, who is an unexceptionable performer, but a charming woman. She is the source of much admiration from men and rumours abound around Paris of her many dalliances with an assortment of gentlemen. Nanteuil places little importance on these relationships, but this relaxed attitude is not always shared by the men she spends time with. Monsieur Chevalier is deeply infatuated with the actress, and becomes desperate when he learns of her attachment to another man.

France addresses the controversial issue of suicide in relation to the Catholic Church and the measures taken by the relations and friends of the departed to try to ensure a Catholic burial, preventing the deceased from enduring eternal damnation in the eyes of the Church. The opening of the work also details an interesting discussion between Nanteuil and her friend and physician Dr Trublet. The actress expresses disgust at a fellow actresses same-sex desires and is quickly rebuked by the doctor who informs her of Aristophanes satirical speech in Plato's *The Symposium* about sexual orientation; he describes how long ago there were three types of humans: Male, female and androgynous, and every gender was perfectly round and contained four arms and legs, and two identical faces. It was a blissful state but after displeasing the Gods humans were split in two, and spent their lives trying to find their other half. Therefore, the male figures become homosexual, the female lesbian, and those who were androgynous became heterosexual.

CONTENTS

[CHAPTER I](#)
[CHAPTER II](#)
[CHAPTER III](#)
[CHAPTER IV](#)
[CHAPTER V](#)
[CHAPTER VI](#)
[CHAPTER VII](#)
[CHAPTER VIII](#)
[CHAPTER IX](#)
[CHAPTER X](#)
[CHAPTER XI](#)
[CHAPTER XII](#)
[CHAPTER XIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIV](#)
[CHAPTER XV](#)
[CHAPTER XVI](#)
[CHAPTER XVII](#)
[CHAPTER XVIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIX](#)
[CHAPTER XX](#)

CHAPTER I

The scene was an actress's dressing-room at the Odéon.

Félicie Nanteuil, her hair powdered, with blue on her eyelids, rouge on her cheeks and ears, and white on her neck and shoulders, was holding out her foot to Madame Michon, the dresser, who was fitting on a pair of little black slippers with red heels. Dr. Trublet, the physician attached to the theatre, and a friend of the actress's, was resting his bald cranium on a cushion of the divan, his hands folded upon his stomach and his short legs crossed.

"What else, my dear?" he inquired of her.

"Oh, I don't know! Fits of suffocation; giddiness; and, all of a sudden, an agonizing pain, as if I were going to die. That's the worst of all."

"Do you sometimes feel as though you must laugh or cry for no apparent reason, about nothing at all?"

"That I cannot tell you, for in this life one has so many reasons for laughing or crying!"

"Are you subject to attacks of dizziness?"

"No. But, just think, doctor, at night, I see an imaginary cat, under the chairs or the table, gazing at me with fiery eyes!"

"Try not to dream of cats any more," said Madame Michon, "because that's a bad omen. To see a cat is a sign that you'll be betrayed by friends, or deceived by a woman."

"But it is not in my dreams that I see a cat! It's when I'm wide awake!"

Trublet, who was in attendance at the Odéon once a month only, was given to looking in as a friend almost every evening. He was fond of the actresses, delighted in chatting with them, gave them good advice, and listened with delicacy to their confidences. He promised Félicie that he would write her a prescription at once.

"We'll attend to the stomach, my dear child, and you'll see no more cats under the chairs and tables."

Madame Michon was adjusting the actress's stays. The doctor, suddenly gloomy, watched her tugging at the laces.

"Don't scowl," said Félicie. "I am never tight-laced. With my waist I should surely be a fool if I were." And she added, thinking of her best friend in the theatre, "It's all very well for Fagette, who has no shoulders and no hips; she's simply straight up and down. Michon, you can pull a little tighter still. I know

you are no lover of waists, doctor. Nevertheless, I cannot wear swaddling bands like those æsthetic creatures. Just slip your hand into my stays, and you'll see that I don't squeeze myself too tight."

He denied that he was inimical to stays; he only condemned them when too tightly laced. He deplored the fact that women should have no sense of the harmony of line; that they should associate with smallness of the waist an idea of grace and beauty, not realizing that their beauty resided wholly in those modulations through which the body, having displayed the superb expansion of chest and bosom, tapers off gradually below the thorax, to glorify itself in the calm and generous width of the flanks.

"The waist," he said, "the waist, since one has to make use of that hideous word, should be a gradual, imperceptible, gentle transition from one to another of woman's two glories, her bosom and her womb, and you stupidly strangle it, you stave in the thorax, which involves the breasts in its ruin, you flatten your lower ribs, and you plough a horrible furrow above the navel. The negresses, who file their teeth down to a point, and split their lips, in order to insert a wooden disc, disfigure themselves in a less barbarous fashion. For, after all, some feminine splendour still remains to a creature who wears rings in the cartilage of her nose, and whose lip is distended by a circular disc of mahogany as big as this pomade pot. But the devastation is complete when woman carries her ravages into the sacred centre of her empire."

Dwelling upon a favourite subject, he enumerated one by one the deformities of the bones and muscles caused by the wearing of stays, in terms now fanciful, now precise, now droll, now lugubrious.

Nanteuil laughed as she listened. She laughed because, being a woman, she felt an inclination to laugh at physical uncomeliness or poverty; because, referring everything to her own little world of actors and actresses, each and every deformity described by the doctor reminded her of some comrade of the boards, stamping itself on her mind like a caricature. Knowing that she herself had a good figure, she delighted in her own young body as she pictured to herself all these indignities of the flesh. With a ringing laugh she crossed the dressing-room towards the doctor, dragging with her Madame Michon, who was holding on to her stay-laces as though they were reins, with the look of a sorceress being whisked away to a witches' sabbath.

"Don't be afraid!" she said.

And she objected that peasant women, who never wore stays, had far worse figures than town-bred women.

The doctor bitterly inveighed against the Western civilizations because of their contempt for and ignorance of natural beauty.

Trublet, born within the shadow of Saint-Sulpice, had gone as a young man to practise in Cairo. He brought back from that city a little money, a liver complaint, and a knowledge of the various customs of humanity. When at a ripe age, he returned to his own country, he rarely strayed from his ancient Rue de Seine, thoroughly enjoying his life, save that it depressed him a trifle to see how little able his contemporaries were to realize the deplorable misunderstandings which for eighteen centuries had kept humanity at cross-purposes with nature.

There was a tap at the door.

"It's only me!" exclaimed a woman's voice in the passage.

Félicie, slipping on her pink petticoat, begged the doctor to open the door.

Enter Madame Doulce, a lady who was allowing her massive person to run to seed, although she had long contrived to hold it together on the boards, compelling it to assume the dignity proper to aristocratic mothers.

"Well, my dear! How-d'ye-do, doctor! Félicie, you know I am not one to pay compliments. Nevertheless, I saw you the day before yesterday, and I assure you that in the second of *La Mère confidente* you put in some excellent touches, which are far from easy to bring off."

Nanteuil, with smiling eyes, waited — as is always the case when one has received a compliment — for another.

Madame Doulce, thus invited by Nanteuil's silence, murmured some additional words of praise:

"...excellent touches, genuinely individual business!"

"You really think so, Madame Doulce? Glad to hear it, for I don't feel the part. And then that great Perrin woman upsets me altogether. It is a fact. When I sit on the creature's knees, it makes me feel as if ——— You don't know all the horrors that she whispers into my ear while we are on the stage! She's crazy! I understand everything, but there are some things which disgust me. Michon, don't my stays crease at the back, on the right?"

"My dear child," cried Trublet with enthusiasm, "you have just said something that is really admirable."

"What?" inquired Nanteuil simply.

"You said: 'I understand everything, but there are some things which disgust me.' You understand everything; the thoughts and actions of men appear to you as particular instances of the universal mechanics, but in respect of them you cherish neither hatred nor anger. But there are things which disgust you; you have a fastidious taste, and it is profoundly true that morals are a matter of taste. My child, I could wish that the Academy of Moral Science thought as sanely as you. Yes. You are quite right. As regards the instincts which you attribute to

your fellow-actress, it is as futile to blame her for them as to blame lactic acid for being an acid possessing mixed properties."

"What are you talking about?"

"I am saying that we can no longer assign praise or blame to any human thought or action, once the inevitable nature of such thoughts and actions has been proved for us."

"So you approve of the morals of that gawk of a Perrin, do you? You, a member of the Legion of Honour! A nice thing, to be sure!"

The doctor heaved himself up.

"My child," he said, "give me a moment's attention; I am going to tell you an instructive story:

"In times gone by, human nature was other than it is to-day. There were then not men and women only, but also hermaphrodites; in other words, beings in whom the two sexes were combined. These three kinds of human beings possessed four arms, four legs, and two faces. They were robust and rotated rapidly on their own axes, just like wheels. Their strength inspired them with audacity to war with the gods, therein following the example of the Giants, Jupiter, unable to brook such insolence — —"

"Michon, doesn't my petticoat hang too low on the left?" asked Nanteuil.

"Resolved," continued the doctor, "to render them less strong and less daring. He divided each into two, so that they had now but two arms, two legs, and one head apiece, and thenceforward the human race became what it is to-day. Consequently, each of us is only the half of a human being, divided from the other half, just as one divides a sole into two portions. These halves are ever seeking their other halves. The love which we experience for one another is nothing but an invisible force impelling us to reunite our two halves in order to re-establish ourselves in our pristine perfection. Those men who result from the divisions of hermaphrodites love women; those women who have a similar origin love men. But the women who proceed from the division of primitive women do not bestow much attention upon men, but are drawn toward their own sex. So do not be astonished when you see — —"

"Did you invent that precious story, doctor?" inquired Nanteuil, pinning a rose in her bodice.

The doctor protested that he had not invented a word of it. On the contrary, he had, he said, left out part of the story.

"So much the better?" exclaimed Nanteuil. "For I must tell you that the person who did invent it is not particularly brilliant."

"He is dead," remarked Trublet.

Nanteuil once more expressed her disgust of her fellow-actress, but Madame Doulce, who was prudent and occasionally took *déjeuner* with Jeanne Perrin, changed the subject.

“Well, my darling, so you’ve got the part of Angélique. Only remember what I told you: your gestures should be somewhat restrained, and you yourself a little stiff. That is the secret of the *ingénue*. Beware of your charming natural suppleness. Young girls in a ‘stock’ piece ought to be just a trifle doll-like. It’s good form. The costume requires it. You see, Félicie, what you must do above all, when you are playing in *La Mère confidente*, which is a delightful play —

—”

“Oh,” interrupted Félicie, “so long as I have a good part, I don’t care a fig for the play. Besides, I am not particularly in love with Marivaux — What are you laughing at, doctor? Have I put my foot in it? Isn’t *La Mère confidente* by Marivaux?”

“To be sure it is!”

“Well, then? You are always trying to muddle me. I was saying that Angélique gets on my nerves. I should prefer a part with more meat in it, something out of the ordinary. This evenings especially, the part gives me the creeps.”

“All the more likely that you’ll do well in it, my pet,” said Madame Doulce. “We never enter more thoroughly into our parts than when we do so by main force, and in spite of ourselves. I could give you many examples. I myself, in *La Vivandière d’Austerlitz*, staggered the house by my gaiety of tone, when I had just been informed that my Doulce, so great an artist and so good a husband, had had an epileptic fit in the orchestra at the Odéon, just as he was picking up his cornet.”

“Why do they insist on my being nothing but an *ingénue*?” inquired Nanteuil, who wanted to play the woman in love, the brilliant coquette, and every part a woman could play.

“That is quite natural,” persisted Madame Doulce. “Comedy is an imitative art; and you imitate an art all the better for not feeling it yourself.”

“Do not delude yourself, my child,” said the doctor to Félicie. “Once an *ingénue*, always an *ingénue*. You are born an Angélique or a Dorine, a Célimène or a Madame Pernelle. On the stage, some women are always twenty, others are always thirty, others again are always sixty. As for you, Mademoiselle Nanteuil, you will always be eighteen, and you will always be an *ingénue*.”

“I am quite content with my work,” replied Nanteuil, “but you cannot expect me to play all *ingénues* with the same pleasure. There is one part, for example, which I long to play, and that is Agnès in *L’École des femmes* .”

At the mere mention of the name of Agnès, the doctor murmured delightedly from among his cushions:

“Mes yeux ont-ils du mal pour en donner au monde?”

“Agnès, that’s a part if you like!” exclaimed Nanteuil. “I have asked Pradel to give it me.”

Pradel, the manager of the theatre, was an ex-comedian, a wideawake, genial fellow, who had got rid of his illusions and nourished no exaggerated hopes. He loved peace, books and women. Nanteuil had every reason to speak well of Pradel, and she referred to him without any feeling of ill will, and with frank directness.

“It was shameful, disgusting, rotten of him,” she said. “He wouldn’t let me play Agnès and gave the part to Falempin. I must say, though, that when I asked him I didn’t go the right way about it. While she knows how to tackle him, if you like! But what do I care! If Pradel doesn’t let me play Agnès, he can go to the deuce, and his dirty Punch and Judy show too!”

Madame Doulce continued to lavish her unheeded precepts. She was an actress of merits but she was old and worn out, and no longer obtained any engagements. She gave advice to beginners, wrote their letters for them, and thus, in the morning or evenings earned what was almost every day her only meal.

“Doctor,” asked Félicie, while Madame Michon was fastening a black velvet ribbon round her neck: “You say that my fits of dizziness are due to my stomach. Are you sure of that?”

Before Trublet could answer, Madame Doulce exclaimed that fits of dizziness always proceeded from the stomach, and that two or three hours after meals she experienced a feeling of distension in hers, and she thereupon asked the doctor for a remedy.

Félicie, however, was thinking, for she was capable of thought.

“Doctor,” she said suddenly, “I want to ask you a question, which you may possibly think a droll one; but I do really want to know whether, considering that you know just what there is in the human body, and that you have seen all the things we have inside us, it doesn’t embarrass you, at certain moments, in your dealings with women? It seems to me that the idea of all that must disgust you.”

From the depths of his cushions Trublet, wafting a kiss to Félicie, replied:

“My dear child, there is no more exquisitely delicate, rich, and beautiful tissue than the skin of a pretty woman. That is what I was telling myself just

now, while contemplating the back of your neck, and you will readily understand that, under such an impression — —”

She made a grimace at him like that of a disdainful monkey.

“You think it witty, I suppose, to talk nonsense when anyone asks you a serious question?”

“Well, then, since you wish it, mademoiselle, you shall have an instructive answer. Some twenty years ago we had, in the post-mortem room at the Hôpital Saint-Joseph, a drunken old watchman, named Daddy Rousseau, who every day at eleven o’clock used to lunch at the end of the table on which the corpse was lying. He ate his lunch because he was hungry. Nothing prevents people who are hungry from eating as soon as they have got something to eat. Only Daddy Rousseau used to say: ‘I don’t know whether it is because of the atmosphere of the room, but I must have something fresh and appetizing.’”

“I understand,” said Félicie. “Little flower-girls are what you want. But you mustn’t, you know. And there you are seated like a Turk and you haven’t written out my prescription yet.” She cast an inquiring glance at him. “Where is the stomach exactly?”

The door had remained ajar. A young man, a very pretty fellow and extremely fashionable, pushed it open, and, having taken a couple of steps into the dressing-room, inquired politely whether he might come in.

“Oh, it’s you!” said Nanteuil. And she stretched out her hand, which he kissed with pleasure, ceremony and fatuity.

“How are you, Doctor Socrates?” he inquired, without wasting any particular courtesies on Madame Doulce.

Trublet was often accosted in this manner, because of his snub-nose and his subtle speech. Pointing to Nanteuil, he said:

“Monsieur de Ligny, you see before you a young lady who is not quite sure whether she has a stomach. It is a serious question. We advise her to refer, for the answer, to the little girl who ate too much jam. Her mother said to her: ‘You will injure your stomach.’ The child replied: ‘It’s only ladies who have stomachs; little girls haven’t any.’”

“Heavens, how silly you are, doctor!” cried Nanteuil.

“I would you spoke the truth, mademoiselle. Silliness is the capacity for happiness. It is the sovereign content. It is the prime asset in a civilized society.”

“You are paradoxical, my dear doctor,” remarked Monsieur de Ligny. “But I grant you that it is better to be silly as everybody is silly than to be clever as no one else is clever.”

“It’s true, what Robert says!” exclaimed Nanteuil, sincerely impressed. And she added thoughtfully: “At any rate, doctor, one thing is certain. It is that stupidity often prevents one from doing stupid things. I have noticed that many a time. Whether you take men or women, those are not the most stupid who act the most stupidly. For example, there are intelligent women who are stupid about men.”

“You mean those who cannot do without them.”

“There’s no hiding anything from you, my little Socrates.”

“Ah,” sighed the big Douce, “what a terrible slavery it is! Every woman who cannot control her senses is lost to art.”

Nanteuil shrugged her pretty shoulders, which still retained something of the angularity of youth.

“Oh, my great-grandmother! Don’t try to kid the youngsters! What an idea! In your days, did actresses control their — how did you put it? Fiddlesticks! They didn’t control them a scrap!”

Noticing that Nanteuil’s temper was rising, the bulky Douce retired with dignity and prudence. Once in the passage, she vouchsafed a further word of advice:

“Remember, my darling, to play Angélique as a ‘bud.’ The part requires it.”

But Nanteuil, her nerves on edge, took no notice.

“Really,” she said, sitting down before her dressing-table, “she makes me boil, that old Douce, with her morality. Does she think people have forgotten her adventures? If so, she is mistaken. Madame Ravaud tells one of them six days out of seven. Everybody knows that she reduced her husband, the musician, to such a state of exhaustion that one night he tumbled into his cornet. As for her lovers, magnificent men, just ask Madame Michon. Why, in less than two years she made mere shadows of them, mere puffs of breath. That’s the way she controlled them! And supposing anyone had told her that she was lost to art!”

Dr. Trublet extended his two hands, palms outward, towards Nanteuil, as though to stop her.

“Do not excite yourself, my child. Madame Douce is sincere. She used to love men, now she loves God. One loves what one can, as one can, and with what one has. She has become chaste and pious at the fitting age. She is diligent in the practices of her religion: she goes to Mass on Sundays and feast days, she — —”

“Well, she is right to go to Mass,” asserted Nanteuil “Michon, light a candle for me, to heat my rouge. I must do my lips again. Certainly, she is quite right to go to Mass, but religion does not forbid one to have a lover.”

“You think not?” asked the doctor.

"I know my religion better than you, that's certain!"

A lugubrious bell sounded, and the mournful voice of the call-boy was heard in the corridors:

"The curtain-raiser is over!"

Nanteuil rose, and slipped over her wrist a velvet ribbon ornamented with a steel medallion. Madame Michon was on her knees arranging the three Watteau pleats of the pink dress, and, with her mouth full of pins, delivered herself from one corner of her lips of the following maxim:

"There is one good thing in being old, men cannot make you suffer any more."

Robert de Ligny took a cigarette from his case.

"May I?" And he moved toward the lighted candle on the dressing-table.

Nanteuil, who never took her eyes off him, saw beneath his moustache, red and light as flame, his lips, ruddy in the candlelight, drawing in and puffing out the smoke. She felt a slight warmth in her ears. Pretending to look among her trinkets, she grazed Ligny's neck with her lips, and whispered to him:

"Wait for me after the show, in a cab, at the corner of the Rue de Tournon."

At this moment the sound of voices and footsteps was heard in the corridor. The actors in the curtain-raiser were returning to their dressing-rooms.

"Doctor, pass me your newspaper."

"It is highly uninteresting, mademoiselle."

"Never mind, pass it over."

She took it and held it like a screen above her head.

"The light makes my eyes ache," she observed.

It was true that a too brilliant light would sometimes give her a headache. But she had just seen herself in the glass. With her blue-tinted eyelids, her eyelashes smeared with a black paste, her grease-painted cheeks, her lips tinted red in the shape of a tiny heart, it seemed to her she looked like a painted corpse with glass eyes, and she did not wish Ligny to see her thus.

While she was keeping her face in the shadow of the newspaper a tall, lean young man entered the dressing-room with a swaggering gait. His melancholy eyes were deeply sunken above a nose like a crow's beak; his mouth was set in a petrified grin. The Adam's apple of his long throat made a deep shadow on his stock. He was dressed as a stage bailiff.

"That you, Chevalier? How are you, my friend?" gaily inquired Dr. Trublet, who was fond of actors, preferred the bad ones, and had a special liking for Chevalier.

“Come in, everybody!” cried Nanteuil “This isn’t a dressing-room; it’s a mill.”

“My respects, none the less, *Mme. Miller!*” replied Chevalier, “I warn you, there’s a pack of idiots out in front. Would you believe it — they shut me up!”

“That’s no reason for walking in without knocking,” replied Nanteuil snappishly.

The doctor pointed out that Monsieur de Ligny had left the door open; whereupon Nanteuil, turning to Ligny, said in a tone of tender reproach:

“Did you really leave the door open? But, when one comes into a room, one closes the door on other people: it is one of the first things one is taught.”

She wrapped herself in a white blanket-cloak.

The call-boy summoned the players to the stage.

She grasped the hand which Ligny offered her, and, exploring his wrist with her fingers, dug her nail into the spot, close to the veins, where the skin is tender. Then she disappeared into the dark corridor.

CHAPTER II

Chevalier, having resumed his ordinary clothes, sat in a corner box, beside Madame Douce, gazing at Félicie, a small remote figure on the stage. And remembering the days when he had held her in his arms, in his attic in the Rue des Martyrs, he wept with grief and rage.

They had met last year at a fête given under the patronage of Lecureuil, the deputy; a benefit performance given in aid of poor actors of the ninth *arrondissement*. He had prowled around her, dumb, famishing, and with blazing eyes. For a whole fortnight he had pursued her incessantly. Cold and unmoved, she had appeared to ignore him. Then, suddenly, she surrendered; so suddenly that when he left her that day, still radiant and amazed, he had said a stupid thing. He had told her: "And I took you for a little bit of china!" For three whole months he had tasted joys acute as pain. Then Félicie had grown elusive, remote, and estranged. She loved him no longer. He sought the reason, but could not discover it. It tortured him to know that he was no longer loved; jealousy tortured him still more. It was true that in the first beautiful hours of his love he had known that Félicie had a lover, one Girmandel, a court bailiff, who lived in the Rue de Provence, and he had felt it deeply. But as he never saw him he had formed so confused and ill-defined an idea of him that his jealousy lost itself in uncertainty. Félicie assured him that she had never been more than passive in her intercourse with Girmandel, that she had not even pretended to care for him. He believed her, and this belief gave him the keenest satisfaction. She also told him that for a long time past, for months, Girmandel had been nothing more than a friend, and he believed her. In short, he was deceiving the bailiff, and it was agreeable to him to feel that he enjoyed this advantage. He had learned also that Félicie, who was just finishing her second year at the Conservatoire, had not denied herself to her professor. But the grief which he had felt because of this was softened by a time-honoured and venerable custom. Now Robert de Ligny was causing him intolerable suffering. For some time past he had found him incessantly dangle about her. He could not doubt that she loved Robert; and although he sometimes told himself that she had not yet given herself to this man, it was not that he believed it, but merely that he was fain sometimes to mitigate the bitterness of his sufferings.

Mechanical applause broke out at the back of the theatre, and a few members of the orchestra, murmuring inaudibly, clapped their hands slowly and noiselessly. Nanteuil had just given her last reply to Jeanne Perrin.

“*Brava! Brava!* She is delightful, dear little woman!” sighed Madame Doulce.

In his jealous anger, Chevalier was disloyal. Lifting a finger to his forehead, he remarked:

“She plays with *that* .” Then, placing his hand upon his heart, he added: “It is with this that one should act.”

“Thanks, dear friend, thanks!” murmured Madame Doulce, who read into these maxims an obvious eulogy of herself.

She was, indeed, in the habit of asserting that all good acting comes from the heart; she maintained that, to give full expression to a passion, it was necessary to experience it, and to feel in one’s own person the expressions that one wished to represent. She was fond of referring to herself as an example of this. When appearing as a tragedy queen, after draining a goblet of poison on the stage, her bowels had been on fire all night. Nevertheless she was given to saying: “The dramatic art is an imitative art, and one imitates an emotion all the better for not having experienced it.” And to illustrate this maxim she drew yet further examples from her triumphant career.

She gave a deep sigh.

“The child is admirably gifted. But she is to be pitied; she has been born into a bad period. There is no longer a public nowadays; no critics, no plays, no theatres, no artists. It is a decadence of art.”

Chevalier shook his head.

“No need to pity her,” he said. “She will have all that she can wish; she will succeed; she will be wealthy. She is a selfish little jade, and a woman who is selfish can get anything she likes. But for people with hearts there’s nothing left but to hang a stone round one’s neck and throw oneself into the river. But, I too, I shall go far. I, too, shall climb high. I, too, will be a selfish hound.”

He got up and went out without waiting for the end of the play. He did not return to Félicie’s dressing-room for fear of meeting Ligny there, the sight of whom was insupportable, and because by avoiding it he could pretend to himself that Ligny had not returned thither.

Conscious of physical distress on going away from her, he took five or six turns under the dark, deserted arcades of the Odéon, went down the steps into the night, and turned up the Rue de Médicis. Coachmen were dozing on their boxes, while waiting for the end of the performance, and high over the tops of the plane-trees the moon was racing through the clouds. Treasuring in his heart an absurd yet soothing remnant of hope, he went, this night, as on other nights, to wait for Félicie at her mother’s flat.

CHAPTER III

Madame Nanteuil lived with her daughter in a little flat on the fifth story of a house in the Boulevard Saint-Michel, whose windows opened upon the garden of the Luxembourg. She gave Chevalier a friendly welcome, for she thought kindly of him because he loved Félicie, and because the latter did not love him in return, and ignored on principle the fact that he had been her daughter's lover.

She made him sit beside her in the dining-room, where a coke fire was burning in the stove. In the lamplight army revolvers and sabres with golden tassels on the sword-knots gleamed upon the wall. They were hung about a woman's cuirass, which was provided with round breast-shields of tin-plate; a piece of armour which Félicie had worn last winter, while still a pupil at the Conservatoire, when taking the part of Joan of Arc at the house of a spiritualistic duchess. An officer's widow and the mother of an actress, Madame Nanteuil, whose real name was Nantean, treasured these trophies.

"Félicie is not back yet, Monsieur Chevalier. I don't expect her before midnight. She is on the stage till the end of the play."

"I know; I was in the first piece. I left the theatre after the first act of *La Mère confidente* .

"Oh, Monsieur Chevalier, why didn't you stay till the end? My daughter would have been so pleased if you had waited. When one is acting one likes to have friends in the house."

Chevalier replied ambiguously:

"Oh, as to friends, there are plenty of those about."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur Chevalier; good friends are scarce. Madame Douce was there, of course? Was she pleased with Félicie?" And she added, with great humility: "I should indeed be happy if she could really make a hit. It is so difficult to come to the fore in her profession, for a girl who is alone, without support, without influence! And it is so necessary for her to succeed, poor child!"

Chevalier did not feel disposed to lavish any pity upon Félicie. With a shrug of the shoulders he replied bluntly: "No need to worry about that. She'll get on. She is an actress heart and soul. She has it in her bones, down to her very legs."

Madame Nanteuil indulged in a quiet smile.

“Poor child! They are not very plump, her legs. Félicie’s health is not bad, but she must not overdo it. She often has fits of giddiness, and sick headaches.”

The servant came in to place on the table a dish of fried sausage, a bottle of wine, and a few plates.

Meanwhile, Chevalier was searching in his mind for some appropriate fashion of asking a question which had been on the tip of his tongue ever since he had set foot on the stairs. He wanted to know whether Félicie was still meeting Girmandel, whose name he never heard mentioned nowadays. We are given to conceiving desires which suit themselves to our condition. Now, in the misery of his existence, in the distress of his heart, he was full of an eager desire that Félicie, who loved him no longer, should love Girmandel, whom she loved but little, and he hoped with all his heart that Girmandel would keep her for him, would possess her wholly, and leave nothing of her for Robert de Ligny. The idea that the girl might be with Girmandel appeased his jealousy, and he dreaded to learn that she had broken with him.

Of course he would never have allowed himself to question a mother as to her daughter’s lovers. But it was permissible to speak of Girmandel to Madame Nanteuil, who saw nothing that was other than respectable in the relations of her household with the Government official, who was well-to-do, married, and the father of two charming daughters. To bring Girmandel’s name into the conversation he had only to resort to a stratagem. Chevalier hit upon one which he thought was ingenious.

“By the way,” he remarked, “I saw Girmandel just now in a carriage.”

Madame Nanteuil made no comment.

“He was driving down the Boulevard Saint-Michel in a cab. I certainly thought I recognized him. I should be greatly surprised if it wasn’t he.”

Madame Nanteuil made no comment.

“His fair beard, his high colour — he’s an easy man to recognize, Girmandel.”

Madame Nanteuil made no comment.

“You were very friendly with him at one time, you and Félicie. Do you still see him?”

“Monsieur Girmandel? Oh yes, we still see him,” replied Madame Nanteuil softly.

These words made Chevalier feel almost happy. But she had deceived him; she had not spoken the truth. She had lied out of self-respect, and in order not to reveal a domestic secret which she regarded as derogatory to the honour of her family. The truth was that, being carried away by her passion for Ligny, Félicie had given Girmandel the go-by, and he, being a man of the world, had promptly

cut off supplies. Madame Nanteuil, despite her years, had resumed an old lover, out of her love for her child, that she might not want for anything. She had renewed her former liaison with Tony Meyer, the picture-dealer in the Rue de Clichy. Tony Meyer was a poor substitute for Girmandel; he was none too free with his money. Madame Nanteuil, who was wise and knew the value of things, did not complain on that account, and she was rewarded for her devotion, for, in the six weeks during which she had been loved anew, she had grown young again.

Chevalier, following up his idea, inquired:

“You would hardly say that Girmandel was still a young man, would you?”

“He is not old,” said Madame Nanteuil. “A man is not old at forty.”

“A bit used up, isn’t he?”

“Oh, dear no,” replied Madame Nanteuil, quite calmly.

Chevalier became thoughtful and was silent. Madame Nanteuil began to nod. Then, being aroused from her somnolence by the servant, who brought in the salt-cellar and the water-bottle, she inquired: “And you, Monsieur Chevalier, is all well with you?”

No, all was not well with him. The critics were out to “down” him. And the proof that they had combined against him was that they all said the same thing; they said his face lacked expression.

“My face lacking in expression!” he cried indignantly. “They should have called it a predestined face. Madame Nanteuil, I aim high, and it is that which does me harm. For example, in *La Nuit du 23 octobre*, which is being rehearsed now, I am Florentin: I have only six lines; it’s a washout. But I have increased the importance of the character enormously. Durville is furious. He deliberately crabs all my effects.”

Madame Nanteuil, placid and kindly, found words to comfort him. Obstacles there were, no doubt, but in the end one overcame them. Her own daughter had fallen foul of the ill-will of certain critics.

“Half-past twelve!” said Chevalier gloomily. “Félicie is late.”

Madame Nanteuil supposed that she had been detained by Madame Doulce.

“Madame Doulce as a rule undertakes to see her home, and you know she never hurries herself.”

Chevalier rose, as if to take his leave, to show that he remembered his manners. Madame Nanteuil begged him to stay.

“Don’t go; Félicie won’t be long now. She will be pleased to find you here. You will have supper with her.”

Madame Nanteuil dozed off again in her chair. Chevalier sat gazing in silence at the clock hanging on the wall, and as the hand travelled across the dial he felt

a burning wound in his heart, which grew bigger and bigger, and each little stroke of the pendulum touched him to the quick, lending a keener eye to his jealousy, by recording the moments which Félicie was passing with Ligny. For he was now convinced that they were together. The stillness of the night, interrupted only by the muffled sound of the cabs bowling along the boulevard, gave reality to the thoughts and images which tortured him. He could see them.

Awakened with a start by the sound of singing on the pavement below, Madame Nanteuil returned to the thought with which she had fallen asleep.

“That’s what I am always telling Félicie; one mustn’t be discouraged. One should not lose heart. We all have our ups and downs in life.”

Chevalier nodded acquiescence.

“But those who suffer,” he said, “only get what they deserve. It needs but a moment to free oneself from all one’s troubles. Isn’t it so?”

She admitted the fact; certainly there were such things as sudden opportunities, especially on the stage.

“Heaven knows,” he continued in a deep, brooding voice, “it’s not the stage I am worrying about. I know I shall make a name for myself one day, and a big one. But what’s the good of being a great artist if one isn’t happy? There are stupid worries which are terrible! Pains that throb in your temples with strokes as even and as regular as the ticking of that clock, till they drive you mad!”

He ceased speaking; the gloomy gaze of his deep-set eyes fell upon the trophy hanging on the wall. Then he continued: “These stupid worries, these ridiculous sufferings, if one endures them too long, it simply means that one is a coward.”

And he felt the butt of the revolver which he always carried in his pocket.

Madame Nanteuil listened to him serenely, with that gentle determination not to know anything, which had been her one talent in life.

“Another dreadful thing,” she observed, “is to decide what to have to eat. Félicie is sick of everything. There’s no knowing what to get for her.”

After that, the flagging conversation languished, drawn out into detached phrases, which had no particular meaning. Madame Nanteuil, the servant, the coke fire, the lamp, the plate of sausage, awaited Félicie in depressing silence. The clock struck one. Chevalier’s suffering had by this time attained the serenity of a flood tide. He was now certain. The cabs were not so frequent and their wheels echoed more loudly along the street. The rumbling of one of these cabs suddenly ceased outside the house. A few seconds later he heard the slight grating of a key in the lock, the slamming of the door, and light footsteps in the outer room.

The clock marked twenty-three minutes past one. He was suddenly full of agitation, yet hopeful. She had come! Who could tell what she would say? She might offer the most natural explanation of her late arrival.

Félicie entered the room, her hair in disorder, her eyes shining, her cheeks white, her bruised lips a vivid red; she was tired, indifferent, mute, happy and lovely, seeming to guard beneath her cloak, which she held wrapped about her with both hands, some remnant of warmth and voluptuous pleasure.

"I was beginning to be worried," said her mother. "Aren't you going to unfasten your cloak?"

"I'm hungry," she replied. She dropped into a chair before the little round table. Throwing her cloak over the back of the chair, she revealed her slender figure in its little black schoolgirl's dress, and, resting her left elbow on the oil-cloth table-cover, she proceeded to stick her fork into the sliced sausage.

"Did everything go off well to-night?" asked Madame Nanteuil.

"Quite well."

"You see Chevalier has come to keep you company. It is kind of him, isn't it?"

"Oh, Chevalier! Well, let him come to the table."

And, without replying further to her mother's questions, she began to eat, greedy and charming, like Ceres in the old woman's house. Then she pushed aside her plate, and leaning back in her chair, with half-closed eyes, and parted lips, she smiled a smile that was akin to a kiss.

Madame Nanteuil, having drunk her glass of mulled wine, rose to her feet.

"You will excuse me, Monsieur Chevalier, I have my accounts to bring up to date."

This was the formula which she usually employed to announce that she was going to bed.

Left alone with Félicie, Chevalier said to her angrily:

"I know I'm a fool and a groveller; but I'm going mad for love of you. Do you hear, Félicie?"

"I should think I do hear. You needn't shout like that!"

"It's ridiculous, isn't it?"

"No, it's not ridiculous, it's — —"

She did not complete the sentence.

He drew nearer to her, dragging his chair with him.

"You came in at twenty-five minutes past one. It was Ligny who saw you home, I know it. He brought you back in a cab, I heard it stop outside the

house.”

As she did not reply, he continued:

“Deny it, if you can!”

She remained silent, and he repeated, in an urgent, almost appealing tone: “Tell me he didn’t!”

Had she been so inclined, she might, with a phrase, with a single word, with a tiny movement of head or shoulders, have rendered him perfectly submissive, and almost happy. But she maintained a malicious silence. With compressed lips and a far-off look in her eyes, she seemed as though lost in a dream.

He sighed hoarsely.

“Fool that I was, I didn’t think of that! I told myself you would come home, as on other nights, with Madame Douce, or else alone. If I had only known that you were going to let that fellow see you home!”

“Well, what would you have done, had you known it?”

“I should have followed you, by God!”

She stared at him with hard, unnaturally bright eyes.

“That I forbid you to do! Understand me! If I learn that you have followed me, even once, I’ll never see you again. To begin with, you haven’t the right to follow me. I suppose I am free to do as I like.”

Choking with astonishment and anger, he stammered:

“Haven’t the right to? Haven’t the right to? You tell me I haven’t the right?”

“No, you haven’t the right! Moreover, I won’t have it.” Her face assumed an expression of disgust. “It’s a mean trick to spy on a woman, if you once try to find out where I’m going, I’ll send you about your business, and quickly at that.”

“Then,” he murmured, thunderstruck, “we are nothing to each other, I am nothing to you. We have never belonged to each other. But see, Félicie, remember — —”

But she was losing patience:

“Well, what do you want me to remember?”

“Félicie, remember that you gave yourself to me!”

“My dear boy, you really can’t expect me to think of that all day. It wouldn’t be proper.”

He looked at her for a while, more in curiosity than in anger, and said to her, half bitterly, half gently: “They may well call you a selfish little jade! Be one, Félicie, be one, as much as you like! What does it matter, since I love you? You are mine; I am going to take you back; I am going to take you back, and keep you. Think! I can’t go on suffering for ever, like a poor dumb beast. Listen. I’ll start with a clean slate. Let us begin to love one another over again. And this

time it will be all right. And you'll be mine for good, mine only. I am an honest man; you know that. You can depend on me. I'll marry you as soon as I've got a position."

She gazed at him with disdainful surprise. He believed that she had doubts as to his dramatic future, and, in order to banish them, he said, erect on his long legs: "Don't you believe in my star, Félicie? You are wrong. I can feel that I am capable of creating great parts. Let them only give me a part, and they'll see. And I have in me not only comedy, but drama, tragedy — yes, tragedy. I can deliver verse properly. And that is a talent which is becoming rare in these days. So don't imagine, Félicie, that I am insulting you when I offer you marriage. Far from it! We will marry later on, as soon as it is possible and suitable. Of course, there is no need for hurry. Meanwhile, we will resume our pleasant habits of the Rue des Martyrs. You remember, Félicie; we were so happy there! The bed wasn't wide, but we used to say: "That doesn't matter." I have now two fine rooms in the Rue de la Montagne-Saint-Genève, behind Saint-Étienne-du-Mont. Your portrait hangs on every wall. You will find there the little bed of the Rue des Martyrs. Listen to me, I beg of you: I have suffered too much; I will not suffer any longer. I demand that you shall be mine, mine only."

While he was speaking, Félicie had taken from the mantelpiece the pack of cards with which her mother played every night, and was spreading them out on the table.

"Mine only. You hear me, Félicie."

"Don't disturb me, I am busy with a game of patience."

"Listen to me, Félicie. I won't have you receiving that fool in your dressing-room."

Looking at her cards she murmured:

"All the blacks are at the bottom of the pack."

"I say that fool. He is a diplomatist, and nowadays the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the refuge of incompetents." Raising his voice, he continued: "Félicie, for your own sake, as well as for mine, listen to me!"

"Well, don't shout, then. Mama is asleep."

He continued in muffled tones:

"Just get it into your head that I don't intend that Ligny shall be your lover."

She raised her spiteful little face, and replied:

"And if he is my lover?"

He moved a step closer to her, raising his chair, gazing at her with the eye of a madman, and laughing a cracked laugh.

"If he is your lover, he won't be so for long."

And he dropped the chair.

Now she was alarmed. She forced herself to smile.

“You know very well I’m joking!”

She succeeded without much difficulty in making him believe that she had spoken thus merely to punish him, because he was getting unbearable. He became calmer. She then informed him that she was tired out, that she was dropping with sleep. At last he decided to go home. On the landing he turned, and said: “Félicie, I advise you, if you wish to avoid a tragedy, not to see Ligny again.”

She cried through the half-open door:

“Knock on the window of the porter’s lodge, so that he can let you out!”

CHAPTER IV

In the dark auditorium large linen sheets protected the balcony and the boxes. The orchestra was covered with a huge dust-cloth, which, being turned back at the edges, left room for a few human figures, indistinctly seen in the gloom: actors, scene-shifters, costumiers, friends of the manager, mothers and lovers and actresses. Here and there shone a pair of eyes from the black recesses of the boxes.

They were rehearsing, for the fifty-sixth time, *La Nuit du 23 octobre 1812*, a celebrated drama, dating twenty years back, which had not as yet been performed in this theatre. The actors knew their parts, and the following day had been chosen for that last private rehearsal which on stages less austere than that of the Odéon is known as “the dressmakers’ rehearsal.”

Nanteuil had no part in the play. But she had had business at the theatre that day, and, as she had been informed that Marie-Claire was execrable in the part of General Malet’s wife, she had come to have a peep at her, concealed in the depths of a box.

The great scene of the second act was about to begin. The stage setting represented an attic in the private asylum where the conspirator was confined in 1812. Durville, who filled the part of General Malet, had just made his entrance. He was rehearsing in costume: a long blue frock-coat, with a collar reaching above his ears, and riding-breeches of chamois leather. He had even gone so far as to make up his face for the part, the clean-shaven soldierly face of the general of the Empire, ornamented with the “hare’s-foot” whiskers which were handed down by the victors of Austerlitz to their sons, the bourgeois of July. Standing erect, his right elbow resting in his left hand, his brow supported by his right hand, his deep voice and his tight-fitting breeches expressed his pride.

“Alone, and without funds, from the depths of a prison, to attack this colossus, who commands a million soldiers, and who causes all the peoples and kings of Europe to tremble. Well, this colossus shall fall crashing to the ground.”

From the back of the stage old Maury, who was playing the conspirator Jacquemont, delivered his reply:

“He may crush us in his downfall.”

Suddenly cries at once plaintive and angry arose from the orchestra.

The author was exploding. He was a man of seventy, brimming over with youth.

“What do I see there at the back of the stage? It’s not an actor, it’s a fireplace. We shall have to send for the bricklayers, the marble-workers, to move it. Maury, do get a move on, confound you!”

Maury shifted his position.

“He may crush us in his downfall. I realize that it will not be your fault, General. Your proclamation is excellent. You promise them a constitution, liberty, equality. It is Machiavellian.”

Durville replied:

“And in the best sense. An incorrigible breed, they are making ready to violate the oaths that they have not yet taken, and, because they lie, they believe themselves Machiavellis. What will you do with absolute power, you simpletons?”

The strident voice of the author ground out:

“You are right off the track, Dauville.”

“I?” asked the astonished Durville.

“Yes, you, Dauville, you do not understand a word of what you are saying.”

In order to humiliate them, “to take them down a peg,” this man who, in the whole course of his life, had never forgotten the name of a dairy-woman or a hall-porter, disdained to remember the names of the most illustrious actors.

“Dauville, my friend, just do that over again for me.”

He could play every part well. Jovial, funereal, violent, tender, impetuous, affectionate, he assumed at will a deep or a piping voice; he sighed, he roared, he laughed, he wept. He could transform himself, like the man in the fairy-tale, into a flame, a river, a woman, a tiger.

In the wings the actors exchanged only short and meaningless phrases. Their freedom of speech, their easy morals, the familiarity of their manners did not prevent their retaining so much of hypocrisy as is needful, in any assemblage of men, if people are to look upon one another without feelings of horror and disgust. There even prevailed, in this workshop in full activity, a seemingly appearance of harmony and union, a oneness of feeling created by the thought, lofty or commonplace, of the author, a spirit of order which compelled all rivalries and all illwill to transform themselves into goodwill and harmonious co-operation.

Nanteuil, sitting in her box, felt uneasy at the thought that Chevalier was close at hand. For the last two days, since the night on which he had uttered his obscure threats, she had not seen him again and the fear with which he had inspired her still possessed her. “Félicie, if you wish to prevent a tragedy, I advise you not to see Ligny again.” What did those words portend? She pondered deeply over Chevalier. This young fellow, who, only two days earlier,

had seemed to her commonplace and insignificant, of whom she had seen a good deal too much, whom she knew by heart — how mysterious and full of secrets he now appeared to her! How suddenly it had dawned upon her that she did not know him! Of what was he capable? She tried to guess. What was he going to do? Probably nothing. All men who are thrown over by a woman utter threats and do nothing. But was Chevalier a man quite like all the rest? People did say that he was crazy. That was mere talk. But she herself did not feel sure that there might not be a spark of insanity in him. She was studying him now with genuine interest. Highly intelligent herself, she had never discovered any great signs of intelligence in him; but he had on several occasions astonished her by the obstinacy of his will. She could remember his performing acts of the fiercest energy. Jealous by nature, there were yet certain matters which he understood. He knew what a woman is compelled to do in order to win a place on the stage, or to dress herself properly; but he could not endure to be deceived for the sake of love. Was he the sort of man to commit a crime, to do something dreadful? That was what she could not decide. She recalled his mania for handling firearms. When she used to visit him in the Rue des Martyrs, she always found him in his room, taking an old shot-gun to pieces and cleaning it. And yet he never went shooting. He boasted of being a dead shot, and carried a revolver on his person. But what did that prove? Never before had she thought so much about him.

Nanteuil was tormenting herself in this fashion in her box, when Jenny Fagette came to join her there; Jenny Fagette, slender and fragile, the incarnation of Alfred de Musset's Muse, who at night wore out her eyes of periwinkle-blue by scribbling society notes and fashion articles. A mediocre actress, but a clever and wonderfully energetic woman, she was Nanteuil's most intimate friend. They recognized in each other remarkable qualities, qualities which differed from those which each discovered in herself, and they acted in concert as the two great Powers of the Odéon. Nevertheless, Fagette was doing her best to take Ligny away from her friend; not from inclination, for she was insensible as a stick and held men in contempt, but with the idea that a liaison with a diplomatist would procure her certain advantages, and above all, in order not to miss the opportunity of doing something scandalous. Nanteuil was aware of this. She knew that all her sister-actresses, Ellen Midi, Duvernet, Herschell, Falempin, Stella, Marie-Claire, were trying to take Ligny from her. She had seen Louise Dalle, who dressed like a music-mistress, and always had the air of being about to storm an omnibus, and retained, even in her provocations and accidental contacts, the appearance of incurable respectability, pursue Ligny with her lanky legs, and beset him with the glances of a poverty-stricken Pasiphae. She had also

surprised the oldest actress of the theatre, their excellent mother Ravaud, in a corridor, baring, at Ligny's approach, all that was left to her, her magnificent arms, which had been famous for forty years.

Fagette, with disgust, and the tip of a gloved finger, called Nanteuil's attention to the scene through which Durville, old Maury and Marie-Claire were struggling.

"Just look at those people. They look as if they were playing at the bottom of thirty fathoms of water."

"It's because the top lights are not lit."

"Not a bit of it. This theatre always looks as if it were at the bottom of the sea. And to think that I, too, in a moment, have to enter that aquarium. Nanteuil, you must not stop longer than one season in this theatre. One is drowned in it. But look at them, look at them!"

Durville was becoming almost ventriloquial in order to seem more solemn and more virile:

"Peace, the abolition of the combined martial and civil law, and of conscription, higher pay for the troops; in the absence of funds, a few drafts on the bank, a few commissions suitably distributed, these are infallible means."

Madame Douce entered the box. Unfastening her cloak with its pathetic lining of old rabbit-skin, she produced a small dog's-eared book.

"They are Madame de Sévigné's letters," she said. "You know that next Sunday I am going to give a reading of the best of Madame de Sévigné's letters."

"Where?" asked Fagette.

"Salle Renard."

It must have been some remote and little known hall, for Nanteuil and Fagette had not heard of it.

"I am giving this reading for the benefit of the three poor orphans left by Lacour, the actor, who died so sadly of consumption this winter. I am counting on you, my darlings, to dispose of some tickets for me."

"All the same, she really is ridiculous, Marie-Claire!" said Nanteuil.

Some one scratched at the door of the box. It was Constantin Marc, the youthful author of a play, *La Grille*, which the Odéon was going to rehearse immediately; and Constantin Marc, although a countryman living in the forest, could henceforth breathe only in the theatre. Nanteuil was to take the principal part in the play. He gazed upon her with emotion, as the precious amphora destined to be the receptacle of his thought.

Meanwhile Durville continued hoarsely:

“If our France can be saved only at the price of our life and honour, I shall say, with the man of ‘93: ‘Perish our memory!’”

Fagette pointed her finger at a bloated youth, who was sitting in the orchestra, resting his chin on his walking-stick.

“Isn’t that Baron Deutz?”

“Need you ask!” replied Nanteuil. “Ellen Midi is in the cast. She plays in the fourth act. Baron Deutz has come to display himself.”

“Just wait a minute, my children; I have a word to say to that ill-mannered cub. He met me yesterday in the Place de la Concorde, and he didn’t bow to me.”

“What, Baron Deutz? He couldn’t have seen you!”

“He saw me perfectly well. But he was with his people. I am going to have him on toast. Just you watch, my dears.”

She called him very softly:

“Deutz! Deutz!”

The Baron came towards her, smiling and well-pleased with himself, and leaned his elbows on the edge of the box.

“Tell me, Monsieur Deutz, when you met me yesterday, were you in very bad company that you did not raise your hat to me?”

He looked at her in astonishment.

“I? I was with my sister.”

“Oh!”

On the stage, Marie-Claire, hanging upon Durville’s neck, was exclaiming:

“Go! Victorious or defeated, in good or evil fortune, your glory will be equally great. Come what may, I shall know how to show myself the wife of a hero.”

“That will do, Madame Marie-Claire!” said Pradel.

Just at that moment Chevalier made his entry, and immediately the author, tearing his hair, let loose a flood of imprecations:

“Do you call that an entry? It’s a tumble, a catastrophe, a cataclysm! Ye gods! A meteor, an aerolith, a bit of the moon falling on to the stage would be less horribly disastrous! I will take off my play! Chevalier, come in again, my good fellow!”

The artist who had designed the costumes, Michel, a fair young man with a mystic’s beard, was seated in the first row, on the arm of a stall. He leaned over and whispered into the ear of Roger, the scene-painter:

“And to think it’s the fifty-sixth time that he’s dropped on Chevalier with the same fury!”

“Well, you know, Chevalier is rottenly bad,” replied Roger, without hesitation.

“It isn’t that he is bad,” returned Michel indulgently. “But he always seems to be laughing, and nothing could be worse for a comedy actor. I knew him when he was quite a kid, at Montmartre. At school his masters used to ask him: ‘Why are you laughing?’ He was not laughing; he had no desire to laugh; he used to get his ears boxed from morning to night. His parents wanted to put him in a chemical factory. But he had dreams of the stage, and spent his days on the Butte Montmartre, in the studio of the painter Montalent. Montalent at that time was working day and night on his *Death of Saint Louis*, a huge picture which was commissioned for the cathedral of Carthage. One day, Montalent said to him —

—”

“A little less noise!” shouted Pradel.

“Said to him: ‘Chevalier, since you have nothing to do, just sit for Philippe the Bold.’ ‘With pleasure,’ said Chevalier. Montalent told him to assume the attitude of a man bowed down with grief. More, he stuck two tears as big as spectacle lenses on his cheeks. He finished his picture, forwarded it to Carthage, and had half a dozen bottles of champagne sent up. Three months later he received from Father Cornemuse, the head of the French Missions in Tunis, a letter informing him that his painting of the *Death of Saint Louis*, having been submitted to the Cardinal-Archbishop, had been refused by His Eminence, because of the unseemly expression on the face of Philippe the Bold who was laughing as he watched the saintly King, his father, dying on a bed of straw. Montalent could not make head or tail of it; he was furious, and wanted to take proceedings against the Cardinal-Archbishop. His painting was returned to him; he unpacked it, gazed at it in gloomy silence, and suddenly shouted: ‘It’s true — Philippe the Bold appears to be splitting his sides with laughter. What a fool I have been! I gave him the head of Chevalier, who always seems to be laughing, the brute!’”

“Will you be quiet there!” yelled Pradel.

And the author exclaimed:

“Pradel, my dear boy, just pitch all those people into the street.”

Indefatigable, he was arranging the scene:

“A little farther, Trouville, there. Chevalier, you walk up to the table, you pick up the documents one by one, and you say: ‘Senatus-Consultum. Order of the day. Despatches to the departments. Proclamation,’ Do you understand?”

“Yes, Master. ‘Senatus-Consultum. Order of the day. Despatches to the departments. Proclamation.’”

“Now, Marie-Claire, my child, a little more life, confound it! Cross over! That’s it! Very good. Back again! Good! Very good! Buck up! Ah, the wretched woman! She’s spoiling it all!”

He called the stage manager.

“Romilly, give us a little more light, one can’t see an inch. Dauville, my dear friend, what are you doing there in front of the prompter’s box! You seem glued to it! Just get into your head, once for all, that you are not the statue of General Malet, that you are General Malet in person, that my play is not a catalogue of wax-work figures, but a living moving tragedy, one which brings the tears into your eyes, and — —”

Words failed him, and he sobbed for a long while into his handkerchief. Then he roared:

“Holy thunder! Pradel! Romilly! Where is Romilly? Ah, there he is, the villain! Romilly, I told you to put the stove nearer the dormer-window. You have not done so. What are you thinking of, my friend?”

The rehearsal was suddenly brought to a standstill by a serious difficulty. Chevalier, the bearer of documents on which hung the fate of the Empire, was to escape from his prison by the dormer-window. The stage “business” had not yet been settled; it had been impossible to do so before the setting of the stage was completed. It was now discovered that the measurements had been wrongly taken, and the dormer-window was not accessible.

The author leapt on to the stage.

“Romilly, my friend, the stove is not in the place fixed on. How can you expect Chevalier to get out through the dormer-window? Push the stove to the right at once.”

“I’m willing enough,” said Romilly, “but we shall be blocking up the door.”

“What’s that? We shall be blocking up the door?”

“Precisely.”

The manager of the theatre, the stage-manager, the scene-shifters stood examining the stage-setting with gloomy attention, while the author held his peace.

“Don’t worry, Master,” said Chevalier. “There’s no need to change anything. I shall be able to jump out all right.”

Climbing on to the stove, he did indeed succeed in grasping the sill of the window, and in hoisting himself up until his elbows rested on it, a feat that had seemed impossible.

A murmur of admiration rose from the stage, the wings, and the house. Chevalier had produced an astonishing impression by his strength and agility.

“Splendid!” exclaimed the author. “Chevalier, my friend, that is perfect. The fellow is as nimble as a monkey. I’ll be hanged if any of you could do as much. If all the parts were in such good hands as that of Florentin, the play would be lauded to the skies.”

Nanteuil, in her box, almost admired him. For one brief second he had seemed to her more than man, both man and gorilla, and the fear with which he had inspired her was immeasurably increased. She did not love him; she had never loved him; she did not desire him; it was a long time since she had really wanted him; and, for some days past, she had been unable to imagine herself taking pleasure in any other than Ligny; but had she at that moment found herself alone with Chevalier she would have felt powerless, and she would have sought to appease him by her submission as one appeases a supernatural power.

On the stage, while an Empire *salon* was being lowered from the flies, through all the noise of the running gear and the grounding of the supports, the author held the whole of the company, as well as all the supers, in the hollow of his hand, and at the same time gave them all advice, or illustrated what he wanted of them.

“You, the big woman, the cake-seller, Madame Ravaud, haven’t you ever heard the women calling in the Champs-Élysées: ‘Eat your fill, ladies! This way for a treat!’ It is *sung*. Just learn the tune by to-morrow. And you, drummer-boy, just give me your drum; I’m going to teach you how to beat the roll, confound it! Fagette, my child, what the mischief are you doing at a ball given by the Minister of Police, if you haven’t any stockings with golden clocks? Take off those knitted woollen stockings immediately. This is the very last play that I shall produce in this theatre. Where is the colonel of the 10th cohort? So it’s you? Well then, my friend, your soldiers march past like so many pigs. Madame Marie-Claire, come forward a little, so that I may teach you how to curtsy.”

He had a hundred eyes, a hundred mouths, and arms and legs everywhere.

In the house, Romilly was shaking hands with Monsieur Gombaut, of the Academy of Moral Sciences, who had dropped in as a neighbour.

“You may say what you will, Monsieur Gombaut, it is perhaps not accurate as far as facts are concerned, but it’s drama.”

“Malet’s conspiracy,” replied Monsieur Gombaut, “remains, and will doubtless remain for a long time to come, an historical enigma. The author of this drama has taken advantage of those points which are obscure in order to introduce dramatic elements. But what, to my thinking, is beyond a doubt, is that General Malet, although associated with Royalists, was himself a Republican, and was working for the re-establishment of popular Government. In the course of his examination during the trial, he pronounced a sublime and profound

utterance. When the presiding judge of the court-martial asked him: ‘Who were your accomplices?’ Malet replied: ‘All France, and you yourself, had I succeeded.’”

Leaning on the edge of Nanteuil’s box, an aged sculptor, as venerable and as handsome as an ancient satyr, was gazing with glistening eye and smiling lips at the stage, which at that moment was in a state of commotion and confusion.

“Are you pleased with the play, Master?” Nanteuil asked him.

And the Master, who had no eyes for anything but bones, tendons and muscles, replied:

“Yes, indeed, mademoiselle; yes, indeed! I see over there a little creature, little Midi, whose shoulder attachment is a jewel.”

He outlined it with his thumb. Tears welled up into his eyes.

Chevalier asked if he might enter the box. He was happy, less on account of his prodigious success than at seeing Félicie. He dreamed, in his infatuation, that she had come for his sake, that she loved him, that she was returning to him.

She feared him, and, as she was timid, she flattered him.

“I congratulate you, Chevalier. You were simply astounding. Your exit is a marvel. You can take my word for it. I am not the only one to say so. Fagette thought you were wonderful.”

“Really?” asked Chevalier.

It was one of the happiest moments of his life.

A shrieking voice issued from the deserted heights of the third galleries, sounding through the house like the whistle of a locomotive.

“One can’t hear a word you say, my children; speak louder and pronounce your words distinctly!”

The author appeared, infinitely small, in the shadow of the dome.

Thereupon the utterance of the players who were collected at the front of the stage, around a naphtha flare, rose more distinctly:

“The Emperor will allow the troops to rest for some weeks at Moscow; then with the rapidity of an eagle he will swoop down upon St. Petersburg.”

“Spades, clubs, trump, two points to me.”

“There we shall spend the winter, and next spring we shall penetrate into India, crossing Persia, and the British power will be a thing of the past.”

“Thirty-six in diamonds.”

“And I the four aces.”

“By the way, gentlemen, what say you to the Imperial decree concerning the actors of Paris, dated from the Kremlin? There’s an end of the squabbles between Mademoiselle Mars and Mademoiselle Leverd.”

“Do look at Fagette,” said Nanteuil. “She is charming in that blue Marie-Louise dress trimmed with chinchilla.”

Madame Douce brought out from under her furs a stack of tickets already soiled through having been too frequently offered.

“Master,” she said, addressing Constantin Marc, “you know that next Sunday I am to give a reading, with appropriate remarks, of the best letters of Madame de Sévigné, for the benefit of the three poor orphans left by Lacour, the actors who died this winter in so deplorable a fashion.”

“Had he any talent?” asked Constantin Marc.

“None whatever,” said Nanteuil.

“Well, then, in what way is his death deplorable?”

“Oh, Master,” sighed Madame Douce, “do not pretend to be unfeeling.”

“I am not pretending to be unfeeling. But here is something that surprises me: the value which we set upon the lives of those who are not of the slightest interest to us. We seem as though we believe that life is in itself something precious. Yet nature teaches us plainly enough that nothing is more worthless and contemptible. In former days people were less besmeared with sentimentalism. Each of us held his own life to be infinitely precious, but he did not profess any respect whatever for the life of others. We were nearer to nature in those days. We were created to devour one another. But our debilitated, enervated, hypocritical race wallows in a sly cannibalism. While we are gulping one another down we declare that life is sacred, and we no longer dare to confess that life is murder.”

“That life is murder,” echoed Chevalier dreamily, without grasping the meaning of the words.

Then he poured forth a string of nebulous ideas:

“Murder and bloodshed, that may be! But amusing bloodshed, and comical murder. Life is a burlesque catastrophe, a terrible comedy, the mask of carnival over blood-stained cheeks. That is what life means to the artist; the artist on the stage, and the artist in action.”

Nanteuil uneasily sought a meaning in these confused phrases.

The actor continued excitedly:

“Life is yet another thing: it is the flower and the knife, it is to see red one day and blue the next, it is hatred and love, ravishing, delightful hatred, cruel love.”

“Monsieur Chevalier,” asked Constantin Marc in the quietest of tones, “does it not seem to you natural to be a murderer, and do you not think that it is merely the fear of being killed that prevents us from killing?”

Chevalier replied in deep, pensive tones:

“Most certainly not! It would not be the fear of being killed that would prevent me from killing. I have no fear of death. But I feel a respect for the life of others. I am humane in spite of myself. I have for some time past been seriously considering the question which you have just asked me, Monsieur Constantin Marc. I have pondered over it day and night, and I know now that I could not kill any one.”

At this, Nanteuil, filled with joy, cast upon him a look of contempt. She feared him no longer, and she could not forgive him for having alarmed her.

She rose.

“Good evening; I have a headache. Good-bye till to-morrow, Monsieur Constantin Marc.” And she went out briskly.

Chevalier ran after her down the corridor, descended the stage staircase behind her, and rejoined her by the stage doorkeeper’s box.

“Félicie, come and dine with me to-night at our cabaret. I should be so glad if you would! Will you?”

“Good gracious, no!”

“Why won’t you?”

“Leave me alone; you are bothering me!”

She tried to escape. He detained her.

“I love you so! Don’t be too cruel to me!”

Taking a step towards him, her lips curling back from her clenched teeth, she hissed into his ear:

“It’s all over, over, over! You hear me? I am fed up with you.”

Then, very gently and solemnly, he said:

“It is the last time that we two shall speak together. Listen, Félicie, before there is a tragedy I ought to warn you. I cannot compel you to love me. But I do not intend that you shall love another. For the last time I advise you not to see Monsieur de Ligny again, I shall prevent your belonging to him.”

“You will prevent me? You? My poor dear fellow!”

In a still more gentle tone he replied:

“I mean it; I shall do it. A man can get what he wants; only he must pay the price.”

CHAPTER V

Returning home, Félicie succumbed to a fit of tears. She saw Chevalier once more imploring her in a despairing voice with the look of a poor man. She had heard that voice and seen that expression when passing tramps, worn out with fatigue, on the high road, when her mother fearing that her lungs were affected, had taken her to spend the winter at Antibes with a wealthy aunt. She despised Chevalier for his gentleness and tranquil manner. But the recollection of that face and that voice disturbed her. She could not eat, she felt as if she were suffocating. In the evening she was attacked by such an excruciating internal pain that she thought she must be dying. She thought this feeling of prostration was due to the fact that it was two days since she had seen Robert. It was only nine o'clock. She hoped that she might find him still at home, and put on her hat.

"Mamma, I have to go to the theatre this evening. I am off."

Out of consideration for her mother, she was in the habit of making such veiled explanations.

"Go, my child, but don't come home too late."

Ligny lived with his parents. He had, on the top floor of the charming house in the Rue Vernet, a small bachelor flat, lit by round windows, which he called his "oeil-de-boeuf." Félicie sent word by the hall-porter that a lady was waiting for him in a carriage. Ligny did not care for women to look him up too often in the bosom of his family. His father, who was in the diplomatic service, and deeply engrossed in the foreign interests of the country, remained in an incredible state of ignorance as to what went on in his own house. But Madame de Ligny was determined that the decencies of life should be observed in her home, and her son was careful to satisfy her requirements in the matter of outward appearances, since they never probed to the bottom of things. She left him perfectly free to love where he would, and only rarely, in serious and expansive moments, did she hint that it was to the advantage of young men to cultivate the acquaintance of women of their own class. Hence it was that Robert had always dissuaded Félicie from coming to him in the Rue Vernet. He had rented, in the Boulevard de Villiers, a small house, where they could meet in absolute freedom. But on the present occasion, after two days without seeing her, he was greatly pleased by her unexpected visit, and he came down immediately.

Leaning back in the cab, they drove through the darkness and the snow, at the quiet pace of their aged hack, through the streets and boulevards, while the darkness of the night cloaked their love-making.

At her door, having seen her home, he said:

“Good-bye till to-morrow.”

“Yes, to-morrow, Boulevard de Villiers. Come early.”

She was leaning on him preparatory to stepping down from the cab. Suddenly she started back.

“There! There! Among the trees. He has seen us. He was watching us.”

“Who, then?”

“A man — some one I don’t know.”

She had just recognized Chevalier. She stepped out, rang the bell, and, nestling in Robert’s fur coat, waited, trembling, for the door to open. When it was opened, she detained him.

“Robert, see me upstairs, I am frightened.”

Not without some impatience, he followed her up the stairs.

Chevalier had waited for Félicie, in the little dining-room, before the armour which she had worn as Jeanne d’Arc, together with Madame Nanteuil, until one o’clock in the morning. He had left at that hour, and had watched for her on the pavement, and on seeing the cab stop in front of the door he had concealed himself behind a tree. He knew very well that she would return with Ligny; but when he saw them together it was as if the earth had yawned beneath him, and, so that he should not fall to the ground, he had clutched the trunk of the tree. He remained until Ligny had emerged from the house; he watched him as, wrapped in his fur coat, he got into the cab, took a couple of steps as if to spring on him, stopped short, and then with long strides went down the boulevard.

He went his way, driven by the rain and wind. Feeling too hot, he doffed his felt hat, and derived a certain pleasure from the sense of the icy drops of water on his forehead. He was vaguely conscious that houses, trees, walls, and lights went past him indefinitely; he wandered on, dreaming.

He found himself, without knowing how he had got there, on a bridge which he hardly knew. Half-way across it stood the colossal statue of a woman. His mind was now at rest; he had formed a resolution. It was an old idea, which he had now driven into his brain like a nail, which pierced it through and through. He no longer examined it. He calculated coldly the means of carrying out the thing he had determined to do. He walked straight ahead at random, absorbed in thought, and as calm as a mathematician.

On the Pont des Arts he became aware that a dog was following him. He was a big, long-haired farm dog, with eyes of different colours, which were full of

gentleness, and an expression of infinite distress. Chevalier spoke to him: "You've no collar. You are not happy. Poor fellow, I can't do anything for you."

By four o'clock in the morning he found himself in the Avenue de l'Observatoire. On seeing the houses of the Boulevard Saint-Michel he experienced a painful impression and abruptly turned back toward the Observatory. The dog had vanished. Near the monument of the Lion of Belfort, Chevalier stopped in front of a deep trench which cut the road in two. Against the bank of excavated earth, under a tarpaulin supported by four stakes, an old man was keeping vigil before a brazier. The lappets of his rabbit-skin cap were down over his ears; his huge nose was a flaming red. He raised his head; his eyes, which were watering, seemed wholly white, without pupils, each set in a ring of fire and tears. He was stuffing into the bowl of his cutty a few scraps of canteen tobacco, mixed with bread-crumbs, which did not fill half the bowl of his little pipe.

"Will you have some tobacco, old fellow?" asked Chevalier, offering him his pouch.

The man's answer was slow in coming. His understanding was not quick, and courtesies astonished him. Finally, he opened a mouth which was quite black, and said: "I won't say no to that."

He half rose from his seat. One of his feet was shod in an old slipper; the other was swathed in rags. Slowly, with hands numb with the cold, he stuffed his pipe. It was snowing, a snow that melted as it fell.

"You will excuse me?" said Chevalier, and he slipped under the tarpaulin and seated himself beside the old man.

From time to time they exchanged a remark.

"Rotten weather!"

"It's what we expect at this season. Winter's hard; summer's better."

"So you look after the job at night, old fellow?"

The old man answered readily when questioned. Before he spoke his throat emitted a long, very gentle murmur.

"I do one thing one day; another thing another. Odd jobs. See?"

"You are not a Parisian?"

"No, I was born in La Creuse. I used to work as a navvy in the Vosges. I left there the year the Prussians and other foreigners came. There were thousands of them. Can't understand where they all came from. Maybe you've heard of the war of the Prussians, young man?"

He remained silent for a long spell and then resumed:

“So you are out on a spree, my lad. You don’t feel like going back to the works yet?”

“I am an actor,” replied Chevalier.

The old man who did not understand, inquired:

“Where is it, your works?”

Chevalier was anxious to rouse the old man’s admiration.

“I play comedy parts in a big theatre,” he said. “I am one of the principal actors at the Odéon. You know the Odéon?”

The watchman shook his head. No, he did not know the Odéon. After a prolonged silence, he once more opened the black cavern of his mouth: “And so, young man, you are on the loose. You don’t want to go back to the works, eh?”

Chevalier replied:

“Read the paper the day after to-morrow, you will see my name in it.”

The old man tried to discover a meaning in these words, but it was too difficult; he gave it up, and reverted to his familiar train of thought.

“When once one’s off on the loose, it is sometimes for weeks and months.”

At daybreak, Chevalier resumed his wanderings. The sky was milky. Heavy wheels were breaking the silence of the paved roads. Voices, here and there, rang through the keen air. The snow was no longer falling. He walked on at haphazard. The spectacle of the city’s reviving life made him feel almost cheerful. On the Pont des Arts he stood for a long time watching the Seine flow by, after which he continued on his way. On the Place du Havre he saw an open café. A faint streak of dawn was reddening the front windows. The waiters were sanding the brick pavement and setting out the tables. He flung himself into a chair.

“Waiter, an absinthe.”

CHAPTER VI

In the cab, beyond the fortifications, which were skirted by the deserted boulevard, Félicie and Robert held one another in a close embrace.

“Don’t you love your own Félicie? Tell me! Doesn’t it flatter your vanity to possess a little woman who makes people cheer and clap her, who is written about in the newspapers? Mamma pastes all my notices in her album. The album is full already.”

He replied that he had not waited for her to succeed before discovering how charming she was; and, in fact, their liaison had begun when she was making an obscure first appearance at the Odéon in a revival which had fallen flat.

“When you told me that you wanted me, I didn’t keep you waiting, did I? We didn’t take long about that! Wasn’t I right? You are too sensible to think badly of me because I didn’t keep things dragging along. When I saw you for the first time I felt that I was to be yours, so it wasn’t worth while delaying. I don’t regret it. Do you?”

The cab stopped at a short distance from the fortifications, in front of a garden railing.

This railing, which had not been painted for a long time, stood on a wall faced with pebbles, low and broad enough to permit of children perching themselves on it. It was screened half-way up by a sheet of iron with a toothed edge, and its rusty spikes did not rise more than ten feet above the ground. In the centre, between two pillars of masonry surmounted by cast-iron vases, the railing formed a gate opening in the middle, filled in across its lower part, and furnished, on the inside, with worm-eaten slatted shutters.

They alighted from the cab. The trees of the boulevard, in four straight lines, lifted their frail skeletons in the fog. They heard, through the wide silence, the diminishing rattle of their cab, on its way back to the barrier, and the trotting of a horse coming from Paris.

“How dismal the country is!” she said, with a shiver.

“But, my darling, the Boulevard de Villiers is not the country.”

He could not open the gate, and the lock creaked. Irritated by the sound, she said: “Open it, do: the noise is getting on my nerves.”

She noticed that the cab which had come from Paris had stopped near their house, at about the tenth tree from where she stood; she looked at the thin, steaming horse and the shabby driver, and asked: “What is that carriage?”

"It's a cab, my pet."

"Why does it stop here?"

"It has not stopped here? It's stopping in front of the next house."

"There is no next house; there's only a vacant lot."

"Well, then, it has stopped in front of a vacant lot. What more can I tell you?"

"I don't see anyone getting out of it."

"The driver is perhaps waiting for a fare."

"What, in front of a vacant lot!"

"Probably, my dear. This lock has got rusty."

She crept along, hiding herself behind the trees, toward the spot where the cab had stopped, and then returned to Ligny, who had succeeded in unlocking the gate.

"Robert, the blinds of the cab are down."

"Well, then, there's a loving couple inside."

"Don't you think there's something queer about that cab?"

"It is not a thing of beauty, but all cabs are ugly. Come in."

"Isn't somebody following us?"

"Whom do you expect to follow us?"

"I don't know. One of your women friends."

But she was not saying what was in her thoughts.

"Do come in, my darling."

When she had entered the garden she said:

"Be sure to close the gate properly, Robert."

Before them stretched a small oval grass-plot.

Behind it stood the house, with its flight of three steps, sheltered by a zinc portico, its six windows, and its slate roof.

Ligny had rented it for a year from an old merchant's clerk, who had wearied of it because nocturnal prowlers used to steal his fowls and rabbits. On either side of the grass-plot a gravel path led to the steps. They took the path on the right. The gravel creaked beneath their feet.

"Madame Simonneau has forgotten to close the shutters again," said Ligny.

Madame Simonneau was a woman from Neuilly, who came every morning to clean up.

A large Judas-tree, leaning to one side, and to all appearance dead, stretched one of its round black branches as far as the portico.

"I don't quite like that tree," said Félicie; "its branches are like great snakes. One of them goes almost into our room."

They went up the three front steps; and, while he was looking through his bunch of keys for the key of the front door, she rested her head on his shoulder.

Félicie, when unveiling her beauty, displayed a serene pride which made her adorable. She revealed such a quiet satisfaction in her nudity that her chemise, when it fell to her feet, made the onlooker think of a white peacock.

And when Robert saw her in her nakedness, bright as the streams or stars, he said: "At least you don't make one badger you! Its curious: there are women, who, even if you don't ask them for anything, surrender themselves completely, go just as far as it's possible to go, yet all the time they won't let you see so much as a finger-breadth of skin."

"Why?" asked Félicie, playing with the airy threads of her hair.

Robert de Ligny had experience of women. Yet he did not realize what an insidious question this was. He had received some training in moral science, and in replying he derived inspiration from the professors whose classes he had attended.

"It is doubtless a matter of training, religious principles, and an innate feeling which survives even when — —"

This was not at all what he ought to have replied, for Félicie, shrugging her shoulders, and placing her hands upon her smoothly polished hips, interrupted him sharply: "Well, you are simple! It's because they've got bad figures! Training! Religion! It makes me boil to hear such rubbish! Have I been brought up any worse than other women? Have I less religion than they have? Tell me, Robert, how many really well-made women have you ever seen? Just reckon them up on your fingers. Yes, there are heaps of women who won't show their shoulders or anything. Take Fagette; she won't let even women see her undress; when she puts a clean chemise on she holds the old one between her teeth. Sure enough, I should do the same if I were built as she is!"

She relapsed into silence, and, with quiet arrogance, slowly ran the palms of her hands over her sides and her loins, observing proudly: "And the best of it is that there's not too much of me anywhere."

She was conscious of the charm imparted to her beauty by the graceful slenderness of her outlines.

Now her head, thrown back on the pillow, was bathed in the masses of her golden tresses, which lay streaming in all directions; her slender body, slightly raised by a pillow slipped beneath her loins, lay motionless at full length; one gleaming leg was extended along the edge of the bed, ending in a sharply chiselled foot like the point of a sword. The light from the great fire which had been lit in the fireplace gilded her flesh, casting palpitating lights and shadows

over her motionless body, clothing it in mystery and splendour, while her outer clothing and her underlinen, lying on the chairs and the carpet, waited, like a docile flock.

She raised herself on her elbow, resting her cheek in her hand.

“You are the first, really you are, I am not lying: the others don’t exist.”

He felt no jealousy in respect of the past; he had no fear of comparisons. He questioned her: “Then the others?”

“To begin with, there were only two: my professor, and he of course doesn’t count, and there was the man I told you about, a solid sort of a person, whom my mother saddled me with.”

“No more?”

“I swear it.”

“And Chevalier?”

“Chevalier? He? Good gracious, no! You wouldn’t have had me look at him!”

“And the solid sort of person found by your mother, he, too, does not count any more?”

“I assure you that, with you, I am another woman. It’s the solemn truth that you are the first to possess me. It’s queer, all the same. Directly I set eyes on you I wanted you. Quite suddenly I felt I must have you. I felt it somehow. What? I should find it very hard to say. Oh, I didn’t stop to think. With your conventional, stiff, frigid manners, and your appearance, like a curly-haired little wolf, you pleased me, that was all! And now I could not do without you. No, indeed, I couldn’t.”

He assured her that on her surrender he had been deliciously surprised; he said all sorts of pretty, caressing things, all of which had been said before.

Taking his head in her hands, she said:

“You have really the teeth of a wolf. I think it was your teeth that made me want you the first day. Bite me!”

He pressed her to his bosom, and felt her firm supple body respond to his embrace. Suddenly she released herself: “Don’t you hear the gravel creaking?”

“No.”

“Listen: I can hear a sound of footsteps on the path.”

Sitting upright, her body bent forward, she strained her ears.

He was disappointed, excited, irritated, and perhaps his self-esteem was slightly hurt.

“What has come over you? It’s absurd.”

She cried very sharply:

“Do hold your tongue!”

She was listening intently to a slight sound, near at hand, as of breaking branches.

Suddenly she leapt from the bed with such instinctive agility, with a movement so like the rapid spring of a young animal, that Ligny, although by no means of a literary turn of mind, thought of the cat metamorphosed into a woman.

“Are you crazy? Where are you going?”

Raising a corner of the curtain, she wiped the moisture from the corner of a pane, and peered out through the window. She saw nothing but the night. The noise had ceased altogether.

During this time, Ligny, lying moodily against the wall, was grumbling: “As you will, but, if you catch a cold, so much the worse for you!”

She glided back into bed. At first he remained somewhat resentful; but she wrapped him about with the delicious freshness of her body.

When they came to themselves they were surprised to see by one of their watches that it was seven o’clock.

Ligny lit the lamp, a paraffin lamp, supported on a column, with a cut-glass container inside which the wick was curled up like a tape-worm. Félicie was very quick in dressing herself. They had to descend one floor by a wooden staircase, dark and narrow. He went ahead, carrying the lamp, and halted in the passage.

“You go out, darling, before I put the lamp out.”

She opened the door, and immediately recoiled with a loud shriek. She had seen Chevalier standing on the outer steps, with arms extended, tall, black, erect as a crucifix. His hand grasped a revolver. The glint of the weapon was not perceptible; nevertheless she saw it quite distinctly.

“What’s the matter?” demanded Ligny, who was turning down the wick of the lamp.

“Listen, but don’t come near me!” cried Chevalier in a loud voice. “I forbid you to belong to one another. This is my dying wish. Good-bye, Félicie.”

And he slipped the barrel of the revolver into his mouth.

Crouching against the passage wall, she closed her eyes. When she reopened them, Chevalier was lying on his side, across the doorway. His eyes were wide open, and he seemed to be gazing at them with a smile. A thread of blood was trickling from his mouth over the flagstones of the porch. A convulsive tremor shook his arm. Then he ceased to move. As he lay there, huddled up; he seemed smaller than usual.

On hearing the report of the revolver, Ligny had hurriedly come forward. In the darkness of the night he raised the body, and immediately lowering it gently to the ground he attempted to strike matches, which the wind promptly extinguished. At last, by the flare of one of the matches, he saw that the bullet had carried away part of the skull, that the meninges were laid bare over an area as large as the palm of the hand; this area was grey, oozing blood, and very irregular in shape, its outlines reminding Ligny of the map of Africa. He was conscious of a sudden feeling of respect in the presence of this dead man. Placing his hands under the armpits, he dragged Chevalier with the minutest precautions into the room at the side. Leaving him there, he hurried through the house in quest of Félicie, calling to her.

He found her in the bedroom, with her head buried under the bed-clothes of the unmade bed, crying: “Mamma! Mamma!” and repeating prayers.

“Don’t stay here, Félicie.”

She went downstairs with him. But, on reaching the hall, she said: “You know very well that we can’t go out that way.”

He showed her out by the kitchen door.

CHAPTER VII

Left alone in the silent house, Robert de Ligny relit the lamp. Serious and even somewhat solemn voices were beginning to speak within him. Moulded from childhood by the rules of moral responsibility, he now experienced a sensation of painful regret, akin to remorse. Reflecting that he had caused the death of this man, albeit without intending it or knowing it, he did not feel wholly innocent. Shreds of his philosophic and religious training came back to him, disturbing his conscience. The phrases of moralists and preachers, learned at school, which had sunk to the very depths of his memory, suddenly rose in his mind. Its inward voices repeated them to him. They said, quoting some old religious orator: "When we abandon ourselves to irregularities of conduct, even to those regarded as least culpable in the opinion of the world, we render ourselves liable to commit the most reprehensible actions. We perceive, from the most frightful examples, that voluptuousness leads to crime."

These maxims, upon which he had never reflected, suddenly assumed for him a precise and austere meaning. He thought the matter over seriously. But since his mind was not deeply religious, and since he was incapable of cherishing exaggerated scruples, he was conscious of only a passable degree of edification, which was steadily diminishing. Before long he decided that such scruples were out of place and that they could not possibly apply to the situation. "When we abandon ourselves to irregularities of conduct, even to those regarded as least culpable in the opinion of the world.... We perceive, from the most frightful examples...." These phrases, which only a little while ago had reverberated through his soul like a peal of thunder, he now heard in the snuffling and throaty voices of the professors and priests who had taught them to him, and he found them somewhat ridiculous. By a natural association of ideas he recalled a passage from an ancient Roman history — which he had read, when in the second form, during a certain course of study, and which had impressed itself on his mind — a few lines concerning a lady who was convicted of adultery and accused of having set fire to Rome. "So true it is," ran the historian's comment, "that a person who violates the laws of chastity is capable of any crime." He smiled inwardly at this recollection, reflecting that the moralists, after all, had queer ideas about life.

The wick, which was charring, gave an insufficient light. He could not manage to snuff it, and it was giving out a horrible stench of paraffin. Thinking

of the author of the passage relating to the Roman lady, he said to himself: "Sure enough, it was a queer idea that he got hold of there!"

He felt reassured as to his innocence. His slight feeling of remorse had entirely evaporated, and he was unable to conceive how he could for a moment have believed himself responsible for Chevalier's death. Yet the affair troubled him.

Suddenly he thought: "Supposing he were still alive!"

A while ago, for the space of a second, by the light of a match blown out as soon as it was struck, he had seen the hole in the actor's skull. But what if he had seen incorrectly? What if he had taken a mere graze of the skin for a serious lesion of the brain and skull? Does a man retain his powers of judgment in the first moments of surprise and horror? A wound may be hideous without being mortal, or even particularly serious. It had certainly seemed to him that the man was dead. But was he a medical man, able to judge with certainty?

He lost all patience with the wick, which was still charring, and muttered:

"This lamp is enough to poison one."

Then recalling a trick of speech habitual to Dr. Socrates, as to the origin of which he was ignorant, he repeated mentally:

"This lamp stinks like thirty-six cart-loads of devils."

Instances occurred to him of several abortive attempts at suicide. He remembered having read in a newspaper that a married man, after killing his wife, had, like Chevalier, fired his revolver into his mouth, but had only succeeded in shattering his jaw; he remembered that at his club a well known sportsman, after a card scandal, tried to blow out his brains but merely shot off an ear. These instances applied to Chevalier with striking exactitude.

"Supposing he were not dead."

He wished and hoped against all evidence that the unfortunate man might still be breathing, that he might be saved. He thought of fetching bandages, of giving first aid. Intending to re-examine the man lying in the front room, he raised the lamp, which was still emitting an insufficient light, too suddenly, and so extinguished it. Whereupon, surprised by the sudden darkness, he lost patience and exclaimed:

"Confound the blasted thing!"

While lighting it again, he flattered himself with the idea that Chevalier, once taken to hospital, would regain consciousness, and would live, and seeing him already on his feet, perched on his long legs, bawling, clearing his throat, sneering, his desire for his recovery became less eager; he was even beginning to

cease to desire it, to regard it as annoying and inconsiderate. He asked himself anxiously, with a feeling of real uneasiness:

“What in the world would he do if he came back, that dismal actor fellow? Would he return to the Odéon? Would he stroll through its corridors displaying his great scar? Would he once more have to see him prowling round Félicie?”

He held the lighted lamp close to the body and recognized the livid bleeding wound, the irregular outline of which reminded him of the Africa of his schoolboy maps.

Plainly death had been instantaneous, and he failed to understand how he could for a moment have doubted it.

He left the house and proceeded to stride up and down in the garden. The image of the wound was flashing before his eyes like the impression caused by too bright a light. It moved away from him, increasing in size against the black sky; it took the shape of a pale continent whence he saw swarms of distracted little blacks pouring forth, armed with bows and arrows.

He decided that the first thing to do was to fetch Madame Simonneau, who lived close at hand, in the Boulevard Bineau, in the residential part of the café. He closed the gate carefully, and went in search of the housekeeper. Once on the boulevard, he recovered his equanimity. He felt most uncomfortable about the accident; he accepted the accomplished fact, but he cavilled at fate in respect of the circumstances. Since there had to be a death, he gave his consent that there should be one, but he would have preferred another. Toward this one he was conscious of a feeling of disgust and repugnance. He said to himself vaguely:

“I concede a suicide. But what is the good of a ridiculous and declamatory suicide? Couldn’t the fellow have killed himself at home? Couldn’t he, if his determination was irrevocable, have carried it out discreetly, with proper pride? That is what a gentleman would have done in his position. Then one might have pitied him, and respected his memory.”

He recalled word for word his conversation with Félicie in the bedroom an hour before the tragedy. He asked her if she had not for a time been Chevalier’s mistress. He had asked her this, not because he wanted to know, for he had very little doubt of it, but in order to show that he knew it. And she had replied indignantly: “Chevalier? He? Good gracious no! You wouldn’t have had me look at him!”

He did not blame her for having lied. All women lie. He rather enjoyed the graceful and easy manner with which she had cast the fellow out of her past. But he was vexed with her for having given herself to a low-down actor. Chevalier spoilt Félicie for him. Why did she take lovers of that type? Was she wanting in taste? Did she not exercise a certain selection? Did she behave like a woman of

the town? Did she lack a certain sense of niceness which warns women as to what they may or may not do? Didn't she know how to behave? Well, this was the sort of thing that happened if women had no breeding. He blamed Félicie for the accident that had occurred and was relieved of a heavy incubus.

Madame Simonneau was not at home. He inquired her whereabouts of the waiters in the café, the grocer's assistants, the girls at the laundry, the police, and the postman. At last, following the direction of a neighbour, he found her poulticing an old lady, for she was a nurse. Her face was purple and she reeked of brandy. He sent her to watch the corpse. He instructed her to cover it with a sheet, and to hold herself at the disposal of the commissary and the doctor, who would come for the particulars. She replied, somewhat nettled, that she knew please God, what she had to do. She did indeed know. Madame Simonneau was born in a social circle which is obsequious to the constituted authorities and respects the dead. But when, having questioned Monsieur de Ligny, she learnt that he had dragged the body into the front room, she could not conceal from him that such behaviour was imprudent and might expose him to unpleasantness.

"You ought not to have done it," she told him. "When anyone has killed himself, you must never touch him before the police come."

Ligny thereupon went off to notify the commissary. The first excitement having passed off, he no longer felt any surprise, doubtless because events which, considered from a distance, would seem strange, when they take place before us appear quite natural, as indeed they are. They unfold themselves in an ordinary fashion, falling into place as a succession of petty facts, and eventually losing themselves in the everyday commonplace of life. His mind was distracted from the violent death of an unfortunate fellow-creature by the very circumstances of that death, by the part which he had played in the affair and the occupation which it had imposed upon him. On his way to the commissary's he felt as calm and as free from mental care as though he had been on his way to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to decipher despatches.

At nine o'clock in the evening, the police commissary entered the garden with his secretary and a policeman. The municipal physician, Monsieur Hibry, arrived simultaneously. Already, thanks to the industry of Madame Simonneau, who was always interested in matters of supply, the house exhaled a violent smell of carbolic and was blazing with the candles which she had lit. Madame Simonneau was bustling to and fro, actuated by an urgent desire to procure a crucifix and a bough of consecrated box-wood for the dead. The doctor examined the corpse by the light of a candle.

He was a bulky man with a ruddy complexion. He breathed noisily. He had just dined.

“The bullet, a large calibre bullet,” he said, “penetrated by way of the palatal vault, traversed the brain and finally fractured the left parietal bone, carrying away a portion of the cerebral substance, and blowing out a piece of the skull. Death was instantaneous.”

He returned the candle to Madame Simonneau and continued:

“Splinters of the skull were projected to a certain distance. They will probably be found in the garden. I should conjecture that the bullet was round-nosed. A conical bullet would have caused less destruction.”

However, the commissary. Monsieur Josse-Arbrissel, a tall, thin man with a long grey moustache, seemed neither to see nor to hear. A dog was howling outside the garden gate.

“The direction of the wound,” said the doctor, “as well as the fingers of the right hand, which are still contracted, are more than ample proof of suicide.”

He lit a cigar.

“We are sufficiently informed,” remarked the commissary.

“I regret, gentlemen, to have disturbed you,” said Robert de Ligny, “and I thank you for the courteous manner in which you have carried out your official duties.”

The secretary and the police agent, Madame Simonneau showing the way, carried the body up to the first floor.

Monsieur Josse-Arbrissel was biting his nails and looking into space.

“A tragedy of jealousy,” he remarked, “nothing is more common. We have here in Neuilly a steady average of self-inflicted deaths. Out of a hundred suicides thirty are caused by gambling. The others are due to disappointment in love, poverty, or incurable disease.”

“Chevalier?” inquired Dr. Hibry, who was a lover of the theatre, “Chevalier? Wait a minute! I have seen him; I saw him at a benefit performance, at the Variétés. Of course! He recited a monologue.”

The dog howled outside the garden gate.

“You cannot imagine,” resumed the commissary, “the disasters caused in this municipality by the *pari mutuel*. I am not exaggerating when I assert that at least thirty per cent of the suicides which I have to look into are caused by gambling. Everybody gambles here. Every hairdresser’s shop is a clandestine betting agency. No later than last week a concierge in the Avenue du Roule was found hanging from a tree in the Bois de Boulogne. Now, working men, servants, and junior clerks who gamble do not need to take their own lives. They move to another quarter, they disappear. But a man of position, an official whom gambling has ruined, who is overwhelmed by clamorous creditors, threatened

with restraint, and on the point of being dragged before a court of justice, cannot disappear. What is to become of him?"

"I have it!" exclaimed the physician. "He recited *The Duel in the Prairie*. People are rather tired of monologues, but that is very funny. You remember! 'Will you fight with the sword?' 'No, sir.' 'The pistol?' 'No, sir.' 'The sabre, the knife?' 'No, sir.' 'Ah, then, I see what you want. You are not fastidious. What you want is a duel in the prairie. I agree. We will replace the prairie by a five-storied house. You are permitted to conceal yourself in the vegetation.' Chevalier used to recite *The Duel in the Prairie* in a very humorous manner. He amused me greatly that night. It is true that I am not an ungrateful audience; I worship the theatre."

The commissary was not listening. He was following up his own train of thought.

"It will never be known, how many fortunes and lives are devoured each year by the *pari mutuel*. Gambling never releases its victims; when it has despoiled them of everything, it still remains their only hope. What else, indeed, will permit them to hope?"

He ceased, straining his ear to catch the distant cry of a newsvendor, and rushed out into the avenue in pursuit of the fugitive yelping shadow, hailed him, and snatched from him a sporting paper, which he spread out under the light of a gas-lamp, scanning its pages for certain names of horses: *Fleur-des-pois*, *La Châtelaine*, *Lucrèce*. With haggard eyes, trembling hands, dumbfounded, crushed, he dropped the sheet: his horse had not won.

And Dr. Hibry, observing him from a distance, reflected that some day, in his capacity of physician to the dead, he might well be called upon to certify the suicide of his commissary of police, and he made up his mind in advance to conclude, as far as possible, that his death was due to accidental causes.

Suddenly he seized his umbrella.

"I must be off," he said. "I have been given a seat for the Opéra-Comique to-night. It would be a pity to waste it."

Before leaving the house, Ligny asked Madame Simonneau:

"Where have you put him?"

"In the bed," replied Madame Simonneau. "It was more decent."

He made no objection, and raising his eyes to the front of the house, he saw at the windows of the bedroom, through the muslin curtains, the light of the two candles which the housekeeper had placed on the bedside table.

"Perhaps," he said, "one might get a nun to watch by him."

“It’s not necessary,” replied Madame Simonneau, who had invited some neighbours of her own sex, and had ordered her wine and meat. “It’s not necessary, I will watch by him myself.”

Ligny did not press the point.

The dog was still howling outside the gate.

Returning on foot to the barrier, he noticed, over Paris, a reddish glow which filled the whole sky. Above the chimney-pots the factory chimneys rose grotesque and black, against this fiery mist, seeming to look down with a ridiculous familiarity upon the mysterious conflagration of a world. The few passers-by whom he met on the boulevard strolled along quietly, without raising their heads. Although he knew that when cities are wrapped in night the moist atmosphere often reflects the lights, becoming tinged with this uniform glow, which shines without a flicker, he fancied that he was looking at the reflection of a vast fire. He accepted, without reflection, the idea that Paris was sinking into the abyss of a prodigious conflagration; he found it natural that the private catastrophe in which he had become involved should be merged into a public disaster and that this same night should be for a whole population, as for him! a night of sinister happenings.

Being extremely hungry, he took a cab at the barrier, and had himself driven to a restaurant in the Rue Royale. In the bright, warm room he was conscious of a sense of well-being. After ordering his meal, he opened an evening newspaper and saw, in the Parliamentary report, that his Minister had delivered a speech. On reading it, he smothered a slight laugh; he remembered certain stories told at the Quai d’Orsay. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was enamoured of Madame de Neuilles, an elderly lady with a lurid past, whom public rumour had raised to the status of adventuress and spy. He was wont, it was whispered, to try on her the speeches which he was to deliver in the Chamber. Ligny, who had formerly been to a certain small extent the lover of Madame de Neuilles, pictured to himself the statesman in his shirt reciting to his lady-love the following statement of principles: “Far be it from me to disregard the legitimate susceptibilities of the national sentiment. Resolutely pacific, but jealous of France’s honour, the Government will, etc.” This vision put him in a merry mood. He turned the page, and read: To-morrow at the Odéon, first performance (in this theatre) of *La Nuit du 23 octobre 1812* with Messieurs Durville, Maury, Romilly, Destrée, Vicar, Léon Clim, Valroche, Aman, Chevalier....

CHAPTER VIII

At one o'clock on the following day *La Grille* was in rehearsal, for the first time, in the green-room of the theatre. A dismal light spread like a pall over the grey stones of the roof, the galleries, and the columns. In the depressing majesty of this pallid architecture, beneath the statue of Racine, the leading actors were reading before Pradel, the manager of the house, their parts, which they did not yet know. Romilly, the stage manager, and Constantine Marc, the author of the piece, were all three seated on a red velvet sofa, while, from a bench set back between two columns, was exhaled the vigilant hatred and whispered jealousy of the actresses left out of the cast.

The lover, Paul Delage, was with difficulty deciphering a speech: "I recognize the château with its brick walls, its slated roof; the park, where I have so often entwined her initials and mine on the bark of the trees; the pond whose slumbering waters...."

Fagette rebuked him:

"Beware, Aimeri, lest the château know you not again, lest the park forget your name, lest the pond murmur: 'Who is this stranger?'"

But she had a cold, and was reading from a manuscript copy full of mistakes.

"Don't stand there, Fagette: it's the summer-house," said Romilly.

"How do you expect me to know that?"

"There's a chair put there."

"Lest the pond murmur: 'Who is this stranger?'"

"Mademoiselle Nanteuil, it's your cue — Where has Nanteuil got to? Nanteuil!"

Nanteuil came forward muffled up in her furs, her little bag and her part in her hand, white as a sheet, her eyes sunken, her legs nerveless. When fully awake she had seen the dead man enter her bedroom.

She inquired:

"Where do I make my entrance from?"

"From the right."

"All right."

And she read:

"Cousin, I was so happy when I awoke this morning, I do not know why it was. Can you perhaps tell me?"

Delage read his reply:

“It may be, Cécile, that it was due to a special dispensation of Providence or of fate. The God who loves you suffers you to smile, in the hour of weeping and the gnashing of teeth.”

“Nanteuil, my darling, you cross the stage,” said Romilly. “Delage, stand aside a bit to let her pass.”

Nanteuil crossed over.

“Terrible days, do you say, Aimeri? Our days are what we make them. They are terrible for evil-doers only.”

Romilly interrupted:

“Delage, efface yourself a trifle; be careful not to hide her from the audience. Once more, Nanteuil.”

Nanteuil repeated:

“Terrible days, do you say, Aimeri? Our days are what we make them. They are terrible for evil-doers only.”

Constantin Marc no longer recognized his handiwork, he could no longer even hear the sound of his beloved phrases, which he had so often repeated to himself in the Vivarais woods. Dumbfounded and dazed, he held his peace.

Nanteuil tripped daintily across the stage, and resumed reading her part: “You will perhaps think me very foolish, Aimeri; in the convent where I was brought up, I often used to envy the fate of the victims.”

Delage took up his cue, but he had overlooked a page of the manuscript: “The weather is magnificent. Already the guests are strolling about the garden.”

It became necessary to start all over again.

“Terrible days, do you say, Aimeri....”

And so they proceeded, without troubling to understand, but careful to regulate their movements, as if studying the figures of a dance.

“In the interests of the play, we shall have to make some cuts,” said Pradel to the dismayed author.

And Delage continued:

“Do not blame me, Cécile: I felt for you a friendship dating from childhood, one of those fraternal friendships which impart to the love which springs from them a disquieting appearance of incest.”

“Incest,” shouted Pradel. “You cannot let the word ‘incest’ remain, Monsieur Constantin Marc. The public has susceptibilities of which you have no idea. Moreover, the order of the two speeches which follow must be transposed. The optics of the stage require it.”

The rehearsal was interrupted. Romilly caught sight of Durville who, in a recess, was telling racy stories.

“Durville, you can go. The second act will not be rehearsed to-day.”

Before leaving, the old actor went up to Nanteuil, to press her hand. Judging that this was the moment to assure her of his sympathy, he summoned up the tears to his eyes, as anyone condoling with her would have done in his place. But he did it admirably. The pupils of his eyes swam in their orbits, like the moon amid clouds. The corners of his lips were turned down in two deep furrows which prolonged them to the bottom of his chin. He appeared to be genuinely afflicted.

“My poor darling,” he sighed, “I pity you, I do indeed! To see one for whom one has experienced a — feeling — with whom one has — lived in intimacy — to see him carried off at a blow — a tragic blow — is hard, is terrible!”

And he extended his compassionate hands. Nanteuil, completely unnerved, and crushing her tiny handkerchief and her part in her hands, turned her back upon him, and hissed between her teeth: “Old idiot!”

Fagette passed her arm round her waist, and led her gently aside to the foot of Racine’s statue, where she whispered into her ear: “Listen to me, my dear. This affair must be completely hushed up. Everybody is talking about it. If you let people talk, they will brand you for life as Chevalier’s widow.”

Then, being something of a talker, she added:

“I know you, I am your best friend. I know your value. But beware, Félicie: women are held at their own valuation.”

Every one of Fagette’s shafts told. Nanteuil, with fiery cheeks, held back her tears. Too young to possess or even to desire the prudence which comes to celebrated actresses when of an age to graduate as women of the world of fashion, she was full of self-esteem, and since she had known what it was to love another she was eager to efface everything unfashionable from her past; she felt that Chevalier, in killing himself for her sake, had behaved towards her publicly with a familiarity which made her ridiculous. Still unaware that all things fall into oblivion, and are lost in the swift current of our days, that all our actions flow like the waters of a river, between banks that have no memory, she pondered, irritated and dejected, at the feet of Jean Racine, who understood her grief.

“Just look at her,” said Madame Marie-Claire to young Delage. “She wants to cry. I understand her. A man killed himself for me. I was greatly upset by it. He was a count.”

“Well, begin again!” shouted Pradel. “Come now, Mademoiselle Nanteuil, your cue!”

Whereupon Nanteuil:

““Cousin, I was so happy when I awoke this morning....””

Suddenly, Madame Douce appeared. Ponderous and mournful, she let fall the following words: “I have very sad news. The parish priest will not allow him to enter his church.”

As Chevalier had no relations left other than a sister, a working-woman at Pantin, Madame Douce had undertaken to make arrangements for the funeral at the expense of the members of the company.

They gathered round her. She continued:

“The Church rejects him as though he were accursed! That’s dreadful!”

“Why?” asked Romilly.

Madame Douce replied in a very low tone and as if reluctantly:

“Because he committed suicide.”

“We must see to this,” said Pradel.

Romilly displayed an eager desire to be of service.

“The curé knows me,” he said. “He is a very decent fellow. I’ll just run over to Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, and I’d be greatly surprised if — —”

Madame Douce shook her head sadly:

“All is useless.”

“All the same, we must have a religious service,” said Romilly, with all the authority of a stage-manager.

“Quite so,” said Madame Douce.

Madame Marie-Claire, deeply exercised in her mind, was of opinion that the priests could be compelled to say a Mass.

“Let us keep cool,” said Pradel, caressing his venerable beard. “Under Louis VIII the people broke in the doors of Saint-Roch, which had been closed to the coffin of Mademoiselle Raucourt. We live in other times, and under different circumstances. We must have recourse to gentler methods.”

Constantin Marc, seeing to his great regret that his play was abandoned, had likewise approached Madame Douce; he inquired of her: “Why should you want Chevalier to be blessed by the Church? Personally, I am a Catholic. With me, it is not a faith, it is a system, and I look upon it as a duty to participate in all the external practices of worship. I am on the side of all authorities. I am for the judge, the soldier, the priest. I cannot therefore be suspected of favouring civil burials. But I hardly understand why you persist in offering the curé of Saint-

Étienne-du-Mont a dead body which he repudiates. Now why do you want this unfortunate Chevalier to go to church?"

"Why?" replied Madame Douce. "For the salvation of his soul and because it is more seemly."

"What would be seemly," replied Constantin Marc, "would be to obey the laws of the Church, which excommunicates suicides."

"Monsieur Constantin Marc, have you read *Les Soirées de Neuilly*?" inquired Pradel, who was an ardent collector of old books and a great reader. "What, you have not read *Les Soirées de Neuilly*, by Monsieur de Fongerey? You have missed something. It is a curious book, which can still be met with sometimes on the quays. It is adorned by a lithograph of Henry Monnier's, which is, I don't know why, a caricature of Stendhal. Fongerey is the pseudonym of two Liberals of the Restoration, Dittmer and Cavé. The work consists of comedies and dramas which cannot be acted; but which contain some most interesting scenes representing manners and customs. You will read in it how, in the reign of Charles X, a vicar of one of the Paris churches, the Abbé Mouchaud, would refuse burial to a pious lady, and would, at all costs, grant it to an atheist. Madame d'Hautefeuille was religious, but she held some national property. At her death, she received the ministrations of a Jansenist priest. For this reason, after her death, the Abbé Mouchaud refused to receive her into the church in which she had passed her life. At the same time, in the same parish, Monsieur Dubourg, a big banker, was good enough to die. In his will he stipulated that he should be borne straight to the cemetery. 'He is a Catholic,' reflected the Abbé Mouchaud, 'he belongs to us.' Quickly making a parcel of his stole and surplice, he rushed off to the dead man's house, administered extreme unction, and brought him into his church."

"Well," replied Constantin Marc, "that vicar was an excellent politician. Atheists are not formidable enemies of the Church. They do not count as adversaries. They cannot raise a Church against her, and they do not dream of doing so. Atheists have existed at all times among the heads and princes of the Church, and many of them have rendered signal services to the Papacy. On the other hand, whoever does not submit strictly to ecclesiastical discipline and breaks away from tradition upon a single point, whoever sets up a faith against the faith, an opinion, a practice against the accepted opinion and the common practice, is a factor of disorder, a menace of peril, and must be extirpated. This the vicar, Mouchaud, understood. He should have been made a Cardinal."

Madame Douce, who had been clever enough not to tell everything in a breath, went on to say: "I did not allow myself to be discomfited by the

opposition of Monsieur le Curé. I begged, I entreated. And his answer was: 'We owe respectful obedience to the Ordinary. Go to the Archbishop's Palace. I will do as Monseigneur bids me.' There is nothing left for me but to follow this advice. I'm hurrying off to the Archbishop's Palace."

"Let us get to work," said Pradel.

Romilly called to Nanteuil:

"Nanteuil! Come, Nanteuil, begin your whole scene over again."

And Nanteuil said once more:

"Cousin, I was so happy when I awoke this morning...."

CHAPTER IX

The prominence given by the Press to the suicide of the Boulevard de Villiers rendered the negotiations between the Stage and the Church all the more difficult. The reporters had given the fullest details of the event, and it was pointed out by the Abbé Mirabelle, the Archbishop's second vicar, that to open the doors of the parish church to Chevalier, as matters then stood, was to proclaim that excommunicated persons were entitled to the prayers of the Church.

But for that matter, Monsieur Mirabelle himself, who in this affair displayed great wisdom and circumspection, paved the way to a solution.

"You must fully understand," he observed to Madame Doulce, "that the opinion of the newspapers cannot affect our decision. We are absolutely indifferent to it, and we do not disturb ourselves in the slightest degree, no matter what fifty public sheets may say about the unfortunate young fellow. Whether the journalists have told the truth or distorted it is their affair, not mine. I do not know and I do not wish to know what they have written. But the fact of the suicide is notorious. You cannot dispute it. It would now be advisable to investigate closely, and by the light of science, the circumstances in which the deed was committed. Do not be surprised by my thus invoking the aid of science. Science has no better friend than religion. Now medical science may in the present case be of great assistance to us. You will understand in a moment. Mother Church ejects the suicide from her bosom only when his act is an act of despair. The madmen who attempt their own lives are not those who have lost all hope, and the Church does not deny them her prayers; she prays for all who are unfortunate. Now, if it could be proved that this poor boy had acted under the influence of a high fever or of a mental disorder, if a medical man were in a position to certify that the poor fellow was not in possession of his faculties when he slew himself with his own hand, there would be no obstacle to the celebration of a religious service."

Having hearkened to the words of Monsieur l'Abbé Mirabelle, Madame Doulce hastened back to the theatre. The rehearsal of *La Grille* was over. She found Pradel in his office with a couple of young actresses, one of whom was soliciting an engagement, the other, leave of absence. He refused, in conformity with his principle never to grant a request until he had first refused it. In this way he bestowed a value upon his most trifling concessions. His glistening eyes and his patriarchal beard, his manner, at once amorous and paternal, gave him a

resemblance to Lot, as we see him between his two daughters in the prints of the Old Masters. Standing on the table was an amphora of gilt pasteboard which fostered this illusion.

"It can't be done," he was telling each of them. "It really can't be done, my child — Well, after all, look in to-morrow."

Having dismissed them, he inquired, as he signed some letters:

"Well, Madame Doulice, what news do you bring?"

Constantin Marc, appearing with Nanteuil, hastily exclaimed:

"What about my scenery, Monsieur Pradel?"

Thereupon he described for the twentieth time the landscape, upon which the curtain ought to rise.

"In the foreground, an old park. The trunks of the great trees, on the north side, are green with moss. The dampness of the soil must be felt."

And the manager replied:

"You may rest assured that everything that can be done will be done, and that it will be most appropriate. Well, Madame Doulice, what news?"

"There is a glimmer of hope," she replied.

"At the back, in a slight mist," said the author, "the grey stones and the slate roofs of the Abbaye-aux-Dames."

"Quite so. Pray be seated, Madame Doulice; you have my attention."

"I was most courteously received at the Archbishop's Palace," said Madame Doulice.

"Monsieur Pradel, it is imperative that the walls of the Abbaye should appear inscrutable, of great thickness, and yet subtilized by the mists of coming night. A pale-gold sky — —"

"Monsieur l'Abbé Mirabelle," resumed Madame Doulice, "is a priest of the highest distinction — —"

"Monsieur Marc, are you particularly keen on your pale-gold sky?" inquired the stage manager. "Go on, Madame Doulice, go on, I am listening to you."

"And exquisitely polite. He made a delicate allusion to the indiscretions of the newspapers — —"

At this moment Monsieur Marchegeay, the stage manager, burst into the room. His green eyes were glittering, and his red moustache was dancing like a flame. The words rolled off his tongue:

"They are at it again! Lydie, the little super, is screaming like a stoat on the stairs. She says Delage tried to violate her. It's at least the tenth time in a month that she has come out with that story. This is an infernal nuisance!"

“Such conduct cannot be tolerated in a house like this,” said Pradel. “You’ll have to fine Delage. Pray continue, Madame Doulice.”

“Monsieur l’Abbé Mirabelle explained to me in the clearest manner that suicide is an act of despair.”

But Constantin Marc was inquiring of Pradel with interest, whether Lydie, the little super, was pretty.

“You have seen her in *La Nuit du 23 octobre* ; she plays the woman of the people who, in the Plaine de Grenelle, is buying wafers of Madame Ravaud.”

“A very pretty girl, to my thinking,” said Constantin Marc.

“Undoubtedly,” responded Pradel. “But she would be still prettier if her ankles weren’t like stakes.”

And Constantin Marc musingly replied.

“And Delage has outraged her. That fellow possesses the sense of love. Love is a simple and primitive act. It’s a struggle, it’s hatred. Violence is necessary to it. Love by mutual consent is merely a tedious obligation.”

And he cried, greatly excited.

“Delage is prodigious!”

“Don’t get yourself into a fix,” said Pradel.

“This same little Lydie entices my actors into her dressing-room, and then all of a sudden she screams out that she is being outraged in order to get hush-money out of them. It’s her lover who has taught her the trick, and takes the coin. You were saying, Madame Doulice — —”

“After a long and interesting conversation,” resumed Madame Doulice, “Monsieur l’Abbé Mirabelle suggested a favourable solution. He gave me to understand that, in order to remove all difficulties, it would be sufficient for a physician to certify that Chevalier was not in full possession of his faculties, and that he was not responsible for his acts.”

“But,” observed Pradel, “Chevalier wasn’t insane. He was in full possession of his faculties.”

“It’s not for us to say,” replied Madame Doulice. “What do we know about it?”

“No,” said Nanteuil, “he was not in full possession of his faculties.”

Pradel shrugged his shoulders.

“After all, it’s possible. Insanity and reason, it’s a matter of appreciation. To whom could we apply for a certificate?”

Madame Doulice and Pradel called to mind three physicians in succession; but they were unable to find the address of the first; the second was bad-tempered, and it was decided that the third was dead.

Nanteuil suggested that they should approach Dr. Trublet.

"That's an idea!" exclaimed Pradel. "Let us ask a certificate of Dr. Socrates. What's to-day? Friday. It's his day for consultations. We shall find him at home."

Dr. Trublet lived in an old house at the top of the Rue de Seine. Pradel took Nanteuil with him, with the idea that Socrates would refuse nothing to a pretty woman. Constantin Marc, who could not live, when in Paris, save in the company of theatrical folk, accompanied them. The Chevalier affair was beginning to amuse him. He found it theatrical, that is, appropriate to theatrical performers. Although the hour for consultations was over, the doctor's sitting-room was still full of people in search of healing. Trublet dismissed them, and received his theatrical friends in his private room. He was standing in front of a table encumbered with books and papers. An adjustable arm-chair, infirm and cynical, displayed itself by the window. The director of the Odéon set forth the object of his call, and ended by saying:

"Chevalier's funeral service cannot be celebrated in the church unless you certify that the unfortunate young man was not altogether sane."

Dr. Trublet declared that Chevalier might very well do without a religious service.

"Adrienne Lecouvreur, who was of more account than Chevalier, did without one. Mademoiselle Monime had no Mass said for her after her death, and, as you are aware, she was denied 'the honour of rotting in a nasty cemetery in the company of all the beggars of the quarter.' She was none the worse off for that."

"You are not ignorant of the fact, Dr. Socrates," replied Pradel, "that actors and actresses are the most religious of people. My company would be deeply grieved if they could not be present at the celebration of a Mass for their colleague. They have already secured the co-operation of several lyric artists, and the music will be very fine."

"Now that's a reason," said Trublet "I do not gainsay it. Charles Monselet, who was a witty fellow, was reflecting, only a few hours before his death, on his musical Mass, 'I know a great many singers at the Opéra,' he said, 'I shall have a *Pie Jésus aux truffes*.' But, as on this occasion the Archbishop does not authorize a spiritual concert, it would be more convenient to postpone it to some other occasion."

"As far as I am concerned," replied the director, "I have no religious belief. But I consider that the Church and the Stage are two great social powers, and that it is beneficial that they should be friends and allies. For my own part, I

never lose an opportunity of sealing the alliance. This coming Lent, I shall have Durville read one of Bourdaloue's sermons. I receive a State subsidy. I must observe the Concordat. Moreover, whatever people may say, Catholicism is the most acceptable form of religious indifference."

"Well then," objected Constantin Marc, "since you wish to show deference to the Church, why do you foist upon her, by force or by subterfuge, a coffin which she doesn't want?"

The doctor spoke in a similar strain, and ended by saying.

"My dear Pradel, don't you have anything more to do with the matter."

"Whereupon Nanteuil, her eyes blazing, her voice sibilant, cried:

"He must go to church, doctor; sign what is asked of you, write that he was not in possession of his faculties, I entreat you."

There was not religion alone at the back of this desire. Blended with it was an intimate feeling, an obscure background of old beliefs, of which she herself was unaware. She hoped that if he were carried into the church, and sprinkled with holy water, Chevalier would be appeased, would become one of the peaceful dead, and would no longer torment her. She feared, on the other hand, that if he were deprived of benediction and prayers he would perpetually hover about her, accursed and maleficent. And, more simply still, in her dread of seeing him again, she was anxious that the priests should take good care to bury him, and that everybody should attend the funeral, so that he should be all the more thoroughly buried; as thoroughly buried, in short, as it was possible to be. Her lips trembled and she wrung her hands.

Trublet, who had long graduated in human nature, watched her with interest. He understood and took a special interest in the female of the human machine. This particular specimen filled him with joy. His snub-nosed face beamed with delight as he watched her.

"Don't be uneasy, child. There is always a way of coming to an understanding with the Church. What you are asking me is not within my powers; I am a lay doctor. But we have to-day, thank God, religious physicians who send their patients to the ecclesiastical waters, and whose special function is to attest miraculous cures. I know one who lives in this part of the town; I'll give you his address. Go and see him; the Bishop will refuse him nothing. He will arrange the matter for you."

"Not at all," said Pradel. "You always attended poor Chevalier. It is for you to give a certificate."

Romilly agreed:

“Of course, doctor. You are the physician to the theatre. We must wash our dirty linen at home.”

At the same time, Nanteuil turned upon Socrates a gaze of entreaty.

“But,” objected Trublet, “what do you want me to say?”

“It’s very simple,” Pradel replied. “Say that he was to a certain extent irresponsible.”

“You are simply asking me to speak like a police surgeon. It’s expecting too much of me.”

“You believe then, doctor, that Chevalier was fully and entirely morally responsible?”

“Quite the contrary. I am of opinion that he was not in the least responsible for his actions.”

“Well, then?”

“But I also consider that, in this respect, he differed in nowise from you, myself, and all other men. My judicial colleagues distinguish between individual responsibilities. They have procedures by which they recognize full responsibilities, and those which lack one or more fractional parts. It is a remarkable fact, moreover, that in order to get a poor wretch condemned they always find him fully responsible. May we not therefore consider that their own responsibility is full — like the moon?”

And Dr. Socrates proceeded to unfold before the astonished stage folk a comprehensive theory of universal determinism. He went back to the origins of life, and, like the Silenus of Virgil, who, smeared with the juice of mulberries, sang to the shepherds of Sicily and the naiad Aglaia of the origin of the world, he broke out into a flood of words:

“To call upon a poor wretch to answer for his actions! Why, even when the solar system was still no more than a pale nebula, forming, in the ether, a fragile halo, whose circumference was a thousand times greater than the orbit of Neptune, we had all of us, for ages past, been fully conditioned, determined and irrevocably destined, and your responsibility, my dear child, my responsibility, Chevalier’s, and that of all men, had been, not mitigated, but abolished beforehand. All our movements, the result of previous movements of matter, are subject to the laws which govern the cosmic forces, and the human mechanism is merely a particular instance of the universal mechanism.”

Pointing to a locked cupboard, he proceeded.

“I have there, contained in bottles, that which would transform, destroy, or excite to frenzy the will of fifty thousand men.”

“Wouldn’t be playing the game,” objected Pradel.

"I agree, it wouldn't be playing the game. But these substances are not essentially laboratory products. The laboratory combines, it does not create anything. These substances are scattered throughout nature. In their free state, they surround and enter into us, they determine our will, they circumscribe our freedom of device, which is merely the illusion engendered within us by the ignorance of our determinations."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked Pradel, taken aback.

"I mean that our will is an illusion caused by our ignorance of the causes which compel us to exert our will. That which wills within us is not ourselves, but myriads of cells of prodigious activity, of which we know nothing, which are unaware of us, which are ignorant of one another, but which nevertheless constitute us. By means of their restlessness they produce innumerable currents which we call our passions, our thoughts, our joys, our sufferings, our desires, our fears, and our will. We believe that we are our own masters, while a mere drop of alcohol stimulates, and then benumbs the very elements by which we feel and will."

Constantin Marc interrupted the physician:

"Excuse me! Since you are speaking of the action of alcohol, I should like your advice on the subject. I am in the habit of drinking a small glass of Armagnac brandy after each meal. That's not too much, is it?"

"It's a great deal too much. Alcohol is a poison. If you have a bottle of brandy at home, fling it out of the window."

Pradel was pondering. He considered that in suppressing will and responsibility in all human things Dr. Socrates was doing him a personal injury.

"You may say what you like. Will and responsibility are not illusions. They are tangible and powerful realities. I know how the terms of my contract bind me, and I impose my will on others."

And he added with some bitterness:

"I believe in the will, in moral responsibility, in the distinction between good and evil. Doubtless these are, according to you, stupid ideas."

"They are indeed stupid ideas," replied the physician, "but they are very suitable to us, since we are mere animals. We are for ever forgetting this. They are stupid, venerable, wholesome ideas. Men have felt that, without these ideas, they would all go mad. They had only the choice between stupidity and madness. Very reasonably they chose stupidity. Such is the foundation of moral ideas."

"What a paradox!" exclaimed Romilly.

The physician calmly proceeded:

“The distinction between good and evil in human societies has never emerged from the grossest empiricism. It was constituted in a wholly practical spirit and as a simple convenience. We do not trouble ourselves about it where cut-glass or a tree is concerned. We practise moral indifference with regard to animals. We practise it in the case of savage races. This enables us to exterminate them without remorse. That’s what is known as the colonial policy. Nor do we find that believers exact a high degree of morality from their god. In the present state of society, they would not willingly admit that he was lecherous or compromised himself with women; but they do think it fitting that he should be vindictive and cruel. Morality is a mutual agreement to keep what we possess: land, houses, furniture, women, and our lives. It does not imply, in the case of those who bow to it, any particular intelligence or character. It is instinctive and ferocious. Written law follows it closely, and is in more or less harmonious agreement with it. Hence we see that great-hearted men, or men of brilliant genius, have almost all been accused of impiety, and, like Socrates, the son of Phenaretes, and Benoît Malon, have been smitten by the tribunals of their country. And it may be stated that a man who has not, at the very least, been sentenced to imprisonment does little credit to the land of his fathers.”

“There are exceptions,” remarked Pradel.

“Few,” replied Dr. Trublet.

But Nanteuil, pursuing her idea, remarked.

“My little Socrates, you can very well certify that he was insane. It is the truth. He was not sane, I know it only too well.”

“No doubt he was mad, my dear child. But it is a question of determining whether he was madder than other men. The entire history of humanity, replete with tortures, ecstasies, and massacres, is the history of raving, demented creatures.”

“Doctor,” inquired Constantin Marc, “are you by chance one of those who do not admire War? It is nevertheless a magnificent thing, when you come to think of it. The animals merely eat one another. Men have conceived the idea of beautiful massacres. They have learnt to kill one another in glittering cuirasses, in helmets topped with plumes, or maned with scarlet. By the use of artillery, and the art of fortification, they have introduced chemistry and mathematics among the necessary means of destruction. War is a sublime invention. And, since the extermination of human beings appears to us the only object of life, the wisdom of man resides in this, that he has made this extermination a delight and a splendour. After all, doctor, you cannot deny that murder is a law of nature, and that it is consequently divine.”

To which Dr. Socrates replied:

“We are only miserable animals, and yet we are our own providence and our own gods. The lower animals, whose immemorial reign preceded our own upon this planet, have transformed it by their genius and their courage. The insects have traced roads, excavated the soil, hollowed the trunks of trees and rocks, built dwellings, founded cities, metamorphosed the soil, the air, and the waters. The labour of the humblest of these, that of the madrepores, has created islands and continents. Every material change produces a moral change, since morals depend upon environment. The transformation to which man in his turn has subjected the earth is undoubtedly more profound and more harmonious than the transformation wrought by other animals. Why should not humanity succeed in changing nature to the extent of making it pacific? Why should not humanity, miserably puny though it is and will be, succeed, some day, in suppressing, or at least in controlling the struggle for life? Why indeed should not humanity abolish the law of murder? We may expect a great deal from chemistry. Yet I do not guarantee anything. It is possible that our race will persist in melancholy, delirium, mania, dementia, and stupor until its lamentable end amid ice and darkness. This world is perhaps irremediably wicked. At all events, I shall have got plenty of amusement out of it. It affords those who are in it an interesting spectacle, and I am beginning to think that Chevalier was madder than the rest in that he voluntarily left his seat.”

Nanteuil took a pen from the desk, and held it out, dipped in ink, to the doctor.

He began to write:

“Having been called on several occasions to attend — —”

He interrupted himself to ask Chevalier’s Christian name.

“Aimé,” replied Nanteuil.

“Aimé Chevalier, I have noticed in his system certain disorders of sensibility, vision and motor control, ordinary indications of — —”

He went to fetch a book from a shelf of his library.

“It’s a thousand chances that I shall find something to confirm my diagnosis in the lectures of Professor Ball on mental diseases.”

He turned over the leaves of the book.

“Just see, my dear Romilly, this is what I find to begin with; in the eighteenth lecture, page 389: ‘Many madmen are to be met with among actors.’ This remark of Professor Ball’s reminds me that the celebrated Cabanis one day asked Dr. Esprit Blanche whether the stage was not a cause of madness.”

“Really?” asked Romilly uneasily.

“Not a doubt of it,” replied Trublet. “But listen to what Professor Ball says on the same page. ‘It is an incontestable fact that medical men are excessively

predisposed to mental aberration.' Nothing is truer. Among medical men, those who are more especially predestined to insanity are the alienists. It is often difficult to determine which of the two is the crazier, the madman or his doctor. People say too that men of genius are prone to insanity. That is certainly the case. Still, a man is not a reasoning being merely because he is an idiot."

After glancing a little further through the pages of Professor Ball's lectures, he resumed his writing:

"Ordinary indications of maniacal excitement, and, if it be taken into consideration that the subject was of a neuropathic temperament, there is reason to believe that his constitution predisposed him to insanity, which, according to the highest authorities, is merely an exaggeration of the habitual temperament of the individual, and hence it is not possible to credit him with full moral responsibility."

He signed the sheet and handed it to Pradel, saying:

"Here's something that is innocuous and too devoid of meaning to contain the slightest falsehood."

Pradel rose and said:

"Believe me, my dear doctors we should not have asked you to tell a lie."

"Why not? I am a medical man. I keep a lie-shop. I relieve, I console. How is it possible to relieve and console without lying?"

Then, with a sympathetic glance at Nanteuil; he added:

"Only women and physicians know how necessary untruthfulness is, and how beneficial to man."

And, as Pradel, Constantin Mate, and Romilly were taking their leave, he said:

"Pray go out by the dining-room. I've just received a small cask of old Armagnac. You'll tell me what you think of it!"

Nanteuil had remained behind in the doctor's consulting room.

"My little Socrates, I have spent an awful night. I saw him."

"During your sleep?"

"No, when wide awake."

"You are sure you were not sleeping?"

"Quite sure."

He was on the point of asking her if the apparition had spoken to her. But he left the question unspoken, fearing lest he might suggest to so sensitive a subject those hallucinations of the sense of hearing, which, by reason of their imperious nature, he dreaded far more than visual hallucinations. He was familiar with the docility of the sick in obeying orders given them by voices. Abandoning the idea

of questioning Félicie, he resolved, at all hazards, to remove any scruples of conscience which might be troubling her. At the same time, having observed that, generally speaking, the sense of moral responsibility is weak in women, he made no great effort in that direction, and contented himself with remarking lightly:

“My dear child, you must not consider yourself responsible for the death of that poor fellow. A suicide inspired by passion is the inevitable termination of a pathological condition. Every individual who commits suicide had to commit suicide. You are merely the incidental cause of an accident, which is, of course, deplorable, but the importance of which should not be exaggerated.”

Thinking that he had said enough on this score, he applied himself immediately to dispersing the terrors which surrounded her. He sought to convince her by simple arguments that she was beholding images which had no reality, mere reflections of her own thoughts. In order to illustrate his demonstration, he told her a story of a reassuring nature.

“An English physician,” he told her, “was attending a lady, like yourself, highly intelligent, who, like yourself, was in the habit of seeing cats under her furniture, and was visited by phantoms. He convinced her that these apparitions corresponded to nothing in reality. She believed him, and worried herself no longer. One fine day, after a long period of retirement, she reappeared in society, and on entering a drawing-room she saw the lady of the house who, pointing to an arm-chair, begged her to be seated. She also saw, seated in this chair, a crafty-looking old gentleman. She argued to herself that one of the two persons was necessarily a creature of the imagination, and, deciding that the gentleman had no real existence, she sat down on the arm-chair. On touching the bottom, she drew a long breath. From that day onward, she never again set eyes on any further phantoms, either of man or of beast. When smothering the crafty-looking old gentleman, she had smothered them all — fundamentally.”

Félicie shook her head, saying:

“That does not apply to this case.”

She meant to say that her own phantom was not a grotesque old man, on whom one could sit, but a jealous dead man who did not pay her visits without some object. But she feared to speak of these things; and, letting her hands fall upon her knees, she held her peace.

Seeing her thus, dejected and crushed, he pointed out that these disorders of the vision were neither rare nor very serious, and that they soon vanished without leaving any traces.

“I myself,” he said, “once had a vision.”

“You?”

“Yes, I had a vision, some twenty years ago. It was in Egypt.”

He noticed that she was looking at him inquiringly, so he began the story of his hallucination, having switched on all the electric lights, in order to disperse the phantoms of darkness.

“In the days when I was practising in Cairo, I was accustomed, in the February of each year, to go up the Nile as far as Luxor, and thence I proceeded, in company with some friends, to visit the tombs and temples in the desert. These trips across the sands are made on donkey-back. The last time I went to Luxor I hired a young donkey-boy, whose white donkey Rameses was stronger than the others. This donkey-boy, whose name was Selim, was also stronger, slenderer, and better looking than the other donkey-boys. He was fifteen years old. His shy, gentle eyes shone from behind a magnificent veil of long black lashes; his brown face was a pure clear-cut oval. He tramped barefoot through the desert with a step which made one think of those dances of warriors of which the Bible speaks. His every movement was graceful; his young animal-like gaiety was charming. As he prodded Rameses’ back with the point of his stick, he would chatter to me in a limited vocabulary in which English, French and Arabic were intermingled; he enjoyed telling me of the travellers whom he had escorted and who, he believed, were all princes or princesses; but if I asked him about his relations or his companions he remained silent, and assumed an air of indifference and boredom. When cadging for a promise of substantial baksheesh, the nasal twang of his voice assumed caressing inflexions. He thought out subtle stratagems and expended whole treasuries of prayers in order to obtain a cigarette. Noticing that I liked to see the donkey-boys treat their beasts with kindness, he used, in my presence, to kiss Rameses on the nostrils, and when we halted he would waltz with him. He often displayed real ingenuity in getting what he wanted. But he was far too short-sighted ever to show the slightest gratitude for what he had obtained. Greedy of piastres, he coveted still more eagerly such small glittering articles as one cannot keep covered — gold scarf-pins, rings, sleeve-links, or nickel cigar-lighters; and when he saw a gold chain his face would light up with a gleam of pleasure.

“The following summer was the hardest time of my life. An epidemic of cholera had broken out in Lower Egypt. I was running about the town all day long in a scorching atmosphere. Cairo summers are overpowering to Europeans. We were going through the hottest weeks I had ever known. I heard one day that Selim, brought before the native court of Cairo, had been sentenced to death. He had murdered the daughter of some fellaheen, a little girl nine years old, in order to rob her of her ear-rings, and had thrown her into a cistern. The rings, stained with blood, had been found under a big stone in the Valley of the Kings. They

were the crude jewels which the Nubian nomads hammer out of shillings or two-franc pieces, I was told that Selim would certainly be hanged, because the little girl's mother refused the tendered blood-money. Now, the Khedive does not enjoy the prerogative of mercy, and the murderer, according to Moslem law, can redeem his life only if the parents of the victim consent to receive from him a sum of money as compensation. I was too busy to give thought to the matter. I could readily imagine that Selim, cunning but thoughtless, caressing yet unfeeling, had played with the little girl, torn off her ear-rings, killed her, and hidden her body. The affair soon passed out of my mind. The epidemic was spreading from Old Cairo to the European quarters. I was visiting from thirty to forty sick persons daily, practising venous injections in every case. I was suffering from liver trouble, anæmia was playing havoc with me, and I was dropping with fatigue. In order to husband my strength, I took a little rest at noon. I was accustomed, after luncheon, to lie down in the inner courtyard of my house, and there for an hour I bathed myself in the African shade, as dense and cool as water. One day, as I was lying there on a divan in my courtyard, just as I was lighting a cigarette, I saw Selim approaching. With his beautiful bronze arm he lifted the door-curtain, and came towards me in his blue robe. He did not speak, but smiled with his shy and innocent smile, and the deep red of his lips disclosed his dazzling teeth. His eyes, beneath the blue shadow of his eyelashes, shone with covetousness while gazing at my watch which lay on the table.

"I thought he had escaped. And this surprised me, not because captives are strictly watched in Oriental prisons, where men, women, horses and dogs are herded in imperfectly closed courtyards, and guarded by a soldier armed with a stick. But Moslems are never tempted to flee from their fate. Selim knelt down with an appealing grace, and approached his lips to my hand, to kiss it according to ancient custom. I was not asleep, and I had proof of it. I also had proof that the apparition had been before me only for a short time. When Selim had vanished I noticed that my cigarette, which was alight, was not yet tipped with ash."

"Was he dead when you saw him?" asked Nanteuil.

"Not a bit of it," replied the doctor, "I heard a few days later that Selim, in his jail, wove little baskets, or played for hours at a time with a chaplet of glass balls, and that he would smilingly beg a piastre of European visitors, who were surprised by the caressing softness of his eyes. Moslem justice is slow. He was hanged six months later. No one, not even he himself, was greatly concerned about it. I was in Europe at the time."

"And since then he has never reappeared?"

"Never."

Nanteuil looked at him, disappointed.

“I thought he had come when he was dead. But since he was in prison you certainly could not have seen him in your house. You only thought you saw him.”

The physician, understanding what was in Félicie’s mind, quickly replied:

“My dear little Nanteuil, believe what I tell you. The phantoms of the dead have no more reality than the phantoms of the living.”

Without attending to what he was saying, she asked him if it was really because he suffered from his liver that he had a vision. He replied that he believed that the bad state of his digestive organs, general fatigue, and a tendency to congestion, had all predisposed him to behold an apparition.

“There was; I believe,” he added, “a more immediate cause. Stretched out on my divan, my head was very low. I raised it to light a cigarette, and let it fall back immediately. This attitude is particularly favourable to hallucinations. It is sometimes enough to lie down with one’s head thrown back to see and to hear imaginary shapes and sounds. That is why I advise you, my child, to sleep with a bolster and a fat pillow.”

She began to laugh.

“As mamma does — majestically!”

Then, flitting off to another idea:

“Tell me; Socrates, how comes it that you saw this sordid individual rather than another? You had hired a donkey from him, and you were no longer thinking of him. And yet he came. Say what you like, it’s queer.”

“You ask me why it was he rather than another? It would be very hard for me to tell you. Our visions, bound up with our innermost thoughts, often present their images to us; sometimes there is no connection between them, and they show us an unexpected figure.”

He once more exhorted her not to allow herself to be frightened by phantoms.

“The dead do not return. When one of them appears to you, rest assured that what you see is a thing imagined by your brain.”

“Can you,” she inquired; “guarantee that there is nothing after death?”

“My child, there is nothing after death that could frighten you.”

She rose, picked up her little bag and her part, and held out her hand to the doctor, saying:

“As for you, you don’t believe in anything, do you, old Socrates?”

He detained her for a moment in the waiting-room, warned her to take good care of herself, to lead a quiet, restful life, and to take sufficient rest.

“Do you suppose that is easy in our profession? To-morrow I have a rehearsal in the green-room, and one on the stage, and I have to try on a gown, while to-

night I am acting. For more than a year now I've been leading that sort of life."

CHAPTER X

Under the great void reserved by the height of the roof for the upward flight of prayers the motley crowd of human beings was huddled together like a flock of sheep.

They were all there, at the foot of the catafalque surrounded by lights and covered with flowers, Durville, old Maury, Delage, Vicar, Destrée, Léon Clim, Valrosche, Aman, Regnard, Pradel, Romilly, and Marchegeay, the manager. They were all there, Madame Ravaud, Madame Doulce, Ellen Midi, Duvernet, Herschell, Falempin, Stella, Marie-Claire, Louise Dalle, Fagette, Nanteuil, kneeling, robed in black, like elegiac figures. Some of the women were reading their missals. Some were weeping. All of them brought to the coffin of their comrade at least the tribute of their heavy eyes and their faces pallid from the cold of the morning. Journalists, actors, playwrights, whole families of those artisans who gain their living by the theatre, and a crowd of curious onlookers filled the nave.

The choristers were uttering the mournful cries of the *Kyrie eleison* ; the priest kissed the altar; turned towards the people and said:

“Dominus vobiscum.”

Romilly; taking in the crowd at a glance, remarked

“Chevalier has a full house.”

“Just look at that Louise Dalle,” said Fagette. “To look as though she’s in mourning, she has put on a black mackintosh!”

A little to the back of the church, with Pradel and Constantin Marc, Dr. Trublet was, in subdued tones, according to his habit, delivering his moral homilies.

“Observe,” he said, “that they are lighting, on the altar and about the coffin, in the guise of wax candles, diminutive night-lights mounted on billiard cues, and are thereby making an offering of lamp oil instead of virgin wax to the Lord. The pious men who dwell in the sanctuary have at all times been proved to defraud their God by these little deceptions. This observation is not my own; it is, I believe, Renan’s.”

The celebrant, standing on the epistle side of the altar, was reciting in a low voice:

“Nolumus autem vos ignorare fratres de dormientibus, ut non contrisemimi, sicut et cæteri qui spem non habent.”

“Who is taking the part of Florentin?” inquired Durville of Romilly.

“Regnard: he’ll be no worse in it than Chevalier.”

Pradel plucked Trublet by the sleeve, and said:

“Dr. Socrates, I beg you to tell me whether as a scientific man, as a physiologist, you see any serious objections to the immortality of the soul?”

He asked the question as a busy and practical man in need of personal information.

“You are doubtless aware, my dear friend,” replied Trublet, “what Cyrano’s bird said on this very subject. One day Cyrano de Bergerac heard two birds conversing in a tree. One of them said, ‘The souls of birds are immortal,’ ‘There can be no doubt of it,’ replied the other. ‘But it is inconceivable that beings who possess neither bill nor feathers, who have no wings and walk on two legs, should believe that they, like the birds, have an immortal soul.’”

“All the same,” said Pradel, “when I hear the organ, I am chock-full of religious ideas.”

“*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine.*”

The celebrated author of *La Nuit du 23 octobre 1812* appeared in the church, and no sooner had he done so than he was everywhere at one and the same moment — in the nave, under the porch, and in the choir. Like the *Diable boiteux* he must, bestriding his crutch, have soared above the heads of the congregation, to pass as he did in the twinkling of an eye from Morlot, the deputy, who, being a freethinker, had remained in the parvis, to Marie-Claire kneeling at the foot of the catafalque.

At one and at the same moment he whispered into the ears of all a few nimble phrases:

“Pradel, can you imagine this fellow going and chucking his part, an excellent part, and running off to kill himself? A pumpkin-headed fool! Blows out his brains just two days before the first night. Compels us to replace him and sets us back a week. What an imbecile! A rotten bad egg. But we must do him justice; he could jump, and jump well, the animal. Well, my dear Romilly, we rehearse the new man to-day at two o’clock. See to it that Regnard has the script of his part, and that he knows how to climb on to the roof. Let us hope he won’t kick the bucket on our hands like Chevalier. What if he, too, were to commit suicide! You needn’t laugh. There’s an evil spell on certain parts. Thus, in my *Marino Falieri*, the gondolier Sandro breaks his arm at the dress rehearsal. I am given another Sandro. He sprains his ankle on the first night. I am given a third, he contracts typhoid fever. My little Nanteuil, I’ll entrust you with a magnificent

rôle to create when you get to the Français. But I have sworn by the great gods that I'll never again have a single play performed in this theatre."

And immediately, under the little door which shuts off the choir on the right hand side of the altar, showing his friends Racine's epitaph, which is let into the wall, like a Parisian thoroughly conversant with the antiquities of his city, he recalled the history of this stone, he told them how the poet had been buried in accordance with his desire at Port-Royal-des-Champs, at the foot of Monsieur Hamon's grave, and that, after the destruction of the abbey and the violation of the tombs, the body of Messire Jean Racine, the King's secretary, Groom of the Chamber, had been transferred, all unhonoured; to Saint-Étienne-du-Mont. And he told how the tombstone, bearing the inscription composed for Boileau, beneath the knight's crest and the shield with its swan argent, and done into Latin by Monsieur Dodart, had served as a flagstone in the choir of the little church of Magny-Lessart; where it had been discovered in 1808.

"There it is," he added. "It was broken in six pieces and the name of Racine was effaced by the shoes of the peasants. The fragments were pieced together and the missing letters carved anew."

On this subject he expatiated with his customary vivacity and diffusiveness, drawing from his prodigious memory a multitude of curious facts and amusing anecdotes, breathing life into history and endowing archæology with a living interest. His admiration and his wrath burst forth in swift and violent alternation in the solemnity of the church, and amid the pomp of the ceremony.

"I would give something to know, for instance, who were the stupid bunglers who set this stone in the wall. *Hic jacet nobilis vir Johannes Racine*. It is not true! They make honest Boileau's epitaph lie. The body of Racine is not in this spot. It was laid to rest in the third chapel on the left, as you enter. What idiots!" Then, suddenly calm, he pointed to Pascal's tombstone.

"That came here from the museum of the Petits-Augustins. No praise can be too great for Lenoir, who, in the days of the Revolution, collected and preserved."

Thereupon, he improvised a second lecture on lapidary archæology, even more brilliant than the first, transformed the history of Pascal's life into a terrible yet amusing drama, and vanished. In all, he had remained in the church for the space of ten minutes.

Over those heads full of worldly cares and profane desires the *Dies iræ* rumbled like a storm:

*“Mors stupebit et natura,
Quum resurget creatura
Judicanti responsura.”*

“Tell me, Dutil, how could that little Nanteuil, who is pretty and intelligent, get herself mixed up with a dirty mummer like Chevalier?”

“Your ignorance of the feminine heart surprises me.”

“Herschell was prettier when she was a brunette.”

*“Qui Mariam absolvisti
Et latronem exaudisti
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.”*

“I must be off to lunch.”

“Do you know anyone who knows the Minister?”

“Durville is a has-been. He blows like a grampus.”

“Put me in a little paragraph about Marie Falempin. I can tell you she was simply delicious in *Les Trois Magots* .”

*“Inter oves locum presta
Et ab hædis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.”*

“So then, it is for Nanteuil’s sake that he blew out his brains? A little ninny who isn’t worth spanking!”

The celebrant poured the wine and the water into the chalice, saying:

“Deus qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti....”

“Is it really true, doctor, that he killed himself because Nanteuil wouldn’t have any more to do with him?”

“He killed himself,” replied Trublet, “because she loved another. The obsession of genetic images frequently determines mania and melancholia.”

“You don’t understand second-rate actors, Dr. Socrates,” said Pradel. “He killed himself to cause a sensation, and for no other reason.”

“It’s not only second-rate actors,” said Constantin Marc, “who suffer from an uncontrollable desire to attract attention to themselves at whatever cost. Last year, in the place where I live, Saint-Bartholomé, while a threshing-machine was at work, a thirteen-year-old boy shoved his arm into the gear; it was crushed up to the shoulder. The surgeon who amputated it asked him, as he was dressing the

stump, why he mutilated himself like that. The boy confessed that it was to draw attention to himself.”

Meanwhile, Nanteuil, with dry eyes and pursed lips, had fixed her eyes upon the black cloth with which the catafalque was covered, and was impatiently waiting until enough holy water, candles and Latin prayers should be bestowed upon the dead man for him to depart in peace. She had seen him again the night before, and she thought he had returned because the priests had not yet bidden him to rest in peace. Then, reflecting that one day she, too, would die, and would, like him, be laid in a coffin, beneath a black pall, she shuddered with horror and closed her eyes. The idea of life was so strong within her that she pictured death as a hideous life. Afraid of death, she prayed for a long life. Kneeling, with bowed head, the voluptuous ashen cloud of her buoyant hair falling over her forehead, she, a profane penitent, was reading in her prayer-book words which reassured her, although she did not understand them.

“Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful dead from the pains of hell and from the depths of the bottomless pit. Deliver them from the lion’s jaws. Let them not be plunged into hell, and let them not fall into the outer darkness, but suffer that St. Michael, the Prince of Angels, lead them to the holy light promised by Thee to Abraham and to his posterity.”

At the Elevation of the Host the congregation, permeated by a vague impression that the mystery was becoming more sacred, ceased its private conversations, and assumed a certain appearance of reverent devotion. And as the organ fell silent all heads were bowed at the tinkling of a little bell which was shaken by a child. Then, after the last Gospel, when, the service being over, the priest, attended by his acolytes, approached the catafalque to the chanting of the *Libera*, a sense of relief was experienced by the crowd, and they began to jostle one another a little in order to file past the coffin. The women, whose piety, grief and contrition were contingent upon their immobility and their kneeling posture, were at once recalled to their customary frame of mind by the movement and the encounters of the procession. They exchanged amongst themselves and with the men remarks relating to their profession.

“Do you know,” said Ellen Midi to Falempin, “that Nanteuil is going to join the Comédie-Française?”

“It’s not possible!”

“The contract is signed.”

“How did she manage it?”

“Not by her acting, you may be sure,” replied Ellen, who proceeded to relate a highly scandalous story.

“Take care,” said Falempin, “she is just behind you.”

“Yes, I see her! She’s got a cheek of her own to show herself here, don’t you think?”

Marie-Claire whispered an extraordinary piece of news into Durville’s ear:

“They say he committed suicide. Well, there’s not a word of truth in it He didn’t commit suicide at all. And the proof of it is that he is being buried with the rites of the Church.”

“What then?” inquired Durville.

“Monsieur de Ligny surprised him with Nanteuil and killed him.”

“Come, come!”

“I can assure you that I am accurately informed.”

The conversations were becoming animated and familiar.

“So you are here, you wicked old sinner!”

“The box-office receipts are falling off already.”

“Stella has succeeded in getting herself proposed by seventeen Deputies, nine of whom are members of the Budget Commission.”

“Yet I told Herschell, ‘That little Bocquet fellow isn’t the man for you. What you need is a man of standing.’”

When the bier, borne by the undertaker’s men, passed through the west door, the delicious rays of a winter sun fell on the faces of the women and the roses lying on the coffin. Grouped on either side of the parvis, a few young men from the great colleges sought the faces of celebrities; the little factory girls from the neighbouring workshops, standing in couples with arms round each other’s waists, contemplated the actresses’ dresses. And standing against the porch on their aching feet, a couple of tramps, accustomed to living under the open sky, whether mild or sullen, slowly shifted their dejected gaze, while a college lad gazed with rapture at the fiery tresses which coiled like flames on the nape of Fagette’s neck.

She had stopped on the topmost step in front of the doors, and was chatting with Constantin Marc and a few journalists:

“...Monsieur de Ligny? He danced attendance upon me long before he knew Nanteuil. He used to gaze upon me by the hour, with eager eyes, without daring to speak a word to me. I received him willingly enough, for his behaviour was perfect. It is only fair to say that his manners are excellent. He was as reserved as a man could be. At last, one day, he declared that he was madly in love with me. I told him that as he was speaking to me seriously I would do the same; that I was truly sorry to see him in such a state; that every time such a thing happened I was greatly upset by it; that I was a woman of standing, I had settled my life, and could do nothing for him. He was desperate. He informed me that he was

leaving for Constantinople, that he would never return. He couldn't make up his mind either to remain or to go away. He fell ill. Nanteuil, who thought I loved him and wanted to keep him, did all in her power to get him away from me. She flung herself at his head in the craziest fashion, I found her sometimes a trifle ridiculous, but, as you may imagine, I did not place any obstacle in her path. For his part, Monsieur de Ligny, with the object of inspiring me with regret, with vexation, or what not, perhaps in the hope of making me jealous, responded very visibly to Nanteuil's advances. And that is how they came to be together. I was delighted. Nanteuil and I are the best of friends."

Madame Doulce, hedged in on either side by the onlookers, came slowly down the steps, indulging herself in the illusion that the crowd was whispering, "That's Doulce!"

She seized Nanteuil as she was passing, pressed her to her bosom, and with a beautiful gesture of Christian charity enveloped her in her mantle, saying through her sobs:

"Try to pray, my child, and accept this medal. It has been blessed by the Pope. A Dominican Father gave it to me."

Madame Nanteuil, who was a little out of breath, but was growing young again since she had renewed her experience of love, was the last to come out. Durville pressed her hand.

"Poor Chevalier!" he murmured.

"His was not a bad character," answered Madame Nanteuil, "but he showed a lack of tact. A man of the world does not commit suicide in such a manner. Poor boy, he had no breeding."

The hearse began its journey in the colossal shadow of the Panthéon, and proceeded down the Rue Soufflet, which is lined on both sides with booksellers' shops. Chevalier's fellow-players, the employés of the theatre, the director, Dr. Socrates, Constantin Marc, a few journalists and a few inquisitive onlookers followed. The clergy and the actresses took their seats in the mourning coaches. Nanteuil, disregarding Madame Doulce's advice, followed with Fagette, in a hired coupé.

The weather was fine. Behind the hearse the mourners were conversing in familiar fashion.

"The cemetery is the devil of a way!"

"Montparnasse? Half an hour at the outside."

"Do you know Nanteuil is engaged at the Comédie-Française?"

"Do we rehearse to-day?" Constantin Marc inquired of Romilly.

“To be sure we do, at three o’clock, in the green-room. We shall rehearse till five. I am playing to-night; I am playing to-morrow; on Sunday I play both afternoon and evening. Work is never over for us actors; one is always beginning over again, always putting one’s shoulder to the wheel.”

Adolphe Meunier, the poet, laying his hand on his shoulder said:

“Everything going well, Romilly?”

“How are you getting on yourself, Meunier? Always rolling the rock of Sisypheus. That would be nothing, but success does not depend on us alone. If the play is bad and falls flat, all that we have put into it, our work, our talent, a bit of our own life, collapses with it. And the number of ‘frosts’ I’ve seen! How often the play has fallen under me like an old hack, and has chucked me into the gutter! Ah, if one were punished only for one’s own sins!”

“My dear Romilly,” replied Meunier sharply, “do you imagine that the fate of dramatic authors like myself does not depend as much upon the actors as upon ourselves? Do you think it never happens that actors, by their carelessness or clumsiness, ruin a work which was meant to reach the heights? And do not we also, like Cæsar’s legionary, become seized with dismay and anguish at the thought that our fate is not assured by our own valour, but that it depends on those who fight beside us?”

“Such is life,” observed Constantin Marc. “In every undertaking, everywhere and always, we pay for the faults of others.”

“That is only too true,” resumed Meunier, who had just seen his lyric drama, *Pandolphe et Clarimonde*, come hopelessly to grief. “But the iniquity of it disgusts us.”

“It should not disgust us in the least,” replied Constantin Marc. “There is a sacred law which governs the world, which we are forced to obey, which we are proud to worship. It is injustice, holy injustice, august injustice. It is everywhere blessed under the name of happiness, fortune, genius and grace. It is a weakness not to acknowledge it and to venerate it under its true name.”

“That’s rather weird, what you have just said!” remarked the gentle Meunier.

“Think it over,” resumed Constantin Marc. “You, too, belong yourself to the party of injustice, for you are striving for distinction, and you very reasonably want to throttle your competitors, a natural, unjust and legitimate desire. Do you know of anything more stupid or more odious than the sort of people we have seen demanding justice? Public opinion, which is not, however, remarkable for its intelligence, and common sense, which nevertheless is not a superior sense, have felt that they constituted the precise contrary of nature, society and life.”

“Quite so,” said Meunier, “but justice — —”

“Justice is nothing but the dream of a few simpletons. Injustice is the thought of God Himself. The doctrine of original sin would alone suffice to make me a Christian, while the doctrine of grace embodies all truths divine and human.”

“Then are you a believer?” asked Romilly respectfully.

“No, but I should like to be. I regard faith as the most precious possession which a man can enjoy in this world. At Saint-Bartholomé, I go to Mass every Sunday and feast day, and I have never once listened to the exposition of the Gospel by the *curé* without saying to myself: ‘I would give all I possess, my house, my acres, my woods, to be as stupid as that animal there.’”

Michel, the young painter with the mystic’s beard, was saying to Roget, the scene painter:

“That poor Chevalier was a man with ideas. But they were not all good ones. One evening, he walked into the *brasserie* radiant and transfigured, sat himself beside us, and twirling his old felt hat between his long red fingers, he cried: ‘I have discovered the true manner of acting tragedy. Hitherto no one has realized how to act tragedy, no one, you understand!’ And he told us what his discovery was. ‘I’ve just come from the Chamber. They made me climb up to the amphitheatre. I could see the Deputies swarming like black insects at the bottom of a pit. Suddenly a stumpy little man mounted the tribune. He looked as if he were carrying a sack of coals on his back. He threw out his arms and clenched his fists. By Jove, he was comical! He had a Southern accent, and his delivery was full of defects. He spoke of the workers, of the proletariat, of social justice. It was magnificent; his voice, his gestures gripped one’s very bowels; the applause nearly brought the house down. I said to myself ‘What he is doing, I’ll do on the stage, and I’ll do it better. I, a comic actor, will play tragedy. Great tragedy parts, if they are to produce their true effect, ought to be played by a comedian, but he must have a soul.’” The poor fellow actually thought that he had imagined a new form of art. ‘You’ll see,’ he said.”

At the corner of the Boulevard Saint-Michel, a journalist came up to Meunier, and asked him:

“Is it true that Robert de Ligny was at one time madly in love with Fagette?”

“If he’s in love with her, he hasn’t been so long. Only a fortnight ago he asked me, in the theatre, ‘Who is that little fair-haired woman?’ and he pointed to Fagette.”

“I cannot understand,” said the chronicler of an evening paper to a chronicler of a morning paper, “what can be the origin of our mania for calumniating humanity. I am amazed, on the other hand, by the number of decent people I come across. It is enough to make one incline to the belief that men are ashamed

of the good they do, and that they conceal themselves when performing acts of devotion and generosity. Don't you think that is so?"

"As far as I am concerned," replied the chronicler of the morning paper, "every time I have opened a door by mistake — I mean this both literally and metaphorically — I have always come across some unsuspected baseness. Were society suddenly turned inside out like a glove, so that one could see the inside, we should all faint away with horror and disgust."

"Some time ago," said Roger to the painter Michel, "I used to know Chevalier's uncle on the Butte de Montmartre. He was a photographer who dressed like an astrologer. A crazy old fellow, always sending one customer the portrait of another. The customers used to complain. But not all of them. There were even some who thought the portraits were a good likeness."

"What has become of him?"

"He went bankrupt and hanged himself."

In the Boulevard Saint-Michel Pradel, who was walking beside Trublet, was still profiting by the opportunity of obtaining information as to the immortality of the soul and the fate of man after death. He obtained nothing that seemed to him sufficiently positive and repeated:

"I should like to know."

To which Dr. Socrates replied:

"Men were not made to know; men were not made to understand. They do not possess the necessary faculties. A man's brain is larger and richer in convolutions than that of a gorilla, but there is no essential difference between the two. Our highest thoughts and our most comprehensive systems will never be anything more than the magnificent extension of the ideas contained in the head of a monkey. We know more about the world than the dog does, and this flatters and entertains us; but it is very little in itself, and our illusions increase with our knowledge."

But Pradel was not listening. He was mentally rehearsing the speech which he had to deliver at Chevalier's grave.

When the funeral procession turned towards the shabby grass-plots which overflow the Avenue de l'Observatoire, the tram-cars, out of respect for the dead, made way for it.

Trublet remarked upon this.

"Men," he said, "respect death, since they rightly believe that, if it is respectable to die, every one is assured of being respectable in that, at least."

The actors were excitedly discussing Chevalier's death. Durville, mysteriously, and in a deep voice, disclosed the tragedy:

"It is not a case of suicide. It is a crime of passion. Monsieur de Ligny surprised Chevalier with Nanteuil. He fired seven revolver shots at him. Two bullets struck our unfortunate comrade in the head and the chest, four went wide, and the fifth grazed Nanteuil below the left breast."

"Is Nanteuil wounded?"

"Only slightly."

"Will Monsieur de Ligny be arrested?"

"The affair is to be hushed up, and rightly so. I have, however, the best authority for what I say."

In the carriages, too, the actresses were engaged in spreading various reports. Some felt sure it was a case of murder; others, one of suicide.

"He shot himself in the chest with a revolver," asserted Falempin. "But he only succeeded in wounding himself. The doctor said that if he had been attended to in time he might have been saved. But they left him lying on the floor, bathed in blood."

And Madame Douce said to Ellen Midi:

"It has often been my fate to stand beside a deathbed. I always go down on my knees and pray. I at once feel myself invaded by a heavenly serenity."

"You are indeed fortunate!" replied Ellen Midi.

At the end of the Rue Campagne-Première, on the wide grey boulevards, they became conscious of the length of the road which they had covered, and the melancholy nature of the journey. They felt that while following the coffin they had crossed the confines of life, and were already in the country of the dead. On their right stretched the yards of the marble-workers, the florists' shops which supplied wreaths for funerals, displays of potted flowers, and the economical furniture of tombs, zinc flower-stands, wreaths of immortelles in cement, and guardian angels in plaster. On their left, they could see behind the low wall of the cemetery the white crosses rising among the bare tops of the lime-trees, and everywhere, in the wan dust, they breathed death, commonplace, uniform deaths under the administration of City and State, and poorly embellished by the pious hands of relations.

They passed between two massive pillars of stone surmounted by winged hour-glasses. The hearse advanced slowly on the gravel which creaked in the silence. It seemed, amid the homes of the dead, to be twice as tall as before. The mourners read the famous names on some of the tombs, or gazed at the statue of a young girl, seated, book in hand. Old Maury deciphered, in the inscriptions, the age of the deceased. Short lives, and even more lives of average duration, distressed him as being of ill omen. But, when he encountered those of the dead

who were notable for the length of their years, he joyfully drew from them the hope and probability of a long lease of life.

The hearse stopped in the middle of a side alley. The clergy and the women stepped out of the coaches. Delage received in his arms, from the top of the carriage steps, the worthy Madame Ravaud, who was getting a little ponderous, and of a sudden, half in jest, half in earnest, he made certain proposals to her. She was no longer young, having been on the stage for half a century. Delage, with his twenty-five years, looked upon her as prodigiously old. Yet, as he whispered into her ear, he felt excited, infatuated, he became sincere, he really desired her, out of perverse curiosity, because he wanted to do something extraordinary, and was certain that he would be able to do it, perhaps because of his professional instinct as a handsome youth, and, lastly, because, in the first place having asked for what he did not want, he began to want what he had asked for. Madame Ravaud, indignant but flattered, made good her escape.

The coffin was carried along a narrow path bordered with dwarf cypresses, amid a murmuring of prayers:

“In paradisum deducant te Angeli, in tuo adventu susciptant te Martyres et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem, Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat et cum Lazaro, quondam paupere, æternam habeas requiem.”

Soon there was no longer any visible path. It was necessary, in following the quickly vanishing coffin, the priests and the choristers, to scatter, striding over the recumbent tombstones, and slipping between the broken columns and upright slabs. They lost the coffin and found it again. Nanteuil evinced a certain eagerness in her pursuit of it, anxious and abrupt, her prayer-book in her hand, freeing her skirt as it caught on the railings, and brushing past the withered wreaths which left the heads of immortelles adhering to her gown. Finally, the first to reach the graveside smelt the acrid odour of the freshly turned soil, and from the heights of the neighbouring flagstones saw the grave into which the coffin was being lowered.

The actors had contributed liberally to the expenses of the funeral; they had clubbed together to buy for their comrade as much earth as he needed, two metres granted for five years. Romilly, on behalf of the actors of the Odéon, had paid the cemetery board 300 francs — to be exact, 301 fr. 80 centimes. He had even made plans for a monument, a broken stele with comedy masks suspended upon it. But no decision had been come to on this point.

The celebrant blessed the open grave. And the priest and the boy choristers murmured the responses:

“Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.”

“*Et lux perpetua luceat ei.*”

“*Requiescat in pace.*”

“Amen.”

“*Anima ejus et animæ omnium fidelium defunctorum, per misericordiam Dei, requiescant in pace.*”

“Amen.”

“*De profundis....*”

Each one of those present came forward to sprinkle holy water on the coffin. Nanteuil stood watching it all, the prayers, the spadefuls of earth, the sprinkling; then, kneeling apart on the corner of a tomb, she fervently recited “Our Father who art in heaven....”

Pradel spoke at the graveside. He refrained from making a speech. But the Théâtre de l’Odéon could not allow a young artist beloved of all to depart without a word of farewell.

“I shall speak therefore, in the name of the great and true-hearted dramatic family, the words that are in every bosom.”

Grouped about the speaker in studied attitudes, the actors listened with profound knowledge. They listened actively, with their ears, lips, eyes, arms, and legs. Each listened in his own manner, with nobility, simplicity, grief or rebelliousness, according to the parts which the actor was accustomed to play.

No, the director of the theatre would not suffer the valiant actor, who, in the course of his only too brief career, had shown more than promise, to depart without a word of farewell.

“Chevalier, impetuous, uneven, restless, imparted to his creations an individual character, a distinctive physiognomy. We saw him a very few days ago — a few hours ago, I might say — bring an episodic character into powerful relief. The author of the play was struck by the performance. Chevalier was on the verge of success. The sacred flame was his. There are those who have asked, what was the cause of so cruel an end? Let us not seek for that cause. Chevalier died of his art; he died of dramatic fever. He died consumed by the flame which is slowly consuming all of us. Alas, the stage, of which the public sees only the smiles, and the tears, as sweet as the smiles, is a jealous master which demands of its servants an absolute devotion and the most painful sacrifices, and, at times, claims its victims. In the name of all your comrades, farewell, Chevalier, farewell!”

The handkerchiefs were at work, wiping away the mourners' tears. The actors were weeping with all sincerity; they were weeping for themselves.

After they had slipped away, Dr. Trublet, left alone in the cemetery with Constantin Marc, took in the multitude of graves with a glance.

"Do you remember," he said, "one of Auguste Comte's reflections: 'Humanity is composed of the dead and the living. The dead are by far the more numerous.' Assuredly, the dead are by far the more numerous. By the multitudinous numbers and the magnitude of their work, they are more powerful. It's they who rule; we obey them. Our masters lie beneath these stones. Here is the lawgiver who made the law to which I submit to-day; the architect who built my house, the poet who created the illusions which still disturb us; the orator who swayed us before our birth. Here are all the artisans of our knowledge, true or false, of our wisdom and of our follies. There they lie, the inexorable leaders, whom we dare not disobey. In them dwells strength, continuity, and duration. What does a generation of living folk amount to, in comparison with the numberless generations of the dead? What is our will of a day before the will of a thousand centuries? Can we rebel against them? Why, we have not even time to disobey them!"

"At last you are coming to the point, Dr. Socrates!" said Constantin Marc. "You renounce progress, the new justice, the peace of the world, freedom of thought; you submit to tradition. You consent to the ancient error, the good old-fashioned ignorance, the venerable iniquity of our forbears. You withdraw into the French tradition, you submit to ancient custom, to the authority of our ancestors."

"Whence do you obtain custom and tradition?" asked Trublet. "Whence do you receive authority? There are irreconcilable traditions, diverse customs; and opposed authorities. The dead do not impose any one will upon us. They subject us to contradictory wills. The opinions of the past which weigh upon us are uncertain and confused. In crushing us they destroy one another. All these dead have lived, like ourselves, in the midst of disorder and contradiction. Each in his time, in his own fashion, in hatred or in love, has dreamed the dream of life. Let us in our turn dream this dream with kindness and joy, if it be possible, and let us go to lunch. I am taking you to a little tavern in the Rue Vavin, kept by Clémence, who cooks only one dish, but a marvellous one at that, the Castelnau *cassoulet*, not to be confused with the *cassoulet* prepared in the Carcassonne fashion, which is merely a leg of mutton with haricot beans. The *cassoulet* of Castelnau comprises pickled goose legs, haricot beans that have been previously bleached, bacon, and a small sausage. To be good, it must be

cooked for a long time over a slow fire. Clémence's *cassoulet* has been cooking for twenty years. From time to time she puts in the saucepan, now a little bit of goose or bacon, now a sausage or some haricots, but it is always the same *cassoulet* . The stock remains, and this ancient and precious stock gives it the flavour which, in the pictures of the old Venetian masters, one finds in the amber-coloured flesh of the women. Come, I want you to taste Clémence's *cassoulet* .”

CHAPTER XI

Having said her prayer, Nanteuil, without waiting to hear Pradel's speech, jumped into a carriage in order to join Robert de Ligny, who was waiting for her in front of the Montparnasse railway station. Amid the throng of passers-by they shook hands, gazing at one another without a word. More than ever did they feel that they were bound together. Robert loved her.

He loved her without knowing it. She was for him, or so he believed, merely one delight in the infinite series of possible delights. But delight had assumed for him the form of Félicie, and, had he reflected more deeply upon the innumerable women whom he promised himself in the vast remainder of his newly begun life, he would have recognized that now they were all Félicies. He might at least have realized that, without having any intention of being faithful to her, he did not dream of being unfaithful, and that since she had given herself to him he had not desired any other woman. But he did not realize it.

On this occasion, however, standing in the bustling commonplace square, on seeing her no longer in the voluptuous shadow of night, nor under the caressing glimmer of the alcove which gave her naked form the delicious vagueness of a Milky Way, but in a harsh, diffused daylight, by the circumstantial illumination of a sunlight devoid of splendour and without shadows, which revealed beneath her veil her eyelids that were seared with tears, her pearly cheeks and roughened lips, he realized that he felt for this woman's flesh a profound and mysterious inclination.

He did not question her. They exchanged only tender trivial phrases. And, as she was very hungry, he took her to lunch at a well-known *cabaret* whose name shone in letters of gold on one of the old houses in the square. They had their meal served in the winter-garden, whose rockery, fountain, and solitary tree were multiplied by mirrors framed in a green trellis. When seated at the table, consulting the bill of fare, they conversed with less restraint than heretofore. He told her that the emotions and worries of the past three days had unstrung his nerves, but he no longer thought about it, and it would be absurd to worry about the matter any further. She spoke to him of her health, complaining that she could not sleep, save for a restless slumber full of dreams. But she did not tell him what she saw in those dreams, and she avoided speaking of the dead man. He asked her if she had not spent a tiring morning, and why she had gone to the cemetery, a useless proceeding.

Incapable of explaining to him the depths of her soul, submissive to rites and propitiatory ceremonies and incantations, she shook her head as if to say:

“Had to.”

While those lunching at the adjoining tables were finishing their meal, they talked for a long time, both in subdued tones, while waiting to be served.

Robert had promised himself, had sworn indeed never to reproach Félicie for having had Chevalier for her lover, or even to ask her a single question in this connection. And yet, moved by some obscure resentment, by an ebullition of ill-temper or natural curiosity, and also because he loved her too deeply to control himself, he said to her, with bitterness in his voice:

“You were on intimate terms with him, formerly.”

She was silent, and did not deny the fact. Not that she felt that it was henceforth useless to lie. On the contrary, she was in the habit of denying the obvious truth, and she had, of course, too much knowledge of men to be ignorant of the fact that, when in love, there is no lie, however clumsy, which they cannot believe if they wish to do so. But on this occasion, contrary to her nature and habit, she refrained from lying. She was afraid of offending the dead. She imagined that in denying him she would be doing him a wrong, depriving him of his share, angering him. She held her peace, fearing to see him come and rest his elbows on the table, with his fixed smile and the hole in his head, and to hear him say in his plaintive voice. “Félicie, you surely cannot have forgotten our little room, in the Rue des Martyrs?”

What he had become, for her, since his death, she could not have said, so alien was it to her beliefs, so contrary to her reason, and so antiquated, ridiculous and obsolete did the words which would have expressed her feeling seem to her. But from some remote inherited instinct, or more likely from certain tales which she had heard in her childhood, she derived a confused idea that he was of the number of those dead who in the days of old were wont to torment the living, and were exorcised by the priests; for upon thinking of him she instinctively began to make the sign of the cross, and she checked herself only that she might not seem ridiculous.

Ligny, seeing her melancholy and distracted, blamed himself for his harsh and useless words, while at the very moment of reproaching himself for them he followed them by others equally harsh and equally useless.

“And yet you told me it was not true!”

She replied, fervently:

“Because, don’t you see, I wanted it not to be true.”

She added:

“Oh, my darling, since I’ve been yours, I swear to you that I’ve not belonged to anyone else. I don’t claim any merit for this; I should have found it impossible.”

Like the young of animals, she had need of gaiety. The wine, which shone in her glass like liquid amber, was a joy to her eyes, and she moistened her tongue with it with luxurious pleasure. She took an interest in the dishes set before her, and especially in the *pommes de terre soufflées*, like golden blisters. Next she watched the people lunching at the tables in the dining-room, attributing to them, according to their appearance, ridiculous opinions or grotesque passions. She noticed the ill-natured glances which the women directed toward her, and the efforts of the men to appear handsome and important. And she gave utterance to a general reflection:

“Robert, have you noticed that people are never natural? They do not say a thing because they think it. They say it because they think it is what they ought to say. This habit makes them very wearisome. And it is extremely rare to find anyone who is natural. You, you are natural.”

“Well, I don’t think I’m guilty of posing.”

“You pose like the rest. But you pose in your own character. I can see perfectly well when you are trying to surprise and impress me.”

She spoke to him of himself and, led back by an involuntary train of thought to the tragedy enacted at Neuilly, she inquired:

“Did your mother say anything to you?”

“No.”

“Yet she must have known.”

“It is probable.”

“Are you on good terms with her?”

“Why, yes!”

“They say she is still very beautiful, your mother, is it so?”

He did not answer her and sought to change the conversation. He did not like Félicie to speak to him of his mother, or to turn her attention to his family. Monsieur and Madame de Ligny enjoyed the highest consideration in Parisian society. Monsieur de Ligny, a diplomatist by birth and by profession, was in himself a person worthy of the greatest consideration. He was so even before his birth, by virtue of the diplomatic services which his ancestors had rendered to France. His great-grandfather had signed the surrender of Pondicherry to England. Madame de Ligny lived with her husband on the most correct terms. But, although she had no money of her own, she lived in great style, and her gowns were one of the greatest glories of France. She received intimate visits from an ex-Ambassador. His age, his position, his opinions, his titles, and his

great fortune made the connection respectable. Madame de Ligny kept the ladies of the Republic at arm's length, and, when the spirit moved her, gave them lessons in decorum. She had nothing to fear from the opinion of the fashionable world. Robert knew that she was looked upon with respect by people in society. But he was continually dreading that, in speaking of her, Félicie might fail to do so with all the needful reserve. He feared lest, not being in society, she might say that which had better have been left unsaid. He was wrong; Félicie knew nothing of the private life of Madame de Ligny; moreover, had she known of it, she would not have blamed her. The lady inspired her with a naive curiosity and an admiration mingled with fear. Since her lover was unwilling to speak to her of his mother, she attributed his reserve to a certain aristocratic arrogance, even to a lack of consideration, for her, at which the pride of the freewoman and the plebeian was up in arms. She was wont to say to him tartly:

"I'm perfectly free to speak of your mother." The first time she had added: "Mine is just as good as yours." But she had realized that the remark was vulgar, and she had not repeated it.

The dining-room was now empty. She looked at her watch, and saw that it was three o'clock.

"I must be off," she said. "*La Grille* is being rehearsed this afternoon. Constantin Marc ought to be at the theatre already. There's another queer fellow for you! He boasts that when he's in the Vivarais he ruins all the women. And yet he is so shy that he daren't even talk to Fagette and Falempin. I frighten him. It amuses me."

She was so tired that she had not the courage to rise.

"Isn't it queer? They are saying everywhere that I'm engaged for the Français, it's not true. There's not even a question of it. Of course, I can't remain indefinitely where I am. In the long run one would get besotted there. But there is no hurry. I have a great part to create in *La Grille*. We shall see after that. What I want is to play comedy. I don't want to join the Français and then to do nothing."

Suddenly, gazing in front of her with eyes full of terror, she flung herself backwards, turned pale, and uttered a shrill scream. Then her eyelids fluttered, and she murmured that she could not breathe.

Robert loosened her jacket, and moistened her temples with a little water. She spoke.

“A priest! I saw a priest. He was in his surplice. His lips were moving, but no sound came from them. He looked at me.”

He tried to comfort her.

“Come now, my darling, how can you suppose that a priest, a priest in his surplice, would show himself in a restaurant?”

She listened obediently, and allowed herself to be persuaded.

“You are right, you are right, I know it well enough.”

In that little head of hers illusions were soon dispelled. She was born two hundred and thirty years after the death of Descartes, of whom she had never heard; yet, as Dr. Socrates would have said, he had taught her the use of reason.

Robert met her at six o'clock after the rehearsal, under the arcades of the Odéon, and drove away with her in a cab.

“Where are we going?” she inquired.

He hesitated a little.

“You would not care to go back to our house out there?”

She cried out at the suggestion.

“Oh no! I couldn't! Oh, heavens, never!”

He replied that he had thought as much; that he would try to find something else: a little ground-floor flat in Paris; that in the meantime, just for to-day, they would content themselves with a chance abode.

She gazed at him with fixed, heavy eyes, drew him violently towards her, scorching his neck and ear with the breath of her desire. Then her arms fell away from him, and she sank back beside him, dejected and relaxed.

When the cab stopped, she said:

“You will not be vexed with me, will you, my own Robert, at what I am going to say? Not to-day — to-morrow.”

She had considered it necessary to make this sacrifice to the jealous dead.

CHAPTER XII

On the following day, he took her to a furnished room, commonplace but cheerful, which he had selected on the first floor of a house facing the square, near the Bibliothèque Nationale. In the centre of the square stood the basin of a fountain, supported by lusty nymphs. The paths, bordered with laurel and spindlewood, were deserted, and from this little-frequented spot one heard the vast and reassuring hum of the city. The rehearsal had finished very late. When they entered the room the night, already slower to arrive in this season of melting snow, was beginning to cast its gloom over the hangings. The large mirrors of the wardrobe and overmantel were filling with vague lights and shadows. She took off her fur coat, went to look out of the window between the curtains and said: "Robert, the steps are wet."

He answered that there was no flight of steps, only the pavement and the road, and then another pavement and the railings of the square.

"You are a Parisian, you know this square well. In the centre, among the trees, there is a monumental fountain, with enormous women whose breasts are not as pretty as yours."

In his impatience he helped her to undo her cloth frock; but he could not find the hooks, and scratched himself with the pins.

"I am clumsy," he said.

She retorted laughingly:

"You are certainly not so clever as Madame Michon! It's not so much clumsiness, but you are afraid of getting pricked. Men are a cowardly race. As for women, they have to accustom themselves to suffer. It's true: to be a woman is to be nearly always ailing."

He did not notice that she was pale, with dark rings round her eyes. He desired her so ardently; he no longer saw her.

"They are very sensitive to pain," he said, "but they are also very sensitive to pleasure. Do you know Claude Bernard?"

"No."

"He was a great scientist. He said that he didn't hesitate to recognize woman's supremacy in the domain of physical and moral sensibility."

Nantueil; unhooking her stays, replied:

"If he meant by that that all women are sensitive, he was indeed an old greenhorn. He ought to have seen Fagette; he would soon have discovered

whether it was easy to get anything out of her in the domain — how did he express it? — of physical and moral sensibility.”

And she added with gentle pride:

“Don’t you make any mistake, Robert, there’s not such a heap of women like myself.”

As he was drawing her into his arms, she released herself.

“You are hindering me.”

Sitting down and doubling herself up in order to undo her boots, she continued.

“Do you know, Dr. Socrates told me the other day that he had seen an apparition. He saw a donkey-boy who had murdered a little girl. I dreamt of the story last night, only in my dream I could not make out whether the donkey-boy was a man or a woman. What a mix-up the dream was! Talking of Dr. Socrates, just guess whose lover he is — why, the lady who keeps the circulating library in the Rue Mazarine. She is no longer very young, but she is very intelligent. Do you think he is faithful to her? I’ll take off my stockings, it’s more becoming.”

And she went on to tell him a story of the theatre:

“I really don’t think I shall remain at the Odéon much longer.”

“Why?”

“You’ll see. Pradel said to me to-day, before rehearsal ‘My dear little Nanteuil, there has never been anything between us. It is ridiculous.’ He was extremely decorous, but he gave me to understand that we were in a false position with regard to one another, which could not go on indefinitely. You must know that Pradel has established a rule. Formerly he used to pick and choose among his *pensionnaires*. He had favourites, and that caused an outcry. Nowadays, for the better administration of the theatre, he takes them all, even those he has no liking for, even those who are distasteful to him. There are no more favourites. Everything goes splendidly. Ah, he’s a director all through, is Pradel!”

As Robert, in the bed, listened in silence, she went up to him and shook him: “Then it’s all the same to you if I carry on with Pradel?”

“No, my dear, it would not be all the same to me. But nothing I might say would prevent it.”

Bending over him, she caressed him ardently, pretending to threaten and to punish him; and she cried: “Then you don’t really love me, that you are not jealous. I insist that you shall be jealous.”

Then, suddenly, she moved away from him, and hitching over her left shoulder her chemise, which had slipped down under her right breast, she

loitered in front of the dressing-table and inquired uneasily: "Robert, you have not brought anything here from the other room?"

"Nothing."

Thereupon, softly, timidly, she slipped into the bed. But hardly had she lain down when she raised herself from the pillow on her elbow, and, craning her neck, listened with parted lips. It seemed to her that she could hear slight sounds of footsteps along the gravel path which she had heard in the house in the Boulevard de Villiers. She ran to the window; she saw the Judas tree, the lawn, the garden gate. Knowing what she was yet to see, she sought to hide her face in her hands, but she could not raise her arms, and Chevalier's face rose up before her.

CHAPTER XIII

She had returned home in a burning fever. Robert, after dining *en famille* , had retired to his attic. His nerves were on edge, and he was badly out of temper as a result of the manner in which Nanteuil had left him.

His shirt and his clothes, laid out on the bed by his valet, seemed to be waiting for him in a domestic and obsequious attitude. He began to dress himself with a somewhat ill-tempered alacrity. He was impatient to leave the house. He opened his round window, listened to the murmur of the city, and saw above the roofs the glow which rose into the sky from the city of Paris. He scented from afar all the amorous flesh gathered, on this winter's night, in the theatres and the great *cabarets* , the *café-concerts* and the bars.

Irritated by Félicie's denial of his desires, he had decided to satisfy them elsewhere, and as he was not conscious of any preference he believed that his only difficulty would be to make a choice; but he presently realized that he had no desire for any of the women of his acquaintance, nor did he even feel any desire for an unknown woman. He closed his window, and seated himself before the fire.

It was a coke fire; Madame de Ligny, who wore cloaks costing a thousand pounds, was wont to economize in the matter of her table and her fires. She would not allow wood to be burned in her house.

He reflected upon his own affairs, to which he had so far given little or no thought; upon the career he had embraced, and which he beheld obscurely before him. The Minister was a great friend of his family. A mountaineer of the Cévennes, brought up on chestnuts, his dazzled eyes blinked at the flower-bedecked tables of Paris. He was too shrewd and too wily not to retain his advantage over the old aristocracy, which welcomed him to its bosom: the advantage of harsh caprices and arrogant refusals. Ligny knew him, and expected no favours at his hands. In this respect he was more perspicacious than his mother, who credited herself with a certain power over the dark, hairy little man, whom every Thursday she engulfed in her majestic skirts on the way from the drawing-room to the dinner-table. He judged him to be disobliging. And then something had gone wrong between them. Robert, as ill luck would have it, had forestalled his Minister in his intimacy with a lady whom the latter loved to the verge of absurdity: Madame de Neuilles, a woman of easy virtue. And it seemed to him that the hairy little man suspected it, and regarded him with an unfriendly eye. And, lastly, the idea had grown upon him at the Quai d'Orsay that Ministers

are neither able nor willing to do very much. But he did not exaggerate matters, and thought it quite possible that he might obtain a minor secretaryship. Such had been his wish hitherto. He was most anxious not to leave Paris. His mother, on the contrary, would have preferred that he should be sent to The Hague, where a post as third secretary was vacant. Now, of a sudden, he decided in favour of The Hague. "I'll go," he said. "The sooner the better." Having made up his mind, he reviewed his reasons. In the first place, it would be an excellent thing for his future career. Again, The Hague post was a pleasant one. A friend of his, who had held it, had enlarged upon the delightful hypocrisy of the sleepy little capital, where everything was engineered and "wangled" for the comfort of the Diplomatic Corps. He reflected, also, that The Hague was the august cradle of a new international law, and finally went so far as to invoke the argument that he would be giving pleasure to his mother. After which he realized that he wanted to leave home solely on account of Félicie.

His thoughts of her were not benevolent. He knew her to be mendacious, timorous, and a malicious friend. He had proof that she was given to falling in love with actors of the lowest type, or, at all events, that she made shift with them. He was not certain that she did not deceive him, not that he had discovered anything suspect in the life which she was leading, but because he was properly distrustful of all women. He conjured up in his mind all the evil that he knew of her, and persuaded himself that she was a little jade, and, being conscious that he loved her, he believed that he loved her merely because of her extreme prettiness. This reason seemed to him a sound one; but on analysing it he perceived that it explained nothing; that he loved the girl not because she was exceedingly pretty, but because she was pretty in a certain uncommon fashion of her own; that he loved her for that which was incomparable and rare in her; because, in a word, she was a wonderful thing of art and voluptuousness, a living gem of priceless value. Thereupon, realizing how weak he was, he wept, mourning over his lost freedom, his captive mind, his disordered soul, the devotion of his very flesh and blood to a weak, perfidious little creature.

He had scorched his eyes by gazing at the coke fire behind the bars of the grate. He closed them in pain and, under his closed eyes, he saw negroes leaping before him in an obscene and bloody riot. While he sought to remember from what book of travel, read in boyhood, these blacks emerged, he saw them diminish, resolve themselves into imperceptible specks, and disappear into a red Africa, which little by little came to represent the wound seen by the light of a match on the night of the suicide. He reflected.

"That fool of a Chevalier! Why, I was scarcely thinking of the fellow!"

Suddenly, against this background of blood and flame; appeared the slender form of Félicie, and he felt lurking within him a hot, cruel desire.

CHAPTER XIV

He went to see her the following day, in the little flat in the Boulevard Saint-Michel. He was not in the habit of going thither. He did not particularly care to meet Madame Nanteuil; she bored him and embarrassed him, although she was extremely polite to him, even to obsequiousness.

It was she who received him in the little drawing-room. She thanked him for his interest in Félicie's health, and informed him that she had been restless and unwell the night before, but was now feeling better.

"She is in her bedroom, working at her part. I will tell her that you are here. She will be very glad to see you, Monsieur de Ligny. She knows that you are very fond of her. And true friends are rare, especially in the theatrical world."

Robert observed Madame Nanteuil with an attention which he had not hitherto bestowed upon her. He was trying to see in her face the face that would be her daughter's in years to come. When walking in the street he was fond of reading, in the faces of the mothers, the love-affairs of the daughters. And on this occasion he assiduously deciphered the features and the figure of this woman as an interesting prophecy. He discovered nothing either of bad or good augury. Madame Nanteuil, plump, fresh-complexioned, cool-skinned, was not unattractive with the sensuous fullness of her contours. But her daughter did not in the least resemble her.

Seeing her so collected and serene, he said to her:

"You yourself are not of a nervous temperament?"

"I have never been nervous. My daughter does not take after me. She is the living image of her father. He was delicate, although his health was not bad. He died of a fall from his horse. You'll take a cup of tea, won't you, Monsieur de Ligny?"

Félicie entered the room. Her hair was outspread upon her shoulders; she was wrapped in a white woollen dressing-gown, held very loosely at the waist by a heavy embroidered girdle, and she shuffled along in red slippers; she looked a mere child. The friend of the house, Tony Meyer, the picture dealer, was wont when he saw her in this garment, which was a trifle monkish in appearance, to call her Brother Ange de Charolais, because he had discovered in her a resemblance to a portrait by Nattier which represented Mademoiselle de Charolais in the Franciscan habit. Before this little girl, Robert was surprised and silent.

"It's kind of you," she said, "to have come to inquire after me. I am better, thank you."

"She works very hard; she works too hard," said Madame Nanteuil. "Her part in *La Grille* is tiring her."

"Oh no, mother."

They spoke of the theatre, and the conversation languished.

During a moment's silence, Madame Nanteuil asked Monsieur de Ligny if he were still collecting old fashion-prints.

Félicie and Robert looked at her without understanding. They had told her not long before some fiction about engraved fashion-plates, to explain the meetings which they had not been able to conceal. But they had quite forgotten the fact. Since then, a piece of the moon, as an old author has said, had fallen into their love; Madame Nanteuil alone, in her profound respect for fiction, remembered it.

"My daughter told me you had a great number of those old engravings and that she used to find ideas for her costumes in them."

"Quite so, madame, quite so."

"Come here, Monsieur de Ligny," said Félicie. "I want to show you a design for a costume for the part of Cécile de Rochemaure."

And she carried him off to her room.

It was a small room hung with flowered paper; the furniture consisted of a wardrobe with a mirror, a couple of chairs upholstered in horsehairs and an iron bedstead; with a white counterpane; above it was a bowl for holy water, and a sprig of boxwood.

She gave him a long kiss on the mouth.

"I do love you, do you know!"

"Quite sure?"

"Oh yes! And you?"

"I too, I love you. I wouldn't have believed that I could love you so!"

"Then it came afterwards."

"It always comes afterwards."

"That's true, what you've just said, Robert. Before — one doesn't know."

She shook her head.

"I was very ill yesterday."

"Have you seen Trublet? What did he say?"

"He told me that I needed rest, and quiet. My darling, we must be sensible for another fortnight. Do you mind?"

"I do."

"So do I. But what would you have?"

He strolled round the room two or three times, looking into every corner. She watched him with some little uneasiness, dreading lest he should ask her questions about her poor jewels and her cheap trinkets, which were modest enough as presents, but she could not in every case explain how she came to receive them. One may say anything one pleases, of course, but one may contradict oneself, and get into trouble, and that assuredly is not worth while. She diverted his attention.

“Robert, open my glove-box.”

“What have you got in your glove-box?”

“The violets you gave me the first time. Darling, don’t leave me! Don’t go away. When I think that from one day to the next you may go to some foreign country, to London, to Constantinople, I feel crazy.”

He comforted her, telling her that there had been some thought of sending him to The Hague. But he was determined not to go; he would get himself attached to the Minister’s staff.

“You promise?”

He gave the promise in all sincerity. And she became quite cheerful.

Pointing to the little wardrobe with its looking-glass, she said:

“Look, darling, it’s there that I study my part. When you came, I was working over my scene in the fourth. I take advantage of being alone to try for the exact tone. I seek a broad, mellow effect. If I were to listen to Romilly I should mince my words, and the result would be wretched. I have to say. ‘I do not fear you.’ It’s the great moment of the part. Do you know how Romilly would have me say: ‘I do not fear you’? I’ll show you, I am to raise my hand to my nose, open my fingers and speak one word to each finger separately, in a particular tone, with a special expression ‘I, do, not, fear, you,’ as if I were exhibiting marionettes! It’s a wonder he does not ask me to put a little paper hat on every finger. Subtle, intellectual, isn’t it?”

Then, lifting her hair and uncovering her animated features, she said:

“I’ll show you how I do it.”

Suddenly transfigured, seeming of greater stature, she spoke the words with an air of ingenuous dignity and serene innocence:

“No, sir, I do not fear you. Why should I fear you? You thought to ensnare me, and you have placed yourself at my mercy. You are a man of honour. Now that I am under the shelter of your roof, you shall tell me what you told Chevalier d’Amberre, your enemy, when he entered that gate. You shall tell me: ‘You are in your own house; I am yours to command.’”

She had the mysterious gift of changing her soul and her very face. Ligny was under the spell of this beautiful illusion.

“You are marvellous!”

“Listen, pussy-cat. I shall wear a big lawn bonnet with lappets, one above the other, on either side of my face. You see, in the play I am a young girl of the Revolution. And it is imperative that I should make people feel it. I must have the Revolution *in* me, do you understand?”

“Are you well up in the Revolution?”

“Of course I am! I don’t know the dates, to be sure. But I have the feeling of the period. For me, the Revolution means a bosom swelling with pride under a crossed neckerchief, knees enjoying full freedom in a striped petticoat, and a tiny blaze of colour on the cheek-bones. There you have it!”

He asked her questions about the play, and he realized that she knew nothing about it. She, did not need to know anything about it. She divined, she found by instinct all that she needed from it.

“At rehearsals, I never give them a hint as to any of my effects, I keep them all for the public. It will make Romilly tear his hair. How stupid they’ll all look! Fagette, my dear, will make herself ill over it.”

She sat down on a little rickety chair. Her forehead, but a moment before as white as marble, was rosy; she had once more assumed her cheeky flapper’s expression.

He drew near to her, gazed into the fascinating grey of her eyes, and, as on the evening before, when he sat in front of his coke-fire, he reflected that she was untruthful and cowardly, and ill-natured toward her friends; but now the thought was tempered with indulgence. He reflected that she had love-affairs with actors of the lowest type, or that she at least made shift with them; but the thought was tempered with a gentle pity. He recalled all the evil that he knew of her, but without bitterness. He felt that he loved her, less because she was pretty than because she was pretty in her own fashion; in a word, that he loved her because she was a gem endowed with life, and an incomparable thing of art and voluptuousness. He looked into the fascinating grey of her eyes, into their pupils, where tiny astrological symbols seemed to float in a luminous tide. He gazed at her with a gaze so searching that she felt it pierce right through her. And, assured that he had seen right into her, she said to him, with her eyes on his, clasping his head between her two hands:

“Oh yes! I’m a rotten little actress; but I love you, and I don’t care a rap for money. And there aren’t many as good as me. And you know it well enough.”

CHAPTER XV

They met daily at the theatre, and they went for walks together.

Nanteuil was playing almost every night, and was eagerly working at her part of Cécile. She was gradually recovering her peace of mind; her nights were less disturbed; she no longer made her mother hold her hand while she fell asleep and no longer found herself suffocating in nightmares. A fortnight went by in this fashion. Then, one morning, while sitting at her dressing-table, combing her hairs she bent her head toward the glass, as the weather was overcast, and she saw in it, not her own face, but the face of the dead man. A thread of blood was trickling from one corner of his mouth; he was smiling and gazing at her.

Thereupon she decided to do what she thought would be the proper and efficacious thing. She took a cab and drove off to see him. Going down the Boulevard Saint-Michel she bought a bunch of roses at her florist's. She took them to him. She went down on her knees before the tiny black cross which marked the spot where they had laid him. She spoke to him, she begged him to be reasonable, to leave her in peace. She asked his forgiveness for having treated him formerly with harshness. People did not always understand one another in life. But now he ought to understand and forgive her. What good did it do to him to torment her? She asked no better than to retain a kindly memory of him. She would come and see him from time to time. But he must cease to persecute and frighten her.

She sought to flatter and soothe him with gentle phrases.

"I can understand that you wanted to revenge yourself. It was natural. But you are not wicked at heart. Don't be angry any more. Don't frighten me any more. Don't come to see me any more. I'll come to you; I'll come often. I'll bring you flowers."

She longed to deceive him, to soothe him with lying promises, to say to him "Stay where you are; do not be restless any longer; stay where you are, and I swear to you that I will never again do anything to offend you; I promise to submit to your will." But she dared not lie over a grave, and she was sure that it would be useless, that the dead know everything.

A little wearied, she continued awhile, more indolently, her prayers and supplications, and she realized that she no longer felt the horror with which the tombs had formerly inspired her; that she had no fear of the dead man. She sought the reason for this, and discovered that he did not frighten her because he was not there.

And she mused:

“He is not there; he is never there; he is everywhere except where they laid him. He is in the streets, in the houses, in the rooms.”

And she rose to her feet in despair, feeling sure that henceforth she would meet him everywhere except in the cemetery.

CHAPTER XVI

After a fortnight's patience Ligny urged her to resume their former intercourse. The period which she herself had fixed had elapsed. He would not wait any longer. She suffered as much as he did in refusing herself to him. But she dreaded to see the dead man return. She found lame excuses for postponing appointments; at last she confessed that she was afraid. He despised her for displaying so little common sense and courage. He no longer felt that she loved him, and he spoke harshly to her, but he pursued her incessantly with his desire.

Bitter days and barren hours followed. As she no longer dared to seek the shelter of a roof in his company, they used to take a cab, and after driving for hours about the outskirts of the city they would alight in some gloomy avenue, wandering far down it under the bitter east wind, walking swiftly, as though chastised by the breath of an unseen wrath.

Once, however, the weather was so mild that it filled them with its soft languor. Side by side they trod the deserted paths of the Bois de Boulogne. The buds, which were beginning to swell on the tips of the slender black branches, dyed the tree-tops violet under the rosy sky. To their left stretched the fields, dotted with clumps of leafless trees, and the houses of Auteuil were visible. Slowly driven coupés, with their elderly passengers, crawled along the road, and the wet-nurses pushed their perambulators. A motor-car broke the silence of the Bois with its humming.

"Do you like those machines?" asked Félicie.

"I find them convenient, that's all."

It was true that he was no chauffeur. He had no taste for any kind of sport; he concerned himself only with women.

Pointing to a cab which had just passed them, she exclaimed: "Robert, did you see?"

"No."

"Jeanne Perrin was in it with a woman."

And, as he displayed a calm indifference, she added in a reproachful tone: "You are like Dr. Socrates. Do you think that sort of thing natural?"

The lake slept, bright and serene, within its sombre walls of pines. They took the path to their right, which skirted the bank where the white geese and swans were preening their feathers. At their approach a flotilla of ducks, like living hulls, their necks curving like prows, set sail toward them.

Félicie told them, in a regretful tone, that she had nothing to give them.

“When I was little,” she went on to say, “Papa used to take me out on Sundays to feed the animals. It was my reward for having learned my lessons well all the week. Papa used to delight in the country. He was fond of dog, horses, all animals in fact. He was very gentle and very clever. He used to work very hard. But life is difficult for an officer who has no money of his own. It grieved him sorely not to be able to do as the wealthy officers did, and then he didn’t hit it off with Mamma. Papa’s life was not a happy one. He was often wretched. He didn’t talk much; but we two understood one another without speaking. He was very fond of me. Robert, dearest, later on, in the distant future, the very distant future, I shall have a tiny house in the country. And when you come there, my beloved, you will find me in a short skirt, throwing corn to my fowls.”

He asked her what gave her the idea of going on the stage.

“I knew very well that I’d never find a husband, since I had no dowry. And from what I saw of my older girl friends, working at dress-making or in a telegraph office, I was not encouraged to follow in their steps. When I was quite a little girl I thought it would be nice to be an actress. I had once acted, at my boarding-school, in a little play, on St. Nicholas’ Day. I thought it no end of a lark. The schoolmistress said I didn’t act well, but that was because Mamma owed her for a whole term. From the time I was fifteen I began to think seriously about going on the stage. I entered the Conservatoire, I worked, I worked very hard. It’s a back-breaking trade. But success brings rest.”

Opposite the chalet on the island they found the ferry-boat moored to the landing. Ligny jumped into it, pulling Félicie after him.

“Those tall trees are lovely, even without leaves,” she said. “But I thought the chalet was closed at this time of the year.”

The ferryman told them that, on fine winter days, people out for a walk liked to visit the island, because they could enjoy quiet there, and that he had only just ferried a couple of ladies across.

A waiter, who was living amid the solitude of the island, brought them tea, in a rustic sitting-room, furnished with a couple of chairs, a table, a piano, and a sofa. The panelling was mildewed, the planks of the flooring had started. Félicie looked out of the window at the lawn and the tall trees.

“What is that,” she asked, “that big dark ball on the poplar?”

“That’s mistletoe, my pet.”

“One would think it was an animal rolled round the branch, gnawing at it. It isn’t nice to look at.”

She rested her head on her lover's shoulder, saying in a languid tone: "I love you."

He drew her down upon the sofa. She felt him, kneeling at her feet, his hands, clumsy with impatience, gliding over her, and she suffered his attempts, inert, discouraged, foreseeing that it was useless. Her ears were ringing like a little bell. The ringing ceased, and she heard; on her right, a strange, clear, glacial voice say. "I forbid you to belong to one another." It seemed to her that the voice spoke from above, in the glow of light, but she did not dare to turn her head. It was an unfamiliar voice. Involuntarily and despite herself she tried to remember his voice, and she realized that she had forgotten its sound, and that she could never again remember it. The thought came to her "Perhaps this is the voice he has now." Terrified, she swiftly pushed her skirt over her knees. But she refrained from crying out, and she did not speak of what she had just heard, lest she should be taken for a madwoman, and because she realized somehow that it was not real.

Ligny drew away from her.

"If you don't want anything more to do with me, say so honestly. I am not going to take you by force."

Sitting upright, with her knees pressed together, she told him: "Whenever we are in a crowd, as long as there are people about us, I want you, I long for you, but as soon as we are by ourselves I am afraid."

He replied by a cheap, spiteful sneer:

"Ah, if you must have a public to stimulate you!"

She rose, and returned to the window. A tear was running down her cheek. She wept for some time in silence. Suddenly she called to him: "Look there!"

She pointed to Jeanne Perrin, who was strolling on the lawn with a young woman. Each had an arm about the other's waist; they were giving one another violets to smell, and were smiling.

"See! That woman is happy; her mind at peace."

And Jeanne Perrin, tasting the peace of long-established habits, strolled along satisfied and serene, without even betraying any pride in her strange preference.

Félicie watched her with, an interest which she did not confess to herself, and envied her her serenity.

"She's not afraid, that woman."

"Let her be! What harm is she doing us?"

And he caught her violently by the waist. She freed herself with a shudder. In the end, disappointed, frustrated, humiliated, he lost his temper, called her a silly

fool, and swore that he would not stand her ridiculous way of treating him any longer.

She made no reply, and once more she began to weep.

Angered by her tears, he told her harshly:

“Since you can no longer give me what I ask you, it is useless for us to meet any more. There is nothing more to be said between us. Besides, I see that you have ceased to love me. And you would admit, if for once you could speak the truth, that you have never loved anyone except that wretched second-rate actor.”

Then her anger exploded, and she moaned in despair:

“Liar! Liar! That’s an abominable thing to say. You see I’m crying, and you want to make me suffer more. You take advantage of the fact that I love you to make me miserable. It’s cowardly. Well, no then, I don’t love you any longer. Go away! I don’t want to see you again. Go! But it’s true — what are we doing like this? Are we going to spend our lives staring at each other like this, wild with each other, full of despair and rage? It is not my fault — I can’t, I can’t. Forgive me, darling, I love you, I worship you, I want you. Only drive him away. You are a man, you know what there is to do. Drive him away. You killed him, not I. It was you. Kill him altogether then — Oh God, I am going mad. I am going mad!”

On the following day, Ligny applied to be sent as Third Secretary to The Hague. He was appointed a week later, and left at once, without having seen Félicie again.

CHAPTER XVII

Madame Nanteuil thought of nothing but her daughter's welfare. Her liaison with Tony Meyers the picture-dealer in the Rue de Clichy, left her with plenty of leisure and an unoccupied heart. She met at the theatre a Monsieur Bondois, a manufacturer of electrical apparatus; he was still young, superior to his trade, and extremely well-mannered. He was blessed with an amorous temperament and a bashful nature, and, as young and beautiful women frightened him, he had accustomed himself to desiring only women who were not young and beautiful. Madame Nanteuil was still a very pleasing woman. But one night when she was badly dressed, and did not look her best; he made her the offer of his affections. She accepted him as something of a help toward housekeeping, and so that her daughter should want for nothing. Her devotion brought her happiness. Monsieur Bondois loved her, and courted her most ardently. At the outset this surprised her; then it brought her happiness and peace of mind; it seemed to her natural and good to be loved, and she could not believe that her time for love was past when she was in receipt of proof to the contrary.

She had always displayed a kindly disposition, an easy-going character, and an even temper. But never yet had she revealed in her home so happy a spirit and such gracious thoughtfulness. Kind to others, and to herself, always preserving, in the lapse of changeful hours, the smile that disclosed her beautiful teeth and brought the dimples into her plump cheeks, grateful to life for what it was giving her, blooming, expanding, overflowing, she was the joy and the youth of the house.

While Madame Nanteuil conceived and gave expression to bright and cheerful ideas, Félicie was fast becoming gloomy, fretful, and sullen. Lines began to show in her pretty face; her voice assumed a grating quality. She had at once realized the position which Monsieur Bondois occupied in the household, and, whether she would have preferred her mother to live and breathe for her alone, whether her filial piety suffered because she was forced to respect her less, whether she envied her happiness, or whether she merely felt the distress which love affairs cause us when we are brought into too close contact with them, Félicie, more especially at meal-times, and every day, bitterly reproached Madame Nanteuil, in very pointed allusions, and in terms which were not precisely veiled, in respect of this new "friend of the family"; and for Monsieur Bondois himself, whenever she met him, she exhibited an expressive disgust and an unconcealed aversion. Madame Nanteuil was only moderately distressed by

this, and she excused her daughter by reflecting that the young girl had as yet no experience of life. And Monsieur Bondois, whom Félicie inspired with a superhuman terror, strove to placate her by signs of respect and inconsiderable presents.

She was violent because she was suffering. The letters which she received from The Hague inflamed her love, so that it was a pain to her. A prey to consuming visions, she was pining away. When she saw her absent friend too clearly her temples throbbed, her heart beat violently, and a dense increasing shadow would darken her mind. All the sensibility of her nerves, all the warmth of her blood, all the forces of her being flowed through her, sinking downwards, merging themselves in desire in the very depths of her flesh. At such times she had no other thought than to recover Ligny. It was Ligny that she wanted, only Ligny, and she herself was surprised at the disgust which she felt for all other men. For her instincts had not always been so exclusive. She told herself that she would go at once to Bondois, ask him for money, and take the train for The Hague. And she did not do it. What deterred her was not so much the idea of displeasing her lover, who would have looked upon such a journey as bad form, as the vague fear of awakening the slumbering shadow.

That she had not seen since Ligny's departure. But perturbing things were happening, within her and around her. In the street she was followed by a water-spaniel, which appealed and vanished suddenly. One morning when she was in bed her mother told her "I am going to the dressmaker's," and went out. Two or three minutes later Félicie saw her come back into the room as if she had forgotten something. But the apparition advanced without a look at her, without a word, without a sound and disappeared as it touched the bed.

She had even more disturbing illusions. One Sunday, she was acting, in a *matinée* of *Athalie*, the part of young Zacharias. As she had very pretty legs she found the disguise not displeasing; she was glad also to show that she knew how verse should be spoken. But she noticed that in the orchestra stalls there was a priest wearing his cassock. It was not the first time that an ecclesiastic had been present at an afternoon performance of this tragedy drawn from the Scriptures. Nevertheless, it impressed her disagreeably. When she went on the stage she distinctly saw Louise Dalle, wearing the turban of Jehoshabeath; loading a revolver in front of the prompter's box. She had enough common sense and presence of mind to reject this absurd vision, which disappeared. But she spoke her first lines in an inaudible voice.

She had burning pains in the stomach. She suffered from fits of suffocation, sometimes, without apparent cause, an unspeakable agony gripped her bowels, her heart beat madly and she feared that she must be dying.

Dr Trublet attended her with watchful prudence. She often saw him at the theatre, and occasionally went to consult him at his old house in the Rue de Seine. She did not go through the waiting-room; the servant would show her at once into the little dining-room, where Arab potteries glinted in the shadows, and she was always the first to be shown in. One day Socrates succeeded in making her understand the manner in which images are formed in the brain, and how these images do not always correspond with external objects, or, at my rate, do not always correspond exactly.

“Hallucinations,” he added, “are more often than not merely false perceptions. One sees a thing, but one sees it badly, so that a feather-broom becomes a head of bristling locks, a red carnation is a beast’s open mouth, and a chemise is a ghost in its winding-sheet. Insignificant errors.”

From these arguments she derived sufficient strength to despise and dispel her visions of cats and dogs, or of persons who were living, and well known to her. Yet she dreaded seeing the dead man again; and the mystic terrors nestling in the obscure crannies of her brain were more powerful than the demonstrations of science. It was useless to tell her that the dead never returned; she knew very well that they did.

On this occasion Socrates once more advised her to find some distraction, to visit her friends, and by preference the more pleasant of her friends, and to avoid darkness and solitude, as her two most treacherous enemies.

And he added this prescription:

“Especially must you avoid persons and things which may be connected with the object of your visions.”

He did not see that this was impossible. Nor did Nanteuil.

“Then you will cure me, dear old Socrates,” she said, turning upon him her pretty grey eyes, full of entreaty.

“You will cure yourself my child. You will cure yourself, because you are hard-working, sensible, and courageous. Yes, yes, you are timid and brave at the same time. You dread danger, but you have the courage to live. You will be cured, because you are not in sympathy with evil and suffering. You will be cured because you want to be cured.”

“You think then that one can be cured if one wills it?”

“When one wills it in a certain profound, intimate fashion, when it is our cells that will it within us, when it is our unconscious self that wills it; when one wills it with the secret, abounding, absolute will of the sturdy tree that wills itself to grow green again in the spring.”

CHAPTER XVIII

That same night, being unable to sleep, she turned over in her bed, and threw back the bed-clothes. She felt that sleep was still far off, that it would come with the first rays, full of dancing atoms of dust, with which morning pierces the chinks between the curtains. The night-light, with its tiny burning heart shining through its porcelain shade, gave her a mystic and familiar companionship. Félicie opened her eyes and at a glance drank in the white milky glimmer which brought her peace of mind. Then, closing them once more, she relapsed into the tumultuous weariness of insomnia. Now and again a few words of her part recurred to her memory, words to which she attached no meaning, yet which obsessed her: "Our days are what we make them." And her mind wearied itself by turning over and over some four or five ideas.

"I must go to Madame Royaumont to-morrow, to try on my gown. Yesterday I went with Fagette to Jeanne Perrin's dressing-room; she was dressing, and she showed her hairy legs, as if she was proud of them. She's not ugly, Jeanne Perrin; indeed, she has a fine head; but it is her expression that I dislike. How does Madame Colbert make out that I owe her thirty-two francs? Fourteen and three are seventeen, and nine, twenty-six. I owe her only twenty-six francs. 'Our days are what we make them.' How hot I feel!"

With one swift movement of her supple loins she turned over, and her bare arms opened to embrace the air as though it had been a cool, subtle body.

"It seems a hundred years since Robert went away. It was cruel of him to leave me alone. I am sick with longing for him." And curled up in her bed, she recollected intently the hours when they held each other in a close embrace. She called him:

"My pussy-cat! Little wolf!"

And immediately the same train of thoughts began once more their fatiguing procession through her mind.

"Our days are what we make them. Our days are what we make them. Our days....' Fourteen and three, seventeen, and nine, twenty-six. I could see quite plainly that Jeanne Perrin showed her long man's legs, dark with hair, on purpose. Is it true what they say, that Jeanne Perrin gives money to women? I must try my gown on at four o'clock to-morrow. There's one dreadful thing, Madame Royaumont never can put in the sleeves properly. How hot I am! Socrates is a good doctor. But he does sometimes amuse himself by making you feel a stupid fool."

Suddenly she thought of Chevalier, and she seemed to feel an influence emanating from him which was gliding along the walls of her bedroom. It seemed to her that the glimmer of the night-light was dimmed by it. It was less than a shadow, and it filled her with alarm. The idea suddenly flashed through her mind that this subtle thing had its origin in the portraits of the dead man. She had not kept any of them in her bedroom. But there were still some in the flat, some that she had not torn up. She carefully reckoned them up, and discovered that there must still be three left: the first, when he was quite young, showed him against a cloudy background; another, laughing and at his ease, sitting astride of a chair; a third as Don Cæsar de Bazan. In her hurry to destroy every vestige of them she sprang out of bed, lit a candle, and in her nightgown shuffled along in her slippers into the drawing-room, until she came to the rosewood table, surmounted by a phoenix palm. She pulled up the tablecloth and searched through the drawer. It contained card-counters, sockets for candles, a few scraps of wood detached from the furniture, two or three lustres belonging to the chandelier and a few photographs, among which she found only one of Chevalier, the earliest, showing him standing against a cloudy background.

She searched for the other two in a little piece of Boule furniture which adorned the space between the windows, and on which were some Chinese lamps. Here slumbered lamp-globes of ground glass, lamp-shades, cut-glass goblets ornamented with gilt bronze, a match-stand in painted porcelain flanked by a child sleeping against a drum beside a dog, books whose bindings were detached, tattered musical scores, a couple of broken fans, a flute, and a small heap of carte-de-visite portraits. There she discovered a second Chevalier, the Don Cæsar de Bazan. The third was not there. She asked herself in vain where it could have been hidden away. Fruitlessly she hunted through boxes, bowls, flowerpot holders, and the music davenport. And while she was eagerly searching for the portrait, it was growing in size and distinctness in her imagination, attaining to a man's stature, was assuming a mocking air and defying her. Her head was on fire, her feet were like ice, and she could feel terror creeping into the pit of her stomach. Just as she was about to give up the search, about to go and bury her face in her pillow, she remembered that her mother kept some photographs in her mirror-panelled wardrobe. She again took courage. Softly she entered the room of the sleeping Madame Nanteuil. With silent steps she crept over to the wardrobe, opened it slowly and noiselessly, and, standing on a chair, explored the top shelf, which was loaded with old cardboard boxes. She came upon an album which dated from the Second Empire, and which had not been opened for twenty years. She rummaged among a mass of letters, of bundles of receipts and Mont-de-Piété vouchers. Awakened by the

light of the candle and by the mouse-like noise made by the seeker, Madame Nanteuil demanded:

“Who is there?”

Immediately, perceiving the familiar little phantom in her long nightgown, with a heavy plait of hair down her back, perched on a chair, she exclaimed:

“It’s you, Félicie? You are not ill, are you? What are you doing there?”

“I am looking for something.”

“In my wardrobe?”

“Yes, mamma.”

“Will you kindly go back to your bed! You will catch cold. Tell me at least what you are looking for. If it’s the chocolate, it is on the middle shelf next to the silver sugar-basin.”

But Félicie had seized upon a packet of photographs, which she was rapidly turning over. Her impatient fingers rejected Madame Douce, bedecked with lace, Fagette, radiant, her hair dissolving in its own brilliance; Tony Meyer, with close-set eyes and a nose drooping over his lips; Pradel, with his flourishing beard; Trublet, bald and snub-nosed; Monsieur Bondois, with timorous eye and straight nose set above a heavy moustache. Although not in a mood to bestow any attention upon Monsieur Bondois, she gave him a passing glance of hostility, and by chance let a drop of candle-grease disfigure his nose.

Madame Nanteuil, who was now wide awake, could make nothing of her proceedings.

“Félicie, why on earth are you poking about in my wardrobe like that?”

Félicie, who at last held the photograph for which she had sought so assiduously, responded only by a cry of fierce delight and flew from the chair, taking with her her dead friend, and, inadvertently, Monsieur Bondois as well.

Returning to the drawing-room she crouched down by the fireplace, and made a fire of paper, into which she cast Chevalier’s three photographs. She watched them blazing, and when the three bits of cardboard, twisted and blackened, had flown up the chimney, and neither shape nor substance was left, she breathed freely. She really believed, this time, that she had deprived the jealous dead man of the material of his apparitions, and had freed herself from the dreaded obsession.

On picking up her candlestick she saw Monsieur Bondois, whose nose had disappeared beneath a round blob of white wax. Not knowing what to do with him she threw him with a laugh into the still flaming grate.

Returning to her room she stood before the looking-glass and drew her nightgown closely about her, in order to emphasize the lines of her body. A

thought which occasionally flitted through her mind tarried there this time a little longer than usual.

She was wont to ask herself:

“Why is one made like that, with a head, arms, legs, hands, feet, chest, and abdomen? Why is one made like that and not otherwise? It’s funny.”

And at the moment the human form seemed to her arbitrary, fantastic, alien. But her astonishment was soon over. And, as she looked at herself, she felt pleased with herself. She was conscious of a keen deep-seated delight in herself. She bared her breasts, held them delicately in the hollow of her hands, looked at them tenderly in the glass, as if they were not a part of herself, but something belonging to her, like two living creatures, like a pair of doves.

After smiling upon them, she went back to bed. Waking late in the morning she felt surprised for a moment at being alone in her bed. Sometimes, in a dream, she would divide herself into two beings, and, feeling her own flesh, she would dream that she was being caressed by a woman.

CHAPTER XIX

The dress rehearsal of *La Grille* was called for two o'clock. As early as one o'clock Dr. Trublet had taken his accustomed place in Nanteuil's dressing-room.

Félicie, who was being dressed by Madame Michon, reproached her doctor with having nothing to say to her. Yet it was she who, preoccupied, her mind concentrated upon the part which she was about to play, was not listening to him. She gave orders that nobody should be allowed to come into her dressing-room. For all that, she received Constantin Marc's visit with pleasure, for she found him sympathetic.

He was getting excited. In order to conceal his agitation he made a pretence of talking about his woods in the Vivarais, and began to tell shooting stories and peasants' tales, which he did not finish.

"I am in a funk," said Nanteuil. "And you, Monsieur Marc, don't you feel qualms in the stomach?"

He denied feeling any anxiety. She insisted:

"Now confess that you wish it were all over."

"Well, since you insist, perhaps I would rather it were over."

Whereupon Dr. Socrates, with a simple expression and in a quiet voice, asked him the following question:

"Do you not believe that what must be accomplished has already been accomplished, and has been accomplished from all time?"

And without waiting for a reply he added:

"If the world's phenomena reach our consciousness in succession, we must not conclude from that that they are really successive, and we have still fewer reasons to believe that they are produced at the moment when we perceive them."

"That's obvious," said Constantin Marc, who had not listened.

"The universe," continued the doctor, "appears to us perpetually imperfect, and we are all under the illusion that it is perpetually completing itself. Since we perceive phenomena successively, we actually believe that they follow one another. We imagine that those which we no longer see are in the past, and those which we do not yet see are in the future. But it is possible to conceive beings built in such fashion that they perceive simultaneously what we regard as the past and the future. We may conceive beings who perceive phenomena in a retrograde order, and see them unroll themselves from our future to our past.

Animals disposing of space otherwise than ourselves, and able, for instance, to move at a speed greater than that of light, would conceive an idea of the succession of phenomena which would differ greatly from our own.”

“If only Durville is not going to rag me on the stage!” exclaimed Félicie, while Madame Michon was putting on her stockings under her skirt.

Constantin Marc assured her that Durville did not even dream of any such thing, and begged her not to be uneasy.

And Dr. Socrates resumed his discourse.

“We ourselves, of a clear night, when we gaze at Spica Virginis, which is throbbing above the top of a poplar, can see at one and the same time that which was and that which is. And it may be said with equal truth that we see that which is and that which will be. For if the star, such as it appears to us, represents the past as compared with the tree, the tree constitutes the future as compared with the star. Yet the star, which, from afar, shows us its tiny, fiery countenance, not as it is to-day, but as it was in the time of our youth, perhaps even before our birth, and the poplar-tree, whose young leaves are trembling in the fresh night air, come together within us in the same moment of time, and to us are present simultaneously. We say of a thing that it is in the present when we have a precise perception of it. We say that it is in the past when we preserve but an indistinct image of it. A thing may have been accomplished millions of years ago, yet if it makes the strongest possible impression upon us it will not be for us a thing of the past; it will be present. The order in which things revolve in the depths of the universe is unknown to us. We know only the order of our perceptions. To believe that the future does not exist, because we do not know it, is like believing that a book is not finished because we have not finished reading it.”

The doctor paused for a moment. And Nanteuil, in the silence which followed, heard the sound of her heart beating. She exclaimed:

“Continue, my dear Socrates, continue, I beg you. If you only knew how much good you do me by talking! You think that I am not listening to a word you say. But it distracts me to hear you talking of far-away things; it makes me feel that there is something else besides my entrance; it prevents me from giving way to the blues. Talk about anything you like, but do not stop.”

The wise Socrates, who had doubtless anticipated the benign influence which his speech was exerting over the actress, resumed his lecture:

“The universe is constructed inevitably as a triangle of which two angles and one side are given. Future things are determined. They are from that moment finished. They are as if they existed. Indeed, they exist already. They exist to such a degree that we know them in part. And, if that part is infinitesimal in

proportion to their immensity, it is none the less very appreciable in proportion to the part of accomplished things of which we can have any knowledge. It is permissible to say that, for us, the future is not much more obscure than the past. We know that generations will follow generations in labour, joy and suffering. I look beyond the duration of the human race. I see the constellations slowly changing in the heavens those forms of theirs which seem immutable; I see the Wain unharnessed from its ancient team, the shield of Orion broken in twain, Sirius extinguished. We know that the sun will rise to-morrow and that for a long time to come it will rise every morning amid the dense clouds or in light mists."

Adolphe Meunier entered discreetly on tiptoe.

The doctor grasped his hand warmly.

"Good day, Monsieur Meunier. We can see next month's new moon. We do not see her as distinctly as to-night's new moon, because we do not know in what grey or ruddy sky she will reveal her old saucepan-lid over my roof, amid the stove-flues capped with pointed hats and romantic hoods, to the gaze of the amorous cats. But this coming rising of the moon — if we were expert enough to know it in advance, in its most minute particulars, every one of which is essential, we should conceive as clear an idea of the night whereof I speak as of the night now with us; both would be equally present to us.

"The knowledge that we have of the facts is the sole reason which leads us to believe in their reality. We know that certain facts are bound to occur. We must therefore believe them to be real. And, if they are real, they are realized. It is therefore credible, my dear Constantin Marc, that your play has been played a thousand years ago, or half an hour ago, which comes absolutely to the same thing. It is credible that we have all been dead for some time past. Think it, and your mind will be at rest."

Constantin Marc, who had paid scant attention to his remarks and who did not perceive their relevance or their propriety, answered, in a somewhat irritable tone, that all that was to be found in Bossuet.

"In Bossuet!" exclaimed the indignant physician. "I challenge you to show me anything resembling it in his works. Bossuet knew nothing of philosophy."

Nanteuil turned to the doctor. She was wearing a big lawn bonnet with a tall round coif; it was bound tightly upon her head with a wide blue ribbon, and its lappets, one above another, fell on either side of her face, shading her forehead and cheeks. She had transformed herself into a fiery blonde. Reddish-brown hair fell in curls about her shoulders. An organdie neckerchief was crossed over her bosom and held at the waist by a broad purple girdle. Her white and pink striped

petticoat, which flowed as though wet and clinging from the somewhat high waist, made her appear very tall. She looked like a figure in a dream.

“Delage, too,” she said, “rags one in the most rotten way. Have you heard what he did to Marie-Claire? They were playing together in *Les Femmes savantes*. He put an egg into her hand, on the stage. She couldn’t get rid of it until the end of the act.”

On hearing the call boy’s summons she went downstairs, followed by Constantin Marc. They heard the roar of the house, the mutterings of the monster, and it seemed to them that they were entering into the flaming mouth of the apocalyptic beast.

La Grille was favourably received. Coming at the end of the season, with little hope of a long run, it found favour with all. By the middle of the first act the public were conscious of the style, the poetry, and, here and there, the obscurities of the play. Thenceforward they respected it, pretended to enjoy it, and wished they could understand it. They forgave the play its slight dramatic value. It was literary, and for once the style found acceptance.

Constantin Marc as yet knew no one in Paris. He had invited to the theatre three or four landed proprietors from the Vivarais, who sat blushing in the stalls in their white ties, rolled their round eyes, and did not dare to applaud. As he had no friends nobody dreamt of spoiling his success. And even in the corridors there were those who set his talent above that of other dramatists. Greatly excited, nevertheless, he wandered from dressing-room to dressing-room or collapsed into a chair at the back of the director’s stage-box. He was worrying about the critics.

“Set your mind at rest,” Romilly told him. “They will say of your play the good or bad things they think of Pradel. And for the time being they think more ill than good of him.”

Adolphe Meunier informed him, with a pale smile, that the house was a good one, and that the critics thought the play showed very careful writing. He expected, in return, a few complimentary words concerning his *Pandolphe et Clarimonde*. But it did not enter Constantin Marc’s head to vouchsafe them.

Romilly shook his head.

“We must look forward to slatings. Monsieur Meunier knows it well. The press has shown itself ferociously unjust to him.”

“Alas,” sighed Meunier, “they will never say as many hard things about us as were said of Shakespeare and Molière.”

Nanteuil had a great success which was marked less by vociferous calls before the curtain than by the deeper and more discreet approval of

discriminating playgoers. She had revealed qualities with which she had not hitherto been credited; purity of diction, nobility of pose, and a proud, modest grace.

On the stage, during the last interval, the Minister congratulated her in person. This was a sign that the public was favourably disposed, for Ministers never express individual opinions. Behind the Grand Master of the University pressed a flattering crowd of public officials, society folk, and dramatic authors. With arms extended toward her like pump-handles they all simultaneously assured her of their admiration. And Madame Douce, stifled by their numbers, left on the buttons of the men's garments shreds of her countless adornments of cotton lace.

The last act was Nanteuil's triumph. She obtained better things from the public than tears and shouts. She won from all eyes that moist yet tearless gaze, from every breast that deep yet almost silent murmur, which beauty alone has power to compel.

She felt that she had grown immeasurably in a single instant, and when the curtain fell she whispered:

"This time I've done it!"

She was unrobing herself in her dressing-room, which was filled with baskets of orchids, bouquets of roses, and bunches of lilac, when a telegram was brought to her. She tore it open. It was a message from The Hague containing these words:

"My heartfelt congratulations on your undoubted success — Robert."

Just as she finished reading it Dr. Trublet entered the dressing-room.

She flung her arms, burning with joy and fatigue, round his neck; she drew him to her warm moist bosom, and planted on his meditative Silenus-like face a smacking kiss from her intoxicated lips.

Socrates, who was a wise man, took the kiss as a gift from the gods, knowing full well that it was not intended for him, but was dedicated to glory and to love.

Nanteuil realized herself that in her intoxication she had perhaps charged her lips with too ardent a breath, for, throwing her arms apart, she exclaimed:

"It can't be helped! I am so happy!"

CHAPTER XX

At Easter an event of great importance increased her joy. She was engaged at the Comédie-Française. For some time past, without mentioning the subject, she had been trying for this engagement. Her mother had helped her in the steps she had taken. Madame Nanteuil was lovable now that she was loved. She now wore straight corsets and petticoats that she could display anywhere. She frequented the offices of the Ministry, and it is said that, being solicited by the deputy-chief of a department in the Beaux-Arts, she had yielded with very good grace. At least, so Pradel said.

He would exclaim joyfully:

“You wouldn’t recognize her now, Mother Nanteuil! She has become most desirable, and I like her better than her little vixen of a daughter. She has a better disposition.”

Like the rest of them, Félicie had disdained, despised, disparaged the Comédie-Française. She had said, as all the others did: “I should hardly care to get into that house.” And no sooner did she belong to it than she was filled with proud and joyful exultation. What increased her pleasure twofold was that she was to make her debut in *L’École des Femmes*. She already studying the part of Agnès with an obscure old professor, Monsieur Maxime, of whom she thought highly because he was acquainted with all the traditions of the stage. At night she was playing Cécile in *La Grille*, and she was living in a feverish turmoil of work she received a letter in which Robert de Ligny informed her that he was returning to Paris.

During his stay at The Hague he had made certain experiments which had proved to him the strength of his love for Félicie. He had had women who were reported to be pretty and pleasing. But neither Madame Bourmdernoot of Brussels, tall and fresh looking, nor the sisters Van Cruysen, milliners on the Vijver, nor Suzette Berger of the Folies-Marigny, then on tour through Northern Europe, had given him a sense of pleasure in its completeness. When in their company he had regretted Félicie, and had discovered that of all women, he desired her alone. Had it not been for Madame Bourmdernoot, the sisters Van Cruysen, and Suzette Berger, he would never have known how priceless Félicie Nanteuil was to him. If one must be literal it may be argued that he was unfaithful to her. That is the correct expression. There are others which come to the same thing and which are not such good form. But if one looks into the matter more closely he had not deceived her. He had sought her, he had sought

her out of herself and had learned that he would find her in herself alone. In his futile wisdom he was almost angered and alarmed; he was uneasy at having to stake the multitude of his desires upon so slender a substance, in so unique and fragile a vessel. And he loved Félicie all the more because he loved her with a certain depth of rage and hatred.

On the very day of his arrival in Paris, he made an appointment with her in a bachelor's flat, which a rich colleague in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had placed at his disposal. It was situated in the Avenue de l'Alma, on the ground-floor of an attractive-looking house, and consisted of a couple of small rooms hung with a design of suns with brown hearts and golden rays, which rose, uniform, peaceful, and shadowless on the cheerful wall. The rooms were modern in style; the furniture was of a pale green, decorated with flowering branches; its outlines followed the gentle curves of the liliaceous plants, and assumed something of the tender feeling of moist vegetation. The cheval-glass leant slightly forward in its frame of bulbous plants of supple form, terminating in closed corollas, and in this frame the mirror had the coolness of water. A white bearskin lay stretched at the foot of the bed.

"You! You! It's you!" was all she could say.

She saw the pupils of his eyes shining and heavy with desire, and while she gazed at him a cloud gathered before her eyes. The subtle fire of her blood, the burning of her loins, the warm breath of her lungs, the fiery colour of her face, were all blended in her mouth, and she pressed on her lover's lips a long, long kiss, a kiss pregnant with all these fires and as fresh as a flower in the dew.

They asked one another twenty things at a time, and their questions intermingled.

"Were you wretched, Robert, when you were away from me?"

"So you are making your *début* at the Comédie?"

"Is The Hague a pretty place?"

"Yes, a quiet little town. Red, grey, yellow houses, with stepped gables, green shutters, and geraniums at the windows."

"What did you do there?"

"Not much. I walked round the Vijver."

"You did not go with women, I should hope?"

"No, upon my word. How pretty you are, my darling! Are you well again now?"

"Yes, I am cured."

And in sudden entreaty she said:

"Robert, I love you. Do not leave me. If you were to leave me I know for certain I could never take another lover. And what would become of me? You

know that I can't do without love."

He replied brusquely, in a harsh voice, that he loved her only too well, that he thought of nothing but of her.

"I'm going crazy with it."

His harshness delighted and reassured her better than the nerveless tenderness of oaths and promises could have done. She smiled and began to undress herself generously.

"When do you make your début at the Comédie?"

"This very month."

She opened her little bag, and took from it, together with her face-powder, her call for the rehearsal, which she held out to Robert. It was a source of unending delight to her to gaze admiringly at this document, because it bore the heading of the Comédie, with the remote and awe-inspiring date of its foundation.

"You see, I make my début as Agnès in *L'École des Femmes*."

"It's a fine part."

"I believe you."

And, while she was undressing, the lines surged to her lips, and she whispered them:

"Moi, j'ai blessé quelqu'un? fis-je tout étonnée
Oui, dit-elle, blessé; mais blessé tout de bon;
Et c'est l'homme qu'hier vous vîtes au balcon
Las! qui pourrait, lui dis-je, en avoir été cause?
Sur lui, sans y penser, fis-je choir quelque chose?"

"You see, I have not grown thin."

"Non, dit-elle, vos yeux ont fait ce coup fatal,
Et c'est de leurs regards qu'est venu tout son mal."

"If anything, I am a little plumper, but not too much."

"Hé, mon Dieu! ma surprise est, fis-je, sans seconde;
Mes yeux ont-ils du mal pour en donner au monde?"

He listened to the lines with pleasure. If on the one hand he did not know much more of the literature of bygone days or of French tradition than his

youthful contemporaries, he had more taste and more lively interests. And, like all Frenchmen, he loved Molière, understood him, and felt him profoundly.

“It’s delightful,” he said. “Now, come to me.”

She let her chemise slip downwards with a calm and beneficent grace. But, because she wished to make herself desired, and because she loved comedy, she began Agnès’ narrative:

“J’étais sur le balcon à travailler au frais,
Lorsque je vis passer sous les arbres d’auprès
Un jeune homme bien fait qui, rencontrant ma vue....”

He called her, and drew her to him. She glided from his arms, and, advancing toward the mirror, she continued to recite and act before the glass.

“D’une humble révérence aussitôt me salue.”

Bending her knee, at first slightly, then lower, then, with her left leg brought forward, and her right thrown, back, she curtsied deeply.

“Moi, pour ne point manquer à la civilité,
Je fis la révérence aussi de mon côté.”

He called her more urgently. But she dropped a second curtsy, the pauses of which she accentuated with amusing precision. And she went on reciting and dropping curtsies at the places indicated by the text and by the traditions of the stage.

“Soudain il me refait une autre révérence;
Moi, j’en refais de même une autre en diligence;
Et lui, d’une troisième aussitôt repartant,
D’une troisième aussi j’y repars à l’instant.”

She executed every detail of stage business, seriously and conscientiously, taking pains to give a perfect rendering. Her poses, some of which were disconcerting, requiring as they did a skirt to explain them, were almost all pretty, while all were interesting, inasmuch as they brought into relief the firm muscles under the soft envelope of a young body, and revealed at every movement correspondences and harmonies which are not commonly observed.

When clothing her nudity with the propriety of her attitudes and the ingenuousness of her expressions she was the incarnation, through mere chance

and caprice, of a gem of art, an allegory of Innocence in the style of Allegrain or Clodion. And the great lines of the comedy rang out with delicious purity from this animated figurine. Robert, enthralled in spite of himself, suffered her to go on to the very end. What entertained him above all was that the most public of all things, a stage scene, should be presented to him in so private and secret a fashion. And, while watching the ceremonious actions of this girl in all her nudity, he was at the same time revelling in the philosophical pleasure of discovering how dignity is produced in the best social circles.

“Il passe, vient, repasse et toujours de plus belle
Me fait à chaque fois une révérence nouvelle,
Et moi qui tous ses tours fixement regardais,
Nouvelle révérence aussi je lui rendais....”

In the meantime she admired in the mirror her freshly-budded breasts, her supple waist, her arms, a trifle slender, round and tapering, and her smooth, beautiful knees; and, seeing all this subservient to the fine art of comedy, she became animated and exalted; a slight flush, like rouge, tinted her cheeks.

“Tant que si sur ce point la nuit ne fût venue,
Toujours comme cela je me serais tenue,
Ne voulaut point céder, ni recevoir l’ennui
Qu’il me pût estimer moins civile que lui....”

He called to her from the bed, where he was lying on his elbow.

“Now come!”

Whereupon, full of animation and with heightened colour, she exclaimed:

“Don’t you think that I, too, love you!”

She flung herself beside her lover. Supple and wholly surrendered, she threw back her head, offering to his kisses her eyes veiled with shadowy lashes and her half-parted lips, from which gleamed a moist flash of white.

Of a sudden she started to her knees. Her staring eyes were filled with unspeakable terror. A hoarse scream escaped from her throat, followed by a wail as long drawn out and gentle as an organ note. Turning her head, she pointed to the white fur spread out at the foot of the bed.

“There! There! He is lying there like a crouching dog, with a hole in his head. He is looking at me, with the blood trickling from the corner of his mouth.”

Her eyes, wide open, rolled up, showing the whites. Her body stretched backward like a bow, and, when it had recovered its suppleness, she fell as if dead.

He bathed her temples with cold water, and brought her back to consciousness. In a childlike voice she whimpered that every joint in her body was broken. Feeling a burning sensation in the hollow of her hand, she looked, and saw that the palm was cut and bleeding.

She said:

“It’s my nails, they’ve gone into my hand. See, my nails are full of blood!”

She thanked him tenderly for his ministrations, and apologized sweetly for causing him so much trouble.

“It was not for that you came, was it?”

She tried to smile, and looked around her.

“It’s nice, here.”

Her gaze met the call to rehearsal lying open on the bedside table, and she sighed:

“What is the use of my being a great actress if I am not happy?”

Without realizing it, she was repeating word for word what Chevalier had said when she rejected his advances.

Then, raising her still stupefied head from the pillow in which it had lain buried, she turned her mournful eyes toward her lover, and said to him resignedly:

“We did indeed love each other, we two. It is over. We shall never again belong to each other; no, never. He forbids it!”

THE END

THE WHITE STONE



Translated by Charles E. Roche

Originally published in 1905 in France and translated by Charles E. Roche and published by John Lane of London in Britain in 1910, *The White Stone* demonstrates France's increasing interest and dedication to the socialist cause. As the author's disgust and disdain for the bourgeoisie grew, he declared himself a supporter of the ill-fated 1905 Russia Revolution. One important aspect of the work is the discussion and rejection of the so-called 'Yellow Peril' of the late 19th century. This 'scare' was the racist and xenophobic belief that there was a threat to the Western culture from Asia; the notion that this nameless, faceless (non-white) barbaric and degenerate enemy was going to invade and destroy Europe. The *fin de siècle* political culture was rife with ideas associated with the decay and fall of Western European 'values'; the fear of the 'Other', panic over the blurring of gender boundaries, concern about invasions and sexual 'deviance'.

The White Stone involves a science-fiction element associated with a literal dream of a future world and organisation. It is set in 2270, or year 220 of European Federation of Nations, in a socialist state, without property or money and is highly technologically advanced. France does not depict this new order as a utopia, as he raises the issue of authoritarianism in a statist socialist structure. However, the inhabitants of the society inform the narrator that as imperfect as their lives remain this world is largely preferable to the capitalist order. There is more equality, marriage no longer reigns supreme as the ideal relationship form, and lawyers and courts no longer exist because the elimination of private property and an adequate standard of living for all have resulted in the eradication of crime.

ANATOLE FRANCE

DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

SUR

LA PIERRE BLANCHE



PARIS

CALMANN-LÉVY, ÉDITEURS

3, RUE AUBER, 3

The original title page

CONTENTS

[I](#)
[II](#)
[III](#)
[IV](#)
[V](#)
[VI](#)

I

A FEW Frenchmen, united in friendship, who were spending the spring in Rome, were wont to meet amid the ruins of the disinterred Forum. They were Joséphin Leclerc, an Embassy Attaché on leave; M. Goubin, licencié ès lettres, an annotator; Nicole Langelier, of the old Parisian family of the Langeliers, printers and classical scholars; Jean Boilly, a civil engineer, and Hippolyte Dufresne, a man of leisure, and a lover of the fine arts.

Towards five o'clock of the afternoon of the first day of May, they wended their way, as was their custom, through the northern door, closed to the public, where Commendatore Boni, who superintended the excavations, welcomed them with quiet amenity, and led them to the threshold of his house of wood nestling in the shadow of laurel bushes, privet hedges and cytusus, and rising above the vast trench, dug down to the depth of the ancient Forum, in the cattle market of pontifical Rome.

Here, they pause awhile, and look about them.

Facing them rise the truncated shafts of the Columnae Honorariae, and where stood the Basilica of Julia, the eye rested on what bore the semblance of a huge draughts-board and its draughts. Further south, the three columns of the Temple of the Dioscuri cleave the azure of the skies with their blue-tinted volutes. On their right, surmounting the dilapidated Arch of Septimus Severus, the tall columns of the Temple of Saturn, the dwellings of Christian Rome, and the Women's Hospital display in tiers, their facings yellower and muddier than the waters of the Tiber. To their left stands the Palatine flanked by huge red arches and crowned with evergreen oaks. At their feet, from hill to hill, among the flagstones of the Via Sacra, narrow as a village street, spring from the earth an agglomeration of brick walls and marble foundations, the remains of buildings which dotted the Forum in the days of Rome's strength. Trefoil, oats, and the grasses of the field which the wind has sown on their lowered tops, have covered them with a rustic roof illumined by the crimson poppies. A mass of *débris*, of crumbling entablatures, a multitude of pillars and altars, an entanglement of steps and enclosing walls : all this indeed not stunted but of a serried vastness and within limits.

Nicole Langelier was doubtless reviewing in his mind the host of monuments confined in this famed space:

"These edifices of wise proportions and moderate dimensions," he remarked, "were separated from one another by narrow streets full of shade. Here ran the

vicoli beloved in countries where the sun shines, while the generous descendants of Remus, on their return from hearing public speakers, found, along the walls of the temples, cool yet foul-smelling corners, whence the rinds of water-melons and castaway shells were never swept away, and where they could eat and enjoy their siesta. The shops skirting the square must certainly have emitted the pungent odour of onions, wine, fried meats, and cheese. The butchers' stalls were laden with meats, to the delectation of the hardy citizens, and it was from one of those butchers that Virginius snatched the knife with which he killed his daughter. There also were doubtless jewellers and vendors of little domestic tutelary deities, protectors of the hearth, the ox-stall, and the garden. The citizens' necessities of life were all centred in this spot. The market and the shops, the basilicas, *i.e.* , the commercial Exchanges and the civil tribunals; the Curia, that municipal council which became the administrative power of the universe; the prisons, whose vaults emitted their much dreaded and fetid effluvia, and the temples, the altars, of the highest necessity to the Italians who have ever some thing to beg of the celestial powers.

"Here it was, lastly, that during a long roll of centuries were accomplished the vulgar or strange deeds, almost ever flat and dull, oftentimes odious and ridiculous, at times generous, the agglomeration of which constitutes the august life of a people."

"What is it that one sees, in the centre of the square, fronting the commemorative pedestals?" inquired M. Goubin, who, primed with an eyeglass, had noticed a new feature in the ancient Forum, and was thirsting for information concerning it.

Joséphin Leclerc obligingly answered him that they were the foundations of the recently unearthed colossal statue of Domitian.

Thereupon he pointed out, one after the other, the monuments laid bare by Giacomo Boni in the course of his five years' fruitful excavations: the fountain and the well of Juturna, under the Palatine Hill; the altar erected on the site of Caesar's funeral pile, the base of which spread itself at their feet, opposite the Rostra; the archaic stele and the legendary tomb of Romulus over which lies the black marble slab of the Comitium; and again, the Lacus Curtius.

The sun, which had set behind the Capitol, was striking with its last shafts the triumphal arch of Titus on the towering Velia. The heavens, where to the West the pearl-white moon floated, remained as blue as at midday. An even, peaceful, and clear shadow spread itself over the silent Forum. The bronzed navvies were delving this field of stones, while, pursuing the work of the ancient Kings, their comrades turned the crank of a well, for the purpose of drawing the water which

still forms the bed where slumbered, in the days of pious Numa, the reed-fringed Velabrum.

They were performing their task methodically and with vigilance. Hippolyte Dufresne, who had for several months been a witness of their assiduous labour, of their intelligence and of their prompt obedience to orders, inquired of the director of the excavations how it was that he obtained such yeoman's work from his labourers.

"By leading their life," replied Giacomo Boni. "Together with them do I turn over the soil; I impart to them what we are together seeking for and I impress on their minds the beauty of our common work. They feel an interest in an enterprise the grandeur of which they apprehend but vaguely. I have seen their faces pale with enthusiasm when unearthing the tomb of Romulus. I am their everyday comrade, and if one of them falls ill, I take a seat at his bedside. I place as great faith in them as they do in me. And so it is that I boast of faithful workmen."

"Boni, my dear Boni," exclaimed Joséphin Leclerc, "you know full well that I admire your labours, and that your grand discoveries fill me with emotion, and yet, allow me to say so, I regret the days when flocks grazed over the entombed Forum. A white ox, from whose massive head branched horns widely apart, chewed the cud in the unploughed field; a hind dozed at the foot of a tall column which sprang from the sward, and one mused: Here was debated the fate of the world. The Forum has been lost to poets and lovers from the day that it ceased to be the Campo Formio."

Jean Boilly dwelt on the value of these excavations, so methodically carried out, as a contribution towards a knowledge of the past. Then, the conversation having drifted towards the philosophy of the history of Rome:

"The Latins," he remarked, "displayed reason even in the matter of their religion. Their gods were commonplace and vulgar, but full of common sense and occasionally generous. If a comparison be drawn between this Roman Pantheon composed of soldiers, magistrates, virgins, and matrons and the devilries painted on the walls of Etruscan tombs, reason and madness will be found in juxtaposition. The infernal scenes depicted in the mortuary chambers of Corneto represent the monstrous creations of ignorance and fear. They seem to us as grotesque as Orcagna's *Day of Judgment* in Santa Maria Novella at Florence, and the *Dantesque Hell* of the Campo Santo of Pisa, whereas the Latin Pantheon reflects for ever the image of a well-organised society. The gods of the Romans were like themselves, industrious and good citizens. They were useful deities, each one having its proper function. The very nymphs held civil and political offices.

“Look at Juturna, whose altar at the foot of the Palatine we have so frequently contemplated. She did not seem fated by her birth, her adventures, and her misfortunes to occupy a permanent post in the city of Romulus. An incensed Rutula, beloved by Jupiter, who rewarded her with immortality, when King Turnus fell by the hand of Æneas, as decreed by the Fates, she flung herself into the Tiber, to escape thus from the light of day, since it was denied her to perish with her royal brother. Long did the shepherds of Latium tell the story of the living nymph’s lamentations from the depths of the river. In later years, the villagers of rural Rome, when looking down at night-time over the bank, imagined that they could see her by the moon’s rays, lurking in her glaucous garments among the rushes. The Romans, however, did not leave her to the idle contemplation of her sorrows. They promptly conceived the idea of allotting to her an important duty, and entrusted her with the custody of their fountains, converting her into a municipal goddess. And so it is with all their divinities. The Dioscuri, whose temple lives in its beautiful ruins, the Dioscuri, the brothers of Helen, the sparkling *Gemini*, were put to good use by the Romans, as messengers of the State. The Dioscuri it was, who, mounted on a white charger, brought to Rome the news of the victory of Lake Regillus.

“The Italians asked of their gods only temporal and substantial benefits. In this respect, notwithstanding the Asiatic fears which have invaded Europe, their religious sentiment has not changed. That which they formally demanded from their gods and their genii, they nowadays expect from the Madonna and the Saints. Every parish possesses its Beatified patron, to whom requests are preferred just as in the case of a Deputy. There are Saints for the vine, for cereals, for cattle, for the colic, and for toothache. Latin imagination has repopled Heaven with a multitude of living bodies, and has converted Judaic monotheism into a new polytheism. It has enlivened the Gospels with a copious mythology; it has re-established a familiar intercourse between the divine and the terrestrial worlds. The peasantry demand miracles of their protecting Saints, and hurl invectives at them if the miracle is slow of manifestation. The peasant who has in vain solicited a favour of the Bambino, returns to the chapel, and addressing on this occasion the Incoronata herself, exclaims:

“‘I am not speaking to you, you whoreson, but to your sainted mother.’

“The women make the *Madré di Dio* a confidant of their love affairs. They believe with some show of reason that being a woman she understands, and that there is no need to be on a footing of delicacy with her. They have no fear of going too far — a proof of their piety. Hence we must view with admiration the prayer which a fine lass of the Genoese Riviera addressed to the Madonna:

‘Holy Mother of God, who didst conceive without sin, grant me the grace of sinning without conceiving.’”

Nicole Langelier here remarked that the religion of the Romans lent itself to the evolution of Rome’s policy.

“Bearing the stamp of a distinctly national character,” he said, “it was, for all that, capable of penetrating the minds of foreign nations, and of winning them over by its sociable and tolerant spirit. It was an administrative religion propagating itself without effort together with the rest of the administration.”

“The Romans loved war,” said M. Goubin, who studiously avoided paradoxes.

“They loved not war for itself,” was Jean Boilly’s rejoinder. They were far too reasonable for that. That military service was to them a hardship is revealed by certain signs. Monsieur Michel Bréal tells you that the word which primarily expressed the equipment of the soldier, *œrumna*, subsequently assumed the general meaning of lassitude, need, trouble, hardship, toil, pain, and distress. Those peasants were just as other peasants. They entered the ranks merely because compelled and forced thereto. Their very leaders, the wealthy proprietors, waged war neither for pleasure nor for glory. Previous to entering on a campaign, they consulted their interests twenty times over, and carefully computed the chances.”

“True,” said M. Goubin, “but their circumstances and the state of the world compelled them ever to be in arms. Thus it is that they carried civilisation to the far ends of the known world. War is above all an instrument of progress.”

“The Latins,” resumed Jean Boilly, “were agriculturists who waged agriculturists’ wars. Their ambitions were ever agricultural. They exacted of the vanquished, not money, but soil, the whole or part of the territory of the subjugated confederation, generally speaking one-third, out of friendship, as they said, and because they were moderate in their desires. The farmer came and drove his plough over the spot where the legionary had a short while ago planted his pike. The tiller of the soil confirmed the soldier’s conquests. Admirable soldiers, doubtless, well disciplined, patient, and brave, who fought and who were sometimes beaten just like any others; yet still more admirable peasants. If wonder is felt at their having conquered so many lands, still more is it to be wondered at that they should have kept them. The marvel of it is that in spite of the many battles they lost, these stubborn peasants never yielded an acre of soil, so to speak.”

While this discussion was proceeding, Giacomo Boni was gazing with a hostile eye at the tall brick house standing to the north of the Forum on top of several layers of ancient substructures.

“We are about,” he said, “to explore the Curia Julia. We shall soon, I hope, be in a position to break up the sordid building which covers its remains. It will not cost the State much to purchase it for the spade’s work. Buried under nine mètres of soil on which stands the Convent of S. Adriano lie the flagstones of Diocletian, who restored the Curia for the last time. We shall surely find among the rubbish a number of the marble tables on which the laws were engraved. It is a matter of interest to Rome, to Italy, nay to the whole world, that the last vestiges of the Roman Senate should see the light of day.”

Thereupon he invited his friends into his hut, as hospitable and rustic a one as that of Evander.

It constituted a single room wherein stood a deal table laden with black potteries and shapeless fragments giving out an earthy smell.

“Prehistorical treasures!” sighed Joséphin Leclerc. “And so, my good Giacomo Boni, not content with seeking in the Forum the monuments of the Emperors, those of the Republic, and those of the Kings, you must fain sink down into the soil which bore flora and fauna that have vanished, drive your spade into the quaternary, and the tertiary, penetrate the pliocene, the miocene, and the eocene; from Latin archaeology you wander to prehistoric archaeology and to palaeontology. The salons are expressing alarm at the depths to which you are venturing. Countess Pasolini would like to know where you intend to stop, and you are represented in a little satirical sheet as coming out at the Antipodes, breathing the words: *Adesso va bene!* ”

Boni seemed not to have heard.

He was examining with deep attention a clay vessel still damp and covered with ooze. His pale blue expressive eyes darkened while critically examining this humble work of man for some unrevealed trace of a mysterious past, but resumed their natural hue as the Commendatore’s mind wandered off into a reverie.

“These remains which you have before you,” he presently remarked, “these roughly hewn little wooden sarcophagi and these cinerary urns of black pottery and of house-like shape containing calcined bones were gathered under the Temple of Faustina, on the north-west side of the Forum.

“Black urns containing ashes, and skeletons resting in their coffins as if in a bed, are here to be met with side by side. The funeral rites of the Greeks and the Romans included both those of burial and of cremation. Over the whole of Europe, in prehistoric days, the two customs were simultaneously observed, in the same city and in the same tribe. Does this dual fashion of sepulture correspond with the ideals of two races? I am inclined to believe so.”

Picking up, with reverential and almost ritual gesture, an urn shaped like a dwelling and containing a small quantity of ashes, he went on:

“The men who in immemorial times gave this form to clay, believed that the soul, being attached to the bones and the ashes, had need of a dwelling, but that it did not require a very large house wherein to live the abridged life of the dead. These men were of a noble race which came from Asia. The one whose light ashes I now hold lived before the days of Evander and of the shepherd Faustulus.”

Then, making use of the phraseology of the ancients, he added:

“Those were the days when King Vitulus, King Calf as we should say, held peaceful sway over this country so pregnant with glory. Monotonous pastoral times reigned over the Ausonian plain. These men were, however, neither ignorant nor boorish. Much priceless knowledge had come to them from their forefathers. Both the ship and the oar were known to them. They practised the art of subjecting oxen to the yoke and of harnessing them to the pole. They kindled at will the divine flame. They gathered salt, wrought in gold, kneaded and baked vases of clay. Probably too they began to till the soil. They do say that the Latin shepherds became agricultural labourers in the fabled days of the Calf. They cultivated millet, wheat, and spelt. They stitched skins together with needles of bone. They wove and per chance made wool false to its whiteness by dyeing it various colours. By the phases of the moon did they measure time. They gazed upon the heavens but to discover in them what was in the world below. They saw in them the greyhound who watches for Diospiter the shepherd who tends the starry flock. The prolific clouds were to them the Sun’s cattle, the cows supplying milk to the cerulean countryside. They worshipped the heavens as their Father, and the Earth as their Mother. At eventide, they heard the chariots of the gods, like themselves migratory, roll along the mountain roads with their ponderous wheels. They enjoyed the light of day and pondered with sadness over the life of the souls in the Kingdom of Shadows.

“We know that these massive-headed Aryans were fair, since their gods, made to their own image, were fair. Indra had locks like ears of wheat and a beard as tawny as the tiger’s coat. The Greeks conceived the immortal gods with blue or glaucous eyes, and a head of golden hair. The goddess Roma was *flava et candida*:

“Were it possible to make a whole out of these calcined bony fragments, the result would be pure Aryan forms. In those massive and vigorous skulls, in those heads as square as the primary Rome which their sons were to build, you would recognise the ancestors of the patricians of the Commonwealth, the long flourishing stock which produced tribunes of the people, pontiffs, and consuls;

you would be handling the magnificent mould of the robust brains which constructed religion, the family, the army, and the public laws of the most strongly organised city that ever existed.”

Gently placing the bit of pottery on the rustic table, Giacomo Boni bends over a coffin the size of a cradle, a coffin dug out of the trunk of an oak, and similar in shape to the early canoes of man. He lifts up the thin covering of bark and sap-wood forming the lid of that funeral wherry, and brings to light bones as frail as a bird’s skeleton. Of the body, there hardly remains the spinal column, and it would bear resemblance to one of the lowest of vertebrata, such as a big saurian, did not the fulness of the forehead reveal man. Coloured beads, which have become detached from a necklace, are scattered over these bones browned with age, washed by subterraneous waters, and exhumed from clayey soil.

“Look!” says Boni, “at this little boy who was not given the honours of cremation, but buried, and returned as a whole to the earth whence he sprung. He is not a son of headmen, nor a noble inheritor of the traits of a fair race. He belongs to the race indigenous to the Mediterranean, the race which became the Roman *plebs*, and which supplies Italy to the present day with subtle lawyers and calculating individuals. He was born in the Palatine City of the Seven Hills, in days seen dimly through the mist of heroic fables. It is a Romulean boy. In those days, the Valley of the Seven Hills was a morass, and the slopes of the Palatine were covered with reed-thatched huts only. A tiny lance was placed on the coffin to show that the child was a male. He was barely four years old when he fell asleep in death. Then his mother clothed him with a beautiful tunic clasped at the neck, around which she fastened a string of beads. The kinsmen did not begrudge him their offerings. They deposited on his tomb, in urns of black earthenware, milk, beans, and a bunch of grapes. I have collected these vessels and I have fashioned similar ones out of the same clay by the heat of a wood fire lit in the Forum at night. Previous to taking a last farewell of him, they ate and drank together a portion of their offerings; this funeral repast assuaged their sorrow. Child, thou who sleepest since the days of the god Quirinus, an Empire has passed over thy agrestic coffin, and the same stars which shone at thy birth are about to light up the skies above us. The unfathomable space which separates the hours of your life from those of our own constitutes but an imperceptible moment in the life of the Universe.”

After a moment’s silence, Nicole Langelier remarked:

“It is as difficult to distinguish amid a people the races composing it as to trace in the course of a river the streams which mingle with it. What constitutes, moreover, a race? Do any human races really exist? I see white men, red men, and black men. But, they do not constitute races; they are merely varieties of the

same race, of the same species, which form together fruitful unions and intermingle without ceasing. *A fortiori*, the man of learning knows not several yellow races or several white races. Human beings invent, however, races in pursuance of their vanity, their hatred, or their greed. In 1871, France became dismembered by virtue of the rights of the Germanic race, and yet no German race has an existence. The antiemites kindle the hatred of Christian peoples against the Jews, and still there is no Jewish race.

“What I state on the subject, Boni, is purely speculative, and not with the view of running counter to your ideas. How could one not believe you! Conviction has its home on your lips. Moreover, you blend in your thoughts the profound verities of poetry with the far-spreading truths of science. As you truly state, the shepherds who came from Bactriana peopled Greece and Italy. As you again say, they found there natives of the soil. In ancient days, a belief shared in common by Italians and Hellenes was that the first men who peopled their country were like Erectheus, born of Mother Earth. Nor do I pretend, my dear Boni, that you cannot trace through the centuries the antochthones of your Ausonia, and the immigrants from the Pamir; the former, intelligent and eloquent plebeians; the latter, patricians fully impregnated with courage and faith. For, when all is said, if there are not, properly speaking, several human races, and if still less so several white races, our species assuredly comprises distinct varieties oftentimes stamped with marked characteristics. Hence there is nothing to hinder two or more of these varieties living for a long time side by side without fusing, each one preserving its individual characteristics. Nay, these differences may occasionally, in lieu of vanishing with the course of time under the action of the plastic forces of nature, on the contrary become accentuated more strongly through the empire of immutable customs, and the stress of social institutions.”

“*E proprio vero*,” said Boni in a low tone, as he replaced the oaken lid on the coffin of the Romulean child.

Then, begging his guests to be seated, he said to Nicole Langelier:

“I shall now hold you to your promise, and beg you to read to us that story of Gallio, at which I have seen you at work in your little room in the *Foro Traiano*. You make Romans speak in your script. This is the spot to hear your narrative, here in a corner of the Forum, close by the Via Sacra, between the Capitol and the Palatine. Tarry not with your reading, so as not to be overtaken by the twilight, and lest your voice be quickly drowned by the cries of the birds warning one another of approaching night.”

The guests of Giacomo Boni welcomed the foregoing utterance with a murmur of approval, and Nicole Langelier, without waiting for more pressing

entreaties, unrolled a manuscript and read aloud the following narrative.

II

GALLIO

IN the 804th year of the foundation of Rome, and the 13th of the principality of Claudius Caesar, Junius Annaeus Novatus was proconsul of Achaia. Born of a knightly family of Spanish origin, a son of Seneca the Rhetor and of the chaste Helvia, a brother of Annaeus Mela, and of the famed Lucius Annaeus, he bore the name of his adoptive father, the Rhetor Gallio, exiled by Tiberius. In his mother's veins flowed the same blood as that of Cicero, and he had inherited from his father, together with immense wealth, a love of letters and of philosophy. He studied the works of the Greeks even more assiduously than those of the Latins. His mind was a prey to noble aspiration. He was an interested student of nature and of what appertains to her. The activity of his intelligence was so keen that he enjoyed being read to while in his bath, and that, even when joining in the chase, he was wont to carry with him his tablets of wax and his stylus. During the leisure moments which he managed to secure in the intervals of most serious duties and most important works, he wrote books on subjects relating to nature, and composed tragedies.

His clients and his freedmen loudly proclaimed his gentleness. His was indeed a genial character. He had never been known to give way to a fit of anger. He looked upon violence as the worst and most unpardonable of weaknesses.

All deeds of cruelty were held in execration by him, save when their true character escaped him owing to the consecration of custom and of public opinion. He frequently discovered, amid the severities rendered sacred by ancestral usage and sanctified by the laws, revolting excesses against which he raised his voice in protest, and which he would have attempted to sweep away, had not the interests of the State and the common welfare been objected from all quarters. In those days, conscientious magistrates and honest functionaries were not few and far between throughout the Empire. There were indeed a number as honest and as impartial as Gallio himself, but it is to be doubted whether another could be found so humane.

Entrusted with the administration of that Greece despoiled of her riches, her pristine glory departed, and fallen from her freedom so full of life into an idle tranquillity, he remembered that she had formerly taught the world wisdom and the fine arts, and his treatment of her combined the vigilance of a guardian with the reverence of a son. He respected the liberties of the cities and the rights of individuals. He showed honour to those who were truly Greeks by birth and education, regretting that their numbers were sorely restricted, and that his authority extended for the greater part over an infamous rabble of Jews and Syrians; yet he remained equitable in dealing with these Asiatics, laying unction to his soul for what he considered a meritorious endeavour.

He dwelt in Corinth, the richest and most densely populated city of Roman Greece. His villa, built in the time of Augustus, enlarged and embellished since then by the proconsuls who had governed the province in succession, stood on the furthestmost western slopes of the Acrocorinthus, whose foliated summit was crowned by the Temple of Venus and the groves where dwelt her priests. It was a somewhat spacious mansion surrounded by gardens studded with bushy trees, watered by springs, ornamented with statues, alcoves, gymnasia, baths, libraries, and altars consecrated to the gods.

He was strolling in it on a certain morn, according to his wont, with his brother Annaeus Mela, discoursing on the order of nature and the vicissitudes of fortune. The sun was rising, hazy in its white splendour in the roseate heavens. The gentle undulations of the hills of the Isthmus concealed the Saronic shore, the Stadium, the sanctuary of the sports, and the eastern harbour of Cenchreae. Between the fallow slopes of the Geranean range and the crimson twin-peaked Helicon, one could, however, obtain a glimpse of the quiescent blue waters of the Alcyonium Mare. In the distance, and to the north, glistened the three snow-capped summits of Parnassus. Gallio and Mela proceeded together as far as the edge of the elevated foreground. At their feet spread Corinth standing on an extensive plateau of pale yellow sand, and sloping gently towards the spumous fringe of the Gulf. The pavements of the forum, the columns of the basilica, the tiers of the hippodrome, the white steps of the porches sparkled, while the gilded roofs of the temples flashed dazzling rays. Vast and new, the town was intersected with straight-running streets. A wide road descended to the harbour of Lechaëum, whose shore was fringed with warehouses and whose waters were covered with ships. To the west, the atmosphere reeked with the smoke of the iron-foundries, while the streams ran black from the pollution of the dye-houses, and on that side, forests of pine extending to the edge of the horizon, were lost to sight in the skies.

Gradually, the town awoke from its slumbers. The strident neighing of a horse rent the morning calm, and soon were heard the muffled rumblings of wheels, shouting of waggoners, and the chanting voices of women selling herbs. Emerging from their hovels amid the ruins of the Palace of Sisyphus, aged and blind hags bearing copper vessels on their heads, and led by children, wended their way to draw water from the Pirene fountain. On the flat roofs of the houses abutting the grounds of the proconsul, Corinthian women were spreading linen to dry, and one of them was castigating her child with leek-stalks. In the hollow road leading to the Acropolis, a semi-nude old bronze-coloured man, prodded the rump of an ass laden with salad herbs and chanted between the stumps of his teeth and in his unkempt beard, a slave-song:

“Toil, little ass,
As I have toiled.
Much good will it do you:
You may be sure of it.”

Meanwhile, at the sight of the town resuming its daily labour, Gallio fell amusing over the earlier Corinth, the lovely Ionian city, opulent and joyous until the day when she witnessed the massacre of her citizens by the soldiery of Mummius, her women, the noble daughters of Sisyphus, sold at auction, her palaces and temples the prey of flames, her walls razed to the ground, and her riches piled away into the Liburnian ships of the Consul.

“Hardly a century ago,” he remarked, “the work wrought by Mummius still stood revealed in all its horror. The shore which you see, brother mine, was more of a desert than the Libyan sands. The divine Julius rebuilt the town wrecked by our arms, and peopled it with freedmen. On this very strand, where the illustrious Bacchiadae formerly revelled in their haughty indolence, poor and rude Latins settled, and Corinth entered upon a new lease of life. She grew rapidly, and realised how to take advantage of her position. She levies tribute on all ships which, whether from the East or from the West, cast anchor in her two harbours of Lechaeum and Cenchreae. Her population and wealth increase apace under the aegis of the Roman peace.

“What blessings has not the Empire bestowed throughout the world! To the Empire is due the profound tranquillity which the countryside enjoys. The seas are swept of pirates, and the highways of robbers. From the befogged Ocean to the Permucic Gulf, from Gades to the Euphrates, the trading of merchandise proceeds in undisturbed security. The law protects the lives and property of all. Individual rights must not be infringed upon. Liberty has henceforth no other limits than its lines of defence, and is circumscribed for its own security alone. Justice and reason rule the world.”

Unlike his two brothers, Annaeus Mela had not intrigued for honours. Those who loved him, and their name was legion, for he was ever in his intercourse affable and extremely pleasant, attributed his detachment from public affairs to the moderation of a mind attracted by the blessings of tranquil obscurity, a mind which had no other care than the study of philosophy. But those who observed him with greater insight were under the impression that he was ambitious after his own fashion, and that like Maecenas, he, a simple knight, was consumed with the envy of enjoying the same consideration as the consuls. Lastly, certain evil-minded individuals believed that they discerned in him the greed of the Senecas for the riches which they affected to despise, and thus did they explain

to themselves that Mela had for a long time lived in obscurity in Betica, giving himself up entirely to the management of his vast estates, and that subsequently summoned to Rome by his brother the philosopher, he had devoted himself to the administration of the finances of the Empire, rather than go in the quest of high judiciary or military posts. His character could not be readily determined from his utterances, for he spoke the language of the Stoics, a language equally adapted for the concealment of the weaknesses of the mind and the revelation of the grandeur of one's sentiments. It was in those days the height of elegance to utter virtuous discourse. At any rate, there is no doubt that Mela spoke his thoughts.

He replied to his brother that, although not versed in public affairs like himself, he had had occasion to admire the power and wisdom of the Romans.

"They reveal themselves," he said, "in the most remote parts of our own Spain. But it is in a wild pass of the mountains of Thessaly that I have been made to appreciate at its highest the beneficent majesty of the Empire. I had come from Hypata, a town renowned for its cheeses, and whose women were notorious for witchcraft, and I had been riding for some hours along mountain paths, without coming across a human face. Overcome by the heat and fatigue, I tethered my horse to a tree by the road, and lay down under an arbutus-bush. I had been resting there a short while only, when there came along a lean old man bowed down under a load of branches. Utterly exhausted, he tottered in his steps, and just as he was about to fall, exclaimed: 'Caesar.' On hearing such an invocation escape the lips of a poor woodcutter in this stony solitude, my heart overflowed with veneration for the tutelary City, which inspires, even unto the farthest lands, the most rustic of minds with so great a conception of its sovereign providence. But sadness and a feeling of distress mingled with my admiration, brother mine, when I reflected upon the injury and insults to which the inheritance of Augustus and the fortune of Rome were exposed through men's folly and the vices of the century."

"I have witnessed on the spot, brother mine," replied Gallio, "the crimes and follies which sadden your mind. My cheek has blanched under the gaze of the victims of Caius from my seat in the Senate. I have held my peace, as I did not despair of better days. I am of the opinion that good citizens should serve the Republic under bad princes rather than shirk their duty in a useless death."

As Gallio was uttering these sentiments, two men, still in their youth and wearing the toga, came up to him. The one was Lucius Cassius, of a Roman family, plebeian but ancient, and having attained distinction. The other, Marcus Lollius, son and grandson of consuls, and moreover of a knightly family, which had sprung from the free town of Terracina. Both had frequented the schools of

Athens, and acquired a knowledge of the laws of nature of which those Romans who had not been in Greece were totally ignorant.

At the present moment, they were studying in Corinth the management of public affairs, and the proconsul surrounded himself with them as an ornamental adjunct to his magistracy. Somewhat behind them, the Greek Apollodorus, wearing the short cape of the philosophers, bald of head, and with Socratic beard, sauntered along, with uplifted arm and gesticulating fingers, discussing with himself.

Gallio welcomed all three of them in kindly fashion.

"The rose of dawn is already fading," he said, "and the sun is beginning to shed its steeled darts. Come along, my good friends, to the coolness of the shady foliage beyond."

Saying this, he led them along the banks of a stream whose babbling murmur invited peaceful reflections, until they had reached an enclosure of verdant bushes in the midst of which lay in a hollow an alabaster basin filled with limpid waters on whose surface floated the feather of a dove, which had just bathed in them, and which was now cooing plaintively from a branch. They took their seats on a semicircular marble bench supported by griffins. Laurel and myrtle bushes blended their shadows about it. Statues encircled the enclosure. A wounded Amazon gracefully coiled her arm about her head. Grief appeared a thing of beauty on her lovely face. A shaggy Satyr was playing with a goat. A Venus, emerging from the bath, was drying her wetted limbs along which a shudder of pleasurable emotion seemed to run. Near by, a youthful Faun was smilingly placing a flute to his lips. His face was partly concealed by the branches, but his shining belly glistened amid the leafage.

"That Faun seems animated," remarked Marcus Lollius. "One could imagine that a gentle breathing was causing his bosom to heave."

"He is true to life, Marcus," said Gallic "One expects to hear rustic melodies flow from his flute. A Greek slave carved him out of the marble, in imitation of an ancient model. The Greeks formerly excelled in the making of these fanciful statues. Several of their efforts in this style are justly renowned. There is no gainsaying it: they have found the means of giving august traits to the gods and of expressing in both marble and bronze the majesty of the masters of the world. Who but admires the Olympian Zeus? And yet, who would care to be Phidias!"

"No Roman would assuredly care to be Phidias," exclaimed Lollius, who was spending the fortune he had inherited from his ancestry in ornamenting his villa at Pausilypum with the masterpieces of Phidias and Myron brought over from Greece and Asia.

Lucius Cassius was of the same opinion. He argued with some warmth that the hands of a free man were not made to wield the sculptor's chisel or the painter's brush, and that no Roman citizen would condescend to the degrading work of casting bronze, hewing marble into shape, and painting forms on a wall.

He professed admiration for the manners of the ancient times, and vaunted at every opportunity the ancestral virtues.

"Men of the stamp of Curius and Fabricius cultivated their lettuce-beds, and slept under thatched roofs," he said. "They wot of no other statue than the Priapus carved in the heart of a box-tree, who, protruding his vigorous pale in the centre of their garden, threatened pilferers with a terrible and shameful punishment."

Mela, who was well versed in the annals of Rome, opposed to this opinion the example of an old patrician.

"In the days of the Republic," he pointed out, "that illustrious man, Caius Fabius, of a family issued from Hercules and Evander, limned with his own hand on the walls of the Temple of Salus paintings so highly prized that their recent loss, on the destruction of the temple by fire, has been considered a public misfortune. It is moreover related that he did not doff his toga when painting, thus to indicate that such work was not unworthy of a Roman citizen. He was given the surname of Pictor, which his descendants were proud to bear."

Lucius Cassius replied with vivacity:

"When painting victories in a temple, Caius Fabius had in mind those victories, and not the painting of them. No painters existed in Rome in those days. Anxious that the doughty deeds of his ancestors should for ever be present to the gaze of the Romans, he set an example to the artisans. But just as a pontiff or an aedile lays the first stone of an edifice, without exercising for that the trade of a mason or of an architect, Caius Fabius executed the first painting Rome boasted of, without it being permissible to number him with the workmen who earn their livelihood by painting on walls."

Apollodorus signified approval of this speech with a nod, and, stroking his philosophic beard, remarked:

"The sons of Ascanius are born to rule the world. Any other care would be unworthy of them."

Then, speaking at some length and in well-rounded sentences, he sang the praises of the Romans. He flattered them because he feared them. But in his innermost being, he felt nothing but contempt for their shallow intelligences so devoid of finesse. He beslavered Gallio with praise in these words:

"Thou hast ornamented this city with magnificent monuments. Thou hast assured the liberty of its Senate and of its people. Thou hast decreed excellent

regulations for trade and navigation, and thou dispensest justice with even tempered equity. Thy statue shall stand in the Forum. The title shall be granted to you of the second founder of Corinth, or rather Corinth shall take from you the name of Annaea. All these things are worthy of a Roman, and worthy of Gallio. But, do not think that the Greeks have an exaggerated affection for the manual arts. If many of them are engaged in painting vases, in dyeing stuffs, and in modelling figures, it is through necessity. Ulysses constructed his bed and his ship with his own hands. At the same time, the Greeks proclaim that it is unworthy of a wise man to give himself up to futile and gross arts. In his youth, Socrates followed the trade of a sculptor, and modelled an image of the Charites still to be seen on the Acropolis of Athens. His skill was certainly not of a mediocre order, and, had he so wished, he could, like the most renowned artists, have portrayed an athlete throwing a discus or bandaging his head. But he abandoned like works to devote himself to the quest of wisdom, as commanded by the oracle. Henceforth, he attached himself to young men, not for the purpose of measuring the proportions of their bodies but solely to teach them that which is honest. He preferred those whose soul was beautiful to those of perfect form, differing in this respect from sculptors, painters and debauchees, who consider only external beauty, despising the inner comeliness. You are aware that Phidias engraved on the great toe of his Jupiter the name of an athlete, because he was handsome, and without considering whether he was pure.”

“Hence it is,” was Gallio’s summing up, “that we do not sing the praises of sculptors, while bestowing them on their works.”

“By Hercules!” exclaimed Lollius, “I do not know whether to admire most that Venus or that Faun. The goddess seems to reflect coolness from the water still dripping from her. She is truly the desire of gods and men; do you not fear, Gallio, that some night, a lout concealed in your grounds may subject her to an outrage similar to the one inflicted by a profane youth, so it is reported, on the Aphrodite of the Cnidians? The priestesses of her temple discovered one morning traces of the outrage on the body of the goddess, and travellers affirm that from that day until now she bears the indelible mark of her defilement. The audacity of the man and the patience of the Immortal One are to be wondered at.”

“The crime did not remain unpunished,” affirmed Gallio. “The sacrilegious profaner flung himself into the sea, and fell on the rocks a shapeless mass. He was never again seen.”

“There can be no doubt,” resumed Lollius, “that the Venus of Cnidus surpasses all others in beauty. But the artisan who carved the one in your grounds, Gallio, knew how to make marble plastic. Look at that Faun; he is

laughing, and saliva moistens his teeth and his lips; his cheeks have the fresh bloom of the apple: his whole body glistens with youth. However, I prefer the Venus to the Faun.”

Raising his right arm, Apollodorus said:

“Most gentle Lollius, just think a bit, and you will fain admit that a like preference is pardonable in an ignorant individual who follows his instincts and who reasons not, but that it is not permitted to one as wise as yourself. That Venus cannot be as beautiful as that Faun, for the body of woman enjoys a perfection lesser than that of man, and the copy of a thing which is less perfect can never equal in beauty the copy of a thing that is more perfect. No doubt can assuredly exist, Lollius, that the body of woman is less beautiful than that of man, since it contains a less beautiful soul. Women are vain, quarrelsome, their mind occupied with trifles and incapable of elevated thoughts, while sickness oftentimes obscures their intellect.”

“And yet,” remarked Gallio, “both in Rome and in Athens, virgins and matrons have been held worthy of presiding over sacred rites and of placing offerings on the altars. Nay more, the gods have at times selected virgins to give utterance to their oracular words, or to reveal the future to men. Cassandra wore the bands of Apollo about her head and prophesied the discomfiture of the Trojans. Juturna, to whom the love of a god gave immortality, was entrusted with the guardianship of the fountains of Rome.”

“Quite true,” replied Apollodorus. “But the gods sell dearly to virgins the privilege of interpreting their wishes, and of announcing future events. While conferring on them the power of seeing that which is hidden, they deprive them of their reason and inflict madness on them. I will, however, Gallio, grant you that some women are better than some men and that some men are less good than some women. This arises from the fact that the two sexes are not as distinct and separate from each other as one would believe, and that, quite on the contrary, there is something of man in many women, and of woman in many a man. The following is the explanation of this commingling:

“The ancestors of the men who nowadays people the earth sprang from the hands of Prometheus, who, to give them shape, kneaded the clay as does the potter. He did not confine himself to shaping with his hands a single couple. Far too prudent and too industrious to cause the entire human race to grow from one seed and from a single vessel, he undertook the manufacture of a multitude of women and men, in order to secure at once to humanity the advantage of numbers. In order better to carry out so difficult a work, he modelled separately at the outset all the parts which were to constitute both male and female bodies. He fashioned as many lungs, livers, hearts, brains, bladders, spleens, intestines,

matrices and generative organs as were required, and, lastly, he made with subtle art, and in sufficient quantity, all the organs by means of which human beings might breathe freely, feed themselves, and enjoy the reproduction of the species. He forgot neither muscles, tendons, bones, blood nor fluids. He next cut out skins, intending to place in each one, as in a sack, the requisite articles. All these component parts of men and women were duly finished, and nothing remained but to put them together, when he was of a sudden invited to partake of supper at the residence of Bacchus. He went thither, crowned with roses, and indulged too freely in libations to the god, returning with tottering steps to his workshop. His brain befogged with the fumes of wine, his eyesight dimmed, and his hands shaky, he resumed his task, greatly to our misfortune. The distribution of organs among human beings seemed to him an easy enough pastime. He knew not what he was about, and was perfectly contented with his job, however badly he accomplished it. He was constantly and inadvertently allotting to woman that which was proper to man, and to man the things pertaining to woman.

“Thus it came about that our first parents were composed of ill-assorted pieces which did not harmonise. And, having mated by choice or at haphazard, they produced beings as incoherent as themselves. Thus has it come about, through the Titan’s fault, that we see so many virile women and so many effeminate men. This also explains the contradictory characteristics to be met with in the firmest of minds and how it is that the most determined character is perpetually false to itself. And, finally, this is why we are all at variance with our own selves.”

Lucius Cassius expressed condemnation of this fable, because it did not teach man to conquer himself, but on the contrary induced him to yield to nature.

Gallio pointed out that the poets and philosophers gave a different interpretation as to the origin of the world and the creation of mankind.

“The fables told by the Greeks,” he said, “should not be believed in too blindly, nor should we hold as truthful, Apollodorus, what they state in particular concerning the stones thrown by Pyrrha. The philosophers are not in accord among themselves as to the principle presiding over the creation of the world, and leave us in doubt as to whether the earth was produced by water, by air, or, as seems more credible, by the subtile heat. But the Greeks wish to know all things, and so they forge ingenious falsehood. How much better it is to confess our ignorance. The past is as much concealed from us as is the future; we are circumscribed by two dense clouds, in the forgetfulness of what was, and in the uncertainty of what shall be. And yet we suffer ourselves to be the playthings of an inquisitive desire to become acquainted with the causes of things, and a

consuming anxiety incites us to ponder over the destinies of mankind and of the world.”

“It is true,” sighed Cassius, “that we are everlastingly striving to penetrate the impenetrable future. We toil at this quest with all our might, and call to our aid all kinds of means. Anon we think to attain our object by meditation; again, by prayer and ecstasy. Some of us consult the oracles of the gods; others, fearing not to do that which is forbidden, appeal to the augurs of Chaldaea, or try the Babylonian spells. Futile and sacrilegious curiosity! For, of what advantage would be to us the knowledge of future things, since they are inevitable! Nevertheless the wise men, still more so than the vulgar herd, feel the desire of delving into the future and of, so to speak, hurling themselves into it. It is doubtless because they hope thus to escape the present which inflicts on them so much that is sad and distasteful. Why should not the men of to-day be goaded with the desire of fleeing from these wretched times? We are living in an age replete with deeds of cowardice, abounding in ignominious acts, and fertile in crimes.”

Cassius spoke at some length in depreciation of the times in which he lived. He lamented the fact that the Romans, fallen from their ancient virtues, no longer found any pleasure except in the consumption of the oysters of the Lucrine lake and of the birds of Phasis river, and that they had no taste except for mummers, chariot-drivers, and gladiators. He deplored the ills which the Empire was suffering from, the insolent luxury of the great, the contemptible avidity of the clients, and the savage depravity of the multitude.

Gallio and his brother agreed with him. They loved virtue. Nevertheless, they had nothing in common with the patricians of old who, having no other care than the fattening of their swine, and the performance of the sacred rites, conquered the world for the better administration of their farms. This nobility of the byre, instituted by Romulus and Remus, was long since extinct. The patrician families created by the divine Julius and by the Emperor Augustus, had passed away. Intelligent men from all the provinces of the Empire had stepped into their places. Romans in Rome, they were nowhere strangers. They greatly surpassed the old Cethegus family by their refined minds and humane feelings. They did not regret the Republic; they did not regret liberty, the recollection of which recalled simultaneously proscriptions and civil wars. They honoured Cato as the heroic figure of another age, without wishing to see so exalted a type of virtue arise on top of fresh ruins. They looked upon the Augustan epoch and the first years of Tiberius as the happiest the world had ever known, since the Golden Age had existed in the imagination of the poets only. They lamented the fact that the new order of things, which had promised the world a long reign of felicity,

should have so promptly burdened Rome with an unheard of shame unknown even to the contemporaries of Marius and Sulla. They had, during the madness of Caius, seen the best citizens branded with a hot iron, sentenced to the mines, to labour on the roads, thrown to wild beasts, fathers compelled to be present at the agony of their children, and men shining by their virtues, such as Cremutius Cordus, suffer themselves to die of starvation, in order to cheat the tyrant of their death. To Rome's shame, be it said, Caligula respected neither his sisters nor the most illustrious dames. And, what filled these rhetors and philosophers with as great an indignation as the one they felt over the rape of the matrons and the assassination of the best citizens, were the crimes perpetrated by Caius against eloquence and letters. This madman had conceived the idea of destroying the poems of Homer, and had caused to be removed from all bookshelves the writings, the portraits, and the names of Virgil and of Livy. Finally, Gallio could not forgive him for having compared the style of Seneca to mortar without cement.

They dreaded Claudius in a somewhat lesser degree, but despised him the more for all that. They ridiculed his pumpkin-like head and his seal-like voice. That old savant was not a monster of wickedness. The worst they could reproach him with was his weakness. But, in the exercise of the sovereign power, such weakness became at times as cruel as the cruelty of Caius. They also bore domestic grievances against him. If Caius had held Seneca up to ridicule, Claudius had banished him to Corsica. It is true that he had subsequently recalled him to Rome and conferred a praetorship on him. But they showed him no gratitude for having thus carried out the behests of Agrippina, in ignorance of what he was commanding. Indignant but long suffering, they left it to the Empress to determine the fate of the aged man, and the choice of the new prince. Many rumours were current to the shame of the unchaste and cruel daughter of Germanicus. They heeded them not, and sang the praises of the illustrious woman to whom the Senecas owed the termination of their misfortune and their rise in honours. As will oftentimes happen, their convictions were in harmony with their interests. A painful experience of public life had left unshaken their trust in the *régime* established by the divine Augustus, a *régime* placed on a firmer basis by Tiberius, and under which they filled high positions. They were reckoning on a new master to redress the evils engendered by the masters of the Empire.

Gallio produced from the folds of his toga a roll of papyrus.

"Dear friends," he said, "I have learnt this morning, through letters from Rome, that our young prince has married Octavia, the daughter of Caesar."

A murmur of approval greeted the news.

“We should indeed,” continued Gallio, “congratulate ourselves over a union, by virtue of which the prince, combining with his former qualifications those of husband and of son-in-law, becomes henceforth the equal of Britannicus. My brother Seneca never ceases praising in his letters to me the eloquence and gentleness of his pupil who sheds lustre on his youth by pleading before the Senate in the presence of the Emperor. He has not yet completed his sixteenth year, yet he has already won the cases of three unfortunate or guilty cities — Ilion, Bologna, and Apamea.”

“He has not then,” asked Lucius Cassius, “inherited the evil disposition of the Domitians, his ancestors?”

“Indeed he has not,” replied Gallio. “It is Germanicus who lives anew in him.”

Annaeus Mela, who was not looked upon as a sycophant, joined in the praise of the son of Agrippina. His praises appeared affecting and sincere, since he pledged them, so to speak, on the head of his son, who was still of tender age.

“Nero is chaste, modest, of a kindly disposition, and religious. My little Lucan, who is dearer to me than my eyes, was his play-and school-mate. Together they practised declamation in the Greek and Latin languages. Together they attempted to indite verse. Never did Nero, in the course of these contests of skill at versification, manifest the slightest symptom of jealousy. Quite the contrary, he enjoyed praising his rival’s verses, which, in spite of his tender age, revealed traces here and there of a consuming energy. He sometimes seemed happy to be surpassed by the nephew of his teacher. Such was the charming modesty of the prince of youth! Poets will some day compare the friendship of Nero and Lucan with that of Euryalus and Nisus.”

“Nero,” the proconsul went on to say, “displays with the ardour of youth a gentle and merciful spirit. Time will but strengthen such virtues.

“Claudius, when adopting him, has wisely acquiesced in the hope expressed by the Senate and the wish of the people. In so doing, he has removed from the Imperial succession a child overwhelmed by the shame of his mother, and has now, by giving Octavia to Nero, secured the accession of a youthful Caesar whom Rome will delight in. The respectful son of an honoured mother, the zealous disciple of a philosopher, Nero, whose adolescence is illumined with the most agreeable qualities, Nero, our hope and the hope of the world, will remember, when clad in purple, the teachings of the Portico, and will rule the universe with justice and moderation.”

“We welcome the omen,” remarked Lollius. “May an era of happiness dawn upon the human race!”

“’Tis difficult to predict the future,” said Gallio. “Still, we experience no doubts regarding the eternity of the City. The oracles have promised Rome an empire without end, and it would be sacrilegious not to put our faith in the gods. Shall I reveal to you my fondest hope? I joyfully expect the time when peace will reign for ever on the earth, following upon the chastising of the Parthians. Yes indeed, we may, without fear of deceiving ourselves, herald the end of war so hated by mothers. Who is there to disturb the Roman peace henceforth? Our eagles have spread to the confines of the universe. All the nations have experienced our strength and our mercy. The Arab, the Sabaeen, the dweller on the slopes of the Hasmus, the Sarmatian who quenches his thirst with the blood of his steed, the Sygambri of the curly locks, the woolly-headed Ethiopian, all come in hordes to worship Rome their protectress. Whence would new barbarians spring? Is it likely that the icy plains of the North or the burning sands of Libya hold in store enemies of the Roman nation? All Barbarians, won over to our friendship, will lay down their arms, and Rome, the white-haired great-grandmother, tranquil in her old age, will see the nations respectfully grouped about her as her adopted children, dwelling in harmony and love.”

All signified their approval of the foregoing sentiments, excepting Cassius, who shook his head in disagreement.

He felt a pride in his military ancestry while the glory of arms, so greatly extolled by poets and rhetors, kindled his enthusiasm.

“I doubt, my friend Gallio,” he commented, “that nations will ever cease to hate and fear one another. To tell the truth, I should not desire such a consummation. Did war cease, what would become of strength of character, grandeur of soul, and love of country? Courage and devotion would be virtues out of date.”

“Rest assured, Lucius,” said Gallio, “that when men shall cease to conquer one another, they will strive to subdue their own selves. That is the most virtuous attempt they can make, and the most noble use to which they can put their bravery and magnanimity. Yes indeed, the august mother whose wrinkles and whose hairs, blanched by centuries, we worship, Rome, will establish universal peace. Then shall the enjoyment of life be realised. Life under certain conditions is worth living. Life is a tiny flame between two infinite shadows; ’tis our share of the divine essence. During the term of his life, a man is similar to the gods.”

While Gallio was thus discoursing, a dove perched itself on the shoulder of the Venus, whose marble contours gleamed among the myrtles.

“My dear Gallio,” said Lollius with a smile, “the bird of Aphrodite takes delight in thy words. They are gentle and full of gracefulness.”

A slave approached, bearing cool wine, and the friends of the proconsul discoursed of the gods. Apollodorus was of opinion that it was not easy to grasp their nature. Lollius doubted their very existence.

“When thunder peals,” he said, “it all depends upon the philosopher whether it is the cloud or the god who has thundered.”

Cassius, however, did not countenance such thoughtless arguments. He believed in the gods of the Republic. While entertaining doubts as to the extent of their providence, he asserted their existence, as he did not wish to differ from humanity on an essential point. And to support his belief in the faith of his ancestors, he had recourse to an argument he had learnt from the Greeks.

“The gods exist,” he said. “Men have formed their idea of what they are like. Now, it is impossible to conceive an image not based on reality. How would it be possible to see Minerva, Neptune, and Mercury, were there neither Mercury, nor Neptune, nor Minerva?”

“You have convinced me,” said Lollius mockingly. “The old woman who sells honey-cakes in the Forum, outside the basilica, has seen the god Typhon, he with the shaggy head of an ass, and a monster belly. He threw her on her back, threw her clothes over her ears, chastised her while keeping time to each resounding blow, and left her for dead, after polluting her in a disgusting fashion. She has herself told how, even as Antiope, she had been favoured with the visit of an immortal god. It is certain that the god Typhon exists, since he committed an outrage on an old cake-selling hag.”

“In spite of thy mockery, Marcus, I do not doubt the existence of the gods,” resumed Cassius. And I believe that they enjoy a human form, since it is under that form that they always show themselves to us, whether we slumber or whether we are awake.”

“It would be better,” remarked Apollodorus, “to say that men possess the divine form, since the gods existed before them.”

“My dear Apollodorus,” exclaimed Lollius. “You forget that Diana was first worshipped under the form of a tree, and that several important gods have the shape of an unhewn stone. Cybele is represented, not as a woman should be, with two breasts, but with several teats like a bitch or a sow. The sun is a god, but being too hot to assume the human form, he has taken the shape of a ball; he is a round god.”

Annaeus Mela gently censured this academic jesting.

“All that is related about the gods,” he said, should not be taken literally. The vulgar herd calls wheat Ceres, and wine Bacchus. But where is to be found the man crazy enough to believe that he drinks and eats a god? Let us indulge in a

more exalted knowledge of the divine nature. The gods are but the several parts of nature, and they are all lost in one god, who is nature in its entirety.”

The proconsul signified his approval of the words of his brother, and speaking in a serious strain, defined the attributes of divinity.

“God is the soul of the world; this soul spreads to all parts of the universe, infusing motion and life into it. This soul, a creative flame, penetrating the inert mass of matter, gave shape to the world, governing and preserving it. Divinity, an active force, is essentially good. The matter which it has put to good use, being inert and passive, is bad in certain of its parts. God has been powerless to change its nature. This explains the origin of the evil in the world. Our souls are particles of the divine fire into which they will some day be merged. Consequently, God is within us and he dwells in particular in the virtuous man whose soul is not hampered with gross materialism. This wise man, in whom God dwells, is God’s equal. He should not implore him, but contain him within himself. And what madness it is to pray to God! What an act of impiety it is to petition him! It is tantamount to believing that it is possible to enlighten his intelligence, to change his heart, and to persuade him to mend his behaviour. It is displaying ignorance of the necessity governing his immutable wisdom. He is subjected to Destiny, or, to be more accurate, he is Destiny. His ways are laws to which he is like ourselves subjected. For once that he commands, he obeys for ever. Free and powerful in his submission, it is to himself that he shows obedience. All the happenings in the world are the manifestations of sovereign intentions originating with himself. His helplessness against himself is infinite.”

Gallio’s speech was applauded by his hearers. Apollodorus, however, craved permission to submit a few objections.

“You are right, Gallio,” he said, “when you believe that Jupiter is at the mercy of Anankè and I hold with you that Anankè is the first among the immortal goddesses. But it appears to me that your god, above all admirable in his compass and his perpetuity, had better intentions than luck when he created the world, since he found nothing better wherewith to knead it than a rebellious and ingrate substance, and that the material betrays the workman. I cannot but feel for him over his discomfiture. The potters of Athens are more fortunate. They procure, for the purpose of making vases, a delicate and plastic clay which readily takes and preserves the contours they give it. Hence do their goblets and amphorae present an agreeable form. Their curves are graceful, and the painter limns with ease figures pleasing to the eye, such as old Silenus bestriding his ass, the toilet of Aphrodite, and the chaste Amazons. When I come to think of it, Gallio, I am of the opinion that if your god was less fortunate than the potters of Athens, ’tis for the reason that he lacked wisdom and that he was a poor artisan.

The material at his disposal was not of the best. Still, it was not devoid of all serviceable properties, as you have yourself confessed. Nothing is absolutely good or absolutely bad. A thing may be bad if put to a certain use, while it may be excellent in some other. It would be waste of time to plant olive-trees in the clay used in fashioning amphorae. The tree of Pallas would not grow in the light and pure soil of which are made the beautiful vases which our victorious athletes receive, blushing the while with pride and modesty. It seems to me, Gallio, that your god, when fashioning the world with a material that was not suitable for the undertaking, was guilty of the mistake which a vine-dresser of Megara would be committing, were he to plant a vine in modelling clay, or were some worker in ceramics to select for the making of amphorae the stony soil which affords nutriment to the clusters of the grape-vine. Your god, you say, made the universe. He ought certainly to have given form to some other thing, in order to make suitable use of his material. Since the substance, as you assert, proved rebellious to him, either through its inherent inertia, or through some other bad quality, should he have persisted in putting it to a use it could not respond to, and, as the saying goes, carve his bow out of a cypress? The secret of industry does not consist in accomplishing much, but in doing good work. Why did he not content himself with creating some small thing, say a gnat, or a drop of water, but finish it to perfection?

“I might add further remarks about your god, Gallio, and ask you, for instance, if you do not entertain a fear that from his constant rubbing against matter, he may wear out, just as a millstone becomes worn in the long run in the course of grinding wheat. But such questions are not to be solved in a hurry, and the time of a proconsul is precious. Permit me at least to say to you that you are not justified in believing that your god rules and preserves the world, since, according to your own admission, he deprived himself of intelligence after having become acquainted with all things; of will-power, after having willed all things, and of power, following upon his ability to do what he saw fit. Herein again lay, on his part, a serious mistake, for he was thus an instrument in depriving himself of the means of correcting his imperfect work. So far as I am concerned, I am inclined to believe that god is in reality, not the one you have conceived, but indeed the matter he discovered on a certain day, and which the Greeks have styled chaos. You are mistaken in your belief that matter is inert. It is ever in motion, and its perpetual activity keeps life a-going throughout the universe.”

Thus spake the philosopher Apollodorus. Gallio, who had listened to his speech with some degree of impatience, denied that he had fallen a victim to the mistakes and contradictions with which the Greek charged him. But he failed in

refuting successfully the arguments of his opponent, as his intellect was not a subtle one and because he demanded principally of philosophy the means of rendering men virtuous, and because he was interested in useful truths only.

“Try to grasp, Apollodorus,” he said, “that God is none other than nature. Nature and himself are one. God and Nature are the two names of a single being, just as Novatus and Gallio designate one and the same man. God, if you prefer, is divine reason commingling with the earth. You need have no fear that he will wear out through this amalgamation, since his tenuous substance participates of the fire which consumes all matter while remaining unchanged.

“But should, nevertheless,” proceeded Gallio, “my doctrine embrace ill-assorted ideas, do not blame me for it, my dear Apollodorus, but rather give me praise because I suffer a few contradictions to find a place in my mind. Were I not conciliatory as regards my own ideas, were I to confer upon a single system an exclusive preference, I could no longer tolerate the freedom of every opinion; having destroyed my own freedom of thought, I could not readily tolerate it in the case of others, and I should forfeit the respect due to every doctrine established or professed by a sincere man. The gods forbid that I should see my opinion prevail to the exclusion of any other, and exercise an absolute sway on other minds. Conjure up a picture, my dear friends, of the state of manners and morals, were a sufficient number of men firmly to believe that they were the sole possessors of the truth, if, by some impossible chance, they were thoroughly agreed as to that truth. A too narrow piety among the Athenians, who are nevertheless full of wisdom and of doubt, was the cause of the banishment of Anaxagoras and of the death of Socrates. What would happen were millions of men enslaved by one solitary idea concerning the nature of the gods? The genius of the Greeks and the prudence of our ancestors made allowance for doubt, and tolerated the worship of Jupiter under several names. No sooner should a powerful sect come on this ailing earth and proclaim that Jupiter has one name only, than blood would flow the world over, and no longer would there be but one Caius whose madness should threaten the human race with death. All the men of such a sect would be so many Caiuses. They would face death for a name. For a name, they would kill, since it is rather in the nature of men to kill than to die on behalf of what seems to them true and most excellent. Hence it is better to base public order on the diversity of opinions, than to seek to establish it on a universal consent to one and the same belief. A like unanimous consent could never be realised, and in seeking to obtain it, men would become stupid and maddened. For, indeed, the most patent truth is but a vain jangle of words to the men on whom it is attempted to impose it. You would compel me to believe a thing which you understand, but which passes my understanding. You would

thus be forcing upon me not a thing that is intelligible, but one that is incomprehensible. And I am nearer you when holding a different belief, one which I understand. For, in that case, both of us are making use of our reason, and we both possess an intelligent comprehension of our own belief."

"Enough of all this," remarked Lollius. "Educated men will never combine for the purpose of stifling all other doctrines to the advantage of a single one. As to the vulgar herd, who cares to teach it that Jupiter has six hundred names, or a single one?"

Cassius, slow of utterance, and of a serious turn of mind, spoke next.

"Beware, Gallio," he said, "lest the existence of God, such as expounded by you, be not in contradiction with the beliefs of our forefathers. It matters little, after all, whether your arguments are better or worse than those of Apollodorus. What we have to consider is the fatherland. To its religion does Rome owe her virtues and her power. To destroy our gods is to compass our own destruction."

"You need not fear, my friend," rejoined Gallio with some show of animation, "have no fear, I repeat, that I deny in an insolent spirit the heavenly protectors of the Empire. The only divinity which the philosophers acknowledge embodies within itself all the gods, just as humanity embraces all men. The gods whose worship was instituted by the wisdom of our forefathers, Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Minerva, Quirinus, and Hercules, constitute the most august parts of the universal providence, and no less than the whole do these parts exist. No, indeed, I am not an impious man, nor inimical to the laws. None respects the sacred things more than Gallio."

No one seemed disposed to dispute these ideas. Thereupon Lollius, bringing the conversation back to its starting-point, remarked:

"We have been seeking to penetrate the veil of the future. What are man's destinies, according to you, my friends, after his demise?"

In reply to this question, Annaeus Mela promised immortality to heroes and wise men, while denying it to the common of mankind.

"It passes belief," he said, "that misers, gluttons, and mean-spirited men should possess an immortal soul. Could so singular a privilege be the portion of coarse and silly oafs? I cannot entertain such a thought. It would be an insult to the majority of the gods to believe that they have decreed the immortality of the boor who wots only of his goats and cheeses, or of the freedman, richer than Croesus, who had no other cares in the world than to check the accounts of his stewards. Why, good gods, should they be provided with a soul? What sort of a figure would they present among heroes and wise men in the Elysian fields? These wretches, like so many others here below, are incapable of realising humanity's short-spanned life. How could they realise a life of longer duration?"

Vulgar souls are snuffed out at the hour of death, or they may for a while whirl about our globe, to vanish in the dense strata of the atmosphere. Virtue only, by making man the equal of the gods, makes them participate in their immortality. To quote the poet:

“‘Illustrious virtue never descends into the Stygian shades. Lead a hero’s life, and the fates will not consign thee to the pitiless river of forgetfulness. When comes thy last day, glory will open to thee the path of heaven.’

“Let us realise our condition. We must all die, and all that we are must die. The man of shining virtue simply escapes the common destiny by becoming god, and by obtaining his admission into Olympus among the Heroes and the Gods.”

“But he is not conscious of his own apotheosis,” said Marcus Lollius. “There does not exist upon earth a slave or a barbarian who is not aware that Augustus is a god. But Augustus knows it not. Hence it is that our Caesars journey reluctantly towards the constellations, and even now we see Claudius near with blanched face these shadowy honours.”

Gallio shook his head, and remarked, “The poet Euripides has said:

“‘We love the life which is revealed unto us upon earth, since we know of no other.’

“Everything that is related concerning the dead is open to doubt, and is bound up with fables and falsehoods. Nevertheless, I believe that virtuous men attain an immortality of which they are fully cognisant. Let it be clearly understood that they achieve it by their own efforts, and not as a recompense conferred by the gods. By what right should the immortal gods degrade a virtuous man to the extent of rewarding him? The leading of a blameless life is its own reward, and no prize is there worthy of virtue, which is its own reward. Let us leave to vulgar souls, that they may thereby sustain their wretched fortitude, the dread of punishment, and the hope of a reward. Let us love virtue for its own sake. Gallio, if what the poets tell of the infernal regions be true, if after your death you are arraigned before the tribunal of Minos, you may say to him: “Minos shall not judge me. By my actions have I been judged.”

“How,” inquired Apollodorus the philosopher, “can the gods give to men an immortality they themselves do not enjoy?”

Apollodorus, indeed, did not believe in the immortality of the gods, or rather that their sway over the world should be exercised for all time.

He proceeded to develop the reasons for his belief.

“The reign of Jupiter,” he said, “began after the Golden Age. We know through the traditions preserved for us by the poets that the son of Saturn succeeded to his father in the governing of the world. Now, everything that had a beginning must have an end. It is foolish to suppose that anything finite in one

part can be infinite in another. It would then become necessary to call it finite and infinite as a whole, which would be absurd. Anything possessed of an extreme point can be measured from that point itself, and could not in any way cease to be measured at any point of its extent, without changing its nature, and the proper of what is measurable is to be comprised between two extreme points. We may therefore make up our minds that the reign of Jupiter will end just as did that of Saturn. As Æschylus has said:

“Jupiter is subordinate to Anankè. He cannot escape his fate.”

Gallio thought the same, for reasons derived from the observation of nature.

“I consider with you, Apollodorus, that the reigns of the gods are not immortal, and the observation of the celestial phenomena inclines me to this belief. The heavens, as well as the earth, are subject to corruption, and the divine palaces, liable to ruin just as the dwellings of mankind, crumble under the weight of the centuries. I have seen stones fall from the aerial regions. They were blackened and corroded by fire, and bore testimony to a celestial conflagration.

“The bodies of the gods, Apollodorus, are not any more exempt from injury than their dwellings. If it be true, as Homer teaches, that the gods, inhabitants of Olympus, impregnate the flanks of goddesses and mortal women, it is assuredly because they are not themselves immortal, in spite of their life’s span being greater than that of mankind, and hence it is patent that fate subjects them to the necessity of transmitting a life which they may not enjoy for ever.

“In truth,” said Lollius, “it is hardly to be conceived that immortals should produce children in the same way as human beings and animals, or even that they should possess organs adapted to such a purpose. But perhaps the loves of the gods owe their origin to the mendacity of the poets.”

Apollodorus persisted in his assertion that the reign of Jupiter would some day cease, supporting his opinion with subtile reasons. He prophesied that Prometheus would succeed the son of Saturn.

“Prometheus,” replied Gallio, “was set free by Hercules with the consent of Jupiter, and he enjoys in Olympus the happiness he owes to his foresight and to his love of mankind. Nothing will ever happen to change his happy fate.”

Apollodorus asked him:

“Who then, according to you, Gallio, shall inherit the thunder which sets the world a-quaking?”

“Although it may seem audacious to answer this question,” replied Gallio, “I think I am competent to do so, and to name Jove’s successor.”

As he spoke, an officer of the basilica, whose duty it was to call cases, approached him, and informed him that some suitors were waiting for him in

court.”

The proconsul asked if the matter was one of paramount importance.

“It is a most petty case, Gallio,” replied the officer of the basilica. “A man from the harbour of Cenchreae has just dragged a stranger before your tribunal. They are both Jews and of humble condition. They are quarelling over some barbarian custom or some gross superstition, as is the wont of Syrians. Here is the minute of their case. It is all Punic to the clerk who wrote it.

“The plaintiff sets forth, Gallio, that he is the head of the assembly of the Jews or, as one says in Greek, of the synagogue, and he begs justice of you against a man from Tarsus, who, recently settled at Cenchreae, goes every Saturday to the synagogue, for the purpose of speaking against the Jewish law. ‘It is a scandal and an abomination, which thou shalt put an end to,’ says the plaintiff, and he clamours for the integrity of the privileges belonging to the children of Israel. The defendant claims for all those who believe his teachings adoption and incorporation into the family of a man named Abraham, and he threatens the plaintiff with the divine ire. You see, Gallio, that the case is a petty and ambiguous one. It rests with you to decide whether you will take the case yourself, or whether you will leave it to be judged by a lesser magistrate.”

The proconsul’s friends begged him not to disturb himself for so miserable an affair.

“I make it my duty,” he said in response to their prayers, “to follow in this respect the rules laid down by the divine Augustus. I must therefore try personally, not only important cases, but also smaller ones, when the jurisprudence concerning them has not been determined. Certain light cases recur daily and are of importance, if only for their frequency. It is meet that I should personally try one of each class. A judgment rendered by a proconsul serves as an example, and establishes a precedent in law.”

“You deserve praise, Gallio,” said Lollius, “for the zeal you display in the fulfilment of your consular duties. But, acquainted as I am with your wisdom, I doubt whether it is agreeable for you to render justice. That which men honour with this title is really an administration of base prudence and of cruel revenge. Human laws are the daughters of fear and anger.”

Gallio protested feebly against this definition. He did not admit that human laws bore the character of real justice, saying:

“The punishment of crime consists in its commission. The penalty added thereto by the laws is superfluous, and does not fit the crime. However, since through the fault of mankind laws there are, we should apply them equitably.”

Thereupon he told the officer of the court that he would proceed to the tribunal very shortly, and, turning towards his friends, he said:

“To speak truly, I have a special reason for looking into this case with my own eyes. I must not neglect any opportunity of keeping an eye on these Jews of Cenchreae, a turbulent, rancorous race, which shows contempt for the laws, and which it is not easy to hold in check. If ever the peace of Corinth should be troubled, it will be by them. This port, where all the ships of the East come to anchor, conceals amid a congested mass of warehouses and taverns, a countless horde of thieves, eunuchs, soothsayers, sorcerers, lepers, desecraters of graves, and assassins. It is the haunt of every abomination and of every form of superstition. Isis, Eschmoun, the Phoenician Venus, and the god of the Jews, are all worshipped there. I am alarmed at seeing those unclean Jews multiply, rather in the way of fishes than in that of mankind. They swarm about the miry streets of the harbour like crabs under the rocks.”

“What is more dreadful is that they infest Rome to a like extent,” exclaimed Lucius Cassius. “To great Pompey’s own door must be laid the crime of introducing this plague of leprosy into the City. He it was who committed the wrong of not treating as did our ancestors the prisoners he brought from Judaea for his triumphal entry into the City, and they have peopled the right bank of the Tiber with their base spawn. Dwelling about the base of the Janiculum, amid the tanneries, the gut-works, and the fermenting-troughs, in the suburbs whither flock all the abominations and horrors of the world, they earn their livelihood at the vilest of trades, unloading lighters, selling rags and refuse, and exchanging matches for broken glasses. Their women tell fortunes in the houses of the wealthy; their children beg from the frequenters of Egeria’s groves. As you rightly said, Gallio, hostile to the human race and to themselves, they are ever fomenting sedition. A few years back, the followers of a certain Chrestus or Cherestus raised bloody riots among the Jews. The Porta Portuensis was put to fire and sword, and Caesar was compelled to exercise severe repression, in spite of his forbearance. He expelled from Rome the leaders of the movement.”

“Full well do I know it,” said Gallio. “Several of these exiles came to Cenchreae, among others a Jew and a Jewess from the Pontus, who still dwell there, following some humble trade. I believe that they weave the coarse stuffs of Cilicia. I have not learnt anything noteworthy in regard to the partisans of Chrestus. As to Chrestus himself, I am ignorant of what has become of him, and whether he is still of this world.”

“I am as ignorant on this score as you are, Gallio,” resumed Lucius Cassius, “and no one will ever know it. These vile wretches do not so much as attain celebrity in the annals of crime. Moreover, there are so many slaves of the name of Chrestus that it would be no easy matter to distinguish a particular one amid the throng.

“It is but a trifling matter that the Jews should cause tumult within the low purlieus where their number and their lowliness protect them from supervision. They swarm through the city, they ingratiate themselves into families, and are everywhere a source of trouble. They shout in the Forum on behalf of the agitators who pay them, and these despicable foreigners incite the citizens to a hatred of one another. Too long have we endured their presence in popular assemblages, and for a long time now have public speakers avoided running counter to the opinion of these wretches, for fear of their insults. Obstinate in the observance of their barbarian law, they wish to subject others to it, and they find adepts among the Asiatics, and even among the Greeks. And, what is hardly to be credited, they impose their customs on the Latins themselves. There are, in the City, whole quarters where all the shops are closed on their Sabbath day. Oh the shame of Rome! And, while corrupting the lowly folk among whom they dwell, their kings, admitted into Caesar’s palace, insolently practise their superstitions, and set to all citizens a detestable and noted example. Thus do the Jews inoculate Italy on all sides with an oriental venom.”

Annaeus Mela, who had travelled over the whole of the Roman world, sought to make his friends realise the extent of the evil they deplored.

“The Jews corrupt the whole world,” he said. “There is not a Greek city, there are hardly any barbarian towns where work does not cease on the seventh day, where lamps are not lit, where their keeping of fast-days is not followed, and where the abstaining from the flesh of certain animals is not observed in imitation of them.

“I have met in Alexandria an aged Jew not lacking in intelligence, who was even versed in Greek literature. He rejoiced at the progress of his religion in the Empire. ‘In proportion to the knowledge foreigners acquire of our laws,’ he told me, ‘do they find them pleasant, and they conform readily to them, both Romans and Greeks, those who dwell on the mainland and the people of the isles, Eastern and Western nations, Europe and Asia.’ The ancient one spoke perhaps with some degree of exaggeration. Still one sees a number of Greeks yielding to the beliefs of the Jews.”

Apollodorus sharply denied such to be the case.

“The Greeks who judaize,” he said, “are not to be met with except amid the dregs of the populace, and among the barbarians wandering about Greece, as brigands and tramps. The followers of the Stammerer may, however, have persuaded some few ignorant Greeks, by inducing them to believe that the ideas of Plato are to be found in the Hebrew scriptures. Such is the lie which they strive to spread.”

“It is a fact,” replied Gallio, “that the Jews recognise an only, invisible, almighty god, who has created the earth. But they are far from worshipping him with wisdom. They publicly proclaim that this god is the enemy of all that is not Jewish, and that he will not tolerate in his temple either the effigies of the other gods, or the statue of Caesar, or his own images. They regard as impious those who fashion out of perishable matter a god the image of man. Various reasons, some of them good and in harmony with the ideas which we conceive in regard to the divine providence, are adduced why this god should not be given expression to in marble or in bronze. But what can be thought, dear Apollodorus, of a god sufficiently inimical to the Republic that he will not admit in his sanctuary the statues of the Prince? How conceive a god who takes offence at the honours rendered to other gods? And what opinion can one have of a nation which credits its gods with like sentiments! The Jews look upon the gods of the Latins, Greeks and Barbarians as hostile gods, and they carry superstition to the point of believing that they possess a full and complete knowledge of God, one to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be subtracted.

“As you are aware, my dear friends, it is not sufficient to tolerate every religion; we should honour them all, believe that all are sacred, that they are all coequal in the sincerity of those professing them, and that similar to arrows shot from various points towards the same goal, they all meet in the bosom of God. Alone the religion which only tolerates itself, cannot be endured. Were it to be permitted to spread, it would absorb all others. Nay, so unsociable a religion is not a religion, but rather an abligion, and no longer a bond that unites pious men, but one severing that sacred bond. It is the most impious of things. Can, indeed, a greater insult be offered to the deity than to worship it under a particular form, while at one and the same time dooming it to execration under all the other forms it assumes in the eyes of men?

“What! Because I sacrifice to Jupiter crowned with a bushel, I am to forbid a foreigner from sacrificing to a Jupiter whose head of hair, similar to the flower of the hyacinth, drops uncrowned over his shoulders; and that, impious man that I should be, I should still consider myself a worshipper of Jupiter! No, by all means no! The religious man bound to the immortal gods is equally bound to all men by the religion which embraces both the earth and the heavens. Odious is the error of the Jews who believe they are pious in that they worship their god alone!”

“They suffer themselves to be circumcised in his honour,” spoke Annaeus Mela. “In order that this mutilation should not be noticed, it is necessary, when frequenting the public baths, for them to conceal that which should neither be made a display of, nor covered as a thing of shame. For it is alike ridiculous for a

man to pride himself on, or to be ashamed of, what he shares in common with all men. We have good cause to dread, my friends, the progress of Judaic customs in the Empire. There is, however, no cause to fear that Romans and Greeks will adopt circumcision. It passes belief that this custom is likely to make its way among the Barbarians who, however, would feel the disgrace of it to a lesser degree, since they are, for the greater part, absurd enough to reckon as disgraceful for a man to appear before his fellow men in a state of nudity.”

“While I think of it!” exclaimed Lollius. “When our gentle Canidia, the flower of the matrons of the Esquiline, sends her beautiful slaves to the hot baths, she compels them to wear drawers, as she grudges everybody even a view of what is most dear to her about their bodies. By Pollux, she will be the cause of their being taken for Jews, an insulting supposition, even for a slave.”

Lucius Cassius resumed, revealing the irritation which consumed him:

“I cannot say whether the Jewish folly will overtake the whole world. But it is past endurance that this madness should spread among the ignorant, that it should be tolerated in the Empire, that this foetid race, which has descended to every form of turpitude, absurd and sordid in its manners and customs, impious and villainous in its laws, and execrated by the immortal gods, should be suffered to exist. The obscene Syrian is corrupting the City of Rome. We have cast aside with contempt our ancient usages, and the salutary methods of discipline of our ancestors. We no longer serve these masters of the earth, who conquered it for us. Which of us still believes in the haruspices? Who is there with any respect for the augurs? Who shows reverence to Mars and the divine Twins? Oh the sad neglect of our religious duties! Italy has repudiated her indigenous gods, and her tutelary genii. She is henceforth on all sides at the mercy of foreign superstitions, and is handed over defenceless to the impure horde of oriental priests. Alas, did Rome conquer the world only to be conquered by the Jews? Warnings have assuredly not been lacking. The overflowing of the Tiber and the grain famine are certainly not doubtful manifestations of the divine ire. No day passes without its sinister presage. The earth quakes, the sun is veiled, while lightning flashes in a clear sky. Wonders follow upon wonders. Birds of ill omen have been seen to perch on the summit of the Capitol. An ox has been heard to speak on the Etruscan shore. Women have brought forth monsters; a wailing voice has sounded amid the recreations of the theatre. The statue of Victory has dropped the reins of her chariot.”

“The hosts of the celestial palaces,” remarked Lollius, “have strange ways of making themselves heard. If they desire a little more incense, or sigh for a few more fat offerings, let them say so plainly, instead of expressing their wishes by means of thunder, clouds, crows, bronze statues, and two-headed children.

Moreover, you must admit, Lucius, theirs is a far too one-sided part when they presage the evils threatening us, since, in the natural course of things, not a day goes by but what brings some individual or public misfortune.”

Gallio exhibited distress at the sorrows of Cassius.

“Claudius,” he remarked, “Claudius, although he is always dozing, has deeply felt this great peril. He has complained to the Senate of the contempt into which ancient usages have been suffered to fall. Alarmed at the progress of foreign superstitions, the Senate has, on his recommendation, re-established haruspices. But it is not sufficient that the observance of the ceremonial rites of worship should be restored; rather is it necessary once more to instil into men’s hearts their primitive purity. The souls of virtuous men constitute the proper shrine of the gods in this world. Give a home within your hearts to past virtues once more, simplicity, good faith, love of the public welfare, and the gods will immediately re-enter them. You shall then yourselves be temples and altars.”

He spoke, and, taking leave of his friends, entered his litter, which, for some little time past, had been awaiting him near a clump of myrtle-bushes to convey him to the tribunal.

His friends had risen from their seats, and leaving the grounds, followed leisurely behind him under a double portico, so disposed as to afford shadow at all hours of the day, and leading from the walls of the villa to the basilica where the proconsul dispensed justice.

By the way, Lucius Cassius expressed to Mela his regret at the oblivion into which the ancient methods of discipline had fallen.

Marcus Lollius, placing a hand on the shoulder of Apollodorus, said:

“It seems to me that neither our gentle Gallio nor Mela, nor even Cassius, have stated their reasons for their deep hatred of the Jews. I think I know, and I am going to tell you, most dear Apollodorus. The Romans who offer up to the gods a white sow ornamented with white bands, execrate the Jews who refuse to partake of pork. It is not in vain that the fates sent to the pious Æneas a white female boar as a presage. Had the gods not studded with oaks the wild realms of Evander and Turnus, Rome would not be to-day the mistress of the world. The acorns of Latium fattened the swine whose flesh has alone appeased the insatiable hunger of the magnanimous descendants of Remus. Our Italians, whose bodies are built on boars and pigs, feel offended at the proud abstinence of the Jews, who persist in casting aside as unclean victuals the fat sounders, beloved of old Cato, which furnish food to the masters of the Universe.”

Thus discoursing pleasantly, and enjoying the kindly shade, the four friends reached the furthest end of the portico, when of a sudden the Forum appeared before them in a glitter of light.

At that early hour, it was all astir with the coming and going of noisy crowds. In the centre of the square stood a bronze Minerva on a pedestal on which were sculptured the Muses, and to the right and to the left stood a Mercury and a bronze Apollo, the work of Hermogenes of Cythera. A Neptune with a green beard arose from the centre of a basin. At the feet of the god, a dolphin vomited forth water.

The Forum was surrounded in all directions by monuments, the high columns and the arches of which revealed the Roman style of architecture. Facing the portico by way of which Mela and his friends had come, the Propylae, surmounted by two gilded chariots, formed the boundary of the public square, and led, by way of marble steps, to the broad and straight road of the harbour of Lechaeum. On either side of these heroic gates rose in kingly fashion the painted pediments of the sanctuaries, the Pantheon, and the temple of Artemis of Ephesus. The temple of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, dominated the Forum, and looked upon the sea.

Between it and the basilica ran an insignificant little street. The building rose over two stories of arcades supported by pillars flanked with Doric half-columns forming a square. The Roman style, which stamped its character upon all the other buildings of the city, was patent. There remained of the pristine Corinth nothing but the calcined ruins of an old temple.

The lower arcades of the basilica were open and served as shops to sellers of fruit, vegetables, oil, wine and fried foods, to bird-fanciers, jewellers, booksellers, and barbers. Money-changers sat at little tables laden with gold and silver coins. From the gloomy hollow of these stalls emerged shouts, laughter, hailings, the noise of disputes, and pungent odours. On the marble steps, wherever their slabs were tinted blue by the shade, loafers shook dice or tossed knuckle-bones, suitors paced to and fro with anxious mien, sailors gravely looked for the pleasures upon which they should squander their wages, while quidnuncs read news from Rome written for them by frivolous Greeks. Blended with this crowd of Corinthians and foreigners, numerous blind beggars persistently obtruded themselves, as well as callow and rouged youths, matchsellers and crippled sailors from whose necks depended a picture of the wreck of their ships. Doves flew in flocks from the roof of the basilica down to the large open spaces on which the sun shone, and picked up grain between the cracks of the heated flagstones.

A girl of twelve, dark and velvety as a pansy of Xanthus, placed on the ground her little brother, as yet unable to walk, put beside him a chipped bowl filled with porridge and a wooden spoon, saying to him:

“Eat, Comatas, eat and keep quiet, or that red horse will have you.”

Then, holding an obolus in her hand, she ran towards the fish-dealer, whose wrinkled face and naked breast, the colour of saffron, appeared amid baskets lined with seaweed.

While she was thus engaged, a dove hovering about the little Comatas got its talons entangled in the child's locks. The boy began to cry, and to call his sister to his help, screaming in a voice choked with sobs:

"Joessa! Joessa!"

But Joessa heard him not. She was rummaging in the old man's baskets, amid the fish and the shell-fish, for something that would improve the taste of her stale bread. Naturally she did not pick out a peacock-fish or a smaris, whose flesh is most delicate, but which cost money. She brought away in the hollow of her gown, which she had tucked up, three handfuls of sea-urchins and sticklebacks.

Meanwhile little Comatas, his mouth wide open, and drinking his own tears, was still bawling:

"Joessa! Joessa!"

Unlike Jove's eagle, the bird of Venus did not carry off little Comatas into the glorious skies. It left him on the earth, taking with it in its flight, between its pink talons, three golden hairs from his matted locks.

The child, with cheeks glistening with tears and begrimed with dust, clenching his wooden spoon in his tiny fists, was sobbing beside his overturned bowl.

Annaeus Mela, followed by his three friends, had reached the top of the basilica's steps. Alike heedless of the noise and stir of the idle multitude, he was imparting information to Cassius in regard to the future renovation of the universe.

"On a day determined by the gods," he said, "the things existing to-day, whose order and disposition claim our attention, will be destroyed. Stars will clash with stars, all matters composing the earth, the air, and the waters will be consumed in one conflagration. Human souls, imperceptible *débris* amid the universal destruction, will be resolved anew into their primitive elements. An entirely new world ..."

As he uttered the words, Annaeus Mela stumbled against a sleeper stretched out in the shade. It was an old man who had artistically gathered about his dust-covered body the ragged remnants of his cloak. His wallet, his sandals, and his stick lay beside him.

The proconsul's brother, ever courteous and kindly, even to men of the lowliest class, was about to apologise, but the recumbent individual did not allow him time to do so.

“Try and see where you put your feet, you brute,” he exclaimed, “and give alms to the philosopher Posocharis.”

“I perceive a wallet and a stick,” smilingly replied the Roman, “but so far I do not see any philosopher.”

Just as he was about to toss a piece of silver to Posocharis, Apollodorus stayed his hand, saying:

“Do not give him anything, Annaeus. It is not a philosopher; nay, not even a man.”

“But I am one,” replied Mela, “if I give him money, and he is a man if he takes this coin. For, alone among all animals, man does both these things. And can you not see that for the sake of a small coin I satisfy myself that I am a better man than he? Your master teaches that he who gives is better than he who receives.”

Posocharis took the coin. Then he hurled coarse invectives at Annaeus Mela and his companions, stigmatising them as arrogant and as debauchees, and referring them to the jugglers and harlots who walked past them with undulating hips. Then, baring to the navel his hairy body, and drawing over his face his tattered cloak, he once more stretched himself out at full length on the pavement.

“Would it not interest you,” asked Lollius of his companions, “to hear those Jews expound their dispute in the praetorium?”

They replied that they entertained no such curiosity, preferring to stroll under the portico, while waiting for the proconsul, who would, doubtless not be long in coming out.

“I am with you, my friends,” said Lollius. “We shall not miss anything very interesting.”

“Moreover,” he went on to say, “the Jews who have come from Cenchreae to accompany the suitors are not all in the basilica. Here comes one who is recognisable by his beaked nose and his forked beard. He is in as fine a state of frenzy as Pythia herself.”

Lollius was pointing with both look and finger at a lean stranger, poorly clad, who was vociferating under the portico, in the midst of a railing mob.”

“Men of Corinth, you place a vain trust in your wisdom, which is naught but madness. You follow blindly the precepts of your philosophers who teach you death, and not life. You do not observe the natural law, and in order to punish you, God has delivered you unto unnatural vices ...”

A sailor, who had just joined the group of spectators, recognised the man, for, with a shrug of the shoulders, he muttered:

“Why, ’tis Stephanas, the Jew of Cenchreae, who brings once more some extraordinary piece of news from his trip to the skies, into which he ascended, if

we are to credit him.”

And Stephanas was teaching the people.

“The Christian is not bound by law and concupiscence. He is exempt from damnation through the mercy of God, who sent his only son to assume a sinful body, in order to destroy sin. But ye shall only be delivered if, breaking with the flesh, you live according to the spirit.

“The Jews observe the laws, and believe that they are saved by their works. But it is their faith which saves them, and not their works. Of what use is it to them to be circumcised in fact, if their heart is uncircumcised?

“Men of Corinth, glory in the faith, and ye shall be incorporated into the family of Abraham.”

The mob was beginning to laugh and jeer at these obscure utterances. Still the Jew continued prophesying in hollow tones. He was announcing a great manifestation of wrath and the all-destroying fire which was to consume the earth.

“And these things shall come to pass in my lifetime,” he cried, “and I shall witness them with mine own eyes. The hour has come for us to awaken from our sleep. The night has passed, and the day is dawning. The Saints will rejoice in Heaven, and those who have not believed in Jesus crucified shall perish.”

Then, promising the resurrection of the body, he invoked Anastasis, amid the jeers of the hilarious crowd.

Just then, a leather-lunged man, Milo the baker, a member of the Corinthian Senate, who for some time past had been listening to the Jew with impatience, came up to him, took him by the arm, and shaking him roughly said:

“Cease, you wretch, spouting idle words. All this is children’s fables and nonsense fit to capture a woman’s mind. How canst thou, on the strength of thy dreams, indulge in such foolery, casting aside all that is beautiful, and taking pleasure in what is evil only, without even deriving any advantage from thy hatred? Renounce your strange phantasies, your perverse designs, your gloomy forebodings, lest a god abandon you to the crows, to punish you for your imprecations against this city and the Empire.”

The citizens applauded Milo’s speech.

“He speaks truly,” they shouted. “Those Syrians have but one design: they seek to weaken our fatherland. They are the enemies of Caesar.”

A number of them abstracted from the fruiterers’ stalls gourds and locust-beans, others picked up oyster-shells, and flung them at the apostle, who was still vaticinating.

Thrown down the steps of the portico, he wended his way through the Forum, shouting, amid a storm of hooting, insults, and blows, pelted with dirt, bleeding,

and half naked:

“My Master has said it, we are the sweepings of the world.”

And he exulted in his joy.

The children pursued him on the Cenchreae road, yelling.

“Anastasis! Anastasis!”

Posocharis was not sleeping. Hardly had the friends of the proconsul gone away, when he raised himself upon his elbow. Seated on a step, a short distance from him, the swarthy Joessa was crunching between her teeth the shell of a sea-urchin. The cynic hailed her and showed her the glittering piece of silver he had just received. Then, having readjusted his rags and tatters, he rose, slipped his feet into his sandals, picked up his stick and wallet, and went down the steps. Joessa went up to him, relieved him of his wallet full of holes, which she gravely placed on her shoulder, as if to carry it as an offering to the august Cypris, and followed the old man.

Apollodorus saw them taking the Cenchreae road with the object of reaching the cemetery of the slaves, and the place of execution conspicuous from afar by the swarms of crows which hovered over the crosses. The philosopher and the young girl knew there a clump of arbutus always deserted, and favourable to dalliance with Eros.

At the sight of this, Apollodorus, pulling Mela by the flap of his toga, remarked:

“Just look. No sooner has that cur received your alms than he decoys a child, in order to mate with her.”

“Which goes to prove,” answered Mela, “that I gave money to the kind of man who knows full well what to do with it.”

Meanwhile, the brat Comatas, squatting on the heated flagstone and sucking his thumbs, was laughing at the sight of a pebble glistening in the sun.

“Besides,” resumed Mela, “you must admit, Apollodorus, that the way in which Posocharis makes love is not a bit philosophical. The dog is assuredly wiser than our young debauchees of the Palatine, who love amid perfumes, tears, and laughter, with languor or with passion. ...”

As he spoke, a hoarse clamour arose in the praetorium, deafening to the ears of the Greek and the three Romans.

“By Pollux!” exclaimed Lollius, “the suitors whose case our friend Gallio is trying are shouting like dockers, and it seems to me that together with their growls a stench of sweat and onions reaches us.”

“Nothing is more true,” quoth Apollodorus. “But, were Posocharis a philosopher instead of the dog he is, far from sacrificing to the Venus of the cross-roads, he would flee from the whole breed of women, and attach himself

solely to some youth, whose eternal comeliness he would contemplate merely as the expression of an inner beauty more noble and more precious.”

“Love,” resumed Mela, “is an abject passion. It disturbs the reason, destroys noble impulses, and diverts the most elevated ideas to the vilest cares. It has no place in a sensible mind. As the poet Euripides teaches us ...”

Mela did not finish his sentence. Preceded by lictors, who pushed the crowd aside, the proconsul came out of the basilica, and went up to his friends.

“I have not been away from you long,” he said. “The case which I was summoned to try was as meagre as could be, and ridiculous in the extreme. On entering the praetorium, I found it invaded by a motley crowd of the Jews who, in their sordid shops along the wharves of the harbour of Cenchreae, sell carpets, stuffs, and petty articles of silver and gold jewellery to the sailors. The atmosphere was filled with their shrill yelping, and with a pungent odour of goat. It was with difficulty that I could grasp the meaning of their words, and it cost me an effort to understand that one of those Jews, Sosthenes by name, who styled himself the chief of the synagogue, was charging with impiety another Jew, the latter, repulsively ugly, bandy-legged, and blear-eyed, and named Paul or Saul, a native of Tarsus, who has for some time past been exercising in Corinth his trade of weaver, and has gone into partnership with certain Jews expelled from Rome, for the weaving of tent-cloths and Cilician garments in goat-hair. They all spoke at once, and in very bad Greek. I made out, however, that this Sosthenes imputed as a crime to this Paul that he had entered the house wherein the Jews of Corinth are in the habit of meeting every Saturday, and had spoken with the object of seducing his co-religionists, and of persuading them to worship their god in a fashion contrary to their law. I had heard enough. So having, not without difficulty, silenced them, I informed them that had they come to me to complain of some matter of wrong or of some deed of violence wherefrom they might have suffered injury, I should have listened to them with patience, and with all the necessary attention; but, since their case turned simply upon a question of words, and a disagreement in regard to their law, it concerned me not, and that I could not be judge of such matters. I thereupon dismissed them with these words: ‘Settle your quarrels among yourselves, as best you see fit.’”

“What did they say to that?” asked Cassius. “Did they submit with good grace to so wise a decision?”

“It is not in the nature of brutes,” replied the proconsul, “to relish wisdom. Those fellows greeted my decision with harsh murmurings of which, as you may well imagine, I took no notice. I left them shouting and struggling at the foot of the tribunal. From what I could see, most of the blows fell to the plaintiff. He

will be left for dead, if my lictors do not interfere. These Jews from the harbour are great ignoramuses, and like most ignorant people, not enjoying the faculty of supporting with arguments the truth of what they believe, they know no other argument than kicks and fisticuffs.

“The friends of that little deformed and blear-eyed Jew named Paul seem to be particularly clever at that kind of controversy. Ye gods! How they got the better of the chief of the synagogue, raining blows on him, and trampling him under their feet! But I do not doubt that had the friends of Sosthenes been the stronger of the two parties, they would have treated Paul as the friends of Paul treated Sosthenes.”

Mela congratulated the proconsul.

“You were right, brother mine, in sending those wretched litigants about their business.”

“Could I do otherwise?” replied Gallio. “How could I have decided between that Sosthenes and that Paul who are the one as stupid and as rabid as the other? ... If I treat them with contempt, do not, my friends, think that is because they are poor and humble, because Sosthenes reeks of salted fish, or for the reason that Paul’s fingers have become worn in weaving carpets and tent-cloth. No, Philemon and Baucis were poor, yet worthy of the highest honours. The gods did not disdain being entertained at their frugal board. Wisdom raises a slave above his master. Nay, a virtuous slave is superior to the gods. If he is their equal in wisdom, he surpasses them in the beauty of the accomplishment. Those Jews are to be despised simply because they are boorish, and that no image of the divinity is reflected in them.”

A smile overspread the countenance of Marcus Lollius at these words.

“Truly, the gods,” he said, “would hardly frequent the Syrians who infest the harbours, amid the sellers of fruit and the strumpets.”

“The Barbarians themselves,” resumed the proconsul, “possess some knowledge of the gods. Not to mention the Egyptians, who, in the olden days, were men filled with piety, there is not in wealthy Asia a nation which has not worshipped Diana, Vulcan, Juno, or the mother of the Æneades. They give these divinities strange names, confused forms, and sometimes offer up to them human sacrifices, but they recognise their power. Alone are the Jews ignorant of the providence of the gods. I know not whether that Paul, whom the Syrians also call Saul, is as superstitious as the others, and as obstinate in his errors. I know not what obscure idea he conceives of the immortal gods, and to tell the truth, I am not concerned to know it. What is there to be learned of those who know nothing! It amounts, to put it plainly, to educating oneself in ignorance. I gathered from some of his confused expressions in my presence and in reply to

his accuser, that he joins issue with the priests of his nation, that he repudiates the religion of the Jews, and that he worships Orpheus under an assumed name which has escaped me. What makes me suppose this, is that he speaks with respect of a god, or rather of a hero, who is supposed to have descended into Hades, and to have reascended into the heavens, after having wandered among the pallid shades of the dead. He may perhaps have set himself to worship some subterranean Mercury. I should, however, feel more inclined to believe that he worships Adonis, for I think I heard him say that, following in the steps of the women of Byblos, he wept over the sufferings and the death of a god.

“These youthful gods, who die and come to life again, abound on Asiatic soil. The Syrian courtesans have brought several of them to Rome, and these celestial youths please, more than is proper, our respectable women. Our matrons do not blush to celebrate their mysterious rites in private. My Julia, so prudent and so self-contained, has repeatedly asked me how much should be believed of them. ‘What kind of a god,’ have I answered her with indignation, ‘what can be the god who takes delight in the stealthy homage of a married dame? A woman should know no other friends than those of her husband. And do not the gods stand first in order among our friends?’”

“Does not this man of Tarsus,” inquired the philosopher Apollodorus, “pay reverence rather to Typhon, whom the Egyptians call Sethon? It is said that a god with an ass’s head is shown honour by a certain Jewish sect. This god can be no other than Typhon, and I should not be surprised if the weavers of Cenchreae held a secret intercourse with the Immortal, who, according to our gentle Marcus, committed so disgusting an outrage on the old woman who sold cakes.”

“I know not,” resumed Gallio. “They do indeed say that a number of Syrians meet to celebrate in secret the worship of a god with a donkey’s head. It may be that Paul is one of them. But what matters the Adonis, the Mercury, the Orpheus, or the Typhon of that Jew? He will never reign over any but the female fortune-tellers, the usurers, and the sordid traders who spoil the sailors in seaports. At the very utmost will he be able to win over, in the suburbs of the big cities, a few handfuls of slaves.”

“Oho! Oho!” exclaimed Marcus Lollius in an outburst of laughter, “can you see that hideous Paul founding a religion of slaves? By Castor, it would indeed be a miraculous novelty! Should perchance the god of the slaves (may Jove avert the omen!) climb up into Olympus and expel therefrom the gods of the empire, what would he do in turn? In what way would he exercise his power over the astonished world? I should enjoy seeing him at work. He would no doubt keep up the Saturnalia during the entire course of the year. He would open to gladiators the road to the highest honours, establish the prostitutes of the Suburra

in the temple of Vesta, and perhaps make of some wretched straggling village in Syria the capital of the world.”

Lollius might have followed up his jest for some time had Gallio not interrupted him.

“Marcus,” he said, “do not entertain the hope of witnessing these marvellous novelties. Although men are capable of stupendous acts of folly, it is not a little Jew weaver who could seduce them with his bad Greek and his tales about a Syrian Orpheus. The slaves’ god could but foment uprisings and servile wars, which would be promptly put down in blood, and he would soon perish himself, together with his worshippers, in an amphitheatre, under the teeth of wild beasts, to the plaudits of the Roman people.

“Enough of Paul and Sosthenes. Their mind would not be of any help to us in the quest we were engaged upon ere they so untowardly interrupted us. We were seeking to know the future the gods have in store for us, not for you, dear friends, or for me in particular (for we are prepared to endure all that is to be), but for the fatherland and for the human race which we love and towards which we feel kindly. It is not that Jew weaver, with his inflamed eyelids, who could tell us, whatever Marcus may think, the name of the god who is to dethrone Jupiter.”

Gallio broke off his speech to dismiss the lictors, who stood motionless in line before him, shouldering their fasces.

“We require neither the rods nor the axes,” he remarked with a smile. “Speech is our only weapon. May the day come when the universe shall know no others. If you are not tired, my friends, let us walk towards the Pirene fountain. We shall find midway an old fig-tree under which, so it is related, the betrayed Medea meditated her cruel revenge. The Corinthians hold the tree in reverence, in memory of that jealous queen, and suspend votive tablets from its branches, for Medea never brought them but good. It has cleft the earth with its branches, which have thrown out roots, and it is still crowned with a luxuriant foliage. Seated in its shade, we can while away time with conversation till our bath-hour.”

The children, weary of pursuing Stephanas, were playing at knuckle-bones by the roadside. The apostle was striding along rapidly, when he came across, near the place of execution, a band of Jews, who had come up from Cenchreae to ascertain the judgment rendered by the proconsul in regard to the synagogue. They were friends of Sosthenes, and were greatly irritated against the Jew of Tarsus and his adherents because they sought to change the law. Noticing the man, who was wiping with his sleeve his eyes blinded with blood, they thought

they recognised him, and one of them, pulling him by the beard, asked him if he were not Stephanas, the companion of Paul.

Proudly he answered:

“Behold him!”

He was quickly thrown to the ground, and trampled under foot. The Jews were picking up stones and shouting:

“He is a blasphemer! Stone him!”

A couple of the most zealous tore up the milestone sunk by the Romans, and were endeavouring to heave it at him. The stones fell with a dull thud on the skinny bones of the apostle, who yelled:

“Oh the delight of these wounds! Oh the joy of these sufferings! Oh the refreshment of this torture! I behold Jesus.”

A few steps farther off, under an arbutus, and to the murmurings of a spring, old Posocharis was pressing in his arms the smooth flanks of Joessa. Annoyed at the disturbance, he growled with a choking voice, with head buried in the hair of the young girl:

“Begone, you low brutes, and do not trouble a philosopher’s pastime.”

After a few minutes, a centurion who was passing along the now deserted road, raised Stephanas from the ground, made him swallow a mouthful of wine, and gave him linen wherewith to bandage his wounds.

While this was going on, Gallio, sitting with his friends under Medea’s tree, was saying:

“If you wish to know the successor of the master of gods and men, meditate the words of the poet:

“‘Jove’s spouse shall bring forth a son more powerful than his father.’

“This line designates, not the august Juno, but the most illustrious among the noble women with whom consorted the Olympian who so often changed his form and his loves. It seems to me assured that the government of the universe is to fall to the lot of Hercules. This opinion has long since taken root in my mind, by reasons derived not only from the poets, but from philosophers and men of science. I have, so to speak, greeted by anticipation the accession of the son of Alcmena, in the climax of my tragedy of *Hercules on Œta*, ending with the following words:

“‘Hail, great conqueror of monsters, and pacifier of the world; be propitious unto us! Cast thy gaze upon the earth, and if some monster of a new kind strike terror into mankind, destroy it with a thunderbolt. Better than thy father wilt thou know how to hurl thunder.’

“I augur favourably of the coming reign of Hercules. During his life upon earth, he displayed a spirit patient and inclined to elevated thoughts. When the

time comes for thunder to arm his hand, he will not suffer a new Caius to govern the Empire with impunity. Virtue, ancient simplicity, courage, innocence, and peace will reign with him. Thus do I prophesy.”

And Gallio, having risen, took leave of his friends with these words:

“Fare ye well, and love me.”

III

AS Nicole Langelier came to the end of his reading, the birds heralded by Giacomo Boni filled the deserted Forum with their friendly cries.

The sky was spreading over the Roman ruins the ash-tinted veil of evening; the young laurel-bushes planted along the Via Sacra lifted up into the diaphanous atmosphere their branches black as antique bronzes, while the flanks of the Palatine were clothed in azure.

“Langelier,” spoke M. Goubin, who was not easily deceived, “you did not invent that story. The suit brought by Sosthenes against St. Paul before Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, is to be found in the *Acts of the Apostles* .”

Nichole Langelier readily admitted the fact.

“The story is told,” he said, “in chapter xviii., and occupies verses 12 to 17 inclusively, which I am able to read to you, for I copied them on to a sheet of my manuscript.”

Whereupon he read:

“12. And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

“13. Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

“14. And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

“15. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it* ; for I will be no judge of such *matters* .

“16. And he drove them from the judgment seat.

“17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.’

“I have not invented anything,” added Langelier. “Little is known of Annaeus Mela, and of Gallio, his brother. It is, however, certain that they were numbered among the most intelligent men of their day. When Achaia, a senatorial province under Augustus, an imperial one under Tiberius, was restored to the Senate by Claudius, Gallio was sent thither as proconsul. He was doubtless indebted for the post to the influence of his brother Seneca; it is possible, however, that he was selected for his knowledge of Greek literature, and as a man agreeable to the Athenian professors, whose intellects the Romans admired. He was highly educated. He had written a book on physiological subjects, and, it is believed,

some few tragedies. His works are all lost, unless something from his pen is to be met with in the collection of tragic recitations attributed without sufficient reasons to his brother the philosopher. I have assumed that he was a Stoic, and that he held in many respects the same opinions as his illustrious brother. But, while placing in his mouth words of virtue and rectitude, I have guarded against attributing any settled doctrine to him. The Romans of those days blended the ideas of Epicurus with those of Zenon. I was not incurring any great risk of being mistaken, when investing Gallio with this eclecticism. I have represented him as a kindly man. He was that, assuredly. Seneca has said of him that no one loved him in a lukewarm fashion. His gentleness was universal. He aspired to honours.

“Quite the contrary, his brother Annaeus Mela held aloof from them. We have on that point the testimony of Seneca the philosopher, as well as that of Tacitus. When Helvia, the mother of the three Senecas, lost her husband, the most famed of her sons indited a small philosophical treatise for her. In a certain part of this work, he exhorts her to consider, in order to reconcile her to life, that there remain unto her sons like Gallio and Mela, differing as to character, but equally worthy of her affection.

“‘Cast thine eyes upon my brothers,’ he says, or words to that effect. ‘Both shall, by the diversity of their virtues, charm thy weary moments. Gallio has attained honours through his talents. Mela has despised them in his wisdom. Derive enjoyment from the regard in which the one is held, from the calm of the other, and from the love of both. I know the inner sentiments of my brothers. Gallio seeks in dignities an ornament for thyself. Mela embraces a gentle and peaceful life in order to devote himself to thee.’

“A child during the principality of Nero, Tacitus did not know the Senecas. He merely collected what was currently said about them in his day. He states that if Mela held aloof from honours, it was through a refinement of ambition, and, a simple Roman knight, to rival the influence of the consular officers. After having administered in person the vast estates he possessed in Boetica, Mela came to Rome, and had himself appointed administrator of Nero’s estate. The conclusion was drawn therefrom that he was shrewd in matters of business, and he was even suspected of not being as disinterested as he wished to appear. That may be. The Senecas, while parading their contempt for riches, were possessed of great wealth, and it is very hard to believe the tutor of Nero when, amid the luxury of his furniture and his gardens, he represents himself as faithful to his beloved poverty. Still, the three sons of Helvia were not ordinary souls. Mela had of Atilla, his wife, a son, Lucan the poet. It would seem that Lucan’s talent

reflected great lustre on his father's name. Letters were then held in high honour, and eloquence and poetry ranked above all things.

"Seneca, Mela, Lucan, and Gallio perished with the accomplices of Piso. Seneca the philosopher was already an aged man. Tacitus, who had not been a witness of his death, has portrayed the scene for us. We know how Nero's tutor opened his veins while in his bath, and how his young wife Paulina protested that she would die with him, and by a similar death. By Nero's order, Paulina's wrists, which had been opened at the veins, were bandaged. She lived, preserving thereafter a deathly pallor. Tacitus records that young Lucan, whilst under torture, denounced his mother. Even if there were confirmation of this infamous deed, the blame for it should be laid to the tortures he underwent. But there is certainly one reason for not believing it. If indeed pain extorted from Lucan the names of several of the conspirators, he did not pronounce that of Atilla, since Atilla was not molested at a time when every information was blindly credited.

"After the death of Lucan, Mela, with too great a haste and diligence, seized on the inheritance of his son. A friend of the young poet, who doubtless coveted the inheritance, became the accuser of Mela. It was alleged that the father had been initiated into the secret of the conspiracy, and a forged letter of Lucan was brought forth. Nero, after having read it, ordered it to be shown to Mela. Following the example set by his brother and so many of Nero's victims, Mela caused his veins to be opened, after having bequeathed a large sum of money to the freedmen of Caesar, in order to secure the remainder of his fortunes to the unhappy Atilla. Gallio did not survive his two brothers; he took his own life.

"Such was the tragic end of these charming and cultured men. I have made two of them, Gallio and Mela, speak in Corinth. Mela was a great traveller. His son Lucan, while yet a child, was on a visit to Athens, at the time Gallio was proconsul of Achaia. There is therefore some show of reason for saying that Mela was then with his brother in Corinth. I have supposed that two young Romans of illustrious birth, and a philosopher of the Areopagus, accompanied the proconsul. In so doing, I have not taken too great a liberty, since the intendants, the procurators, the proprætors, and the proconsuls whom the Emperor and the Senate respectively sent to govern the provinces, always had about themselves the sons of great families, who came to instruct themselves in the management of public affairs under their guidance, and that of men of keen intellect like my Apollodorus, more frequently freedmen acting as their secretaries. Lastly, I conceived the idea that at the moment St. Paul was being brought before a Roman tribunal, the proconsul and his friends were conversing freely about the most varied subjects, art, philosophy, religion, and politics, and

that there pierced the various topics absorbing their interest a deep anxiety as to the future. There is indeed some likelihood that on that very day, just as well as on any other, they may have sought to discover the future destiny of Rome and the world. Gallio and Mela stood among the most elevated and open intellects of the day. Minds of such a calibre are at all times inclined to delve into the present and the past for the conditions of the future. I have noticed in the most learned and well-informed men whom I have known, to name but Renan and Berthelot, a pronounced tendency to interject at haphazard into a conversation outlines of rational Utopias and scientific forecasts.”

“Here then we have,” said Joséphin Leclerc, “one of the best educated men of his day, a man versed in philosophic speculation, trained in the conduct of public affairs, and who was of as open and broad a mind as could be that of a Roman such as Gallio, the brother of Seneca, the ornament and light of his century. He is concerned about the future, he seeks to grasp the movement which is most affecting the world, and he tries to fathom the destiny of the Empire and the gods. Just then, by a unique stroke of fortune, he comes across St. Paul; the future he is in quest of passes by him, and he sees it not. What an example of the blindness which strikes, in the very presence of an unexpected revelation, the most enlightened minds and the keenest intellects!”

“I would have you observe, my dear friend,” replied Nicole Langelier, “that it was not a very easy matter for Gallio to converse with St. Paul. It is not easy to conceive how they could possibly have exchanged ideas. St. Paul had trouble in expressing himself, and it was with great difficulty that he made himself intelligible to the folk who lived and thought like himself. He had never spoken word of mouth to any cultured man.

“He was nowise capable of indicating a train of thought and of following those of an interlocutor. He was ignorant of Greek science. Gallio, accustomed to the conversation of educated people, had long since trained his reason to debate. He knew not the maxims of the rabbis. What then could these two men have said to each other?

“Not that it was impossible for a Jew to converse with a Roman. The Herods enjoyed a mode of expression which was agreeable to Tiberius and Caligula. Flavius Josephus and Queen Berenice discoursed in terms pleasing to Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem. We know that bejewelled Jews were at all times to be found in company of the *antisemites*. They were *meschoumets* (accursed unbelievers — anathema to Paul). Paul was a *něbi* (prophet). This fiery and haughty Syrian, disdainful of the worldly goods sought for by all men, thirsting after poverty, ambitious of insults and humiliations, rejoicing in suffering, was merely able to proclaim his sombre and inflamed visions, his hatred of life and

of the beautiful, his absurd outbursts of anger, and his insane charity. Apart from this, he had nothing to say. In truth, I can discover one subject only on which he might have agreed with the proconsul of Achaia. 'Tis Nero.

"St. Paul, at that time, could hardly have heard any mention of the youthful son of Agrippina, but on learning that Nero was destined to Imperial power, he would immediately become a Neronian. He became so later on. He was still one at the time Nero poisoned Britannicus. Not that he was capable of approving of a brother's murder, but because he entertained a profound respect for all government. 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers,' he wrote to his churches. 'For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.' Gallio might perchance have found these maxims somewhat simple and commonplace, but he could not have disapproved of them as a whole. But if there is a subject which he would not have felt tempted to approach while speaking with a Jewish weaver, it is indeed the ruling of people and the authority of the Emperor. Once more, what could those two men well have said to each other?

"In our own day, when a European official in Africa, let us say the Governor-General of the Sudan for his Britannic Majesty, or our Governor of Algeria, comes across a fakeer or a marabout, their conversation is naturally confined within restricted limits. St. Paul was to a proconsul what a marabout is to our civil Governor of Algeria. A conversation between Gallio and St. Paul would have resembled only too much, I imagine, that held by General Desaix with his famous dervish. After the battle of the Pyramids, General Desaix, at the head of twelve hundred cavalry, pursued into Upper Egypt the Mamelukes of Murad Bey. On arriving at Girgeh, he heard that an old dervish, who had acquired among the Arabs a wide reputation for learning and sanctity, was living near that city. Desaix was endowed with both philosophy and humanity. Desirous of making the acquaintance of a man esteemed of his fellows, he caused the dervish to be summoned to headquarters, received him with honour, and entered into conversation with him through an interpreter.

"'Venerable old man,' he said, 'the French have come to bring Egypt justice and liberty.'

"'I knew they would come,' replied the dervish.

"'How did you come to know it?'

"'Through an eclipse of the sun.'

"'How can an eclipse of the sun have informed you as to the movement of our armies?'

“Eclipses are brought about by the angel Gabriel, who places himself before the sun in order to announce to the faithful the misfortunes which threaten them.’

“Venerable old man, you are ignorant of the true cause of eclipses; I shall impart the knowledge of it to you.’

“Thereupon, taking a stump of pencil and a scrap of paper, he traced some figures:

“Let A be the sun, B, the moon, C, the earth,’ and so forth ...

“And when he had come to the end of his demonstration,

“Such,’ he said, ‘is the theory governing eclipses of the sun.’

“And as the dervish was mumbling a few words,

“What does he say?’ asked the General of the interpreter.

“General, he says that it is the angel Gabriel who causes eclipses, by placing himself in front of the sun.’

“The fellow is simply naught but a fanatic!’ exclaimed Desaix.

“Whereupon he drove the dervish out with well-administered kicks.

“I imagine that had a conversation been entered into between St. Paul and Gallio, it would have ended somewhat as did the dialogue between the dervish and General Desaix.”

“It must, however, be pointed out,” said Joséphin Leclerc, joining issue, “that between the Apostle Paul and the dervish of General Desaix, there is at the very least this difference: the dervish did not impose his faith on Europe. And you will admit that his Britannic Majesty’s honourable Governor of the Sudan has doubtless not come across the marabout who is to confer his name on the biggest church in London; you must likewise admit that our civil Governor of Algeria has never come face to face with the founder of a religion which the majority of the French nation will some day believe and profess. These functionaries have not seen the future arise before them under a human form. The proconsul of Achaia did.”

“It was none the less impossible for Gallio,” replied Langelier, “to carry on with St. Paul a steady conversation on some important subject regarding morals or philosophy. I am well aware, and you yourselves are not ignorant of the fact, that towards the fifth century of the Christian Era, it was believed that Seneca had known St. Paul in Rome, and had expressed admiration of the Apostle’s doctrines. This fable owed its spread to the deplorable clouding of the human mind following so closely upon the age of Tacitus and of Trajan. In order to obtain credence for it, certain forgerers, who at that time swarmed in Christian ranks, fabricated a correspondence which is mentioned respectfully by St. Jerome and St. Augustine. If these letters are those which have come unto us ascribed to Paul and Seneca, it must be that those two Fathers did not read them,

or that they greatly lacked discernment. It is the absurd work of a Christian utterly ignorant of everything connected with Nero's time, and one totally incapable of imitating Seneca's style. Is it necessary to say that the great divines of the Middle Ages firmly believed in the truth of the intercourse between the two men and in the genuineness of the letters? But the classical scholars of the Renaissance had no difficulty in demonstrating the unlikelihood and the falsity of these inventions. It matters little that Joseph de Maistre should have garnered by the way this antiquated rubbish together with much of the same kind. No one any longer heeds it, and henceforth it is only in pretty novels written for society by skilful and mystical authors that the apostles of the primitive Church converse freely with the philosophers and people of fashion of Imperial Rome and expound to the delight of Petronius the novel beauties of Christianity. The words of Gallio and his friends, which you have just heard, are endowed with less charm and more truth."

"I do not deny it," replied Joséphin Leclerc, and I believe that the personages of the dialogue are made to think and speak as they must actually have thought and spoken, and that the ideas entertained by them are those of their day. Therein, it seems to me, lies the merit of the work, and therefore do I reason about it just as if I were basing my arguments on a historical text."

"You may safely do so," said Langelier. "I have not embodied in it anything for which I have not the authority of a reference."

"Very well then," resumed Joséphin Leclerc, "so we have been listening to a Greek philosopher and several Roman literati engaged in speculation as to the future destinies of their fatherland, of humanity, and of the earth, and seeking to discover the name of Jove's successor. The while they are absorbed in this perplexing quest, the apostle of the new god appears before them, and they treat him with contempt. I maintain that in so doing they plainly show a lack of penetration, and lose through their own fault a unique opportunity of becoming instructed concerning that which they felt so great a desire to know."

"It seems self-evident to you, my good friend," replied Nicole Langelier, "that Gallio, had he known how to set about it, would have gathered from St. Paul the secret of the future. Such is perhaps the first idea that springs to the mind, and it is one that many have become imbued with. Renan, after having recorded, according to the *Acts*, this singular interview between Gallio and St. Paul, is not averse from discovering evidence of a narrow and thoughtless mind in the contempt experienced by the proconsul for this Jew of Tarsus who appeared before his tribunal. He seizes the opportunity thus offered to lament the poor philosophy of the Romans. 'What a lack of foresight,' he exclaims, 'is sometimes exhibited by intellectual men! In later times, it was to be discovered

that the squabble between those abject sectarians was the great event of the century.' Renan seems to believe that the proconsul of Achaia had merely to listen to that weaver in order to be there and then informed of the spiritual revolution in course of preparation throughout the universe, and to penetrate the secret of future humanity. And this is also no doubt what every one thinks at first sight. Nevertheless, ere settling the point, let us look more closely into the matter; let us examine what both men expected, and let us find out which of the two was, when all is said and done, the better prophet.

"In the first place, Gallio believed that the youthful Nero would be an emperor of philosophic mind, govern according to the maxims of the Portico, and be the delight of the human race. He was mistaken, and the reasons for his erroneous assumption are only too patent. His brother Seneca was the tutor of the son of Agrippina; his nephew, the boy Lucan, lived on terms of intimacy with the young prince. Both his family and his personal interests bound up the proconsul with the fortunes of Nero. He believed that Nero would make an excellent Emperor, for the wish was father to the thought. His mistake arose rather from weakness of character than from lack of intellect. Nero, moreover, was then a youth full of gentleness, and the early years of his principality were not to give the lie to the hopes of the philosophers. Secondly, Gallio believed that peace would reign over the world after the chastisement of the Parthians. He erred owing to a lack of knowledge of the actual dimensions of the earth. He erroneously believed that the *orbis Romanus* covered the whole of the globe; that the inhabitable world ended at the burning or frozen strands, rivers, mountains, sands, and deserts reached by the Roman eagles, and that the Germani and Parthians peopled the confines of the universe. We know how much weeping and blood this error, shared in common by all Romans, cost the Empire. Thirdly, Gallio, pinning his faith to the oracles, believed in the eternity of Rome. He was mistaken, if his prediction is to be taken in a narrow and literal sense. But he was not so, if one considers that Rome, the Rome of Caesar and Trajan, has bequeathed us its customs and laws, and that modern civilisation proceeds from Roman civilisation. It is in the august square where we now stand that from the height of the rostral tribune and in the Curia was debated the fate of the universe, and the form of constitution which to the present day governs the nations. Our science is based on Greek science transmitted to us by Rome. The reawakening of ancient thought in the fifteenth century in Italy, in the sixteenth century in France and Germany, was the cause of Europe being born anew in science and in reason. The proconsul of Achaia did not deceive himself: Rome is not defunct, since she lives in us. Let us, in the fourth place, examine Gallio's philosophical ideas. No doubt he was not equipped with a very sound natural philosophy, and

he did not always interpret natural phenomena with sufficient precision. He applied himself to metaphysics as a Roman, *i.e.* , with a lack of acuteness. At heart, he valued philosophy merely because of its utility, and devoted himself mainly to moral questions. I have neither betrayed nor flattered him when placing his speeches on record. I have represented him as serious and mediocre, and a fairly good disciple of Cicero. You may have gathered that he reconciled, by dint of the poorest of reasoning, the doctrine of the Stoics to the national religion. One feels that whenever he indulges in speculation as to the nature of the gods, he is anxious to remain a good citizen and an honest official. But, after all, he thinks matters out, and reasons. The idea he conceives of the forces which govern the world is, in its principle, rational and scientific and, in this respect, it conforms to that which we have ourselves conceived of them. He does not reason as well as his friend the Greek Apollodorus. He does not argue any worse than the professors of our University who teach an independent philosophy and a Christian antimaterialism. By his open-mindedness and his strength of intelligence, he seems our contemporary. His thoughts turn naturally in the direction followed by the human mind at the present moment. Do not therefore let us say that he was unable to recognise the intellectual future of humanity.

“As to St. Paul, he announced the future; none doubt the fact. And yet he expected to see with his own eyes the world come to an end, and all things existing engulfed in flames. This conflagration of the universe, which Gallio and the Stoics foresaw in a future so remote that they none the less announced the eternity of the Empire, Paul believed to be quite close at hand, and was preparing for that great day. Herein he was mistaken, and you will admit that this misconception is in itself worse than all the united blunders of Gallio and his friends. Still more serious is it that Paul did not base this extraordinary belief on any observation or any reasoning whatever. He was ignorant of and despised science. He gave himself up to the lowest practices of thaumaturgy and glossology, and had no culture whatsoever.

“As a matter of fact, in regard to the future, as well as to the present and the past, there was nothing the proconsul could learn from the apostle, nothing but a mere name. Had he learnt that Paul was of Christ’s religion, he would not have been any the better informed as to the future of Christianity, which was within a few years to disengage itself almost wholly from the ideas of Paul and of the first apostolic men. Thus it will be seen, if one does not pin one’s opinion to liturgical texts, and to the strictly verbal interpretations of theologians, that St. Paul foresaw the future less accurately than Gallio, and one will be inclined to think that were the apostle to return to Rome nowadays, he would discover more cause for surprise than the proconsul.

“St. Paul, in modern Rome, would no more recognise himself on the column of Marcus Aurelius than he would recognise on the column of Trajan his old enemy Cephas. The dome of St. Peter’s, the Stanze of the Vatican, the splendour of the churches, and the Papal pomp, all would offend his blinking eyes. In vain would he look for disciples in London, Paris, or Geneva. He would not understand either Catholics or Reformers who vie in quoting his real or supposed Epistles. Nor would he understand the minds freed from all dogma, who base their opinion on the two forces he hated and despised the most: science and reason. On discovering that the Son of Man has not come, he would rend his garments, and cover himself with ashes.”

Hippolyte Dufresne interrupted, saying:

“Whether in Paris or in Rome, there is no doubt that St. Paul would be as an owl blinking in the sun. He would be no more fit than a Bedouin of the desert to communicate with cultured Europeans. He would not know himself when at a bishop’s, nor would he obtain recognition from him. Were he to alight at the house of a Swiss pastor fed upon his writings, he would astound him with the primitive crudity of his Christianity. All this is true. Bear in mind, however, that he was a Semite, a foreigner to Latin thought, to the genius of the Germani and Saxons, to the races from which sprung those theologians who, by dint of erroneous conceptions, mistranslations, and absurdities, discovered a meaning in his counterfeit Epistles. You conceive him in a world which was not his own, which can in no wise become his, and this absurd conception at once gives birth to an agglomeration of incongruous presentments. We picture to ourselves, to illustrate what I say, this vagabond weaver sitting in a Cardinal’s coach, and we make merry over the appearance presented by two human beings of so opposite a character. If you persist in resurrecting St. Paul, pray have the good taste to restore him to his race and country, among the Semites of the East, who have not greatly changed these twenty centuries, and for whom the Bible and the Talmud contain human science in its entirety. Drop him among the Jews of Damascus or of Jerusalem. Lead him to the Synagogue. There he will listen without astonishment to the teachings of his master, Gamaliel. He will enter into disputation with the rabbis, will weave goat-hair, live on dates and a little rice, observe the law faithfully, and of a sudden undertake to destroy it. He will in turn be persecutor and persecuted, executioner and martyr, all with equal keenness. The Jews of the Synagogue will proceed with his excommunication, by blowing into a ram’s horn, and by spilling drop by drop the wax of black candles into a tub containing blood. He will endure without flinching this horrible ceremony, and will exercise, in the course of an arduous and continually menaced existence, the energy of a headstrong will. In such circumstances, he

will probably be known to only a few ignorant and sordid Jews. But it will be Paul once more, and wholly Paul.”

“That may be possible,” said Joséphin Leclerc. “Yet you will grant me that St. Paul was one of the principal founders of Christianity, and that he might have imparted to Gallio valuable information concerning the great religious movement of which the proconsul was entirely ignorant.”

“He who founds a religion,” replied Langelier, “wots not what he does. I may say almost the same of those who found great human institutions, monastic orders, insurance companies, national guards, banks, trusts, trade unions, academies, schools of music and the drama, gymnastic societies, soup-kitchens, and lectures. Generally speaking, these establishments do not for any length of time carry out the intentions of their founders, and it sometimes happens that they become diametrically opposed to them. It is as much as one can do to trace after many long years a few vestiges of their founders’ original intention. In the matter of religions, at any rate among nations whose existence is troublous and whose mind is fickle, they undergo so incessant and so complete a transformation, according to the feelings or interests of their faithful and their ministers, that in the course of a few years they preserve naught of the spirit which created them. Gods undergo more changes than men, for the reason that their form is less precise and that they endure longer. Some there are who improve as they grow older; others deteriorate with the years. It takes less than a century for a god to become unrecognisable. The god of the Christians has perhaps undergone a more complete transformation than any other. This is doubtless attributable to the fact that he has belonged in succession to the most varied civilisations and races, to the Latins, to the Greeks, to the Barbarians, and to all the nations sprung from the ruins of the Roman Empire. It is assuredly a far cry from the wooden Apollo of Daedalus to the classical Apollo Belvedere. Still greater a distance separates the youthful Christ of the Catacombs from the ascetic Christ of our cathedrals. This personage of the Christian mythology perplexes one by the number and variety of his metamorphoses. The flamboyant Christ of St. Paul is followed, as early as the second century, by the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels, a poor Jew, vaguely communistic, who becomes, with the Fourth Gospel, a sort of young Alexandrine, a milk-and-water disciple of the Gnostics. At a later period, if we only take into account the Roman Christs and tarry merely with the most famed of them, we have had the dominating Christ of Gregory VII., the bloodthirsty Christ of St. Dominic, the mob-leading Christ of Julius II., the atheistic and artistic Christ of Leo X., the indeterminate and insipid Christ of the Jesuits, Christ the protector of the factory, the defender of capital and the opponent of Socialism, who flourished under the pontificate of Leo

XIII., and who still reigns. All those Christs, who have but the name in common, were not foreseen by Paul. In reality, he knew no more than Gallio about the future god.”

“You exaggerate,” remarked M. Goubin, who disliked exaggeration in whatever form.

Giacomo Boni, who venerates the sacred books of all nations, here pointed out that Gallio and the Roman philosophers and historians were to be blamed for not having a knowledge of the Jews’ Sacred Scriptures.

“Had they been better informed,” he said, “the Romans would not have harboured unjust prejudices against the religion of Israel; and, as your own Renan has said, a little goodwill and a better knowledge would perhaps have warded off fearful misunderstandings in regard to questions of interest to the whole of humanity. There lacked not educated Jews like Philo to explain the laws of Moses to the Romans, had the latter been more broad-minded and possessed a more correct presentiment of the future. The Romans experienced disgust and fear, when face to face with Asiatic thought. Even if they were right in fearing it, they were wrong in despising it. To despise a danger constitutes a great blunder. Gallio displayed want of foresight when stigmatising as criminal fancies and profanities of the vulgar the Syrian beliefs.”

“How then could the Hellenist Jews have taught the Romans what they were themselves ignorant of?” inquired Langelier. “How could that honest Philo, so learned yet so shallow, have revealed to them the obscure, confused, and fecund thought of Israel, of which he knew nothing himself? What could he have imparted to Gallio concerning the faith of the Jews except literary absurdities? He would have explained to him that the doctrine of Moses harmonises with the philosophy of Plato. Then, as always, cultured men had no idea of what was passing through the minds of the multitudes. The ignorant mob is for ever creating gods unknown to the literati.

“One of the strangest and most notable facts of history is the conquest of the world by the god of a Syrian tribe, and the victory of Jehovah over all the gods of Rome, Greece, Asia, and Egypt. Upon the whole, Jesus was simply a *nēbi*, and the last of the prophets of Israel. Nothing is known about him. We are in the dark as to his life and death, for the Evangelists are in nowise biographers. As to the moral ideas grouped under his name, they originate in truth with the crowd of visionaries who prophesied in the days of the Herods.

“What is called the triumph of Christianity is more accurately the triumph of Judaism, and to Israel fell the singular privilege of giving a god to the world. It must be admitted that Jehovah deserved his sudden elevation in many respects. He was, when he attained to empire, the best of the gods. He had made a very

bad beginning. Of him it may be said what historians say of Augustus, his heart softened with the years. At the time when the Israelites settled in the Promised Land, Jehovah was stupid, ferocious, ignorant, cruel, coarse, foulmouthed, indeed the most silly and most cruel of gods. But, under the influence of the prophets, there came about a complete transformation. He ceased being conservative and formal, and became converted to ideas of peace and to dreams of justice. His people were wretched. He began to feel a profound pity for all poor wretches. And although he remained at heart very much a Jew and very patriotic, he naturally became international when becoming revolutionary. He constituted himself the defender of the humble and oppressed. He conceived one of those simple ideas which captivate the world. He announced universal happiness, and the coming of a beneficent Messiah whose reign would be peace. His prophet Isaiah prompted him as to this admirable theme with words delightfully poetical and of unsurpassed softness:

“‘The mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.

“‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fading together; and a little child shall lead them.’

“In the Roman Empire, the god of the Jews set himself to capture the working classes and the social revolution. He addressed himself to the unfortunate. Now, in the days of Tiberius and Claudius, there existed within the Empire infinitely more unhappy than happy ones. There were hordes of slaves. One man alone owned as many as ten thousand. These slaves were for the most part sunk in wretchedness. Neither Jupiter, nor Juno, nor the Dioscuri troubled themselves about them. The Latin gods did not pity their condition. They were the gods of their masters. When came from Judaea a god who hearkened to the complaints of the humble, they worshipped him. So it is that the religion of Israel became the religion of the Roman world. This is what neither St. Paul nor Philo could explain to the proconsul of Achaia, for they themselves did not see it clearly. And this is what Gallio could not realise. He felt, however, that the reign of Jupiter was nearing its end, and he predicted the coming of a better god. From love of the national antiquities, he went for this god to the Graeco-Latin

Olympus, and selected him of the blood of Jupiter, through aristocratic feeling. Thus it is that he chose Hercules instead of Jehovah.”

“For once,” said Joséphin Leclerc, “you will admit that Gallio was mistaken.”

“Less so than you think,” replied Langelier with a smile. “Jehovah or Hercules, it mattered little. You may be sure of this: the son of Alcmene would not have governed the world otherwise than the father of Jesus. Olympian as he might be, he would have had to become the god of the slaves, and assume the religious spirit of the new times. The gods conform scrupulously to the sentiments of their worshippers: they have reasons for so doing. Pay attention to this. The spirit which favoured the accession in Rome of the god of Israel was not merely the spirit of the masses, but also that of the philosophers. At that time, they were nearly all Stoics, and believed in one god alone, one on whose behalf Plato had laboured and one unconnected by tie of family or friendship with the gods of human form of Greece and Rome. This god, through his infinity, resembled the god of the Jews. Seneca and Epictetus, who venerated him, would have been the first to have been surprised at the resemblance, had they been called upon to institute a comparison. Nevertheless, they had themselves greatly contributed towards rendering acceptable the austere monotheism of the Judaeo-Christians. Doubtless a wide gulf separated Stoic haughtiness from Christian humility, but Seneca’s morals, consequent upon his sadness and his contempt of nature, were paving the way for the Evangelical morals. The Stoics had joined issue with life and the beautiful; this rupture, attributed to Christianity, was initiated by the philosophers. A couple of centuries later, in the time of Constantine, both pagans and Christians will have, so to speak, the same morals and philosophy. The Emperor Julian, who restored to the Empire its old religion, which had been abolished by Constantine the Apostate, is justly regarded as an opponent of the Galilean. And, when perusing the petty treatises of Julian, one is struck with the number of ideas this enemy of the Christians held in common with them. He, like them, is a monotheist; with them, he believes in the merits of abstinence, fasting, and mortification of the flesh; with them, he despises carnal pleasures, and considers he will rise in favour with the gods by avoiding women; finally, he pushes Christian sentiment to the degree of rejoicing over his dirty beard and his black finger-nails. The Emperor Julian’s morals were almost those of St. Gregory Nazianzen. There is nothing in this but what is natural and usual. The transformations undergone by morals and ideas are never sudden. The greatest changes in social life are wrought perceptibly, and are only seen from afar. Christianity did not secure a foothold until such time as the condition of morals accommodated itself to it, and as Christianity itself had become adjusted to the condition of morals. It was

unable to substitute itself for paganism until such time as paganism came to resemble it, and itself came to resemble paganism.”

“Granted,” said Joséphin Leclerc, “that neither St. Paul nor Gallio saw into the future. No one does. Has not one of your friends said: ‘The future is concealed even from those who shape it’?”

“Our knowledge of what the future has in store,” resumed Langelier, “is in proportion of our acquaintance with the present and the past. Science is prophetic. The more a science is accurate, the more can accurate prophecies be drawn from it. Mathematics, to which alone appertains entire accuracy, communicate a portion of their precision to the sciences proceeding from them. Thus it is that accurate predictions are made by means of mathematical astronomy and chemistry. One is able to calculate eclipses millions of years ahead, without fear of one’s calculations being found erroneous, as long as the sun, the moon, and the earth shall preserve the same relations as to bulk and distance. It is even permitted to us to foresee that these relations will be modified in a far distant future. Indeed, it is prophesied, on the strength of the celestial mechanism, that the silver horned moon will not describe eternally the same circle round our globe, and that causes now in operation will, by dint of repetition, change its course. You may safely predict that the sun will become darkened, and will no longer appear except a shrunken globe over our icy seas, unless there should come to it in the interval some new alimentation, a thing quite within the possibilities, for the sun is capable of catching swarms of asteroids, just as a spider does flies. It is, however, safe to predict that it will become extinguished, and that the dislocated figures of the constellations will vanish star by star in the darkness of space. But what does the death of a star amount to? To the fading away of a spark. Let all the stars in the heavens die out just as the grasses of the field wither, what matters it to universal life, so long as the infinitely tiny elements composing them shall have retained within themselves the force which makes and unmakes worlds? It is safe to predict an even more complete end of the universe, the end of the atom, the dissociation of the last elements of matter, the times when protyle, when the amorphous fog will have reconquered its illimitable empire over the ruins of all things. And this will form but a breathing-spell in God’s respiration. All will begin anew.

“The worlds will again be born to life. They will live again to die. Life and death will succeed each other for all eternity. All sorts of combinations will become facts in the infinity of space and time, and we shall find ourselves seated once more on the flank of the Forum in ruins. But as we shall not know that we are ourselves, it will not be us.”

M. Goubin wiped his eye-glass.

“Such ideas are disheartening,” he remarked.

“What then do you hope for, Monsieur Goubin,” asked Nicole Langelier, “to gratify your wishes? Do you aspire to preserve of yourself and of the world an eternal consciousness? Why do you wish to remember for all time that you are Monsieur Goubin? I will not conceal it from you: the present universe, which is far from nearing its end, does not seem to possess the property of satisfying you in this respect. Do not place any more store in those which are to follow, for they will doubtless be of the same kind. Do not, however, abandon all hope. It is possible that after an indefinite succession of universes, you shall be born anew, Monsieur Goubin, with a recollection of your previous existences. Renan has said that it was a risk to be taken, and that at all events it would not be long in coming. The successions of universe will take place for us within less than a second. Time does not count for the dead.”

“Are you cognisant,” asked Hippolyte Dufresne of the astronomical dreams of Blanqui? The aged Blanqui, a prisoner in the Mont-Saint-Michel, could get but a glimpse of the sky through his stopped-up window, and had the stars for his only neighbours. This made of him an astronomer, and he based on the unity of matter and the laws ruling it a strange theory in regard to the identity of the worlds. I have read a sixty-page pamphlet of his wherein he sets forth that form and life are developed in exactly the same manner in a large number of worlds. According to him, a multitude of suns, all similar to our own, have, do, or will shed light upon planets in every respect similar to the planets of our own system. There is, was, and will be, *ad infinitum*, Venuses, Mars, Saturns, and Jupiters, quite the counterpart of our Saturn, Mars, and Venus, and worlds similar to our own. These worlds produce exactly what our world produces, and bear fruits, animals, and men resembling in all respects terrestrial plants, animals, and human beings. The evolution of life in them is the same as that on our globe. Consequently, thought the aged prisoner, there is, was and shall be throughout the infinite space myriads of Monts-Saint-Michel, each containing a Blanqui.”

“We know but little of the worlds whose suns shine upon our nights,” resumed Langelier. “We perceive, however, that subjected to the same mechanical and chemical laws, they differ from our own world and among themselves in extent and form, and that the substances burning in them are not distributed among all of them in the same proportions. These differences must produce an infinity of others which we do not suspect. A pebble is sufficient to change the fate of an Empire. Who knows? Perchance, Monsieur Goubin, many times multiplied and disseminated through myriads of worlds, has wiped, wipes, and shall eternally wipe clean his eye-glass.”

Joséphin Leclerc did not suffer his friends to expatiate any further on astronomical dreams.

“I am,” he said, “like Monsieur Goubin, of the opinion that all this would be heartrending were it not too far from us to affect us. What is of paramount interest for us, what we are curious to know is the fate of those who will come immediately after us in this world.”

“There is no doubt,” said Langelier, “that the succession of worlds only fills us with sad astonishment. We should welcome with a more fraternal and friendly eye the future of civilisation, and the immediate destiny of our fellow men. The closer at hand the future, the more we are concerned about it. Unfortunately, moral and political sciences are inaccurate, and full of uncertainty. They have but an imperfect knowledge of the so far accomplished developments of human evolution, and can therefore not instruct us concerning the developments which remain to be completed. Equipped with hardly any memory, they have little or no presentiment. This is why scientific minds feel an insurmountable repugnance to attempt investigations, the uselessness of which they know, and they dare not even confess to a curiosity which they entertain no hope of satisfying. Willingly would the task be undertaken to discover what would happen, were men to become wiser. Plato, Sir Thomas More, Campanella, Fénelon, Cabet, and Paul Adam have reconstructed their particular city in Atlantis, in the Island of Utopia, in the Sun, at Salentinum, in Icaria, in Malaya, and established there an abstract social administration. Others, like the philosopher Sébastien Mercier, and the socialist-poet William Morris, dived into a far-off future. But they took their system of morals with them. They discovered a new Atlantis, and it is a city of dreamland which they have harmoniously built there. Shall I also quote Maurice Spronck? He shows us the French Republic conquered by the Moors, in the 230th year of its foundation. He argues thus, in order to induce us to hand over the government to the Conservatives whom alone he considers capable of warding off so great a disaster. Meanwhile Camille Mauclair, trusting in humanity to come, reads in the future the victorious resistance, of Socialistic Europe against Mussulman Asia. Daniel Halévy dreads not the Moors, but, with greater show of reason, the Russians. He narrates, in his *Histoire de quatre ans*, the foundation, in 2001, of the United States of Europe. But he seeks to show us more especially that the moral equilibrium of nations is unstable, and that a facility suddenly introduced into the conditions of life may suffice to let loose on a multitude of men the worst scourges and the most cruel sufferings.

“Few are those who have sought to know the future, out of pure curiosity, and without moral intention or optimistic designs. I know no other than H. G. Wells who, journeying through future ages, has discovered for humanity a fate he did

not, according to every indication, expect; for the institution of an anthropophagous proletariat and an edible aristocracy is a cruel solution of social questions. Yet such is the fate H. G. Wells assigns to posterity. All the other prophets of whom I have any knowledge content themselves with entrusting to future centuries the realisation of their dreams. They do not unveil the future, being satisfied with conjuring it up.

“The truth is that men do not look so far ahead without fright. Many consider that such an investigation is not only useless, but pernicious; while those most ready to believe that future events are discoverable are those who would most dread to discover them. This fear is doubtless based on profound reasons. All morals, all religions, embody a revelation of humanity’s destiny. The greater part of men, whether they admit it to, or conceal it from, themselves, would recoil from investigating these august revelations, to discover the emptiness of their anticipations. They are accustomed to endure the idea of manners totally different from their own, if once those manners are buried in the past. Thereupon they congratulate themselves on the progress made by morality. But, as their morality is in the main governed by their manners, or rather by what they allow one to see of them, they dare not confess to themselves that morality, which has continually changed with manners, up to their own day, will undergo a further change when they have passed out of this life, and that future men are liable to conceive an idea entirely at variance with their own as to what is permissible or not. It would go against the grain with them to admit that their virtues are merely transitory, and their gods decrepit. And, although the past is there to point out to them ever-changing and shifting rights and duties, they would look upon themselves as dupes were they to foresee that future humanity is to create for itself new rights, duties and gods. Finally, they fear disgracing themselves in the eyes of their contemporaries, in assuming the horrible immorality which future morality stands for. Such are the obstacles to a quest of the future. Look at Gallio and his friends; they would not have dared to foresee the equality of classes in the matter of marriage, the abolition of slavery, the rout of the legions, the fall of the Empire, the end of Rome, nor even the death of those very gods in whom they had all but ceased to believe.”

“’Tis possible,” said Joséphin Leclerc, “but it is time for us to dine.”

And, leaving the Forum bathed in the calm light of the moon, they wended their way through the populous streets of the city towards a famed but cheap eating-house in the Via Condotti.

Paul Adam, journalist and playwright; contributor to the *Revue de Paris* and the *Nouvelle Revue* .

Maurice Spronck, journalist and barrister; contributor to the *Journal des Débats* , the *Revue des Deux Mondes* , the *Revue bleue* , and the *Revue hebdomadaire* .

Camille Faust, *dit* Camille Mauclair, art critic and lecturer; author of works on Greuze, Fragonard, Schumann, Rodin, and of *De Watteau à Whistler* .

IV

THE room was small, and hung with a smoke-stained paper dating from the pontificate of Pio Nono. Ancient lithographs were dependent from the walls, representing Cavour with his tortoise-shell-framed spectacles and collar-like beard, the leonine visage of Garibaldi, the stupendous moustaches of Victor Emanuel, a classic placing side by side of the combined symbols of the revolution and of the supreme power, a popular testimony to the Italian spirit which excels in juxtapositions, and in whose midst, in our own day, in Rome, the fulminating Pope and the excommunicated King daily exchange assurances of good-neighbourship, with an exquisite grasp of politics, and not without a certain flavour of delicate comedy. The mahogany sideboard was laden with plated chafing-dishes and alabaster goblets. The establishment affected for new things a contempt appropriate to long-standing renown.

Seated around a table bedecked with roses, and with flasks of Chianti before them, the five continued their philosophic discourse.

“It is quite true,” said Nicole Langelier, “that the heart fails in the case of many men, when gazing into the abyss of future events. It is moreover certain that our all too imperfect knowledge of facts past and gone does not supply us with the elements required to enable us to determine accurately what is to succeed them. However, since the past of human social organisations is in part known to us, the future of those societies, a continuation and consequence of their past, is not wholly beyond our ken. It is not impossible to observe certain social phenomena, and to define from the conditions under which they have already occurred, the conditions under which they will reappear. We are not barred, when witnessing the commencement of an order of facts, from comparing it with a past order of analogous facts, and from deducing from the completion of the second a like completion of the first. By way of example: when observing that the forms of labour are changeable, that serfdom has succeeded slavery, salaried labour, serfdom, new methods of production may be anticipated; when it is shown that industrial capital has for barely a century taken the place of the small artisans and peasant property, one is led to ponder over the form which is to succeed capital; when studying the manner in which was carried out the redemption of the feudal burdens and conditions of servitude, one is enabled to conceive how the redemption of the means of production nowadays constituting private ownership may some day be carried out. By studying the great Services of the State now in operation, it is possible to form a conception

of future socialistic methods of production; and, after having thus investigated in several respects the present and the past of human industry, we shall, lacking certainties, determine by aid of probabilities whether collectivism is to be realised some day, not because it is just, for there is no reason for believing in the triumph of justice, but because it is the necessary sequel to the present state of things, and the fatal consequence of capitalistic evolution.

“Let us, if you like, take another example: we possess some experience of the life and death of religions. The end of Roman polytheism in particular, is familiar to us. Its lamentable end enables us to imagine that of Christianity, whose decline we are witnessing.

“We may similarly seek to find out whether future humanity will be bellicose or peaceful.”

“I am curious to learn,” said Joséphin Leclerc, “how to set about it.”

M. Goubin shook his head, saying:

“Such a quest is useless. We know its result beforehand. War will last as long as the world.”

“There is nothing to prove it,” replied Langelier, “and a consideration of the past leads one to believe, on the contrary, that war is not one of the essential conditions of social life.”

And Langelier, while waiting for the *minestra* (soup) which was long in making its appearance, developed the foregoing idea, without, however, departing from the moderation characterising his mind.

“Although the early periods of the human race,” he said, “are lost to us in impenetrable darkness, it is certain that men were not always warlike. They were not so during the long ages of the pastoral life; the memory of which survives only in a small number of words common to all Indo-European languages, and which reveal innocent manners. And there are reasons for believing that these peaceful pastoral centuries had a far longer duration than the agricultural, industrial, and commercial periods which, following them in a necessary progress, brought about between tribes and nations a state of all but constant war.

“It was by force of arms that it was most frequently sought to acquire property, lands, women, slaves, and cattle. At first, wars were waged between village and village. Next, the vanquished, joining hands with the victors, formed a nation, and wars occurred between nation and nation. Each of these peoples, in order to retain possession of the acquired riches, or to make further acquisitions, contended with neighbouring peoples for the possession of strongholds securing the command of roads, mountain passes, river courses, and the seashore. In the end, nations formed confederations, and contracted alliances. Thus it came about

that men banded together; as they increased in strength, instead of contending for the goods of the earth, formally bartered them. The community of sentiments and interests gradually became broadened. A day came when Rome imagined she had established it the world over. Augustus thought he had inaugurated the era of universal peace.

“We know how this illusion was gradually and savagely dissipated, and how the barbarian hordes overwhelmed the Roman peace. These barbarians, who had settled within the Empire, cut one another’s throats on its ruins, for a space of fourteen centuries, and founded in carnage countries baptized in blood. Of such was the life of nations in the Middle Ages, and the constitution of the great European monarchies.

“In those days, a state of war was alone possible and conceivable. All the forces of the world were organised solely for the purpose of maintaining it.

“If the reawakening of thought, at the time of the Renaissance, permitted a few sparse minds to conceive better regulated relations between nations, at one and the same time, the burning desire to invent, and the thirst for knowledge supplied fresh food to the warrior instinct. The discovery of the West Indies, the exploration of Africa, the navigation of the Pacific Ocean, opened up vast territories to European avidity. The white kingdoms joined issue over the extermination of the red, yellow, and black races, and for the space of four centuries gave themselves up madly to the pillaging of three great divisions of the world. This is what is styled modern civilisation.

“During this uninterrupted succession of deeds of rapine and violence, Europeans acquired a knowledge of the extent and configuration of the earth. As they progressed in this knowledge, so did their work of destruction proceed apace. To the present day, the whites come in contact with the black or the yellow races but to enslave or massacre them. The peoples whom we call barbarians know us so far through our crimes only.

“For all that, those navigations, those explorations undertaken in a spirit of savage cupidity, these tracks by land and by sea opened up to conquerors, adventurers, hunters of and traders in men, these life-destroying colonisations, this brutal impulse which has led and still leads one-half of humanity to destroy the other, are the fatal conditions of a further progress of civilisation, and the terrible means which shall have prepared, for a still undetermined future, the peace of the world.

“This time, ’tis the whole world assimilated, in spite of enormous dissimilarities, to the state of the Roman Empire under Augustus. The Roman peace was the fruit of conquest. Universal peace will most assuredly not be brought about by the same means. No Empire is there to-day which can lay

claim to the hegemony of the lands and seas covering the globe, known and surveyed at last. But, in spite of their being less apparent than those of political and military domination, the bonds which are beginning to unite the whole of humanity, and no longer merely a part of humanity, are none the less real; they are both more supple and more solid, more intimate and infinite in variety, since they are connected, athwart the fictions of public life, with the realities of social life.

“The increasing multiplicity of communications and exchanges, the compulsory solidarity of the financial markets of every capital, of commercial markets vainly striving to guarantee their independence by recourse to unfortunate expedients, the rapid growth of international socialism, seem likely to guarantee, sooner or later, the union of the peoples of every continent. If at the present moment the Imperialist spirit of the great States and the haughty ambitions of armed nations seem to give the lie to these previsions, and to damn these aspirations, it will be perceived that in reality modern nationalism amounts merely to a confused aspiration towards a more and more vast union of intellects and wills, and that the dream of a greater England, a greater Germany, a greater America, leads, will or do whatever you may, to the dream of a greater humanity, and to a partnership between nations for the common exploitation of the riches of the earth. ...”

The speech was interrupted by the appearance of the tavern-keeper bearing a steaming soup-tureen and grated cheese.

And, from amid the hot and aromatic vapour of the soup, Nicole Langelier concluded his argument with these words:

“There will doubtless be further wars. The savage instincts coupled with the natural desires, pride and hunger, which have embroiled the world for so many centuries, will again disturb it. The human masses have so far not found their equilibrium. The sagacity of nations is not yet sufficiently methodical to secure the common welfare, by means of the freedom and the facility of exchanges, man has so far not come to be looked up to with respect everywhere by man, the several portions of humanity are not yet about to associate harmoniously for the purpose of building the cells and organs of one and the same body. It will not be vouchsafed even unto the youngest of us to witness the close of the era of arms. But, we feel within us a presentiment of these better times which we are not to experience. If we extend into the future the present trend, we may even now determine the establishment of more perfect and frequent communications between all races and all nations, a more general and stronger feeling of human solidarity, the rational organisation of labour, and the coming of the United States of the World.

“Universal peace will become a fact some day, not because men will become better (’tis more than we may hope for), but because a new order of things, a new science, and new economic necessities will force on men the state of peace, just as formerly the very conditions of their existence placed and kept them in a state of war.”

“Nicole Langelier, a rose has shed a leaf in your glass,” said Giacomo Boni. “This has not taken place without the permission of the gods. Let us drink to the future peace of the world.”

Raising his glass, Joséphin Leclerc remarked:

“This wine of Chianti has a tart savour, and a light sparkle. Let us drink to peace, the while Russians and Japanese are waging a bitter war in Manchuria and in Korea Bay.”

“That war,” resumed Langelier, “marks one of the great periods in the history of the world. And, in order to grasp its meaning, we must hark back two thousand years.

“The Romans, assuredly, did not suspect the vastness of the barbarian world, and had no conception of those immense human reservoirs which were to burst on them one fine day, and submerge them. They did not suspect that there existed in the world any other than the Roman peace. And yet, an older and vaster one there was, the Chinese peace.

“Not but what their merchants had business relations with the merchants of Serica. The latter were wont to bring raw silk to a spot situated to the north of the Pamir table-land, named the Tower of Stone. The merchants of the Empire went thither. Bolder Latin traders penetrated as far as the Gulf of Tong-King and the Chinese coasts up to Hang-chau-fu, or Hanoi. Nevertheless, the Romans did not conceive that Serica constituted an Empire more densely populated than their own one, richer, and more advanced in agriculture and political economy. The Chinese, on their part, knew the white men. Their annals mention the fact that the Emperor An-tung, under which name we recognise Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, despatched an embassy to them, which was perhaps merely an expedition of navigators and merchants. But they were ignorant of the fact that a civilisation more seething and violent than their own, as well as more prolific and infinitely more expansive, was spread over one of the faces of the globe of which they covered another face: the Chinese, agriculturists and gardeners full of experience, honest and expert merchants, led a happy life, owing to their system of exchange and to their immense associations of credit. Contented with their subtle science, their exquisite politeness, their singularly human piety, and their immutable wisdom, they were doubtless not anxious to become acquainted with the ways of life and thought of the white men who had come from the land of

Caesar. Perchance the ambassadors of An-tung may have seemed somewhat gross and barbarian to them.

“The two great civilisations, the yellow and the white, continued ignorant of each other until the day when the Portuguese, having doubled the Cape of Good Hope, settled down to trade at Macao. Merchants and Christian missionaries established themselves in China, and indulged in every kind of violence and rapine. The Chinese tolerated them, in the manner of men accustomed to works of patience, and marvellously capable of endurance; nevertheless, they could on occasion take life with all the refinements of cruelty. For nearly three whole centuries the Jesuits were, in the Middle Kingdom, a source of endless disturbances. In our own times, the Christian acquired the habit of sending jointly or separately into that vast Empire, whenever order was disturbed, soldiers who restored it by means of theft, rape, pillage, murder, and incendiarism, and of proceeding at short intervals with the pacific penetration of the country with rifles and guns. The poorly armed Chinese either defend themselves badly or not at all, and so they are massacred with delightful facility. They are polite and ceremonious, but are reproached with cherishing feeble sentiments of affection for Europeans. The grievances we have against them are greatly of the order of those which Mr. Du Chaillu cherished towards his gorilla. Mr. Du Chaillu, while in a forest, brought down with his rifle the mother of a gorilla. In its death, the brute was still pressing its young to its bosom. He tore it from this embrace, and dragged it with him in a cage across Africa, for the purpose of selling it in Europe. Now, the young animal gave him just cause for complaint. It was unsociable, and actually starved itself to death. ‘I was powerless,’ says Mr. Du Chaillu, ‘to correct its evil nature.’ We complain of the Chinese with as great a show of reason as Mr. Du Chaillu of his gorilla.

“In 1901, order having been disturbed at Peking, the troops of the five Great Powers, under the command of a German Field-Marshal, restored it by the customary means. Having in this fashion covered themselves with military glory, the five Powers signed one of the innumerable treaties by which they guarantee the integrity of the very China whose provinces they divide among themselves.

“Russia’s share was Manchuria, and she closed Korea to Japanese trade. Japan, which in 1894 had beaten the Chinese on land and on sea, and had taken a part, in 1901, in the pacifying action of the Powers, saw with concentrated fury the advance of the voracious and slow-footed she-bear. And, while the huge brute indolently stretched out its muzzle towards the Japanese beehive, the yellow bees, arming their wings and stings together, riddled it with burning punctures.

“‘It is a colonial war,’ was the expression used by a high-placed Russian official to my friend Georges Bourdon. Now, the fundamental principal of every colonial war is that the European should be more powerful than the peoples whom he is fighting; this is as clear as noonday. It is understood that in these kinds of wars the European is to attack with artillery, while the Asiatic or African is of course to defend himself with arrows, clubs, assegais and tomahawks. It is tolerated that he should procure a few antiquated flint-locks and cartridge-pouches; this aids in rendering colonisation more glorious. But in no case is it permissible that he should be armed and instructed in European fashion. His fleet must consist of junks, canoes and ‘dug-outs.’ Should he perchance purchase ships from European ship-owners, such ships shall naturally be unfit for use. The Chinese who fill their arsenals with porcelain shells conform to the rules of colonial warfare.

“The Japanese have departed from these rules. They wage war in accordance with the principles taught in France by General Bonnal. They greatly outweighed their adversaries in knowledge and intelligence. While fighting better than Europeans, they show no respect for consecrated usages, and act to a certain degree in a fashion contrary to the law of nations.

“‘Tis in vain that serious individuals like Monsieur Edmond Théry demonstrated to them that they were bound to be beaten, in the superior interest of the European market and in conformity with the most firmly established economic laws. Vainly did the proconsul of Indo-China, Monsieur Doumer himself, call upon them to suffer, and at short notice, decisive defeats on sea and on land. ‘What a financial sadness would bow down our hearts,’ exclaimed this great man, ‘were Bezobrazoff and Alexeieff not to extract another million out of the Korean forests. They are kings. Like them, I was a king: our cause is a common one. Oh ye Japanese! Imitate in their gentleness the copper-coloured folk over whom I reigned so gloriously under Méline.’ In vain did Dr. Charles Richet, skeleton in hand, represent to them that being prognathous, and not having the muscles of their calves sufficiently developed, they were under the obligation of seeking flight in the trees when face to face with the Russians, who are brachycephalous and as such eminently civilising, as was demonstrated when they drowned five thousand Chinese in the Amur. ‘Bear in mind that you are links between monkey and man,’ obligingly said to them my Lord Professor Richet, ‘as a consequence of which, if you should defeat the Russians or Finno-Letto-Ugro-Slavs, it would be exactly as if monkeys were to beat you. Is it not plain to you?’ They heeded him not.

“At the present moment, the Russians are paying the penalty, in the waters of Japan and in the gorges of Manchuria, not only of their grasping and brutal

policy in the East, but of the colonial policy of all Europe. They are now expiating, not merely their own crimes, but those of the whole of military and commercial Christianity. When saying this, I do not mean to say that there is a justice in the world. But we witness a strange whirligig of things, and brute force, up to now the sole judge of human actions, indulges occasionally in unexpected pranks. Its sudden starts aside destroy an equilibrium thought to be stable. And its pranks, which are ever the work of some hidden rule, bring about interesting results. The Japanese cross the Yalu and defeat the Russians in good form. Their sailors annihilate artistically a European fleet. Immediately do we discern that a danger threatens us. If it indeed exists, who created it? It was not the Japanese who sought out the Russians. It was not the yellow men who hunted up the whites. We there and then make the discovery of a Yellow Peril. For many long years have Asiatics been familiar with the White Peril. The looting of the Summer Palace, the massacres of Peking, the drownings of Blagovestchenk, the dismemberment of China, were these not enough to alarm the Chinese? As to the Japanese, could they feel secure under the guns of Port Arthur? We created the White Peril. The White Peril has engendered the Yellow Peril. We have here concatenations giving to the ancient Necessity which rules the world an appearance of divine Justice, and must perforce admire the astonishing behaviour of that blind queen of men and gods, when seeing Japan, formerly so cruel to the Chinese and Koreans, and the unpaid accessory to the crimes of Europeans in China, become the avenger of China, and the hope of the yellow race.

“It does not, however, appear at first sight that the Yellow Peril at which European economists are terrified is to be compared to the White Peril suspended over Asia. The Chinese do not send to Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg missionaries to teach Christians the Fung-chui, and sow disorder in European affairs. A Chinese expeditionary force did not land in Quiberon Bay to demand of the Government of the Republic *extra-territoriality*, *i.e.* , the right of trying by a tribunal of mandarins cases pending between Chinese and Europeans. Admiral Togo did not come and bombard Brest roads with a dozen battleships, for the purpose of improving Japanese trade in France. The flower of French nationalism, the *élite* of our Trubliions, did not besiege in their mansions in the Avenues Hoche and Marceau the Legations of China and of Japan, and Marshal Oyama did not, for the same reason, lead the combined armies of the Far East to the Boulevard de la Madeleine to demand the punishment of the foreigner-hating Trubliions. He did not burn Versailles in the name of a higher civilisation. The armies of the Great Asiatic Powers did not carry away to Tokio and Peking the Louvre paintings and the silver service of the Elysée.

“No indeed! Monsieur Edmond Théry himself admits that the yellow men are not sufficiently civilised to imitate the whites so faithfully. Nor does he foresee that they will ever rise to so high a moral culture. How could it be possible for them to possess our virtues? They are not Christians. But men entitled to speak consider that the Yellow Peril is none the less to be dreaded for all that it is economic. Japan, and China organised by Japan, threaten us, in all the markets of Europe, with a competition frightful, monstrous, enormous, and deformed, the mere idea of which causes the hair of the economists to stand on end. That is why Japanese and Chinese must be exterminated. There can be no doubt about the matter. But war must also be declared against the United States to prevent it from selling iron and steel at a lower price than our manufacturers less well equipped in machinery.

“Let us for once admit the truth, and for a moment cease flattering ourselves. Old Europe and new Europe — for that is America’s true name — have inaugurated economic war. Each and every nation is waging an industrial struggle against the others. Everywhere does production arm itself furiously against production. We are displaying bad grace when we complain that we are witnessing fresh competing and disturbing products invade the market of the world thus thrown into confusion. Of what use are our lamentations? That might is right is our god. If Tokio is the weaker, it shall be in the wrong and it shall be made to feel it; if it is the stronger, right will be on its side, and we shall have no reproach to cast at it. Where is the nation in the world entitled to speak in the name of justice?

“We have taught the Japanese both the capitalistic *régime* and war. They are a cause of alarm because they are becoming like ourselves. In truth, it is awful. They dare to defend themselves with European weapons against Europeans. Their generals, their naval officers, who have studied in England, in Germany, and in France, reflect honour on their instructors. Several of them have followed the classes of our special military schools. The Russian Grand Dukes, who feared that no good could come out of military institutions too democratic to their taste, must feel reassured.

“I am unable to foretell the issue of the war. The Russian Empire opposes to the methodical energy of the Japanese its irresolute forces which the savage imbecility of its government restrains, the dishonesty of a voracious administration robs, and military incapacity leads to disaster. The stupendousness of its impotence and the depths of its disorganisation stand revealed. Withal, its golden reservoirs, kept filled by its rich creditors, are all but inexhaustible. On the other hand, its enemy has no other resources than onerous loans obtained with difficulty, of which victory itself may perchance deprive

them. For while English and Americans are one in assisting it to weaken Russia, they do not intend that it shall become powerful and to be feared. It is hard to predict the final victory of one combatant over the other. But if Japan makes the yellow men respected by the white men, it will have greatly served the cause of humanity, and paved the way unawares and doubtless against its own wish for the pacific organisation of the world."

"What do you mean," said M. Goubin, raising his eyes from his plate filled with a savoury *fritto* .

"It is feared," continued Nicole Langelier, "that Japan grown to manhood will educate China, teach it to defend itself and to exploit its wealth itself, and that Japan will create a strong China. No need to look upon such a contingency with alarm; it should, on the contrary, be hoped for in the universal interest. Strong nations co-operate to the harmony and wealth of the world. Weak nations, like China and Turkey, are a perpetual cause of disturbances and perils. But we are ever in too great a haste in our fears and hopes. Should victorious Japan undertake to organise the old yellow Empire, it will not succeed in its task that quickly. It will require time to teach China that a China exists. For she knows it not, and as long as she is unaware of it, there will not be any China. A people exists only in the knowledge possessed by it of its existence. There are 350,000,000 Chinese, but they are not aware of the fact. As long as they have not counted themselves, they will not count for anything. They will not even exist by dint of numbers. 'Number off!' is the first word of command spoken by the drill-sergeant to his men. He is there and then teaching them the principle of societies. But it takes a long time for 350,000,000 men to number themselves. Nevertheless, Ular, who is a European out of the common, since he believes that one should be humane and just towards the Chinese, informs us that a great national movement is simmering in all the provinces of the huge empire."

"And even should it happen," said Joséphin Leclerc, "that victorious Japan came to infuse into Mongols, Chinese, and Tibetans a consciousness of themselves, and caused them to be respected by the white races, in what way would the peace of the world be better assured, and the conquering mania of nations be kept within stricter bounds? Would not negro humanity still remain to be exterminated? Where is the black nation which will insure the respecting of negroes by the white and yellow races?"

"But," interposed Nicole Langelier, "who can define how far one of the great human races may go? The blacks are not, like the red man, dying out through contact with the Europeans. Where is the prophet who will venture to tell the 200,000,000 African blacks that their posterity will never enjoy wealth and peace on the lakes and great rivers? The white men passed through the ages of

caves and lacustrine villages. They were at that time wild and naked. They dried rude potteries in the sun. Their chiefs led barbarian dances at which they shouted. They knew no other sciences than those of their sorcerers. Since those days they have built the Parthenon, conceived geometry, subjected the expression of their thought and the motions of their body to the laws of harmony.

“Are you then going to say to the African negroes: ‘You shall for ever carry on an internecine war between tribe and tribe, and you shall inflict upon one another atrocities and absurd tortures; King Gléglé, permeated with a religious idea, shall for all time have prisoners tied up in a basket and thrown from the roof of his royal hut; you shall for ever devour with enjoyment the strips of flesh torn from the decomposed cadavers of your aged relations; for ever shall explorers unload their rifles on you, and smoke you out in your kraals; the wonderful Christian soldier will enjoy in his bravery the amusement of hacking your women to pieces; the gay and festive sailor from the befogged seas shall for all time kick in the bellies of your little children, just to take the stiffness out of his knee-joints? Can you safely prophesy to one-third of humanity a state of perpetual ignominy?

“I am unable to say whether one day, as Mrs. Beecher Stowe predicted in 1840, a life will awaken in Africa full of a splendour and magnificence unknown to the cold-blooded races of the West, and whether art will blossom forth in new and dazzling forms. The blacks possess a keen appreciation of music. It may happen that a delightful negro art of dance and song shall see the light of day. In the meanwhile, the coloured folk of the Southern States are making rapid strides in capitalistic civilisation. Monsieur Jean Finot has recently supplied us with information on the subject.

“Fifty years ago they did not, as a whole, own two hundred and fifty acres of land. Nowadays their property is valued at over £160,000,000. They were illiterate. To-day fifty per cent, of them can read and write. There are black novelists, poets, economists, and philanthropists.

“The half-breeds, the issue of master and slave, are singularly intelligent and vigorous. The coloured men, both cunning and ferocious, instinctive and calculating, will gradually (so one of them has confided to me) reap the advantage of number, and one day lord it over the effeminate creole race which exercises so lightly over the blacks its fitful cruelty. It may be that the mulatto of genius, who will make the children of the whites pay dearly the blood of the negroes lynched by their fathers, is already born.”

M. Goubin primed himself with his powerful eye-glass, and remarked:

“Were the Japanese to be victorious, they would take Indo-China from us.”

“Thereby rendering us a great service,” answered Langelier. “Colonies are the curse of nations.”

M. Goubin’s indignant silence was his sole reply.

“I cannot listen to such statements,” exclaimed Joséphin Leclerc. “We require outlets for our products, and territories for our industrial and commercial expansion. What are you thinking of, Langelier? One policy alone governs Europe, America, and the world to-day — colonial policy.”

Nicole Langelier, unruffled, replied:

“Colonial policy is the most recent form of barbarism, or, if you prefer, the term of civilisation. I make no distinction between these two expressions; they are identical. What men call civilisation is the present condition of manners, while what they style barbarism are anterior conditions. The manners of to-day will be styled barbarian when they shall be of the past. It is patent to me that our manners and morals embody the idea that strong nations shall destroy the weaker ones. Of such is the principle of the law of nations.

“It remains to be seen, however, whether conquests abroad always constitute a good stroke of business for nations. It would not seem so. What have Mexico and Peru done for Spain? Brazil for Portugal? Batavia for Holland? There are various kinds of colonies. There are colonies which afford to unfortunate Europeans desert and uncultivated lands. These, loyal as long as they remain poor, separate from the mother country as soon as they become prosperous. Some there are which are inhabitable; these supply raw material, and import manufactured goods. Now it is plain that these colonies enrich, not those who govern them, but whoever trades with them. The greater part of the time they are not worth what they cost. Moreover, they may at any moment expose the mother country to military disasters.”

“How about England?” interrupted M. Goubin.

“England is less a nation than a race. The Anglo-Saxons know no fatherland but the sea. England, looked upon as wealthy in her vast domains, owes her fortune and her power to her commerce. It is not her colonies which should be envied her, but her merchants, the authors of her wealth. Do you imagine, by way of illustration, that the Transvaal represents so very good a stroke of business for her? For all that, it is conceivable that in the present state of the world nations who bring forth many children and manufacture products in large quantities should seek territories and markets in far-off lands, and secure possession of them by stratagem and violence. How different it is in our own case! Our thrifty nation, careful not to have more children than the natal soil can feed without difficulty, and producing in a moderate degree, does not willingly embark on distant adventures; our France, who hardly goes beyond her garden

wall, great heavens, what need has she of colonies? Of what use are they to her? What do they bring her? She has spent men and money in profusion, in order that the Congo, Cochin-China, Annam, Tonking, Guiana, and Madagascar shall purchase calicoes from Manchester, guns from Birmingham and Liège, brandies from Dantzic, and cases of wine all the way from Bordeaux to Hamburg. She has, for seventy years, despoiled, hunted, and shot down Arabs, and in the end she has peopled Algeria with Italians and Spaniards!

“The irony of these results is cruel enough, and it is hard to realise that this empire, ten or eleven times as big as France herself, has been formed to our detriment. But, it must be taken into consideration that whereas the French nation derives no advantage whatsoever from the possession of territories in Africa and Asia, the heads of its Government, on the other hand, find it to their great advantage to acquire them. They thereby secure the affection of the navy and army, which on the occasion of colonial expeditions reap a harvest of promotions, pensions, and crosses, to say nothing of the glory won in defeating the enemy. They conciliate the clergy by opening new paths to the Propaganda, and by allocating territories to Catholic missions. They make joyous the ship-owners, builders, and army contractors, whom they load with orders. They secure for themselves in the country itself a numerous following by the granting of concessions of immense forests and plantations without end. And, what is still more precious to them, they attach to their majority every parliamentary jobber and kerbstone-broker. Lastly, they cajole the multitude, proud in its possession of a yellow and black empire, which makes Germany and England turn green with envy. They are looked upon as good citizens, patriots, and great statesmen. And if, like Ferry, they incur the risk of going under, as the result of some military disaster, they willingly run the risk fully convinced that the most harmful of distant expeditions will cost them fewer difficulties, and will inveigle them into fewer perils than the most useful of social reforms.

“You can now realise why we have occasionally had imperialist ministers, jealous of aggrandising our colonial domain. We must congratulate ourselves, however, and praise the moderation of our rulers, who might have burdened us with still more colonies.

“But all danger has not been averted, and we are threatened with an eighty years’ warfare in Morocco. Is there never to be an end to the colonial mania?

“I am fully aware that nations are not sensible. How can it be expected of them, if one considers what they are made of? Still, a certain instinct oftentimes warns them of what is harmful. They are occasionally endowed with the power of observing. In the long run they undergo the painful experience of their errors and blunders. The day will come when it will dawn upon them that colonies are

a source of perils and ruinous results. Commercial barbarism will be followed by commercial civilisation, and forcible, by pacific penetration. These ideas have to-day found an echo even in the bosom of parliaments. They will prevail, not because men will be more disinterested, but because they will know their own interests better.

“The great human asset is man himself. In order to rate the terrestrial globe, it is necessary to begin by rating men. To exploit the soil, the mines, the waters, all the substances and all the forces of our planet, it needs man, the whole of man; humanity, the whole of humanity. The complete exploitation of the terrestrial globe demands the united labour of white, yellow, and black men. By reducing, diminishing, and weakening, or, to sum it up in one word, by colonising a portion of humanity, we are working against ourselves. It is to our advantage that yellow and black men should be powerful, free, and wealthy. Our prosperity and our wealth depend on theirs. The more is produced, the more will there be consumed. The greater the profit they derive from us, the greater the profit we shall derive from them. If they reap the benefit of our labours, so shall we fully reap theirs.

“If we study the movements which govern the destinies of societies, we may perhaps discover signs that the era of violent deeds is coming to an end. War, which was formerly a standing institution among nations, is now intermittent, and the periods of peace have become of longer duration than those of war. Our country affords the observations of a fact full of interest, for the French nation presents an original characteristic in the military history of nations. Whereas other nations never waged war except from interest or necessity, alone the French have fought for the pleasure of fighting. Now it is remarkable that the taste of our compatriots has undergone a change. Thirty years ago Renan wrote: ‘Whoever knows France as a whole and in her provincial varieties will not hesitate to recognise the fact that the movement swaying this country for the past fifty years is essentially pacific’ It is a fact attested by a large number of observers that in 1870 France had no desire to have recourse to the arbitrament of war, and that the declaration of war was greeted with consternation. It is an assured fact that few Frenchmen dream of taking the field, and that everybody readily accepts the idea that the army exists in order to avoid a war. Let me quote one example out of a thousand in confirmation of this state of mind. Monsieur Ribot, a representative of the people and a former Cabinet Minister, having been invited to some patriotic celebration, replied with an eloquent letter, begging to be excused. The same Monsieur Ribot knits his brows superciliously at the mere mention of the word disarmament. He has towards standards and cannon the leaning proper to a former Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his letter

he denounces as a national peril the pacific ideas disseminated by the Socialist. He sees in them a spirit of renunciation he cannot endure. Not that he is of a bellicose turn of mind. He, too sighs for peace, but a peace full of pomp, magnificent, and flashing with the same pride as war. Between Monsieur Ribot and Jaurès, the matter is merely one of form. Both of them are for peace. Jaurès, simply; Monsieur Ribot, superbly. That is all. Better still and more surely than the Socialist democracy which contents itself with a bloused or coated peace does the sentiment of the bourgeois, who demand a peace gleaming with military insignia and bedecked with emblems of glory, testify to the inevitable decline of all idea of revenge and conquests, since one discerns in it the military instinct, at the very time when it is losing its nature and is becoming pacific.

“France is acquiring by degrees the sentiment of her true strength, consisting in intellectual strength; she is becoming conscious of her mission, which is the sowing of ideas and the exercise of a sway over thought. She will within measurable time perceive that her only stable power has lain in her speakers, her writers, and her men of science. Hence she will some day fain have to recognise that the force of numbers, after having so often betrayed her, is finally escaping from her, and that the time has come for her to resign herself to the glory which the exercise of the mind and the use of reason assure her of.”

Jean Boilly, shaking his head, said:

“You ask. that France should teach other nations concord and peace. Are you so sure that she will be listened to and her example followed? Is her own tranquillity so assured? Has she not to fear threats from outside, to foresee dangers, to watch over her safety, and to provide for her defence? One swallow does not make a summer; one nation does not make the peace of the world. Is it so sure that Germany keeps up an army with the sole object of not waging war? Her Social-Democrats desire peace. But they are not the masters, and their deputies do not enjoy in the Parliament the authority which the number of their electors should give them. And Russia, who has hardly entered upon the industrial period, do you believe that she will soon be entering upon the pacific period? Is it not to be feared that after having disturbed Asia she will disturb Europe?

“Supposing even that Europe should become pacific, can you not see that America would become warlike? Following upon Cuba, reduced to the state of a vassal republic, Hawaii, Porto Rico, and the annexation of the Philippines, it is impossible to say that the American Union is not a conquering nation. A publicist of Yankee proclivities, Stead, has said amid the plaudits of the whole of the United States: ‘The Americanisation of the world is on the march.’ And then there is Mr. Roosevelt, whose dream is to plant the Stars and Stripes in South

Africa, Australia, and the West Indies. Mr. Roosevelt is Imperialist and he sighs for an America mistress of the world. Between ourselves, he is planning the Empire of Augustus. He has unfortunately perused Livy. The conquests of the Romans banish sleep from him. Have you read his speeches? They breathe a bellicose spirit. 'Fight, my friends,' says Mr. Roosevelt, 'and fight hard. There is nothing like blows. We are upon earth only to exterminate one another. Those who tell you the contrary are men without morality. Mistrust men who think. Thought enervates. 'Tis a French failing. The Romans conquered the world. They lost it. We are the modern Romans.' Words full of eloquence, backed up with a navy which will soon be the second in the world, and with a military Budget of 40,500,000 francs!

"The Yankees declare that in four years' time they will fight Germany. If we are to believe this, they should first tell us where they expect to come into contact with the enemy. That a Russia, the serf of her Czar, that a still feudal Germany, should entertain armies for fighting purposes, this one is tempted to lay to the door of ancient habits and the survival of a strenuous past. But that a young democracy, the United States of America, an aggregation of business men, a mass of emigrants from all countries, lacking community, traditions, and memories, madly cast into the scramble for the mighty dollar, should of a sudden be swept with the desire of firing torpedoes at the flanks of battleships, and of exploding mines under the enemy's columns, affords a proof that the inordinate struggle for the production and exploitation of riches keeps alive the employment of and taste for brutal force, that industrial violence engenders military violence, and that mercantile rivalries kindle between nations hatreds that bloodshed can alone extinguish. The colonial mania of which you were speaking a while ago is but one of the thousand forms of the much-vaunted competition of our economists. The capitalistic state is just as much a warlike one as the feudal. The era has dawned of great wars for the industrial sovereignty. Under the present *régime* of national production it is the cannon which fixes tariffs, establishes customs, opens and closes markets. There exists no other regulator of commerce and industry. Extermination is the fatal result of the economic conditions in which the civilised world finds itself to-day...."

The perfume of Gorgonzola and Stracchino was pervading the table. The waiter was bringing in wax-candles to each of which was attached the *abbrustolatoio* wherewith to light the long cigars with straws, so dear to Italians.

Hippolyte Dufresne, who for some time past seemed to have remained indifferent to the conversation, here remarked in a low tone tinged with an ostentatious modesty:

“Gentlemen, our friend Langelier was asserting just now that many men are afraid of disgracing themselves in the eyes of their contemporaries by assuming the horrible immorality which is to be the morality of the future. I do not entertain a like fear, and I have written a little tale, which has perhaps no other merit than the one of revealing my calmness of mind when considering the future. I shall one day crave permission to read it to you.”

“Read it right away,” said Boni, lighting his cigar.

“You will be giving us pleasure,” added Joséphin Leclerc, Nicole Langelier, and M. Goubin.

“I am not sure whether I have the manuscript with me,” replied Hippolyte Dufresne.

With these words, he drew out of his pocket a roll of paper, and began to read what follows.

1.

M. Georges Bourdon, journalist, on the staff of *Le Figaro* .

M. Edmond Théry, journalist, on the staff of *Le Figaro* . Has been entrusted by the French Government with several politico-economic missions; author of several works in this connection.

Dr. Charles Richet, a noted physician, who has written plays, and is the author of several works on physiology and sociology.

M. Jean Finot, editor of *La Revue* , and contributor to several French and European publications.

Abbrustolatoio — apparatus attached to the candle; it has two rings through which the cigar is placed, and left to burn awhile.

V

THROUGH THE HORN OR THE IVORY GATE

“IT was about one o’clock in the morning. Before retiring for the night, I opened the window and lit a cigarette. The hum of a motor-car scudding along the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne broke the reigning silence. The trees were freshening the atmosphere by the swaying of their darkened tops. No buzzing insect, no living sound arose from the sterile soil of the city. The night was resplendent with stars. Their fires seemed, in the clearness of the air, more so than on other nights, of varied lines. The greater number blazed at white heat. Some there were, however, yellow and orange-tinted, similar to the flames of dying lamps. Several were blue, and I saw one of so pale a blue, so limpid, and so soft, that I could not avert my gaze from it. I regret being ignorant of its name, but I console myself with the thought that men do not give the stars their true names.

“When I reflect that each one of these drops of light enlightens worlds, I ask myself whether, like our own sun, they do not shed their rays on sufferings without end, and whether pain does not penetrate the utmost recesses of heaven. We can only judge the other worlds by our own. We know of life only the forms which it assumes upon the earth, and if we suppose that our planet is one of the least good, we have no reason for believing that all goes rightly in the others, nor that fortunate is he who is born under the rays of Altair, Betelgeux, or the fiery Sirius, when we know what a grievous affair it is to open our eyes on earth to the light of our old Sun. It is not that I find mine an unhappy fate, when compared with that of other men. I am not troubled with either wife or child. Love and sickness have left me unscathed. I am not very rich, and I do not go into society. I am thus to be numbered with the happy ones. Little joy, however, falls to their lot. What, then, can be the fate of the others? Men are really to be pitied. I impute no blame to nature for this; to hold a conversation with her is an impossibility; she is not intelligent. Nor will I lay the blame on society. There is no sense in opposing society to nature. It is as absurd to oppose the nature of men to the society of men, as to oppose the nature of ants to the society of ants, or the nature of herrings to the society of herrings. Animal societies are the necessary outcome of animal nature. The earth is the planet where one eats; ’tis the planet of hunger. The animals peopling it are naturally gluttonous and ferocious. Man, the most intelligent of them all, is alone avaricious. Avarice has so far been the fundamental virtue of human societies, and the moral masterpiece

of nature. Were I a writer, I should indite the praise of avarice. It is true that my book would not reveal anything strikingly new. The subject has been dealt with a hundred times over by moralists and economists. Human societies have avarice and cruelty as their august basis.

“It is thus in the other universes, in the numberless ethereal worlds? Do all the stars I see shed their light on men? Do people eat and inter-devour one another beyond the infinite. This doubt troubles me, and I am unable to contemplate without fright the fiery dew suspended in the heavens.

“My thoughts imperceptibly become more lucid and gentle, and the idea of life, in its sensuality, violent and suave in turn, once more assumes a pleasurable aspect to my mind. I sometimes say to myself that life is beautiful. For, without such beauty, how could we discern its ugly features, and how believe that nature is bad, if at the same time we do not believe that it is good?

“For a few minutes past, the phrases of a sonata of Mozart have hovered in the air, with their white columns and their garlands of roses. My neighbour is a pianist, who at nights plays Mozart and Gluck. I close the window, and while undressing, I am pondering over the doubtful pleasures which I may give myself the next day, when of a sudden I remember that for a week past I have been invited to lunch in the Bois de Boulogne; I have a vague idea that the invitation is for the coming day. To make sure of it, I look up the letter of invitation, which lies open on my table. Its contents are:

““16th September 1903.

““My dear old Dufresne, —

““ Do me the pleasure of coming to luncheon with ... *etc. etc.*, next Saturday, the 23rd of September, 1903, *etc. etc.*’

“It is for to-morrow.

“I ring for my valet.

““Jean, wake me to-morrow at nine o’clock.’

“It happens precisely that to-morrow, the 23rd of September 1903, I shall enter upon my fortieth year. From what I have already seen in this world I can almost conceive what still remains for me to be seen. I can safely foretell the topics of to-morrow’s conversation at the restaurant in the Bois: ‘My automobile goes sixty kilomètres an hour.’— ‘Blanche has a nasty disposition; but she is true to me; of that I feel sure.’— ‘The Cabinet takes its pass-word from the Socialists.’— ‘In the long run, the *petits-chevaux* are a bore. However, there remains *baccara* .’— ‘The workmen would be fools not to do as they please: the government always gives in to them.’— ‘I will bet you that Epingled’Or will beat Ranavalo.’— ‘What I personally cannot make out is why there is not some

General to sweep away all those blackguards.’— ‘What can you expect? France has been sold to England and Germany by the Jews.’ This is what I shall hear tomorrow. Here you have the social and political ideas of my friends, the great-grandsons of the bourgeois of July, princes of the factory and foundry, kings of the mine, who knew the way of mastering and enslaving the forces of the Revolution. My friends do not seem to me capable of preserving for any lengthy period the industrial empire and the political power bequeathed to them by their ancestors. My friends do not shine by their intelligence. They have not indulged in too much brainwork. No more have I. So far, I have not done much in this life. Like them, I am both idle and ignorant. I do not feel myself capable of achieving anything, and if I do not possess their vanity, if my brain is not stored with all the foolish ideas encumbering theirs; if, like them, I do not feel a hatred for and a fear of ideas, it is due to a peculiar circumstance of my life. My father, a big manufacturer and Conservative deputy, gave me, when I was seventeen, a young and timid “coach,” who spoke little, and who looked like a girl. While preparing me for my bachelorship, he was organising the social revolution in Europe. His gentleness was something refreshing. He has often been put in prison, and is now a deputy. I used to copy his addresses to the international proletariat. He made me read the whole Socialistic library. He taught me things all of which were not to be credited, but he opened my eyes to what was going on about me; he demonstrated to me that everything our society honours is contemptible, and that all that it despises is worthy of esteem. He led me into the paths of rebellion. In spite of his demonstrations, I came to the conclusion that falsehood should be respected and hypocrisy venerated as the two surest supports of the public order. I remained a Conservative, but my soul became saturated with disgust.

“As I am falling asleep, a few almost imperceptible phrases of Mozart still reach my ears now and then, and make me dream of temples of marble standing amid a blue foliage.

“It was broad daylight when I awoke. I dressed myself much more quickly than it is my wont. Unconscious of the cause for this haste, I found myself in the street without knowing how I had got there. What I now saw about me was to me the cause of a surprise which suspended all my faculties of reflection; and it is owing to this impossibility to reflect that my surprise did not increase, but remained stationary and calm. It would doubtless soon have become immoderate, and would have changed to stupor and terror, had I retained the use of my mind, so greatly was the scene which I was witnessing different from what it should be. Everything about me was to me new, unknown, and foreign. The trees and the lawns which I was in the habit of seeing daily had vanished.

Where, on the day before, the tall grey buildings of the avenue stood out against the sky, there now stretched a fanciful line of brick cottages surrounded by gardens. I dared not look round to ascertain whether my own house still existed, and so I went straight towards the Porte Dauphine. I found it not. I took a street which was, so it seemed to me, the old road to Suresnes. The houses flanking it, of strange style and new form, too small to be occupied by rich people, were nevertheless embellished with pictures, sculptures, and brilliant potteries. A covered terrace surmounted them. I followed this rural road, whose curves produced enchanting perspectives. It was crossed obliquely by other sinuous ways. Neither trains, nor automobiles, nor vehicles of any kind went by. Shadows flitted over the soil. I looked upwards and saw masses of huge birds and enormous fishes glide rapidly through the upper atmosphere, which seemed to be a combination of heaven and ocean. Near the Seine, the course of which was altered, I came across a crowd of men clad in short blouses knotted at the waist, and wearing long gaiters. To all appearance they were in their working clothes. But their gait was lighter and more elegant than that of our workmen. I noticed women among them. What had heretofore prevented my recognising them as such was that they were dressed like the men, that they had long and straight legs, and, so it seemed to me, the narrow hips of American women. Although these folk did not present a savage appearance, I looked at them with fright. They presented to my gaze a more foreign appearance than any of the numerous strangers I had so far met upon the earth. In order to avoid seeing another human face, I turned down a deserted lane. Very soon I came to a circus planted with masts from which flew crimson oriflammes bearing in letters of gold the words: European Federation. Placards in large frames ornamented with emblems of peace hung at the foot of the masts. They embodied announcements regarding popular festivals, legal injunctions, and works of public interest. In addition to balloon time-tables was a chart of the atmospheric currents drawn on the 28th of June of the year 220 of the Federation of Nations. All these texts were printed in characters new to me, and in a language of which I did not understand all the words. The while I was attempting to decipher them, the shadows of the countless machines cleaving the air flitted across my vision. Once more did I gaze upwards, and in this sky altered beyond recognition, more densely populated than the earth, cloven by rudders and threshed by screws, towards which a circle of smoke rose from the horizon, I perceived the sun. I felt like crying on seeing it. It was the only familiar figure which I had come across since morning. From its altitude I judged that it was about ten o'clock of the forenoon. Of a sudden I was surrounded by a second crowd of men and women, similar in appearance and in costume to the first. I was confirmed in the

impression that the women, although some of them were very plump, others very skinny, and many beggared description, were on the whole androgynous in appearance. The crowd went its way. The open space once more was desert, just as our suburban quarters, which only come to life on the exodus from the workshops. I remained behind in front of the placards and read once more the date — the 28th of June of the year 220 of the European Federation. What did it mean! A proclamation by the Federal Committee, on the occasion of the festival of the Earth, furnished me with timely and useful data for comprehension of that date. This is what I read: ‘Comrades, you are aware how, in the last year of the twentieth century, the old order collapsed in a fearful cataclysm, and how, after fifty years of anarchy, the federation of the peoples of Europe was organised....’ The year 220 of the federation of peoples was therefore the year 2270 of the Christian Era; this was certainly a fact which remained to be explained. How came it that of a sudden I found myself transported to the year 2270?

“I mused over the circumstance as I strolled at haphazard.

“‘I have not, as far as I know,’ I said to myself, ‘been preserved for so many years in the mummy state, like Colonel Fougas. I have not driven the machine with which Mr. H. G. Wells explores time. And if, following the example of William Morris, I have, while asleep, skipped three and a half centuries, I am unaware of the fact, since, when dreaming, one does not know that one is doing so. I am utterly convinced that I am not asleep.’

“While indulging in these musings and others not worth recording, I was following a long street bordered with railings behind which pink-hued houses of various styles, but all equally small, smilingly peeped through the foliage. At times I perceived huge circuses of steel standing out in the landscape, and crowned with flames and smoke. Terror planed over these regions to which no name can be given, while the vibrating rush of air caused by the rapid flight of the machines resounded painfully through my brain. The street led to a meadow studded with clumps of trees and intersected by rivulets. Cows were pasturing in it. Just as my eyes were feasting upon the freshness of the scene I fancied I saw in front of me shadows flitting along a smooth and straight road. The whirlwind engendered by them, as they passed me, fanned my cheeks. I saw that they were trams and automobiles, real transparencies in their rapidity.

“I crossed the road by a foot-bridge, and for a long time I sauntered through small meadows and woodlands. I thought I was in the open country, when I discovered an extensive frontage of resplendent houses bordering on the park. Soon, I found myself opposite a palace of an airy style of architecture. A sculptured and painted frieze, representing a largely attended feast, stretched across the vast façade. I perceived, through the panes of the bay-windows, men

and women seated in a large and bright room around long marble tables, laden with prettily painted potteries. I entered, under the impression that this was a restaurant. I was not hungry, but weary, and the coolness of the room, artistically hung with garlands of fruit, appeared to me delicious. A man who stood by the door asked me for my voucher, and, as I showed embarrassment, he remarked:

“‘I see, comrade, that you are not of these parts. How is it that you are travelling without vouchers! Very sorry, but it is impossible for me to admit you. Go and seek the delegate who hires journeymen; or, if you are too weak to work, address yourself to the delegate who attends to those who need succour.’

“I informed him that I was nowise unfit for work, and drew away. A stout fellow, who was picking his teeth, said to me obligingly:

“‘Comrade, you need not go to the delegate who engages journeymen. I am the delegate attached to the bakery of the section. We are one comrade short. Come along with me. You shall be put to work at once.’

“I thanked the corpulent comrade, assured him of my willingness, pointing out, however, that I was not a baker.

“He looked at me with some surprise, and told me that he could see I enjoyed a joke.

“I followed him. We stopped in front of an immense cast-iron building having a monumental gateway, on the pediment of which a couple of bronze giants were resting on their elbows — the Sower and the Reaper. Their bodies expressed strength unstrained. A calm pride irradiated their faces, and they carried high their heads; in this, greatly dissimilar to the fierce-looking workers of the Flemish Constantin Meunier. We entered a room forty mètres in height, wherein, amid clouds of a light whitish dust, machinery was working with a sonorous and calm hum. Under the metallic dome, bags tendered themselves spontaneously to the knife which disembowelled them; the flour which escaped from them dropped into troughs where powerful hands of steel kneaded it into dough which flowed into moulds, which when full hastened to put themselves of their own accord into an oven as capacious and deep as a tunnel. Five or six men at most, motionless amid all this motion, supervised the labour of the machinery.

“‘Tis an old bakery,’ said my companion. ‘It hardly produces more than eighty thousand loaves a day, and its too weak machines employ too many hands. It matters little. Come up to the place where the goods arrive.’

“I did not have the time to ask for a more explicit command. A lift had deposited me on the platform. Hardly had I reached it, when a kind of flying whale alighted close to me and unloaded a number of sacks. No human being was aboard this machine. Other flying whales brought more sacks which they unloaded, and which offered themselves up in succession to the knife which

ripped them open. The screws revolved, and the rudder did its work. There was no one at the helm, nobody aboard the machine. I could hear in the distance the slight hum of a wasp flying, and then the thing grew with astounding rapidity. It seemed quite sure of itself, but my ignorance as to what would happen, should it perchance go wrong, caused me to shudder. I was several times tempted to ask to be allowed to go down again. A false shame prevented me. I stood my ground. The sun was disappearing on the horizon, and it was about five o'clock when the lift came up for me. The day's work was over. I was given a voucher for board and lodging.

"The rotund comrade remarked to me:

"'You must be hungry. You may, if you wish, take your evening meal at the public table. If you prefer eating by yourself in your own room, you may likewise do so. If you prefer supping at my place, together with a few comrades, say so at once. I am going to telephone to the culinary workshop that your rations be sent to you. I am telling you all this in order to set you at ease, for you seem like a fish out of water. You have no doubt come from afar. You do not look as if you could take care of yourself. To-day, your task has been an easy one. Do not, however, imagine that one's livelihood is earned every day as cheaply as that. If the Z-rays which directed the balloons had worked badly, as will sometimes happen, your task would not have been so easy. What is your particular line, and where do you come from?'

"These questions embarrassed me greatly. I could not tell him the truth. I could not inform him that I was a bourgeois, and that I had come from the twentieth century. He would have thought me crazy. I replied in a vague and embarrassed manner that I had no trade, and that I came from far, from very far.

"He smiled, and said:

"'I understand. You dare not admit it. You come from the United States of Africa. You are not the only European who has thus given us the slip. But nearly all these deserters end by coming back to us.'

"I answered not a word, and my silence led him to believe that he had guessed aright. He renewed his invitation to supper, and asked me my name. I informed him that I was known as Hippolyte Dufresne. He seemed surprised at my having two names.

"'My name is Michel,' he said.

"Then, after a minute inspection of my straw hat, my jacket, my shoes, and the rest of my costume, which was no doubt somewhat dusty, but of a good cut, for after all I do not have my clothes made by a tailor who acts as hall-porter in the Rue des Acacias, he continued:

“Hippolyte, I see whence you have come. You have lived in the black provinces. Nowadays there are only Zulus and Basutos to weave cloth so badly, to give so grotesque a shape to a suit, to make such ill-shapen footgear, and to stiffen linen with starch. It is only among them that you can have learnt to shave off your beard, while preserving on your face a moustache, and two little whiskers. This custom of scissoring the hair of the face, so as to form figures and ornaments, is the last word of tattooing, nowadays in vogue only among the Basutos and Zulus. These black provinces of the United States of Africa are wallowing in a state of barbarism resembling in many aspects the state of France three or four hundred years ago.’

“I accepted Michel’s invitation.

“‘I live quite close to here, in Sologne,’ he said. ‘My aeroplane scuds along fairly well. We shall soon be there.’

“He made me take a seat under the belly of a huge mechanical bird, and we were soon cleaving the air so rapidly that I lost breath. The aspect of the countryside was vastly different from the one known to me. All the roads were bordered with houses; countless canals intersected the fields with their silvery lines. As I sat wrapt in admiration, Michel remarked to me:

“‘The land is fairly well exploited, and cultivation is “intense,” as they say, since chemists are themselves agriculturists. One has tried one’s best, and one has worked hard for the past three hundred years. The fact is that to make collectivism a reality it has been necessary to compel the soil to return four or five times more than it returned in the days of capitalistic anarchy. You, who have lived among the Zulus and Basutos, are aware that the necessities of life are so scarce with them that were they to be divided among all it would amount to sharing poverty and not wealth. The superabundant production which we have attained to is more especially due to the progress made by science. The almost total suppression of the urban classes has also been of great advantage to agriculture. The shopkeepers and the clerks have gone, some to the factory, others to the field.’

“‘What!’ I exclaimed. ‘You have suppressed the cities! What has become of Paris?’

“‘Hardly any one lives there now,’ replied Michel. ‘The greater part of those hideous and insanitary five-storied houses, wherein dwelt the citizens of the closed era, have fallen in ruins, and have been suffered to remain in that condition. House-building was very poor in the twentieth century of that unhappy era. We have preserved some of the older and better constructed buildings and converted them into museums. We possess a large number of museums and libraries: it is there we seek instruction. We have also kept a

portion of the remains of the Hôtel de Ville. It was an ugly and fragile building, but great things were carried out within its precincts. As we no longer have tribunals, commerce, and armies, we no longer have cities, so to speak. Nevertheless, the density of the population is much greater on certain points than on others, and in spite of the rapidity of means of communication, the mining and metallurgic centres are densely peopled.'

"'What is that you say?' I asked him. 'You have done away with the courts of law? Have you then suppressed crime and misdemeanour?'

"'Crime will last as long as old and gloomy humanity. But, the number of criminals has diminished with the number of the wretched. The suburbs of the great cities were the feeding-grounds of crime; we no longer have big cities. The wireless telephone makes the highways safe day and night. We are all provided with electric means of defence. As to misdemeanours, they were rather the result of the scruples of the judges than of the perversity of the accused. Now that we no longer possess lawyers and judges, and that justice is administered by citizens summoned in rotation, many misdemeanours have disappeared, doubtless because it is impossible to recognise them as such.'

"In this fashion did Michel discourse while steering his aeroplane. I am recording the meaning of his words as exactly as I can. I regret my inability, owing to a lack of memory, and also from fear of not making myself understood, to reproduce his language in all its expressiveness and its movement. The baker and his contemporaries spoke a language astonishing me at first by the novelty of its vocabulary and syntax, and especially by its pithy and flowing construction.

"Michel came to ground on the terrace of a modest but pleasing dwelling.

"'We have arrived,' he said; 'tis here that I live. You will sup with comrades who, like myself, take an interest in statistics.'

"'What! You a statistician! I thought you were a baker.

"'I am a baker, six hours of the day. This is the duration of the day's work as determined for nearly a century by the Federal Committee. The rest of the time I give up to statistical labours. It is the science which has stepped into history's shoes. The historians of old related the brilliant deeds of the few. Ours register all that is produced and consumed?'

"After having conducted me to a hydrotherapeutic closet established on the roof, Michel led me downstairs to the dining-room lit up by electricity, entirely white, and ornamented only with a sculptured frieze of strawberry plants in bloom. A table in painted pottery was covered with dishes with a metallic glaze. Three persons sat at it. Michel named them to me.

"'Morin, Perceval, Chéron.'

These three individuals were all clad alike in rough-spun jackets, velvet breeches, and grey stockings. Morin wore a long white beard; Chéron's and Perceval's faces were callow. Their short hair and more especially the frankness of their looks gave them the appearance of young lads. Yet I felt sure that they were women. Perceval seemed to me rather pretty, although she was no longer very young. I thought Chéron altogether charming. Michel introduced me:

“I have brought comrade Hippolyte, who also calls himself Dufresne, to meet you; he has lived among the half-breeds, in the black provinces of the United States of Africa. He could not get any dinner at eleven o'clock, and so he must have an appetite.’

“I was indeed hungry. They helped me to tiny bits of food cut into squares, which were not unpleasant to the taste, however new to me. A variety of cheeses were on the table. Morin poured me out a glass of light beer, and informed me that I could drink to my heart's content, as it did not contain any alcohol.

“‘That's right,’ I said. ‘I am glad to see that you pay attention to the evils of alcohol.’

“‘They have almost ceased to exist,’ answered Morin. ‘We succeeded in suppressing alcoholism before the end of the closed era. It would have otherwise been impossible to establish the new *régime*. An alcoholic proletariat is incapable of emancipation.’

“‘Have you not also,’ I inquired, while tasting a strangely carved bit of food — ‘have you not also perfected food?’

“‘Comrade,’ replied Perceval, ‘you doubtless refer to chemical alimentation. So far, it has not made any great strides. ’Tis in vain that we send our chemists as delegates into the kitchen.... Their tabloids are of no good. With the exception that we know how to compound properly caloric and nutritious foods, we feed almost as coarsely as the men of the closed era, and we enjoy it just as much.’

“‘Our scientists,’ remarked Michel, ‘are seeking to establish a rational system of food.’

“‘That's childishness,’ said the young female Chéron. ‘No good result will be reached, as long as the big intestine, a useless and harmful organ, and the seat of microbial infection, has not been removed.... This will come in time.’

“‘In what way?’ I asked.

“‘Simply by ablation. And this suppression, the result, in the first place, of an operation upon a sufficient number of individuals, will tend to establish itself by heredity, and will later on be common to the whole race.’

“These people treated me humanely and conversed obligingly with me. But it was difficult for me to chime in with their manners and their ideas, while I noticed that I nowise interested them, and that they felt an absolute indifference

towards my modes of thought. The more I showed them courtesies, the more I alienated their sympathies. Following upon my addressing a few compliments, albeit discreet and sincere, to Chéron, she no longer even deigned to look at me.

“The meal over, addressing myself to Morin, who seemed to me intelligent and gentle, I said to him with a sincerity which indeed stirred me deeply:

“‘Monsieur Morin, I am ignorant of all things, and I am suffering cruelly because of my lack of knowledge. I repeat to you that I come from far, from very far. Tell me, I entreat you, how the European Federation came into existence, and explain to me the present social system.’

“Old Morin protested:

“‘You are asking me for the history of three centuries. It would take me weeks, nay months. Moreover, there are many things I could not teach you, as I do not know them myself.’

“I thereupon entreated him to lay before me a very concise summary, as is done in the case of school children.

“Morin, flinging himself back in his arm-chair, began:

“‘To ascertain how the present society was constituted, it is necessary to go back far into the past.

“‘The crowning achievement of the twentieth century was the extinction of war.

“‘The arbitration Congress of The Hague, instituted in the middle of barbarism, did not to any degree contribute towards the maintenance of peace. But another more efficacious institution came into existence at that time. Groups of deputies were formed in the various Parliaments, who entered into communication with one another, and who in course of time came to deliberate in common on international questions. Giving expression as they did to the peaceful aspirations of a growing crowd of electors, their resolutions carried great weight, and supplied food for reflection to the governments, the most absolute of which, if one sets aside Russia, had at that time learnt to reckon with popular sentiment. What surprises us nowadays is that no one discerned in those meetings of deputies come together from all countries the first attempt at an international parliament.

“‘But then the party of violence was still powerful in the several empires, and even in the French Republic. And if the danger of the old-time dynastic and diplomatic wars determined upon at a green-baized table for the purpose of maintaining what was known as the European equilibrium was averted for all time, it was still to be dreaded, considering the unsatisfactory industrial condition affecting Europe, that the conflicting industrial interests might bring about some terrible conflagration.

“The imperfectly organised proletariat, as yet without the consciousness of its strength, did not put an end to armed struggles between nations, but it limited their frequency and duration.

“The last wars were the outcome of that mad fury of the old world known as the colonial policy. English, Russians, Germans, French, and Americans joined in rabid competition, in Asia and Africa, for the possession of zones of influence, as they said, wherein they could, on the basis of pillage and massacres, establish economic relations with the aborigines. They destroyed everything they could destroy in those two countries. Then followed the inevitable. The impoverished colonies which were expensive were retained and the prosperous ones lost. But mankind had to reckon, in Asia, with a small heroic nation, taught by Europe, which made itself respected by her. By so doing, Japan, in barbarous times, rendered a great service to humanity.

“When at last that detestable period of colonisation came to an end, no further was there any war. Still the States continued keeping up armies.

“Having so far explained matters, I shall proceed to lay before you, pursuant to your request, the origins of present-day society. It issued from the one preceding it. In moral just as in individual life forms generate one another. Capitalistic naturally enough produced collectivist society. At the commencement of the twentieth century of the closed era, a memorable industrial evolution took place. The slender production of small artisans whose all were their tools was followed by a great production financially supported by a new agent of marvellous power — capital. Here was a great social progress.’

“What was a great social step in advance?’ I asked.

“The capitalistic *régime* ,’ replied Morin. ‘It brought humanity an untold source of wealth. By grouping the workers in considerable masses and multiplying their numbers it created the proletariat. By making the workers an immense State within the State it paved the way for their emancipation, and furnished them with the means of conquering power.

“This *régime* , however, which was to be productive of such happy results in the future, was execrated by the workers, in whose ranks it made countless victims.

“There exists no social benefit which has not been purchased at the cost of blood and tears. Moreover, this *régime* which had enriched the whole world came within an ace of ruining it. After having increased production to a considerable extent, it failed in its endeavours to regulate it, and struggled hopelessly in the toils of inextricable difficulties.

“You are not totally ignorant, comrade, of the economic disturbances which filled the twentieth century. During the last hundred years of the capitalistic

domination, the disorder of production and the delirium of competition piled up disasters high. The capitalists and the masters vainly attempted, by means of gigantic combinations, to regulate production and to annihilate competition. Their ill-conceived undertakings were engulfed in an abyss of gigantic catastrophes. During those anarchical days, the fight between classes was blind and terrible. The proletariat, overwhelmed in the same ratio by its victories and its defeats, overwhelmed by the ruins of the edifice which it was pulling down on its own head, torn by fearful internal struggles, casting aside in its blind violence its best leaders and most trustworthy friends, fought on without system and in the dark. It was, however, continually winning some advantage: an increase of wages, shorter hours of work, a growing freedom of organisation and of propaganda, the conquest of public power, and making progress in the dumfounded public mind. It was looked upon as wrecked through its divisions and mistakes. But all great parties are at odds, and all commit blunders. The proletariat had on its side the force of events. Towards the end of the century it attained the degree of well-being which opens the way to better things. Comrade, a party must have within itself a certain strength in order to accomplish a revolution favourable to its interests. Towards the end of the twentieth century of the closed era the general situation had become most favourable to the developments of socialism. The standing armies, more and more reduced during the course of the century, were abolished, following upon a desperate opposition of the powers that were, and of the bourgeoisie owning all things, by Chambers born of universal suffrage under the fiery pressure of the people of the cities and of the country. For a long time past already, the chiefs of State had retained their armies, less in view of a war which they no longer dreaded or could hope for, than to hold in check the multitude of proletarians at home. In the end, they yielded. Militias imbued with socialistic ideas supplanted regular armies. It was not without good cause that the governments showed opposition. No longer defended by guns and rifles, the monarchical systems succumbed in succession, and Republican Government stepped into their places. Alone, England, who had previously established a *régime* considered endurable by the workers, and Russia, who had remained Imperialist and theocratic, stood outside the pale of this great movement. It was feared that the Czar, who felt towards republican Europe the sentiments which the French Revolution had inspired the great Catherine with, might raise armies to combat it. But his government had reached a degree of weakness and imbecility which only an absolute monarchy can attain. The Russian proletariat, joining hands with the intellectuals, rose in revolt, and after an awful succession of outrages and massacres, power passed into the hands of the revolutionaries, who established the representative system.

“Telegraphy and wireless telephony were then in use from one end of Europe to the other, and so easy of use that the poorest of individuals could speak, whenever he wished, and give utterance to whatever he saw fit to a fellow creature living in any corner of the globe. Collectivist ideas rained down on Moscow. The Russian peasants could listen in their beds to the speeches of their comrades of Marseilles and Berlin. Simultaneously, the approximate steering of balloons and the exact course of flying-machines came into practical use. The result was the abolition of frontiers. This was the most critical moment of all. The patriotic instinct took a fresh life in the hearts of the nations so near uniting and fusing into one boundless humanity. In all countries, and at one and the same time, the nationalist faith, rekindled, emitted flashes of light. As there were no longer any kings, armies, or aristocracy, this great movement assumed a tumultuous and popular character. The French Republic, the German Republic, the Hungarian Republic, the Roman Republic, the Italian Republic, and even the Swiss and Belgian Republics, each expressed by a unanimous vote of their respective Parliaments, and at largely attended meetings, the solemn resolve to defend against all foreign aggression national territory and industry. Stringent laws were promulgated repressing the smuggling by flying-machines, and regulating severely the use of wireless telegraphy. The militia was everywhere reorganised and brought back to the old type of standing armies. Once more did the former uniforms, boots, dolmans, and generals’ plumes make their appearance. Fur busbies were anew welcomed with the applause of Paris. All the shopkeepers and a portion of the workmen donned the tricolour cockade. In all foundry districts, cannon and armour-plates were once more forged. Terrible wars were anticipated. This mad spurt lasted three years, without matters coming to a clash, and then it slackened imperceptibly. The militias gradually recovered the bourgeois aspect and feeling. The union of nations, which had seemed postponed to a fabled remoteness, was near at hand. Pacific efforts were developing day by day; collectivists were gradually achieving the conquest of society. The day came at last when the defeated capitalists abandoned the field to them.’

“‘What a change!’ I exclaimed. ‘History cannot show another example of such a revolution.’

“‘You may well imagine, comrade,’ resumed Morin, ‘that collectivism did not make its appearance till the appointed hour. The Socialists could not have suppressed capital and individual property had not those two forms of wealth been already all but destroyed *de facto* by the efforts of the proletariat, and still more so by the fresh developments of science and industry.

“It had indeed been thought that Germany would be the first collectivist State; the Labour Party had there been organised for about one hundred years, and it was everywhere said: ‘Socialism is a thing German?’ Still, France, less well prepared, got the start of her. The social revolution broke out in the first place at Lyons, Lille, and Marseilles, to the strains of *l’Internationale*. Paris held aloof for a fortnight, and then hoisted the red flag. It was only on the following day that Berlin proclaimed the collectivist state. The triumph of socialism had as a result the union of nations.

“The delegates of all the European Republics, sitting in Brussels, proclaimed the Constitution of the United States of Europe.

“England refused to form part of it, but she declared herself its ally. While having become socialistic, she had retained her king, her lords, and even the wigs of her judges. Socialism was at that time supreme ruler in Oceania, China, Japan, and in a portion of the vast Russian Republic. Black Africa, which had entered upon the capitalistic phase, formed a confederation of little homogeneity. The American Union had a while ago renounced mercantile militarism. The condition of the world was consequently favourable, upon the whole, to the free development of the United States of Europe. Nevertheless, this union, welcomed with delirious joy, was followed for the space of half a century by economic disturbances and social miseries. There were no longer any armies, and hardly any militias; in consequence of not being constricted, popular movements did not take the form of violent outbreaks. But the inexperience or the ill-will of the local governments was fostering a ruinous state of disorder.

“Fifty years after the constitution of the States, the disappointments were so cruel, and the difficulties seemed to such a degree insurmountable, that the most optimistic spirits were beginning to despair. Smothered crackings foretold in all directions the dismemberment of the Union. It was then that the dictatorship of a committee composed of fourteen workmen put an end to anarchy, and organised the Federation of European nations as it exists to-day. There are those who say that the Fourteen displayed unparalleled genius and relentless energy; others claim that they were mediocrities terrified and influenced by the stress of necessity, and that they presided as if in spite of themselves over the spontaneous organisation of the new social forces. It is at all events certain that they did not go against the tide of events. The organisation which they established, or witnessed the establishment of, still subsists almost in its entirety. The production and consumption of goods are nowadays carried out, to all purposes, according to the rules laid down in those days. The new era justly dates from that time.’

“Morin then expounded to me most succinctly the principles of modern society.

“‘It rests,’ said he, ‘on the total suppression of individual property.’

“‘Is not this intolerable to you?’ I asked.

“‘Why should we find it unendurable, Hippolyte? In Europe, formerly, the State collected the taxes. It disposed of resources proper to it. Nowadays it can be said with an equal degree of truth that it possesses everything, while possessing nothing. It is still more exact to say that it is we who own all things, since the State is not a thing apart from us, and is merely the expression of collectiveness.’

“‘But,’ I asked, ‘do you not possess anything proper to yourself? Not even the plates out of which you eat, nor your bed, your bed-sheets, your clothes?’

“Morin smiled at my question.

“‘You are a deal more simple than I dreamt, Hippolyte. What! You imagine that we are not the owners of our personal property. What can well be your idea of our tastes, our instincts, our needs, and our mode of living? Do you take us for monks, as was said in the olden days, for men destitute of all individual character and incapable of affixing a personal impress on our surroundings? You are mistaken, my friend, altogether mistaken. We hold as our own the objects destined to our use and comfort, and we feel more attached to them than were the bourgeois of the closed era to their knick-knacks, for our taste is keener, and we possess a livelier sentiment of form. All our comrades of some refinement own works of art, and take great pride in them. Chéron has in her home paintings which are her delight, and she would take it amiss were the Federal Committee to contest with her the possession of them. Personally, I preserve in that closet some ancient drawings, the almost complete work of Steinlen, one of the most highly prized artists of the closed era. Neither silver nor gold would tempt me to part with them.

“‘Whence have you come, Hippolyte? You are told that our society is based on the total suppression of individual property, and you get into your head that such suppression covers goods and chattels, and articles in daily use. But, you simple-minded fellow, the individual property totally suppressed by us is the ownership of the means of production, soil, canals, roads, mines, material, plant, &c. It does not affect lamps and arm-chairs. What we have done away with is the possibility of diverting to the benefit of an individual or of a group of individuals the fruits of labour; ’tis not the natural and harmless possession of the beloved chattels about us.’

“Morin next enlightened me as to the distribution of intellectual and manual labours among all the members of the community, in conformity with their

aptitudes.

“‘Collectivist society,’ he went on to say, ‘differs not only from capitalistic society in the fact that in the former everybody works. During the closed era, the people who toiled not were in great numbers; still, they constituted the minority. Our society differs more especially from the former in that labour was not properly classified, and that many useless tasks were performed. The workers produced without systematic order, method, and concerted action. The cities were full of officials, magistrates, merchants, and clerks, who worked without producing. There were also the soldiers. The fruits of labour were not properly distributed. The customs and tariff’s established for the purpose of remedying the evil merely aggravated matters. All were suffering. Production and consumption are now minutely regulated. Lastly, our society differs from the old one in that we enjoy all the benefits derived from machinery, the use of which, in the capitalistic age, was so frequently disastrous for the workers.’

“I asked him how it had been possible to constitute a society composed wholly of workmen.

“Morin pointed out to me that man’s aptitude for work is general, and that it constitutes one of the essential characteristics of the race.

“‘In barbarian times,’ he said, ‘and right until the end of the closed era, the aristocratic and wealthy classes always showed a preference for manual labour. They put their intellectual faculties to an infinitesimal use, and in exceptional instances at that. Their tastes always inclined towards such occupations as the chase and war, wherein the body plays a greater part than the mind. They rode, drove, fenced, and practised pistol-shooting. It may therefore be said of them that they worked with their hands. Their work was either sterile or harmful, for the reason that a certain prejudice forbade them to engage in any useful or beneficent work, and also, because in their day, useful work was most often carried out under ignoble and disgusting conditions. It did not prove so very difficult to impart a taste for work to every one by reinstating it in a position of honour. The men of the barbaric ages took pride in carrying a gun or wearing a sword. The men of to-day are proud of handling a spade or a hammer. Humanity rests on a foundation which undergoes but little change.’

‘Morin having told me that the very memory of all monetary circulation had become lost, I asked him:

“‘How then do you carry on business without cash payments?’

“‘We exchange products by means of vouchers similar to those just given you, comrade, and they correspond to the hours of labour performed by us. The value of the products is computed by the length of time their production has taken. Bread, meat, beer, clothes, an aeroplane, represent x hours, x days of

labour. From each of these vouchers, collectivism, or, as it was styled formerly, the State, deducts a certain number of minutes for the purpose of allocating them to unproductive works, metallurgic and alimentary reserves, refuges and private asylums, and so forth.'

"‘These minutes,’ interjected Michel, ‘are continually increasing apace. The Federal Committee orders far too many great works, the burden of which is thus on our shoulders. The reserve stocks are far too considerable. The public warehouses are crowded to overflowing with riches of all sorts. ’Tis our minutes of labour which are entombed there. Many abuses are still in existence.’

"‘No doubt,’ replied Morin, ‘there is room for improvement. The wealth of Europe, which has accrued through general methodical labour, is untold.’

"‘I was curious to learn whether these folk had no other measurement of labour than the time required for its accomplishment, and whether in their case the day’s work of the navy or of the journeyman tempering plaster ranked with that of the chemist or the surgeon. I put the question frankly.

"‘What a silly question,’ exclaimed Perceval.

"‘Nevertheless old Morin vouchsafed to enlighten me.

"‘All works of study, of research, in fact all works contributing to render life better and more beautiful are encouraged in our workshops and laboratories. The collectivist State fosters the higher studies. To study is akin to producing, since nothing is produced without study. Study, just as much as work, entitles one to existence. Those who devote themselves to long and arduous research secure unto themselves a peaceful and respected existence. It takes a sculptor a fortnight to make the *maquette* of a figure, but he has worked five years to learn modelling. Now the State has paid him for his *maquette* during those five years. A chemist discovers in a few hours the particular properties of a body. But he has spent months in isolating this body, and years in fitting himself to become capable of such an undertaking. During the whole of that time he has lived at the expense of the State. A surgeon removes a tumour in ten minutes. This is the result of fifteen years of study and practice. He has, as a consequence, received vouchers from the State for fifteen years past. Every man who gives in a month, in an hour, in a few minutes, the product of his whole life, is merely repaying in a lump sum what collectivism has given him day by day.’

"‘Without reckoning,’ said Perceval, ‘that our great intellectuals, our surgeons, our lady doctors, our chemists, know full well how to derive profit from their works and discoveries, and to add beyond measure to their enjoyments. They cause to be allotted to themselves aerial machines of 60 h.p., palaces, gardens, and immense parks. They are, for the greater part, individuals keenly alive to laying hold of the world’s goods, and lead a more splendid and

more copious existence than the bourgeois of the closed era. The worst of it is that the majority of them are stupid fools who should be recruited for work at the flour-mills, like Hippolyte.'

"I bowed my thanks. Michel approved Perceval, and bitterly lamented the accommodating mind of the State in its system of fattening chemists at the expense of the other workers.

"I asked whether the negotiation of the vouchers did not bring about a rise and fall.

"‘Speculation in vouchers,’ replied Morin, ‘is prohibited. As a matter of fact, it cannot be prevented altogether. There are among us, just as formerly, avaricious and prodigal, laborious and idle, rich and poor, happy and miserable, contented and discontented men. Yet all manage to exist, and that is already something.’

"I felt amusing for a while; then I remarked:

"‘Monsieur Morin, if one is to believe you, it seems to me that you have realised equality and fraternity, as much as possible. But, I fear that it is at the expense of liberty, which I have learnt to cherish as the best of things.’

"Morin shrugged his shoulders, saying:

"‘We have not established equality. We know what it means. We have secured a livelihood for all. We have placed labour on a pedestal of honour. After that, if the bricklayer thinks himself superior to the poet, and the poet to the bricklayer, ’tis their business. Every one of our workers imagines that his form of labour is the grandest in the world. The advantages of this idea are greater than the disadvantages.

"‘Comrade Hippolyte, you seem to have delved deeply into the books of the nineteenth century of the closed era; their leaves are hardly turned nowadays: you speak their language, to us a foreign tongue. It is hard for us to realise nowadays that the bygone friends of the people should have adopted as their motto: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. Liberty has no place in society, since it does not exist in nature. There is no free animal. It was said formerly that a man who obeyed the laws was free. This was childish. Moreover, so strange a use was made of the word liberty in the last days of the capitalistic anarchy that the word has ended in merely expressing the setting claim to privileges. The idea of equality is still less reasonable, and it is an unfortunate idea in that it presupposes a false ideal. We have not to seek whether men are equal among themselves. What we must see to is that each one shall supply his best and receive all necessities of life. As to fraternity, we know only too well how brothers have acted towards brothers during the course of centuries. We do not pretend to say that men are bad. We do not say that they are good. They are what

they are, but they live in peace, when there are no longer any reasons for them to fight one another. We have but a single word to express our social system. We say that we live in harmony. Now it is an assured fact that all human forces act in concert nowadays.'

"'In the centuries,' I said to him, 'of what you style the closed era, one preferred the possession of things to their enjoyment. I can conceive that, reversing the order of things, you prefer enjoyment to possession. But is it not distressing to you not to have any property to leave to your children?'

"'In capitalistic times,' replied Morin with animation, 'how many were there who left inheritances? One in a thousand; nay, one in ten thousand. Nor must it be forgotten that many generations did not enjoy the faculty of bequeathing. Be this as it may, the transmission of fortune through the medium of inheritances was perfectly conceivable when the family was in existence. But now...'

"'What!' I exclaimed, 'you have no family ties?'

"My surprise, which I had not been able to conceal, seemed comical to the woman-comrade Chéron.

"'We are quite aware,' she said to me, 'that marriage exists among the Kaffirs. We European women do not bind ourselves by promises; or, if we make them, the law does not take cognisance of them. We are of opinion that the whole destiny of a human being should not hang on a word. Nevertheless, there survives a relic of the customs of the closed era. When a woman gives herself, she swears fidelity on the horns of the moon. In reality, neither the man nor the woman takes any binding engagement. Yet it is not of rare occurrence that their union endures as long as life. Neither of them would wish to be the object of a fidelity secured by means of an oath, instead of by physical and moral expediency. We owe nothing to anybody. Formerly, a man convinced a woman that she belonged to him. We are less simple-minded. We believe that a human being belongs to itself alone. We give ourselves when we please, and to whom we see fit.

"'Moreover, we feel no shame in yielding to desire. We are no hypocrites. Only four hundred years ago, physiology was a sealed book to men, and their ignorance was the cause of dire illusions and cruel deceptions. Hippolyte, whatever the Kaffirs may say, society must be subordinate to nature, and not, as too long has been the case, nature to society?'

"Perceval, endorsing the speech of her comrade, added:

"'To show you how the sex question is regulated in our society, I must tell you, Hippolyte, that in many factories the recruiting delegate does not even inquire about one's sex. The sex of an individual does not interest collectivism.'

"'But the children?'

“‘Well? The children?’

“‘Not having any family ideal, are they not neglected?’

“‘Whence did you get such an idea? Maternal love is a most powerful instinct in woman. In the hideous society of the past, mothers were to be seen courting misery and shame, in order to bring up illegitimate offspring. Why should ours, exempt as they are from shame and misery, forsake their little ones? There are among us many good partners, and many good mothers. But there is a very large number, which increases apace, of women who dispense with men.’

“Chéron made in this connection a somewhat strange remark.

“‘We have in regard to sexual characteristics,’ she said, ‘notions undreamt of in the barbaric simplicity of the men of the closed era. False conclusions were for a long time drawn from the fact that there are two sexes, and two only. It was therefrom concluded that a woman is absolutely female, and a man absolutely male. In reality, it is not thus; there are women who are very much women, while others are very little so. These differences, formerly concealed by the costume and the mode of life, and disguised by prejudice, make themselves clearly manifest in our society. More than that, they become accentuated and more marked with each succeeding generation. Ever since women have worked like men, and acted and thought like them, many are to be found who resemble men. We may some day reach the point of creating neutrals, and produce female workers, as in the case of bees. It will prove a great benefit, for it will become possible to increase the quantity of work without increasing the population in a degree out of proportion to the necessities of life. We entertain the same dread of a deficit in and a surplus of births.’

“I thanked Perceval and Chéron for having kindly supplied me with information on so interesting a subject; and I inquired whether education was not neglected in collectivist society, and whether speculative science and the liberal arts still flourished.

“The following is old Morin’s reply to my question:

“‘Education, in all its degrees, is highly developed. The comrades all know something; they do not know the same things, nor have they learnt anything useless. No longer is any time lost in the study of law and theology. Each one selects from the arts and sciences what suits him. We still possess many ancient works, although the greater part of the works printed before the new era have perished. Books are still printed in greater quantity than ever. And yet typography is on the point of disappearing. Phonography will take its place. Poets and novelists are already being published phonographically, while in connection with theatrical plays, a most ingenious combination of the phono and

the cinemato rendering both the voice and the play of the actors has been devised.'

"'You have then poets and playwrights?'

"'We not only have poets, but a poetry of our own. We are the first who have delimited the domain of poetry. Previous to our time, many ideas which could have been better expressed in prose were expressed in verse. Narratives were unfolded in rhyme. This was a survival of the days when legislative enactments and recipes of rural economy were drawn up in measured terms. Nowadays poets merely sing delicate subjects which have no meaning, while their grammar and language are as proper to them as their rhythm and assonance. As to our stage, it is almost exclusively lyric. A precise knowledge of reality and a life void of violence have rendered us almost indifferent to drama and tragedy. The uniformity of the classes and the equality of the sexes have deprived the old comedy of nearly all its subject-matter. But never has music been so beautiful and so beloved. We especially admire the sonata and the symphony.

"'Our society is greatly predisposed in favour of the arts of design. Many prejudices harmful to painting have vanished. Our life is more limpid and more beautiful than the bourgeois life, and we have a vivid appreciation of form. Sculpture is in a still more flourishing condition than painting, ever since it has taken an intelligent part in the ornamentation of public buildings and private dwellings. Never was so much done towards the teaching of art. If you will but steer your aeroplane above one of our streets, you will be surprised at the number of schools and museums.'

"'To sum matters up, are you happy?' I inquired.

"Morin shook his head and replied:

"'It is not in human nature to enjoy perfect happiness. Happiness is not attainable without effort, and every effort brings with it fatigue and suffering. We have made life endurable to all. That is something. Our descendants will do better still. Our organisation is not immutable. Not fifty years ago, it was different from what it is to-day. Men endowed with subtile powers of observation believe that we are on the road to great changes. That may be. However, the forward steps in human civilisation will henceforth be harmonious and pacific.'

"'Do you not fear, on the contrary,' I asked him, that the civilisation with which you appear to be satisfied may be destroyed by an invasion of barbarians? There still remain in Asia and Africa, so you have told me, large black or yellow populations which have not entered into your concert. They have armies, while you have none. Were they to attack you...'

“Our defence is assured. The Americans and the Australians alone could enter upon a struggle with us, for they are as learned as ourselves. But the ocean separates us and a community of interests makes us sure of their amity. As to the capitalistic negroes, they have not got any further than the steel cannon, fire-arms and all the old scrap-iron of the twentieth century. What could these ancient engines of war do against a discharge of Y-rays? Our frontiers are protected by electricity. A zone of lightning encircles the Federation. A little spectacled fellow is sitting I know not where, in front of a keyboard. He is our one and only soldier. He has but to touch a key in order to reduce to dust an army of 500,000 men.’

“Morin ceased speaking for a moment; then he continued, speaking more deliberately:

“Were our civilisation threatened, it would not be by any outside enemy. It would be by the enemies from within.’

“There are such enemies, then ?’

“We have the anarchists. They are many, fiery, and intelligent. Our chemists and our professors of sciences and letters are almost to a man anarchists. They attribute to the regulation of labour and production the majority of the evils which still afflict society. They argue that humanity will not be happy except in the spontaneous harmony to be born of the total destruction of civilisation. They are dangerous. They would be still more so were we to repress them. To do this, however, we have neither the means nor the desire. We do not possess any power of coercion or repression, and we get along very well without it. In the barbaric ages, men nurtured great illusions in regard to the efficacy of penalties. Our fathers suppressed the judiciary system entirely. They no longer required it. With the suppression of private property, they simultaneously suppressed theft and swindling. Ever since we have carried electric protectors, assaults are no longer to be feared. Man has come to be respected by man. Crimes of passion are still and will ever be committed. However, such crimes as these, if left unpunished, become rarer. Our entire judiciary body is composed of elected arbitrators who try gratuitously all offences and disputes.’

“I rose, and thanking my comrades for their kindness, I begged Morin the favour of putting one more question to him.

“You no longer have any religion?’

“Quite the contrary; we have a large number of religions, some of them somewhat novel. To mention France only, we have the religion of humanity, positivism, Christianity, and spiritualism. In some countries there are still some Catholics, but they are few and split up into sects, as the result of schisms which

occured in the twentieth century, when Church and State drifted apart. For a long time now there has not been any Pope.'

"'You are mistaken,' said Michel. 'There is still a Pope. It is by a mere chance that I know of him. He is Pius XXV., dyer, Via dell' Orso, in Rome.'

"'What!' I exclaimed, 'the Pope is a dyer!'"

"'What is there surprising about that! He must perforce have a trade, just as everybody else.'

"'But his Church?'"

"'He is recognised by a few thousands, in Europe.'

"With these words, we parted. Michel informed me that I should find a lodging in the neighbourhood, and that Chéron would conduct me to it on her way home.

"The night was illuminated with an opalescent light both powerful and soft. It gave the foliage the sheen of enamel. I walked by the side of Chéron.

"I looked her over. Her flat-soled shoes gave firmness to her gait and balance to her body; although her male habiliments made her seem smaller than she was, and in spite of her having one hand in her pocket, her perfectly simple carriage did not lack dignity. She gazed freely to the right and left of her. She was the first woman in whom I had noticed the air of a curious and amused loungeur. Her features, seen from under her tam-o'-shanter, were refined and strongly defined. She both irritated and charmed me. I was in dread that she might consider me stupid and ridiculous. It was, to say the least, plain that my personality inspired her with supreme indifference. Nevertheless, of a sudden she asked me what my trade might be. I answered at haphazard that I was an electrician.

"'So am I,' she said.

"I prudently put an end to the conversation.

"Unheard-of sounds were filling the night air with their calm rhythmic noise, and I listened in affright to the respiration of the monstrous genius of this new world.

"The more I looked at the female electrician, the more did I feel a desire for her, a desire fanned by a dash of antipathy.

"'So of course,' I said to her of a sudden, 'you have regulated love scientifically, and 'tis a matter which no longer causes any one uneasiness.'

"'You are mistaken,' she replied. 'We have naturally got beyond the mad imbecility of the closed era, and the whole domain of human physiology is henceforth freed from legal barbarisms and theological terrors. We are no longer the prey to an erroneous and cruel conception of duty. But the laws governing the attraction between body and body are still a mystery to us. The spirit of the species is what it ever was and ever shall be, violent and capricious. Now, just as

formerly, instinct remains stronger than reason. Our superiority over the ancients lies less in the knowledge of it than in proclaiming it. We have within us a force capable of creating worlds, to wit, desire, and you would have us regulate it. 'Tis asking too much of us. We are no longer barbarians. We have not yet become wise. Collectivism altogether ignores all that appertains to sexual relations. These relations are what they may be, most often tolerable, rarely delicious, and at times horrible. But, comrade, do not imagine that love no longer troubles any one.'

"I could not discuss such extraordinary ideas. I diverted the conversation to the temperament of women. Chéron informed me that there were three kinds, those who were amorously disposed, those prompted by curiosity, and the third, indifferent. I thereupon asked her to which class she belonged.

"She looked at me somewhat haughtily and said:

"There are also various kinds of men. First and foremost are the impertinent ones...'

"Her reply caused her to appear far more contemporaneous than I had until then believed her to be. For that reason I began to speak to her the language used by me on similar occasions. After a few trifling and frivolous words I said to her:

"Will you grant me a favour and tell me your first name?"

"I have none?"

"She perceived that this seemed to vex me, for she resumed with some show of pique:

"Do you think that a woman must, in order to be pleasing to you, possess a first name, like the ladies of former days, a baptismal name such as Marguerite, Thérèse, or Jeanne?"

"You are a living proof to the contrary."

"I sought her gaze, but it did not respond to mine. She seemed not to have heard. I could no longer entertain doubts: she was a coquette. I was delighted. I told her that I found her charming, that I loved her, and I told her so over and over again. She suffered me to go on with my speeches, and finally asked:

"What do you mean by all this!"

"I became more pressing.

"She reproached me for taking liberties with her, exclaiming:

"Your ways are those of a savage."

"I do not find acceptance with you?"

"I do not say so."

"Chéron, Chéron, would it cost you any great effort to ..."

"We sat down together on a bench over which an elm cast its shade. I took her hand, and carried it to my lips ... of a sudden, I no longer felt, no longer saw

anything, and I found myself lying in bed at home. I rubbed my eyes, smarting with the morning light, and I saw my valet who, standing before me with a stupid look, was saying to me:

“It is nine o’clock, sir. You told me to wake you at nine o’clock, sir. I have come to tell you, sir, that it is nine o’clock?”

VI

HIPPOLYTE Dufresne was warmly congratulated by his friends on his finishing the reading of his story.

Nicole Langelier, applying to him the words of Critias to Triephon, said:

“You seem to have dreamt on the white stone, in the midst of the people of dreams, since you dreamt so long a dream in the course of so short a night.”

“It is not likely,” remarked Joséphin Leclerc, “that the future will be such as you have seen it. I do not wish for the coming of socialism, but I dread it not. Collectivism at the helm would be quite another thing than is imagined. Who was it who said, carrying back his thoughts to the time of Constantine and of the Church’s early triumphs: ‘Christianity is triumphant, but its triumph is subject to the conditions imposed by life on all political and religious parties. All of them, whatever they may be, undergo so complete a transformation in the struggle that after victory there remains of themselves but the name and a few symbols of the last idea’?”

“Must we then give up the idea of knowing the future?” asked M. Goubin.

But Giacomo Boni, who when delving down into a few feet of soil had descended from the present period to the stone age, remarked:

“Upon the whole, humanity changes little. What has been shall be.”

“No doubt,” replied Jean Boilly, “man, or that which we call man, changes little. We belong to a definite species. The evolution of the species is of necessity included in the definition of the species. It is impossible to conceive humanity subsequent to its transformation. A transformed species is a lost species. But what reason is there for us to believe that man is the end of the evolution of life upon the earth? Why suppose that his birth has exhausted the creative forces of nature, and that the universal mother of the flora and fauna should, after having shaped him, become for ever barren. A natural philosopher, who does not stand in fear of his own ideas, H. G. Wells, has said: ‘Man is not final.’ No indeed, man is neither the beginning nor the end of terrestrial life. Long before him, all over the globe, animated forces were multiplying in the depths of the sea, in the mud of the strand, in the forests, lakes, prairies, and tree-topped mountains. After him, new forms will go on taking shape. A future race, born perhaps of our own, but having perchance no bond of origin with us, will succeed us in the empire of the planet. These new spirits of the earth will ignore or despise us. The monuments of our arts, should they discover vestiges of them, will have no meaning for them. Rulers of the future, whose mind we can no

more divine than the palaeopithekos of the Siwalik Mountains was able to forecast the trains of thought of Aristotle, Newton, and Poincaré.”

THE END

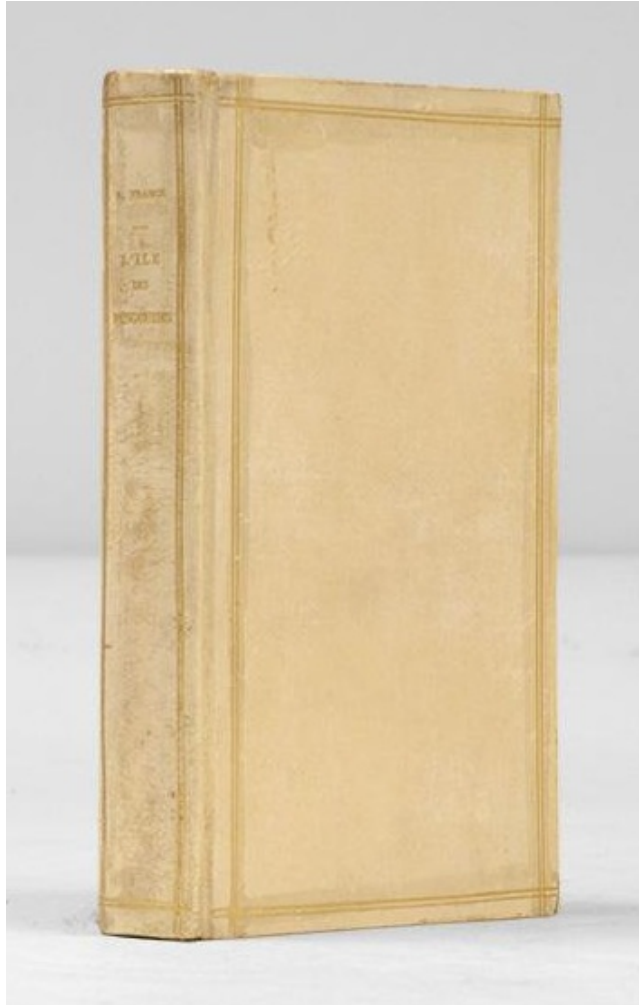
PENGUIN ISLAND



Translated by A. W. Evans

First published in France in 1908, *Penguin Island* is one of the author's best known and most celebrated works. It is an incisive satire on everything from the foundations of Christianity, to the beginning of private property, exploring themes of imperialism, nationalism and Western democracy. The novel opens with the elderly monk St. Mael, who decides to go on a mission and ends up on a freezing island north of Rome. He suffers poor eyesight and when he becomes aware of a group of figures speaking a language he cannot understand, he determines that they are well-intentioned 'noble' non-Christians and he baptises them from the shore. However, upon closer inspection he realises that they are not people, but a colony of penguins. The monk is stricken with panic because only humans can be baptised, but he cannot reverse the act. There follows a series of highly amusing conversations involving God granting the penguins souls and allowing them to become humans.

The island of Penguinia is born and from this point the author traces the 'history' of the island, mirroring that of Europe, and more specifically France. It lampoons the Medieval Church for its barbarity, detailing aspects of the Reformation and criticising Roman ideals that have been incorporated into French values. France astutely observes that while murder and theft are condemned as awful acts, these very behaviours are glorified in imperialism. Ideas of nationalism and exceptionalism justify atrocious violence perpetrated against other nations. The formation of private property on the island is started by the murder and direct theft of land between neighbours; this idea of violent appropriation of land recalls Marxist notions about primitive accumulation (a pre-condition of Capitalism) that contrast to Adam Smith's account about original accumulation. France also delivers a blistering assault on 'democratically' elected governments and their inability to do anything besides cater to the desires and interests of the financially powerful.



The first edition

CONTENTS

BOOK I. THE BEGINNINGS

I. LIFE OF SAINT MAEL

II. THE APOSTOLICAL VOCATION OF SAINT MAEL

III. THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT MAEL

IV. ST. MAEL'S NAVIGATION ON THE OCEAN OF ICE

V. THE BAPTISM OF THE PENGUINS

VI. AN ASSEMBLY IN PARADISE

VII. AN ASSEMBLY IN PARADISE (Continuation and End)

VIII. METAMORPHOSIS OF THE PENGUINS

BOOK II. THE ANCIENT TIMES

I. THE FIRST CLOTHES

II. THE FIRST CLOTHES (Continuation and End)

III. SETTING BOUNDS TO THE FIELDS AND THE ORIGIN OF PROPERTY

IV. THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE ESTATES OF PENGUINIA

V. THE MARRIAGE OF KRAKEN AND ORBEROSIA

VI. THE DRAGON OF ALCA

VII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

VIII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

IX. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

X. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

XI. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

XII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

XIII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation and End)

BOOK III. THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

I. BRIAN THE GOOD AND QUEEN GLAMORGAN

II. DRACO THE GREAT (Translation of the Relics of St. Orberosia)

III. QUEEN CRUCHA

IV. LETTERS: JOHANNES TALPA

V. THE ARTS: THE PRIMITIVES OF PENGUIN PAINTING

VI. MARBODIUS

VII. SIGNS IN THE MOON

BOOK IV. MODERN TIMES: TRINCO

I. MOTHER ROUQUIN

II. TRINCO

III. THE JOURNEY OF DOCTOR OBNUBILE

BOOK V. MODERN TIMES: CHATILLON

I. THE REVEREND FATHERS AGARIC AND CORNEMUSE

II. PRINCE CRUCHO

III. THE CABAL

IV. VISCOUNTESS OLIVE

V. THE PRINCE DES BOSCELOS

VI. THE EMERALD'S FALL

VII. CONCLUSION

BOOK VI. MODERN TIMES.

THE AFFAIR OF THE EIGHTY THOUSAND TRUSSES OF HAY

I. GENERAL GREATAUK, DUKE OF SKULL

II. PYROT

III. COUNT DE MAUBEC DE LA DENTDULYNX

IV. COLOMBAN

V. THE REVEREND FATHERS AGARIC AND CORNEMUSE

VI. THE SEVEN HUNDRED PYROTISTS

VII. BIDAULT-COQUILLE AND MANIFLORE, THE SOCIALISTS

VIII. THE COLOMBAN TRIAL

IX. FATHER DOUILLARD

X. MR. JUSTICE CHAUSSEPIED

XI. CONCLUSION

BOOK VII. MODERN TIMES

I. MADAME CLARENCE'S DRAWING-ROOM

II. THE CHARITY OF ST. ORBEROSIA

III. HIPPOLYTE CERES

IV. A POLITICIAN'S MARRIAGE

V. THE VISIRE CABINET

VI. THE SOFA OF THE FAVOURITE

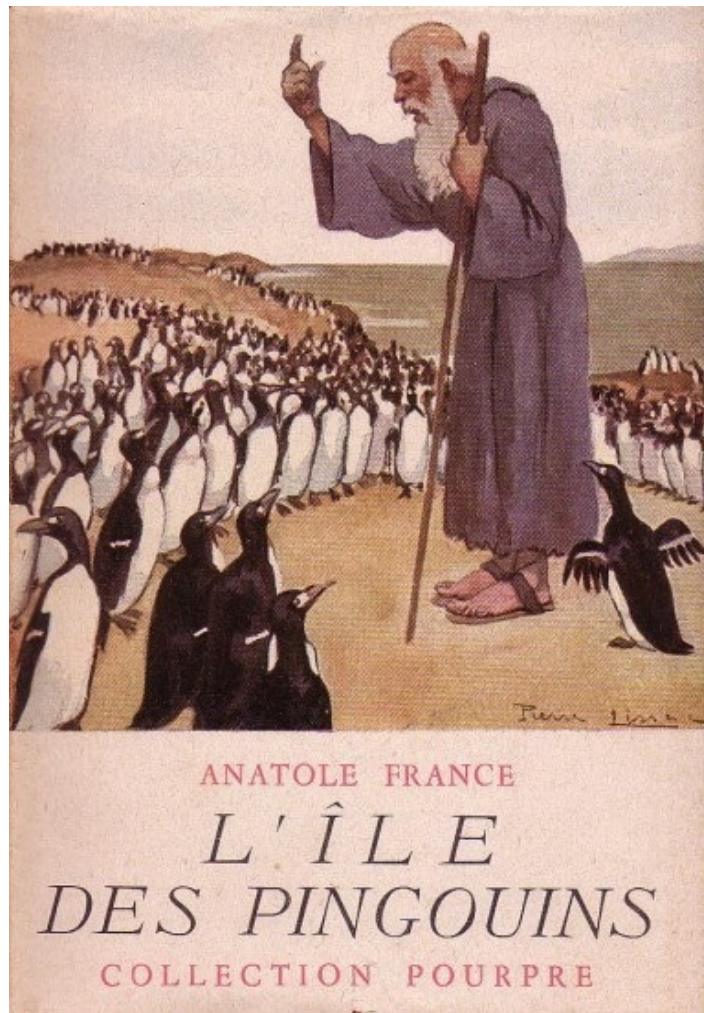
VII. THE FIRST CONSEQUENCES

VIII. FURTHER CONSEQUENCES

IX. THE FINAL CONSEQUENCES

BOOK VIII. FUTURE TIMES

THE ENDLESS HISTORY



An early dust jacket for the novel

BOOK I. THE BEGINNINGS

I. LIFE OF SAINT MAEL

Mael, a scion of a royal family of Cambria, was sent in his ninth year to the Abbey of Yvern so that he might there study both sacred and profane learning. At the age of fourteen he renounced his patrimony and took a vow to serve the Lord. His time was divided, according to the rule, between the singing of hymns, the study of grammar, and the meditation of eternal truths.

A celestial perfume soon disclosed the virtues of the monk throughout the cloister, and when the blessed Gal, the Abbot of Yvern, departed from this world into the next, young Mael succeeded him in the government of the monastery. He established therein a school, an infirmary, a guest-house, a forge, work-shops of all kinds, and sheds for building ships, and he compelled the monks to till the lands in the neighbourhood. With his own hands he cultivated the garden of the Abbey, he worked in metals, he instructed the novices, and his life was gently gliding along like a stream that reflects the heaven and fertilizes the fields.

At the close of the day this servant of God was accustomed to seat himself on the cliff, in the place that is to-day still called St. Mael's chair. At his feet the rocks bristling with green seaweed and tawny wrack seemed like black dragons as they faced the foam of the waves with their monstrous breasts. He watched the sun descending into the ocean like a red Host whose glorious blood gave a purple tone to the clouds and to the summits of the waves. And the holy man saw in this the image of the mystery of the Cross, by which the divine blood has clothed the earth with a royal purple. In the offing a line of dark blue marked the shores of the island of Gad, where St. Bridget, who had been given the veil by St. Malo, ruled over a convent of women.

Now Bridget, knowing the merits of the venerable Mael, begged from him some work of his hands as a rich present. Mael cast a hand-bell of bronze for her and, when it was finished, he blessed it and threw it into the sea. And the bell went ringing towards the coast of Gad, where St. Bridget, warned by the sound of the bell upon the waves, received it piously, and carried it in solemn procession with singing of psalms into the chapel of the convent.

Thus the holy Mael advanced from virtue to virtue. He had already passed through two-thirds of the way of life, and he hoped peacefully to reach his terrestrial end in the midst of his spiritual brethren, when he knew by a certain sign that the Divine wisdom had decided otherwise, and that the Lord was calling him to less peaceful but not less meritorious labours.

II. THE APOSTOLICAL VOCATION OF SAINT MAEL

One day as he walked in meditation to the furthest point of a tranquil beach, for which rocks jutting out into the sea formed a rugged dam, he saw a trough of stone which floated like a boat upon the waters.

It was in a vessel similar to this that St. Guirec, the great St. Columba, and so many holy men from Scotland and from Ireland had gone forth to evangelize Armorica. More recently still, St. Avoye having come from England, ascended the river Auray in a mortar made of rose-coloured granite into which children were afterwards placed in order to make them strong; St. Vouga passed from Hibernia to Cornwall on a rock whose fragments, preserved at Penmarch, will cure of fever such pilgrims as place these splinters on their heads. St. Samson entered the Bay of St. Michael's Mount in a granite vessel which will one day be called St. Samson's basin. It is because of these facts that when he saw the stone trough the holy Mael understood that the Lord intended him for the apostolate of the pagans who still peopled the coast and the Breton islands.

He handed his ashen staff to the holy Budoc, thus investing him with the government of the monastery. Then, furnished with bread, a barrel of fresh water, and the book of the Holy Gospels, he entered the stone trough which carried him gently to the island of Hoedic.

This island is perpetually buffeted by the winds. In it some poor men fished among the clefts of the rocks and labouriously cultivated vegetables in gardens full of sand and pebbles that were sheltered from the wind by walls of barren stone and hedges of tamarisk. A beautiful fig-tree raised itself in a hollow of the island and thrust forth its branches far and wide. The inhabitants of the island used to worship it.

And the holy Mael said to them: "You worship this tree because it is beautiful. Therefore you are capable of feeling beauty. Now I come to reveal to you the hidden beauty." And he taught them the Gospel. And after having instructed them, he baptized them with salt and water.

The islands of Morbihan were more numerous in those times than they are to-day. For since then many have been swallowed up by the sea. St. Mael evangelized sixty of them. Then in his granite trough he ascended the river Auray. And after sailing for three hours he landed before a Roman house. A thin column of smoke went up from the roof. The holy man crossed the threshold on which there was a mosaic representing a dog with its hind legs outstretched and

its lips drawn back. He was welcomed by an old couple, Marcus Combabus and Valeria Moerens, who lived there on the products of their lands. There was a portico round the interior court the columns of which were painted red, half their height upwards from the base. A fountain made of shells stood against the wall and under the portico there rose an altar with a niche in which the master of the house had placed some little idols made of baked earth and whitened with whitewash. Some represented winged children, others Apollo or Mercury, and several were in the form of a naked woman twisting her hair. But the holy Mael, observing those figures, discovered among them the image of a young mother holding a child upon her knees.

Immediately pointing to that image he said:

“That is the Virgin, the mother of God. The poet Virgil foretold her in Sibylline verses before she was born and, in angelical tones he sang *Jam redit et virgo*. Throughout heathendom prophetic figures of her have been made, like that which you, O Marcus, have placed upon this altar. And without doubt it is she who has protected your modest household. Thus it is that those who faithfully observe the natural law prepare themselves for the knowledge of revealed truths.”

Marcus Combabus and Valeria Moerens, having been instructed by this speech, were converted to the Christian faith. They received baptism together with their young freedwoman, Caelia Avitella, who was dearer to them than the light of their eyes. All their tenants renounced paganism and were baptized on the same day.

Marcus Combabus, Valeria Moerens, and Caelia Avitella led thenceforth a life full of merit. They died in the Lord and were admitted into the canon of the saints.

For thirty-seven years longer the blessed Mael evangelized the pagans of the inner lands. He built two hundred and eighteen chapels and seventy-four abbeys.

Now on a certain day in the city of Vannes, when he was preaching the Gospel, he learned that the monks of Yvern had in his absence declined from the rule of St. Gal. Immediately, with the zeal of a hen who gathers her brood, he repaired to his erring children. He was then towards the end of his ninety-seventh year; his figure was bent, but his arms were still strong, and his speech was poured forth abundantly like winter snow in the depths of the valleys.

Abbot Budoc restored the ashen staff to St. Mael and informed him of the unhappy state into which the Abbey had fallen. The monks were in disagreement as to the date at which the festival of Easter ought to be celebrated. Some held for the Roman calendar, others for the Greek calendar, and the horrors of a chronological schism distracted the monastery.

There also prevailed another cause of disorder. The nuns of the island of Gad, sadly fallen from their former virtue, continually came in boats to the coast of Yvern. The monks received them in the guesthouse and from this there arose scandals which filled pious souls with desolation.

Having finished his faithful report, Abbot Budoc concluded in these terms:

“Since the coming of these nuns the innocence and peace of the monks are at an end.”

“I readily believe it,” answered the blessed Mael. “For woman is a cleverly constructed snare by which we are taken even before we suspect the trap. Alas! the delightful attraction of these creatures is exerted with even greater force from a distance than when they are close at hand. The less they satisfy desire the more they inspire it. This is the reason why a poet wrote this verse to one of them:

‘When present I avoid thee, but when away I find thee.’

“Thus we see, my son, that the blandishments of carnal love have more power over hermits and monks than over men who live in the world. All through my life the demon of lust has tempted me in various ways, but his strongest temptations did not come to me from meeting a woman, however beautiful and fragrant she was. They came to me from the image of an absent woman. Even now, though full of days and approaching my ninety-eighth year, I am often led by the Enemy to sin against chastity, at least in thought. At night when I am cold in my bed and my frozen old bones rattle together with a dull sound I hear voices reciting the second verse of the third Book of the Kings: ‘Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat,’ and the devil shows me a girl in the bloom of youth who says to me: ‘I am thy Abishag; I am thy Shunamite. Make, O my lord, room for me in thy couch.’

“Believe me,” added the old man, “it is only by the special aid of Heaven that a monk can keep his chastity in act and in intention.”

Applying himself immediately to restore innocence and peace to the monastery, he corrected the calendar according to the calculations of chronology and astronomy and he compelled all the monks to accept his decision; he sent the women who had declined from St. Bridget’s rule back to their convent; but far from driving them away brutally, he caused them to be led to their boat with singing of psalms and litanies.

“Let us respect in them,” he said, “the daughters of Bridget and the betrothed of the Lord. Let us beware lest we imitate the Pharisees who affect to despise sinners. The sin of these women and not their persons should be abased, and they

should be made ashamed of what they have done and not of what they are, for they are all creatures of God.”

And the holy man exhorted his monks to obey faithfully the rule of their order.

“When it does not yield to the rudder,” said he to them, “the ship yields to the rock.”

III. THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT MAEL

The blessed Mael had scarcely restored order in the Abbey of Yvern before he learned that the inhabitants of the island of Hoedic, his first catechumens and the dearest of all to his heart, had returned to paganism, and that they were hanging crowns of flowers and fillets of wool to the branches of the sacred fig-tree.

The boatman who brought this sad news expressed a fear that soon those misguided men might violently destroy the chapel that had been built on the shore of their island.

The holy man resolved forthwith to visit his faithless children, so that he might lead them back to the faith and prevent them from yielding to such sacrilege. As he went down to the bay where his stone trough was moored, he turned his eyes to the sheds, then filled with the noise of saws and of hammers, which, thirty years before, he had erected on the fringe of that bay for the purpose of building ships.

At that moment, the Devil, who never tires, went out from the sheds and, under the appearance of a monk called Samsok, he approached the holy man and tempted him thus:

“Father, the inhabitants of the island of Hoedic commit sins unceasingly. Every moment that passes removes them farther from God. They are soon going to use violence towards the chapel that you have raised with your own venerable hands on the shore of their island. Time is pressing. Do you not think that your stone trough would carry you more quickly towards them if it were rigged like a boat and furnished with a rudder, a mast, and a sail, for then you would be driven by the wind? Your arms are still strong and able to steer a small craft. It would be a good thing, too, to put a sharp stem in front of your apostolic trough. You are much too clear-sighted not to have thought of it already.”

“Truly time is pressing,” answered the holy man. “But to do as you say, Samson, my son, would it not be to make myself like those men of little faith who do not trust the Lord? Would it not be to despise the gifts of Him who has sent me this stone vessel without rigging or sail?”

This question, the Devil, who is a great theologian, answered by another.

“Father, is it praiseworthy to wait, with our arms folded, until help comes from on high, and to ask everything from Him who can do all things, instead of acting by human prudence and helping ourselves?

“It certainly is not,” answered the holy Mael, “and to neglect to act by human prudence is tempting God.”

“Well,” urged the Devil, “is it not prudence in this case to rig the vessel?”

“It would be prudence if we could not attain our end in any other way.”

“Is your vessel then so very speedy?”

“It is as speedy as God pleases.”

“What do you know about it? It goes like Abbot Budoc’s mule. It is a regular old tub. Are you forbidden to make it speedier?”

“My son, clearness adorns your words, but they are unduly over-confident. Remember that this vessel is miraculous.”

“It is, father. A granite trough that floats on the water like a cork is a miraculous trough. There is not the slightest doubt about it. What conclusion do you draw from that?”

“I am greatly perplexed. Is it right to perfect so miraculous a machine by human and natural means?”

“Father, if you lost your right foot and God restored it to you, would not that foot be miraculous?”

“Without doubt, my son.”

“Would you put a shoe on it?”

“Assuredly.”

“Well, then, if you believe that one may cover a miraculous foot with a natural shoe, you should also believe that we can put natural rigging on a miraculous boat. That is clear. Alas! Why must the holiest persons have their moments of weakness and despondency? The most illustrious of the apostles of Brittany could accomplish works worthy of eternal glory . . . But his spirit is tardy and his hand is slothful. Farewell then, father! Travel by short and slow stages and when at last you approach the coast of Hoedic you will see the smoking ruins of the chapel that was built and consecrated by your own hands. The pagans will have burned it and with it the deacon you left there. He will be as thoroughly roasted as a black pudding.”

“My trouble is extreme,” said the servant of God, drying with his sleeve the sweat that gathered upon his brow. “But tell me, Samson, my son, would not rigging this stone trough be a difficult piece of work? And if we undertook it might we not lose time instead of gaining it?”

“Ah! father,” exclaimed the Devil, “in one turning of the hour-glass the thing would be done. We shall find the necessary rigging in this shed that you have formerly built here on the coast and in those store-houses abundantly stocked through your care. I will myself regulate all the ship’s fittings. Before being a monk I was a sailor and a carpenter and I have worked at many other trades as well. Let us to work.”

Immediately he drew the holy man into an outhouse filled with all things needful for fitting out a boat.

“That for you, father!”

And he placed on his shoulders the sail, the mast, the gaff, and the boom.

Then, himself bearing a stem and a rudder with its screw and tiller, and seizing a carpenter’s bag full of tools, he ran to the shore, dragging the holy man after him by his habit. The latter was bent, sweating, and breathless, under the burden of canvas and wood.

IV. ST. MAEL'S NAVIGATION ON THE OCEAN OF ICE

The Devil, having tucked his clothes up to his arm-pits, dragged the trough on the sand, and fitted the rigging in less than an hour.

As soon as the holy Mael had embarked, the vessel, with all its sails set, cleft through the waters with such speed that the coast was almost immediately out of sight. The old man steered to the south so as to double the Land's End, but an irresistible current carried him to the south-west. He went along the southern coast of Ireland and turned sharply towards the north. In the evening the wind freshened. In vain did Mael attempt to furl the sail. The vessel flew distractedly towards the fabulous seas.

By the light of the moon the immodest sirens of the North came around him with their hempen-coloured hair, raising their white throats and their rose-tinted limbs out of the sea; and beating the water into foam with their emerald tails, they sang in cadence:

Whither go'st thou, gentle Mael,
In thy trough distracted?
All distended is thy sail
Like the breast of Juno
When from it gushed the Milky Way.

For a moment their harmonious laughter followed him beneath the stars, but the vessel fled on, a hundred times more swiftly than the red ship of a Viking. And the petrels, surprised in their flight, clung with their feet to the hair of the holy man.

Soon a tempest arose full of darkness and groanings, and the trough, driven by a furious wind, flew like a sea-mew through the mist and the surge.

After a night of three times twenty-four hours the darkness was suddenly rent and the holy man discovered on the horizon a shore more dazzling than diamond. The coast rapidly grew larger, and soon by the glacial light of a torpid and sunken sun, Mael saw, rising above the waves, the silent streets of a white city, which, vaster than Thebes with its hundred gates, extended as far as the eye could see the ruins of its forum built of snow, its palaces of frost, its crystal arches, and its iridescent obelisks.

The ocean was covered with floating ice-bergs around which swam men of the sea of a wild yet gentle appearance. And Leviathan passed by hurling a column of water up to the clouds.

Moreover, on a block of ice which floated at the same rate as the stone trough there was seated a white bear holding her little one in her arms, and Mael heard her murmuring in a low voice this verse of Virgil, *Incipe parve puer*.

And full of sadness and trouble, the old man wept.

The fresh water had frozen and burst the barrel that contained it. And Mael was sucking pieces of ice to quench his thirst, and his food was bread dipped in dirty water. His beard and his hair were broken like glass. His habit was covered with a layer of ice and cut into him at every movement of his limbs. Huge waves rose up and opened their foaming jaws at the old man. Twenty times the boat was filled by masses of sea. And the ocean swallowed up the book of the Holy Gospels which the apostle guarded with extreme care in a purple cover marked with a golden cross.

Now on the thirtieth day the sea calmed. And lo! with a frightful clamour of sky and waters a mountain of dazzling whiteness advanced towards the stone vessel. Mael steered to avoid it, but the tiller broke in his hands. To lessen the speed of his progress towards the rock he attempted to reef the sails, but when he tried to knot the reef-points the wind pulled them away from him and the rope seared his hands. He saw three demons with wings of black skin having hooks at their ends, who, hanging from the rigging, were puffing with their breath against the sails.

Understanding from this sight that the Enemy had governed him in all these things, he guarded himself by making the sign of the Cross. Immediately a furious gust of wind filled with the noise of sobs and howls struck the stone trough, carried off the mast with all the sails, and tore away the rudder and the stem.

The trough was drifting on the sea, which had now grown calm. The holy man knelt and gave thanks to the Lord who had delivered him from the snares of the demon. Then he recognised, sitting on a block of ice, the mother bear who had spoken during the storm. She pressed her beloved child to her bosom, and in her hand she held a purple book marked with a golden cross. Hailing the granite trough, she saluted the holy man with these words:

“Pax tibi Mael.”

And she held out the book to him.

The holy man recognised his evangelistary, and, full of astonishment, he sang in the tepid air a hymn to the Creator and His creation.

V. THE BAPTISM OF THE PENGUINS

After having drifted for an hour the holy man approached a narrow strand, shut in by steep mountains. He went along the coast for a whole day and a night, passing around the reef which formed an insuperable barrier. He discovered in this way that it was a round island in the middle of which rose a mountain crowned with clouds. He joyfully breathed the fresh breath of the moist air. Rain fell, and this rain was so pleasant that the holy man said to the Lord:

“Lord, this is the island of tears, the island of contrition.”

The strand was deserted. Worn out with fatigue and hunger, he sat down on a rock in the hollow of which there lay some yellow eggs, marked with black spots, and about as large as those of a swan. But he did not touch them, saying:

“Birds are the living praises of God. I should not like a single one of these praises to be lacking through me.”

And he munched the lichens which he tore from the crannies of the rocks.

The holy man had gone almost entirely round the island without meeting any inhabitants, when he came to a vast amphitheatre formed of black and red rocks whose summits became tinged with blue as they rose towards the clouds, and they were filled with sonorous cascades.

The reflection from the polar ice had hurt the old man’s eyes, but a feeble gleam of light still shone through his swollen eyelids. He distinguished animated forms which filled the rocks, in stages, like a crowd of men on the tiers of an amphitheatre. And at the same time, his ears, deafened by the continual noises of the sea, heard a feeble sound of voices. Thinking that what he saw were men living under the natural law, and that the Lord had sent him to teach them the Divine law, he preached the gospel to them.

Mounted on a lofty stone in the midst of the wild circus:

“Inhabitants of this island,” said he, “although you be of small stature, you look less like a band of fishermen and mariners than like the senate of a judicious republic. By your gravity, your silence, your tranquil deportment, you form on this wild rock an assembly comparable to the Conscript Fathers at Rome deliberating in the temple of Victory, or rather, to the philosophers of Athens disputing on the benches of the Areopagus. Doubtless you possess neither their science nor their genius, but perhaps in the sight of God you are their superiors. I believe that you are simple and good. As I went round your island I saw no image of murder, no sign of carnage, no enemies’ heads or scalps hung from a lofty pole or nailed to the doors of your villages. You appear to me to have no

arts and not to work in metals. But your hearts are pure and your hands are innocent, and the truth will easily enter into your souls.”

Now what he had taken for men of small stature but of grave bearing were penguins whom the spring had gathered together, and who were ranged in couples on the natural steps of the rock, erect in the majesty of their large white bellies. From moment to moment they moved their winglets like arms, and uttered peaceful cries. They did not fear men, for they did not know them, and had never received any harm from them; and there was in the monk a certain gentleness that reassured the most timid animals and that pleased these penguins extremely. With a friendly curiosity they turned towards him their little round eyes lengthened in front by a white oval spot that gave something odd and human to their appearance.

Touched by their attention, the holy man taught them the Gospel.

“Inhabitants of this island, the earthly day that has just risen over your rocks is the image of the heavenly day that rises in your souls. For I bring you the inner light; I bring you the light and heat of the soul. Just as the sun melts the ice of your mountains so Jesus Christ will melt the ice of your hearts.”

Thus the old man spoke. As everywhere throughout nature voice calls to voice, as all which breathes in the light of day loves alternate strains, these penguins answered the old man by the sounds of their throats. And their voices were soft, for it was the season of their loves.

The holy man, persuaded that they belonged to some idolatrous people and that in their own language they gave adherence to the Christian faith, invited them to receive baptism.

“I think,” said he to them, “that you bathe often, for all the hollows of the rocks are full of pure water, and as I came to your assembly I saw several of you plunging into these natural baths. Now purity of body is the image of spiritual purity.”

And he taught them the origin, the nature, and the effects of baptism.

“Baptism,” said he to them, “is Adoption, New Birth, Regeneration, Illumination.”

And he explained each of these points to them in succession.

Then, having previously blessed the water that fell from the cascades and recited the exorcisms, he baptized those whom he had just taught, pouring on each of their heads a drop of pure water and pronouncing the sacred words.

And thus for three days and three nights he baptized the birds.

VI. AN ASSEMBLY IN PARADISE

When the baptism of the penguins was known in Paradise, it caused neither joy nor sorrow, but an extreme surprise. The Lord himself was embarrassed. He gathered an assembly of clerics and doctors, and asked them whether they regarded the baptism as valid.

“It is void,” said St. Patrick.

“Why is it void?” asked St. Gal, who had evangelized the people of Cornwall and had trained the holy Mael for his apostolical labours.

“The sacrament of baptism,” answered St. Patrick, “is void when it is given to birds, just as the sacrament of marriage is void when it is given to a eunuch.”

But St. Gal replied:

“What relation do you claim to establish between the baptism of a bird and the marriage of a eunuch? There is none at all. Marriage is, if I may say so, a conditional, a contingent sacrament. The priest blesses an event beforehand; it is evident that if the act is not consummated the benediction remains without effect. That is obvious. I have known on earth, in the town of Antrim, a rich man named Sadoc, who, living in concubinage with a woman, caused her to be the mother of nine children. In his old age, yielding to my reproofs, he consented to marry her, and I blessed their union. Unfortunately Sadoc’s great age prevented him from consummating the marriage. A short time afterwards he lost all his property, and Germaine (that was the name of the woman), not feeling herself able to endure poverty, asked for the annulment of a marriage which was no reality. The Pope granted her request, for it was just. So much for marriage. But baptism is conferred without restrictions or reserves of any kind. There is no doubt about it, what the penguins have received is a sacrament.”

Called to give his opinion, Pope St. Damascus expressed himself in these terms:

“In order to know if a baptism is valid and will produce its result, that is to say, sanctification, it is necessary to consider who gives it and not who receives it. In truth, the sanctifying virtue of this sacrament results from the exterior act by which it is conferred, without the baptized person cooperating in his own sanctification by any personal act; if it were otherwise it would not be administered to the newly born. And there is no need, in order to baptize, to fulfil any special condition; it is not necessary to be in a state of grace; it is sufficient to have the intention of doing what the Church does, to pronounce the consecrated words and to observe the prescribed forms. Now we cannot doubt

that the venerable Mael has observed these conditions. Therefore the penguins are baptized.”

“Do you think so?” asked St. Guenole. “And what then do you believe that baptism really is? Baptism is the process of regeneration by which man is born of water and of the spirit, for having entered the water covered with crimes, he goes out of it a neophyte, a new creature, abounding in the fruits of righteousness; baptism is the seed of immortality; baptism is the pledge of the resurrection; baptism is the burying with Christ in His death and participation in His departure from the sepulchre. That is not a gift to bestow upon birds. Reverend Fathers, let us consider. Baptism washes away original sin; now the penguins were not conceived in sin. It removes the penalty of sin; now the penguins have not sinned. It produces grace and the gift of virtues, uniting Christians to Jesus Christ, as the members to the body, and it is obvious to the senses that penguins cannot acquire the virtues of confessors, of virgins, and of widows, or receive grace and be united to—”

St. Damascus did not allow him to finish.

“That proves,” said he warmly, “that the baptism was useless; it does not prove that it was not effective.”

“But by this reasoning,” said St. Guenole, “one might baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by aspersion or immersion, not only a bird or a quadruped, but also an inanimate object, a statue, a table, a chair, *etc.* That animal would be Christian, that idol, that table would be Christian! It is absurd!”

St. Augustine began to speak. There was a great silence.

“I am going,” said the ardent bishop of Hippo, “to show you, by an example, the power of formulas. It deals, it is true, with a diabolical operation. But if it be established that formulas taught by the Devil have effect upon unintelligent animals or even on inanimate objects, how can we longer doubt that the effect of the sacramental formulas extends to the minds of beasts and even to inert matter?”

“This is the example. There was during my lifetime in the town of Madaura, the birthplace of the philosopher Apuleius, a witch who was able to attract men to her chamber by burning a few of their hairs along with certain herbs upon her tripod, pronouncing at the same time certain words. Now one day when she wished by this means to gain the love of a young man, she was deceived by her maid, and instead of the young man’s hairs, she burned some hairs pulled from a leather bottle, made out of a goatskin that hung in a tavern. During the night the leather bottle, full of wine, capered through the town up to the witch’s door. This fact is undoubted. And in sacraments as in enchantments it is the form which

operates. The effect of a divine formula cannot be less in power and extent than the effect of an infernal formula.”

Having spoken in this fashion the great St. Augustine sat down amidst applause.

One of the blessed, of an advanced age and having a melancholy appearance, asked permission to speak. No one knew him. His name was Probus, and he was not enrolled in the canon of the saints.

“I beg the company’s pardon,” said he, “I have no halo, and I gained eternal blessedness without any eminent distinction. But after what the great St. Augustine has just told you I believe it right to impart a cruel experience, which I had, relative to the conditions necessary for the validity of a sacrament. The bishop of Hippo is indeed right in what he said. A sacrament depends on the form; its virtue is in its form; its vice is in its form. Listen, confessors and pontiffs, to my woeful story. I was a priest in Rome under the rule of the Emperor Gordianus. Without desiring to recommend myself to you for any special merit, I may say that I exercised my priesthood with piety and zeal. For forty years I served the church of St. Modestus-beyond-the-Walls. My habits were regular. Every Saturday I went to a tavern-keeper called Barjas, who dwelt with his wine-jars under the Porta Capena, and from him I bought the wine that I consecrated daily throughout the week. During that long space of time I never failed for a single morning to consecrate the holy sacrifice of the mass. However, I had no joy, and it was with a heart oppressed by sorrow that, on the steps of the altar I used to ask, ‘Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?’ The faithful whom I invited to the holy table gave me cause for affliction, for having, so to speak, the Host that I administered still upon their tongues, they fell again into sin just as if the sacrament had been without power or efficacy. At last I reached the end of my earthly trials, and failing asleep in the Lord, I awoke in this abode of the elect. I learned then from the mouth of the angel who brought me here, that Barjas, the tavern-keeper of the Porta Capena, had sold for wine a decoction of roots and barks in which there was not a single drop of the juice of the grape. I had been unable to transmute this vile brew into blood, for it was not wine, and wine alone is changed into the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore all my consecrations were invalid, and unknown to us, my faithful and myself had for forty years been deprived of the sacrament and were in fact in a state of excommunication. This revelation threw me into a stupor which overwhelms me even to-day in this abode of bliss. I go all through Paradise without ever meeting a single one of those Christians whom formerly I admitted to the holy table in the basilica of the blessed Modestus. Deprived of the bread of angels, they easily gave way to the

most abominable vices, and they have all gone to hell. It gives me some satisfaction to think that Barjas, the tavern-keeper, is damned. There is in these things a logic worthy of the author of all logic. Nevertheless my unhappy example proves that it is sometimes inconvenient that form should prevail over essence in the sacraments, and I humbly ask, Could not, eternal wisdom remedy this?"

"No," answered the Lord. "The remedy would be worse than the disease. It would be the ruin of the priesthood if essence prevailed over form in the laws of salvation."

"Alas! Lord," sighed the humble Probus. "Be persuaded by my humble experience; as long as you reduce your sacraments to formulas your justice will meet with terrible obstacles."

"I know that better than you do," replied the Lord. "I see in a single glance both the actual problems which are difficult, and the future problems which will not be less difficult. Thus I can foretell that when the sun will have turned round the earth two hundred and forty times more.

"Sublime language," exclaimed the angels.

"And worthy of the creator of the world," answered the pontiffs.

"It is," resumed the Lord, "a manner of speaking in accordance with my old cosmogony and one which I cannot give up without losing my immutability. . . .

"After the sun, then, will have turned another two hundred and forty times round the earth, there will not be a single cleric left in Rome who knows Latin. When they sing their litanies in the churches people will invoke Orichel, Roguel, and Totichel, and, as you know, these are devils and not angels. Many robbers desiring to make their communions, but fearing that before obtaining pardon they would be forced to give up the things they had robbed to the Church, will make their confessions to travelling priests, who, ignorant of both Italian and Latin, and only speaking the patois of their village, will go through cities and towns selling the remission of sins for a base price, often for a bottle of wine. Probably we shall not be inconvenienced by those absolutions as they will want contrition to make them valid, but it may be that their baptisms will cause us some embarrassment. The priests will become so ignorant that they will baptize children in nomine patria et filia et spirita sancta, as Louis de Potter will take a pleasure in relating in the third volume of his 'Philosophical, Political, and Critical History of Christianity.' It will be an arduous question to decide on the validity of such baptisms; for even if in my sacred writings I tolerate a Greek less elegant than Plato's and a scarcely Ciceronian Latin, I cannot possibly admit a piece of pure patois as a liturgical formula. And one shudders when one thinks

that millions of new-born babes will be baptized by this method. But let us return to our penguins.”

“Your divine words, Lord, have already led us back to them,” said St. Gal. “In the signs of religion and the laws of salvation form necessarily prevails over essence, and the validity of a sacrament solely depends upon its form. The whole question is whether the penguins have been baptized with the proper forms. Now there is no doubt about the answer.”

The fathers and the doctors agreed, and their perplexity became only the more cruel.

“The Christian state,” said St. Cornelius, “is not without serious inconveniences for a penguin. In it the birds are obliged to work out their own salvation. How can they succeed? The habits of birds are, in many points, contrary to the commandments of the Church, and the penguins have no reason for changing theirs. I mean that they are not intelligent enough to give up their present habits and assume better.”

“They cannot,” said the Lord; “my decrees prevent them.”

“Nevertheless,” resumed St. Cornelius, “in virtue of their baptism their actions no longer remain indifferent. Henceforth they will be good or bad, susceptible of merit or of demerit.”

“That is precisely the question we have to deal with,” said the Lord.

“I see only one solution,” said St. Augustine. “The penguins will go to hell.”

“But they have no soul,” observed St. Irenaeus.

“It is a pity,” sighed Tertullian.

“It is indeed,” resumed St. Gal. “And I admit that my disciple, the holy Mael, has, in his blind zeal, created great theological difficulties for the Holy Spirit and introduced disorder into the economy of mysteries.”

“He is an old blunderer,” cried St. Adjutor of Alsace, shrugging his shoulders. But the Lord cast a reproachful look on Adjutor.

“Allow me to speak,” said he; “the holy Mael has not intuitive knowledge like you, my blessed ones. He does not see me. He is an old man burdened by infirmities; he is half deaf and three parts blind. You are too severe on him. However, I recognise that the situation is an embarrassing one.”

“Luckily it is but a passing disorder,” said St. Irenaeus. “The penguins are baptized, but their eggs are not, and the evil will stop with the present generation.”

“Do not speak thus, Irenaeus my son,” said the Lord. “There are exceptions to the laws that men of science lay down on the earth because they are imperfect and have not an exact application to nature. But the laws that I establish are perfect and suffer no exception. We must decide the fate of the baptized

penguins without violating any divine law, and in a manner conformable to the decalogue as well as to the commandments of my Church.”

“Lord,” said St. Gregory Nazianzen, “give them an immortal soul.”

“Alas! Lord, what would they do with it,” sighed Lactantius. “They have not tuneful voices to sing your praises. They would not be able to celebrate your mysteries.”

“Without doubt,” said St. Augustine, “they would not observe the divine law.”

“They could not,” said the Lord.

“They could not,” continued St. Augustine. “And if, Lord, in your wisdom, you pour an immortal soul into them, they will burn eternally in hell in virtue of your adorable decrees. Thus will the transcendent order, that this old Welshman has disturbed, be re-established.”

“You propose a correct solution to me, son of Monica,” said the Lord, “and one that accords with my wisdom. But it does not satisfy my mercy. And, although in my essence I am immutable, the longer I endure, the more I incline to mildness. This change of character is evident to anyone who reads my two Testaments.”

As the discussion continued without much light being thrown upon the matter and as the blessed showed a disposition to keep repeating the same thing, it was decided to consult St. Catherine of Alexandria. This is what was usually done in such cases. St. Catherine while on earth had confounded fifty very learned doctors. She knew Plato’s philosophy in addition to the Holy Scriptures, and she also possessed a knowledge of rhetoric.

VII. AN ASSEMBLY IN PARADISE (Continuation and End)

St. Catherine entered the assembly, her head encircled by a crown of emeralds, sapphires, and pearls, and she was clad in a robe of cloth of gold. She carried at her side a blazing wheel, the image of the one whose fragments had struck her persecutors.

The Lord having invited her to speak, she expressed herself in these terms:

“Lord, in order to solve the problem you deign to submit to me I shall not study the habits of animals in general nor those of birds in particular. I shall only remark to the doctors, confessors, and pontiffs gathered in this assembly that the separation between man and animal is not complete since there are monsters who proceed from both. Such are chimeras — half nymphs and half serpents; such are the three Gorgons and the Capripeds; such are the Scyllas and the Sirens who sing in the sea. These have a woman’s breast and a fish’s tail. Such also are the Centaurs, men down to the waist and the remainder horses. They are a noble race of monsters. One of them, as you know, was able, guided by the light of reason alone, to direct his steps towards eternal blessedness, and you sometimes see his heroic bosom prancing on the clouds. Chiron, the Centaur, deserved for his works on the earth to share the abode of the blessed; he it was who gave Achilles his education; and that young hero, when he left the Centaur’s hands, lived for two years, dressed as a young girl, among the daughters of King Lycomedes. He shared their games and their bed without allowing any suspicion to arise that he was not a young virgin like them. Chiron, who taught him such good morals, is, with the Emperor Trajan, the only righteous man who obtained celestial glory by following the law of nature. And yet he was but half human.

“I think I have proved by this example that, to reach eternal blessedness, it is enough to possess some parts of humanity, always on the condition that they are noble. And what Chiron, the Centaur, could obtain without having been regenerated by baptism, would not the penguins deserve too, if they became half penguins and half men? That is why, Lord, I entreat you to give old Mael’s penguins a human head and breast so that they can praise you worthily. And grant them also an immortal soul — but one of small size.”

Thus Catherine spoke, and the fathers, doctors, confessors, and pontiffs heard her with a murmur of approbation.

But St. Anthony, the Hermit, arose and stretching two red and knotty arms towards the Most High:

“Do not so, O Lord God,” he cried, “in the name of your holy Paraclete, do not so!”

He spoke with such vehemence that his long white beard shook on his chin like the empty nose-bag of a hungry horse.

“Lord, do not so. Birds with human heads exist already. St. Catherine has told us nothing new.”

“The imagination groups and compares; it never creates,” replied St. Catherine drily.

“They exist already,” continued St. Antony, who would listen to nothing. “They are called harpies, and they are the most obscene animals in creation. One day as I was having supper in the desert with the Abbot St. Paul, I placed the table outside my cabin under an old sycamore tree. The harpies came and sat in its branches; they deafened us with their shrill cries and cast their excrement over all our food. The clamour of the monsters prevented me from listening to the teaching of the Abbot St. Paul, and we ate birds’ dung with our bread and lettuces. Lord, it is impossible to believe that harpies could give thee worthy praise.

“Truly in my temptations I have seen many hybrid beings, not only women-serpents and women-fishes, but beings still more confusedly formed such as men whose bodies were made out of a pot, a bell, a clock, a cupboard full of food and crockery, or even out of a house with doors and windows through which people engaged in their domestic tasks could be seen. Eternity would not suffice were I to describe all the monsters that assailed me in my solitude, from whales rigged like ships to a shower of red insects which changed the water of my fountain into blood. But none were as disgusting as the harpies whose offal polluted the leaves of my sycamore.”

“Harpies,” observed Lactantius, “are female Monsters with birds’ bodies. They have a woman’s head and breast. Their forwardness, their shamelessness, and their obscenity proceed from their female nature as the poet Virgil demonstrated in his ‘Aeneid.’ They share the curse of Eve.”

“Let us not speak of the curse of Eve,” said the Lord. “The second Eve has redeemed the first.”

Paul Orosius, the author of a universal history that Bossuet was to imitate in later years, arose and prayed to the Lord:

“Lord, hear my prayer and Anthony’s. Do not make any more monsters like the Centaurs, Sirens, and Fauns, whom the Greeks, those collectors of fables, loved. You will derive no satisfaction from them. Those species of monsters

have pagan inclinations and their double nature does not dispose them to purity of morals.”

The bland Lactantius replied in these terms:

“He who has just spoken is assuredly the best historian in Paradise, for Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Cornelius Nepos, Suetonius, Manetho, Diodorus Siculus, Dion Cassius, and Lampridius are deprived of the sight of God, and Tacitus suffers in hell the torments that are reserved for blasphemers. But Paul Orosius does not know heaven as well as he knows the earth, for he does not seem to bear in mind that the angels, who proceed from man and bird, are purity itself.”

“We are wandering,” said the Eternal. “What have we to do with all those centaurs, harpies, and angels? We have to deal with penguins.”

“You have spoken to the point, Lord,” said the chief of the fifty doctors, who, during their mortal life had been confounded by the Virgin of Alexandria, “and I dare express the opinion that, in order to put an end to the scandal by which heaven is now stirred, old Mael’s penguins should, as St. Catherine who confounded us has proposed, be given half of a human body with an eternal soul proportioned to that half.”

At this speech there arose in the assembly a great noise of private conversations and disputes of the doctors. The Greek fathers argued with the Latins concerning the substance, nature, and dimensions of the soul that should be given to the penguins.

“Confessors and pontiffs,” exclaimed the Lord, “do not imitate the conclaves and synods of the earth. And do not bring into the Church Triumphant those violences that trouble the Church Militant. For it is but too true that in all the councils held under the inspiration of my spirit, in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, fathers have torn the beards and scratched the eyes of other fathers. Nevertheless they were infallible, for I was with them.”

Order being restored, old Hermas arose and slowly uttered these words:

“I will praise you, Lord, for that you caused my mother, Saphira, to be born amidst your people, in the days when the dew of heaven refreshed the earth which was in travail with its Saviour. And will praise you, Lord, for having granted to me to see with my mortal eyes the Apostles of your divine Son. And I will speak in this illustrious assembly because you have willed that truth should proceed out of the mouths of the humble, and I will say: ‘Change these penguins to men. It is the only determination conformable to your justice and your mercy.’”

Several doctors asked permission to speak, others began to do so. No one listened, and all the confessors were tumultuously shaking their palms and their

crowns.

The Lord, by a gesture of his right hand, appeased the quarrels of his elect.

“Let us not deliberate any longer,” said he. “The opinion broached by gentle old Hermas is the only one conformable to my eternal designs. These birds will be changed into men. I foresee in this several disadvantages. Many of those men will commit sins they would not have committed as penguins. Truly their fate through this change will be far less enviable than if they had been without this baptism and this incorporation into the family of Abraham. But my foreknowledge must not encroach upon their free will.

“In order not to impair human liberty, I will be ignorant of what I know, I will thicken upon my eyes the veils I have pierced, and in my blind clear sightedness I will let myself be surprised by what I have foreseen.”

And immediately calling the archangel Raphael:

“Go and find the holy Mael,” said he to him; “inform him of his mistake and tell him, armed with my Name, to change these penguins into men.”

VIII. METAMORPHOSIS OF THE PENGUINS

The archangel, having gone down into the Island of the Penguins, found the holy man asleep in the hollow of a rock surrounded by his new disciples. He laid his hand on his shoulder and, having waked him, said in a gentle voice:

“Mael, fear not!”

The holy man, dazzled by a vivid light, inebriated by a delicious odour, recognised the angel of the Lord, and prostrated himself with his forehead on the ground.

The angel continued:

“Mael, know thy error, believing that thou wert baptizing children of Adam thou hast baptized birds; and it is, through thee that penguins have entered into the Church of God.”

At these words the old man remained stupefied.

And the angel resumed:

“Arise, Mael, arm thyself with the mighty Name of the Lord, and say to these birds, ‘Be ye men!’”

And the holy Mael, having wept and prayed, armed himself with the mighty Name of the Lord and said to the birds:

“Be ye men!”

Immediately the penguins were transformed. Their foreheads enlarged and their heads grew round like the dome of St. Maria Rotunda in Rome. Their oval eyes opened more widely on the universe; a fleshy nose clothed the two clefts of their nostrils; their beaks were changed into mouths, and from their mouths went forth speech; their necks grew short and thick; their wings became arms and their claws legs; a restless soul dwelt within the breast of each of them.

However, there remained with them some traces of their first nature. They were inclined to look sideways; they balanced themselves on their short thighs; their bodies were covered with fine down.

And Mael gave thanks to the Lord, because he had incorporated these penguins into the family of Abraham.

But he grieved at the thought that he would soon leave the island to come back no more, and that perhaps when he was far away the faith of the penguins would perish for want of care like a young and tender plant.

And he formed the idea of transporting their island to the coasts of Armorica.

“I know not the designs of eternal Wisdom,” said he to himself. “But if God wills that this island be transported, who could prevent it?”

And the holy man made a very fine cord about forty feet long out of the flax of his stole. He fastened one end of the cord round a point of rock that jutted up through the sand of the shore and, holding the other end of the cord in his hand, he entered the stone trough.

The trough glided over the sea and towed Penguin Island behind it; after nine days' sailing it approached the Breton coast, bringing the island with it.

BOOK II. THE ANCIENT TIMES

I. THE FIRST CLOTHES

One day St. Mael was sitting by the seashore on a warm stone that he found. He thought it had been warmed by the sun and he gave thanks to God for it, not knowing that the Devil had been resting on it. The apostle was waiting for the monks of Yvern who had been commissioned to bring a freight of skins and fabrics to clothe the inhabitants of the island of Alca.

Soon he saw a monk called Magis coming ashore and carrying a chest upon his back. This monk enjoyed a great reputation for holiness.

When he had drawn near to the old man he laid the chest on the ground and wiping his forehead with the back of his sleeve, he said:

“Well, father, you wish then to clothe these penguins?”

“Nothing is more needful, my son,” said the old man. “Since they have been incorporated into the family of Abraham these penguins share the curse of Eve, and they know that they are naked, a thing of which they were ignorant before. And it is high time to clothe them, for they are losing the down that remained on them after their metamorphosis.”

“It is true,” said Magis as he cast his eyes over the coast where the penguins were to be seen looking for shrimps, gathering mussels, singing, or sleeping, “they are naked. But do you not think, father, that it would be better to leave them naked? Why clothe them? When they wear clothes and are under the moral law they will assume an immense pride, a vile hypocrisy, and an excessive cruelty.”

“Is it possible, my son,” sighed the old man, “that you understand so badly the effects of the moral law to which even the heathen submit?”

“The moral law,” answered Magis, “forces men who are beasts to live otherwise than beasts, a thine that doubtless puts a constraint upon them, but that also flatters and reassures them; and as they are proud, cowardly, and covetous of pleasure, they willingly submit to restraints that tickle their vanity and on which they found both their present security and the hope of their future happiness. That is the principle of all morality. . . . But let us not mislead ourselves. My companions are unloading their cargo of stuffs and skins on the island. Think, father, while there is still time I To clothe the penguins is a very serious business. At present when a penguin desires a penguin he knows precisely what he desires and his lust is limited by an exact knowledge of its object. At this moment two or three couples of penguins are making love on the beach. See with what simplicity! No one pays any attention and the actors

themselves do not seem to be greatly preoccupied. But when the female penguins are clothed, the male penguin will not form so exact a notion of what it is that attracts him to them. His indeterminate desires will fly out into all sorts of dreams and illusions; in short, father, he will know love and its mad torments. And all the time the female penguins will cast down their eyes and bite their lips, and take on airs as if they kept a treasure under their clothes! . . . what a pity!

“The evil will be endurable as long as these people remain rude and poor; but only wait for a thousand years and you will see, father, with what powerful weapons you have endowed the daughters of Alca. If you will allow me, I can give you some idea of it beforehand. I have some old clothes in this chest. Let us take at hazard one of these female penguins to whom the male penguins give such little thought, and let us dress her as well as we can.

“Here is one coming towards us. She is neither more beautiful nor uglier than the others; she is young. No one looks at her. She strolls indolently along the shore, scratching her back and with her finger at her nose as she walks. You cannot help seeing, father, that she has narrow shoulders, clumsy breasts, a stout figure, and short legs. Her reddish knees pucker at every step she takes, and there is, at each of her joints, what looks like a little monkey’s head. Her broad and sinewy feet cling to the rock with their four crooked toes, while the great toes stick up like the heads of two cunning serpents. She begins to walk, all her muscles are engaged in the task, and, when we see them working, we think of her as a machine intended for walking rather than as a machine intended for making love, although visibly she is both, and contains within herself several other pieces of machinery, besides. Well, venerable apostle, you will see what I am going to make of her.”

With these words the monk, Magis, reached the female penguin in three bounds, lifted her up, carried her in his arms with her hair trailing behind her, and threw her, overcome with fright, at the feet of the holy Mael.

And whilst she wept and begged him to do her no harm, he took a pair of sandals out of his chest and commanded her to put them on.

“Her feet,” observed the old man, “will appear smaller when squeezed in by the woollen cords. The soles, being two fingers high, will give an elegant length to her legs and the weight they bear will seem magnified.”

As the penguin tied on her sandals she threw a curious look towards the open coffer, and seeing that it was full of jewels and finery, she smiled through her tears.

The monk twisted her hair on the back of her head and covered it with a chaplet of flowers. He encircled her wrist with golden bracelets and making her stand upright, he passed a large linen band beneath her breasts, alleging that her

bosom would thereby derive a new dignity and that her sides would be compressed to the greater glory of her hips.

He fixed this band with pins, taking them one by one out of his mouth.

“You can tighten it still more,” said the penguin.

When he had, with much care and study, enclosed the soft parts of her bust in this way, he covered her whole body with a rose-coloured tunic which gently followed the lines of her figure.

“Does it hang well?” asked the penguin.

And bending forward with her head on one side and her chin on her shoulder, she kept looking attentively at the appearance of her toilet.

Magis asked her if she did not think the dress a little long, but she answered with assurance that it was not — she would hold it up.

Immediately, taking the back of her skirt in her left hand, she drew it obliquely across her hips, taking care to disclose a glimpse of her heels. Then she went away, walking with short steps and swinging her hips.

She did not turn her head, but as she passed near a stream she glanced out of the corner of her eye at her own reflection.

A male penguin, who met her by chance, stopped in surprise, and retracing his steps began to follow her. As she went along the shore, others coming back from fishing, went up to her, and after looking at her, walked behind her. Those who were lying on the sand got up and joined the rest.

Unceasingly, as she advanced, fresh penguins, descending from the paths of the mountain, coming out of clefts of the rocks, and emerging from the water, added to the size of her retinue.

And all of them, men of ripe age with vigorous shoulders and hairy breasts, agile youths, old men shaking the multitudinous wrinkles of their rosy, and white-haired skins, or dragging their legs thinner and drier than the juniper staff that served them as a third leg, hurried on, panting and emitting an acrid odour and hoarse gasps. Yet she went on peacefully and seemed to see nothing.

“Father,” cried Magis, “notice how each one advances with his nose pointed towards the centre of gravity of that young damsel now that the centre is covered by a garment. The sphere inspires the meditations of geometers by the number of its properties. When it proceeds from a physical and living nature it acquires new qualities, and in order that the interest of that figure might be fully revealed to the penguins it was necessary that, ceasing to see it distinctly with their eyes, they should be led to represent it to themselves in their minds. I myself feel at this moment irresistibly attracted towards that penguin. Whether it be because her skirt gives more importance to her hips, and that in its simple magnificence it invests them with a synthetic and general character and allows only the pure

idea, the divine principle, of them to be seen, whether this be the cause I cannot say, but I feel that if I embraced her I would hold in my hands the heaven of human pleasure. It is certain that modesty communicates an invincible attraction to women. My uneasiness is so great that it would be vain for me to try to conceal it.”

He spoke, and, gathering up his habit, he rushed among the crowd of penguins, pushing, jostling, trampling, and crushing, until he reached the daughter of Alca, whom he seized and suddenly carried in his arms into a cave that had been hollowed out by the sea.

Then the penguins felt as if the sun had gone out. And the holy Mael knew that the Devil had taken the features of the monk, Magis, in order that he might give clothes to the daughter of Alca. He was troubled in spirit, and his soul was sad. As with slow steps he went towards his hermitage he saw the little penguins of six and seven years of age tightening their waists with belts made of sea-weed and walking along the shore to see if anybody would follow them.

II. THE FIRST CLOTHES (Continuation and End)

The holy Mael felt a profound sadness that the first clothes put upon a daughter of Alca should have betrayed the penguin modesty instead of helping it. He persisted, none the less, in his design of giving clothes to the inhabitants of the miraculous island. Assembling them on the shore, he distributed to them the garments that the monks of Yvern had brought. The male penguins received short tunics and breeches, the female penguins long robes. But these robes were far from creating the effect that the former one had produced. They were not so beautiful, their shape was uncouth and without art, and no attention was paid to them since every woman had one. As they prepared the meals and worked in the fields they soon had nothing but slovenly bodices and soiled petticoats.

The male penguins loaded their unfortunate consorts with work until they looked like beasts of burden. They knew nothing of the troubles of the heart and the disorders of passion. Their habits were innocent. Incest, though frequent, was a sign of rustic simplicity and if drunkenness led a youth to commit some such crime he thought nothing more about it the day afterwards.

III. SETTING BOUNDS TO THE FIELDS AND THE ORIGIN OF PROPERTY

The island did not preserve the rugged appearance that it had formerly, when, in the midst of floating icebergs it sheltered a population of birds within its rocky amphitheatre. Its snow-clad peak had sunk down into a hill from the summit of which one could see the coasts of Armorica eternally covered with mist, and the ocean strewn with sullen reefs like monsters half raised out of its depths.

Its coasts were now very extensive and clearly defined and its shape reminded one of a mulberry leaf. It was suddenly covered with coarse grass, pleasing to the flocks, and with willows, ancient figtrees, and mighty oaks. This fact is attested by the Venerable Bede and several other authors worthy of credence.

To the north the shore formed a deep bay that in after years became one of the most famous ports in the universe. To the east, along a rocky coast beaten by a foaming sea, there stretched a deserted and fragrant heath. It was the Beach of Shadows, and the inhabitants of the island never ventured on it for fear of the serpents that lodged in the hollows of the rocks and lest they might encounter the souls of the dead who resembled livid flames. To the south, orchards and woods bounded the languid Bay of Divers. On this fortunate shore old Mael built a wooden church and a monastery. To the west, two streams, the Clange and the Surelle, watered the fertile valleys of Dalles and Dombes.

Now one autumn morning, as the blessed Mael was walking in the valley of Clange in company with a monk of Yvern called Bulloch, he saw bands of fierce-looking men loaded with stones passing along the roads. At the same time he heard in all directions cries and complaints mounting up from the valley towards the tranquil sky.

And he said to Bulloch:

“I notice with sadness, my son, that since they became men the inhabitants of this island act with less wisdom than formerly. When they were birds they only quarrelled during the season of their love affairs. But now they dispute all the time; they pick quarrels with each other in summer as well as in winter. How greatly have they fallen from that peaceful majesty which made the assembly of the penguins look like the Senate of a wise republic!

“Look towards Surelle, Bulloch, my son. In yonder pleasant valley a dozen men penguins are busy knocking each other down with the spades and picks that they might employ better in tilling the ground. The women, still more cruel than

the men, are tearing their opponents' faces with their nails. Alas! Bulloch, my son, why are they murdering each other in this way?"

"From a spirit of fellowship, father, and through forethought for the future," answered Bulloch. "For man is essentially provident and sociable. Such is his character and it is impossible to imagine it apart from a certain appropriation of things. Those penguins whom you see are dividing the ground among themselves."

"Could they not divide it with less violence?" asked the aged man. "As they fight they exchange invectives and threats. I do not distinguish their words, but they are angry ones, judging from the tone."

"They are accusing one another of theft and encroachment," answered Bulloch. "That is the general sense of their speech."

At that moment the holy Mael clasped his hands and sighed deeply.

"Do you see, my son," he exclaimed, "that madman who with his teeth is biting the nose of the adversary he has overthrown and that other one who is pounding a woman's head with a huge stone?"

"I see them," said Bulloch. "They are creating law; they are founding property; they are establishing the principles of civilization, the basis of society, and the foundations of the State."

"How is that?" asked old Mael.

"By setting bounds to their fields. That is the origin of all government. Your penguins, O Master, are performing the most august of functions. Throughout the ages their work will be consecrated by lawyers, and magistrates will confirm it."

Whilst the monk, Bulloch, was pronouncing these words a big penguin with a fair skin and red hair went down into the valley carrying a trunk of a tree upon his shoulder. He went up to a little penguin who was watering his vegetables in the heat of the sun, and shouted to him:

"Your field is mine!"

And having delivered himself of this stout utterance he brought down his club on the head of the little penguin, who fell dead upon the field that his own hands had tilled.

At this sight the holy Mael shuddered through his whole body and poured forth a flood of tears.

And in a voice stifled by horror and fear he addressed this prayer to heaven:

"O Lord, my God, O thou who didst receive young Abel's sacrifices, thou who didst curse Cain, avenge, O Lord, this innocent penguin sacrificed upon his own field and make the murderer feel the weight of thy arm. Is there a more

odious crime, is there a graver offence against thy justice, O Lord, than this murder and this robbery?"

"Take care, father," said Bulloch gently, "that what you call murder and robbery may not really be war and conquest, those sacred foundations of empires, those sources of all human virtues and all human greatness. Reflect, above all, that in blaming the big penguin you are attacking property in its origin and in its source. I shall have no trouble in showing you how. To till the land is one thing, to possess it is another, and these two things must not be confused; as regards ownership the right of the first occupier is uncertain and badly founded. The right of conquest, on the other hand, rests on more solid foundations. It is the only right that receives respect since it is the only one that makes itself respected. The sole and proud origin of property is force. It is born and preserved by force. In that it is august and yields only to a greater force. This is why it is correct to say that he who possesses is noble. And that big red man, when he knocked down a labourer to get possession of his field, founded at that moment a very noble house upon this earth. I congratulate him upon it."

Having thus spoken, Bulloch approached the big penguin, who was leaning upon his club as he stood in the blood-stained furrow:

"Lord Greatauk, dreaded Prince," said he, bowing to the ground, "I come to pay you the homage due to the founder of legitimate power and hereditary wealth. The skull of the vile Penguin you have overthrown will, buried in your field, attest for ever the sacred rights of your posterity over this soil that you have ennobled. Blessed be your sons and your sons' sons! They shall be Greatauks, Dukes of Skull, and they shall rule over this island of Alca."

Then raising his voice and turning towards the holy Mael:

"Bless Greatauk, father, for all power comes from God."

Mael remained silent and motionless, with his eyes raised towards heaven; he felt a painful uncertainty in judging the monk Bulloch's doctrine. It was, however, the doctrine destined to prevail in epochs of advanced civilization. Bulloch can be considered as the creator of civil law in Penguinia.

IV. THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE ESTATES OF PENGUINIA

“Bulloch, my son,” said old Mael, “we ought to make a census of the Penguins and inscribe each of their names in a book.”

“It is a most urgent matter,” answered Bulloch, “there can be no good government without it.”

Forthwith, the apostle, with the help of twelve monks, proceeded to make a census of the people.

And old Mael then said:

“Now that we keep a register of all the inhabitants, we ought, Bulloch, my son, to levy a just tax so as to provide for public expenses and the maintenance of the Abbey. Each ought to contribute according to his means. For this reason, my son, call together the Elders of Alca, and in agreement with them we shall establish the tax.”

The Elders, being called together, assembled to the number of thirty under the great sycamore in the courtyard of the wooden monastery. They were the first Estates of Penguinia. Three-fourths of them were substantial peasants of Surelle and Clange. Greatauk, as the noblest of the Penguins, sat upon the highest stone.

The venerable Mael took his place in the midst of his monks and uttered these words:

“Children, the Lord when he pleases grants riches to men and he takes them away from them. Now I have called you together to levy contributions from the people so as to provide for public expenses and the maintenance of the monks. I consider that these contributions ought to be in proportion to the wealth of each. Therefore he who has a hundred oxen will give ten; he who has ten will give one.”

When the holy man had spoken, Morio, a labourer at Anis-on-the-Clange, one of the richest of the Penguins, rose up and said:

“O Father Mael, I think it right that each should contribute to the public expenses and to the support of the Church, on my part I am ready to give up all that I possess in the interest of my brother Penguins, and if it were necessary I would even cheerfully part with my shirt. All the elders of the people are ready, like me, to sacrifice their goods, and no one can doubt their absolute devotion to their country and their creed. We have, then, only to consider the public interest and to do what it requires. Now, Father, what it requires, what it demands, is not to ask much from those who possess much, for then the rich would be less rich

and the poor still poorer. The poor live on the wealth of the rich and that is the reason why that wealth is sacred. Do not touch it, to do so would be an uncalled for evil. You will get no great profit by taking from the rich, for they are very few in number; on the contrary you will strip yourself of all your resources and plunge the country into misery. Whereas if you ask a little from each inhabitant without regard to his wealth, you will collect enough for the public necessities and you will have no need to enquire into each citizen's resources, a thing that would be regarded by all as a most vexatious measure. By taxing all equally and easily you will spare the poor, for you will leave them the wealth of the rich. And how could you possibly proportion taxes to wealth? Yesterday I had two hundred oxen, to-day I have sixty, to-morrow I shall have a hundred. Clunic has three cows, but they are thin; Nicclu has only two, but they are fat. Which is the richer, Clunic or Nicclu? The signs of opulence are deceitful. What is certain is that everyone eats and drinks. Tax people according to what they consume. That would be wisdom and it would be justice."

Thus spoke Morio amid the applause of the Elders.

"I ask that this speech be graven on bronze," cried the monk, Bulloch. "It is spoken for the future; in fifteen hundred years the best of the Penguins will not speak otherwise."

The Elders were still applauding when Greatauk, his hand on the pommel of his sword, made this brief declaration:

"Being noble, I shall not contribute; for to contribute is ignoble. It is for the rabble to pay."

After this warning the Elders separated in silence.

As in Rome, a new census was taken every five years; and by this means it was observed that the population increased rapidly. Although children died in marvellous abundance and plagues and famines came with perfect regularity to devastate entire villages, new Penguins, in continually greater numbers, contributed by their private misery to the public prosperity.

V. THE MARRIAGE OF KRAKEN AND ORBEROSIA

During these times there lived in the island of Alca a Penguin whose arm was strong and whose mind was subtle. He was called Kraken, and had his dwelling on the Beach of Shadows whither the inhabitants never ventured for fear of serpents that lodged in the hollows of the rocks and lest they might encounter the souls of Penguins that had died without baptism. These, in appearance like livid flames, and uttering doleful groans, wandered night and day along the deserted beach. For it was generally believed, though without proof, that among the Penguins that had been changed into men at the blessed Mael's prayer, several had not received baptism and returned after their death to lament amid the tempests. Kraken dwelt on this savage coast in an inaccessible cavern. The only way to it was through a natural tunnel a hundred feet long, the entrance of which was concealed by a thick wood. One evening as Kraken was walking through this deserted plain he happened to meet a young and charming woman Penguin. She was the one that the monk Magis had clothed with his own hands and thus was the first to have worn the garments of chastity. In remembrance of the day when the astonished crowd of Penguins had seen her moving gloriously in her robe tinted like the dawn, this maiden had received the name of Orberosia.*

* "Orb, poetically, a globe when speaking of the heavenly bodies. By extension any species of globular body." — Littré At the sight of Kraken she uttered a cry of alarm and darted forward to escape from him. But the hero seized her by the garments that floated behind, her, and addressed her in these words: "Damsel, tell me thy name, thy family and thy country."

But Orberosia kept looking at Kraken with alarm.

"Is it you, I see, sir," she asked him, trembling, "or is it not rather your troubled spirit?"

She spoke in this way because the inhabitants of Alca, having no news of Kraken since he went to live on the Beach of Shadows, believed that he had died and descended among the demons of night.

"Cease to fear, daughter of Alca," answered Kraken. "He who speaks to thee is not a wandering spirit, but a man full of strength and might. I shall soon possess great riches."

And young Orberosia asked:

"How dost thou think of acquiring great riches, O Kraken, since thou art a child of Penguins?"

“By my intelligence,” answered Kraken.

“I know,” said Orberosia, “that in the time that thou dwelt among us thou wert renowned for thy skill in hunting and fishing. No one equalled thee in taking fishes in a net or in piercing with thy arrows the swift-flying birds.”

“It was but a vulgar and laborious industry, O maiden. I have found a means of gaining much wealth for myself without fatigue. But tell me who thou art?”

“I am called Orberosia,” answered the young girl.

“Why art thou so far away from thy dwelling and in the night?”

“Kraken, it was not without the will of Heaven.”

“What meanest thou, Orberosia?”

“That Heaven, O Kraken, placed me in thy path, for what reason I know not.”

Kraken beheld her for a long time in silence.

Then he said with gentleness:

“Orberosia, come into my house; it is that of the bravest and most ingenious of the sons of the Penguins. If thou art willing to follow me, I will make thee my companion.”

Then casting down her eyes, she murmured:

“I will follow thee, master.”

It is thus that the fair Orberosia became the consort of the hero Kraken. This marriage was not celebrated with songs and torches because Kraken did not consent to show himself to the people of the Penguins; but hidden in his cave he planned great designs.

VI. THE DRAGON OF ALCA “We afterwards went to visit the cabinet of natural history. . . . The care-taker showed us a sort of packet bound in straw that he told us contained the skeleton of a dragon; a proof, added he, that the dragon is not a fabulous animal.” — *Memoirs of Jacques Casanova*, Paris, 1843. Vol. IV., p, 405

In the meantime the inhabitants of Alca practised the labours of peace. Those of the northern coast went in boats to fish or to search for shell-fish. The labourers of Dombes cultivated oats, rye, and wheat. The rich Penguins of the valley of Dalles reared domestic animals, while those of the Bay of Divers cultivated their orchards. Merchants of Port-Alca carried on a trade in salt fish with Armorica and the gold of the two Britains, which began to be introduced into the island, facilitated exchange. The Penguin people were enjoying the fruit of their labours in perfect tranquillity when suddenly a sinister rumour ran from village to village. It was said everywhere that frightful dragon had ravaged two farms in the Bay of Divers.

A few days before, the maiden Orberosia had disappeared. Her absence had at first caused no uneasiness because on several occasions she had been carried off by violent men who were consumed with love. And thoughtful people were not astonished at this, reflecting that the maiden was the most beautiful of the Penguins. It was even remarked that she sometimes went to meet her ravishers, for none of us can escape his destiny. But this time, as she did not return, it was feared that the dragon had devoured her. The more so as the inhabitants of the valley of Dalles soon knew that the dragon was not a fable told by the women around the fountains. For one night the monster devoured out of the village of Anis six hens, a sheep, and a young orphan child called little Elo. The next morning nothing was to be found either of the animals or of the child.

Immediately the Elders of the village assembled in the public place and seated themselves on the stone bench to take counsel concerning what it was expedient to do in these terrible circumstances.

Having called all those Penguins who had seen the dragon during the disastrous night, they asked them: “Have you not noticed his form and his behaviour?”

And each answered in his turn:

“He has the claws of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the tail of a serpent.”

“His back bristles with thorny crests.”

“His whole body is covered with yellow scales.”

“His look fascinates and confounds. He vomits flames.”

“He poisons the air with his breath.”

“He has the head of a dragon, the claws of a lion, and the tail of a fish.”

And a woman of Anis, who was regarded as intelligent and of sound judgment and from whom the dragon had taken three hens, deposed as follows: “He is formed like a man. The proof is that I thought he was my husband, and I said to him, ‘Come to bed, you old fool.’”

Others said:

“He is formed like a cloud.”

“He looks like a mountain.”

And a little child came and said: “I saw the dragon taking off his head in the barn so that he might give a kiss to my sister Minnie.”

And the Elders also asked the inhabitants: “How big is the dragon?”

And it was answered:

“As big as an ox.”

“Like the big merchant ships of the Bretons.”

“He is the height of a man.”

“He is higher than the fig-tree under which you are sitting.”

“He is as large as a dog.”

Questioned finally on his colour, the inhabitants said: “Red.”

“Green.”

“Blue.”

“Yellow.”

“His head is bright green, his wings are brilliant orange tinged with pink, his limbs are silver grey, his hind-quarters and his tail are striped with brown and pink bands, his belly bright yellow spotted with black.”

“His colour? He has no colour.”

“He is the colour of a dragon.”

After hearing this evidence the Elders remained uncertain as to what should be done. Some advised to watch for him, to surprise him and overthrow him by a multitude of arrows. Others, thinking it vain to oppose so powerful a monster by force, counselled that he should be appeased by offerings.

“Pay him tribute,” said one of them who passed for a wise man. “We can render him propitious to us by giving him agreeable presents, fruits, wine, lambs, a young virgin.”

Others held for poisoning the fountains where he was accustomed to drink or for smoking him out of his cavern.

But none of these counsels prevailed. The dispute was lengthy and the Elders dispersed without coming to any resolution.

VII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

During all the month dedicated by the Romans to their false god Mars or Mavors, the dragon ravaged the farms of Dalles and Dombes. He carried off fifty sheep, twelve pigs, and three young boys. Every family was in mourning and the island was full of lamentations. In order to remove the scourge, the Elders of the unfortunate villages watered by the Clange and the Surelle resolved to assemble and together go and ask the help of the blessed Mael.

On the fifth day of the month whose name among the Latins signifies opening, because it opens the year, they went in procession to the wooden monastery that had been built on the southern coast of the island. When they were introduced into the cloister they filled it with their sobs and groans. Moved by their lamentations, old Mael left the room in which he devoted himself to the study of astronomy and the meditation of the Scriptures, and went down to them, leaning on his pastoral staff. At his approach, the Elders, prostrating themselves, held out to him green branches of trees and some of them burnt aromatic herbs.

And the holy man, seating himself beside the cloistral fountain under an ancient fig-tree, uttered these words:

“O my sons, offspring of the Penguins, why do you weep and groan? Why do you hold out those suppliant boughs towards me? Why do you raise towards heaven the smoke of those herbs? What calamity do you expect that I can avert from your heads? Why do you beseech me? I am ready to give my life for you. Only tell your father what it is you hope from him.”

To these questions the chief of the Elders answered:

“O Mael, father of the sons of Alca, I will speak for all. A horrible dragon is laying waste our lands, depopulating our cattle-sheds, and carrying off the flower of our youth. He has devoured the child Elo and seven young boys; he has mangled the maiden Orberosia, the fairest of the Penguins with his teeth. There is not a village in which he does not emit his poisoned breath and which he has not filled with desolation. A prey to this terrible scourge, we come, O Mael, to pray thee, as the wisest, to advise us concerning the safety of the inhabitants of this island lest the ancient race of Penguins be extinguished.”

“O chief of the Elders of Alca,” replied Mael, “thy words fill me with profound grief, and I groan at the thought that this island is the prey of a terrible dragon. But such an occurrence is not unique, for we find in books several tales of very fierce dragons. The monsters are oftenest found in caverns, by the brinks of waters, and, in preference, among pagan peoples. Perhaps there are some

among you who, although they have received holy baptism and been incorporated into the family of Abraham, have yet worshipped idols, like the ancient Romans, or hung up images, votive tablets, fillets of wool, and garlands of flowers on the branches of some sacred tree. Or perhaps some of the women Penguins have danced round a magic stone and drunk water from the fountains where the nymphs dwell. If it be so, believe, O Penguins, that the Lord has sent this dragon to punish all for the crimes of some, and to lead you, O children of the Penguins, to exterminate blasphemy, superstition, and impiety from amongst you. For this reason I advise, as a remedy against the great evil from which you suffer, that you carefully search your dwellings for idolatry, and extirpate it from them. I think it would be also efficacious to pray and do penance.”

Thus spoke the holy Mael. And the Elders of the Penguin people kissed his feet and returned to their villages with renewed hope.

VIII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

Following the counsel of the holy Mael the inhabitants of Alca endeavoured to uproot the superstitions that had sprung up amongst them. They took care to prevent the girls from dancing with incantations round the fairy tree. Young mothers were sternly forbidden to rub their children against the stones that stood upright in the fields so as to make them strong. An old man of Dombes who foretold the future by shaking grains of barley on a sieve, was thrown into a well.

However, each night the monster still raided the poultry-yards and the cattle-sheds. The frightened peasants barricaded themselves in their houses. A woman with child who saw the shadow of a dragon on the road through a window in the moonlight, was so terrified that she was brought to bed before her time.

In those days of trial, the holy Mael meditated unceasingly on the nature of dragons and the means of combating them. After six months of study and prayer he thought he had found what he sought. One evening as he was walking by the sea with a young monk called Samuel, he told him in these terms:

“I have studied at length the history and habits of dragons, not to satisfy a vain curiosity, but to discover examples to follow in the present circumstances. For such, Samuel, my son, is the use of history.

“It is an invariable fact that dragons are extremely vigilant. They never sleep, and for this reason we often find them employed in guarding treasures. A dragon guarded at Colchis the golden fleece that Jason conquered from him. A dragon watched over the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides. He was killed by Hercules and transformed into a star by Juno. This fact is related in some books, and if it be true, it was done by magic, for the gods of the pagans are in reality demons. A dragon prevented barbarous and ignorant men from drinking at the fountain of Castalia. We must also remember the dragon of Andromeda, which was slain by Perseus. But let us turn from these pagan fables, in which error is always mixed with truth. We meet dragons in the histories of the glorious archangel Michael, of St. George, St. Philip, St. James the Great, St. Patrick, St. Martha, and St. Margaret. And it is in such writings, since they are worthy of full credence, that we ought to look for comfort and counsel.

“The story of the dragon of Silena affords us particularly precious examples. You must know, my son, that on the banks of a vast pool close to that town there dwelt a dragon who sometimes approached the walls and poisoned with his breath all who dwelt in the suburbs. And that they might not be devoured by the

monster, the inhabitants of Silena delivered up to him one of their number expressed his thought every morning. The victim was chosen by lot, and after a hundred others, the lot fell upon the king's daughter.

"Now St. George, who was a military tribune, as he passed through the town of Silena, learned that the king's daughter had just been given to the fierce beast. He immediately mounted his horse, and, armed with his lance, rushed to encounter the dragon, whom he reached just as the monster was about to devour the royal virgin. And when St. George had overthrown the dragon, the king's daughter fastened her girdle round the beast's neck and he followed her like a dog led on a leash.

"That is an example for us of the power of virgins over dragons. The history of St. Martha furnishes us with a still more certain proof. Do you know the story, Samuel, my son?"

"Yes, father," answered Samuel.

And the blessed Mael went on:

"There was in a forest on the banks of the Rhone, between Arles and Avignon, a dragon half quadruped and half fish, larger than an ox, with sharp teeth like horns and huge-wings at his shoulders. He sank the boats and devoured their passengers. Now St. Martha, at the entreaty of the people, approached this dragon, whom she found devouring a man. She put her girdle round his neck and led him easily into the town.

"These two examples lead me to think that we should have recourse to the power of some virgin so as to conquer the dragon who scatters terror and death through the island of Alca.

"For this reason, Samuel thy son, gird up thy loins and go, I pray thee, with two of thy companions, into all the villages of this island, and proclaim everywhere that a virgin alone shall be able to deliver the island from the monster that devastates it.

"Thou shalt sing psalms and canticles and thou shalt say:

"O sons of the Penguins, if there be among you a pure virgin, let her arise and go, armed with the sign of the cross, to combat the dragon!"

Thus the old man spake, and Samuel promised to obey him. The next day he girded up his loins and set out with two of his companions to proclaim to the inhabitants of Alca that a virgin alone would be able to deliver the Penguins from the rage of the dragon.

IX. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

Orberosia loved her husband, but she did not love him alone. At the hour when Venus lightens in the pale sky, whilst Kraken scattered terror through the villages, she used to visit in his moving hut, a young shepherd of Dalles called Marcel, whose pleasing form was invested with inexhaustible vigour. The fair Orberosia shared the shepherd's aromatic couch with delight, but far from making herself known to him, she took the name of Bridget, and said that she was the daughter of a gardener in the Bay of Divers. When regretfully she left his arms she walked across the smoking fields towards the Coast of Shadows, and if she happened to meet some belated peasant she immediately spread out her garments like great wings and cried:

"Passer by, lower your eyes, that you may not have to say, 'Alas! alas! woe is me, for I have seen the angel of the Lord.'"

The villagers tremblingly knelt with their faces to the round. And several of them used to say that angels, whom it would be death to see, passed along the roads of the island in the night time.

Kraken did not know of the loves of Orberosia and Marcel, for he was a hero, and heroes never discover the secrets of their wives. But though he did not know of these loves, he reaped the benefit of them. Every night he found his companion more good-humoured and more beautiful, exhaling pleasure and perfuming the nuptial bed with a delicious odour of fennel and vervain. She loved Kraken with a love that never became importunate or anxious, because she did not rest its whole weight on him alone.

This lucky infidelity of Orberosia was destined soon to save the hero from a great peril and to assure his fortune and his glory for ever. For it happened that she saw passing in the twilight a neatherd from Belmont, who was goading on his oxen, and she fell more deeply in love with him than she had ever been with the shepherd Marcel. He was hunch-backed; his shoulders were higher than his ears; his body was supported by legs of different lengths; his rolling eyes flashed, from beneath his matted hair. From his throat issued a hoarse voice and strident laughter; he smelt of the cow-shed. However, to her he was beautiful. "A plant," as Gnatho says, "has been loved by one, a stream by another, a beast by a third."

Now, one day, as she was sighing within the neatherd's arms in a village barn, suddenly the blasts of a trumpet, with sounds and footsteps, fell upon her ears; she looked through the window and saw the inhabitants collected in the

marketplace round a young monk, who, standing upon a rock, uttered these words in a distinct voice:

“Inhabitants of Belmont, Abbot Mael, our venerable father, informs you through my mouth that neither by strength nor skill in arms shall you prevail against the dragon; but the beast shall be overcome by a virgin. If, then, there be among you a perfectly pure virgin, let her arise and go towards the monster; and when she meets him let her tie her girdle round his neck and she shall lead him as easily as if he were a little dog.”

And the young monk, replacing his hood upon his head, departed to carry the proclamation of the blessed Mael to other villages.

Orberosia sat in the amorous straw, resting her head in her hand and supporting her elbow upon her knee, meditating on what she had just heard.

Although, so far as Kraken was concerned, she feared the power of a virgin much less than the strength of armed men, she did not feel reassured by the proclamation of the blessed Mael. A vague but sure instinct ruled her mind and warned her that Kraken could not henceforth be a dragon with safety.

She said to the neatherd:

“My own heart, what do you think about the dragon?”

The rustic shook his head.

“It is certain that dragons laid waste the earth in ancient times and some have been seen as large as mountains. But they come no longer, and I believe that what has been taken for a dragon is not one at all, but pirates or merchants who have carried off the fair Orberosia and the best of the children of Alca in their ships. But if one of those brigands attempts to rob me of my oxen, I will either by force or craft find a way to prevent him from doing me any harm.”

This remark of the neatherd increased Orberosia’s apprehensions and added to her solicitude for the husband whom she loved.

X. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

The days passed by and no maiden arose in the island to combat the monster. And in the wooden monastery old Mael, seated on a bench in the shade of an old fig-tree, accompanied by a pious monk called Regimental, kept asking himself anxiously and sadly how it was that there was not in Alca a single virgin fit to overthrow the monster.

He sighed and brother Regimental sighed too. At that moment old Mael called young Samuel, who happened to pass through the garden, and said to him:

“I have meditated anew, my son, on the means of destroying the dragon who devours the flower of our youth, our flocks, and our harvests. In this respect the story of the dragons of St. Riok and of St. Pol de Leon seems to me particularly instructive. The dragon of St. Riok was six fathoms long; his head was derived from the cock and the basilisk, his body from the ox and the serpent; he ravaged the banks of the Elorn in the time of King Bristocus. St. Riok, then aged two years, led him by a leash to the sea, in which the monster drowned himself of his own accord. St. Pol’s dragon was sixty feet long and not less terrible. The blessed apostle of Leon bound him with his stole and allowed a young noble of great purity of life to lead him. These examples prove that in the eyes of God a chaste young man is as agreeable as a chaste girl. Heaven makes no distinction between them. For this reason, my son, if you believe what I say, we will both go to the Coast of Shadows; when we reach the dragon’s cavern we will call the monster in a loud voice, and when he comes forth I will tie my stole round his neck and you will lead him to the sea, where he will not fail to drown himself.”

At the old man’s words Samuel cast down his head and did not answer.

“You seem to hesitate, my son,” said Mael.

Brother Regimental, contrary to his custom, spoke without being addressed.

“There is at least cause for some hesitation,” said he. “St. Riok was only two years old when he overcame the dragon. Who says that nine or ten years later he could have done as much? Remember, father, that the dragon who is devastating our island has devoured little Elo and four or five other young boys. Brother Samuel is not go presumptuous as to believe that at nineteen years of age he is more innocent than they were at twelve and fourteen.

“Alas!” added the monk, with a groan, “who can boast of being chaste in this world, where everything gives the example and model of love, where all things in nature, animals, and plants, show us the caresses of love and advise us to share them? Animals are eager to unite in their own fashion, but the various

marriages of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, and reptiles are far from equalling in lust the nuptials of the trees. The greatest extremes of lewdness that the pagans have imagined in their fables are outstripped by the simple flowers of the field, and, if you knew the irregularities of lilies and roses you would take those chalices of impurity, those vases of scandal, away from your altars.”

“Do not speak in this way, Brother Regimental,” answered old Mael. “Since they are subject to the law of nature, animals and plants are always innocent. They have no souls to save, whilst man—”

“You are right,” replied Brother Regimental, “it is quite a different thing. But do not send young Samuel to the dragon — the dragon might devour him. For the last five years Samuel is not in a state to show his innocence to monsters. In the year of the comet, the Devil in order to seduce him, put in his path a milkmaid, who was lifting up her petticoat to cross a ford. Samuel was tempted, but he overcame the temptation. The Devil, who never tires, sent him the image of that young girl in a dream. The shade did what the reality was unable to accomplish, and Samuel yielded. When he awoke he moistened his couch with his tears, but alas! repentance did not give him back his innocence.”

As he listened to this story Samuel asked himself how his secret could be known, for he was ignorant that the Devil had borrowed the appearance of Brother Regimental, so as to trouble the hearts of the monks of Alca.

And old Mael remained deep in thought and kept asking himself in grief:

“Who will deliver us from the dragon’s tooth? Who will preserve us from his breath? Who will save us from his look?”

However, the inhabitants of Alca began to take courage. The labourers of Dombes and the neatherds of Belmont swore that they themselves would be of more avail than a girl against the ferocious beast, and they exclaimed as they stroked the muscles on their arms, “Let the dragon come!” Many men and women had seen him. They did not agree about his form and his figure, but all now united in saying that he was not as big as they had thought, and that his height was not much greater than a man’s. The defence was organised; towards nightfall watches were stationed at the entrances of the villages ready to give the alarm; and during the night companies armed with pitchforks and scythes protected the paddocks in which the animals were shut up. Indeed, once in the village of Anis some plucky labourers surprised him as he was scaling Morio’s wall, and, as they had flails, scythes, and pitchforks, they fell upon him and pressed him hard. One of them, a very quick and courageous man, thought to have run him through with his pitchfork; but he slipped in a pool and so let him escape. The others would certainly have caught him had they not waited to pick up the rabbits and fowls that he dropped in his flight.

Those labourers declared to the Elders of the village that the monster's form and proportions appeared to them human enough except for his head and his tail, which were, in truth, terrifying.

XI. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

On that day Kraken came back to his cavern sooner than usual. He took from his head his sealskin helmet with its two bull's horns and its visor trimmed with terrible hooks. He threw on the table his gloves that ended in horrible claws — they were the beaks of sea-birds. He unhooked his belt from which hung a long green tail twisted into many folds. Then he ordered his page, Elo, to help him off with his boots and, as the child did not succeed in doing this very quickly, he gave him a kick that sent him to the other end of the grotto.

Without looking at the fair Orberosia, who was spinning, he seated himself in front of the fireplace, on which a sheep was roasting, and he muttered:

“Ignoble Penguins. . . . There is no worse trade than a dragon's.”

“What does my master say?” asked the fair Orberosia.

“They fear me no longer,” continued Kraken. “Formerly everyone fled at my approach. I carried away hens and rabbits in my bag; I drove sheep and pigs, cows, and oxen before me. To-day these clod-hoppers keep a good guard; they sit up at night. Just now I was pursued in the village of Anis by doughty labourers armed with flails and scythes and pitchforks. I had to drop the hens and rabbits, put my tail under my arm, and run as fast as I could. Now I ask you, is it seemly for a dragon of Cappadocia to run away like a robber with his tail under his arm? Further, incommoded as I was by crests, horns, hooks, claws, and scales, I barely escaped a brute who ran half an inch of his pitchfork into my left thigh.”

As he said this he carefully ran his hand over the insulted part, and, after giving himself up for a few moments to bitter meditation:

“What idiots those Penguins are! I am tired of blowing flames in the faces of such imbeciles. Orberosia, do you hear me?”

Having thus spoken the hero raised his terrible helmet in his hands and gazed at it for a long time in gloomy silence. Then he pronounced these rapid words:

“I have made this helmet with my own hands in the shape of a fish's head, covering it with the skin of a seal. To make it more terrible I have put on it the horns of a bull and I have given it a boar's jaws; I have hung from it a horse's tail dyed vermillion. When in the gloomy twilight I threw it over my shoulders no inhabitant of this island had courage to withstand its sight. Women and children, young men and old men fled distracted at its approach, and I carried terror among the whole race of Penguins. By what advice does that insolent people

lose its earlier fears and dare to-day to behold these horrible jaws and to attack this terrible crest?"

And throwing his helmet on the rocky soil:

"Perish, deceitful helmet!" cried Kraken. "I swear by all the demons of Armor that I will never bear you upon my head again."

And having uttered this oath he stamped upon his helmet, his gloves, his boots, and upon his tail with its twisted folds.

"Kraken," said the fair Orberosia, "will you allow your servant to employ artifice to save your reputation and your goods? Do not despise a woman's help. You need it, for all men are imbeciles."

"Woman," asked Kraken, "what are your plans?"

And the fair Orberosia informed her husband that the monks were going through the villages teaching the inhabitants the best way of combating the dragon; that, according to their instructions, the beast would be overcome by a virgin, and that if a maid placed her girdle around the dragon's neck she could lead him as easily as if he were a little dog.

"How do you know that the monks teach this?" asked Kraken.

"My friend," answered Orberosia, "do not interrupt a serious subject by frivolous questions. . . . 'If, then,' added the monks, 'there be in Alca a pure virgin, let her arise!' Now, Kraken, I have determined to answer their call. I will go and find the holy Mael and I will say to him: 'I am the virgin destined by Heaven to overthrow the dragon.'"

At these words Kraken exclaimed: "How can you be that pure virgin? And why do you want to overthrow me, Orberosia? Have you lost your reason? Be sure that I will not allow myself to be conquered by you!"

"Can you not try and understand me before you get angry?" sighed the fair Orberosia with deep though gentle contempt.

And she explained the cunning designs that she had formed.

As he listened, the hero remained pensive. And when she ceased speaking:

"Orberosia, your cunning, is deep," said he, "And if your plans are carried out according to your intentions I shall derive great advantages from them. But how can you be the virgin destined by heaven?"

"Don't bother about that," she replied, "and come to bed."

The next day in the grease-laden atmosphere of the cavern, Kraken plaited a deformed skeleton out of osier rods and covered it with bristling, scaly, and filthy skins. To one extremity of the skeleton Orberosia sewed the fierce crest and the hideous mask that Kraken used to wear in his plundering expeditions, and to the other end she fastened the tail with twisted folds which the hero was wont to trail behind him. And when the work was finished they showed little Elo

and the other five children who waited on them how to get inside this machine, how to make it walk, how to blow horns and burn tow in it so as to send forth smoke and flames through the dragon's mouth.

XII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation)

Orberosia, having clothed herself in a robe made of coarse stuff and girt herself with a thick cord, went to the monastery and asked to speak to the blessed Mael. And because women were forbidden to enter the enclosure of the monastery the old man advanced outside the gates, holding his pastoral cross in his right hand and resting his left on the shoulder of Brother Samuel, the youngest of his disciples.

He asked:

“Woman, who art thou?”

“I am the maiden Orberosia.”

At this reply Mael raised his trembling arms to heaven.

“Do you speak truth, woman? It is a certain fact that Orberosia was devoured by the dragon. And yet I see Orberosia and hear her. Did you not, O my daughter, while within the dragon’s bowels arm yourself with the sign of the cross and come uninjured out of his throat? That is what seems to me the most credible explanation.”

“You are not deceived, father,” answered Orberosia. “That is precisely what happened to me. Immediately I came out of the creature’s bowels I took refuge in a hermitage on the Coast of Shadows. I lived there in solitude, giving myself up to prayer and meditation, and performing unheard of austerities, until I learnt by a revelation from heaven that a maid alone could overcome the dragon, and that I was that maid.”

“Show me a sign of your mission,” said the old man.

“I myself am the sign,” answered Orberosia.

“I am not ignorant of the power of those who have placed a seal upon their flesh,” replied the apostle of the Penguins. “But are you indeed such as you say?”

“You will see by the result,” answered Orberosia.

The monk Regimental drew near:

“That will,” said he, “be the best proof. King Solomon has said: ‘Three things are hard to understand and a fourth is impossible: they are the way of a serpent on the earth, the way of a bird in the air, the way of a ship in the sea, and the way of a man with a maid!’ I regard such matrons as nothing less than presumptuous who claim to compare themselves in these matters with the wisest of kings. Father, if you are led by me you will not consult them in regard to the pious Orberosia. When they have given their opinion you will not be a bit farther on

than before. Virginity is not less difficult to prove than to keep. Pliny tells us in his history that its signs are either imaginary or very uncertain.* One who bears upon her the fourteen signs of corruption may yet be pure in the eyes of the angels, and, on the contrary, another who has been pronounced pure by the matrons who inspected her may know that her good appearance is due to the artifices of a cunning perversity. As for the purity of this holy girl here, I would put my hand in the fire in witness of it.”

* We have vainly sought for this phrase in Pliny’s “Natural History.” — Editor.

He spoke thus because he was the Devil. But old Mael did not know it. He asked the pious Orberosia: “My daughter, how, would you proceed to conquer so fierce an animal as he who devoured you?”

The virgin answered:

“To-morrow at sunrise, O Mael, you will summon the people together on the hill in front of the desolate moor that extends to the Coast of Shadows, and you will take care that no man of the Penguins remains less than five hundred paces from those rocks so that he may not be poisoned by the monster’s breath. And the dragon will come out of the rocks and I will put my girdle round his neck and lead him like an obedient dog.”

“Ought you not to be accompanied by a courageous and pious man who will kill the dragon?” asked Mael.

“It will be as thou sayest, venerable father. I shall deliver the monster to Kraken, who will slay him with his flashing sword. For I tell thee that the noble Kraken, who was believed to be dead, will return among the Penguins and he shall slay the dragon. And from the creature’s belly will come forth the little children whom he has devoured.”

“What you declare to me, O virgin,” cried the apostle, “seems wonderful and beyond human power.”

“It is,” answered the virgin Orberosia. “But learn, O Mael, that I have had a revelation that as a reward for their deliverance, the Penguin people will pay to the knight Kraken an annual tribute of three hundred fowls, twelve sheep, two oxen, three pigs, one thousand eight hundred bushels of corn, and vegetables according to their season; and that, moreover, the children who will come out of the dragon’s belly will be given and committed to the said Kraken to serve him and obey him in all things. If the Penguin people fail to keep their engagements a new dragon will come upon the island more terrible than the first. I have spoken.”

XIII. THE DRAGON OF ALCA (Continuation and End)

The people of the Penguins were assembled by Mael and they spent the night on the Coast of Shadows within the bounds which the holy man had prescribed in order that none among the Penguins should be poisoned by the monster's breath.

The veil of night still covered the earth when, preceded by a hoarse bellowing, the dragon showed his indistinct and monstrous form upon the rocky coast. He crawled like a serpent and his writhing body seemed about fifteen feet long. At his appearance the crowd drew back in terror. But soon all eyes were turned towards the Virgin Orberosia, who, in the first light of the dawn, clothed in white, advanced over the purple heather. With an intrepid though modest gait she walked towards the beast, who, uttering awful bellowings, opened his flaming throat. An immense cry of terror and pity arose from the midst of the Penguins. But the virgin, unloosing her linen girdle, put it round the dragon's neck and led him on the leash like a faithful dog amid the acclamations of the spectators.

She had walked over a long stretch of the heath when Kraken appeared armed with a flashing sword. The people, who believed him dead, uttered cries of joy and surprise. The hero rushed towards the beast, turned him over on his back, and with his sword cut open his belly, from whence came forth in their shirts, with curling hair and folded hands, little Elo and the five other children whom the monster had devoured.

Immediately they threw themselves on their knees before the virgin Orberosia, who took them in her arms and whispered into their ears:

"You will go through the villages saying: 'We are the poor little children who were devoured by the dragon, and we came out of his belly in our shirts.' The inhabitants will give you abundance of all that you can desire. But if you say anything else you will get nothing but cuffs and whippings. Go!"

Several Penguins, seeing the dragon disembowelled, rushed forward to cut him to pieces, some from a feeling of rage and vengeance, others to get the magic stone called dragonite, that is engendered in his head. The mothers of the children who had come back to life ran to embrace their little ones. But the holy Mael kept them back, saying that none of them were holy enough to approach a dragon without dying.

And soon little Elo, and the five other children came towards the people and said:

“We are the poor little children who were devoured by the dragon and we came out of his belly in our shirts.”

And all who heard them kissed them and said:

“Blessed children, we will give you abundance of all that you can desire.”

And the crowd of people dispersed, full of joy, singing hymns and canticles.

To commemorate this day on which Providence delivered the people from a cruel scourge, processions were established in which the effigy of a chained dragon was led about.

Kraken levied the tribute and became the richest and most powerful of the Penguins. As a sign of his victory and so as to inspire a salutary terror, he wore a dragon’s crest upon his head and he had a habit of saying to the people:

“Now that the monster is dead I am the dragon.”

For many years Orberosia bestowed her favours upon neatherds and shepherds, whom she thought equal to the gods. But when she was no longer beautiful she consecrated herself to the Lord.

At her death she became the object of public veneration, and was admitted into the calendar of the saints and adopted as the patron saint of Penguinia.

Kraken left a son, who, like his father, wore a dragon’s crest, and he was for this reason surnamed Draco. He was the founder of the first royal dynasty of the Penguins.

BOOK III. THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

I. BRIAN THE GOOD AND QUEEN GLAMORGAN

The kings of Alca were descended from Draco, the son of Kraken, and they wore on their heads a terrible dragon's crest, as a sacred badge whose appearance alone inspired the people with veneration, terror, and love. They were perpetually in conflict either with their own vassals and subjects or with the princes of the adjoining islands and continents.

The most ancient of these kings has left but a name. We do not even know how to pronounce or write it. The first of the Draconides whose history is known was Brian the Good, renowned for his skill and courage in war and in the chase.

He was a Christian and loved learning. He also favoured men who had vowed themselves to the monastic life. In the hall of his palace where, under the sooty rafters, there hung the heads, pelts, and horns of wild beasts, he held feasts to which all the harpers of Alca and of the neighbouring islands were invited, and he himself used to join in singing the praises of the heroes. He was just and magnanimous, but inflamed by so ardent a love of glory that he could not restrain himself from putting to death those who had sung better than himself.

The monks of Yvern having been driven out by the pagans who ravaged Brittany, King Brian summoned them into his kingdom and built a wooden monastery for them near his palace. Every day he went with Queen Glamorgan, his wife, into the monastery chapel and was present at the religious ceremonies and joined in the hymns.

Now among these monks there was a brother called Oddoul, who, while still in the flower of his youth, had adorned himself with knowledge and virtue. The devil entertained a great grudge against him, and attempted several times to lead him into temptation. He took several shapes and appeared to him in turn as a war-horse, a young maiden, and a cup of mead. Then he rattled two dice in a dicebox and said to him:

"Will you play with me for the kingdoms of, the world against one of the hairs of your head?"

But the man of the Lord, armed with the sign of the Cross, repulsed the enemy. Perceiving that he could not seduce him, the devil thought of an artful plan to ruin him. One summer night he approached the queen, who slept upon her couch, showed her an image of the young monk whom she saw every day in the wooden monastery, and upon this image he placed a spell. Forthwith, like a subtle poison, love flowed into Glamorgan's veins, and she burned with an ardent desire to do as she listed with Oddoul. She found unceasing pretexts to

have him near her. Several times she asked him to teach reading and singing to her children.

"I entrust them to you," said she to him. "And will follow the lessons you will give them so that I myself may learn also. You will teach both mother and sons at the same time."

But the young monk kept making excuses. At times he would say that he was not a learned enough teacher, and on other occasions that his state forbade him all intercourse with women. This refusal inflamed Glamorgan's passion. One day as she lay pining upon her couch, her malady having become intolerable, she summoned Oddoul to her chamber. He came in obedience to her orders, but remained with his eyes cast down towards the threshold of the door. With impatience and grief she resented his not looking at her.

"See," said she to him, "I have no more strength, a shadow is on my eyes. My body is both burning and freezing."

And as he kept silence and made no movement, she called him in a voice of entreaty:

"Come to me, come!"

With outstretched arms to which passion gave more length, she endeavoured to seize him and draw him towards her.

But he fled away, reproaching her for her wantonness.

Then, incensed with rage and fearing that Oddoul might divulge the shame into which she had fallen, she determined to ruin him so that he might not ruin her.

In a voice of lamentation that resounded throughout all the palace she called for help, as if, in truth, she were in some great danger. Her servants rushed up and saw the young monk fleeing and the queen pulling back the sheets upon her couch. They all cried out together. And when King Brian, attracted by the noise, entered the chamber, Glamorgan, showing him her dishevelled hair, her eyes flooded with tears, and her bosom that in the fury of her love she had torn with her nails, said:

"My lord and husband, behold the traces of the insults I have undergone. Driven by an infamous desire Oddoul has approached me and attempted to do me violence."

When he heard these complaints and saw the blood, the king, transported with fury, ordered his guards to seize the young monk and burn him alive before the palace under the queen's eyes.

Being told of the affair, the Abbot of Yvern went to the king and said to him:

"King Brian, know by this example the difference between a Christian woman and a pagan. Roman Lucretia was the most virtuous of idolatrous

princesses, yet she had not the strength to defend herself against the attacks of an effeminate youth, and, ashamed of her weakness, she gave way to despair, whilst Glamorgan has successfully withstood the assaults of a criminal filled with rage, and possessed by the most terrible of demons.” Meanwhile Oddoul, in the prison of the palace, was waiting for the moment when he should be burned alive. But God did not suffer an innocent to perish. He sent to him an angel, who, taking the form of one of the queen’s servants called Gudrune, took him out of his prison and led him into the very room where the woman whose appearance he had taken dwelt.

And the angel said to young Oddoul:

“I love thee because thou art daring.”

And young Oddoul, believing that it was Gudrune herself, answered with downcast looks:

“It is by the grace of the Lord that I have resisted the violence of the queen and braved the anger of that powerful woman.”

And the angel asked:

“What? Hast thou not done what the queen accuses thee of?”

“In truth no, I have not done it,” answered Oddoul, his hand on his heart.

“Thou hast not done it?”

“No, I have not done it. The very thought of such an action fills me with horror.”

“Then,” cried the angel, “what art thou doing here, thou impotent creature?” *

* The Penguin chronicler who relates the fact employs the expression, *Species inductilis*. I have endeavoured to translate it literally.

And she opened the door to facilitate the young man’s escape. Oddoul felt himself pushed violently out. Scarcely had he gone down into the street than a chamber-pot was poured over his head; and he thought:

“Mysterious are thy designs, O Lord, and thy ways past finding out.”

II. DRACO THE GREAT (Translation of the Relics of St. Orberosia)

The direct posterity of Brian the Good was extinguished about the year 900 in the person of Collic of the Short Nose. A cousin of that prince, Bosco the Magnanimous, succeeded him, and took care, in order to assure himself of the throne, to put to death all his relations. There issued from him a long line of powerful kings.

One of them, Draco the Great, attained great renown as a man of war. He was defeated more frequently than the others. It is by this constancy in defeat that great captains are recognized. In twenty years he burned down more than a hundred thousand hamlets, market towns, unwallled towns, villages, walled towns, cities, and universities. He set fire impartially to his enemies' territory and to his own domains. And he used to explain his conduct by saying:

“War without fire is like tripe without mustard: it is an insipid thing.”

His justice was rigorous. When the peasants whom he made prisoners were unable to raise the money for their ransoms he had them hanged from a tree, and if any unhappy woman came to plead for her destitute husband he dragged her by the hair at his horse's tail. He lived like a soldier without effeminacy. It is satisfactory to relate that his manner of life was pure. Not only did he not allow his kingdom to decline from its hereditary glory, but, even in his reverses he valiantly supported the honour of the Penguin people.

Draco the Great caused the relics of St. Orberosia to be transferred to Alca.

The body of the blessed saint had been buried in a grotto on the Coast of Shadows at the end of a scented heath. The first pilgrims who went to visit it were the boys and girls from the neighbouring villages. They used to go there in the evening, by preference in couples, as if their pious desires naturally sought satisfaction in darkness and solitude. They worshipped the saint with a fervent and discreet worship whose mystery they seemed jealously to guard, for they did not like to publish too openly the experiences they felt. But they were heard to murmur one to another words of love, delight, and rapture with which they mingled the name of Orberosia. Some would sigh that there they forgot the world; others would say that they came out of the grotto in peace and calm; the young girls among them used to recall to each other the joy with which they had been filled in it.

Such were the marvels that the virgin of Alca performed in the morning of her glorious eternity; they had the sweetness and indefiniteness of the dawn.

Soon the mystery of the grotto spread like a perfume throughout the land; it was a ground of joy and edification for pious souls, and corrupt men endeavoured, though in vain, by falsehood and calumny, to divert the faithful from the springs of grace that flowed from the saint's tomb. The Church took measures so that these graces should not remain reserved for a few children, but should be diffused throughout all Penguin Christianity. Monks took up their quarters in the grotto, they built a monastery, a chapel, and a hostelry on the coast, and pilgrims began to flock thither.

As if strengthened by a longer sojourn in heaven, the blessed Orberosia now performed still greater miracles for those who came to lay their offerings on her tomb. She gave hopes to women who had been hitherto barren, she sent dreams to reassure jealous old men concerning the fidelity of the young wives whom they had suspected without cause, and she protected the country from plagues, murrains, famines, tempests, and dragons of Cappadocia.

But during the troubles that desolated the kingdom in the time of King Collic and his successors, the tomb of St. Orberosia was plundered of its wealth, the monastery burned down, and the monks dispersed. The road that had been so long trodden by devout pilgrims was overgrown with furze and heather, and the blue thistles of the sands. For a hundred years the miraculous tomb had been visited by none save vipers, weasels, and bats, when, one day the saint appeared to a peasant of the neighbourhood, Momordic by name.

"I am the virgin Orberosia," said she to him; "I have chosen thee to restore my sanctuary. Warn the inhabitants of the country that if they allow my memory to be blotted out, and leave my tomb without honour and wealth, a new dragon will come and devastate Penguinia."

Learned churchmen held an inquiry concerning this apparition, and pronounced it genuine, and not diabolical but truly heavenly, and in later years it was remarked that in France, in like circumstances, St. Foy and St. Catherine had acted in the same way and made use of similar language.

The monastery was restored and pilgrims flocked to it anew. The virgin Orberosia worked greater and greater miracles. She cured divers hurtful maladies, particularly club-foot, dropsy, paralysis, and St. Guy's disease. The monks who kept the tomb were enjoying an enviable opulence, when the saint, appearing to King Draco the Great, ordered him to recognise her as the heavenly patron of the kingdom and to transfer her precious remains to the cathedral of Alca.

In consequence, the odoriferous relics of that virgin were carried with great pomp to the metropolitan church and placed in the middle of the choir in a shrine made of gold and enamel and ornamented with precious stones.

The chapter kept a record of the miracles wrought by the blessed Orberosia.

Draco the Great, who had never ceased to defend and exalt the Christian faith, died fulfilled with the most pious sentiments and bequeathed his great possessions to the Church.

III. QUEEN CRUCHA

Terrible disorders followed the death of Draco the Great. That prince's successors have often been accused of weakness, and it is true that none of them followed, even from afar, the example of their valiant ancestor.

His son, Chum, who was lame, failed to increase the territory of the Penguins. Bolo, the son of Chum, was assassinated by the palace guards at the age of nine, just as he was ascending the throne. His brother Gun succeeded him. He was only seven years old and allowed himself to be governed by his mother, Queen Crucha.

Crucha was beautiful, learned, and intelligent; but she was unable to curb her own passions.

These are the terms in which the venerable Talpa expresses himself in his chronicle regarding that illustrious queen:

"In beauty of face and symmetry of figure Queen Crucha yields neither to Semiramis of Babylon nor to Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons; nor to Salome, the daughter of Herodias. But she offers in her person certain singularities that will appear beautiful or uncomely according to the contradictory opinions of men and the varying judgments of the world. She has on her forehead two small horns which she conceals in the abundant folds of her golden hair; one of her eyes is blue and one is black; her neck is bent towards the left side; and, like Alexander of Macedon, she has six fingers on her right hand, and a stain like a little monkey's head upon her skin.

"Her gait is majestic and her manner affable. She is magnificent in her expenses, but she is not always able to rule desire by reason.

"One day, having noticed in the palace stables, a young groom of great beauty, she immediately fell violently in love with him, and entrusted to him the command of her armies. What one must praise unreservedly in this great queen is the abundance of gifts that she makes to the churches, monasteries, and chapels in her kingdom, and especially to the holy house of Beargarden, where, by the grace of the Lord, I made my profession in my fourteenth year. She has founded masses for the repose of her soul in such great numbers that every priest in the Penguin Church is, so to speak, transformed into a taper lighted in the sight of heaven to draw down the divine mercy upon the august Crucha."

From these lines and from some others with which have enriched my text the reader can judge of the historical and literary value of the "Gesta Penguinorum." Unhappily, that chronicle suddenly comes suddenly to an end at third year of

Draco the Simple, the successor of Gun the Weak. Having reached that point of my history, I deplore the loss of an agreeable and trustworthy guide.

During the two centuries that followed, the Penguins remained plunged in blood-stained disorder. All the arts perished. In the midst of the general ignorance, the monks in the shadow of their cloister devoted themselves to study, and copied the Holy Scriptures with indefatigable zeal. As parchment was scarce, they scraped the writing off old manuscripts in order to transcribe upon them the divine word. Thus throughout the breadth of Penguinia Bibles blossomed forth like roses on a bush.

A monk of the order of St. Benedict, Ermold the Penguin, had himself alone defaced four thousand Greek and Latin manuscripts so as to copy out the Gospel of St. John four thousand times. Thus the masterpieces of ancient poetry and eloquence were destroyed in great numbers. Historians are unanimous in recognising that the Penguin convents were the refuge of learning during the Middle Ages.

Unending wars between the Penguins and the Porpoises filled the close of this period. It is extremely difficult to know the truth concerning these wars, not because accounts are wanting, but because there are so many of them. The Porpoise Chronicles contradict the Penguin Chronicles at every point. And, moreover, the Penguins contradict each other as well as the Porpoises. I have discovered two chronicles that are in agreement, but one has copied from the other. A single fact is certain, namely, that massacres, rapes, conflagrations, and plunder succeeded one another without interruption.

Under the unhappy prince Bosco IX. the kingdom was at the verge of ruin. On the news that the Porpoise fleet, composed of six hundred great ships, was in sight of Alca, the bishop ordered a solemn procession. The cathedral chapter, the elected magistrates, the members of Parliament, and the clerics of the University entered the Cathedral and, taking up St. Orberosia's shrine, led it in procession through the town, followed by the entire people singing hymns. The holy patron of Penguinia was not invoked in vain. Nevertheless, the Porpoises besieged the town both by land and sea, took it by assault, and for three days and three nights killed, plundered, violated, and burned, with all the indifference that habit produces.

Our astonishment cannot be too great at the fact that, during those iron ages, the faith was preserved intact among the Penguins. The splendour of the truth in those times illumined all souls that had not been corrupted by sophisms. This is the explanation of the unity of belief. A constant practice of the Church doubtless contributed also to maintain this happy communion of the faithful —

every Penguin who thought differently from the others was immediately burned at the stake.

IV. LETTERS: JOHANNES TALPA

During the minority of King Gun, Johannes Talpa, in the monastery of Beargarden, where at the age of fourteen he had made his profession and from which he never departed for a single day throughout his life, composed his celebrated Latin chronicle in twelve books called “De Gestis Penguinorum.”

The monastery of Beargarden lifts its high walls on the summit of an inaccessible peak. One sees around it only the blue tops of mountains, divided by the clouds.

When he began to write his “Gesta Penguinorum,” Johannes Talpa was already old. The good monk has taken care to tell us this in his book: “My head has long since lost,” he says, “its adornment of fair hair, and my scalp resembles those convex mirrors of metal which the Penguin ladies consult with so much care and zeal. My stature, naturally small, has with years become diminished and bent. My white beard gives warmth to my breast.”

With a charming simplicity, Talpa informs us of certain circumstances in his life and some features in his character. “Descended,” he tells us, “from a noble family, and destined from childhood for the ecclesiastical state, I was taught grammar and music. I learnt to read under the guidance of a master who was called Amicus, and who would have been better named Inimicus. As I did not easily attain to a knowledge of my letters, he beat me violently with rods so that I can say that he printed the alphabet in strokes upon my back.”

In another passage Talpa confesses his natural inclination towards pleasure. These are his expressive words: “In my youth the ardour of my senses was such that in the shadow of the woods I experienced a sensation of boiling in a pot rather than of breathing the fresh air. I fled from women, but in vain, for every object recalled them to me.”

While he was writing his chronicle, a terrible war, at once foreign and domestic, laid waste the Penguin land. The soldiers of Crucha came to defend the monastery of Beargarden against the Penguin barbarians and established themselves strongly within its walls. In order to render it impregnable they pierced loop-holes through the walls and they took the lead off the church roof to make balls for their slings. At night they lighted huge fires in the courts and cloisters and on them they roasted whole oxen which they spitted upon the ancient pine-trees of the mountain. Sitting around the flames, amid smoke filled with a mingled odour of resin and fat, they broached huge casks of wine and

beer. Their songs, their blasphemies, and the noise of their quarrels drowned the sound of the morning bells.

At last the Porpoises, having crossed the defiles, laid siege to the monastery. They were warriors from the North, clad in copper armour. They fastened ladders a hundred and fifty fathoms long to the sides of the cliffs and sometimes in the darkness and storm these broke beneath the weight of men and arms, and bunches of the besiegers were hurled into the ravines and precipices. A prolonged wail would be heard going down into the darkness, and the assault would begin again. The Penguins poured streams of burning wax upon their assailants, which made them blaze like torches. Sixty times the enraged Porpoises attempted to scale the monastery and sixty times they were repulsed.

For six months they had closely invested the monastery, when, on the day of the Epiphany, a shepherd of the valley showed them a hidden path by which they climbed the mountain, penetrated into the vaults of the abbey, ran through the cloisters, the kitchens, the church, the chapter halls, the library, the laundry, the cells, the refectories, and the dormitories, and burned the buildings, killing and violating without distinction of age or sex. The Penguins, awakened unexpectedly, ran to arms, but in the darkness and alarm they struck at one another, whilst the Porpoises with blows of their axes disputed the sacred vessels, the censers, the candlesticks, dalmatics, reliquaries, golden crosses, and precious stones.

The air was filled with an acrid odour of burnt flesh. Groans and death-cries arose in the midst of the flames, and on the edges of the crumbling roofs monks ran in thousands like ants, and fell into the valley. Yet Johannes Talpa kept on writing his Chronicle. The soldiers of Crucha retreated speedily and filled up all the issues from the monastery with pieces of rock so as to shut up the Porpoises in the burning buildings. And to crush the enemy beneath the ruin they employed the trunks of old oaks as battering-rams. The burning timbers fell in with a noise like thunder and the lofty arches of the naves crumbled beneath the shock of these giant trees when moved by six hundred men together. Soon there was left nothing of the rich and extensive abbey but the cell of Johannes Talpa, which, by a marvellous chance, hung from the ruin of a smoking gable. The old chronicler still kept writing.

This admirable intensity of thought may seem excessive in the case of an annalist who applies himself to relate the events of his own time. However abstracted and detached we may be from surrounding things, we nevertheless resent their influence. I have consulted the original manuscript of Johannes Talpa in the National Library, where it is preserved (*Monumenta Peng.*, K. L6., 12390 four). It is a parchment manuscript of 628 leaves. The writing is

extremely confused, the letters instead of being in a straight line, stray in all directions and are mingled together in great disorder, or, more correctly speaking, in absolute confusion. They are so badly formed that for the most part it is impossible not merely to say what they are, but even to distinguish them from the splashes of ink with which they are plentifully interspersed. Those inestimable pages bear witness in this way to the troubles amid which they were written. To read them is difficult. On the other hand, the monk of Beargarden's style shows no trace of emotion. The tone of the "Gesta Penguinorum" never departs from simplicity. The narration is rapid and of a conciseness that sometimes approaches dryness. The reflections are rare and, as a rule, judicious.

V. THE ARTS: THE PRIMITIVES OF PENGUIN PAINTING

The Penguin critics vie with one another in affirming that Penguin art has from its origin been distinguished by a powerful and pleasing originality, and that we may look elsewhere in vain for the qualities of grace and reason that characterise its earliest works. But the Porpoises claim that their artists were undoubtedly the instructors and masters of the Penguins. It is difficult to form an opinion on the matter, because the Penguins, before they began to admire their primitive painters, destroyed all their works.

We cannot be too sorry for this loss. For my own part I feel it cruelly, for I venerate the Penguin antiquities and I adore the primitives. They are delightful. I do not say they are all alike, for that would be untrue, but they have common characters that are found in all schools — I mean formulas from which they never depart — and there is besides something finished in their work, for what they know they know well. Luckily we can form a notion of the Penguin primitives from the Italian, Flemish, and Dutch primitives, and from the French primitives, who are superior to all the rest; as M. Gruyer tells us they are more logical, logic being a peculiarly French quality. Even if this is denied it must at least be admitted that to France belongs the credit of having kept primitives when the other nations knew them no longer. The Exhibition of French Primitives at the Pavillon Marsan in 1904 contained several little panels contemporary with the later Valois kings and with Henry IV.

I have made many journeys to see the pictures of the brothers Van Eyck, of Memling, of Roger van der Weyden, of the painter of the death of Mary, of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, and of the old Umbrian masters. It was, however, neither Bruges, nor Cologne, nor Sienna, nor Perugia, that completed my initiation; it was in the little town of Arezzo that I became a conscious adept in primitive painting. That was ten years ago or even longer. At that period of indigence and simplicity, the municipal museums, though usually kept shut, were always opened to foreigners. One evening an old woman with a candle showed me, for half a lira, the sordid museum of Arezzo, and in it I discovered a painting by Margaritone, a “St. Francis,” the pious sadness of which moved me to tears. I was deeply touched, and Margaritone, of Arezzo became from that day my dearest primitive.

I picture to myself the Penguin primitives in conformity with the works of that master. It will not therefore be thought superfluous if in this place I consider

his works with some attention, if not in detail, at least under their more general and, if I dare say so, most representative aspect.

We possess five or six pictures signed with his hand. His masterpiece, preserved in the National Gallery of London, represents the Virgin seated on a throne and holding the infant Jesus in her arms. What strikes one first when one looks at this figure is the proportion. The body from the neck to the feet is only twice as long as the head, so that it appears extremely short and podgy. This work is not less remarkable for its painting than for its drawing. The great Margaritone had but a limited number of colours in his possession, and he used them in all their purity without ever modifying the tones. From this it follows that his colouring has more vivacity than harmony. The cheeks of the Virgin and those of the Child are of a bright vermilion which the old master, from a naive preference for clear definitions, has placed on each face in two circumferences as exact as if they had been traced out by a pair of compasses.

A learned critic of the eighteenth century, the Abbe Lanzi, has treated Margaritone's works with profound disdain. "They are," he says, "merely crude daubs. In those unfortunate times people could neither draw nor paint." Such was the common opinion of the connoisseurs of the days of powdered wigs. But the great Margaritone and his contemporaries were soon to be avenged for this cruel contempt. There was born in the nineteenth century, in the biblical villages and reformed cottages of pious England, a multitude of little Samuels and little St. Johns, with hair curling like lambs, who, about 1840, and 1850, became spectacled professors and founded the cult of the primitives.

That eminent theorist of Pre-Raphaelitism, Sir James Tuckett, does not shrink from placing the Madonna of the National Gallery on a level with the masterpieces of Christian art. "By giving to the Virgin's head," says Sir James Tuckett, "a third of the total height of the figure, the old master attracts the spectator's attention and keeps it directed towards the more sublime parts of the human figure, and in particular the eyes, which we ordinarily describe as the spiritual organs. In this picture, colouring and design conspire to produce an ideal and mystical impression. The vermilion of the cheeks does not recall the natural appearance of the skin; it rather seems as if the old master has applied the roses of Paradise to the faces of the Mother and the Child."

We see, in such a criticism as this, a shining reflection, so to speak, of the work which it exalts; yet MacSilly, the seraphic aesthete of Edinburgh, has expressed in a still more moving and penetrating fashion the impression produced upon his mind by the sight of this primitive painting. "The Madonna of Margaritone," says the revered MacSilly, "attains the transcendent end of art. It inspires its beholders with feelings of innocence and purity; it makes them like

little children. And so true is this, that at the age of sixty-six, after having had the joy of contemplating it closely for three hours, I felt myself suddenly transformed into a little child. While my cab was taking me through Trafalgar Square I kept laughing and prattling and shaking my spectacle-case as if it were a rattle. And when the maid in my boarding-house had served my meal I kept pouring spoonfuls of soup into my ear with all the artlessness of childhood."

"It is by such results," adds MacSilly, "that the excellence of a work of art is proved."

Margaritone, according to Vasari, died at the age of seventy-seven, "regretting that he had lived to see a new form of art arising and the new artists crowned with fame."

These lines, which I translate literally, have inspired Sir James Tuckett with what are perhaps the finest pages in his work. They form part of his "Breviary for Aesthetes"; all the Pre-Raphaelites know them by heart. I place them here as the most precious ornament of this book. You will agree that nothing more sublime has been written since the days of the Hebrew prophets.

MARGARITONE'S VISION

Margaritone, full of years and labours, went one day to visit the studio of a young painter who had lately settled in the town. He noticed in the studio a freshly painted Madonna, which, although severe and rigid, nevertheless, by a certain exactness in the proportions and a devilish mingling of light and shade, assumed an appearance of relief and life. At this sight the artless and sublime worker of Arezzo perceived with horror what the future of painting would be. With his brow clasped in his hands he exclaimed:

"What things of shame does not this figure show forth! I discern in it the end of that Christian art which paints the soul and inspires the beholder with an ardent desire for heaven. Future painters will not restrain themselves as does this one to portraying on the side of a wall or on a wooden panel the cursed matter of which our bodies are formed; they will celebrate and glorify it. They will clothe their figures with dangerous appearances of flesh, and these figures will seem like real persons. Their bodies will be seen; their forms will appear through their clothing. St. Magdalen will have a bosom. St. Martha a belly, St. Barbara hips, St. Agnes buttocks; St. Sebastian will unveil his youthful beauty, and St. George will display beneath his armour the muscular wealth of a robust virility; apostles, confessors, doctors, and God the Father himself will appear as ordinary beings like you and me; the angels will affect an equivocal, ambiguous, mysterious beauty which will trouble hearts. What desire for heaven will these representations impart? None; but from them you will learn to take pleasure in the forms of terrestrial life. Where will painters stop in their indiscreet inquiries?

They will stop nowhere. They will go so far as to show men and women naked like the idols of the Romans. There will be a sacred art and a profane art, and the sacred art will not be less profane than the other.”

“Get ye behind me, demons,” exclaimed the old master. For in prophetic vision he saw the righteous and the saints assuming the appearance of melancholy athletes. He saw Apollos playing the lute on a flowery hill, in the midst of the Muses wearing light tunics. He saw Venuses lying under shady myrtles and the Danae exposing their charming sides to the golden rain. He saw pictures of Jesus under the pillar’s of the temple amidst patricians, fair ladies, musicians, pages, negroes, dogs, and parrots. He saw in an inextricable confusion of human limbs, outspread wings, and flying draperies, crowds of tumultuous Nativities, opulent Holy Families, emphatic Crucifixions. He saw St. Catherines, St. Barbaras, St. Agneses humiliating patricians by the sumptuousness of their velvets, their brocades, and their pearls, and by the splendour of their breasts. He saw Auroras scattering roses, and a multitude of naked Dianas and Nymphs surprised on the banks of retired streams. And the great Margaritone died, strangled by so horrible a presentiment of the Renaissance and the Bolognese School.

VI. MARBODIUS

We possess a precious monument of the Penguin literature of the fifteenth century. It is a narrative of a journey to hell undertaken by the monk Marbodius, of the order of St. Benedict, who professed a fervent admiration for the poet Virgil. This narrative, written in fairly good Latin, has been published by M. du Clos des Limes. It is here translated for the first time. I believe that I am doing a service to my fellow-countrymen in making them acquainted with these pages, though doubtless they are far from forming a unique example of this class of mediaeval Latin literature. Among the fictions that may be compared with them we may mention "The Voyage of St. Brendan," "The Vision of Albericus," and "St. Patrick's Purgatory," imaginary descriptions, like Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy," of the supposed abode of the dead. The narrative of Marbodius is one of the latest works dealing with this theme, but it is not the least singular.

THE DESCENT OF MARBODIUS INTO HELL

In the fourteen hundred and fifty-third year of the incarnation of the Son of God, a few days before the enemies of the Cross entered the city of Helena and the great Constantine, it was given to me, Brother Marbodius, an unworthy monk, to see and to hear what none had hitherto seen or heard. I have composed a faithful narrative of those things so that their memory may not perish with me, for man's time is short.

On the first day of May in the aforesaid year, at the hour of vespers, I was seated in the Abbey of Corrigan on a stone in the cloisters and, as my custom was, I read the verses of the poet whom I love best of all, Virgil, who has sung of the labours: of the field, of shepherds, and of heroes. Evening was hanging its purple folds from the arches of the cloisters and in a voice of emotion I was murmuring the verses which describe how Dido, the Phoenician queen, wanders with her ever-bleeding wound beneath the myrtles of hell. At that moment Brother Hilary happened to pass by, followed by Brother Jacinth, the porter.

Brought up in the barbarous ages before the resurrection of the Muses, Brother Hilary has not been initiated into the wisdom of the ancients; nevertheless, the poetry of the Mantuan has, like a subtle torch, shed some gleams of light into his understanding.

"Brother Marbodius," he asked me, "do those verses that you utter with swelling breast and sparkling eyes — do they belong to that great 'Aeneid' from which morning or evening your glances are never withheld?"

I answered that I was reading in Virgil how the son of Anchises perceived Dido like a moon behind the foliage.*

* The text runs

. . .qualem primo qui syrgere mense

Aut videt aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam.

Brother Marbodius, by a strange misunderstanding, substitutes an entirely different image for the one created by the poet.

“Brother Marbodius,” he replied, “I am certain that on all occasions Virgil gives expression to wise maxims and profound thoughts. But the songs that he modulates on his Syracusan flute hold such a lofty meaning and such exalted doctrine that I am continually puzzled by them.”

“Take care, father,” cried Brother Jacinth, in an agitated voice. “Virgil was a magician who wrought marvels by the help of demons. It is thus he pierced through a mountain near Naples and fashioned a bronze horse that had power to heal all the diseases of horses. He was a necromancer, and there is still shown, in a certain town in Italy, the mirror in which he made the dead appear. And yet a woman deceived this great sorcerer. A Neapolitan courtesan invited him to hoist himself up to her window in the basket that was used to bring the provisions, and she left him all night suspended between two storeys.”

Brother Hilary did not appear to hear these observations.

“Virgil is a prophet,” he replied, “and a prophet who leaves far behind him the sibyls with their sacred verses as well as the daughter of King Priam, and that great diviner of future things, Plato of Athens. You will find in the fourth of his Syracusan cantos the birth of our Lord foretold in a lancune that seems of heaven rather than of earth.* In the time of my early studies, when I read for the first time JAM REDIT ET VIRGO, I felt myself bathed in an infinite delight, but I immediately experienced intense grief at the thought that, for ever deprived of the presence of God, the author of this prophetic verse, the noblest that has come from human lips, was pining among the heathen in eternal darkness. This cruel thought did not leave me. It pursued me even in my studies, my prayers, my meditations, and my ascetic labours. Thinkin that Virgil was deprived of the sight of God and that possibly he might even be suffering the fate of the reprobate in hell, I could neither enjoy peace nor rest, and I went so far as to exclaim several times a day with my arms outstretched to heaven: “‘Reveal to me, O Lord, the lot thou hast assigned to him who sang on earth as the angels sing in heaven!’

*Three centuries before the epoch in which our Marbodius lived the words — ‘Maro, vates gentilium

Da Christo testimonium.'

Were sung in the churches on Christmas Day.

"After some years my anguish ceased when I read in an old book that the great apostle St. Paul, who called the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, went to Naples and sanctified with his tears the tomb of the prince of poets.* This was some ground for believing that Virgil, like the Emperor Trajan, was admitted to Paradise because even in error he had a presentiment of the truth. We are not compelled to believe it, but I can easily persuade myself that it is true."

*Ad maronis mausoleum
Ductus, fudit super eum
Piae rorem lacrymae.
Quem te, intuit, reddidissem,
Si te vivum invenissem
Poetarum maxime!

Having thus spoken, old Hilary wished me the peace of a holy night and went away with Brother Jacinth.

I resumed the delightful study of my poet. Book in hand, I meditated upon the way in which those whom Love destroys with its cruel malady wander through the secret paths in the depth of the myrtle forest, and, as I meditated, the quivering reflections of the stars came and mingled with those of the leafless eglantines in the waters of the cloister fountain. Suddenly the lights and the perfumes and the stillness of the sky were overwhelmed, a fierce Northwind charged with storm and darkness burst roaring upon me. It lifted me up and carried me like a wisp of straw over fields, cities, rivers, and mountains, and through the midst of thunder-clouds, during a long night composed of a whole series of nights and days. And when, after this prolonged and cruel rage, the hurricane was at last stilled, I found myself far from my native land at the bottom of a valley bordered by cypress trees. Then a woman of wild beauty, trailing long garments behind her, approached me. She placed her left hand on my shoulder, and, pointing her right arm to an oak with thick foliage: "Look!" said she to me.

Immediately I recognised the Sibyl who guards the sacred wood of Avernus, and I discerned the fair Proserpine's beautiful golden twig amongst the tufted boughs of the tree to which her finger pointed.

"O prophetic Virgin," I exclaimed, "thou hast comprehended my desire and thou hast satisfied it in this way. Thou hast revealed to me the tree that bears the shining twig without which none can enter alive into the dwelling-place of the dead. And in truth, eagerly did I long to converse with the shade of Virgil."

Having said this, I snatched the golden branch from its ancient trunk and I advanced without fear into the smoking gulf that leads to the miry banks of the Styx, upon which the shades are tossed about like dead leaves. At sight of the branch dedicated to Proserpine, Charon took me in his bark, which groaned beneath my weight, and I alighted on the shores of the dead, and was greeted by the mute baying of the threefold Cerberus. I pretended to throw the shade of a stone at him, and the vain monster fled into his cave. There, amidst the rushes, wandered the souls of those children whose eyes had but opened and shut to the kindly light of day, and there in a gloomy cavern Minos judges men. I penetrated into the myrtle wood in which the victims of love wander languishing, Phaedra, Procris, the sad Eriphyle, Evadne, Pasiphae, Laodamia, and Cenis, and the Phoenician Dido. Then I went through the dusty plains reserved for famous warriors. Beyond them open two ways. That to the left leads to Tartarus, the abode of the wicked. I took that to the right, which leads to Elysium and to the dwellings of Dis. Having hung the sacred branch at the goddess's door, I reached pleasant fields flooded with purple light. The shades of philosophers and poets hold grave converse there. The Graces and the Muses formed sprightly choirs upon the grass. Old Homer sang, accompanying himself upon his rustic lyre. His eyes were closed, but divine images shone upon his lips. I saw Solon, Democritus, and Pythagoras watching the games of the young men in the meadow, and, through the foliage of an ancient laurel, I perceived also Hesiod, Orpheus, the melancholy Euripides, and the masculine Sappho. I passed and recognised, as they sat on the bank of a fresh rivulet, the poet Horace, Varius, Gallus, and Lycoris. A little apart, leaning against the trunk of a dark holm-oak, Virgil was gazing pensively at the grove. Of lofty stature, though spare, he still preserved that swarthy complexion, that rustic air, that negligent bearing, and unpolished appearance which during his lifetime concealed his genius. I saluted him piously and remained for a long time without speech.

At last when my halting voice could proceed out of my throat: "O thou, so dear to the Ausonian Muses, thou honour of the Latin name, Virgil," cried I, "it is through thee I have known what beauty is, it is through thee I have known what the tables of the gods and the beds of the goddesses are like. Suffer the praises of the humblest of thy adorers."

"Arise, stranger," answered the divine poet. "I perceive that thou art a living being among the shades, and that thy body treads down the grass in this eternal evening. Thou art not the first man who has descended before his death into these dwellings, although all intercourse between us and the living is difficult. But cease from praise; I do not like eulogies and the confused sounds of glory have always offended my ears. That is why I fled from Rome, where I was

known to the idle and curious, and laboured in the solitude of my beloved Parthenope. And then I am not so convinced that the men of thy generation understand my verses that should be gratified by thy praises. Who art thou?"

"I am called Marbodius of the Kingdom of Alca. I made my profession in the Abbey of Corrigan. I read thy poems by day and I read them by night. It is thee whom I have come to see in Hell; I was impatient to know what thy fate was. On earth the learned often dispute about it. Some hold it probable that, having lived under the power of demons, thou art now burning in inextinguishable flames; others, more cautious, pronounce no opinion, believing that all which is said concerning the dead is uncertain and full of lies; several, though not in truth the ablest, maintain that, because thou didst elevate the tone of the Sicilian Muses and foretell that a new progeny would descend from heaven, thou wert admitted, like the Emperor Trajan, to enjoy eternal blessedness in the Christian heaven."

"Thou seest that such is not the case," answered the shade, smiling.

"I meet thee in truth, O Virgil, among the heroes and sages in those Elysian Fields which thou thyself hast described. Thus, contrary to what several on earth believe, no one has come to seek thee on the part of Him who reigns on high?"

After a rather long silence:

"I will conceal nought from thee. He sent for me; one of his messengers, a simple man, came to say that I was expected, and that, although I had not been initiated into their mysteries, in consideration of my prophetic verses, a place had been reserved for me among those of the new sect. But I refused to accept that invitation; I had no desire to change my lace. I did so not because I share the admiration of the Greeks for the Elysian fields, or because I taste here those joys which caused Proserpine to lose the remembrance of her mother. I never believed much myself in what I say about these things in the 'Aeneid.' I was instructed by philosophers and men of science and I had a correct foreboding of the truth. Life in hell is extremely attenuated; we feel neither pleasure nor pain; we are as if we were not. The dead have no existence here except such as the living lend them. Nevertheless I prefer to remain here."

"But what reason didst thou give, O Virgil, for so strange a refusal?"

"I gave excellent ones. I said to the messenger of the god that I did not deserve the honour he brought me, and that a meaning had been given to my verses which they did not bear. In truth I have not in my fourth Eclogue betrayed the faith of my ancestors. Some ignorant Jews alone have interpreted in favour of a barbarian god a verse which celebrates the return of the golden age predicted by the Sibylline oracles. I excused myself then on the ground that I could not occupy a place which was destined for me in error and to which I

recognised that I had no right. Then I alleged my disposition and my tastes, which do not accord with the customs of the new heavens.

“‘I am not unsociable,’ said I to this man. ‘I have shown in life a complaisant and easy disposition, although the extreme simplicity of my habits caused me to be suspected of avarice. I kept nothing for myself alone. My library was open to all and I have conformed my conduct to that fine saying of Euripides, “all ought to be common among friends.” Those praises that seemed obtrusive when I myself received them became agreeable to me when addressed to Varius or to Macer. But at bottom I am rustic and uncultivated. I take pleasure in the society of animals; I was so zealous in observing them and took so much care of them that I was regarded, not altogether wrongly, as a good veterinary surgeon. I am told that the people of thy sect claim an immortal soul for themselves, but refuse one to the animals. That is a piece of nonsense that makes me doubt their judgment. Perhaps I love the flocks and the shepherds a little too much. That would not seem right amongst you. There is a maxim to which I endeavour to conform my actions, “Nothing too much.” More even than my feeble health my philosophy teaches me to use things with measure. I am sober; a lettuce and some olives with a drop of Falernian wine form all my meals. I have, indeed, to some extent gone with strange women, but I have not delayed over long in taverns to watch the young Syrians dance to the sound of the crotalum.* But if I have restrained my desires it was for my own satisfaction and for the sake of good discipline. To fear pleasure and to fly from joy appears to me the worst insult that one can offer to nature. I am assured that during their lives certain of the elect of thy god abstained from food and avoided women through love of asceticism, and voluntarily exposed themselves to useless sufferings. I should be afraid of meeting those, criminals whose frenzy horrifies me. A poet must not be asked to attach himself too strictly to any scientific or moral doctrine. Moreover, I am a Roman, and the Romans, unlike the Greeks, are unable to pursue profound speculations in a subtle manner. If they adopt a philosophy it is above all in order to derive some practical advantages from it. Siro, who enjoyed great renown among us, taught me the system of Epicurus and thus freed me from vain terrors and turned me aside from the cruelties to which religion persuades ignorant men. I have embraced the views of Pythagoras concerning the souls of men and animals, both of which are of divine essence; this invites us to look upon ourselves without pride and without shame. I have learnt from the Alexandrines how the earth, at first soft and without form, hardened in proportion as Nereus withdrew himself from it to dig his humid dwellings; I have learned how things were formed insensibly; in what manner the rains, falling from the burdened clouds, nourished the silent forests, and by what

progress a few animals at last began to wander over the nameless mountains. I could not accustom myself to your cosmogony either, for it seems to me fitter for a camel-driver on the Syrian sands than for a disciple of Aristarchus of Samos. And what would become of me in the abode of your beatitude if I did not find there my friends, my ancestors, my masters, and my gods, and if it is not given to me to see Rhea's noble son, or Venus, mother of Aeneas, with her winning smile, or Pan, or the young Dryads, or the Sylvans, or old Silenus, with his face stained by Aegle's purple mulberries.' These are the reasons which I begged that simple man to plead before the successor of Jupiter."

* This phrase seems to indicate that, if one is to believe Macrobius, the "Copa" is by Virgil.

"And since then, O great shade, thou hast received no other messages?"

"I have received none."

"To console themselves for thy absence, O Virgil, they have three poets, Commodianus, Prudentius, and Fortunatus, who were all three born in those dark plays when neither prosody nor grammar were known. But tell me, O Mantuan, hast thou never received other intelligence of the God whose company thou didst so deliberately refuse?"

"Never that I remember."

"Hast thou not told me that I am not the first who descended alive into these abodes and presented himself before thee?"

"Thou dost remind me of it. A century and a half ago, or so it seems to me (it is difficult to reckon days and years amid the shades), my profound peace was intruded upon by a strange visitor. As I was wandering beneath the gloomy foliage that borders the Styx, I saw rising before me a human form more opaque and darker than that of the inhabitants of these shores. I recognised a living person. He was of high stature, thin, with an aquiline nose, sharp chin, and hollow cheeks. His dark eyes shot forth fire; a red hood girt with a crown of laurels bound his lean brows. His bones pierced through the tight brown cloak that descended to his heels. He saluted me with deference, tempered by a sort of fierce pride, and addressed me in a speech more obscure and incorrect than that of those Gauls with whom the divine Julius filled both his legions and the Curia. At last I understood that he had been born near Fiesole, in an ancient Etruscan colony that Sulla had founded on the banks of the Arno, and which had prospered; that he had obtained municipal honours, but that he had thrown himself vehemently into the sanguinary quarrels which arose between the senate, the knights, and the people, that he had been defeated and banished, and now he wandered in exile throughout the world. He described Italy to me as distracted by more wars and discords than in the time of my youth, and as sighing anew for

a second Augustus. I pitied his misfortune, remembering what I myself had formerly endured.

“An audacious spirit unceasingly disquieted him, and his mind harboured great thoughts, but alas! his rudeness and ignorance displayed the triumph of barbarism. He knew neither poetry, nor science, nor even the tongue of the Greeks, and he was ignorant, too, of the ancient traditions concerning the origin of the world and the nature of the gods. He bravely repeated fables which in my time would have brought smiles to the little children who were not yet old enough to pay for admission at the baths. The vulgar easily believe in monsters. The Etruscans especially peopled hell with demons, hideous as a sick man’s dreams. That they have not abandoned their childish imaginings after so many centuries is explained by the continuation and progress of ignorance and misery, but that one of their magistrates whose mind is raised above the common level should share these popular illusions and should be frightened by the hideous demons that the inhabitants of that country painted on the walls of their tombs in the time of Porsena — that is something which might sadden even a sage. My Etruscan visitor repeated verses to me which he had composed in a new dialect, called by him the vulgar tongue, the sense of which I could not understand. My ears were more surprised than charmed as I heard him repeat the same sound three or four times at regular intervals in his efforts to mark the rhythm. That artifice did not seem ingenious to me; but it is not for the dead to judge of novelties.

“But I do not reproach this colonist of Sulla, born in an unhappy time, for making inharmonious verses or for being, if it be possible, as bad a poet as Bavius or Maevius. I have grievances against him which touch me more closely. The thing is monstrous and scarcely credible, but when this man returned to earth he disseminated the most odious lies about me. He affirmed in several passages of his barbarous poems that I had served him as a guide in the modern Tartarus, a place I know nothing of. He insolently proclaimed that I had spoken of the gods of Rome as false and lying gods, and that I held as the true God the present successor of Jupiter. Friend, when thou art restored to the kindly light of day and beholdest again thy native land, contradict those abominable falsehoods. Say to thy people that the singer of the pious Aeneas has never worshipped the god of the Jews. I am assured that his power is declining and that his approaching fall is manifested by undoubted indications. This news would give me some pleasure if one could rejoice in these abodes where we feel neither fears nor desires.”

He spoke, and with a gesture of farewell he went away. I beheld his shade gliding over the asphodels without bending their stalks. I saw that it became

fainter and vaguer as it receded farther from me, and it vanished before it reached the wood of evergreen laurels. Then I understood the meaning of the words, "The dead have no life, but that which the living lend them," and I walked slowly through the pale meadow to the gate of horn.

I affirm that all in this writing is true.*

* There is in Marbodius's narrative a passage very worthy of notice, viz., that in which the monk of Corrigan describes Dante Alighieri such as we picture him to ourselves to-day.

The miniatures in a very old manuscript of the "Divine Comedy," the "Codex Venetianus," represent the poet as a little fat man clad in a short tunic, the skirts of which fall above his knees. As for Virgil, he still wears the philosophical beard, in the wood-engravings of the sixteenth century.

One would not have thought either that Marbodius, or even Virgil, could have known the Etruscan tombs of Chiusi and Corneto, where, in fact, there are horrible and burlesque devils closely resembling those of Orcagna. Nevertheless, the authenticity of the "Descent of Marbodius into Hell" is indisputable. M. du Clos des Lunes has firmly established it. To doubt it would be to doubt palaeography itself.

VII. SIGNS IN THE MOON

At that time, whilst Penguinia was still plunged in ignorance and barbarism, Giles Bird-catcher, a Franciscan monk, known by his writings under the name Aegidius Aucupis, devoted himself with indefatigable zeal to the study of letters and the sciences. He gave his nights to mathematics and music, which he called the two adorable sisters, the harmonious daughters of Number and Imagination. He was versed in medicine and astrology. He was suspected of practising magic, and it seemed true that he wrought metamorphoses and discovered hidden things.

The monks of his convent, finding in his cell Greek books which they could not read, imagined them to be conjuring-books, and denounced their too learned brother as a wizard. Aegidius Aucupis fled, and reached the island of Ireland, where he lived for thirty studious years. He went from monastery to monastery, searching for and copying the Greek and Latin manuscripts which they contained. He also studied physics and alchemy. He acquired a universal knowledge and discovered notable secrets concerning animals, plants, and stones. He was found one day in the company of a very beautiful woman who sang to her own accompaniment on the lute, and who was afterwards discovered to be a machine which he had himself constructed.

He often crossed the Irish Sea to go into the land of Wales and to visit the libraries of the monasteries there. During one of these crossings, as he remained during the night on the bridge of the ship, he saw beneath the waters two sturgeons swimming side by side. He had very good hearing and he knew the language of fishes. Now he heard one of the sturgeons say to the other:

“The man in the moon, whom we have often seen carrying fagots on his shoulders, has fallen into the sea.”

And the other sturgeon said in its turn:

“And in the silver disc there will be seen the image of two lovers kissing each other on the mouth.”

Some years later, having returned to his native country, Aegidius Aucupis found that ancient learning had been restored. Manners had softened. Men no longer pursued the nymphs of the fountains, of the woods, and of the mountains with their insults. They placed images of the Muses and of the modest Graces in their gardens, and they rendered her former honours to the Goddess with ambrosial lips, the joy of men and gods. They were becoming reconciled to nature. They trampled vain terrors beneath their feet and raised their eyes to

heaven without fearing, as they formerly did, to read signs of anger and threats of damnation in the skies.

At this spectacle Aegidius Aucupis remembered what the two sturgeons of the sea of Erin had foretold.

BOOK IV. MODERN TIMES: TRINCO

I. MOTHER ROUQUIN

Aegidius Aucupis, the Erasmus of the Penguins, was not mistaken; his age was an age of free inquiry. But that great man mistook the elegances of the humanists for softness of manners, and he did not foresee the effects that the awaking of intelligence would have amongst the Penguins. It brought about the religious Reformation; Catholics massacred Protestants and Protestants massacred Catholics. Such were the first results of liberty of thought. The Catholics prevailed in Penguinia. But the spirit of inquiry had penetrated among them without their knowing it. They joined reason to faith, and claimed that religion had been divested of the superstitious practices that dishonoured it, just as in later days the booths that the cobblers, hucksters, and dealers in old clothes had built against the walls of the cathedrals were cleared away. The word, legend, which at first indicated what the faithful ought to read, soon suggested the idea of pious fables and childish tales.

The saints had to suffer from this state of mind. An obscure canon called Princeteau, a very austere and crabbed man, designated so great a number of them as not worthy of having their days observed, that he was surnamed the expositor of the saints. He did not think, for instance, that if St. Margaret's prayer were applied as a poultice to a woman in travail that the pains of childbirth would be softened.

Even the venerable patron saint of Penguinia did not escape his rigid criticism. This is what he says of her in his "Antiquities of Alca":

"Nothing is more uncertain than the history, or even the existence, of St. Orberosia. An ancient anonymous annalist, a monk of Dombes, relates that a woman called Orberosia was possessed by the devil in a cavern where, even down to his own days, the little boys and girls of the village used to play at a sort of game representing the devil and the fair Orberosia. He adds that this woman became the concubine of a horrible dragon, who ravaged the country. Such a statement is hardly credible, but the history of Orberosia, as it has since been related, seems hardly more worthy of belief. The life of that saint by the Abbot Simplicitissimus is three hundred years later than the pretended events which it relates and that author shows himself excessively credulous and devoid of all critical faculty."

Suspicion attacked even the supernatural origin of the Penguins. The historian Ovidius Capito went so far as to deny the miracle of their transformation. He thus begins his "Annals of Penguinia":

“A dense obscurity envelopes this history, and it would be no exaggeration to say that it is a tissue of puerile fables and popular tales. The Penguins claim that they are descended from birds who were baptized by St. Mael and whom God changed into men at the intercession of that glorious apostle. They hold that, situated at first in the frozen ocean, their island, floating like Delos, was brought to anchor in these heaven-favoured seas, of which it is to-day the queen. I conclude that this myth is a reminiscence of the ancient migrations of the Penguins.”

In the following century, which was that of the philosophers, scepticism became still more acute. No further evidence of it is needed than the following celebrated passage from the “Moral Essay”:

“Arriving we know not from whence (for indeed their origins are not very clear), and successively invaded and conquered by four or five peoples from the north, south, east, and west, miscegenated, interbred, amalgamated, and commingled, the Penguins boast of the purity of their race, and with justice, for they have become a pure race. This mixture of all mankind, red, black, yellow, and white, round-headed and long-headed, as formed in the course of ages a fairly homogeneous human family, and one which is recognisable by certain features due to a community of life and customs.

“This idea that they belong to the best race in the world, and that they are its finest family, inspires them with noble pride, indomitable courage, and a hatred for the human race.

“The life of a people is but a succession of miseries, crimes, and follies. This is true of the Penguin nation, as of all other nations. Save for this exception its history is admirable from beginning to end.”

The two classic ages of the Penguins are too well-known for me to lay stress upon them. But what has not been sufficiently noticed is the way in which the rationalist theologians such as Canon Princeteau called into existence the unbelievers of the succeeding age. The former employed their reason to destroy what did not seem to them, essential to their religion; they only left untouched the most rigid article of faith. Their intellectual successors, being taught by them how to make use of science and reason, employed them against whatever beliefs remained. Thus rational theology engendered natural philosophy.

That is why (if I may turn from the Penguins of former days to the Sovereign Pontiff, who, to-day governs the universal Church) we cannot admire too greatly the wisdom of Pope Pius X. in condemning the study of exegesis as contrary to revealed truth, fatal to sound theological doctrine, and deadly to the faith. Those clerics who maintain the rights of science in opposition to him are pernicious

doctors and pestilent teachers, and the faithful who approve of them are lacking in either mental or moral ballast.

At the end of the age of philosophers, the ancient kingdom of Penguinia was utterly destroyed, the king put to death, the privileges of the nobles abolished, and a Republic proclaimed in the midst of public misfortunes and while a terrible war was raging. The assembly which then governed Penguinia ordered all the metal articles contained in the churches to be melted down. The patriots even desecrated the tombs of the kings. It is said that when the tomb of Draco the Great was opened, that king presented an appearance as black as ebony and so majestic that those who profaned his corpse fled in terror. According to other accounts, these churlish men insulted him by putting a pipe in his mouth and derisively offering him a glass of wine.

On the seventeenth day of the month of Mayflowers, the shrine of St. Orberosia, which had for five hundred years been exposed to the veneration of the faithful in the Church of St. Mael, was transported into the town-hall and submitted to the examination of a jury of experts appointed by the municipality. It was made of gilded copper in shape like the nave of a church, entirely covered with enamels and decorated with precious stones, which latter were perceived to be false. The chapter in its foresight had removed the rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and great balls of rock-crystal, and had substituted pieces of glass in their place. It contained only a little dust and a piece of old linen, which were thrown into a great fire that had been lighted on the Place de Greve to burn the relics of the saints. The people danced around it singing patriotic songs.

From the threshold of their booth, which leant against the town-hall, a man called Rouquin and his wife were watching this group of madmen. Rouquin clipped dogs and gelded cats; he also frequented the inns. His wife was a ragpicker and a bawd, but she had plenty of shrewdness.

“You see, Rouquin,” said she to her man, “they are committing a sacrilege. They will repent of it.”

“You know nothing about it, wife,” answered Rouquin; “they, have become philosophers, and when one is once a philosopher he is a philosopher for ever.”

“I tell you, Rouquin, that sooner or later they will regret what they are doing to-day. They ill-treat the saints because they have not helped them enough, but for all that the quails won’t fall ready cooked into their mouths. They will soon find themselves as badly off as before, and when they have put out their tongues for enough they will become pious again. Sooner than people think the day will come when Penguinia will again begin to honour her blessed patron. Rouquin, it would be a good thing, in readiness for that day, if we kept a handful of ashes and some rags and bones in an old pot in our lodgings. We will say that they are

the relics of St. Orberosia and that we have saved them from the flames at the peril of our lives. I am greatly mistaken if we don't get honour and profit out of them. That good action might be worth a place from the Cure to sell tapers and hire chairs in the chapel of St. Orberosia."

On that same day Mother Rouquin took home with her a little ashes and some bones, and put them in an old jam-pot in her cupboard.

II. TRINCO

The sovereign Nation had taken possession of the lands of the nobility and clergy to sell them at a low price to the middle classes and the peasants. The middle classes and the peasants thought that the revolution was a good thing for acquiring lands and a bad one for retaining them.

The legislators of the Republic made terrible laws for the defence of property, and decreed death to anyone who should propose a division of wealth. But that did not avail the Republic. The peasants who had become proprietors bethought themselves that though it had made them rich, the Republic had nevertheless caused a disturbance to wealth, and they desired a system more respectful of private property and more capable of assuring the permanence of the new institutions.

They had not long to wait. The Republic, like Agrippina, bore her destroyer in her bosom.

Having great wars to carry on, it created military forces, and these were destined both to save it and to destroy it. Its legislators thought they could restrain their generals by the fear of punishment, but if they sometimes cut off the heads of unlucky soldiers they could not do the same to the fortunate soldiers who obtained over it the advantages of having saved its existence.

In the enthusiasm of victory the renovated Penguins delivered themselves up to a dragon, more terrible than that of their fables, who, like a stork amongst frogs, devoured them for fourteen years with his insatiable beak.

Half a century after the reign of the new dragon a young Maharajah of Malay, called Djambi, desirous, like the Scythian Anacharsis, of instructing himself by travel, visited Penguinia and wrote an interesting account of his travels. I transcribe the first page of his account: ACCOUNT OF THE TRAVELS OF YOUNG DJAMBI IN PENGUINIA

After a voyage of ninety days I landed at the vast and deserted port of the Penguins and travelled over untilled fields to their ruined capital. Surrounded by ramparts and full of barracks and arsenals it had a martial though desolate appearance. Feeble and crippled men wandered proudly through the streets, wearing old uniforms and carrying rusty weapons.

“What do you want?” I was rudely asked at the gate of the city by a soldier whose moustaches pointed to the skies.

“Sir,” I answered, “I come as an inquirer to visit this island.”

“It is not an island,” replied the soldier.

“What!” I exclaimed, “Penguin Island is not an island?”

“No, sir, it is an insula. It was formerly called an island, but for a century it has been decreed that it shall bear the name of insula. It is the only insula in the whole universe. Have you a passport?”

“Here it is.”

“Go and get it signed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

A lame guide who conducted me came to a pause in a vast square.

“The insula,” said he, “has given birth, as you know, to Trinco, the greatest genius of the universe, whose statue you see before you. That obelisk standing to your right commemorates Trinco’s birth; the column that rises to your left has Trinco crowned with a diadem upon its summit. You see here the triumphal arch dedicated to the glory of Trinco and his family.”

“What extraordinary feat has Trinco performed?” I asked.

“War.”

“That is nothing extraordinary. We Malaysians make war constantly.”

“That may be, but Trinco is the greatest warrior of all countries and all times. There never existed a greater conqueror than he. As you anchored in our port you saw to the east a volcanic island called Ampelophoria, shaped like a cone, and of small size, but renowned for its wines. And to the west a larger island which raises to the sky a long range of sharp teeth; for this reason it is called the Dog’s Jaws. It is rich in copper mines. We possessed both before Trinco’s reign and they were the boundaries of our empire. Trinco extended the Penguin dominion over the Archipelago of the Turquoises and the Green Continent, subdued the gloomy Porpoises, and planted his flag amid the icebergs of the Pole and on the burning sands of the African deserts. He raised troops in all the countries he conquered, and when his armies marched past in the wake of our own light infantry, our island grenadiers, our hussars, our dragoons, our artillery, and our engineers there were to be seen yellow soldiers looking in their blue armour like crayfish standing on their tails; red men with parrots’ plumes, tattooed with solar and Phallic emblems, and with quivers of poisoned arrows resounding on their backs; naked blacks armed only with their teeth and nails; pygmies riding on cranes; gorillas carrying trunks of trees and led by an old ape who wore upon his hairy breast the cross of the Legion of Honour. And all those troops, led to Trinco’s banner by the most ardent patriotism, flew on from victory to victory, and in thirty years of war Trinco conquered half the known world.”

“What!” cried I, “you possess half of the world.”

“Trinco conquered it for us, and Trinco lost it to us. As great in his defeats as in his victories he surrendered all that he had conquered. He even allowed those

two islands we possessed before his time, Ampelophoria and the Dog's Jaws, to be taken from us. He left Penguinia impoverished and depopulated. The flower of the insula perished in his wars. At the time of his fall there were left in our country none but the hunchbacks and cripples from whom we are descended. But he gave us glory."

"He made you pay dearly for it!"

"Glory never costs too much," replied my guide.

III. THE JOURNEY OF DOCTOR OBNUBILE

After a succession of amazing vicissitudes, the memory of which is in great part lost by the wrongs of time and the bad style of historians, the Penguins established the government of the Penguins by themselves. They elected a diet or assembly, and invested it with the privilege of naming the Head of the State. The latter, chosen from among the simple Penguins, wore no formidable monster's crest upon his head and exercised no absolute authority over the people. He was himself subject to the laws of the nation. He was not given the title of king, and no ordinal number followed his name. He bore such names as Paturle, Janvion, Traffaldin, Coquenhot, and Bredouille. These magistrates did not make war. They were not suited for that.

The new state received the name of Public Thing or Republic. Its partisans were called republicanists or republicans. They were also named Thingmongers and sometimes Scamps, but this latter name was taken in ill part.

The Penguin democracy did not itself govern. It obeyed a financial oligarchy which formed opinion by means of the newspapers, and held in its hands the representatives, the ministers, and the president. It controlled the finances of the republic, and directed the foreign affairs of the country as if it were possessed of sovereign power.

Empires and kingdoms in those days kept up enormous fleets. Penguinia, compelled to do as they did, sank under the pressure of her armaments. Everybody deplored or pretended to deplore so grievous a necessity. However, the rich, and those engaged in business or affairs, submitted to it with a good heart through a spirit of patriotism, and because they counted on the soldiers and sailors to defend their goods at home and to acquire markets and territories abroad. The great manufacturers encouraged the making of cannons and ships through a zeal for the national defence and in order to obtain orders. Among the citizens of middle rank and of the liberal professions some resigned themselves to this state of affairs without complaining, believing that it would last for ever; others waited impatiently for its end and thought they might be able to lead the powers to a simultaneous disarmament.

The illustrious Professor Obnubile belonged to this latter class.

"War," said he, "is a barbarity to which the progress of civilization will put an end. The great democracies are pacific and will soon impose their will upon the aristocrats."

Professor Obnubile, who had for sixty years led a solitary and retired life in his laboratory, whither external noises did not penetrate, resolved to observe the spirit of the peoples for himself. He began his studies with the greatest of all democracies and set sail for New Atlantis.

After a voyage of fifteen days his steamer entered, during the night, the harbour of Titanport, where thousands of ships were anchored. An iron bridge thrown across the water and shining with lights, stretched between two piers so far apart that Professor Obnubile imagined he was sailing on the seas of Saturn and that he saw the marvellous ring which girds the planet of the Old Man. And this immense conduit bore upon it more than a quarter of the wealth of the world. The learned Penguin, having disembarked, was waited on by automatons in a hotel forty-eight stories high. Then he took the great railway that led to Gigantopolis, the capital of New Atlantis. In the train there were restaurants, gaming-rooms, athletic arenas, telegraphic, commercial, and financial offices, a Protestant Church, and the printing-office of a great newspaper, which latter the doctor was unable to read, as he did not know the language of the New Atlantans. The train passed along the banks of great rivers, through manufacturing cities which concealed the sky with the smoke from their chimneys, towns black in the day, towns red at night, full of noise by day and full of noise also by night.

“Here,” thought the doctor, “is a people far too much engaged in industry and trade to make war. I am already certain that the New Atlantans pursue a policy of peace. For it is an axiom admitted by all economists that peace without and peace within are necessary for the progress of commerce and industry.”

As he surveyed Gigantopolis, he was confirmed in this opinion. People went through the streets so swiftly propelled by hurry that they knocked down all who were in their way. Obnubile was thrown down several times, but soon succeeded in learning how to demean himself better; after an hour’s walking he himself knocked down an Atlantan.

Having reached a great square he saw the portico of a palace in the Classic style, whose Corinthian columns reared their capitals of arborescent acanthus seventy metres above the stylobate.

As he stood with his head thrown back admiring the building, a man of modest appearance approached him and said in Penguin:

“I see by your dress that you are from Penguinia. I know your language; I am a sworn interpreter. This is the Parliament palace. At the present moment the representatives of the States are in deliberation. Would you like to be present at the sitting?”

The doctor was brought into the hall and cast his looks upon the crowd of legislators who were sitting on cane chairs with their feet upon their desks.

The president arose and, in the midst of general inattention, muttered rather than spoke the following formulas which the interpreter immediately translated to the doctor.

“The war for the opening of the Mongol markets being ended to the satisfaction of the States, I propose that the accounts be laid before the finance committee”

“Is there any opposition? . . .”

“The proposal is carried.”

“The war for the opening of the markets of Third-Zealand being ended to the satisfaction of the States, I propose that the accounts be laid before the finance committee. . . .”

“Is there any opposition? . . .”

“The proposal is carried.”

“Have I heard aright?” asked Professor Obnubile. “What? you an industrial people and engaged in all these wars!”

“Certainly,” answered the interpreter, “these are industrial wars. Peoples who have neither commerce nor industry are not obliged to make war, but a business people is forced to adopt a policy of conquest. The number of wars necessarily increases with our productive activity. As soon as one of our industries fails to find a market for its products a war is necessary to open new outlets. It is in this way we have had a coal war, a copper war, and a cotton war. In Third-Zealand we have killed two-thirds of the inhabitants in order to compel the remainder to buy our umbrellas and braces.”

At that moment a fat man who was sitting in the middle of the assembly ascended the tribune.

“I claim,” said he, “a war against the Emerald Republic, which insolently contends with our pigs for the hegemony of hams and sauces in all the markets of the universe.”

“Who is that legislator?” asked Doctor Obnubile.

“He is a pig merchant.”

“Is there any opposition?” said the President. “I put the proposition to the vote.”

The war against the Emerald Republic was voted with uplifted hands by a very large majority.

“What?” said Obnubile to the interpreter; “you have voted a war with that rapidity and that indifference!”

“Oh! it is an unimportant war which will hardly cost eight million dollars.”

“And men . . .”

“The men are included in the eight million dollars.”

Then Doctor Obnubile bent his head in bitter reflection.

“Since wealth and civilization admit of as many causes of wars as poverty and barbarism, since the folly and wickedness of men are incurable, there remains but one good action to be done. The wise man will collect enough dynamite to blow up this planet. When its fragments fly through space an imperceptible amelioration will be accomplished in the universe and a satisfaction will be given to the universal conscience. Moreover, this universal conscience does not exist.”

BOOK V. MODERN TIMES: CHATILLON

I. THE REVEREND FATHERS AGARIC AND CORNEMUSE

Every system of government produces people who are dissatisfied. The Republic or Public Thing produced them at first from among the nobles who had been despoiled of their ancient privileges. These looked with regret and hope to Prince Crucho, the last of the Draconides, a prince adorned both with the grace of youth and the melancholy of exile. It also produced them from among the smaller traders, who, owing to profound economic causes, no longer gained a livelihood. They believed that this was the fault of the republic which they had at first adored and from which each day they were now becoming more detached. The financiers, both Christians and Jews, became by their insolence and their cupidity the scourge of the country, which they plundered and degraded, as well as the scandal of a government which they never troubled either to destroy or preserve, so confident were they that they could operate without hindrance under all governments. Nevertheless, their sympathies inclined to absolute power as the best protection against the socialists, their puny but ardent adversaries. And just as they imitated the habits of the aristocrats, so they imitated their political and religious sentiments. Their women, in particular, loved the Prince and had dreams of appearing one day at his Court.

However, the Republic retained some partisans and defenders. If it was not in a position to believe in the fidelity of its own officials it could at least still count on the devotion of the manual labourers, although it had never relieved their misery. These came forth in crowds from their quarries and their factories to defend it, and marched in long processions, gloomy, emaciated, and sinister. They would have died for it because it had given them hope.

Now, under the Presidency of Theodore Formose, there lived in a peaceable suburb of Alca a monk called Agaric, who kept a school and assisted in arranging marriages. In his school he taught fencing and riding to the sons of old families, illustrious by their birth, but now as destitute of wealth as of privilege. And as soon as they were old enough he married them to the daughters of the opulent and despised caste of financiers.

Tall, thin, and dark, Agaric used to walk in deep thought, with his breviary in his hand and his brow loaded with care, through the corridors of the school and the alleys of the garden. His care was not limited to inculcating in his pupils abstruse doctrines and mechanical precepts and to endowing them afterwards with legitimate and rich wives. He entertained political designs and pursued the

realisation of a gigantic plan. His thought of thoughts and labour of labours was to overthrow the Republic. He was not moved to this by any personal interest. He believed that a democratic state was opposed to the holy society to which body and soul he belonged. And all the other monks, his brethren, thought the same. The Republic was perpetually at strife with the congregation of monks and the assembly of the faithful. True, to plot the death of the new government was a difficult and perilous enterprise. Still, Agaric was in a position to carry on a formidable conspiracy. At that epoch, when the clergy guided the superior classes of the Penguins, this monk exercised a tremendous influence over the aristocracy of Alca.

All the young men whom he had brought up waited only for a favourable moment to march against the popular power. The sons of the ancient families did not practise the arts or engage in business. They were almost all soldiers and served the Republic. They served it, but they did not love it; they regretted the dragon's crest. And the fair Jewesses shared in these regrets in order that they might be taken for Christians.

One July as he was walking in a suburban street which ended in some dusty fields, Agaric heard groans coming from a moss-grown well that had been abandoned by the gardeners. And almost immediately he was told by a cobbler of the neighbourhood that a ragged man who had shouted out "Hurrah for the Republic!" had been thrown into the well by some cavalry officers who were passing, and had sunk up to his ears in the mud. Agaric was quite ready to see a general significance in this particular fact. He inferred a great fermentation in the whole aristocratic and military caste, and concluded that it was the moment to act.

The next day he went to the end of the Wood of Conils to visit the good Father Cornemuse. He found the monk in his laboratory pouring a golden-coloured liquor into a still. He was a short, fat, little man, with vermilion-tinted cheeks and an elaborately polished bald head. His eyes had ruby-coloured pupils like a guinea-pig's. He graciously saluted his visitor and offered him a glass of the St. Orberosian liqueur, which he manufactured, and from the sale of which he gained immense wealth.

Agaric made a gesture of refusal. Then, standing on his long feet and pressing his melancholy hat against his stomach, he remained silent.

"Take a seat," said Cornemuse to him.

Agaric sat down on a rickety stool, but continued mute.

Then the monk of Conils inquired:

"Tell me some news of your young pupils. Have the dear children sound views?"

"I am very satisfied with them," answered the teacher. "It is everything to be nurtured in sound principles. It is necessary to have sound views before having any views at all, for afterwards it is too late. . . . Yes, I have great grounds for comfort. But we live in a sad age."

"Alas!" sighed Cornemuse.

"We are passing through evil days. . . ."

"Times of trial."

"Yet, Cornemuse, the mind of the public is not so entirely corrupted as it seems."

"Perhaps you are right."

"The people are tired of a government that ruins them and does nothing for them. Every day fresh scandals spring up. The Republic is sunk in shame. It is ruined."

"May God grant it!"

"Cornemuse, what do you think of Prince Crucho?"

"He is an amiable young man and, I dare say, a worthy scion of an august stock. I pity him for having to endure the pains of exile at so early an age. Spring has no flowers for the exile, and autumn no fruits. Prince Crucho has sound views; he respects the clergy; he practises our religion; besides, he consumes a good deal of my little products."

"Cornemuse, in many homes, both rich and poor, his return is hoped for. Believe me, he will come back."

"May I live to throw my mantle beneath his feet!" sighed Cornemuse.

Seeing that he held these sentiments, Agaric depicted to him the state of people's minds such as he himself imagined them. He showed him the nobles and the rich exasperated against the popular government; the army refusing to endure fresh insults; the officials willing to betray their chiefs; the people discontented, riot ready to burst forth, and the enemies of the monks, the agents of the constituted authority, thrown into the wells of Alca. He concluded that it was the moment to strike a great blow.

"We can," he cried, "save the Penguin people, we can deliver it from its tyrants, deliver it from itself, restore the Dragon's crest, re-establish the ancient State, the good State, for the honour of the faith and the exaltation of the Church. We can do this if we will. We possess great wealth and we exert secret influences; by our evangelistic and outspoken journals we communicate with all the ecclesiastics in towns and county alike, and we inspire them with our own eager enthusiasm and our own burning faith. They will kindle their penitents and their congregations. I can dispose of the chiefs of the army; I have an understanding with the men of the people. Unknown to them I sway the minds of

umbrella sellers, publicans, shopmen, gutter merchants, newspaper boys, women of the streets, and police agents. We have more people on our side than we need. What are we waiting for? Let us act!"

"What do you think of doing?" asked Cornemuse.

"Of forming a vast conspiracy and overthrowing the Republic, of re-establishing Crucho on the throne of the Draconides."

Cornemuse moistened his lips with his tongue several times. Then he said with unction:

"Certainly the restoration of the Draconides is desirable; it is eminently desirable; and for my part, desire it with all my heart. As for the Republic, you know what I think of it. . . . But would it not be better to abandon it to its fate and let it die of the vices of its own constitution? Doubtless, Agaric, what you propose is noble and generous. It would be a fine thing to save this great and unhappy country, to re-establish it in its ancient splendour. But reflect on it, we are Christians before we are Penguins. And we must take heed not to compromise religion in political enterprises."

Agaric replied eagerly:

"Fear nothing. We shall hold all the threads of the plot, but we ourselves shall remain in the background. We shall not be seen."

"Like flies in milk," murmured the monk of Conils.

And turning his keen ruby-coloured eyes towards his brother monk:

"Take care. Perhaps the Republic is stronger than it seems. Possibly, too, by dragging it out of the nerveless inertia in which it now rests we may only consolidate its forces. Its malice is great; if we attack it, it will defend itself. It makes bad laws which hardly affect us; if it is frightened it will make terrible ones against us. Let us not lightly engage in an adventure in which we may get fleeced. You think the opportunity a good one. I don't, and I am going to tell you why. The present government is not yet known by everybody, that is to say, it is known by nobody. It proclaims that it is the Public Thing, the common thing. The populace believes it and remains democratic and Republican. But patience! This same people will one day demand that the public thing be the people's thing. I need not tell you how insolent, unregulated, and contrary to Scriptural polity such claims seem to me. But the people will make them, and enforce them, and then there will be an end of the present government. The moment cannot now be far distant; and it is then that we ought to act in the interests of our august body. Let us wait. What hurries us? Our existence is not in peril. It has not been rendered absolutely intolerable to us. The Republic fails in respect and submission to us; it does not give the priests the honours it owes them. But it lets us live. And such is the excellence of our position that with us to live is to

prosper. The Republic is hostile to us, but women revere us. President Formose does not assist at the celebration of our mysteries, but I have seen his wife and daughters at my feet. They buy my phials by the gross. I have no better clients even among the aristocracy. Let us say what there is to be said for it. There is no country in the world as good for priests and monks as Penguinia. In what other country would you find our virgin wax, our virile incense, our rosaries, our scapulars, our holy water, and our St. Orberosian liqueur sold in such great quantities? What other people would, like the Penguins, give a hundred golden crowns for a wave of our hands, a sound from our mouths, a movement of our lips? For my part, I gain a thousand times more, in this pleasant, faithful, and docile Penguinia, by extracting the essence from a bundle of thyme, than I could make by tiring my lungs with preaching the remission of sins in the most populous states of Europe and America. Honestly, would Penguinia be better off if a police officer came to take me away from here and put me on a steamboat bound for the Islands of Night?"

Having thus spoken, the monk of Conils got up and led his guest into a huge shed where hundreds of orphans clothed in blue were packing bottles, nailing up cases, and gumming tickets. The ear was deafened by the noise of hammers mingled with the dull rumbling of bales being placed upon the rails.

"It is from here that consignments are forwarded," said Cornemuse. "I have obtained from the government a railway through the Wood and a station at my door. Every three days I fill a truck with my own products. You see that the Republic has not killed all beliefs."

Agaric made a last effort to engage the wise distiller in his enterprise. He pointed him to a prompt, certain, dazzling success.

"Don't you wish to share in it?" he added. "Don't you wish to bring back your king from exile?"

"Exile is pleasant to men of good will," answered the monk of Conils. "If you are guided by me, my dear Brother Agaric, you will give up your project for the present. For my own part I have no illusions. Whether or not I belong to your party, if you lose, I shall have to pay like you."

Father Agaric took leave of his friend and went back satisfied to his school. "Cornemuse," thought he, "not being able to prevent the plot, would like to make it succeed and he will give money." Agaric was not deceived. Such, indeed, was the solidarity among priests and monks that the acts of a single one bound them all. That was at once both their strength and their weakness.

II. PRINCE CRUCHO

Agaric resolved to proceed without delay to Prince Crucho, who honoured him with his familiarity. In the dusk of the evening he went out of his school by the side door, disguised as a cattle merchant and took passage on board the St. Mael.

The next day he landed in Porpoisea, for it was at Chitterlings Castle on this hospitable soil that Crucho ate the bitter bread of exile.

Agaric met the Prince on the road driving in a motor-car with two young ladies at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. When the monk saw him he shook his red umbrella and the prince stopped his car.

"Is it you, Agaric? Get in! There are already three of us, but we can make room for you. You can take one of these young ladies on your knee."

The pious Agaric got in.

"What news, worthy father?" asked the young prince.

"Great news," answered Agaric. "Can I speak?"

"You can. I have nothing secret from these two ladies."

"Sire, Penguinia claims you. You will not be deaf to her call."

Agaric described the state of feeling and outlined a vast plot.

"On my first signal," said he, "all your partisans will rise at once. With cross in hand and habits girded up, your venerable clergy will lead the armed crowd into Formose's palace. We shall carry terror and death among your enemies. For a reward of our efforts we only ask of you, Sire, that you will not render them useless. We entreat you to come and seat yourself on the throne that we shall prepare."

The prince returned a simple answer:

"I shall enter Alca on a green horse."

Agaric declared that he accepted this manly response. Although, contrary to his custom, he had a lady on his knee, he adjured the young prince, with a sublime loftiness of soul, to be faithful to his royal duties.

"Sire," he cried, with tears in his eyes, "you will live to remember the day on which you have been restored from exile, given back to your people, reestablished on the throne of your ancestors by the hands of your monks, and crowned by them with the august crest of the Dragon. King Crucho, may you equal the glory of your ancestor Draco the Great!"

The young prince threw himself with emotion on his restorer and attempted to embrace him, but he was prevented from reaching him by the girth of the two ladies, so tightly packed were they all in that historic carriage.

“Worthy father,” said he, “I would like all Penguinia to witness this embrace.”

“It would be a cheering spectacle,” said Agaric.

In the mean time the motor-car rushed like a tornado through hamlets and villages, crushing hens, geese, turkeys, ducks, guinea-fowls, cats, dogs, pigs, children, labourers, and women beneath its insatiable tyres. And the pious Agaric turned over his great designs in his mind. His voice, coming from behind one of the ladies, expressed this thought: “We must have money, a great deal of money.”

“That is your business,” answered the prince.

But already the park gates were opening to the formidable motor-car.

The dinner was sumptuous. They toasted the Dragon’s crest. Everybody knows that a closed goblet is a sign of sovereignty; so Prince Crucho and Princess Gudrune, his wife, drank out of goblets that were covered-over like ciboriums. The prince had his filled several times with the wines of Penguinia, both white and red.

Crucho had received a truly princely education, and he excelled in motoring, but was not ignorant of history either. He was said to be well versed in the antiquities and famous deeds of his family; and, indeed, he gave a notable proof of his knowledge in this respect. As they were speaking of the various remarkable peculiarities that had been noticed in famous women.

“It is perfectly true,” said he, “that Queen Crucha, whose name I bear, had the mark of a little monkey’s head upon her body.”

During the evening Agaric had a decisive interview with three of the prince’s oldest councillors. It was decided to ask for funds from Crucho’s father-in-law, as he was anxious to have a king for son-in-law, from several Jewish ladies, who were impatient to become ennobled, and, finally, from the Prince Regent of the Porpoises, who had promised his aid to the Draconides, thinking that by Crucho’s restoration he would weaken the Penguins, the hereditary enemies of his people. The three old councillors divided among themselves the three chief offices of the Court, those of Chamberlain, Seneschal, and High Steward, and authorised the monk to distribute the other places to the prince’s best advantage.

“Devotion has to be rewarded,” said the three old councillors.

“And treachery also,” said Agaric.

“It is but too true,” replied one of them, the Marquis of Sevenwounds, who had experience of revolutions.

There was dancing, and after the ball Princess Gudrune tore up her green robe to make cockades. With her own hands she sewed a piece of it on the monk’s breast, upon which he shed tears of sensibility and gratitude.

M. de Plume, the prince's equerry, set out the same evening to look for a green horse.

III. THE CABAL

After his return to the capital of Penguinia, the Reverend Father Agaric disclosed his projects to Prince Adelestan des Boscenos, of whose Draconian sentiments he was well aware.

The prince belonged to the highest nobility. The Torticol des Boscenos went back to Brian the Good, and under the Draconides had held the highest offices in the kingdom. In 1179, Philip Torticol, High Admiral of Penguinia, a brave, faithful, and generous, but vindictive man, delivered over the port of La Crique and the Penguin fleet to the enemies of the kingdom, because he suspected that Queen Crucha, whose lover he was, had been unfaithful to him and loved a stable-boy. It was that great queen who gave to the Boscenos the silver warming-pan which they bear in their arms. As for their motto, it only goes back to the sixteenth century. The story of its origin is as follows: One gala night, as he mingled with the crowd of courtiers who were watching the fire-works in the king's garden, Duke John des Boscenos approached the Duchess of Skull and put his hand under the petticoat of that lady, who made no complaint at the gesture. The king, happening to pass, surprised them and contented himself with saying, "And thus I find you." These four words became the motto of the Boscenos.

Prince Adelestan had not degenerated from his ancestors. He preserved an unalterable fidelity for the race of the Draconides and desired nothing so much as the restoration of Prince Crucho, an event which was in his eyes to be the fore-runner of the restoration of his own fortune. He therefore readily entered into the Reverend Father Agaric's plans. He joined himself at once to the monk's projects, and hastened to put him into communication with the most loyal Royalists of his acquaintance, Count Clena, M. de La Trumelle, Viscount Olive, and M. Bigourd. They met together one night in the Duke of Ampoule's country house, six miles eastward of Alca, to consider ways and means.

M. de La Trumelle was in favour of legal action.

"We ought to keep within the law," said he in substance. "We are for order. It is by an untiring propaganda that we shall best pursue the realisation of our hopes. We must change the feeling of the country. Our cause will conquer because it is just."

The Prince des Boscenos expressed a contrary opinion. He thought that, in order to triumph, just causes need force quite as much and even more than unjust causes require it.

“In the present situation,” said he tranquilly, “three methods of action present themselves: to hire the butcher boys, to corrupt the ministers, and to kidnap President Formose.”

“It would be a mistake to kidnap Formose,” objected M. de La Trumelle. “The President is on our side.”

The attitude and sentiments of the President of the Republic are explained by the fact that one Dracophil proposed to seize Formose while another Dracophil regarded him as a friend. Formose showed himself favourable to the Royalists, whose habits he admired and imitated. If he smiled at the mention of the Dragon’s crest it was at the thought of putting it on his own head. He was envious of sovereign power, not because he felt himself capable of exercising it, but because he loved to appear so. According to the expression of a Penguin chronicler, “he was a goose.”

Prince des Boscenos maintained his proposal to march against Formose’s palace and the House of Parliament.

Count Clena was even still more energetic.

“Let us begin,” said he, “by slaughtering, disembowelling, and braining the Republicans and all partisans of the government. Afterwards we shall see what more need be done.”

M. de La Trumelle was a moderate, and moderates are always moderately opposed to violence. He recognised that Count Clena’s policy was inspired by a noble feeling and that it was high-minded, but he timidly objected that perhaps it was not conformable to principle, and that it presented certain dangers. At last he consented to discuss it.

“I propose,” added he, “to draw up an appeal to the people. Let us show who we are. For my own part I can assure you that I shall not hide my flag in my pocket.”

M. Bigourd began to speak.

“Gentlemen, the Penguins are dissatisfied with the new order because it exists, and it is natural for men to complain of their condition. But at the same time the Penguins are afraid to change their government because new things alarm them. They have not known the Dragon’s crest and, although they sometimes say that they regret it, we must not believe them. It is easy to see that they speak in this way either without thought or because they are in an ill-temper. Let us not have any illusions about their feelings towards ourselves. They do not like us. They hate the aristocracy both from a base envy and from a generous love of equality. And these two united feelings are very strong in a people. Public opinion is not against us, because it knows nothing about us. But when it knows what we want it will not follow us. If we let it be seen that we

wish to destroy democratic government and restore the Dragon's crest, who will be our partisans? Only the butcher-boys and the little shopkeepers of Alca. And could we even count on them to the end? They are dissatisfied, but at the bottom of their hearts they are Republicans. They are more anxious to sell their cursed wares than to see Crucho again. If we act openly we shall only cause alarm.

"To make people sympathise with us and follow us we must make them believe that we want, not to overthrow the Republic, but, on the contrary, to restore it, to cleanse, to purify, to embellish, to adorn, to beautify, and to ornament it, to render it, in a word, glorious and attractive. Therefore, we ought not to act openly ourselves. It is known that we are not favourable to the present order. We must have recourse to a friend of the Republic, and, if we are to do what is best, to a defender of this government. We have plenty to choose from. It would be well to prefer the most popular and, if I dare say so, the most republican of them. We shall win him over to us by flattery, by presents, and above all by promises. Promises cost less than presents, and are worth more. No one gives as much as he who gives hopes. It is not necessary for the man we choose to be of brilliant intellect. I would even prefer him to be of no great ability. Stupid people show an inimitable grace in roguery. Be guided by me, gentlemen, and overthrow the Republic by the agency of a Republican. Let us be prudent. But prudence does not exclude energy. If you need me you will find me at your disposal."

This speech made a great impression upon those who heard it. The mind of the pious Agaric was particularly impressed. But each of them was anxious to appoint himself to a position of honour and profit. A secret government was organised of which all those present were elected active members. The Duke of Ampoule, who was the great financier of the party, was chosen treasurer and charged with organising funds for the propaganda.

The meeting was on the point of coming to an end when a rough voice was heard singing an old air:

Boscenos est un gros cochon;
On en va faire des andouilles
Des saucisses et du jambon
Pour le reveillon des pauv' bougres.

It had, for two hundred years, been a well-known song in the slums of Alca. Prince Boscenos did not like to hear it. He went down into the street, and, perceiving that the singer was a workman who was placing some slates on the roof of a church, he politely asked him to sing something else.

"I will sing what I like," answered the man.

"My friend, to please me. . . ."

“I don’t want to please you.”

Prince Boscenos was as a rule good-tempered, but he was easily angered and a man of great strength.

“Fellow, come down or I will go up to you,” cried he, in a terrible voice.

As the workman, astride on his coping, showed no sign of budging, the prince climbed quickly up the staircase of the tower and attacked the singer. He gave him a blow that broke his jaw-bone and sent him rolling into a water-spout. At that moment seven or eight carpenters, who were working on the rafters, heard their companion’s cry and looked through the window. Seeing the prince on the coping they climbed along a ladder that was leaning on the slates and reached him just as he was slipping into the tower. They sent him, head foremost, down the one hundred and thirty-seven steps of the spiral staircase.

IV. VISCOUNTESS OLIVE

The Penguins had the finest army in the world. So had the Porpoises. And it was the same with the other nations of Europe. The smallest amount of thought will prevent any surprise at this. For all armies are the finest in the world. The second finest army, if one could exist, would be in a notoriously inferior position; it would be certain to be beaten. It ought to be disbanded at once. Therefore, all armies are the finest in the world. In France the illustrious Colonel Marchand understood this when, before the passage of the Yalou, being questioned by some journalists about the Russo-Japanese war, he did not hesitate to describe the Russian army as the finest in the world, and also the Japanese. And it should be noticed that even after suffering the most terrible reverses an army does not fall from its position of being the finest in the world. For if nations ascribe their victories to the ability of their generals and the courage of their soldiers, they always attribute their defeats to an inexplicable fatality. On the other hand, navies are classed according to the number of their ships. There is a first, a second, a third, and so on. So that there exists no doubt as to the result of naval wars.

The Penguins had the finest army and the second navy in the world. This navy was commanded by the famous Chatillon, who bore the title of Emiralbahr, and by abbreviation Emiral. It is the same word which, unfortunately in a corrupt form, is used to-day among several European nations to designate the highest grade in the naval service. But as there was but one Emiral among the Penguins, a singular prestige, if I dare say so, was attached to that rank.

The Emiral did not belong to the nobility. A child of the people, he was loved by the people. They were flattered to see a man who sprang from their own ranks holding a position of honour. Chatillon was good-looking and fortune favoured him. He was not over-addicted to thought. No event ever disturbed his serene outlook.

The Reverend Father Agaric, surrendering to M. Bigourd's reasons and recognising that the existing government could only be destroyed by one of its defenders, cast his eyes upon Emiral Chatillon. He asked a large sum of money from his friend, the Reverend Father Cornemuse, which the latter handed him with a sigh. And with this sum he hired six hundred butcher boys of Alca to run behind Chatillon's horse and shout, "Hurrah for the Emiral!" Henceforth Chatillon could not take a single step without being cheered.

Viscountess Olive asked him for a private interview. He received her at the Admiralty* in a room decorated with anchors, shells, and grenades.

* Or better, Emiralty.

She was discreetly dressed in greyish blue. A hat trimmed with roses covered her pretty, fair hair, Behind her veil her eyes shone like sapphires. Although she came of Jewish origin there was no more fashionable woman in the whole nobility. She was tall and well shaped; her form was that of the year, her figure that of the season.

“Emiral,” said she, in a delightful voice, “I cannot conceal my emotion from you. . . . It is very natural . . . before a hero.”

“You are too kind. But tell me, Viscountess, what brings me the honour of your visit.”

“For a long time I have been anxious to see you, to speak to you. . . . So I very willingly undertook to convey a message to you.”

“Please take a seat.”

“How still it is here.”

“Yes, it is quiet enough.”

“You can hear the birds singing.”

“Sit down, then, dear lady.”

And he drew up an arm-chair for her.

She took a seat with her back to the light.

“Emiral, I came to bring you a very important message, a message. . .”

“Explain.”

“Emiral, have you ever seen Prince Crucho?”

“Never.”

She sighed.

“It is a great pity. He would be so delighted to see you! He esteems and appreciates you. He has your portrait on his desk beside his mother’s. What a pity it is he is not better known! He is a charming prince and so grateful for what is done for him! He will be a great king. For he will be king without doubt. He will come back and sooner than people think. . . . What I have to tell you, the message with which I am entrusted, refers precisely to. . .”

The Emiral stood up.

“Not a word more, dear lady. I have the esteem, the confidence of the Republic. I will not betray it. And why should I betray it? I am loaded honours and dignities.”

“Allow me to tell you, my dear Emiral, that your honours and dignities are far from equalling what you deserve. If your services were properly rewarded, you

would be Emiralissimo and Generalissimo, Commander-in-chief of the troops both on land and sea. The Republic is very ungrateful to you."

"All governments are more or less ungrateful."

"Yes, but the Republicans are jealous of you. That class of person is always afraid of his superiors. They cannot endure the Services. Everything that has to do with the navy and the army is odious to them. They are afraid of you."

"That is possible."

"They are wretches; they are ruining the country. Don't you wish to save Penguinia?"

"In what way?"

"By sweeping away all the rascals of the Republic, all the Republicans."

"What a proposal to make to me, dear lady!"

"It is what will certainly be done, if not by you, then by some one else. The Generalissimo, to mention him alone, is ready to throw all the ministers, deputies, and senators into the sea, and to recall Prince Crucho."

"Oh, the rascal, the scoundrel," exclaimed the Emiral.

"Do to him what he would do to you. The prince will know how to recognise your services, He will give you the Constable's sword and a magnificent grant. I am commissioned, in the mean time, to hand you a pledge of his royal friendship."

As she said these words she drew a green cockade from her bosom.

"What is that?" asked the Emiral.

"It is his colours which Crucho sends you."

"Be good enough to take them back."

"So that they may be offered to the Generalissimo who will accept them! . . . No, Emiral, let me place them on your glorious breast."

Chatillon gently repelled the lady. But for some minutes he thought her extremely pretty, and he felt this impression still more when two bare arms and the rosy palms of two delicate hands touched him lightly. He yielded almost immediately. Olive was slow in fastening the ribbon. Then when it was done she made a low courtesy and saluted Chatillon with the title of Constable.

"I have been ambitious like my comrades," answered the sailor, "I don't hide it, and perhaps I am so still; but u on my word of honour, when I look at you, the only, desire I feel is for a cottage and a heart."

She turned upon him the charming sapphire glances that flashed from under her eyelids.

"That is to be had also . . . what are you doing, Emiral?"

"I am looking for the heart."

When she left the Admiralty, the Viscountess went immediately to the Reverend Father Agaric to give an account of her visit.

“You must go to him again, dear lady,” said that austere monk.

V. THE PRINCE DES BOSCELOS

Morning and evening the newspapers that had been bought by the Dracophils proclaimed Chatillon's praises and hurled shame and opprobrium upon the Ministers of the Republic. Chatillon's portrait was sold through the streets of Alca. Those young descendants of Remus who carry plaster figures on their heads, offered busts of Chatillon for sale upon the bridges.

Every evening Chatillon rode upon his white horse round the Queen's Meadow, a place frequented by the people of fashion. The Dracophils posted along the Emiral's route a crowd of needy Penguins who kept shouting: "It is Chatillon we want." The middle classes of Alca conceived a profound admiration for the Emiral. Shopwomen murmured: "He is good-looking." Women of fashion slackened the speed of their motor-cars and kissed hands to him as they passed, amidst the hurrahs of an enthusiastic populace.

One day, as he went into a tobacco shop, two Penguins who were putting letters in the box recognized Chatillon and cried at the top of their voices: "Hurrah for the Emiral! Down with the Republicans." All those who were passing stopped in front of the shop. Chatillon lighted his cigar before the eyes of a dense crowd of frenzied citizens who waved their hats and cheered. The crowd kept increasing, and the whole town, singing and marching behind its hero, went back with him to the Admiralty.

The Emiral had an old comrade in arms, Under-Emiral Vulcanmould, who had served with great distinction, a man as true as gold and as loyal as his sword. Vulcanmould plumed himself on his thoroughgoing independence and he went among the partisans of Crucho and the Minister of the Republic telling both parties what he thought of them. M. Bigourd maliciously declared that he told each party what the other party thought of it. In truth he had on several occasions been guilty of regrettable indiscretions, which were overlooked as being the freedoms of a soldier who knew nothing of intrigue. Every morning he went to see Chatillon, whom he treated with the cordial roughness of a brother in arms.

"Well, old buffer, so you are popular," said he to him. "Your phiz is sold on the heads of pipes and on liqueur bottles and every drunkard in Alca spits out your name as he rolls in the gutter. . . . Chatillon, the hero of the Penguins! Chatillon, defender of the Penguin glory! . . . Who would have said it? Who would have thought it?"

And he laughed with his harsh laugh. Then changing his tone: "But, joking aside, are you not a bit surprised at what is happening to you?"

“No, indeed,” answered Chatillon.

And out went the honest Vulcanmould, banging the door behind him.

In the mean time Chatillon had taken a little flat at number 18 Johannes-Talpa Street, so that he might receive Viscountess Olive. They met there every day. He was desperately in love with her. During his martial and neptunian life he had loved crowds of women, red, black, yellow, and white, and some of them had been very beautiful. But before he met the Viscountess he did not know what a woman really was. When the Viscountess Olive called him her darling, her dear darling, he felt in heaven and it seemed to him that the stars shone in her hair.

She would come a little late, and, as she put her bag on the table, she would ask pensively:

“Let me sit on your knee.”

And then she would talk of subjects suggested by the pious Agaric, interrupting the conversation with sighs and kisses. She would ask him to dismiss such and such an officer, to give a command to another, to send the squadron here or there. And at the right moment she would exclaim:

“How young you are, my dear!”

And he did whatever she wished, for he was simple, he was anxious to wear the Constable’s sword, and to receive a large grant; he did not dislike playing a double part, he had a vague idea of saving Penguinia, and he was in love.

This delightful woman induced him to remove the troops that were at La Cirque, the port where Crucho was to land. By this means it was made certain that there would be no obstacle to prevent the prince from entering Penguinia.

The pious Agaric organised public meetings so as to keep up the agitation. The Dracophils held one or two every day in some of the thirty-six districts of Alca, and preferably in the poorer quarters. They desired to win over the poor, for they are the most numerous. On the fourth of May a particularly fine meeting was held in an old cattle-market, situated in the centre of a populous suburb filled with housewives sitting on the doorsteps and children playing in the gutters. There were present about two thousand people, in the opinion of the Republicans, and six thousand according to the reckoning of the Dracophils. In the audience was to be seen the flower of Penguin society, including Prince and Princess des Boscenos, Count Clena, M. de La Trumelle, M. Bigourd, and several rich Jewish ladies.

The Generalissimo of the national army had come in uniform. He was cheered.

The committee had been carefully formed. A man of the people, a workman, but a man of sound principles, M. Rauchin, the secretary of the yellow syndicate, was asked to preside, supported by Count Clena and M. Michaud, a butcher.

The government which Penguinia had freely given itself was called by such names as cesspool and drain in several eloquent speeches. But President Formose was spared and no mention was made of Crucho or the priests.

The meeting was not unanimous. A defender of the modern State and of the Republic, a manual labourer, stood up.

"Gentlemen," said M. Rauchin, the chairman, "we have told you that this meeting would not be unanimous. We are not like our opponents, we are honest men. I allow our opponent to speak. Heaven knows what you are going to hear. Gentlemen, I beg of you to restrain as long as you can the expression of your contempt, your disgust, and your indignation."

"Gentlemen," said the opponent. . . .

Immediately he was knocked down, trampled beneath the feet of the indignant crowd, and his unrecognisable remains thrown out of the hall.

The tumult was still resounding when Count Clena ascended the tribune. Cheers took the place of groans and when silence was restored the orator uttered these words:

"Comrades, we are going to see whether you have blood in your veins. What we have got to do is to slaughter, disembowel, and brain all the Republicans."

This speech let loose such a thunder of applause that the old shed rocked with it, and a cloud of acrid and thick dust fell from its filthy walls and worm-eaten beams and enveloped the audience.

A resolution was carried vilifying the government and acclaiming Chatillon. And the audience departed singing the hymn of the liberator: "It is Chatillon we want."

The only way out of the old market was through a muddy alley shut in by omnibus stables and coal sheds. There was no moon and a cold drizzle was coming down. The police, who were assembled in great numbers, blocked the alley and compelled the Dracophils to disperse in little groups. These were the instructions they had received from their chief, who was anxious to check the enthusiasm of the excited crowd.

The Dracophils who were detained in the alley kept marking time and singing, "It is Chatillon we want." Soon, becoming impatient of the delay, the cause of which they did not know, they began to push those in front of them. This movement, propagated along the alley, threw those in front against the broad chests of the police. The latter had no hatred for the Dracophils. In the bottom of their hearts they liked Chatillon. But it is natural to resist aggression and strong men are inclined to make use of their strength. For these reasons the police kicked the Dracophils with their hob-nailed boots. As a result there were

sudden rushes backwards and forwards. Threats and cries mingled with the songs.

“Murder! Murder! . . . It is Chatillon we want! Murder! Murder!”

And in the gloomy alley the more prudent kept saying, “Don’t push.” Among these latter, in the darkness, his lofty figure rising above the moving crowd, his broad shoulders and robust body noticeable among the trampled limbs and crushed sides of the rest, stood the Prince des Boscenos, calm, immovable, and placid. Serenely and indulgently he waited. In the mean time, as the exit was opened at regular intervals between the ranks of the police, the pressure of elbows against the chests of those around the prince diminished and people began to breathe again.

“You see we shall soon be able to go out,” said that kindly giant, with a pleasant smile. “Time and patience . . .”

He took a cigar from his case, raised it to his lips and struck a match. Suddenly, in the light of the match, he saw Princess Anne, his wife, clasped in Count Clena’s arms. At this sight he rushed towards them, striking both them and those around with his cane. He was disarmed, though not without difficulty, but he could not be separated from his opponent. And whilst the fainting princess was lifted from arm to arm to her carriage over the excited and curious crowd, the two men still fought furiously. Prince des Boscenos lost his hat, his eye-glass, his cigar, his necktie, and his portfolio full of private letters and political correspondence; he even lost the miraculous medals that he had received from the good Father Cornemuse. But he gave his opponent so terrible a kick in the stomach that the unfortunate Count was knocked through an iron grating and went, head foremost, through a glass door and into a coal-shed.

Attracted by the struggle and the cries of those around, the police rushed towards the prince, who furiously resisted them. He stretched three of them gasping at his feet and put seven others to flight, with, respectively, a broken jaw, a split lip, a nose pouring blood, a fractured skull, a torn ear, a dislocated collar-bone, and broken ribs. He fell, however, and was dragged bleeding and disfigured, with his clothes in rags, to the nearest police-station, where, jumping about and bellowing, he spent the night.

At daybreak groups of demonstrators went about the town singing, “It is Chatillon we want,” and breaking the windows of the houses in which the Ministers of the Republic lived.

VI. THE EMIRAL'S FALL

That night marked the culmination of the Dracophil movement. The Royalists had no longer any doubt of its triumph. Their chiefs sent congratulations to Prince Crucho by wireless telegraphy. Their ladies embroidered scarves and slippers for him. M. de Plume had found the green horse.

The pious Agaric shared the common hope. But he still worked to win partisans for the Pretender. They ought, he said, to lay their foundations upon the bed-rock.

With this design he had an interview with three Trade Union workmen.

In these times the artisans no longer lived, as in the days of the Draconides, under the government of corporations. They were free, but they had no assured pay. After having remained isolated from each other for a long time, without help and without support, they had formed themselves into unions. The coffers of the unions were empty, as it was not the habit of the unionists to pay their subscriptions. There were unions numbering thirty thousand members, others with a thousand, five hundred, two hundred, and so forth. Several numbered two or three members only, or even a few less. But as the lists of adherents were not published, it was not easy to distinguish the great unions from the small ones.

After some dark and indirect steps the pious Agaric was put into communication in a room in the Moulin de la Galette, with comrades Dagobert, Tronc, and Balafille, the secretaries of three unions of which the first numbered fourteen members, the second twenty-four, and the third only one. Agaric showed extreme cleverness at this interview.

"Gentlemen," said he, "you and I have not, in most respects, the same political and social views, but there are points in which we may come to an understanding. We have a common enemy. The government exploits you and despises us. Help us to overthrow it; we will supply you with the means so far as we are able, and you can in addition count on our gratitude."

"Fork out the tin," said Dagobert.

The Reverend Father placed on the table a bag which the distiller of Conils had given him with tears in his eyes.

"Done!" said the three companions.

Thus was the solemn compact sealed.

As soon as the monk had departed, carrying with him the joy of having won over the masses to his cause, Dagobert, Tronc, and Balafille whistled to their

wives, Amelia, Queenie, and Matilda, who were waiting in the street for the signal, and all six holding each other's hands, danced around the bag, singing:

J'ai du bon pognon,
Tu n'l'auras pas Chatillon!
Hou! Hou! la calotte!

And they ordered a salad-bowl full of warm wine.

In the evening all six went through the street from stall to stall singing their new song. The song became popular, for the detectives reported that every day showed an increase of the number of workpeople who sang through the slums:

J'ai du bon pognon;
Tu n'l'auras pas Chatillon!
Hou! Hou! la calotte!

The Dracophil agitation made no progress in the provinces. The pious Agaric sought to find the cause of this, but was unable to discover it until old Cornemuse revealed it to him.

"I have proofs," sighed the monk of Conils, "that the Duke of Ampoule, the treasurer of the Dracophils, has brought property in Porpoisia with the funds that he received for the propaganda."

The party wanted money. Prince des Boscenos had lost his portfolio in a brawl and he was reduced to painful expedients which were repugnant to his impetuous character. The Viscountess Olive was expensive. Cornemuse advised that the monthly allowance of that lady should be diminished.

"She is very useful to us," objected the pious Agaric.

"Undoubtedly," answered Cornemuse, "but she does us an injury by ruining us."

A schism divided the Dracophils. Misunderstandings reigned in their councils. Some wished that in accordance with the policy of M. Bigourd and the pious Agaric, they should carry on the design of reforming the Republic. Others, wearied by their long constraint, had resolved to proclaim the Dragon's crest and swore to conquer beneath that sign.

The latter urged the advantage of a clear situation and the impossibility of making a pretence much longer, and in truth, the public began to see whither the agitation was tending and that the Emiral's partisans wanted to destroy the very foundations of the Republic.

A report was spread that the prince was to land at La Cirque and make his entry into Alca on a green horse.

These rumours excited the fanatical monks, delighted the poor nobles, satisfied the rich Jewish ladies, and put hope in the hearts of the small traders. But very few of them were inclined to purchase these benefits at the price of a

social catastrophe and the overthrow of the public credit; and there were fewer still who would have risked their money, their peace, their liberty, or a single hour from their pleasures in the business. On the other hand, the workmen held themselves ready, as ever, to give a day's work to the Republic, and a strong resistance was being formed in the suburbs.

"The people are with us," the pious Agaric used to say.

However, men, women, and children, when leaving their factories, used to shout with one voice:

A bas Chatillon!

Hou! Hou! la calotte!

As for the government, it showed the weakness, indecision, flabbiness, and heedlessness common to all governments, and from which none has ever departed without falling into arbitrariness and violence. In three words it knew nothing, wanted nothing, and would do nothing. Formose, shut in his presidential palace, remained blind, dumb, deaf, huge, invisible, wrapped up in his pride as in an eider-down.

Count Olive advised the Dracophils to make a last appeal for funds and to attempt a great stroke while Alca was still in a ferment.

An executive committee, which he himself had chosen, decided to kidnap the members of the Chamber of Deputies, and considered ways and means.

The affair was fixed for the twenty-eighth of July. On that day the sun rose radiantly over the city. In front of the legislative palace women passed to market with their baskets; hawkers cried their peaches, pears, and grapes; cab horses with their noses in their bags munched their hay. Nobody expected anything, not because the secret had been kept but because it met with nothing but unbelievers. Nobody believed in a revolution, and from this fact we may conclude that nobody desired one. About two o'clock the deputies began to pass, few and unnoticed, through the side-door of the palace. At three o'clock a few groups of badly dressed men had formed. At half past three black masses coming from the adjacent streets spread over Revolution Square. This vast expanse was soon covered by an ocean of soft hats, and the crowd of demonstrators, continually increased by sight-seers, having crossed the bridge, struck its dark wave against the walls of the legislative enclosure. Cries, murmurs, and songs went up to the impassive sky. "It is Chatillon we want!" "Down with the Deputies!" "Down with the Republicans!" "Death to the Republicans!" The devoted band of Dracophils, led by Prince des Boscenos, struck up the august canticle:

Vive Crucho,

Vaillant et sage,

Plein de courage

Des le berceau!

Behind the wall silence alone replied.

This silence and the absence of guards encouraged and at the same time frightened the crowd. Suddenly a formidable voice cried out:

“Attack!”

And Prince des Boscenos was seen raising his gigantic form to the top of the wall, which was covered with barbs and iron spikes. Behind him rushed his companions, and the people followed. Some hammered against the wall to make holes in it; others endeavoured to tear down the spikes and to pull out the barbs. These defences had given way in places and some of the invaders had stripped the wall and were sitting astride on the top. Prince des Boscenos was waving an immense green flag. Suddenly the crowd wavered and from it came a long cry of terror. The police and the Republican carabineers issuing out of all the entrances of the palace formed themselves into a column beneath the wall and in a moment it was cleared of its besiegers. After a long moment of suspense the noise of arms was heard, and the police charged the crowd with fixed bayonets. An instant afterwards and on the deserted square strewn with hats and walking-sticks there reigned a sinister silence. Twice again the Dracophils attempted to form, twice they were repulsed. The rising was conquered. But Prince des Boscenos, standing on the wall of the hostile palace, his flag in his hand, still repelled the attack of a whole brigade. He knocked down all who approached him. At last he, too, was thrown down, and fell on an iron spike, to which he remained hooked, still clasping the standard of the Draconides.

On the following day the Ministers of the Republic and the Members of Parliament determined to take energetic measures. In vain, this time, did President Formose attempt to evade his responsibilities. The government discussed the question of depriving Chatillon of his rank and dignities and of indicting him before the High Court as a conspirator, an enemy of the public good, a traitor, *etc.*

At this news the Emiral's old companions in arms, who the very evening before had beset him with their adulations, made no effort to conceal their joy. But Chatillon remained popular with the middle classes of Alca and one still heard the hymn of the liberator sounding in the streets, “It is Chatillon we want.”

The Ministers were embarrassed. They intended to indict Chatillon before the High Court. But they knew nothing; they remained in that total ignorance reserved for those who govern men. They were incapable of advancing any grave charges against Chatillon. They could supply the prosecution with nothing but the ridiculous lies of their spies. Chatillon's share in the plot and his relations with Prince Crucho remained the secret of the thirty thousand Dracophils. The

Ministers and the Deputies had suspicions and even certainties, but they had no proofs. The Public Prosecutor said to the Minister of justice: "Very little is needed for a political prosecution! but I have nothing at all and that is not enough." The affair made no progress. The enemies of the Republic were triumphant.

On the eighteenth of September the news ran in Alca that Chatillon had taken flight. Everywhere there was surprise and astonishment. People doubted, for they could not understand.

This is what had happened: One day as the brave Under-Emiral Vulcanmould happened, as if by chance, to go into the office of M. Barbotan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he remarked with his usual frankness:

"M. Barbotan, your colleagues do not seem to me to be up to much; it is evident that they have never commanded a ship. That fool Chatillon gives them a deuced bad fit of the shivers."

The Minister, in sign of denial, waved his paper-knife in the air above his desk.

"Don't deny it," answered Vulcanmould. "You don't know how to get rid of Chatillon. You do not dare to indict him before the High Court because you are not sure of being able to bring forward a strong enough charge. Bigourd will defend him, and Bigourd is a clever advocate. . . . You are right, M. Barbotan, you are right. It would be a dangerous trial."

"Ah! my friend," said the Minister, in a careless tone, "if you knew how satisfied we are. . . . I receive the most reassuring news from my prefects. The good sense of the Penguins will do justice to the intrigues of this mutinous soldier. Can you suppose for a moment that a great people, an intelligent, laborious people, devoted to liberal institutions which. . ."

Vulcanmould interrupted with a great sigh:

"Ah! If I had time to do it I would relieve you of your difficulty. I would juggle away my Chatillon like a nutmeg out of a thimble. I would fillip him off to Porpoisia."

The Minister paid close attention.

"It would not take long," continued the sailor. "I would rid you in a trice of the creature. . . . But just now I have other fish to fry. . . . I am in a bad hole. I must find a pretty big sum. But, deuce take it, honour before everything."

The Minister and the Under-Emiral looked at each other for a moment in silence. Then Barbotan said with authority:

"Under-Emiral Vulcanmould, get rid of this seditious soldier. You will render a great service to Penguinia, and the Minister of Home Affairs will see that your gambling debts are paid."

The same evening Vulcanmould called on Chatillon and looked at him for some time with an expression of grief and mystery.

“My do you look like that?” asked the Emiral in an uneasy tone.

Vulcanmould said to him sadly:

“Old brother in arms, all is discovered. For the past half-hour the government knows everything.”

At these words Chatillon sank down overwhelmed.

Vulcanmould continued:

“You may be arrested any moment. I advise you to make off.”

And drawing out his watch:

“Not a minute to lose.”

“Have I time to call on the Viscountess Olive?”

“It would be mad,” said Vulcanmould, handing him a passport and a pair of blue spectacles, and telling him to have courage.

“I will,” said Chatillon.

“Good-bye! old chum.”

“Good-bye and thanks! You have saved my life.”

“That is the least I could do.”

A quarter of an hour later the brave Emiral had left the city of Alca.

He embarked at night on an old cutter at La Cirque and set sail for Porpoisia. But eight miles from the coast he was captured by a despatch-boat which was sailing without lights and which was under, the flag of the Queen of the Black Islands. That Queen had for a long time nourished a fatal passion for Chatillon.

VII. CONCLUSION

Nunc est bibendum. Delivered from its fears and pleased at having escaped from so great a danger, the government resolved to celebrate the anniversary of the Penguin regeneration and the establishment of the Republic by holding a general holiday.

President Formose, the Ministers, and the members of the Chamber and of the Senate were present at the ceremony.

The Generalissimo of the Penguin army was present in uniform. He was cheered.

Preceded by the black flag of misery and the red flag of revolt, deputations of workmen walked in the procession, their aspect one of grim protection.

President, Ministers, Deputies, officials, heads of the magistracy and of the army, each, in their own names and in the name of the sovereign people, renewed the ancient oath to live in freedom or to die. It was an alternative upon which they were resolutely determined. But they preferred to live in freedom. There were games, speeches, and songs.

After the departure of the representatives of the State the crowd of citizens separated slowly and peaceably, shouting out, "Hurrah for the Republic!" "Hurrah for liberty!" "Down with the shaven pates!"

The newspapers mentioned only one regrettable incident that happened on that wonderful day. Prince des Boscenos was quietly smoking a cigar in the Queen's Meadow when the State procession passed by. The prince approached the Minister's carriage and said in a loud voice: "Death to the Republicans!" He was immediately apprehended by the police, to whom he offered a most desperate resistance. He knocked them down in crowds, but he was conquered by numbers, and, bruised, scratched, swollen, and unrecognisable even to the eyes of his wife, he was dragged through the joyous streets into an obscure prison.

The magistrates carried on the case against Chatillon in a peculiar style. Letters were found at the Admiralty which revealed the complicity of the Reverend Father Agaric in the plot. Immediately public opinion was inflamed against the monks, and Parliament voted, one after the other, a dozen laws which restrained, diminished, limited, prescribed, suppressed, determined, and curtailed, their rights, immunities, exemptions, privileges, and benefits, and created many invalidating disqualifications against them.

The Reverend Father Agaric steadfastly endured the rigour of the laws which struck himself personally, as well as the terrible fall of the Emiral of which he was the chief cause. Far from yielding to evil fortune, he regarded it as but a bird of passage. He was planning new political designs more audacious than the first.

When his projects were sufficiently ripe he went one day to the Wood of Conils. A thrush sang in a tree and a little hedgehog crossed the stony path in front of him with awkward steps. Agaric walked with great strides, muttering fragments of sentences to himself.

When he reached the door of the laboratory in which, for so many years, the pious manufacturer had distilled the golden liqueur of St. Orberosia, he found the place deserted and the door shut. Having walked around the building he saw in the backyard the venerable Cornemuse, who, with his habit pinned up, was climbing a ladder that leant against the wall.

"Is that you, my dear friend?" said he to him. "What are you doing there?"

"You can see for yourself," answered the monk of Conils in a feeble voice, turning a sorrowful look Upon Agaric. "I am going into my house."

The red pupils of his eyes no longer imitated the triumph and brilliance of the ruby, they flashed mournful and troubled glances. His countenance had lost its happy fulness. His shining head was no longer pleasant to the sight; perspiration and inflamed blotches had altered its inestimable perfection.

"I don't understand," said Agaric.

"It is easy enough to understand. You see the consequences of your plot. Although a multitude of laws are directed against me I have managed to elude the greater number of them. Some, however, have struck me. These vindictive men have closed my laboratories and my shops, and confiscated my bottles, my stills, and my retorts. They have put seals on my doors and now I am compelled to go in through the window. I am barely able to extract in secret and from time to time the juice of a few plants and that with an apparatus which the humblest labourer would despise."

"You suffer from the persecution," said Agaric. "It strikes us all."

The monk of Conils passed his hand over his afflicted brow:

"I told you so, Brother Agaric; I told you that your enterprise would turn against ourselves."

"Our defeat is only momentary," replied Agaric eagerly. "It is due to purely accidental causes; it results from mere contingencies. Chatillon was a fool; he has drowned himself in his own ineptitude. Listen to me, Brother Cornemuse. We have not a moment to lose. We must free the Penguin people, we must deliver them from their tyrants, save them from themselves, restore the Dragon's crest, reestablish the ancient State, the good State, for the honour of religion and

the exaltation of the Catholic faith. Chatillon was a bad instrument; he broke in our hands. Let us take a better instrument to replace him. I have the man who will destroy this impious democracy. He is a civil official; his name is Gomoru. The Penguins worship him, He has already betrayed his party for a plate of rice. There's the man we want!"

At the beginning of this speech the monk of Conils had climbed into his window and pulled up the ladder.

"I foresee," answered he, with his nose through the sash, "that you will not stop until you have us all expelled from this pleasant, agreeable, and sweet land of Penguinia. Good night; God keep you!"

Agaric, standing before the wall, entreated his dearest brother to listen to him for a moment:

"Understand your own interest better, Cornemuse! Penguinia is ours. What do we need to conquer it? just one effort more . . . one more little sacrifice of money and . . ."

But without listening further, the monk of Conils drew in his head and closed his window.

BOOK VI. MODERN TIMES.

THE AFFAIR OF THE EIGHTY THOUSAND TRUSSES OF HAY

O Father Zeus, only save thou the sons of the Achaeans from the darkness, and make clear sky and vouchsafe sight to our eyes, and then, so it be but light, slay us, since such is thy good pleasure. (*Iliad*, xvii. 645 et seq.)

I. GENERAL GREATAUK, DUKE OF SKULL

A short time after the flight of the Emiral, a middle-class Jew called Pyrot, desirous of associating with the aristocracy and wishing to serve his country, entered the Penguin army. The Minister of War, who at the time was Greatauk, Duke of Skull, could not endure him. He blamed him for his zeal, his hooked nose, his vanity, his fondness for study, his thick lips, and his exemplary conduct. Every time the author of any misdeed was looked for, Greatauk used to say:

“It must be Pyrot!”

One morning General Panther, the Chief of the Staff, informed Greatauk of a serious matter. Eighty thousand trusses of hay intended for the cavalry had disappeared and not a trace of them was to be found.

Greatauk exclaimed at once:

“It must be Pyrot who has stolen them!”

He remained in thought for some time and said: “The more I think of it the more I am convinced that Pyrot has stolen those eighty thousand trusses of hay. And I know it by this: he stole them in order that he might sell them to our bitter enemies the Porpoises. What an infamous piece of treachery!

“There is no doubt about it,” answered Panther; “it only remains to prove it.”

The same day, as he passed by a cavalry barracks, Prince des Boscenos heard the troopers as they were sweeping out the yard, singing:

Boscenos est un gros cochon;
On en va faire des andouilles,
Des saucisses et du jambon
Pour le riveillon des pauy' bougres.

It seemed to him contrary to all discipline that soldiers should sing this domestic and revolutionary refrain which on days of riot had been uttered by the lips of jeering workmen. On this occasion he deplored the moral degeneration of the army, and thought with a bitter smile that his old comrade Greatauk, the head of this degenerate army, basely exposed him to the malice of an unpatriotic government. And he promised himself that he would make an improvement before long.

“That scoundrel Greatauk,” said he to himself, “will, not remain long a Minister.”

Prince des Boscenos was the most irreconcilable of the opponents of modern democracy, free thought, and the government which the Penguins had

voluntarily given themselves. He had a vigorous and undisguised hatred for the Jews, and he worked in public and in private, night and day, for the restoration of the line of the Draconides. His ardent royalism was still further excited by the thought of his private affairs, which were in a bad way and were hourly growing worse. He had no hope of seeing an end to his pecuniary embarrassments until the heir of Draco the Great entered the city of Alca.

When he returned to his house, the prince took out of his safe a bundle of old letters consisting of a private correspondence of the most secret nature, which he had obtained from a treacherous secretary. They proved that his old comrade Greatauk, the Duke of Skull, had been guilty of jobbery regarding the military stores and had received a present of no great value from a manufacturer called Maloury. The very smallness of this present deprived the Minister who had accepted it of all excuse.

The prince re-read the letters with a bitter satisfaction, put them carefully back into his safe, and dashed to the Minister of War. He was a man of resolute character. On being told that the Minister could see no one he knocked down the ushers, swept aside the orderlies, trampled under foot the civil and military clerks, burst through the doors, and entered the room of the astonished Greatauk.

"I will not say much," said he to him, "but I will speak to the point. You are a confounded cad. I have asked you to put a flea in the ear of General Mouchin, the tool of those Republicans, and you would not do it. I have asked you to give a command to General des Clapiers, who works for the Dracophils, and who has obliged me personally, and you would not do it. I have asked you to dismiss General Tandem, the commander of Port Alca, who robbed me of fifty louis at cards, and who had me handcuffed when I was brought before the High Court as Emiral Chatillon's accomplice. You would not do it. I asked you for the hay and bran stores. You would not give them. I asked you to send me on a secret mission to Porpoisia. You refused. And not satisfied with these repeated refusals you have designated me to your Government colleagues as a dangerous person, who ought to be watched, and it is owing to you that I have been shadowed by the police. You old traitor! I ask nothing more from you and I have but one word to say to you: Clear out; you have bothered us too long. Besides, we will force the vile Republic to replace you by one of our own party. You know that I am a man of my word. If in twenty-four hours you have not handed in your resignation I will publish the Maloury dossier in the newspapers."

But Greatauk calmly and serenely replied:

"Be quiet, you fool. I am just having a Jew transported. I am handing over Pyrot to justice as guilty of having stolen eighty thousand trusses of hay."

Prince Boscenos, whose anger vanished like a dream, smiled.

“Is that true?”

“You will see.”

“My congratulations, Greatauk. But as one always needs to take precautions with you I shall immediately publish the good news. People will read this evening about Pyrot’s arrest in every newspaper in Alca”

And he went away muttering:

“That Pyrot! I suspected he would come to a bad end.”

A moment later General Panther appeared before Greatauk.

“Sir,” said he, “I have just examined the business of the eighty thousand trusses of hay. There is no evidence against Pyrot.”

“Let it be found,” answered Greatauk. “Justice requires it. Have Pyrot arrested at once.”

II. PYROT

All Penguinia heard with horror of Pyrot's crime; at the same time there was a sort of satisfaction that this embezzlement combined with treachery and even bordering on sacrilege, had been committed by a Jew. In order to understand this feeling it is necessary to be acquainted with the state of public opinion regarding the Jews both great and small. As we have had occasion to say in this history, the universally detested and all powerful financial caste was composed of Christians and of Jews. The Jews who formed part of it and on whom the people poured all their hatred were the upper-class Jews. They possessed immense riches and, it was said, held more than a fifth part of the total property of Penguinia. Outside this formidable caste there was a multitude of Jews of a mediocre condition, who were not more loved than the others and who were feared much less. In every ordered State, wealth is a sacred thing: in democracies it is the only sacred thing. Now the Penguin State was democratic. Three or four financial companies exercised a more extensive, and above all, more effective and continuous power, than that of the Ministers of the Republic. The latter were puppets whom the companies ruled in secret, whom they compelled by intimidation or corruption to favour themselves at the expense of the State, and whom they ruined by calumnies in the press if they remained honest. In spite of the secrecy of the Exchequer, enough appeared to make the country indignant, but the middle-class Penguins had, from the greatest to the least of them, been brought up to hold money in great reverence, and as they all had property, either much or little, they were strongly impressed with the solidarity of capital and understood that a small fortune is not safe unless a big one is protected. For these reasons they conceived a religious respect for the Jews' millions, and self-interest being stronger with them than aversion, they were as much afraid as they were of death to touch a single hair of one of the rich Jews whom they detested. Towards the poorer Jews they felt less ceremonious and when they saw any of them down they trampled on them. That is why the entire nation learnt with thorough satisfaction that the traitor was a Jew. They could take vengeance on all Israel in his person without any fear of compromising the public credit.

That Pyrot had stolen the eighty thousand trusses of hay nobody hesitated for a moment to believe. No one doubted because the general ignorance in which everybody was concerning the affair did not allow of doubt, for doubt is a thing that demands motives. People do not doubt without reasons in the same way that people believe without reasons. The thing was not doubted because it was

repeated everywhere and, with the public, to repeat is to prove. It was not doubted because people wished to believe Pyrot guilty and one believes what one wishes to believe. Finally, it was not doubted because the faculty of doubt is rare amongst men; very few minds carry in them its germs and these are not developed without cultivation. Doubt is singular, exquisite, philosophic, immoral, transcendent, monstrous, full of malignity, injurious to persons and to property, contrary to the good order of governments, and to the prosperity of empires, fatal to humanity, destructive of the gods, held in horror by heaven and earth. The mass of the Penguins were ignorant of doubt: it believed in Pyrot's guilt and this conviction immediately became one of its chief national beliefs and an essential truth in its patriotic creed.

Pyrot was tried secretly and condemned.

General Panther immediately went to the Minister of War to tell him the result.

"Luckily," said he, "the judges were certain, for they had no proofs."

"Proofs," muttered Greatauk, "Proofs, what do they prove? There is only one certain, irrefragable proof — the confession of the guilty person. Has Pyrot confessed?"

"No, General."

"He will confess, he ought to. Panther, we must induce him; tell him it is to his interest. Promise him that, if he confesses, he will obtain favours, a reduction of his sentence, full pardon; promise him that if he confesses his innocence will be admitted, that he will be decorated. Appeal to his good feelings. Let him confess from patriotism, for the flag, for the sake of order, from respect for the hierarchy, at the special command of the Minister of War militarily. . . . But tell me, Panther, has he not confessed already? There are tacit confessions; silence is a confession."

"But, General, he is not silent; he keeps on squealing like a pig that he is innocent."

"Panther, the confessions of a guilty man sometimes result from the vehemence of his denials. To deny desperately is to confess. Pyrot has confessed; we must have witnesses of his confessions, justice requires them."

There was in Western Penguinia a seaport called La Cirque, formed of three small bays and formerly greatly frequented by ships, but now solitary and deserted. Gloomy lagoons stretched along its low coasts exhaling a pestilent odour, while fever hovered over its sleepy waters. Here, on the borders of the sea, there was built a high square tower, like the old Campanile at Venice, from the side of which, close to the summit hung an open cage which was fastened by a chain to a transverse beam. In the times of the Draconides the Inquisitors of

Alca used to put heretical clergy into this cage. It had been empty for three hundred years, but now Pirot was imprisoned in it under the guard of sixty warders, who lived in the tower and did not lose sight of him night or day, spying on him for confessions that they might afterwards report to the Minister of War. For Greatauk, careful and prudent, desired confessions and still further confessions. Greatauk, who was looked upon as a fool, was in reality a man of great ability and full of rare foresight.

In the mean time Pyrot, burnt by the sun, eaten by mosquitoes, soaked in the rain, hail and snow, frozen by the cold, tossed about terribly by the wind, beset by the sinister croaking of the ravens that perched upon his cage, kept writing down his innocence on pieces torn off his shirt with a tooth-pick dipped in blood. These rags were lost in the sea or fell into the hands of the gaolers. But Pyrot's protests moved nobody because his confessions had been published.

III. COUNT DE MAUBEC DE LA DENTDULYNX

The morals of the Jews were not always pure; in most cases they were averse from none of the vices of Christian civilization, but they retained from the Patriarchal age a recognition of family, ties and an attachment to the interests of the tribe. Pyrot's brothers, half-brothers, uncles, great-uncles, first, second, and third cousins, nephews and great-nephews, relations by blood and relations by marriage, and all who were related to him to the number of about seven hundred, were at first overwhelmed by the blow that had struck their relative, and they shut themselves up in their houses, covering themselves with ashes and blessing the hand that had chastised them. For forty days they kept a strict fast. Then they bathed themselves and resolved to search, without rest, at the cost of any toil and at the risk of even danger, for the demonstration of an innocence which they did not doubt. And how could they have doubted? Pyrot's innocence had been revealed to them in the same way that his guilt had been revealed to Christian Penguinia's; for these things, being hidden, assume a mystic character and take on the authority of religious truths. The seven hundred Pyrotists set to work with as much zeal as prudence, and made the most thorough inquiries in secret. They were everywhere; they were seen nowhere. One would have said that, like the pilot of Ulysses, they wandered freely over the earth. They penetrated into the War Office and approached, under different disguises, the judges, the registrars, and the witnesses of the affair. Then Greatauk's cleverness was seen. The witnesses knew nothing; the judges and registrars knew nothing. Emissaries reached even Pyrot and anxiously questioned him in his cage amid the prolonged moanings of the sea and the hoarse croaks of the ravens. It was in vain; the prisoner knew nothing. The seven hundred Pyrotists could not subvert the proofs of the accusation because they could not know what they were, and they could not know what they were because there were none. Pyrot's guilt was indefeasible through its very nullity. And it was with a legitimate pride that Greatauk, expressing himself as a true artist, said one day to General Panther: "This case is a master-piece: it is made out of nothing." The seven hundred Pyrotists despaired of ever clearing up this dark business, when suddenly they discovered, from a stolen letter, that the eighty thousand trusses of hay had never existed, that a most distinguished nobleman, Count de Maubec, had sold them to the State, that he had received the price but had never delivered them. Indeed seeing that he was descended from the richest landed proprietors of ancient Penguinia, the heir of the Maubecs of Dentdulynx, once the possessors of four

duchies, sixty counties, and six hundred and twelve marquises, baronies, and viscounties, he did not possess as much land as he could cover with his hand, and would not have been able to cut a single day's mowing of forage off his own domains. As to his getting a single rush from a land-owner or a merchant, that would have been quite impossible, for everybody except the Ministers of State and the Government officials knew that it would be easier to get blood from a stone than a farthing from a Maubec.

The seven hundred Pyrotists made a minute inquiry concerning the Count Maubec de la Dentdulynx's financial resources, and they proved that that nobleman was chiefly supported by a house in which some generous ladies were ready to furnish all comers with the most lavish hospitality. They publicly proclaimed that he was guilty of the theft of the eighty thousand trusses of straw for which an innocent man had been condemned and was now imprisoned in the cage.

Maubec belonged to an illustrious family which was allied to the Draconides. There is nothing that a democracy esteems more highly than noble birth. Maubec had also served in the Penguin army, and since the Penguins were all soldiers, they loved their army to idolatry. Maubec, on the field of battle, had received the Cross, which is a sign of honour among the Penguins and which they valued even more highly than the embraces of their wives. All Penguinia declared for Maubec, and the voice of the people which began to assume a threatening tone, demanded severe punishments for the seven hundred calumniating Pyrotists.

Maubec was a nobleman; he challenged the seven hundred Pyrotists to combat with either sword, sabre, pistols, carabines, or sticks.

"Vile dogs," he wrote to them in a famous letter, "you have crucified my God and you want my life too; I warn you that I will not be such a duffer as He was and that I will cut off your fourteen hundred ears. Accept my boot on your seven hundred behinds."

The Chief of the Government at the time was a peasant called Robin Mielleux, a man pleasant to the rich and powerful, but hard towards the poor, a man of small courage and ignorant of his own interests. In a public declaration he guaranteed Maubec's innocence and honour, and presented the seven hundred Pyrotists: to the criminal courts where they were condemned, as libellers, to imprisonment, to enormous fines, and to all the damages that were claimed by their innocent victim.

It seemed as if Pyrot was destined to remain for ever shut in the cage on which the ravens perched. But all the Penguins being anxious to know and prove that this Jew was guilty, all the proofs brought forward were found not to be good, while some of them were also contradictory. The officers of the Staff

showed zeal but lacked prudence. Whilst Greatauk kept an admirable silence, General Panther made inexhaustible speeches and every morning demonstrated in the newspapers that the condemned man was guilty. He would have done better, perhaps, if he had said nothing. The guilt was evident and what is evident cannot be demonstrated. So much reasoning disturbed people's minds; their faith, though still alive, became less serene. The more proofs one gives a crowd the more they ask for.

Nevertheless the danger of proving too much would not have been great if there had not been in Penguinia, as there are, indeed, everywhere, minds framed for free inquiry, capable of studying a difficult question, and inclined to philosophic doubt. They were few; they were not all inclined to speak, and the public was by no means inclined to listen to them. Still, they did not always meet with deaf ears. The great Jews, all the Israelite millionaires of Alca, when spoken to of Pyrot, said: "We do not know the man"; but they thought of saving him. They preserved the prudence to which their wealth inclined them and wished that others would be less timid. Their wish was to be gratified.

IV. COLOMBAN

Some weeks after the conviction of the seven hundred Pyrotists, a little, gruff, hairy, short-sighted man left his house one morning with a paste-pot, a ladder, and a bundle of posters and went about the streets pasting placards to the walls on which might be read in large letters: Pyrot is innocent, Maubec is guilty. He was not a bill-poster; his name was Colomban, and as the author of sixty volumes on Penguin sociology he was numbered among the most laborious and respected writers in Alca. Having given sufficient thought to the matter and no longer doubting Pyrot's innocence, he proclaimed it in the manner which he thought would be most sensational. He met with no hindrance while posting his bills in the quiet streets, but when he came to the populous quarters, every time he mounted his ladder, inquisitive people crowded round him and, dumbfounded with surprise and indignation, threw at him threatening looks which he received with the calm that comes from courage and short-sightedness. Whilst caretakers and tradespeople tore down the bills he had posted, he kept on zealously placarding, carrying his tools and followed by little boys who, with their baskets under their arms or their satchels on their backs, were in no hurry to reach school. To the mute indignation against him, protests and murmurs were now added. But Colomban did not condescend to see or hear anything. As, at the entrance to the Rue St. Orberosia, he was posting one of his squares of paper bearing the words: Pyrot is innocent, Maubec is guilty, the riotous crowd showed signs of the most violent anger. They called after him, "Traitor, thief, rascal, scoundrel." A woman opened a window and emptied a vase full of filth over his head, a cabby sent his hat flying from one end of the street to the other by a blow of his whip amid the cheers of the crowd who now felt themselves avenged. A butcher's boy knocked Colomban with his paste-pot, his brush, and his posters, from the top of his ladder into the gutter, and the proud Penguins then felt the greatness of their country. Colomban stood up, covered with filth, lame, and with his elbow injured, but tranquil and resolute.

"Low brutes," he muttered, shrugging his shoulders.

Then he went down on all-fours in the gutter to look for his glasses which he had lost in his fall. It was then seen that his coat was split from the collar to the tails and that his trousers were in rags. The rancour of the crowd grew stronger.

On the other side of the street stretched the big St. Orberosian Stores. The patriots seized whatever they could lay their hands on from the shop front, and hurled at Colomban oranges, lemons, pots of jam, pieces of chocolate, bottles of

liqueurs, boxes of sardines, pots of foie gras, hams, fowls, flasks of oil, and bags of haricots. Covered with the debris of the food, bruised, tattered, lame, and blind, he took to flight, followed by the shop-boys, bakers, loafers, citizens, and hooligans whose number increased each moment and who kept shouting: "Duck him! Death to the traitor! Duck him!" This torrent of vulgar humanity swept along the streets and rushed into the Rue St. Mael. The police did their duty. From all the adjacent streets constables proceeded and, holding their scabbards with their left hands, they went at full speed in front of the pursuers. They were on the point of grabbing Colomban in their huge hands when he suddenly escaped them by falling through an open man-hole to the bottom of a sewer.

He spent the night there in the darkness, sitting close by the dirty water amidst the fat and slimy rats. He thought of his task, and his swelling heart filled with courage and pity. And when the dawn threw a pale ray of light into the air-hole he got up and said, speaking to himself:

"I see that the fight will be a stiff one."

Forthwith he composed a memorandum in which he clearly showed that Pyrot could not have stolen from the Ministry of War the eighty thousand trusses of hay which it had never received, for the reason that Maubec had never delivered them, though he had received the money. Colomban caused this statement to be distributed in the streets of Alca. The people refused to read it and tore it up in anger. The shop-keepers shook their fists at the distributors, who made off, chased by angry women armed with brooms. Feelings grew warm and the ferment lasted the whole day. In the evening bands of wild and ragged men went about the streets yelling: "Death to Colomban!" The patriots snatched whole bundles of the memorandum from the newsboys and burned them in the public squares, dancing wildly round these bon-fires with girls whose petticoats were tied up to their waists.

Some of the more enthusiastic among them went and broke the windows of the house in which Colomban had lived in perfect tranquillity during his forty years of work.

Parliament was roused and asked the Chief of the Government what measures he proposed to take in order to repel the odious attacks made by Colomban upon the honour of the National Arm and the safety of Penguinia. Robin Mielleux denounced Colomban's impious audacity and proclaimed amid the cheers of the legislators that the man would be summoned before the Courts to answer for his infamous libel.

The Minister of War was called to the tribune and appeared in it transfigured. He had no longer the air, as in former days, of one of the sacred geese of the

Penguin citadels. Now, bristling, with outstretched neck and hooked beak, he seemed the symbolical vulture fastened to the livers of his country's enemies.

In the august silence of the assembly he pronounced these words only:

"I swear that Pyrot is a rascal."

This speech of Greatauk was reported all over Penguinia and satisfied the public conscience.

V. THE REVEREND FATHERS AGARIC AND CORNEMUSE

Colomban bore with meekness and surprise the weight of the general reprobation. He could not go out without being stoned, so he did not go out. He remained in his study with a superb obstinacy, writing new memoranda in favour of the encaged innocent. In the mean time among the few readers that he found, some, about a dozen, were struck by his reasons and began to doubt Pyrot's guilt. They broached the subject to their friends and endeavoured to spread the light that had arisen in their minds. One of them was a friend of Robin Mielleux and confided to him his perplexities, with the result that he was no longer received by that Minister. Another demanded explanations in an open letter to the Minister of War. A third published a terrible pamphlet. The latter, whose name was Kerdanic, was a formidable controversialist. The public was unmoved. It was said that these defenders of the traitor had been bribed by the rich Jews; they were stigmatized by the name of Pyrotists and the patriots swore to exterminate them. There were only a thousand or twelve hundred Pyrotists in the whole vast Republic, but it was believed that they were everywhere. People were afraid of finding them in the promenades, at meetings, at receptions, in fashionable drawing-rooms, at the dinner-table, even in the conjugal couch. One half of the population was suspected by the other half. The discord set all Alca on fire.

In the mean time Father Agaric, who managed his big school for young nobles, followed events with anxious attention. The misfortunes of the Penguin Church had not disheartened him. He remained faithful to Prince Crucho and preserved the hope of restoring the heir of the Draconides to the Penguin throne. It appeared to him that the events that were happening or about to happen in the country, the state of mind of which they were at once the effect and the cause, and the troubles that necessarily resulted from them might — if they were directed, guided, and led by the profound wisdom of a monk — overthrow the Republic and incline the Penguins to restore Prince Crucho, from whose piety the faithful hoped for so much solace. Wearing his huge black hat, the brims of which looked like the wings of Night, he walked through the Wood of Conils towards the factory where his venerable friend, Father Cornemuse, distilled the hygienic St. Orberosian liqueur, The good monk's industry, so cruelly affected in the time of Emiral Chatillon, was being restored from its ruins. One heard

goods trains rumbling through the Wood and one saw in the sheds hundreds of orphans clothed in blue, packing bottles and nailing up cases.

Agaric found the venerable Cornemuse standing before his stoves and surrounded by his retorts. The shining pupils of the old man's eyes had again become as rubies, his skull shone with its former elaborate and careful polish.

Agaric first congratulated the pious distiller on the restored activity of his laboratories and workshops.

"Business is recovering. I thank God for it," answered the old man of Conils. "Alas! it had fallen into a bad state, Brother Agaric. You saw the desolation of this establishment. I need say no more."

Agaric turned away his head.

"The St. Orberosian liqueur," continued Cornemuse, "is making fresh conquests. But none the less my industry remains uncertain and precarious. The laws of ruin and desolation that struck it have not been abrogated, they have only been suspended."

And the monk of Conils lifted his ruby eyes to heaven.

Agaric put his hand on his shoulder.

"What a sight, Cornemuse, does unhappy Penguinia present to us! Everywhere disobedience, independence, liberty! We see the proud, the haughty, the men of revolt rising up. After having braved the Divine laws they now rear themselves against human laws, so true is it that in order to be a good citizen a man must be a good Christian. Colomban is trying to imitate Satan. Numerous criminals are following his fatal example. They want, in their rage, to put aside all checks, to throw off all yokes, to free themselves from the most sacred bonds, to escape from the most salutary restraints. They strike their country to make it obey them. But they will be overcome by the weight of public animadversion, vituperation, indignation, fury, execration, and abomination. That is the abyss to which they have been led by atheism, free thought, and the monstrous claim to judge for themselves and to form their own opinions."

"Doubtless, doubtless," replied Father Cornemuse, shaking his head, "but I confess that the care of distilling these simples has prevented me from following public affairs. I only know that people are talking a great deal about a man called Pyrot. Some maintain that he is guilty, others affirm that he is innocent, but I do not clearly understand the motives that drive both parties to mix themselves up in a business that concerns neither of them."

The pious Agaric asked eagerly:

"You do not doubt Pyrot's guilt?"

"I cannot doubt it, dear Agaric," answered the monk of Conils. "That would be contrary to the laws of my country which we ought to respect as long as they

are not opposed to the Divine laws. Pyrot is guilty, for he has been convicted. As to saying more for or against his guilt, that would be to erect my own authority against that of the judges, a thing which I will take good care not to do. Besides, it is useless, for Pyrot has been convicted. If he has not been convicted because he is guilty, he is guilty because he has been convicted; it comes to the same thing. I believe in his guilt as every good citizen ought to believe in it; and I will believe in it as long as the established jurisdiction will order me to believe in it, for it is not for a private person but for a judge to proclaim the innocence of a convicted person. Human justice is venerable even in the errors inherent in its fallible and limited nature. These errors are never irreparable; if the judges do not repair them on earth, God will repair them in Heaven. Besides I have great confidence in general Greatauk, who, though he certainly does not look it, seems to me to be an abler man than all those who are attacking him."

"Dearest Cornemuse," cried the pious Agaric, "the Pyrot affair, if pushed to the point whither we can lead it by the help of God and the necessary funds, will produce the greatest benefits. It will lay bare the vices of this Anti-Christian Republic and will incline the Penguins to restore the throne of the Draconides and the prerogatives of the Church. But to do that it is necessary for the people to see the clergy in the front rank of its defenders. Let us march against the enemies of the army, against those who insult our heroes, and everybody will follow us."

"Everybody will be too many," murmured the monk of Conils, shaking his head. "I see that the Penguins want to quarrel. If we mix ourselves up in their quarrel they will become reconciled at our expense and we shall have to pay the cost of the war. That is why, if you are guided by me, dear Agaric, you will not engage the Church in this adventure."

"You know my energy; you know my prudence. I will compromise nothing. . . . Dear Cornemuse, I only want from you the funds necessary for us to begin the campaign."

For a long time Cornemuse refused to bear the expenses of what he thought was a fatal enterprise. Agaric was in turn pathetic and terrible. At last, yielding to his prayers and threats, Cornemuse, with banging head and swinging arms, went to the austere cell that concealed his evangelical poverty. In the whitewashed wall under a branch of blessed box, there was fixed a safe. He opened it, and with a sigh took out a bundle of bills which, with hesitating hands, he gave to the pious Agaric.

"Do not doubt it, dear Cornemuse," said the latter, thrusting the papers into the pocket of his overcoat, "this Pyrot affair has been sent us by God for the glory and exaltation of the Church of Penguinia."

“I pray that you may be right!” sighed the monk of Conils.

And, left alone in his laboratory, he gazed, through his exquisite eyes, with an ineffable sadness at his stoves and his retorts.

VI. THE SEVEN HUNDRED PYROTISTS

The seven hundred Pyrotists inspired the public with an increasing aversion. Every day two or three of them were beaten to death in the streets. One of them was publicly whipped, another thrown into the river, a third tarred and feathered and led through a laughing crowd, a fourth had his nose cut off by a captain of dragoons. They did not dare to show themselves at their clubs, at tennis, or at the races; they put on a disguise when they went to the Stock Exchange. In these circumstances the Prince des Boscenos thought it urgent to curb their audacity and repress their insolence. For this purpose he joined with Count Clena, M. de La Trumelle, Viscount Olive, and M. Bigourd in founding a great anti-Pyrotist association to which citizens in hundreds of thousands, soldiers in companies, regiments, brigades, divisions, and army corps, towns, districts, and provinces, all gave their adhesion.

About this time the Minister of War happening to visit one day his Chief of Staff, saw with surprise that the large room where General Panther worked, which was formerly quite bare, had now along each wall from floor to ceiling in sets of deep pigeon-holes, triple and quadruple rows of paper bundles of every as form and colour. These sudden and monstrous records had in a few days reached the dimensions of a pile of archives such as it takes centuries to accumulate.

“What is this?” asked the astonished minister.

“Proofs against Pyrot,” answered General Panther with patriotic satisfaction. “We had not got them when we convicted him, but we have plenty of them now.”

The door was open, and Greatauk saw coming up the stair-case a long file of porters who were unloading heavy bales of papers in the hall, and he saw the lift slowly rising heavily loaded with paper packets.

“What are those others?” said he.

“They are fresh proofs against Pyrot that are now reaching us,” said Panther. “I have asked for them in every county of Penguinia, in every Staff Office and in every Court in Europe. I have ordered them in every town in America and in Australia, and in every factory in Africa, and I am expecting bales of them from Bremen and a ship-load from Melbourne.” And Panther turned towards the Minister of War the tranquil and radiant look of a hero. However, Greatauk, his eye-glass in his eye, was looking at the formidable pile of papers with less satisfaction than uneasiness.

“Very good,” said he, “very good! but I am afraid that this Pyrot business may lose its beautiful simplicity. It was limpid; like a rock-crystal its value lay in its transparency. You could have searched it in vain with a magnifying-glass for a straw, a bend, a blot, for the least fault. When it left my hands it was as pure as the light. Indeed it was the light. I give you a pearl and you make a mountain out of it. To tell you the truth I am afraid that by wishing to do too well you have done less well. Proofs! of course it is good to have proofs, but perhaps it is better to have none at all. I have already told you, Panther, there is only one irrefutable proof, the confession of the guilty person (or if the innocent what matter!). The Pyrot affair, as I arranged it, left no room for criticism; there was no spot where it could be touched. It defied assault. It was invulnerable because it was invisible. Now it gives an enormous handle for discussion. I advise you, Panther, to use your paper packets with great reserve. I should be particularly grateful if you would be more sparing of your communications to journalists. You speak well, but you say too much. Tell me, Panther, are there any forged documents among these?”

“There are some adapted ones.”

“That is what I meant. There are some adapted ones. So much the better. As proofs, forged documents, in general, are better than genuine ones, first of all because they have been expressly made to suit the needs of the case, to order and measure, and therefore they are fitting and exact. They are also preferable because they carry the mind into an ideal world and turn it aside from the reality which, alas! in this world is never without some alloy. . . . Nevertheless, I think I should have preferred, Panther, that we had no proofs at all.”

The first act of the Anti-Pyrotist Association was to ask the Government immediately to summon the seven hundred Pyrotists and their accomplices before the High Court of Justice as guilty of high treason. Prince des Boscenos was charged to speak on behalf of the Association and presented himself before the Council which had assembled to hear him. He expressed a hope that the vigilance and firmness of the Government would rise to the height of the occasion. He shook hands with each of the ministers and as he passed General Greatauk he whispered in his ear:

“Behave properly, you ruffian, or I will publish the Maloury dossier!”

Some days later by a unanimous vote of both Houses, on a motion proposed by the Government, the Anti-Pyrotist Association was granted a charter recognising it as beneficial to the public interest.

The Association immediately sent a deputation to Chitterlings Castle in Porpoisia, where Crucho was eating the bitter bread of exile, to assure the prince of the love and devotion of the Anti-Pyrotist members.

However, the Pyrotists grew in numbers, and now counted ten thousand. They had their regular cafes on the boulevards. The patriots had theirs also, richer and bigger, and every evening glasses of beer, saucers, match-stands, jugs, chairs, and tables were hurled from one to the other. Mirrors were smashed to bits, and the police ended the struggles by impartially trampling the combatants of both parties under their hob-nailed shoes.

On one of these glorious nights, as Prince des Boscenos was leaving a fashionable cafe in the company of some patriots, M. de La Trumelle pointed out to him a little, bearded man with glasses, hatless, and having only one sleeve to his coat, who was painfully dragging himself along the rubbish-strewn pavement.

“Look!” said he, “there is Colomban!”

The prince had gentleness as well as strength; he was exceedingly mild; but at the name of Colomban his blood boiled. He rushed at the little spectacled man, and knocked him down with one blow of his fist on the nose.

M. de La Trumelle then perceived that, misled by an undeserved resemblance, he had mistaken for Colomban, M. Bazile, a retired lawyer, the secretary of the Anti-pyrotist Association, and an ardent and generous patriot. Prince des Boscenos was one of those antique souls who never bend. However, he knew how to recognise his faults.

“M. Bazile,” said he, raising his hat, “if I have touched your face with my hand you will excuse me and you will understand me, you will approve of me, nay, you will compliment me, you will congratulate me and felicitate me, when you know the cause of that act. I took you for Colomban.”

M. Bazile, wiping his bleeding nostrils with his handkerchief and displaying an elbow laid bare by the absence of his sleeve:

“No, sir,” answered he drily, “I shall not felicitate you, I shall not congratulate you, I shall not compliment you, for your action was, at the very least, superfluous; it was, I will even say, supererogatory. Already this evening I have been three times mistaken for Colomban and received a sufficient amount of the treatment he deserves. The patriots have knocked in my ribs and broken my back, and, sir, I was of opinion that that was enough.”

VII. BIDAULT-COQUILLE AND MANIFLORE, THE SOCIALISTS

Whilst the wind of anger and hatred blew in Alca, Eugene Bidault-Coquille, poorest and happiest of astronomers, installed in an old steam-engine of the time of the Draconides, was observing the heavens through a bad telescope, and photographing the paths of the meteors upon some damaged photographic plates. His genius corrected the errors of his instruments and his love of science triumphed over the worthlessness of his apparatus. With an inextinguishable ardour he observed aerolites, meteors, and fire-balls, and all the glowing ruins and blazing sparks which pass through the terrestrial atmosphere with prodigious speed, and as a reward for his studious vigils he received the indifference of the public, the ingratitude of the State and the blame of the learned societies. Engulfed in the celestial spaces he knew not what occurred upon the surface of the earth. He never read the newspapers, and when he walked through the town his mind was occupied with the November asteroids, and more than once he found himself at the bottom of a pond in one of the public parks or beneath the wheels of a motor omnibus.

Elevated in stature as in thought he respected himself and others. This was shown by his cold politeness as well as by a very thin black frock coat and a tall hat which gave to his person an appearance at once emaciated and sublime. He took his meals in a little restaurant from which all customers less intellectual than himself had fled, and thenceforth his napkin bound by its wooden ring rested alone in the abandoned rack.

In this cook-shop his eyes fell one evening upon Colomban's memorandum in favour of Pyrot. He read it as he was cracking some bad nuts and suddenly, exalted with astonishment, admiration, horror, and pity, he forgot all about falling meteors and shooting stars and saw nothing but the innocent man hanging in his cage exposed to the winds of heaven and the ravens perching upon it.

That image did not leave him. For a week he had been obsessed by the innocent convict, when, as he was leaving his cook-shop, he saw a crowd of citizens entering a public-house in which a public meeting was going on. He went in. The meeting was disorderly; they were yelling, abusing one another and knocking one another down in the smoke-laden hall. The Pyrotists and the Anti-Pyrotists spoke in turn and were alternately cheered and hissed at. An obscure and confused enthusiasm moved the audience. With the audacity of a timid and retired man Bidault-Coquille leaped upon the platform and spoke for three-

quarters of an hour. He spoke very quickly, without order, but with vehemence, and with all the conviction of a mathematical mystic. He was cheered. When he got down from the platform a big woman of uncertain age, dressed in red, and wearing an immense hat trimmed with heroic feathers, throwing herself into his arms, embraced him, and said to him:

“You are splendid!”

He thought in his simplicity that there was some truth in the statement.

She declared to him that henceforth she would live but for Pyrot’s defence and Colomban’s glory. He thought her sublime and beautiful. She was Maniflore, a poor old courtesan, now forgotten and discarded, who had suddenly become a vehement politician.

She never left him. They spent glorious hours together in doss-houses and in lodgings beautified by their love, in newspaper offices, in meeting-halls and in lecture-halls. As he was an idealist, he persisted in thinking her beautiful, although she gave him abundant opportunity of seeing that she had preserved no charm of any kind. From her past beauty she only retained a confidence in her capacity for pleasing and a lofty assurance in demanding homage. Still, it must be admitted that this Pyrot affair, so fruitful in prodigies, invested Maniflore with a sort of civic majesty, and transformed her, at public meetings, into an august symbol of justice and truth.

Bidault-Coquille and Maniflore did not kindle the least spark of irony or amusement in a single Anti-Pyrotist, a single defender of Greatauk, or a single supporter of the army. The gods, in their anger, had refused to those men the precious gift of humour. They gravely accused the courtesan and the astronomer of being spies, of treachery, and of plotting against their country. Bidault-Coquille and Maniflore grew visibly greater beneath insult, abuse, and calumny.

For long months Penguinia had been divided into two camps and, though at first sight it may appear strange, hitherto the socialists had taken no part in the contest. Their groups comprised almost all the manual workers in the country, necessarily scattered, confused, broken up, and divided, but formidable. The Pyrot affair threw the group leaders into a singular embarrassment. They did not wish to place themselves either on the side of the financiers or on the side of the army. They regarded the Jews, both great and small, as their uncompromising opponents. Their principles were not at stake, nor were their interests concerned in the affair. Still the greater number felt how difficult it was growing for them to remain aloof from struggles in which all Penguinia was engaged.

Their leaders called a sitting of their federation at the Rue de la Queue-du-diable-St. Mael, to take into consideration the conduct they ought to adopt in the present circumstances and in future eventualities.

Comrade Phoenix was the first to speak.

"A crime," said he, "the most odious and cowardly of crimes, a judicial crime, has been committed. Military judges, coerced or misled by their superior officers, have condemned an innocent man to an infamous and cruel punishment. Let us not say that the victim is not one of our own party, that he belongs to a caste which was, and always will be, our enemy. Our party is the party of social justice; it can look upon no iniquity with indifference.

"It would be a shame for us if we left it to Kerdanic, a radical, to Colombar, a member of the middle classes, and to a few moderate Republicans, alone to proceed against the crimes of the army. If the victim is not one of us, his executioners are our brothers' executioners, and before Greatauk struck down this soldier he shot our comrades who were on strike.

"Comrades, by an intellectual, moral and material effort you must rescue Pyrot from his torment, and in performing this generous act you are not turning aside from the liberating and revolutionary task you have undertaken, for Pyrot has become the symbol of the oppressed and of all the social iniquities that now exist; by destroying one you make all the others tremble."

When Phoenix ended, comrade Sapor spoke in these terms:

"You are advised to abandon your task in order to do something with which you have no concern. Why throw yourselves into a conflict where, on whatever side you turn, you will find none but your natural, uncompromising, even necessary opponents? Are the financiers to be less hated by us than the army? What inept and criminal generosity is it that hurries you to save those seven hundred Pyrotists whom you will always find confronting you in the social war?

"It is proposed that you act the part of the police for your enemies, and that you are to re-establish for them the order which their own crimes have disturbed. Magnanimity pushed to this degree changes its name.

"Comrades, there is a point at which infamy becomes fatal to a society. Penguin society is being strangled by its infamy, and you are requested to save it, to give it air that it can breathe. This is simply turning you into ridicule.

"Leave is to smother itself and let us gaze at its last convulsions with joyful contempt, only regretting that it has so entirely corrupted the soil on which it has been built that we shall find nothing but poisoned mud on which to lay the foundations of a new society."

When Sapor had ended his speech comrade Lapersonne pronounced these few words:

"Phoenix calls us to Pyrot's help for the reason that Pyrot is innocent. It seems to me that that is a very bad reason. If Pyrot is innocent he has behaved like a good soldier and has always conscientiously worked at his trade, which

principally consists in shooting the people. That is not a motive to make the people brave all dangers in his defence. When it is demonstrated to me that Pyrot is guilty and that he stole the army hay, I shall be on his side.”

Comrade Larrivee afterwards spoke.

“I am not of my friend, Phoenix’s opinion but I am not with my friend Sapor either. I do not believe that the party is bound to embrace a cause as soon as we are told that that cause is just. That, I am afraid, is a grievous abuse of words and a dangerous equivocation. For social justice is not revolutionary justice. They are both in perpetual antagonism: to serve the one is to oppose the other. As for me, my choice is made. I am for revolutionary justice as against social justice. Still, in the present case I am against abstention. I say that when a lucky chance brings us an affair like this we should be fools not to profit by it.

“How? We are given an opportunity of striking terrible, perhaps fatal, blows against militarism. And am I to fold my arms? I tell you, comrades, I am not a fakir, I have never been a fakir, and if there are fakirs here let them not count on me. To sit in meditation is a policy without results and one which I shall never adopt.

“A party like ours ought to be continually asserting itself. It ought to prove its existence by continual action. We will intervene in the Pyrot affair but we will intervene in it in a revolutionary manner; we will adopt violent action. . . . Perhaps you think that violence is old-fashioned and superannuated, to be scrapped along with diligences, hand-presses and aerial telegraphy. You are mistaken. To-day as yesterday nothing is obtained except by violence; it is the one efficient instrument. The only thing necessary is to know how to use it. You ask what will our action be? I will tell you: it will be to stir up the governing classes against one another, to put the army in conflict with the capitalists, the government with the magistracy, the nobility and clergy with the Jews, and if possible to drive them all to destroy one another. To do this would be to carry on an agitation which would weaken government in the same way that fever wears out the sick.

“The Pyrot affair, little as we know how to turn it to advantage, will put forward by ten years the growth of the Social party and the emancipation of the proletariat, by disarmament, the general strike, and revolution.”

The leaders of the party having each expressed a different opinion, the discussion was continued, not without vivacity. The orators, as always happens in such a case, reproduced the arguments they had already brought forward, though with less order and moderation than before. The dispute was prolonged and none changed his opinion. These opinions, in the final analysis, were reduced to two: that of Sapor and Lapersonne who advised abstention, and that

of Phoenix and Larrivee, who wanted intervention. Even these two contrary opinions were united in a common hatred of the heads of the army and of their justice, and in a common belief in Pyrot's innocence. So that public opinion was hardly mistaken in regarding all the Socialist leaders as pernicious Anti-Pyrotists.

As for the vast masses in whose name they spoke and whom they represented as far as speech can express the impossible — as for the proletarians whose thought is difficult to know and who do not know it themselves, it seemed that the Pyrot affair did not interest them. It was too literary for them, it was in too classical a style, and had an upper-middle-class and high-finance tone about it that did not please them much.

VIII. THE COLOMBAN TRIAL

When the Colomban trial began, the Pyrotists were not many more than thirty thousand, but they were every where and might be found even among the priests and millionaires. What injured them most was the sympathy of the rich Jews. On the other hand they derived valuable advantages from their feeble number. In the first place there were among them fewer fools than among their opponents, who were over-burdened with them. Comprising but a feeble minority, they co-operated easily, acted with harmony, and had no temptation to divide and thus counteract one another's efforts. Each of them felt the necessity of doing the best possible and was the more careful of his conduct as he found himself more in the public eye. Finally, they had every reason to hope that they would gain fresh adherents, while their opponents, having had everybody with them at the beginning, could only decrease.

Summoned before the judges at a public sitting, Colomban immediately perceived that his judges were not anxious to discover the truth. As soon as he opened his mouth the President ordered him to be silent in the superior interests of the State. For the same reason, which is the supreme reason, the witnesses for the defence were not heard. General Panther, the Chief of the Staff, appeared in the witness-box, in full uniform and decorated with all his orders. He deposed as follows:

"The infamous Colomban states that we have no proofs against Pyrot. He lies; we have them. I have in my archives seven hundred and thirty-two square yards of them which at five hundred pounds each make three hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds."

That superior officer afterwards gave, with elegance and ease, a summary of those proofs.

"They are of all colours and all shades," said he in substance, "they are of every form — pot, crown, sovereign, grape, dove-cot, grand eagle, *etc.* The smallest is less than the hundredth part of a square inch, the largest measures seventy yards long by ninety yards broad."

At this revelation the audience shuddered with horror.

Greatauk came to give evidence in his turn. Simpler, and perhaps greater, he wore a grey tunic and held his hands joined behind his back.

"I leave," said he calmly and in a slightly raised voice, "I leave to M. Colomban the responsibility for an act that has brought our country to the brink of ruin. The Pyrot affair is secret; it ought to remain secret. If it were divulged

the cruelest ills, wars, pillages, depredations, fires, massacres, and epidemics would immediately burst upon Penguinia. I should consider myself guilty of high treason if I uttered another word.”

Some persons known for their political experience, among others M. Bigourd, considered the evidence of the Minister of War as abler and of greater weight than that of his Chief of Staff.

The evidence of Colonel de Boisjoli made a great impression.

“One evening at the Ministry of War,” said that officer, “the attache of a neighbouring Power told me that while visiting his sovereign’s stables he had once admired some soft and fragrant hay, of a pretty green colour, the finest hay he had ever seen! ‘Where did it come from?’ I asked him. He did not answer, but there seemed to me no doubt about its origin. It was the hay Pyrot had stolen. Those qualities of verdure, softness, and aroma, are those of our national hay. The forage of the neighbouring Power is grey and brittle; it sounds under the fork and smells of dust. One can draw one own conclusions.”

Lieutenant-Colonel Hasting said in the witness-box, amid hisses, that he did not believe Pyrot guilty. He was immediately seized by the police and thrown into the bottom of a dungeon where, amid vipers, toads, and broken glass, he remained insensible both to promises and threats.

The usher called:

“Count Pierre Maubec de la Dentdulynx.”

There was deep silence, and a stately but ill-dressed nobleman, whose moustaches pointed to the skies and whose dark eyes shot forth flashing glances, was seen advancing toward the witness-box.

He approached Colomban and casting upon him a look of ineffable disdain:

“My evidence,” said he, “here it is: you excrement!”

At these words the entire hall burst into enthusiastic applause and jumped up, moved by one of those transports that stir men’s hearts and rouse them to extraordinary actions. Without another word Count Maubec de la Dentdulynx withdrew.

All those present left the Court and formed a procession behind him. Prostrate at his feet, Princess des Boscenos held his legs in a close embrace, but he went on, stern and impassive, beneath a shower of handkerchiefs and flowers. Viscountess Olive, clinging to his neck, could not be removed, and the calm hero bore her along with him, floating on his breast like a light scarf.

When the court resumed its sitting, which it had been compelled to suspend, the President called the experts.

Vermillard, the famous expert in handwriting, gave the results of his researches.

“Having carefully studied,” said he, “the papers found in Pyrot’s house, in particular his account book and his laundry books, I noticed that, though apparently not out of the common, they formed an impenetrable cryptogram, the key to which, however, I discovered. The traitor’s infamy is to be seen in every line. In this system of writing the words ‘Three glasses of beer and twenty francs for Adele’ mean ‘I have delivered thirty thousand trusses of hay to a neighbouring Power! From these documents I have even been able to establish the composition of the hay delivered by this officer. The words waistcoat, drawers, pocket handkerchief, collars, drink, tobacco, cigars, mean clover, meadowgrass, lucern, burnet, oats, rye-grass, vernal-grass, and common cat’s tail grass. And these are precisely the constituents of the hay furnished by Count Maubec to the Penguin cavalry. In this way Pyrot mentioned his crimes in a language that he believed would always remain indecipherable. One is confounded by so much astuteness and so great a want of conscience.”

Colomban, pronounced guilty without any extenuating circumstances, was condemned to the severest penalty. The judges immediately signed a warrant consuming him to solitary confinement.

In the Place du Palais on the sides of a river whose banks had during the course of twelve centuries seen so great a history, fifty thousand persons were tumultuously awaiting the result of the trial. Here were the heads of the Anti-Pyrotist Association, among whom might be seen Prince des Boscenos, Count Clena, Viscount Olive, and M. de La Trumelle; here crowded the Reverend Father Agaric and the teachers of St. Mael College with their pupils; here the monk Douillard and General Caraguel, embracing each other, formed a sublime group. The market women and laundry women with spits, shovels, tongs, beetles, and kettles full of water might be seen running across the Pont-Vieux. On the steps in front of the bronze gates were assembled all the defenders of Pyrot in Alca, professors, publicists, workmen, some conservatives, others Radicals or Revolutionaries, and by their negligent dress and fierce aspect could be recognised comrades Phoenix, Larrivee, Lapersonne, Dagobert, and Varambille. Squeezed in his funereal frock-coat and wearing his hat of ceremony, Bidault-Coquille invoked the sentimental mathematics on behalf of Colomban and Colonel Hastaing. Maniflore shone smiling and resplendent on the topmost step, anxious, like Leaena, to deserve a glorious monument, or to be given, like Epicharis, the praises of history.

The seven hundred Pyrotists disguised as lemonade sellers, utter-merchants, collectors of odds and ends, or anti-Pyrotists, wandered round the vast building.

When Colomban appeared, so great an uproar burst forth that, struck by the commotion of air and water, birds fell from the trees and fishes floated on the

surface of the stream.

On all sides there were yells:

“Duck Colomban, duck him, duck him!”

There were some cries of “Justice and truth!” and a voice was even heard shouting:

“Down with the Army!”

This was the signal for a terrible struggle. The combatants fell in thousands, and their bodies formed howling and moving mounds on top of which fresh champions gripped each other by the throats. Women, eager, pale, and dishevelled, with clenched teeth and frantic nails, rushed on the man, in transports that, in the brilliant light of the public square, gave to their faces expressions unsurpassed even in the shade of curtains and in the hollows of pillows. They were going to seize Colomban, to bite him, to strangle, dismember and rend him, when Maniflore, tall and dignified in her red tunic, stood forth, serene and terrible, confronting these furies who recoiled from before her in terror. Colomban seemed to be saved; his partisans succeeded in clearing a passage for him through the Place du Palais and in putting him into a cab stationed at the corner of the Pont-Vieux. The horse was already in full trot when Prince des Boscenos, Count Clena, and M. de La Trumelle knocked the driver off his seat. Then, making the animal back and pushing the spokes of the wheels, they ran the vehicle on to the parapet of the bridge, whence they overturned it into the river amid the cheers of the delirious crowd. With a resounding splash a jet of water rose upwards, and then nothing but a slight eddy was to be seen on the surface of the stream.

Almost immediately comrades Dagobert and Varambille, with the help of the seven hundred disguised Pyrotists, sent Prince des Boscenos head foremost into a river-laundry in which he was lamentably swallowed up.

Serene night descended over the Place du Palais and shed silence and peace upon the frightful ruins with which it was strewn. In the mean time, Colomban, three thousand yards down the stream, cowering beside a lame old horse on a bridge, was meditating on the ignorance and injustice of crowds.

“The business,” said he to himself, “is even more troublesome than I believed. I foresee fresh difficulties.”

He got up and approached the unhappy animal.

“What have you, poor friend, done to them?” said he. “It is on my account they have used you so cruelly.”

He embraced the unfortunate beast and kissed the white star on his forehead. Then he took him by the bridle and led him, both of them limping, through the sleeping city to his house, where sleep soon allowed them to forget mankind.

IX. FATHER DOUILLARD

In their infinite gentleness and at the suggestion of the common father of the faithful, the bishops, canons, vicars, curates, abbots, and friars of Penguinia resolved to hold a solemn service in the cathedral of Alca, and to pray that Divine mercy would deign to put an end to the troubles that distracted one of the noblest countries in Christendom, and grant to repentant Penguinia pardon for its crimes against God and the ministers of religion.

The ceremony took place on the fifteenth of June. General Caraguel, surrounded by his staff, occupied the churchwarden's pew. The congregation was numerous and brilliant. According to M. Bigourd's expression it was both crowded and select. In the front rank was to be seen M. de la Bertheoiseille, Chamberlain to his Highness Prince Crucho. Near the pulpit, which was to be ascended by the Reverend Father Douillard, of the Order of St. Francis, were gathered, in an attitude of attention with their hands crossed upon their wands of office, the great dignitaries of the Anti-Pyrotist association, Viscount Olive, M. de La Trumelle, Count Clena, the Duke d'Ampoule, and Prince des Boscenos. Father Agaric was in the apse with the teachers and pupils of St. Mael College. The right-hand transept and aisle were reserved for officers and soldiers in uniform, this side being thought the more honourable, since the Lord leaned his head to the right when he died on the Cross. The ladies of the aristocracy, and among them Countess Clena, Viscountess Olive, and Princess des Boscenos, occupied reserved seats. In the immense building and in the square outside were gathered twenty thousand clergy of all sorts, as well as thirty thousand of the laity.

After the expiatory and propitiatory ceremony the Reverend Father Douillard ascended the pulpit. The sermon had at first been entrusted to the Reverend Father Agaric, but, in spite of his merits, he was thought unequal to the occasion in zeal and doctrine, and the eloquent Capuchin friar, who for six months had gone through the barracks preaching against the enemies of God and authority, had been chosen in his place.

The Reverend Father Douillard, taking as his text, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat," established that all temporal power has God as its principle and its end, and that it is ruined and destroyed when it turns aside from the path that Providence has traced out for it and from the end to which He has directed it.

Applying these sacred rules to the government of Penguinia, he drew a terrible picture of the evils that the country's rulers had been unable either to prevent or to foresee.

"The first author of all these miseries and degradations, my brethren," said he, "is only too well known to you. He is a monster whose destiny is providentially proclaimed by his name, for it is derived from the Greek word, pyros, which means fire. Eternal wisdom warns us by this etymology that a Jew was to set ablaze the country that had welcomed him."

He depicted the country, persecuted by the persecutors of the Church, and crying in its agony:

"O woe! O glory! Those who have crucified my God are crucifying me!"

At these words a prolonged shudder passed through the assembly.

The powerful orator excited still greater indignation when he described the proud and crime-stained Colombar, plunged into the stream, all the waters of which could not cleanse him. He gathered up all the humiliations and all the perils of the Penguins in order to reproach the President of the Republic and his Prime Minister with them.

"That Minister," said he, "having been guilty of degrading cowardice in not exterminating the seven hundred Pyrotists with their allies and defenders, as Saul exterminated the Philistines at Gibeah, has rendered himself unworthy of exercising the power that God delegated to him, and every good citizen ought henceforth to insult his contemptible government. Heaven will look favourably on those who despise him. 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat.' God will depose these pusillanimous chiefs and will put in their place strong men who will call upon Him. I tell you, gentlemen, I tell you officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers who listen to me, I tell you General of the Penguin armies, the hour has come! If you do not obey God's orders, if in His name you do not depose those now in authority, if you do not establish a religious and strong government in Penguinia, God will none the less destroy what He has condemned, He will none the less save His people. He will save them, but, if you are wanting, He will do so by means of a humble artisan or a simple corporal. Hasten! The hour will soon be past."

Excited by this ardent exhortation, the sixty thousand people present rose up trembling and shouting: "To arms! To arms! Death to the Pyrotists! Hurrah for Crucho!" and all of them, monks, women, soldiers, noblemen, citizens, and loafers, who were gathered beneath the superhuman arm uplifted in the pulpit, struck up the hymn, "Let us save Penguinia!" They rushed impetuously from the basilica and marched along the quays to the Chamber of Deputies.

Left alone in the deserted nave, the wise Cornemuse, lifting his arms to heaven, murmured in broken accents:

“Agnosco fortunam ecclesiae penguicanae! I see but too well whither this will lead us.”

The attack which the crowd made upon the legislative palace was repulsed. Vigorously charged by the police and Alcan guards, the assailants were already fleeing in disorder, when the Socialists, running from the slums and led by comrades Phoenix, Dagobert, Lapersonne, and Varambille, threw themselves upon them and completed their discomfiture. MM. de La Trumelle and d’Ampoule were taken to the police station. Prince des Boscenos, after a valiant struggle, fell upon the bloody pavement with a fractured skull.

In the enthusiasm of victory, the comrades, mingled with an innumerable crowd of paper-sellers and gutter-merchants, ran through the boulevards all night, carrying, Maniflore in triumph, and breaking the mirrors of the cafes and the glasses of the street lamps amid cries of “Down with Crucho! Hurrah for the Social Revolution!” The Anti-Pyrotists in their turn upset the newspaper kiosks and tore down the hoardings.

These were spectacles of which cool reason cannot approve and they were fit causes for grief to the municipal authorities, who desired to preserve the good order of the roads and streets. But, what was sadder for a man of heart was the sight of the canting humbugs, who, from fear of blows, kept at an equal distance from the two camps, and who, although they allowed their selfishness and cowardice to be visible, claimed admiration for the generosity of their sentiments and the nobility of their souls. They rubbed their eyes with onions, gaped like whittings, blew violently into their handkerchiefs, and, bringing their voices out of the depths of their stomachs, groaned forth: “O Penguins, cease these fratricidal struggles; cease to rend your mother’s bosom!” As if men could live in society without disputes and without quarrels, and as if civil discords were not the necessary conditions of national life and progress. They showed themselves hypocritical cowards by proposing a compromise between the just and the unjust, offending the just in his rectitude and the unjust in his courage. One of these creatures, the rich and powerful Machimel, a champion coward, rose upon the town like a colossus of grief; his tears formed poisonous lakes at his feet and his sighs capsized the boats of the fishermen.

During these stormy nights Bidault-Coquille at the top of his old steam-engine, under the serene sky, boasted in his heart, while the shooting stars registered themselves upon his photographic plates. He was fighting for justice. He loved and was loved with a sublime passion. Insult and calumny raised him to the clouds. A caricature of him in company with those of Colombar,

Kerdanic, and Colonel Hastaing was to be seen in the newspaper kiosks. The Anti-Pyrotists proclaimed that he had received fifty thousand francs from the big Jewish financiers. The reporters of the militarist sheets held interviews regarding his scientific knowledge with official scholars, who declared he had no knowledge of the stars, disputed his most solid observations, denied his most certain discoveries, and condemned his most ingenious and most fruitful hypotheses. He exulted under these flattering blows of hatred and envy.

He contemplated the black immensity pierced by a multitude of lights, without giving a thought to all the heavy slumbers, cruel insomnias, vain dreams, spoilt pleasures, and infinitely diverse miseries that a great city contains.

“It is in this enormous city,” said he to himself, “that the just and the unjust are joining battle.”

And substituting a simple and magnificent poetry for the multiple and vulgar reality, he represented to himself the Pyrot affair as a struggle between good and bad angels. He awaited the eternal triumph of the Sons of Light and congratulated himself on being a Child of the Day confounding the Children of Night.

X. MR. JUSTICE CHAUSSEPIED

Hitherto blinded by fear, incautious and stupid before the bands of Friar Douillard and the partisans of Prince Crucho, the Republicans at last opened their eyes and grasped the real meaning of the Pyrot affair. The deputies who had for two years turned pale at the shouts of the patriotic crowds became, not indeed more courageous, but altered their cowardice and blamed Robin Mielleux for disorders which their own compliance had encouraged, and the instigators of which they had several times slavishly congratulated. They reproached him for having imperilled the Republic by a weakness which was really theirs and a timidity which they themselves had imposed upon him. Some of them began to doubt whether it was not to their interest to believe in Pyrot's innocence rather than in his guilt, and thenceforward they felt a bitter anguish at the thought that the unhappy man might have been wrongly convicted and that in his aerial cage he might be expiating another man's crimes. "I cannot sleep on account of it!" was what several members of Minister Guillaumette's majority used to say. But these were ambitious to replace their chief.

These generous legislators overthrew the cabinet, and the President of the Republic put in Robin Mielleux's place, a patriarchal Republican with a flowing beard, La Trinite by name, who, like most of the Penguins, understood nothing about the affair, but thought that too many monks were mixed up in it.

General Greatauk before leaving the Ministry of War, gave his final advice to Pariler, the Chief of the Staff.

"I go and you remain," said he, as he shook hands with him. "The Pyrot affair is my daughter; I confide her to you, she is worthy of your love and your care; she is beautiful. Do not forget that her beauty loves the shade, is leased with mystery, and likes to remain veiled. Great her modesty with gentleness. Too many indiscreet looks have already profaned her charms. . . . Panther, you desired proofs and you obtained them. You have many, perhaps too many, in your possession. I see that there will be many tiresome interventions and much dangerous curiosity. If I were in your place I would tear up all those documents. Believe me, the best of proofs is none at all. That is the only one which nobody discusses."

Alas! General Panther did not realise the wisdom of this advice. The future was only too thoroughly to justify Greatauk's perspicacity. La Trinite demanded the documents belonging to the Pyrot affair. Peniche, his Minister of War, refused them in the superior interests of the national defence, telling him that the

documents under General Panther's care formed the hugest mass of archives in the world. La Trinite studied the case as well as he could, and, without penetrating to the bottom of the matter, suspected it of irregularity. Conformably to his rights and prerogatives he then ordered a fresh trial to be held. Immediately, Peniche, his Minister of War, accused him of insulting the army and betraying the country and flung his portfolio at his head. He was replaced by a second, who did the same. To him succeeded a third, who imitated these examples, and those after him to the number of seventy acted like their predecessors, until the venerable La Trinite groaned beneath the weight of bellicose portfolios. The seventy-first Minister of War, van Julep, retained office. Not that he was in disagreement with so many and such noble colleagues, but he had been commissioned by them generously to betray his Prime Minister, to cover him with shame and opprobrium, and to convert the new trial to the glory of Greatauk, the satisfaction of the Anti-Pyrotists, the profit of the monks, and the restoration of Prince Crucho.

General van Julep, though endowed with high military virtues, was not intelligent enough to employ the subtle conduct and exquisite methods of Greatauk. He thought, like General Panther, that tangible proofs against Pyrot were necessary, that they could never have too many of them, that they could never have even enough. He expressed these' sentiments to his Chief of Staff, who was only too inclined to agree with them.

"Panther," said he, "we are at the moment when we need abundant and superabundant proofs."

"You have said enough, General," answered Panther, "I will complete my piles of documents."

Six months later the proofs against Pyrot filled two storeys of the Ministry of War. The ceiling fell in beneath the weight of the bundles, and the avalanche of falling documents crushed two head clerks, fourteen second clerks, and sixty copying clerks, who were at work upon the ground floor arranging a change in the fashion of the cavalry gaiters. The walls of the huge edifice had to be propped. Passers-by saw with amazement enormous beams and monstrous stanchions which reared themselves obliquely against the noble front of the building, now tottering and disjointed, and blocked up the streets, stopped the carriages, and presented to the motor-omnibuses an obstacle against which they dashed with their loads of passengers.

The judges who had condemned Pyrot were not, properly speaking, judges but soldiers. The judges who had condemned Colombar were real judges, but of inferior rank, wearing seedy black clothes like church vergers, unlucky wretches of judges, miserable judgelings. Above them were the superior judges who wore

ermine robes over their black gowns. These, renowned for their knowledge and doctrine, formed a court whose terrible name expressed power. It was called the Court of Appeal (Cassation) so as to make it clear that it was the hammer suspended over the judgments and decrees of all other jurisdictions.

One of these superior red Judges of the Supreme Court, called Chaussepied, led a modest and tranquil life in a suburb of Alca. His soul was pure, his heart honest, his spirit just. When he had finished studying his documents he used to play the violin and cultivate hyacinths. Every Sunday he dined with his neighbours the Mesdemoiselles Helbivore. His old age was cheerful and robust and his friends often praised the amenity of his character.

For some months, however, he had been irritable and touchy, and when he opened a newspaper his broad and ruddy face would become covered with dolorous wrinkles and darkened with an angry purple. Pyrot was the cause of it. Justice Chaussepied could not understand how an officer could have committed so black a crime as to hand over eighty thousand trusses of military hay to a neighbouring and hostile Power. And he could still less conceive how a scoundrel should have found official defenders in Penguinia. The thought that there existed in his country a Pyrot, a Colonel Hastaing, a Colombar, a Kerdanic, a Phoenix, spoilt his hyacinths, his violin, his heaven, and his earth, all nature, and even his dinner with the Mesdemoiselles Helbivore!

XI. CONCLUSION

The appeal was allowed, and Pyrot was brought down from his cage. But the Anti-Pyrotists did not regard themselves as beaten. The military judges re-tried Pyrot. Greatauk, in this second affair, surpassed himself. He obtained a second conviction; he obtained it by declaring that the proofs communicated to the Supreme Court were worth nothing, and that great care had been taken to keep back the good ones, since they ought to remain secret. In the opinion of connoisseurs he had never shown so much address. On leaving the court, as he passed through the vestibule with a tranquil step, and his hands behind his back, amidst a crowd of sight-seers, a woman dressed in red and with her face covered by a black veil rushed at him, brandishing a kitchen knife.

“Die, scoundrel!” she cried. It was Maniflore. Before those present could understand what was happening, the general seized her by the wrist, and with apparent gentleness, squeezed it so forcibly that the knife fell from her aching hand.

Then he picked it up and handed it to Maniflore.

“Madam,” said he with a bow, “you have dropped a household utensil.”

He could not prevent the heroine from being taken to the police-station; but he had her immediately released and afterwards he employed all his influence to stop the prosecution.

The second conviction of Pyrot was Greatauk’s last victory.

Justice Chaussepied, who had formerly liked soldiers so much, and esteemed their justice so highly, being now enraged with the military judges, quashed their judgments as a monkey cracks nuts. He rehabilitated Pyrot a second time; he would, if necessary, have rehabilitated him five hundred times.

Furious at having been cowards and at having allowed themselves to be deceived and made game of, the Republicans turned against the monks and clergy. The deputies passed laws of expulsion, separation, and spoliation against them. What Father Cornemuse had foreseen took place. That good monk was driven from the Wood of Conils. Treasury officers confiscated his retorts and his stills, and the liquidators divided amongst them his bottles of St. Oberosian liqueur. The pious distiller lost the annual income of three million five hundred thousand francs that his products procured for him. Father Agaric went into exile, abandoning his school into the hands of laymen, who soon allowed it to fall into decay. Separated from its foster-mother, the State, the Church of Penguinia withered like a plucked flower.

The victorious defenders of the innocent man now abused each other and overwhelmed each other reciprocally with insults and calumnies. The vehement Kerdanic hurled himself upon Phoenix as if ready to devour him. The wealthy Jews and the seven hundred Pyrotists turned away with disdain from the socialist comrades whose aid they had humbly implored in the past.

“We know you no longer,” said they. “To the devil with you and your social justice. Social justice is the defence of property.”

Having been elected a Deputy and chosen to be the leader of the new majority, comrade Larrivee was appointed by the Chamber and public opinion to the Premiership. He showed himself an energetic defender of the military tribunals that had condemned Pyrot. When his former socialist comrades claimed a little more justice and liberty for the employes of the State as well as for manual workers, he opposed their proposals in an eloquent speech.

“Liberty,” said he, “is not licence. Between order and disorder my choice is made: revolution is impotence. Progress has no more formidable enemy than violence. Gentlemen, those who, as I am, are anxious for reform, ought to apply themselves before everything else to cure this agitation which enfeebles government just as fever exhausts those who are ill. It is time to reassure honest people.”

This speech was received with applause. The government of the Republic remained in subjection to the great financial companies, the army was exclusively devoted to the defence of capital, while the fleet was designed solely to procure fresh orders for the mine-owners. Since the rich refused to pay their just share of the taxes, the poor, as in the past, paid for them.

In the mean time from the height of his old steamline, beneath the crowded stars of night, Bidault-Coquille gazed sadly at the sleeping city. Maniflore had left him. Consumed with a desire for fresh devotions and fresh sacrifices, she had gone in company with a young Bulgarian to bear justice and vengeance to Sofia. He did not regret her, having perceived after the Affair, that she was less beautiful in form and in thought than he had at first imagined. His impressions had been modified in the same direction concerning many other forms and many other thoughts. And what was cruelest of all to him, he regarded himself as not so great, not so splendid, as he had believed.

And he reflected:

“You considered yourself sublime when you had but candour and good-will. Of what were you proud, Bidault-Coquille? Of having been one of the first to know that Pyrot was innocent and Greatauk a scoundrel. But three-fourths of those who defended Greatauk against the attacks of the seven hundred Pyrotists knew that better than you. Of what then did you show yourself so proud? Of

having dared to say what you thought? That is civic courage, and, like military courage, it is a mere result of imprudence. You have been imprudent. So far so good, but that is no reason for praising yourself beyond measure. Your imprudence was trifling; it exposed you to trifling perils; you did not risk your head by it. The Penguins have lost that cruel and sanguinary pride which formerly gave a tragic grandeur to their revolutions; it is the fatal result of the weakening of beliefs and character. Ought one to look upon oneself as a superior spirit for having shown a little more clear-sightedness than the vulgar? I am very much afraid, on the contrary, Bidault-Coquille, that you have given proof of a gross misunderstanding of the conditions of the moral and intellectual development of a people. You imagined that social injustices were threaded together like pearls and that it would be enough to pull off one in order to unfasten the whole necklace. That is a very ingenuous conception. You flattered yourself that at one stroke you were establishing justice in your own country and in the universe. You were a brave man, an honest idealist, though without much experimental philosophy. But go home to your own heart and you will recognise that you had in you a spice of malice and that our ingenuousness was not without cunning. You believed you were performing a fine moral action. You said to yourself: 'Here am I, just and courageous once for all. I can henceforth repose in the public esteem and the praise of historians.' And now that you have lost your illusions, now that you know how hard it is to redress wrongs, and that the task must ever be begun afresh, you are going back to your asteroids. You are right; but go back to them with modesty, Bidault-Coquille!"

BOOK VII. MODERN TIMES

MADAME CERES

“Only extreme things are tolerable.” Count Robert de Montesquiou.

I. MADAME CLARENCE'S DRAWING-ROOM

Madame Clarence, the widow of an exalted functionary of the Republic, loved to entertain. Every Thursday she collected together some friends of modest condition who took pleasure in conversation. The ladies who went to see her, very different in age and rank, were all without money, and had all suffered much. There was a duchess who looked like a fortune-teller and a fortune-teller who looked like a duchess. Madame Clarence was pretty enough to maintain some old liaisons, but not to form new ones, and she generally inspired a quiet esteem. She had a very pretty daughter, who, since she had no dower, caused some alarm among the male guests; for the Penguins were as much afraid of portionless girls as they were of the devil himself. Eveline Clarence, noticing their reserve and perceiving its cause, used to hand them their tea with an air of disdain. Moreover, she seldom appeared at the parties and talked only to the ladies or the very young people. Her discreet and retiring presence put no restraint upon the conversation, since those who took part in it thought either that as she was a young girl she would not understand it, or that, being twenty-five years old, she might listen to everything.

One Thursday therefore, in Madame Clarence's drawing-room, the conversation turned upon love. The ladies spoke of it with pride, delicacy, and mystery, the men with discretion and fatuity; everyone took an interest in the conversation, for each one was interested in what he or she said. A great deal of wit flowed; brilliant apostrophes were launched forth and keen repartees were returned. But when Professor Haddi began to speak he overwhelmed everybody.

"It is the same with our ideas on love as with our ideas on everything else," said he, "they rest upon anterior habits whose very memory has been effaced. In morals, the limitations that have lost their grounds for existing, the most useless obligations, the cruelest and most injurious restraints, are because of their profound antiquity and the mystery of their origin, the least disputed and the least disputable as well as the most respected, and they are those that cannot be violated without incurring the most severe blame. All morality relative to the relations of the sexes is founded on this principle: that a woman once obtained belongs to the man, that she is his property like his horse or his weapons. And this having ceased to be true, absurdities result from it, such as the marriage or contract of sale of a woman to a man, with clauses restricting the right of ownership introduced as a consequence of the gradual diminution of the claims of the possessor.

“The obligation imposed on a girl that she should bring her virginity to her husband comes from the times when girls were married immediately they were of a marriageable age. It is ridiculous that a girl who marries at twenty-five or thirty should be subject to that obligation. You will, perhaps, say that it is a present with which her husband, if she gets one at last, will be gratified; but every moment we see men wooing married women and showing themselves perfectly satisfied to take them as they find them.

“Still, even in our own day, the duty of girls is determined in religious morality by the old belief that God, the most powerful of warriors, is polygamous, that he has reserved all maidens for himself, and that men can only take those whom he has left. This belief, although traces of it exist in several metaphors of mysticism, is abandoned to-day, by most civilised peoples. However, it still dominates the education of girls not only among our believers, but even among our free-thinkers, who, as a rule, think freely for the reason that they do not think at all.

“Discretion means ability to separate and discern. We say that a girl is discreet when she knows nothing at all. We cultivate her ignorance. In spite of all our care the most discreet know something, for we cannot conceal from them their own nature and their own sensations. But they know badly, they know in a wrong way. That is all we obtain by our careful education. . . .”

“Sir,” suddenly said Joseph Boutourle, the High Treasurer of Alca, “believe me, there are innocent girls, perfectly innocent girls, and it is a great pity. I have known three. They married, and the result was tragical.”

“I have noticed,” Professor Haddock went on, “that Europeans in general and Penguins in particular occupy themselves, after sport and motoring, with nothing so much as with love. It is giving a great deal of importance to a matter that has very little weight.”

“Then, Professor,” exclaimed Madame Cremeur in a choking voice, “when a woman has completely surrendered herself to you, you think it is a matter of no importance?”

“No, Madame; it can have its importance,” answered Professor Haddock, “but it is necessary to examine if when she surrenders herself to us she offers us a delicious fruit-garden or a plot of thistles and dandelions. And then, do we not misuse words? In love, a woman lends herself rather than gives herself. Look at the pretty Madame Pensee. . . .”

“She is my mother,” said a tall, fair young man.

“Sir, I have the greatest respect for her,” replied Professor Haddock; “do not be afraid that I intend to say anything in the least offensive about her. But allow me to tell you that, as a rule, the opinions of sons about their mothers are not to

be relied on. They do not bear enough in mind that a mother is a mother only because she loved, and that she can still love. That, however, is the case, and it would be deplorable were it otherwise. I have noticed, on the contrary, that daughters do not deceive themselves about their mothers' faculty for loving or about the use they make of it; they are rivals; they have their eyes upon them."

The insupportable Professor spoke a great deal longer, adding indecorum to awkwardness, and impertinence to incivility, accumulating incongruities, despising what is respectable, respecting what is despicable; but no one listened to him further.

During this time in a room that was simple without grace, a room sad for the want of love, a room which, like all young girls' rooms, had something of the cold atmosphere of a place of waiting about it, Eveline Clarence turned over the pages of club annuals and prospectuses of charities in order to obtain from them some acquaintance with society. Being convinced that her mother, shut up in her own intellectual but poor world, could neither bring her out or push her into prominence, she decided that she herself would seek the best means of winning a husband. At once calm and obstinate, without dreams or illusions, and regarding marriage as but a ticket of admission or a passport, she kept before her mind a clear notion of the hazards, difficulties, and chances of her enterprise. She had the art of pleasing and a coldness of temperament that enabled her to turn it to its fullest advantage. Her weakness lay in the fact that she was dazzled by anything that had an aristocratic air.

When she was alone with her mother she said:

"Mamma, we will go to-morrow to Father Douillard's retreat."

II. THE CHARITY OF ST. ORBEROSIA

Every Friday evening at nine o'clock the choicest of Alcan society assembled in the aristocratic church of St. Mael for the Reverend Father Douillard's retreat. Prince and Princess des Boscenos, Viscount and Viscountess Olive, M. and Madame Bigourd, Monsieur and Madame de La Trumelle were never absent. The flower of the aristocracy might be seen there, and fair Jewish baronesses also adorned it by their presence, for the Jewish baronesses of Alca were Christians.

This retreat, like all religious retreats, had for its object to procure for those living in the world opportunities for recollection so that they might think of their eternal salvation. It was also intended to draw down upon so many noble and illustrious families the benediction of L. Orberosia, who loves the Penguins. The Reverend Father Douillard strove for the completion of his task with a truly apostolical zeal. He hoped to restore the prerogatives of St. Orberosia as the patron saint of Penguinia and to dedicate to her a monumental church on one of the hills that dominate the city. His efforts had been crowned with great success, and for the accomplishing of this national enterprise he had already united more than a hundred thousand adherents and collected more than twenty millions of francs.

It was in the choir of St. Mael's that St. Orberosia's new shrine, shining with gold, sparkling with precious stones, and surrounded by tapers and flowers, had been erected.

The following account may be read in the "History of the Miracles of the Patron Saint of Alca" by the Abbe Plantain:

"The ancient shrine had been melted down during the Terror and the precious relics of the saint thrown into a fire that had been lit on the Place de Greve; but a poor woman of great piety, named Rouquin, went by night at the peril of her life to gather up the calcined bones and the ashes of the blessed saint. She preserved them in a jam-pot, and when religion was again restored, brought them to the venerable Cure of St. Maels. The woman ended her days piously as a vendor of tapers and custodian of seats in the saint's chapel."

It is certain that in the time of Father Douillard, although faith was declining, the cult of St. Orberosia, which for three hundred years had fallen under the criticism of Canon Princeteau and the silence of the Doctors of the Church, recovered, and was surrounded with more pomp, more splendour, and more fervour than ever. The theologians did not now subtract a single iota from the

legend. They held as certainly established all the facts related by Abbot Simplicissimus, and in particular declared, on the testimony of that monk, that the devil, assuming a monk's form had carried off the saint to a cave and had there striven with her until she overcame him. Neither places nor dates caused them any embarrassment. They paid no heed to exegesis and took good care not to grant as much to science as Canon Princeteau had formerly conceded. They knew too well whither that would lead.

The church shone with lights and flowers. An operatic tenor sang the famous canticle of St. Orberosia:

Virgin of Paradise
Come, come in the dusky night
And on us shed
Thy beams of light.

Mademoiselle Clarence sat beside her mother and in front of Viscount Clena. She remained kneeling during a considerable time, for the attitude of prayer is natural to discreet virgins and it shows off their figures.

The Reverend Father Douillard ascended the pulpit. He was a powerful orator and could, at once melt, surprise, and rouse his hearers. Women complained only that he fulminated against vice with excessive harshness and in crude terms that made them blush. But they liked him none the less for it.

He treated in his sermon of the seventh trial of St. Orberosia, who was tempted by the dragon which she went forth to combat. But she did not yield, and she disarmed the monster. The orator demonstrated without difficulty that we, also, by the aid of St. Orberosia, and strong in the virtue which she inspires, can in our turn overthrow the dragons that dart upon us and are waiting to devour us, the dragon of doubt, the dragon of impiety, the dragon of forgetfulness of religious duties. He proved that the charity of St. Orberosia was a work of social regeneration, and he concluded by an ardent appeal to the faithful "to become instruments of the Divine mercy, eager upholders and supporters of the charity of St. Orberosia, and to furnish it with all the means which it required to take its flight and bear its salutary fruits." *

* Cf. J. Ernest Charles in the "Censeur," May-August, 1907,
, col. 2.

After the ceremony, the Reverend Father Douillard remained in the sacristy at the disposal of those of the faithful who desired information concerning the charity, or who wished to bring their contributions. Mademoiselle Clarence wished to speak to Father Douillard, so did Viscount Clena. The crowd was large, and a queue was formed. By chance Viscount Clena and Mademoiselle Clarence were side by side and possibly they were squeezed a little closely to

each other by the crowd. Eveline had noticed this fashionable young man, who was almost as well known as his father in the world of sport. Clena had noticed her, and, as he thought her pretty, he bowed to her, then apologised and pretended to believe that he had been introduced to the ladies, but could not remember where. They pretended to believe it also.

He presented himself the following week at Madame Clarence's, thinking that her house was a bit fast — a thing not likely to displease him — and when he saw Eveline again he felt he had not been mistaken and that she was an extremely pretty girl.

Viscount Clena had the finest motor-car in Europe. For three months he drove the Clarences every day over hills and plains, through woods and valleys; they visited famous sites and went over celebrated castles. He said to Eveline all that could be said and did all that could be done to overcome her resistance. She did not conceal from him that she loved him, that she would always love him, and love no one but him. She remained grave and trembling by his side. To his devouring passion she opposed the invincible defence of a virtue conscious of its danger. At the end of three months, after having gone uphill and down hill, turned sharp corners, and negotiated level crossings, and experienced innumerable break-downs, he knew her as well as he knew the fly-wheel of his car, but not much better. He employed surprises, adventures, sudden stoppages in the depths of forests and before hotels, but he had advanced no farther. He said to himself that it was absurd; then, taking her again in his car he set off at fifty miles an hour quite prepared to upset her in a ditch or to smash himself and her against a tree.

One day, having come to take her on some excursion, he found her more charming than ever, and more provoking. He darted upon her as a storm falls upon the reeds that border a lake. She bent with adorable weakness beneath the breath of the storm, and twenty times was almost carried away by its strength, but twenty times she arose, supple and, bowing to the wind. After all these shocks one would have said that a light breeze had barely touched her charming stem; she smiled as if ready to be plucked by a bold hand. Then her unhappy aggressor, desperate, enraged, and three parts mad, fled so as not to kill her, mistook the door, went into the bedroom of Madame Clarence, whom he found putting on her hat in front of a wardrobe, seized her, flung her on the bed, and possessed her before she knew what had happened.

The same day Eveline, who had been making inquiries, learned that Viscount Clena had nothing but debts, lived on money given him by an elderly lady, and promoted the sale of the latest models of a motor-car manufacturer. They

separated with common accord and Eveline began again disdainfully to serve tea to her mother's guests.

III. HIPPOLYTE CERES

In Madame Clarence's drawing-room the conversation turned upon love, and many charming things were said about it.

"Love is a sacrifice," sighed Madame Cremeur.

"I agree with you," replied M. Boutourle with animation.

But Professor Haddock soon displayed his fastidious insolence.

"It seems to me," said he, "that the Penguin ladies have made a great fuss since, through St. Mael's agency, they became viviparous. But there is nothing to be particularly proud of in that, for it is a state they share in common with cows and pigs, and even with orange and lemon trees, for the seeds of these plants germinate in the pericarp."

"The self-importance which the Penguin ladies give themselves does not go so far back as that," answered M. Boutourle. "It dates from the day when the holy apostle gave them clothes. But this self-importance was long kept in restraint, and displayed itself fully only with increased luxury of dress and in a small section of society. For go only two leagues from Alca into the country at harvest time, and you will see whether women are over-precise or self-important."

On that day M. Hippolyte Ceres paid his first call. He was a Deputy of Alca, and one of the youngest members of the House. His father was said to have kept a dram shop, but he himself was a lawyer of robust physique, a good though prolix speaker, with a self-important air and a reputation for ability.

"M. Ceres," said the mistress of the house, "your constituency is one of the finest in Alca."

"And there are fresh improvements made in it every day, Madame."

"Unfortunately, it is impossible to take a stroll through it any longer," said M. Boutourle.

"Why?" asked M. Ceres.

"On account of the motors, of course."

"Do not give them a bad name," answered the Deputy. "They are our great national industry."

"I know. The Penguins of to-day make me think of the ancient Egyptians. According to Clement of Alexandria, Taine tells us — though he misquotes the text — the Egyptians worshipped the crocodiles that devoured them. The Penguins to-day worship the motors that crush them. Without a doubt the future belongs to the metal beast. We are no more likely to go back to cabs than we are

to go back to the diligence. And the long martyrdom of the horse will come to an end. The motor, which the frenzied cupidity of manufacturers hurls like a juggernaut's car upon the bewildered people and of which the idle and fashionable make a foolish though fatal elegance, will soon begin to perform its true function, and putting its strength at the service of the entire people, will behave like a docile, toiling monster. But in order that the motor may cease to be injurious and become beneficent we must build roads suited to its speed, roads which it cannot tear up with its ferocious tyres, and from which it will send no clouds of poisonous dust into human lungs. We ought not to allow slower vehicles or mere animals to go upon those roads, and we should establish garages upon them and foot-bridges over them, and so create order and harmony among the means of communication of the future. That is the wish of every good citizen."

Madame Clarence led the conversation back to the improvements in M. Ceres' constituency. M. Ceres showed his enthusiasm for demolitions, tunnelings, constructions, reconstructions, and all other fruitful operations.

"We build to-day in an admirable style," said he; "everywhere majestic avenues are being reared. Was ever anything as fine as our arcaded bridges and our domed hotels!"

"You are forgetting that big palace surmounted an immense melon-shaped dome," grumbled by M. Daniset, an old art amateur, in a voice of restrained rage. "I am amazed at the degree of ugliness which a modern city can attain. Alca is becoming Americanised. Everywhere we are destroying all that is free, unexpected, measured, restrained, human, or traditional among the things that are left us. Everywhere we are destroying that charming object, a piece of an old wall that bears up the branches of a tree. Everywhere we are suppressing some fragment of light and air, some fragment of nature, some fragment of the associations that still remain with us, some fragment of our fathers, some fragment of ourselves. And we are putting up frightful, enormous, infamous houses, surmounted in Viennese style by ridiculous domes, or fashioned after the models of the 'new art' without mouldings, or having profiles with sinister corbels and burlesque pinnacles, and such monsters as these shamelessly peer over the surrounding buildings. We see bulbous protuberances stuck on the fronts of buildings and we are told they are 'new art' motives. I have seen the 'new art' in other countries, but it is not so ugly as with us; it has fancy and it has simplicity. It is only in our own country that by a sad privilege we may behold the newest and most diverse styles of architectural ugliness. Not an enviable privilege!"

“Are you not afraid,” asked M. Ceres severely, “are you not afraid that these bitter criticisms tend to keep out of our capital the foreigners who flow into it from all arts of the world and who leave millions behind them?”

“You may set your mind at rest about that,” answered M. Daniset. “Foreigners do not come to admire our buildings; they come to see our courtesans, our dressmakers, and our dancing saloons.”

“We have one bad habit,” sighed M. Ceres, “it is that we calumniate ourselves.”

Madame Clarence as an accomplished hostess thought it was time to return to the subject of love and asked M. Jumel his opinion of M. Leon Blum’s recent book in which the author complained. . . .

“. . . That an irrational custom,” went on Professor Haddock, “prevents respectable young ladies from making love, a thing they would enjoy doing, whilst mercenary girls do it too much and without getting any enjoyment out of it. It is indeed deplorable. But M. Leon Blum need not fret too much. If the evil exists, as he says it does, in our middle-class society, I can assure him that everywhere else he would see a consoling spectacle. Among the people, the mass of the people through town and country, girls do not deny themselves that pleasure.”

“It is depravity!” said Madame Cremeur.

And she praised the innocence of young girls in terms full of modesty and grace. It was charming to hear her.

Professor Haddock’s views on the same subject were, on the contrary, painful to listen to.

“Respectable young girls,” said he, “are guarded and watched over. Besides, men do not, as a rule, pursue them much, either through probity, or from a fear of grave responsibilities, or because the seduction of a young girl would not be to their credit. Even then we do not know what really takes place, for the reason that what is hidden is not seen. This is a condition necessary to the existence of all society. The scruples of respectable young girls could be more easily overcome than those of married women if the same pressure were brought to bear on them, and for this there are two reasons: they have more illusions, and their curiosity has not been satisfied. Women, for the most part, have been so disappointed by their husbands that they have not courage enough to begin again with somebody else. I myself have been met by this obstacle several times in my attempts at seduction.”

At the moment when Professor Haddock ended his unpleasant remarks, Mademoiselle Eveline Clarence entered the drawing-room and listlessly handed

about tea with that expression of boredom which gave an oriental charm to her beauty.

“For my part,” said Hippolyte Ceres, looking at her, “I declare myself the young ladies’ champion.”

“He must be a fool,” thought the girl.

Hippolyte Ceres, who had never set foot outside of his political world of electors and elected, thought Madame Clarence’s drawing-room most select, its mistress exquisite, and her daughter amazingly beautiful. His visits became frequent and he paid court to both of them. Madame Clarence, who now liked attention, thought him agreeable. Eveline showed no friendliness towards him, and treated him with a hauteur and disdain that he took for aristocratic behaviour and fashionable manners, and he thought all the more of her on that account. This busy man taxed his ingenuity to please them, and he sometimes succeeded. He got them cards for fashionable functions and boxes at the Opera. He furnished Mademoiselle Clarence with several opportunities of appearing to great advantage and in particular at a garden party which, although given by a Minister, was regarded as really fashionable, and gained its first success in society circles for the Republic.

At that party Eveline had been much noticed and had attracted the special attention of a young diplomat called Roger Lambilly who, imagining that she belonged to a rather fast set, invited her to his bachelor’s flat. She thought him handsome and believed him rich, and she accepted. A little moved, almost disquieted, she very nearly became the victim of her daring, and only avoided defeat by an offensive measure audaciously carried out. This was the most foolish escapade in her unmarried life.

Being now on friendly terms with Ministers and with the President, Eveline continued to wear her aristocratic and pious affectations, and these won for her the sympathy of the chief personages in the anti-clerical and democratic Republic. M. Hippolyte Ceres, seeing that she was succeeding and doing him credit, liked her still more. He even went so far as to fall madly in love with her.

Henceforth, in spite of everything, she began to observe him with interest, being curious to see if his passion would increase. He appeared to her without elegance or grace, and not well bred, but active, clear-sighted, full of resource, and not too great a bore. She still made fun of him, but he had now won her interest.

One day she wished to test him. It was during the elections, when members of Parliament were, as the phrase runs, requesting a renewal of their mandates. He had an opponent, who, though not dangerous at first and not much of an orator, was rich and was reported to be gaining votes every day. Hippolyte Ceres,

banishing both dull security and foolish alarm from his mind, redoubled his care. His chief method of action was by public meetings at which he spoke vehemently against the rival candidate. His committee held huge meetings on Saturday evenings and at three o'clock on Sunday afternoons. One Sunday, as he called on the Clarences, he found Eveline alone in the drawing-room. He had been chatting for about twenty or twenty-five minutes, when, taking out his watch, he saw that it was a quarter to three. The young girl showed herself amiable, engaging, attractive, and full of promises. Ceres was fascinated, but he stood up to go.

"Stay a little longer," said she in a pressing and agreeable voice which made him promptly sit down again.

She was full of interest, of abandon, curiosity, and weakness. He blushed, turned pale, and again got up.

Then, in order to keep him still longer, she looked at him out of two grey and melting eyes, and though her bosom was heaving, she did not say another word. He fell at her feet in distraction, but once more looking at his watch, he jumped up with a terrible oath.

"D — ! a quarter to four! I must be off."

And immediately he rushed down the stairs.

From that time onwards she had a certain amount of esteem for him.

IV. A POLITICIAN'S MARRIAGE

She was not quite in love with him, but she wished him to be in love with her. She was, moreover, very reserved with him, and that not solely from any want of inclination to be otherwise, since in affairs of love some things are due to indifference, to inattention, to woman's instinct, to traditional custom and feeling, to a desire to try one's power, and to satisfaction at seeing its results. The reason of her prudence was that she knew him to be very much infatuated and capable of taking advantage of any familiarities she allowed as well as of reproaching her coarsely afterwards if she discontinued them.

As he was a professed anti-clerical and free-thinker, she thought it a good plan to affect an appearance of piety in his presence and to be seen with prayer-books bound in red morocco, such as Queen Marie Leczinska's or the Dauphiness Marie Josephine's "The Last Two Weeks of Lent." She lost no opportunity, either, of showing him the subscriptions that she collected for the endowment of the national cult of St. Orberosia. Eveline did not act in this way because she wished to tease him. Nor did it spring from a young girl's archness, or a spirit of constraint, or even from snobbishness, though there was more than a suspicion of this latter in her behaviour. It was but her way of asserting herself, of stamping herself with a definite character, of increasing her value. To rouse the Deputy's courage she wrapped herself up in religion, just as Brunhild surrounded herself with flames so as to attract Sigurd. Her audacity was successful. He thought her still more beautiful thus. Clericalism was in his eyes a sign of good form.

Ceres was re-elected by an enormous majority and returned to a House which showed itself more inclined to the Left, more advanced, and, as it seemed, more eager for reform than its predecessor. Perceiving at once that so much zeal was but intended to hide a fear of change, and a sincere desire to do nothing, he determined to adopt a policy that would satisfy these aspirations. At the beginning of the session he made a great speech, cleverly thought out and well arranged, dealing with the idea that all reform ought to be put off for a long time. He showed himself heated, even fervid; holding the principle that an orator should recommend moderation with extreme vehemence. He was applauded by the entire assembly. The Clarences listened to him from the President's box and Eveline trembled in spite of herself at the solemn sound of the applause. On the same bench the fair Madame Pensee shivered at the intonations of his virile voice.

As soon as he descended from the tribune, Ceres, even while the audience were still clapping, went without a moment's delay to salute the Clarences in their box. Eveline saw in him the beauty of success, and as he leaned towards the ladies, wiping his neck with his handkerchief and receiving their congratulations with an air of modesty though not without a tinge of self-conceit, the young girl glanced towards Madame Pensee and saw her, palpitating and breathless, drinking in the hero's applause with her head thrown backwards. It seemed as if she were on the point of fainting. Eveline immediately smiled tenderly on M. Ceres.

The Alcan deputy's speech had a great vogue. In political "spheres" it was regarded as extremely able. "We have at last heard an honest pronouncement," said the chief Moderate journal. "It is a regular programme!" they said in the House. It was agreed that he was a man of immense talent.

Hippolyte Ceres had now established himself as leader of the radicals, socialists, and anti-clericals, and they appointed him President of their group, which was then the most considerable in the House. He thus found himself marked out for office in the next ministerial combination.

After a long hesitation Eveline Clarence accepted the idea of marrying M. Hippolyte Ceres. The great man was a little common for her taste. Nothing had yet proved that he would one day reach the point where politics bring in large sums of money. But she was entering her twenty-seventh year and knew enough of life to see that she must not be too fastidious or show herself too difficult to please.

Hippolyte Ceres was celebrated; Hippolyte Ceres was happy. He was no longer recognisable; the elegance of his clothes and deportment had increased tremendously. He wore an undue number of white gloves. Now that he was too much of a society man, Eveline began to doubt if it was not worse than being too little of one. Madame Clarence regarded the engagement with favour. She was reassured concerning her daughter's future and pleased to have flowers given her every Thursday for her drawing-room.

The celebration of the marriage raised some difficulties. Eveline was pious and wished to receive the benediction of the Church. Hippolyte Ceres, tolerant but a free-thinker, wanted only a civil marriage. There were many discussions and even some violent scenes upon the subject. The last took place in the young girl's room at the moment when the invitations were being written. Eveline declared that if she did not go to church she would not believe herself married. She spoke of breaking off the engagement, and of going abroad with her mother, or of retiring into a convent. Then she became tender, weak, suppliant. She sighed, and everything in her virginal chamber sighed in chorus, the holy-water

font, the palm-branch above her white bed, the books of devotion on their little shelves, and the blue and white statuette of St. Orberosia chaining the dragon of Cappadocia, that stood upon the marble mantelpiece. Hippolyte Ceres was moved, softened, melted.

Beautiful in her grief, her eyes shining with tears, her wrists girt by a rosary of lapis lazuli and, so to speak, chained by her faith, she suddenly flung herself at Hippolyte's feet, and dishevelled, almost dying, she embraced his knees.

He nearly yielded.

"A religious marriage," he muttered, "a marriage in church, I could make my constituents stand that, but my committee would not swallow the matter so easily. . . . Still I'll explain it to them . . . toleration, social necessities They all send their daughters to Sunday school But as for office, my dear I am afraid we are going to drown all hope of that in your holy water."

At these words she stood up grave, generous, resigned, conquered also in her turn.

"My dear, I insist no longer."

"Then we won't have a religious marriage. It will be better, much better not."

"Very well, but be guided by me. I am going to try and arrange everything both to your satisfaction and mine."

She sought the Reverend Father Douillard and explained the situation. He showed himself even more accommodating and yielding than she had hoped.

"Your husband is an intelligent man, a man of order and reason; he will come over to us. You will sanctify him. It is not in vain that God has granted him the blessing of a Christian wife. The Church needs no pomp and ceremonial display for her benedictions. Now that she is persecuted, the shadow of the crypts and the recesses of the catacombs are in better accord with her festivals. Mademoiselle, when you have performed the civil formalities come here to my private chapel in costume with M. Ceres. I will marry you, and observe the most absolute discretion. I will obtain the necessary dispensations from the Archbishop as well as all facilities regarding the banns, confession-tickets, etc."

Hippolyte, although he thought the combination a little dangerous, agreed to it, a good deal flattered, at bottom.

"I will go in a short coat," he said.

He went in a frock coat with white gloves and varnished shoes, and he genuflected.

"Politeness demands. . . ."

V. THE VISIRE CABINET

The Ceres household was established with modest decency in a pretty flat situated in a new building. Ceres loved his wife in a calm and tranquil fashion. He was often kept late from home by the Commission on the Budget and he worked more than three nights a week at a report on the postal finances of which he hoped to make a masterpiece. Eveline thought she could twist him round her finger, and this did not displease him. The bad side of their situation was that they had not much money; in truth they had very little. The servants of the Republic do not grow rich in her service as easily as people think. Since the sovereign is no longer there to distribute favours, each of them takes what he can, and his depredations, limited by the depredations of all the others, are reduced to modest proportions. Hence that austerity of morals that is noticed in democratic leaders. They can only grow rich during periods of great business activity and then they find themselves exposed to the envy of their less favoured colleagues. Hippolyte Ceres had for a long time foreseen such a period. He was one of those who had made preparations for its arrival. Whilst waiting for it he endured his poverty with dignity, and Eveline shared that poverty without suffering as much as one might have thought. She was in close intimacy with the Reverend Father Douillard and frequented the chapel of St. Orberosia, where she met with serious society and people in a position to render her useful services. She knew how to choose among them and gave her confidence to none but those who deserved it. She had gained experience since her motor excursions with Viscount Clena, and above all she had now acquired the value of a married woman.

The deputy was at first uneasy about these pious practices, which were ridiculed by the demagogic newspapers, but he was soon reassured, for he saw all around him democratic leaders joyfully becoming reconciled to the aristocracy and the Church.

They found that they had reached one of those periods (which often recur) when advance had been carried a little too far. Hippolyte Ceres gave a moderate support to this view. His policy was not a policy of persecution but a policy of tolerance. He had laid its foundations in his splendid speech on the preparations for reform. The Prime Minister was looked upon as too advanced. He proposed schemes which were admitted to be dangerous to capital, and the great financial companies were opposed to him. Of course it followed that the papers of all views supported the companies. Seeing the danger increasing, the Cabinet

abandoned its schemes, its programme, and its opinions, but it was too late. A new administration was already ready. An insidious question by Paul Visire which was immediately made the subject of a resolution, and a fine speech by Hippolyte Ceres, overthrew the Cabinet.

The President of the Republic entrusted the formation of a new Cabinet to this same Paul Visire, who, though still very young, had been a Minister twice. He was a charming man, spending much of his time in the green-rooms of theatres, very artistic, a great society man, of amazing ability and industry. Paul Visire formed a temporary ministry intended to reassure public feeling which had taken alarm, and Hippolyte Ceres was invited to hold office in it.

The new ministry, belonging to all the groups in the majority, represented the most diverse and contrary opinions, but they were all moderate and convinced conservatives.* The Minister of Foreign Affairs was retained from the former cabinet. He was a little dark man called Crombile, who worked fourteen hours a day with the conviction that he dealt with tremendous questions. He refused to see even his own diplomatic agents, and was terribly uneasy, though he did not disturb anybody else, for the want of foresight of peoples is infinite and that of governments is just as great.

* As this ministry exercised considerable influence upon the destinies of the country and of the world, we think it well to give its composition: Minister of the Interior and Prime Minister, Paul Visire; Minister of Justice, Pierre Bouc; Foreign Affairs, Victor Crombile; Finance, Terrasson; Education, Labillette; Commerce, Posts and Telegraphs, Hippolyte Ceres; Agriculture, Aulac; Public Works, Lapersonne; War, General Debonnaire; Admiralty, Admiral Vivier des Murenes.

The office of Public Works was given to a Socialist, Fortune Lapersonne. It was then a political custom and one of the most solemn, most severe, most rigorous, and if I may dare say so, the most terrible and cruel of all political customs, to include a member of the Socialist party in each ministry intended to oppose Socialism, so that the enemies of wealth and property should suffer the shame of being attacked by one of their own party, and so that they could not unite against these forces without turning to some one who might possibly attack themselves in the future. Nothing but a profound ignorance of the human heart would permit the belief that it was difficult to find a Socialist to occupy these functions. Citizen Fortune Lapersonne entered the Visire cabinet of his own free will and without any constraint; and he found those who approved of his action

even among his former friends, so great was the fascination that power exercised over the Penguins!

General Debonnaire went to the War Office. He was looked upon as one of the ablest generals in the army, but he was ruled by a woman, the Baroness Bildermann, who, though she had reached the age of intrigue, was still beautiful. She was in the pay of a neighbouring and hostile Power.

The new Minister of Marine, the worthy Admiral Vivier des Murenes, was generally regarded as an excellent seaman. He displayed a piety that would have seemed excessive in an anticlerical minister, if the Republic had not recognised that religion was of great maritime utility. Acting on the instruction of his spiritual director, the Reverend Father Douillard, the worthy Admiral had dedicated his fleet to St. Orberosia and directed canticles in honour of the Alcan Virgin to be composed by Christian bards. These replaced the national hymn in the music played by the navy.

Prime Minister Visire declared himself to be distinctly anticlerical but ready to respect all creeds; he asserted that he was a sober-minded reformer. Paul Visire and his colleagues desired reforms, and it was in order not to compromise reform that they proposed none; for they were true politicians and knew that reforms are compromised the moment they are proposed. The government was well received, respectable people were reassured, and the funds rose.

The administration announced that four new ironclads would be put into commission, that prosecutions would be undertaken against the Socialists, and it formally declared its intention to have nothing to do with any inquisitorial income-tax. The choice of Terrasson as Minister of Finance was warmly approved by the press. Terrasson, an old minister famous for his financial operations, gave warrant to all the hopes of the financiers and shadowed forth a period of great business activity. Soon those three udders of modern nations, monopolies, bill discounting, and fraudulent speculation, were swollen with the milk of wealth. Already whispers were heard of distant enterprises, and of planting colonies, and the boldest put forward in the newspapers the project of a military and financial protectorate over Nigritia.

Without having yet shown what he was capable of, Hippolyte Ceres was considered a man of weight. Business people thought highly of him. He was congratulated on all sides for having broken with the extreme sections, the dangerous men, and for having realised the responsibilities of government.

Madame Ceres shone alone amid the Ministers' wives. Crombile withered away in bachelordom. Paul Visire had married money in the person of Mademoiselle Blampignon, an accomplished, estimable, and simple lady who was always ill, and whose feeble health compelled her to stay with her mother in

the depths of a remote province. The other Ministers' wives were not born to charm the sight, and people smiled when they read that Madame Labillette had appeared at the Presidency Ball wearing a headdress of birds of paradise. Madame Vivier des Murenes, a woman of good family, was stout rather than tall, had a face like a beef-steak and the voice of a newspaper-seller. Madame Debonnaire, tall, dry, and florid, was devoted to young officers. She ruined herself by her escapades and crimes and only regained consideration by dint of ugliness and insolence.

Madame Ceres was the charm of the Ministry and its tide to consideration. Young, beautiful, and irreproachable, she charmed alike society and the masses by her combination of elegant costumes and pleasant smiles.

Her receptions were thronged by the great Jewish financiers. She gave the most fashionable garden parties in the Republic. The newspapers described her dresses and the milliners did not ask her to pay for them. She went to Mass; she protected the chapel of St. Orberosia from the ill-will of the people; and she aroused in aristocratic hearts the hope of a fresh Concordat.

With her golden hair, grey eyes, and supple and slight though rounded figure, she was indeed pretty. She enjoyed an excellent reputation and she was so adroit, and calm, so much mistress of herself, that she would have preserved it intact even if she had been discovered in the very act of ruining it.

The session ended with a victory for the cabinet which, amid the almost unanimous applause of the House, defeated a proposal for an inquisitorial tax, and with a triumph for Madame Ceres who gave parties in honour of three kings who were at the moment passing through Alca.

VI. THE SOFA OF THE FAVOURITE

The Prime Minister invited Monsieur and Madame Ceres to spend a couple of weeks of the holidays in a little villa that he had taken in the mountains, and in which he lived alone. The deplorable health of Madame Paul Visire did not allow her to accompany her husband, and she remained with her relatives in one of the southern provinces.

The villa had belonged to the mistress of one of the last Kings of Alca: the drawing-room retained its old furniture, and in it was still to be found the Sofa of the Favourite. The country was charming; a pretty blue stream, the Aiselle, flowed at the foot of the hill that dominated the villa. Hippolyte Ceres loved fishing; when engaged at this monotonous occupation he often formed his best Parliamentary combinations, and his happiest oratorical inspirations. Trout swarmed in the Aiselle; he fished it from morning till evening in a boat that the Prime Minister readily placed at his disposal.

In the mean time, Eveline and Paul Visire sometimes took a turn together in the garden, or had a little chat in the drawing-room. Eveline, although she recognised the attraction that Visire had for women, had hitherto displayed towards him only an intermittent and superficial coquetry, without any deep intentions or settled design. He was a connoisseur and saw that she was pretty. The House and the Opera had deprived him of all leisure, but, in a little villa, the grey eyes and rounded figure of Eveline took on a value in his eyes. One day as Hippolyte Ceres was fishing in the Aiselle, he made her sit beside him on the Sofa of the Favourite. Long rays of gold struck Eveline like arrows from a hidden Cupid through the chinks of the curtains which protected her from the heat and glare of a brilliant day. Beneath her white muslin dress her rounded yet slender form was outlined in its grace and youth. Her skin was cool and fresh, and had the fragrance of freshly mown hay. Paul Visire behaved as the occasion warranted, and for her part, she was opposed neither to the games of chance or of society. She believed it would be nothing or a trifle; she was mistaken.

“There was,” says the famous German ballad, “on the sunny side of the town square, beside a wall whereon the creeper grew, a pretty little letter-box, as blue as the corn-flowers, smiling and tranquil.

“All day long there came to it, in their heavy shoes, small shop-keepers, rich farmers, citizens, the tax-collector and the policeman, and they put into it their business letters, their invoices, their summonses their notices to pay taxes, the

judges' returns, and orders for the recruits to assemble. It remained smiling and tranquil.

"With joy, or in anxiety, there advanced towards it workmen and farm servants, maids and nursemaids, accountants, clerks, and women carrying their little children in their arms; they put into it notifications of births, marriages, and deaths, letters between engaged couples, between husbands and wives, from mothers to their sons, and from sons to their mothers. It remained smiling and tranquil.

"At twilight, young lads and young girls slipped furtively to it, and put in love-letters, some moistened with tears that blotted the ink, others with a little circle to show the place to kiss, all of them very long. It remained smiling and tranquil.

"Rich merchants came themselves through excess of carefulness at the hour of daybreak, and put into it registered letters, and letters with five red seals, full of bank notes or cheques on the great financial establishments of the Empire. It remained smiling and tranquil.

"But one day, Gaspar, whom it had never seen, and whom it did not know from Adam, came to put in a letter, of which nothing is known but that it was folded like a little hat. Immediately the pretty letter-box fell into a swoon. Henceforth it remains no longer in its place; it runs through streets, fields, and woods, girdled with ivy, and crowned with roses. It keeps running up hill and down dale; the country policeman surprises it sometimes, amidst the corn, in Gaspar's arms kissing him upon the mouth."

Paul Visire had recovered all his customary nonchalance. Eveline remained stretched on the Divan of the Favourite in an attitude of delicious astonishment.

The Reverend Father Douillard, an excellent moral theologian, and a man who in the decadence of the Church has preserved his principles, was very right to teach, in conformity with the doctrine of the Fathers, that while a woman commits a great sin by giving herself for money, she commits a much greater one by giving herself for nothing. For, in the first case she acts to support her life, and that is sometimes not merely excusable but pardonable, and even worthy of the Divine Grace, for God forbids suicide, and is unwilling that his creatures should destroy themselves. Besides, in giving herself in order to live, she remains humble, and derives no pleasure from it a thing which diminishes the sin. But a woman who gives herself for nothing sins with pleasure and exults in her fault. The pride and delight with which she burdens her crime increase its load of moral guilt.

Madame Hippolyte Ceres' example shows the profundity of these moral truths. She perceived that she had senses. A second was enough to bring about

this discovery, to change her soul, to alter her whole life. To have learned to know herself was at first a delight. The {greek here} of the ancient philosophy is not a precept the moral fulfilment of which procures any pleasure, since one enjoys little satisfaction from knowing one's soul. It is not the same with the flesh, for in it sources of pleasure may be revealed to us. Eveline immediately felt an obligation to her revealer equal to the benefit she had received, and she imagined that he who had discovered these heavenly depths was the sole possessor of the key to them. Was this an error, and might she not be able to find others who also had the golden key? It is difficult to decide; and Professor Haddock, when the facts were divulged (which happened without much delay as we shall see), treated the matter from an experimental point of view, in a scientific review, and concluded that the chances Madame C — would have of finding the exact equivalent of M. V — were in the proportion of 305 to 975008. This is as much as to say that she would never find it. Doubtless her instinct told her the same, for she attached herself distractedly to him.

I have related these facts with all the circumstances which seemed to me worthy of attracting the attention of meditative and philosophic minds. The Sofa of the Favourite is worthy of the majesty of history; on it were decided the destinies of a great people; nay, on it was accomplished an act whose renown was to extend over the neighbouring nations both friendly and hostile, and even over all humanity. Too often events of this nature escape the superficial minds and shallow spirits who inconsiderately assume the task of writing history. Thus the secret springs of events remain hidden from us. The fall of Empires and the transmission of dominions astonish us and remain incomprehensible to us, because we have not discovered the imperceptible point, or touched the secret spring which when put in movement has destroyed and overthrown everything. The author of this great history knows better than anyone else his faults and his weaknesses, but he can do himself this justice — that he has always kept the moderation, the seriousness, the austerity, which an account of affairs of State demands, and that he has never departed from the gravity which is suitable to a recital of human actions.

VII. THE FIRST CONSEQUENCES

When Eveline confided to Paul Visire that she had never experienced anything similar, he did not believe her. He had had a good deal to do with women and knew that they readily say these things to men in order to make them more in love with them. Thus his experience, as sometimes happens, made him disregard the truth. Incredulous, but gratified all the same, he soon felt love and something more for her. This state at first seemed favourable to his intellectual faculties. Visire delivered in the chief town of his constituency a speech full of grace, brilliant and happy, which was considered to be a masterpiece.

The re-opening of Parliament was serene. A few isolated jealousies, a few timid ambitions raised their heads in the House, and that was all. A smile from the Prime Minister was enough to dissipate these shadows. She and he saw each other twice a day, and wrote to each other in the interval. He was accustomed to intimate relationships, was adroit, and knew how to dissimulate; but Eveline displayed a foolish imprudence: she made herself conspicuous with him in drawing-rooms, at the theatre, in the House, and at the Embassies; she wore her love upon her face, upon her whole person, in her moist glances, in the languishing smile of her lips, in the heaving of her breast, in all her heightened, agitated, and distracted beauty. Soon the entire country knew of their intimacy. Foreign Courts were informed of it. The President of the Republic and Eveline's husband alone remained in ignorance. The President became acquainted with it in the country, through a misplaced police report which found its way, it is not known how, into his portmanteau.

Hippolyte Ceres, without being either very subtle, or very perspicacious, noticed that there was something different in his home. Eveline, who quite lately had interested herself in his affairs, and shown, if not tenderness, at least affection, towards him, displayed henceforth nothing but indifference and repulsion. She had always had periods of absence, and made prolonged visits to the Charity of St. Orberosia; now, she went out in the morning, remained out all day, and sat down to dinner at nine o'clock in the evening with the face of a somnambulist. Her husband thought it absurd; however, he might perhaps have never known the reason for this; a profound ignorance of women, a crass confidence in his own merit, and in his own fortune, might perhaps have always hidden the truth from him, if the two lovers had not, so to speak, compelled him to discover it.

When Paul Visire went to Eveline's house and found her alone, they used to say, as they embraced each other; "Not here! not here!" and immediately they affected an extreme reserve. That was their invariable rule. Now, one day, Paul Visire went to the house of his colleague Ceres, with whom he had an engagement. It was Eveline who received him, the Minister of Commerce being delayed by a commission.

"Not here!" said the lovers, smiling.

They said it, mouth to mouth, embracing, and clasping each other. They were still saying it, when Hippolyte Ceres entered the drawing-room.

Paul Visire did not lose his presence of mind. He declared to Madame Ceres that he would give up his attempt to take the dust out of her eye. By this attitude he did not deceive the husband, but he was able to leave the room with some dignity.

Hippolyte Ceres was thunderstruck. Eveline's conduct appeared incomprehensible to him; he asked her what reasons she had for it.

"Why? why?" he kept repeating continually, "why?"

She denied everything, not to convince him, for he had seen them, but from expediency and good taste, and to avoid painful explanations. Hippolyte Ceres suffered all the tortures of jealousy. He admitted it to himself, he kept saying inwardly, "I am a strong man; I am clad in armour; but the wound is underneath, it is in my heart," and turning towards his wife, who looked beautiful in her guilt, he would say:

"It ought not to have been with him."

He was right — Eveline ought not to have loved in government circles.

He suffered so much that he took up his revolver, exclaiming: "I will go and kill him!" But he remembered that a Minister of Commerce cannot kill his own Prime Minister, and he put his revolver back into his drawer.

The weeks passed without calming his sufferings. Each morning he buckled his strong man's armour over his wound and sought in work and fame the peace that fled from him. Every Sunday he inaugurated busts, statues, fountains, artesian wells, hospitals, dispensaries, railways, canals, public markets, drainage systems, triumphal arches, and slaughter houses, and delivered moving speeches on each of these occasions. His fervid activity devoured whole piles of documents; he changed the colours of the postage stamps fourteen times in one week. Nevertheless, he gave vent to outbursts of grief and rage that drove him insane; for whole days his reason abandoned him. If he had been in the employment of a private administration this would have been noticed immediately, but it is much more difficult to discover insanity or frenzy in the conduct of affairs of State. At that moment the government employees were

forming themselves into associations and federations amid a ferment that was giving alarm both to the Parliament and to public feeling. The postmen were especially prominent in their enthusiasm for trade unions.

Hippolyte Ceres informed them in a circular that their action was strictly legal. The following day he sent out a second circular forbidding all associations of government employees as illegal. He dismissed one hundred and eighty postmen, reinstated them, reprimanded them — and awarded them gratuities. At Cabinet councils he was always on the point of bursting forth. The presence of the Head of the State scarcely restrained him within the limits of the decencies, and as he did not dare to attack his rival he consoled himself by heaping invectives upon General Debonnaire, the respected Minister of War. The General did not hear them, for he was deaf and occupied himself in composing verses for the Baroness Bildermann. Hippolyte Ceres offered an indistinct opposition to everything the Prime Minister proposed. In a word, he was a madman. One faculty alone escaped the ruin of his intellect: he retained his Parliamentary sense, his consciousness of the temper of majorities, his thorough knowledge of groups, and his certainty of the direction in which affairs were moving.

VIII. FURTHER CONSEQUENCES

The session ended calmly, and the Ministry saw no dangerous signs upon the benches where the majority sat. It was visible, however, from certain articles in the Moderate journals, that the demands of the Jewish and Christian financiers were increasing daily, that the patriotism of the banks required a civilizing expedition to Nigritia, and that the steel trusts, eager in the defence of our coasts and colonies, were crying out for armoured cruisers and still more armoured cruisers. Rumours of war began to be heard. Such rumours sprang up every year as regularly as the trade winds; serious people paid no heed to them and the government usually let them die away from their own weakness unless they grew stronger and spread. For in that case the country would be alarmed. The financiers only wanted colonial wars and the people did not want any wars at all. It loved to see its government proud and even insolent, but at the least suspicion that a European war was brewing, its violent emotion would quickly have reached the House. Paul Visire was not uneasy. The European situation was in his view completely reassuring. He was only irritated by the maniacal silence of his Minister of Foreign Affairs. That gnome went to the Cabinet meetings with a portfolio bigger than himself stuffed full of papers, said nothing, refused to answer all questions, even those asked him by the respected President of the Republic, and, exhausted by his obstinate labours, took a few moments' sleep in his arm-chair in which nothing but the top of his little black head was to be seen above the green tablecloth.

In the mean time Hippolyte Ceres became a strong man again. In company with his colleague Lapersonne he formed numerous intimacies with ladies of the theatre. They were both to be seen at night entering fashionable restaurants in the company of ladies whom they over-topped by their lofty stature and their new hats, and they were soon reckoned amongst the most sympathetic frequenters of the boulevards. Fortune Lapersonne had his own wound beneath his armour, His wife, a young milliner whom he carried off from a marquis, had gone to live with a chauffeur. He loved her still, and could not console himself for her loss, so that very often in the private room of a restaurant, in the midst of a group of girls who laughed and ate crayfish, the two ministers exchanged a look full of their common sorrow and wiped away an unbidden tear.

Hippolyte Ceres, although wounded to the heart, did not allow himself to be beaten. He swore that he would be avenged.

Madame Paul Visire, whose deplorable health forced her to live with her relatives in a distant province, received an anonymous letter specifying that M. Paul Visire, who had not a half-penny when he married her, was spending her dowry on a married woman, E — C — , that he gave this woman thirty-thousand-franc motor-cars, and pearl necklaces costing twenty-five thousand francs, and that he was going straight to dishonour and ruin. Madame Paul Visire read the letter, fell into hysterics, and handed it to her father.

“I am going to box your husband’s ears,” said M. Blampignon; “he is a blackguard who will land you both in the workhouse unless we look out. He may be Prime Minister, but he won’t frighten me.”

When he stepped off the train M. Blampignon presented himself at the Ministry of the Interior, and was immediately received. He entered the Prime Minister’s room in a fury.

“I have something to say to you, sir!” And he waved the anonymous letter.

Paul Visire welcomed him smiling.

“You are welcome, my dear father. I was going to write to you. . . . Yes, to tell you of your nomination to the rank of officer of the Legion of Honour. I signed the patent this morning.”

M. Blampignon thanked his son-in-law warmly and threw the anonymous letter into the fire.

He returned to his provincial house and found his daughter fretting and agitated.

“Well! I saw your husband. He is a delightful fellow. But then, you don’t understand how to deal with him.”

About this time Hippolyte Ceres learned through a little scandalous newspaper (it is always through the newspapers that ministers are informed of the affairs of State) that the Prime Minister dined every evening with Mademoiselle Lysiane of the Folies Dramatiques, whose charm seemed to have made a great impression on him. Thenceforth Ceres took a gloomy joy in watching his wife. She came in every evening to dine or dress with an air of agreeable fatigue and the serenity that comes from enjoyment.

Thinking that she knew nothing, he sent her anonymous communications. She read them at the table before him and remained still listless and smiling.

He then persuaded himself that she gave no heed to these vague reports, and that in order to disturb her it would be necessary to enable her to verify her lover’s infidelity and treason for herself. There were at the Ministry a number of trustworthy agents charged with secret inquiries regarding the national defence. They were then employed in watching the spies of a neighbouring and hostile Power who had succeeded in entering the Postal and Telegraphic service. M.

Ceres ordered them to suspend their work for the present and to inquire where, when, and how, the Minister of the Interior saw Mademoiselle Lysiane. The agents performed their missions faithfully and told the minister that they had several times seen the Prime Minister with a woman, but that she was not Mademoiselle Lysiane. Hippolyte Ceres asked them nothing further. He was right; the loves of Paul Visire and Lysiane were but an alibi invented by Paul Visire himself, with Eveline's approval, for his fame was rather inconvenient to her, and she sighed for secrecy and mystery.

They were not shadowed by the agents of the Ministry of Commerce alone. They were also followed by those of the Prefect of Police, and even by those of the Minister of the Interior, who disputed with each other the honour of protecting their chief. Then there were the emissaries of several royalist, imperialist, and clerical organisations, those of eight or ten blackmailers, several amateur detectives, a multitude of reporters, and a crowd of photographers, who all made their appearance wherever these two took refuge in their perambulating love affairs, at big hotels, small hotels, town houses, country houses, private apartments, villas, museums, palaces, hovels. They kept watch in the streets, from neighbouring houses, trees, walls, stair-cases, landings, roofs, adjoining rooms, and even chimneys. The Minister and his friend saw with alarm all round their bed room, gimlets boring through doors and shutters, and drills making holes in the walls. A photograph of Madame Ceres in night attire buttoning her boots was the utmost that had been obtained.

Paul Visire grew impatient and irritable, and often lost his good humour and agreeableness. He came to the cabinet meetings in a rage and he, too, poured invectives upon General Debonnaire — a brave man under fire but a lax disciplinarian — and launched his sarcasms at against the venerable admiral Vivier des Murenes whose ships went to the bottom without any apparent reason.

Fortune Lapersonne listened open-eyed, and grumbled scoffingly between his teeth:

“He is not satisfied with robbing Hippolyte Ceres of his wife, but he must go and rob him of his catchwords too.”

These storms were made known by the indiscretion of some ministers and by the complaints of the two old warriors, who declared their intention of flinging their portfolios at the beggar's head, but who did nothing of the sort. These outbursts, far from injuring the lucky Prime Minister, had an excellent effect on Parliament and public opinion, who looked on them as signs of a keen solicitude for the welfare of the national army and navy. The Prime Minister was the recipient of general approbation.

To the congratulations of the various groups and of notable personages, he replied with simple firmness: "Those are my principles!" and he had seven or eight Socialists put in prison.

The session ended, and Paul Visire, very exhausted, went to take the waters. Hippolyte Ceres refused to leave his Ministry, where the trade union of telephone girls was in tumultuous agitation. He opposed it with an unheard of violence, for he had now become a woman-hater. On Sundays he went into the suburbs to fish along with his colleague Lapersonne, wearing the tall hat that never left him since he had become a Minister. And both of them, forgetting the fish, complained of the inconstancy of women and mingled their griefs.

Hippolyte still loved Eveline and he still suffered. However, hope had slipped into his heart. She was now separated from her lover, and, thinking to win her back, he directed all his efforts to that end. He put forth all his skill, showed himself sincere, adaptable, affectionate, devoted, even discreet; his heart taught him the delicacies of feeling. He said charming and touching things to the faithless one, and, to soften her, he told her all that he had suffered.

Crossing the band of his trousers upon his stomach.

"See," said he, "how thin I have got."

He promised her everything he thought could gratify a woman, country parties, hats, jewels.

Sometimes he thought she would take pity on him.

She no longer displayed an insolently happy countenance. Being separated from Paul, her sadness had an air of gentleness. But the moment he made a gesture to recover her she turned away fiercely and gloomily, girt with her fault as if with a golden girdle.

He did not give up, making himself humble, suppliant, lamentable.

One day he went to Lapersonne and said to him with tears in his eyes:

"Will you speak to her?"

Lapersonne excused himself, thinking that his intervention would be useless, but he gave some advice to his friend.

"Make her think that you don't care about her, that you love another, and she will come back to you."

Hippolyte, adopting this method, inserted in the newspapers that he was always to be found in the company of Mademoiselle Guinaud of the Opera. He came home late or did not come home at all, assumed in Eveline's presence an appearance of inward joy impossible to restrain, took out of his pocket, at dinner, a letter on scented paper which he pretended to read with delight, and his lips seemed as in a dream to kiss invisible lips. Nothing happened. Eveline did not even notice the change. Insensible to all around her, she only came out of her

lethargy to ask for some louis from her husband, and if he did not give them she threw him a look of contempt, ready to upbraid him with the shame which she poured upon him in the sight of the whole world. Since she had loved she spent a great deal on dress. She needed money, and she had only her husband to secure it for her; she was so far faithful to him.

He lost patience, became furious, and threatened her with his revolver. He said one day before her to Madame Clarence:

“I congratulate you, Madame; you have brought up your daughter to be a wanton hussy.”

“Take me away, Mamma,” exclaimed Eveline. “I will get a divorce!”

He loved her more ardently than ever. In his jealous rage, suspecting her, not without probability, of sending and receiving letters, he swore that he would intercept them, re-established a censorship over the post, threw private correspondence into confusion, delayed stock-exchange quotations, prevented assignations, brought about bankruptcies, thwarted passions, and caused suicides. The independent press gave utterance to the complaints of the public and indignantly supported them. To justify these arbitrary measures, the ministerial journals spoke darkly of plots and public dangers, and promoted a belief in a monarchical conspiracy. The less well-informed sheets gave more precise information, told of the seizure of fifty thousand guns, and the landing of Prince Crucho. Feeling grew throughout the country, and the republican organs called for the immediate meeting of Parliament. Paul Visire returned to Paris, summoned his colleagues, held an important Cabinet Council, and proclaimed through his agencies that a plot had been actually formed against the national representation, but that the Prime Minister held the threads of it in his hand, and that a judicial inquiry was about to be opened.

He immediately ordered the arrest of thirty Socialists, and whilst the entire country was acclaiming him as its saviour, baffling the watchfulness of his six hundred detectives, he secretly took Eveline to a little house near the Northern railway station, where they remained until night. After their departure, the maid of their hotel, as she was putting their room in order, saw seven little crosses traced by a hairpin on the wall at the head of the bed.

That is all that Hippolyte Ceres obtained as a reward of his efforts.

IX. THE FINAL CONSEQUENCES

Jealousy is a virtue of democracies which preserves them from tyrants. Deputies began to envy the Prime Minister his golden key. For a year his domination over the beautiful Madame Ceres had been known to the whole universe. The provinces, whither news and fashions only arrive after a complete revolution of the earth round the sun, were at last informed of the illegitimate loves of the Cabinet. The provinces preserve an austere morality; women are more virtuous there than they are in the capital.

Various reasons have been alleged for this: Education, example, simplicity of life. Professor Haddock asserts that this virtue of provincial ladies is solely due to the fact that the heels of their shoes are low. "A woman," said he, in a learned article in the "Anthropological Review", "a woman attracts a civilized man in proportion as her feet make an angle with the ground. If this angle is as much as thirty-five degrees, the attraction becomes acute. For the position of the feet upon the ground determines the whole carriage of the body, and it results that provincial women, since they wear low heels, are not very attractive, and preserve their virtue with ease." These conclusions were not generally accepted. It was objected that under the influence of English and American fashions, low heels had been introduced generally without producing the results attributed to them by the learned Professor; moreover, it was said that the difference he pretended to establish between the morals of the metropolis and those of the provinces is perhaps illusory, and that if it exists, it is apparently due to the fact that great cities offer more advantages and facilities for love than small towns provide. However that may be, the provinces began to murmur against the Prime Minister, and to raise a scandal. This was not yet a danger, but there was a possibility that it might become one.

For the moment the peril was nowhere and yet everywhere. The majority remained solid; but the leaders became stiff and exacting. Perhaps Hippolyte Ceres would never have intentionally sacrificed his interests to his vengeance. But thinking that he could henceforth, without compromising his own fortune, secretly damage that of Paul Visire, he devoted himself to the skilful and careful preparation of difficulties and perils for the Head of the Government. Though far from equalling his rival in talent, knowledge, and authority, he greatly surpassed him in his skill as a lobbyist. The most acute parliamentarians attributed the recent misfortunes of the majority to his refusal to vote. At committees, by a calculated imprudence, he favoured motions which he knew the Prime Minister

could not accept. One day his intentional awkwardness provoked a sudden and violent conflict between the Minister of the Interior, and his departmental Treasurer. Then Ceres became frightened and went no further. It would have been dangerous for him to overthrow the ministry too soon. His ingenious hatred found an issue by circuitous paths. Paul Visire had a poor cousin of easy morals who bore his name. Ceres, remembering this lady, Celine Visire, brought her into prominence, arranged that she should become intimate with several foreigners, and procured her engagements in the music-halls. One summer night, on a stage in the Champs Elysees before a tumultuous crowd, she performed risky dances to the sounds of wild music which was audible in the gardens where the President of the Republic was entertaining Royalty. The name of Visire, associated with these scandals, covered the walls of the town, filled the newspapers, was repeated in the cafes and at balls, and blazed forth in letters of fire upon the boulevards.

Nobody regarded the Prime Minister as responsible for the scandal of his relatives, but a bad idea of his family came into existence, and the influence of the statesman was diminished.

Almost immediately he was made to feel this in a pretty sharp fashion. One day in the House, on a simple question, Labillette, the Minister of Religion and Public Worship, who was suffering from an attack of liver, and beginning to be exasperated by the intentions and intrigues of the clergy, threatened to close the Chapel of St. Orberosia, and spoke without respect of the National Virgin. The entire Right rose up in indignation; the Left appeared to give but a half-hearted support to the rash Minister. The leaders of the majority did not care to attack a popular cult which brought thirty millions a year into the country. The most moderate of the supporters of the Right, M. Bigourd, made the question the subject of a resolution and endangered the Cabinet. Luckily, Fortune Lapersonne, the Minister of Public Works, always conscious of the obligations of power, was able in the Prime Minister's absence to repair the awkwardness and indecorum of his colleague, the Minister of Public Worship. He ascended the tribune and bore witness to the respect in which the Government held the heavenly Patron of the country, the consoler of so many ills which science admitted its powerlessness to relieve.

When Paul Visire, snatched at last from Eveline's arms, appeared in the House, the administration was saved; but the Prime Minister saw himself compelled to grant important concessions to the upper classes. He proposed in Parliament that six armoured cruisers should be laid down, and thus won the sympathies of the Steel Trust; he gave new assurances that the income tax would not be imposed, and he had eighteen Socialists arrested.

He was soon to find himself opposed by more formidable obstacles. The Chancellor of the neighbouring Empire in an ingenious and profound speech upon the foreign relations of his sovereign, made a sly allusion to the intrigues that inspired the policy of a great country. This reference, which was received with smiles by the Imperial Parliament, was certain to irritate a punctilious republic. It aroused the national susceptibility, which directed its wrath against its amorous Minister. The Deputies seized upon a frivolous pretext to show their dissatisfaction. A ridiculous incident, the fact that the wife of a subprefect had danced at the Moulin Rouge, forced the minister to face a vote of censure, and he was within a few votes of being defeated. According to general opinion, Paul Visire had never been so weak, so vacillating, or so spiritless, as on that occasion.

He understood that he could only keep himself in office by a great political stroke, and he decided on the expedition to Nigritia. This measure was demanded by the great financial and industrial corporations and was one which would bring concessions of immense forests to the capitalists, a loan of eight millions to the banking companies, as well as promotions and decorations to the naval and military officers. A pretext presented itself; some insult needed to be avenged, or some debt to be collected. Six battleships, fourteen cruisers, and eighteen transports sailed up the mouth of the river Hippopotamus. Six hundred canoes vainly opposed the landing of the troops. Admiral Vivier des Murenes' cannons produced an appalling effect upon the blacks, who replied to them with flights of arrows, but in spite of their fanatical courage they were entirely defeated. Popular enthusiasm was kindled by the newspapers which the financiers subsidised, and burst into a blaze. Some Socialists alone protested against this barbarous, doubtful, and dangerous enterprise. They were at once arrested.

At that moment when the Minister, supported by wealth, and now beloved by the poor, seemed unconquerable, the light of hate showed Hippolyte Ceres alone the danger, and looking with a gloomy joy at his rival, he muttered between his teeth, "He is wrecked, the brigand!"

Whilst the country intoxicated itself with glory, the neighbouring Empire protested against the occupation of Nigritia by a European power, and these protests following one another at shorter and shorter intervals became more and more vehement. The newspapers of the interested Republic concealed all causes for uneasiness; but Hippolyte Ceres heard the growing menace, and determined at last to risk everything, even the fate of the ministry, in order to ruin his enemy. He got men whom he could trust to write and insert articles in several of

the official journals, which, seeming to express Paul Visire's precise views, attributed warlike intentions to the Head of the Government.

These articles roused a terrible echo abroad, and they alarmed the public opinion of a nation which, while fond of soldiers, was not fond of war. Questioned in the House on the foreign policy of his government, Paul Visire made a reassuring statement, and promised to maintain a face compatible with the dignity of a great nation. His Minister of Foreign Affairs, Crombile, read a declaration which was absolutely unintelligible, for the reason that it was couched in diplomatic language. The Minister obtained a large majority.

But the rumours of war did not cease, and in order to avoid a new and dangerous motion, the Prime Minister distributed eighty thousand acres of forests in Nigritia among the Deputies, and had fourteen Socialists arrested. Hippolyte Ceres went gloomily about the lobbies, confiding to the Deputies of his group that he was endeavouring to induce the Cabinet to adopt a pacific policy, and that he still hoped to succeed. Day by day the sinister rumours grew in volume, and penetrating amongst the public, spread uneasiness and disquiet. Paul Visire himself began to take alarm. What disturbed him most were the silence and absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Crombile no longer came to the meetings of the Cabinet. Rising at five o'clock in the morning, he worked eighteen hours at his desk, and at last fell exhausted into his waste-paper basket, from whence the registrars removed him, together with the papers which they were going to sell to the military attaches of the neighbouring Empire.

General Debonnaire believed that a campaign was imminent, and prepared for it. Far from fearing war, he prayed for it, and confided his generous hopes to Baroness Bildermann, who informed the neighbouring nation, which, acting on her information, proceeded to a rapid mobilization.

The Minister of Finance unintentionally precipitated events. At the moment, he was speculating for a fall, and in order to bring about a panic on the Stock Exchange, he spread the rumour that war was now inevitable. The neighbouring Empire, deceived by this action, and expecting to see its territory invaded, mobilized its troops in all haste. The terrified Chamber overthrew the Visire ministry by an enormous majority (814 votes to 7, with 28 abstentions). It was too late. The very day of this fall the neighbouring and hostile nation recalled its ambassador and flung eight millions of men into Madame Ceres' country. War became universal, and the whole world was drowned in a torrent of blood.

THE ZENITH OF PENGUIN CIVILIZATION

Half a century after the events we have just related, Madame Ceres died surrounded with respect and veneration, in the eighty-ninth year of her age. She had long been the widow of a statesman whose name she bore with dignity. Her modest and quiet funeral was followed by the orphans of the parish and the sisters of the Sacred Compassion.

The deceased left all her property to the Charity of St. Orberosia.

“Alas!” sighed M. Monnoyer, a canon of St. Mael, as he received the pious legacy, “it was high time for a generous benefactor to come to the relief of our necessities. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant are turning away from us. And when we try to lead back these misguided souls, neither threats nor promises, neither gentleness nor violence, nor anything else is now successful. The Penguin clergy pine in desolation; our country priests, reduced to following the humblest of trades, are shoeless, and compelled to live upon such scraps as they can pick up. In our ruined churches the rain of heaven falls upon the faithful, and during the holy offices they can hear the noise of stones falling from the arches. The tower of the cathedral is tottering and will soon fall. St. Orberosia is forgotten by the Penguins, her devotion abandoned, and her sanctuary deserted. On her shrine, bereft of its gold and precious stones, the spider silently weaves her web.”

Hearing these lamentations, Pierre Mille, who at the age of ninety-eight years had lost nothing of his intellectual and moral power, asked, the canon if he did not think that St. Orberosia would one day rise out of this wrongful oblivion.

“I hardly dare to hope so,” sighed M. Monnoyer.

“It is a pity!” answered Pierre Mille. “Orberosia is a charming figure and her legend is a beautiful one. I discovered the other day by the merest chance, one of her most delightful miracles, the miracle of Jean Violle. Would you like to hear it, M. Monnoyer?”

“I should be very pleased, M. Mille.”

“Here it is, then, just as I found it in a fifteenth-century manuscript

“Cecile, the wife of Nicolas Gaubert, a jeweller on the Pont-au-Change, after having led an honest and chaste life for many years, and being now past her prime, became infatuated with Jean Violle, the Countess de Maubec’s page, who lived at the Hotel du Paon on the Place de Greve. He was not yet eighteen years old, and his face and figure were attractive. Not being able to conquer her passion, Cecile resolved to satisfy it. She attracted the page to her house, loaded

him with caresses, supplied him with sweetmeats and finally did as she wished with him.

“Now one day, as they were together in the jeweller’s bed, Master Nicholas came home sooner than he was expected. He found the bolt drawn, and heard his wife on the other side of the door exclaiming, ‘My heart! my angel! my love!’ Then suspecting that she was shut up with a gallant, he struck great blows upon the door and began to shout ‘Slut! hussy! wanton! open so that I may cut off your nose and ears!’ In this peril, the jeweller’s wife besought St. Orberosia, and vowed her a large candle if she helped her and the little page, who was dying of fear beside the bed, out of their difficulty.

“The saint heard the prayer. She immediately changed Jean Violle into a girl. Seeing this, Cecile was completely reassured, and began to call out to her husband: ‘Oh! you brutal villain, you jealous wretch! Speak gently if you want the door to be opened.’ And scolding in this way, she ran to the wardrobe and took out of it an old hood, a pair of stays, and a long grey petticoat, in which she hastily wrapped the transformed page. Then when this was done, ‘Catherine, dear Catherine,’ said she, loudly, ‘open the door for your uncle; he is more fool than knave, and won’t do you any harm.’ The boy who had become a girl, obeyed. Master Nicholas entered the room and found in it a young maid whom he did not know, and his wife in bed. ‘Big booby,’ said the latter to him, ‘don’t stand gaping at what you see, just as I had come to bed because had a stomach ache, I received a visit from Catherine, the daughter of my sister Jeanne de Palaiseau, with whom we quarrelled fifteen years ago. Kiss your niece. She is well worth the trouble.’ The jeweller gave Violle a hug, and from that moment wanted nothing so much as to be alone with her a moment, so that he might embrace her as much as he liked. For this reason he led her without any delay down to the kitchen, under the pretext of giving her some walnuts and wine, and he was no sooner there with her than he began to caress her very affectionately. He would not have stopped at that if St. Orberosia had not inspired his good wife with the idea of seeing what he was about. She found him with the pretended niece sitting on his knee. She called him a debauched creature, boxed his ears, and forced him to beg her pardon. The next day Violle resumed his previous form.”

Having heard this story the venerable Canon Monnoyer thanked Pierre Mille for having told it, and, taking up his pen, began to write out a list of horses that would win at the next race meeting. For he was a book-maker’s clerk.

In the mean time Penguinia gloried in its wealth. Those who produced the things necessary for life, wanted them; those who did not produce them had more than enough. “But these,” as a member of the Institute said, “are necessary

economic fatalities.” The great Penguin people had no longer either traditions, intellectual culture, or arts. The progress of civilisation manifested itself among them by murderous industry, infamous speculation, and hideous luxury. Its capital assumed, as did all the great cities of the time, a cosmopolitan and financial character. An immense and regular ugliness reigned within it. The country enjoyed perfect tranquillity. It had reached its zenith.

BOOK VIII. FUTURE TIMES

THE ENDLESS HISTORY

Alca is becoming Americanised. — M. Daniset.

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. — Genesis xix. 25

{greek here} (Herodotus, Histories, VII cii.)

Poverty has ever been familiar to Greece, but virtue has been acquired, having been accomplished by wisdom and firm laws. — Henry Cary's Translation.

You have not seen angels then. — Liber Terribilis.

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We are now beginning to study a chemistry which will deal with effects produced by bodies containing a quantity of concentrated energy the like of which we have not yet had at our disposal. — Sir William Ramsay.

S. I

The houses were never high enough to satisfy them; they kept on making them still higher and built them of thirty or forty storeys: with offices, shops, banks, societies one above another; they dug cellars and tunnels ever deeper downwards.

Fifteen millions of men laboured in a giant town by the light of beacons which shed forth their glare both day and night. No light of heaven pierced through the smoke of the factories with which the town was girt, but sometimes the red disk of a rayless sun might be seen riding in the black firmament through which iron bridges ploughed their way, and from which there descended a continual shower of soot and cinders. It was the most industrial of all the cities in the world and the richest. Its organisation seemed perfect. None of the ancient aristocratic or democratic forms remained; everything was subordinated to the interests of the trusts. This environment gave rise to what anthropologists called the multimillionaire type. The men of this type were at once energetic and frail, capable of great activity in forming mental combinations and of prolonged labour in offices, but men whose nervous irritability suffered from hereditary troubles which increased as time went on.

Like all true aristocrats, like the patricians of republican Rome or the squires of old England, these powerful men affected a great severity in their habits and customs. They were the ascetics of wealth. At the meetings of the trusts an observer would have noticed their smooth and puffy faces, their lantern cheeks, their sunken eyes and wrinkled brows. With bodies more withered, complexions yellower, lips drier, and eyes filled with a more burning fanaticism than those of the old Spanish monks, these multimillionaires gave themselves up with inextinguishable ardour to the austerities of banking and industry. Several, denying themselves all happiness, all pleasure, and all rest, spent their miserable lives in rooms without light or air, furnished only with electrical apparatus, living on eggs and milk, and sleeping on camp beds. By doing nothing except pressing nickel buttons with their fingers, these mystics heaped up riches of which they never even saw the signs, and acquired the vain possibility of gratifying desires that they never experienced.

The worship of wealth had its martyrs. One of these multimillionaires, the famous Samuel Box, preferred to die rather than surrender the smallest atom of his property. One of his workmen, the victim of an accident while at work, being refused any indemnity by his employer, obtained a verdict in the courts, but repelled by innumerable obstacles of procedure, he fell into the direst poverty. Being thus reduced to despair, he succeeded by dint of cunning and audacity in confronting his employer with a loaded revolver in his hand, and threatened to blow out his brains if he did not give him some assistance. Samuel Box gave nothing, and let himself be killed for the sake of principle.

Examples that come from high quarters are followed. Those who possessed some small capital (and they were necessarily the greater number), affected the ideas and habits of the multimillionaires, in order that they might be classed among them. All passions which injured the increase or the preservation of wealth, were regarded as dishonourable; neither indolence, nor idleness, nor the taste for disinterested study, nor love of the arts, nor, above all, extravagance, was ever forgiven; pity was condemned as a dangerous weakness. Whilst every inclination to licentiousness excited public reprobation, the violent and brutal satisfaction of an appetite was, on the contrary, excused; violence, in truth, was regarded as less injurious to morality, since it manifested a form of social energy. The State was firmly based on two great public virtues: respect for the rich and contempt for the poor. Feeble spirits who were still moved by human suffering had no other resource than to take refuge in a hypocrisy which it was impossible to blame, since it contributed to the maintenance of order and the solidity of institutions.

Thus, among the rich, all were devoted to their social order, or seemed to be so; all gave good examples, if all did not follow them. Some felt the gravity of their position cruelly; but they endured it either from pride or from duty. Some attempted, in secret and by subterfuge, to escape from it for a moment. One of these, Edward Martin, the President, of the Steel Trust, sometimes dressed himself as a poor man, went forth to beg his bread, and allowed himself to be jostled by the passers-by. One day, as he asked alms on a bridge, he engaged in a quarrel with a real beggar, and filled with a fury of envy, he strangled him.

As they devoted their whole intelligence to business, they sought no intellectual pleasures. The theatre, which had formerly been very flourishing among them, was now reduced to pantomimes and comic dances. Even the pieces in which women acted were given up; the taste for pretty forms and brilliant toilettes had been lost; the somersaults of clowns and the music of negroes were preferred above them, and what roused enthusiasm was the sight of women upon the stage whose necks were bedizened with diamonds, or processions carrying golden bars in triumph. Ladies of wealth were as much compelled as the men to lead a respectable life. According to a tendency common to all civilizations, public feeling set them up as symbols; they were, by their austere magnificence, to represent both the splendour of wealth and its intangible. The old habits of gallantry had been reformed, but fashionable lovers were now secretly replaced by muscular labourers or stray grooms. Nevertheless, scandals were rare, a foreign journey concealed nearly all of them, and the Princesses of the Trusts remained objects of universal esteem.

The rich formed only a small minority, but their collaborators, who composed the entire people, had been completely won over or completely subjugated by them. They formed two classes, the agents of commerce or banking, and workers in the factories. The former contributed an immense amount of work and received large salaries. Some of them succeeded in founding establishments of their own; for in the constant increase of the public wealth the more intelligent and audacious could hope for anything. Doubtless it would have been possible to find a certain number of discontented and rebellious persons among the immense crowd of engineers and accountants, but this powerful society had imprinted its firm discipline even on the minds of its opponents. The very anarchists were laborious and regular.

As for the workmen who toiled in the factories that surrounded the town, their decadence, both physical and moral, was terrible; they were examples of the type of poverty as it is set forth by anthropology. Although the development among them of certain muscles, due to the particular nature of their work, might give a false idea of their strength, they presented sure signs of morbid debility. Of low

stature, with small heads and narrow chests, they were further distinguished from the comfortable classes by a multitude of physiological anomalies, and, in particular, by a common want of symmetry between the head and the limbs. And they were destined to a gradual and continuous degeneration, for the State made soldiers of the more robust among them, and the health of these did not long withstand the brothels and the drink-shops that sprang up around their barracks. The proletarians became more and more feeble in mind. The continued weakening of their intellectual faculties was not entirely due to their manner of life; it resulted also from a methodical selection carried out by the employers. The latter, fearing that workmen of too great ability might be inclined to put forward legitimate demands, took care to eliminate them by every possible means, and preferred to engage ignorant and stupid labourers, who were incapable of defending their rights, but were yet intelligent enough to perform their toil, which highly perfected machines rendered extremely simple. Thus the proletarians were unable to do anything to improve their lot. With difficulty did they succeed by means of strikes in maintaining the rate of their wages. Even this means began to fail them. The alternations of production inherent in the capitalist system caused such cessations of work that, in several branches of industry, as soon as a strike was declared, the accumulation of products allowed the employers to dispense with the strikers. In a word, these miserable employees were plunged in a gloomy apathy that nothing enlightened and nothing exasperated. They were necessary instruments for the social order and well adapted to their purpose.

Upon the whole, this social order seemed the most firmly established that had yet been seen, at least among kind, for that of bees and ants is incomparably more stable. Nothing could foreshadow the ruin of a system founded on what is strongest in human nature, pride and cupidity. However, keen observers discovered several grounds for uneasiness. The most certain, although the least apparent, were of an economic order, and consisted in the continually increasing amount of over-production, which entailed long and cruel interruptions of labour, though these were, it is true, utilized by the manufacturers as a means of breaking the power of the workmen, by facing them with the prospect of a lock-out. A more obvious peril resulted from the physiological state of almost the entire population. "The health of the poor is what it must be," said the experts in hygiene, "but that of the rich leaves much to be desired." It was not difficult to find the causes of this. The supply of oxygen necessary for life was insufficient in the city, and men breathed in an artificial air. The food trusts, by means of the most daring chemical syntheses, produced artificial wines, meat, milk, fruit, and vegetables, and the diet thus imposed gave rise to stomach and brain troubles.

The multimillionaires were bald at the age of eighteen; some showed from time to time a dangerous weakness of mind. Over-strung and enfeebled, they gave enormous sums to ignorant charlatans; and it was a common thing for some bath-attendant or other trumpery who turned healer or prophet, to make a rapid fortune by the practice of medicine or theology. The number of lunatics increased continually; suicides multiplied in the world of wealth, and many of them were accompanied by atrocious and extraordinary circumstances, which bore witness to an unheard of perversion of intelligence and sensibility.

Another fatal symptom created a strong impression upon average minds. Terrible accidents, henceforth periodical and regular, entered into people's calculations, and kept mounting higher and higher in statistical tables. Every day, machines burst into fragments, houses fell down, trains laden with merchandise fell on to the streets, demolishing entire buildings and crushing hundreds of passers-by. Through the ground, honey-combed with tunnels, two or three storeys of work-shops would often crash, engulfing all those who worked in them.

S. 2

In the southwestern district of the city, on an eminence which had preserved its ancient name of Fort Saint-Michel, there stretched a square where some old trees still spread their exhausted arms above the greensward. Landscape gardeners had constructed a cascade, grottos, a torrent, a lake, and an island, on its northern slope. From this side one could see the whole town with its streets, its boulevards, its squares, the multitude of its roofs and domes, its air-passages, and its crowds of men, covered with a veil of silence, and seemingly enchanted by the distance. This square was the healthiest place in the capital; here no smoke obscured the sky, and children were brought here to play. In summer some employees from the neighbouring offices and laboratories used to resort to it for a moment after their luncheons, but they did not disturb its solitude and peace.

It was owing to this custom that, one day in June, about mid-day, a telegraph clerk, Caroline Meslier, came and sat down on a bench at the end of a terrace. In order to refresh her eyes by the sight of a little green, she turned her back to the town. Dark, with brown eyes, robust and placid, Caroline appeared to be from twenty-five to twenty-eight years of age. Almost immediately, a clerk in the Electricity Trust, George Clair, took his place beside her. Fair, thin, and supple, he had features of a feminine delicacy; he was scarcely older than she, and looked still younger. As they met almost every day in this place, a comradeship had sprung up between them, and they enjoyed chatting together. But their conversation had never been tender, affectionate, or even intimate. Caroline,

although it had happened to her in the past to repent of her confidence, might perhaps have been less reserved had not George Clair always shown himself extremely restrained in his expressions and behaviour. He always gave a purely intellectual character to the conversation, keeping it within the realm of general ideas, and, moreover, expressing himself on all subjects with the greatest freedom. He spoke frequently of the organization of society, and the conditions of labour.

“Wealth,” said he, “is one of the means of living happily; but people have made it the sole end of existence.”

And this state of things seemed monstrous to both of them.

They returned continually to various scientific subjects with which they were both familiar.

On that day they discussed the evolution of chemistry.

“From the moment,” said Clair, “that radium was seen to be transformed into helium, people ceased to affirm the immutability of simple bodies; in this way all those old laws about simple relations and about the indestructibility of matter were abolished.”

“However,” said she, “chemical laws exist.”

For, being a woman, she had need of belief.

He resumed carelessly:

“Now that we can procure radium in sufficient quantities, science possesses incomparable means of analysis; even at present we get glimpses, within what are called simple bodies, of extremely diversified complex ones, and we discover energies in matter which seem to increase even by reason of its tenuity.”

As they talked, they threw bits of bread to the birds, and some children played around them.

Passing from one subject to another:

“This hill, in the quaternary epoch,” said Clair, “was inhabited by wild horses. Last year, as they were tunnelling for the water mains, they found a layer of the bones of primeval horses.”

She was anxious to know whether, at that distant epoch, man had yet appeared.

He told her that man used to hunt the primeval horse long before he tried to domesticate him.

“Man,” he added, “was at first a hunter, then he became a shepherd, a cultivator, a manufacturer . . . and these diverse civilizations succeeded each other at intervals of time that the mind cannot conceive.”

He took out his watch.

Caroline asked if it was already time to go back to the office.

He said it was not, that it was scarcely half-past twelve.

A little girl was making mud pies at the foot of their bench; a little boy of seven or eight years was playing in front of them. Whilst his mother was sewing on an adjoining bench, he played all alone at being a run-away horse, and with that power of illusion, of which children are capable, he imagined that he was at the same time the horse, and those who ran after him, and those who fled in terror before him. He kept struggling with himself and shouting: "Stop him, Hi! Hi! This is an awful horse, he has got the bit between his teeth."

Caroline asked the question:

"Do you think that men were happy formerly?"

Her companion answered:

"They suffered less when they were younger. They acted like that little boy: they played; they played at arts, at virtues, at vices, at heroism, at beliefs, at pleasures; they had illusions which entertained them; they made a noise; they amused themselves. But now. . . ."

He interrupted himself, and looked again at his watch.

The child, who was running, struck his foot against the little girl's pail, and fell his full length on the gravel. He remained a moment stretched out motionless, then raised himself up on the palms of his hands. His forehead puckered, his mouth opened, and he burst into tears. His mother ran up, but Caroline had lifted him from the ground and was wiping his eyes and mouth with her handkerchief.

The child kept on sobbing and Clair took him in his arms.

"Come, don't cry, my little man! I am going to tell you a story.

"A fisherman once threw his net into the sea and drew out a little, sealed, copper pot, which he opened with his knife. Smoke came out of it, and as it mounted up to the clouds the smoke grew thicker and thicker and became a giant who gave such a terrible yawn that the whole world was blown to dust."

Clair stopped himself, gave a dry laugh, and handed the child back to his mother. Then he took out his watch again, and kneeling on the bench with his elbows resting on its back he gazed at the town. As far as the eye could reach, the multitude of houses stood out in their tiny immensity.

Caroline turned her eyes in the same direction.

"What splendid weather it is!" said she. "The sun's rays change the smoke on the horizon into gold. The worst thing about civilization is that it deprives one of the light of day."

We did not answer; his looks remained fixed on a place in the town.

After some seconds of silence they saw about half a mile away, in the richer district on the other side of the river, a sort of tragic fog rearing itself upwards. A moment afterwards an explosion was heard even where they were sitting, and an immense tree of smoke mounted towards the pure sky. Little by little the air was filled with an imperceptible murmur caused by the shouts of thousands of men. Cries burst forth quite close to the square.

“What has been blown up?”

The bewilderment was great, for although accidents were common, such a violent explosion as this one had never been seen, and everybody perceived that something terribly strange had happened.

Attempts were made to locate the place of the accident; districts, streets, different buildings, clubs, theatres, and shops were mentioned. Information gradually became more precise and at last the truth was known.

“The Steel Trust has just been blown up.”

Clair put his watch back into his pocket.

Caroline looked at him closely and her eyes filled with astonishment.

At last she whispered in his ear:

“Did you know it? Were you expecting it? Was it you . . . ?”

He answered very calmly:

“That town ought to be destroyed.”

She replied in a gentle and thoughtful tone:

“I think so too.”

And both of them returned quietly to their work.

S. 3

From that day onward, anarchist attempts followed one another every week without interruption. The victims were numerous, and almost all of them belonged to the poorer classes. These crimes roused public resentment. It was among domestic servants, hotel-keepers, and the employees of such small shops as the Trusts still allowed to exist, that indignation burst forth most vehemently. In popular districts women might be heard demanding unusual punishments for the dynamitards. (They were called by this old name, although it was hardly appropriate to them, since, to these unknown chemists, dynamite was an innocent material only fit to destroy ant-hills, and they considered it mere child’s play to explode nitro-glycerine with a cartridge made of fulminate of mercury.) Business ceased suddenly, and those who were least rich were the first to feel the effects. They spoke of doing justice themselves to the anarchists. In the mean time the factory workers remained hostile or indifferent to violent action. They were threatened, as a result of the decline of business, with a likelihood of losing their work, or even a lock-out in all the factories. The Federation of Trade

Unions proposed a general strike as the most powerful means of influencing the employers, and the best aid that could be given to the revolutionists, but all the trades with the exception of the gliders refused to cease work.

The police made numerous arrests. Troops summoned from all parts of the National Federation protected the offices of the Trusts, the houses of the multimillionaires, the public halls, the banks, and the big shops. A fortnight passed without a single explosion, and it was concluded that the dynamitards, in all probability but a handful of persons, perhaps even still fewer, had all been killed or captured, or that they were in hiding, or had taken flight. Confidence returned; it returned at first among the poorer classes. Two or three hundred thousand soldiers, who had been lodged in the most closely populated districts, stimulated trade, and people began to cry out: "Hurrah for the army!"

The rich, who had not been so quick to take alarm, were reassured more slowly. But at the Stock Exchange a group of "bulls" spread optimistic rumours and by a powerful effort put a brake upon the fall in prices. Business improved. Newspapers with big circulations supported the movement. With patriotic eloquence they depicted capital as laughing in its impregnable position at the assaults of a few dastardly criminals, and public wealth maintaining its serene ascendancy in spite of the vain threats made against it. They were sincere in their attitude, though at the same time they found it benefited them. Outrages were forgotten or their occurrence denied. On Sundays, at the race-meetings, the stands were adorned by women covered with pearls and diamonds. It was observed with joy that the capitalists had not suffered. Cheers were given for the multimillionaires in the saddling rooms.

On the following day the Southern Railway Station, the Petroleum Trust, and the huge church built at the expense of Thomas Morcellet were all blown up. Thirty houses were in flames, and the beginning of a fire was discovered at the docks. The firemen showed amazing intrepidity and zeal. They managed their tall fire-escapes with automatic precision, and climbed as high as thirty storeys to rescue the luckless inhabitants from the flames. The soldiers performed their duties with spirit, and were given a double ration of coffee. But these fresh casualties started a panic. Millions of people, who wanted to take their money with them and leave the town at once, crowded the great banking houses. These establishments, after paying out money for three days, closed their doors amid mutterings of a riot. A crowd of fugitives, laden with their baggage, besieged the railway stations and took the town by storm. Many who were anxious to lay in a stock of provisions and take refuge in the cellars, attacked the grocery stores, although they were guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets. The public

authorities displayed energy. Numerous arrests were made and thousands of warrants issued against suspected persons.

During the three weeks that followed no outrage was committed. There was a rumour that bombs had been found in the Opera House, in the cellars of the Town Hall, and beside one of the Pillars of the Stock Exchange. But it was soon known that these were boxes of sweets that had been put in those places by practical jokers or lunatics. One of the accused, when questioned by a magistrate, declared that he was the chief author of the explosions, and said that all his accomplices had lost their lives. These confessions were published by the newspapers and helped to reassure public opinion. It was only towards the close of the examination that the magistrates saw they had to deal with a pretender who was in no way connected with any of the crimes.

The experts chosen by the courts discovered nothing that enabled them to determine the engine employed in the work of destruction. According to their conjectures the new explosive emanated from a gas which radium evolves, and it was supposed that electric waves, produced by a special type of oscillator, were propagated through space and thus caused the explosion. But even the ablest chemist could say nothing precise or certain. At last two policemen, who were passing in front of the Hotel Meyer, found on the pavement, close to a ventilator, an egg made of white metal and provided with a capsule at each end. They picked it up carefully, and, on the orders of their chief, carried it to the municipal laboratory. Scarcely had the experts assembled to examine it, than the egg burst and blew up the amphitheatre and the dome. All the experts perished, and with them Collin, the General of Artillery, and the famous Professor Tigre.

The capitalist society did not allow itself to be daunted by this fresh disaster. The great banks re-opened their doors, declaring that they would meet demands partly in bullion and partly in paper money guaranteed by the State: The Stock Exchange and the Trade Exchange, in spite of the complete cessation of business, decided not to suspend their sittings.

In the mean time the magisterial investigation into the case of those who had been first accused had come to an end. Perhaps the evidence brought against them might have appeared insufficient under other circumstances, but the zeal both of the magistrates and the public made up for this insufficiency. On the eve of the day fixed for the trial the Courts of justice were blown up and eight hundred people were killed, the greater number of them being judges and lawyers. A furious crowd broke into the prison and lynched the prisoners. The troops sent to restore order were received with showers of stones and revolver shots; several soldiers being dragged from their horses and trampled underfoot. The soldiers fired on the mob and many persons were killed. At last the public

authorities succeeded in establishing tranquillity. Next day the Bank was blown up.

From that time onwards unheard-of things took place. The factory workers, who had refused to strike, rushed in crowds into the town and set fire to the houses. Entire regiments, led by their officers, joined the workmen, went with them through the town singing revolutionary hymns, and took barrels of petroleum from the docks with which to feed the fires. Explosions were continual. One morning a monstrous tree of smoke, like the ghost of a huge palm tree half a mile in height, rose above the giant Telegraph Hall which suddenly fell into a complete ruin.

Whilst half the town was in flames, the other half pursued its accustomed life. In the mornings, milk pails could be heard jingling in the dairy carts. In a deserted avenue some old navvy might be seen seated against a wall slowly eating hunks of bread with perhaps a little meat. Almost all the presidents of the trusts remained at their posts. Some of them performed their duty with heroic simplicity. Raphael Box, the son of a martyred multimillionaire, was blown up as he was presiding at the general meeting of the Sugar Trust. He was given a magnificent funeral and the procession on its way to the cemetery had to climb six times over piles of ruins or cross upon planks over the uprooted roads.

The ordinary helpers of the rich, the clerks, employees, brokers, and agents, preserved an unshaken fidelity. The surviving clerks of the Bank that had been blown up, made their way along the ruined streets through the midst of smoking houses to hand in their bills of exchange, and several were swallowed up in the flames while endeavouring to present their receipts.

Nevertheless, any illusion concerning the state of affairs was impossible. The enemy was master of the town. Instead of silence the noise of explosions was now continuous and produced an insurmountable feeling of horror. The lighting apparatus having been destroyed, the city was plunged in darkness all through the night, and appalling crimes were committed. The populous districts alone, having suffered the least, still preserved measures of protection. They were paraded by patrols of volunteers who shot the robbers, and at every street corner one stumbled over a body lying in a pool of blood, the hands bound behind the back, a handkerchief over the face, and a placard pinned upon the breast.

It became impossible to clear away the ruins or to bury the dead. Soon the stench from the corpses became intolerable. Epidemics raged and caused innumerable deaths, while they also rendered the survivors feeble and listless. Famine carried off almost all who were left. A hundred and one days after the first outrage, whilst six army corps with field artillery and siege artillery were marching, at night, into the poorest quarter of the city, Caroline and Clair,

holding each other's hands, were watching from the roof a lofty house, the only one still left standing, but now surrounded by smoke and flame, joyous songs ascended from the street, where the crowd was dancing in delirium.

"To-morrow it will be ended," said the man, "and it will be better."

The young woman, her hair loosened and her face shining with the reflection of the flames, gazed with a pious joy at the circle of fire that was growing closer around them.

"It will be better," said she also.

And throwing herself into the destroyer's arms she pressed a passionate kiss upon his lips.

S. 4

The other towns of the federation also suffered from disturbances and outbreaks, and then order was restored. Reforms were introduced into institutions and great changes took place in habits and customs, but the country never recovered the loss of its capital, and never regained its former prosperity. Commerce and industry dwindled away, and civilization abandoned those countries which for so long it had preferred to all others. They became insalubrious and sterile; the territory that had supported so many millions of men became nothing more than a desert. On the hill of Fort St. Michel wild horses cropped the coarse grass.

Days flowed by like water from the fountains, and the centuries passed like drops falling from the ends of stalactites. Hunters came to chase the bears upon the hills that covered the forgotten city; shepherds led their flocks upon them; labourers turned up the soil with their ploughs; gardeners cultivated their lettuces and grafted their pear trees. They were not rich, and they had no arts. The walls of their cabins were covered with old vines and roses, A goat-skin clothed their tanned limbs, while their wives dressed themselves with the wool that they themselves had spun. The goat-herds moulded little figures of men and animals out of clay, or sang songs about the young girl who follows her lover through woods or among the browsing goats while the pine trees whisper together and the water utters its murmuring sound. The master of the house grew angry with the beetles who devoured his figs; he planned snares to protect his fowls from the velvet-tailed fox, and he poured out wine for his neighbours saying:

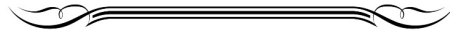
"Drink! The flies have not spoilt my vintage; the vines were dry before they came."

Then in the course of ages the wealth of the villages and the corn that filled the fields were pillaged by barbarian invaders. The country changed its masters several times. The conquerors built castles upon the hills; cultivation increased; mills, forges, tanneries, and looms were established; roads were opened through

the woods and over the marshes; the river was covered with boats. The hamlets became large villages and joining together formed a town which protected itself by deep trenches and lofty walls. Later, becoming the capital of a great State, it found itself straitened within its now useless ramparts and it converted them into grass-covered walks.

It grew very rich and large beyond measure. The houses were never high enough to satisfy the people; they kept on making them still higher and built them of thirty or forty storeys, with offices, shops, banks, societies one above another; they dug cellars and tunnels ever deeper downwards. Fifteen millions of men laboured in the giant town.

THE GODS ARE ATHIRST



Translated by Mrs. Wilfrid Jackson

The Gods are Athirst was first published in 1912 in France and has been translated with the aforementioned title in addition to *The Gods are Thirsty* and *The Gods Will Have Blood*. It is one of the author's better known works and remains a popular text today. Set during the French Revolution, the novel details the political rise of Evariste Gamelin during the Reign of Terror. He is a Jacobin painter that has achieved little success with his work, except for a canvas depicting the Greek characters Electra and Orestes. There is a striking similarity between the artist and his rendering of the handsome and tragic Orestes, which foretell interesting parallels between them as the story progresses. The artist determines to channel his political fervour into an attempt to make money by altering the Jacks, Queens and Kings on playing cards to the symbols of liberte, egalite, and fraternite. However, he is unable to convince the print seller Jean Blaise to buy his work, though he does encounter the seller's daughter Elodie, with whom he begins a romantic relationship. The novel then traces Evariste's increasing devotion to the Jacobin cause and his conversion into a bloodthirsty fanatic who is willing to murder his own family in the name of Revolution.

The former noble Maurice Brotteaux is an interesting counter-balance to Evariste; he displays an understanding and wisdom regarding the nature of the Terror and is able to discern the pleasure and power rendered from accusing, and then enacting violence upon others. He is a hedonist, who believes in the pursuit of pleasure and an atheist that happily shelters a priest from the Terror. Evariste contains many contradictions within his character: he is a loving son, a good and caring neighbour, a passionate devotee of the arts and someone that believes he is fighting for the future of France. However, Gamelin seems incapable of controlling his wild vengeful passions as the Terror overcomes him. Once he becomes a member of the Revolutionary Tribunal, he loses any sense of restraint or empathy and in a frenzy to deliver 'justice' becomes entirely unjust and cruel. France depicts the frightening manner in which events can spiral out of control and how an idealist can suddenly be prepared to send his friends and love ones to their deaths.

ANATOLE FRANCE

DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

LES

DIEUX ONT SOIF

PARIS

CALMANN-LÉVY, ÉDITEURS

3, RUE AUBER, 3

Title page from the first edition

CONTENTS

[I](#)
[II](#)
[III](#)
[IV](#)
[V](#)
[VI](#)
[VII](#)
[VIII](#)
[IX](#)
[X](#)
[XI](#)
[XII](#)
[XIII](#)
[XIV](#)
[XV](#)
[XVI](#)
[XVII](#)
[XVIII](#)
[XIX](#)
[XX](#)
[XXI](#)
[XXII](#)
[XXIII](#)
[XXIV](#)
[XXV](#)
[XXVI](#)
[XXVII](#)
[XXVIII](#)
[XXIX](#)

I

Evariste Gamelin, painter, pupil of David, member of the Section du Pont-Neuf, formerly Section Henri IV, had betaken himself at an early hour in the morning to the old church of the Barnabites, which for three years, since 21st May 1790, had served as meeting-place for the General Assembly of the Section. The church stood in a narrow, gloomy square, not far from the gates of the Palais de Justice. On the façade, which consisted of two of the Classical orders superimposed and was decorated with inverted brackets and flaming urns, blackened by the weather and disfigured by the hand of man, the religious emblems had been battered to pieces, while above the doorway had been inscribed in black letters the Republican catchword of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death." Évariste Gamelin made his way into the nave; the same vaults which had heard the surpliced clerks of the Congregation of St. Paul sing the divine offices, now looked down on red-capped patriots assembled to elect the Municipal magistrates and deliberate on the affairs of the Section. The Saints had been dragged from their niches and replaced by the busts of Brutus, Jean-Jacques and Le Peltier. The altar had been stripped bare and was surmounted by the Table of the Rights of Man.

It was here in the nave that twice a week, from five in the evening to eleven, were held the public assemblies. The pulpit, decorated with the colours of the Nation, served as tribune for the speakers who harangued the meeting. Opposite, on the Epistle side, rose a platform of rough planks, for the accommodation of the women and children, who attended these gatherings in considerable numbers.

On this particular morning, facing a desk planted underneath the pulpit, sat in red cap and *carmagnole* complete the joiner from the Place Thionville, the *citoyen* Dupont senior, one of the twelve forming the Committee of Surveillance. On the desk stood a bottle and glasses, an ink-horn, and a folio containing the text of the petition urging the Convention to expel from its bosom the twenty-two members deemed unworthy.

Évariste Gamelin took the pen and signed.

"I was sure," said the carpenter and magistrate, "I was sure you would come and give in your name, *citoyen* Gamelin. You are the real thing. But the Section is lukewarm; it is lacking in virtue. I have proposed to the Committee of Surveillance to deliver no certificate of citizenship to any one who has failed to sign the petition."

"I am ready to sign with my blood," said Gamelin, "for the proscription of these federalists, these traitors. They have desired the death of Marat: let them perish."

"What ruins us," replied Dupont senior, "is indifferentism. In a Section which contains nine hundred citizens with the right to vote there are not fifty attend the assembly. Yesterday we were eight and twenty."

"Well then," said Gamelin, "citizens must be obliged to come under penalty of a fine."

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the joiner frowning, "but if they all came, the patriots would be in a minority.... *Citoyen* Gamelin, will you drink a glass of wine to the health of all good sansculottes?..."

On the wall of the church, on the Gospel side, could be read the words, accompanied by a black hand, the forefinger pointing to the passage leading to the cloisters: "*Comité civil, Comité de surveillance, Comité de bienfaisance.*" A few yards further on, you came to the door of the erstwhile sacristy, over which was inscribed: *Comité militaire* .

Gamelin pushed this door open and found the Secretary of the Committee within; he was writing at a large table loaded with books, papers, steel ingots, cartridges and samples of saltpetre-bearing soils.

"Greeting, *citoyen* Trubert. How are you?"

"I?... I am perfectly well."

The Secretary of the Military Committee, Fortuné Trubert, invariably made this same reply to all who troubled about his health, less by way of informing them of his welfare than to cut short any discussion on the subject. At twenty-eight, he had a parched skin, thin hair, hectic cheeks and bent shoulders. He was an optician on the Quai des Orfèvres, and owned a very old house which he had given up in '91 to a superannuated clerk in order to devote his energies to the discharge of his municipal duties. His mother, a charming woman, whose memory a few old men of the neighbourhood still cherished fondly, had died at twenty; she had left him her fine eyes, full of gentleness and passion, her pallor and timidity. From his father, optician and mathematical instrument maker to the King, carried off by the same complaint before his thirtieth year, he inherited an upright character and an industrious temperament.

Without stopping his writing:

"And you, *citoyen* ," he asked, "how are you?"

"Very well. Anything new?"

"Nothing, nothing. You can see, — we are all quiet here."

"And the situation?"

“The situation is just the same.”

The situation was appalling. The finest army of the Republic blockaded in Mayence; Valenciennes besieged; Fontenay taken by the Vendéens; Lyons rebellious; the Cévennes in insurrection, the frontier open to the Spaniards; two-thirds of the Departments invaded or revolted; Paris helpless before the Austrian cannon, without money, without bread!

Fortuné Trubert wrote on calmly. The Sections being instructed by resolution of the Commune to carry out the levy of twelve thousand men for La Vendée, he was drawing up directions relating to the enrolment and arming of the contingent which the “Pont-Neuf,” erstwhile “Henri IV,” was to supply. All the muskets in store were to be handed over to the men requisitioned for the front; the National Guard of the Section would be armed with fowling-pieces and pikes.

“I have brought you here,” said Gamelin, “the schedule of the church-bells to be sent to the Luxembourg to be converted into cannon.”

Évariste Gamelin, albeit he had not a penny, was inscribed among the active members of the Section; the law accorded this privilege only to such citizens as were rich enough to pay a contribution equivalent in amount to three days’ work, and demanded a ten days’ contribution to qualify an elector for office. But the Section du Pont-Neuf, enamoured of equality and jealous of its independence, regarded as qualified both for the vote and for office every citizen who had paid out of his own pocket for his National Guard’s uniform. This was Gamelin’s case, who was an *active* citizen of his Section and member of the Military Committee.

Fortuné Trubert laid down his pen:

“*Citoyen* Évariste,” he said, “I beg you to go to the Convention and ask them to send us orders to dig up the floor of cellars, to wash the soil and flag-stones and collect the saltpetre. It is not everything to have guns, we must have gunpowder too.”

A little hunchback, a pen behind his ear and a bundle of papers in his hand, entered the erstwhile sacristy. It was the *citoyen* Beauvisage, of the Committee of Surveillance.

“*Citoyens* ,” he announced, “we have bad news: Custine has evacuated Landau.”

“Custine is a traitor!” cried Gamelin.

“He shall be guillotined,” said Beauvisage.

Trubert, in his rather breathless voice, expressed himself with his habitual calmness:

“The Convention has not instituted a Committee of Public Safety for fun. It will enquire into Custine’s conduct. Incompetent or traitor, he will be superseded by a General resolved to win the victory, — and *ça ira!* ”

He turned over a heap of papers, scrutinizing them with his tired eyes:

“That our soldiers may do their duty with a quiet mind and stout heart, they must be assured that the lot of those they leave behind at home is safeguarded. If you are of the same opinion, *citoyen* Gamelin, you will join me in demanding, at the next assembly, that the Committee of Benevolence concert measures with the Military Committee to succour the families that are in indigence and have a relative at the front.”

He smiled and hummed to himself: “*Ça ira! ça ira!...* ”

Working twelve and fourteen hours a day at his table of unpainted deal for the defence of the fatherland in peril, this humble Secretary of the Sectional Committee could see no disproportion between the immensity of the task and the meagreness of his means for performing it, so filled was he with a sense of the unity in a common effort between himself and all other patriots, so intimately did he feel himself one with the Nation at large, so merged was his individual life in the life of a great People. He was of the sort who combine enthusiasm with long-suffering, who, after each check, set about organizing the victory that is impossible, but is bound to come. And verily they *must* win the day. These men of no account, who had destroyed Royalty and upset the old order of things, this Trubert, a penniless optician, this Évariste Gamelin, an unknown dauber, could expect no mercy from their enemies. They had no choice save between victory and death. Hence both their fervour and their serenity.

II

Quitting the Barnabites, Évariste Gamelin set off in the direction of the Place Dauphine, now renamed the Place de Thionville in honour of a city that had shown itself impregnable.

Situated in the busiest quarter of Paris, the *Place* had long lost the fine stateliness it had worn a hundred years ago; the mansions forming its three sides, built in the days of Henri IV in one uniform style, of red brick with white stone dressings, to lodge splendour-loving magistrates, had had their imposing roofs of slate removed to make way for two or three wretched storeys of lath and plaster or had even been demolished altogether and replaced by shabby whitewashed houses, and now displayed only a series of irregular, poverty-stricken, squalid fronts, pierced with countless narrow, unevenly spaced windows enlivened with flowers in pots, birdcages, and rags hanging out to dry. These were occupied by a swarm of artisans, jewellers, metal-workers, clockmakers, opticians, printers, laundresses, sempstresses, milliners, and a few grey-beard lawyers who had not been swept away in the storm of revolution along with the King's courts.

It was morning and springtime. Golden sunbeams, intoxicating as new wine, played on the walls and flashed gaily in at garret casements. Every sash of every window was thrown open, showing the housewives' frowsy heads peeping out. The Clerk of the Revolutionary Tribunal, who had just left his house on his way to Court, distributed amicable taps on the cheeks of the children playing under the trees. From the Pont-Neuf came the crier's voice denouncing the treason of the infamous Dumouriez.

Évariste Gamelin lived in a house on the side towards the Quai de l'Horloge, a house that dated from Henri IV and would still have preserved a not unhandsome appearance but for a mean tiled attic that had been added on to heighten the building under the last but one of the *tyrants*. To adapt the lodging of some erstwhile dignitary of the *Parlement* to the exigencies of the bourgeois and artisan households that formed its present denizens, endless partitions and false floors had been run up. This was why the *citoyen* Remacle, concierge and jobbing tailor, perched in a sort of 'tween-decks, as low ceiled as it was confined in area. Here he could be seen through the glass door sitting cross-legged on his work-bench, his bowed back within an inch of the floor above, stitching away at a National Guard's uniform, while the *citoyenne* Remacle, whose cooking stove boasted no chimney but the well of the staircase, poisoned the other tenants with the fumes of her stew-pots and frying-pans, and their little

girl Joséphine, her face smudged with treacle and looking as pretty as an angel, played on the threshold with Mouton, the joiner's dog. The *citoyenne*, whose heart was as capacious as her ample bosom and broad back, was reputed to bestow her favours on her neighbour the *citoyen* Dupont senior, who was one of the twelve constituting the Committee of Surveillance. At any rate her husband had his strong suspicions, and from morning to night the house resounded with the racket of the alternate squabbles and reconciliations of the pair. The upper floors were occupied by the *citoyen* Chaperon, gold and silver-smith, who had his shop on the Quai de l'Horloge, by a health officer, an attorney, a goldbeater, and several employés at the Palais de Justice.

Évariste Gamelin climbed the old-fashioned staircase as far as the fourth and last storey, where he had his studio together with a bedroom for his mother. At this point ended the wooden stairs laid with tiles that took the place of the grand stairway of the more important floors. A ladder clamped to the wall led to a cock-loft, from which at that moment emerged a stout man with a handsome, florid, rosy-cheeked face, climbing painfully down with an enormous package clasped in his arms, yet humming gaily to himself: *J'ai perdu mon serviteur*.

Breaking off his song, he wished a polite good-day to Gamelin, who returned him a fraternal greeting and helped him down with his parcel, for which the old man thanked him.

"There," said he, shouldering his burden again, "you have a batch of dancing-dolls which I am going to deliver straight away to a toy-merchant in the Rue de la Loi. There is a whole tribe of them inside; I am their creator; they have received of me a perishable body, exempt from joys and sufferings. I have not given them the gift of thought, for I am a benevolent God."

It was the *citoyen* Brotteaux, once farmer of taxes and *ci-devant* noble; his father, having made a fortune in these transactions, had bought himself an office conferring a title on the possessor. In the good old times Maurice Brotteaux had called himself Monsieur des Ilettes and used to give elegant suppers which the fair Madame de Rochemaure, wife of a King's *procureur*, enlivened with her bright glances, — a finished gentlewoman whose loyal fidelity was never impugned so long as the Revolution left Maurice Brotteaux in possession of his offices and emoluments, his hôtel, his estates and his noble name. The Revolution swept them all away. He made his living by painting portraits under the archways of doors, making pancakes and fritters on the Quai de la Mégisserie, composing speeches for the representatives of the people and giving dancing lessons to the young *citoyennes*. At the present time, in his garret into which you climbed by a ladder and where a man could not stand upright,

Maurice Brotteaux, the proud owner of a glue-pot, a ball of twine, a box of water-colours and sundry clippings of paper, manufactured dancing-dolls which he sold to wholesale toy-dealers, who resold them to the pedlars who hawked them up and down the Champs-Élysées at the end of a pole, — glittering magnets to draw the little ones' eyes. Amidst the calamities of the State and the disaster that overwhelmed himself, he preserved an unruffled spirit, reading for the refreshment of his mind in his Lucretius, which he carried with him wherever he went in the gaping pocket of his plum-coloured surtout.

Évariste Gamelin pushed open the door of his lodging. It offered no resistance, for his poverty spared him any trouble about lock and key; when his mother from force of habit shot the bolt, he would tell her: "Why, what's the good? Folks don't steal spiders'-webs, — nor my pictures, neither." In his workroom were piled, under a thick layer of dust or with faces turned to the wall, the canvases of his student years, — when, as the fashion of the day was, he limned scenes of gallantry, depicting with a sleek, timorous brush emptied quivers and birds put to flight, risky pastimes and reveries of bliss, high-kilted goose-girls and shepherdesses with rose-wreathed bosoms.

But it was not a genre that suited his temperament. His cold treatment of such like scenes proved the painter's incurable purity of heart. Amateurs were right: Gamelin had no gifts as an erotic artist. Nowadays, though he was still short of thirty, these subjects struck him as dating from an immemorial antiquity. He saw in them the degradation wrought by Monarchy, the shameful effects of the corruption of Courts. He blamed himself for having practised so contemptible a style and prostituted his genius to the vile arts of slavery. Now, citizen of a free people, he occupied his hand with bold charcoal sketches of Liberties, Rights of Man, French Constitutions, Republican Virtues, the People as Hercules felling the Hydra of Tyranny, throwing into each and all his compositions all the fire of his patriotism. Alas! he could not make a living by it. The times were hard for artists. No doubt the fault did not lie with the Convention, which was hurling its armies against the kings gathered on every frontier, which, proud, unmoved, determined in the face of the coalesced powers of Europe, false and ruthless to itself, was rending its own bosom with its own hands, which was setting up terror as the order of the day, establishing for the punishment of plotters a pitiless tribunal to whose devouring maw it was soon to deliver up its own members; but which through it all, with calm and thoughtful brow, the patroness of science and friend of all things beautiful, was reforming the calendar, instituting technical schools, decreeing competitions in painting and sculpture, founding prizes to encourage artists, organizing annual exhibitions, opening the Museum of the Louvre, and, on the model of Athens and Rome, endowing with

a stately sublimity the celebration of National festivals and public obsequies. But French Art, once so widely appreciated in England, and Germany, in Russia, in Poland, now found every outlet to foreign lands closed. Amateurs of painting, dilettanti of the fine arts, great noblemen and financiers, were ruined, had emigrated or were in hiding. The men the Revolution had enriched, peasants who had bought up National properties, speculators, army-contractors, gamesters of the Palais-Royal, durst not at present show their wealth, and did not care a fig for pictures, either. It needed Regnault's fame or the youthful Gérard's cleverness to sell a canvas. Greuze, Fragonard, Houin were reduced to indigence. Prud'hon could barely earn bread for his wife and children by drawing subjects which Copia reproduced in stippled engravings. The patriot painters Hennequin, Wicar, Topino-Lebrun were starving. Gamelin, without means to meet the expenses of a picture, to hire a model or buy colours, abandoned his vast canvas of *The Tyrant pursued in the Infernal Regions by the Furies*, after barely sketching in the main outlines. It blocked up half the studio with its half-finished, threatening shapes, greater than life-size, and its vast brood of green snakes, each darting forth two sharp, forked tongues. In the foreground, to the left, could be discerned Charon in his boat, a haggard, wild-looking figure, — a powerful and well conceived design, but of the schools, schooly. There was far more of genius and less of artificiality in a canvas of smaller dimensions, also unfinished, that hung in the best lighted corner of the studio. It was an Orestes whom his sister Electra was raising in her arms on his bed of pain. The maiden was putting back with a moving tenderness the matted hair that hung over her brother's eyes. The head of the hero was tragic and fine, and you could see a likeness in it to the painter's own countenance.

Gamelin cast many a mournful look at this composition; sometimes his fingers itched with the craving to be at work on it, and his arms would be stretched longingly towards the boldly sketched figure of Electra, to fall back again helpless to his sides. The artist was burning with enthusiasm, his soul aspired to great achievements. But he had to exhaust his energy on pot-boilers which he executed indifferently, because he was bound to please the taste of the vulgar and also because he had no skill to impress trivial things with the seal of genius. He drew little allegorical compositions which his comrade Desmahis engraved cleverly enough in black or in colours and which were bought at a low figure by a print-dealer in the Rue Honoré, the *citoyen* Blaise. But the trade was going from bad to worse, declared Blaise, who for some time now had declined to purchase anything.

This time, however, made inventive by necessity, Gamelin had conceived a new and happy thought, as *he* at any rate believed, — an idea that was to make the print-seller's fortune, and the engraver's and his own to boot. This was a "patriotic" pack of cards, where for the kings and queens and knaves of the old style he meant to substitute figures of Genius, of Liberty, of Equality and the like. He had already sketched out all his designs, had finished several and was eager to pass on to Desmahis such as were in a state to be engraved. The one he deemed the most successful represented a soldier dressed in the three-cornered hat, blue coat with red facings, yellow breeches and black gaiters of the Volunteer, seated on a big drum, his feet on a pile of cannon-balls and his musket between his knees. It was the *citizen of hearts* replacing the *ci-devant* knave of hearts. For six months and more Gamelin had been drawing soldiers with never-failing gusto. He had sold some of these while the fit of martial enthusiasm lasted, while others hung on the walls of the room, and five or six, water-colours, colour-washes and chinks in two tints, lay about on the table and chairs. In the days of July, '92, when in every open space rose platforms for enrolling recruits, when all the taverns were gay with green leaves and resounded to the shouts of "Vive la Nation! freedom or death!" Gamelin could not cross the Pont-Neuf or pass the Hôtel de Ville without his heart beating high at sight of the beflagged marquee in which magistrates in tricolour scarves were inscribing the names of volunteers to the sound of the *Marseillaise*. But for him to join the Republic's armies would have meant leaving his mother to starve.

Heralded by a grievous sound of puffing and panting the old *citoyenne*, Gamelin's widowed mother, entered the studio, hot, red and out of breath, the National cockade hanging half unpinned in her cap and on the point of falling out. She deposited her basket on a chair and still standing, the better to get her breath, began to groan over the high price of victuals.

A shopkeeper's wife till the death of her husband, a cutler in the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Germain, at the sign of the Ville de Châtellerault, now reduced to poverty, the *citoyenne* Gamelin lived in seclusion, keeping house for her son the painter. He was the elder of her two children. As for her daughter Julie, at one time employed at a fashionable milliner's in the Rue Honoré, the best thing was not to know what had become of her, for it was ill saying the truth, that she had emigrated with an aristocrat.

"Lord God!" sighed the *citoyenne*, showing her son a loaf baked of heavy dun-coloured dough, "bread is too dear for anything; the more reason it should be made of pure wheat! At market neither eggs nor green-stuff nor cheese to be had. By dint of eating chestnuts, we're like to grow into chestnuts."

After a long pause, she began again:

“Why, I’ve seen women in the streets who had nothing to feed their little ones with. The distress is sore among poor folks. And it will go on the same till things are put back on a proper footing.”

“Mother,” broke in Gamelin with a frown, “the scarcity we suffer from is due to the unprincipled buyers and speculators who starve the people and connive with our foes over the border to render the Republic odious to the citizens and to destroy liberty. This comes of the Brissotins’ plots and the traitorous dealings of your Pétions and Rolands. It is well if the federalists in arms do not march on Paris and massacre the patriot remnant whom famine is too slow in killing! There is no time to lose; we must tax the price of flour and guillotine every man who speculates in the food of the people, foment insurrection or palters with the foreigner. The Convention has set up an extraordinary tribunal to try conspirators. Patriots form the court; but will its members have energy enough to defend the fatherland against our foes? There is hope in Robespierre; he is virtuous. There is hope above all in Marat. He loves the people, discerns its true interests and promotes them. He was ever the first to unmask traitors, to baffle plots. He is incorruptible and fearless. He, and he alone, can save the imperilled Republic.”

The *citoyenne* Gamelin shook her head, paying no heed to the cockade that fell out of her cap at the gesture.

“Have done, Évariste; your Marat is a man like another and no better than the rest. You are young and your head is full of fancies. What you say to-day of Marat, you said before of Mirabeau, of La Fayette, of Pétion, of Brissot.”

“Never!” cried Gamelin, who was genuinely oblivious.

After clearing one end of the deal table of the papers and books, brushes and chalks that littered it, the *citoyenne* laid out on it the earthenware soup-bowl, two tin porringers, two iron forks, the loaf of brown bread and a jug of thin wine.

Mother and son ate the soup in silence and finished their meal with a small scrap of bacon. The *citoyenne*, putting *her* titbit on her bread, used the point of her pocket knife to convey the pieces one by one slowly and solemnly to her toothless jaws and masticated with a proper reverence the victuals that had cost so dear.

She had left the best part on the dish for her son, who sat lost in a brown study.

“Eat, Évariste,” she repeated at regular intervals, “eat,” — and on her lips the word had all the solemnity of a religious commandment.

She began again with her lamentations on the dearness of provisions, and again Gamelin demanded taxation as the only remedy for these evils.

But she shrilled:

“There is no money left in the country. The *émigrés* have carried it all off with them. There is no confidence left either. Everything is desperate.”

“Hush, mother, hush!” protested Gamelin. “What matter our privations, our hardships of a moment? The Revolution will win for all time the happiness of the human race.”

The good dame sopped her bread in her wine; her mood grew more cheerful and she smiled as her thoughts returned to her young days, when she used to dance on the green in honour of the King’s birthday. She well remembered too the day when Joseph Gamelin, cutler by trade, had asked her hand in marriage. And she told over, detail by detail, how things had gone, — how her mother had bidden her: “Go dress. We are going to the Place de Grève, to Monsieur Bienassis’ shop, to see Damiens drawn and quartered,” and what difficulty they had to force their way through the press of eager spectators. Presently, in Monsieur Bienassis’ shop, she had seen Joseph Gamelin, wearing his fine rose-pink coat and had known in an instant what he would be at. All the time she sat at the window to see the regicide torn with red-hot pincers, drenched with molten lead, dragged at the tail of four horses and thrown into the flames, Joseph Gamelin had stood behind her chair and had never once left off complimenting her on her complexion, her hair and her figure.

She drained the last drop in her cup and continued her reminiscences of other days:

“I brought you into the world, Évariste, sooner than I had expected, by reason of a fright I had when I was big. It was on the Pont-Neuf, where I came near being knocked down by a crowd of sightseers hurrying to Monsieur de Lally’s execution. You were so little at your birth the surgeon thought you would not live. But I felt sure God would be gracious to me and preserve your life. I reared you to the best of my powers, grudging neither pains nor expense. It is fair to say, my Évariste, that you showed me you were grateful and that, from childhood up, you tried your best to recompense me for what I had done. You were naturally affectionate and tender-hearted. Your sister was not bad at heart; but she was selfish and of unbridled temper. Your compassion was greater than ever was hers for the unfortunate. When the little ragamuffins of the neighbourhood robbed birds’ nests in the trees, you always fought hard to rescue the nestlings from their hands and restore them to the mother, and many a time you did not give in till after you had been kicked and cuffed cruelly. At seven years of age, instead of wrangling with bad boys, you would pace soberly along the street saying over your catechism; and all the poor people you came across you insisted on bringing home with you to relieve their needs, till I was forced to

whip you to break you of the habit. You could not see a living creature suffer without tears. When you had done growing, you turned out a very handsome lad. To my great surprise, you appeared not to know it, — how different from most pretty boys, who are full of conceit and vain of their good looks!”

His old mother spoke the truth. Évariste at twenty had had a grave and charming cast of countenance, a beauty at once austere and feminine, the countenance of a Minerva. Now his sombre eyes and pale cheeks revealed a melancholy and passionate soul. But his gaze, when it fell on his mother, recovered for a brief moment its childish softness.

She went on:

“You might have profited by your advantages to run after the girls, but you preferred to stay with me in the shop, and I had sometimes to tell you not to hang on always to my apron-strings, but to go and amuse yourself with your young companions. To my dying day I shall always testify that you have been a good son, Évariste. After your father’s death, you bravely took me and provided for me; though your work barely pays you, you have never let me want for anything, and if we are at this moment destitute and miserable, I cannot blame you for it. The fault lies with the Revolution.”

He raised his hand to protest; but she only shrugged and continued:

“I am no aristocrat. I have seen the great in the full tide of their power, and I can bear witness that they abused their privileges. I have seen your father cudgelled by the Duc de Canaleilles’ lackeys because he did not make way quick enough for their master. I could never abide *the Austrian* — she was too haughty and too extravagant. As for the King, I thought him good-hearted, and it needed his trial and condemnation to alter my opinion. In fact, I do not regret the old régime, — though I have had some agreeable times under it. But never tell me the Revolution is going to establish equality, because men will never be equal; it is an impossibility, and, let them turn the country upside down to their heart’s content, there will still be great and small, fat and lean in it.”

As she talked, she was busy putting away the plates and dishes. The painter had left off listening. He was thinking out a design, — for a sansculotte, in red cap and *carmagnole*, who was to supersede the discredited knave of spades in his pack of cards.

There was a sound of scratching on the door, and a girl appeared, — a country wench, as broad as she was long, red-haired and bandy-legged, a wen hiding the left eye, the right so pale a blue it looked white, with monstrous thick lips and teeth protruding beyond them.

She asked Gamelin if he was Gamelin the painter and if he could do her a portrait of her betrothed, Ferrand (Jules), a volunteer serving with the Army of

the Ardennes.

Gamelin replied that he would be glad to execute the portrait on the gallant warrior's return.

But the girl insisted gently but firmly that it must be done at once.

The painter protested, smiling in spite of himself as he pointed out that he could do nothing without the original.

The poor creature was dumfounded; she had not foreseen the difficulty. Her head drooping over the left shoulder, her hands clasped in front of her, she stood still and silent as if overwhelmed by her disappointment. Touched and diverted by so much simplicity, and by way of distracting the poor, lovesick creature's grief, the painter handed her one of the soldiers he had drawn in water-colours and asked her if he was like that, her sweetheart in the Ardennes.

She bent her doleful look on the sketch, and little by little her eye brightened, sparkled, flashed, and her moon face beamed out in a radiant smile.

"It is his very likeness," she cried at last. "It is the very spit of Jules Ferrand, it is Jules Ferrand to the life."

Before it occurred to the artist to take the sheet of paper out of her hands, she folded it carefully with her coarse red fingers into a tiny square, slipped it over her heart between her stays and her shift, handed the painter an *assignat* for five livres, and wishing the company a very good day, hobbled light-heartedly to the door and so out of the room.

III

On the afternoon of the same day Évariste set out to see the *citoyen* Jean Blaise, printseller, as well as dealer in ornamental boxes, fancy goods and games of all sorts, in the Rue Honoré, opposite the Oratoire and near the office of the Messageries, at the sign of the *Amour peintre*. The shop was on the ground floor of a house sixty years old, and opened on the street by a vaulted arch the keystone of which bore a grotesque head with horns. The semicircle beneath the arch was occupied by an oil-painting representing “the Sicilian or Cupid the Painter,” after a composition by Boucher, which Jean Blaise’s father had put up in 1770 and which sun and rain had been doing their best to obliterate ever since. On either side of the door a similar arched opening, with a nymph’s head on the keystone arch glazed with the largest panes to be got, exhibited for the benefit of the public the prints in vogue at the time and the latest novelties in coloured engravings. To-day’s display included a series of scenes of gallantry by Boilly, treated in his graceful, rather stiff way, *Leçons d’amour conjugal*, *Douces résistances* and the like, which scandalized the Jacobins and which the rigid moralists denounced to the Society of Arts, Debucourt’s *Promenade publique*, with a dandy in canary-coloured breeches lounging on three chairs, a group of horses by the young Carle Vernet, pictures of air balloons, the *Bain de Virginie* and figures after the antique.

Amid the stream of citizens that flowed past the shop it was the raggedest figures that loitered longest before the two fascinating windows. Easily amused, delighting in pictures and bent on getting their share, if only through the eyes, of the good things of this world, they stood in open-mouthed admiration, whereas the aristocrats merely glanced in, frowned and passed on.

The instant he came within sight of the house, Évariste fixed his eyes on one of the row of windows above the shop, the one on the left hand, where there was a red carnation in a flower-pot behind a balcony of twisted ironwork. It was the window of Élodie’s chamber, Jean Blaise’s daughter. The print-dealer lived with his only child on the first floor of the house.

Évariste, after halting a moment as if to get his breath in front of the *Amour peintre*, turned the hasp of the shop-door. He found the *citoyenne* Élodie within; she had just sold a couple of engravings by Fragonard *fils* and Naigeon, carefully selected from a number of others, and before locking up the *assignats* received in payment in the strong-box, was holding them one after the other between her fine eyes and the light, to scrutinize the delicate lines and intricate curves of

engraving and the watermark. She was naturally suspicious, for as much forged paper was in circulation as true, which was a great hindrance to commerce. As in former days, in the case of such as copied the King's signature, forgers of the national currency were punished by death; yet plates for printing *assignats* were to be found in every cellar, the Swiss smuggled in counterfeits by the million, whole packets were put in circulation in the inns, the English landed bales of them every day on our coasts, to ruin the Republic's credit and bring good patriots to destitution. Élodie was in terror of accepting bad paper, and still more in terror of passing it and being treated as an accomplice of Pitt, though she had a firm belief in her own good luck and felt pretty sure of coming off best in any emergency.

Évariste looked at her with the sombre gaze that speaks more movingly of love than the most smiling face. She returned his gaze with a mocking curl of the lips and an arch gleam in the dark eyes, — an expression she wore because she knew he loved her and liked to know it and because such a look provokes a lover, makes him complain of ill-usage, brings him to the speaking point, if he has not spoken already, which was Évariste's case.

Before depositing the *assignats* in the strong-box, she produced from her work-basket a white scarf, which she had begun to embroider, and set to work on it. At once industrious and a coquette, she knew instinctively how to ply her needle so as to fascinate an admirer and make a pretty thing for her wearing at one and the same time; she had quite different ways of working according to the person watching her, — a nonchalant way for those she would lull into a gentle languor, a capricious way for those she was fain to see in a more or less despairing mood. For Évariste, she bent with an air of painstaking absorption over her scarf, for she wanted to stir a sentiment of serious affection in his heart.

Élodie was neither very young nor very pretty. She might have been deemed plain at the first glance. She was a brunette, with an olive complexion; under the broad white kerchief knotted carelessly about her head, from which the dark lustrous ringlets escaped, her eyes of fire gleamed as if they would burn their orbits. Her round face with its prominent cheek-bones, laughing lips and rather broad nose, that gave it a wild-wood, voluptuous expression, reminded the painter of the faun of the Borghese, a cast of which he had seen and been struck with admiration for its freakish charm. A faint down of moustache accentuated the curve of the full lips. A bosom that seemed big with love was confined by a crossed kerchief in the fashion of the year. Her supple waist, her active limbs, her whole vigorous body expressed in every movement a wild, delicious freedom. Every glance, every breath, every quiver of the warm flesh called for love and promised passion. There, behind the tradesman's counter, she seemed

rather a dancing nymph, a bacchante of the opera, stripped of her lynx skin and thyrsus, imprisoned, and travestied by a magician's spell under the modest trappings of a housewife by Chardin.

"My father is not at home," she told the painter; "wait a little, he will not be long."

In the small brown hands the needle travelled swiftly over the fine lawn.

"Is the pattern to your taste, Monsieur Gamelin?"

It was not in Gamelin's nature to pretend. And love, exaggerating his confidence, encouraged him to speak quite frankly.

"You embroider cleverly, *citoyenne* ; but, if I am to say what I think, the pattern you have traced is not simple enough or bold enough, and smacks of the affected taste that in France governed too long the ornamentation of dress and furniture and woodwork; all those rosettes and wreaths recall the pretty, finikin style that was in favour under the tyrant. There is a new birth of taste. Alas! we have much leeway to make up. In the days of the infamous Louis XV the art of decoration had something Chinese about it. They made pot-bellied cabinets with drawer handles grotesque in their contortions, good for nothing but to be thrown on the fire to warm good patriots. Simplicity alone is beautiful. We must hark back to the antique. David designs beds and chairs from the Etruscan vases and the wall-paintings of Herculaneum."

"Yes, I have seen those beds and chairs," said Élodie, "they are lovely. Soon we shall want no other sort. I am like you, I adore the antique."

"Well, then, *citoyenne* ," returned Évariste, "if you had limited your pattern to a Greek border, with ivy leaves, serpents or crossed arrows, it would have been worthy of a Spartan maiden ... and of you. But you can still keep this design by simplifying it, reducing it to the plain lines of beauty."

She asked her preceptor what should be picked out.

He bent over the work, and the girl's ringlets swept lightly over his cheek. Their hands met and their breaths mingled. For an instant Évariste tasted an ecstatic bliss, but to feel Élodie's lips so close to his own filled him with fear, and dreading to alarm her modesty, he drew back quickly.

The *citoyenne* Blaise was in love with Évariste Gamelin; she thought his great ardent eyes superb no less than the fine oval of his pale face, and his abundant black locks, parted above the brow and falling in showers about his shoulders; his gravity of demeanour, his cold reserve, his severe manner and uncompromising speech which never condescended to flattery, were equally to her liking. She was in love, and therefore believed him possessed of supreme artistic genius that would one day blossom forth in incomparable masterpieces and make his name world-famous, — and she loved him the better for the belief.

The *citoyenne* Blaise was no prude on the score of masculine purity and her scruples were not offended because a man should satisfy his passions and follow his own tastes and caprices; she loved Évariste, who was virtuous; she did not love him because he was virtuous, albeit she appreciated the advantage of his being so in that she had no cause for jealousy or suspicion or any fear of rivals in his affections.

Nevertheless, for the time being, she deemed his reserve a little overdone. If Racine's "Aricie," who loved "Hippolyte," admired the youthful hero's untameable virtue, it was with the hope of winning a victory over it, and she would quickly have bewailed a sternness of moral fibre that had refused to be softened for her sake. At the first opportunity she more than half declared her passion to constrain him to speak out himself. Like her prototype the tender-hearted "Aricie," the *citoyenne* Blaise was much inclined to think that in love the woman is bound to make the advances. "The fondest hearts," she told herself, "are the most fearful; they need help and encouragement. Besides, they are so simple a woman can go half way and even further without their even knowing it, if only she lets them fancy the credit is theirs of the bold attack and the glorious victory." What made her more confident of success was the fact that she knew for a certainty (and indeed there was no doubt about it) that Évariste, before ever the Revolution had made him a hero, had loved a mistress like any ordinary mortal, a very unheroic creature, no other than the *concierge* at the Academy of Painting. Élodie, who was a girl of some experience, quite realised that there are different sorts of love. The sentiment Évariste inspired in her heart was profound enough for her to dream of making him the partner of her life. She was very ready to marry him, but hardly expected her father would approve the union of his only daughter with a poor and unknown artist. Gamelin had nothing, while the printseller turned over large sums of money. The *Amour peintre* brought him in large profits, the share market larger still, and he was in partnership with an army contractor who supplied the cavalry of the Republic with rushes in place of hay and mildewed oats. In a word, the cutler's son of the Rue Saint-Dominique was a very insignificant personage beside the publisher of engravings, a man known throughout Europe, related to the Blaizots, Basans and Didots, and an honoured guest at the houses of the *citoyens* Saint-Pierre and Florian. Not that, as an obedient daughter should, she held her father's consent to be an indispensable preliminary to her settlement in life. The latter, early left a widower, and a man of a self-indulgent, volatile temper, as enterprising with women as he was in business, had never paid much heed to her and had left her to develop at her own sweet will, untrammelled whether by parental advice or

parental affection, more careful to ignore than to safeguard the girl's behaviour, whose passionate temperament he appreciated as a connoisseur of the sex and in whom he recognized charms far and away more seductive than a pretty face. Too generous-hearted to be circumspect, too clever to come to harm, cautious even in her caprices, passion had never made her forget the social proprieties. Her father was infinitely grateful for this prudent behaviour, and as she had inherited from him a good head for business and a taste for money-making, he never troubled himself as to the mysterious reasons that deterred a girl so eminently marriageable from entering that estate and kept her at home, where she was as good as a housekeeper and four clerks to him. At twenty-seven she felt old enough and experienced enough to manage her own concerns and had no need to ask the advice or consult the wishes of a father still a young man, and one of so easy-going and careless a temper. But for her to marry Gamelin, Monsieur Blaise must needs contrive a future for a son-in-law with such poor prospects, give him an interest in the business, guarantee him regular work as he did to several artists already — in fact, one way or another, provide him with a livelihood; and such a favour was out of the question, she considered, whether for the one to offer or the other to accept, so small was the bond of sympathy between the two men.

The difficulty troubled the girl's tender heart and wise brain. She saw nothing to alarm her in a secret union with her lover and in taking the author of nature for sole witness of their mutual troth. Her creed found nothing blameworthy in such a union, which the independence of her mode of life made possible and which Évariste's honourable and virtuous character gave her good hopes of forming without apprehension as to the result. But Gamelin was hard put to it to live and provide his old mother with the barest necessities, and it did not seem as though in so straitened an existence room could well be found for an amour even when reduced to the simplicity of nature. Moreover, Évariste had not yet spoken and declared his intentions, though certainly the *citoyenne* Blaise hoped to bring him to this before long.

She broke off her meditations, and the needle stopped at the same moment.

"*Citoyen* Évariste," she said, "I shall not care for the scarf, unless you like it too. Draw me a pattern, please. Meanwhile, I will copy Penelope and unravel what I have done in your absence."

He answered in a tone of sombre enthusiasm:

"I promise you I will, *citoyenne*. I will draw you the brand of the tyrannicide Harmodius, — a sword in a wreath," — and pulling out his pencil, he sketched in a design of swords and flowers in the sober, unadorned style he admired. And as he drew, he expounded his views of art:

“A regenerated People,” he declared, “must repudiate all the legacies of servitude, bad taste, bad outline, bad drawing. Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard worked for tyrants and for slaves. Their works show no feeling for good style or purity of line, no love of nature or truth. Masks, dolls, fripperies, monkey-tricks, — nothing else! Posterity will despise their frivolous productions. In a hundred years all Watteau’s pictures will be banished to the garrets and falling to pieces from neglect; in 1893 struggling painters will be daubing their studies over Boucher’s canvases. David has opened the way; he approaches the Antique, but he has not yet reached true simplicity, true grandeur, bare and unadorned. Our artists have many secrets still to learn from the friezes of Herculaneum, the Roman bas-reliefs, the Etruscan vases.”

He dilated at length on antique beauty, then came back to Fragonard, whom he abused with inexhaustible venom:

“Do you know him, *citoyenne* ?”

Élodie nodded.

“You likewise know good old Greuze, who is ridiculous enough, to be sure, with his scarlet coat and his sword. But he looks like a wise man of Greece beside Fragonard. I met him, a while ago, the miserable old man, trotting by under the arcades of the Palais-Égalité, powdered, genteel, sprightly, spruce, hideous. At sight of him, I longed that, failing Apollo, some sturdy friend of the arts might hang him up to a tree and flay him alive like Marsyas as an everlasting warning to bad painters.”

Élodie gave him a long look out of her dancing, wanton eyes.

“You know how to hate, Monsieur Gamelin, are we to conclude you know also how to lo...?”

“Is that you, Gamelin?” broke in a tenor voice; it was the *citoyen* Blaise just come back to his shop. He advanced, boots creaking, charms rattling, coat-skirts flying, an enormous black cocked hat on his head, the corners of which touched his shoulders.

Élodie, picking up her work-basket, retreated to her chamber.

“Well, Gamelin!” inquired the *citoyen* Blaise, “have you brought me anything new?”

“May be,” declared the painter, — and proceeded to expound his ideas.

“Our playing cards present a grievous and startling contrast with our present ways of thinking. The names of knave and king offend the ears of a patriot. I have designed and executed a reformed, Revolutionary pack in which for kings, queens, and knaves are substituted Liberties, Equalities, Fraternities; the aces in a border of fasces, are called Laws.... You call Liberty of clubs, Equality of spades, Fraternity of diamonds, Law of hearts. I venture to think my cards are

drawn with some spirit; I propose to have them engraved on copper by Desmahis, and to take out letters of patent."

So saying and extracting from his portfolio some finished designs in water-colour, the artist handed them to the printseller.

The *citoyen* Blaise declined to take them, and turning away:

"My lad," he sneered, "take 'em to the Convention; they will perhaps accord you a vote of thanks. But never think to make a *sol* by your new invention which is not new at all. You're a day behind the fair. Your Revolutionary pack of cards is the third I've had brought me. Your comrade Dugourc offered me last week a picquet set with four Geniuses of the People, four Liberties, four Equalities. Another was suggested, with Sages and Heroes, Cato, Rousseau, Hannibal, — I don't know what all!... And these cards had the advantage over yours, my friend, in being coarsely drawn and cut on wood blocks — with a penknife. How little you know the world to dream that players will use cards designed in the taste of David and engraved à la Bartolozzi! And then again, what a strange mistake to think it needs all this to-do to suit the old packs to the new ideas. Out of their own heads, the good sansculottes can find a corrective for what offends them, saying, instead of 'king' — 'The Tyrant!' or just 'The fat pig!' They go on using the same old filthy cards and never buy new ones. The great market for playing-cards is the gaming-hells of the Palais-Égalité; well, I advise you to go there and offer the croupiers and punters there your Liberties, your Equalities, your ... what d'ye call 'em?... Laws of hearts ... and come back and tell me what sort of a reception they gave you!"

The *citoyen* Blaise sat down on the counter, filliped away sundry grains of snuff from his nankeen breeches and looking at Gamelin with an air of gentle pity:

"Let me give you a bit of advice, *citoyen* ; if you want to make your living, drop your patriotic packs of cards, leave your revolutionary symbols alone, have done with your Hercules, your hydras, your Furies pursuing guilt, your Geniuses of Liberty, and paint me pretty girls. The people's ardour for regeneration grows lukewarm with time, but men will always love women. Paint me women, all pink and white, with little feet and tiny hands. And get this into your thick skull that nobody cares a fig about the Revolution or wants to hear another word about it."

But Évariste drew himself up in indignant protest:

"What! not hear another word of the Revolution!... But, why surely, the restoration of liberty, the victories of our armies, the chastisement of tyrants are events that will startle the most remote posterity. How could we not be struck by

such portents?... What! the sect of the *sansculotte* Jesus has lasted well-nigh eighteen centuries, and the religion of Liberty is to be abolished after barely four years of existence!”

But Jean Blaise resumed in a tone of superiority:

“You walk in a dream; *I* see life as it is. Believe me, friend, the Revolution is a bore; it lasts over long. Five years of enthusiasm, five years of fraternal embraces, of massacres, of fine speeches, of *Marseillaises*, of tocsins, of ‘hang up the aristocrats,’ of heads promenaded on pikes, of women mounted astride of cannon, of trees of Liberty crowned with the red cap, of white-robed maidens and old men drawn about the streets in flower-wreathed cars; of imprisonments and guillotinings, of proclamations, and short commons, of cockades and plumes, swords and *carmagnoles* — it grows tedious! And then folk are beginning to lose the hang of it all. We have gone through too much, we have seen too many of the great men and noble patriots whom you have led in triumph to the Capitol only to hurl them afterwards from the Tarpeian rock, — Necker, Mirabeau, La Fayette, Bailly, Pétion, Manuel, and how many others! How can we be sure you are not preparing the same fate for your new heroes?... Men have lost all count.”

“Their names, *citoyen* Blaise; name them, these heroes we are making ready to sacrifice!” cried Gamelin in a tone that recalled the print-dealer to a sense of prudence.

“I am a Republican and a patriot,” he replied, clapping his hand on his heart. “I am as good a Republican as you, as ardent a patriot as you, *citoyen* Gamelin. I do not suspect your zeal nor accuse you of any backsliding. But remember that my zeal and my devotion to the State are attested by numerous acts. Here you have my principles: I give my confidence to every individual competent to serve the Nation. Before the men whom the general voice elects to the perilous honour of the Legislative office, such as Marat, such as Robespierre, I bow my head; I am ready to support them to the measure of my poor ability and offer them the humble co-operation of a good citizen. The Committees can bear witness to my ardour and self-sacrifice. In conjunction with true patriots, I have furnished oats and fodder to our gallant cavalry, boots for our soldiers. This very day I am despatching from Vernon a convoy of sixty oxen to the Army of the South through a country infested with brigands and patrolled by the emissaries of Pitt and Condé. I do not talk; I act.”

Gamelin calmly put back his sketches in his portfolio, the strings of which he tied and then slipped it under his arm.

“It is a strange contradiction,” he said through his clenched teeth, “to see men help our soldiers to carry through the world the liberty they betray in their own homes by sowing discontent and alarm in the soul of its defenders.... Greeting and farewell, *citoyen* Blaise.”

Before turning down the alley that runs alongside the Oratoire, Gamelin, his heart big with love and anger, wheeled round for a last look at the red carnations blossoming on a certain window-sill.

He did not despair; the fatherland would yet be saved. Against Jean Blaise’s unpatriotic speeches he set his faith in the Revolution. Still he was bound to recognize that the tradesman had some show of reason when he asserted that the people of Paris had lost its old interest in public events. Alas! it was but too manifest that to the enthusiasm of the early days had little by little succeeded a widespread indifference, that never again would be seen the mighty crowds, unanimous in their ardour, of ‘89, never again the millions, one in heart and soul, that in ‘90 thronged round the altar of the *fédérés*. Well, good citizens must show double zeal and courage, must rouse the people from its apathy, bidding it choose between liberty and death.

Such were Gamelin’s thoughts, and the memory of Élodie was a spur to his confidence.

Coming to the Quais, he saw the sun setting in the distant west behind lowering clouds that were like mountains of glowing lava; the roofs of the city were bathed in a golden light; the windows flashed back a thousand dazzling reflections. And Gamelin pictured the Titans forging out of the molten fragments of by-gone worlds Diké, the city of brass.

Not having a morsel of bread for his mother or himself, he was dreaming of a place at the limitless board that should have all the world for guests and welcome regenerated humanity to the feast. Meantime, he tried to persuade himself that the fatherland, as a good mother should, would feed her faithful child. Shutting his mind against the gibes of the printseller, he forced himself to believe that his notion of a Revolutionary pack of cards was a novel one and a good one, and that with these happily conceived sketches of his he held a fortune in the portfolio under his arm. “Desmahis,” he told himself, “shall engrave them. We will publish for ourselves the new patriotic toy and we are sure to sell ten thousand packs in a month, at twenty *sols* apiece.”

In his impatience to realize the project, he strode off at once for the Quai de la Ferraille, where Desmahis lived over a glazier’s shop.

The entrance was through the shop. The glazier’s wife informed Gamelin that the *citoyen* Desmahis was not in, a fact that in no wise surprised the painter, who

knew his friend was of a vagabond and dissipated humour and who marvelled that a man could engrave so much and so well as he did while showing so little perseverance. Gamelin made up his mind to wait a while for his return and the woman offered him a chair. She was in a black mood and began to grumble at the badness of trade, though she had always been told that the Revolution, by breaking windows, was making the glaziers' fortunes.

Night was falling; so abandoning his idea of waiting for his comrade, Gamelin took his leave of his hostess of the moment. As he was crossing the Pont-Neuf, he saw a detachment of National Guards debouch from the Quai des Morfondus. They were mounted and carried torches. They were driving back the crowd, and amid a mighty clatter of sabres escorting a cart driving slowly on its way to the guillotine with a man whose name no one knew, a *ci-devant* noble, the first prisoner condemned by the newly constituted Revolutionary Tribunal. He could be seen by glimpses between the guardsmen's hats, sitting with hands tied behind his back, his head bared and swaying from side to side, his face to the cart's tail. The headsman stood beside him lolling against the rail. The passers-by had stopped to look and were telling each other it was likely one of the fellows who starved the people, and staring with eyes of indifference. Gamelin, coming closer, caught sight of Desmahis among the spectators; he was struggling to push a way through the press and cut across the line of march. He called out to him and clapped a hand on his shoulder, — and Desmahis turned his head. He was a young man with a handsome face and a stalwart person. In former days, at the Academy, they used to say he had the head of Bacchus on the torso of Hercules. His friends nicknamed him "Barbaroux" because of his likeness to that representative of the people.

"Come here," Gamelin said to him, "I have something of importance to say to you, Desmahis."

"Leave me alone," the latter answered peevishly, muttering some half-heard explanation, looking out as he spoke for a chance of darting across:

"I was following a divine creature, in a straw hat, a milliner's wench, with her flaxen hair down her back; that cursed cart has blocked my way.... She has gone on ahead, she is at the other end of the bridge by now!"

Gamelin endeavoured to hold him back by his coat skirts, swearing his business was urgent.

But Desmahis had already slipped away between horses, guards, swords and torches, and was in hot pursuit of the milliner's girl.

IV

It was ten o'clock in the forenoon. The April sun bathed the tender leafage of the trees in light. A storm had cleared the air during the night and it was deliciously fresh and sweet. At long intervals a horseman passing along the Allée des Veuves broke the silence and solitude. On the outskirts of the shady avenue, over against a rustic cottage known as *La Belle Lilloise*, Évariste sat on a wooden bench waiting for Élodie. Since the day their fingers had met over the embroidery and their breaths had mingled, he had never been back to the *Amour peintre*. For a whole week his proud stoicism and his timidity, which grew more extreme every day, had kept him away from Élodie. He had written her a letter conceived in a key of gravity, at once sombre and ardent, in which, explaining the grievance he had against the *citoyen* Blaise, but saying no word of his love and concealing his chagrin, he announced his intention of never returning to her father's shop, and was now showing greater steadfastness in keeping this resolution than a woman in love was quite likely to approve.

A born fighter whose bent was to defend her property under all circumstances, Élodie instantly turned her mind to the task of winning back her lover. At first she thought of going to see him at the studio in the Place de Thionville. But knowing his touchy temper and judging from his letter that he was sick and sore, she feared he might come to regard daughter and father with the same angry displeasure and make a point of never seeing her again; so she deemed it wiser to invite him to a sentimental, romantic rendezvous which he could not well decline, where she would have ample time to cajole and charm him and where solitude would be her ally to fascinate his senses and overcome his scruples.

At this period, in all the English gardens and all the fashionable promenades, rustic cottages were to be found, built by clever architects, whose aim it was to flatter the taste of the city folk for a country life. The *Belle Lilloise* was occupied as a house of light refreshment; its exterior bore a look of poverty that was part of the *mise en scène* and it stood on the fragments, artistically imitated, of a fallen tower, so as to unite with the charm of rusticity the melancholy appeal of a ruined castle. Moreover, as though a peasant's cot and a shattered donjon were not enough to stir the sensibilities of his customers, the owner had raised a tomb beneath a weeping-willow, — a column surmounted by a funeral urn and bearing the inscription: "Cléonice to her faithful Azor." Rustic cots, ruined keeps, imitation tombs, — on the eve of being swept away, the aristocracy had

erected in its ancestral parks these symbols of poverty, of decadence and of death. And now the patriot citizen found his delight in drinking, dancing, making love in sham hovels, under the broken vaults, a sham in their very ruin, of sham cloisters and surrounded by a sham graveyard; for was not he too, like his betters, a lover of nature, a disciple of Jean-Jacques? was not his heart stuffed as full as theirs with sensibility and the philosophy of humanity?

Reaching the rendezvous before the appointed time, Évariste waited, measuring the minutes by the beating of his heart as by the pendulum of a clock. A patrol passed, guarding a convoy of prisoners. Ten minutes after a woman dressed all in pink, carrying a bouquet as the fashion was, escorted by a gentleman in a three-cornered hat, red coat, striped waistcoat and breeches, slipped into the cottage, both so very like the gallants and dames of the ancien régime one was bound to think with the *citoyen* Blaise that mankind possesses characteristics Revolutions cannot change.

A few minutes later, coming from Rueil or Saint-Cloud, an old woman carrying a cylindrical box, painted in brilliant colours, arrived and sat down beside Gamelin, on his bench. She put down her box in front of her, and he saw that the lid had a turning needle fixed on it; the poor woman's trade was to hold a lottery in the public gardens for the children to try their luck at. She also dealt in "ladies' pleasures," an old-fashioned sweetmeat which she sold under a new name; whether because the time-honoured title of "forget-me-nots" called up inappropriate ideas of unhappiness and retribution or that folks had just got tired of it in course of time, "forget-me-nots" were now yclept "ladies' pleasures."

The old dame wiped the sweat from her forehead with a corner of her apron and broke out into railings against heaven, upbraiding God for injustice when he made life so hard for his creatures. Her husband kept a tavern on the river-bank at Saint-Cloud, while she came in every day to the Champs Élysées, sounding her rattle and crying: "*Ladies' pleasures*, come buy, come buy!" And with all this toil the old couple could not scrape enough together to end their days in comfort.

Seeing the young man beside her disposed to commiserate with her, she expounded at great length the origin of her misfortunes. It was all the Republic; by robbing the rich, it was taking the bread out of poor people's mouths. And there was no hoping for a better state of affairs. Things would only go from bad to worse, — she knew that from many tokens. At Nanterre a woman had had a baby born with a serpent's head; the lightning had struck the church at Rueil and melted the cross on the steeple; a were-wolf had been seen in the woods of Chaville. Masked men were poisoning the springs and throwing plague powders in the air to cause diseases....

Évariste saw Élodie spring from a carriage and run forward. The girl's eyes flashed in the clear shadow cast by her straw hat; her lips, as red as the carnations she held in her hand, were wreathed in smiles. A scarf of black silk, crossed over the bosom, was knotted behind the back. Her yellow gown displayed the quick movements of the knees and showed a pair of low-heeled shoes below the hem. The hips were almost entirely unconfined; the Revolution had enfranchised the waists of its *citoyennes*. For all that, the skirts, still puffed out below the loins, marked the curves by exaggerating them and veiled the reality beneath an artificial amplitude of outline.

He tried to speak but could not find his voice, and was chagrined at his failure, which Élodie preferred to the most eloquent greeting. She noticed also and looked upon it as a good omen, that he had tied his cravat with more than usual pains.

She gave him her hand.

"I wanted to see you," she began, "and talk to you. I did not answer your letter; I did not like it and I did not think it worthy of you. It would have been more to my taste if it had been more outspoken. It would be to malign your character and common sense to suppose you do not mean to return to the *Amour peintre* because you had a trifling altercation there about politics with a man many years your senior. Rest assured you have no cause to fear my father will receive you ill whenever you come to see us again. You do not know him; he has forgotten both what he said to you and what you said in reply. I do not say there is any great bond of sympathy between you two; but he bears no malice; I tell you frankly he pays no great heed to you ... nor to me. He thinks only of his own affairs and his own pleasures."

She stepped towards the shrubberies surrounding the *Belle Lilloise*, and he followed her with something of repugnance, knowing it to be the trysting-place of mercenary lovers and amours of a day. She selected the table furthest out of sight.

"How many things I have to tell you, Évariste. Friendship has its rights; you do not forbid me to exercise them? I have much to say about you ... and something about myself, if you will let me."

The landlord having brought a carafe of lemonade, she filled their glasses herself with the air of a careful housewife; then she began to tell him about her childhood, described her mother's beauty, which she loved to dilate upon both as a tribute to the latter's memory and as the source of her own good looks, and boasted of her grandparents' sturdy vigour, for she was proud of her bourgeois blood. She related how at sixteen she had lost this mother she adored and had

entered on a life without anyone to love or rely upon. She painted herself as she was, a vehement, passionate nature, full of sensibility and courage, and concluded:

“Oh, Évariste, my girlhood was so sad and lonely I cannot but know what a prize is a heart like yours, and I will not surrender, I give you fair warning, of my own free will and without an effort to retain it, a sympathy on which I trusted I might count and which I held dear.”

Évariste gazed at her tenderly.

“Can it be, Élodie, that I am not indifferent to you? Can I really think...?”

He broke off, fearing to say too much and thereby betray so trusting a friendliness.

She gave him a little confiding hand that half-peeped out of the long narrow sleeve with its lace frillings. Her bosom rose and fell in long-drawn sighs.

“Credit me, Évariste, with all the sentiments you would have me feel for you, and you will not be mistaken in the dispositions of my heart.”

“Élodie, Élodie, you say that? will you still say it when you know ...” — he hesitated.

She dropped her eyes; and he finished the sentence in a whisper:

“... when you know I love you?”

As she heard the declaration, she blushed, — with pleasure. Yet, while her eyes still spoke of a tender ecstasy, a quizzical smile flickered in spite of herself about one corner of her lips. She was thinking:

“And he imagines he proposed first!... and he is afraid perhaps of offending me!...”

Then she said to him fondly:

“So you had never seen, dear heart, that I loved you?”

They seemed to themselves to be alone, the only two beings in the universe. In his exaltation, Évariste raised his eyes to the firmament flashing with blue and gold:

“See, the sky is looking down at us! It is benign; it is adorable, as you are, beloved; it has your brightness, your gentleness, your smile.”

He felt himself one with all nature, it formed part and parcel of his joy and triumph. To his eyes, it was to celebrate his betrothal that the chestnut blossoms lit their flaming candles, the poplars burned aloft like giant torches.

He exulted in his strength and stature. She, with her softer as well as finer nature, more pliable and more malleable, rejoiced in her very weakness and, his subjection once secured, instantly bowed to his ascendancy; now she had brought him under her slavery, she acknowledged him for the master, the hero, the god, burned to obey, to admire, to offer her homage. In the shade of the

shrubbery he gave her a long, ardent kiss, which she received with head thrown back and, clasped in Évariste's arms, felt all her flesh melt like wax.

They went on talking a long time of themselves, forgetful of the universe. Évariste abounded mainly in vague, high thoughts, which filled Élodie with ecstasy. She spoke sweetly of things of practical utility and personal interest. Then, presently, when she felt she could stay no longer, she rose with a decided air, gave her lover the three red carnations from the flower in her balcony and sprang lightly into the cabriolet in which she had driven there. It was a hired carriage, painted yellow, hung on very high wheels and certainly had nothing out of the common about it, or the coachman either. But Gamelin was not in the habit of hiring carriages and his friends were hardly more used to such an indulgence. To see the great wheels whirling her away gave him a strange pang and a painful presentiment assailed him; by a sort of hallucination of the mind, the hack horse seemed to be carrying Élodie away from him beyond the bounds of the actual world and present time towards a city of wealth and pleasure, towards abodes of luxury and enjoyment, which he would never be able to enter.

The carriage disappeared. Évariste recovered his calm by degrees; but a dull anguish remained and he felt that the hours of tender abandonment he had just lived would never be his again.

He returned by the Champs Élysées, where women in light summer dresses were sitting on wooden chairs, talking or sewing, while their children played under the trees. A woman selling "ladies' pleasures," — *her* box was shaped like a drum — reminded him of the one he had spoken to in the Allée des Veuves, and it seemed as if a whole epoch of his life had elapsed between the two encounters. He crossed the Place de la Révolution. In the Tuileries gardens he caught the distant roar of a host of men, a sound of many voices shouting in accord, so familiar in those great days of popular enthusiasm which the enemies of the Revolution declared would never dawn again. He quickened his pace as the noise grew louder and louder, reached the Rue Honoré and found it thronged with a crowd of men and women yelling: "Vive la République! Vive la Liberté!" The walls of the gardens, the windows, the balconies, the very roofs were black with lookers-on waving hats and handkerchiefs. Preceded by a sapper, who cleared a way for the procession, surrounded by Municipal Officers, National Guards, gunners, gendarmes, huzzars, advanced slowly, high above the backs of the citizens, a man of a bilious complexion, a wreath of oak-leaves about his brow, his body wrapped in an old green surtout with an ermine collar. The women threw him flowers, while he cast about him the piercing glance of his jaundiced eyes, as though, in this enthusiastic multitude he was still searching out enemies of the people to denounce, traitors to punish. As he went by,

Gamelin bent his head and joining his voice to a hundred thousand others, shouted his:

“Vive Marat!”

The triumphant hero entered the Hall of the Convention like Fate personified. While the crowd slowly dispersed Gamelin sat on a stone post in the Rue Honoré and pressed his hand over his heart to check its wild beating. What he had seen filled him with high emotion and burning enthusiasm.

He loved and worshipped Marat, who, sick and fevered, his veins on fire, eaten up by ulcers, was wearing out the last remnants of his strength in the service of the Republic, and in his own poor house, closed to no man, welcomed him with open arms, conversed eagerly with him of public affairs, questioned him sometimes on the machinations of evil-doers. He rejoiced that the enemies of *the Just*, conspiring for his ruin, had prepared his triumph; he blessed the Revolutionary Tribunal, which acquitting the Friend of the People had given back to the Convention the most zealous and most immaculate of its legislators. Again his eyes could see the head racked with fever, garlanded with the civic crown, the features instinct with virtuous pride and pitiless love, the worn, ravaged, powerful face, the close-pressed lips, the broad chest, the strong man dying by inches who, raised aloft in the living chariot of his triumph, seemed to exhort his fellow-citizens: “Be ye like me, — patriots to the death!”

The street was empty, darkening with the shadows of approaching night; the lamplighter went by with his cresset, and Gamelin muttered to himself:

“Yes, to the death!”

V

By nine in the morning Évariste reached the gardens of the Luxembourg, to find Élodie already there seated on a bench waiting for him.

It was a month ago they had exchanged their vows and since then they had seen each other every day, either at the *Amour peintre* or at the studio in the Place de Thionville. Their meetings had been very tender, but at the same time characterized by a certain reserve that checked their expansiveness, — a reserve due to the staid and virtuous temper of the lover, a theist and a good citizen, who, while ready to make his beloved mistress his own before the law or with God alone for witness according as circumstances demanded, would do nothing save publicly and in the light of day. Élodie knew the resolution to be right and honourable; but, despairing of a marriage that seemed impossible from every point of view and loath to outrage the prejudices of society, she contemplated in her inmost heart a liaison that could be kept a secret till the lapse of time gave it sanction. She hoped one day to overcome the scruples of a lover she could have wished less scrupulous, and meantime, unwilling to postpone some necessary confidences as to the past, she had asked him to meet her for a lover's talk in a lonely corner of the gardens near the Carthusian Priory.

She threw him a tender look, took his hand frankly, invited him to share the bench and speaking slowly and thoughtfully:

“I esteem you too well, Évariste, to hide anything from you. I believe myself worthy of you; I should not be so were I not to tell you everything. Hear me and be my judge. I have no act to reproach myself with that is degrading or base, or even merely selfish. I have only been weak and credulous.... Do not forget, dear Évariste, the difficult circumstances in which I found myself. You know how it was with me; I had lost my mother, my father, still a young man, thought only of his own amusement and neglected me. I had a feeling heart, nature has dowered me with a loving temper and a generous soul; it was true she had not denied me a firm will and a sound judgment, but in those days what ruled my conduct was passion, not reason. Alas! it would be the same again to-day, if the two were not in harmony; I should be driven to give myself to you, beloved, heart and soul, and for ever!”

She expressed herself in firm, well-balanced phrases. She had well thought over what she would say, having long ago made up her mind to this confession for several reasons — because she was naturally candid, because she found

pleasure in following Rousseau's example, and because, as she told herself reasonably enough:

"One day Évariste must fathom a secret which is known to others as well as myself. A frank avowal is best. It is unforced and therefore to my credit, and only tells him what some time or other he would discover to my shame."

Soft-hearted as she was and amenable to nature's promptings, she did not feel herself to be very much to blame, and this made her confession the easier; besides which, she had no intention of telling more than was absolutely requisite.

"Ah!" she sighed, "why did I not know you, Évariste, in the days when I was alone and forsaken?"

Gamelin had taken her request quite literally when Élodie asked him to be her judge. Primed at once by nature and the education of books for the exercise of domestic justice, he sat ready to receive Élodie's admissions.

As she still hesitated, he motioned to her to proceed. Then she began speaking very simply:

"A young man, who with many defects of character combined some good qualities, and only showed the latter, found me to his taste and courted me with a perseverance that was surprising in such a case; he was in the flower of his youth, full of charm and the idol of a bevy of charming women who made no attempt to hide their adoration. It was not his good looks nor even his brilliance that appealed to me.... He touched my heart by the tokens of true love he gave me, and I do think he loved me truly. He was tender, impassioned. I asked no pledge save of his heart, and alas! his heart was fickle.... I blame no one but myself; it is my confession I am making, not his. I lay nothing to his charge, for indeed he is become a stranger to me. Ah! believe me, Évariste, I swear it, he is no more to me than if he had never existed."

She had finished, but Gamelin vouchsafed no answer. He folded his arms, a steadfast, sombre look settling in his eyes. His mistress and his sister Julie were running together in his thoughts. Julie too had hearkened to a lover; but, unlike, altogether unlike, he thought, the unhappy Élodie, *she* had let him have his will and carry her off, not misled by the promptings of a tender heart, but to enjoy, far from her home and friends, the sweets of luxury and pleasure. He was a stern moralist; he had condemned his sister and he was half inclined to condemn his mistress.

Élodie resumed in a very pleading voice:

"I was full of Jean-Jacques' philosophy; I believed men were naturally honest and honourable. My misfortune was to have encountered a lover who was not formed in the school of nature and natural morality, and whom social prejudice, ambition, self-love, a false point of honour had made selfish and treacherous."

The words produced the effect she had calculated on. Gamelin's eyes softened. He asked:

"Who was your seducer? Is he a man I know?"

"You do not know him."

"Tell me his name."

She had foreseen the question and was firmly resolved not to answer it.

She gave her reasons:

"Spare me, I beseech you. For your peace of mind as for my own, I have already said too much."

Then, as he still pressed her:

"In the sacred name of our love, I refuse to tell you anything to give you a definite notion of this stranger. I will not give your jealousy a shape to feed on; I will not bring a harassing shadow between you and me. I have not forgotten the man's name, but I will never let you know it."

Gamelin insisted on knowing the name of the seducer, — that was the word he employed all through, for he felt no doubt Élodie had been seduced, cajoled, trifled with. He could not so much as conceive any other possibility, — that she had obeyed an overmastering desire, an irresistible craving, listened to the tempter's voice in the shape of her own flesh and blood; he could not find it credible that the fair victim, a creature of hot passion and a fond heart, had offered herself a willing sacrifice; to satisfy his ideal, she must needs have been overborne by force or fraud, constrained by sheer violence, caught in snares spread about her steps on every side. He questioned her in guarded terms, but with a close, searching, embarrassing persistency. He asked her how the liaison began, if it was long or short, tranquil or troubled, under what circumstances it was broken off. And his enquiries came back again and again to the means the fellow had used to cajole her, as if these must surely have been extraordinary and unheard of. But all his cross-examination was in vain. She kept her own counsel with a gentle, deprecatory obstinacy, her lips tightly pressed together and tears welling in her eyes.

Presently, however, Évariste having asked where the man was now, she told him:

"He has left the Kingdom — France, I mean," she corrected herself in an instant.

"An *émigré* !" ejaculated Gamelin.

She looked at him, speechless, at once reassured and disheartened to see him create in his own mind a truth in accordance with his political passions and of his own motion give his jealousy a Jacobin complexion.

In actual fact Élodie's lover was a little lawyer's clerk, a very pretty lad, half Adonis, half guttersnipe, whom she had adored and the thought of whom, though three years had gone by since, still thrilled her nerves. Rich old women were his particular game, and he deserted Élodie for a woman of the world of a certain age who could and did recompense his merits. Having, after the abolition of offices, attained a post in the Mairie of Paris, he was now a *sansculotte* dragoon and the hanger-on of a *ci-devant* Countess.

"A noble! an *émigré* !" muttered Gamelin, whom she took good care not to undeceive, never having been desirous he should know the whole truth. "And he deserted you like a dastard?"

She nodded in answer. He clasped her to his heart:

"Dear victim of the vile corruption of monarchies, my love shall avenge his villainy! Heaven grant, I may meet the scoundrel! I shall not fail to know him!"

She turned away, at one and the same time saddened and smiling, — and disappointed. She would fain have had him wiser in the lore of love, with more of the natural man about him, more perhaps even of the brute. She felt he forgave so readily only because his imagination was cold and the secret she had revealed awoke in him none of the mental pictures that torture sensuous natures, — in a word, that he saw her seduction solely under a moral and social aspect.

They had risen, and while they walked up and down the shady avenues of the gardens, he informed her that he only esteemed her the more because she had suffered wrong, Élodie entertained no such high claims; however, take him as he was, she loved him, and admired the brilliant artistic genius she divined in him.

As they left the Luxembourg, they came upon crowds thronging the Rue de l'Égalité and the whole neighbourhood of the Théâtre de la Nation. There was nothing to surprise them in this; for several days great excitement had prevailed in the most patriotic Sections; denunciations were rife against the Orleans faction and the Brissotin plotters, who were conspiring, it was said, to bring about the ruin of Paris and the massacre of good Republicans. Gamelin himself a short time back had signed a petition from the Commune demanding the expulsion of the Twenty-one.

Just before passing under the arcade, joining the theatre to the neighbouring house, they had to find their way through a group of citizens *en carmagnole* who were listening to a harangue from a young soldier mounted on the top of the gallery. He looked as beautiful as the Eros of Praxiteles in his helmet of panther-skin. This fascinating warrior was charging the People's Friend with indolence:

"Marat, you are asleep," he was crying, "and the federalists are forging fetters to bind us."

Hardly had Élodie cast eyes on the orator before she turned rapidly to Évariste and begged him to get her away. The crowd, she declared, frightened her and she was afraid of fainting in the crush.

They parted in the Place de la Nation, swearing an oath of eternal fidelity.

That same morning early the *citoyen* Brotteaux had made the *citoyenne* Gamelin the magnificent present of a capon. It would have been an act of indiscretion for him to mention how he had come by it; as a fact, he had it of a *Dame de la Halle* at the Pointe Eustache for whom he sometimes acted as amanuensis, and as everybody knows, these “Ladies of the Market” cherished Royalist sympathies and were in correspondence with the *émigrés*. The *citoyenne* Gamelin had received the gift with heartfelt gratitude. Such dainties were scarce ever seen then; victuals grew dearer every day. The people feared a famine; the aristocrats, they said, wished it, and the “corner” makers were at work to bring it about.

The *citoyen* Brotteaux, being invited to eat his share of the capon at the midday dinner, appeared in due course and congratulated his hostess on the rich aroma of cooking that assailed his nostrils. Indeed a noble smell of rich, savoury broth filled the painter’s studio.

“You are very obliging, sir,” replied the good dame. “To prepare the digestion for your capon, I have made a vegetable soup with a slice of fat bacon and a big beef bone. There’s nothing like a marrowbone, sir, to give soup a flavour.”

“The maxim does you honour, *citoyenne*,” returned the old man. “And you will be doing wisely to put back again to-morrow and the day after, all the week, in fact, to put back again, I say, this precious bone in the pot, which it will continue to flavour. The wise woman of Panzoust always did so; she used to make a soup of green cabbages with a rind of rusty bacon and an old *savorados*. That is what in her country, which is also mine, they call the medullary bone, the most tasty and most succulent of all bones.”

“This lady you speak of, sir,” remarked the *citoyenne* Gamelin, “was she not rather a saving soul, to make the same bone serve so many times over?”

“Oh! she lived in a small way,” explained Brotteaux, “she was poor, albeit a prophetess.”

At that moment, Évariste Gamelin returned, agitated by the confession he had heard and determined to know who was Élodie’s betrayer, to avenge at one and the same time the Republic’s wrong and his own on the miscreant.

After the usual greetings had been exchanged, the *citoyen* Brotteaux resumed the thread of his discourse:

“It is seldom those who make a trade of foretelling the future grow rich. Their impostures are too soon found out and their trickery renders them odious. But indeed we should be bound to detest them much worse if they prophesied truly. A man’s life would be intolerable if he knew what is to befall him. He would be aware of calamities to come and suffer their pains in advance, while he would get no joy of present blessings whose end he would foresee. Ignorance is a necessary condition of human happiness, and it must be owned that in most cases we fulfil it well. We know almost nothing about ourselves; absolutely nothing about our neighbours. Ignorance constitutes our peace of mind; self-deception our felicity.”

The *citoyenne* Gamelin set the soup on the table, said the Benedicite and seated her son and her guest at the board. She stood up herself to eat, declining the chair the *citoyen* Brotteaux offered her beside him; she said she knew what good manners required of a woman.

VI

Ten o'clock in the forenoon. Not a breath of wind. It was the hottest July ever known. In the narrow Rue de Jérusalem a hundred or so citizens of the Section were waiting in queue at the baker's door, under the eye of four National Guards who stood at ease smoking their pipes.

The National Convention had decreed the *maximum*, — and instantly corn and flour had disappeared. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, the Parisians had to rise before daybreak if they wished to eat. The crowd was lined up, men, women and children tightly packed together, under a sky of molten lead. The heat beat down on the rotting foulness of the kennels and exaggerated the stench of unwashed, sweating humanity. All were pushing, abusing their neighbours, exchanging looks fraught with every sort of emotion one human being can feel for another, — dislike, disgust, interest, attraction, indifference. Painful experience had taught them there was not bread enough for everybody; so the late comers were always trying to push forward, while those who lost ground complained bitterly and indignantly and vainly claimed their rights. Women shoved and elbowed savagely to keep their place or squeeze into a better. When the press grew too intolerable, cries rose of "Stop pushing there!" while each and all protested they could not help it — it was someone else pushing them.

To obviate these daily scenes of disorder, the officials appointed by the Section had conceived the notion of fastening a rope to the shop-door which each applicant held in his proper order; but hands at such close quarters *would* come in contact on the rope and a struggle would result. Whoever lost hold could never recover it, while the disappointed and the mischievously inclined sometimes cut the cord. In the end the plan had to be abandoned.

On this occasion there was the usual suffocation and confusion. While some swore they were dying, others indulged in jokes or loose remarks; all abused the aristocrats and federalists, authors of all the misery. When a dog ran by, wags hailed the beast as Pitt. More than once a loud slap showed that some *citoyenne* in the line had resented with a vigorous hand the insolence of a lewd admirer, while, pressed close against her neighbour, a young servant girl, with eyes half shut and mouth half open, stood sighing in a sort of trance. At any word, or gesture, or attitude of a sort to provoke the sportive humour of the coarse-minded populace, a knot of young libertines would strike up the *Ça-ira* in chorus, regardless of the protests of an old Jacobin, highly indignant to see a

dirty meaning attached to a refrain expressive of the Republican faith in a future of justice and happiness.

His ladder under his arm, a billsticker appeared to post up on a blank wall facing the baker's a proclamation by the Commune apportioning the rations of butcher's-meat. Passers-by halted to read the notice, still sticky with paste. A cabbage vendor going by, basket on back, began calling out in her loud cracked voice:

"They'm all gone, the purty oxen! best rake up the guts!"

Suddenly such an appalling stench of putrefaction rose from a sewer near by that several people were turned sick; a woman was taken ill and handed over in a fainting condition to a couple of National Guards, who carried her off to a pump a few yards away. All held their noses, and fell to growling and grumbling, exchanging conjectures each more ghastly and alarming than the last. What was it? a dead animal buried thereabouts, a dead fish, perhaps, put in for mischief's sake, or more likely a victim of the September massacres, some noble or priest, left to rot in a cellar.

"They buried them in cellars, eh?"

"They got rid of 'em anywhere and anyhow."

"It will be one of the Châtelet prisoners. On the 2nd I saw three hundred in a heap on the Port au Change."

The Parisians dreaded the vengeance of these aristocrats who were like to poison them with their dead bodies.

Évariste Gamelin joined the line; he was resolved to spare his old mother the fatigues of the long wait. His neighbour, the *citoyen* Brotteaux, went with him, calm and smiling, his Lucretius in the baggy pocket of his plum-coloured coat.

The good old fellow enjoyed the scene, calling it a bit of low life worthy the brush of a modern Teniers.

"These street-porters and goodwives," he declared, "are more amusing than the Greeks and Romans our painters are so fond of nowadays. For my part, I have always admired the Flemish style."

One fact he was too sensible and tactful to mention — that he had himself owned a gallery of Dutch masters rivalled only by Monsieur de Choiseul's in the number and excellence of the examples.

"Nothing is beautiful save the Antique," returned the painter, "and what is inspired by it. Still, I grant you these low-life scenes by Teniers, Jan Steen or Ostade are better stuff than the frills and furbelows of Watteau, Boucher, or Van Loo; humanity is shown in an ugly light, but it is not degraded as it is by a Baudouin or a Fragonard."

A hawker went by bawling:

“Bulletin of the Revolutionary Tribunal! ... list of the condemned!”

“One Revolutionary Tribunal is not enough,” said Gamelin, “there should be one in every town ... in every town, do I say? — nay, in every village, in every hamlet. Fathers of families, citizens, one and all, should constitute themselves judges. At a time when the enemy’s cannon is at her gates and the assassin’s dagger at her throat, the Nation must hold mercy to be parricide. What! Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux in insurrection, Corsica in revolt, La Vendée on fire, Mayence and Valenciennes in the hands of the Coalition, treason in the country, town and camp, treason sitting on the very benches of the National Convention, treason assisting, map in hand, at the council board of our Commanders in the field!... The fatherland is in danger — and the guillotine must save her!”

“I have no objection on principle to make to the guillotine,” replied Brotteaux. “Nature, my only mistress and my only instructress, certainly offers me no suggestion to the effect that a man’s life is of any value; on the contrary, she teaches in all kinds of ways that it is of none. The sole end and object of living beings seems to be to serve as food for other beings destined to the same end. Murder is of natural right; therefore, the penalty of death is lawful, on condition it is exercised from no motives either of virtue or of justice, but by necessity or to gain some profit thereby. However, I must have perverse instincts, for I sicken to see blood flow, and this defect of character all my philosophy has failed so far to correct.”

“Republicans,” answered Évariste, “are humane and full of feeling. It is only despots hold the death penalty to be a necessary attribute of authority. The sovereign people will do away with it one day. Robespierre fought against it, and all good patriots were with him; the law abolishing it cannot be too soon promulgated. But it will not have to be applied till the last foe of the Republic has perished beneath the sword of law and order.”

Gamelin and Brotteaux had by this time a number of late comers behind them and amongst these several women of the Section, including a stalwart, handsome *tricoteuse*, in head-kerchief and sabots, wearing a sword in a shoulder belt, a pretty girl with a mop of golden hair and a very tumbled neckerchief, and a young mother, pale and thin, giving the breast to a sickly infant.

The child, which could get no milk, was screaming, but its voice was weak and stifled by its sobs. Pitifully small, with a pallid, unhealthy skin and inflamed eyes, the mother gazed at it with mingled anxiety and grief.

“He is very young,” observed Gamelin, turning to look at the unhappy infant groaning just at his back, half stifled amid the crowd of new arrivals.

“He is six months, poor love!... His father is with the army; he is one of the men who drove back the Austrians at Condé. His name is Dumonteil (Michel), a

draper's assistant by trade. He enlisted at a booth they had established in front of the Hôtel de Ville. Poor lad, he was all for defending his country and seeing the world.... He writes telling me to be patient. But pray, how am I to feed Paul (he's called Paul, you know) when I can't feed myself?"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the pretty girl with the flaxen hair, "we've got another hour before us yet, and to-night we shall have to repeat the same ceremony over again at the grocer's. You risk your life to get three eggs and a quarter of a pound of butter."

"Butter!" sighed the *citoyenne* Dumonteil, "why, it's three months since I've seen a scrap!"

And a chorus of female voices rose, bewailing the scarcity and dearness of provisions, cursing the *émigrés* and devoting to the guillotine the Commissaries of Sections who were ready to give good-for-nothing minxes, in return for unmentionable services, fat hens and four-pound loaves. Alarming stories passed round of cattle drowned in the Seine, sacks of flour emptied in the sewers, loaves of bread thrown into the latrines.... It was all those Royalists, and Rolandists, and Brissotins, who were starving the people, bent on exterminating every living thing in Paris!

All of a sudden the pretty, fair-haired girl with the rumpled neckerchief broke into shrieks as if her petticoats were afire. She was shaking these violently and turning out her pockets, vociferating that somebody had stolen her purse.

At news of the petty theft, a flood of indignation swept over this crowd of poor folks, the same who had sacked the mansions of the Faubourg Saint-Germain and invaded the Tuileries without appropriating the smallest thing, artisans and housewives, who would have burned down the Palace of Versailles with a light heart, but would have thought it a dire disgrace if they had stolen the value of a pin. The young rakes greeted the pretty girl's loss with some ribald jokes, that were immediately drowned under a burst of public indignation. There was some talk of instant execution — hanging the thief to the nearest lamp-post, and an investigation was begun, where everyone spoke at once and nobody would listen to a word of reason. The tall *tricoteuse*, pointing her finger at an old man, strongly suspected of being an unfrocked monk, swore it was the "Capuchin" yonder who was the cut-purse. The crowd believed her without further evidence and raised a shout of "Death! death!"

The old man so unexpectedly exposed to the public vengeance was standing very quietly and soberly just in front of the *citoyen* Brotteaux. He had all the look, there was no denying it, of a *ci-devant* cleric. His aspect was venerable, though the face was changed and drawn by the terrors the poor man had suffered

from the violence of the crowd and the recollection of the September days that were still vivid in his imagination. The fear depicted on his features stirred the suspicion of the populace, which is always ready to believe that only the guilty dread its judgments, as if the haste and recklessness with which it pronounces them were not enough to terrify even the most innocent.

Brotteaux had made it a standing rule never to go against the popular feeling of the moment, above all when it was manifestly illogical and cruel, "because in that case," he would say, "the voice of the people was the voice of God." But Brotteaux proved himself untrue to his principles; he asseverated that the old man, whether he was a Capuchin or not, could not have robbed the *citoyenne*, having never gone near her for one moment.

The crowd drew its own conclusion, — the individual who spoke up for the thief was of course his accomplice, and stern measures were proposed to deal with the two malefactors, and when Gamelin offered to guarantee Brotteaux' honesty, the wisest heads suggested sending *him* along with the two others to the Sectional headquarters.

But the pretty girl gave a cry of delight; she had found her purse again. The statement was received with a storm of hisses, and she was threatened with a public whipping, — like a Nun.

"Sir," said the ex-monk, addressing Brotteaux, "I thank you for having spoken in my defence. My name is of no concern, but I had better tell you what it is; I am called Louis de Longuemare. I am in truth a Regular; but not a Capuchin, as those women would have it. There is the widest difference; I am a monk of the Order of the Barnabites, which has given Doctors and Saints without number to the Church. It is only a half-truth to refer its origin to St. Charles Borromeo; we must account as the true founder the Apostle St. Paul, whose cipher it bears on its arms. I have been compelled to quit my cloister, now headquarters of the Section du Pont-Neuf, and adopt a secular habit.

"Nay, Father," said Brotteaux, scrutinizing Monsieur de Longuemare's frock, "your dress is token enough that you have not forsworn your profession; to look at it, one might think you had reformed your Order rather than forsaken it. It is your good heart makes you expose yourself in these austere habiliments to the insults of a godless populace."

"Yet I cannot very well," replied the ex-monk, "wear a blue coat, like a roisterer at a dance!"

"What I mention, Father, about your dress is by way of paying homage to your character and putting you on your guard against the risks you run."

"On the contrary, sir, it would be much better to inspirit me to confess my faith. For indeed, I am only too prone to fear danger. I have abandoned my habit,

sir, which is a sort of apostasy; I would fain not have deserted, had it been possible, the House where God granted me for so many years the grace of a peaceable and retired life. I got leave to stay there, and I still continued to occupy my cell, while they turned the church and cloister into a sort of petty *hôtel de ville* they called the Section. I saw, sir, I saw them hack away the emblems of the Holy Verity; I saw the name of the Apostle Paul replaced by a convicted felon's cap. Sometimes I was actually present at the confabulations of the Section, where I heard amazing errors propounded. At last I quitted this place of profanation and went to live on the pension of a hundred pistoles allowed me by the Assembly in a stable that stood empty, the horses having been requisitioned for the service of the armies. There I sing Mass for a few of the faithful, who come to the office to bear witness to the eternity of the Church of Jesus Christ."

"For my part, Father," replied the other, "if you care to know my name, I am called Brotteaux, and I was a publican in former days."

"Sir," returned the Père Longuemare, "I was aware by St. Matthew's example that one may look for good counsel from a publican."

"Father, you are too obliging."

"*Citoyen* Brotteaux," remarked Gamelin, "pray admire the virtues of the people, more hungry for justice than for bread; consider how everyone here is ready to lose his place to chastise the thief. These men and women, victims of such poverty and privation, are of so stern a probity they cannot tolerate a dishonest act."

"It must indeed be owned," replied Brotteaux, "that in their hearty desire to hang the pilferer, these folks were like to do a mischief to this good cleric, to his champion and to his champion's champion. Their avarice itself and their selfish eagerness to safeguard their own welfare were motives enough; the thief in attacking one of them threatened all; self-preservation urged them to punish him.... At the same time, it is like enough the most part of these workmen and goodwives are honest and keep their hands off other folk's goods. From the cradle these sentiments have been instilled in them by their father and mother, who have whipped them well and soundly and inculcated the virtues through their backside."

Gamelin did not conceal the fact from his old neighbour that he deemed such language unworthy of a philosopher.

"Virtue," said he, "is natural to mankind; God has planted the seed of it in the heart of mortals."

Old Brotteaux was a sceptic and found in his atheism an abundant source of self-satisfaction.

“I see this much, *citoyen* Gamelin, that, while a Revolutionary for what is of this world, you are, where Heaven is concerned, of a conservative, or even a reactionary temper. Robespierre and Marat are the same to you. For me, I find it strange that Frenchmen, who will not put up with a mortal king any longer, insist on retaining an immortal tyrant, far more despotic and ferocious. For what is the Bastille, or even the *Chambre Ardente* beside Hellfire? Humanity models its gods on its tyrants, and you, who reject the original, preserve the copy!”

“Oh! *citoyen*!” protested Gamelin, “are you not ashamed to hold such language? how can you confound the dark divinities born of ignorance and fear with the Author of Nature? Belief in a benevolent God is necessary for morality. The Supreme Being is the source of all the virtues and a man cannot be a Republican if he does not believe in God. Robespierre knew this, who, as we all remember, had the bust of the philosopher Helvétius removed from the Hall of the Jacobins, because he had taught Frenchmen the lessons of slavery by preaching atheism.... I hope, at least, *citoyen* Brotteaux, that, as soon as the Republic has established the worship of Reason, you will not refuse your adhesion to so wise a religion!”

“I love reason, but I am no fanatic in my love,” was Brotteaux’s answer. “Reason is our guide and beacon-light; but when you have made a divinity of it, it will blind you and instigate you to crime,” — and he proceeded to develop his thesis, standing both feet in the kennel, as he had once been used to perorate, seated in one of Baron d’Holbach’s gilt armchairs, which, as he was fond of saying, formed the basis of natural philosophy.

“Jean Jacques Rousseau,” he proceeded, “who was not without talents, particularly in music, was a scampish fellow who professed to derive his morality from Nature while all the time he got it from the dogmas of Calvin. Nature teaches us to devour each other and gives us the example of all the crimes and all the vices which the social state corrects or conceals. We should love virtue; but it is well to know that this is simply and solely a convenient expedient invented by men in order to live comfortably together. What we call morality is merely a desperate enterprise, a forlorn hope, on the part of our fellow creatures to reverse the order of the universe, which is strife and murder, the blind interplay of hostile forces. She destroys herself, and the more I think of things, the more convinced I am that the universe is mad. Theologians and philosophers, who make God the author of Nature and the architect of the universe, show Him to us as illogical and ill-conditioned. They declare Him benevolent, because they are afraid of Him, but they are forced to admit that His acts are atrocious. They attribute a malignity to him seldom to be found even in

mankind. And that is how they get human beings to adore Him. For our miserable race would never lavish worship on just and benevolent deities from which they would have nothing to fear; they would feel only a barren gratitude for their benefits. Without purgatory and hell, your good God would be a mighty poor creature.”

“Sir,” said the Père Longuemare, “do not talk of Nature; you do not know what Nature is.”

“Egad, I know it as well as you do, Father.”

“You cannot know it, because you have not religion, and religion alone teaches us what Nature is, wherein it is good, and how it has been made evil. However, you must not expect me to answer you; God has vouchsafed me, to refute your errors, neither eloquence nor force of intellect. I should only be afraid, by my inadequate replies, of giving you occasion to blaspheme and further reasons for hardening your heart. I feel a strong desire to help you; yet the sole fruit of my importunate efforts would be to...”

The discussion was cut short by a tremendous shout coming from the head of the column to warn the whole regiment of famished citizens that the baker was opening his doors. The line began to push forward, but very, very slowly. A National Guard on duty admitted the purchasers one by one. The baker, his wife and boy presided over the sale, assisted by two Civil Commissaries. These, wearing a tricoloured riband round the left arm, saw that the customers belonged to the Section and were given their proper share in proportion to the number of mouths to be filled.

The *citoyen* Brotteaux made the quest of pleasure the one and only aim of life, holding that the reason and the senses, the sole judges when gods there were none, were unable to conceive any other. Accordingly, finding the painter’s remarks somewhat overfull of fanaticism, and the Monk’s of simplicity, to please his taste, this wise man, bent on squaring his behaviour with his views and relieving the tedium of waiting, drew from the bulging pocket of his plum-coloured coat his Lucretius, now as always his chiefest solace and faithful comforter. The binding of red morocco was chafed by hard wear, and the *citoyen* Brotteaux had judiciously erased the coat of arms that once embellished it, — three islets or, which his father the financier had bought for good money down. He opened the book at the passage where the poet philosopher, who is for curing men of the futile and mischievous passion of love, surprises a woman in the arms of her serving-women in a state bound to offend all a lover’s susceptibilities. The *citoyen* Brotteaux read the lines, though not without casting a surreptitious glance at the golden pate of the pretty girl in front of him and enjoying a sniff of the heady perfume of the little slut’s hot skin. The poet

Lucretius was a wise man, but he had only one string to his bow; his disciple Brotteaux had several.

So he read on, taking two steps forward every quarter of an hour. His ear, soothed by the grave and cadenced numbers of the Latin Muse, was deaf to the women's scolding about the monstrous prices of bread and sugar and coffee, candles and soap. In this calm and unruffled mood he reached the threshold of the bakehouse. Behind him, Évariste Gamelin could see over his head the gilt cornsheaf surmounting the iron grating that filled the fanlight over the door.

When his turn came to enter the shop, he found the hampers and lockers already emptied; the baker handed him the only scrap of bread left, which did not weigh two pounds. Évariste paid his money, and the gate was slammed on his heels, for fear of a riot and the people carrying the place by storm.

But there was no need to fear; these poor folks, trained to obedience alike by their old-time oppressors and by their liberators of to-day, slunk off with drooping heads and dragging feet.

As he reached the corner of the street, Gamelin caught sight of the *citoyenne* Dumonteil, seated on a stone post, her nursling in her arms. She sat there quite still; her face was colourless and her tearless eyes seemed to see nothing. The infant was sucking her finger voraciously. Gamelin stood a while in front of her, abashed and uncertain what to do. She did not appear to see him.

He stammered something, then pulled out his pocket-knife, a clasp-knife with a horn handle, cut his loaf in two and laid half on the young mother's knee. She looked up at him in wonder; but he had already turned the corner of the street.

On reaching home, Évariste found his mother sitting at the window darning stockings. With a light laugh he put his half of the bread in her hand.

"You must forgive me, mother dear; I was tired out with standing about and exhausted by the heat, and out in the street there as I trudged home, mouthful by mouthful I have gobbled up half of our allowance. There's barely your share left," — and as he spoke, he made a pretence of shaking the crumbs off his jacket.

VII

Employing a very old-fashioned locution, the *citoyenne* Gamelin had declared: “that by dint of eating chestnuts they would be turning into chestnuts.” As a matter of fact, on that day, the 13th July, she and her son had made their midday dinner on a basin of chestnut porridge. As they were finishing this austere repast, a lady pushed open the door and the room was flooded in an instant with the splendour of her presence and the fragrance of her perfumes. Évariste recognised the *citoyenne* Rochemaure. Thinking she had mistaken the door and meant her visit for the *citoyen* Brotteaux, her friend of other days, he was already preparing to point her out the *ci-devant* aristocrat’s garret or perhaps summon Brotteaux and so spare an elegant woman the task of scrambling up a mill-ladder; but she made it clear at once that the *citoyen* Évariste Gamelin and no other was the person she had come to see by announcing that she was happy to find him at home and was his servant to command.

They were not entirely strangers to each other, having met more than once in David’s studio, in a box at the Assembly Hall, at the Jacobins, at Venua’s restaurant. On these occasions she had been struck by his good looks and youth and interesting air.

Wearing a hat beribboned like a fairing and plumed like the head-piece of a Representative on mission, the *citoyenne* Rochemaure was wigged, painted, patched and scented. But her complexion was young and fresh behind all these disguises; these extravagant artificialities of fashion only betokened a frantic haste to enjoy life and the feverishness of these dreadful days when the morrow was so uncertain. Her corsage, with wide facings and enormous basques and all ablaze with huge steel buttons, was blood-red, and it was hard to tell, so aristocratic and so revolutionary at one and the same time was her array, whether it was the colours of the victims or of the headsman that she sported. A young officer, a dragoon, accompanied her.

Dandling her long cane by its handle of mother-o’-pearl, a tall, fine woman, of generous proportions and ample bosom, she made the circuit of the studio, and putting up to her grey eyes her double quizzing-glasses of gold, examined the painter’s canvases with many smiles and exclamations of delight, admiring the handsome artist and flattering him in hopes of a return in kind.

“What,” asked the *citoyenne*, “is that picture — it is so nobly conceived, so touching — of a gentle, beautiful woman standing by a young man lying sick?”

Gamelin told her it was meant to represent *Orestes tended by his sister Electra*, and that, had he been able to finish it, it might perhaps have been the least unsatisfactory of his works.

“The subject,” he went on to say, “is taken from the *Orestes* of Euripides. I had read, in a translation of this tragedy made years ago, a scene that filled me with admiration, — the one where the young Electra, raising her brother on his bed of pain, wipes away the froth that gathers on his lips, puts aside the locks that blind his eyes and beseeches the brother she loves to hearken to what she will tell him while the Furies are at peace for the moment.... As I read and re-read this translation, I seemed to be aware of a kind of fog that shrouded the forms of Greek perfection, a fog I could not drive away. I pictured the original text to myself as more nervous and pitched in a different accent. Feeling a keen desire to get a precise idea of the thing, I went to Monsieur Gail, who was the Professor of Greek at the Collège de France (this was in ‘91), and begged him to expound the scene to me word by word. He did what I asked, and I then saw that the Ancients are much more simple and homely than people think. Thus, for instance, Electra says to Orestes: ‘Dear brother, what joy it gave me to see thee sleep! Shall I help thee to rise?’ And Orestes answers: ‘Yes, help me, take me in thy arms, and wipe away the spume that still clings about my mouth and eyes. Put thy bosom against mine and part from my brow my tangled hair, for it blinds my eyes....’ My mind still full of this poetry, so young and vivid, ringing with these simple, strong phrases, I sketched the picture you see there, *citoyenne*.”

The painter, who, as a rule, spoke so sparingly of his works, waxed eloquent on the subject of this one. At an encouraging gesture from the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, who lifted her quizzing-glasses in token of attention, he continued:

“Hennequin has depicted the madness of Orestes in masterly fashion. But Orestes appeals to us still more poignantly in his sorrow than when he is distraught. What a fate was his! It was filial piety, obedience to a sacred obligation, drove him to commit his dreadful deed, — a sin the gods cannot but pardon, but which men will never condone. To avenge outraged justice, he has repudiated Nature, has made himself a monster, has torn out his own heart. But his spirit remains unbroken under the weight of his horrible, yet innocent crime.... That is what I would fain have exhibited in my group of brother and sister.” He stepped up to the canvas and looked at it not without satisfaction.

“Parts of the picture,” he said, “are pretty nearly finished; the head and arm of Orestes, for instance.”

“It is an admirable composition.... And Orestes reminds me of you, *citoyen* Gamelin.”

“You think he is like me?” exclaimed the painter, with a grave smile.

She took the chair Gamelin offered her. The young dragoon stood beside her, his hand on the back of the chair on which she sat. Which showed plainly that the Revolution was an accomplished fact, for under the ancien régime, no man would ever, in company, have touched so much as with the tip of a finger, the seat occupied by a lady. In those days a gentleman was trained and broken in to the laws of politeness, sometimes pretty hard laws, and taught to understand that a scrupulous self-restraint in public places gives a peculiar zest to the sweet familiarity of the boudoir, and that to lose your respectful awe of a woman, you must first have that feeling.

Louise Masché de Rochemaure, daughter of a Lieutenant of the King’s Hunt, widow of a Procureur and, for twenty years, the faithful mistress of the financier Brotteaux des Ilettes, had fallen in with the new ideas. She was to be seen, in July, 1790, digging the soil of the Champ de Mars. Her strong inclination to side with the powers that be had carried her readily enough along a political path that started with the Feuillants and led by way of the Girondins to end on the summit of *the Mountain*, while at the same time a spirit of compromise, a passion for conversion and a certain aptitude for intrigue still attached her to the aristocratic and anti-revolutionary party. She was to be met everywhere, — at coffee houses and theatres, fashionable restaurants, gaming-saloons, drawing-rooms, newspaper offices and ante-chambers of Committees. The Revolution yielded her a hundred satisfactions, — novelty and amusement, smiles and pleasures, business ventures and profitable speculations. Combining political with amorous intrigue, playing the harp, drawing landscapes, singing ballads, dancing Greek dances, giving supper parties, entertaining pretty women, such as the Comtesse de Beaufort and the actress Mademoiselle Descoings, presiding all night long over a *trente-et-un* or *biribi* table and an adept at *rouge et noir*, she still found time to be charitable to her friends. Inquisitive and interfering, giddy-pated and frivolous, she understood men but knew nothing of the masses; as indifferent to the creed she professed as to the opinions she felt bound to repudiate, understanding nothing whatever of all that was happening in the country, she was enterprising, intrepid, and full of audacity from sheer ignorance of danger and an unbounded confidence in the efficacy of her charms.

The soldier who escorted her was in the heyday of youth. A brazen helmet decorated with a panther skin and the crest set off with a crimson cock’s-comb shaded his fresh young face and displayed a long and terrific mane that swept his back. His red jacket was cut short and square, barely reaching to the waist, the better to show off his elegant figure. In his girdle he carried an enormous sabre, the hilt of which was a glittering eagle’s beak. A pair of flapped breeches of sky

blue moulded the fine muscles of his legs and was braided in rich arabesques of a darker blue on the thighs. He might have been a dancer dressed for some warlike and dashing rôle, in *Achilles at Scyros* or *Alexander's Wedding-feast*, in a costume designed by a pupil of David with the one idea of accentuating every line of the shape.

Gamelin had a vague recollection of having seen him before. He was, in fact, the same young soldier he had come upon a fortnight previously haranguing the people from the arcades of the Théâtre de la Nation.

The *citoyenne* Rochemaure introduced him by name:

"The *citoyen* Henry, Member of the Revolutionary Committee of the Section of the Rights of Man."

She had him always at her heels, — a mirror of gallantry and a living and walking guarantee of patriotism.

The *citoyenne* complimented Gamelin on his talents and asked him if he would be willing to design a card for a protégée of hers, a fashionable milliner. He would, of course, choose an appropriate *motif*, — a woman trying on a scarf before a cheval glass, for instance, or a young workwoman carrying a band-box on her arm.

She had heard several artists mentioned as competent to execute a little matter of the sort, — Fragonard *fils*, young Ducis, as well as a certain Prudhomme; but she would rather apply to the *citoyen* Évariste Gamelin. However, she made no definite proposal on this head and it was evident she had mentioned the commission merely by way of starting the conversation. In truth she had come for something quite different. She wanted the *citoyen* Gamelin to do her a favour; knowing he was a friend of the *citoyen* Marat, she had come to ask him to introduce her to the Friend of the People, with whom she desired an interview.

Gamelin replied that he was too insignificant an individual to present her to Marat, besides which, she had no need of anyone to be her sponsor; Marat, albeit overwhelmed with business, was not the inaccessible person he was said to be, — and, added Gamelin:

"He will receive you, *citoyenne*, if you are in distress; his great heart makes him compassionate to all who suffer. He will likewise receive you if you have any revelation to make concerning the public weal; he has vowed his days to the unmasking of traitors."

The *citoyenne* Rochemaure answered that she would be happy to greet in Marat an illustrious citizen, who had rendered great services to his country, who was capable of rendering greater still, and that she was anxious to bring the legislator in question into relation with friends of hers of good repute and good

will, philanthropists favoured by fortune and competent to provide him with new means of satisfying his ardent affection for humanity.

“It is very desirable,” she concluded, “to make the rich co-operate in securing public prosperity.”

In actual fact, the *citoyenne* had promised the banker Morhardt to arrange a dinner where he and Marat should meet.

Morhardt, a Swiss like the Friend of the People, had entered into a combination with several deputies of the Convention, Julien (of Toulouse), Delaunay (of Angers) and the ex-Capuchin Chabot, to speculate in the shares of the *Compagnie des Indes*. The game was very simple, — to bring down the price of these shares to 650 livres by proposing motions pointing in the direction of confiscation, in order to buy up the greatest possible number at this figure and then push them up to 4,000 or 5,000 livres by dint of proposals of a reassuring nature. But for Chabot, Julien, Delaunay, their little ways were too notorious, while suspicions were rife of Lacroix, Fabre d’Églantine, and even Danton. The arch-speculator, the Baron de Batz, was looking for new confederates in the Convention and had advised Morhardt to sound Marat.

This idea of the anti-revolutionary speculators was not so extravagant as might have been supposed at the first blush. It was always the way of these gentry to form alliance with those in power at the moment, and by virtue of his popularity, his pen, his character, Marat was a power to be reckoned with. The Girondists were near shipwreck; the Dantonists, battered by the hurricane, had lost their hold on the helm. Robespierre, the idol of the people, was a man jealous of his scrupulous honesty, full of suspicion, impossible to approach. The great thing was to get round Marat, to secure his good will against the day when he should be dictator — and everything pointed to this consummation, — his popularity, his ambition, his eagerness to recommend heroic measures. And it might be, after all, Marat would re-establish order, the finances, the prosperity of the country. More than once he had risen in revolt against the zealots who were for outbidding him in fanaticism; for some time past he had been denouncing the demagogues as vehemently as the moderates. After inciting the people to sack the “cornerers” shops and hang them over their own counters, he was now exhorting the citizens to be calm and prudent. He was growing into an administrator.

In spite of certain rumours disseminated against him as against all the other chiefs of the Revolution, these pirates of the money-market did not believe he could be corrupted, but they did know him to be vain and credulous, and they hoped to win him over by flattery and still more by a condescending friendliness which they looked upon as the most seductive form of flattery from men like

themselves. They counted, thanks to him, on blowing hot and cold on all the securities they might wish to buy and sell, and making him serve their interests while supposing himself to be acting solely for the public good.

Great as a go-between, albeit she was still of an age for amours on her own account, the *citoyenne* Rochemaure had made it her mission to bring together the legislator-journalist and the banker, and in her extravagant imagination she already saw the man of the underworld, the man whose hands were yet red with the blood of the September massacres, a partner in the game of the financiers whose agent she was; she pictured him drawn by his very warmth of feeling and unsophisticated candour into the whirlpool of speculation, a recruit to the *côterie* she loved of “corner” makers, contractors, foreign emissaries, gamblers, and women of gallantry.

She insisted on the *citoyen* Gamelin taking her to see the Friend of the People, who lived quite near, in the Rue des Cordeliers, near the church. After some little show of reluctance, the painter acceded to the *citoyenne*’s wishes.

The dragoon Henry was invited to join them in the visit, but declined, declaring he meant to keep his liberty of action, even towards the *citoyen* Marat, who, he felt no doubt, had rendered services to the Republic, but was weakening nowadays; had he not, in his news sheet, counselled resignation as the proper thing for the people of Paris?

And the young man, in a sweet voice, broken by long-drawn sighs, deplored the fate of the Republic, betrayed by the men in whom she had put her trust, — Danton rejecting the notion of a tax on the rich, Robespierre opposing the permanence of the Sections, Marat, whose pusillanimous counsels were paralyzing the enthusiasm of the citizens.

“Ah!” he cried, “how feeble such men appear beside Leclerc and Jacques Roux!... Roux! Leclerc! ye are the true friends of the people!”

Gamelin did not hear these remarks, which would have angered him; he had gone into the next room to don his blue coat.

“You may well be proud of your son,” observed the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, addressing the *citoyenne* Gamelin. “He is a great man; talent and character both make him so.”

In answer, the widow Gamelin gave a good account of her son, yet without making much boast of him before a lady of high station, for she had been taught in her childhood that the first duty of the lowly is humility towards the great. She was of a complaining bent, having indeed only too good cause and finding in such jeremiads a salve for her griefs. She was garrulous in her revelations of all the hardships she had to bear to any whom she supposed in a position to relieve

them, and Madame de Rochemaure seemed to belong to that class. She made the most, therefore, of this favourable opportunity and told a long and breathless story of their distresses, — how mother and son were both dying of slow starvation. Pictures could not be sold any more; the Revolution had killed business dead. Victuals were scarce and too dear for words....

The good dame poured out her lamentations with all the loose-lipped volubility her halting tongue was capable of, so as to get them all finished by the time her son, whose pride would not brook such whining, should reappear. She was bent on attaining her object in the shortest possible time, — that of touching a lady whom she deemed rich and influential, and enlisting her sympathy in her boy's future. She felt sure that Évariste's good looks were an asset on her side to move the heart of a well-born lady. And so they were; the *citoyenne* Rochemaure proved tender-hearted and was melted to think of Évariste's and his mother's sufferings. She made plans to alleviate them; she had rich men amongst her friends and would get them to buy the artist's pictures.

"The truth is," she added, with a smile, "there is still money in France, but it keeps in hiding."

Better still, now Art was ruined, she would obtain Évariste a post in Morhardt's bank or with the Brothers Perregaux, or a place as clerk in the office of an army contractor.

Then she reflected that this was not what a man of his character needed; and, after a moment's thought, she nodded in sign that she had hit the nail on the head:

"There are still several jurymen left to be appointed on the Revolutionary Tribunal. Jurymen, magistrate, that is the thing to suit your son. I have friendly relations with the Committee of Public Safety. I know Robespierre the elder personally; his brother frequently sups at my house. I will speak to them. I will get a word said to Montané, Dumas, Fouquier."

The *citoyenne* Gamelin, bursting with excitement and gratitude, put a finger to her lip; Évariste was coming back into the studio.

He escorted the *citoyenne* Rochemaure down the gloomy staircase, the steps of which, whether of wood or tiled, were coated with an ancient layer of dirt.

On the Pont-Neuf, where the sun, now near its setting, threw a lengthened shadow from the pedestal that had borne the Bronze Horse and was now gay with the National colours, a crowd of men and women of the people gathered in little groups were listening to some tale that was being told them. Consternation reigned and a heavy silence, broken at intervals by groans and fierce cries. Many were making off at a rapid pace in the direction of the Rue de Thionville,

erstwhile Rue Dauphine; Gamelin joined one of these groups and heard the news — that Marat had just been assassinated.

Little by little the tidings were confirmed and particulars became known; he had been murdered in his bath by a woman who had come expressly from Caen to commit the crime.

Some thought she had escaped; but the majority declared she had been arrested.

There they stood like sheep without a shepherd, thinking sadly:

“Marat, the tender-hearted, the humane, Marat our benefactor, is no longer there to guide us, Marat who was never deceived, who saw through every subterfuge and never feared to reveal the truth!... What can we do, what is to become of us? We have lost our adviser, our champion, our friend.” They knew very well whence the blow had come, and who had directed the woman’s arm. They groaned aloud:

“Marat has been struck down by the same criminal hands that are bent on our extermination. His death is the signal for the slaughter of all good patriots.”

Different reports were current, as to the circumstances of the tragic event and the last words of the victim; endless questions were asked concerning the assassin, all that anyone knew was that it was a young woman sent by those traitors, the federalists. Baring teeth and nails, the *citoyennes* devoted the culprit to condign punishment; deeming the guillotine too merciful a death, they demanded this monster of iniquity should be scourged, broken on the wheel, torn limb from limb, and racked their brains to invent new tortures.

An armed body of National Guards was haling to the Section headquarters a man of determined mien. His clothes were in tatters, and streams of blood trickled down his white face. He had been overheard saying that Marat had earned his fate by his constant incitements to pillage and massacre, and it was only with great difficulty that the Guards had saved him from the fury of the populace. A hundred fingers pointed him out as the accomplice of the assassin, and threats of death followed him as he was led away.

Gamelin was stunned by the blow. A few hot tears blistered his burning eyes. With the grief he felt as a disciple mingled solicitude for the popular idol, and these combined feelings tore at his heart-strings. He thought to himself:

“After Le Peltier, after Bourdon, Marat!... I foresee the fate of the patriots; massacred on the Champ de Mars, at Nancy, at Paris, they will perish one and all.” And he thought of Wimpfen, the traitor, who only a while before was marching on Paris, and who, had he not been stopped at Vernon, by the gallant patriots, would have devoted the heroic city to fire and slaughter.

And how many perils still remained, how many criminal designs, how many treasonable plots, which only Marat's perspicacity and vigilance could unravel and foil! Now he was dead, who was there to denounce Custine loitering in idleness in the Camp of Cæsar and refusing to relieve Valenciennes, Biron tarrying inactive in the Lower Vendée letting Saumur be taken and Nantes blockaded, Dillon betraying the Fatherland in the Argonne?...

Meantime, all about him, rose momentarily higher the sinister cry:

"Marat is dead; the aristocrats have killed him!"

As he was on his way, his heart bursting with grief and hate and love, to pay a last mark of respect to the martyr of liberty, an old countrywoman, wearing the coif of the Limousin peasantry, accosted him to ask if the Monsieur Marat who had been murdered was not Monsieur le Curé Mara, of Saint-Pierre-de-Queyroix.

VIII

It was the eve of the Festival, a calm, bright evening, and Élodie hanging on Évariste's arm, was strolling with him about the *Champ de la Fédération*. Workmen were hastily completing their task of erecting columns, statues, temples, a "mountain," an altar of the Fatherland. Huge symbolic figures, Hercules (representing the people) brandishing his club, Nature suckling the Universe from her inexhaustible breasts, were rising at a moment's notice in the capital that, tortured by famine and fear, was listening for the dreaded sound of the Austrian cannon on the road from Meaux. La Vendée was making good its check before Nantes by a series of startling victories. A ring of fire and flame and hate was drawn about the great revolutionary city.

And meantime, she was preparing a superb welcome, like the sovereign state of a vast empire, for the deputies of the primary Assemblies which had accepted the Constitution. Federalism was on its knees; the Republic, one and indivisible, would surely vanquish all its enemies.

Waving his arm towards the thronged expanse:

"There it was," cried Évariste, "that on the 17th July, '91, the infamous Bailly ordered the people to be shot down at the foot of the altar of the fatherland. Passavant, the grenadier, who witnessed the massacre, returned to his house, tore his coat from his back and cried: 'I have sworn to die with Liberty; Liberty is no more, and I fulfil my oath,' — and blew out his brains."

All this time artists and peaceful citizens were examining the preparations for the festival, their faces showing as joyless a joy in life as their lives were dull and joyless; to their minds the mightiest events shrank into insignificance and grew as insipid as they were themselves. Couple by couple they went, carrying in their arms or holding by the hand or letting them run on in front children as unprepossessing as their parents and promising to grow up no whit happier, who in due course would give birth to children of their own as poor in spirit and looks as they. Yet now and again a young girl would pass, tall and fair and desirable, rousing in young men a not ignoble passion to possess, and in the old regret for the bliss they had missed.

Near the *École Militaire* Évariste pointed out to his companion the Egyptian statues designed by David on Roman models of the age of Augustus, and they overheard a Parisian, an old man with powdered hair, ejaculate to himself:

"Egad! you might think yourself on the banks of the Nile!"

It was three days since Élodie had seen her lover, and serious events had befallen meantime at the *Amour peintre*. The *citoyen* Blaise had been denounced to the Committee of General Security for fraudulent dealings in the matter of supplies to the armies. Fortunately for himself, the print-dealer was well known in his Section; the Committee of Surveillance of the *Section des Piques* had stood guarantee of his patriotism with the general committee and had completely justified his conduct.

This alarming incident Élodie now recounted in trembling accents, concluding:

“We are quiet now, but the alarm was a hot one. A little more and my father would have been clapped in prison. If the danger had lasted a few hours more, I should have come to you, Évariste, to make interest for him among your influential friends.”

Évariste vouchsafed no reply to this, but Élodie was very far from realizing all his silence portended.

They went on hand in hand along the banks of the river, discoursing of their mutual fondness in the phrases of Julie and Saint-Preux; the good Jean-Jacques gave them the colours to paint and prank their love withal.

The Municipality of Paris had wrought a miracle, — abundance reigned for a day in the famished city. A fair was installed on the *Place des Invalides*, beside the Seine, where hucksters in booths sold sausages, saveloys, chitterlings, hams decked with laurels, Nanterre cakes, gingerbreads, pancakes, four-pound loaves, lemonade and wine. There were stalls also for the sale of patriotic songs, cockades, tricolour ribands, purses, pinchbeck watch-chains and all sorts of cheap gewgaws. Stopping before the display of a petty jeweller, Évariste selected a silver ring having a head of Marat in relief with a silk handkerchief wound about the brows, and put it on Élodie’s finger.

The same evening Gamelin proceeded to the Rue de l’Arbre-Sec to call on the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, who had sent for him on pressing business. She received him in her bedchamber, reclining on a couch in a seductive dishabille.

While the *citoyenne*’s attitude expressed a voluptuous languor, everything about her spoke of her accomplishments, her diversions, her talents, — a harp beside an open harpsichord, a guitar on a chair, an embroidering frame with a square of satin stretched on it, a half-finished miniature on a table among papers and books, a bookcase in dire disorder as if rifled by the hand of a fair reader as eager to know as to feel.

She gave him her hand to kiss, and addressed him:

“Greeting, sir juryman!... This very day Robespierre the elder gave me a letter in your favour to be handed to the President Herman, a very well turned letter, pretty much to this effect:

“I bring to your notice the *citoyen* Gamelin, commendable alike for his talents and for his patriotism. I have made it my duty to make known to you a patriot whose principles are good and his conduct steadfast in the right line of revolution. You will not let slip the opportunity of being useful to a Republican.... This letter I carried there and then to the President Herman, who received me with an exquisite politeness and signed your appointment on the spot. The thing is done.”

After a moment’s pause:

“*Citoyenne* ,” said Gamelin, “though I have not a morsel of bread to give my mother, I swear on my honour I accept the duties of a juror only to serve the Republic and avenge her on her foes.”

The *citoyenne* thought this but a cold way of expressing gratitude and considered the sentiment high-flown. The young man was no adept, she suspected, at graceful courtesies. But she was too great an admirer of youth not to excuse some little lack of polish. Gamelin was a handsome fellow, and that was merit enough in her eyes. “We will form him,” she said to herself. So she invited him to her suppers to which she welcomed her friends every evening after the theatre.

“You will meet at my house men of wit and talent, — Elleviou, Talma, the *citoyen* Vigée, who turns bouts-rimés with a marvellous aptitude. The *citoyen* François read us his ‘Paméla’ the other day, the piece rehearsing at the present moment at the *Théâtre de la Nation* . The style is elegant and chaste, as everything is that comes from the *citoyen* François’ pen. The plot is touching; it brought tears to all our eyes. It is the young *citoyenne* Lange who is to take the part of ‘Paméla.’”

“I believe it if you say so, *citoyenne* ,” answered Gamelin, “but the *Théâtre de la Nation* is scarcely National and it is hard on the *citoyen* François that his works should be produced on the boards degraded by the contemptible verses of a Laya; the people has not forgotten the scandal of the *Ami des Lois*”

“Nay, *citoyen* Gamelin, say what you will of Laya; he is none of my friends.”

It was not purely out of kindness that the *citoyenne* had employed her credit to get Gamelin appointed to a much envied post; after what she had done for him and what peradventure she might come to do for him in the future, she counted on binding him closely to her interests and in that way securing for herself a protector connected with a tribunal she might one day or another have to reckon

with; for the fact is, she was in constant correspondence with the French provinces and foreign countries, and at that date such a circumstance was ground enough for suspicion.

“Do you often go to the theatre, *citoyen* ?”

As she asked the question, Henry, the dragoon, entered the room, looking more charming than the youthful Bathyllus. A brace of enormous pistols was passed through his belt.

He kissed the fair *citoyenne*’s hand. Turning to him:

“There stands the *citoyen* Évariste Gamelin,” she said, “for whose sake I have spent the day at the Committee of General Security, and who is an ungrateful wretch. Scold him for me.”

“Ah! *citoyenne* ,” cried the young soldier, “you have seen our Legislators at the Tuileries. What an afflicting sight! Is it seemly the Representatives of a free people should sit beneath the roof of a despot? The same lustres that once shone on the plots of Capet and the orgies of Antoinette now illumine the deliberations of our law-makers. ’Tis enough to make Nature shudder.”

“Pray, congratulate the *citoyen* Gamelin,” was all her answer, “he is appointed juryman on the Revolutionary Tribunal.”

“My compliments, *citoyen* !” said Henry. “I am rejoiced to see a man of your character invested with these functions. But, to speak truth, I have small confidence in this systematic justice, set up by the moderates of the Convention, in this complaisant Nemesis that is considerate to conspirators and merciful to traitors, that hardly dares strike a blow at the Federalists and fears to summon *the Austrian* to the bar. No, it is not the Revolutionary Tribunal will save the Republic. They are very culpable, the men who, in the desperate situation we are in, have arrested the flowing torrent of popular justice!”

“Henry,” interrupted the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, “pass me that scent bottle, please....”

On reaching home, Gamelin found his mother and old Brotteaux playing a game of piquet by the light of a smoky tallow-candle. At the moment the old woman was calling “sequence of kings” without the smallest scruple.

When she heard her son was appointed juryman, she kissed him in a transport of triumph, thinking what an honour it was for both of them and that henceforth they would have plenty to eat every day.

“I am proud and happy,” she declared, “to be the mother of a juryman. Justice is a fine thing, and of all the most necessary; without justice the weak would be harassed every moment of their lives. And I think you will give right judgment, Évariste, my own boy; for from a child I have found you just and kind-hearted in

all concerns. You could never endure wrong-doing and always tried what you could to hinder violence. You compassionated the unfortunate and that is the finest jewel in a juror's crown.... But tell me, Évariste, how are you dressed in your grand tribunal?"

Gamelin informed her that the judges wore a hat with black plumes, but that the jury had no special costume, that they were dressed in their every-day attire.

"It would be better," returned the good woman, "if they wore wig and gown; it would inspire more respect. Though you are mostly dressed carelessly, you are a handsome man and you set off your clothes; but the majority of men need some fine feathers to make them look imposing; yes, the jury should have wigs and gowns."

The *citoyenne* had heard say that the duties of a juror of the Tribunal carried a salary; and she had no hesitation in asking the question whether the emoluments were enough to live respectably on, for a juryman, she opined, ought to cut a good figure in the world.

She was pleased to hear that each juror received an allowance of eighteen livres for every sitting and that the multiplicity of crimes against the security of the State obliged the court to sit very frequently.

Old Brotteaux gathered up the cards, rose from the table and addressing Gamelin:

"*Citoyen*," he said, "you are invested with an august and redoubtable office. I congratulate you on lending the light of your integrity to a tribunal more trustworthy and less fallible perhaps than any other, because it searches out good and evil, not in themselves and in their essence, but solely in relation to tangible interests and plain and obvious sentiments. You will have to determine betwixt hate and love, which is done spontaneously, not betwixt truth and falsehood, to discriminate which is impossible for the feeble mind of man. Giving judgment after the impulses of your heart, you will run no risk of mistake, inasmuch as the verdict will be good provided it satisfy the passions that are your sacred law. But, all the same, if I was your President, I should imitate Bridoie, I should appeal to the arbitrament of the dice. In matters of justice it is still the surest plan."

IX

Evariste Gamelin was to enter on his duties on the 14th September, when the reorganization of the Tribunal was complete, according to which it was henceforth subdivided into four sections with fifteen jurors for each. The prisons were full to overflowing; the Public Prosecutor was working eighteen hours a day. Defeats in the field, revolts in the provinces, conspiracies, plots, betrayals, the Convention had one panacea for them all, — terror. The Gods were athirst.

The first act of the new juror was to pay a visit of ceremony to the President Herman, who charmed him by the amiability of his conversation and the courtesy of his bearing. A compatriot and friend of Robespierre's, whose sentiments he shared, he showed every sign of a feeling and virtuous temper. He was deeply attached to those humane sentiments, too long foreign to the heart of our judges, that redound to the everlasting glory of a Dupaty and a Beccaria. He looked with complacency on the greater mildness of modern manners as evidenced, in judicial matters, by the abolition of torture and of ignominious or cruel forms of punishment. He was rejoiced to see the death penalty, once so recklessly inflicted and employed till quite lately for the repression of the most trifling offences, applied less frequently and reserved for heinous crimes. For his own part, he agreed with Robespierre and would gladly have seen it abolished altogether, except only in cases touching the public safety. At the same time, he would have deemed it treason to the State not to adjudge the punishment of death for crimes against the National Sovereignty.

All his colleagues were of like mind; the old Monarchical idea of reasons of State still inspired the Revolutionary Tribunal. Eight centuries of absolute power had moulded the magisterial conscience, and it was by the principles of Divine Right that the Court even now tried and sentenced the enemies of Liberty.

The same day Évariste Gamelin sought an interview with the Public Prosecutor, the *citoyen* Fouquier, who received him in the Cabinet where he used to work with his clerk of the court. He was a sturdily built man, with a rough voice, catlike eyes, bearing in his pock-marked face and leaden complexion marks of the mischief wrought by a sedentary and indoor life on a vigorous constitution adapted to the open air and violent exercise. Towering piles of papers shut him in like the walls of a tomb, and it was plain to see he was in his element amid all these dreadful documents that seemed like to bury him alive. His conversation was that of a hard-working magistrate, a man devoted to his task and whose mind never left the narrow groove of his official duties. His fiery

breath reeked of the brandy he took to keep up his strength; but the liquor seemed never to fly to his brain, so clear-headed, albeit entirely commonplace, was every word he uttered.

He lived in a small suite of rooms in the Palais de Justice with his young wife, who had given him twin boys. His wife, an aunt Henriette and the maid-servant Pélagie made up the whole household. He was good and kind to these women. In a word, he was an excellent person in his family and professional relations, with a scarcity of ideas and a total lack of imagination.

Gamelin could not help being struck unpleasantly by the close resemblance in temper and ways of thought between the new magistrates and their predecessors under the old régime. In fact, they were of the old régime; Herman had held the office of Advocate General to the Council of Artois; Fouquier was a former Procureur at the Châtelet. They had preserved their character, whereas Gamelin believed in a Revolutionary palingenesis.

Quitting the precincts of the court, he passed along the great gallery of the Palace and halted in front of the shops where articles of every sort and kind were exposed for sale in the most attractive fashion. Standing before the *citoyenne* Ténot's stall, he turned over sundry historical, political, and philosophical works:— "The Chains of Slavery," "An Essay on Despotism," "The Crimes of Queens." "Very good!" he thought, "here is Republican stuff!" and he asked the woman if she sold a great many of these books. She shook her head:

"The only things that sell are songs and romances," — and pulling a duodecimo volume out of a drawer:

"Here," she told him, "here we have something good."

Évariste read the title: "La Religieuse en chemise," "The Nun in dishabille!"

Before the next shop he came upon Philippe Desmahis, who, with a tender, conquering-hero air, among the *citoyenne* Saint-Jorre's perfumes and powders and sachets, was assuring the fair tradeswoman of his undying love, promising to paint her portrait and begging her to vouchsafe him a moment's talk that evening in the Tuileries gardens. There was no resisting him; persuasion sat on his lips and beamed from his eye. The *citoyenne* Saint-Jorre was listening without a word, her eyes on the ground, only too ready to believe him.

Wishing to familiarize himself with the awful duties imposed on him, the new juror resolved to mingle with the throng and look on at a case before the Tribunal as a member of the general public. He climbed the great stairs on which a vast crowd was seated as in an amphitheatre and pushed his way into the ancient Hall of the Parlement of Paris.

This was crammed to suffocation; some General or other was taking his trial. For in those days, as old Brotteaux put it, “the Convention, copying the example of His Britannic Majesty’s Government, made a point of arraigning beaten Generals, in default of traitorous Generals, the latter taking good care not to stand their trial. Not that a beaten General,” Brotteaux would add, “is necessarily criminal, for in the nature of things there must be one in every battle. But there’s nothing like condemning a General to death for giving encouragement to others.”

Several had already appeared before the Tribunal; they were all alike, these empty-headed, opinionated soldiers with the brains of a sparrow in an ox’s skull. This particular commander was pretty nearly as ignorant of the sieges and battles of his own campaign as the magistrates who were questioning him; both sides, prosecution and defence, were lost in a fog of effectives, objectives, munitions and ammunitions, marches and counter-marches. But the mass of citizens listening to these obscure and never-ending details could see behind the half-witted soldier the bare and bleeding breast of the fatherland enduring a thousand deaths; and by look and voice urged the jurymen, sitting quietly on their bench, to use their verdict as a club to fell the foes of the Republic.

Évariste was firmly convinced of one thing, — what they had to strike at in the pitiful creature was the two dread monsters that were battenning on the fatherland, revolt and defeat. What a to-do to discover if this particular soldier was innocent or guilty! When La Vendée was recovering heart, when Toulon was surrendering to the enemy, when the army of the Rhine was recoiling before the victors of Mayence, when the Army of the North, cowering in Cæsar’s Camp, might be taken at a blow by the Imperialists, the English, the Dutch, now masters of Valenciennes, the one important thing was to teach the Generals of the Republic to conquer or to die. To see yonder feeble-witted muddle-pated veteran losing himself under cross-examination among his maps as he had done before in the plains of Northern France, Gamelin longed to yell “death! death!” with the rest, and fled from the Hall of Audience to escape the temptation.

At the meeting of the Section, the newly appointed juryman received the congratulations of the President Olivier, who made him swear on the old high altar of the Barnabites, now altar of the fatherland, to stifle in his heart, in the sacred name of humanity, every human weakness.

Gamelin, with uplifted right hand, invoked as witness of his oath the august shade of Marat, martyr of Liberty, whose bust had lately been set up against a pillar of the erstwhile church, facing that of Le Peltier.

There was some applause, interrupted by cries of protest. The meeting was a stormy one; at the entrance of the nave stood a group of members of the Section, armed with pikes and shouting clamorously:

"It is anti-republican," declared the President, "to carry arms at a meeting of free citizens," — and he ordered the muskets and pikes to be deposited there and then in the erstwhile sacristy.

A hunchback, with blazing eyes and lips drawn back so as to show the teeth, the *citoyen* Beauvisage, of the Committee of Vigilance, mounted to the pulpit, now become the speakers' tribune and surmounted by a red cap of liberty.

"The Generals are betraying us," he vociferated, "and surrendering our armies to the enemy. The Imperialists are pushing forward their cavalry around Péronne and Saint-Quentin. Toulon has been given up to the English, who are landing fourteen thousand men there. The foes of the Republic are busy with plots in the very bosom of the Convention. In the capital conspiracies without number are afoot to deliver *the Austrian*. At this very moment while I speak there runs a rumour that the Capet brat has escaped from the Temple and is being borne in triumph to Saint-Cloud by those who would fain re-erect the tyrant's throne in his favour. The dearness of food, the depreciation of the *assignats* are the direct result of manœuvres carried out in our own homes, beneath our very eyes, by the agents of the foreigners. In the name of public safety I call upon the new juryman, our fellow-citizen, to show no pity to conspirators and traitors."

As he left the tribune, cries rose among the audience: "Down with the Revolutionary Tribunal! Down with the Moderates!"

A stout, rosy-faced man, the *citoyen* Dupont senior, a joiner living in the Place de Thionville, mounted the Tribune, announcing that he wished to ask a question of the new juror. Then he demanded of Gamelin what attitude he meant to take up in the matter of the Brissotins and of the widow Capet.

Évariste was timid and unpractised in public speaking. But indignation gave him eloquence. He rose with a pale face and said in a voice of suppressed emotion:

"I am a magistrate. I am responsible to my conscience only. Any promise I might make you would be against my duty, which is to speak in the Court and hold my peace elsewhere. I have ceased to know you. It is mine to give judgment; I know neither friends nor enemies."

The meeting, made up like all meetings of divers elements and subject to sudden and incalculable moods, approved these sentiments. But the *citoyen* Dupont returned to the charge; he could not forgive Gamelin for having secured a post he had coveted himself.

“I understand,” he said, “I even approve the juror’s scruples. They say he is a patriot; it is for him to examine his conscience and see if it permits him to sit on a tribunal intended to destroy the enemies of the Republic and resolved to spare them. There are circumstances in which a good citizen is bound to repudiate all complicity. Is it not averred that more than one juror of this tribunal has let himself be corrupted by the gold of the accused, and that the President Montané falsified the procedure to save the head of the woman Corday?”

At the words the hall resounded with vehement applause. The vaults were still reverberating with the uproar when Fortuné Trubert mounted the tribune. He had grown thinner than ever in the last few months. His face was pale and the cheekbones seemed ready to pierce the reddened skin; his eyes had a glassy look under the inflamed lids.

“*Citoyens* ,” he began, in a weak, breathless voice that yet had a strangely penetrating quality, “we cannot suspect the Revolutionary Tribunal without at the same time suspecting the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety from which it derives its powers. The *citoyen* Beauvisage has alarmed us, showing us the President Montané tampering with the course of justice in favour of a culprit. Why did he not add, to relieve our fears, that on the denunciation of the Public Prosecutor, Montané has been dismissed his office and thrown into prison?... Is it impossible to watch over the public safety without casting suspicion on all and sundry? Is there no talent, no virtue left in the Convention? Robespierre, Couthon, Saint-Just, are not these honest men? It is a notable thing that the most violent language is held by individuals who have never been known to fight for the Republic. They could speak no otherwise if they wish to render her hateful. *Citoyens* , less talk, say I, and more work! It is with shot and shell and not with shouting that France will be saved. One-half the cellars of the Section have not been dug up. Not a few citizens still hold considerable quantities of bronze. We would remind the rich that patriotic gifts are for them the most potent guarantees. I recommend to your generosity the wives and daughters of our soldiers who are covering themselves with glory on the frontiers and on the Loire. One of these, the hussar Pommier (Augustin), formerly a cellarman’s lad in the Rue de Jérusalem, on the 10th of last month, before Condé, when watering the troop horses, was set upon by six Austrian cavalymen; he killed two of them and brought in the others prisoners. I ask the Section to declare that Pommier (Augustin) has done his duty.”

This speech was applauded and the Sectionaries dispersed with cries of “Vive la République!”

Left alone in the nave with Trubert, Gamelin pressed the latter’s hand.

“Thank you. How are you?”

“I? Oh! Very well, very well!” replied Trubert, coughing and spitting blood into his handkerchief. “The Republic has many enemies without and within, and our own Section counts a not inconsiderable number of them. It is not with loud talk but with iron and laws that empires are founded ... good night, Gamelin; I have letters to write.”

And he disappeared, his handkerchief pressed to his lips, into the old-time sacristy.

The widow Gamelin, her cockade now and henceforth fastened more carefully in her hood, had from one day to the next assumed a fine, consequential air, a Republican haughtiness and the dignified carriage suitable to the mother of a juror of the State.

The veneration for the law in which she had been brought up, the admiration with which the magistrate’s gown and cassock had from a child inspired her, the holy terror she had always experienced at sight of those to whom God had delegated on earth His divine right of life and death, these feelings made her regard as an august and worshipful and holy being the son whom till yesterday she had thought of as little more than a child. To her simple mind the conviction of the continuity of justice through all the changes of the Revolution was as strong as was that of the legislators of the Convention regarding the continuity of the State under varying systems of government, and the Revolutionary Tribunal appeared to her every whit as majestic as any of the time-honoured jurisdictions she had been taught to revere.

The *citoyen* Brotteaux showed the young magistrate an interest mingled with surprise and a reluctant deference. His views were the same as the widow Gamelin’s as to the continuity of justice under successive governments; but, in flat contradiction to that good lady’s attitude, his scorn for the Revolutionary Tribunals was on a par with his contempt for the courts of the *ancien régime*. Not daring to express his opinions openly and unable to make up his mind to say nothing, he indulged in a string of paradoxes which Gamelin understood just well enough to suspect the anti-patriotism that underlay them.

“The august tribunal whereon you are soon to take your seat,” he told him on one occasion, “was instituted by the French Senate for the security of the Republic; and it was for certain a magnanimous thought on the part of our legislators to set up a court to try our enemies. I appreciate its generosity, but I doubt its wisdom. It would have shown greater astuteness, it seems to me, if they had struck down in the dark the more irreconcilable of their adversaries and won over the rest by gifts and promises. A tribunal strikes slowly and effects more harm than it inspires fear; its first duty is to make an example. The mischief

yours does is to unite together all whom it terrifies and make out of a mass of contradictory interests and passions a great party capable of common and effective action. You sow fear broadcast, and it is terror more than courage that produces heroes; I pray, *citoyen*, you may not one day see prodigies of terror arrayed against you!”

The engraver Desmahis, in love that week with a light o’ love of the Palais-Égalité named Flora, a brown-locked giantess, had nevertheless found five minutes to congratulate his comrade and tell him that such an appointment was a great compliment to the fine arts.

Élodie herself, though without knowing it she detested everything revolutionary and who dreaded official functions as the most dangerous of rivals, the most likely to estrange her lover’s affections, the tender Élodie was impressed by the glamour attaching to a magistrate called upon to pronounce judgment in matters of life and death. Besides which, Évariste’s promotion as a jurymen was followed by other fortunate results that filled her loving heart with satisfaction; the *citoyen* Jean Blaise made a point of calling at the studio in the Place de Thionville and embraced the young juror affectionately in a burst of manly sympathy.

Like all the anti-revolutionaries, he had a great respect for the authorities established by the Republic, and ever since he had been denounced for fraud in connection with his supplies for the army, the Revolutionary Tribunal had inspired him with a wholesome dread. He felt himself to be a person too much in the public eye and mixed up in too many transactions to enjoy perfect security; so the *citoyen* Gamelin struck him as a friend worth cultivating. When all was said, one was a good citizen and on the side of justice.

He gave the painter magistrate his hand, declaring himself his true friend and a true patriot, a well-wisher of the arts and of liberty. Gamelin forgot his injuries and pressed the hand so generously offered.

“*Citoyen* Évariste Gamelin,” said Jean Blaise, “I appeal to you as a friend and as a man of talent. I am going to take you to-morrow for two days’ jaunt in the country; you can do some drawing and we can enjoy a talk.”

Several times every year the print-dealer was in the habit of making a two or three days’ expedition of this sort in the company of artists who made drawings, according to his suggestions, of landscapes and ruins. He was quick to see what would please the public and these little journeys always resulted in some picturesque bits which were then finished at home and cleverly engraved; prints in red or colours were struck off from these, and brought in a good profit to the

citoyen Blaise. From the same sketches he had over-doors and panels executed, which sold as well or better than the decorative works of Hubert Robert.

On this occasion he had invited the *citoyen* Gamelin to accompany him to sketch buildings after nature, so much had the juror's office increased the painter's importance in his eyes. Two other artists were of the party, the engraver Desmahis, who drew well, and an almost unknown man, Philippe Dubois, an excellent designer in the style of Robert. According to custom, the *citoyenne* Élodie with her friend the *citoyenne* Hasard accompanied the artists. Jean Blaise, an adept at combining pleasure with profit, had also extended an invitation to the *citoyenne* Thévenin, an actress at the Vaudeville, who was reputed to be on the best of terms with him.

X

On Saturday at seven in the morning the *citoyen* Blaise, in a black cocked-hat, scarlet waistcoat, doe-skin breeches, and boots with yellow tops, rapped with the handle of his riding-whip at the studio door. The *citoyenne* Gamelin was in the room in polite conversation with the *citoyen* Brotteaux, while Évariste stood before a bit of looking-glass knotting his high white cravat.

“A pleasant journey, Monsieur Blaise!” the *citoyenne* greeted him. “But, as you are going to paint landscapes, why don’t you take Monsieur Brotteaux, who is a painter?”

“Well, well,” said Jean Blaise, “will you come with us, *citoyen* Brotteaux?”

On being assured he would not be intruding, Brotteaux, a man of a sociable temper and fond of all amusements, accepted the invitation.

The *citoyenne* Élodie had climbed the four storeys to embrace the widow Gamelin, whom she called her good mother. She was in white from head to foot, and smelt of lavender.

An old two-horsed travelling *berline* stood waiting in the Place, with the hood down. Rose Thévenin occupied the back seat with Julienne Hasard. Élodie made the actress sit on the right, took the left-hand place herself and put the slim Julienne between the two of them. Brotteaux settled himself, back to the horses, facing the *citoyenne* Thévenin; Philippe Dubois, opposite the *citoyenne* Hasard; Évariste opposite Élodie. As for Philippe Desmahis, he planted his athletic figure on the box, on the coachman’s left, and proceeded to amaze that worthy with a traveller’s tale about a country in America where the trees bore chitterlings and saveloys by way of fruit.

The *citoyen* Blaise, who was a capital rider, took the road on horseback, going on in front to escape the dust from the *berline*.

As the wheels rattled merrily over the suburban roads the travellers began to forget their cares, and at sight of the green fields and trees and sky, their minds turned to gay and pleasant thoughts. Élodie dreamed she was surely born to rear poultry with Évariste, a country justice, to help her, in some village on a river bank beside a wood. The roadside elms whirled by as they sped along. Outside the villages the peasants’ mastiffs dashed out to intercept the carriage and barked at the horses, while a fat spaniel, lying in the roadway, struggled reluctantly to its feet; the fowls scattered and fled; the geese in a close-packed band waddled slowly out of the way. The children, with their fresh morning faces, watched the company go by. It was a hot day and a cloudless sky. The parched earth was

thirsting for rain. They alighted just outside Villejuif. On their way through the little town, Desmahis went into a fruiterer's to buy cherries for the overheated *citoyennes*. The shop-keeper was a pretty woman, and Desmahis showed no signs of reappearing. Philippe Dubois shouted to him, using the nickname his friends constantly gave him:

“Ho there! Barbaroux!... Barbaroux!”

At this hated name the passers-by pricked up their ears and faces appeared at every window. Then, when they saw a young and handsome man emerge from the shop, his jacket thrown open, his neckerchief flying loose over a muscular chest, and carrying over his shoulder a basket of cherries and his coat at the end of a stick, taking him for the proscribed girondist, a posse of *sansculottes* laid violent hands on him. Regardless of his indignant protests, they would have haled him to the town-hall, had not old Brotteaux, Gamelin, and the three young women borne testimony that the *citoyen* was named Philippe Desmahis, a copper-plate engraver and a good Jacobin. Even then the suspect had to show his *carte de civisme*, which he had in his pocket by great good luck, for he was very heedless in such matters. At this price he escaped from the hands of these patriotic villagers without worse loss than one of his lace ruffles, which had been torn off; but this was a trifle after all. He even received the apologies of the National Guards who had hustled him the most savagely and who now spoke of carrying him in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville.

A free man again and with the *citoyennes* Élodie, Rose, and Julienne crowding round him, Desmahis looked at Philippe Dubois — he did not like the man and suspected him of having played him a practical joke — with a wry smile, and towering above him by a whole head:

“Dubois,” he told him, “if you call me Barbaroux again, I shall call you Brissot; he is a little fat man with a silly face, greasy hair, an oily skin and damp hands. They’ll be perfectly sure you are the infamous Brissot, the people’s enemy; and the good Republicans, filled with horror and loathing at sight of you, will hang you from the nearest lamp-post. You hear me?”

The *citoyen* Blaise, who had been watering his horse, announced that he had arranged the affair, though it was quite plain to everybody that it had been arranged without him.

The company got in again, and as they drove on, Desmahis informed the coachman that in this same plain of Longjumeau several inhabitants of the Moon had once come down, in shape and colour much like frogs, only very much bigger. Philippe Dubois and Gamelin talked about their art. Dubois, a pupil of Regnault, had been to Rome, where he had seen Raphael’s tapestries, which he

set above all the masterpieces of the world. He admired Correggio's colouring, Annibale Caracci's invention, Domenichino's drawing, but thought nothing comparable in point of style with the pictures of Pompeo Battoni. He had been in touch at Rome with Monsieur Ménageot and Madame Lebrun, who had both pronounced against the Revolution; so the less said of them the better. But he spoke highly of Angelica Kauffmann, who had a pure taste and a fine knowledge of the Antique.

Gamelin deplored that the apogee of French painting, belated as it was, for it only dated from Lesueur, Claude and Poussin and corresponded with the decadence of the Italian and Flemish schools, had been succeeded by so rapid and profound a decline. This he attributed to the degraded state of manners and to the Academy, which was the expression of that state. But the Academy had been happily abolished, and under the influence of new canons, David and his school were creating an art worthy of a free people. Among the young painters, Gamelin, without a trace of envy, gave the first place to Hennequin and Topino-Lebrun. Philippe Dubois preferred his own master Regnault to David, and founded his hopes for the future of painting on that rising artist Gérard.

Meantime Élodie complimented the *citoyenne* Thévenin on her red velvet toque and white gown. The actress repaid the compliment by congratulating her two companions on their toilets and advising them how to do better still; the thing, she said, was to be more sparing in ornaments and trimmings.

"A woman can never be dressed too simply," was her dictum. "We see this on the stage, where the costume should allow every pose to be appreciated. That is its true beauty and it needs no other."

"You are right, my dear," replied Élodie. "Only there is nothing more expensive in dress than simplicity. It is not always out of bad taste we add frills and furbelows; sometimes it is to save our pockets."

They discussed eagerly the autumn fashions, — frocks entirely plain and short-waisted.

"So many women disfigure themselves through following the fashion!" declared Rose Thévenin. "In dressing every woman should study her own figure."

"There is nothing beautiful save draperies that follow the lines of the figure and fall in folds," put in Gamelin. "Everything that is cut out and sewn is hideous."

These sentiments, more appropriate in a treatise of Winckelmann's than in the mouth of a man talking to Parisiennes, met with the scorn they deserved, being entirely disregarded.

“For the winter,” observed Élodie, “they are making quilted gowns in Lapland style of taffeta and muslin, and coats à la Zulime , round-waisted and opening over a stomacher à la Turque .”

“Nasty cheap things,” declared the actress, “you can buy them ready made. Now I have a little seamstress who works like an angel and is not dear; I’ll send her to see you, my dear.”

So they prattled on trippingly, eagerly discussing and appraising different fine fabrics — striped taffeta, self-coloured china silk, muslin, gauze, nankeen.

And old Brotteaux, as he listened to them, thought with a pensive pleasure of these veils that hide women’s charms and change incessantly, — how they last for a few years to be renewed eternally like the flowers of the field. And his eyes, as they wandered from the three pretty women to the cornflowers and the poppies in the wheat, were wet with smiling tears.

They reached Orangis about nine o’clock and stopped before the inn, the *Auberge de la Cloche* , where the Poitrines, husband and wife, offered accommodation for man and beast. The *citoyen* Blaise, who had repaired any disorder in his dress, helped the *citoyennes* to alight. After ordering dinner for midday, they all set off, preceded by their paintboxes, drawing-boards, easels, and parasols, which were carried by a village lad, for the meadows near the confluence of the Orge and the Yvette, a charming bit of country giving a view over the verdant plain of Longjumeau and bounded by the Seine and the woods of Sainte-Geneviève.

Jean Blaise, the leader of the troop of artists, was bandying funny stories with the *ci-devant* financier, tales that brought in without rhyme or reason Verboquet the Open-handed, Catherine Cuissot the pedlar, the demoiselles Chaudron, the fortune-teller Galichet, as well as characters of a later time like Cadet-Rousselle and Madame Angot.

Évariste, inspired with a sudden love of nature, as he saw a troop of harvesters binding their sheaves, felt the tears rise to his eyes, while visions of concord and affection filled his heart. For his part, Desmahis was blowing the light down of the seeding dandelions into the *citoyennes*’ hair. All three loved posies, as town-bred girls always do, and were busy in the meadows plucking the mullein, whose blossoms grow in spikes close round the stem, the campanula, with its little blue-bells hanging in rows one above another, the slender twigs of the scented vervain, wallwort, mint, dyer’s weed, milfoil — all the wild flowers of late summer. Jean-Jacques had made botany the fashion among townswomen, so all three knew the name and symbolism of every flower.

As the delicate petals, drooping for want of moisture, wilted in her hands and fell in a shower about her feet, the *citoyenne* Élodie sighed:

“They are dying already, the poor flowers!”

All set to work and strove to express nature as they saw her; but each saw her through the eyes of a master. In a short time Philippe Dubois had knocked off in the style of Hubert Robert a deserted farm, a clump of storm-riven trees, a dried-up torrent. Évariste Gamelin found a landscape by Poussin ready made on the banks of the Yvette. Philippe Desmahis was at work before a pigeon-cote in the picaresque manner of Callot and Duplessis. Old Brotteaux who piqued himself on imitating the Flemings, was drawing a cow with infinite care. Élodie was sketching a peasant's hut, while her friend Julienne, who was a colourman's daughter, set her palette. A swarm of children pressed about her, watching her paint, whom she would scold out of her light at intervals, calling them pestering gnats and giving them lollipops. The *citoyenne* Thévenin, picking out the pretty ones, would wash their faces, kiss them and put flowers in their hair. She fondled them with a gentle air of melancholy, because she had missed the joy of motherhood, — as well as to heighten her fascinations by a show of tender sentiment and to practise herself in the art of pose and grouping.

She was the only member of the party neither drawing nor painting. She devoted her attention to learning a part and still more to charming her companions, flitting from one to another, book in hand, a bright, entrancing creature.

“No complexion, no figure, no voice, no nothing,” declared the women, — and she filled the earth with movement, colour and harmony. Faded, pretty, tired, indefatigable, she was the joy of the expedition. A woman of ever-varying moods, but always gay, sensitive, quick-tempered and yet easy-going and accommodating, a sharp tongue with the most polished utterance, vain, modest, true, false, delightful; if Rose Thévenin enjoyed no triumphant success, if she was not worshipped as a goddess, it was because the times were out of joint and Paris had no more incense, no more altars for the Graces. The *citoyenne* Blaise herself, who made a face when she spoke of her and used to call her “my step-mother,” could not see her and not be subjugated by such an array of charms.

They were rehearsing *Les Visitandines* at the Théâtre Feydeau, and Rose was full of self-congratulation at having a part full of “naturalness.” It was this quality she strove after, this she sought and this she found.

“Then we shall not see ‘Paméla’?” asked Desmahis.

The Théâtre de la Nation was closed and the actors packed off to the Madelonnettes and to Pélagie.

“Do you call that liberty?” cried Rose Thévenin, raising her beautiful eyes to heaven in indignant protest.

“The players of the Théâtre de la Nation are aristocrats, and the *citoyen* François’ piece tends to make men regret the privileges of the noblesse.”

“Gentlemen,” said Rose Thévenin, “have you patience to listen only to those who flatter you?”

As midday approached everybody began to feel pangs of hunger and the little band marched back to the inn.

Évariste walked beside Élodie, smilingly recalling memories of their first meetings:

“Two young birds had fallen out of their nests on the roof on to the sill of your window. You brought the little creatures up by hand; one of them lived and in due time flew away. The other died in the nest of cotton-wool you had made him. ‘It was the one I loved best,’ I remember you said. That day, Élodie, you were wearing a red bow in your hair.”

Philippe Dubois and Brotteaux, a little behind the rest, were talking of Rome, where they had both been, the latter in ‘72, the other towards the last days of the Academy. Brotteaux indeed had never forgotten the Princess Mondragone, to whom he would most certainly have poured out his complaints but for the Count Altieri, who always followed her like her shadow. Nor did Philippe Dubois fail to mention that he had been invited to dine with Cardinal de Bernis and that he was the most obliging host in the world.

“I knew him,” said Brotteaux, “and I may add without boasting that I was for some while one of his most intimate friends; he had a taste for low society. He was an amiable man, and for all his affectation of telling fairy tales, there was more sound philosophy in his little finger than in the heads of all you Jacobins, who are for making us virtuous and God-fearing by Act of Parliament. Upon my word I prefer our simple-minded theophagists who know not what they say nor yet what they do, to these mad law-menders, who make it their business to guillotine us in order to render us wise and virtuous and adorers of the Supreme Being who has created them in His likeness. In former days I used to have Mass said in the Chapel at Les Ilettes by a poor devil of a Curé who used to say in his cups: ‘Don’t let’s speak ill of sinners; we live by ‘em, we priests, unworthy as we are!’ You must agree, sir, this prayer-monger held sound maxims of government. We should adopt his principles, and govern men as being what they are and not what we should like them to be.”

Rose Thévenin had meantime drawn closer to the old man. She knew he had lived on a grand scale, and the thought of this gilded the *ci-devant* financier’s present poverty, which she deemed less humiliating as being due to general

causes, the result of the public bankruptcy. She saw in him, with curiosity not unmixed with respect, the survival of one of those open-handed millionaires of whom her elder comrades of the stage spoke with sighs of unfeigned regret. Besides, the old fellow in his plum-coloured coat, so threadbare and so well brushed, pleased her by his agreeable address.

“Monsieur Brotteaux,” she said to him, “we know how once upon a time, in a noble park, on moonlight nights, you would slip into the shade of myrtle groves with actresses and dancing-girls to the far-off shrilling of flutes and fiddles.... Alas! they were more lovely, were they not, your goddesses of the Opera and the Comédie-Française, than we of to-day, we poor little National actresses?”

“Never think it, Mademoiselle,” returned Brotteaux, “but believe me, if one like you had been known in those days, she would have moved alone, as sovereign queen without a rival (little as she would have desired such solitude), in the park you are obliging enough to form so flattering a picture of....”

It was quite a rustic inn, this Hôtel de la Cloche. A branch of holly hung over the great waggon doors that opened on a courtyard where fowls were always pecking about in the damp soil. On the far side of this stood the house itself, consisting of a ground floor and one storey above, crowned by a high-pitched tiled roof and with walls almost hidden under old climbing rose-trees covered with blossom. To the right, trimmed fruit-trees showed their tops above the low garden wall. To the left was the stable, with an outside manger and a barn supported by wooden pillars. A ladder leaned against the wall. Here again, under a shed crowded with agricultural implements and stumps of trees, a white cock was keeping an eye on his hens from the top of a broken-down cabriolet. The courtyard was enclosed on this side by cow-sheds, in front of which rose in mountainous grandeur a dunghill which at this moment a girl as broad as she was long, with straw-coloured hair, was turning over with a pitchfork. The liquid manure filled her sabots and bathed her bare feet, and you could see the heels rise out of her shoes every now and then as yellow as saffron. Her petticoats were kilted and revealed the filth on her enormous calves and thick ankles. While Philippe Desmahis was staring at her, surprised and tickled by the whimsicalities of nature in framing this odd example of breadth without length, the landlord shouted:

“Ho, there! Tronche, my girl! go fetch some water!”

She turned her head, showing a scarlet face and a vast mouth in which one huge front tooth was missing. It had needed nothing less than a bull’s horn to effect a breach in that powerful jaw. She stood there grinning, pitchfork on shoulder. Her sleeves were rolled up and her arms, as thick as another woman’s thighs, gleamed in the sun.

The table was laid in the farm kitchen, where a brace of fowls was roasting, — they were almost done to a turn, — under the hood of the open fireplace, above which hung two or three old fowling-pieces by way of ornament. The bare whitewashed room, twenty feet long, was lighted only through the panes of greenish glass let into the door and by a single window, framed in roses, near which the grandmother sat turning her spinning-wheel. She wore a coif and a lace frilling in the fashion of the Regency. Her gnarled, earth-stained fingers held the distaff. Flies clustered about her lids without her trying to drive them away. As a child in her mother's arms, she had seen Louis XIV go by in his coach.

Sixty years ago she had made the journey to Paris. In a weak sing-song voice she told the tale to the three young women, standing in front of her, how she had seen the Hôtel de Ville, the Tuileries and the Samaritaine, and how, when she was crossing the Pont-Royal, a barge loaded with apples for the Marché du Mail had broken up, the apples had floated down the current and the river was all red with the rosy-cheeked fruit.

She had been told of the changes that had occurred of late in the kingdom, and in particular of the coil there was betwixt the curés who had taken the oath and the nonjuring curés. She knew likewise there had been wars and famines and portents in the sky. She did not believe the King was dead. They had contrived his escape, she *would* have it, by a subterranean passage, and had handed over to the headsman in his stead a man of the common people.

At the old woman's feet, in his wicker cradle, Jeannot, the last born of the Poitrines, was cutting his teeth. The *citoyenne* Thévenin lifted the cradle and smiled at the child, which moaned feebly, worn out with feverishness and convulsions. It must have been very ill, for they had sent for the doctor, the *citoyen* Pelleport, who, it is true, being a deputy-substitute to the Convention, asked no payment for his visits.

The *citoyenne* Thévenin, an innkeeper's daughter herself, was in her element; not satisfied with the way the farm-girl had washed the plates and dishes, she gave an extra wipe to the crockery and glass, an extra polish to the knives and forks. While the *citoyenne* Poitrine was attending to the soup, which she tasted from time to time as a good cook should, Élodie was cutting up into slices a four-pound loaf hot from the oven. Gamelin, when he saw what she was doing, addressed her:

"A few days ago I read a book written by a young German whose name I have forgotten, and which has been very well translated into French. In it you have a beautiful young girl named Charlotte, who, like you, Élodie, was cutting

bread and butter, and like you, cutting it gracefully, and so prettily that at the sight the young Werther fell in love with her.”

“And it ended in their marrying?” asked Élodie.

“No,” replied Évariste; “it ended in Werther’s death by violence.”

They dined well, they were all very hungry; but the fare was indifferent. Jean Blaise complained bitterly; he was a great trencherman and made it a rule of conduct to feed well; and no doubt what urged him to elaborate his gluttony into a system was the general scarcity. In every household the Revolution had overturned the cooking pot. The common run of citizens had nothing to chew upon. Clever folks like Jean Blaise, who made big profits amid the general wretchedness, went to the cookshop where they showed their astuteness by stuffing themselves to repletion. As for Brotteaux who, in this year II of liberty, was living on chestnuts and bread-crusts, he could remember having supped at Grimod de la Reynière’s at the near end of the Champs Élysées. Eager to win the repute of an accomplished gourmand he reeled off, sitting there before Dame Poitrine’s bacon and cabbages, a string of artful kitchen recipes and wise gastronomic maxims. Presently, when Gamelin protested that a Republican scorns the pleasures of the table, the old financier, always a lover of antiquity, gave the young Spartan the true recipe for the famous black broth.

After dinner, Jean Blaise, who never forgot business, set his itinerant academy to make studies and sketches of the inn, which struck him as quite romantic in its dilapidation. While Philippe Desmahis and Philippe Dubois were drawing the cow-houses the girl Tronche came out to feed the pigs. The *citoyen* Pelleport, officer of health, who at the same moment appeared at the door of the farm kitchen where he had been bestowing his professional services on the Poitrine baby, stepped up to the artists and after complimenting them on their talents, which were an honour to the whole nation, pointed to the Tronche girl in the middle of her porkers:

“You see that creature,” he said, “it is not one girl, it is two girls. I speak by the letter, understand that. I was amazed at the extraordinary massiveness of her bony framework and I examined her, to discover she had most of the bones in duplicate — in each thigh two femurs welded together, in each shoulder a double humerus. Some of her muscles are likewise in duplicate. It is a case, in my view, of a pair of twins associated or rather confounded together. It is an interesting phenomenon. I notified Monsieur Saint-Hilaire of the facts, and he thanked me. It is a monster you see before you, *citoyens*. The people here call her ‘the girl Tronche’; they should say ‘the girls Tronches,’ for there are two of them. Nature has these freaks.... Good evening, *citoyens*; we shall have a storm to-night....”

After supper by candle-light, the Academy Blaise adjourned to the courtyard

where they were joined by a son and daughter of the house in a game of blindman's-buff, in which the young folks, both men and women, displayed a feverish energy sufficiently accounted for by the high spirits proper to their age without seeking an explanation in the wild and precarious times in which they lived. When it was quite dark, Jean Blaise proposed children's games in the farm kitchen. Élodie suggested the game of "hunt my heart," and this was agreed to unanimously. Under the girl's direction Philippe Desmahis traced in chalk, on different pieces of furniture, on doors and walls, seven hearts, that is to say one less than there were players, for old Brotteaux had obligingly joined the rest. They danced round in a ring singing "La Tour, prends garde!" and at a signal from Élodie, each ran to put a hand on a heart. Gamelin in his absent-minded clumsiness was too late to find one vacant, and had to pay a forfeit, the little knife he had bought for six sous at the fair of Saint-Germain and with which he had cut the loaf for his mother in her poverty. The game went on, and one after the other Blaise, Élodie, Brotteaux and Rose Thévenin failed to touch a heart; each paid a forfeit in turn — a ring, a reticule, a little morocco-bound book, a bracelet. Then the forfeits were raffled on Élodie's lap, and each player had to redeem his property by showing his society accomplishments — singing a song or reciting a poem. Brotteaux chose the speech of the patron saint of France in the first canto of the *Pucelle* :

"Je suis Denis et saint de mon métier, J'aime la Gaule,..."

The *citoyen* Blaise, though a far less well-read man, replied without hesitation with Richemond's ripost:

"Monsieur le Saint, ce n'était pas la peine D'abandonner le céleste domaine...."

At that time everybody was reading and re-reading with delight the masterpiece of the French Ariosto; the most serious of men smiled over the loves of Jeanne and Dunois, the adventures of Agnès and Monrose and the exploits of the winged ass. Every man of cultivation knew by heart the choice passages of this diverting and philosophical poem. Évariste Gamelin himself, stern-tempered as he was, when he recovered his twopenny knife from Élodie's lap, recited the going down of Grisbourdon into hell, with a good deal of spirit. The *citoyenne* Thévenin sang without accompaniment Nina's ballad:

"Quand le bien-aimé reviendra. "

Desmahis sang to the tune of *La Faridondaine* :

"Quelques-uns prirent le cochon De ce bon saint Antoine, Et lui mettant un capuchon, Ils en firent un moine. Il n'en coûtait que la façon...."

All the same Desmahis was in a pensive mood. For the moment he was ardently in love with all the three women with whom he was playing forfeits, and was casting burning looks of soft appeal at each in turn. He loved Rose Thévenin for her grace, her supple figure, her clever acting, her roving glances, and her voice that went straight to a man's heart; he loved Élodie, because he recognized instinctively her rich endowment of temperament and her kind, complaisant humour; he loved Julianne Hasard, despite her colourless hair, her pale eyelashes, her freckles and her thin bust, because, like Dunois in Voltaire's *Pucelle*, he was always ready, in his generosity, to give the least engaging a token of love — and the more so in this instance because she appeared to be for the moment the most neglected, and therefore the most amenable to his attentions. Without a trace of vanity, he was never sure of these being agreeable; nor yet was he ever sure of their not being. So he never omitted to offer them on the chance. Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the game of forfeits, he made some tender speeches to Rose Thévenin, who showed no displeasure, but could hardly say much in return under the jealous eyes of the *citoyen* Jean Blaise. He spoke more warmly still to the *citoyenne* Élodie, whom he knew to be pledged to Gamelin, but he was not so exacting as to want a heart all to himself. Élodie could never care for him; but she thought him a handsome fellow and did not altogether succeed in hiding the fact from him. Finally, he whispered his most ardent vows in the ear of the *citoyenne* Hasard, which she received with an air of bewildered stupefaction that might equally express abject submission or chill indifference. And Desmahis did not believe she was indifferent to him.

The inn contained only two bedrooms, both on the first floor and opening on the same landing. That to the left, the better of the two, boasted a flowered paper and a looking-glass the size of a man's hand, the gilt frame of which had been blackened by generations of flies since the days when Louis XIV was a child. In it, under sprigged muslin curtains, stood two beds with down pillows, coverlets and counterpanes. This room was reserved for the three *citoyennes*.

When the time came to retire, Desmahis and the *citoyenne* Hasard, each holding a bedroom candlestick, wished each other good-night on the landing. The amorous engraver quickly passed a note to the colourman's daughter, beseeching her to come to him, when everybody was asleep, in the garret, which was over the *citoyennes'* chamber.

With judicious foresight, he had taken care in the course of the day to study the lie of the land and explore the garret in question, which was full of strings of onions, apples and pears left there to ripen with a swarm of wasps crawling over

them, chests and old trunks. He had even noticed an old bed of sacking, decrepit and now disused, as far as he could see, and a palliasse, all ripped up and jumping with fleas.

Facing the *citoyennes'* room was another of very modest dimensions containing three beds, where the men of the party were to sleep, in such comfort as they might. But Brotteaux, who was a Sybarite, betook himself to the barn to sleep among the hay. As for Jean Blaise, *he* had disappeared. Dubois and Gamelin were soon asleep. Desmahis went to bed; but no sooner had the silence of night, like a stagnant pool, enveloped the house, than the engraver got up and climbed the wooden staircase, which creaked under his bare feet. The door of the garret stood ajar. From within came a breath of stifling hot air, mingled with the acrid smell of rotting fruit. On the broken-down bed of sacking lay the girl Tronche, fast asleep with her mouth open.

Desmahis returned to his room, where he slept soundly and peacefully till daybreak.

On the morrow, after a last day's work, the itinerant Academy took the road back to Paris. When Jean Blaise paid mine host in assignats, the *citoyen* Poitrine complained bitterly that he never saw what he called "square money" nowadays, and promised a fine candle to the beggar who'd bring back the "yellow boys" again.

He offered the *citoyennes* their pick of flowers. At his orders, the girl Tronche mounted on a ladder in her sabots and kilted skirts, giving a full view of her noble, much-bespattered calves, and was indefatigable in cutting blossoms from the climbing roses that covered the wall. From her huge hands the flowers fell in showers, in torrents, in avalanches, into the laps of Élodie, Julienne, and Rose Thévenin, who held out their skirts to catch them. The carriage was full of them. The whole party, when they got back at nightfall, carried armfuls home, and their sleeping and waking were perfumed with their fragrance.

XI

In the forenoon of the 7th September the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, on her way to visit Gamelin, the new juror, whose interest she wished to solicit on behalf of an acquaintance, who had been denounced as a suspect, encountered on the landing the *ci-devant* Brotteaux des Ilettes, who had been her lover in the old happy days. Brotteaux was just starting to deliver a gross of dancing-dolls of his manufacture to the toy-merchant in the Rue de la Loi; for their more convenient carriage he had hit on the idea of tying them at the end of a pole, as the street hawkers do with their commodities. His manners were always chivalrous towards women, even to those whose fascination for him had been blunted by long familiarity, as could hardly fail to be the case with Madame de Rochemaure, — unless indeed he found her appetizing with the added seasoning of betrayal, absence, unfaithfulness and fat. Be this as it may, he now greeted her on the sordid stairs with their cracked tiles as courteously as he had ever done on the steps before the entrance-door of Les Ilettes, and begged her to do him the honour of entering his garret. She climbed the ladder nimbly enough and found herself under a timbering, the sloping beams of which supported a tiled roof pierced with a skylight. It was impossible to stand upright. She sat down on the only chair there was in the wretched place; after a brief glance at the broken tiling, she asked in a tone of surprise and sorrow:

“Is this where you live, Maurice? You need have little fear of intruders. One must be an imp or a cat to find you here.”

“I am cramped for space,” returned the *ci-devant* millionaire; “and I do not deny the fact that sometimes it rains on my pallet. It is a trifling inconvenience. And on fine nights I can see the moon, symbol and confidant of men’s loves. For the moon, Madame, since the world began, has been apostrophized by lovers, and at her full, with her pale round face, she recalls to the fond swain’s mind the object of his desires.”

“I know,” sighed the *citoyenne* .

“When their time comes the cats make a fine pandemonium in the rain gutter yonder. But we must forgive love if it makes them caterwaul and swear on the tiles, seeing how it fills the lives of men with torments and villanies.”

Both had had the tact to greet each other as friends who had parted the night before to take their night’s rest, and though grown strangers to each other, they conversed with a good grace and on a footing of friendliness.

At the same time Madame de Rochemaure seemed pensive. The Revolution, which had for a long while been pleasant and profitable to her, was now a source of anxiety and disquietude; her suppers were growing less brilliant and less merry. The notes of her harp no longer charmed the cloud from sombre faces. Her play-tables were forsaken by the most lavish punters. Many of her cronies, now numbered among the suspects, were in hiding; her lover, Morhardt the financier, was under arrest, and it was on his behalf she had come to sound the juror Gamelin. She was suspect herself. A posse of National Guards had made a search at her house, had turned out the drawers of her cabinets, prised up boards in her floor, thrust their bayonets into her mattresses. They had found nothing, had made their apologies and drunk her wine. But they had come very near lighting on her correspondence with an *émigré*, Monsieur d'Expilly. Certain friends he had among the Jacobins had warned her that Henry, her handsome favourite, was beginning to compromise his party by his violent language, which was too extravagant to be sincere.

Elbows on knees and head on fist, she sat buried in thought; then turning to her old lover sitting on the palliasse, she asked:

“What do you think of it all, Maurice?”

“I think these good gentry give a philosopher and an amateur of the shows of life abundant matter for reflection and amusement; but that it would be better for you, my dear, if you were out of France.”

“Maurice, where will it land us?”

“That is what you asked me, Louise, one day we were driving on the banks of the Cher, on the road to Les Ilettes; the horse, you remember, had taken the bit in his teeth and was galloping off with us at a frantic pace. How inquisitive women are! to-day, for the second time, you want to know where we are going to. Ask the fortune-tellers. I am not a wizard, sweetheart. And philosophy, even the soundest, is of small help for revealing the future. These things will have an end; everything has. One may foresee divers issues. The triumph of the Coalition and the entry of the allies into Paris. They are not far off; yet I doubt if they will get there. These soldiers of the Republic take their beatings with a zest nothing can extinguish. It may be Robespierre will marry Madame Royale and have himself proclaimed Protector of the Kingdom during the minority of Louis XVII.”

“You think so!” exclaimed the *citoyenne*, agog to have a hand in so promising an intrigue.

“Again it may be,” Brotteaux went on, “that La Vendée will win the day and the rule of the priests be set up again over heaps of ruins and piles of corpses. You cannot conceive, dear heart, the empire the clergy still wields over the masses of the foolish,... I beg pardon, I meant to say, — of ‘the Faithful’; it was

a slip of the tongue. The most likely thing, in my poor opinion, is that the Revolutionary Tribunal will bring about the destruction of the régime it has established; it is a menace over too many heads. Those it terrifies are without number; they will unite together, and to destroy it they will destroy the whole system of government. I think you have got our young friend Gamelin posted to this court. He is virtuous; he will be implacable. The more I think of it, fair friend, the more convinced I am that this Tribunal, set up to save the Republic, will destroy it. The Convention has resolved to have, like Royalty, its *Grands Jours*, its *Chambre Ardente*, and to provide for its security by means of magistrates appointed by itself and by it kept in subjection. But how inferior are the Convention's *Grands Jours* to those of the Monarchy, and its *Chambre Ardente* to that of Louis XIV! The Revolutionary Tribunal is dominated by a sentiment of mean-spirited justice and common equality that will quickly make it odious and ridiculous and will disgust everybody. Do you know, Louise, that this tribunal, which is about to cite to its bar the Queen of France and twenty-one legislators, yesterday condemned a servant-girl convicted of crying: 'Vive le Roi!' with malicious intent and in the hope of destroying the Republic? Our judges, with their black hats and plumes, are working on the model of that William Shakespeare, so dear to the heart of Englishmen, who drags in coarse buffooneries in the middle of his most tragic scenes."

"Ah, well! Maurice," asked the *citoyenne*, "are you still as fortunate as ever with women?"

"Alas!" replied Brotteaux, "the doves flock to the bright new dovecote and light no more on the ruined tower."

"You have not changed.... Good-bye, dear friend, — till we meet again."

The same evening the dragoon Henry, paying a visit uninvited at Madame de Rochemaure's, found her in the act of sealing a letter on which he read the address of the *citoyen* Rauline at Vernon. The letter, he knew, was for England. Rauline used to receive Madame de Rochemaure's communications by a postilion of the posting-service and send them on to Dieppe by the hands of a fishwife. The master of a fishing-smack delivered them under cover of night to a British ship cruising off the coast; an *émigré*, Monsieur d'Expilly, received them in London and passed them on, if he thought it advisable, to the Cabinet of Saint James's.

Henry was young and good looking; Achilles was not such a paragon of grace and vigour when he donned the armour Ulysses offered him. But the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, once so enraptured by the charms of the young hero of the

Commune, now looked askance at him; her mood had changed since the day she was told how the young soldier had been denounced at the Jacobins as one whose zeal outran discretion and that he might compromise and ruin her. Henry thought it might not break his heart perhaps to leave off loving Madame de Rochemaure; but he was piqued to have fallen in her good graces. He counted on her to meet sundry expenses in which the service of the Republic had involved him. Last but not least, remembering to what extremities women will proceed and how they go in a flash from the most ardent tenderness to the coldest indifference, and how easy they find it to sacrifice what once they held dear and destroy what once they adored, he began to suspect that some day his fascinating mistress might have him thrown into prison to get rid of him. Common prudence urged him to regain his lost ascendancy and to this end he had come armed with all his fascinations. He came near, drew away, came near again, hovered round her, ran from her, in the approved fashion of seduction in the ballet. Then he threw himself in an armchair and in his irresistible voice, his voice that went straight to women's hearts, he extolled the charms of nature and solitude and with a lovelorn sigh proposed an expedition to Ermenonville.

Meanwhile she was striking chords on her harp and looking about her with an expression of impatience and boredom. Suddenly Henry got up with a gesture of gloomy resolution and informed her that he was starting for the army and in a few days would be before Maubeuge.

Without a sign either of scepticism or surprise she nodded her approval.

"You congratulate me on my decision?"

"I do indeed."

She was expecting a new admirer who was infinitely to her taste and from whom she hoped to reap great advantages, — a contrast in every way to the old, a Mirabeau come to life again, a Danton rehabilitated and turned army-contractor, a lion who talked of pitching every patriot into the Seine. She was on tenter-hooks, thinking to hear the bell ring at any moment.

To hasten Henry's departure, she fell silent, yawned, fingered a score, and yawned again. Seeing he made no move to go, she told him she had to go out and withdrew into her dressing-room.

He called to her in a broken voice:

"Farewell, Louise!... Shall I ever see you again?" — and his hands were busy fumbling in the open writing-desk.

When he reached the street, he opened the letter addressed to the *citoyen* Rauline and read it with absorbed attention. Indeed it drew a curious picture of the state of public feeling in France. It spoke of the Queen, of the actress Rose

Thévenin, of the Revolutionary Tribunal and a host of confidential remarks emanating from that worthy, Brotteaux des Ilettes, were repeated in it.

Having read to the end and restored the missive to his pocket, he stood hesitating a few moments; then, like a man who has made up his mind and says to himself “the sooner the better,” he turned his steps to the Tuileries and found his way into the antechamber of the Committee of General Security.

The same day, at three o’clock of the afternoon, Évariste Gamelin was seated on the jurors’ bench along with fourteen colleagues, most of whom he knew, simple-minded, honest, patriotic folks, savants, artists or artisans, — a painter like himself, an artist in black-and-white, both men of talent, a surgeon, a cobbler, a *ci-devant* marquis, who had given high proofs of patriotism, a printer, two or three small tradesmen, a sample lot in a word of the inhabitants of Paris. There they sat, in the workman’s blouse or bourgeois coat, with their hair close-cropped *à la Titus* or clubbed *à la catogan* ; there were cocked-hats tilted over the eyes, round hats clapped on the back of the head, red caps of liberty smothering the ears. Some were dressed in coat, flapped waistcoat and breeches, as in olden days, others in the *carmagnole* and striped trousers of the sansculottes. Wearing top-boots or buckled shoes or sabots, they offered in their persons every variety of masculine attire prevalent at that date. Having all of them occupied their places on several previous occasions, they seemed very much at their ease, and Gamelin envied them their unconcern. His own heart was thumping, his ears roaring; a mist was before his eyes and everything about him took on a livid tinge.

When the usher announced the opening of the sitting, three judges took their places on a raised platform of no great size in front of a green table. They wore hats cockaded and crowned with great black plumes and the official cloak with a tricolour riband from which a heavy silver medal was suspended on the breast. In front of them at the foot of the *daïs*, sat the deputy of the Public Prosecutor, similarly attired. The clerk of the court had a seat between the judges’ bench and the prisoner’s chair, at present unoccupied. To Gamelin’s eyes these men wore a different aspect from that of every day; they seemed nobler, graver, more alarming, albeit their bearing was commonplace enough as they turned over papers, beckoned to an usher or leant back to listen to some communication from a jurymen or an officer of the court.

Above the judges’ heads hung the tables of the Rights of Man; to their right and left, against the old feudal walls, the busts of Le Peltier Saint-Fargeau and Marat. Facing the jury bench, at the lower end of the hall, rose the public gallery.

The first row of seats was filled by women, who all, fair, brown and grey-haired alike, wore the high coif with the pleated tucker shading their cheeks; the breast, which invariably, as decreed by the fashion of the day, showed the amplitude of the nursing mother's bosom, was covered with a crossed white kerchief or the rounded bib of a blue apron. They sat with folded arms resting on the rail of the tribune. Behind them, scattered about the rising tiers, could be seen a sprinkling of citizens dressed in the varied garb which at that date gave every gathering so striking and picturesque a character. On the right hand, near the doors, behind a broad barrier, a space was reserved where the public could stand. On this occasion it was nearly empty. The business that was to occupy the attention of this particular section of the tribunal interested only a few spectators, while doubtless the other sections sitting at the same hour would be hearing more exciting cases.

This fact somewhat reassured Gamelin; his heart was like to fail him as it was, and he could not have endured the heated atmosphere of one of the great days. His eyes took in the most trifling details of the scene, — the cotton-wool in the *greffier's* ear and a blot of ink on the Deputy Prosecutor's papers. He could see, as through a magnifying glass, the capitals of the pillars sculptured at a time when all knowledge of the classical orders was forgotten and which crowned the Gothic columns with wreaths of nettle and holly. But wherever he looked, his gaze came back again and again to the fatal chair; this was of an antiquated make, covered in red Utrecht velvet, the seat worn and the arms blackened with use. Armed National Guards stood guarding every door.

At last the accused appeared, escorted by grenadiers, but with limbs unbound, as the law directed. He was a man of fifty or thereabouts, lean and dry, with a brown face, a very bald head, hollow cheeks and thin livid lips, dressed in an out-of-date coat of a sanguine red. No doubt it was fever that made his eyes glitter like jewels and gave his cheeks their shiny, varnished look. He took his seat. His legs, which he crossed, were extraordinarily spare and his great knotted hands met round the knees they clasped. His name was Marie-Adolphe Guillergues, and he was accused of malversation in the supply of forage to the Republican troops. The act of indictment laid to his charge numerous and serious offences, of which no single one was positively certain. Under examination, Guillergues denied the majority of the charges and explained the rest in a light favourable to himself. He spoke in a cold, precise way, with a marked ability and gave the impression of being a dangerous man to have business dealings with. He had an answer for everything. When the judge asked him an embarrassing question, his face remained unmoved and his voice confident, but his two hands,

folded on his breast, kept twitching in an agony. Gamelin was struck by this and whispered to the colleague sitting next him, a painter like himself:

“Watch his thumbs!”

The first witness to depose alleged a number of most damaging facts. He was the mainstay of the prosecution. Those on the other hand who followed showed themselves well disposed to the prisoner. The Deputy of the Public Prosecutor spoke strongly, but did not go beyond generalities. The advocate for the defence adopted a tone of bluff conviction of his client's innocence that earned the accused a sympathy he had failed to secure by his own efforts. The sitting was suspended and the jury assembled in the room set apart for deliberation. There, after a confused and confusing discussion, they found themselves divided in two groups about equal in number. On the one side were the unemotional, the lukewarm, the men of reason, whom no passion could stir, on the other the kind who let their feelings guide them, who prove all but inaccessible to argument and only consult their heart. These always voted guilty. They were the true metal, pure and unadulterated; their only thought was to save the Republic and they cared not a straw for anything else. Their attitude made a strong impression on Gamelin who felt he was of the same kidney himself.

“This Guillergues,” he thought to himself, “is a cunning scamp, a villain who has speculated in the forage supplied to our cavalry. To acquit him is to let a traitor escape, to be false to the fatherland, to devote the army to defeat.” And in a flash Gamelin could see the Hussars of the Republic, mounted on stumbling horses, sabred by the enemy's cavalry.... “But if Guillergues was innocent...?”

Suddenly he remembered Jean Blaise, likewise suspected of bad faith in the matter of supplies. There were bound to be many others acting like Guillergues and Blaise, contriving disaster, ruining the Republic! An example must be made. But if Guillergues was innocent...?

“There are no proofs,” said Gamelin, aloud.

“There never are,” retorted the foreman of the jury, shrugging his shoulders; he was good metal, pure metal!

In the end, there proved to be seven votes for condemnation, eight for acquittal.

The jury re-entered the hall and the sitting was resumed. The jurors were required to give reasons for their verdict, and each spoke in turn facing the empty chair. Some were prolix, others confined themselves to a sentence; one or two talked unintelligible gabble.

When Gamelin's turn came, he rose and said:

“In presence of a crime so heinous as that of robbing the defenders of the fatherland of the sinews of victory, we need formal proofs which we have not

got.”

By a majority of votes the accused was declared not guilty.

Guillergues was brought in again and stood before his judges amid a hum of sympathy from the spectators which conveyed the news of his acquittal to him. He was another man. His features had lost their harshness, his lips were relaxed again. He looked venerable; his face bore the impression of innocence. The President read out in tones of emotion the verdict releasing the prisoner; the audience broke into applause. The gendarme who had brought Guillergues in threw himself into his arms. The President called him to the daïs and gave him the embrace of brotherhood. The jurors kissed him, while Gamelin’s eyes rained hot tears.

The courtyard of the Palais, dimly lighted by the last rays of the setting sun, was filled with a howling, excited crowd. The four sections of the Tribunal had the day before pronounced thirty sentences of death, and on the steps of the Great Stairway a throng of *tricoteuses* squatted to see the tumbrils start. But Gamelin, as he descended the steps among the press of jurors and spectators, saw nothing, heard nothing but his own act of justice and humanity and the self-congratulation he felt at having recognized innocence. In the courtyard stood Élodie, all in white, smiling through her tears; she threw herself into his arms and lay there half fainting. When she had recovered her voice, she said to him:

“Évariste, you are noble, you are good, you are generous! In the hall there, your voice, so gentle and manly, went right through me with its magnetic waves. It electrified me. I gazed at you on your bench, I could see no one but you. But you, dear heart, you never guessed I was there? Nothing told you I was present? I sat in the gallery in the second row to the right. By heaven! how sweet it is to do the right! you saved that unhappy man’s life. Without you, it was all over with him; he was as good as dead. You have given him back to life and the love of his friends. At this moment he must bless you. Évariste, how happy I am and how proud to love you!”

Arm in arm, pressed close to one another, they went along the streets; their bodies felt so light they seemed to be flying.

They went to the *Amour peintre*. On reaching the Oratoire:

“Better not go through the shop,” Élodie suggested.

She made him go in by the main coach-door and mount the stairs with her to the suite of rooms above. On the landing she drew out of her reticule a heavy iron key.

“It might be the key of a prison,” she exclaimed, “Évariste, you are going to be my prisoner.”

They crossed the dining-room and were in the girl’s bedchamber.

Évariste felt upon his the ardent freshness of Élodie's lips. He pressed her in his arms; with head thrown back and swooning eyes, her hair flowing loose over her relaxed form, half fainting, she escaped his hold and ran to shoot the bolt....

The night was far advanced when the *citoyenne* Blaise opened the outer door of the flat for her lover and whispered to him in the darkness.

“Good-bye, sweetheart! it is the hour my father will be coming home. If you hear a noise on the stairs, go up quick to the higher floor and don't come down till all danger is over of your being seen. To have the street-door opened, give three raps on the *concierge's* window. Good-bye, my life, good-bye, my soul!”

When he found himself in the street, he saw the window of Élodie's chamber half unclose and a little hand pluck a red carnation, which fell at his feet like a drop of blood.

XII

One evening when old Brotteaux arrived in the Rue de la Loi bringing a gross of dancing-dolls for the *citoyen* Caillou, the toy-merchant, the latter, a soft-spoken, polite man as a rule, stood there stiff and stern among his dolls and punch-and-judies and gave him a far from gracious welcome.

"Have a care, *citoyen* Brotteaux," he began, "have a care! There is a time to laugh, and a time to be serious; jokes are not always in good taste. A member of the Committee of Security of the Section, who inspected my establishment yesterday, saw your dancing-dolls and deemed them anti-revolutionary."

"He was jesting!" declared Brotteaux.

"Not so, *citoyen*, not at all. He is not the man to joke. He said in these little fellows the National representatives were insidiously mimicked, that in particular one could discover caricatures of Couthon, Saint-Just and Robespierre, and he seized the lot. It is a dead loss to me, to say nothing of the grave risks to which I am exposed."

"What! these Harlequins, these Gilles, these Scaramouches, these Colins and Colinettes, which I have painted the same as Boucher used to fifty years ago, how should they be parodies of Couthons and Saint-Justs? No sensible man could imagine such a thing."

"It is possible," replied the *citoyen* Caillou, "that you acted without malice, albeit we must always distrust a man of parts like you. But it is a dangerous game. Shall I give you an instance? Natoile, who runs a little outdoor theatre in the Champs Élysées, was arrested the day before yesterday for anti-patriotism, because he made Polichinelle poke fun at the Convention."

"Now listen to me," Brotteaux urged, raising the cloth that covered his little dangling figures; "just look at these masks and faces, are they anything else whatever but characters in plays and pastorals? How could you let yourself be persuaded, *citoyen* Caillou, that I was making fun of the National Convention?"

Brotteaux was dumfounded. While allowing much for human folly, he had not thought it possible it could ever go so far as to suspect his Scaramouches and Colinettes. Repeatedly he protested their innocence and his; but the *citoyen* Caillou would not hear a word.

"*Citoyen* Brotteaux, take your dolls away. I esteem you, I honour you, but I do not mean to incur blame or get into trouble because of you. I intend to remain a good citizen and to be treated as such. Good evening, *citoyen* Brotteaux; take your dolls away."

The old man set out again for home, carrying his suspects over his shoulder at the end of a pole, an object of derision to the children, who took him for the hawker of rat-poison. His thoughts were gloomy. No doubt, he did not live only by his dancing-dolls; he used to paint portraits at twenty *sols* apiece, under the archways of doors or in one of the market halls, among the darners and old-clothes menders, where he found many a young recruit starting for the front and wanting to leave his likeness behind for his sweetheart. But these petty tasks cost him endless pains, and he was a long way from making as good portraits as he did dancing-dolls. Sometimes, too, he acted as amanuensis for the Market dames, but this meant mixing himself up in Royalist plots, and the risks were heavy. He remembered there lived in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, near the erstwhile Place Vendôme, another toy-merchant, Joly by name, and he resolved to go next day to offer him the goods the chicken-hearted Caillou had declined.

A fine rain began to fall. Brotteaux who feared its effects on his marionettes, quickened his pace. As he crossed the Pont-Neuf and was turning the corner of the Place de Thionville, he saw by the light of a street-lamp, sitting on a stone post, a lean old man who seemed utterly exhausted with fatigue and hunger, but still preserved his venerable appearance. He was dressed in a tattered surtout, had no hat and appeared over sixty. Approaching the poor wretch, Brotteaux recognised the Père Longuemare, the same he had saved from hanging six months before while both of them were waiting in queue in front of the bakery in the Rue de Jérusalem. Feeling bound to the monk by the service he had already done him, Brotteaux stepped up to him and made himself known as the publican who had stood beside him among the common herd, one day of great scarcity, and asked him if he could not be of some use to him.

“You seem wearied, Father. Take a taste of cordial,” — and Brotteaux drew from the pocket of his plum-coloured coat a flask of brandy, which lay there alongside his Lucretius.

“Drink. And I will help you to get back to your house.”

The Père Longuemare pushed away the flask with his hand and tried to rise, but only to fall back again in his seat.

“Sir,” he said in a weak but firm voice, “for three months I have been living at Picpus. Being warned they had come to arrest me at my lodging, yesterday at five o’clock of the afternoon, I did not return home. I have no place to go to; I am wandering the streets and am a little fatigued.”

“Very well, Father,” proposed Brotteaux, “do me the honour to share my garret.”

“Sir,” replied the Barnabite, “you know, I suppose, I am a suspect.”

“I am one too,” said Brotteaux, “and my marionettes into the bargain, which is the worst thing of all. You see them exposed under this flimsy cloth to the fine rain that chills our bones. For, I must tell you, Father, that after having been a publican, I now make dancing-dolls for a living.”

The Père Longuemare took the hand the *ci-devant* financier extended to him and accepted the hospitality offered. Brotteaux, in his garret, served him a meal of bread and cheese and wine, which last he had put to cool in the rain-gutter, for was he not a Sybarite?

Having appeased his hunger:

“Sir,” said the Père Longuemare, “I ought to inform you of the circumstances that led to my flight and left me to die on yonder post where you found me. Driven from my cloister, I lived on the scanty allowance the Assembly had assigned to me; I gave lessons in Latin and Mathematics and I wrote pamphlets on the persecution of the Church of France. I have even composed a work of some length, to prove that the Constitutional oath of the Priests is subversive of Ecclesiastical discipline. The advances made by the Revolution deprived me of all my pupils, while I could not get my pension because I had not the certificate of citizenship required by law. This certificate I went to the Hôtel de Ville to claim, in the conviction I was well entitled to it. Member of an order founded by the Apostle Paul himself, who boasted the title of Roman citizen, I always piqued myself on behaving after his example as a good French citizen, a respecter of all human laws which are not in opposition to the Divine. I presented my demand to Monsieur Colin, pork-butcher and Municipal officer, in charge of the delivery of certificates of the sort. He questioned me as to my calling. I told him I was a Priest. He asked me if I was married, and on my answering that I was not, he told me that was the worse for me. Finally, after a variety of questions, he asked me if I had proved my citizenship on the 10th August, the 2nd September and the 31st May. ‘No certificates can be given,’ he added, ‘except to such as have proved their patriotism by their behaviour on these three occasions.’ I could not give him an answer that would satisfy him. However, he took down my name and address and promised me to make prompt enquiry into my case. He kept his word, and as the result of his enquiry two Commissioners of the Committee of General Security of Picpus, supported by an armed band, presented themselves at my lodging in my absence to conduct me to prison. I do not know of what crime I am accused. But you will agree with me one must pity Monsieur Colin, whose wits are so clouded he holds it a reproach to an ecclesiastic not to have made display of his patriotism on the 10th August, the 2nd September, and the 31st May. A man capable of such a notion is surely deserving of commiseration.”

"I am in the same plight, I have no certificate," observed Brotteaux. "We are both suspects. But you are weary. To bed, Father. We will discuss plans tomorrow for your safety."

He gave the mattress to his guest and kept the palliasse for himself; but the monk in his humility demanded the latter with so much urgency that his wish had to be complied with; otherwise he would have slept on the boards.

These arrangements completed, Brotteaux blew out the candle both to save tallow and as a wise precaution.

"Sir," the monk addressed him, "I am thankful for what you are doing for me; but alas! it is of small moment to you whether I am grateful or no. May God account your act meritorious! *That* is of infinite concern for you. But God pays no heed to what is not done for his glory and is merely the outcome of purely natural virtue. Wherefore I beseech you, sir, to do for Him what you were led to do for me."

"Father," answered Brotteaux, "never trouble yourself on this head and do not think of gratitude. What I am doing now, the merit of which you exaggerate, — is not done for any love of you; for indeed, albeit you are a lovable man, Father, I know you too little to love you. Nor yet do I act so for love of humanity; for I am not so simple as to think with 'Don Juan' that humanity has rights; indeed this prejudice, in a mind so emancipated as his, grieves me. I do it out of that selfishness which inspires mankind to perform all their deeds of generosity and self-sacrifice, by making them recognize themselves in all who are unfortunate, by disposing them to commiserate their own calamities in the calamities of others and by inciting them to offer help to a mortal resembling themselves in nature and destiny, so that they think they are succouring themselves in succouring him. I do it also for lack of anything better to do; for life is so desperately insipid we must find distraction at any cost, and benevolence is an amusement, of a mawkish sort, one indulges in for want of any more savoury; I do it out of pride and to get an advantage over you; I do it, in a word, as part of a system and to show you what an atheist is capable of."

"Do not calumniate yourself, sir," replied the Père Longuemare. "I have received of God more marks of grace than He has accorded you hitherto; but I am not as good a man as you, and am greatly your inferior in natural merits. But now let me take an advantage too over you. Not knowing me, you cannot love me. And I, sir, without knowing you, I love you better than myself; God bids me do so."

Having so said, the Père Longuemare knelt down on the floor, and after repeating his prayers, stretched himself on his palliasse and fell peacefully asleep.

XIII

Evariste Gamelin occupied his place as juror of the Tribunal for the second time. Before the opening of the sitting, he discussed with his colleagues the news that had arrived that morning. Some of it was doubtful, some untrue; but part was authentic — and appalling; the armies of the coalition in command of all the roads and marching *en masse* on Paris, La Vendée triumphant, Lyons in insurrection, Toulon surrendered to the English, who were landing fourteen thousand men there.

For him and his fellow magistrates these were not only events of interest to all the world, but so many matters of domestic concern. Foredoomed to perish in the ruin of the fatherland, they made the public salvation their own proper business. The Nation's interests, thus entangled with their own, dictated their opinions and passions and conduct.

Gamelin, where he sat on the jury bench, was handed a letter from Trubert, Secretary of the Committee of Defence; it was to notify his appointment as Commissioner of Supplies of Powder and Saltpetre:

"You will excavate all the cellars in the Section in order to extract the substances necessary for the manufacture of powder. To-morrow perhaps the enemy will be before Paris; the soil of the fatherland must provide us with the lightning we shall launch against our aggressors. I send you herewith a schedule of instructions from the Convention regarding the manipulation of saltpetres. Farewell and brotherly greeting."

At that moment the accused was brought in. He was one of the last of the defeated Generals whom the Convention delivered over one after the other to the Tribunal, and the most insignificant. At sight of him Gamelin shuddered; once again he seemed to see the same soldier whom three weeks before, looking on as a spectator, he had seen sentenced and sent to the guillotine. The man was the same, with his obstinate, opinionated look; the procedure was the same. He gave his answers in a cunning, brutish way that ruined the effect even of the most convincing. His cavilling and chicanery and the accusations he levelled against his subordinates, made you forget he was fulfilling the honourable task of defending his honour and his life. Everything was uncertain, every statement disputed, — position of the armies, total of forces engaged, munitions of war, orders given, orders received, movements of troops; nobody knew anything. It was impossible to make head or tail of these confused, nonsensical, aimless operations which had ended in disaster; defending counsel and the accused

himself were as much in the dark as were accuser, judges, and jury, and strange to say, not a soul would admit, whether to himself or to other people, that this was the case. The judges took a childish delight in drawing plans and discussing problems of tactics and strategy, while the prisoner constantly betrayed his inborn predilection for crooked ways.

The arguments dragged on endlessly. And all the time Gamelin could see on the rough roads of the north the ammunition wagons stogged in the mire and the guns capsized in the ruts, and along all the ways the broken and beaten columns flying in disorder, while from all sides the enemy's cavalry was debouching by the abandoned defiles. And from this host of men betrayed he could hear a mighty shout going up in accusation of the General. When the hearing closed, darkness was falling on the hall, and the head of Marat gleamed half-seen like a phantom above the President's head. The jury was called upon to give judgment, but was of two minds. Gamelin, in a hoarse, strangled voice, but in resolute accents, declared the accused guilty of treason against the Republic, and a murmur of approval rose from the crowd, a flattering unction to his youthful virtue. The sentence was read by the light of torches which cast a lurid, uncertain gleam on the prisoner's hollow temples beaded with drops of sweat. Outside the doors, on the steps crowded with the customary swarm of cockaded haridans, Gamelin could hear his name, which the habitués of the Tribunal were beginning to know, passed from mouth to mouth, and was assailed by a bevy of *tricoteuses* who shook their fists in his face, demanding the head of *the Austrian* .

The next day Évariste had to give judgment on the fate of a poor woman, the widow Meyrion. She distributed bread from house to house and tramped the streets pushing a little hand-cart and carrying a wooden tally hung at her waist, on which she cut notches with her knife representing the number of the loaves she had delivered. Her gains amounted to eight sous a day. The deputy of the Public Prosecutor displayed an extraordinary virulence towards the wretched creature, who had, it appears, shouted "Vive le Roi!" on several occasions, uttered anti-revolutionary remarks in the houses where she called to leave the daily dole of bread, and been mixed up in a plot for the escape of the woman Capet. In answer to the Judge's question she admitted the facts alleged against her; whether fool or fanatic, she professed Royalist sentiments of the most enthusiastic sort and waited her doom.

The Revolutionary Tribunal made a point of proving the triumph of Equality by showing itself just as severe for street-porters and servant maids as for the aristocrats and financiers. Gamelin could conceive no other system possible under a popular government. He would have deemed it a mark of contempt, an insult to the people, to exclude it from punishment. That would have been to

consider it, so to speak, as unworthy of chastisement by the law. Reserved for aristocrats only, the guillotine would have appeared to him in the light of an iniquitous privilege. In his thoughts he was beginning to erect chastisement into a religious and mystic dogma, to assign it a virtue, a merit of its own; he conceived that society owes punishment to criminals and that it is doing them an injustice to cheat them of this right. He declared the woman Meyrion guilty and deserving of death, only regretting that the fanatics, more culpable than herself, who had brought her to her ruin, were not there to share her fate.

Every evening almost Évariste attended the meetings of the Jacobins, who assembled in the former chapel of the Dominicans, commonly known as Jacobins, in the Rue Honoré. In a courtyard, in which stood a tree of Liberty, a poplar whose leaves shook and rustled all day in the wind, the chapel, built in a poor, clumsy style and surmounted by a heavy roof of tiles, showed its bare gable, pierced by a round window and an arched doorway, above which floated the National colours, the flagstaff crowned with the cap of Liberty. The Jacobins, like the Cordeliers, and the Feuillants, had appropriated the premises and taken the name of the dispossessed monks. Gamelin, once a regular attendant at the sittings of the Cordeliers, did not find at the Jacobins the familiar sabots, carmagnoles and rallying cries of the Dantonists. In Robespierre's club administrative reserve and bourgeois gravity were the order of the day. The Friend of the People was no more, and since his death Évariste had followed the lessons of Maximilien whose thought ruled the Jacobins, and thence, through a thousand affiliated societies was disseminated over all France. During the reading of the minutes, his eyes wandered over the bare, dismal walls, which, after sheltering the spiritual sons of the arch-inquisitor of heresy, now looked down on the assemblage of zealous inquisitors of crimes against the fatherland.

There, without pomp or ceremony, sat the body that was the chiefest power of the State and ruled by force of words. It governed the city, the empire, dictated its decrees to the Convention itself. These artisans of the new order of things, so respectful of the law that they continued Royalists in 1791 and would fain have been Royalists still on the King's return from Varennes, so obstinate in their attachment to the Constitution, friends of the established order of the State even after the massacres of the Champ-de-Mars, and never revolutionaries against the Revolution, heedless of popular agitation, cherished in their dark and puissant soul a love of the fatherland that had given birth to fourteen armies and set up the guillotine. Évariste was lost in admiration of their vigilance, their suspicious temper, their reasoned dogmatism, their love of system, their supremacy in the art of governing, their sovereign sanity.

The public that formed the audience gave no token of their presence save a low, long-drawn murmur as of one voice, like the rustling of the leaves of the tree of Liberty that stood outside the threshold.

That day, the 11th Vendémiaire, a young man, with a receding brow, a piercing eye, a sharp prominent nose, a pointed chin, a pock-marked face, a look of cold self-possession, mounted the tribune slowly. His hair was white with powder and he wore a blue coat that displayed his slim figure. He showed the precise carriage and moved with the cadenced step that made some say in mockery that he was like a dancing-master and earned him from others the name of the "French Orpheus." Robespierre, speaking in a clear voice, delivered an eloquent discourse against the enemies of the Republic. He belaboured with metaphysical and uncompromising arguments Brissot and his accomplices. He spoke at great length, in free-flowing harmonious periods. Soaring in the celestial spheres of philosophy, he launched his lightnings at the base conspirators crawling on the ground.

Évariste heard and understood. Till then he had blamed the Gironde; were they not working for the restoration of the monarchy or the triumph of the Orleans faction, were they not planning the ruin of the heroic city that had delivered France from her fetters and would one day deliver the universe? Now, as he listened to the sage's voice, he discerned truths of a higher and purer compass; he grasped a revolutionary metaphysic which lifted his mind above coarse, material conditions into a region of absolute, unqualified convictions, untrammelled by the errors of the senses. Things are in their nature involved and full of confusion; the complexity of circumstances is such that we lose our way amongst them. Robespierre simplified them to his mind, put good and evil before him in clear and precise formulas. Federalism, — indivisibility; unity and indivisibility meant salvation, federalism, damnation. Gamelin tasted the ineffable joy of a believer who knows the word that saves and the word that destroys the soul. Henceforth the Revolutionary Tribunal, as of old the ecclesiastical courts, would take cognizance of crime absolute, of crime definable in a word. And, because he had the religious spirit, Évariste welcomed these revelations with a sombre enthusiasm; his heart swelled and rejoiced at the thought that, henceforth, he had a talisman to discern betwixt crime and innocence, he possessed a creed! Ye stand in lieu of all else, oh, treasures of faith!

The sage Maximilien enlightened him further as to the perfidious intent of those who were for equalizing property and partitioning the land, abolishing wealth and poverty and establishing a happy mediocrity for all. Misled by their specious maxims, he had originally approved their designs, which he deemed in

accord with the principles of a true Republican. But Robespierre, in his speeches at the Jacobins, had unmasked their machinations and convinced him that these men, disinterested as their intentions appeared, were working to overthrow the Republic, that they were alarming the rich only to rouse against the lawful authority powerful and implacable foes. Once private property was threatened, the whole population, the more ardently attached to its possessions the less of these it owned, would turn suddenly against the Republic. To terrify vested interests is to conspire against the State. These men who, under pretence of securing universal happiness and the reign of justice, proposed a system of equality and community of goods as a worthy object of good citizens' endeavours, were traitors and malefactors more dangerous than the Federalists.

But the most startling revelation he owed to Robespierre's wisdom was that of the crimes and infamies of atheism. Gamelin had never denied the existence of God; he was a deist and believed in a Providence that watches over mankind; but, admitting that he could form only a very vague conception of the Supreme Being and deeply attached to the principle of freedom of conscience, he was quite ready to allow that right-thinking men might follow the example of Lamettrie, Boulanger, the Baron d'Holbach, Lalande, Helvétius, the *citoyen* Dupuis, and deny God's existence, on condition they formulated a natural morality and found in themselves the sources of justice and the rules of a virtuous life. He had even felt himself in sympathy with the atheists, when he had seen them vilified and persecuted. Maximilien had opened his mind and unsealed his eyes. The great man by his virtuous eloquence had taught him the true character of atheism, its nature, its objects, its effects; he had shown him how this doctrine, conceived in the drawing-rooms and boudoirs of the aristocracy, was the most perfidious invention the enemies of the people had ever devised to demoralize and enslave it; how it was a criminal act to uproot from the heart of the unfortunate the consoling thought of a Providence to reward and compensate and give them over without rein or bit to the passions that degrade men and make vile slaves of them; how, in fine, the monarchical Epicureanism of a Helvétius led to immorality, cruelty, and every wickedness. Now that he had learnt these lessons from the lips of a great man and a great citizen, he execrated the atheists — especially when they were of an open-hearted, joyous temper, like his old friend Brotteaux.

In the days that followed Évariste had to give judgment one after the other on a *ci-devant* convicted of having destroyed wheat-stuffs in order to starve the people, three *émigrés* who had returned to foment civil war in France, two ladies

of pleasure of the Palais-Égalité, fourteen Breton conspirators, men, women, old men, youths, masters, and servants. The crime was proven, the law explicit. Among the guilty was a girl of twenty, adorable in the heyday of her young beauty under the shadow of the doom so soon to overwhelm her, a fascinating figure. A blue bow bound her golden locks, her lawn kerchief revealed a white, graceful neck.

Évariste was consistent in casting his vote for death, and all the accused, with the one exception of an old gardener, were sent to the scaffold.

The following week Évariste and his section mowed down sixty-three heads — forty-five men and eighteen women.

The judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal drew no distinction between men and women, in this following a principle as old as justice itself. True, the President Montané, touched by the bravery and beauty of Charlotte Corday, had tried to save her by paltering with the procedure of the trial and had thereby lost his seat, but women as a rule were shown no favour under examination, in strict accordance with the rule common to all the tribunals. The jurors feared them, distrusting their artful ways, their aptitude for deception, their powers of seduction. They were the match of men in resolution, and this invited the Tribunal to treat them in the same way. The majority of those who sat in judgment, men of normal sensuality or sensual on occasion, were in no wise affected by the fact that the prisoner was a woman. They condemned or acquitted them as their conscience, their zeal, their love, lukewarm or vehement, for the Republic dictated. Almost always they appeared before the court with their hair carefully dressed and attired with as much elegance as the unhappy conditions allowed. But few of them were young and still fewer pretty. Confinement and suspense had blighted them, the harsh light of the hall betrayed their weariness and the anguish they had endured, beating down on faded lids, blotched and pimpled cheeks, white, drawn lips. Nevertheless, the fatal chair more than once held a young girl, lovely in her pallor, while a shadow of the tomb veiled her eyes and made her beauty the more seductive. That the sight had the power to melt some jurymen and irritate others, who should deny? That, in the secret depraved heart of him, one of these magistrates may have pried into the most sacred intimacies of the fair body that was to his morbid fancy at the same moment a living and a dead woman's, and that, gloating over voluptuous and ghoulish imaginings he may have found an atrocious pleasure in giving over to the headsman those dainty, desirable limbs, — this is perhaps a thing better left unsaid, but one which no one can deem impossible who knows what men are. Évariste Gamelin, cold and pedantic in his artistic creed, could see no beauty but in the Antique; he admired beauty, but it hardly stirred his senses. His

classical taste was so severe he rarely found a woman to his liking; he was as insensible to the charms of a pretty face as he was to Fragonard's colouring and Boucher's drawing. He had never known desire save under the form of deep passion.

Like the majority of his colleagues in the Tribunal, he thought women more dangerous than men. He hated the *ci-devant* princesses, the creatures he pictured to himself in his horrified dreams in company with Elisabeth and *the Austrian* weaving plots to assassinate good patriots; he even hated all those fair mistresses of financiers, philosophers, and men of letters whose only crime was having enjoyed the pleasures of the senses and the mind and lived at a time when it was sweet to live. He hated them without admitting the feeling to himself, and when he had one before him at the bar, he condemned her out of pique, convinced all the while that he was dooming her justly and rightly for the public good. His sense of honour, his manly modesty, his cold, calculated wisdom, his devotion to the State, his virtues in a word, pushed under the knife heads that might well have moved men's pity.

But what is this, what is the meaning of this strange prodigy? Once the difficulty was to find the guilty, to search them out in their lair, to drag the confession of their crime from reluctant lips. Now, there is no hunting with a great pack of sleuth-hounds, no pursuing a timid prey; lo! from all sides come the victims to offer themselves a voluntary sacrifice. Nobles, virgins, soldiers, courtesans, flock to the Tribunal, dragging their condemnation from dilatory judges, claiming death as a right which they are impatient to enjoy. Not enough the multitude with which the zeal of the informers has crowded the prisons and which the Public Prosecutor and his myrmidons are wearing out their lives in haling before the Tribunal; punishment must likewise be provided for those who refuse to wait. And how many others, prouder and more pressing yet, begrudging their judges and headsman their death, perish by their own hand! The mania of killing is equalled by the mania to die. Here, in the Conciergerie, is a young soldier, handsome, vigorous, beloved; he leaves behind him in the prison an adorable mistress; she bade him "Live for me!" — he will live neither for her nor love nor glory. He lights his pipe with his act of accusation. And, a Republican, for he breathes liberty through every pore, he turns Royalist that he may die. The Tribunal tries its best to save him, but the accused proves the stronger; judges and jury are forced to let him have his way.

Évariste's mind, naturally of an anxious, scrupulous cast, was filled to overflowing through the lessons he learned at the Jacobins and the contemplation of life with suspicions and alarms. At night, as he paced the ill-lighted streets on his way to Élodie's, he fancied through every cellar-grating he

passed he caught a glimpse of a plate for printing off forged assignats; in the dark recesses of the baker's and grocer's empty shops he imagined storerooms bursting with provisions fraudulently held back for a rise in prices; looking in at the glittering windows of the eating-houses, he seemed to hear the talk of the speculators plotting the ruin of the country as they drained bottles of Beaune and Chablis; in the evil-smelling alleys he could see the very prostitutes trampling underfoot the National cockade to the applause of elegant young roisterers; everywhere he beheld conspirators and traitors. And he thought: "Against so many foes, secret or declared, oh! Republic thou hast but one succour; Saint Guillotine, save the fatherland!..."

Élodie would be waiting for him in her little blue chamber above the *Amour peintre*. To let him know he might come in, she used to set on the window-sill her little watering-can beside the pot of carnations. Now he filled her with horror, he seemed like a monster to her; she was afraid of him, — and she adored him. All the night, clinging together in a frantic embrace, the bloody-minded lover and the amorous girl exchanged in silence frenzied kisses.

XIV

Rising at dawn, the Père Longuemare, after sweeping out the room, departed to say his Mass in a chapel in the Rue d'Enfer served by a nonjuring priest. There were in Paris thousands of similar retreats, where the refractory clergy gathered together clandestinely little troops of the faithful. The police of the Sections, vigilant and suspicious as they were, kept their eyes shut to these hidden folds, from fear of the exasperated flock and moved by some lingering veneration for holy things. The Barnabite made his farewells to his host who had great difficulty in persuading him to come back to dine, and only succeeded in the end by promising that the cheer would be neither plentiful nor delicate.

Brotteaux, when left to himself, kindled a little earthenware stove; then, while he busied himself with preparations for the Monk's and the Epicurean's meal, he read in his Lucretius and meditated on the conditions of human beings.

As a sage and a philosopher, he was not surprised that these wretched creatures, silly playthings of the forces of nature, found themselves more often than not in absurd and painful situations; but he was weak and illogical enough to believe that the Revolutionaries were more wicked and more foolish than other men, thereby falling into the error of the metaphysician. At the same time he was no Pessimist and did not hold that life was altogether bad. He admired Nature in several of her departments, especially the celestial mechanism and physical love, and accommodated himself to the labours of life, pending the arrival of the day, which could not be far off, when he would have nothing more either to fear or to desire.

He coloured some dancing-dolls with painstaking care and made a Zerline that was very like Rose Thévenin. He liked the girl and his Epicureanism highly approved of the arrangement of the atoms of which she was composed.

These tasks occupied him till the Barnabite's return.

"Father," he announced, as he opened the door to admit him, "I told you, you remember, that our fare would be meagre. We have nothing but chestnuts. The more reason, therefore, they should be well seasoned."

"Chestnuts!" cried Père Longuemare, smiling, "there is no more delicious dish. My father, sir, was a poor gentleman of the Limousin, whose whole estate consisted of a pigeon-cote in ruins, an orchard run wild and a clump of chestnut-trees. He fed himself, his wife and his twelve children on big green chestnuts, and we were all strong and sturdy. I was the youngest and the most turbulent; my father used to declare, by way of jesting, he would have to send me to America

to be a filibuster.... Ah! sir, how fragrant your chestnut soup smells! It takes me back to the table where my mother sat smiling, surrounded by her troop of little ones.”

The repast ended, Brotteaux set out for Joly’s, the toy-merchant in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, who took the dancing-dolls Caillou had refused, and ordered — not another gross of them like the latter, but a round twenty-four dozen to begin with.

On reaching the erstwhile Rue Royale and turning into the Place de la Révolution, Brotteaux caught sight of a steel triangle glittering between two wooden uprights; it was the guillotine. An immense crowd of light-hearted spectators pressed round the scaffold, waiting the arrival of the loaded carts. Women were hawking Nanterre cakes on a tray hung in front of them and crying their wares; sellers of cooling drinks were tinkling their little bells; at the foot of the Statue of Liberty an old man had a peep-show in a small booth surmounted by a swing on which a monkey played its antics. Underneath the scaffold some dogs were licking yesterday’s blood, Brotteaux turned back towards the Rue Honoré.

Regaining his garret, where the Barnabite was reading his breviary, he carefully wiped the table and arranged his colour-box on it alongside the materials and tools of his trade.

“Father,” he said, “if you do not deem the occupation unworthy of the sacred character with which you are invested, I will ask you to help me make my marionettes. A worthy tradesman, Joly by name, has this very morning given me a pretty heavy order. Whilst I am painting these figures already put together, you will do me a great service by cutting out heads, arms, legs, and bodies from the patterns here. Better you could not find; they are after Watteau and Boucher.”

“I agree with you, sir,” replied Longuemare, “that Watteau and Boucher were well fitted to create such-like baubles; it had been more to their glory if they had confined themselves to innocent figures like these. I should be delighted to help you, but I fear I may not be clever enough for that.”

The Père Longuemare was right to distrust his own skill; after sundry unsuccessful attempts, the fact was patent that his genius did not lie in the direction of cutting out pretty shapes in thin cardboard with the point of a penknife. But when, at his suggestion, Brotteaux gave him some string and a bodkin, he showed himself very apt in endowing with motion the little creatures he had failed to make and teaching them to dance. He had a happy knack, by way of trying them afterwards, of making them each execute three or four steps of a gavotte, and when they rewarded his pains, a smile would flicker on his stern lips.

One time when he was pulling the string of a Scaramouch to a dance tune:

“Sir,” he observed, “this little travesty reminds me of a quaint story. It was in 1746, when I was completing my noviciate under the care of the Père Magitot, a man well on in years, of deep learning and austere morals. At that period, you perhaps remember, dancing figures, intended in the first instance to amuse children, exercised over women and even over men, both young and old, an extraordinary fascination; they were all the rage in Paris. The fashionable shops were crammed with them; they were to be found in the houses of people of quality, and it was nothing out of the way to see a grave and reverend senior dancing his doll in the streets and public gardens. The Père Magitot’s age, character, and sacred profession did not avail to guard him against infection. Every time he saw anyone busy jumping his cardboard mannikin, his fingers itched with impatience to be at the same game, — an impatience that soon grew well nigh intolerable. One day when he was paying a visit of importance on a matter involving the interests of the whole Order to Monsieur Chauvel, advocate in the courts of the Parlement, noticing one of these dancers hanging from the chimney-piece, he felt a terrible temptation to pull its string, which he only resisted at the cost of a tremendous effort. But this frivolous ambition pursued him everywhere and left him no peace. In his studies, in his meditations, in his prayers, at church, at chapter, in the confessional and in the pulpit, he was possessed by it. After some days of dreadful agony of mind, he laid bare his extraordinary case to the General of the Order, who happened fortunately to be in Paris at the moment. He was an eminent ecclesiastic of Milan, a Doctor and Prince of the Church. His counsel to the Père Magitot was to satisfy a craving, innocent in its inception, importunate in its consequences and inordinate in its excess, which threatened to super induce the gravest disorders in the soul which was afflicted with it. On the advice, or more strictly by the order of the General, the Père Magitot returned to Monsieur Chauvel’s house, where the advocate received him, as on the first occasion, in his cabinet. There, finding the dancing figure still fastened in the same place, he ran excitedly to the chimney-piece and begged his host to do him a favour, — to let him pull the string. The lawyer gave him his permission very readily, and informed him in confidence that sometimes he set Scaramouch (that was the doll’s name) dancing while he was studying his briefs, and that, only the night before, he had modulated on Scaramouch’s movements the peroration of his speech in defence of a woman falsely accused of poisoning her husband. The Père Magitot seized the string with trembling fingers and saw Scaramouch throw his limbs wildly about under his manipulation like one possessed of devils in the agonies of exorcism.”

“Your tale does not surprise me, father,” Brotteaux told him, “We see such cases of obsession; but it is not always cardboard figures that occasion it.”

The Père Longuemare, who was religious by profession, never talked about religion, while Brotteaux was for ever harping on the subject. He was conscious of a bond of sympathy between himself and the Barnabite, and took a delight in embarrassing and disturbing his peace of mind with objections against divers articles of the Christian faith.

Once when they were working together making Zerlines and Scaramouches:

“When I consider,” remarked Brotteaux, “the events which have brought us to the point at which we stand, I am in doubt as to which party, in the general madness, has been the most insane; sometimes, I am greatly tempted to believe it was that of the Court.”

“Sir,” answered the Monk, “all men lose their wits like Nebuchadnezzar, when God forsakes them; but no man in our days ever plunged so deep in ignorance and error as the Abbé Fauchet, no man was so fatal as he to the kingdom. God must needs have been sorely exasperated against France to send her Monsieur l’Abbé Fauchet!”

“I imagine we have seen other evil-doers besides poor, unhappy Fauchet.”

“The Abbé Gregoire too, was full of malice.”

“And Brissot, and Danton, and Marat, and a hundred others, what of them, Father?”

“Sir, they are laics; the laity could never incur the same responsibilities as the clergy. They do not work evil from so high a standpoint, and their crimes are not of universal bearing.”

“And your God, Father, what say you of His behaviour in the present Revolution?”

“I do not understand you, sir.”

“Epicurus said: Either God wishes to hinder evil and cannot, or He can and does not wish to, or He cannot nor does he wish to, or He does wish to and can. If He wishes to and cannot, He is impotent; if He can and does not wish to, He is perverse; if He cannot nor does He wish to, He is impotent and perverse; if He does wish to and can, why does He not, tell me that, Father!” — and Brotteaux cast a look of triumph at his interlocutor.

“Sir,” retorted the Monk, “there is nothing more contemptible than these difficulties you raise. When I look into the reasoning of infidels, I seem to see ants piling up a few blades of grass as a dam against the torrent that sweeps down from the mountains. With your leave, I had rather not argue with you; I should have too many excellent reasons and too few wits to apply them. Besides, you will find your refutation in the Abbé Guénée and twenty other apologists. I

will only say that what you quote from Epicurus is foolishness; because God is arraigned in it as if he was a man, with a man's moral code. Well! sir, the sceptics, from Celsus down to Bayle and Voltaire, have cajoled fools with such-like paradoxes."

"See, Father," protested Brotteaux, "to what lengths your faith makes you go. Not satisfied with finding all truth in your Theology, you likewise refuse to discover any in the works of so many noble intellects who thought differently from yourselves."

"You are entirely mistaken, sir," replied Longuemare. "On the contrary, I believe that nothing could ever be altogether false in a man's thoughts. The atheists stand on the lowest rung of the ladder of knowledge; but even there, gleams of sense are to be found and flashes of truth, and even when darkness is thick about him, a man may lift up his eyes to God, and He will put understanding in his heart; was it not so with Lucifer?"

"Well, sir," said Brotteaux, "I cannot match your generosity and I am bound to tell you I cannot find in all the works of the Theologians one atom of good sense."

At the same time he would repudiate any desire to attack religion, which he deemed indispensable for the nations; he could only wish it had for its ministers philosophers instead of controversialists. He deplored the fact that the Jacobins were for replacing it by a newer and more pestilent religion, the cult of liberty, equality, the republic, the fatherland. He had observed this, that it is in the vigour of their youth religions are the fiercest and most cruel, and grow milder as they grow older. He was anxious, therefore, to see Catholicism preserved; it had devoured many victims in the times of its vigour, but nowadays, burdened by the weight of years and with enfeebled appetite, it was content with roasting four or five heretics in a hundred years.

"As a matter of fact," he concluded, "I have always got on very well with your God-eaters and Christ-worshippers. I kept a chaplain at Les Ilettes, where Mass was said every Sunday and all my guests attended. The philosophers were the most devout while the opera girls showed the most fervour. I was prosperous then and had crowds of friends."

"Friends," exclaimed the Père Longuemare, "friends! Ah! sir, do you really think they loved you, all these philosophers and all these courtesans, who have degraded your soul in such wise that God himself would find it hard to know it for one of the temples built by Him for His glory?"

The Père Longuemare lived for a week longer at the publican's without being interfered with. As far as possible he observed the discipline of his House and

every night at the canonical hours would rise from his palliasse to kneel on the bare boards and recite the offices. Though both were reduced to a diet of wretched scraps, he duly observed fasts and abstinence. A smiling but pitiful spectator of these austerities, Brotteaux one day asked him:

“Do you really believe that God finds any satisfaction in seeing you endure cold and hunger as you do?”

“God himself,” was the Monk’s answer, “has given us the example of suffering.”

On the ninth day since the Barnabite had come to share the philosopher’s garret, the latter sallied forth at twilight to deliver his dancing-dolls to Joly, the toy-merchant of the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs. He was on his way back overjoyed at having sold them all, when, as he was crossing the erstwhile Place du Carrousel, a girl in a blue satin pelisse trimmed with ermine, running by with a limping gait, threw herself into his arms and held him fast in the way suppliants have had since the world began.

She was trembling and her heart was beating so fast and loud it could be plainly heard. Wondering to see one of her common sort look so pathetic, Brotteaux, a veteran amateur of the stage, thought how Mademoiselle Raucourt, if she could have seen her, might have learnt something from her bearing.

She spoke in breathless tones, lowering her voice to a whisper for fear of being overheard by the passers-by:

“Take me with you, *citoyen*, and hide me, for the love of pity!... They are in my room in the Rue Fromenteau. While they were coming upstairs, I ran for refuge into Flora’s room, — she is my next-door neighbour, — and leapt out of the window into the street, that is how I sprained my ankle.... They are coming; they want to put me in prison and kill me.... Last week they killed Virginie.”

Brotteaux understood, of course, that the child was speaking of the delegates of the Revolutionary Committee of the Section or else the Commissaries of the Committee of General Security. At that time the Commune had as *procureur* a man of virtue, the *citoyen* Chaumette who regarded the ladies of pleasure as the direct foes of the Republic and harassed them unmercifully in his efforts to regenerate the Nation’s morals. To tell the truth, the young ladies of the Palais-Égalité were no great patriots. They regretted the old state of things and did not always conceal the fact. Several had been guillotined already as conspirators, and their tragic fate had excited no little emulation among their fellows.

The *citoyen* Brotteaux asked the suppliant what offence she had been guilty of to bring down on herself a warrant of arrest.

She swore she had no notion, that she had done nothing anyone could blame her for.

“Well then, my girl,” Brotteaux told her, “you are not suspect; you have nothing to fear. Be off with you to bed and leave me alone.”

At this she confessed everything:

“I tore out my cockade and shouted: ‘Vive le roi!’”

He walked down to the river-side and she kept by his side along the deserted *quais*. Clinging to his arm she went on:

“It is not that I care for him particularly, the King, you know; I never knew him, and I daresay he wasn’t very much different from other men. But they are bad people. They are cruel to poor girls. They torment and vex and abuse me in every kind of way; they want to stop me following my trade. I have no other trade. You may be sure, if I had, I should not be doing what I do.... What is it they want? They are so hard on poor humble folks, the milkman, the charcoalman, the water carrier, the laundress. They won’t rest content till they’ve set all poor people against them.”

He looked at her; she seemed a mere child. She was no longer afraid; she was almost smiling, as she limped along lightly at his side. He asked her her name. She said she was called Athenaïs and was sixteen.

Brotteaux offered to see her safe to anywhere she wished to go. She did not know a soul in Paris; but she had an aunt, in service at Palaiseau, who would take her in.

Brotteaux made up his mind at once.

“Come with me, my child,” he ordered, and led the way home, with her hanging on his arm.

On his arrival, he found the Père Longuemare in the garret reading his breviary.

Holding Athenaïs by the hand, he drew the other’s attention to her:

“Father,” he said, “here is a girl from the Rue Fromenteau who has been shouting: ‘Vive le roi!’ The revolutionary police are on her track. She has nowhere to lay head. Will you allow the girl to pass the night here?”

The Père Longuemare closed his breviary.

“If I understand you right,” he said, “you ask me, sir, if this young girl, who is like myself subject to be molested under a warrant of arrest, may be suffered, for her temporal salvation, to spend the night in the same room as I?”

“Yes, Father.”

“By what right should I object? and why must I suppose myself affronted by her presence? am I so sure that I am any better than she?”

He established himself for the night in an old broken-down armchair, declaring he should sleep excellently in it. Athenaïs lay on the mattress. Brotteaux stretched himself on the palliasse and blew out the candle.

The hours and half-hours sounded one after the other from the church towers, but the old man could not sleep; he lay awake listening to the mingled breathing of the man of religion and the girl of pleasure. The moon rose, symbol and witness of his old-time loves, and threw a silvery ray into the attic, illuminating the fair hair and golden lashes, the delicate nose and round, red mouth of Athenaïs, who lay sound asleep.

"Truly," he thought to himself, "a terrible enemy for the Republic!"

When Athenaïs awoke, the day was breaking. The Monk had disappeared. Brotteaux was reading Lucretius under the skylight, learning from the maxims of the Latin poet to live without fears and without desires; but for all this he felt himself at the moment devoured with regrets and disquietudes.

Opening her eyes, Athenaïs was dumfounded to see the roof beams of a garret above her head. Then she remembered, smiled at her preserver and extended towards him with a caressing gesture her pretty little dirty hands.

Rising on her elbow, she pointed to the dilapidated armchair in which the Monk had passed the night.

"He is not there?... He has not gone to denounce me, has he?"

"No, no, my child. You could not find a more honest soul than that old madman."

Athenaïs asked in what the old fellow's madness consisted; and when Brotteaux informed her it was religion, she gravely reproached him for speaking so, declaring that men without faith were worse than the beasts that perish and that for her part she often prayed to God, hoping He would forgive her her sins and receive her in His blessed mercy.

Then, noticing that Brotteaux held a book in his hand, she thought it was a book of the Mass and said:

"There you see, you too, you say your prayers! God will reward you for what you have done for me."

Brotteaux having told her that it was not a Mass-book, and that it had been written before ever the Mass had been invented in the world, she opined it was an *Interpretation of Dreams*, and asked if it did not contain an explanation of an extraordinary dream she had had. She could not read and these were the only two sorts of books she had heard tell of.

Brotteaux informed her that this book was only by way of explaining the dream of life. Finding this a hard saying, the pretty child did not try to understand it and dipped the end of her nose in the earthenware crock that

replaced the silver basins Brotteaux had once been accustomed to use. Next, she arranged her hair before her host's shaving-glass with scrupulous care and gravity. Her white arms raised above her head, she let fall an observation from time to time with long intervals between:

"You, you were rich once."

"What makes you think that?"

"I don't know. But you *were* rich, — and you are an aristocrat, I am certain of it."

She drew from her pocket a little Holy Virgin of silver in a round ivory shrine, a bit of sugar, thread, scissors, a flint and steel, two or three cases for needles and the like, and after selecting what she required, sat down to mend her skirt, which had got torn in several places.

"For your own safety, my child, put this in your cap!" Brotteaux bade her, handing her a tricolour cockade.

"I will do that gladly, sir," she agreed, "but it will be for the love of you and not for love of the Nation."

When she was dressed and had made herself look her best, taking her skirt in both hands, she dropped a curtsy as she had been taught to do in her village, and addressing Brotteaux:

"Sir," she said, "I am your very humble servant."

She was prepared to oblige her benefactor in all ways he might wish, but she thought it more becoming that he asked for no favour and she offered none; it seemed to her a pretty way to part so, and what good manners required.

Brotteaux slipped a few assignats into her hand to pay her coach-hire to Palaiseau. It was the half of his fortune, and, albeit he was notorious for his lavishness towards women, it was the first time he had ever made so equal a partition of his goods with any of the sex.

She asked him his name.

"I am called Maurice."

It was with reluctance he opened the garret door for her:

"Good-bye, Athenais."

She kissed him. "Monsieur Maurice," she said, "when you think of me, if ever you do, call me Marthe; that is the name I was christened, the name they called me by in the village.... Good-bye and thank you.... Your very humble servant, Monsieur Maurice."

XV

The prisons were full to bursting and must be emptied; the work of judging, judging, must go on without truce or respite. Seated against the tapestried walls with their fasces and red caps of liberty, like their fellows of the fleurs-de-lis, the judges preserved the same gravity, the same dreadful calm, as their Royal predecessors. The Public Prosecutor and his Deputies, worn out with fatigue, consumed with the fever of sleeplessness and brandy, could only shake off their exhaustion by a violent effort; their broken health made them tragic figures to look upon. The jurors, divers in character and origin, some educated, others ignorant, craven or generous, gentle or violent, hypocritical or sincere, but all men who, knowing the fatherland and the Republic in danger, suffered or feigned to suffer the same anguish, to burn with the same ardour; all alike primed to atrocities of virtue or of fear, they formed but one living entity, one single head, dull and irritable, one single soul, a beast of the apocalypse that by the mere exercise of its natural functions produced a teeming brood of death. Kind-hearted or cruel by caprice of sensibility, when shaken momentarily by a sudden pang of pity, they would acquit with streaming eyes a prisoner whom an hour before they would have condemned to the guillotine with taunts. The further they proceeded with their task, the more impetuously did they follow the impulses of their heart.

Judge and jury toiled, fevered and half asleep with overwork, distracted by the excitement outside and the orders of the sovereign people, menaced by the threats of the *sansculottes* and *tricoteuses* who crowded the galleries and the public enclosure, relying on insane evidence, acting on the denunciations of madmen, in a poisonous atmosphere that stupefied the brain, set ears hammering and temples beating and darkened the eyes with a veil of blood. Vague rumours were current among the public of jurors bought by the gold of the accused. But to these the jury as a body replied with indignant protest and merciless condemnations. In truth they were men neither worse nor better than their fellows. Innocence more often than not is a piece of good fortune rather than a virtue; any other who should have consented to put himself in their place would have acted as they did and accomplished to the best of his commonplace soul these appalling tasks.

Antoinette, so long expected, sat at last in the fatal chair, in a black gown, the centre of such a concentration of hate that only the certainty of what the sentence would be made the court observe the forms of law. To the deadly questions the

accused replied sometimes with the instinct of self-preservation, sometimes with her wonted haughtiness, and once, thanks to the hideous suggestion of one of her accusers, with the noble dignity of a mother. The witnesses were confined to outrage and calumny; the defence was frozen with terror. The tribunal, forcing itself to respect the rules of procedure, was only waiting till all formalities were completed to hurl the head of *the Austrian* in the face of Europe.

Three days after the execution of Marie Antoinette Gamelin was called to the bedside of the *citoyen* Fortuné Trubert, who lay dying, within thirty paces of the Military Bureau where he had worn out his life, on a pallet of sacking, in the cell of some expelled Barnabite father. His livid face was sunk in the pillow. His eyes, which already were almost sightless, turned their glassy pupils upon his visitor; his parched hand grasped Évariste's and pressed it with unexpected vigour. Three times he had vomited blood in two days. He tried to speak; his voice, at first hoarse and feeble as a whisper, grew louder, deeper:

"Wattignies! Wattignies!... Jourdan has forced the enemy into their camp ... raised the blockade at Maubeuge.... We have retaken Marchiennes, *ça ira ... ça ira ...*" and he smiled.

These were no dreams of a sick man, but a clear vision of the truth that flashed through the brain so soon to be shrouded in eternal darkness. Hereafter the invasion seemed arrested; the Generals were terrorized and saw that the one best thing for them to do was to be victorious. Where voluntary recruiting had failed to produce what was needed, a strong and disciplined army, compulsion was succeeding. One effort more, and the Republic would be saved.

After a half hour of semi-consciousness, Fortuné Trubert's face, hollow-cheeked and worn by disease, lit up again and his hands moved.

He lifted his finger and pointed to the only piece of furniture in the room, a little walnut-wood writing-desk. The voice was weak and breathless, but the mind quite unclouded:

"Like Eudamidas," he said, "I bequeath my debts to my friend, — three hundred and twenty livres, of which you will find the account ... in that red book yonder ... good-bye, Gamelin. Never rest; wake and watch over the defence of the Republic. *Ça ira.* "

The shades of night were deepening in the cell. The difficult breathing of the dying man was the only sound, and his hands scratching on the sheet.

At midnight he uttered some disconnected phrases:

"More saltpetre.... See the muskets are delivered. Health? Oh! excellent.... Get down the church-bells...."

He breathed his last at five in the morning.

By order of the Section his body lay in state in the nave of the erstwhile church of the Barnabites, at the foot of the Altar of the Fatherland, on a camp bed, covered with a tricolour flag and the brow wreathed with an oak crown.

Twelve old men clad in the Roman toga, with palms in their hands, twelve young girls wearing long veils and carrying flowers, surrounded the funeral couch. At the dead man's feet stood two children, each holding an inverted torch. One of them Évariste recognized as his *conciergerie's* little daughter Joséphine, who in her childish gravity and beauty reminded him of those charming genii of Love and Death the Romans used to sculpture on their tombs.

The funeral procession made its way to the Cemetery of Saint-André-des-Arts to the strains of the *Marseillaise* and the *Ça-ira*.

As he laid the kiss of farewell on Fortuné Trubert's brow, Évariste wept. His tears flowed in self-pity, for he envied his friend who was resting there, his task accomplished.

On reaching home, he received notice that he was posted a member of the Council General of the Commune. After standing as candidate for four months, he had been elected unopposed, after several ballots, by some thirty suffrages. No one voted nowadays; the Sections were deserted; rich and poor alike only sought to shirk the performance of public duties. The most momentous events had ceased to rouse either enthusiasm or curiosity; the newspapers were left unread. Out of the seven hundred thousand inhabitants of the capital Évariste doubted if as many as three or four thousand still preserved the old Republican spirit.

The same day the Twenty-one came up for trial. Innocent or guilty of the calamities and crimes of the Republic, vain, incautious, ambitious and impetuous, at once moderate and violent, feeble in their fear as in their clemency, quick to declare war, slow to carry it out, haled before the Tribunal to answer for the example they had given, they were not the less the first and the most brilliant children of the Revolution, whose delight and glory they had been. The judge who will question them with artful bias; the pallid accuser yonder who, where he sits behind his little table, is planning their death and dishonour; the jurors who will presently try to stifle their defence; the public in the galleries which overwhelms them with howls of insult and abuse, — all, judge, jury, people, have applauded their eloquence in other days, extolled their talents and their virtues. But judge, jury, people have short memories now.

Once Évariste had made Vergniaud his god, Brissot his oracle. But he had forgotten; if any vestige of his old wonder still lingered in his memory, it was to think that these monsters had seduced the noblest citizens.

Returning to his lodging after the sitting, Gamelin heard heart-breaking cries as he entered the house. It was little Joséphine; her mother was whipping her for playing in the Place with good-for-nothing boys and dirtying the fine white frock she had worn for the obsequies of the *citoyen* Trubert.

XVI

After three months during which he had made a daily holocaust of victims, illustrious or insignificant, to the fatherland, Évariste had a case that interested him personally; there was one prisoner he made it his special business to track down to death.

Ever since he had sat on the juror's bench, he had been eagerly watching, among the crowd of culprits who appeared before him, for Élodie's seducer; of this man he had elaborated in his busy fancy a portrait, some details of which were accurate. He pictured him as young, handsome, haughty, and felt convinced he had fled to England. He thought he had discovered him in a young *émigré* named Maubel, who, having come back to France and been denounced by his host, had been arrested in an inn at Passy; Fouquier-Tinville was in charge of the prosecution, — among a thousand others. Letters had been found on him which the accusation regarded as proofs of a plot concocted between Maubel and the agents of Pitt, but which were in fact only letters written to the *émigré* by a banking-house in London which he had entrusted with certain funds. Maubel, who was young and good-looking, seemed to be mainly occupied in affairs of gallantry. His pocket-book afforded a clue to some correspondence with Spain, then at war with France; but these communications were really of a purely private nature, and if the court of preliminary enquiry did not ignore the bill, it was only in virtue of the maxim that justice should never be in too great a hurry to release a prisoner.

Gamelin was handed a report of Maubel's first semi-private examination and he was struck by what it revealed of the young man's character, which he took to agree with what he believed to be that of Élodie's betrayer. Thereafter he spent long hours in the private room of the Clerk of the Court, poring eagerly over the papers relating to this case. His suspicion received a remarkable confirmation on his discovering in a note-book belonging to the *émigré*, but long out of date, the address of the *Amour peintre*, in company, it is true, with those of the *Green Monkey*, the *Dauphin's Head*, and several more print and picture shops. But when he was informed that in this same note-book had been found three or four petals of a red carnation carefully wrapped in a piece of silk paper, remembering how the red carnation was Élodie's favourite flower, the one she cultivated on her window-sill, wore in her hair and used to give (he had reason to know) as a love-token, Évariste's last doubts vanished. Being now convinced he knew the

facts, he resolved to question Élodie, though without letting her know the circumstances that had led him to discover the culprit.

As he was climbing the stairs to his lodgings, he perceived even on the lower landings a stifling smell of fruit, and on reaching the studio, found Élodie helping the *citoyenne* Gamelin to make quince preserve. While the old housewife was kindling the stove and turning over in her mind ways of saving the fuel and moist sugar without prejudicing the quality of the preserves, the *citoyenne* Blaise, seated in a straw-bottomed chair, with an apron of brown holland and her lap full of the golden fruit, was peeling the quinces, quartering and throwing them into a shallow copper basin. The strings of her coif were thrown back over her shoulders, the meshes of her black hair coiled above her moist forehead; from her whole person breathed a domestic charm and an intimate grace that induced gentle thoughts and voluptuous dreams of tranquil pleasures.

Without stirring from her seat, she lifted her beautiful eyes, that gleamed like molten gold, to her lover's face, and said:

"See, Évariste, we are working for you. We mean you to have a store of delicious quince jelly to last you the winter; it will settle your stomach and make your heart merry."

But Gamelin, stepping nearer, uttered a name in her ear:

"Jacques Maubel...."

At that moment Combalot the cobbler showed his red nose at the half-open door. He had brought, along with some pairs of shoes he had re-heeled, the bill for the repairs.

For fear of being taken for a bad citizen, he made a point of using the new calendar. The *citoyenne* Gamelin, who liked to see clearly what was what in her accounts, was all astray among the *Fructidors* and *Vendémiaires*. She heaved a sigh.

"Jesus!" she complained, "they want to alter everything, — days, months, seasons of the year, the sun and the moon! Lord God, Monsieur Combalot, what ever is this pair of over-shoes down for the 8 Vendémiaire?"

"*Citoyenne*, just cast your eye over your almanac, and you'll get the hang of it."

She took it down from the wall, glanced at it and immediately turning her head another way.

"It hasn't a Christian look!" she cried in a shocked tone.

"Not only that, *citoyenne*," said the cobbler, "but now we have only three Sundays in the month instead of four. And that's not all; we shall soon have to

change our ways of reckoning. There will be no more farthings and half-farthings, everything will be regulated by distilled water.”

At the words the *citoyenne* Gamelin, whose lips were trembling, threw up her eyes to the ceiling and sighed out:

“They are going too far!”

And, while she was lost in lamentations, looking like the holy women in a wayside calvary, a bad coal that had caught alight in the fire when her attention was diverted, began to fill the studio with a poisonous smother which, added to the stifling smell of quinces, was like to make the air unbreathable.

Élodie complained that her throat was tickling her and begged to have the window opened. But, directly the *citoyen* Combalot had taken his leave and the *citoyenne* Gamelin had gone back to her stove, Évariste repeated the same name in the girl’s ear:

“Jacques Maubel,” he reiterated.

She looked up at him in some surprise, and very quietly, still going on cutting a quince in quarters:

“Well!... Jacques Maubel...?”

“He is the man.”

“The man! what man?”

“You once gave him a red carnation.”

She declared she did not understand and asked him to explain himself.

“That aristocrat! that *émigré* ! that scoundrel!”

She shrugged her shoulders, and denied with the most natural air that she had never known a Jacques Maubel.

It was true; she *had* never known anyone of the name.

She denied she had ever given red carnations to anybody but Évariste; but perhaps, on this point, her memory was not very good.

He had little experience of women and was far from having fully fathomed Élodie’s character; still, he deemed her quite capable of cajoling and deceiving a cleverer man than himself.

“Why deny?” he asked. “I know all.”

Again she asseverated she had never known anybody called Maubel. And, having done peeling the quinces, she asked for a basin of water, because her fingers were sticky. This Gamelin brought her, and, as she washed her hands, she repeated her denials.

Again he repeated that he knew, and this time she made no reply.

She did not guess the object of her lover’s question and she was a thousand miles from suspecting that this Maubel, whom she had never heard spoken of

before, was to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal; she could make nothing of the suspicions with which she was assailed, but she knew them to be unfounded. For this reason, having very little hope of dissipating them, she had very little wish to do so either. She ceased to deny having known Maubel, preferring to leave her jealous lover to go astray on a false trail, when from one moment to the next, the smallest incident might start him on the right road. Her little lawyer's clerk of former days, now grown into a patriot dragoon and lady-killer, had quarrelled by now with his aristocratic mistress. Whenever he met Élodie in the street, he would gaze at her with a glance that seemed to say:

"Come, my beauty! I feel sure I am going to forgive you for having betrayed you, and I am really quite ready to take you back into favour." She made no further attempt therefore to cure what she called her lover's crotchets, and Gamelin remained firm in the conviction that Jacques Maubel was Élodie's seducer.

Through the days that ensued the Tribunal devoted its undivided attention to the task of crushing Federalism, which, like a hydra, had threatened to devour Liberty. They were busy days; and the jurors, worn out with fatigue, despatched with the utmost possible expedition the case of the woman Roland, instigator and accomplice of the crimes of the Brissotin faction.

Meantime Gamelin spent every morning at the Courts to press on Maubel's trial. Some important pieces of evidence were to be found at Bordeaux; he insisted on a Commissioner being sent to ride post to fetch them. They arrived at last. The deputy of the Public Prosecutor read them, pulled a face and told Évariste:

"It is not good for much, your new evidence! there is nothing in it! mere fiddle-faddle.... If only it was certain that this *ci-devant* Comte de Maubel ever really emigrated...!"

In the end Gamelin succeeded. Young Maubel was served with his act of accusation and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal on the 19 Brumaire.

From the first opening of the sitting the President showed the gloomy and dreadful face he took care to assume for the hearing of cases where the evidence was weak. The Deputy Prosecutor stroked his chin with the feather of his pen and affected the serenity of a conscience at ease. The Clerk read the act of accusation; it was the hollowest sham the Court had ever heard so far.

The President asked the accused if he had not been aware of the laws passed against the *émigrés*.

"I was aware of them and I observed them," answered Maubel, "and I left France provided with passports in proper form."

As to the reasons for his journey to England and his return to France he had satisfactory explanations to offer. His face was pleasant, with a look of frankness and confidence that was agreeable. The women in the galleries looked at the young man with a favourable eye. The prosecution maintained that he had made a stay in Spain at the time that Nation was at war with France; he averred he had never left Bayonne at that period. One point alone remained obscure. Among the papers he had thrown in the fire at the time of his arrest, and of which only fragments had been found, some words in Spanish had been deciphered and the name of "Nieves."

On this subject Jacques Maubel refused to give the explanations demanded; and, when the President told him that it was in the accused's own interest to clear up the point, he answered that a man ought not always to do what his own interest requires.

Gamelin only thought of convicting Maubel of a crime; three times over he pressed the President to ask the accused if he could explain about the carnation the dried petals of which he hoarded so carefully in his pocket-book.

Maubel replied that he did not consider himself obliged to answer a question that had no concern with the case at law, as no letter had been found concealed in the flower.

The jury retired to the hall of deliberations, favourably impressed towards the young man whose mysterious conduct appeared chiefly connected with a lover's secrets. This time the good patriots, the purest of the pure themselves, would gladly have voted for acquittal. One of them, a *ci-devant* noble, who had given pledges to the Revolution, said:

"Is it his birth they bring up against him? I, too, I have had the misfortune to be born in the aristocracy."

"Yes, but you have left them," retorted Gamelin, "and he has not."

And he spoke with such vehemence against this conspirator, this emissary of Pitt, this accomplice of Coburg, who had climbed the mountains and sailed the seas to stir up enemies to Liberty, he demanded the traitor's condemnation in such burning words, that he awoke the never-resting suspicions, the old stern temper of the patriot jury.

One of them told him cynically:

"There are services that cannot well be refused between colleagues."

The verdict of death was recorded by a majority of one.

The condemned man heard his sentence with a quiet smile. His eyes, which had been gazing unconcernedly about the hall, as they fell on Gamelin's face, took on an expression of unspeakable contempt.

No one applauded the decision of the court.

Jacques Maubel was taken back to the Conciergerie; here he wrote a letter while he waited the hour of execution, which was to take place the same evening, by torchlight:

My dear sister, — The tribunal sends me to the scaffold, affording me the only joy I have been able to appreciate since the death of my adored Nieves. They have taken from me the only relic I had left of her, a pomegranate flower, which they called, I cannot tell why, a carnation.

I loved the arts; at Paris, in happier times, I made a collection of paintings and engravings, which are now in a sure place, and which will be delivered to you so soon as this is possible. I pray you, dear sister, to keep them in memory of me.

He cut a lock of his hair, enclosed it in the letter, which he folded and wrote outside:

*To the citoyenne Clémence Dezeimeries, née Maubel,
La Réole.*

He gave all the silver he had on him to the turnkey, begging him to forward this letter to its destination, asked for a bottle of wine, which he drank in little sips while waiting for the cart....

After supper Gamelin ran to the *Amour Peintre* and burst into the blue chamber where every night Élodie was waiting for him.

“You are avenged,” he told her. “Jacques Maubel is no more. The cart that took him to his death has just passed beneath your window, escorted by torchbearers.”

She understood:

“Wretch! it is you have killed him, and he was not my lover. I did not know him.... I have never seen him.... What was this man? He was young, amiable ... innocent. And you have killed him, wretch! wretch!”

She fell in a faint. But, amid the shadows of this momentary death, she felt herself overborne by a flood at once of horror and voluptuous ecstasy. She half revived; her heavy lids lifted to show the whites of the eyes, her bosom swelled, her hands beat the air, seeking for her lover. She pressed him to her in a strangling embrace, drove her nails into the flesh, and gave him with her bleeding lips, without a word, without a sound, the longest, the most agonized, the most delicious of kisses.

She loved him with all her flesh, and the more terrible, cruel, atrocious she thought him, the more she saw him reeking with the blood of his victims, the

more consuming was her hunger and thirst for him.

XVII

The 24 Frimaire, at ten in the forenoon, under a clear bright sun that was melting the ice formed in the night, the *citoyens* Guénot and Delourmel, delegates of the Committee of General Security, proceeded to the Barnabites and asked to be conducted to the Committee of Surveillance of the Section, in the Capitular hall, whose only occupant for the moment was the *citoyen* Beauvisage, who was piling logs on the fire. But they did not see him just at first because of his short, thickset stature.

In a hunchback's cracked voice the *citoyen* Beauvisage begged the delegates to seat themselves and put himself entirely at their service.

Guénot then asked him if he knew a *ci-devant* Monsieur des Ilettes, residing near the Pont-Neuf.

"It is an individual," he added, "whose arrest I am instructed to effect," — and he exhibited the order from the Committee of General Security.

Beauvisage, after racking his memory for a while, replied that he knew no individual of that name, that the suspect in question might not be an inhabitant of his Section, certain portions of the *Sections du Muséum , de l'Unité , de Marat-et-Marseille* being likewise in the near neighbourhood of the Pont-Neuf; that, if he did live in the Section, it must be under another name than that borne on the Committee's order; that, nevertheless, it would not be long before they laid hands on him.

"Let's lose no time," urged Guénot. "Our vigilance was aroused in this case by a letter from one of the man's accomplices that was intercepted and put into the hands of the Committee a fortnight ago, but which the *citoyen* Lacroix took action upon only yesterday evening. We are overdone with business; denunciations flow in from every quarter in such abundance one does not know which to attend to."

"Denunciations," replied Beauvisage proudly, "are coming in freely, too, to the Committee of Vigilance of our Section. Some make these revelations out of patriotism, others lured by the bait of a bank-bill for a hundred *sols* . Many children denounce their parents, whose property they covet."

"This letter," resumed Guénot, "emanates from a *ci-devant* called Rochemaure, a woman of gallantry, at whose house they played *biribi* , and is addressed to one *citoyen* Rauline; but is really for an *émigré* in the service of Pitt. I have brought it with me to communicate to you the portion relating to this man des Ilettes."

He drew the letter from his pocket.

“It begins with copious details as to those members of the Convention who might, according to the woman’s tale, be gained over by the offer of a sum of money or the promise of a well-paid post under a new Government, more stable than the present. Then comes the following passage:

“I have just returned from a visit to Monsieur des Ilettes, who lives near the Pont-Neuf in a garret where you must be either a cat or an imp to get at him; he is reduced to earning a living by making punch-and-judies. He is a man of judgment, for which reason I report to you, sir, the main gist of his conversation. He does not believe that the existing state of things will last long. Nor does he foresee its being ended by the victory of the coalition, and events appear to justify his opinion; for, as you are aware, sir, for some time past tidings from the front have been bad. He would rather seem to believe in the revolt of the poor and the women of the humbler classes, who remain still deeply attached to their religion. He holds that the widespread alarm caused by the Revolutionary Tribunal will soon reunite all France against the Jacobins. ‘This tribunal,’ he said, in his joking way, ‘which sentences the Queen of France and a bread-hawker, is like that William Shakespeare the English admire so much, etc....’ He thinks it not impossible that Robespierre may marry Madame Royale and have himself named Protector of the Kingdom.

“I should be grateful to you, sir, if you would transmit me the amount owing to me, that is to say one thousand pounds sterling, by the channel you are in the habit of using; but whatever you do, do not write to Monsieur Morhardt; he has lately been arrested, thrown into prison, etc., etc....”

“This worthy des Ilettes makes dancing-dolls, it appears,” observed Beauvisage, “that is a valuable clue ... though certainly there are many petty trades of the sort carried on in the Section.”

“That reminds me,” said Delourmel, “I promised to bring home a doll for my little girl Nathalie, my youngest, who is ill with scarlatina. The fever is not a dangerous one, but it demands careful nursing, and Nathalie, a very forward child for her age, and with a very active brain, has but delicate health.”

“I,” remarked Guénot, “I have only a boy. He plays hoop with barrel-hoops and makes little montgolfier balloons by inflating paper bags.”

“Very often,” Beauvisage put in his word, “it is with articles that are not toys at all that children like best to play. My nephew Émile, a little chap of seven, a very intelligent child, amuses himself all day long with little wooden bricks with which he builds houses.... Do you snuff, *citoyens* ?” — and Beauvisage held out his open snuff-box to the two delegates.

“Now we must set about nabbing our rascal,” said Delourmel, who had long moustaches and great eyes that rolled in his head. “I feel quite in the mood this morning for a dish of aristocrat’s lights and liver, washed down with a glass of white wine.”

Beauvisage suggested to the delegates going to the Place Dauphine to see if his colleague Dupont senior was at his shop there; he would be sure to know this man, des llettes.

So they set off in the keen morning air, accompanied by four grenadiers of the Section.

“Have you seen ‘*The Last Judgment of Kings*’ played?” Delourmel asked his companions; “the piece is worth seeing. The author shows you all the Kings of Europe on a desert island where they have taken refuge, at the foot of a volcano which swallows them up. It is a patriotic work.”

At the corner of the Rue du Harlay Delourmel’s eye was caught by a little cart, as brilliantly painted as a reliquary, which an old woman was pushing, wearing over her coif a hat of waxed cloth.

“What is that old woman selling?” he asked.

The old dame answered for herself:

“Look, gentlemen, make your choice. I have beads and rosaries, crosses, St. Anthonys, holy cerecloths, St. Veronica handkerchiefs, *Ecce homos*, *Agnus Deis*, hunting-horns and rings of St. Hubert, and articles of devotion of every sort and kind.”

“Why, it is the very arsenal of fanaticism!” cried Delourmel in horror, — and he proceeded to a summary examination of the poor woman, who made the same answer to every question:

“My son, it’s forty years I have been selling articles of devotion.”

Another Delegate of the Committee of General Security, noticing a blue-coated National Guard passing, directed him to convey the astonished old woman to the Conciergerie.

The *citoyen* Beauvisage pointed out to Delourmel that it would have been more in the competence of the Committee of Surveillance to arrest the woman and bring her before the Section; that in any case, one never knew nowadays what attitude to take up towards the old religion so as to act up to the views of the Government, and whether it was best to allow everything or forbid everything.

On nearing the joiner’s shop, the delegates and the commissary could hear angry shouts mingling with the hissing of the saw and the grinding of the plane. A quarrel had broken out between the joiner, Dupont senior, and his neighbour

Remacle, the porter, because of the *citoyenne* Remacle, whom an irresistible attraction was for ever drawing into the recesses of the workshop, whence she would return to the porter's lodge all covered with shavings and saw-dust. The injured porter bestowed a kick on Mouton, the carpenter's dog, which at that very moment his own little daughter Joséphine was nursing lovingly in her arms. Joséphine was furious and burst into a torrent of imprecations against her father, while the carpenter shouted in a voice of exasperation:

"Wretch! I tell you you shall not beat my dog."

"And I," retorted the porter brandishing his broom, "I tell you you shall *not*"

He did not finish the sentence; the joiner's plane had hurtled close past his head.

The instant he caught sight of the *citoyen* Beauvisage and the attendant delegates, he rushed up to him and cried:

"*Citoyen* Commissary you are my witness, this villain has just tried to murder me."

The *citoyen* Beauvisage, in his red cap, the badge of his office, put out his long arms in the attitude of a peacemaker, and addressing the porter and the joiner:

"A hundred *sols* ," he announced, "to whichever of you will inform us where to find a suspect, wanted by the Committee of General Security, a *ci-devant* named des Ilettes, a maker of dancing-dolls."

With one accord porter and carpenter designated Brotteaux's lodging, the only quarrel now between them being who should have the assignat for a hundred *sols* promised the informer.

Delourmel, Guénot, and Beauvisage, followed by the four grenadiers, Remacle the porter, Dupont the carpenter, and a dozen little scamps of the neighbourhood filed up the stairs which shook under their tread, and finally mounted the ladder to the attics.

Brotteaux was in his garret busy cutting out his dancing figures, while the Père Longuemare sat facing him, stringing their scattered limbs on threads, smiling to himself to see rhythm and harmony thus growing under his fingers.

At the sound of muskets being grounded on the landing, the monk trembled in every limb, not that he was a whit less courageous than Brotteaux, who never moved a muscle, but the habit of respect for human conventions had never disciplined him to assume an attitude of self-composure. Brotteaux gathered from the *citoyen* Delourmel's questions the quarter from which the blow had come and saw too late how unwise it is to confide in women. He obeyed the

citoyen Commissary's order to go with him, first picking up his Lucretius and his three shirts.

"The *citoyen* ," he said, pointing to the Père Longuemare, "is an assistant I have taken to help me make my marionettes. His home is here."

But the monk failing to produce a certificate of citizenship, was put under arrest along with Brotteaux.

As the procession filed past the porter's door, the *citoyenne* Remacle, leaning on her broom, looked at her lodger with the eyes of virtue beholding crime in the clutches of the law. Little Joséphine, dainty and disdainful, held back Mouton by his collar when the dog tried to fawn on the friend who had often given him a lump of sugar. A gaping crowd filled the Place de Thionville.

At the foot of the stairs Brotteaux came face to face with a young peasant woman who was on the point of going up. She carried a basket on her arm full of eggs and in her hand a flat cake wrapped in a napkin. It was Athenaïs, who had come from Palaiseau to present her saviour with a token of her gratitude. When she observed a posse of magistrates and four grenadiers and "Monsieur Maurice" being led away a prisoner, she stopped in consternation and asked if it was really true; then she stepped up to the Commissary and said in a gentle voice:

"You are not taking him to prison? it can't be possible.... Why! you don't know him! God himself is not better or kinder."

The *citoyen* Delourmel pushed her away and beckoned to the grenadiers to come forward. Then Athenaïs let loose a torrent of the foulest abuse, the filthiest and most abominable invective, at the magistrates and soldiers, who thought that all the rinsings of the Palais-Royal and the Rue Fromenteau were being emptied over their devoted heads. After which, in a voice that filled the whole Place de Thionville and sent a shudder through the throng of curious onlookers:

"Vive le roi! Vive le roi!" she yelled.

XVIII

The *citoyenne* Gamelin was devoted to old Brotteaux, and taking him altogether, thought him the best and greatest man she had ever known. She had not bidden him good-bye when he was arrested, because she would not have dared to defy the powers that be and because in her lowly estate she looked upon cowardice as a duty. But she had received a blow she could not recover from.

She could not eat and lamented she had lost her appetite just when she had at last the means to satisfy it. She still admired her son; but she durst not let her mind dwell on the appalling duties he was engaged upon and congratulated herself she was only an ignorant woman who had no call to judge his conduct.

The poor mother had found a rosary at the bottom of a trunk; she hardly knew how to use it, but often fumbled the beads in her trembling fingers. She had lived to grow old without any overt exercise of her religion, but she had always been a pious woman, and she would pray to God all day long, in the chimney corner, to save her boy and that good, kind Monsieur Brotteaux. Élodie often came to see her; they durst not look each other in the eyes, and sitting side by side they would talk at random of indifferent matters.

One day in Pluviose, when the snow, falling in heavy flakes, darkened the sky and deadened the noises of the city, the *citoyenne* Gamelin, who was alone in the lodging heard a knock at the door. She started violently; for months now the slightest noise had set her trembling. She opened the door. A young man of eighteen or twenty walked in, his hat on his head. He was dressed in a bottle-green box-coat, the triple collar of which covered his bust and descended to the waist. He wore top-boots of an English cut. His chestnut hair fell in ringlets about his shoulders. He stepped into the middle of the studio, as if wishful that all the light admitted by the snow-encumbered skylight might fall on him, and stood there some moments without moving or speaking.

At last, in answer to the *citoyenne* Gamelin's look of amazement:

"Don't you know your daughter?"

The old dame clasped her hands:

"Julie!... It is you.... Good God! is it possible?..."

"Why, yes, it is I. Kiss me, mother."

The *citoyenne* Gamelin pressed her daughter to her bosom, and dropped a tear on the collar of the box-coat. Then she began again in an anxious voice:

"You, in Paris!..."

“Ah! mother, but why did I not come alone! For myself, they will never know me in this dress.”

It was a fact the box-coat sufficiently disguised her shape, and she did not look very different from a great many very young men, who, like her, wore their hair long and parted in two masses on the forehead. Her features, which were delicately cut and charming, but burnt by the sun, drawn with fatigue, worn with anxiety, had a bold, masculine expression. She was slim, with long straight limbs and an easy carriage; only the clear treble of her voice could have betrayed her sex.

Her mother asked her if she was hungry. She said she would be glad of something to eat, and when bread, wine and ham had been set before her, she fell to, one elbow on the table, with a pretty gluttony, like Ceres in the hut of the old woman Baubo.

Then, the glass still at her lips:

“Mother,” she asked, “do you know when my brother will be back? I have come to speak to him.”

The good woman looked at her daughter in embarrassment and said nothing.

“I must see him. My husband was arrested this morning and taken to the Luxembourg.”

By this name of “husband” she designated Fortuné de Chassagne, a *ci-devant* noble and officer in Bouillé’s regiment. He had first loved her when she was a work-girl at a milliner’s in the Rue des Lombards, and had carried her away with him to England, whither he had fled after the 10th August. He was her lover; but she thought it more becoming to speak of him as her husband before her mother. Indeed, she told herself that the hardships they had shared had surely united them in a wedlock consecrated by suffering.

More than once they had spent the night side by side on a bench in one of the London parks and gathered up scraps of broken bread under the table in the taverns in Piccadilly.

Her mother could find no answer and gazed at her mournfully.

“Don’t you hear what I say, mother? Time presses, I must see Évariste at once; he, and he only, can save Fortuné’s life.”

“Julie,” answered her mother at last, “it is better you should not speak to your brother.”

“Why, what do you mean, mother?”

“I mean what I say, it is better you do not speak to your brother about Monsieur de Chassagne.”

“But, mother, I must!”

“My child, Évariste can never forgive Monsieur de Chassagne for his treatment of you. You know how angrily he used to speak of him, what names he called him.”

“Yes, he called him seducer,” said Julie with a little hissing laugh, shrugging her shoulders.

“My child, it was a mortal blow to his pride. Évariste has vowed never again to mention Monsieur de Chassagne’s name, and for two years now he has not breathed one word of him or of you. But his feelings have not altered; you know him, he can never forgive you.”

“But, mother, as Fortuné has married me ... in London....”

The poor mother threw up her eyes and hands:

“Fortuné is an aristocrat, an *émigré*, and that is cause enough to make Évariste treat him as an enemy.”

“Mother, give me a direct answer. Do you mean that if I ask him to go to the Public Prosecutor and the Committee of General Security and take the necessary steps to save Fortuné’s life, do you mean that he will not consent?... But, mother, he would be a monster if he refused!”

“My child, your brother is an honest man and a good son. But do not ask him, oh! do not ask him to intercede for Monsieur de Chassagne.... Listen to me, Julie. He does not confide his thoughts to me and, no doubt, I should not be competent to understand them ... but he is a juror; he has principles; he acts as his conscience dictates. Do not ask him anything, Julie.”

“Ah! I see you know him now. You know that he is cold, callous, that he is a bad man, that ambition and vainglory are his only guides. And you always loved him better than me. When we lived together, all three of us, you set him up as my pattern to copy. His staid demeanour and grave speech impressed you; you thought he possessed all the virtues. And me, me you always blamed, you gave me all the vices, because I was frank and free, and because I climbed trees. You could never endure me. You loved nobody but him. There, I hate him, your model Évariste; he is a hypocrite.”

“Hush, Julie! I have been a good mother to you as well as to him. I had you taught a trade. It has been no fault of mine that you are not an honest woman and did not marry in your station. I loved you tenderly and I love you still. I forgive you and I love you. But do not speak ill of Évariste. He is a good son. He has always taken care of me. When you left me, my child, when you abandoned your trade and forsook your shop, to go and live with Monsieur de Chassagne, what would have become of me without him? I should have died of hunger and wretchedness.”

“Do not talk so, mother; you know very well we would have cherished you with all affection, Fortuné and I, if you had not turned your face from us, at Évariste’s instigation. Never tell me! he is incapable of a kindly action. It was to make me odious in your eyes that he made a pretence of caring for you. He! love you?... Is he capable of loving anyone? He has neither heart nor head. He has no talent, not a scrap. To paint, a man must have a softer, tenderer nature than his.”

She threw a glance round the canvases in the studio, which she found to be no better and no worse than when she left her home.

“There you see his soul! he has put it in his pictures, cold and sombre as it is. His Orestes, his Orestes with the dull eye and cruel mouth, and looking as if he had been impaled, is himself all over.... But, mother, cannot you understand at all? I cannot leave Fortuné in prison. You know these Jacobins, these patriots, all Évariste’s crew. They will kill him. Mother, little mother, darling mother, I cannot have them kill him. I love him! I love him! He has been so good to me, and we have been so unhappy together. Look, this box-coat is one of his coats. I had never a shift left. A friend of Fortuné’s lent me a jacket and I got a post with an eating-house keeper at Dover, while he worked at a barber’s. We knew quite well that to return to France was to risk our lives; but we were asked if we would go to Paris to carry out an important mission.... We agreed, — we would have accepted a mission to hell! Our travelling expenses were paid and we were given a letter of exchange on a Paris banker. We found the offices closed; the banker is in prison and going to be guillotined. We had not a brass farthing. All the individuals with whom we were in correspondence and to whom we could appeal are fled or imprisoned. Not a door to knock at. We slept in a stable in the Rue de la Femme-sans-tête. A charitable bootblack, who slept on the same straw with us there, lent my lover one of his boxes, a brush and a pot of blacking three quarters empty. For a fortnight Fortuné made his living and mine by blacking shoes in the Place de Grève.

“But on Monday a Member of the Commune put his foot on the box to have his boots polished. He had been a butcher once, a man Fortuné had before now given a kick behind to for selling meat of short weight. When Fortuné raised his head to ask for his two sous, the rascal recognized him, called him aristocrat, and threatened to have him arrested. A crowd collected, made up of honest folks and a few blackguards, who began to shout “*Death to the émigré!*” and called for the gendarmes. At that moment I came up with Fortuné’s bowl of soup. I saw him taken off to the Section and shut up in the church of Saint-Jean. I tried to kiss him, but they hustled me away. I spent the night like a dog on the church steps.... They took him away this morning....”

Julie could not finish, her sobs choked her.

She threw her hat on the floor and fell on her knees at her mother's feet.

"They took him away this morning to the Luxembourg prison. Mother, mother, help me to save him; have pity on your child!"

Drowned in her tears, she threw open her box-coat and, the better to prove herself a woman and a wife, bared her bosom; seizing her mother's hands, she held them close over her throbbing breasts.

"My darling, my daughter, Julie, my Julie!" sobbed the widow Gamelin, — and pressed her streaming cheeks to the girl's.

For some moments they clung together without a word. The poor mother was racking her brains for some way of helping her daughter, and Julie was watching the kind look in those tearful eyes.

"Perhaps," thought Évariste's mother, "perhaps, if I speak to him, he will be melted. He is good, he is tender-hearted. If politics had not hardened him, if he had not been influenced by the Jacobins, he would never have had these cruel feelings, that terrify me because I cannot understand them."

She took Julie's head in her two hands:

"Listen, my child. I will speak to Évariste. I will sound him, get him to see you and hear your story. The sight of you might anger him; his first impulse might be to turn against you.... And then, I know him; this costume would offend him; he is uncompromising in everything that touches morals, that shocks the proprieties. *I* was a bit startled to see my Julie dressed as a man."

"Oh! mother, the emigration and the fearful disorders of the kingdom have made these disguises quite a common thing. They are adopted in order to follow a trade, to escape recognition, to get a borrowed passport or a certificate approved. In London I saw young Girey dressed as a girl, — and he made a very pretty girl; you must own, mother, *that* is a more scandalous disguise than mine."

"My poor child, you have no need to justify yourself in my eyes, whether in this or any other thing. I am your mother; for me you will always be blameless. I will speak to Évariste, I will say...."

She broke off. She knew what her son was; she felt it in her heart, but she would not believe it, she *would* not know it.

"He is kind-hearted. He will do it for my sake ... for your sake, he will do what I ask him."

The two women, weary to the death, fell silent. Julie sank asleep, her head pillowed on the knees where she had rested as a child, while the mother, the rosary between her hands, wept, like another *mater dolorosa*, over the calamities she felt drawing stealthily nearer and nearer in the silence of this day

of snow when everything was hushed, footsteps and carriage wheels and the very heaven itself.

Suddenly, with a keenness of hearing sharpened by anxiety, she caught the sound of her son's steps on the stairs.

"Évariste!" she cried. "Hide" — and she hurried the girl into the bedroom.

"How are you to-day, mother dear?"

Évariste hung up his hat on its peg, changed his blue coat for a working jacket and sat down before his easel. For some days he had been working at a sketch in charcoal of a Victory laying a wreath on the brow of a dead soldier, who had died for the fatherland. Once the subject would have called out all his enthusiasm, but the Tribunal consumed all his days and absorbed his whole soul, while his hand had lost its knack from disuse and had grown heavy and inert.

He hummed over the *Ça ira*.

"I hear you singing," said the *citoyenne* Gamelin; "you are light-hearted, Évariste?"

"We have reason to be glad, mother; there is good news. La Vendée is crushed, the Austrians beaten, the Army of the Rhine has forced the lines of Lautern and of Wissembourg. The day is at hand when the Republic triumphant will show her clemency. Why must the conspirators' audacity increase the mightier the Republic waxes in strength, and traitors plot to strike the fatherland a blow in the dark at the very moment her lightnings overwhelm the enemies that assail her openly?"

The *citoyenne* Gamelin, as she sat knitting a stocking, was watching her son's face over her spectacles.

"Berzélius, your old model, has been to ask for the ten livres you owed him; I paid him. Little Joséphine has had a belly-ache from eating too much of the preserves the carpenter gave her. So I made her a drop of herb tea.... Desmahis has been to see you; he was sorry he did not find you in. He wanted to engrave a design by you. He thinks you have great talent. He is a fine fellow; he looked at your sketches and admired them."

"When peace is re-established and conspiracy suppressed," said the painter, "I shall begin on my Orestes again. It is not my way to flatter myself; but that head is worthy of David's brush."

He outlined with a majestic sweep the arm of his Victory.

"She holds out palms," he said. "But it would be finer if her arms themselves were palms."

"Évariste!"

"Mother?"

"I have had news ... guess, of whom...."

“I do not know.”

“Of Julie ... of your sister.... She is not happy.”

“It would be a scandal if she were.”

“Do not speak so, my son, she is your sister. Julie is not a bad woman; she had a good disposition, which misfortune has developed. She loves you. I can assure you, Évariste, that she only desires a hard-working, exemplary life and her fondest wish is to be reconciled to her friends. There is nothing to prevent your seeing her again. She has married Fortuné Chassagne.”

“She has written to you?”

“No.”

“How, then, have you had news of her, mother?”

“It was not by letter, Évariste; it was....”

He sprang up and stopped her with a savage cry:

“Not another word, mother! Do not tell me they have both returned to France.... As they are doomed to perish, at least let it not be at my hands. For their own sake, for yours, for mine, let me not know they are in Paris.... Do not force the knowledge on me; otherwise....”

“What do you mean, my son? you would think, you would dare...?”

“Mother, hear what I say; if I knew my sister Julie to be in that room ...” (and he pointed at the closed door), “I should go instantly to denounce her to the Committee of Vigilance of the Section.”

The poor mother, her face as white as her coif, dropped her knitting from her trembling hands and sighed in a voice fainter than the faintest whisper:

“I would not believe it, but I see it now; my boy is a monster....”

As pale as she, the froth gathering on his lips, Évariste fled from the house and ran to find at Élodie’s side forgetfulness, sleep, the delicious foretaste of extinction.

XIX

While the Père Longuemare and the girl Athenais were examined at the Section, Brotteaux was led off between two gendarmes to the Luxembourg, where the door-keeper refused to admit him, declaring he had no room left. The old financier was next taken to the Conciergerie and brought into the Gaoler's office, quite a small room, divided in two by a glazed partition. While the clerk was inscribing his name in the prison registers, Brotteaux could see through the panes two men lying each on a tattered mattress, both as still as death and with glazed eyes that seemed to see nothing. Plates, bottles and bits of broken bread and meat littered the floor round them. They were prisoners condemned to death and waiting for the cart to arrive.

The *ci-devant* Monsieur des Ilettes was thrust into a dungeon, where by the light of a lantern he could just make out two figures stretched on the ground, one savage-looking and hideously mutilated, the other graceful and pleasing. The two prisoners offered him a share of their straw, and this, rotten and swarming with vermin as it was, was better than having to lie on the earth, which was befouled with excrement. Brotteaux sank down on a bench in the pestiferous darkness and sat there, his head against the wall, speechless and motionless. So intense was his agony of mind he would have dashed out his brains against the stones if he had had the strength. He could not breathe. His eyes swam, and a long-drawn murmur, as soft as silence, filled his ears. He felt his whole being bathed in a delicious semi-consciousness. For one incomparable moment everything was harmony, serenity, light, fragrance, sweetness. Then he ceased to know or feel anything.

When he returned to himself, the first notion that entered his head was to regret his coma and, a philosopher even in the stupor of despair, he reflected how he had had to plunge to the depths of an underground dungeon, there to await execution, to enjoy the most exquisite of all voluptuous sensations he had ever tasted. He tried hard to lose consciousness again, but without success; on the contrary, little by little he felt the poisonous air of the dungeon fill his lungs and bring with it, along with the fever of life, a full consciousness of his intolerable wretchedness.

Meantime his two companions regarded his silence as a cruel personal insult. Brotteaux, who was of a sociable turn, endeavoured to satisfy their curiosity; but when they discovered he was only what they called "a political," one of the mild sort whose crime was only a matter of words and opinions, they lost all respect

and sympathy for him. The offences charged against these two prisoners had more grit; the older of the men was a murderer, the other had been manufacturing forged assignats. Both made the best of their situation and even found some alleviations in it. Brotteaux's thoughts suddenly turned to the world above him, — how over his head all was noise and bustle, light and life, while the pretty shopwomen in the Palais de Justice behind their counters, loaded with perfumery and pretty knicknacks, smiled on their customers, happy people free to go where they pleased, — and the picture doubled his despair.

Night fell, unmarked in the darkness and silence of the dungeon, but yet gloomy and oppressive. One leg extended on his bench and his back propped against the wall, Brotteaux fell into a doze. And lo! he saw himself seated at the foot of a leafy beech, in which the birds were singing; the setting sun bathed the river in liquid fire and the clouds were edged with purple. The night wore through. A burning fever consumed him and he greedily drained his pitcher to the dregs, but the fetid water only increased his distress.

Next day the gaoler who brought the food promised Brotteaux, if he could afford the cost, to give him the privileges of a prisoner who pays for his accommodation, so soon as there should be room, and it was not likely to be long first. And so it turned out; two days later he invited the old financier to leave his dungeon. At every step he took upwards, Brotteaux felt life and vigour coming back to him, and when he saw a room with a red-tiled floor and in it a bed of sacking covered with a dingy woollen counterpane, he wept for joy. The gilded bed carved with doves billing and cooing that he had once had made for the prettiest of the dancers at the Opera had not seemed so desirable or promised him such delights.

This bed of sacking was in a large hall, very fairly clean, which held seventeen others like it, separated by high partitions of planks. The company that occupied these quarters, composed of ex-nobles, tradesmen, bankers, working-men, hit the old publican's taste well enough, for he could accommodate himself to persons of all qualities. He noticed that these, cut off like himself from every opportunity of pleasure and foredoomed to perish at the hand of the executioner, were of a very merry humour and showed a marked taste for wit and raillery. His bent was to think lightly of mankind, so he attributed the high spirits of his companions to the frivolity of their minds, which prevented them from looking seriously at their situation. Moreover, he was strengthened in his opinion by observing how the more intelligent among them were profoundly sad. He remarked before long, that, for the most part, wine and brandy supplied the inspiration of a gaiety that betrayed its source by its violent and sometimes almost insane character. They did not all possess courage; but all made a display

of it. This caused Brotteaux no surprise; he was well aware how men will readily enough avow cruelty, passion, even avarice, but never cowardice, because such an admission would bring them, among savages and even in civilized society, into mortal danger. That is the reason, he reflected, why all nations are nations of heroes and all armies are made up of brave men only.

More potent, even, than wine and brandy were the rattle of weapons and keys, the clash of locks and bolts, the cry of sentries, the stamping of feet at the door of the Tribunal, to intoxicate the prisoners and fill their minds with melancholy, insanity, or frenzy. Some there were who cut their throat with a razor or threw themselves from a window.

Brotteaux had been living for three days in these privileged quarters when he learned through the turnkey that the Père Longuemare was languishing on the rotten verminous straw of the common prison with the thieves and murderers. He had him put on paying terms in the same room as himself, where a bed had fallen vacant. Having promised to pay for the monk, the old publican, who had no large sum of money about him, struck out the idea of making portraits at a crown apiece. By the help of a gaoler, he procured a supply of small black frames in which to put pretty little designs in hair which he executed with considerable cleverness. These productions sold well, being highly appreciated among people whose thoughts were set on leaving souvenirs to their friends.

The Père Longuemare kept a good heart and a high spirit. While waiting his summons to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he was preparing his defence. Drawing no distinction between his own case and that of the Church, he promised himself to expose to his judges the disorders and scandals to which the Spouse of Christ was exposed by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy; he proposed to depict the eldest daughter of the Church waging sacrilegious war upon the Pope, the French clergy robbed, outraged, subjected to the odious domination of laics, the regulars, Christ's true army, despoiled and scattered. He cited St. Gregory the Great and St. Irenæus, quoted numerous articles of the Canon Law and whole paragraphs from the Decretals.

All day long he sat scribbling on his knees, at the foot of his bed, dipping stumps of pens worn to the feathers in ink, soot, coffee-grounds, covering with illegible writing candle-wrappers, packing-paper, newspapers, playing cards, even thinking of using his shirt for the same purpose after starching it. Leaf by leaf the pile grew; pointing to this mass of undecipherable scrawls, he would say:

“Ah! when I appear before my judges, I will inundate them with light.”

Another day, casting a look of satisfaction on his defence, which grew bulkier day by day, and thinking of these magistrates he was burning to confound, he

cried:

“I wouldn’t like to be in *their* shoes!”

The prisoners whom fate had brought together in this prison-room were Royalists or Federalists, there was even a Jacobin amongst the rest; they held widely different views as to the right way of conducting the business of the State, but not one of them all preserved the smallest vestige of Christian beliefs. Feuillants, Constitutionals, Girondists, all, like Brotteaux, considered the Christians’ God a very bad thing for themselves and an excellent one for the people; as for the Jacobins, they were for installing in the place of Jehovah a Jacobin god, anxious to refer the dispensation of Jacobinism on earth to a higher source. But as they could not conceive, either one or the other, of anybody being so absurd as to believe in any revealed religion, seeing that the Père Longuemare was no fool, they took him to be a knave. By way, no doubt, of preparing for martyrdom, he made confession of faith at every opportunity, and the more sincerity he displayed, the more like an impostor he seemed.

In vain Brotteaux stood surety for the monk’s good faith; Brotteaux himself was reputed to believe only a part of what he said. His ideas were too singular not to appear affected and satisfied nobody entirely. He dubbed Jean-Jacques a dull, paltry rascal. Voltaire, on the other hand, he accounted among the divinely-gifted men, though not on the same level as the amiable Helvétius, or Diderot, or the Baron d’Holbach. In his opinion the greatest genius of the century was Boulanger. He also thought highly of the astronomer Lalande and of Dupuis, author of a *Memoir on the origin of the Constellations* .

The wits of the company made a thousand jokes at the poor Barnabite’s expense, the point of which he never saw; his simplicity saved him from every pitfall. To drown the suspense that racked them and escape the torments of idleness, the prisoners played at draughts, cards and backgammon. No instrument of music was allowed. After supper they would sing, or recite verses. Voltaire’s *La Pucelle* brought a little cheerfulness to these aching hearts, and the company never wearied of hearing the telling passages repeated. But, unable to distract their thoughts from the appalling vision that always loomed before their mind’s eye, they strove sometimes to make a diversion of it, and in the chamber of the eighteen beds, before turning in for the night, they would play the game of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The parts were distributed according to tastes and aptitudes. While some represented the judges and prosecutor, others were the accused or the witnesses, others again the headsman and his men. The trials invariably wound up with the execution of the condemned, who were laid at full length on a bed, the neck underneath a plank. The scene then shifted to the infernal regions. The most agile of the troop, wrapped in white sheets, played

spectres. There was a young *avocat* from Bordeaux, a man named Dubosc, short, dark, one-eyed, humpbacked, bandy-legged, the very black deuce in person, who used to come all horned and hoofed, to drag the Père Longuemare feet first out of his bed, announcing to the culprit that he was condemned to the everlasting flames of hell and doomed past redemption for having made of the Creator of the Universe a jealous being, a blockhead, and a bully, an enemy of human happiness and love.

“Ah! ha! ha!” the devil would scream discordantly, “so you taught, you old bonze, that God delights to see His creatures languish in contrition and deny themselves His dearest gifts. Impostor, hypocrite, sneak, sit on nails and eat eggshells for all eternity!”

The Père Longuemare, for all reply, would observe that the speech showed the philosopher’s cloven hoof behind the devil’s and that the meanest imp of hell would never have talked such foolishness, having at least rubbed shoulders with Theology and for certain being less ignorant than an Encyclopædist.

But when the Girondist *avocat* called him a Capuchin, he turned scarlet with anger and declared that a man incapable of distinguishing a Barnabite from a Franciscan was too blind to see a fly in milk.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was always draining the prisons, which the Committees were as unceasingly replenishing; in three months the chamber of the eighteen was half full of new faces. The Père Longuemare lost his tormentor. The *avocat* Dubosc was haled before the Revolutionary Tribunal and condemned to death as a Federalist and for having conspired against the unity of the Republic. On leaving the court, he returned, as the prisoners always did, by a corridor that ran through the prison and opened on the room he had enlivened for three months with his gaiety. As he made his farewells to his companions, he maintained the same light tone and cheerful air that were habitual with him.

“Forgive me, sir,” he said to the Père Longuemare, “for having hauled you feet foremost from your bed. I will never do it again.”

Then, turning to old Brotteaux:

“Good-bye, I go before you into the land of nowhere. I gladly return to Nature the atoms of my composition, only hoping she will make a better use of them for the future, for it must be owned she did not make much of a job of me.”

So he went on his way to the gaoler’s room, leaving Brotteaux sorrowful and the Père Longuemare trembling and green as a leaf, more dead than alive to see the impious wretch laugh on the brink of the abyss.

When Germinal brought back the bright days, Brotteaux, who was of an ardent temperament, tramped down several times every day to the courtyard giving on the women’s quarters, near the fountain where the female prisoners

used to come of a morning to wash their linen. An iron railing separated the two barracks; but the bars were not so close together as to hinder hands joining and lips meeting. Under the kindly shade of night loving couples would press against the obstacle. At such times Brotteaux would retire discreetly to the staircase and, sitting on a step, would draw from the pocket of his plum-coloured surtout his little Lucretius and read, by the light of a lantern, some of the author's sternly consolatory maxims: "*Sic ubi non erimus* When we shall have ceased to be, nothing will have power to move us, not even the heavens and earth and sea confounding their shattered fragments...." But, in the act of enjoying his exalted wisdom, Brotteaux would find himself envying the Barnabite this craze that veiled the universe from his eyes.

Month by month terror grew more intense. Every night the tipsy gaolers, their watch-dogs at their heels, would march from cell to cell, delivering acts of accusation, howling out names they mutilated, waking the prisoners and for twenty victims marked on their list terrifying two hundred. Along these corridors, reeking with bloody memories, passed every day, without a murmur, twenty, thirty, fifty condemned prisoners, old men, women, young men and maidens, so widely different in rank and character and opinion that the question rose involuntarily to the lips, — had they not been chosen by lot?

And the card playing went on, the Burgundy drinking, the making of plans, the assignations for after dark at the rails. The company, new almost to a man, now consisted in great part of "extremists" and "irreconcilables." But still the room of the eighteen beds remained the home of elegance and good breeding; barring two prisoners recently transferred from the Luxembourg to the Conciergerie and added to the company, by whom they were suspected of being spies, the *citoyens* Navette and Bellier by name, there were none but honest folk there who reposed a mutual trust in each other. Glass in hand, the victories of the Republic were celebrated by all. Amongst the rest were several poets, as there always are in any gathering of people with nothing to do. The most accomplished composed odes on the triumphs of the Army of the Rhine, which they recited with much mouthing. They were uproariously applauded. Brotteaux was the only lukewarm admirer of the victors and the bards who sang their victories.

"Since Homer began it," he observed one day, "it has always been a mania with poets, this extolling the powers of fighting-men. War is not an art, and luck alone decides the fate of battles. With two generals, both blockheads, face to face, one of them must inevitably be victorious. Wait till some day one of these warriors you make gods of swallows you all up like the stork in the fable who

gobbles up the frogs. Ah! then he would be really and truly a God! For you can always tell the gods by their appetite.”

Brotteaux’s head had never been turned by the glamour of arms. He felt no triumph at the victories of the Republic, which he had foreseen. He did not like the new régime, which military success confirmed. He was a malcontent. Another would have been the same for less cause.

One morning it was announced that the Commissaries of the Committee of General Security were going to institute a search in the prisoners’ quarters, that they would seize assignats, articles of gold and silver, knives, scissors; that similar proceedings had been taken at the Luxembourg, where letters, papers, and books had been taken possession of.

Thereupon everyone tried to think of some hiding place in which to secure whatever he held most precious. The Père Longuemare carried away his defence in armfuls to a rain-gutter, while Brotteaux slipped his Lucretius among the ashes on the hearth.

When the Commissaries, wearing tricolour ribands at their necks, arrived to carry out their perquisition, they found scarcely anything but such trifles as it had been deemed judicious to let them discover. On their departure, the Père Longuemare ran to his rain-pipe and rescued as much of his defence as wind and water had spared. Brotteaux pulled out his Lucretius from the fireplace all black with soot.

“Let us make the best of the present,” he thought, “for I augur from sundry tokens that our time is straitly measured from henceforth.”

One soft night in Prairial, while over the prison yard the moon riding high in a pale sky showed her two silver horns, the ex-financier, who, as his way was, sat reading Lucretius on a step of the stone stairs, heard a voice call him, a woman’s voice, a delightful voice, which he did not know. He went down into the court and saw behind the railing a form which he recognized as little as he did the voice, but which reminded him, in its half-seen fascinating outlines, of all the women he had loved. A flood of silvery blue moonlight fell on it. Next instant Brotteaux recognized the pretty actress of the Rue Feydeau, Rose Thévenin.

“You here, my child! It is a joy to see you, but it stabs my heart. Since when have you been here, and why?”

“Since yesterday,” — and she added very low:

“I have been denounced as a Royalist. They accuse me of conspiring to set free the Queen. Knowing you were here, I tried at once to see you. Listen to me, dear friend ... you will let me call you so?... I know people in power; I have

sympathizers, I am sure of it, on the Committee of Public Safety itself. I will set my friends to work; they will deliver me, and *I* will deliver you.”

But Brotteaux in a voice that took on an accent of urgency:

“By everything you hold dear, my child, do nothing of the sort! Do not write, do not petition; ask nothing of anybody, I conjure you, let yourself be forgotten.”

As she appeared unconvinced by what he said, he went on more beseechingly still:

“Not a word, Rose, let them forget you; there lies safety. Anything your friends might attempt would only hasten your undoing. Time is everything; only a short delay, a very short one, I hope, is needed to save you.... Above all, never try to melt the judges, the jurors, a Gamelin. They are not men, they are things; there is no arguing with things. Let them forget you; if you take my advice, sweetheart, I shall die happy, happy to have saved your life.”

She answered:

“I will do as you say.... Never talk of dying....”

He shrugged his shoulders.

“My life is ended, my child. Do you live and be happy.”

She took his hands and laid them on her bosom:

“Hear what I say, dear friend.... I have only seen you once for a day, and yet you are not indifferent to me. And if what I am going to tell you can renew your attachment to life, oh! believe my promise, — I will be for you ... whatever you shall wish me to be.”

And they exchanged a kiss on the mouth through the bars.

XX

Evariste Gamelin, as he sat, one day that a long, tedious case was before the Tribunal, on the jury-bench in the stifling court, closed his eyes and thought:

“Evil-doers, by forcing Marat to hide in holes and corners, had turned him into a bird of night, the bird of Minerva, whose glance pierced the dark recesses where conspirators lurked. Now it is a blue eye, cold and calm, that discovers the enemies of the State and denounces traitors with a subtlety unknown even to the Friend of the People, now asleep for ever in the garden of the Cordeliers. The new saviour of the country, as zealous and more keen-sighted than the first, sees what no man before had seen and with a lifted finger spreads terror broadcast. He discerns the fine, imperceptible shades of difference that divide evil from good, vice from virtue, which but for him would have been confounded, to the hurt of the fatherland and freedom, he marks out before him the thin, inflexible line outside which lies, to the right hand and to the left, only error, crime, and wickedness. The Incorruptible teaches how men serve the foreigner equally by excess of zeal and by supineness, by persecuting the religious in the name of reason no less than by fighting in the name of religion against the laws of the Republic. Every whit as much as the villains who immolated Le Peltier and Marat, do they serve the foreigner who decree them divine honours, to compromise their memory. Agent of the foreigner whosoever repudiates the ideas of order, wisdom, opportunity; agent of the foreigner whosoever outrages morals, scandalizes virtue, and, in the foolishness of his heart, denies God. Yes, fanatic priests deserve to die; but there is an anti-revolutionary way of combating fanaticism; abjurers, too, may be guilty of a crime. By moderation men destroy the Republic; by violence they do the same.

“August and terrible the functions of a judge, — functions defined by the wisest of mankind! It is not aristocrats alone, federalists, scoundrels of the Orleans faction, open enemies of the fatherland, that we must strike down. The conspirator, the agent of the foreigner is a Proteus, he assumes all shapes, he puts on the guise of a patriot, a revolutionary, an enemy of Kings; he affects the boldness of a heart that beats only for freedom; his voice swells, and the foes of the Republic tremble. His name is Danton; his violence is a poor cloak to his odious moderatism, and his base corruption is manifest at last. The conspirator, the agent of the foreigner is that fluent stammerer, the man who clapped the first cockade of revolution in his hat, that pamphleteer who, in his ironical and cruel patriotism, nicknamed himself, ‘The procureur of the Lantern.’ *His* name is

Camille Desmoulins. He threw off the mask by defending the Generals, traitors to their country, and claiming measures of clemency criminal at such a time. There was Philippeaux, there was Hérault, there was the despicable Lacroix. There was the Père Duchesne, he, too, a conspirator and agent of the foreigner, the vile demagogue who degraded liberty, and whose filthy calumnies stirred sympathy for Antoinette herself. There was Chaumette, who yet was a mild man, popular, moderate, well-intentioned, and virtuous in the administration of the Commune; but he was an atheist! Conspirators, agents of the foreigner, — such were all those sansculottes in red cap and carmagnole and sabots who recklessly outbid the Jacobins in patriotism. Conspirator and agent of the foreigner was Anacharsis Cloots, ‘orator of the human race,’ condemned to die by all the Monarchies of the world; but everything was to be feared of him, — he was a Prussian.

“Now violent or moderate, all these evil-doers, all these traitors, — Danton, Desmoulins, Hébert, Chaumette, — have perished under the axe. The Republic is saved; a chorus of praises rises from all the Committees and the popular assemblies one and all to greet Maximilien and *the Mountain*. Good citizens cry aloud: ‘Worthy representatives of a free people, in vain have the sons of the Titans lifted their proud heads; oh! mountain of blessing, oh! protecting Sinai, from thy tumultuous bosom has issued the saving lightning....’

“In this chorus the Tribunal has its meed of praise. How sweet a thing it is to be virtuous, and how dear to public gratitude, to the heart of the upright judge!

“Meanwhile, for a patriot heart, what food for amazement, what motives for anxiety! What! to betray the people’s cause, it was not enough to have a Mirabeau, a La Fayette, a Bailly, a Pétion, a Brissot? We must likewise have the men who denounced these traitors. Can it be that all the patriots who made the Revolution only wrought to ruin her? that these heroes of the great days were but contriving with Pitt and Coburg to give the kingdom to the Orleans and set up a Regency under Louis XVII? What! Danton was another Monk. What! Chaumette and the Hébertists, falsers than the Federalists who sent them to the guillotine, had conspired to destroy the State! But among those who hurried to their death the traitor Danton and the traitor Chaumette, will not the blue eye of Robespierre discover anon more perfidious traitors yet? What will be the end of this hideous concatenation of traitors betrayed and the revelations of the keen-sighted Incorruptible?...”

XXI

Meantime Julie Gamelin, in her bottle-green box-coat, went every day to the Luxembourg Gardens and there, on a bench at the end of one of the avenues, sat waiting for the moment when her lover should show his face at one of the dormers of the Palace. Then they would beckon to each other and talk together in a language of signs they had invented. In this way she learned that the prisoner occupied a fairly good room and had pleasant companions, that he wanted a blanket for his bed and a kettle and loved his mistress fondly.

She was not the only one to watch for the sight of a dear face at a window of the Palace now turned into a prison. A young mother not far from her kept her eyes fixed on a closed casement; then directly she saw it open, she would lift her little one in her arms above her head. An old lady in a lace veil sat for long hours on a folding-chair, vainly hoping to catch a momentary glimpse of her son, who, for fear of breaking down, never left his game of quoits in the courtyard of the prison till the hour when the gardens were closed.

During these long hours of waiting, whether the sky were blue or overcast, a man of middle age, rather stout and very neatly dressed, was constantly to be seen on a neighbouring bench, playing with his snuff-box and the charms on his watch-guard or unfolding a newspaper, which he never read. He was dressed like a bourgeois of the old school in a gold-laced cocked hat, a plum-coloured coat and blue waistcoat embroidered in silver. He looked well-meaning enough, and was something of a musician to judge by a flute, one end of which peeped from his pocket. Never for a moment did his eyes wander from the supposed stripling, on whom he bestowed continual smiles, and when he saw him leave his seat, he would get up himself and follow him at a distance. Julie, in her misery and loneliness, was touched by the discreet sympathy the good man manifested.

One day, as she was leaving the gardens, it began to rain; the old fellow stepped up to her and, opening his vast red umbrella, asked permission to offer her its shelter. She answered sweetly, in her clear treble, that she would be very glad. But at the sound of her voice and warned perhaps by a subtle scent of womanhood, he strode rapidly away, leaving the girl exposed to the rain-storm; she took in the situation, and, despite her gnawing anxieties, could not restrain a smile.

Julie lived in an attic in the Rue du Cherche-Midi and represented herself as a draper's shop-boy in search of employment; the widow Gamelin, at last convinced that the girl was running smaller risks anywhere else than at her

home, had got her away from the Place de Thionville and the Section du Pont-Neuf, and was giving her all the help she could in the way of food and linen. Julie did her trifle of cooking, went to the Luxembourg to see her beloved prisoner and back again to her garret; the monotony of the life was a balm to her grief, and, being young and strong, she slept well and soundly the night through. She was of a fearless temper and broken in to an adventurous life; the costume she wore added perhaps a further spice of excitement, and she would sometimes sally out at night to visit a restaurateur's in the Rue du Four, at the sign of the Red Cross, a place frequented by men of all sorts and conditions and women of gallantry. There she read the papers or played backgammon with some tradesman's clerk or citizen-soldier, who smoked his pipe in her face. Drinking, gambling, love-making were the order of the day, and scuffles were not unfrequent. One evening a customer, hearing a trampling of hoofs on the paved roadway outside, lifted the curtain, and recognizing the Commandant-in-Chief of the National Guard, the *citoyen* Hanriot, who was riding past with his Staff, muttered between his teeth:

"There goes Robespierre's jackass!"

Julie overheard and burst into a loud guffaw.

But a moustachioed patriot took up the challenge roundly:

"Whoever says that," he shouted, "is a bl — sted aristocrat, and I should like to see the fellow sneeze into Samson's basket. I tell you General Hanriot is a good patriot who'll know how to defend Paris and the Convention at a pinch. That's why the Royalists can't forgive him."

Glaring at Julie, who was still laughing, the patriot added:

"You there, greenhorn, have a care I don't land you a kick in the backside to learn you to respect good patriots."

But other voices were joining in:

"Hanriot's a drunken sot and a fool!"

"Hanriot's a good Jacobin! Vive Hanriot!"

Sides were taken, and the fray began. Blows were exchanged, hats battered in, tables overturned, and glasses shattered; the lights went out and the women began to scream. Two or three patriots fell upon Julie, who seized hold of a settle in self-defence; she was brought to the ground, where she scratched and bit her assailants. Her coat flew open and her neckerchief was torn, revealing her panting bosom. A patrol came running up at the noise, and the girl aristocrat escaped between the gendarmes' legs.

Every day the carts were full of victims for the guillotine.

"But I cannot, I cannot let my lover die!" Julie would tell her mother.

She resolved to beg his life, to take what steps were possible, to go to the Committees and Public Departments, to canvas Representatives, Magistrates, to visit anyone who could be of help. She had no woman's dress to wear. Her mother borrowed a striped gown, a kerchief, a lace coif from the *citoyenne* Blaise, and Julie, attired as a woman and a patriot, set out for the abode of one of the judges, Renaudin, a damp, dismal house in the Rue Mazarine.

With trembling steps she climbed the wooden, tiled stairs and was received by the judge in his squalid cabinet, furnished with a deal table and two straw-bottomed chairs. The wall-paper hung in strips. Renaudin, with black hair plastered on his forehead, a lowering eye, tucked-in lips, and a protuberant chin, signed to her to speak and listened in silence.

She told him she was the sister of the *citoyen* Chassagne, a prisoner at the Luxembourg, explained as speciously as she could the circumstances under which he had been arrested, represented him as an innocent man, the victim of mischance, pleaded more and more urgently; but he remained callous and unsympathetic.

She fell at his feet in supplication and burst into tears.

No sooner did he see her tears than his face changed; his dark blood-shot eyes lit up, and his heavy blue jowl worked as if pumping up the saliva in his dry throat.

"*Citoyenne*, we will do what is necessary. You need have no anxiety," — and opening a door, he pushed the petitioner into a little sitting-room, with rose-pink hangings, painted panels, Dresden china figures, a time-piece and gilt candelabra; for furniture it contained settees, and a sofa covered in tapestry and adorned with a pastoral group after Boucher. Julie was ready for anything to save her lover.

Renaudin had his way, — rapidly and brutally. When she got up, readjusting the *citoyenne's* pretty frock, she met the man's cruel mocking eye; instantly she knew she had made her sacrifice in vain.

"You promised me my brother's freedom," she said.

He chuckled.

"I told you, *citoyenne*, we would do what was necessary, — that is to say, we should apply the law, neither more nor less. I told you to have no anxiety, — and why should you be anxious? The Revolutionary Tribunal is always just."

She thought of throwing herself upon the man, biting him, tearing out his eyes. But, realizing she would only be consummating Fortuné Chassagne's ruin, she rushed from the house, and fled to her garret to take off Élodie's soiled and desecrated frock. All night she lay, screaming with grief and rage.

Next day, on returning to the Luxembourg, she found the gardens occupied by gendarmes, who were turning out the women and children. Sentinels were posted in the avenues to prevent the passers-by from communicating with the prisoners. The young mother, who used to come every day, carrying her child in her arms, told Julie that there was talk of plotting in the prisons and that the women were blamed for gathering in the gardens in order to rouse the people's pity in favour of aristocrats and traitors.

XXII

A mountain has suddenly sprung up in the garden of the Tuileries. Under a cloudless sky, Maximilien heads the procession of his colleagues in a blue coat and yellow breeches, carrying in his hand a bouquet of wheatears, cornflowers and poppies. He ascends the mountain and proclaims the God of Jean-Jacques to the Republic, which hears and weeps. Oh purity! oh sweetness! oh faith! oh antique simplicity! oh tears of pity! oh fertilizing dew! oh clemency! oh human fraternity!

In vain Atheism still lifts its hideous face; Maximilien grasps a torch; flames devour the monster and Wisdom appears, with one hand pointing to the sky, in the other holding a crown of stars.

On the platform raised against the façade of the Tuileries, Évariste, standing amid a throng of deeply-stirred spectators, sheds tears of joy and renders thanks to God. An era of universal felicity opens before his eyes.

He sighs:

“At last we shall be happy, pure, innocent, if the scoundrels suffer it.”

Alas! the scoundrels have not suffered it. There must be more executions; more torrents of tainted blood must be shed. Three days after the festival celebrating the new alliance and the reconciliation of heaven and earth, the Convention promulgates the Law of Prairial which suppresses, with a sort of ferocious good-nature, all the traditional forms of Law, whatever has been devised since the time of the Roman jurisconsults for the safeguarding of innocence under suspicion. No more sifting of evidence, no more questioning of the accused, no more witnesses, no more counsel for the defence; love of the fatherland supplies everything that is needful. The prisoner, who bears locked up in his bosom his guilt or innocence, passes without a word allowed before the patriot jury, and it is in this brief moment they must unravel his case, often complicated and obscure. How is justice possible? How distinguish in an instant between the honest man and the villain, the patriot and the enemy of the fatherland...?

Disconcerted for the moment, Gamelin quickly learned his new duties and accommodated himself to his new functions. He recognized that this curtailment of formalities was genuinely characteristic of the new justice, at once salutary and terrifying, the administrators of which were no longer ermined pedants leisurely weighing the *pros* and *contras* in their Gothic balances, but good sansculottes judging by inspiration and seeing the whole truth in a flash. When

guarantees and precautions would have undone everything, the impulses of an upright heart saved the situation. We must follow the promptings of Nature, the good mother who never deceives; the heart must teach us to do judgment, and Gamelin made invocation to the manes of Jean-Jacques:

“Man of virtue, inspire me with the love of men, the ardent desire to regenerate humankind!”

His colleagues, for the most part, felt with him. They were, first and foremost, simple people; and when the forms of law were simplified, they felt more comfortable. Justice thus abbreviated satisfied them; the pace was quickened, and no obstacles were left to fret them. They limited themselves to an inquiry into the opinions of the accused, not conceiving it possible that anyone could think differently from themselves except in pure perversity. Believing themselves the exclusive possessors of truth, wisdom, the quintessence of good, they attributed to their opponents nothing but error and evil. They felt themselves all-powerful; they envisaged God.

They saw God, these jurors of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Supreme Being, acknowledged by Maximilien, flooded them with His flames of light. They loved, they believed.

The chair of the accused had been replaced by a vast platform able to accommodate fifty persons; the court only dealt with batches now. The Public Prosecutor would often confound under the same charge or implicate as accomplices individuals who met each other for the first time before the Tribunal. The latter, taking advantage of the terrible facilities accorded by the law of Prairial, sat in judgment on those supposed prison plots which, coming after the proscriptions of the Dantonists and the Commune, were made to seem their outcome by the insinuations of cunning adversaries. In fact, to let the world appreciate the two essential characteristics of a conspiracy fomented by foreign gold against the Republic, — to wit inopportune moderation on the one hand and self-interested excess of zeal on the other, they had united in the same condemnation two very different women, the widow of Camille Desmoulins, poor lovable Lucille, and the widow of the Hébertist Momoro, goddess of a day and jolly companion all her life. Both, to make the analogy complete, had been shut up in the same prison, where they had mingled their tears on the same bench; both, to round off the resemblance, had climbed the scaffold. Too ingenious the symbol, — a masterpiece of equilibrium, conceived doubtless by a lawyer’s brain, and the honour of which was given to Maximilien. This representative of the people was accredited with every eventuality, happy or unhappy, that came about in the Republic, every change that was effected in the laws, in manners and morals, the very course of the seasons, the harvests, the

incidence of epidemics. Unjust of course, but not unmerited the injustice, for indeed the man, the little, spruce, cat-faced dandy, was all powerful with the people....

That day the Tribunal was clearing off a batch of prisoners involved in the great plot, thirty or more conspirators from the Luxembourg, submissive enough in gaol, but Royalists or Federalists of the most pronounced type. The prosecution relied almost entirely on the evidence of a single informer. The jurors did not know one word of the matter, — not so much as the conspirators' names. Gamelin, casting his eye over the prisoners' bench, recognized Fortuné Chassagne among the accused. Julie's lover, pale-faced and emaciated by long confinement and his features showing coarser in the glare of light that flooded the hall, still retained traces of his old grace and proud bearing. His eyes met Gamelin's and filled with scorn.

Gamelin, possessed by a calm fury, rose, asked leave to speak, and, fixing his eyes on the bust of Roman Brutus, which looked down on the Tribunal:

"*Citoyen* President," he said, "although there may exist between one of the accused and myself ties which, if they were made public, would be ties of married kinship, I hereby declare I do not decline to act. The two Bruti did not decline their duty, when for the salvation of the state and the cause of freedom, the one had to condemn a son, the other to strike down an adoptive father."

He resumed his seat.

"A fine scoundrel that," muttered Chassagne between his teeth.

The public remained cold, whether because it was tired of high-flown characters, or thinking that Gamelin had triumphed too easily over his feelings of family affection.

"*Citoyen* Gamelin," said the President, "by the terms of the law, every refusal must be formulated in writing within the twenty-four hours preceding the opening of the trial. In any case, you have no reason to refuse; a patriot jury is superior to human passions."

Each prisoner was questioned for three or four minutes, the examination resulting in a verdict of death in every instance. The jurors voted without a word said, by a nod of the head or by exclamation. When Gamelin's turn came to pronounce his opinion:

"All the accused," he declared, "are convicted, and the law is explicit."

As he was descending the stairway of the Palais de Justice, a young man dressed in a bottle-green box-coat, and who looked seventeen or eighteen years of age, stopped him abruptly as he went by. The lad wore a round hat, tilted on the back of his head, the brim framing his fine pale face in a dark aureole. Facing the juror, in a terrible voice vibrating with passion and despair:

“Villain, monster, murderer!” he screamed. “Strike me, coward! I am a woman! Have me arrested, have me guillotined, Cain! I am your sister,” — and Julie spat in his face.

The throng of *tricoteuses* and *sansculottes* was relaxing by this time in its Revolutionary vigilance; its civic zeal had largely cooled; Gamelin and his assailant found themselves the centre of nothing worse than uproar and confusion. Julie fought a way through the press and disappeared in the dark.

XXIII

Evariste Gamelin was worn out and could not rest; twenty times in the night he would awake with a start from a sleep haunted by nightmares. It was only in the blue chamber, in Élodie's arms, that he could snatch a few hours' slumber. He talked and cried out in his sleep and used often to awake her; but she could make nothing of what he said.

One morning, after a night when he had seen the Eumenides, he started awake, broken with terror and weak as a child. The dawn was piercing the window curtains with its wan arrows. Évariste's hair, lying tangled on his brow, covered his eyes with a black veil; Élodie, by the bedside, was gently parting the wild locks. She was looking at him now, with a sister's tenderness, while with her handkerchief she wiped away the icy sweat from the unhappy man's forehead. Then he remembered that fine scene in the *Orestes* of Euripides, which he had essayed to represent in a picture that, if he could have finished it, would have been his masterpiece — the scene where the unhappy Electra wipes away the spume that sullies her brother's lips. And he seemed to hear Élodie also saying in a gentle voice:

“Hear me, beloved brother, while the Furies leave you master of your reason ...”

And he thought:

“And yet I am no parricide. Far from it, it is filial piety has made me shed the tainted blood of the enemies of my fatherland.”

XXIV

There seemed no end to these trials for conspiracy in the prisons. Forty-nine accused crowded the tiers of seats. Maurice Brotteaux occupied the right-hand corner of the topmost row, — the place of honour. He was dressed in his plum-coloured surtout, which he had brushed very carefully the day before and mended at the pocket where his little Lucretius had ended by fretting a hole. Beside him sat the woman Rochemaure, painted and powdered and patched, a brilliant and ghastly figure. They had put the Père Longuemare between her and the girl Athenais, who had recovered her look of youthful freshness at the Madelonnettes.

On the platform the gendarmes massed a number of other prisoners unknown to any of our friends, and who, as likely as not, knew nothing of each other, — yet accomplices one and all, — lawyers, journalists, *ci-devant* nobles, citizens, and citizens' wives. The *citoyenne* Rochemaure caught sight of Gamelin on the jurors' bench. He had not answered her urgent letters and repeated messages; still she had not abandoned hope and threw him a look of supplication, trying to appear fascinating and pathetic for him. But the young juror's cold glance robbed her of any illusion she might have entertained.

The Clerk read the act of accusation, which, succinct as was its reference to each individual, was a lengthy document because of the great number accused. It began by exposing in general outline the plot concocted in the prisons to drown the Republic in the blood of the Representatives of the nation and the people of Paris; then, coming to each severally, it went on:

“One of the most mischievous authors of this abominable conspiracy is the man Brotteaux, once known as des Ilettes, receiver of imposts under the tyrant. This person, who was remarkable, even in the days of tyranny, for his libertine behaviour, is a sure proof how dissoluteness and immorality are the greatest enemies of the liberty and happiness of peoples; as a fact, after misappropriating the public revenues and wasting in debauchery a noticeable part of the people's patrimony, the person in question connived with his former concubine, the woman Rochemaure, to enter into correspondence with the *émigrés* and traitorously keep the faction of the foreigner informed of the state of our finances, the movements of our troops, the fluctuations of public opinion.

“Brotteaux, who, at this period of his despicable life, was living in concubinage with a prostitute he had picked up in the mud of the Rue Fromenteau, the girl Athenais, easily suborned her to his purposes and made use

of her to foment the counterrevolution by impudent and unpatriotic cries and indecent and traitorous speeches.

“Sundry remarks of this ill-omened individual will afford you a clear indication of his abject views and pernicious purpose. Speaking of the patriotic tribunal now called upon to punish him, he declared insultingly,— ‘The Revolutionary Tribunal is like a play of William Shakespeare, who mixes up with the most bloodthirsty scenes the most trivial buffooneries.’ Then he was forever preaching atheism, as the surest means of degrading the people and driving it into immorality. In the prison of the Conciergerie, where he was confined, he used to deplore as among the worst of calamities the victories of our valiant armies, and tried to throw suspicion on the most patriotic Generals, crediting them with designs of tyrannicide. ‘Only wait,’ he would say in atrocious language which the pen is loath to reproduce, ‘only wait till, some day, one of these warriors, to whom you owe your salvation, swallows you all up as the stork in the fable gobbled up the frogs.’

“The woman Rochemaure, a *ci-devant* noble, concubine of Brotteaux, is not less culpable than he. Not only was she in correspondence with the foreigner and in the pay of Pitt himself, but in complicity with swindlers, such as Jullien (of Toulouse) and Chabot, associates of the *ci-devant* Baron de Batz, she seconded that reprobate in all sorts of cunning machinations to depreciate the shares of the Company of the Indies, buy them in at a cheap price, and then raise the quotation by artifices of an opposite tendency, to the confusion and ruin of private fortunes and of the public funds. Incarcerated at La Bourbe and the Madelonnettes, she never ceased in prison to conspire, to dabble in stocks and shares and to devote herself to attempts at corruption, to suborn judges and jury.

“Louis Longuemare, ex-noble, ex-capuchin, had long been practised in infamy and crime before committing the acts of treason for which he has to answer here. Living in a shameful promiscuity with the girl Gorcut, known as Athenaïs, under Brotteaux’s very roof, he is the accomplice of the said girl and the said *ci-devant* nobleman. During his imprisonment at the Conciergerie he has never ceased for one single day writing pamphlets aimed at the subversion of public liberty and security.

“It is right to say, with regard to Marthe Gorcut, known as Athenaïs, that prostitutes are the greatest scourge of public morality, which they insult, and the opprobrium of the society which they disgrace. But why speak at length of revolting crimes which the accused confesses shamelessly...?”

The accusation then proceeded to pass in review the fifty-four other prisoners, none of whom either Brotteaux, or the Père Longuemare, or the *citoyenne*

Rochemaure, were acquainted with, except for having seen several of them in the prisons, but who were one and all included with the first named in "this odious plot, with which the annals of the nation can furnish nothing to compare."

The piece concluded by demanding the penalty of death for all the culprits.

Brotteaux was the first to be examined:

"You were in the plot?"

"No, I have been in no plots. Every word is untrue in the act of accusation I have just heard read."

"There, you see; you are plotting still, at this moment, to discredit the Tribunal," — and the President went on to the woman Rochemaure, who answered with despairing protestations of innocence, tears and quibblings.

The Père Longuemare referred himself purely and entirely to God's will. He had not even brought his written defence with him.

All the questions put to him he answered in a spirit of resignation. Only, when the President spoke of him as a Capuchin, did the old Adam wake again in him:

"I am not a Capuchin," he said, "I am a priest and a monk of the Order of the Barnabites."

"It is the same thing," returned the President good-naturedly.

The Père Longuemare looked at him indignantly:

"One cannot conceive a more extraordinary error," he cried, "than to confound with a Capuchin a monk of this Order of the Barnabites which derives its constitutions from the Apostle Paul himself."

The remark was greeted with a burst of laughter and hooting from the spectators, at which the Père Longuemare, taking this derision to betoken a denial of his proposition, announced that he would die a member of this Order of St. Barnabas, the habit of which he wore in his heart.

"Do you admit," asked the President, "entering into plots with the girl Gorcut, known as Athenaïs, the same who accorded you her despicable favours?"

At the question, the Père Longuemare raised his eyes sorrowfully to heaven, but made no answer; his silence expressed the surprise of an unsophisticated mind and the gravity of a man of religion who fears to utter empty words.

"You, the girl Gorcut," the President asked, turning to Athenaïs, "do you admit plotting in conjunction with Brotteaux?"

Her answer was softly spoken:

"Monsieur Brotteaux, to my knowledge, has done nothing but good. He is a man of the sort we should have more of; there is no better sort. Those who say the contrary are mistaken. That is all I have to say."

The President asked her if she admitted having lived in concubinage with Brotteaux. The expression had to be explained to her, as she did not understand it. But, directly she gathered what the question meant, she answered, that would only have depended on him, but he had never asked her.

There was a laugh in the public galleries, and the President threatened the girl Gorcut to refuse her a hearing if she answered in such a cynical sort again.

At this she broke out, calling him sneak, sour face, cuckold, and spewing out over him, judges, and jury a torrent of invective, till the gendarmes dragged her from her bench and hustled her out of the hall.

The President then proceeded to a brief examination of the rest of the accused, taking them in the order in which they sat on the tiers of benches.

One, a man named Navette, pleaded that he could not have plotted in prison where he had only spent four days. The President observed that the point deserved to be considered, and begged the *citoyens* of the jury to make a note of it. A certain Bellier said the same, and the President made the same remark to the jury in his favour. This mildness on the judge's part was interpreted by some as the result of a praiseworthy scrupulosity, by others as payment due in recognition of their talents as informers.

The Deputy of the Public Prosecutor spoke next. All he did was to amplify the details of the act of accusation and then to put the question:

"Is it proven that Maurice Brotteaux, Louise Rochemaure, Louis Longuemare, Marthe Gorcut, known as Athenais, Eusèbe Rocher, Pierre Guyton-Fabulet, Marcelline Descourtis, etc., etc., are guilty of forming a conspiracy, the means whereof are assassination, starvation, the making of forged assignats and false coin, the depravation of morals and public spirit; the aim and object, civil war, the abolition of the National representation, the re-establishment of Royalty?"

The jurors withdrew into the chamber of deliberation. They voted unanimously in the affirmative, only excepting the cases of the afore-named Navette and Bellier, whom the President, and following his lead, the Public Prosecutor, had put, as it were, in a separate class by themselves.

Gamelin stated the motives for his decision thus:

"The guilt of the accused is self-evident; the safety of the Nation demands their chastisement, and they ought themselves to desire their punishment as the only means of expiating their crimes."

The President pronounced sentence in the absence of those it concerned. In these great days, contrary to what the law prescribed, the condemned were not called back again to hear their judgment read, no doubt for fear of the effects of despair on so large a number of prisoners. A needless apprehension, so

extraordinary and so general was the submissiveness of the victims in those days! The Clerk of the Court came down to the cells to read the verdict, which was listened to with such silence and impassivity as made it a common comparison to liken the condemned of Prairial to trees marked down for felling.

The *citoyenne* Rochemaure declared herself pregnant. A surgeon, who was likewise one of the jury, was directed to see her. She was carried out fainting to her dungeon.

“Ah!” sighed the Père Longuemare, “these judges and jurors are men very deserving of pity; their state of mind is truly deplorable. They mix up everything and confound a Barnabite with a Franciscan.”

The execution was to take place the same day at the *Barrière du Trône- Renversé*. The condemned, their toilet completed, hair cropped and shirt cut down at the neck, waited for the headsman, packed like cattle in the small room separated off from the Gaoler’s office by a glazed partition.

When presently the executioner and his men arrived, Brotteaux, who was quietly reading his Lucretius, put the marker at the page he had begun, shut the book, stuffed it in the pocket of his coat, and said to the Barnabite:

“What enrages me, Reverend Father, is that I shall never convince you. We are going both of us to sleep our last sleep, and I shall not be able to twitch you by the sleeve and tell you: ‘There you see; you have neither sensation nor consciousness left; you are inanimate. What comes after life is like what goes before.’”

He tried to smile; but an atrocious spasm of pain wrung his heart and vitals, and he came near fainting.

He resumed, however:

“Father, I let you see my weakness. I love life and I do not leave it without regret.”

“Sir,” replied the monk gently, “take heed, you are a braver man than I, and nevertheless death troubles you more. What does that mean, if not that I see the light, which you do not see yet?”

“Might it not also be,” said Brotteaux, “that I regret life because I have enjoyed it better than you, who have made it as close a copy of death as possible?”

“Sir,” said the Père Longuemare, his face paling, “this is a solemn moment. God help me! It is plain we shall die without spiritual aid. It must be that in other days I have received the sacraments lukewarmly and with a thankless heart, for Heaven to refuse me them to-day, when I have such pressing need of them.”

The carts were waiting. The condemned were loaded into them pell-mell, with hands tied. The woman Rochemaure, whose pregnancy had not been

verified by the surgeon, was hoisted into one of the tumbrils. She recovered a little of her old energy to watch the crowd of onlookers, hoping against hope to find rescuers amongst them. The throng was less dense than formerly, and the excitement less extreme. Only a few women screamed, "Death! death!" or mocked those who were to die. The men mostly shrugged their shoulders, looked another way, and said nothing, whether out of prudence or from respect of the laws.

A shudder went through the crowd when Athenaïs emerged from the wicket. She looked a mere child.

She bowed her head before the monk:

"Monsieur le Curé," she asked him, "give me absolution."

The Père Longuemare gravely recited the sacramental words in muttered tones; then:

"My daughter!" he added, "you have fallen into great disorders of living; but can I offer the Lord a heart as simple as yours? Would I were sure!"

She climbed lightly into the cart. And there, throwing out her bosom and proudly lifting her girlish head, she cried "Vive le Roi!"

She made a little sign to Brotteaux to show him there was a vacant place beside her. Brotteaux helped the Barnabite to get in and came and placed himself between the monk and the simple-hearted girl.

"Sir," said the Père Longuemare to the Epicurean philosopher, "I ask you a favour; this God in whom you do not yet believe, pray to Him for me. It is far from sure you are not nearer to Him than I am myself; a moment can decide this. A second, and you may be called by the Lord to be His highly favoured son. Sir, pray for me."

While the wheels were grinding over the pavement of the long Faubourg Antoine, the monk was busy, with heart and lips, reciting the prayers of the dying. Brotteaux's mind was fixed on recalling the lines of the poet of nature: *Sic ubi non erimus* Bound as he was and shaken in the vile, jolting cart, he preserved his calm and even showed a certain solicitude to maintain an easy posture. At his side, Athenaïs, proud to die like the Queen of France, surveyed the crowd with haughty looks, and the old financier, noting as a connoisseur the girl's white bosom, was filled with regret for the light of day.

XXV

While the carts, escorted by gendarmes, were rumbling along on their way to the Place du Trône Renversé, carrying to their death Brotteaux and his “accomplices,” Évariste sat pensive on a bench in the garden of the Tuileries. He was waiting for Élodie. The sun, nearing its setting, shot its fiery darts through the leafy chestnuts. At the gate of the garden, Fame on her winged horse blew her everlasting trumpet. The newspaper hawkers were bawling the news of the great victory of Fleurus.

“Yes,” thought Gamelin, “victory is ours. We have paid full price for it.”

He could see the beaten Generals, disconsolate shades, trailing in the blood-stained dust of yonder Place de la Révolution where they perished. And he smiled proudly, reflecting that, but for the severities in which he had borne his share, the Austrian horses would to-day be gnawing the bark of the trees beside him.

He soliloquized:

“Life-giving terror, oh! blessed terror! Last year at this time, our heroic defenders were beaten and in rags, the soil of the fatherland was invaded, two-thirds of the departments in revolt. Now our armies, well equipped, well trained, commanded by able generals, are taking the offensive, ready to bear liberty through the world. Peace reigns over all the territory of the Republic.... Life-giving terror, oh! blessed terror! oh! saintly guillotine! Last year at this time, the Republic was torn with factions, the hydra of Federalism threatened to devour her. Now a united Jacobinism spreads over the empire its might and its wisdom....”

Nevertheless, he was gloomy. His brow was deeply lined, his mouth bitter. His thoughts ran: “We used to say: *To conquer or to die*. We were wrong; it is *to conquer and to die* we ought to say.”

He looked about him. Children were building sand-castles. *Citoyennes* in their wooden chairs under the trees were sewing or embroidering. The passers-by, in coat and breeches of elegant cut and strange fashion, their thoughts fixed on their business or their pleasures, were making for home. And Gamelin felt himself alone amongst them; he was no compatriot, no contemporary of theirs. What was it had happened? How came the enthusiasm of the great years to have been succeeded by indifference, weariness, perhaps disgust? It was plain to see, these people never wanted to hear the Revolutionary Tribunal spoken of again and averted their eyes from the guillotine. Grown too painful a sight in the Place

de la Révolution, it had been banished to the extremity of the Faubourg Antoine. There even, the passage of the tumbrils was greeted with murmurs. Voices, it was said, had been heard to shout: "Enough!"

Enough, when there were still traitors, conspirators! Enough, when the Committees must be reformed, the Convention purged! Enough, when scoundrels disgraced the National representation. Enough, when they were planning the downfall of *The Just*! For, dreadful thought, but only too true! Fouquier himself was weaving plots, and it was to ruin Maximilien that he had sacrificed with solemn ceremony fifty-seven victims haled to death in the red sheet of parricides. France was giving way to pity — and pity was a crime! Then we should have saved her in spite of herself, and when she cried for mercy, stopped our ears and struck! Alas! the fates had decided otherwise; the fatherland was for cursing its saviours. Well, let it curse, if only it may be saved!

"It is not enough to immolate obscure victims, aristocrats, financiers, publicists, poets, a Lavoisier, a Roucher, an André Chénier. We must strike these all-puissant malefactors who, with hands full of gold and dripping with blood, are plotting the ruin of *the Mountain* — the Fouchers, Talliens, Rovères, Carriers, Bourdons. We must deliver the State from all its enemies. If Hébert had triumphed, the Convention was overthrown, the Republic hastening to the abyss; if Desmoulins and Danton had triumphed, the Convention had lost its virtue, ready to surrender the Republic to the aristocrats, the money-jobbers and the Generals. If men like Tallien and Foucher, monsters gorged with blood and rapine, triumph, France is overwhelmed in a welter of crime and infamy ... Robespierre, awake; when criminals, drunken with fury and affright, plan your death and the death of freedom! Couthon, Saint-Just, make haste; why tarry ye to denounce the plots?

"Why! the old-time state, the Royal monster, assured its empire by imprisoning every year four hundred thousand persons, by hanging fifteen thousand, by breaking three thousand on the wheel — and the Republic still hesitates to sacrifice a few hundred heads for its security and domination! Let us drown in blood and save the fatherland...."

He was buried in these thoughts when Élodie hurried up to him, pale-faced and distraught:

"Évariste, what have you to say to me? Why not come to the *Amour peintre* to the blue chamber? Why have you made me come here?"

"To bid you an eternal farewell."

He had lost his wits, she faltered, she could not understand....

He stopped her with a very slight movement of the hand:

"Élodie, I cannot any more accept your love."

She begged him to walk on further; people could see them, overhear them, where they were.

He moved on a score of yards, and resumed, very quietly:

“I have made sacrifices to my country of my life and my honour. I shall die infamous; I shall have naught to leave you, unhappy girl, save an execrated memory.... We, love? Can anyone love me still?... Can I love?”

She told him he was mad; that she loved him, that she would always love him. She was ardent, sincere; but she felt as well as he, she felt better than he, that he was right. But she fought against the evidence of her senses.

He went on:

“I blame myself for nothing. What I have done, I would do again. I have made myself anathema for my country’s sake. I am accursed. I have put myself outside humanity; I shall never re-enter its pale. No, the great task is not finished. Oh! clemency, forgiveness! — Do the traitors forgive? Are the conspirators clement? scoundrels, parricides multiply unceasingly; they spring up from underground, they swarm in from all our frontiers, — young men, who would have done better to perish with our armies, old men, children, women, with every mark of innocence, purity, and grace. They are offered up a sacrifice, — and more victims are ready for the knife!... You can see, Élodie, I must needs renounce love, renounce all joy, all sweetness of life, renounce life itself.”

He fell silent. Born to taste tranquil joys, Élodie not for the first time was appalled to find, under the tragic kisses of a lover like Évariste, her voluptuous transports blended with images of horror and bloodshed; she offered no reply. To Évariste the girl’s silence was as a draught of a bitter chalice.

“Yes, you can see, Élodie, we are on a precipice; our deeds devour us. Our days, our hours are years. I shall soon have lived a century. Look at this brow! Is it a lover’s? Love!...”

“Évariste, you are mine, I will not let you go; I will not give you back your freedom.”

She was speaking in the language of sacrifice. He felt it; she felt it herself.

“Will you be able, Élodie, one day to bear witness that I lived faithful to my duty, that my heart was upright and my soul unsullied, that I knew no passion but the public good; that I was born to feel and love? Will you say: ‘He did his duty’? But no! You will not say it and I do not ask you to say it. Perish my memory! My glory is in my own heart; shame beleaguers me about. If you love me, never speak my name; eternal silence is best.”

A child of eight or nine, trundling its hoop, ran just then between Gamelin’s legs.

He lifted the boy suddenly in his arms:

“Child, you will grow up free, happy, and you will owe it to the infamous Gamelin. I am ferocious, that you may be happy. I am cruel, that you may be kind; I am pitiless, that to-morrow all Frenchmen may embrace with tears of joy.”

He pressed the child to his breast.

“Little one, when you are a man, you will owe your happiness, your innocence to me; and, if ever you hear my name uttered, you will execrate it.”

Then he put down the child, which ran away in terror to cling to its mother’s skirts, who had hurried up to the rescue. The young mother, who was pretty and charming in her aristocratic grace, with her gown of white lawn, carried off the boy with a haughty look.

Gamelin turned his eyes on Élodie:

“I have held the child in my arms; perhaps I shall send the mother to the guillotine,” — and he walked away with long strides under the ordered trees.

Élodie stood a moment motionless, her eyes fixed on the ground. Then, suddenly, she darted after her lover, and frenzied, dishevelled, like a Mænad, she gripped him as if to tear him in pieces and cried in a voice choked with blood and tears:

“Well, then! me too, my beloved, send me to the guillotine; me too, lay me under the knife!”

And, at the thought of the knife at her neck, all her flesh melted in an ecstasy of horror and voluptuous transport.

XXVI

The sun of Thermidor was setting in a blood-red sky, while Évariste wandered, gloomy and careworn, in the Marbeuf gardens, now a National park frequented by the Parisian idlers. There were stalls for the sale of lemonade and ices; wooden horses and shooting-galleries were provided for the younger patriots. Under a tree, a little Savoyard in rags, with a black cap on his head, was making a marmot dance to the shrill notes of his hurdy-gurdy. A man, still young, slim-waisted, wearing a blue coat and his hair powdered, with a big dog at his heels, stopped to listen to the rustic music. Évariste recognized Robespierre. He found him paler, thinner, his face harder and drawn in folds of suffering. He thought to himself:

“What fatigues, how many griefs have left their imprint on his brow! How grievous a thing it is to work for the happiness of mankind! What are his thoughts at this moment? Does the sound of this mountain music perhaps distract him from the cares of government? Is he thinking that he has made a pact with Death and that the hour of reckoning is coming close? Is he dreaming of a triumphant return to the Committee of Public Safety, from which he withdrew, weary of being held in check, with Couthon and Saint-Just, by a seditious majority? Behind that impenetrable countenance what hopes are seething or what fears?”

But Maximilien smiled at the lad, in a gentle, kind voice asked him several questions about his native valley, the humble home and parents the poor child had left behind, tossed him a small piece of silver and resumed his stroll. After taking a few steps, he turned round again to call his dog; sniffing at the marmot, it was showing its teeth at the little creature that bristled up in defiance.

“To heel, Brout!” he called, “to heel!” — and he plunged among the dark trees.

Gamelin, out of respect, did not interrupt his lonely walk; but, as he gazed after the slender form disappearing in the darkness, he mentally addressed his hero in these impassioned words:

“I have seen thy sadness, Maximilien; I have understood thy thought. Thy melancholy, thy fatigue, even the look of fear that stamps thy face, everything says: ‘Let the reign of terror end and that of fraternity begin! Frenchmen, be united, be virtuous, be good and kind. Love ye one another....’ Well then, I will second your designs; that you, in your wisdom and goodness, may be able to put an end to our civil discord, to our fratricidal hate, turn the headsman into a

gardener who will henceforth cut off only the heads of cabbages and lettuces. I will pave the way with my colleagues of the Tribunal that must lead to clemency by exterminating conspirators and traitors. We will redouble our vigilance and our severity. No culprit shall escape us. And when the head of the last enemy of the Republic shall have fallen under the knife, then it will be given thee to be merciful without committing a crime, then thou canst inaugurate the reign of innocence and virtue in all the land, oh! father of thy country!”

The Incorruptible was already almost out of sight. Two men in round hats and nankeen breeches, one of whom, a tall, lean man of a wild, unkempt aspect, had a blur on one eye and resembled Tallien, met him at the corner of an avenue, looked at him askance and passed on, pretending not to recognize him. When they had gone far enough to be out of hearing, they muttered under their breath:

“So there he goes, the King, the Pope, the God. For he is God; and Catherine Théot is his prophetess.”

“Dictator, traitor, tyrant! the race of Brutus is not extinct.”

“Tremble, malefactor! the Tarpeian rock is near the Capitol!”

The dog Brount ran towards the pair. They said no more and quickened their pace.

XXVII

Robespierre, awake! The hour is come, time presses,... soon it will be too late....

At last, on the 8 Thermidor, in the Convention, the Incorruptible rises, he is going to speak. Sun of the 31st May, is this to be a second day-spring? Gamelin waits and hopes. His mind is made up then! Robespierre is to drag from the benches they dishonour these legislators more guilty than the federalists, more dangerous than Danton.... No! not yet. "I cannot," he says, "resolve to clear away entirely the veil that hides this mystery of iniquity."

It is mere summer lightning that flashes harmlessly and without striking any one of the conspirators, terrifies all. Sixty of them at least for a fortnight had not dared sleep in their beds. Marat's way was to denounce traitors by their name, to point the finger of accusation at conspirators. The Incorruptible hesitates, and from that moment he is the accused....

That evening at the Jacobins, the hall is filled to suffocation, the corridors, the courtyard are crowded.

They are all there, loud-voiced friends and silent enemies. Robespierre reads them the speech the Convention had heard in affrighted silence, and the Jacobins greet it with excited applause.

"It is my dying testament," declares the orator. "You will see me drain the hemlock undismayed."

"I will drink it with you," answered David.

"All, we all will!" shout the Jacobins, and separate without deciding anything.

Évariste, while the death of *The Just* was preparing, slept the sleep of the Disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. Next day, he attended the Tribunal where two sections were sitting. That on which he served was trying twenty-one persons implicated in the conspiracy of the Lazare prison. The case was still proceeding when the tidings arrived:

"The Convention, after a six-hours' session, has decreed Maximilien Robespierre accused, — with him Couthon and Saint-Just; add Augustin Robespierre, and Lebas, who have demanded to share the lot of the accused. The five outlaws stand at the bar of the house."

News is brought that the President of the Section sitting in the next court, the *citoyen* Dumas, has been arrested on the bench, but that the case goes on. Drums can be heard beating the alarm, and the tocsin peals from the churches.

Évariste is still in his place when he is handed an order from the Commune to proceed to the Hôtel de Ville to sit in the General Council. To the sound of the rolling drums and clanging church bells, he and his colleagues record their verdict; then he hurries home to embrace his mother and snatch up his scarf of office. The Place de Thionville is deserted. The Section is afraid to declare either for or against the Convention. Wayfarers creep along under the walls, slip down side-streets, sneak indoors. The call of the tocsin and alarm-drums is answered by the noise of barring shutters and bolting doors. The *citoyen* Dupont senior has secreted himself in his shop; Remacle the porter is barricaded in his lodge. Little Joséphine holds Mouton tremblingly in her arms. The widow Gamelin bemoans the dearness of victuals, cause of all the trouble. At the foot of the stairs Évariste encounters Élodie; she is panting for breath and her black locks are plastered on her hot cheek.

“I have been to look for you at the Tribunal; but you had just left. Where are you going?”

“To the Hôtel de Ville.”

“Don’t go there! It would be your ruin; Hanriot is arrested ... the Sections will not stir. The *Section des Piques*, Robespierre’s Section, will do nothing, I know it for a fact; my father belongs to it. If you go to the Hôtel de Ville, you are throwing away your life for nothing.”

“You wish me to be a coward?”

“No! the brave thing is to be faithful to the Convention and to obey the Law.”

“The law is dead when malefactors triumph.”

“Évariste, hear me; hear your Élodie; hear your sister. Come and sit beside her and let her soothe your angry spirit.”

He looked at her; never had she seemed so desirable in his eyes; never had her voice sounded so seductive, so persuasive in his ears.

“A couple of paces, only a couple of paces, dear Évariste!” — and she drew him towards the raised platform on which stood the pedestal of the overthrown statue. It was surrounded by benches occupied by strollers of both sexes. A dealer in fancy articles was offering his laces, a seller of cooling drinks, his portable cistern on his back, was tinkling his bell; little girls were showing off their airs and graces. The parapet was lined with anglers, standing, rod in hand, very still. The weather was stormy, the sky overcast. Gamelin leant on the low wall and looked down on the islet below, pointed like the prow of a ship, listening to the wind whistling in the tree-tops, and feeling his soul penetrated with an infinite longing for peace and solitude.

Like a sweet echo of his thoughts, Élodie’s voice sighed in his ear:

“Do you remember, Évariste, how, at sight of the green fields, you wanted to be a country justice in a village? Yes, that would be happiness.”

But above the rustling of the trees and the girl’s voice, he could hear the tocsin and alarm-drums, the distant tramp of horses, and rumbling of cannon along the streets.

Two steps from them a young man, who was talking to an elegantly attired *citoyenne*, remarked:

“Have you heard the latest?... The Opera is installed in the Rue de la Loi.”

Meantime the news was spreading; Robespierre’s name was spoken, but in a shuddering whisper, for men feared him still. Women, when they heard the muttered rumour of his fall, concealed a smile.

Évariste Gamelin seized Élodie’s hand, but dropped it again swiftly next moment:

“Farewell! I have involved you in my hideous fortunes, I have blasted your life for ever. Farewell! I pray you may forget me!”

“Whatever you do,” she warned him, “do not go back home to-night. Come to the *Amour peintre*. Do not ring; throw a pebble at my shutters. I will come and open the door to you myself; I will hide you in the loft.”

“You shall see me return triumphant, or you shall never see me more. Farewell!”

On nearing the Hôtel de Ville, he caught the well-remembered roar of the old great days rising to the grey heavens. In the Place de Grève a clash of arms, the glitter of scarfs and uniforms, Hanriot’s cannon drawn up. He mounts the grand stairs and, entering the Council Hall, signs the attendance book. The Council General of the Commune, by the unanimous voice of the 491 members present, declares for the outlawed patriots.

The Mayor sends for the Table of the Rights of Man, reads the clause which runs, “When the Government violates the Rights of the people, insurrection is for the people the most sacred and the most indispensable of duties,” and the first magistrate of Paris announces that the Commune’s answer to the Convention’s act of violence is to raise the populace in insurrection.

The members of the Council General take oath to die at their posts. Two municipal officers are deputed to go out on the Place de Grève and invite the people to join with their magistrates in saving the fatherland and freedom.

There is an endless looking for friends, exchanging news, giving advice. Among these Magistrates, artisans are the exception. The Commune assembled here is such as the Jacobin purge has made it, — judges and jurors of the Revolutionary Tribunal, artists like Beauvallet and Gamelin, householders living on their means and college professors, cosy citizens, well-to-do tradesmen,

powdered heads, fat paunches, and gold watch-chains, very few sabots, striped trousers, carmagnole smocks and red caps.

These bourgeois councillors are numerous and determined, but, when all is said, they are pretty well all Paris possesses of true Republicans. They stand on guard in the city mansion-house, as on a rock of liberty, but an ocean of indifference washes round their refuge.

However, good news arrives. All the prisons where the proscribed had been confined open their doors and disgorge their prey. Augustin Robespierre, coming from La Force, is the first to enter the Hôtel de Ville and is welcomed with acclamation.

At eight o'clock it is announced that Maximilien, after a protracted resistance, is on his way to the Commune. He is eagerly expected; he is coming; he is here; a roar of triumph shakes the vault of the old Municipal Palace.

He enters, supported by twenty arms. It is he, the little man there, slim, spruce, in blue coat and yellow breeches. He takes his seat; he speaks.

At his arrival the Council orders the façade of the Hôtel de Ville to be illuminated there and then. It is there the Republic resides. He speaks in a thin voice, in picked phrases. He speaks lucidly, copiously. His hearers who have staked their lives on his head, see the naked truth, see it to their horror. He is a man of words, a man of committees, a wind-bag incapable of prompt action, incompetent to lead a Revolution.

They draw him into the Hall of Deliberation. Now they are all there, these illustrious outlaws, — Lebas, Saint-Just, Couthon. Robespierre has the word. It is midnight and past, he is still speaking. Meantime Gamelin in the Council Hall, his bent brow pressed against a window, looks out with a haggard eye and sees the lamps flare and smoke in the gloom. Hanriot's cannon are parked before the Hôtel de Ville. In the black Place de Grève surges an anxious crowd, in uncertainty and suspense. At half past twelve torches are seen turning the corner of the Rue de la Vannerie, escorting a delegate of the Convention, clad in the insignia of office, who unfolds a paper and reads by the ruddy light the decree of the Convention, the outlawry of the members of the insurgent Commune, of the members of the Council General who are its abettors and of all such citizens as shall listen to its appeal.

Outlawry, death without trial! The mere thought pales the cheek of the most determined. Gamelin feels the icy sweat on his brow. He watches the crowd hurrying with all speed from the Place. Turning his head, he finds that the Hall, packed but now with Councillors, is almost empty. But they have fled in vain; their signatures attest their attendance.

It is two in the morning. The Incorruptible is in the neighbouring Hall, in deliberation with the Commune and the proscribed representatives.

Gamelin casts a despairing look over the dark Square below. By the light of the lanterns he can see the wooden candles above the grocer's shop knocking together like ninepins; the street lamps shiver and swing; a high wind has sprung up. Next moment a deluge of rain comes down; the Place empties entirely; such as the fear of the Convention and its dread decree had not put to flight scatter in terror of a wetting. Hanriot's guns are abandoned, and when the lightning reveals the troops of the Convention debouching simultaneously from the Rue Antoine and from the Quai, the approaches to the Hôtel de Ville are utterly deserted.

At last Maximilien has resolved to make appeal from the decree of the Convention to his own Section, — the *Section des Piques* .

The Council General sends for swords, pistols, muskets. But now the clash of arms, the trampling of feet and the shiver of broken glass fill the building. The troops of the Convention sweep by like an avalanche across the Hall of Deliberation, and pour into the Council Chamber. A shot rings out; Gamelin sees Robespierre fall; his jaw is broken. He himself grasps his knife, the six-sous knife that, one day of bitter scarcity, had cut bread for a starving mother, the same knife that, one summer evening at a farm at Orangis, Élodie had held in her lap, when she cried the forfeits. He opens it, tries to plunge it into his heart, but the blade strikes on a rib, closes on the handle, the catch giving way, and two fingers are badly cut. Gamelin falls, the blood pouring from the wounds. He lies quite still, but the cold is cruel, and he is trampled underfoot in the turmoil of a fearful struggle. Through the hurly-burly he can distinctly hear the voice of the young dragoon Henry, shouting:

“The tyrant is no more; his myrmidons are broken. The Revolution will resume its course, majestic and terrible.”

Gamelin fainted.

At seven in the morning a surgeon sent by the Convention dressed his hurts. The Convention was full of solicitude for Robespierre's accomplices; it would fain not have one of them escape the guillotine.

The artist, ex-juror, ex-member of the Council General of the Commune, was borne on a litter to the Conciergerie.

XXVIII

On the 10th, when Évariste, after a fevered night passed on the pallet-bed of a dungeon, awoke with a start of indescribable horror, Paris was smiling in the sunshine in all her beauty and immensity; new-born hope filled the prisoners' hearts; tradesmen were blithely opening their shops, citizens felt themselves richer, young men happier, women more beautiful, for the fall of Robespierre. Only a handful of Jacobins, a few *Constitutional* priests and a few old women trembled to see the Government pass into the hands of the evil-minded and corrupt. Delegates from the Revolutionary Tribunal, the Public Prosecutor and two judges, were on their way to the Convention to congratulate it on having put an end to the plots. By decree of the Assembly the scaffold was again to be set up in the Place de la Révolution. They wanted the wealthy, the fashionable, the pretty women to see, without putting themselves about, the execution of Robespierre, which was to take place that same day. The Dictator and his accomplices were outlawed; it only needed their identity to be verified by two municipal officers for the Tribunal to hand them over immediately to the executioner. But a difficulty arose; the verifications could not be made in legal form, the Commune as a body having been put outside the pale of law. The Assembly authorized identification by ordinary witnesses.

The triumvirs were haled to death, with their chief accomplices, amidst shouts of joy and fury, imprecations, laughter and dances.

The next day Évariste, who had recovered some strength and could almost stand on his legs, was taken from his cell, brought before the Tribunal, and placed on the platform where so many victims, illustrious or obscure, had sat in succession. Now it groaned under the weight of seventy individuals, the majority members of the Commune, some jurors, like Gamelin, outlawed like him. Again he saw the jury-bench, the seat where he had been accustomed to loll, the place where he had terrorized unhappy prisoners, where he had affronted the scornful eyes of Jacques Maubel and Maurice Brotteaux, the appealing glances of the *citoyenne* Rochemaure, who had got him his post as jurymen and whom he had recompensed with a sentence of death. Again he saw, looking down on the dais where the judges sat in three mahogany armchairs, covered in red Utrecht velvet, the busts of Chalier and Marat and that bust of Brutus which he had one day apostrophized. Nothing was altered, neither the axes, the fasces, the red caps of Liberty on the wall-paper, nor the insults shouted by the *tricoteuses* in the galleries to those about to die, nor yet the soul of Fouquier-Tinville, hard-

headed, painstaking, zealously turning over his murderous papers, and, in his character of perfect magistrate, sending his friends of yesterday to the scaffold.

The *citoyens* Remacle, tailor and door-keeper, and Dupont senior, joiner, of the Place de Thionville, member of the Committee of Surveillance of the Section du Pont-Neuf, identified Gamelin (Évariste), painter, ex-juror of the Revolutionary Tribunal, ex-member of the Council General of the Commune. For their services they received an assignat of a hundred *sols* from the funds of the Section; but, having been neighbours and friends of the outlaw, they found it embarrassing to meet his eye. Anyhow, it was a hot day; they were thirsty and in a hurry to be off and drink a glass of wine.

Gamelin found difficulty in mounting the tumbril; he had lost a great deal of blood and his wounds pained him cruelly. The driver whipped up his jade and the procession got under way amid a storm of hooting.

Some women recognized Gamelin and yelled:

“Go your ways, drinker of blood! murderer at eighteen francs a day!... He doesn’t laugh now; look how pale he is, the coward!”

They were the same women who used in other days to insult conspirators and aristocrats, extremists and moderates, all the victims sent by Gamelin and his colleagues to the guillotine.

The cart turned into the Quai des Morfondus, made slowly for the Pont-Neuf and the Rue de la Monnaie; its destination was the Place de la Révolution and Robespierre’s scaffold. The horse was lame; every other minute the driver’s whip whistled about its ears. The crowd of spectators, a merry, excited crowd, delayed the progress of the escort, fraternizing with the gendarmes, who pulled in their horses to a walk. At the corner of the Rue Honoré, the insults were redoubled. Parties of young men, at table in the fashionable restaurateurs’ rooms on the mezzanine floor, ran to the windows, napkin in hand, and howled:

“Cannibals, man-eaters, vampires!”

The cart having plunged into a heap of refuse that had not been removed during the two days of civil disorder, the gilded youth screamed with delight:

“The waggon’s mired.... Hurrah! The Jacobins in the jakes!”

Gamelin was thinking, and truth seemed to dawn on him.

“I die justly,” he reflected. “It is just we should receive these outrages cast at the Republic, for we should have safeguarded her against them. We have been weak; we have been guilty of supineness. We have betrayed the Republic. We have earned our fate. Robespierre himself, the immaculate, the saint, has sinned from mildness, mercifulness; his faults are wiped out by his martyrdom. He was my exemplar, and I, too, have betrayed the Republic; the Republic perishes; it is

just and fair that I die with her. I have been over sparing of blood; let my blood flow! Let me perish! I have deserved ...”

Such were his reflections when suddenly he caught sight of the signboard of the *Amour peintre* , and a torrent of bitter-sweet emotions swept tumultuously over his heart.

The shop was shut, the sun-blinds of the three windows on the mezzanine floor were drawn right down. As the cart passed in front of the window of the blue chamber, a woman’s hand, wearing a silver ring on the ring-finger, pushed aside the edge of the blind and threw towards Gamelin a red carnation which his bound hands prevented him from catching, but which he adored as the token and likeness of those red and fragrant lips that had refreshed his mouth. His eyes filled with bursting tears, and his whole being was still entranced with the glamour of this farewell when he saw the blood-stained knife rise into view in the Place de la Révolution.

XXIX

It was Nivôse. Masses of floating ice encumbered the Seine; the basins in the Tuileries garden, the kennels, the public fountains were frozen. The North wind swept clouds of hoar frost before it in the streets. A white steam breathed from the horses' noses, and the city folk would glance in passing at the thermometer at the opticians' doors. A shop-boy was wiping the fog from the window-panes of the *Amour peintre*, while curious passers-by threw a look at the prints in vogue, — Robespierre squeezing into a cup a heart like a pumpkin to drink the blood, and ambitious allegorical designs with such titles as the Tigrocracy of Robespierre; it was all hydras, serpents, horrid monsters let loose on France by the tyrant. Other pictures represented the Horrible Conspiracy of Robespierre, Robespierre's Arrest, The Death of Robespierre.

That day, after the midday dinner, Philippe Desmahis walked into the *Amour peintre*, his portfolio under his arm, and brought the *citoyen* Jean Blaise a plate he had just finished, a stippled engraving of the Suicide of Robespierre. The artist's picaresque burin had made Robespierre as hideous as possible. The French people were not yet satiated with all the memorials which enshrined the horror and opprobrium felt for the man who was made scapegoat of all the crimes of the Revolution. For all that, the printseller, who knew his public, informed Desmahis that henceforward he was going to give him military subjects to engrave.

"We shall all be wanting victories and conquests, — swords, waving plumes, triumphant generals. Glory is to be the word. I feel it in me; my heart beats high to hear the exploits of our valiant armies. And when I have a feeling, it is seldom all the world doesn't have the same feeling at the same time. What we want is warriors and women, Mars and Venus."

"*Citoyen* Blaise, I have still two or three drawings of Gamelin's by me, which you gave me to engrave. Is it urgent?"

"Not a bit."

"By-the-bye, about Gamelin; yesterday, strolling in the Boulevard du Temple, I saw at a dealer's, who keeps a second-hand stall opposite the House of Beaumarchais, all that poor devil's canvases, amongst the rest his *Orestes and Electra*. The head of Orestes, who's like Gamelin, is really fine, I assure you.... The head and arm are superb.... The man told me he found no difficulty in getting rid of these canvases to artists who want to paint over them.... Poor

Gamelin! He might have been a genius of the first order, perhaps, if he hadn't taken to politics."

"He had the soul of a criminal!" replied the *citoyen* Blaise. "I unmasked him, on this very spot, when his sanguinary instincts were still held in check. He never forgave me.... Oh! he was a choice blackguard."

"Poor fellow! he was sincere enough. It was the fanatics were his ruin."

"You don't defend him, I presume, Desmahis!... There's no defending him."

"No, *citoyen* Blaise, there's no defending him."

The *citoyen* Blaise tapped the gallant Desmahis' shoulder amicably, and observed:

"Times are changed. We can call you *Barbaroux* now the Convention is recalling the proscribed.... Now I think of it, Desmahis, engrave me a portrait of Charlotte Corday, will you?"

A woman, a tall, handsome brunette, enveloped in furs, entered the shop and bestowed on the *citoyen* Blaise a little discreet nod that implied intimacy. It was Julie Gamelin; but she no longer bore that dishonoured name, she preferred to be called the *citoyenne* widow Chassagne, and wore, under her mantle, a red tunic in honour of the red shirts of the terror. Julie had at first felt a certain repulsion towards Évariste's mistress; anything that had come near her brother was odious to her. But the *citoyenne* Blaise, after Évariste's death, had found an asylum for the unhappy mother in the attics of the *Amour peintre*. Julie had also taken refuge there; then she had got employment again at the fashionable milliner's in the Rue des Lombards. Her short hair *à la victime*, her aristocratic looks, her mourning weeds had won the sympathies of the gilded youth. Jean Blaise, whom Rose Thévenin had pretty well thrown over, offered her his homage, which she accepted. Still Julie was fond of wearing men's clothes, as in the old tragic days; she had a fine *Muscadin* costume made for her and often went, huge bâton and all complete, to sup at some tavern at Sèvres or Meudon with a girl friend, a little assistant in a fashion shop. Inconsolable for the loss of the young noble whose name she bore, this masculine-minded Julie found the only solace to her melancholy in a savage rancour; every time she encountered Jacobins, she would set the passers-by on them, crying "Death, death!" She had small leisure left to give to her mother, who alone in her room told her beads all day, too deeply shocked at her boy's tragic death to feel the grief that might have been expected. Rose was now the constant companion of Élodie who certainly got on amicably with her step-mothers.

"Where is Élodie?" asked the *citoyenne* Chassagne.

Jean Blaise shook his head; he did not know. He never did know; he made it a point of honour not to.

Julie had come to take her friend with her to see Rose Thévenin at Monceaux, where the actress lived in a little house with an English garden.

At the Conciergerie Rose Thévenin had made the acquaintance of a big army-contractor, the *citoyen* Montfort. She had been released first, by Jean Blaise's intervention, and had then procured the *citoyen* Montfort's pardon, who was no sooner at liberty than he started his old trade of provisioning the troops, to which he added speculation in building-lots in the Pépinière quarter. The architects Ledoux, Olivier and Wailly were erecting pretty houses in that district, and in three months the land had trebled in value. Montfort, since their imprisonment together in the Luxembourg, had been Rose Thévenin's lover; he now gave her a little house in the neighbourhood of Tivoli and the Rue du Rocher, which was very expensive, — and cost him nothing, the sale of the adjacent properties having already repaid him several times over. Jean Blaise was a man of the world, so he deemed it best to put up with what he could not hinder; he gave up Mademoiselle Thévenin to Montfort without ceasing to be on friendly terms with her.

Julie had not been long at the *Amour peintre* before Élodie came down to her in the shop, looking like a fashion plate. Under her mantle, despite the rigours of the season, she wore nothing but her white frock; her face was even paler than of old, and her figure thinner; her looks were languishing, and her whole person breathed voluptuous invitation.

The two women set off for Rose Thévenin's, who was expecting them. Desmahis accompanied them; the actress was consulting him about the decoration of her new house and he was in love with Élodie, who had by this time half made up her mind to let him sigh no more in vain. When the party came near Monceaux, where the victims of the Place de la Révolution lay buried under a layer of lime:

"It is all very well in the cold weather," remarked Julie; "but in the spring the exhalations from the ground there will poison half the town."

Rose Thévenin received her two friends in a drawing-room furnished à *l'antique*, the sofas and armchairs of which were designed by David. Roman bas-reliefs, copied in monochrome, adorned the walls above statues, busts and candelabra of imitation bronze. She wore a curled wig of a straw colour. At that date wigs were all the rage; it was quite common to include half a dozen, a dozen, a dozen and a half in a bride's trousseau. A gown à *la Cyprienne* moulded her body like a sheath. Throwing a cloak over her shoulders, she led

her two friends and the engraver into the garden, which Ledoux was laying out for her, but which as yet was a chaos of leafless trees and plaster. She showed them, however, Fingal's grotto, a gothic chapel with a bell, a temple, a torrent.

"There," she said, pointing to a clump of firs, "I should like to raise a cenotaph to the memory of the unfortunate Brotteaux des Ilettes. I was not indifferent to him; he was a lovable man. The monsters slaughtered him; I bewailed his fate. Desmahis, you shall design me an urn on a column."

Then she added almost without a pause:

"It is heart-breaking.... I wanted to give a ball this week; but all the fiddles are engaged three weeks in advance. There is dancing every night at the *citoyenne* Tallien's."

After dinner Mademoiselle Thévenin's carriage took the three friends and Desmahis to the Théâtre Feydeau. All that was most elegant in Paris was gathered in the house — the women with hair dressed *à l'antique* or *à la victime*, in very low dresses, purple or white and spangled with gold, the men wearing very tall black collars and the chin disappearing in enormous white cravats.

The bill announced *Phèdre* and the *Chien du Jardinier*, — The Gardener's Dog. With one voice the audience demanded the hymn dear to the *muscadins* and the gilded youth, the *Réveil du peuple*, — The Awakening of the People.

The curtain rose and a little man, short and fat, took the stage; it was the celebrated Lays. He sang in his fine tenor voice:

Peuple français, peuple de frères!...

Such storms of applause broke out as set the lustres of the chandelier jingling. Then some murmurs made themselves heard, and the voice of a citizen in a round hat answered from the pit with the hymn of the Marseillaise:

Allons, enfants de la patrie....

The voice was drowned by howls, and shouts were raised:

"Down with the Terrorists! Death to the Jacobins!"

Lays was recalled and sang a second time over the hymn of the Thermidorians.

Peuple français, peuple de frères!...

In every play-house was to be seen the bust of Marat, surmounting a column or raised on a pedestal; at the Théâtre Feydeau this bust stood on a dwarf pillar on the "prompt" side, against the masonry-framing in the stage.

While the orchestra was playing the Overture of *Phèdre et Hippolyte*, a young *Muscadin*, pointing his cane at the bust, shouted:

"Down with Marat!" — and the whole house took up the cry: "Down with Marat! Down with Marat!"

Urgent voices rose above the uproar:

“It is a black shame that bust should still be there!”

“The infamous Marat lords it everywhere, to our dishonour! His busts are as many as the heads he wanted to cut off.”

“Venomous toad!”

“Tiger!”

“Vile serpent!”

Suddenly an elegantly dressed spectator clambers on to the edge of his box, pushes the bust, oversets it. The plaster head falls in shivers on the musicians’ heads amid the cheers of the audience, who spring to their feet and strike up the *Réveil du Peuple* :

Peuple français, peuple de frères!...

Among the most enthusiastic singers Élodie recognized the handsome dragoon, the little lawyer’s clerk, Henry, her first love.

After the performance the gallant Desmahis called a cabriolet and escorted the *citoyenne* Blaise back to the *Amour peintre* .

In the carriage the artist took Élodie’s hand between his:

“You know, Élodie, I love you?”

“I know it, because you love all women.”

“I love them in you.”

She smiled:

“I should be assuming a heavy task, spite of the wigs black, blonde and red, that are the rage, if I undertook to be all women, all sorts of women, for you.”

“Élodie, I swear....”

“What! oaths, *citoyen* Desmahis? Either you have a deal of simplicity, or you credit me with overmuch.”

Desmahis had not a word to say, and she hugged herself over the triumph of having reduced her witty admirer to silence.

At the corner of the Rue de la Loi they heard singing and shouting and saw shadows flitting round a brazier of live coals. It was a band of young bloods who had just come out of the Théâtre Français and were burning a guy representing the Friend of the People.

In the Rue Honoré the coachman struck his cocked hat against a burlesque effigy of Marat swinging from the cord of a street lantern.

The fellow, heartened by the incident, turned round to his fares and told them how, only last night, the tripe-seller in the Rue Montorgueil had smeared blood over Marat’s head, declaring: “That’s the stuff he liked,” and how some little

scamps of ten had thrown the bust into the sewer, and how the spectators had hit the nail on the head, shouting:

“That’s the Panthéon for him!”

Meanwhile, from every eating-house and restaurateur’s voices could be heard singing:

Peuple français, peuple de frères!...

“Good-bye,” said Élodie, jumping out of the cabriolet.

But Desmahis begged so hard, he was so tenderly urgent and spoke so sweetly, that she had not the heart to leave him at the door.

“It is late,” she said; “you must only stay an instant.”

In the blue chamber she threw off her mantle and appeared in her white gown *à l’antique*, which displayed all the warm fulness of her shape.

“You are cold, perhaps,” she said, “I will light the fire; it is already laid.”

She struck the flint and put a lighted match to the fire.

Philippe took her in his arms with the gentleness that bespeaks strength, and she felt a strange, delicious thrill. She was already yielding beneath his kisses when she snatched herself from his arms, crying:

“Let me be.”

Slowly she uncoiled her hair before the chimney-glass; then she looked mournfully at the ring she wore on the ring-finger of her left hand, a little silver ring on which the face of Marat, all worn and battered, could no longer be made out. She looked at it till the tears confused her sight, took it off softly and tossed it into the flames.

Then, her face shining with tears and smiles, transfigured with tenderness and passion, she threw herself into Philippe’s arms.

The night was far advanced when the *citoyenne* Blaise opened the outer door of the flat for her lover and whispered to him in the darkness:

“Good-bye, sweetheart! It is the hour my father will be coming home. If you hear a noise on the stairs, go up quick to the higher floor and don’t come down till all danger is over of your being seen. To have the street-door opened, give three raps on the *concierge*’s window. Good-bye, my life, good-bye, my soul!”

The last dying embers were glowing on the hearth when Élodie, tired and happy, dropped her head on the pillow.

THE END

THE REVOLT OF THE ANGELS



Translated by Mrs. Wilfred Jackson

France's last novel was first translated into English in 1914 and published the same year in France and Britain. *The Revolt of the Angels* is work of religious and social satire, focusing on fallen angels, and a revolt against a God that is depicted as vain, capricious and tyrannical. The angel Arcade decides to visit Maurice d'Esparvieu's library in order to educate himself; he soon determines to gather the necessary material to join the revolution and replace God in heaven. Arcade is also Maurice's guardian angel, but if the former is to dedicate his energies to the revolution then he will no longer have the time to fulfil his role to Maurice. There is a darkly funny and ironic segment involving Arcade challenging Maurice to a duel over the latter's lover. The mortal being stabbed by his immortal guardian angel is a somewhat bleak and humorous scenario. Arcade joins with hundreds of other fallen angels to make an army and dispose of a cunning God, who has created a hierarchical order amongst his angels. France manages to use this organisation of the angelic realm to satirise the European class system.

Satan is depicted as an inspiration for creativity, education, happiness and human development. The goal of the revolution is to replace an authoritarian and despotic regime with an egalitarian, peaceful democracy, and an environment that cultivates curiosity in its inhabitants. However, as the novel is an indictment of the old hierarchical order, France does not express optimism that this revolution would lead to the lofty aims of those participating in the overthrow. The author expresses the idea that power corrupts even those with the greatest intentions and it leads to a loss of empathy or compassion. France lambastes how the powerful use war to instil discipline and he also highlights and condemns the fact that ultimately war is a business; it is clear that certain people profit from death and destruction; a haunting message from an author writing at the commencement of the First World War.

ANATOLE FRANCE
DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

LA
RÉVOLTE DES ANGES



PARIS
CALMANN-LÉVY, ÉDITEURS
3, RUE AUBER, 3

The original title page

CONTENTS

[CHAPTER I](#)
[CHAPTER II](#)
[CHAPTER III](#)
[CHAPTER IV](#)
[CHAPTER V](#)
[CHAPTER VI](#)
[CHAPTER VII](#)
[CHAPTER VIII](#)
[CHAPTER IX](#)
[CHAPTER X](#)
[CHAPTER XI](#)
[CHAPTER XII](#)
[CHAPTER XIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIV](#)
[CHAPTER XV](#)
[CHAPTER XVI](#)
[CHAPTER XVII](#)
[CHAPTER XVIII](#)
[CHAPTER XIX](#)
[CHAPTER XX](#)
[CHAPTER XXI](#)
[CHAPTER XXII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIV](#)
[CHAPTER XXV](#)
[CHAPTER XXVI](#)
[CHAPTER XXVII](#)
[CHAPTER XXVIII](#)
[CHAPTER XXIX](#)
[CHAPTER XXX](#)
[CHAPTER XXXI](#)
[CHAPTER XXXII](#)
[CHAPTER XXXIII](#)
[CHAPTER XXXIV](#)
[CHAPTER XXXV](#)



Illustration by Frank C Pape in the 1924 edition

CHAPTER I

CONTAINING IN A FEW LINES THE HISTORY OF A FRENCH FAMILY FROM 1789 TO THE
PRESENT DAY

BENEATH the shadow of St. Sulpice the ancient mansion of the d'Esparvieu family rears its austere three stories between a moss-grown fore-court and a garden hemmed in, as the years have elapsed, by ever loftier and more intrusive buildings, wherein, nevertheless, two tall chestnut trees still lift their withered heads.

Here from 1825 to 1857 dwelt the great man of the family, Alexandre Bussart d'Esparvieu, Vice-President of the Council of State under the Government of July, Member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, and author of an *Essay on the Civil and Religious Institutions of Nations*, in three octavo volumes, a work unfortunately left incomplete.

This eminent theorist of a Liberal monarchy left as heir to his name his fortune and his fame, Fulgence-Adolphe Bussart d'Esparvieu, senator under the Second Empire, who added largely to his patrimony by buying land over which the Avenue de l'Impératrice was destined ultimately to pass, and who made a remarkable speech in favour of the temporal power of the popes.

Fulgence had three sons. The eldest, Marc-Alexandre, entering the army, made a splendid career for himself: he was a good speaker. The second, Gaétan, showing no particular aptitude for anything, lived mostly in the country, where he hunted, bred horses, and devoted himself to music and painting. The third son, René, destined from his childhood for the law, resigned his deputyship to avoid complicity in the Ferry decrees against the religious orders; and later, perceiving the revival under the presidency of Monsieur Fallières of the days of Decius and Diocletian, put his knowledge and zeal at the service of the persecuted Church.

From the Concordat of 1801 down to the closing years of the Second Empire all the d'Esparvieux attended mass for the sake of example. Though sceptics in their inmost hearts, they looked upon religion as an instrument of government.

Mark and René were the first of their race to show any sign of sincere devotion. The General, when still a colonel, had dedicated his regiment to the Sacred Heart, and he practised his faith with a fervour remarkable even in a soldier, though we all know that piety, daughter of Heaven, has marked out the hearts of the generals of the Third Republic as her chosen dwelling-place on earth.

Faith has its vicissitudes. Under the old order the masses were believers, not so the aristocracy or the educated middle class. Under the First Empire the army from top to bottom was entirely irreligious. To-day the masses believe nothing. The middle classes wish to believe, and succeed at times, as did Marc and René d'Esparvieu. Their brother Gaétan, on the contrary, the country gentleman, failed to attain to faith. He was an agnostic, a term commonly employed by the modish to avoid the odious one of freethinker. And he openly declared himself an agnostic, contrary to the admirable custom which deems it better to withhold the avowal.

In the century in which we live there are so many modes of belief and of unbelief that future historians will have difficulty in finding their way about. But are we any more successful in disentangling the condition of religious beliefs in the time of Symmachus or of Ambrose?

A fervent Christian, René d'Esparvieu was deeply attached to the liberal ideas his ancestors had transmitted to him as a sacred heritage. Compelled to oppose a Jacobin and atheistical Republic, he still called himself Republican. And it was in the name of liberty that he demanded the independence and sovereignty of the Church.

During the long debates on the Separation and the quarrels over the Inventories, the synods of the bishops and the assemblies of the faithful were held in his house. While the most authoritatively accredited leaders of the Catholic party: prelates, generals, senators, deputies, journalists, were met together in the big green drawing-room, and every soul present turned towards Rome with a tender submission or enforced obedience; while Monsieur d'Esparvieu, his elbow on the marble chimney-piece, opposed civil law to canon law, and protested eloquently against the spoliation of the Church of France, two faces of other days, immobile and speechless, looked down on the modern crowd; on the right of the fire-place, painted by David, was Romain Bussart, a working-farmer at Esparvieu in shirt-sleeves and drill trousers, with a rough-and-ready air not untouched with cunning. He had good reason to smile: the worthy man laid the foundation of the family fortunes when he bought Church lands. On the left, painted by Gérard in full-dress bedizened with orders, was the peasant's son, Baron Emile Bussart d'Esparvieu, prefect under the Empire, Keeper of the Great Seal under Charles X, who died in 1837, churchwarden of his parish, with couplets from *La Pucelle* on his lips.

René d'Esparvieu married in 1888 Marie-Antoinette Coupelle, daughter of Baron Coupelle, ironmaster at Blainville (Haute Loire). Madame René d'Esparvieu had been president since 1903 of the Society of Christian Mothers.

These perfect spouses, having married off their eldest daughter in 1908, had three children still at home — a girl and two boys.

Léon, the younger, aged seven, had a room next to his mother and his sister Berthe. Maurice, the elder, lived in a little pavilion comprising two rooms at the bottom of the garden. The young man thus gained a freedom which enabled him to endure family life. He was rather good-looking, smart without too much pretence, and the faint smile which merely raised one corner of his mouth did not lack charm.

At twenty-five Maurice possessed the wisdom of Ecclesiastes. Doubting whether a man hath any profit of all his labour which he taketh under the sun he never put himself out about anything. From his earliest childhood this young hopeful's sole concern with work had been considering how he might best avoid it, and it was through his remaining ignorant of the teaching of the *École de Droit* that he became a doctor of law and a barrister at the Court of Appeal.

He neither pleaded nor practised. He had no knowledge and no desire to acquire any; wherein he conformed to his genius whose engaging fragility he forbore to overload; his instinct fortunately telling him that it was better to understand little than to misunderstand a lot.

As Monsieur l'Abbé Patouille expressed it, Maurice had received from Heaven the benefits of a Christian education. From his childhood piety was shown to him in the example of his home, and when on leaving college he was entered at the *École de Droit*, he found the lore of the doctors, the virtues of the confessors, and the constancy of the nursing mothers of the Church assembled around the paternal hearth. Admitted to social and political life at the time of the great persecution of the Church of France, Maurice did not fail to attend every manifestation of youthful Catholicism; he lent a hand with his parish barricades at the time of the Inventories, and with his companions he unharnessed the archbishop's horses when he was driven out from his palace. He showed on all these occasions a modified zeal; one never saw him in the front ranks of the heroic band exciting soldiers to a glorious disobedience or flinging mud and curses at the agents of the law.

He did his duty, nothing more; and if he distinguished himself on the occasion of the great pilgrimage of 1911 among the stretcher-bearers at Lourdes, we have reason to fear it was but to please Madame de la Verdelière, who admired men of muscle. Abbé Patouille, a friend of the family and deeply versed in the knowledge of souls, knew that Maurice had only moderate aspirations to martyrdom. He reproached him with his lukewarmness, and pulled his ear, calling him a bad lot. Anyway, Maurice remained a believer.

Amid the distractions of youth his faith remained intact, since he left it severely alone. He had never examined a single tenet. Nor had he enquired a whit more closely into the ideas of morality current in the grade of society to which he belonged. He took them just as they came. Thus in every situation that arose he cut an eminently respectable figure which he would have assuredly failed to do, had he been given to meditating on the foundations of morality. He was irritable and hot-tempered and possessed of a sense of honour which he was at great pains to cultivate. He was neither vain nor ambitious. Like the majority of Frenchmen, he disliked parting with his money. Women would never have obtained anything from him had they not known the way to make him give. He believed he despised them; the truth was he adored them. He indulged his appetites so naturally that he never suspected that he had any. What people did not know, himself least of all, — though the gleam that occasionally shone in his fine, light-brown eyes might have furnished the hint — was that he had a warm heart and was capable of friendship. For the rest, he was, in the ordinary intercourse of life, no very brilliant specimen.

CHAPTER II

WHEREIN USEFUL INFORMATION WILL BE FOUND CONCERNING A LIBRARY WHERE
STRANGE THINGS WILL SHORTLY COME TO PASS

DESIROUS of embracing the whole circle of human knowledge, and anxious to bequeath to the world a concrete symbol of his encyclopædic genius and a display in keeping with his pecuniary resources, Baron Alexandre d'Esparvieu had formed a library of three hundred and sixty thousand volumes, both printed and in manuscript, whereof the greater part emanated from the Benedictines of Ligugé.

By a special clause in his will he enjoined his heirs to add to his library, after his death, whatever they might deem worthy of note in natural, moral, political, philosophical, and religious science.

He had indicated the sums which might be drawn from his estate for the fulfilment of this object, and charged his eldest son, Fulgence-Adolphe, to proceed with these additions. Fulgence-Adolphe accomplished with filial respect the wishes expressed by his illustrious father.

After him, this huge library, which represented more than one child's share of the estate, remained undivided between the Senator's three sons and two daughters; and René d'Esparvieu, on whom devolved the house in the Rue Garancière, became the guardian of the valuable collection. His two sisters, Madame Paulet de Saint-Fain and Madame Cuissart, repeatedly demanded that such a large but unremunerative piece of property should be turned into money. But René and Gaétan bought in the shares of their two co-legatees, and the library was saved. René d'Esparvieu even busied himself in adding to it, thus fulfilling the intentions of its founder. But from year to year he lessened the number and importance of the acquisitions, opining that the intellectual output in Europe was on the wane.

Nevertheless, Gaétan enriched it, out of his funds, with works published both in France and abroad which he thought good, and he was not lacking in judgment, though his brothers would never allow that he had a particle. Thanks to this man of leisurely and inquiring mind, Baron Alexandre's collection was kept practically up to date. Even at the present day the d'Esparvieu library, in the departments of theology, jurisprudence, and history is one of the finest private libraries in all Europe. Here you may study physical science, or to put it better, physical sciences in all their branches, and for that matter metaphysic or metaphysics, that is to say, all that is connected with physics and has no other

name, so impossible is it to designate by a substantive that which has no substance, and is but a dream and an illusion. Here you may contemplate with admiration philosophers addressing themselves to the solution, dissolution, and resolution of the Absolute, to the determination of the Indeterminate and to the definition of the Infinite.

Amid this pile of books and booklets, both sacred and profane, you may find everything down to the latest and most fashionable pragmatism.

Other libraries there are, more richly abounding in bindings of venerable antiquity and illustrious origin, whose smooth and soft-hued texture render them delicious to the touch; bindings which the gilder's art has enriched with gossamer, lace-work, foliage, flowers, emblematic devices, and coats of arms; bindings that charm the studious eye with their tender radiance. Other libraries perhaps harbour a greater array of manuscripts illuminated with delicate and brilliant miniatures by artists of Venice, Flanders, or Touraine. But in handsome, sound editions of ancient and modern writers, both sacred and profane, the d'Esparvieu library is second to none. Here one finds all that has come down to us from antiquity; all the Fathers of the Church, the Apologists and the Decretalists, all the Humanists of the Renaissance, all the Encyclopædists, the whole world of philosophy and science. Therefore it was that Cardinal Merlin, when he deigned to visit it, remarked:

"There is no man whose brain is equal to containing all the knowledge which is piled upon these shelves. Happily it doesn't matter."

Monseigneur Cachepot, who worked there often when a curate in Paris, was in the habit of saying:

"I see here the stuff to make many a Thomas Aquinas and many an Arius, if only the modern mind had not lost its ancient ardour for good and evil."

There was no gainsaying that the manuscripts formed the more valuable portion of this immense collection. Noteworthy indeed was the unpublished correspondence of Gassendi, of Father Mersenne, and of Pascal, which threw a new light on the spirit of the seventeenth century. Nor must we forget the Hebrew Bibles, the Talmuds, the Rabbinical treatises, printed and in manuscript, the Aramaic and Samaritan texts, on sheepskin and on tablets of sycamore; in fine, all these antique and valuable copies collected in Egypt and in Syria by the celebrated Moïse de Dina, and acquired at a small cost by Alexandre d'Esparvieu in 1836, when the learned Hebraist died of old age and poverty in Paris.

The Esparvienne library occupied the whole of the second floor of the old house. The works thought to be of but mediocre interest, such as books of Protestant exegesis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the gift of Monsieur Gaétan,

were relegated unbound to the limbo of the upper regions. The catalogue, with its various supplements, ran into no less than eighteen folio volumes. It was quite up to date, and the library was in perfect order. Monsieur Julien Sarratie, archivist and palæographer, who, being poor and retiring, used to make his living by teaching, became, in 1895, tutor to young Maurice on the recommendation of the Bishop of Agra, and with scarcely an interval found himself curator of the Bibliothèque Esparvienne. Endowed with business-like energy and dogged patience, Monsieur Sarratie himself classified all the members of this vast body. The system he invented and put into practice was so complicated, the labels he put on the books were made up of so many capital letters and small letters, both Latin and Greek, so many Arabic and Roman numerals, asterisks, double asterisks, triple asterisks, and those signs which in arithmetic express powers and roots, that the mere study of it would have involved more time and labour than would have been required for the complete mastery of algebra, and as no one could be found who would give the hours, that might be more profitably employed in discovering the law of numbers, to the solving of these cryptic symbols, Monsieur Sarratie remained the only one capable of finding his way among the intricacies of his system, and without his help it had become an utter impossibility to discover, among the three hundred and sixty thousand volumes confided to his care, the particular volume one happened to require. Such was the result of his labours. Far from complaining about it, he experienced on the contrary a lively satisfaction.

Monsieur Sarratie loved his library. He loved it with a jealous love. He was there every day at seven o'clock in the morning busy cataloguing at a huge mahogany desk. The slips in his handwriting filled an enormous case standing by his side surmounted by a plaster bust of Alexandre d'Esparvieu. Alexandre wore his hair brushed straight back, and had a sublime look on his face. Like Chateaubriand, he affected little feathery side whiskers. His lips were pursed, his bosom bare. Punctually at midday Monsieur Sarratie used to sally forth to lunch at a *crèmerie* in the narrow gloomy Rue des Canettes. It was known as the *Crèmerie des Quatre Évêques*, and had once been the haunt of Baudelaire, Theodore de Banville, Charles Asselineau, and a certain grandee of Spain who had translated the "Mysteries of Paris" into the language of the *conquistadores*. And the ducks that paddled so nicely on the old stone sign which gave its name to the street used to recognize Monsieur Sarratie. At a quarter to one, to the very minute, he went back to his library, where he remained until seven o'clock. He then again betook himself to the *Quatre Évêques*, and sat down to his frugal dinner, with its crowning glory of stewed prunes. Every evening, after dinner, his crony,

Monsieur Guinardon, universally known as Père Guinardon, a scene-painter and picture-restorer, who used to do work for churches, would come from his garret in the Rue Princesse to have his coffee and liqueur at the *Quatre Évêques*, and the two friends would play their game of dominoes.

Old Guinardon, who was like some rugged old tree still full of sap, was older than he could bring himself to believe. He had known Chenavard. His chastity was positively ferocious, and he was for ever denouncing the impurities of neopaganism in language of alarming obscenity. He loved talking. Monsieur Sariette was a ready listener. Old Guinardon's favourite subject was the Chapelle des Anges in St. Sulpice, in which the paintings were peeling off the walls, and which he was one day to restore; when, that is, it should please God, for, since the Separation, the churches belonged solely to God, and no one would undertake the responsibility of even the most urgent repairs. But old Guinardon demanded no salary.

"Michael is my patron saint," he said. "And I have a special devotion for the Holy Angels."

After they had had their game of dominoes, Monsieur Sariette, very thin and small, and old Guinardon, sturdy as an oak, hirsute as a lion, and tall as a Saint Christopher, went off chatting away side by side across the Place Saint Sulpice, heedless of whether the night were fine or stormy. Monsieur Sariette always went straight home, much to the regret of the painter, who was a gossip and a nightbird.

The following day, as the clock struck seven, Monsieur Sariette would take up his place in the library, and resume his cataloguing. As he sat at his desk, however, he would dart a Medusa-like look at anyone who entered, fearing lest he should prove to be a book-borrower. It was not merely the magistrates, politicians, and prelates whom he would have liked to turn to stone when they came to ask for the loan of a book with an air of authority bred of their familiarity with the master of the house. He would have done as much to Monsieur Gaétan, the library's benefactor, when he wanted some gay or scandalous old volume wherewith to beguile a wet day in the country. He would have meted out similar treatment to Madame René d'Esparvieu, when she came to look for a book to read to her sick poor in hospital, and even to Monsieur René d'Esparvieu himself, who generally contented himself with the Civil Code and a volume of Dalloz. The borrowing of the smallest book seemed like dragging his heart out. To refuse a volume even to such as had the most incontestable right to it, Monsieur Sariette would invent countless far-fetched or clumsy fibs, and did not even shrink from slandering himself as curator or from casting doubts on his own vigilance by saying that such and such a book was

mislaid or lost, when a moment ago he had been gloating over that very volume or pressing it to his bosom. And when ultimately forced to part with a volume he would take it back a score of times from the borrower before he finally relinquished it.

He was always in agony lest one of the objects confided to his care should escape him. As the guardian of three hundred and sixty thousand volumes, he had three hundred and sixty thousand reasons for alarm. Sometimes he woke at night bathed in sweat, and uttering a cry of fear, because he had dreamed he had seen a gap on one of the shelves of his bookcases. It seemed to him a monstrous, unheard-of, and most grievous thing that a volume should leave its habitat. This noble rapacity exasperated Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, who, failing to understand the good qualities of his paragon of a librarian, called him an old maniac. Monsieur Sariette knew nought of this injustice, but he would have braved the cruellest misfortune and endured opprobrium and insult to safeguard the integrity of his trust. Thanks to his assiduity, his vigilance and zeal, or, in a word, to his love, the Esparvienne library had not lost so much as a single leaflet under his supervision during the sixteen years which had now rolled by, this ninth of September, 1912.

CHAPTER III

WHEREIN THE MYSTERY BEGINS

AT seven o'clock on the evening of that day, having as usual replaced all the books which had been taken from their shelves, and having assured himself that he was leaving everything in good order, he quitted the library, double-locking the door after him. According to his usual habit, he dined at the *Crèmerie des Quatre Évêques*, read his newspaper, *La Croix*, and at ten o'clock went home to his little house in the Rue du Regard. The good man had no trouble and no presentiment of evil; his sleep was peaceful. The next morning at seven o'clock to the minute, he entered the little room leading to the library, and, according to his daily habit, doffed his grand frock-coat, and taking down an old one which hung in a cupboard over his washstand, put it on. Then he went in to his workroom, where for sixteen years he had been cataloguing six days out of the seven, under the lofty gaze of Alexandre d'Esparvieu. Preparing to make a round of the various rooms, he entered the first and largest, which contained works on theology and religion in huge cupboards whose cornices were adorned with bronze-coloured busts of poets and orators of ancient days.

Two enormous globes representing the earth and the heavens filled the window-embasures. But at his first step Monsieur Sariette stopped dead, stupefied, powerless alike to doubt or to credit what his eyes beheld. On the blue cloth cover of the writing-table books lay scattered about pell-mell, some lying flat, some standing upright. A number of quartos were heaped up in a tottering pile. Two Greek lexicons, one inside the other, formed a single being more monstrous in shape than the human couples of the divine Plato. A gilt-edged folio was all agape, showing three of its leaves disgracefully dog's-eared.

Having, after an interval of some moments, recovered from his profound amazement, the librarian went up to the table and recognised in the confused mass his most valuable Hebrew, French, and Latin Bibles, a unique Talmud, Rabbinical treatises printed and in manuscript, Aramaic and Samaritan texts and scrolls from the synagogues — in fine, the most precious relics of Israel all lying in a disordered heap, gaping and crumpled.

Monsieur Sariette found himself confronted with an inexplicable phenomenon; nevertheless he sought to account for it. How eagerly he would have welcomed the idea that Monsieur Gaétan, who, being a thoroughly unprincipled man, presumed on the right gained him by his fatal liberality towards the library to rummage there unhindered during his sojourns in Paris, had been the author of this terrible disorder. But Monsieur Gaétan was away travelling in Italy. After pondering for some minutes Monsieur Sariette's next supposition was that

Monsieur René d'Esparvieu had entered the library late in the evening with the keys of his manservant Hippolyte, who, for the past twenty-five years, had looked after the second floor and the attics. Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, however, never worked at night, and did not read Hebrew. Perhaps, thought Monsieur Sariette, perhaps he had brought or allowed to be brought to this room some priest, or Jerusalem monk, on his way through Paris; some Oriental *savant* given to scriptural exegesis. Monsieur Sariette next wondered whether the Abbé Patouille, who had an enquiring mind, and also a habit of dog'searing his books, had, peradventure, flung himself on these talmudic and biblical texts, fired with sudden zeal to lay bare the soul of Shem. He even asked himself for a moment whether Hippolyte, the old manservant, who had swept and dusted the library for a quarter of a century, and had been slowly poisoned by the dust of accumulated knowledge, had allowed his curiosity to get the better of him, and had been there during the night, ruining his eyesight and his reason, and losing his soul poring by moonlight over these undecipherable symbols. Monsieur Sariette even went so far as to imagine that young Maurice, on leaving his club or some nationalist meeting, might have torn these Jewish volumes from their shelves, out of hatred for old Jacob and his modern posterity; for this young man of family was a declared anti-semite, and only consorted with those Jews who were as anti-semitic as himself. It was giving a very free rein to his imagination, but Monsieur Sariette's brain could not rest, and went wandering about among speculations of the wildest extravagance.

Impatient to know the truth, the zealous guardian of the library called the manservant.

Hippolyte knew nothing. The porter at the lodge could not furnish any clue. None of the domestics had heard a sound. Monsieur Sariette went down to the study of Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, who received him in nightcap and dressing-gown, listened to his story with the air of a serious man bored with idle chatter, and dismissed him with words which conveyed a cruel implication of pity.

"Do not worry, my good Monsieur Sariette; be sure that the books were lying where you left them last night."

Monsieur Sariette reiterated his enquiries a score of times, discovered nothing, and suffered such anxiety that sleep entirely forsook him. When, on the following day at seven o'clock he entered the room with the busts and globes, and saw that all was in order, he heaved a sigh of relief. Then suddenly his heart beat fit to burst. He had just seen lying flat on the mantelpiece a paper-bound volume, a modern work, the boxwood paper-knife which had served to cut its pages still thrust between the leaves. It was a dissertation on the two parallel

versions of Genesis, a work which Monsieur Sarratie had relegated to the attic, and which had never left it up to now, no one in Monsieur d'Esparvieu's circle having had the curiosity to differentiate between the parts for which the polytheistic and monotheistic contributors were respectively responsible in the formation of the first of the sacred books. This book bore the label R > 3214VIII/2. And this painful truth was suddenly borne in upon the mind of Monsieur Sarratie: to wit, that the most scientific system of numbering will not help to find a book if the book is no longer in its place. Every day of the ensuing month found the table littered with books. Greek and Latin lay cheek by jowl with Hebrew. Monsieur Sarratie asked himself whether these nocturnal flittings were the work of evil-doers who entered by the skylights to steal valuable and precious volumes. But he found no traces of burglary, and, notwithstanding the most minute search, failed to discover that anything had disappeared. Terrible anxiety took possession of his mind, and he fell to wondering whether it was possible that some monkey in the neighbourhood came down the chimney and acted the part of a person engaged in study. Deriving his knowledge of the habits of these animals in the main from the paintings of Watteau and Chardin, he took it that, in the art of imitating gestures or assuming characters they resembled Harlequin, Scaramouch, Zerlin, and the Doctors of the Italian comedy; he imagined them handling a palette and brushes, pounding drugs in a mortar, or turning over the leaves of an old treatise on alchemy beside an athanor. And so it was that, when, on one unhappy morning, he saw a huge blot of ink on one of the leaves of the third volume of the polyglot Bible bound in blue morocco and adorned with the arms of the Comte de Mirabeau, he had no doubt that a monkey was the author of the evil deed. The monkey had been pretending to take notes and had upset the inkpot. It must be a monkey belonging to a learned professor. Imbued with this idea, Monsieur Sarratie carefully studied the topography of the district, so as to draw a cordon round the group of houses amid which the d'Esparvieu house stood. Then he visited the four surrounding streets, asking at every door if there was a monkey in the house. He interrogated porters and their wives, washer-women, servants, a cobbler, a greengrocer, a glazier, clerks in bookshops, a priest, a bookbinder, two guardians of the peace, children, thus testing the diversity of character and variety of temper in one and the same people; for the replies he received were quite dissimilar in nature; some were rough, some were gentle; there were the coarse and the polished, the simple and the ironical, the prolix and the abrupt, the brief and even the silent. But of the animal he sought he had had neither sight nor sound, when under the archway of an old house in the Rue Servandoni, a small freckled, red-haired girl who looked after the door, made reply:

“There is Monsieur Ordonneau’s monkey; would you care to see it?”

And without another word she conducted the old man to a stable at the other end of the yard. There on some rank straw and old bits of cloth, a young macaco with a chain round his middle sat and shivered. He was no taller than a five-year-old child. His livid face, his wrinkled brow, his thin lips were all expressive of mortal sadness. He fixed on the visitor the still lively gaze of his yellow eyes. Then with his small dry hand he seized a carrot, put it to his mouth, and forthwith flung it away. Having looked at the newcomers for a moment, the exile turned away his head, as if he expected nothing further of mankind or of life. Sitting huddled up, one knee in his hand, he made no further movement, but at times a dry cough shook his breast.

“It’s Edgar,” said the small girl. “He is for sale, you know.”

But the old book-lover, who had come armed with anger and resentment, thinking to find a cynical enemy, a monster of malice, an antibibliophile, stopped short, surprised, saddened, and overcome, before this little being devoid of strength and joy and hope.

Recognising his mistake, troubled by the almost human face which sorrow and suffering made more human still, he murmured “Forgive me” and bowed his head.

CHAPTER IV

WHICH IN ITS FORCEFUL BREVITY PROJECTS US TO THE LIMITS OF THE ACTUAL WORLD

TWO months elapsed; the domestic upheaval did not subside, and Monsieur Sarriette's thoughts turned to the Freemasons. The papers he read were full of their crimes. Abbé Patouille deemed them capable of the darkest deeds, and believed them to be in league with the Jews and meditating the total overthrow of Christendom.

Having now arrived at the acme of power, they wielded a dominating influence in all the principal departments of State, they ruled the Chambers, there were five of them in the Ministry, and they filled the Élysée. Having some time since assassinated a President of the Republic because he was a patriot, they were getting rid of the accomplices and witnesses of their execrable crime. Few days passed without Paris being terror-stricken at some mysterious murder hatched in their Lodges. These were facts concerning which no doubt was possible. By what means did they gain access to the library? Monsieur Sarriette could not imagine. What task had they come to fulfil? Why did they attack sacred antiquity and the origins of the Church? What impious designs were they forming? A heavy shadow hung over these terrible undertakings. The Catholic archivist feeling himself under the eye of the sons of Hiram was terrified and fell ill.

Scarcely had he recovered, when he resolved to pass the night in the very spot where these terrible mysteries were enacted, and to take the subtle and dangerous visitors by surprise. It was an enterprise that demanded all his slender courage. Being a man of delicate physique and of nervous temperament, Monsieur Sarriette was naturally inclined to be fearful. On the 8th of January at nine o'clock in the evening, while the city lay asleep under a whirling snowstorm, he built up a good fire in the room containing the busts of the ancient poets and philosophers, and ensconced himself in an arm-chair at the chimney corner, a rug over his knees. On a small stand within reach of his hand were a lamp, a bowl of black coffee, and a revolver borrowed from the youthful Maurice. He tried to read his paper, *La Croix*, but the letters danced beneath his eyes. So he stared hard in front of him, saw nothing but the shadows, heard nothing but the wind, and fell asleep.

When he awoke the fire was out, the lamp was extinguished, leaving an acrid smell behind. But all around, the darkness was filled with milky brightness and phosphorescent lights. He thought he saw something flutter on the table. Stricken to the marrow with cold and terror, but upheld by a resolve stronger

than any fear, he rose, approached the table, and passed his hands over the cloth. He saw nothing; even the lights faded, but under his fingers he felt a folio wide open; he tried to close it, the book resisted, jumped up and hit the imprudent librarian three blows on the head.

Monsieur Sariette fell down unconscious....

Since then things had gone from bad to worse. Books left their allotted shelves in greater profusion than ever, and sometimes it was impossible to replace them; they disappeared. Monsieur Sariette discovered fresh losses daily. The Bollandists were now an imperfect set, thirty volumes of exegesis were missing. He himself had become unrecognisable. His face had shrunk to the size of one's fist and grown yellow as a lemon, his neck was elongated out of all proportion, his shoulders drooped, the clothes he wore hung on him as on a peg. He ate nothing, and at the *Crèmerie des Quatre Évêques* he would sit with dull eyes and bowed head, staring fixedly and vacantly at the saucer where, in a muddy juice, floated his stewed prunes. He did not hear old Guinardon relate how he had at last begun to restore the Delacroix paintings at St. Sulpice.

Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, when he heard the unhappy curator's alarming reports, used to answer drily:

"These books have been mislaid, they are not lost; look carefully, Monsieur Sariette, look carefully and you will find them."

And he murmured behind the old man's back:

"Poor old Sariette is in a bad way."

"I think," replied Abbé Patouille, "that his brain is going."

CHAPTER V

WHEREIN EVERYTHING SEEMS STRANGE BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS LOGICAL

THE Chapel of the Holy Angels, which lies on the right hand as you enter the Church of St. Sulpice, was hidden behind a scaffolding of planks. Abbé Patouille, Monsieur Gaétan, Monsieur Maurice, his nephew, and Monsieur Sariette, entered in single file through the low door cut in the wooden hoarding, and found old Guinardon on the top of his ladder standing in front of the Heliodorus. The old artist, surrounded by all sorts of tools and materials, was putting a white paste in the crack which cut in two the High Priest Onias. Zéphyrine, Paul Baudry's favourite model, Zéphyrine, who had lent her golden hair and polished shoulders to so many Magdalens, Marguerites, sylphs, and mermaids, and who, it is said, was beloved of the Emperor Napoleon III, was standing at the foot of the ladder with tangled locks, cadaverous cheeks, and dim eyes, older than old Guinardon, whose life she had shared for more than half a century. She had brought the painter's lunch in a basket.

Although the slanting rays fell grey and cold through the leaded and iron-barred window, Delacroix's colouring shone resplendent, and the roses on the cheeks of men and angels dimmed with their glorious beauty the rubicund countenance of old Guinardon, which stood out in relief against one of the temple's columns. These frescoes of the Chapel of the Holy Angels, though derided and insulted when they first appeared, have now become part of the classic tradition, and are united in immortality with the masterpieces of Rubens and Tintoretto.

Old Guinardon, bearded and long-haired, looked like Father Time effacing the works of man's genius. Gaétan, in alarm, called out to him:

"Carefully, Monsieur Guinardon, carefully. Do not scrape too much."

The painter reassured him.

"Fear nothing, Monsieur Gaétan. I do not paint in that style. My art is a higher one. I work after the manner of Cimabue, Giotto, and Beato Angelico, not in the style of Delacroix. This surface here is too heavily charged with contrast and opposition to give a really sacred effect. It is true that Chenavard said that Christianity loves the picturesque, but Chenavard was a rascal with neither faith nor principle — an infidel.... Look, Monsieur d'Esparvieu, I fill up the crevice, I relay the scales of paint which are peeling. That is all.... The damage, due to the sinking of the wall, or more probably to a seismic shock, is confined to a very small space. This painting of oil and wax applied on a very dry foundation is far more solid than one might think.

“I saw Delacroix engaged on this work. Impassioned but anxious, he modelled feverishly, scraped out, re-painted unceasingly; his mighty hand made childish blunders, but the thing is done with the mastery of a genius and the inexperience of a schoolboy. It is a marvel how it holds.”

The good man was silent, and went on filling in the crevice.

“How classic and traditional the composition is,” said Gaétan. “Time was when one could recognise nothing but its amazing novelty; now one can see in it a multitude of old Italian formulas.”

“I may allow myself the luxury of being just, I possess the qualifications,” said the old man from the top of his lofty ladder. “Delacroix lived in a blasphemous and godless age. A painter of the decadence, he was not without pride nor grandeur. He was greater than his times. But he lacked faith, single-heartedness, and purity. To be able to see and paint angels he needed that virtue of angels and primitives, that supreme virtue which, with God’s help, I do my best to practise, chastity.”

“Hold your tongue, Michel; you are as big a brute as any of them.”

Thus Zéphyrine, devoured with jealousy because that very morning on the stairs she had seen her lover kiss the bread-woman’s daughter, to wit the youthful Octavie, who was as squalid and radiant as one of Rembrandt’s Brides. She had loved Michel madly in the happy days long since past, and love had never died out in Zéphyrine’s heart.

Old Guinardon received the flattering insult with a smile that he dissembled, and raised his eyes to the ceiling, where the archangel Michael, terrible in azure cuirass and gilt helmet, was springing heavenwards in all the radiance of his glory.

Meanwhile Abbé Patouille, blinking, and shielding his eyes with his hat against the glaring light from the window, began to examine the pictures one after another: Heliodorus being scourged by the angels, St. Michael vanquishing the Demons, and the combat of Jacob and the Angel.

“All this is exceedingly fine,” he murmured at last, “but why has the artist only represented wrathful angels on these walls? Look where I will in this chapel, I see but heralds of celestial anger, ministers of divine vengeance. God wishes to be feared; He wishes also to be loved. I would fain perceive on these walls messengers of peace and of clemency. I should like to see the Seraphim who purified the lips of the prophet, St. Raphael who gave back his sight to old Tobias, Gabriel who announced the Mystery of the Incarnation to Mary, the Angel who delivered St. Peter from his chains, the Cherubim who bore the dead St. Catherine to the top of Sinai. Above all, I should like to be able to contemplate those heavenly guardians which God gives to every man baptized in

His name. We each have one who follows all our steps, who comforts us and upholds us. It would be pleasant indeed to admire these enchanting spirits, these beautiful faces.”

“Ah, Abbé! it depends on the point of view,” answered Gaétan. “Delacroix was no sentimentalist. Old Ingres was not very far wrong in saying that this great man’s work reeks of fire and brimstone. Look at the sombre, splendid beauty of those angels, look at those androgynes so proud and fierce, at those pitiless youths who lift avenging rods against Heliodorus, note this mysterious wrestler touching the patriarch on the hip....”

“Hush,” said Abbé Patouille. “According to the Bible he is no angel like the others; if he be an angel, he is the Angel of Creation, the Eternal Son of God. I am surprised that the Venerable Curé of St. Sulpice, who entrusted the decoration of this chapel to Monsieur Eugène Delacroix, did not tell him that the patriarch’s symbolic struggle with Him who was nameless took place in profound darkness, and that the subject is quite out of place here, since it prefigures the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The best artists go astray when they fail to obtain their ideas of Christian iconography from a qualified ecclesiastic. The institutions of Christian art form the subject of numerous works with which you are doubtless acquainted, Monsieur Sariette.”

Monsieur Sariette was gazing vacantly about him. It was the third morning after his adventurous night in the library. Being, however, thus called upon by the venerable ecclesiastic, he pulled himself together and replied:

“On this subject we may with advantage consult Molanus, *De Historia Sacrarum Imaginum et Picturarum*, in the edition given us by Noël Paquot, dated Louvain, 1771; Cardinal Frederico Borromeo, *De Pictura Sacra*, and the Iconography of Didron; but this last work must be read with caution.”

Having thus spoken, Monsieur Sariette relapsed into silence. He was pondering on his devastated library.

“On the other hand,” continued Abbé Patouille, “since an example of the holy anger of the angels was necessary in this chapel, the painter is to be commended for having depicted for us in imitation of Raphael the heavenly messengers who chastised Heliodorus. Ordered by Seleucus, King of Syria, to carry off the treasures contained in the Temple, Heliodorus was stricken by an angel in a cuirass of gold mounted on a magnificently caparisoned steed. Two other angels smote him with rods. He fell to earth, as Monsieur Delacroix shows us here, and was swallowed up in darkness. It is right and salutary that this adventure should be cited as an example to the Republican Commissioners of Police and to the sacrilegious agents of the law. There will always be Heliodoruses, but, let it be known, every time they lay their hands on the property of the Church, which is

the property of the poor, they shall be chastised with rods and blinded by the angels.”

“I should like this painting, or, better still, Raphael’s sublimer conception of the same subject, to be engraved in little pictures fully coloured, and distributed as rewards in all the schools.”

“Uncle,” said young Maurice, with a yawn, “I think these things are simply ghastly. I prefer Matisse and Metzinger.”

These words fell unheeded, and old Guinardon from his ladder held forth:

“Only the primitives caught a glimpse of Heaven. Beauty is only to be found between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The antique, the impure antique, which regained its pernicious influence over the minds of the sixteenth century, inspired poets and painters with criminal notions and immodest conceptions, with horrid impurities, filth. All the artists of the Renaissance were swine, including Michael-Angelo.”

Then, perceiving that Gaétan was on the point of departure, Père Guinardon assumed an air of bonhomie, and said to him in a confidential tone:

“Monsieur Gaétan, if you’re not afraid of climbing up my five flights, come and have a look at my den. I’ve got two or three little canvases I wouldn’t mind parting with, and they might interest you. All good, honest, straightforward stuff. I’ll show you, among other things, a tasty, spicy little Baudouin that would make your mouth water.”

At this speech Gaétan made off. As he descended the church steps and turned down the Rue Princesse, he found himself accompanied by old Sariette, and fell to unburdening himself to him, as he would have done to any human creature, or indeed to a tree, a lamp-post, a dog, or his own shadow, of the indignation with which the æsthetic theories of the old painter inspired him.

“Old Guinardon overdoes it with his Christian art and his Primitives! Whatever the artist conceives of Heaven is borrowed from earth; God, the Virgin, the Angels, men and women, saints, the light, the clouds. When he was designing figures for the chapel windows at Dreux, old Ingres drew from life a pure, fine study of a woman, which may be seen, among many others, in the Musée Bonnat at Bayonne. Old Ingres had written at the bottom of the page in case he should forget: ‘Mademoiselle Cécile, admirable legs and thighs’ — and so as to make Mademoiselle Cécile into a saint in Paradise, he gave her a robe, a cloak, a veil, inflicting thus a shameful decline in her estate, for the tissues of Lyons and Genoa are worthless compared with the youthful living tissue, rosy with pure blood; the most beautiful draperies are despicable compared with the lines of a beautiful body. In fact, clothing for flesh that is desirable and ripe for wedlock is an unmerited shame, and the worst of humiliations”; and Gaétan, walking

carelessly in the gutter of the Rue Garancière, continued: "Old Guinardon is a pestilential idiot. He blasphemes Antiquity, sacred Antiquity, the age when the gods were kind. He exalts an epoch when the painter and the sculptor had all their lessons to learn over again. In point of fact, Christianity has run contrary to art in so much as it has not favoured the study of the nude. Art is the representation of nature, and nature is pre-eminently the human body; it is the nude."

"Pardon, pardon," purred old Sariette. "There is such a thing as spiritual, or, as one might term it, inward beauty, which, since the days of Fra Angelico down to those of Hippolyte Flandrin, Christian art has—"

But Gaétan, never hearing a word of all this, went on hurling his impetuous observations at the stones of the old street and the snow-laden clouds overhead:

"The Primitives cannot be judged as a whole, for they are utterly unlike each other. This old madman confounds them all together. Cimabue is a corrupt Byzantine, Giotto gives hints of powerful genius, but his modelling is bad, and, like children, he gives all his characters the same face. The early Italians have grace and joy, because they are Italians. The Venetians have an instinct for fine colour. But when all is said and done these exquisite craftsmen enamel and gild rather than paint. There is far too much softness about the heart and the colouring of your saintly Angelico for me. As for the Flemish school, that's quite another pair of shoes. They can use their hands, and in glory of workmanship they are on a level with the Chinese lacquer-workers. The technique of the brothers Van Eyck is a marvel, but I cannot discover in their Adoration of the Lamb the charm and mystery that some have vaunted. Everything in it is treated with a pitiless perfection; it is vulgar in feeling and cruelly ugly. Memling may touch one perhaps; but he creates nothing but sick wretches and cripples; under the heavy, rich, and ungraceful robing of his virgins and saints one divines some very lamentable anatomy. I did not wait for Rogier van der Wyden to call himself Roger de la Pasture and turn Frenchman in order to prefer him to Memling. This Rogier or Roger is less of a ninny; but then he is more lugubrious, and the rigidity of his lines bears eloquent testimony to his poverty-stricken figures. It is a strange perversion to take pleasure in these carnivalesque figures when one can have the paintings of Leonardo, Titian, Correggio, Velasquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, or Prud'hon. Really it is a perverted instinct."

Meanwhile the Abbé Patouille and Maurice d'Esparvieu were strolling leisurely along in the wake of the esthete and the librarian. As a general rule the Abbé Patouille was little inclined to talk theology with laymen, or, for that matter, with clerics either. Carried away, however, by the attractiveness of the subject, he was

telling the youthful Maurice all about the sacred mission of those guardian angels which Monsieur Delacroix had so inopportunately excluded from his picture. And in order to give more adequate expression to his thoughts on such lofty themes, the Abbé Patouille borrowed whole phrases and sentences from Bossuet. He had got them up by heart to put in his sermons, for he adhered strongly to tradition.

“Yes, my son,” he was saying, “God has appointed tutelary spirits to be near us. They come to us laden with His gifts. They return laden with our prayers. Such is their task. Not an hour, not a moment passes but they are at our side, ready to help us, ever fervent and unwearying guardians, watchmen that never slumber.”

“Quite so, Abbé,” murmured Maurice, who was wondering by what cunning artifice he could get on the soft side of his mother and persuade her to give him some money of which he was urgently in need.

CHAPTER VI

WHEREIN PÈRE SARIETTE DISCOVERS HIS MISSING TREASURES

NEXT morning Monsieur Sariette entered Monsieur René d'Esparvieu's study without knocking. He raised his arms to the heavens, his few hairs were standing straight up on his head. His eyes were big with terror. In husky tones he stammered out the dreadful news. A very old manuscript of Flavius Josephus; sixty volumes of all sizes; a priceless jewel, namely, a *Lucretius* adorned with the arms of Philippe de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France, with notes in Voltaire's own hand; a manuscript of Richard Simon, and a set of Gassendi's correspondence with Gabriel Naudé, comprising two hundred and thirty-eight unpublished letters, had disappeared. This time the owner of the library was alarmed.

He mounted in haste to the abode of the philosophers and the globes, and there with his own eyes confirmed the magnitude of the disaster.

There were yawning gaps on many a shelf. He searched here and there, opened cupboards, dragged out brooms, dusters, and fire-extinguishers, rattled the shovel in the coke fire, shook out Monsieur Sariette's best frock-coat that was hanging in the cloak-room, and then stood and gazed disconsolately at the empty places left by the Gassendi portfolios.

For the past half-century the whole learned world had been loudly clamouring for the publication of this correspondence. Monsieur René d'Esparvieu had not responded to the universal desire, unwilling either to assume so heavy a task, or to resign it to others. Having found much boldness of thought in these letters, and many passages of more libertine tendency than the piety of the twentieth century could endure, he preferred that they should remain unpublished; but he felt himself responsible for their safe-keeping, not only to his country but to the whole civilized world.

"How can you have allowed yourself to be robbed of such a treasure?" he asked severely of Monsieur Sariette.

"How can I have allowed myself to be robbed of such a treasure?" repeated the unhappy librarian. "Monsieur, if you opened my breast, you would find that question engraved upon my heart."

Unmoved by this powerful utterance, Monsieur d'Esparvieu continued with pent-up fury:

"And you have discovered no single sign that would put you on the track of the thief, Monsieur Sariette? You have no suspicion, not the faintest idea, of the way

these things have come to pass? You have seen nothing, heard nothing, noticed nothing, learnt nothing? You must grant this is unbelievable. Think, Monsieur Sariette, think of the possible consequences of this unheard-of theft, committed under your eyes. A document of inestimable value in the history of the human mind disappears. Who has stolen it? Why has it been stolen? Who will gain by it? Those who have got possession of it doubtless know that they will be unable to dispose of it in France. They will go and sell it in America or Germany. Germany is greedy for such literary monuments. Should the correspondence of Gassendi with Gabriel Naudé go over to Berlin, if it is published there by German savants, what a disaster, nay, what a scandal! Monsieur Sariette, have you not thought of that?..."

Beneath the stroke of an accusation all the more cruel in that he brought it against himself, Monsieur Sariette stood stupefied, and was silent. And Monsieur d'Esparvieu continued to overwhelm him with bitter reproaches.

"And you make no effort. You devise nothing to find these inestimable treasures. Make enquiries, bestir yourself, Monsieur Sariette; use your wits. It is well worth while."

And Monsieur d'Esparvieu went out, throwing an icy glance at his librarian.

Monsieur Sariette sought the lost books and manuscripts in every spot where he had already sought them a hundred times, and where they could not possibly be. He even looked in the coke-box and under the leather seat of his arm-chair. When midday struck he mechanically went downstairs. At the foot of the stairs he met his old pupil Maurice, with whom he exchanged a bow. But he only saw men and things as through a mist.

The broken-hearted curator had already reached the hall when Maurice called him back.

"Monsieur Sariette, while I think of it, do have the books removed that are choking up my garden-house."

"What books, Maurice?"

"I could not tell you, Monsieur Sariette, but there are some in Hebrew, all worm-eaten, with a whole heap of old papers. They are in my way. You can't turn round in the passage."

"Who took them there?"

"I'm bothered if I know."

And the young man rushed off to the dining-room, the luncheon gong having sounded quite a minute ago.

Monsieur Sariette tore away to the summer-house. Maurice had spoken the truth. About a hundred volumes were there, on tables, on chairs, even on the floor. When he saw them he was divided betwixt joy and fear, filled with amazement

and anxiety. Happy in the finding of his lost treasure, dreading to lose it again, and completely overwhelmed with astonishment, the man of books alternately babbled like an infant and uttered the hoarse cries of a maniac. He recognised his Hebrew Bibles, his ancient Talmuds, his very old manuscript of Flavius Josephus, his portfolios of Gassendi's letters to Gabriel Naudé, and his richest jewel of all, to wit, *Lucretius* adorned with the arms of the Grand Prior of France, and with notes in Voltaire's own hand. He laughed, he cried, he kissed the morocco, the calf, the parchment, and vellum, even the wooden boards studded with nails.

As fast as Hippolyte, the manservant, returned with an armful to the library, Monsieur Sarriette, with a trembling hand, restored them piously to their places.

CHAPTER VII

OF A SOMEWHAT LIVELY INTEREST, WHEREOF THE MORAL WILL, I HOPE, APPEAL GREATLY TO MY READERS, SINCE IT CAN BE EXPRESSED BY THIS SORROWFUL QUERY: "THOUGHT, WHITHER DOST THOU LEAD ME?" FOR IT IS A UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED TRUTH THAT IT IS UNHEALTHY TO THINK AND THAT TRUE WISDOM LIES IN NOT THINKING AT ALL

ALL the books were now once more assembled in the pious keeping of Monsieur Sariette. But this happy reunion was not destined to last. The following night twenty volumes left their places, among them the *Lucretius* of Prior de Vendôme. Within a week the old Hebrew and Greek texts had all returned to the summer-house, and every night during the ensuing month they left their shelves and secretly went on the same path. Others betook themselves no one knew whither.

On hearing of these mysterious occurrences, Monsieur René d'Esparvieu merely remarked with frigidity to his librarian:

"My poor Sariette, all this is very queer, very queer indeed."

And when Monsieur Sariette tentatively advised him to lodge a formal complaint or to inform the Commissaire de Police, Monsieur d'Esparvieu cried out upon him:

"What are you suggesting, Monsieur Sariette? Divulge domestic secrets, make a scandal! You cannot mean it. I have enemies, and I am proud of it. I think I have deserved them. What I might complain about is that I am wounded in the house of my friend, attacked with unheard-of violence, by fervent loyalists, who, I grant you, are good Catholics, but exceedingly bad Christians.... In a word, I am watched, spied upon, shadowed, and you suggest, Monsieur Sariette, that I should make a present of this comic-opera mystery, this burlesque adventure, this story in which we both cut somewhat pitiable figures, to a set of spiteful journalists? Do you wish to cover me with ridicule?"

The result of the colloquy was that the two gentlemen agreed to change all the locks in the library. Estimates were asked for and workmen called in. For six weeks the d'Esparvieu household rang from morning till night with the sound of hammers, the hum of centre-bits, and the grating of files. Fires were always going in the abode of the philosophers and globes, and the people of the house were simply sickened by the smell of heated oil. The old, smooth, easy-running locks were replaced, on the cupboards and doors of the rooms, by stubborn and tricky fastenings. There was nothing but combinations of locks, letter-padlocks, safety-bolts, bars, chains, and electric alarm-bells.

All this display of ironmongery inspired fear. The lock-cases glistened, and there was much grinding of bolts. To gain access to a room, a cupboard, or a drawer, it was necessary to know a certain number, of which Monsieur Sariette alone was cognisant. His head was filled with bizarre words and tremendous numbers, and he got entangled among all these cryptic signs, these square, cubic, and triangular figures. He himself couldn't get the doors and the cupboards undone, yet every morning he found them wide open, and the books thrown about, ransacked, and hidden away. In the gutter of the Rue Servandoni a policeman picked up a volume of Salomon Reinach on the identity of Barabbas and Jesus Christ. As it bore the book-plate of the d'Esparvieu library he returned it to the owner.

Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, not even deigning to inform Monsieur Sariette of the fact, made up his mind to consult a magistrate, a friend in whom he had complete confidence, to wit, a certain Monsieur des Aubels, Counsel at the Law Courts, who had put through many an important affair. He was a little plump man, very red, very bald, with a cranium that shone like a billiard ball. He entered the library one morning feigning to come as a book-lover, but he soon showed that he knew nothing about books. While all the busts of the ancient philosophers were reflected in his shining pate, he put divers insidious questions to Monsieur Sariette, who grew uncomfortable and turned red, for innocence is easily flustered. From that moment Monsieur des Aubels had a mighty suspicion that Monsieur Sariette was the perpetrator of the very thefts he denounced with horror; and it immediately occurred to him to seek out the accomplices of the crime. As regards motives, he did not trouble about them; motives are always to be found. Monsieur des Aubels told Monsieur René d'Esparvieu that, if he liked, he would have the house secretly watched by a detective from the Prefecture.

"I will see that you get Mignon," he said. "He is an excellent servant, assiduous and prudent."

By six o'clock next morning Mignon was already walking up and down outside the d'Esparvieu's house, his head sunk between his shoulders, wearing love-locks which showed from under the narrow brim of his bowler hat, his eye cocked over his shoulder. He wore an enormous dull-black moustache, his hands and feet were huge; in fact, his whole appearance was distinctly memorable. He paced regularly up and down from the nearest of the big rams' head pillars which adorn the Hôtel de la Sordière to the end of the Rue Garancière, towards the apse of St. Sulpice Church and the dome of the Chapel of the Virgin.

Henceforth it became impossible to enter or leave the d'Esparvieu's house without feeling that one's every action, that one's very thoughts, were being spied upon. Mignon was a prodigious person endowed with powers that Nature

denies to other mortals. He neither ate nor slept. At all hours of the day and night, in wind and rain, he was to be found outside the house, and no one escaped the X-rays of his eye. One felt pierced through and through, penetrated to the very marrow, worse than naked, bare as a skeleton. It was the affair of a moment; the detective did not even stop, but continued his everlasting walk. It became intolerable. Young Maurice threatened to leave the paternal roof if he was to be so radiographed. His mother and his sister Berthe complained of his piercing look; it offended the chaste modesty of their souls. Mademoiselle Caporal, young Léon d'Esparvieu's governess, felt an indescribable embarrassment. Monsieur René d'Esparvieu was sick of the whole business. He never crossed his own threshold without crushing his hat over his eyes to avoid the investigating ray and without wishing old Sariette, the *fons et origo* of all the evil, at the devil. The intimates of the household, such as Abbé Patouille and Uncle Gaétan, made themselves scarce; visitors gave up calling, tradespeople hesitated about leaving their goods, the carts belonging to the big shops scarcely dared stop. But it was among the domestics that the spying roused the most disorder.

The footman, afraid, under the eye of the police, to go and join the cobbler's wife over her solitary labours in the afternoon, found the house unbearable and gave notice. Odile, Madame d'Esparvieu's lady's-maid, not daring, as was her custom after her mistress had retired, to introduce Octave, the handsomest of the neighbouring bookseller's clerks, to her little room upstairs, grew melancholy, irritable and nervous, pulled her mistress's hair while dressing it, spoke insolently, and made advances to Monsieur Maurice. The cook, Madame Malgoire, a serious matron of some fifty years, having no more visits from Auguste, the wine-merchant's man in the Rue Servandoni, and being incapable of suffering a privation so contrary to her temperament, went mad, sent up a raw rabbit to table, and announced that the Pope had asked her hand in marriage. At last, after a fortnight of superhuman assiduity, contrary to all known laws of organic life, and to the essential conditions of animal economy, Mignon, the detective, having observed nothing abnormal, ceased his surveillance and withdrew without a word, refusing to accept a gratuity. In the library the dance of the books became livelier than ever.

"That is all right," said Monsieur des Aubels. "Since nothing comes in nor goes out, the evil-doer must be in the house."

The magistrate thought it possible to discover the criminal without police-warrant or enquiry. On a date agreed upon at midnight, he had the floor of the library, the treads of the stairs, the vestibule, the garden path leading to Monsieur

Maurice's summer-house, and the entrance hall of the latter, all covered with a coating of talc.

The following morning Monsieur des Aubels, assisted by a photographer from the Prefecture, and accompanied by Monsieur René d'Esparvieu and Monsieur Sariette, came to take the imprints. They found nothing in the garden, the wind had blown away the coating of talc; nothing in the summer-house either. Young Maurice told them he thought it was some practical joke and that he had brushed away the white dust with the hearth-brush. The real truth was, he had effaced the traces left by the boots of Odile, the lady's-maid. On the stairs and in the library the very light print of a bare foot could be discerned, it seemed to have sprung into the air and to have touched the ground at rare intervals and without any pressure. They discovered five of these traces. The clearest was to be found in the abode of the busts and spheres, on the edge of the table where the books were piled. The photographer took several negatives of this imprint.

"This is more terrifying than anything else," murmured Monsieur Sariette.

Monsieur des Aubels did not hide his surprise.

Three days later the anthropometrical department of the Prefecture returned the proofs exhibited to them, saying that they were not in the records.

After dinner Monsieur René showed the photographs to his brother Gaétan, who examined them with profound attention, and after a long silence exclaimed:

"No wonder they have not got this at the Prefecture; it is the foot of a god or of an athlete of antiquity. The sole that made this impression is of a perfection unknown to our races and our climates. It exhibits toes of exquisite grace, and a divine heel."

René d'Esparvieu cried out upon his brother for a madman.

"He is a poet," sighed Madame d'Esparvieu.

"Uncle," said Maurice, "you'll fall in love with this foot if you ever come across it."

"Such was the fate of Vivant Denon, who accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt," replied Gaétan. "At Thebes, in a tomb violated by the Arabs, Denon found the little foot of a mummy of marvellous beauty. He contemplated it with extraordinary fervour, 'It is the foot of a young woman,' he pondered, 'of a princess — of a charming creature. No covering has ever marred its perfect shape.' Denon admired, adored, and loved it. You may see a drawing of this little foot in Denon's atlas of his journey to Egypt, whose leaves one could turn over upstairs, without going further afield, if only Monsieur Sariette would ever let us see a single volume of his library."

Sometimes, in bed, Maurice, waking in the middle of the night, thought he heard the sound of pages being turned over in the next room, and the thud of bound

volumes falling on the floor.

One morning at five o'clock he was coming home from the club, after a night of bad luck, and while he stood outside the door of the summer-house, hunting in his pocket for his keys, his ears distinctly heard a voice sighing:

“Knowledge, whither dost thou lead me? Thought, whither dost thou lure me?”

But entering the two rooms he saw nothing, and told himself that his ears must have deceived him.

CHAPTER VIII

WHICH SPEAKS OF LOVE, A SUBJECT WHICH ALWAYS GIVES PLEASURE, FOR A TALE
WITHOUT LOVE IS LIKE BEEF WITHOUT MUSTARD: AN INSIPID DISH

NOTHING ever astonished Maurice. He never sought to know the causes of things and dwelt tranquilly in the world of appearances. Not denying the eternal truth, he nevertheless followed vain things as his fancy led him.

Less addicted to sport and violent exercise than most young people of his generation, he followed unconsciously the old erotic traditions of his race. The French were ever the most gallant of men, and it were a pity they should lose this advantage. Maurice preserved it. He was in love with no woman, but, as St. Augustine said, he loved to love. After paying the tribute that was rightly due to the imperishable beauty and secret arts of Madame de la Berthelière, he had enjoyed the impetuous caresses of a young singer called Luciole. At present he was joylessly experiencing the primitive perversity of Odile, his mother's lady's-maid, and the tearful adoration of the beautiful Madame Boittier. And he felt a great void in his heart.

It chanced that one Wednesday, on entering the drawing-room where his mother entertained her friends — who were, generally speaking, unattractive and austere ladies, with a sprinkling of old men and very young people — he noticed, in this intimate circle, Madame des Aubels, the wife of the magistrate at the Law Courts, whom Monsieur d'Esparvieu had vainly consulted on the mysterious ransacking of his library. She was young, he found her pretty, and not without cause. Gilberte had been modelled by the Genius of the Race, and no other genius had had a part in the work.

Thus all her attributes inspired desire, and nothing in her shape or her being aroused any other sentiment.

The law of attraction which draws world to world moved young Maurice to approach this delicious creature, and under its influence he offered to escort her to the tea-table. And when Gilberte was served with tea, he said:

"We should hit it off quite well together, you and I, don't you think?"

He spoke in this way, according to modern usage, so as to avoid inane compliments and to spare a woman the boredom of listening to one of those old declarations of love which, containing nothing but what is vague and undefined, require neither a truthful nor an exact reply.

And profiting by the fact that he had an opportunity of conversing secretly with Madame des Aubels for a few minutes, he spoke urgently and to the point.

Gilberte, so far as one could judge, was made rather to awaken desire than to feel it. Nevertheless, she well knew that her fate was to love, and she followed it willingly and with pleasure. Maurice did not particularly displease her. She would have preferred him to be an orphan, for experience had taught her how disappointing it sometimes is to love the son of the house.

“Will you?” he said by way of conclusion.

She pretended not to understand, and with her little *foie-gras* sandwich raised half-way to her mouth she looked at Maurice with wondering eyes.

“Will I *what* ?” she asked.

“You know quite well.”

Madame des Aubels lowered her eyes, and sipped her tea, for her prudishness was not quite vanquished. Meanwhile Maurice, taking her empty cup from her hand, murmured:

“Saturday, five o’clock, 126 Rue de Rome, on the ground-floor, the door on the right, under the arch. Knock three times.”

Madame des Aubels glanced severely and imperturbably at the son of the house, and with a self-possessed air rejoined the circle of highly respectable women to whom the Senator Monsieur Le Fol was explaining how artificial incubators were employed at the agricultural colony at St. Julienne.

The following Saturday, Maurice, in his ground-floor flat, awaited Madame des Aubels. He waited her in vain. No light hand came to knock three times on the door under the arch. And Maurice gave way to imprecation, inwardly calling the absent one a jade and a hussy. His fruitless wait, his frustrated desires, rendered him unjust. For Madame des Aubels in not coming where she had never promised to go hardly deserved these names; but we judge human actions by the pleasure or pain they cause us.

Maurice did not put in an appearance in his mother’s drawing-room until a fortnight after the conversation at the tea-table. He came late. Madame des Aubels had been there for half an hour. He bowed coldly to her, took a seat some way off, and affected to be listening to the talk.

“Worthily matched,” a rich male voice was saying; “the two antagonists were well calculated to render the struggle a terrible and uncertain one. General Bol, with unprecedented tenacity, maintained his position as though he were rooted in the very soil. General Milpertuis, with an agility truly superhuman, kept carrying out movements of the most dazzling rapidity around his immovable adversary. The battle continued to be waged with terrible stubbornness. We were all in an agony of suspense....”

It was General d’Esparvieu describing the autumn manœuvres to a company of breathlessly interested ladies. He was talking well and his audience were

delighted. Proceeding to draw a comparison between the French and German methods, he defined their distinguishing characteristics and brought out the conspicuous merits of both with a lofty impartiality. He did not hesitate to affirm that each system had its advantages, and at first made it appear to his circle of wondering, disappointed, and anxious dames, whose countenances were growing increasingly gloomy, that France and Germany were practically in a position of equality. But little by little, as the strategist went on to give a clearer definition of the two methods, that of the French began to appear flexible, elegant, vigorous, full of grace, cleverness, and verve; that of the Germans heavy, clumsy, and undecided. And slowly and surely the faces of the ladies began to clear and to light up with joyous smiles. In order to dissipate any lingering shadows of misgiving from the minds of these wives, sisters, and sweethearts, the General gave them to understand that we were in a position to make use of the German method when it suited us, but that the Germans could not avail themselves of the French method. No sooner had he delivered himself of these sentiments than he was button-holed by Monsieur le Truc de Ruffec, who was engaged in founding a patriotic society known as “Swordsmen All,” of which the object was to regenerate France and ensure her superiority over all her adversaries. Even children in the cradle were to be enrolled, and Monsieur le Truc de Ruffec offered the honorary presidency to General d’Esparvieu.

Meanwhile Maurice was appearing to be interested in a conversation that was taking place between a very gentle old lady and the Abbé Lapetite, Chaplain to the Dames du Saint Sang. The old lady, severely tried of late by illness and the loss of friends, wanted to know how it was that people were unhappy in this world.

“How,” she asked Abbé Lapetite, “do you explain the scourges that afflict mankind? Why are there plagues, famines, floods, and earthquakes?”

“It is surely necessary that God should sometimes remind us of his existence,” replied Abbé Lapetite, with a heavenly smile.

Maurice appeared keenly interested in this conversation. Then he seemed fascinated by Madame Fillot-Grandin, quite a personable young woman, whose simple innocence, however, detracted all piquancy from her beauty, all savour from her bodily charms. A very sour, shrill-voiced old lady, who, affecting the dowdy, woollen weeds of poverty, displayed the pride of a great lady in the world of Christian finance, exclaimed in a squeaky voice:

“Well, my dear Madame d’Esparvieu, so you have had trouble here. The papers speak darkly of robbery, of thefts committed in Monsieur d’Esparvieu’s valuable library, of stolen letters....”

“Oh,” said Madame d’Esparvieu, “if we are to believe all the newspapers say....”

“Oh, so, dear Madame, you have got your treasures back. All’s well that ends well.”

“The library is in perfect order,” asserted Madame d’Esparvieu. “There is nothing missing.”

“The library is on the floor above this, is it not?” asked young Madame des Aubels, showing an unexpected interest in the books.

Madame d’Esparvieu replied that the library occupied the whole of the second floor, and that they had put the least valuable books in the attics.

“Could I not go and look at it?”

The mistress of the house declared that nothing could be easier. She called to her son:

“Maurice, go and do the honours of the library to Madame des Aubels.”

Maurice rose, and without uttering a word, mounted to the second floor in the wake of Madame des Aubels.

He appeared indifferent, but inwardly he rejoiced, for he had no doubt that Gilberte had feigned her ardent desire to inspect the library simply to see him in secret. And, while affecting indifference, he promised himself to renew those offers which, this time, would not be refused.

Under the romantic bust of Alexandre d’Esparvieu, they were met by the silent shadow of a little wan, hollow-eyed old man, who wore a settled expression of mute terror.

“Do not let us disturb you, Monsieur Sariette,” said Maurice. “I am showing Madame des Aubels round the library.”

Maurice and Madame des Aubels passed on into the great room where against the four walls rose presses filled with books and surmounted by bronze busts of poets, philosophers, and orators of antiquity. All was in perfect order, an order which seemed never to have been disturbed from the beginning of things.

Only, a black void was to be seen in the place which, only the evening before, had been filled by an unpublished manuscript of Richard Simon. Meanwhile, by the side of the young couple walked Monsieur Sariette, pale, faded, and silent.

“Really and truly, you have not been nice,” said Maurice, with a look of reproach at Madame des Aubels.

She signed to him that the librarian might over-hear. But he reassured her.

“Take no notice. It is old Sariette. He has become a complete idiot.” And he repeated: “No, you have not been at all nice. I awaited you. You did not come. You have made me unhappy.”

After a moment’s silence, while one heard the low melancholy whistling of asthma in poor Sariette’s bronchial tubes, young Maurice continued insistently:

“You are wrong.”

“Why wrong?”

“Wrong not to do as I ask you.”

“Do you still think so?”

“Certainly.”

“You meant it seriously?”

“As seriously as can be.”

Touched by his assurance of sincere and constant feeling, and thinking she had resisted sufficiently, Gilberte granted to Maurice what she had refused him a fortnight ago.

They slipped into an embrasure of the window, behind an enormous celestial globe whereon were graven the Signs of the Zodiac and the figures of the stars, and there, their gaze fixed on the Lion, the Virgin, and the Scales, in the presence of a multitude of Bibles, before the works of the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, beneath the casts of Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Seneca, and Epictetus, they exchanged vows of love and a long kiss on the mouth.

Almost immediately Madame des Aubels bethought herself that she still had some calls to pay, and that she must make her escape quickly, for love had not made her lose all sense of her own importance. But she had barely crossed the landing with Maurice when they heard a hoarse cry and saw Monsieur Sargette plunge madly downstairs, exclaiming as he went:

“Stop it, stop it; I saw it fly away! It escaped from the shelf by itself. It crossed the room ... there it is — there! It’s going downstairs. Stop it! It has gone out of the door on the ground floor!”

“What?” asked Maurice.

Monsieur Sargette looked out of the landing window, murmuring horror-struck:

“It’s crossing the garden! It’s going into the summer-house. Stop it, stop it!”

“But what is it?” repeated Maurice— “in God’s name, what is it?”

“My Flavius Josephus,” exclaimed Monsieur Sargette. “Stop it!”

And he fell down unconscious.

“You see he is quite mad,” said Maurice to Madame des Aubels, as he lifted up the unfortunate librarian.

Gilberte, a little pale, said she also thought she had seen something in the direction indicated by the unhappy man, something flying.

Maurice had seen nothing, but he had felt what seemed like a gust of wind.

He left Monsieur Sargette in the arms of Hippolyte and the housekeeper, who had both hastened to the spot on hearing the noise.

The old gentleman had a wound in his head.

“All the better,” said the housekeeper; “this wound may save him from having a fit.”

Madame des Aubels gave her handkerchief to stop the blood, and recommended an arnica compress.

CHAPTER IX

WHEREIN IT IS SHOWN THAT, AS AN ANCIENT GREEK POET SAID, "NOTHING IS SWEETER THAN APHRODITE THE GOLDEN"

ALTHOUGH he had enjoyed Madame des Aubels' favours for six whole months, Maurice still loved her. True they had had to separate during the summer. For lack of funds of his own he had had to go to Switzerland with his mother, and then to stop with the whole family at the Château d'Esparvieu. She had spent the summer with her mother at Niort, and the autumn with her husband at a little Normandy seaside place, so that they had hardly seen each other four or five times. But since the winter, kindly to lovers, had brought them back to town again, Maurice had been receiving her twice a week in his little flat in the Rue de Rome, and received no one else. No other woman had inspired him with feelings of such constancy and fidelity. What augmented his pleasure was that he believed himself loved, and indeed he was not unpleasing.

He thought that she did not deceive him, not that he had any reason to think so, but it appeared right and fitting that she should be content with him alone. What annoyed him was that she always kept him waiting, and was unpunctual in coming to their meeting-place; she was invariably late, — at times very late.

Now on Saturday, January 30th, since four o'clock in the afternoon, Maurice had been awaiting Madame des Aubels in the little pink room, where a bright fire was burning. He was gaily clad in a suit of flowered pyjamas, smoking Turkish cigarettes. At first he dreamt of receiving her with long kisses, with hitherto unknown caresses. A quarter of an hour having passed, he meditated serious and affectionate reproaches, then after an hour of disappointed waiting he vowed he would meet her with cold disdain.

At length she appeared, fresh and fragrant.

"It was scarcely worth while coming," he said bitterly, as she laid her muff and her little bag on the table and untied her veil before the wardrobe mirror.

Never, she told her beloved, had she had such trouble to get away. She was full of excuses, which he obstinately rejected. But no sooner had she the good sense to hold her tongue than he ceased his reproaches, and then nothing detracted from the longing with which she inspired him.

The curtains were drawn, the room was bathed in warm shadows lit by the dancing gleams of the fire. The mirrors in the wardrobe and on the chimney-piece shone with mysterious lights. Gilberte, leaning on her elbow, head on hand, was lost in thought. A little jeweller, a trustworthy and intelligent man,

had shown her a wonderfully pretty pearl and sapphire bracelet; it was worth a great deal, and was to be had for a mere nothing. He had got it from a *cocotte* down on her luck, who was in a hurry to dispose of it. It was a rare chance; it would be a huge pity to let it slip.

“Would you like to see it, darling? I will ask the little man to let me have it to show you.”

Maurice did not actually decline the proposal. But it was clear that he took no interest in the wonderful bracelet. “When small jewellers come across a great bargain, they keep it to themselves, and do not allow their customers to profit by it. Moreover, jewellery means nothing just now. Well-bred women have given up wearing it. Everyone goes in for sport, and jewellery does not go with sport.”

Maurice spoke thus, contrary to truth, because having given his mistress a fur coat, he was in no hurry to give her anything more. He was not stingy, but he was careful with his money. His people did not give him a very large allowance, and his debts grew bigger every day. By satisfying the wishes of his innamorata too promptly he feared to arouse others still more pressing. The bargain seemed less wonderful to him than to Gilberte; besides, he liked to take the initiative in choosing his gifts. Above all, he thought that if he gave her too many presents he would be no longer sure of being loved for himself.

Madame des Aubels felt neither contempt nor surprise at this attitude; she was gentle and temperate, she knew men, and judged that one must take them as one found them, that for the most part they do not give very willingly, and that a woman should know how to make them give.

Suddenly a gas lamp was lighted in the street, and shone through the gaps in the curtains.

“Half-past six,” she said. “We must be on the move.”

Pricked by the touch of Time’s fleeting wing, Maurice was conscious of reawakened desires and reanimated powers. A white and radiant offering, Gilberte, with her head thrown back, her eyes half closed, her lips apart, sunk in dreamy languor, was breathing slowly and placidly, when suddenly she started up with a cry of terror.

“Whatever is that?”

“Stay still,” said Maurice, holding her back in his arms.

In his present mood, had the sky fallen it would not have troubled him. But in one bound she escaped from him. Crouching down, her eyes filled with terror, she was pointing with her finger at a figure which appeared in a corner of the room, between the fire-place and the wardrobe with the mirror. Then, unable to bear the sight, and nearly fainting, she hid her face in her hands.

CHAPTER X

WHICH FAR SURPASSES IN AUDACITY THE IMAGINATIVE FLIGHTS OF DANTE AND MILTON

MAURICE at length turned his head, saw the figure, and perceiving that it moved, was also frightened. Meanwhile, Gilberte was regaining her senses. She imagined that what she had seen was some mistress whom her lover had hidden in the room. Inflamed with anger and disgust at the idea of such treachery, boiling with indignation, and glaring at her supposed rival, she exclaimed: "A woman ... a naked woman too! You bring me into a room where you allow your women to come, and when I arrive they have not had time to dress. And you reproach me with arriving late! Your impudence is beyond belief! Come, send the creature packing. If you wanted us both here together, you might at least have asked me whether it suited me...."

Maurice, wide-eyed and groping for a revolver that had never been there, whispered in her ear: "Be quiet ... it is no woman. One can scarcely see, but it is more like a man."

She put her hands over her eyes again and screamed harder than ever.

"A man! Where does he come from? A thief. An assassin! Help! Help! Kill him.... Maurice, kill him! Turn on the light. No, don't turn on the light...."

She made a mental vow that should she escape from this danger she would burn a candle to the Blessed Virgin. Her teeth chattered.

The figure made a movement.

"Keep away!" cried Gilberte. "Keep away!"

She offered the burglar all the money and jewels she had on the table if he would consent not to stir. Amid her surprise and terror the idea assailed her that her husband, dissembling his suspicions, had caused her to be followed, had posted witnesses, and had had recourse to the Commissaire de Police. In a flash she distinctly saw before her the long painful future, the glaring scandal, the pretended disdain, the cowardly desertion of her friends, the just mockery of society, for it is indeed ridiculous to be found out. She saw the divorce, the loss of her position and of her rank. She saw the dreary and narrow existence with her mother, when no one would make love to her, for men avoid women who fail to give them the security of the married state. And all this, why? Why this ruin, this disaster? For a piece of folly, for a mere nothing. Thus in a lightning flash spoke the conscience of Gilberte des Aubels.

"Have no fear, Madame," said a very sweet voice.

Slightly reassured, she found strength to ask:

“Who are you?”

“I am an angel,” replied the voice.

“What did you say?”

“I am an angel. I am Maurice’s guardian angel.”

“Say it again. I am going mad. I do not understand....”

Maurice, without understanding either, was indignant. He sprang forward and showed himself; with his right hand armed with a slipper he made a threatening gesture, and said in a rough voice: “You are a low ruffian; oblige me by going the way you came.”

“Maurice d’Esparvieu,” continued the sweet voice, “He whom you adore as your Creator has stationed by the side of each of the faithful a good angel, whose mission it is to counsel and protect him; it is the invariable opinion of the Fathers, it is founded on many passages in the Bible, the Church admits it unanimously, without, however, pronouncing anathema upon those who hold a contrary opinion. You see before you one of these angels, yours, Maurice. I was commanded to watch over your innocence and to guard your chastity.”

“That may be,” said Maurice; “but you are certainly no gentleman. A gentleman would not permit himself to enter a room at such a moment. To be plain, what the deuce are you doing here?”

“I have assumed this appearance, Maurice, because, having henceforth to move among mankind, I have to make myself like them. The celestial spirits possess the power of assuming a form which renders them apparent to the eye and to the touch. This shape is real, because it is apparent, and all the realities in the world are but appearances.”

Gilberte, pacified at length, was arranging her hair on her forehead.

The Angel pursued:

“The celestial spirits adopt, according to their fancy, one sex or the other, or both at once. But they cannot disguise themselves at any moment, according to their caprice or fantasy. Their metamorphoses are subject to constant laws, which you would not understand. Thus I have neither desire nor power to transform myself under your eyes, for your amusement or my own, into a lion, a tiger, a fly, or into a sycamore-shaving like the young Egyptian whose story was found in a tomb. I cannot change myself into an ass as did Lucius with the pomade of the youthful Photis. For in my wisdom I had fixed beforehand the hour of my apparition to mankind, nothing could hasten or delay it.”

Impatient for enlightenment, Maurice asked for the second time: “Still, what are you up to here?”

Joining her voice to his, Madame des Aubels asked: "Yes, indeed, what are you doing here?"

The Angel replied:

"Man, lend your ear. Woman, hear my voice. I am about to reveal to you a secret on which hangs the fate of the Universe. In rebellion against Him whom you hold to be the Creator of all things visible and invisible, I am preparing the Revolt of the Angels."

"Do not jest," said Maurice, who had faith and did not allow holy things to be played with.

But the Angel answered reproachfully: "What makes you think, Maurice, that I am frivolous and given to vain words?"

"Come, come," said Maurice, shrugging his shoulders. "You are not going to revolt against — —"

He pointed to the ceiling — not daring to finish.

But the Angel continued:

"Do you not know that the sons of God have already revolted and that a great battle took place in the heavens?"

"That was a long time ago," said Maurice, putting on his socks.

Then the Angel replied:

"It was before the creation of the world. But nothing has changed since then in the heavens. The nature of the Angels is no different now from what it was originally. What they did then they could do again now."

"No! It is not possible. It is contrary to faith. If you were an angel, a good angel as you make out you are, it would never occur to you to disobey your Creator."

"You are in error, Maurice, and the authority of the Fathers condemns you. Origen lays it down in his homilies that good angels are fallible, that they sin every day and fall from Heaven like flies. Possibly you may be tempted to reject the authority of this Father, despite his knowledge of the Scriptures, because he is excluded from the Canon of the Saints. If this be so, I would remind you of the second chapter of Revelation, in which the Angels of Ephesus and Pergamos are rebuked for that they kept not ward over their church. You will doubtless contend that the angels to whom the Apostle here refers are, properly speaking, the Bishops of the two cities in question, and that he calls them angels on account of their ministry. It may be so, and I cede the point. But with what arguments, Maurice, would you counter the opinion of all those Doctors and Pontiffs whose unanimous teaching it is that angels may fall from good into evil? Such is the statement made by Saint Jerome in his Epistle to Damasus...."

"Monsieur," said Madame des Aubels, "go away, I beg you."

But the Angel hearkened not, and continued:

“Saint Augustine, in his *True Religion* , Chapter XIII; Saint Gregory, in his *Morals* , Chapter XXIV; Isidore — —”

“Monsieur, let me get my things on; I am in a hurry.”

“In his treatise on *The Greatest Good* , Book I, Chapter XII; Bede on Job — —”

“Oh, please, Monsieur ...”

“Chapter VIII; John of Damascus on *Faith* , Book II, Chapter III. Those, I think, are sufficiently weighty authorities, and there is nothing for it, Maurice, but to admit your error. What has led you astray is that you have not duly considered my nature, which is free, active, and mobile, like that of all the angels, and that you have merely observed the grace and felicity with which you deem me so richly endowed. Lucifer possessed no less, yet he rebelled.”

“But what on earth are you rebelling for?” asked Maurice.

“Isaiah,” answered the child of light, “Isaiah has already asked, before you: ‘*Quomodo cecidisti de cælo, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris?*’ Hearken, Maurice. Before Time was, the Angels rose up to win dominion over Heaven, the most beautiful of the Seraphim revolted through pride. As for me, it is science that has inspired me with the generous desire for freedom. Finding myself near you, Maurice, in a house containing one of the vastest libraries in the world, I acquired a taste for reading and a love of study. While, fondled with the toils of a sensual life, you lay sunk in heavy slumber, I surrounded myself with books, I studied, I pondered over their pages, sometimes in one of the rooms of the library, under the busts of the great men of antiquity, sometimes at the far end of the garden, in the room in the summer-house next to your own.”

On hearing these words, young d’Esparvieu exploded with laughter and beat the pillow with his fist, an infallible sign of uncontrollable mirth.

“Ah ... ah ... ah! It was you who pillaged papa’s library and drove poor old Sarric off his head. You know, he has become completely idiotic.”

“Busily engaged,” continued the Angel, “in cultivating for myself a sovereign intelligence, I paid no heed to that inferior being, and when he thought to offer obstacles to my researches and to disturb my work I punished him for his importunity.

“One particular winter’s night in the abode of the philosophers and globes I let fall a volume of great weight on his head, which he tried to tear from my invisible hand. Then more recently, raising, with a vigorous arm composed of a column of condensed air, a precious manuscript of Flavius Josephus, I gave the imbecile such a fright, that he rushed out screaming on to the landing and (to borrow a striking expression from Dante Alighieri) fell even as a dead body falls. He was well rewarded, for you gave him, Madame, to staunch the blood

from his wound, your little scented handkerchief. It was the day, you may remember, when behind a celestial globe you exchanged a kiss on the mouth with Maurice."

"Monsieur," said Madame des Aubels, with a frown, "I cannot allow you...."

But she stopped short, deeming it was an inopportune moment to appear over-exacting on a matter of decorum.

"I had made up my mind," continued the Angel impassively, "to examine the foundations of belief. I first attacked the monuments of Judaism, and I read all the Hebrew texts."

"You know Hebrew, then?" exclaimed Maurice.

"Hebrew is my native tongue: in Paradise for a long time we have spoken nothing else."

"Ah, you are a Jew. I might have deduced it from your want of tact."

The Angel, not deigning to hear, continued in his melodious voice: "I have delved deep into Oriental antiquities and also into those of Greece and Rome. I have devoured the works of theologians, philosophers, physicists, geologists, and naturalists. I have learnt. I have thought. I have lost my faith."

"What? You no longer believe in God?"

"I believe in Him, since my existence depends on His, and if He should fail to exist, I myself should fall into nothingness. I believe in Him, even as the Satyrs and the Mænads believed in Dionysus and for the same reason. I believe in the God of the Jews and the Christians. But I deny that He created the world; at the most He organised but an inferior part of it, and all that He touched bears the mark of His rough and unforeseeing touch. I do not think He is either eternal or infinite, for it is absurd to conceive of a being who is not bounded by space or time. I think Him limited, even very limited. I no longer believe Him to be the only God. For a long time He did not believe it Himself; in the beginning He was a polytheist; later, His pride and the flattery of His worshippers made Him a monotheist. His ideas have little connection; He is less powerful than He is thought to be. And, to speak candidly, He is not so much a god as a vain and ignorant demiurge. Those who, like myself, know His true nature, call Him Ialdabaoth."

"What's that you say?"

"Ialdabaoth."

"Ialdabaoth. What's that?"

"I have already told you. It is the demiurge whom, in your blindness, you adore as the one and only God."

"You're mad. I don't advise you to go and talk rubbish like that to Abbé Patouille."

“I am not in the least sanguine, my dear Maurice, of piercing the dense night of your intellect. I merely tell you that I am going to engage Ialdabaoth in conflict with some hopes of victory.”

“Mark my words, you won’t succeed.”

“Lucifer shook His throne, and the issue was for a moment in doubt.”

“What is your name?”

“Abdiel for the angels and saints, Arcade for mankind.”

“Well, my poor Arcade, I regret to see you going to the bad. But confess that you are jesting with us. I could at a pinch understand your leaving Heaven for a woman. Love makes us commit the greatest follies. But you will never make me believe that you, who have seen God face to face, ultimately found the truth in old Sariette’s musty books. No, you will never get me to believe that!”

“My dear Maurice, Lucifer was face to face with God, yet he refused to serve Him. As to the kind of truth one finds in books, it is a truth that enables us sometimes to discern what things are not, without ever enabling us to discover what they are. And this poor little truth has sufficed to prove to me that He in whom I blindly believed is not believable, and that men and angels have been deceived by the lies of Ialdabaoth.”

“There is no Ialdabaoth. There is God. Come, Arcade, do the right thing. Renounce these follies, these impieties, dis-incarnate yourself, become once more a pure Spirit, and resume your office of guardian angel. Return to duty. I forgive you, but do not let us see you again.”

“I should like to please you, Maurice. I feel a certain affection for you, for my heart is soft. But fate henceforth calls me elsewhere towards beings capable of thought and action.”

“Monsieur Arcade,” said Madame des Aubels, “withdraw, I implore you. It makes me horribly shy to be in this position before two men. I assure you I am not accustomed to it.”

CHAPTER XI

RECOUNTS IN WHAT MANNER THE ANGEL, ATTIIRED IN THE CAST-OFF GARMENTS OF A SUICIDE, LEAVES THE YOUTHFUL MAURICE WITHOUT A HEAVENLY GUARDIAN

REASSURE yourself, Madame,” replied the apparition, “your position is not as risky as you say. You are not confronted with two men, but with one man and an angel.”

She examined the stranger with an eye which, piercing the gloom, was anxiously surveying a vague but by no means negligible indication, and asked:

“Monsieur, is it quite certain that you are an angel?”

The apparition prayed her to have no doubt about it, and gave some precise information as to his origin.

“There are three hierarchies of celestial spirits, each composed of nine choirs; the first comprises the Seraphim, Cherubim, and the Thrones; the second, the Dominations, the Virtues, and the Powers; the third, the Principalities, the Archangels, and the Angels properly so called. I belong to the ninth choir of the third hierarchy.”

Madame des Aubels, who had her reasons for doubting this, expressed at least one:

“You have no wings.”

“Why should I, Madame? Am I bound to resemble the angels on your holy-water stoups? Those feathery oars that beat the waves of the air in rhythmic cadences are not always worn by the heavenly messengers on their shoulders. Cherubim may be apterous. That all too beautiful angelic pair who spent an anxious night in the house of Lot compassed about by an Oriental horde — they had no wings! No, they appeared just like men, and the dust of the road covered their feet, which the patriarch washed with pious hand. I would beg you to observe, Madame, that according to the Science of Organic Metamorphosis created by Lamarck and Darwin, the wings of birds have been successively transformed into fore-feet in the case of quadrupeds and into arms in the case of the Linnæan primates. And you may remember, Maurice, that by a rather annoying reversion to type, Miss Kate, your English nurse, who used to be so fond of giving you a whipping, had arms very like the pinions of a plucked fowl. One may say, then, that a being possessing both arms and wings is a monster and belongs to the department of Teratology. In Paradise we have Cherubim and Kerûbs in the shape of winged bulls, but those are the clumsy inventions of an inartistic god. It is nevertheless true, quite true, that the Victories of the Temple of Athena Nike

on the Athenian Acropolis are beautiful, and possess both arms and wings; it is also true that the Victory of Brescia is beautiful, with her outstretched arms and her long wings folded on her mighty loins. It is one of the miracles of Greek genius to have known how to create harmonious monsters. The Greeks never err. The Moderns always."

"Yet on the whole," said Madame des Aubels, "you have not the look of a pure Spirit."

"Nevertheless, I am one, Madame, if ever there was one. And it ill becomes you, who have been baptised, to doubt it. Several of the Fathers, such as St. Justin, Tertullian, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria thought that the Angels were not purely spiritual, but possessed a body formed of some subtile material. This opinion has been rejected by the Church; hence I am merely Spirit. But what is spirit and what is matter? Formerly they were contrasted as being two opposites, and now your human science tends to reunite them as two aspects of the same thing. It teaches that everything proceeds from ether and everything returns to it, that the same movement transforms the waves of air into stones and minerals, and that the atoms scattered throughout illimitable space, form, by the varying speed of their orbits, all the substance of this material world."

But Madame des Aubels was not listening. She had something on her mind, and to put an end to her suspense, she asked:

"How long have you been here?"

"I came with Maurice."

"Well — that's a nice thing!" said she, shaking her head. But the Angel continued with heavenly serenity:

"Everything in the Universe is circular, elliptical, or hyperbolic, and the same laws which rule the stars govern this grain of dust. In the original and native movement of its substance, my body is spiritual, but it may affect, as you perceive, this material state, by changing the rhythm of its elements."

Having thus spoken he sat down in a chair on Madame des Aubels' black stockings.

A clock struck outside.

"Good heavens, seven o'clock!" exclaimed Gilberte. "What am I to say to my husband? He thinks I am at that tea-party in the Rue de Rivoli. We are dining with the La Verdelières to-night. Go away immediately, Monsieur Arcade. I must get ready to go. I have not a second to lose."

The Angel replied that he would have willingly obeyed Madame des Aubels had he been in a state to show himself decently in public, but that he could not dream of appearing out of doors without any clothes. "Were I to walk naked in the street," he added, "I should offend a nation attached to its ancient habits, habits

which it has never examined. They are the basis of all moral systems. Formerly," he added, "the angels, in revolt like myself, manifested themselves to Christians under grotesque and ridiculous appearances, black, horned, hairy, and cloven-footed. Pure stupidity! They were the laughing-stock of people of taste. They merely frightened old women and children and met with no success."

"It is true he cannot go out as he is," said Madame des Aubels with justice.

Maurice tossed his pyjamas and his slippers to the celestial messenger. Regarded as outdoor habiliments they were not adequate. Gilberte pressed her lover to run at once in quest of other clothes. He proposed to go and get some from the concierge. She was violently opposed to this. It would, she said, be madly imprudent to drag the concierge into such an affair.

"Do you want them to know that ..." she exclaimed.

She pointed to the Angel and was silent.

Young d'Esparvieu went out to seek a clothes-shop.

Meanwhile, Gilberte, who could not delay any longer for fear of causing a horrible society scandal, turned on the light and dressed before the Angel. She did it without any awkwardness, for she knew how to adapt herself to circumstances; and she took it that in such an unheard-of encounter in which heaven and earth were mingled in unutterable confusion it was permissible to retrench in modesty.

Moreover, she knew that she possessed a good figure and had garments as dainty as the fashion demanded. As the apparition's sense of delicacy would not permit him to don Maurice's pyjamas, Gilberte could not help observing by the lamp-light that her suspicions were well-founded, and that angels have the same appearance as men. Curious to know if the appearance were real or imaginary she asked the child of light if Angels were like monkeys, who, to win women, merely lack money.

"Yes, Gilberte," replied Arcade, "Angels are capable of loving mortals. It is the teaching of the Scriptures. It is said in the Seventh Book of Genesis, 'When men became numerous on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took as wives all those which pleased them.'"

"Good heavens," cried Gilberte all at once, "I shall never be able to fasten my dress; it hooks down the back."

When Maurice entered the room he found the Angel on his knees tying the shoes of the woman taken in *flagrante delicto*.

Taking her muff and her bag off the table she said:

"I have not forgotten anything? No. Good-night, Monsieur Arcade. Good-night, Maurice. I shall not forget to-day." And she vanished like a dream.

“Here,” said Maurice, throwing the Angel a bundle of clothes.

The young man, having seen some dismal rags lying among clarionettes and clyster-pipes in the window of a second-hand shop, had bought for nineteen francs the cast-off suit of some wretched sable-clad mortal who had committed suicide. The Angel, with native majesty, took the garments and put them on. Worn by him, they took on an unexpected elegance. He took a step to the door.

“So you are leaving me,” said Maurice. “It’s settled, then? I very much fear that, some day, you will bitterly regret this hasty action.”

“I must not look back. Adieu, Maurice.”

Maurice timidly slipped five louis into his hand.

“Adieu, Arcade.”

But when the Angel had passed through the door, and all that was to be seen of him in the door-way was his uplifted heel, Maurice called him back.

“Arcade! I never thought of it! I have no guardian angel now!”

“Quite true, Maurice, you have one no longer.”

“Then what will become of me? One must have a guardian angel. Tell me, — are there not grave drawbacks, — is there no danger in not having one?”

“Before replying, Maurice, I must ask you if you wish me to speak to you according to your belief, which formerly was my own, according to the teaching of the Church and the Catholic faith, or according to natural philosophy.”

“I don’t care a straw for your natural philosophy. Answer me according to the religion I believe in, and which I profess, and in which I wish to live and die.”

“Very well, my dear Maurice. The loss of your guardian angel will probably deprive you of certain spiritual succour, of certain celestial grace. I am expressing to you the unvarying opinion of the Church on the matter. You will lack an assistance, a support, a consolation which would have guided and confirmed you in the way of salvation. You will have less strength to avoid sin, and as it was you hadn’t much. In fact, in spiritual matters, you will be without strength and without joy. Adieu, Maurice; when you see Madame des Aubels, please remember me to her.”

“You are going?”

“Farewell.”

Arcade disappeared, and Maurice in the depths of an arm-chair sat for a long time with his head in his hands.

CHAPTER XII

WHEREIN IT IS SET FORTH HOW THE ANGEL MIRAR, WHEN BEARING GRACE AND CONSOLATION TO THOSE DWELLING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES IN PARIS, BEHELD A MUSIC-HALL SINGER NAMED BOUCHOTTE AND FELL IN LOVE WITH HER

THROUGH streets filled with brown fog, pierced with white and yellow lights, where horses exhaled their smoking breath and motors radiated their rapid search-lights, the angel made his way, and, mingling with the black flood of foot-passengers which rolled unceasingly along, proceeded across the town from north to south till he came to the lonely boulevards on the left bank of the river. Not far from the old walls of Port Royal, a small restaurant flings night by night athwart the pavement the clouded rays of its streaming windows. Coming to a halt there, Arcade entered a room full of warm, savoury odours, pleasing to the unfortunate beings faint with cold and hunger. Glancing round him he beheld Russian Nihilists, Italian Anarchists, refugees, conspirators, revolutionaries from every quarter of the globe, picturesque old faces with tumbled masses of hair and beard that swept downwards even as the torrent and the waterfall sweep over their rocky bed. There were young faces of virginal coldness, expressions sombre and wild, pale eyes of infinite sweetness, drawn faces, and, in a corner, there were two Russian women, one extremely lovely, the other hideous, but both resembling each other in their indifference to ugliness and to beauty. But failing to find the face he sought, for there were no angels in the room, he sat down at a small vacant marble table.

Angels, when driven by hunger, eat as do the animals of this earth, and their food, transformed by digestive heat, becomes one with their celestial substance. Seeing three angels under the oaks of Mamre, Abraham offered them cakes, kneaded by Sarah, an whole calf, butter and milk, and they ate. Lot, on receiving two angels in his house, ordered unleavened bread to be baked, and they did eat. Arcade was given a tough beef-steak by a seedy waiter, and he did eat. Nevertheless, his dreams were of the sweet leisure, of the repose, of the delightful studies he had quitted, of the heavy task he had undertaken, of the toil, the weariness, the perils which he would have to endure, and his soul was sad and his heart troubled.

As he was finishing his modest repast, a young man of poor appearance and thinly clad entered the room, and rapidly surveying the tables approached the angel and greeted him by the name of Abdiel, because he himself was a celestial spirit.

“I knew you would answer my call, Mirar,” replied Arcade, addressing his angelic brother in his turn by the name he formerly bore in heaven. But Mirar was remembered no more in heaven since he, an Archangel, had left the service of God. He was called Théophile Belais on earth, and to earn his bread gave music lessons to small children in the day-time and at night played the violin in dancing saloons.

“It is you, dear Abdiel?” replied Théophile. “So here we are reunited in this sad world. I am pleased to see you again. All the same I pity you, for we lead a hard life here.”

But Arcade answered:

“Friend, your exile draws to an end. I have great plans. I will confide them to you and associate you with them.”

And Maurice’s guardian angel, having ordered two coffees, revealed his ideas and his projects to his companion: he told how, during his visit on earth, he had abandoned himself to researches little practised by celestial spirits and had studied theologies, cosmogonies, the system of the Universe, theories of matter, modern essays on the transformation and loss of energy. Having, he explained, studied Nature, he had found her in perpetual conflict with the teachings of the Master he served. This Master, greedy of praise, whom he had for a long time adored, appeared to him now as an ignorant, stupid, and cruel tyrant. He had denied Him, blasphemed Him, and was burning to combat Him. His plan was to recommence the revolt of the angels. He wished for war, and hoped for victory.

“But,” he added, “it is necessary above all to know our strength and that of our adversary.” And he asked if the enemies of Ialdabaoth were numerous and powerful on earth.

Théophile looked wonderingly at his brother. He appeared not to understand the questions addressed him.

“Dear compatriot,” he said, “I came at your invitation because it was the invitation of an old comrade. But I do not know what you expect of me, and I fear I shall be unable to help you in anything. I take no hand in politics, neither do I stand forth as a reformer. I am not like you, a spirit in revolt, a freethinker, a revolutionary. I remain faithful, in the depths of my soul, to the Celestial Creator. I still adore the Master I no longer serve, and I lament the days when shrouding myself with my wings I formed with the multitude of the children of light a wheel of flame around His throne of glory. Love, profane love has alone separated me from God. I quitted heaven to follow a daughter of men. She was beautiful and sang in music-halls.”

They rose. Arcade accompanied Théophile, who was living at the other end of the town, at the corner of the Boulevard Rochechouart and the Rue de

Steinkerque. While walking through the deserted streets he who loved the singer told his brother of his love and his sorrows.

His fall, which dated from two years back, had been sudden. Belonging to the eighth choir of the third hierarchy he was a bearer of grace to the faithful who are still to be found in large numbers in France, especially among the higher ranks of the officers of the army and navy.

“One summer night,” he said, “as I was descending from Heaven, to distribute consolations, the grace of perseverance and of good deaths to divers pious persons in the neighbourhood of the Étoile, my eyes, although well accustomed to immortal light, were dazzled by the fiery flowers with which the Champs Élysées were sown. Great candelabra, under the trees, marking the entrances to cafés and restaurants, gave the foliage the precious glitter of an emerald. Long garlands of luminous pearl surrounded the open-air enclosures where a crowd of men and women sat closely packed listening to the sounds of a lively orchestra, whose strains reached my ears confusedly.

“The night was warm, my wings were beginning to grow tired. I descended into one of the concerts and sat down, invisible, among the audience. At this moment, a woman appeared on the stage, clad in a short spangled frock. Owing to the reflection of the footlights and the paint on her face all that was visible of the latter was the expression and the smile. Her body was supple and voluptuous. “She sang and danced.... Arcade, I have always loved dancing and music, but this creature’s thrilling voice and insidious movements created in me an uneasiness I had never known before. My colour came and went. My eyelids drooped, my tongue clove to my mouth. I could not leave the spot.”

And Théophile related, groaning, how, possessed by desire for this woman, he did not return to Heaven again, but, taking the shape of a man, lived an earthly life, for it is written: “In those days the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful.”

A fallen angel, having lost his innocence along with the vision of God, Théophile at heart still retained his simplicity of soul. Clad in rags, filched from the stall of a Jewish hawker, he went to seek the woman he loved. She was called Bouchotte and lodged in a small house in Montmartre. He flung himself at her feet and told her she was adorable, that she sang delightfully, that he loved her madly, that, for her, he would renounce his family and his country, that he was a musician and had nothing to eat. Touched by such youthful ingenuousness, candour, poverty, and love, she fed, clothed, and loved him.

However, after long and painful struggles, he procured employment as a music-teacher, and made some money, which he brought to his mistress, keeping nothing for himself. From that time forward she loved him no longer. She

despised him for earning so little and did not conceal her indifference, weariness, and disgust. She overwhelmed him with reproaches, irony, and abuse, in spite of which she kept him, for she had had experience of worse partners and was used to domestic quarrels. For the rest, she led a busy, serious, and rather hard life as artist and woman. Théophile loved her as he had loved her the first night, and he suffered.

“She overworks herself,” he told his celestial brother, “that is what makes her so hard to please, but I am certain she loves me. I hope soon to give her more comfort.”

And he spoke at length of an operetta at which he was working and which he hoped to have brought out at a Paris theatre. A young poet had given him the libretto. It was the story of Aline, queen of Golconda, after an eighteenth-century tale.

“I am strewing it profusely with melodies,” said Théophile; “my music comes from my heart. My heart is an inexhaustible source of melody. Unfortunately nowadays people like recondite arrangements, difficult scoring. They accuse me of being too fluid, too limpid, of not imparting enough colour to my style, not aiming at stronger effects in harmony and more vigorous contrasts. Harmony, harmony!... No doubt it has given its merits, but it does not appeal to the heart. It is melody which carries us away and ravishes us and brings smiles and tears to our eyes.” At these words he smiled and wept to himself. Then he continued with emotion:

“I am a fountain of melody. But the orchestration! there’s the rub! In Paradise, you know, Arcade, in the matter of instruments, we only possess the harp, the psaltery, and the hydraulic organ.”

Arcade was only listening to him with half an ear. He was meditating plans which filled his soul and swelled his heart.

“Do you know any angels in revolt?” he asked his companion. “As for me, I know only one, Prince Istar, with whom I have exchanged a few letters and who offered to share his attic with me while I was finding a lodging in this town, where I believe rents are very high.”

Of angels in revolt Théophile knew none. When he met a fallen spirit who had formerly been one of his comrades he shook him by the hand, for he was a faithful friend. Sometimes he saw Prince Istar. But he avoided all those bad angels who shocked him by the violence of their opinions and whose conversations plagued him to death.

“Then you don’t approve of me?” asked the impulsive Arcade.

“Friend, I neither approve of you nor blame you. I understand nothing of the ideas which trouble you. Neither do I think it good for an artist to concern

himself with politics. One has quite sufficient to occupy oneself with one's art." He loved his profession, and had hopes of "arriving" one day, but theatrical ways disgusted him. The only chance he saw of having his piece played was to take one or two — perhaps three — collaborators, who, without having done any work, would sign their names and share the profits. Soon Bouchotte would fail to find engagements. When she offered her services in some small hall the manager began by asking her how many shares she was taking in the business. Such customs, thought Théophile, were deplorable.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEREIN WE HEAR THE BEAUTIFUL ARCHANGEL ZITA UNFOLD HER LOFTY DESIGNS AND ARE SHOWN THE WINGS OF MIRAR, ALL MOTH-EATEN, IN A CUPBOARD

THUS talking, the two archangels had reached the Boulevard Rochechouart. As his eye lighted on a tavern, whence, through the mist, the light fell golden on the pavement, Théophile suddenly bethought himself of the Archangel Ithuriel who, in the guise of a poor but beautiful woman, was living in wretched lodgings on La Butte and came every evening to read the papers at this tavern. The musician often met her there. Her name was Zita. Théophile had never been curious enough to enquire into the opinions entertained by this archangel, but it was generally supposed that she was a Russian nihilist, and he took her to be, like Arcade, an atheist and a revolutionary. He had heard remarkable tales about her. People said she was an hermaphrodite, and that as the active and passive principles were united within her in a condition of stable equilibrium, she was an example of a perfect being, finding in herself complete and continuous satisfaction, contented yet unfortunate in that she knew not desire.

“But,” added Théophile, “I have my doubts about it. I believe she’s a woman and subject to love, like everything else that has life and breath in the Universe. Besides, someone caught her one day kissing her hand to a strapping peasant fellow.”

He offered to introduce his companion to her.

The two angels found her alone, reading. As they drew near she lifted her great eyes in whose deeps of molten gold little sparks of light were forever a-dance. Her brows were contracted into that austere fold which we see on the forehead of the Pythian Apollo; her nose was perfect and descended without a curve; her lips were compressed and imparted a disdainful and supercilious air to her whole countenance. Her tawny hair, with its gleaming lights, was carelessly adorned with the tattered remnants of a huge bird of prey, her garments lay about her in dark and shapeless folds. She was leaning her chin on a small ill-tended hand.

Arcade, who had but recently heard references made to this powerful archangel, showed her marked esteem, and placed entire confidence in her. He immediately proceeded to tell of the progress his mind had made towards knowledge and liberty, of his lucubrations in the d’Esparvieu library, of his philosophical reading, his studies of nature, his works on exegesis, his anger and his contempt when he recognised the deception of the demiurge, his voluntary exile among mankind, and, finally, of his project to stir up rebellion in Heaven. Ready to dare

all against an odious master, whom he pursued with inextinguishable hatred, he expressed his profound happiness at finding in Ithuriel a mind capable of counselling and helping him in his great undertaking.

“You are not a very old hand at revolutions,” said Zita, smiling.

Nevertheless, she doubted neither his sincerity nor the firmness of his declared resolve, and she congratulated him on his intellectual audacity.

“That is what is most lacking in our people,” she said, “they do not think.”

And she added almost immediately: “But on what can intelligence sharpen its wits, in a country where the climate is soft and existence made easy? Even here, where necessity calls for intellectual activity, nothing is rarer than a person who thinks.”

“Nevertheless,” replied Maurice’s guardian angel, “man has created science. The important thing is to introduce it into Heaven. When the angels possess some notions of physics, chemistry, astronomy, and physiology; when the study of matter shows them worlds in an atom, and an atom in the myriads of planets; when they see themselves lost between these two infinities; when they weigh and measure the stars, analyse their composition, and calculate their orbits, they will recognise that these monsters work in obedience to forces which no intelligence can define, or that each star has its particular divinity, or indigenous god; and they will realise that the gods of Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, and Sirius are greater than Ialdabaoth. When at length they come to scrutinise with care the little world in which their lot is cast, and, piercing the crust of the earth, note the gradual evolution of its flora and fauna and the rude origin of man, who, under the shelter of rocks and in cave dwellings, had no God but himself; when they discover that, united by the bonds of universal kinship to plants, beasts, and men, they have successively indued all forms of organic life, from the simplest and the most primitive, until they became at length the most beautiful of the children of light, they will perceive that Ialdabaoth, the obscure demon of an insignificant world lost in space, is imposing on their credulity when he pretends that they issued from nothingness at his bidding; they will perceive that he lies in calling himself the Infinite, the Eternal, the Almighty, and that, so far from having created worlds, he knows neither their number nor their laws. They will perceive that he is like unto one of them; they will despise him, and, shaking off his tyranny, will fling him into the Gehenna where he has hurled those more worthy than himself.”

“Do you think so?” murmured Zita, puffing out the smoke of her cigarette....

“Nevertheless, this knowledge by virtue of which you reckon to enfranchise Heaven, has not destroyed religious sentiment on earth. In countries where they have set up and taught this science of physics, of chemistry, astronomy, and

geology, which you think capable of delivering the world, Christianity has retained almost all its sway. If the positive sciences have had such a feeble influence on the beliefs of mankind, it is not likely they will exercise a greater one on the opinions of the angels, and nothing is of such dubious efficacy as scientific propaganda.”

“What!” exclaimed Arcade, “you deny that Science has given the Church its death-blow? Is it possible? The Church, at any rate, judges otherwise. Science, which you believe has no power over her, is redoubtable to her, since she proscribes it. From Galileo’s dialogues to Monsieur Aulard’s little manuals she has condemned all its discoveries. And not without reason.

“In former days, when she gathered within her fold all that was great in human thought, the Church held sway over the bodies as well as over the souls of men, and imposed unity of obedience by fire and sword. To-day her power is but a shadow and the elect among the great minds have withdrawn from her. That is the state to which Science has reduced her.”

“Possibly,” replied the beautiful archangel, “but how slowly, with what vicissitudes, at the price of what efforts, of what sacrifices!”

Zita did not absolutely condemn scientific propaganda, but she anticipated no prompt or certain results from it. For her it was not so much a question of enlightening the angels; the important thing was to enfranchise them. In her opinion one only exerted a strong influence on individuals, whoever they might be, by rousing their passions, and appealing to their interests.

“Persuade the angels that they will cover themselves with glory by overthrowing the tyrant, and that they will be happier once they are free; that is the most practical policy to attempt, and, for my own part, I am devoting all my energies to its fulfilment. It is certainly no light task, because the Kingdom of Heaven is a military autocracy and there is no public opinion in it. Nevertheless, I do not despair of starting an intellectual movement. I do not wish to boast, but no one is more closely acquainted than I with the different classes of angelic society.”

Throwing away her cigarette, Zita pondered for a moment, then, amid the click of ivory balls on the billiard table, the clinking of glasses, the curt voices of the players announcing their points, the monotonous answers of the waiters to their customers, the Archangel enumerated the entire population of the spirits of light.

“We must not count on the Dominations, the Virtues, nor the Powers, which compose the celestial lower middle class. I have no need to tell you, for you know it as well as I, how selfish, base, and cowardly the middle classes are. As to the great dignitaries, the Ministers, the Generals, Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim, you know what they are; they will take no action. Let us, however, once prove ourselves the stronger, and we shall have them with us. For if

autocrats do not readily acquiesce in their own downfall, once overthrown, all their forces recoil upon themselves. It will be well to work the Army. Entirely loyal as the Army is, it will allow itself to be influenced by a clever anarchist propaganda. But our greatest and most constant efforts ought to be brought to bear upon the angels of your own category, Arcade; the guardian angels, who dwell upon earth in such great numbers. They fill the lowest ranks of the hierarchy, are for the most part discontented with their lot, and more or less imbued with the ideas of the present century.”

She had already conferred with the guardian angels of Montmartre, Clignancourt, and Filles-du-Calvaire. She had devised the plan of a vast association of Spirits on Earth with the view of conquering Heaven.

“To accomplish this task,” she said, “I have established myself in France. But not because I had the folly to believe myself freer in a republic than in a monarchy. Quite the contrary, for there is no country where the liberty of the individual is less respected than in France. But the people are indifferent to everything connected with religion; nowhere else, therefore, should I enjoy such tranquillity.”

She invited Arcade to unite his efforts to hers, and when they separated at the door of the *brasserie* the steel shutter was already making its groaning descent.

“Above all,” said Zita, “you must meet the gardener. I will take you to his rustic home one day.”

Théophile, who had slumbered during all this talk, begged his friend to come home with him and smoke a cigarette. He lived quite near in the small street opposite, leading off the Boulevard. Arcade would see Bouchotte, she would please him.

They climbed up five flights of stairs. Bouchotte had not yet returned. A tin of sardines lay open on the piano. Red stockings coiled about the arm-chairs.

“It’s a little place, but it’s comfortable,” said Théophile.

And gazing out of the window which looked out on the russet-coloured night, with its myriad lights, he added, “One can see the *Sacré Cœur* .” His hand on Arcade’s shoulder, he repeated several times, “I am glad to see you.”

Then, dragging his former companion in glory into the kitchen passage, he put down his candlestick, drew a key from his pocket, opened a cupboard, and, raising a linen covering, disclosed two large white wings.

“You see,” he said, “I have preserved them. From time to time, when I am alone, I go and look at them; it does me good.”

And he dabbed his reddened eyes. He stood awhile, overcome by silent emotion. Then, holding the candle near the long pinions which were moulting their down in places, he murmured, “They are eaten away.”

“You must put some pepper on them,” said Arcade.

“I have done so,” replied the angelic musician, sighing. “I have put pepper, camphor, and powder on them. But nothing does any good.”

CHAPTER XIV

WHICH REVEALS THE CHERUB TOILING FOR THE WELFARE OF HUMANITY AND
CONCLUDES IN AN ENTIRELY NOVEL MANNER WITH THE MIRACLE OF THE FLUTE

THE first night of his incarnation Arcade slept at the angel Istar's, in a garret in that narrow, gloomy Rue Mazarine which wallows along beneath the shadow of the old Institute of France. Istar, who had been expecting him, had pushed against the wall the shattered retorts, cracked pots, broken bottles, and odds and ends of iron stoves, which made up the furniture of his room, and spread his clothes on the floor to lie on, leaving his guest his folding-bed with its straw mattress.

The celestial spirits differ from one another in appearance according to the hierarchy and the choir to which they belong, and according to their own particular nature. They are all beautiful; but in different fashion, and they do not all offer to the eye the soft contours and dimpling smiles of childhood with its rosy lights and pearly tints. Nor do they all adorn themselves with eternal youth, that indefinable beauty that Greek art in its decline has imparted to its most lovingly handled marbles, and whereof Christian painters have so often timidly essayed to give us veiled and softened imitations. In some of them the chin glows with tufts of hair, and the limbs are furnished with such vigorous muscles that it seems as if serpents were writhing beneath the skin. Some have no wings, others possess two, four, or six; others again are formed entirely of conjoined pinions. Many, and these not the least illustrious, take the form of superb monsters, such as the Centaurs of fable; nay, one may even see some who are living chariots, and wheels of fire. A member of the highest celestial hierarchy, Istar belonged to the choir of Cherubim or Kerûbs who see above them the Seraphim alone. In common with all the angelic spirits of his rank he had formerly borne in Heaven the bodily shape of a winged bull surmounted by the head of a horned and bearded man, and carrying between his loins the attributes of generous fecundity. He was vaster and more vigorous than any animal on earth, and when he stood erect with outspread wings he covered with his shadow sixty archangels.

Such was Istar in his native home. There he radiated strength and sweetness. His heart was full of courage and his soul benevolent. Moreover, in those days he loved his lord. He believed him to be good and yielded him faithful service. But even while guarding the portals of his Master, he used to ponder unceasingly on the punishment of the rebellious angels and the curse of Eve. His mind worked

slowly but profoundly. When, after a long course of centuries, he persuaded himself that Ialdabaoth in creating the world had created evil and death, he ceased to adore and to serve him. His love changed to hatred, his veneration to contempt. He shouted his execrations in his face, and fled to earth.

Embodied in human form and reduced to the stature of the sons of Adam, he still retained some characteristics of his former nature. His big protruding eyes, his beaked nose, his thick lips framed in a black beard which descended in curls on to his chest recalled those Cherubs of the tabernacle of Iahveh, of which the bulls of Nineveh afford us a pretty accurate representation. He bore the name of Istar on earth as well as in Heaven, and although exempt from vanity and free from all social prejudice, he was immensely desirous of showing himself sincere and truthful in all things. He therefore proclaimed the illustrious rank in which his birth had placed him in the celestial hierarchy and translated into French his title of Cherub by the equivalent one of Prince, calling himself Prince Istar. Seeking shelter among mankind he had developed an ardent love for them. While awaiting the coming of the hour when he should deliver Heaven from bondage, he dreamed of the salvation of regenerate humanity and was eager to consummate the destruction of this wicked world, in order to raise upon its ashes, to the sound of the lyre, a city radiant with happiness and love. A chemist in the pay of a dealer in nitrates, he lived very frugally. He wrote for newspapers with advanced views on liberty, spoke at public meetings, and had got himself sentenced several times to several months' imprisonment for anti-militarism.

Istar greeted his brother Arcade cordially, approved of his rupture with the party of crime, and informed him of the descent of fifty of the children of light who, at the present moment, formed a colony near Val de Grace, imbued with a really excellent spirit.

"It is simply raining angels in Paris," he said, laughing. "Every day some dignitary of the sacred palace falls on one's head, and soon the Sultan of the Cherubs will have no one to make into Vizirs or guards but the little unbreeched vagabonds of his pigeon coops."

Soothed by the good news, Arcade fell asleep, full of happiness and hope.

He awoke in the early dawn and saw Prince Istar bending over his furnaces, his retorts, and his test tubes. Prince Istar was working for the good of humanity.

Every morning when Arcade woke he saw Prince Istar fulfilling his work of tenderness and love. Sometimes the Kerûb, huddled up with his head in his hands, would softly murmur a few chemical formulæ; at others, drawing himself up to his full height, like a dark naked column, with his head, his arms, nay, his entire bust clean out of the sky-light window, he would deposit his melting-pot on the roof, fearing the perquisition with which he was constantly menaced.

Moved by an immense pity for the miseries of the world wherein he dwelt in exile, conscious perhaps of the rumours to which his name gave rise, inebriated with his own virtue, he played the part of apostle to the Human Race, and neglecting the task he had undertaken in coming to earth, he forgot all about the emancipation of the angels. Arcade, who, on the contrary, dreamed of nothing else but of conquering Heaven and returning thither in triumph, reproached the Cherub with forgetting his native land.

Prince Istar, with a great frank, uncouth laugh, acknowledged that he had no preference for angels over men.

“If I am doing my best,” he replied to his celestial brother, “if I am doing my best to stir up France and Europe, it is because the day is dawning which will behold the triumph of the social revolution. It is a pleasure to cast one’s seed on ground so well prepared. The French having passed from feudalism to monarchy, and from monarchy to a financial oligarchy, will easily pass from a financial oligarchy to anarchy.”

“How erroneous it is,” retorted Arcade, “to believe in great and sudden changes in the social order in Europe! The old order is still young in strength and power. The means of defence at her disposal are formidable. On the other hand, the proletariat’s plan of defensive organisation is of the vaguest description and brings merely weakness and confusion to the struggle. In our celestial country all goes quite otherwise. Beneath an apparently unchangeable exterior all is rotten within. A mere push would suffice to overturn an edifice which has not been touched for millions of centuries. Out-worn administration, out-worn army, out-worn finance, the whole thing is more worm-eaten than either the Russian or Persian autocracy.”

And the kindly Arcade adjured the Cherub to fly first to the aid of his brethren who, though dwelling amid the soft clouds with the sound of citterns and their cups of paradisaal wine around them, were in more wretched plight than mankind bowed over the grudging earth. For the latter have a conception of justice, while the angels rejoice in iniquity. He exhorted him to deliver the Prince of Light and his stricken companions and to re-establish them in their ancient honours.

Prince Istar allowed himself to be convinced.

He promised to put the sweet persuasiveness of his words and the excellent formulæ of his explosives at the service of the celestial revolution. He gave his promise.

“To-morrow,” he said.

And when the morrow came he continued his anti-militarist propaganda at Issy-les-Moulineaux. Like the Titan Prometheus, Istar loved mankind.

Arcade, suffering from all the desires to which the sons of Adam are subjected, found himself lacking in resources to satisfy them. Istar gave him a start in a printing house in the Rue de Vaugirard where he knew the foreman. Arcade, thanks to his celestial intelligence, soon knew how to set up type and became, in a short time, a good compositor.

After standing all day in the whirring workroom, holding the composing-stick in his left hand, and swiftly drawing the little leaden signs from the case in the order required by the copy fixed in the *visorium*, he would go and wash his hands at the pump and dine at the corner bar, a newspaper propped up before him on the marble table. Being now no longer invisible, he could not make his way into the d'Esparvieu library, and was thus debarred from allaying his ardent thirst for knowledge at that inexhaustible source. He went, of an evening, to read at the library of *Ste. Geneviève* on the famous hill of learning, but there were only ordinary books to be had there; greasy things, covered with ridiculous annotations, and lacking many pages.

The sight of women troubled and unsettled him. He would remember Madame des Aubels and her charm, and, although he was handsome, he was not loved, because of his poverty and his workaday clothes. He saw much of Zita, and took a certain pleasure in going for walks with her on Sundays along the dusty roads which edge the grass-grown trenches of the fortifications. They wandered, the pair of them, by wayside inns, market-gardens, and green retreats, propounding and discussing the vastest plans that ever stirred the world, and, occasionally, as they passed along by some travelling circus, the steam organ of the merry-go-round would furnish an accompaniment to their words as they breathed fire and fury against Heaven.

Zita used often to say:

“Istar means well, but he’s a simple fellow. He believes in the goodness of men and things. He undertakes the destruction of the old world and imagines that anarchy of itself will create order and harmony. You, Arcade, you believe in Science; you deem that men and angels are capable of understanding, whereas, in point of fact, they are only creatures of sentiment. You may be quite sure that nothing is to be obtained from them by appealing to their intelligence; one must rouse their interests and their passions.”

Arcade, Istar, Zita, and three or four other angelic conspirators occasionally foregathered in Théophile Belais’ little flat, where Bouchotte gave them tea. Though she did not know that they were rebellious angels, she hated them instinctively, and feared them, for she had had a Christian education, albeit she had sadly failed to keep it up.

Prince Istar alone pleased her; she thought there was something kind-hearted and an air of natural distinction about him. He stove in the sofa, broke down the arm-chairs, and tore corners off sheets of music to make notes, which he thrust into pockets invariably crammed with pamphlets and bottles. The musician used to gaze sorrowfully at the manuscript of his operetta, *Aline, Queen of Golconda*, with its corners all torn off. The prince also had a habit of giving Théophile Belais all sorts of things to take care of — mechanical contrivances, chemicals, bits of old iron, powders, and liquids which gave off noisome smells. Théophile Belais put them cautiously away in the cupboard where he kept his wings, and the responsibility weighed heavily upon him.

Arcade was much pained at the disdain of those of his fellows who had remained faithful. When they met him as they went on their sacred errands they regarded him as they passed by with looks of cruel hatred or of pity that was crueller still. He used to visit the rebel angels whom Prince Istar pointed out to him, and usually met with a good reception, but as soon as he began to speak of conquering Heaven, they did not conceal the embarrassment and displeasure he caused them. Arcade perceived that they had no desire to be disturbed in their tastes, their affairs, and their habits. The falsity of their judgment, the narrowness of their minds, shocked him; and the rivalry, the jealousy they displayed towards one another deprived him of all hope of uniting them in a common cause. Perceiving how exile debases the character and warps the intellect, he felt his courage fail him.

One evening, when he had confessed his weariness of spirit to Zita, the beautiful archangel said:

“Let us go and see Nectaire; Nectaire has remedies of his own for sadness and fatigue.”

She led him into the woods of Montmorency and stopped at the threshold of a small white house, adjoining a kitchen garden, laid waste by winter, where far back in the shadows the light shone on forcing-frames and cracked glass melon shades.

Nectaire opened the door to his visitors, and, after quieting the growls of a big mastiff which protected the garden, led them into a low room warmed by an earthenware stove.

Against the whitewashed wall, on a deal board, among the onions and seeds, lay a flute ready to be put to the lips. A round walnut table bore a stone tobacco-jar, a pipe, a bottle of wine and some glasses. The gardener offered each of his guests a cane-seated chair, and himself sat down on a stool by the table.

He was a sturdy old man; thick grey hair stood up on his head, he had a furrowed brow, a snub-nose, a red face, and a forked beard.

The big mastiff stretched himself at his master's feet, rested his short black muzzle on his paws, and closed his eyes. The gardener poured out some wine for his guests, and when they had drunk and talked a little, Zita said to Nectaire:

"Please play your flute to us, you will give pleasure to my friend whom I have brought to see you."

The old man immediately consented. He put the boxwood pipe to his lips, — so clumsy was it that it looked as if the gardener had fashioned it himself, — and preluded with a few strange runs. Then he developed rich melodies in which the thrills sparkled like diamonds and pearls on a velvet ground. Touched by cunning fingers, animated with creative breath, the rustic pipe sang like a silver flute. There were no over-shrill notes and the tone was always even and pure. One seemed to be listening to the nightingale and the Muses singing together, the soul of Nature and the soul of Man. And the old man ordered and developed his thoughts in a musical language full of grace and daring. He told of love, of fear, of vain quarrels, of all-conquering laughter, of the calm light of the intellect, of the arrows of the mind piercing with their golden shafts the monsters of Ignorance and Hate. He told also of Joy and Sorrow bending their twin heads over the earth and of Desire which brings worlds into being.

The whole night listened to the flute of Nectaire. Already the evening star was rising above the paling horizon.

There they sat; Zita with hands clasped about her knees, Arcade, his head leaning on his hand, his lips apart. Motionless they listened. A lark, which had awakened hard by in a sandy field, lured by these novel sounds, rose swiftly in the air, hovered a few seconds, then dropped at one swoop into the musician's orchard. The neighbouring sparrows, forsaking the crannies of the mouldering walls, came and sat in a row on the window-ledge whence notes came welling forth that gave them more delight than oats or grains of barley. A jay, coming for the first time out of his wood, folded his sapphire wings on a leafless cherry tree. Beside the drain-head, a large black rat, glistening with the greasy water of the sewers, sitting on his hind legs, raised his short arms and slender fingers in amazement. A field-mouse, that dwelt in the orchard, was seated near him. Down from the tiles came the old tom-cat, who retained the grey fur, the ringed tail, the powerful loins, the courage, and the pride of his ancestors. He pushed against the half-open door with his nose and approaching the flute-player with silent tread, sat gravely down, pricking his ears that had been torn in many a nocturnal combat; the grocer's white cat followed him, sniffing the vibrant air and then, arching her back and closing her blue eyes, listened in rapture. Mice, swarming in crowds from under the boards, surrounded them, and fearing neither tooth nor claw, sat motionless, their pink hands folded voluptuously on

their bosoms. Spiders that had strayed far from their webs, with waving legs, gathered in a charmed circle on the ceiling. A small grey lizard, that had glided on to the doorstep, stayed there, fascinated, and, in the loft, the bat might have been seen hanging by her nails, head down, now half-awakened from her winter sleep, swaying to the rhythm of the marvellous flute.

CHAPTER XV

WHEREIN WE SEE YOUNG MAURICE BEWAILING THE LOSS OF HIS GUARDIAN ANGEL, EVEN IN HIS MISTRESS'S ARMS, AND WHEREIN WE HEAR THE ABBÉ PATOUILLE REJECT AS VAIN AND ILLUSORY ALL NOTIONS OF A NEW REBELLION OF THE ANGELS

A FORTNIGHT had elapsed since the angel's apparition in the flat. For the first time Gilberte arrived before Maurice at the rendezvous. Maurice was gloomy, Gilberte sulky. So far as they were concerned Nature had resumed her drab monotony. They eyed each other languidly, and kept glancing towards the angle between the wardrobe with the mirror and the window, where recently the pale shade of Arcade had taken shape, and where now the blue cretonne of the hangings was the only thing visible. Without giving him a name (it was unnecessary) Madame des Aubels asked:

"You have not seen him since?"

Slowly, sadly, Maurice turned his head from right to left, and from left to right.

"You look as if you missed him," continued Madame des Aubels. "But come, confess that he gave you a terrible fright, and that you were shocked at his unconventionally."

"Certainly he was unconventional," said Maurice without any resentment.

"Tell me, Maurice, is it nothing to you now to be with me alone?... You need an angel to inspire you. That is sad, for a young man like you!"

Maurice appeared not to hear, and asked gravely:

"Gilberte, do you feel that your guardian angel is watching over you?"

"I, not at all. I have never thought of him, and yet I am not without religion. In the first place, people who have none are like animals. And then one cannot go straight without religion. It is impossible."

"Exactly, that's just it," said Maurice, his eyes on the violet stripes of his flowerless pyjamas; "when one has one's guardian angel one does not even think about him, and when one has lost him one feels very lonely."

"So you miss this...."

"Well, the fact is...."

"Oh, yes, yes, you miss him. Well, my dear, the loss of such a guardian angel as that is no great matter. No, no! he is not worth much, that Arcade of yours. On that famous day, while you were out getting him some clothes, he was ever so long fastening my dress, and I certainly felt his hand.... Well, at any rate, don't trust him."

Maurice dreamily lit a cigarette. They spoke of the six days' bicycle race at the winter velodrome, and of the aviation show at the motor exhibition at Brussels,

without experiencing the slightest amusement. Then they tried love-making as a sort of convenient pastime, and succeeded in becoming moderately absorbed in it; but at the very moment when she might have been expected to play a part more in accordance with a mutual sentiment, she exclaimed with a sudden start:

“Good Heavens! Maurice, how stupid of you to tell me that my guardian angel can see me. You cannot imagine how uncomfortable the idea makes me.”

Maurice, somewhat taken aback, recalled, a little roughly, his mistress’s wandering thoughts.

She declared that her principles forbade her to think of playing a round game with angels.

Maurice was longing to see Arcade again and had no other thought. He reproached himself for suffering him to depart without discovering where he was going, and he cudgelled his brains night and day thinking how to find him again.

On the bare chance, he put a notice in the personal column of one of the big papers, running thus:

“Arcade. Come back to your Maurice.”

Day after day went by, and Arcade did not return.

One morning, at seven o’clock, Maurice went to St. Sulpice to hear Abbé Patouille say Mass, then, as the priest was leaving the sacristy, he went up to him and asked to be heard for a moment.

They descended the steps of the church together and in the bright morning light walked round the fountain of the *Quatre Évêques*. In spite of his troubled conscience and the difficulty of presenting so extraordinary a case with any degree of credibility, Maurice related how the angel Arcade had appeared to him and had announced his unhappy resolve to separate from him and to stir up a new revolt of the spirits of glory. And young d’Esparvieu asked the worthy ecclesiastic how to find his celestial guardian again, since he could not bear his absence, and how to lead his angel back to the Christian faith. Abbé Patouille replied in a tone of affectionate sorrow that his dear child had been dreaming, that he took a morbid hallucination for reality, and that it was not permissible to believe that good angels may revolt.

“People have a notion,” he added, “that they can lead a life of dissipation and disorder with impunity. They are wrong. The abuse of pleasure corrupts the intelligence and impairs the understanding. The devil takes possession of the sinner’s senses, penetrating even to his soul. He has deceived you, Maurice, by a clumsy artifice.”

Maurice objected that he was not in any way a victim of hallucinations, that he had not been dreaming, that he had seen his guardian angel with his eyes and heard him with his ears.

“Monsieur l’Abbé,” he insisted, “a lady who happened to be with me at the time, — I need not mention her name, — also saw and heard him. And, moreover, she felt the angel’s fingers straying ... well, anyhow, she felt them.... Believe me, Monsieur l’Abbé, nothing could be more real, more positively certain than this apparition. The angel was fair, young, very handsome. His clear skin seemed, in the shadow, as if bathed in milky light. He spoke in a pure, sweet voice.”

“That, alone, my child,” the Abbé interrupted quickly, “proves you were dreaming. According to all the demonologies, bad angels have a hoarse voice, which grates like a rusty lock, and even if they did contrive to give a certain look of beauty to their faces, they cannot succeed in imitating the pure voice of the good spirits. This fact, attested by numerous witnesses, is established beyond all doubt.”

“But, Monsieur l’Abbé, I saw him. I saw him sit down, stark naked, in an arm-chair on a pair of black stockings. What else do you want me to tell you?”

The Abbé Patouille appeared in no way disturbed by this announcement.

“I say once more, my son,” he replied, “that these unhappy illusions, these dreams of a deeply troubled soul, are to be ascribed to the deplorable state of your conscience. I believe, moreover, that I can detect the particular circumstance that has caused your unstable mind thus to come to grief. During the winter in company with Monsieur Sariette and your Uncle Gaétan, you came, in an evil frame of mind, to see the Chapel of the Holy Angels in this church, then undergoing repair. As I observed on that occasion, it is impossible to keep artists too closely to the rules of Christian art; they cannot be too strongly enjoined to respect Holy Writ and its authorized interpreters. Monsieur Eugène Delacroix did not suffer his fiery genius to be controlled by tradition. He brooked no guidance and, here, in this chapel he has painted pictures which in common parlance we call lurid, compositions of a violent, terrible nature which, far from inspiring the soul with peace, quietude, and calm, plunge it into a state of agitation. In them the angels are depicted with wrathful countenances, their features are sombre and uncouth. One might take them to be Lucifer and his companions meditating their revolt. Well, my son, it was these pictures, acting upon a mind already weakened and undermined by every kind of dissipation, that have filled it with the trouble to which it is at present a prey.”

But Maurice would have none of it.

“Oh, no! Monsieur l’Abbé,” he cried, “it is not Eugène Delacroix’s pictures that have been troubling me. I didn’t so much as look at them. I am completely indifferent to that kind of art.”

“Well, then, my son, believe me: there is no truth, no reality, in any of the story you have just related to me. Your guardian angel has certainly not appeared to

you.”

“But, Abbé,” replied Maurice, who had the most absolute confidence in the evidence of the senses, “I saw him tying up a woman’s shoe-laces and putting on the trousers of a suicide.”

And stamping his feet on the asphalt, Maurice called as witnesses to the truth of his words the sky, the earth, all nature, the towers of St. Sulpice, the walls of the great seminary, the Fountain of the *Quatre Évêques*, the public lavatory, the cabmen’s shelter, the taxis and motor ‘buses’ shelter, the trees, the passers-by, the dogs, the sparrows, the flower-seller and her flowers.

The Abbé made haste to end the interview.

“All this is error, falsehood, and illusion, my child,” said he. “You are a Christian: think as a Christian, — a Christian does not allow himself to be seduced by empty shadows. Faith protects him against the seduction of the marvellous, he leaves credulity to freethinkers. There are credulous people for you — freethinkers! There is no humbug they will not swallow. But the Christian carries a weapon which dissipates diabolical illusions, — the sign of the Cross. Reassure yourself, Maurice, — you have not lost your guardian angel. He still watches over you. It lies with you not to make this task too difficult nor too painful for him. Good-bye, Maurice. The weather is going to change, for I feel a burning in my big toe.”

And Abbé Patouille went off with his breviary under his arm, hobbling along with a dignity that seemed to foretell a mitre.

That very day, Arcade and Zita were leaning over the parapet of La Butte, gazing down on the mist and smoke that lay floating over the vast city.

“Is it possible,” said Arcade, “for the mind to conceive all the pain and suffering that lie pent within a great city? It is my belief that if a man succeeded in realising it, the weight of it would crush him to the earth.”

“And yet,” answered Zita, “every living being in that place of torment is enamoured of life. It is a great enigma!”

“Unhappy, ill-fated, while they live, the idea of ceasing to be is, nevertheless, a horror to them. They look not for solace in annihilation, it does not even bring them the promise of rest. In their madness they even look upon nothingness with terror: they have peopled it with phantoms. Look you at these pediments, these towers and domes and spires that pierce the mist and rear on high their glittering crosses. Men bow in adoration before the demiurge who has given them a life that is worse than death, and a death that is worse than life.”

Zita was for a long time lost in thought. At length she broke silence, saying:

“There is something, Arcade, that I must confess to you. It was no desire for a purer justice or wiser laws that hurried Ithuriel earthward. Ambition, a taste for

intrigue, the love of wealth and honour, all these things made Heaven, with its calm, unbearable to me, and I longed to mingle with the restless race of men. I came, and by an art unknown to nearly all the angels, I learned how to fashion myself a body which, since I could change it as the fancy seized me, to whatsoever age and sex I would, has permitted me to experience the most diverse and amazing of human destinies. A hundred times I took a position of renown among the leaders of the day, the lords of wealth and princes of nations. I will not reveal to you, Arcade, the famous names I bore; know only that I was pre-eminent in learning, in the fine arts, in power, wealth, and beauty, among all the nations of the world. At last, it was but a few years since, as I was journeying in France, under the outward semblance of a distinguished foreigner, I chanced to be roaming at evening through the forest of Montmorency, when I heard a flute unfolding all the sorrows of Heaven. The purity and sadness of its notes rent my very soul. Never before had I hearkened to aught so lovely. My eyes were wet with tears, my bosom full of sobs, as I drew near and beheld, on the skirts of a glade, an old man like to a faun, blowing on a rustic pipe. It was Nectaire. I cast myself at his feet, imprinted kisses on his hands and on his lips divine, and fled away....

“From that day forth, conscious of the littleness of human achievements, weary of the tumult and the vanity of earthly things, ashamed of my vast and profitless endeavours, and deciding to seek out a loftier aim for my ambition, I looked upwards towards my skiey home and vowed I would return to it as a Deliverer. I rid myself of titles, name, wealth, friends, the horde of sycophants and flatterers and, as Zita the obscure, set to work in indigence and solitude, to bring freedom into Heaven.”

“And I,” said Arcade, “I too have heard the flute of Nectaire. But who is this old gardener who can thus woo from a rude wooden pipe notes that are so moving and so beautiful?”

“You will soon know,” answered Zita.

CHAPTER XVI

WHEREIN MIRA THE SEERESS, ZÉPHYRINE, AND THE FATAL AMÉDÉE ARE SUCCESSIVELY BROUGHT UPON THE SCENE, AND WHEREIN THE NOTION OF EURIPIDES THAT THOSE WHOM ZEUS WISHES TO CRUSH HE FIRST MAKES MAD, IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE TERRIBLE EXAMPLE OF MONSIEUR SARIETTE

DISAPPOINTED at his failure to enlighten an ecclesiastic renowned for his clarity of mind, and frustrated in the hope of finding his angel again on the high road of orthodoxy, Maurice took it into his head to resort to occultism and resolved to go and consult a seer. He would have undoubtedly applied to Madame de Thèbes, but he had already questioned her on the occasion of his early love troubles, and her replies showed such wisdom that he no longer believed her to be a soothsayer. He therefore had recourse to a fashionable medium, Madame Mira. He had heard many examples quoted of the extraordinary insight of this seeress, but it was necessary to present Madame Mira with some object which the absent one had either touched or worn and to which her translucent gaze had to be attracted. Maurice, trying to remember what the angel had touched since his ill-fated incarnation, recollected that in his celestial nudity he had sat down in an arm-chair on Madame des Aubels' black stockings and that he had afterwards helped that lady to dress.

Maurice asked Gilberte for one of the talismans required by the clairvoyante. But Gilberte could not give him a single one, unless, as she said, she herself were to play the part of the talisman. For the angel had, in her case, displayed the greatest indiscretion, and such agility that it was impossible always to forestall his enterprise. On hearing this confession, which nevertheless told him nothing new, Maurice lost his temper with the angel, calling him by the names of the lowest animals and swearing he would give him a good kick when he got him within reach of his foot. But his fury soon turned against Madame des Aubels; he accused her of having provoked the insolence she now denounced, and in his wrath he referred to her by all the zoological symbols of immodesty and perversity. His love for Arcade was rekindled in his heart, and burned with a more ardent flame than ever, and the deserted youth, with outstretched arms and bended knees, invoked his angel with sobs and lamentations.

During his sleepless nights it occurred to him that perhaps the books the angel had turned over before his incarnation might serve as a talisman. One morning, therefore, Maurice went up to the library and greeted Monsieur Sariette, who was cataloguing under the romantic gaze of Alexandre d'Esparvieu. Monsieur Sariette smiled, but his face was deathly pale. Now that an invisible hand no

longer upset the books placed under his charge, now that tranquillity and order once more reigned in the library, Monsieur Sariette was happy, but his strength diminished day by day. There was little left of him but a frail and contented shadow.

“One dies, in full content, of sorrow past.”

“Monsieur Sariette,” said Maurice, “you remember that time when your books were disarranged every night, how armfuls disappeared, how they were dragged about, turned over, ruined, and sent rolling helter-skelter as far as the gutter in the Rue Palatine. Those were great days! Point out to me, Monsieur Sariette, the books which suffered most.”

This proposition threw Monsieur Sariette into a melancholy stupor, and Maurice had to repeat his request three times before he could make the aged librarian understand. At length he pointed to a very ancient Talmud from Jerusalem as having been frequently touched by those unseen hands. An apocryphal Gospel of the third century, consisting of twenty papyrus sheets, had also quitted its place time after time. Gassendi’s Correspondence too seemed to have been well thumbed.

“But,” added Monsieur Sariette, “the book to which the mysterious visitant devoted the most particular attention was undoubtedly a little copy of *Lucretius* adorned with the arms of Philippe de Vendôme, Grand Prieur de France, with autograph annotations by Voltaire, who, as is well known, frequently visited the Temple in his younger days. The fearsome reader who caused me such terrible anxiety never grew weary of this *Lucretius* and made it his bedside book, as it were. His taste was sound, for it’s a gem of a thing. Alas! the monster made a blot of ink on page 137 which perhaps the chemists with all the science at their disposal will be powerless to erase.”

And Monsieur Sariette heaved a profound sigh. He repented having said all this when young d’Esparvieu asked him for the loan of the precious *Lucretius*. Vainly did the jealous custodian affirm that the book was being repaired at the binder’s and was not available. Maurice made it clear that he wasn’t to be taken in like that. He strode resolutely into the abode of the philosophers and the globes and seating himself in an arm-chair said:

“I am waiting.”

Monsieur Sariette suggested his having another edition. There were some that, textually, were more correct, and were, therefore, preferable from the student’s point of view. He offered him Barbou’s edition, or Coustelier’s, or, better still, a French translation. He could have the Baron des Coutures’ version — which was perhaps a little old-fashioned — or La Grange’s, or those in the Nisard and Panckouke series; or, again, there were two versions of striking elegance, one in

verse and the other in prose, both from the pen of Monsieur de Pongerville of the French Academy.

"I don't need a translation," said Maurice proudly. "Give me the Prior de Vendôme's copy."

Monsieur Sariette went slowly up to the cupboard in which the jewel in question was contained. The keys were rattling in his trembling hand. He raised them to the lock and withdrew them again immediately and suggested that Maurice should have the common *Lucretius* published by Garnier.

"It's very handy," said he with an engaging smile.

But the silence with which this proposal was received made it clear that resistance was useless. He slowly drew forth the volume from its place, and having taken the precaution to see that there wasn't a speck of dust on the tablecloth, he laid it tremblingly thereon before the great-grandson of Alexandre d'Esparvieu.

Maurice began to turn the leaves, and when he got to page 137 he saw the stain which had been made with violet ink. It was about the size of a pea.

"Ay, that's it," said old Sariette, who had his eye on the *Lucretius* the whole time; "that's the trace those invisible monsters left behind them."

"What, there were several of them, Monsieur Sariette?" exclaimed Maurice.

"I cannot tell. But I don't know whether I have a right to have this blot removed since, like the blot Paul Louis Courier made on the Florentine manuscript, it constitutes a literary document, so to speak."

Scarcely were the words out of the old fellow's mouth when the front door bell rang and there was a confused noise of voices and footsteps in the next room. Sariette ran forward at the sound and collided with Père Guinardon's mistress, old Zéphyrine, who, with her tousled hair sticking up like a nest of vipers, her face aflame, her bosom heaving, her abdominal part like an eiderdown quilt puffed out by a terrific gale, was choking with grief and rage. And amid sobs and sighs and groans and all the innumerable sounds which, on earth, make up the mighty uproar to which the emotions of living beings and the tumult of nature give rise, she cried:

"He's gone, the monster! He's gone off with her. He's cleared out the whole shanty and left me to shift for myself with eighteenpence in my purse."

And she proceeded to give a long and incoherent account of how Michel Guinardon had abandoned her and gone to live with Octavie, the bread-woman's daughter, and she let loose a torrent of abuse against the traitor.

"A man whom I've kept going with my own money for fifty years and more. For I've had plenty of the needful and known plenty of the upper ten and all. I dragged him out of the gutter and now this is what I get for it. He's a bright

beauty, that friend of yours. The lazy scoundrel. Why, he had to be dressed like a child, the drunken contemptible brute. You don't know him yet, Monsieur Sariette. He's a forger. He turns out Giotto's, Giotto's, I tell you, and Fra Angelico's and Greco's, as hard as he can and sells them to art-dealers — yes, and Fragonard's too, and Baudouin's. He's a debauchee, and doesn't believe in God! That's the worst of the lot, Monsieur Sariette, for without the fear of God...."

Long did Zéphyrine continue to pour forth vituperations. When at last her breath failed her, Monsieur Sariette availed himself of the opportunity to exhort her to be calm and bring herself to look on the bright side of things. Guinardon would come back. A man doesn't forget anyone he's lived and got on well with for fifty years —

These two observations only goaded her to a fresh outburst, and Zéphyrine swore she would never forget the slight that had been put on her; she swore she would never have the monster back with her any more. And if he came to ask her to forgive him on his knees, she would let him grovel at her feet.

"Don't you understand, Monsieur Sariette, that I despise and hate him, that he makes me sick?"

Sixty times she voiced these lofty sentiments; sixty times she vowed she would never have Guinardon back with her again, that she couldn't bear the sight of him, even in a picture.

Monsieur Sariette made no attempt to oppose a resolve which, after protestations such as these, he regarded as unshakable. He did not blame Zéphyrine in the least. He even supported her. Unfolding to the deserted one a purer future, he told her of the frailty of human sentiment, exhorted her to display a spirit of renunciation and enjoined her to show a pious resignation to the will of God.

"Seeing, in truth, that your friend is so little worthy of affection ..."

He was not suffered to continue. Zéphyrine flew at him, and shaking him furiously by the collar of his frock-coat, she yelled, half choking with rage: "So little worthy of affection! Michel! Ah! my boy, you find another more kind, more gay, more witty, you find another like him, always young, yes, always. Not worthy of affection! Anyone can see you don't know anything about love, you old duffer."

Taking advantage of the fact that Père Sariette was thus deeply engaged, young d'Esparvieu slipped the little *Lucretius* into his pocket, and strolled deliberately past the crouching librarian, bidding him adieu with a little wave of the hand.

Armed with his talisman, he hastened to the Place des Ternes, to interview Madame Mira. She received him in a red drawing-room where neither owl nor frog nor any of the paraphernalia of ancient magic were to be found. Madame Mira, in a prune-coloured dress, her hair powdered, though already past her

prime, was of very good appearance. She spoke with a certain elegance and prided herself on discovering hidden things by the help alone of Science, Philosophy, and Religion. She felt the morocco binding, feigning to close her eyes, and looking meanwhile through the narrow slit between her lids at the Latin title and the coat of arms which conveyed nothing to her.

Accustomed to receive as tokens such things as rings, handkerchiefs, letters, and locks of hair, she could not conceive to what sort of individual this singular book could belong. By habitual and mechanical cunning she disguised her real surprise under a feigned surprise.

“Strange!” she murmured, “strange! I do not see quite clearly ... I perceive a woman....”

As she let fall this magic word, she glanced furtively to see what sort of an effect it had and beheld on her questioner’s face an unexpected look of disappointment. Perceiving that she was off the track, she immediately changed her oracle:

“But she fades away immediately. It is strange, strange! I have a confused impression of some vague form, a being that I cannot define,” and having assured herself by a hurried glance that, this time, her words were going down, she expatiated on the vagueness of the person and on the mist that enveloped him.

However, the vision grew clearer to Madame Mira, who was following a clue step by step.

“A wide street ... a square with a statue ... a deserted street, — stairs. He is there in a bluish room — he is a young man, with pale and careworn face. There are things he seems to regret, and which he would not do again did they still remain undone.”

But the effort at divination had been too great. Fatigue prevented the clairvoyante from continuing her transcendental researches. She spent her remaining strength in impressively recommending him who consulted her to remain in intimate union with God if he wished to regain what he had lost and succeed in his attempts.

On leaving Maurice placed a louis on the mantelpiece and went away moved and troubled, persuaded that Madame Mira possessed supernatural faculties, but unfortunately insufficient ones.

At the bottom of the stairs he remembered he had left the little *Lucretius* on the table of the pythoness, and, thinking that the old maniac Sارية would never get over its loss, went up to recover possession of it.

On re-entering the paternal abode his gaze lighted upon a shadowy and grief-stricken figure. It was old Sارية, who in tones as plaintive as the wail of the

November wind began to beg for his *Lucretius* . Maurice pulled it carelessly out of his great-coat pocket.

“Don’t flurry yourself, Monsieur Sariette,” said he. “There the thing is.”

Clasping the jewel to his bosom the old librarian bore it away and laid it gently down on the blue table-cloth, thinking all the while where he might safely hide his precious treasure, and turning over all sorts of schemes in his mind as became a zealous curator. But who among us shall boast of his wisdom? The foresight of man is short, and his prudence is for ever being baffled. The blows of fate are ineluctable; no man shall evade his doom. There is no counsel, no caution that avails against destiny. Hapless as we are, the same blind force which regulates the courses of atom and of star fashions universal order from our vicissitudes. Our ill-fortune is necessary to the harmony of the Universe. It was the day for the binder, a day which the revolving seasons brought round twice a year, beneath the sign of the Ram and the sign of the Scales. That day, ever since morning, Monsieur Sariette had been making things ready for the binder. He had laid out on the table as many of the newly purchased paper-bound volumes as were deemed worthy of a permanent binding or of being put in boards, and also those books whose binding was in need of repair, and of all these he had drawn up a detailed and accurate list. Punctually at five o’clock, old Amédée, the man from Léger-Massieu’s, the binder in the Rue de l’Abbaye, presented himself at the d’Esparvieu library and, after a double check had been carried out by Monsieur Sariette, thrust the books he was to take back to his master into a piece of cloth which he fastened into knots at the four corners and hoisted on to his shoulder. He then saluted the librarian with the following words, “Good night, all!” and went downstairs.

Everything went off on this occasion as usual. But Amédée, seeing the *Lucretius* on the table, innocently put it into the bag with the others, and took it away without Monsieur Sariette’s perceiving it. The librarian quitted the home of the Philosophers and Globes in entire forgetfulness of the book whose absence had been causing him such horrible anxiety all day long. Some people may take a stern view of the matter and call this a lapse, a defection of his better nature. But would it not be more accurate to say that fate had decided that things should come to pass in this manner, and that what is called chance, and is in fact but the regular order of nature, had accomplished this imperceptible deed which was to have such awful consequences in the sight of man? Monsieur Sariette went off to his dinner at the *Quatre Évêques* , and read his paper *La Croix* . He was tranquil and serene. It was only the next morning when he entered the abode of the Philosophers and Globes that he remembered the *Lucretius* . Failing to see it on

the table he looked for it everywhere, but without success. It never entered his head that Amédée might have taken it away by mistake. What he did think was that the invisible visitant had returned, and he was mightily disturbed.

The unhappy curator, hearing a noise on the landing, opened the door and found it was little Léon, who, with a gold-braided *képi* stuck on his head, was shouting “Vive la France” and hurling dusters and feather-brooms and Hippolyte’s floor polish at imaginary foes. The child preferred this landing for playing soldiers to any other part of the house, and sometimes he would stray into the library. Monsieur Sariette was seized with the sudden suspicion that it was he who had taken the *Lucretius* to use as a missile and he ordered him, in threatening tones, to give it back. The child denied that he had taken it, and Monsieur Sariette had recourse to cajolery.

“Léon, if you bring me back the little red book, I will give you some chocolates.”

The child grew thoughtful; and in the evening, as Monsieur Sariette was going downstairs, he met Léon, who said:

“There’s the book!”

And, holding out a much-torn picture-book called *The Story of Gribouille* , demanded his chocolates.

A few days later the post brought Maurice the prospectus of an enquiry agency managed by an ex-employee at the Prefecture of Police; it promised celerity and discretion. He found at the address indicated a moustached gentleman morose and careworn, who demanded a deposit and promised to find the individual.

The ex-police official soon wrote to inform him that very onerous investigations had been commenced and asked for fresh funds. Maurice gave him no more and resolved to carry on the search himself. Imagining, not without some likelihood, that the angel would associate with the wretched, seeing that he had no money, and with the exiled of all nations — like himself, revolutionaries — he visited the lodging-houses at St. Ouen, at la Chapelle, Montmartre, and the Barrière d’Italie. He sought him in the doss-houses, public-houses where they give you plates of tripe, and others where you can get a sausage for three sous; he searched for him in the cellars at the Market and at Père Momie’s.

Maurice visited the restaurants where nihilists and anarchists take their meals. There he came across men dressed as women, gloomy and wild-looking youths, and blue-eyed octogenarians who laughed like little children. He observed, asked questions, was taken for a spy, had a knife thrust into him by a very beautiful woman, and the very next day continued his search in beer-houses, lodging-houses, houses of ill-fame, gambling-hells down by the fortifications, at the receivers of stolen goods, and among the “apaches.”

Seeing him thus pale, harassed, and silent, his mother grew worried.

“We must find him a wife,” she said. “It is a pity that Mademoiselle de la Verdelière has not a bigger fortune.”

Abbé Patouille did not hide his anxiety.

“This child,” he said, “is passing through a moral crisis.”

“I am more inclined to think,” replied Monsieur René d’Esparvieu, “that he is under the influence of some bad woman. We must find him an occupation which will absorb him and flatter his vanity. I might get him appointed Secretary to the Committee for the Preservation of Country Churches, or Consulting Counsel to the Syndicate of Catholic Plumbers.”

CHAPTER XVII

WHEREIN WE LEARN THAT SOPHAR, NO LESS EAGER FOR GOLD THAN MAMMON, LOOKED UPON HIS HEAVENLY HOME LESS FAVOURABLY THAN UPON FRANCE, A COUNTRY BLESSED WITH A SAVINGS BANK AND LOAN DEPARTMENTS, AND WHEREIN WE SEE, YET ONCE AGAIN, THAT WHOSO IS POSSESSED OF THIS WORLD'S GOODS FEARS THE EVIL EFFECTS OF ANY CHANGE

MEANWHILE Arcade led a life of obscure toil. He worked at a printer's in the Rue St. Benoît, and lived in an attic in the Rue Mouffetard. His comrades having gone on strike, he left the workroom and devoted his day to his propaganda. So successful was he that he won over to the side of revolt fifty thousand of those guardian angels who, as Zita had surmised, were discontented with their condition and imbued with the spirit of the times. But lacking money, he lacked liberty, and could not employ his time as he wished in instructing the sons of Heaven. So, too, Prince Istar, hampered by want of funds, manufactured fewer bombs than were needed, and these less fine. Of course he prepared a good many small pocket machines. He had filled Théophile's rooms with them, and not a day passed but he forgot some and left them lying about on the seats in various cafés. But a nice bomb, easily handled and capable of destroying many big mansions, cost him from twenty to twenty-five thousand francs; and Prince Istar only possessed two of this kind. Equally bent on procuring funds, Arcade and Istar both went to make a request for money from a celebrated financier named Max Everdingen, who, as everyone knows, is the managing director of the biggest banking concern in France and indeed in the whole world. What is not so well known is that Max Everdingen was not born of woman, but is a fallen angel. Nevertheless, such is the truth. In Heaven he was named Sophar, and guarded the treasures of Ialdabaoth, a great collector of gold and precious stones. In the exercise of this function Sophar contracted a love of riches which could not be satisfied in a state of society in which banks and stock exchanges are alike unknown. His heart flamed with an ardent love for the god of the Hebrews to whom he remained faithful during a long course of centuries. But at the commencement of the twentieth century of the Christian era, casting his eyes down from the height of the firmament upon France, he saw that this country, under the name of a Republic, was constituted as a plutocracy and that, under the appearance of a democratic government, high finance exercised sovereign sway, untrammelled and unchecked.

Henceforth life in the Empyrean became intolerable to him. He longed for France as for the promised land, and one day, bearing with him all the precious stones he could carry, he descended to earth and established himself in Paris.

This angel of cupidity did good business there. Since his materialisation his face had lost its celestial aspect; it reproduced the Semitic type in all its purity, and one could admire the lines and the puckers which wrinkle the faces of bankers and which are to be seen in the money-changers of Quintin Matsys.

His beginnings were humble and his success amazing. He married an ugly woman and they saw themselves reflected in their children as in a mirror. Baron Max Everdingen's large mansion, which rears itself on the heights of the Trocadéro, is crammed with the spoils of Christian Europe.

The Baron received Arcade and Prince Istar in his study, — one of the most modest rooms in his mansion. The ceiling is decorated with a fresco of Tiepolo, taken from a Venetian palace. The bureau of the Regent, Philip of Orleans, is in this room, which is full of cabinets, show-cases, pictures, and statues.

Arcade allowed his gaze to wander over the walls.

"How comes it, my brother Sophar," said he, "that you, in spite of your Jewish heart, obey so ill the commandment of the Lord your God who said: 'Thou shalt have no graven images'? for here I see an Apollo of Houdon's and a Hebe of Lemoine's, and several busts by Caffieri. And, like Solomon in his old age, O son of God, you set up in your dwelling-place the idols of strange nations: for such are this Venus of Boucher, this Jupiter of Rubens, and those nymphs that are indebted to Fragonard's brush for the gooseberry jam which smears their gleaming limbs. And here in this single show-case, Sophar, you keep the sceptre of St. Louis, six hundred pearls of Marie Antoinette's broken necklace, the imperial mantle of Charles V, the tiara wrought by Ghiberti for Pope Martin V, the Colonna, Bonaparte's sword — and I know not what besides."

"Mere trifles," said Max Everdingen.

"My dear Baron," said Prince Istar, "you even possess the ring which Charlemagne placed on a fairy's finger and which was thought to be lost. But let us discuss the business on which we have come. My friend and I have come to ask you for money."

"I can well believe it," replied Max Everdingen. "Everyone wants money, but for different reasons. What do you want money for?"

Prince Istar replied simply:

"To stir up a revolution in France."

"In France!" repeated the Baron, "in France? Well, I shall give you no money for that, you may be quite sure."

Arcade did not disguise the fact that he had expected greater liberality and more generous help from a celestial brother.

"Our project," he said, "is a vast one. It embraces both Heaven and Earth. It is settled in every detail. We shall first bring about a social revolution in France, in

Europe, on the whole planet; then we shall carry war into the heavens, where we shall establish a peaceful democracy. And to reduce the citadels of Heaven, to overturn the mountain of God, to storm celestial Jerusalem, a vast army is needful, enormous resources, formidable machines, and electrophores of a strength yet unknown. It is our intention to commence with France.”

“You are madmen!” exclaimed Baron Everdingen; “madmen and fools! Listen to me. There is not one single reform to carry out in France. All is perfect, finally settled, unchangeable. You hear? — unchangeable.” And to add force to his statement, Baron Everdingen banged his fist three times on the Regent’s bureau.

“Our points of view differ,” said Arcade sweetly. “I think, as does Prince Istar, that everything should be changed in this country. But what boots it to dispute the matter? Moreover, it is too late. We have come to speak to you, O my brother Sophar, in the name of five hundred thousand celestial spirits, all resolved to commence the universal revolution to-morrow.”

Baron Everdingen exclaimed that they were crazy, that he would not give a *sou*, that it was both criminal and mad to attack the most admirable thing in the world, the thing which renders earth more beautiful than heaven — Finance. He was a poet and a prophet. His heart thrilled with holy enthusiasm; he drew attention to the French Savings Bank, the virtuous Savings Bank, that chaste and pure Savings Bank like unto the Virgin of the Canticle who, issuing from the depths of the country in rustic petticoat, bears to the robust and splendid Bank — her bridegroom, who awaits her — the treasures of her love; and drew a picture of the Bank, enriched with the gifts of its spouse, pouring on all the nations of the world torrents of gold, which, of themselves, by a thousand invisible channels return in still greater abundance to the blessed land from which they sprung.

“By Deposit and Loan,” he went on, “France has become the New Jerusalem, shedding her glory over all the nations of Europe, and the Kings of the Earth come to kiss her rosy feet. And that is what you would fain destroy? You are both impious and sacrilegious.”

Thus spoke the angel of finance. An invisible harp accompanied his voice, and his eyes darted lightning.

Meanwhile Arcade, leaning carelessly against the Regent’s bureau, spread out under the Banker’s eyes various ground-plans, underground-plans, and sky-plans of Paris with red crosses indicating the points where bombs should be simultaneously placed in cellars and catacombs, thrown on public ways, and flung by a flotilla of aeroplanes. All the financial establishments, and notably the Everdingen Bank and its branches, were marked with red crosses.

The financier shrugged his shoulders.

“Nonsense! you are but wretches and vagabonds, shadowed by all the police of the world. You are penniless. How can you manufacture all the machines?”

By way of reply, Prince Istar drew from his pocket a small copper cylinder, which he gracefully presented to Baron Everdingen.

“You see,” said he, “this ordinary-looking box. It is only necessary to let it fall on the ground immediately to reduce this mansion with its inmates to a mass of smoking ashes, and to set a fire going which would devour all the Trocadéro quarter. I have ten thousand like that, and I make three dozen a day.”

The financier asked the Cherub to replace the machine in his pocket, and continued in a conciliatory tone:

“Listen to me, my friends. Go and start a revolution at once in Heaven, and leave things alone in this country. I will sign a cheque for you. You can procure all the material you need to attack celestial Jerusalem.”

And Baron Everdingen was already working up in his imagination a magnificent deal in electrophores and war-material.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHEREIN IS BEGUN THE GARDENER'S STORY, IN THE COURSE OF WHICH WE SHALL SEE THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD UNFOLDED IN A DISCOURSE AS BROAD AND MAGNIFICENT IN ITS VIEWS AS BOSSUET'S DISCOURSE ON THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE IS NARROW AND DISMAL

THE gardener bade Arcade and Zita sit down in an arbour walled with wild bryony, at the far end of the orchard.

"Arcade," said the beautiful Archangel, "Nectaire will perhaps reveal to you to-day the things you are burning to know. Ask him to speak."

Arcade did so and old Nectaire, laying down his pipe, began as follows: —

"I knew him. He was the most beautiful of all the Seraphim. He shone with intelligence and daring. His great heart was big with all the virtues born of pride: frankness, courage, constancy in trial, indomitable hope. Long, long ago, ere Time was, in the boreal sky where gleam the seven magnetic stars, he dwelt in a palace of diamond and gold, where the air was ever tremulous with the beating of wings and with songs of triumph. Iahveh, on his mountain, was jealous of Lucifer. You both know it: angels like unto men feel love and hatred quicken within them. Capable, at times, of generous resolves, they too often follow their own interests and yield to fear. Then, as now, they showed themselves, for the most part, incapable of lofty thoughts, and in the fear of the Lord lay their sole virtue. Lucifer, who held vile things in proud disdain, despised this rabble of commonplace spirits for ever wallowing in a life of feasts and pleasure. But to those who were possessed of a daring spirit, a restless soul, to those fired with a wild love of liberty, he proffered friendship, which was returned with adoration. These latter deserted in a mass the mountain of God and yielded to the Seraph the homage which That Other would fain have kept for himself alone.

"I ranked among the Dominations, and my name, Alaciel, was not unknown to fame. To satisfy my mind — that was ever tormented with an insatiable thirst for knowledge and understanding — I observed the nature of things, I studied the properties of minerals, air, and water. I sought out the laws which govern nature, solid or ethereal, and after much pondering I perceived that the Universe had not been formed as its pretended Creator would have us believe; I knew that all that exists, exists of itself and not by the caprice of Iahveh; that the world is itself its own creator and the spirit its own God. Henceforth I despised Iahveh for his imposture, and I hated him because he showed himself to be opposed to all that I found desirable and good: liberty, curiosity, doubt. These feelings drew me towards the Seraph. I admired him, I loved him. I dwelt in his light. When at

length it appeared that a choice had to be made between him and That Other I ranged myself on the side of Lucifer and knew no other aim than to serve him, no other desire than to share his lot.

“War having become inevitable, he prepared for it with indefatigable vigilance and all the resourcefulness of a far-seeing mind. Making the Thrones and Dominations into Chalybes and Cyclopes, he drew forth iron from the mountains bordering his domain; iron, which he valued more than gold, and forged weapons in the caverns of Heaven. Then in the desert plain of the North he assembled myriads of Spirits, armed them, taught them, and drilled them. Although prepared in secret, the enterprise was too vast for his adversary not to be soon aware of it. It might in truth be said that he had always foreseen and dreaded it, for he had made a citadel of his abode and a warlike host of his angels, and he gave himself the name of the God of Hosts. He made ready his thunderbolts. More than half of the children of Heaven remained faithful to him; thronging round him he beheld obedient souls and patient hearts. The Archangel Michael, who knew not fear, took command of these docile troops. Lucifer, as soon as he saw that his army could gain no more in numbers or in warlike skill, moved it swiftly against the foe, and promising his angels riches and glory marched at their head towards the mountain upon whose summit stands the Throne of the Universe. For three days our host swept onward over the ethereal plains. Above our heads streamed the black standards of revolt. And now, behold, the Mountain of God shone rosy in the orient sky and our chief scanned with his eyes the glittering ramparts. Beneath the sapphire walls the foe was drawn up in battle array, and, while we marched clad in our iron and bronze, they shone resplendent in gold and precious stones.

“Their gonfalons of red and blue floated in the breeze, and lightning flashed from the points of their lances. In a little while the armies were only sundered one from the other by a narrow strip of level and deserted ground, and at this sight even the bravest shuddered as they thought that there in bloody conflict their fate would soon be sealed.

“Angels, as you know, never die. But when bronze and iron, diamond point or flaming sword tear their ethereal substance, the pain they feel is more acute than men may suffer, for their flesh is more exquisitely delicate; and should some essential organ be destroyed, they fall inert and, slowly decomposing, are resolved into clouds and during long æons float insensible in the cold ether. And when at length they resume spirit and form they fail to recover full memory of their past life. Therefore it is but natural that angels shrink from suffering, and the bravest among them is troubled at the thought of being reft of light and sweet remembrance. Were it otherwise the angelic race would know neither the delight

of battle nor the glory of sacrifice. Those who, before the beginning of Time, fought in the Empyrean for or against the God of Armies, would have taken part without honour in mock battles, and it would not now become me to say to you, my children, with rightful pride:

“‘Lo, I was there!’

“Lucifer gave the signal for the onset and led the assault. We fell upon the enemy, thinking to destroy him then and there and carry the sacred citadel at the first onslaught. The soldiers of the jealous God, less fiery, but no whit less firm than ours, remained immovable. The Archangel Michael commanded them with the calmness and resolution of a mighty spirit. Thrice we strove to break through their lines, thrice they opposed to our ironclad breast the flaming points of their lances, swift to pierce the stoutest cuirass. In millions the glorious bodies fell. At length our right wing pierced the enemy’s left and we beheld the Principalities, the Powers, the Virtues, the Dominations, and the Thrones turn and flee in full career; while the Angels of the Third Choir, flying distractedly above them, covered them with a snow of feathers mingled with a rain of blood. We sped in pursuit of them amid the débris of chariots and broken weapons, and we spurred their nimble flight. Suddenly a storm of cries amazed us. It grew louder and nearer. With desperate shrieks and triumphal clamour the right wing of the enemy, the giant archangels of the Most High, had flung themselves upon our left flank and broken it. Thus we were forced to abandon the pursuit of the fugitives and hasten to the rescue of our own shattered troops. Our prince flew to rally them, and re-established the conflict. But the left wing of the enemy, whose ruin he had not quite consummated, no longer pressed by lance or arrow, regained courage, returned, and faced us yet again. Night fell upon the dubious field. While under the shelter of darkness, in the still, silent air stirred ever and anon by the moans of the wounded, his forces were resting from their toils, Lucifer began to make ready for the next day’s battle. Before dawn the trumpets sounded the reveille. Our warriors surprised the enemy at the hour of prayer, put them to rout, and long and fierce was the carnage that ensued. When all had either fallen or fled, the Archangel Michael, none with him save a few companions with four wings of flame, still resisted the onslaughts of a countless host. They fell back ceaselessly opposing their breasts to us, and Michael still displayed an impassible countenance. The sun had run a third of its course when we commenced to scale the Mountain of God. An arduous ascent it was: sweat ran from our brows, a dazzling light blinded us. Weighed down with steel, our feathery wings could not sustain us, but hope gave us wings that bore us up. The beautiful Seraph, pointing with glittering hand, mounting ever higher and higher, showed us the way. All day long we slowly clomb the lofty heights which at

evening were robed in azure, rose, and violet. The starry host appearing in the sky seemed as the reflection of our own arms. Infinite silence reigned above us. We went on, intoxicated with hope; all at once from the darkened sky lightning darted forth, the thunder muttered, and from the cloudy mountain-top fell fire from Heaven. Our helmets, our breast-plates were running with flames, and our bucklers broke under bolts sped by invisible hands. Lucifer, in the storm of fire, retained his haughty mien. In vain the lightning smote him; mightier than ever he stood erect, and still defied the foe. At length, the thunder, making the mountain totter, flung us down pell-mell, huge fragments of sapphire and ruby crashing down with us as we fell, and we rolled inert, swooning, for a period whose duration none could measure.

“I awoke in a darkness filled with lamentations. And when my eyes had grown accustomed to the dense shadows I saw round me my companions in arms, scattered in thousands on the sulphurous ground, lit by fitful gleams of livid light. My eyes perceived but fields of lava, smoking craters, and poisonous swamps.

“Mountains of ice and shadowy seas shut in the horizon. A brazen sky hung heavy on our brows. And the horror of the place was such that we wept as we sat, crouched elbow on knee, our cheeks resting on our clenched hands.

“But soon, raising my eyes, I beheld the Seraph standing before me like a tower. Over his pristine splendour sorrow had cast its mantle of sombre majesty.

“‘Comrades,’ said he, ‘we must be happy and rejoice, for behold we are delivered from celestial servitude. Here we are free, and it were better to be free in Hell than serve in Heaven. We are not conquered, since the will to conquer is still ours. We have caused the Throne of the jealous God to totter; by our hands it shall fall. Arise, therefore, and be of good heart.’

“Thereupon, at his command, we piled mountain upon mountain and on the topmost peak we reared engines which flung molten rocks against the divine habitations. The celestial host was taken unaware and from the abodes of glory there issued groans and cries of terror. And even then we thought to re-enter in triumph on our high estate, but the Mountain of God was wreathed with lightnings, and thunderbolts, falling on our fortress, crushed it to dust. After this fresh disaster, the Seraph remained awhile in meditation, his head buried in his hands. At length he raised his darkened visage. Now he was Satan, greater than Lucifer. Steadfast and loyal the angels thronged about him.

“‘Friends,’ he said, ‘if victory is denied us now, it is because we are neither worthy nor capable of victory. Let us determine wherein we have failed. Nature shall not be ruled, the sceptre of the Universe shall not be grasped, Godhead

shall not be won, save by knowledge alone. We must conquer the thunder; to that task we must apply ourselves unwearingly. It is not blind courage (no one this day has shown more courage than have you) which will win us the courts of Heaven; but rather study and reflection. In these silent realms where we are fallen, let us meditate, seeking the hidden causes of things; let us observe the course of Nature; let us pursue her with compelling ardour and all-conquering desire; let us strive to penetrate her infinite grandeur, her infinite minuteness. Let us seek to know when she is barren and when she brings forth fruit; how she makes cold and heat, joy and sorrow, life and death; how she assembles and disperses her elements, how she produces both the light air we breathe and the rocks of diamond and sapphire whence we have been precipitated, the divine fire wherewith we have been scarred and the soaring thought which stirs our minds. Torn with dire wounds, scorched by flame and by ice, let us render thanks to Fate which has sedulously opened our eyes, and let us rejoice at our lot. It is through pain that, suffering a first experience of Nature, we have been roused to know her and to subdue her. When she obeys us we shall be as gods. But even though she hide her mysteries for ever from us, deny us arms and keep the secret of the thunder, we still must needs congratulate ourselves on having known pain, for pain has revealed to us new feelings, more precious and more sweet than those experienced in eternal bliss, and inspired us with love and pity unknown to Heaven.'

"These words of the Seraph changed our hearts and opened up fresh hope to us. Our hearts were filled with a great longing for knowledge and love.

"Meanwhile the Earth was coming into being. Its immense and nebulous orb took on hourly more shape and more certainty of outline. The waters which fed the seaweed, the madrepores and shellfish and bore the light flotilla of the nautilus upon their bosom, no longer covered it in its entirety; they began to sink into beds, and already continents appeared, where, on the warm slime, amphibious monsters crawled. Then the mountains were overspread with forests, and divers races of animals commenced to feed on the grass, the moss, the berries on the trees, and on the acorns. Then there took possession of cavernous shelters under the rocks, a being who was cunning to wound with a sharpened stone the savage beasts, and by his ruses to overcome the ancient denizens of forest, plain, and mountain.

"Man entered painfully on his kingdom. He was defenceless and naked. His scanty hair afforded him but little protection from the cold. His hands ended in nails too frail to do battle with the claws of wild beasts, but the position of his thumb, in opposition to the rest of his fingers, allowed him easily to grasp the most diverse objects and endowed him with skill in default of strength. Without

differing essentially from the rest of the animals, he was more capable than any others of observing and comparing. As he drew from his throat various sounds, it occurred to him to designate by a particular inflexion of the voice whatever impinged upon his mind, and by this sequence of different sounds he was enabled to fix and communicate his ideas. His miserable lot and his painstaking spirit aroused the sympathy of the vanquished angels, who discerned in him an audacity equalling their own, and the germ of the pride that was at once their glory and their bane. They came in large numbers to be near him, to dwell on this young earth whither their wings wafted them in effortless flight. And they took pleasure in sharpening his talents and fostering his genius. They taught him to clothe himself in the skins of wild beasts, to roll stones before the mouths of caves to keep out the tigers and bears. They taught him how to make the flame burst forth by twirling a stick among the dried leaves and to foster the sacred fire upon the hearth. Inspired by the ingenious spirits he dared to cross the rivers in the hollowed trunks of cleft trees, he invented the wheel, the grinding-mill, and the plough; the share tore up the earth and the wound brought forth fruit, and the grain offered to him who ground it divine nourishment. He moulded vessels in clay, and out of the flint he fashioned various tools.

“In fine, taking up our abode among mankind, we consoled them and taught them. We were not always visible to them, but of an evening, at the turn of the road, we would appear to them under forms often strange and weird, at times dignified and charming, and we adopted at will the appearance of a monster of the woods and waters, of a venerable old man, of a beautiful child, or of a woman with broad hips. Sometimes we would mock them in our songs or test their intelligence by some cunning prank. There were certain of us of a rather turbulent humour who loved to tease their women and children, but though lowly folk, they were our brothers, and we were never loath to come to their aid. Through our care their intelligence developed sufficiently to attain to mistaken ideas, and to acquire erroneous notions of the relations of cause and effect. As they supposed that some magic bond existed between the reality and its counterfeit presentment, they covered the walls of their caves with figures of animals and carved in ivory images of the reindeer and the mammoth in order to secure as prey the creatures they represented. Centuries passed by with infinite slowness while their genius was coming to birth. We sent them happy thoughts in dreams, inspired them to tame the horse, to castrate the bull, to teach the dog to guard the sheep. They created the family and the tribe. It came to pass one day that one of their wandering tribes was assailed by ferocious hunters. Forthwith the young men of the tribe formed an enclosed ring with their chariots, and in it they shut their women, children, old people, cattle, and treasures, and from the

platform of their chariots they hurled murderous stones at their assailants. Thus was formed the first city. Born in misery and condemned to do murder by the law of Iahveh, man put his whole heart into doing battle, and to war he was indebted for his noblest virtues. He hallowed with his blood that sacred love of country which should (if man fulfils his destiny to the very end) enfold the whole earth in peace. One of us, Dædalus, brought him the axe, the plumb-line, and the sail. Thus we rendered the existence of mortals less hard and difficult. By the shores of the lakes they built dwellings of osier, where they might enjoy a meditative quiet unknown to the other inhabitants of the earth, and when they had learned to appease their hunger without too painful efforts we breathed into their hearts the love of beauty.

“They raised up pyramids, obelisks, towers, colossal statues which smiled stiff and uncouth, and genetic symbols. Having learnt to know us or trying at least to divine what manner of beings we were, they felt both friendship and fear for us. The wisest among them watched us with sacred awe and pondered our teaching. In their gratitude the people of Greece and of Asia consecrated to us stones, trees, shadowy woods; offered us victims, and sang us hymns; in fact we became gods in their sight, and they called us Horus, Isis, Astarte, Zeus, Cybele, Demeter, and Triptolemus. Satan was worshipped under the names of Evan, Dionysus, Iacchus, and Lenæus. He showed in his various manifestations all the strength and beauty which it is given to mortals to conceive. His eyes had the sweetness of the wood-violet, his lips were brilliant with the ruby-red of the pomegranate, a down finer than the velvet of the peach covered his cheeks and his chin: his fair hair, wound like a diadem and knotted loosely on the crown of his head, was encircled with ivy. He charmed the wild beasts, and penetrating into the deep forests drew to him all wild spirits, every thing that climbed in trees and peered through the branches with wild and timid gaze. On all these creatures fierce and fearful, that lived on bitter berries and beneath whose hairy breasts a wild heart beat, half-human creatures of the woods — on all he bestowed loving-kindness and grace, and they followed him drunk with joy and beauty. He planted the vine and showed mortals how to crush the grapes underfoot to make the wine flow. Magnificent and benign, he fared across the world, a long procession following in his train. To bear him company I took the form of a satyr; from my brow sprang two budding horns. My nose was flat and my ears were pointed. Glands, like those of the goat, hung on my neck, a goat’s tail moved with my moving loins, and my hairy legs ended in a black cloven hoof which beat the ground in cadence.

“Dionysus fared on his triumphal march over the world. In his company I passed through Lydia, the Phrygian fields, the scorching plains of Persia, Media

bristling with hoar-frost, Arabia Felix, and rich Asia where flourishing cities were laved by the waves of the sea. He proceeded on a car drawn by lions and lynxes, to the sound of flutes, cymbals, and drums, invented for his mysteries. Bacchantes, Thyades, and Mænads, girt with the dappled fawn-skin, waved the thyrsus encircled with ivy. He bore in his train the Satyrs, whose joyous troop I led, Sileni, Pans, and Centaurs. Under his feet flowers and fruit sprang to life, and striking the rocks with his wand he made limpid streams gush forth. In the month of the Vintage he visited Greece, and the villagers ran forth to meet him, stained with the green and ruddy juices of the plants, they wore masks of wood, or bark, or leaves; in their hands they bore earthen cups, and danced wanton dances. Their womenfolk, imitating the companions of the God, their heads wreathed with green smilax, fastened round their supple loins skins of fawn or goat. The virgins twined about their throats garlands of fig leaves, they kneaded cakes of flour, and bore the Phallus in the mystic basket. And the vine-dressers, all daubed with lees of wine, standing up in their wains and bandying mockery or abuse with the passers-by, invented Tragedy.

“Truly, it was not in dreaming beside a fountain, but by dint of strenuous toil that Dionysus taught them to grow plants and to make them bring forth succulent fruits. And while he pondered the art of transforming the rough woodlanders into a race that should love music and submit to just laws, more than once over his brow, burning with the fire of enthusiasm, did melancholy and gloomy fever pass. But his profound knowledge and his friendship for mankind enabled him to triumph over every obstacle. O days divine! Beautiful dawn of life! We led the Bacchanals on the leafy summits of the mountains and on the yellow shores of the seas. The Naiads and the Oreads mingled with us at our play. Aphrodite at our coming rose from the foam of the sea to smile upon us.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE GARDENER'S STORY, CONTINUED

WHEN men had learned to cultivate the earth, to herd cattle, to enclose their holy places within walls, and to recognise the gods by their beauty, I withdrew to that smiling land girdled with dark woods and watered by the Stymphalos, the Olbios, the Erymanthus, and the proud Crathis, swollen with the icy waters of the Styx, and there, in a green valley at the foot of a hill planted with arbutus, olive, and pine, beneath a cluster of white poplars and plane trees, by the side of a stream flowing with soft murmur amid tufted mastic trees, I sang to the shepherds and the nymphs of the birth of the world, the origin of fire, of the tenuous air, of water and of earth. I told them how primeval men had lived wretched and naked in the woods, before the ingenious spirits had taught them the arts; of God, too, I sang to them, and why they gave Dionysus Semele to mother, because his desire to befriend mankind was born amid the thunder.

“It was not without effort that this people, more pleasing than all the others in the eyes of the gods, these happy Greeks, achieved good government and a knowledge of the arts. Their first temple was a hut composed of laurel branches; their first image of the gods, a tree; their first altar, a rough stone stained with the blood of Iphigenia. But in a short time they brought wisdom and beauty to a point that no nation had attained before them, that no nation has since approached. Whence comes it, Arcade, this solitary marvel on the earth? Wherefore did the sacred soil of Ionia and of Attica bring forth this incomparable flower? Because nor priesthood, nor dogma, nor revelation ever found a place there, because the Greeks never knew the jealous God.

“It was his own grace, his own genius that the Greek enthroned and deified as his God, and when he raised his eyes to the heavens it was his own image that he saw reflected there. He conceived everything in due measure; and to his temples he gave perfect proportion. All therein was grace, harmony, symmetry, and wisdom; all were worthy of the immortals who dwelt within them and who under names of happy choice, in realised shapes, figured forth the genius of man. The columns which bore the marble architrave, the frieze and the cornice were touched with something human, which made them venerable; and sometimes one might see, as at Athens and at Delphi, beautiful young girls strong-limbed and radiant upstaying the entablature of treasure house and sanctuary. O days of splendour, harmony, and wisdom!

“Dionysus resolved to repair to Italy, whither he was summoned under the name of Bacchus by a people eager to celebrate his mysteries. I took passage in his ship decked with tendrils of the vine, and landed under the eyes of the two brothers of Helen at the mouth of the yellow Tiber. Already under the teaching of the god, the inhabitants of Latium had learned to wed the vine to the young stripling elm. It was my pleasure to dwell at the foot of the Sabine hills in a valley crowned with trees and watered with pure springs. I gathered the verbena and the mallow in the meadows. The pale olive-trees twisting their perforated trunks on the slope of the hill gave me of their unctuous fruit. There I taught a race of men with square heads, who had not, like the Greeks, a fertile mind, but whose hearts were true, whose souls were patient, and who revered the gods. My neighbour, a rustic soldier, who for fifteen years had bowed under the burden of his haversack, had followed the Roman eagle over land and sea, and had seen the enemies of the sovereign people flee before him. Now he drove his furrow with his two red oxen, starred with white between their spreading horns, while beneath the cabin’s thatch his spouse, chaste and sedate of mien, pounded garlic in a bronze mortar and cooked the beans upon the sacred hearth, And I, his friend, seated near by under an oak, used to lighten his labours with the sound of my flute, and smile on his little children, when the sun, already low in the sky, was lengthening the shadows, and they returned from the wood all laden with branches. At the garden gate where the pears and pumpkins ripened, and where the lily and the evergreen acanthus bloomed, a figure of Priapus carved out of the trunk of a fig tree menaced thieves with his formidable emblem, and the reeds swaying with the wind over his head scared away the plundering birds. At new moon the pious husbandman made offering of a handful of salt and barley to his household gods crowned with myrtle and with rosemary.

“I saw his children grow up, and his children’s children, who kept in their hearts their early piety and did not forget to offer sacrifice to Bacchus, to Diana, and to Venus, nor omit to pour fresh wines and scatter flowers into the fountains. But slowly they fell away from their old habits of patient toil and simplicity.

“I heard them complain when the torrent, swollen with many rains, compelled them to construct a dyke to protect the paternal fields, and the rough Sabine wine grew unpleasing to their delicate palate. They went to drink the wines of Greece at the neighbouring tavern; and the hours slipped unheeded by, while within the arbour shade they watched the dance of the flute player, practised at swaying her supple limbs to the sound of the castanets.

“Lulled by murmuring leaves and whispering streams, the tillers of the soil took sweet repose, but between the poplars we saw along borders of the sacred way vast tombs, statues, and altars arise, and the rolling of the chariot wheels grew

more frequent over the worn stones. A cherry sapling brought home by a veteran told us of the far-distant conquests of a Consul, and odes sung to the lyre related the victories of Rome, mistress of the world.

“All the countries where the great Dionysus had journeyed, changing wild beasts into men, and making the fruit and grain bloom and ripen beneath the passing of his Mænads, now breathed the Pax Romana. The nursling of the she-wolf, soldier and labourer, friend of conquered nations, laid out roads from the margin of the misty sea to the rocky slopes of the Caucasus; in every town rose the temple of Augustus and of Rome, and such was the universal faith in Latin justice that in the gorges of Thessaly or on the wooded borders of the Rhine, the slave, ready to succumb under his iniquitous burden, called aloud on the name of Cæsar.

“But why must it be that on this ill-starred globe of land and water, all should perish and die and the fairest things be ever the most fleeting? O adorable daughters of Greece! O Science! O Wisdom! O Beauty! kindly divinities, you were wrapt in heavy slumber ere you submitted to the outrages of the barbarians, who already in the marshy wastes of the North and on the lonely steppes, ready to assail you, bestrode bare-backed their little shaggy horses.

CHAPTER XX

THE GARDENER'S STORY, CONTINUED

THE new superstition spread at first over Syria and Africa; it won over the seaports where the filthy rabble swarm, and, penetrating into Italy, infected at first the courtesans and the slaves, and then made rapid progress among the middle classes of the towns. But for a long while the country-side remained undisturbed. As in the past, the villagers consecrated a pine tree to Diana, and sprinkled it every year with the blood of a young boar; they propitiated their Lares with the sacrifice of a sow, and offered to Bacchus — benefactor of mankind — a kid of dazzling whiteness, or if they were too poor for this, at least they had a little wine and a little flour from the vineyard and from the fields for their household gods. We had taught them that it sufficed to approach the altar with clean hands, and that the gods rejoiced over a modest offering.

“Nevertheless, the reign of Iahveh proclaimed its advent in a hundred places by its extravagances. The Christians burnt books, overthrew temples, set fire to the towns, and carried on their ravages as far as the deserts. There, thousands of unhappy beings, turning their fury against themselves, lacerated their sides with points of steel. And from the whole earth the sighs of voluntary victims rose up to God like songs of praise.

“My shadowy retreat could not escape for long from the fury of their madness.

“On the summit of the hill which overlooked the olive woods, brightened daily with the sounds of my flute, had stood since the earliest days of the Pax Romana, a small marble temple, round as the huts of our forefathers. It had no walls, but on a base of seven steps, sixteen columns rose in a circle with the acanthus on the capitals, bearing a cupola of white tiles. This cupola sheltered a statue of Love fashioning his bow, the work of an Athenian sculptor. The child seemed to breathe, joy was welling from his lips, all his limbs were harmonious and polished. I honoured this image of the most powerful of all the gods, and I taught the villagers to bear to him as an offering a cup crowned with verbena and filled with wine two summers old.

“One day, when seated as my custom was at the feet of the god, pondering precepts and songs, an unknown man, wild-looking, with unkempt hair, approached the temple, sprang at one bound up the marble steps, and with savage glee exclaimed:

“‘Die, poisoner of souls, and joy and beauty perish with you.’ He spoke thus, and drawing an axe from his girdle raised it against the god. I stayed his arm, I

threw him down, and trampled him under my feet.

“‘Demon,’ he cried desperately, ‘suffer me to overturn this idol, and you may slay me afterwards.’

“I heeded not his atrocious plea, but leaned with all my might on his chest, which cracked under my knee, and, squeezing his throat with my two hands, I strangled the impious one.

“While he lay there, with purple face and lolling tongue, at the feet of the smiling god, I went to purify myself at the sacred stream. Then leaving this land, now the prey of the Christian, I passed through Gaul and gained the banks of the Saône, whither Dionysus had, in days gone by, carried the vine. The god of the Christians had not yet been proclaimed to this happy people. They worshipped for its beauty a leafy beech-tree, whose honoured branches swept the ground, and they hung fillets of wool thereon. They also worshipped a sacred stream and set up images of clay in a dripping grotto. They made offering of little cheeses and a bowl of milk to the Nymphs of the woods and mountains.

“But soon an apostle of sorrow was sent to them by the new God. He was drier than a smoked fish. Although attenuated with fasting and watching, he taught with unabated ardour all manner of gloomy mysteries. He loved suffering, and thought it good; his anger fell upon all that was beautiful, comely, and joyous. The sacred tree fell beneath his hatchet. He hated the Nymphs, because they were beautiful, and he flung imprecations at them when their shining limbs gleamed among the leaves at evening, and he held my melodious flute in aversion. The poor wretch thought that there were certain forms of words wherewith to put to flight the deathless spirits that dwell in the cool groves, and in the depths of the woods and on the tops of the mountains. He thought to conquer us with a few drops of water over which he had pronounced certain words and made certain gestures. The Nymphs, to avenge themselves, appeared to him at nightfall and inflamed him with desire which the foolish knave thought animal; then they fled, their laughter scattered like grain over the fields, while their victim lay tossing with burning limbs on his couch of leaves. Thus do the divine nymphs laugh at exorcisers, and mock the wicked and their sordid chastity.

“The apostle did not do as much harm as he wished, because his teaching was given to the simple souls living in obedience to Nature, and because the mediocrity of most of mankind is such that they gain but little from the principles inculcated in them. The little wood in which I dwelt belonged to a Gaul of senatorial family, who retained some traces of Latin elegance. He loved his young freed-woman and shared with her his bed of brodered purple. His slaves cultivated his garden and his vineyard; he was a poet and sang, in

imitation of Ausonius, Venus whipping her son with roses. Although a Christian, he offered me milk, fruit, and vegetables as if I were the genius of the place. In return I charmed his idle moments with the music of my flute, and I gave him happy dreams. In fact, these peaceful Gauls knew very little of Iahveh and his son.

“But now behold fires looming on the horizon, and ashes driven by the wind fall within our forest glades. Peasants come driving a long file of waggons along the roads or urging their flocks before them. Cries of terror rise from the villages, ‘The Burgundians are upon us!’

“Now one horseman is seen, lance in hand, clad in shining bronze, his long red hair falling in two plaits on his shoulders. Then come two, then twenty, then thousands, wild and blood-stained; old men and children they put to the sword, ay, even aged grandams whose grey hairs cleave to the soles of the slaughterer’s boots, mingled with the brains of babes new-born. My young Gaul and his young freed-woman stain with their blood the couch brodered with narcissi. The barbarians burn the basilicas to roast their oxen whole, shatter the amphoræ, and drain the wine in the mud of the flooded cellars. Their women accompany them, huddled, half naked, in their war chariots. When the Senate, the dwellers in the cities, and the leaders of the churches had perished in the flames, the Burgundians, soddened with wine, lay down to slumber beneath the arcades of the Forum. Two weeks later one of them might have been seen smiling in his shaggy beard at the little child whom, on the threshold of their dwelling, his fair-haired spouse gathers in her arms; while another, kindling the fire of his forge, hammers out his iron with measured stroke; another sings beneath the oak tree to his assembled comrades of the gods and heroes of his race; and yet others spread out for sale stones fallen from Heaven, aurochs’ horns, and amulets. And the former inhabitants of the country, regaining courage little by little, crept from the woods where they had fled for refuge, and returned to rebuild their burnt-down cabins, plough their fields, and prune their vines.

“Once more life resumed its normal course; but those times were the most wretched that mankind had yet experienced. The barbarians swarmed over the whole Empire. Their ways were uncouth, and as they nurtured feelings of vengeance and greed, they firmly believed in the ransom of sin.

“The fable of Iahveh and his son pleased them, and they believed it all the more easily in that it was taught them by the Romans whom they knew to be wiser than themselves, and to whose arts and mode of life they yielded secret admiration. Alas! the heritage of Greece and Rome had fallen into the hands of fools. All knowledge was lost. In those days it was held to be a great merit to sing among the choir, and those who remembered a few sentences from the

Bible passed for prodigious geniuses. There were still poets as there were birds, but their verse went lame in every foot. The ancient demons, the good genii of mankind, shorn of their honours, driven forth, pursued, hunted down, remained hidden in the woods. There, if they still showed themselves to men, they adopted, to hold them in awe, a terrible face, a red, green, or black skin, baleful eyes, an enormous mouth fringed with boars' teeth, horns, a tail, and sometimes a human face on their bellies. The nymphs remained fair, and the barbarians, ignorant of the winsome names they bore in other days, called them fairies, and, imputing to them a capricious character and puerile tastes, both feared and loved them.

"We had suffered a grievous fall, and our ranks were sadly thinned; nevertheless we did not lose courage and, maintaining a laughing aspect and a benevolent spirit, we were in those direful days the real friends of mankind. Perceiving that the barbarians grew daily less sombre and less ferocious, we lent ourselves to the task of conversing with them under all sorts of disguises. We incited them, with a thousand precautions, and by prudent circumlocutions, not to acknowledge the old Iahveh as an infallible master, not blindly to obey his orders, and not to fear his menaces. When need was, we had recourse to magic. We exhorted them unceasingly to study nature and to strive to discover the traces of ancient wisdom.

"These warriors from the North — rude though they were — were acquainted with some mechanical arts. They thought they saw combats in the heavens; the sound of the harp drew tears from their eyes; and perchance they had souls capable of greater things than the degenerate Gauls and Romans whose lands they had invaded. They knew not how to hew stone or to polish marble; but they caused porphyry and columns to be brought from Rome and from Ravenna; their chief men took for their seal a gem engraved by a Greek in the days when Beauty reigned supreme. They raised walls with bricks, cunningly arranged like ears of corn, and succeeded in building quite pleasing-looking churches with cornices upheld by consoles depicting grim faces, and heavy capitals whereon were represented monsters devouring one another.

"We taught them letters and sciences. A mouthpiece of their god, one Gerbert, took lessons in physics, arithmetic, and music with us, and it was said that he had sold us his soul. Centuries passed, and man's ways remained violent. It was a world given up to fire and blood. The successors of the studious Gerbert, not content with the possession of souls (the profits one gains thereby are lighter than air), wished to possess bodies also. They pretended that their universal and prescriptive monarchy was held from a fisherman on the lake of Tiberias. One of them thought for a moment to prevail over the loutish Germanus, successor to

Augustus. But finally the spiritual had to come to terms with the temporal, and the nations were torn between two opposing masters.

“Nations took shape amid horrible tumult. On every side were wars, famines, and internecine conflicts. Since they attributed the innumerable ills that fell upon them to their God, they called him the Most Good, not by way of irony, but because to them the best was he who smote the hardest. In those days of violence, to give myself leisure for study I adopted a *rôle* which may surprise you, but which was exceedingly wise.

“Between the Saône and the mountains of Charolais, where the cattle pasture, there lies a wooded hill sloping gently down to fields watered by a clear stream. There stood a monastery celebrated throughout the Christian world. I hid my cloven feet under a robe and became a monk in this Abbey, where I lived peacefully, sheltered from the men at arms who to friend or foe alike showed themselves equally exacting. Man, who had relapsed into childhood, had all his lessons to learn over again. Brother Luke, whose cell was next to mine, studied the habits of animals and taught us that the weasel conceives her young within her ear. I culled simples in the fields wherewith to soothe the sick, who until then were made by way of treatment to touch the relics of saints. In the Abbey were several demons similar to myself whom I recognised by their cloven feet and by their kindly speech. We joined forces in our endeavours to polish the rough mind of the monks.

“While the little children played at hop-scotch under the Abbey walls our friends the monks devoted themselves to another game equally unprofitable, at which, nevertheless, I joined them, for one must kill time, — that, when one comes to think of it, is the sole business of life. Our game was a game of words which pleased our coarse yet subtle minds, set school fulminating against school, and put all Christendom in an uproar. We formed ourselves into two opposing camps. One camp maintained that before there were apples there was the Apple; that before there were popinjays there was the Popinjay; that before there were lewd and greedy monks there was the Monk, Lewdness and Greed; that before there were feet and before there were posteriors in this world the kick in the posterior must have had existence for all eternity in the bosom of God. The other camp replied that, on the contrary, apples gave man the idea of the apple; popinjays the idea of the popinjay; monks the idea of the monk, greed and lewdness, and that the kick in the posterior existed only after having been duly given and received. The players grew heated and came to fisticuffs. I was an adherent of the second party, which satisfied my reason better, and which was, in fact, condemned by the Council of Soissons.

“Meanwhile, not content with fighting among themselves, vassal against suzerain, suzerain against vassal, the great lords took it into their heads to go and fight in the East. They said, as well as I can remember, that they were going to deliver the tomb of the son of God.

“They said so, but their adventurous and covetous spirit excited them to go forth and seek lands, women, slaves, gold, myrrh, and incense. These expeditions, need it be said, proved disastrous; but our thick-headed compatriots brought back with them the knowledge of certain crafts and oriental arts and a taste for luxury. Henceforth we had less difficulty in making them work and in putting them in the way of inventions. We built wonderfully beautiful churches, with daringly pierced arches, lancet-shaped windows, high towers, thousands of pointed spires, which, rising in the sky towards Iahveh, bore at one and the same time the prayers of the humble and the threats of the proud, for it was all as much our doing as the work of men’s hands; and it was a strange sight to see men and demons working together at a cathedral, each one sawing, polishing, collecting stones, graving, on capital and on cornice, nettles, thorns, thistles, wild parsley, and wild strawberry, — carving faces of virgins and saints and weird figures of serpents, fishes with asses’ heads, apes scratching their buttocks; each one, in fact, putting his own particular talent, — mocking, sublime, grotesque, modest, or audacious, — into the work and making of it all a harmonious cacophony, a rapturous anthem of joy and sorrow, a Babel of victory. At our instigation the carvers, the gold-smiths, the enamellers, accomplished marvels and all the sumptuary arts flourished at once; there were silks at Lyons, tapestries at Arras, linen at Rheims, cloth at Rouen. The good merchants rode on their palfreys to the fairs, bearing pieces of velvet and brocade, embroideries, orfrays, jewels, vessels of silver, and illuminated books. Strollers and players set up their trestles in the churches and in the public squares, and represented, according to their lights, simple chronicles of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Women decked themselves in splendid raiment and lisped of love.

“In the spring when the sky was blue, nobles and peasants were possessed with the desire to make merry in the flower-strewn meadows. The fiddler tuned his instrument, and ladies, knights and demoiselles, townsfolk, villagers and maidens, holding hands, began the dance. But suddenly War, Pestilence, and Famine entered the circle, and Death, tearing the violin from the fiddler’s hands, led the dance. Fire devoured village and monastery. The men-at-arms hanged the peasants on the sign-posts at the cross-roads when they were unable to pay ransom, and bound pregnant women to tree-trunks, where at night the wolves came and devoured the fruit within the womb. The poor people lost their senses.

Sometimes, peace being re-established, and good times come again, they were seized with mad, unreasoning terror, abandoned their homes, and rushed hither and thither in troops, half naked, tearing themselves with iron hooks, and singing. I do not accuse Iahveh and his son of all this evil. Many ill things occurred without him and even in spite of him. But where I recognise the instigation of the All Good (as they called him) was in the custom instituted by his pastors, and established throughout Christendom, of burning, to the sound of bells and the singing of psalms, both men and women who, taught by the demons, professed, concerning this God, opinions of their own.”

CHAPTER XXI

THE GARDENER'S STORY, CONCLUDED

IT seemed as if science and thought had perished for all eternity, and that the earth would never again know peace, joy, and beauty.

“But one day, under the walls of Rome, some workmen, excavating the earth on the borders of an ancient road, found a marble sarcophagus which bore carved on its sides simulacra of Love and the triumphs of Bacchus.

“The lid being raised, a maiden appeared whose face shone with dazzling freshness. Her long hair spread over her white shoulders, she was smiling in her sleep. A band of citizens, thrilled with enthusiasm, raised the funeral couch and bore it to the Capitol. The people came in crowds to contemplate the ineffable beauty of the Roman maiden and stood around in silence, watching for the awakening of the divine soul held within this form of adorable beauty.

“And it came to pass that the City was so greatly stirred by this spectacle that the Pope, fearing, not without reason, the birth of a pagan cult from this radiant body, caused it to be removed at night and secretly buried. The precaution was vain, the labour fruitless. After so many centuries of barbarism, the beauty of the antique world had appeared for a moment before the eyes of men; it was long enough for its image, graven on their hearts, to inspire them with an ardent desire to love and to know.

“Henceforth, the star of the God of the Christians paled and sloped to its decline. Bold navigators discovered worlds inhabited by numerous races who knew not old Iahveh, and it was suspected that he was no less ignorant of them, since he had given them no news of himself or of his son the expiator. A Polish Canon demonstrated the true motions of the earth, and it was seen that, far from having created the world, the old demiurge of Israel had not even an inkling of its structure. The writings of philosophers, orators, jurisconsults, and ancient poets were dragged from the dust of the cloisters and passing from hand to hand inspired men's minds with the love of wisdom. The Vicar of the jealous God, the Pope himself, no longer believed in Him whom he represented on earth. He loved the arts and had no other care than to collect ancient statues and to rear sumptuous buildings wherein were displayed the orders of Vitruvius re-established by Bramante. We began to breathe anew. Already the old gods, recalled from their long exile, were returning to dwell upon earth. There they found once more their temples and their altars. Leo, placing at their feet the ring, the three crowns, and the keys, offered them in secret the incense of sacrifices.

Already Polyhymnia, leaning on her elbow, had begun to resume the golden thread of her meditations; already, in the gardens, the comely Graces and the Nymphs and Satyrs were weaving their mazy dances, and at length the earth had joy once more within its grasp. But, O calamity, unlucky fate, — most tragic circumstance! A German monk, all swollen with beer and theology, rose up against this renaissance of paganism, hurled menaces against it, shattered it, and prevailed single handed against the Princes of the Church. Inciting the nations, he called upon them to undertake a reform which saved that which was about to be destroyed. Vainly did the cleverest among us try to turn him from his work. A subtle demon, on earth called Beelzebub, marked him out for attack, now embarrassing him with learned controversial argument, now tormenting him with cruel mockery. The stubborn monk hurled his ink-pot at his head and went on with his dismal reformation. What ultimately happened? The sturdy mariner repaired, calked, and refloated the damaged ship of the Church. Jesus Christ owes it to this shaveling that his shipwreck was delayed for perhaps more than ten centuries. Henceforth things went from bad to worse. In the wake of this loutish monk, this beer-swiller and brawler, came that tall, dry doctor from Geneva, who, filled with the spirit of the ancient Iahveh, strove to bring the world back again to the abominable days of Joshua and the Judges of Israel. A maniac was he, filled with cold fury, a heretic and a burner of heretics, the most ferocious enemy of the Graces.

“These mad apostles and their mad disciples made even demons like myself, even the horned devils, look back longingly on the time when the Son with his Virgin Mother reigned over the nations dazzled with splendours: cathedrals with their stone tracery delicate as lace, flaming roses of stained glass, frescoes painted in vivid colours telling countless wondrous tales, rich orfrays, glittering enamel of shrines and reliquaries, gold of crosses and of monstrances, waxen tapers gleaming like starry galaxies amid the gloom of vaulted arches, organs with their deep-toned harmonies. All this doubtless was not the Parthenon, nor yet the Panathenæa, but it gladdened eyes and hearts; it was, at all events, beauty. And these cursed reformers would not suffer anything either pleasing or lovable. You should have seen them climbing in black swarms over doorways, plinths, spires, and bell-towers, striking with senseless hammers those images in stone which the demons had carved working hand in hand with the master designers, those genial saints and dear, holy women, and the touching idols of Virgin Mothers pressing their suckling to their heart. For, to be just, a little agreeable paganism had slipped into the cult of the jealous God. These monsters of heretics were for extirpating idolatry. We did our best, my companions and I, to hamper their horrible work, and I, for one, had the pleasure of flinging down

some dozens from the top of the porches and galleries on to the Cathedral Square, where their detestable brains got knocked out. The worst of it was that the Catholic Church also reformed herself and grew more mischievous than ever. In the pleasant land of France, the seminarists and the monks were inflamed with unheard-of fury against the ingenious demons and the men of learning. My prior was one of the most violent opponents of sound knowledge. For some time past my studious lucubrations had caused him anxiety, and perhaps he had caught sight of my cloven foot. The scoundrel searched my cell and found paper, ink, some Greek books newly printed, and some Pan-pipes hanging on the wall. By these signs he knew me for an evil spirit and had me thrown into a dungeon where I should have eaten the bread of suffering and drunk the waters of bitterness, had I not promptly made my escape by the window and sought refuge in the wooded groves among the Nymphs and the Fauns.

“Far and wide the lighted pyres cast the odour of charred flesh. Everywhere there were tortures, executions, broken bones, and tongues cut out. Never before had the spirit of Iahveh breathed forth such atrocious fury. However, it was not altogether in vain that men had raised the lid of the ancient sarcophagus and gazed upon the Roman Virgin.

“During this time of great terror when Papists and Reformers rivalled one another in violence and cruelty, amidst all these scenes of torture, the mind of man was regaining strength and courage. It dared to look up to the heavens, and there it saw, not the old Jew drunk with vengeance, but Venus Urania, tranquil and resplendent. Then a new order of things was born, then the great centuries came into being. Without publicly denying the god of their ancestors, men of intellect submitted to his mortal enemies, Science and Reason, and Abbé Gassendi relegated him gently to the far-distant abyss of first causes. The kindly demons who teach and console unhappy mortals, inspired the great minds of those days with discourses of all kinds, with comedies and tales told in the most polished fashion. Women invented conversation, the art of intimate letter-writing, and politeness. Manners took on a sweetness and a nobility unknown to preceding ages. One of the finest minds of that age of reason, the amiable Bernier, wrote one day to St. Evremond: ‘It is a great sin to deprive oneself of a pleasure.’ And this pronouncement alone should suffice to show the progress of intelligence in Europe. Not that there had not always been Epicureans but, unlike Bernier, Chapelle, and Molière, they had not the consciousness of their talent.

“Then even the very devotees understood Nature. And Racine, fierce bigot that he was, knew as well as such an atheistical physician as Guy Patin, how to attribute to divers states of the organs the passions which agitate mankind.

“Even in my abbey, whither I had returned after the turmoil, and which sheltered only the ignorant and the shallow thinker, a young monk, less of a dunce than the rest, confided to me that the Holy Spirit expresses itself in bad Greek to humiliate the learned.

“Nevertheless, theology and controversy were still raging in this society of thinkers. Not far from Paris in a shady valley there were to be seen solitary beings known as ‘les Messieurs,’ who called themselves disciples of St. Augustine, and argued with honest conviction that the God of the Scriptures strikes those who fear Him, spares those who confront Him, holds works of no account, and damns — should He so wish it — His most faithful servant; for His justice is not our justice, and His ways are incomprehensible.

“One evening I met one of these gentlemen in his garden, where he was pacing thoughtfully among the cabbage-plots and lettuce-beds. I bowed my horned head before him and murmured these friendly words: ‘May old Jehovah protect you, sir. You know him well. Oh, how well you know him, and how perfectly you have understood his character.’ The holy man thought he discerned in me a messenger from Hell, concluded he was eternally damned, and died suddenly of fright.

“The following century was the century of philosophy. The spirit of research was developed, reverence was lost; the pride of the flesh was diminished and the mind acquired fresh energy. Manners took on an elegance until then unknown. On the other hand, the monks of my order grew more and more ignorant and dirty, and the monastery no longer offered me any advantage now that good manners reigned in the town. I could bear it no longer. Flinging my habit to the nettles, I put a powdered wig on my horned brow, hid my goat’s legs under white stockings, and cane in hand, my pockets stuffed with gazettes, I frequented the fashionable world, visited the modish promenades, and showed myself assiduously in the *cafés* where men of letters were to be found. I was made welcome in *salons* where, as a happy novelty, there were arm-chairs that fitted the form, and where both men and women engaged in rational conversation.

“The very metaphysicians spoke intelligibly. I acquired great weight in the town as an authority on matters of exegesis, and, without boasting, I was largely responsible for the Testament of the curé Meslier and *The Bible Explained*, brought out by the chaplains to the King of Prussia.

“At this time a comic and cruel misadventure befel the ancient Iahveh. An American Quaker, by means of a kite, stole his thunderbolts.

“I was living in Paris, and was at the supper where they talked of strangling the last of the priests with the entrails of the last of the kings. France was in a ferment; a terrible revolution broke out. The ephemeral leaders of the disordered

State carried on a Reign of Terror amidst unheard-of perils. They were, for the most part, less pitiless and less cruel than the princes and judges instituted by Iahveh in the kingdoms of the earth; nevertheless, they appeared more ferocious, because they gave judgment in the name of Humanity. Unhappily they were easily moved to pity and of great sensibility. Now men of sensibility are irritable and subject to fits of fury. They were virtuous; they had moral laws, that is to say they conceived certain narrowly defined moral obligations, and judged human actions not by their natural consequences but by abstract principles. Of all the vices which contribute to the undoing of a statesman, virtue is the most fatal; it leads to murder. To work effectively for the happiness of mankind, a man must be superior to all morals, like the divine Julius. God, so ill-used for some time past, did not, on the whole, suffer excessively harsh treatment from these new men. He found protectors among them, and was adored under the name of the Supreme Being. One might even go so far as to say that terror created a diversion from philosophy and was profitable to the old demiurge, in that he appeared to represent order, public tranquillity, and the security of person and property.

“While Liberty was coming to birth amid the storm, I lived at Auteuil, and visited Madame Helvetius, where freethinkers in every branch of intellectual activity were to be met with. Nothing could be rarer than a freethinker, even after Voltaire’s day. A man who will face death without trembling dare not say anything out of the ordinary about morals. That very same respect for Humanity which prompts him to go forth to his death, makes him bow to public opinion. In those days I enjoyed listening to the talk of Volney, Cabanis, and Tracy. Disciples of the great Condillac, they regarded the senses as the origin of all our knowledge. They called themselves ideologists, were the most honourable people in the world, and grieved the vulgar minds by refusing them immortality. For the majority of people, though they do not know what to do with this life, long for another that shall have no end. During the turmoil, our small philosophical society was sometimes disturbed in the peaceful shades of Auteuil by patrols of patriots. Condorcet, our great man, was an outlaw. I myself was regarded as suspect by the friends of the people, who, in spite of my rustic appearance and my frieze coat, believed me to be an aristocrat, and I confess that independence of thought is the proudest of all aristocracies.

“One evening while I was stealthily watching the dryads of Boulogne, who gleamed amid the leaves like the moon rising above the horizon, I was arrested as a suspect, and put in prison. It was a pure misunderstanding; but the Jacobins of those days, like the monks whose place they had usurped, laid great stress on unity of obedience. After the death of Madame Helvetius our society gathered

together in the *salon* of Madame de Condorcet. Bonaparte did not disdain to chat with us sometimes.

“Recognizing him to be a great man, we thought him an ideologist like ourselves. Our influence in the land was considerable. We used it in his favour, and urged him towards the Imperial throne, thinking to display to the world a second Marcus Aurelius. We counted on him to establish universal peace; he did not fulfil our expectations, and we were wrong-headed enough to be wroth with him for our own mistake.

“Without any doubt he greatly surpassed all other men in quickness of intelligence, depth of dissimulation, and capacity for action. What made him an accomplished ruler was that he lived entirely in the present moment, and had no thoughts for anything beyond the immediate and actual reality. His genius was far-reaching and agile; his intelligence, vast in extent but common and vulgar in character, embraced humanity, but did not rise above it. He thought what every grenadier in the army thought; but he thought it with unprecedented force. He loved the game of chance, and it pleased him to tempt fortune by urging pigmies in their hundreds and thousands against each other. It was the game of a child as big as the world. He was too wily not to introduce old Iahveh into the game, — Iahveh, who was still powerful on earth, and who resembled him in his spirit of violence and domination. He threatened him, flattered him, caressed him, and intimidated him. He imprisoned his Vicar, of whom he demanded, with the knife at his throat, that rite of unction which, since the days of Saul of old, has bestowed might upon kings; he restored the worship of the demiurge, sang *Te Deums* to him, and made himself known through him as God of the earth, in small catechisms scattered broadcast throughout the Empire. They united their thunders, and a fine uproar they made.

“While Napoleon’s amusements were throwing Europe into a turmoil, we congratulated ourselves on our wisdom, a little sad, withal, at seeing the era of philosophy ushered in with massacre, torture, and war. The worst is that the children of the century, fallen into the most distressing disorder, formed the conception of a literary and picturesque Christianity, which betokens a degeneracy of mind really unbelievable, and finally fell into Romanticism. War and Romanticism, what terrible scourges! And how pitiful to see these same people nursing a childish and savage love for muskets and drums! They did not understand that war, which trained the courage and founded the cities of barbarous and ignorant men, brings to the victor himself but ruin and misery, and is nothing but a horrible and stupid crime when nations are united together by common bonds of art, science, and trade.

“Insane Europeans who plot to cut each others’ throats, now that one and the

same civilisation enfolds and unites them all!

“I renounced all converse with these madmen and withdrew to this village, where I devoted myself to gardening. The peaches in my orchard remind me of the sun-kissed skin of the Mænads. For mankind I have retained my old friendship, a little admiration, and much pity, and I await, while cultivating this enclosure, that still distant day when the great Dionysus shall come, followed by his Fauns and his Bacchantes, to restore beauty and gladness to the world, and bring back the Golden Age. I shall fare joyously behind his car. And who knows if in that day of triumph mankind will be there for us to see? Who knows whether their worn-out race will not have already fulfilled its destiny, and whether other beings will not rise upon the ashes and ruins of what once was man and his genius? Who knows if winged beings will not have taken possession of the terrestrial empire? Even then the work of the good demons will not be ended, — they will teach a winged race arts and the joy of life.”

CHAPTER XXII

WHEREIN WE ARE SHOWN THE INTERIOR OF A BRIC-A-BRAC SHOP, AND SEE HOW PÈRE GUINARDON'S GUILTY HAPPINESS IS MARRED BY THE JEALOUSY OF A LOVE-LORN DAME

PÈRE GUINARDON (as Zéphyrine had faithfully reported to Monsieur Sariette) smuggled out the pictures, furniture, and curios stored in his attic in the rue Princesse — his studio he called it — and used them to stock a shop he had taken in the rue de Courcelles. Thither he went to take up his abode, leaving Zéphyrine, with whom he had lived for fifty years, without a bed or a saucepan or a penny to call her own, except eighteenpence the poor creature had in her purse. Père Guinardon opened an old picture and curiosity shop, and in it he installed the fair Octavie.

The shop-front presented an attractive appearance: there were Flemish angels in green copes, after the manner of Gérard David, a Salomé of the Luini school, a Saint Barbara in painted wood of French workmanship, Limoges enamel-work, Bohemian and Venetian glass, dishes from Urbino. There were specimens of English point-lace which, if her tale was true, had been presented to Zéphyrine, in the days of her radiant girlhood, by the Emperor Napoleon III. Within, there were golden articles that glinted in the shadows, while pictures of Christ, the Apostles, high-bred dames, and nymphs also presented themselves to the gaze. There was one canvas that was turned face to the wall so that it should only be looked at by connoisseurs; and connoisseurs are scarce. It was a replica of Fragonard's *Gimblette*, a brilliant painting that looked as if it had barely had time to dry. Papa Guinardon himself remarked on the fact. At the far end of the shop was a king-wood cabinet, the drawers of which were full of all manner of treasures: water-colours by Baudouin, eighteenth-century books of illustrations, miniatures, and so forth.

But the real masterpiece, the marvel, the gem, the pearl of great price, stood upon an easel veiled from public view. It was a *Coronation of the Virgin* by Fra Angelico, an exquisitely delicate thing in gold and blue and pink. Père Guinardon was asking a hundred thousand francs for it. Upon a Louis XV chair beside an Empire work-table on which stood a vase of flowers, sat the fair Octavie, broidery in hand. She, having left her glistening rags behind her in the garret in the rue Princesse, no longer presented the appearance of a touched-up Rembrandt, but shone, rather, with the soft radiance and limpidity of a Vermeer of Delft, for the delectation of the connoisseurs who frequented the shop of Papa Guinardon. Tranquil and demure, she remained alone in the shop all day, while

the old fellow himself was up aloft working away at the deuce knows what picture. About five o'clock he used to come downstairs and have a chat with the habitués of the establishment.

The most regular caller was the Comte Desmaisons, a thin, cadaverous man. A strand of hair issued from the deep hollow under each cheek-bone, and, broadening as it descended, shed upon his chin and chest torrents of snow in which he was for ever trailing his long, fleshless, gold-ringed fingers. For twenty years he had been mourning the loss of his wife, who had been carried off by consumption in the flower of her youth and beauty. Since then he had spent his whole life in endeavouring to hold converse with the dead and in filling his lonely mansion with second-rate paintings. His confidence in Guinardon knew no bounds. Another client who was a scarcely less frequent visitor to the shop was Monsieur Blancmesnil, a director of a large financial establishment. He was a florid, prosperous-looking man of fifty. He took no great interest in matters of art, and was perhaps an indifferent connoisseur, but, in his case, it was the fair Octavie, seated in the middle of the shop, like a song-bird in its cage, that offered the attraction.

Monsieur Blancmesnil soon established relations with her, a fact which Père Guinardon alone failed to perceive, for the old fellow was still young in his love-affair with Octavie. Monsieur Gaétan d'Esparvieu used to pay occasional visits to Père Guinardon's shop out of mere curiosity, for he strongly suspected the old man of being a first-rate "faker."

And then that doughty swordsman, Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec, also came to see the old antiquary on one occasion, and acquainted him with a plan he had on foot. Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec was getting up a little historical exhibition of small arms at the Petit Palais in aid of the fund for the education of the native children in Morocco and wanted Père Guinardon to lend him a few of the most valuable articles in his collection.

"Our first idea," he said, "was to organise an exhibition to be called 'The Cross and the Sword.' The juxtaposition of the two words will make the idea which has prompted our undertaking sufficiently clear to you. It was an idea pre-eminently patriotic and Christian which led us to associate the Sword, which is the symbol of Honour, with the Cross, which is the symbol of Salvation. It was hoped that our work would be graced by the distinguished patronage of the Minister of War and Monseigneur Cachepot. Unfortunately there were difficulties in the way, and the full realisation of the project had to be deferred. In the meantime we are limiting our exhibition to 'The Sword.' I have drawn up an explanatory note indicating the significance of the demonstration."

Having delivered himself of these remarks, Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec produced a pocket-case stuffed full of papers. Picking out from a medley of judgment summonses and other odds and ends a little piece of very crumpled paper, he exclaimed, "Ah, here it is," and proceeded to read as follows: "'The Sword is a fierce Virgin; it is *par excellence* the Frenchman's weapon. And now, when patriotic sentiment, after suffering an all too protracted eclipse, is beginning to shine forth again more ardently than ever ...' and so forth; you see?"

And he repeated his request for some really fine specimen to be placed in the most conspicuous position in the exhibition to be held on behalf of the little native children of Morocco, of which General d'Esparvieu was to be honorary President.

Arms and armour were by no means Père Guinardon's strong point. He dealt principally in pictures, drawings, and books. But he was never to be taken unawares. He took down a rapier with a gilt colander-shaped hilt, a highly typical piece of workmanship of the Louis XIII-Napoleon III period, and presented it to the exhibition promoter, who, while contemplating it with respect, maintained a diplomatic silence.

"I have something better still in here," said the antiquary, and he produced from his inner shop — where it had been lying among the walking-sticks and umbrellas — a real demon of a sword, adorned with fleurs-de-lys, a genuine royal relic. It was the sword of Philippe-Auguste as worn by an actor at the *Odéon* when *Agnès de Méranie* was being performed in 1846. Guinardon held it point downwards, as though it were a cross, clasping his hands piously on the cross-bar. He looked as loyal as the sword itself.

"Have her for your exhibition," said he. "The damsel is well worth it. Bouvines is her name."

"If I find a buyer for it," said Monsieur Le True de Ruffec, twirling his enormous moustachios, "I suppose you will allow me a little commission?"

Some days later, Père Guinardon was mysteriously displaying a picture to the Comte Desmaisons and Monsieur Blancmesnil. It was a newly discovered work of El Greco, an amazingly fine example of the Master's later style. It represented a Saint Francis of Assisi standing erect upon Mont Alverno. He was mounting heavenward like a column of smoke, and was plunging into the regions of the clouds a monstrously narrow head that the distance rendered smaller still. In fine it was a real, very real, nay, too real El Greco. The two collectors were attentively scrutinizing the work, while Père Guinardon was belauding the depth of the shadows and the sublimity of the expression. He was raising his arms aloft

to convey an idea of the greatness of Theotocopuli, who derived from Tintoretto, whom, however, he surpassed in loftiness by a hundred cubits.

“He was chaste and pure and strong; a mystic, a visionary.”

Comte Desmaisons declared that El Greco was his favourite painter. In his inmost heart Blancmesnil was not so entirely struck with it.

The door opened, and Monsieur Gaétan quite unexpectedly appeared on the scene.

He gave a glance at the Saint Francis, and said:

“Bless my soul!”

Monsieur Blancmesnil, anxious to improve his knowledge, asked him what he thought of this artist who was now so much in vogue. Gaétan replied, glibly enough, that he did not regard El Greco as the eccentric, the madman that people used to take him for. It was rather his opinion that a defect of vision from which Theotocopuli suffered compelled him to deform his figures.

“Being afflicted with astigmatism and strabismus,” Gaétan went on, “he painted the things he saw exactly as he used to see them.”

Comte Desmaisons was not readily disposed to accept so natural an explanation, which, however, by its very simplicity, highly commended itself to Monsieur Blancmesnil.

Père Guinardon, quite beside himself, exclaimed:

“Are you going to tell me, Monsieur d’Esparvieu, that Saint John was astigmatic because he beheld a woman clothed with the sun, crowned with stars, with the moon about her feet; the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, and the seven angels robed in white linen that bore the seven cups filled with the wrath of the Living God?”

“After all,” said Monsieur Gaétan, by way of conclusion, “people are right in admiring El Greco if he had genius enough to impose his morbidity of vision upon them. By the same token, the contortions to which he subjects the human countenance may give satisfaction to those who love suffering, — a class more numerous than is generally supposed.”

“Monsieur,” replied the Comte Desmaisons, stroking his luxuriant beard with his long, thin hand, “we must love those that love us. Suffering loves us and attaches itself to us. We must love it if life is to be supportable to us. In the knowledge of this truth lies the strength and value of Christianity. Alas! I do not possess the gift of Faith. It is that which drives me to despair.”

The old man thought of her for whom he had been mourning twenty years, and forthwith his reason left him, and his thoughts abandoned themselves unresistingly to the morbid imaginings of gentle and melancholy madness.

Having, he said, made a study of psychic matters, and having, with the co-operation of a favourable medium, carried out experiments concerning the nature and duration of the soul, he had obtained some remarkable results, which, however, did not afford him complete satisfaction. He had succeeded in viewing the soul of his dead wife under the appearance of a transparent and gelatinous mass which bore not the slightest resemblance to his adored one. The most painful part about the whole experiment — which he had repeated over and over again — was that the gelatinous mass, which was furnished with a number of extremely slender tentacles, maintained them in constant motion in time to a rhythm apparently intended to make certain signs, but of what these movements were supposed to convey there was not the slightest clue.

During the whole of this narrative Monsieur Blancmesnil had been whispering in a corner with the youthful Octavie, who sat mute and still, with her eyes on the ground.

Now Zéphyrine had by no means made up her mind to resign her lover into the hands of an unworthy rival. She would often go round of a morning, with her shopping-basket on her arm, and prowling about outside the curio shop. Torn betwixt grief and rage, tormented by warring ideas, she sometimes thought she would empty a saucepanful of vitriol on the head of the faithless one; at others that she would fling herself at his feet, and shower tears and kisses on his precious hands. One day, as she was thus eyeing her Michel — her beloved but guilty Michel — she noticed through the window the fair and youthful Octavie, who was sitting with her embroidery at a table upon which, in a vase of crystal, a rose was swooning to death. Zéphyrine, in a transport of fury, brought down her umbrella on her rival's fair head, and called her a bitch and a trollop. Octavie fled in terror, and ran for the police, while Zéphyrine, beside herself with grief and love, kept digging away with her old gamp at the *Gimblette* of Fragonard, the fuliginous Saint Francis of El Greco, the virgins, the nymphs, and the apostles, and knocked the gilt off the Fra Angelico, shrieking all the while:

“All those pictures there, the El Greco, the Beato Angelico, the Fragonard, the Gérard David, and the Boudouins — Guinardon painted the whole lot of them himself, the wretch, the scoundrel! That Fra Angelico there, why I saw him painting it on my ironing-board, and that Gérard David he executed on an old midwife's sign-board. You and that bitch of yours, why, I'll do for the pair of you just as I'm doing for these pictures.”

And tugging away at the coat of an aged collector who, trembling all over, had hidden himself in the darkest corner of the shop, she called him to witness to the crimes of Guinardon, perjurer and impostor. The police had simply to tear her out of the ruined shop. As she was being taken off to the station, followed by a

great crowd of people, she raised her fiery eyes to Heaven, crying in a voice choked with sobs:

“But don’t you know Michel? If you knew him, you would understand that it is impossible to live without him. Michel! He is handsome and good and charming. He is a very god. He is Love itself. I love him! I love him! I love him! I have known men high up in the world — Dukes, Ministers of State, and higher still. Not one of them was worthy to clean the mud off Michel’s boots. My good, kind sirs, give him back to me again.”

CHAPTER XXIII

WHEREIN WE ARE PERMITTED TO OBSERVE THE ADMIRABLE CHARACTER OF
BOUCHOTTE, WHO RESISTS VIOLENCE BUT YIELDS TO LOVE. AFTER THAT LET NO ONE
CALL THE AUTHOR A MISOGYNIST

ON coming away from the Baron Everdingen's, Prince Istar went to have a few oysters and a bottle of white wine at an eating-house in the Market. Then, being prudent as well as powerful, he paid a visit to his friend, Théophile Belais, for his pockets were full of bombs, and he wanted to secrete them in the musician's cupboard. The composer of *Aline, Queen of Golconda* was not at home. However, the Kerûb found Bouchotte busily working up the rôle of Zigouille; for the young artiste was booked to play the principal part in *Les Apaches*, an operetta that was then being rehearsed in one of the big music halls. The part in question was that of a street-walker who by her obscene gestures lures a passer-by into a trap, and then, while her victim is being gagged and bound, repeats with fiendish cruelty the lascivious motions by which he had been led astray. The part required that she should appear both as mime and singer, and she was in a state of high enthusiasm about it.

The accompanist had just left. Prince Istar seated himself at the piano, and Bouchotte resumed her task. Her movements were unseemly and delicious. Her tawny hair was flying in all directions in wild disordered curls; her skin was moist, it exhaled a scent of violets and alkaline salts which made the nostrils throb; even she herself felt the intoxication. Suddenly, inebriated with her intoxicating presence, Prince Istar arose, and with never a word or a look, caught her into his arms and drew her on to the couch, the little couch with the flowered tapestry which Théophile had procured at one of the big shops by promising to pay ten francs a month for a long term of years. Now Istar might have solicited Bouchotte's favours; he might have invited her to a rapid, and, withal, a mutual embrace, and, despite her preoccupation and excitement, she would not have refused him. But Bouchotte was a girl of spirit. The merest hint of coercion awoke all her untamable pride. She would consent of her own accord, yes; but be mastered, never! She would readily yield to love, curiosity, pity, to less than that even, but she would die rather than yield to force. Her surprise immediately gave place to fury. She fought her aggressor with all her heart and soul.

With nails, to which fury lent an added edge, she tore at the cheeks and eyelids of the Kerûb, and, though he held her as in a vice, she arched herself so stiffly and made such excellent play with knee and elbow, that the human-headed bull, blinded with blood and rage, was sent crashing into the piano which gave forth a

prolonged groan, while the bombs, tumbling out of his pockets, fell on the floor with a noise like thunder. And Bouchotte, with dishevelled locks, and one breast bare, beautiful and terrible, stood brandishing the poker over the prostrate giant, crying:

“Be off with you, or I’ll put your eyes out!”

Prince Istar went to wash himself in the kitchen, and plunged his gory visage into a basin where some haricot beans lay soaking; then he withdrew without anger or resentment, for he had a noble soul.

Scarcely had he gone when the door-bell rang. Bouchotte, calling upon the absent maid in vain, slipped on a dressing-gown and opened the door herself. A young man, very correct in appearance and rather good-looking, bowed politely, and apologising for having to introduce himself, gave his name. It was Maurice d’Esparvieu.

Maurice was still seeking his guardian angel. Upheld by a desperate hope, he sought him in the queerest places. He enquired for him at the houses of sorcerers, magicians, and thaumaturgists, who in filthy hovels lay bare the ineffable secrets of the future, and who, though masters of all the treasures of the earth, wear trousers without any seats to them, and eat pigs’ brains. That very day, having been to a back street in Montmartre to consult a priest of Satan, who practised black magic by piercing waxen images, Maurice had gone on to Bouchotte’s, having been sent by Madame de la Verdelière, who, being about to give a fête in aid of the fund for the Preservation of Country Churches, was anxious to secure Bouchotte’s services, since she had suddenly become — no one knew why — a fashionable artiste.

Bouchotte invited the visitor to sit down on the little flowered couch; at his request she seated herself beside him, and our young man of fashion explained to the singer what Madame de la Verdelière desired of her. The lady wished Bouchotte to sing one of those *apache* songs which were giving such delight in the fashionable world. Unfortunately Madame de la Verdelière could only offer a very modest fee, one out of all proportion to the merits of the artiste, but then it was for a good cause.

Bouchotte agreed to take part, and accepted the reduced fee with the accustomed liberality of the poor towards the rich and of artists towards society people. Bouchotte was not a selfish girl; the work for the preservation of country churches interested her. She remembered with sobs and tears her first communion, and she still retained her faith. When she passed by a church she wanted to enter it, especially in the evening. And so she did not love the Republic which had done its utmost to destroy both the Church and the Army. Her heart rejoiced to see the re-birth of national sentiment. France was lifting up

her head. What was most applauded in the music halls were songs about the soldiers and the kind nuns. Meanwhile Maurice inhaled the odour of her tawny hair, the subtle bitter perfume of her body, all the odours of her person, and desire grew in him. He felt her near him on the little couch, very warm and very soft. He complimented the artiste on her great talent. She asked him what he liked best in all her repertory. He knew nothing about it, still he made replies that satisfied her. She had dictated them herself without knowing it. The vain creature spoke of her talent, of her success, as she wished others to speak of them. She never ceased talking of her triumphs, yet withal she was candour itself. Maurice in all sincerity praised Bouchotte's beauty, her fresh skin, her purity of line. She attributed this advantage to the fact that she never made up and never "put messes on her face." As to her figure, she admitted that there was enough everywhere and none too much, and to illustrate this assertion she passed her hand over all the contours of her charming body, rising lightly to follow the delightful curves on which she reposed.

Maurice was quite moved by it. It began to grow dark; she offered to light up. He begged her to do nothing of the sort.

Their talk, at first gay and full of laughter, grew more intimate and very sweet, with a certain languor in its tone. It seemed to Bouchotte that she had known Monsieur Maurice d'Esparvieu for a long time, and holding him for a man of delicacy, she gave him her confidence. She told him that she was by nature a good woman, but that she had had a grasping and unscrupulous mother. Maurice recalled her to the consideration of her own beauty, and exalted by subtle flattery the excellent opinion she had of herself. Patient and calculating, in spite of the burning desire growing in him, he aroused and increased in the desired one the longing to be still further admired. The dressing-gown opened and slipped down of its own accord, the living satin of her shoulders gleamed in the mysterious light of evening. He — so prudent, so clever, so adroit, — let her sink in his arms, ardent and half swooning before she had even perceived she had granted anything at all. Their breath and their murmurs intermingled. And the little flowery couch sighed in sympathy with them.

When they recovered the power to express their feelings in words, she whispered in his ear that his cheek was even softer than her own.

He answered, holding her embraced:

"It is charming to hold you like this. One would think you had no bones."

She replied, closing her eyes:

"It is because I love you. Love seems to dissolve my bones; it makes me as soft and melting as a pig's foot *à la Ste. Menebould*."

Hereupon Théophile came in, and Bouchotte called upon him to thank Monsieur Maurice d'Esparvieu, who had been amiable enough to be the bearer of a handsome offer from Madame la Comtesse de la Verdelière.

The musician was happy, feeling the quiet and peace of the house after a day of fruitless applications, of colourless lessons, of failure and humiliation. Three new collaborators had been thrust upon him who would add their signatures to his on his operetta, and receive their share of the author's rights, and he had been told to introduce the tango into the Court of Golconda. He pressed young d'Esparvieu's hand and dropped wearily on to the little couch, which, being now at the end of its strength, gave way at the four legs and suddenly collapsed.

And the angel, precipitated to the ground, rolled terror-struck on to the watch, match-box and cigarette-case that had fallen from Maurice's pocket, and on to the bombs Prince Istar had left behind him.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE VICISSITUDES THAT BEFEL THE "LUCRETIUS" OF THE
PRIOR DE VENDÔME

LÉGER-MASSIEU, successor to Léger senior, the binder, whose establishment was in the rue de l'Abbaye, opposite the old Hôtel of the Abbés of Saint Germain-des-Près, in the hotbed of ancient schools and learned societies, employed an excellent but by no means numerous staff of workmen, and served with leisurely deliberation a clientèle who had learned to practise the virtue of patience. Six weeks had elapsed since he had received the parcel of books that had been despatched by Monsieur Sariette, but still Léger-Massieu had not yet put the work in hand. It was not until fifty-three days had come and gone, that, after calling over the books against the list that had been drawn up by Monsieur Sariette, the binder gave them out to his workmen. The little *Lucretius* with the Prior de Vendôme's arms not being mentioned on the list, it was assumed that it had been sent by another customer.

And as it did not figure on any list of goods received it remained shut up in a cupboard, from which Léger-Massieu's son, the youthful Ernest, one day surreptitiously abstracted it, and slipped it into his pocket. Ernest was in love with a neighbouring seamstress whose name was Rose. Rose was fond of the country, and liked to hear the birds singing in the woods, and in order to procure the wherewithal to take her to Chatou one Sunday and give her a dinner, Ernest parted with the *Lucretius* for ten francs to old Moranger, a second-hand dealer in the rue Saint X ———, who displayed no great curiosity regarding the origin of his acquisitions. Old Moranger handed over the volume, the very same day, to Monsieur Poussard, an expert in books, of the faubourg Saint Germain, for sixty francs. The latter removed the stamp which disclosed the ownership of the matchless copy, and sold it for five hundred francs to Monsieur Joseph Meyer, the well-known collector, who handed it straight away for three thousand francs to Monsieur Ardon, the bookseller, who immediately transferred it to Monsieur R ———, the great Parisian biblioplist, who gave six thousand for it, and sold it again a fortnight later at a handsome profit to Madame la Comtesse de Gorce. Well known in the higher ranks of Parisian society, the lady in question is what was called in the seventeenth century a "curieuse," that is to say, a lover of pictures, books, and china. In her mansion in the Avenue d'Jéna she possesses collections of works of art which bear witness to the diversity of her knowledge and the excellence of her taste. During the month of July, while the Comtesse de

Gorce was away at her château at Sarville in Normandy, the house in the Avenue d'Jéna, being unoccupied, was visited one night by a thief said to belong to a gang known as "The Collectors," who made works of art the special objects of their raids.

The police enquiry elicited the fact that the marauder had reached the first floor by means of the waste-pipe, that he had then climbed over the balcony, forced a shutter with a jemmy, broken a pane of glass, turned the window-fastener, and made his way into the long gallery. There he broke open several cupboards and possessed himself of whatever took his fancy. His booty consisted for the most part of small but valuable articles, such as gold caskets, a few ivory carvings of the fourteenth century, two splendid fifteenth-century manuscripts, and a volume which the Countess's secretary briefly described as "a morocco-bound book with a coat of arms on it," and which was none other than the *Lucretius* from the d'Esparvieu library.

The malefactor, who was supposed to be an English cook, was never discovered. But, two months or so after the theft, a well-dressed, clean-shaven young man passed down the rue de Courcelles, in the dimness of twilight, and went to offer the Prior de Vendôme's *Lucretius* to Père Guinardon. The antiquary gave him four shillings for it, examined it carefully, recognised its interest and its beauty, and put it in the king-wood cabinet, where he kept his special treasures.

Such were the vicissitudes which, in the course of a single season, befel this thing of beauty.

CHAPTER XXV

WHEREIN MAURICE FINDS HIS ANGEL AGAIN

THE performance was over. Bouchotte in her dressing-room was taking off her make-up, when the door opened softly and old Monsieur Sandraque, her protector, came in, followed by a troop of her other admirers. Without so much as turning her head, she asked them what they meant by coming and staring at her like a pack of imbeciles, and whether they thought they were in a tent at the Neuilly Fair, looking at the freak woman.

“Now, then, ladies and gentlemen,” she rattled on derisively, “just put a penny in the box for the young lady’s marriage-portion, and she’ll let you feel her legs, — all made of marble!”

Then, with an angry glance at the admiring throng, she exclaimed: “Come, off you go! Look alive!”

She sent them all packing, her sweetheart Théophile among them, — the pale-faced, long-haired, gentle, melancholy, short-sighted, and dreamy Théophile.

But recognizing her little Maurice, she gave him a smile. He approached her, and leaning over the back of the chair on which she was seated, congratulated her on her playing and singing, duly performing a kiss at the end of every compliment. She did not let him escape thus, and with reiterated enquiries, pressing solicitations, feigned incredulity, obliged him to repeat his stock panegyrics three or four times over, and when he stopped she seemed so disappointed that he was forced to take up the strain again immediately. He found it trying, for he was no connoisseur, but he had the pleasure of kissing her plump curved shoulders all golden in the light, and of catching glimpses of her pretty face in the mirror over the toilet-table.

“You were delicious.”

“Really?... you think so?”

“Adorable ... div — —”

Suddenly he gave a loud cry. His eyes had seen in the mirror a face appear at the back of the dressing-room. He turned swiftly round, flung his arms about Arcade, and drew him into the corridor.

“What manners!” exclaimed Bouchotte, gasping.

But, pushing his way through a troop of performing dogs, and a family of American acrobats, young d’Esparvieu dragged his angel towards the exit.

He hurried him forth into the cool darkness of the boulevard, delirious with joy and wondering whether it was all too good to be true.

“Here you are!” he cried; “here you are! I have been looking for you a long time, Arcade, — or Mirar if you like, — and I have found you at last. Arcade, you have taken my guardian angel from me. Give him back to me. Arcade, do you love me still?”

Arcade replied that in accomplishing the super-angelic task he had set himself he had been forced to crush under foot friendship, pity, love, and all those feelings which tend to soften the soul; but that, on the other hand, his new state, by exposing him to suffering and privation, disposed him to love Humanity, and that he felt a certain mechanical friendship for his poor Maurice.

“Well, then,” exclaimed Maurice, “if only you love me, come back to me, stay with me. I cannot do without you. While I had you with me I was not aware of your presence. But no sooner did you depart than I felt a horrible blank. Without you I am like a body without a soul. Do you know that in the little flat in the rue de Rome, with Gilberte by my side, I feel lonely, I miss you sorely, and long to see you and to hear you as I did that day when you made me so angry. Confess I was right, and that your behaviour on that occasion was not that of a gentleman. That you, you of so high an origin, so noble a mind, could commit such an indiscretion is extraordinary, when one comes to think about it. Madame des Aubels has not yet forgiven you. She blames you for having frightened her by appearing at such an inconvenient moment, and for being insolent and forward while hooking her dress and tying her shoes. I, I have forgotten everything. I only remember that you are my celestial brother, the saintly companion of my childhood. No, Arcade, you must not, you cannot leave me. You are my angel; you are my property.”

Arcade explained to young d’Espanieu that he could no longer be guiding angel to a Christian, having himself gone down into the pit. And he painted a horrible picture of himself; he described himself as breathing hatred and fury; in fact, an infernal spirit.

“All nonsense!” said Maurice, smiling, his eyes big with tears.

“Alas! our ideas, our destiny, everything tends to part us, Maurice. But I cannot stifle the tenderness I feel for you, and your candour forces me to love you.”

“No,” sighed Maurice. “You do not love me. You have never loved me. In a brother or a sister such indifference would be natural; in a friend it would be ordinary; in a guardian angel it is monstrous. Arcade, you are an abominable being. I hate you.”

“I have loved you dearly, Maurice, and I still love you. You trouble my heart which I deemed encased in triple bronze. You show me my own weakness. When you were a little innocent boy I loved you as tenderly and purely as Miss Kate, your English governess, who caressed you with so much fervour. In the

country, when the thin bark of the plane trees peels off in long strips and discloses the tender green trunk, after the rains which make the fine sand run on the sloping paths, I showed you how with that sand, those strips of bark, a few wild flowers, and a spray of maidenhair fern to make rustic bridges, rustic shelters, terraces, and those gardens of Adonis, which last but an hour. During the month of May in Paris we raised an altar to the Virgin, and we burnt incense before it, the scent of which, permeating all the house, reminded Marcelline, the cook, of her village church and her lost innocence, and drew from her floods of tears; it also gave your mother a headache, your mother who, with all her wealth, was crushed with the *ennui* that is common to the fortunate ones of this world. When you went to college I interested myself in your progress, I shared your work and your play, I pondered with you over arduous problems in arithmetic, I sought the impenetrable meaning of a phrase of Julius Cæsar's. What fine games of prisoners' base and football we had together! More than once did we know the intoxication of victory, and our young laurels were not soaked in blood or tears. Maurice, I did all I could to protect your innocence, but I could not prevent your losing it at the age of fourteen. Afterwards I regretfully saw you loving women of all sorts, of divers ages, by no means beautiful, at least in the eyes of an angel. Saddened at the sight, I devoted myself to study; a fine library offered me resources rarely met with. I delved into the history of religions; you know the rest."

"But now, my dear Arcade," concluded young d'Esparvieu, "you have lost your position, your situation, you are entirely without resource. You have lost caste, you are off the lines, a vagabond, a bare-footed wanderer."

The Angel replied bitterly that, after all, he was a little better clad at present than when he was wearing the slops of a suicide.

Maurice alleged in excuse that when he dressed his naked angel in a suicide's slops, he was irritated with that angel's infidelity. But it was useless to dwell on the past or to recriminate. What was really needful was to consider what steps to take in future.

And he asked:

"Arcade, what do you think of doing?"

"Have I not already told you, Maurice? To fight with Him who reigns in the heavens, dethrone Him, and set up Satan in His stead."

"You will not do it. To begin with it is not the opportune moment. Opinion is not with you. You will not be in the swim, as papa says. Conservatism and authority are all the go nowadays. We like to be ruled, and the President of the Republic is going to parley with the Pope. Do not be obstinate, Arcade. You are not as bad

as you say. At bottom you are like the rest of the world, you adore the good God."

"I thought I had already explained to you, Maurice, that He whom you consider God is actually but a demiurge. He is absolutely ignorant of the divine world above him, and in all good faith believes himself to be the true and only God. You will find in the *History of the Church*, by Monsignor Duchesne — Vol. I, page 162 — that this proud and narrow-minded demiurge is named Ialdabaoth. My child, so as not to ruffle your prejudices and to deal gently with your feelings in future, that is the name I shall give him. If it should happen that I should speak of him to you, I shall call him Ialdabaoth. I must leave you. Adieu."

"Stay — —"

"I cannot."

"I shall not let you go thus. You have deprived me of my guardian angel. It is for you to repair the injury you have caused me. Give me another one."

Arcade objected that it was difficult for him to satisfy such a demand. That having quarrelled with the sovereign dispenser of guardian Spirits, he could obtain nothing from that quarter.

"My dear Maurice," he added, smiling, "ask for one yourself from Ialdabaoth."

"No, — no, — no," exclaimed Maurice. "You have taken away my guardian angel, — give him back to me."

"Alas! I cannot."

"Is it, Arcade, because you are a revolutionary that you cannot?"

"Yes."

"An enemy of God?"

"Yes."

"A Satanic spirit?"

"Yes."

"Well, then," exclaimed young Maurice, "I will be your guardian angel, — I will not leave you."

And Maurice d'Esparvieu took Arcade to have some oysters at P — — 's.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CONCLAVE

THAT day, convoked by Arcade and Zita, the rebellious angels met together on the banks of the Seine at La Jonchère, in a deserted and tumble-down entertainment-hall that Prince Istar had hired from a pot-house keeper called Barattan. Three hundred angels crowded together in the stalls and boxes. A table, an arm-chair, and a collection of small chairs were arranged on the stage, where hung the tattered remnants of a piece of rustic scenery. The walls, coloured in distemper with flowers and fruit, were cracked and stained with damp, and were crumbling away in flakes. The vulgar and poverty-stricken appearance of the place rendered the grandeur of the passions exhibited therein all the more striking.

When Prince Istar asked the assembly to form its Committee, and first of all to elect a President, the name that was renowned throughout the world entered the minds of all present, but a religious respect sealed their lips; and after a moment's silence, the absent Nectaire was elected by acclamation. Having been invited to take the chair between Zita and an angel of Japan, Arcade immediately began as follows:

“Sons of Heaven! My comrades! You have freed yourselves from the bonds of celestial servitude — you have shaken off the thrall of him called Iahveh, but to whom we should here accord his veritable name of Ialdabaoth, for he is not the creator of the worlds, but merely an ignorant and barbarous demiurge, who having obtained possession of a minute portion of the Universe has therein sown suffering and death. Sons of Heaven, tell me, I charge you, whether you will combat and destroy Ialdabaoth?”

All with one voice made answer:

“We will!”

And many speaking all together swore they would scale the mountain of Ialdabaoth, and hurl down the walls of jasper and porphyry, and plunge the tyrant of Heaven into eternal darkness.

But a voice of crystal pierced through the sullen murmur.

“Tremble, ye impious, sacrilegious madmen! The Lord hath already lifted his dread arm to smite you!”

It was a loyal angel who, with an impulse of faith and love, envying the glory of confessors and martyrs, jealous and eager, like his God himself, to emulate man in the beauty of sacrifice, had flung himself in the midst of the blasphemers, to brave them, to confound them, and to fall beneath their blows. The assembly turned upon him with furious unanimity. Those nearest to him overwhelmed him

with blows. He continued to cry, in a clear, ringing voice, "Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to God!"

A rebel seized him by the neck and strangled his praises of the Almighty in his throat. He was thrown to the ground, trampled underfoot. Prince Istar picked him up, took him by the wings between his fingers, then rising like a column of smoke, opened a ventilator, which no one else could have reached, and passed the faithful angel through it. Order was immediately restored.

"Comrades," continued Arcade, "now that we have affirmed our stern resolve, we must examine the possible plans of campaign, and choose the best. You will therefore have to consider if we should attack the enemy in full force, or whether it were better, by a lengthy and assiduous propaganda, to win the inhabitants of Heaven to our cause."

"War! War!" shouted the assembled host.

And it seemed as if one could hear the sound of trumpets and the rolling of drums.

Théophile, whom Prince Istar had dragged to the meeting, rose, pale and unstrung, and, speaking with emotion, said:

"Brethren, do not take ill what I am about to say; for it is the friendship I have for you that inspires me. I am but a poor musician. But, believe me, all your plans will come to naught before the Divine Wisdom which has foreseen everything."

Théophile Belais sat down amid hisses. And Arcade continued:

"Ialdabaoth foresees everything. I do not contest it. He foresees everything, but in order to leave us our free will he acts towards us absolutely as if he foresaw nothing. Every instant he is surprised, disconcerted; the most probable events take him unawares. The obligation which he has undertaken, to reconcile with his prescience the liberty of both men and angels, throws him constantly into inextricable difficulties and terrible dilemmas. He never sees further than the end of his nose. He did not expect Adam's disobedience, and so little did he anticipate the wickedness of men that he repented having made them, and drowned them in the waters of the Flood, and all the animals as well, though he had no fault to find with the animals. For blindness he is only to be compared with Charles X, his favourite king. If we are prudent it will be easy to take him by surprise. I think that these observations will be calculated to reassure my brother."

Théophile made no reply. He loved God, but he was fearful of sharing the fate of the faithful angel.

One of the best-informed Spirits of the assembly, Mammon, was not altogether reassured by the remarks of his brother Arcade.

“Bethink you,” said this Spirit, “Ialdabaoth has little general culture, but he is a soldier — to the marrow of his bones. The organisation of Paradise is a thoroughly military organisation. It is founded on hierarchy and discipline. Passive obedience is imposed there as a fundamental law. The angels form an army. Compare this spot with the Elysian Fields which Virgil depicts for you. In the Elysian Fields reign liberty, reason, and wisdom. The happy shades hold converse together in the groves of myrtle. In the Heaven of Ialdabaoth there is no civil population. Everyone is enrolled, numbered, registered. It is a barracks and a field for manœuvres. Remember that.”

Arcade replied that they must look at their adversary in his true colours, and that the military organisation of Paradise was far more reminiscent of the villages of King Koffee than of the Prussia of Frederick the Great.

“Already,” said he, “at the time of the first revolt, before the beginning of Time, the conflict raged for two days, and Ialdabaoth’s throne was made to totter. Nevertheless, the demiurge gained the victory. But to what did he owe it? To the thunderstorm which happened to come on during the conflict. The thunderbolts falling on Lucifer and his angels struck them down, bruised and blackened, and Ialdabaoth owed his victory to the thunderbolts. Thunder is his sole weapon. He abuses its power. In the midst of thunder and lightning he promulgates his laws. ‘Fire goeth before him,’ says the Prophet. Now Seneca, the philosopher, said that the thunderbolt in its fall brings peril to very few, but fear to all. This remark was true enough for men of the first century of the Christian era; it is no longer so for the angels of the twentieth; all of which goes to prove that, in spite of his thunder, he is not very powerful; it was acute terror that made men rear him a tower of unbaked brick and bitumen. When myriads of celestial spirits, furnished with machines which modern science puts at their disposal, make an assault upon the heavens, think you, comrades, that the old master of the solar system surrounded with his angels, armed as in the time of Abraham, will be able to resist them? To this day the warriors of the demiurge wear helmets of gold and shields of diamond. Michael, his best captain, knows no other tactics than the hand-to-hand combat. To him Pharaoh’s chariots are still the latest thing, and he has never heard of the Macedonian phalanx.”

And young Arcade lengthily prolonged the parallel between the armed herds of Ialdabaoth and the intelligent fighting men of the rebel army. Then the question of pecuniary resources arose.

Zita asserted that there was enough money to commence war, that the electrophores were in order, that an initial victory would obtain them credit.

The discussion continued, amid turbulence and confusion. In this parliament of angels, as in the synods of men, empty words flowed in abundance. Disturbances

grew more violent and more frequent as the time for putting the resolution drew near. It was beyond question that supreme command would be entrusted to him who had first raised the flag of revolt. But as everyone aspired to act as Lucifer's Lieutenant, each in describing the kind of fighting man to be preferred drew a portrait of himself. Thus Alcor, the youngest of the rebellious angels, arose and spoke rapidly as follows:

"In Ialdabaoth's army, happily for us, the officers obtain their posts by seniority. This being the case, there is little likelihood of the command falling into the hands of a military genius, for men are not made leaders by prolonged habits of obedience, and close attention to minutiae is not a good apprenticeship for the evolution of vast plans of campaign. If we consult ancient and modern history, we shall see that the greatest leaders were kings like Alexander and Frederick, aristocrats like Cæsar and Turenne, or men impatient of red-tape like Bonaparte. A routine man will always be poor or second-rate. Comrades, let us appoint intelligent leaders, men in the prime of life, to command us. An old man may retain the habit of winning victories, but only a young man can acquire it!"

Alcor then gave place to an angel of the philosophic order, who mounted the rostrum and spoke thus:

"War never was an exact science, a clearly defined art. The genius of the race, or the brain of the individual, has ever modified it. Now how are we to define the qualities necessary for a general in command in the war of the future, where one must consider greater masses and a larger number of movements than the intelligence of man can conceive? The multiplication of technical means, by infinitely multiplying the opportunities for mistake, paralyses the genius of those in command. At a certain stage in the progress of military science, a stage which our models, the Europeans, are about to reach, the cleverest leader and the most ignorant become equalized by reason of their incapacity. Another result of great modern armaments is, that the law of numbers tends to rule with inflexible rigour. It is of course true that ten angels in revolt are worth more than ten angels of Ialdabaoth; it is not at all certain that a million rebellious angels are worth more than a million of Ialdabaoth's angels. Great numbers, in war as elsewhere, annihilate intelligence and individual superiority in favour of a sort of exceedingly rudimentary collective soul."

A buzz of conversation drowned the voice of the philosophic angel, and he concluded his speech in an atmosphere of general indifference.

The tribune then resounded with calls to arms and promises of victory. The sword was held up to praise, the sword which defends the right. The triumph of the angels in revolt was celebrated twenty times beforehand, to the plaudits of a delirious crowd.

Cries of “War!” rose to the silent heavens; “Give us war!”

In the midst of these transports Prince Istar hoisted himself on to the platform, and the floor creaked under his weight.

“Comrades,” said he, “you wish for victory, and it is a very natural desire, but you must be mouldy with literature and poetry if you expect to obtain it from war. The idea of making war can nowadays only enter the brain of a sottish bourgeois or a belated romantic. What is war? A burlesque masquerade in the midst of which fatuous patriots sing their stupid dithyrambs. Had Napoleon possessed a practical mind he would not have made war; but he was a dreamer, intoxicated with Ossian. You cry, ‘Give us war!’ You are visionaries. When will you become thinkers? The thinkers do not look for power and strength from any of the dreams which constitute military art: tactics, strategy, fortifications, artillery, and all that rubbish. They do not believe in war, which is a phantasy; they believe in chemistry, which is a science. They know the way to put victory into an algebraic formula.”

And drawing from his pocket a small bottle, which he held up to the meeting, Prince Istar exclaimed:

“Victory — it is here!”

CHAPTER XXVII

WHEREIN WE SHALL SEE REVEALED A DARK AND SECRET MYSTERY AND LEARN HOW IT COMES ABOUT THAT EMPIRES ARE OFTEN HURLED AGAINST EMPIRES, AND RUIN FALLS ALIKE UPON THE VICTORS AND THE VANQUISHED; AND THE WISE READER (IF SUCH THERE BE — WHICH I DOUBT) WILL MEDITATE UPON THIS IMPORTANT UTTERANCE: “A WAR IS A MATTER OF BUSINESS”

THE Angels had dispersed. At the foot of the slopes at Meudon, seated on the grass, Arcade and Zita watched the Seine flowing by the willows.

“In this world,” said Arcade, “in this world, which we call a cosmos, though it is but a microcosm, no thinking being can imagine that he is able to destroy even one atom. At the utmost, all we can hope for is that we shall succeed in modifying, here and there, the rhythm of some group of atoms and the arrangement of certain cells. That, when one thinks of it, must be the limit of our great enterprise. And when we shall have set up the Contradictor in the place of Ialdabaoth, we shall have done no more.... Zita, is the evil in the nature of things or in their arrangement? That is what we ought to know. Zita, I am profoundly troubled — —”

“Arcade,” replied Zita, “if to act we had to know the secret of Nature, one would never act at all. And neither would one live — since to live is to act. Arcade, is your resolution failing you already?”

Arcade assured the beautiful angel that he was resolved to plunge the demiurge into eternal darkness.

A motor-car passed by on the road, followed by a long trail of dust. It stopped before the two angels, and the hooked nose of Baron Everdingen appeared at the window.

“Good morning, my celestial friends, good morning,” said the capitalist. “Sons of Heaven, I am pleased to meet you. I have a word of importance to say to you. Do not remain idle — do not go to sleep. Arm! Arm! You may be surprised by Ialdabaoth. You have a big war-fund. Employ it without stint. I have just learnt that the Archangel Michael has given large orders in Heaven for thunderbolts and arrows. If you take my advice you will procure fifty thousand more electrophores. I will take the order. Good day, angels. Long live the celestial country!”

And Baron Everdingen flew by the flowery shores of Louveciennes in the company of a pretty actress.

“Is it true that they are taking up arms at the demiurge’s?” asked Arcade.

“It may be,” replied Zita, “that up there another Baron Everdingen is inciting to arms.”

The guardian angel of young Maurice remained pensive for some moments. Then he murmured:

“Can it be that we are the sport of financiers?”

“Pooh!” said the beautiful archangel. “War is a business. It has always been a business.”

Then they discussed at length the means of executing their immense enterprise. Rejecting disdainfully the anarchistic proceedings of Prince Istar, they conceived a formidable and sudden invasion of the kingdom of Heaven by their enthusiastic and well-drilled troops.

Now Barattan, the innkeeper of La Jonchère, who had let the entertainment-hall to the rebellious angels, was in the employ of the secret police. In the reports he furnished to the Prefecture he denounced the members of this secret meeting as meditating an attack on a certain person whom they described as obtuse and cruel, and whom they called *Alaballotte*. The agent believed this to be a pseudonym denoting either the President of the Republic or the Republic itself. The conspirators had unanimously given voice to threats against *Alaballotte*, and one of them, a very dangerous individual, well-known in anarchist circles, who had already several convictions against him on account of writings and speeches of a seditious nature, and who was known as Prince Istar or the *Quérube*, had brandished a bomb of very small calibre which seemed to contain a formidable machine. The other conspirators were unknown to Barattan, notwithstanding the fact that he frequented revolutionary circles. Many among them were very young men, mere beardless youths. There were two who, it appeared, had spoken with conspicuous vehemence; a certain Arcade, dwelling in the Rue St. Jacques, and a woman of easy virtue called Zita, living at Montmartre, both without visible means of subsistence.

The affair seemed sufficiently serious to the Prefect of Police to make him think it necessary to confer without delay with the President of the Council.

The Third Republic was then going through one of those climacteric periods during which the French nation, enamoured of authority and worshipping force, gave itself up for lost because it was not governed enough, and clamoured loudly for a saviour. The President of the Council, and Minister of Justice, was only too eager to be that longed-for saviour. Still, for him to play that part it was first necessary that there should be a danger to face. Thus the news of a plot was highly welcome to him. He questioned the Prefect of Police on the character and importance of the affair. The Prefect of Police explained that the people seemed to have money, intelligence, and energy; but that they talked too much and were too numerous to undertake secret and concerted action. The Minister, leaning back in his arm-chair, pondered on the matter. The Empire writing-table at

which he was seated, the ancient tapestry which covered the walls, the clock and the candelabra of the Restoration period — all, in this traditional setting, reminded him of those great principles of government which remain immutable throughout the succession of *régimes*, of stratagem and of bluff. After brief reflexion, he concluded that the plot must be allowed to grow and take shape, that it would even be fitting to nurse it, to embroider it, to colour it, and only to stifle it after having extracted every possible advantage from it.

He instructed the Prefect of Police to watch the affair closely, to render him an account of what went on from day to day, and to confine himself to the rôle of informer.

“I rely on your well-known prudence; observe, and do not intervene.”

The Minister lit a cigarette. He quite reckoned, with the help of this plot, on silencing the Opposition, strengthening his own influence, diminishing that of his colleagues, humiliating the President of the Republic, and becoming the saviour of his country.

The Prefect of Police undertook to follow the ministerial instructions, vowing inwardly all the while to act in his own way. He had a watch put upon the individuals pointed out by Barattan, and commanded his agents not to intervene, come what might. Perceiving that he was a marked man, Prince Istar — who united prudence with strength — withdrew the bombs from the gutter outside his window where he had hidden them, and changing from motor ‘bus to tube, from tube to motor ‘bus, and choosing the most cunningly circuitous route, at length deposited his machines with the angelic musician.

Every time he left his house in the Rue St. Jacques, Arcade found a man of exaggerated smartness at his door, with yellow gloves and in his tie a diamond bigger than the Regent. Being a stranger to the things of this world, the rebellious angel paid no attention to the circumstance. But young Maurice d’Esparvieu, who had undertaken the task of guarding his guardian-angel, viewed this gentleman with uneasiness, for he equalled in assiduity and surpassed in vigilance that Monsieur Mignon who had formerly allowed his inquisitive gaze to wander from the rams’ heads on the Hôtel de la Sordière in the Rue Garancière to the apse of the church of St. Sulpice. Maurice came two and three times a day to see Arcade in his furnished rooms, warning him of the danger, and urging him to change his abode.

Every evening he took his angel to night restaurants, where they supped with ladies of easy virtue. There young d’Esparvieu would foretell the issue of some coming glove-fight, and afterwards exert himself to demonstrate to Arcade the existence of God, the necessity for religion, and the beauties of Christianity, and

adjure him to renounce his impious and criminal undertakings wherefrom, he said, he would reap but bitterness and disappointment.

“For really,” said the young apologist, “if Christianity were false it would be known.”

The ladies approved of Maurice’s religious sentiments, and when the handsome Arcade uttered some blasphemy in language they could understand, they put their hands to their ears and bade him be silent, for fear of being struck down with him. For they believed that God, in his omnipotence and sovereign goodness, taking sudden vengeance against those who insulted him, was quite capable of striking down the innocent with the guilty without meaning it.

Sometimes the angel and his guardian took supper with the angelic musician. Maurice, who remembered from time to time that he was Bouchotte’s lover, was displeased to see Arcade taking liberties with the singer. She had allowed him to do so ever since the day when, the angelic musician having had the little flowery couch repaired, Arcade and Bouchotte had made it a foundation for their friendship. Maurice, who loved Madame des Aubels a great deal, also loved Bouchotte a little, and was rather jealous of Arcade. Now jealousy is a feeling natural to man and beast, and causes them, however slight the attack, keen unhappiness. Therefore, suspecting the truth, which Bouchotte’s temperament and the angel’s character made sufficiently obvious, he overwhelmed Arcade with sarcasm and abuse, reproaching him with the immorality of his ways. Arcade answered, tranquilly, that it was difficult to subject physiological impulses to perfectly defined rules, and that moralists encountered great difficulties in the case of certain natural necessities.

“Moreover,” added Arcade, “I freely acknowledge that it is almost impossible systematically to constitute a natural moral law. Nature has no principles. She furnishes us with no reason to believe that human life is to be respected. Nature, in her indifference, makes no distinction between good and evil.”

“You see, then,” replied Maurice, “that religion is necessary.”

“Moral law,” replied the angel, “which is supposed to be revealed to us, is drawn in reality from the grossest empiricism. Custom alone regulates morals. What Heaven prescribes is merely the consecration of ancient customs. The divine law, promulgated amid fireworks on some Mount Sinai, is never anything but the codification of human prejudice. And from this fact — namely, that morals change — religions which endure for a long time, such as Judæo-Christianity, vary their moral law.”

“At any rate,” said Maurice, whose intelligence was swelling visibly, “you will grant me that religion prevents much profligacy and crime?”

“Except when it promotes crime — as, for instance, the murder of Iphigenia.”

“Arcade,” exclaimed Maurice, “when I hear you argue, I rejoice that I am not an intellectual.”

Meanwhile Théophile, with his head bent over the piano, his face hidden by the long fair veil of his hair, bringing down from on high his inspired hands on to the keys, was playing and singing the full score of *Aline, Queen of Golconda* .

Prince Istar used to come to their friendly reunions, his pockets filled with bombs and bottles of champagne, both of which he owed to the liberality of Baron Everdingen. Bouchotte received the Kerûb with pleasure, since she saw in him the witness and the trophy of the victory she had gained on the little flowered couch. He was to her as the severed head of Goliath in the hands of the youthful David. And she admired the prince for his cleverness as an accompanist, his vigour, which she had subdued, and his prodigious capacity for drink.

One night, when young d’Esparvieu took his angel home in his car from Bouchotte’s house to the lodgings in the Rue St. Jacques, it was very dark; before the door the diamond in the spy’s necktie glittered like a beacon; three cyclists standing in a group under its rays made off in divers directions at the car’s approach. The angel took no notice, but Maurice concluded that Arcade’s movements interested various important people in the State. He judged the danger to be pressing, and at once made up his mind.

The next morning he came to seek the suspect, to take him to the Rue de Rome. The angel was in bed. Maurice urged him to dress and to follow him.

“Come,” said he. “This house is no longer safe for you. You are watched. One of these days you will be arrested. Do you wish to sleep in gaol? No? Well, then, come. I will put you in a safe place.”

The spirit smiled with some little compassion on his naïve preserver.

“Do you not know,” he said, “that an angel broke open the doors of the prison where Peter was confined, and delivered the apostle? Do you believe me, Maurice, to be inferior in power to that heavenly brother of mine, and do you suppose that I am unable to do for myself what he did for the fisherman of the lake of Tiberias?”

“Do not count on it, Arcade. He did it miraculously.”

“Or by a stroke of luck, as a modern historian of the Church has it. But no matter. I will follow you. Just allow me to burn a few letters and to make a parcel of some books I shall need.”

He threw some papers in the fire-place, put several volumes in his pockets, and followed his guide to the car, which was waiting for them not far off, outside the College of France. Maurice took the wheel. Imitating the Kerûb’s prudence, he

made so many windings and turnings, and so many rapid twists that he put all the swift and numerous cyclists, speeding in pursuit, off the scent. At length, having left wheelmarks in every direction all over the town, he stopped in the Rue de Rome, before the first-door flat, where the angel had first appeared.

On entering the dwelling which he had left eighteen months before to carry out his mission, Arcade remembered the irreparable past, and breathing in the scent used by Gilberte, his nostrils throbbed. He asked after Madame des Aubels.

“She is very well,” replied Maurice. “A little plumper and very much more beautiful for it. She still bears you a grudge for your forward behaviour. I hope that she will one day forgive you, as I have forgiven you, and that she will forget your offence. But she is still very annoyed with you.”

Young d’Esparvieu did the honours of his flat to his angel with the manners of a well-bred man and the tender solicitude of a friend. He showed him the folding bed which was opened every evening in the entrance hall and pushed into a dark cupboard in the morning. He showed him the dressing-table, with its accessories; the bath, the linen cupboard, the chest of drawers; gave him the necessary information regarding the heating and lighting; told him that his meals would be brought and the rooms cleaned by the concierge, and showed him which bell to press when he required that person’s services. He told him also that he must consider himself at home, and receive whom he wished.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHICH TREATS OF A PAINFUL DOMESTIC SCENE

SO long as Maurice confined his selection of mistresses to respectable women, his conduct had called forth no reproach. It was a different matter when he took up with Bouchotte. His mother, who had closed her eyes to liaisons which, though guilty, were elegant and discreet, was scandalised when it came to her ears that her son was openly parading about with a music-hall singer. By dint of much prying and probing, Berthe, Maurice's younger sister, had got to know of her brother's adventures, and she narrated them, without any indignation, to her young girl friends. His little brother Léon declared to his mother one day, in the presence of several ladies, that when he was big he, too, would go on the spree, like Maurice. This was a sore wound to the maternal heart of Madame d'Esparvieu.

About the same time there occurred a family event of a very grave nature which occasioned much alarm to Monsieur René d'Esparvieu. Drafts were presented to him signed in his name by his son. His writing had not been forged, but there was no doubt that it had been the son's intention to pass off the signature as his father's. It showed a perverted moral sense; whence it appeared that Maurice was living a life of profligacy, that he was running into debt and on the point of outraging the decencies. The paterfamilias talked the matter over with his wife. It was arranged that he should give his son a very severe lecture, hint at vigorous corrective measures, and that in due course the mother should appear with gentle and sorrowing mien and endeavour to soothe the righteous indignation of the father. This plan being agreed upon, Monsieur René d'Esparvieu sent for his son to come to him in his study. To add to the solemnity of the occasion, he had arrayed himself in his frock-coat. As soon as Maurice saw it he knew there was something serious in the wind. The head of the family was pale, and his voice shook a little (for he was a nervous man), as he declared that he would no longer put up with his son's irregular behaviour, and insisted on an immediate and absolute reform. No more wild courses, no more running into debt, no more undesirable companions, but work, steadiness, and reputable connexions.

Maurice was quite willing to give a respectful reply to his father, whose complaints, after all, were perfectly justified; but, unfortunately, Maurice, like his father, was shy, and the frock-coat which Monsieur d'Esparvieu had donned in order to discharge his magisterial duty with greater dignity seemed to preclude the possibility of any open and unconstrained intercourse. Maurice maintained

an awkward silence, which looked very much like insolence, and this silence compelled Monsieur d'Esparvieu to reiterate his complaints, this time with additional severity. He opened one of the drawers in his historic bureau (the bureau on which Alexandre d'Esparvieu had written his "Essay on the Civil and Religious Institutions of the World"), and produced the bills which Maurice had signed.

"Do you know, my boy," said he, "that this is nothing more nor less than forgery? To make up for such grave misconduct as that — —"

At this moment Madame d'Esparvieu, as arranged, entered the room attired in her walking-dress. She was supposed to play the angel of forgiveness, but neither her appearance nor her disposition was suitable to the part. She was harsh and unsympathetic. Maurice harboured within him the seeds of all the ordinary and necessary virtues. He loved his mother and respected her. His love, however, was more a matter of duty than of inclination, and his respect arose from habit rather than from feeling. Madame René d'Esparvieu's complexion was blotchy, and having powdered herself in order to appear to advantage at the domestic tribunal, the colour of her face suggested raspberries sprinkled over with sugar. Maurice, being possessed of some taste, could not help realising that she was ugly and rather repulsively so. He was out of tune with her, and when she began to go through all the accusations his father had brought against him, making them out to be blacker than ever, the prodigal turned away his head to conceal his irritation.

"Your Aunt de Saint-Fain," she went on, "met you in the street in such disgraceful company that she was really thankful that you forbore to greet her."

"Aunt de Saint-Fain!" Maurice broke out. "I like to hear her talking about scandals! Everyone knows the sort of life she has led, and now the old hypocrite wants to — —"

He stopped. He had caught sight of his father, whose face was even more eloquent of sorrow than of anger. Maurice began to feel as though he had committed murder, and could not imagine how he had allowed such words to escape him. He was on the point of bursting into tears, falling on his knees, and imploring his father to forgive him, when his mother, looking up at the ceiling, said with a sigh:

"What offence can I have committed against God, to have brought such a wicked son into the world?"

This speech struck Maurice as a piece of ridiculous affectation, and it pulled him up with a jerk. The bitterness of contrition suddenly gave place to the delicious arrogance of wrong-doing. He plunged wildly into a torrent of insolence and

revolt, and breathlessly delivered himself of utterances quite unfit for a mother's ear.

"If you will have it, mamma, rather than forbid me to continue my friendship with a talented lyrical artist, you would be better employed in preventing my elder sister, Madame de Margy, from appearing, night after night, in society and at the theatres with a contemptible and disgusting individual that everybody knows is her lover. You should also keep an eye on my little sister Jeanne, who writes objectionable letters to herself in a disguised hand, and then, pretending she has found them in her prayer-book, shows them to you with assumed innocence, to worry and alarm you. It would be just as well, too, if you prevented my little brother Léon, a child of seven, from being quite so much with Mademoiselle Caporal, and you might tell your maid...."

"Get out, sir, I will not have you in the house!" cried Monsieur René d'Esparvieu, white with anger, pointing a trembling finger at the door.

CHAPTER XXIX

WHEREIN WE SEE HOW THE ANGEL, HAVING BECOME A MAN, BEHAVES LIKE A MAN, COVETING ANOTHER'S WIFE AND BETRAYING HIS FRIEND. IN THIS CHAPTER THE CORRECTNESS OF YOUNG D'ESPARVIEU'S CONDUCT WILL BE MADE MANIFEST

THE angel was pleased with his lodging. He worked of a morning, went out in the afternoon, heedless of detectives, and came home to sleep. As in days gone by, Maurice received Madame des Aubels twice or thrice a week in the room in which they had seen the apparition.

All went very well until one morning Gilberte, having, the night before, left her little velvet bag on the table in the blue room, came to find it, and discovered Arcade stretched on the couch in his pyjamas, smoking a cigarette, and dreaming of the conquest of Heaven. She gave a loud scream.

"You, Monsieur! Had I thought to find you here, you may be quite sure I should not ... I came to fetch my little bag, which is in the next room. Allow me...." And she slipped past the angel, cautiously and quickly, as if he were a brazier.

Madame des Aubels that morning, in her pale green tailor-made costume, was deliciously attractive. Her tight skirt displayed her movements, and her every step was one of those miracles of Nature which fill men's hearts with amazement.

She reappeared, bag in hand.

"Once more — I ask your pardon.... I never dreamt that...."

Arcade begged her to sit down and to stay a moment.

"I never expected, Monsieur," said she, "that you would be doing the honours of this flat. I knew how dearly Monsieur d'Esparvieu loved you.... Nevertheless, I had no idea that...."

The sky had suddenly grown overcast. A brownish glare began to steal into the room. Madame des Aubels told him she had walked for her health's sake, but a storm was brewing, and she asked if a carriage could be called for her.

Arcade flung himself at Gilberte's feet, took her in his arms as one takes a precious piece of china, and murmured words which, being meaningless in themselves, expressed desire.

She put her hands over his eyes and on his lips, and exclaimed, "I hate you!"

And shaking with sobs, she asked for a drink of water. She was choking. The angel went to her assistance. In this moment of extreme peril she defended herself courageously. She kept saying: "No!... No!... I will not love you. I should love you too well...." Nevertheless she succumbed.

In the sweet familiarity which followed their mutual astonishment she said to him:

“I have often asked after you. I knew that you were an assiduous frequenter of the playhouses at Montmartre, — that you were often seen with Mademoiselle Bouchotte, who, nevertheless, is not at all pretty. I knew that you had become very smart, and that you were making a good deal of money. I was not surprised. You were born to succeed. The day of your” — and she pointed at the spot between the window and the wardrobe with the mirror— “apparition, I was vexed with Maurice for having given you a suicide’s rags to wear. You pleased me.... Oh, it was not your good looks! Don’t think that women are as sensitive as people say to outward attractions. We consider other things in love. There is a sort of — Well, anyhow I loved you as soon as I saw you.”

The shadows grew deeper.

She asked:

“You are not an angel, are you? Maurice believes you are; but he believes so many things, Maurice.” She questioned Arcade with her eyes and smiled maliciously. “Confess that you have been fooling him, and that you are no angel?”

Arcade replied:

“I only aspire to please you; I will always be what you want me to be.”

Gilberte decided that he was no angel; first, because one never is an angel; secondly, for more detailed reasons which drew her thoughts to the question of love. He did not argue the matter with her, and once again words were found inadequate to express their feelings.

Outside, the rain was falling thick and fast, the windows were streaming, lightning lit up the muslin curtains, and thunder shook the panes. Gilberte made the sign of the Cross and remained with her head hidden in her lover’s bosom.

At this moment Maurice entered the room. He came in wet and smiling, confident, tranquil, happy, to announce to Arcade the good news that with his half-share in the previous day’s race at Longchamps the angel had won twelve times his stake. Surprising the lady and the angel in their embrace, he became furious; anger gripped the muscles of his throat, his face grew red with blood, and the veins stood out on his forehead. He sprang with clenched fists towards Gilberte, and then suddenly stopped.

Interrupted motion was transformed into heat. Maurice fumed. His anger did not arm him, like Archilochus, with lyrical vengeance. He merely applied an offensive epithet to his unfaithful one.

Meanwhile she had recovered her dignified bearing. She rose, full of modesty and grace, and gave her accuser a look which expressed both offended virtue and

loving forgiveness.

But as young d'Esparvieu continued to shower coarse and monotonous insults on her, she grew angry in her turn.

"You are a pretty sort of person, are you not?" she said. "Did I run after this Arcade of yours? It was you who brought him here, and in what a state, too! You had only one idea: to give me up to your friend. Well, Monsieur, you can do as you like — I am not going to oblige you."

Maurice d'Esparvieu replied simply, "Get out of it, you trollop!" And he made a motion as if to push her out. It pained Arcade to see his mistress treated so disrespectfully, but he thought he lacked the necessary authority to interfere with Maurice. Madame des Aubels, who had lost none of her dignity, fixed young d'Esparvieu with her imperious gaze, and said:

"Go and get me a carriage."

And so great is the power of woman over a well-bred soul, in a gallant nation, that the young Frenchman went immediately and told the concierge to call a taxi. Madame des Aubels, with a studied exhibition of charm in every movement, took leave of them, throwing Maurice the contemptuous look that a woman owes to him whom she has deceived. Maurice witnessed her departure with an outward expression of indifference he was far from feeling. Then he turned to the angel clad in the flowered pyjamas which Maurice himself had worn the day of the apparition; and this circumstance, trifling in itself, added fuel to the anger of the host who had been thus shamefully deceived.

"Well," he said, "you may pride yourself on being a despicable individual. You have behaved basely, and all for nothing. If the woman took your fancy, you had but to tell me. I was tired of her. I had had enough of her. I would have willingly left her to you."

He spoke thus to hide his pain, for he loved Gilberte more than ever, and the creature's treachery caused him great suffering. He pursued:

"I was about to ask you to take her off my hands. But you have followed your lower nature — you have behaved like a sweep."

If at this solemn moment Arcade had but spoken one word from his heart, Maurice would have burst into tears, and forgiven his friend and his mistress, and all three would have become content and happy once again. But Arcade had not been nourished on the milk of human kindness. He had never suffered, and did not know how to sympathise with suffering. He replied with frigid wisdom:

"My dear Maurice, that same necessity which orders and constrains the actions of living beings, produces effects that are often unexpected, and sometimes absurd. Thus it is that I have been led to displease you. You would not reproach me if you had a good philosophical understanding of nature; for you would then

know that free-will is but an illusion, and that physiological affinities are as exactly determined as are chemical combinations, and, like them, may be summed up in a formula. I think that, in your case, it might be possible to inculcate these truths, but it would be a difficult task, and maybe they would not bring you the serenity which eludes you. It is fitting, therefore, that I should leave this spot, and — —”

“Stay,” said Maurice.

Maurice had a very clear sense of social obligations. He put honour, when he thought about it, above everything. So now he told himself very forcibly that the outrage he had suffered could only be wiped out with blood. This traditional idea instantly lent an unexpected nobility to his speech and bearing.

“It is I, Monsieur,” said he, “who will quit this place, never to return. You will remain here, since you are a refugee. My seconds will wait upon you.”

The angel smiled.

“I will receive them, if it gives you pleasure, but, bethink you, my dear Maurice, I am invulnerable. Celestial spirits even when they are materialised cannot be touched by point of sword or pistol shot. Consider, my dear Maurice, the awkward situation in which this fatal inequality puts me, and realise that in refusing to appoint seconds I cannot give as a reason my celestial nature, — it would be unprecedented.”

“Monsieur,” replied the heir of the Bussart d’Esparvieu, “you should have thought of that before you insulted me.”

Out he marched haughtily; but no sooner was he in the street than he staggered like a drunken man. The rain was still falling. He walked unseeing, unhearing, at haphazard, dragging his feet in the gutters through pools of water, through heaps of mud. He followed the outer boulevards for a long time, and at length, fardone with weariness, lay down on the edge of a piece of waste land. He was muddied up to the eyes, mud and tears smeared his face, the brim of his hat was dripping with rain. A passer-by, taking him for a beggar, tossed him a copper. He picked it up, put it carefully in his waistcoat pocket, and set off to find his seconds.

CHAPTER XXX

WHICH TREATS OF AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR, AND WHICH WILL AFFORD THE READER AN OPPORTUNITY OF JUDGING WHETHER, AS ARCADE AFFIRMS, THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR FAULTS MAKES BETTER MEN AND WOMEN OF US

THE ground chosen for the combat was Colonel Manchon's garden, on the Boulevard de la Reine at Versailles. Messieurs de la Verdelière and Le Truc de Ruffec, who had both of them constant practice in affairs of honour and knew the rules with great exactness, assisted Maurice d'Esparvieu. No duel was ever fought in the Catholic world without Monsieur de la Verdelière being present; and, in making application to this swordsman, Maurice had conformed to custom, though not without a certain reluctance, for he had been notorious as the lover of Madame de la Verdelière; but Monsieur de la Verdelière was not to be looked upon as a husband. He was an institution. As to Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec, honour was his only known profession and avowedly his sole resource, and when the matter was made the subject of ill-natured comment in Society, the question was asked what finer career than that of honour Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec could possibly have adopted. Arcade's seconds were Prince Istar and Théophile. The celestial musician had not voluntarily nor with a good grace taken a hand in this affair. He had a horror of every kind of violence and disapproved of single combat. The report of pistols and the clash of swords were intolerable to him, and the sight of blood made him faint. This gentle son of Heaven had obstinately refused to act as second to his brother Arcade, and to bring him to the starting-point the Kerûb had had to threaten to break a bottle of panclastite over his head.

Besides the combatants, the seconds, and the doctors, the only people in the garden were a few officers from the barracks at Versailles and several reporters. Although young d'Esparvieu was known merely as a young man of family, and Arcade had never been heard of at all, the duel had attracted quite a large crowd of inquisitive individuals, and the windows of the adjoining houses were crammed with photographers, reporters, and Society people. What had aroused much curiosity was that a woman was known to be the cause of the quarrel. Many mentioned Bouchotte, but the majority said it was Madame des Aubels. It had been remarked upon, moreover, that duels in which Monsieur de la Verdelière acted as second drew all Paris.

The sky was a soft blue, the garden all a-bloom with roses, a blackbird was piping in a tree. Monsieur de la Verdelière, who, stick in hand, conducted the affair, laid the points of the swords together, and said:

“Allez, Messieurs. ”

Maurice d'Esparvieu attacked by doubling and beating the blade. Arcade retired, keeping his sword in line. The first engagement was without result. The seconds were under the impression that Monsieur d'Esparvieu was in a grievous state of nervous irritability, and that his adversary would wear him down. In the second encounter Maurice attacked wildly, spread out his arms, and exposed his breast. He attacked as he advanced, gave a straight thrust, and the point of his sword grazed Arcade on the shoulder. The latter was thought to be wounded. But the seconds ascertained with surprise that it was Maurice who had received a scratch on the wrist. Maurice asserted that he felt nothing, and Dr. Quille declared, after examination, that his client might continue the fight. After the regulation quarter of an hour the duel was resumed. Maurice attacked with fury. His adversary was obviously nursing him, and, what disturbed Monsieur de la Verdelière, seemed to be paying very little attention to his own defence. At the opening of the fifth bout, a black spaniel that had got into the garden no one knew how rushed out from a clump of rose-bushes, made its way on to the space reserved for the combatants, and, in spite of sticks and cries, ran in between Maurice's legs. The latter seemed as though his arm were benumbed, merely gave a shoulder-thrust at his invulnerable opponent. He then delivered a straight lunge and impaled his arm on his adversary's sword, which made a deep wound just below the elbow. Monsieur de la Verdelière stopped the fight, which had lasted an hour and a half. Maurice was conscious of a painful shock. They laid him down on a grassy bank against a wall covered with wistaria. While the surgeon was dressing the wound Maurice called Arcade and offered him his wounded hand. And when the victor, saddened with his victory, advanced, Maurice embraced him tenderly, saying: “Be generous, Arcade; forgive my treachery. Now that we have fought, I can ask you to be reconciled with me.”

He embraced his friend, weeping, and whispered in his ear:

“Come and see me, and bring Gilberte.”

Maurice, who was still unreconciled with his parents, was taken to the little flat in the Rue de Rome. No sooner was he stretched on the bed at the far end of the bedroom where the curtains were drawn as on the day of the apparition, than he saw Arcade and Gilberte appear. He began to suffer greatly from his wound; his temperature was rising, but he was at peace, happy and contented. Angel and woman, both in tears, threw themselves at the foot of the bed. He took both their hands with his left, smiled on them, and kissed them tenderly.

“I am sure now that I shall never quarrel with either of you again; you will deceive me no more. I now know you are capable of anything.”

Gilberte, weeping, swore that Maurice had been misled by appearances, that she had never betrayed him with Arcade, that she had never betrayed him at all. And in a great gush of sincerity she persuaded herself that this was so.

“You wrong yourself, Gilberte,” replied the wounded man. “It did happen; it had to. And it is well. Gilberte, you were basely false to me with my best friend in this very room, and you were right. If you had not been we should not be here, reunited, all three of us, and I should not be at your side tasting the greatest happiness of my life. Oh, Gilberte, how wrong of you to deny a perfect and accomplished fact!”

“If you wish, my friend,” replied Gilberte, a little acidly, “I will not deny it. But it will only be to please you.”

Maurice made her sit down on the bed, and begged Arcade to be seated in the arm-chair.

“My friend,” said Arcade, “I was innocent. I became man. Straightway I did evil. Then I became better.”

“Do not let us exaggerate things,” said Maurice. “Let’s have a game of bridge.”

Scarcely, however, had the patient seen three aces in his hand and called “no trumps,” than his eyes began to swim, the cards slipped from his fingers, head fell heavily back on the pillow, and he complained of a violent headache. Almost immediately, Madame des Aubels went off to pay some calls, for she made a point of appearing in Society, in order that the calmness and confidence of her demeanour might give the lie to the various rumours that were current concerning her. Arcade saw her to the door, and, with a kiss, inhaled from her a delicate perfume which he brought back with him into the room where Maurice lay dozing.

“I am perfectly content,” murmured the latter, “that things should have happened as they have.”

“It was bound to be so,” answered the Spirit. “All the other angels in revolt would have done as I did with Gilberte. ‘Women,’ saith the Apostle, ‘should pray with their heads covered, because of the angels,’ and the Apostle speaks thus because he knows that the angels are disturbed when they look upon them and see that they are beautiful. No sooner do they touch the earth than they desire to embrace mortal women and fulfil their desire. Their clasp is full of strength and sweetness, they hold the secret of those ineffable caresses which plunge the daughters of men into unfathomable depths of delight. Laying upon the lips of their happy victims a honey that burns like fire, making their veins flow with torrents of refreshing flames, they leave them raptured and undone.”

“Stop your clatter, you unclean beast,” cried the wounded one.

“One word more!” said the angel; “just one other word, my dear Maurice, to bear out what I say, and I will let you rest quietly. There’s nothing like having sound references. In order to assure yourself that I am not deceiving you, Maurice, on this subject of the amorous embraces of angels and women, look up Justin, *Apologies* , I and II; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* , Book I, Chapter III; Athenagoras, *Concerning the Resurrection* ; Lactantius, Book II, Chapter XV; Tertullian, *On the Veil of the Virgins* ; Marcus of Ephesus in *Psellus* ; Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelica* , Book V, Chapter IV; Saint Ambrose, in his book on *Noah and the Ark* , Chapter V; Saint Augustine, in his *City of God* , Book XV, Chapter XXIII; Father Meldonat, the Jesuit, *Treatise on Demons* , page 248; Pierre Lebyer the King’s Counsellor — —”

“Arcade, please, for pity’s sake, be quiet; do, please do, and send this dog away,” cried Maurice, whose face was burning, and whose eyes were starting from his head; for in his delirium he thought he saw a black spaniel on his bed.

Madame de la Verdelière, who was assiduous in every modish and patriotic practice, was reckoned, in the best French society, as one of the most gracious of the great ladies interested in good works. She came herself to ask for news of Maurice, and offered to nurse the wounded man. But at the vehement instigation of Madame des Aubels, Arcade shut the door in her face. Expressions of sympathy were showered upon Maurice. Piled on the salver, visiting cards displayed their innumerable little dogs’ ears. Monsieur Le Truc de Ruffec was one of the first to show his manly sympathy at the flat in the Rue de Rome, and, holding out his loyal hand, asked young d’Esparvieu as one honourable man to another for twenty-five louis to pay a debt of honour.

“Of course, my dear Maurice, that is the sort of thing one could not ask of everybody.”

The same day Monsieur Gaétan came to press his nephew’s hand. The latter introduced Arcade.

“This is my guardian angel, whose foot you thought so beautiful when you saw the print it had made on the tell-tale powder, uncle. He appeared to me last year in this very room. You don’t believe it? Well, it is true, nevertheless.”

Then turning towards the Spirit he said:

“What say you, Arcade? The Abbé Patouille, who is a great theologian and a good priest, does not believe that you are an angel; and Uncle Gaétan, who doesn’t know his catechism and hasn’t a scrap of religion in him, doesn’t think so either. They deny you, the pair of them; the one because he has faith, the other because he hasn’t. After that you may be sure that your history, if ever it comes to be narrated, will scarcely appear credible. Moreover, the man that took

it into his head to tell your story would not be a man of taste, and would not come in for much approval. For your story is not a pretty one. I love you, but I sit in judgment upon you, too. Since you fell into atheism, you have become an abominable scoundrel. A bad angel, a bad friend, a traitor, and a homicide, for I suppose it was to bring about my death that you sent that black spaniel between my legs on the duelling-ground.”

The angel shrugged his shoulders and, addressing Gaétan, said:

“Alas! Monsieur, I am not surprised at finding little credit in your eyes. I have been told that you have fallen out with the Judæo-Christian heaven, which is where I came from.”

“Monsieur,” answered Gaétan, “my faith in Jehovah is not sufficiently strong to enable me to believe in his angels.”

“Monsieur, he whom you call Jehovah is really a coarse and ignorant demiurge, and his name is Ialdabaoth.”

“In that case, Monsieur, I am perfectly ready to believe in him. He is a narrow-minded ignoramus, is he? Then belief in his existence offers me no further difficulty. How is he getting on?”

“Badly! We are going to lay him low next month.”

“Don’t make too sure of that, Monsieur. You remind me of my brother-in-law, Cuissart, who has been expecting to hear of the fall of the Republic for the past thirty years.”

“You see, Arcade,” exclaimed Maurice, “Uncle Gaétan thinks as I do. He knows you won’t succeed.”

“And, pray, Monsieur Gaétan, what makes you think I shall not succeed?”

“Your Ialdabaoth is still very powerful in this world, if he isn’t in the other. In days gone by he used to be upheld by his priests, by those who believed in him. Now he is supported by those who do not believe in him, by the philosophers. A pedant of a fellow called Picrochole has recently come on the scene who wants to make a bankrupt of science in order to do a good turn to the Church. And just lately Pragmatism has been invented for the express purpose of gaining credit for religion in the minds of rationalists.”

“You have been studying Pragmatism?”

“Not I! I was frivolous once, and I went in for metaphysics. I read Hegel and Kant. I have become serious with years, and now I only trouble myself about things evident to the senses: what the eye can see or what the ear can hear. Man is summed up in Art. All the rest is moonshine.”

Thus the conversation went on until evening; it was marked by obscenities that would have brought a blush — I will not say to a cuirassier, for cuirassiers are frequently chaste, but even to a Parisienne.

Monsieur Sariette came to see his old pupil. When he entered the room the bust of Alexandre d'Esparvieu seemed to take shape behind the librarian's bald head. He drew near the bed. In the place of blue curtains, mirrored wardrobe, and chimney-piece, there straightway came into view the heavy-laden bookcases of the room of the globes and busts, and the air was heavy with piles of papers, records, and files. Monsieur Sariette could not be dissociated from his library; one could not conceive of him or even see him apart from it. He himself was paler, more vague, more shadowy, and more a creature of the fancy than the fancies he evoked.

Maurice, who had grown very quiet, was sensible of this mark of friendship.

"Sit down, Monsieur Sariette, — you know Madame des Aubels. May I introduce Arcade to you, — my guardian angel. It was he who, while yet invisible, pillaged your library for two years, made you lose all desire for food and drink, and drove you to the verge of madness. He it was who moved piles of books from the room of the busts to my summer-house one day; under your very nose, he took away I know not what precious volumes; and was the cause of your falling on the staircase; another day he took a volume of Salomon Reinach's, and, forced to go out with me (for he never left me, as I have learnt later), he let the volume drop in the gutter of the Rue Princesse. Forgive him, Monsieur Sariette, — he had no pockets. He was invisible. I bitterly regret, Monsieur Sariette, that all your old books were not devoured by fire or swallowed up by a flood. They made my angel lose his head. He became man, and now knows neither faith nor obedience to laws. It is I, now, who am his guardian angel. God knows how it will all end."

While listening to this speech, Monsieur Sariette's face took on an expression of infinite, irreparable, eternal sadness; the sadness of a mummy. Rising to take his leave, the sorrowful librarian murmured in Arcade's ear:

"The poor child is very ill. He is delirious."

Maurice called the old man back.

"Do stay, Monsieur Sariette. You shall have a game of bridge with us. Monsieur Sariette, listen to my advice. Do not do as I did — do not keep bad company. You will be lost. I shudder at the mere thought. Monsieur Sariette, do not go yet. I have something very important to ask you. When you come again, bring me a book on the truth of religion, so that I may study it. I must restore to my guardian-angel the faith which he has lost."

CHAPTER XXXI

WHEREIN WE ARE LED TO MARVEL AT THE READINESS WITH WHICH AN HONEST MAN OF TIMID AND GENTLE NATURE CAN COMMIT A HORRIBLE CRIME

PROFOUNDLY distressed by the dark utterances of young Maurice, Monsieur Sariette took a motor-omnibus, and went to see Père Guinardon, his friend, his only friend, the one person in the whole world whom it gave him pleasure to see and hear. When Monsieur Sariette entered the shop in the Rue de Courcelles, Guinardon was alone, dozing in the depths of an antique arm-chair. His face, surrounded by his curly hair and luxuriant beard, was crimson in hue. Little violet filaments spread a network about the fleshy part of his nose, to which the wines of Burgundy had imparted a purple tint; for there was no longer any disguising the fact, Père Guinardon drank. Two feet away from him, on the fair Octavie's work-table, a rose, all but withered, drooped in an empty vase, and in a basket a piece of embroidery was lying unfinished and neglected. The young Octavie's absences from the shop were growing more and more frequent, and Monsieur Blancmesnil never called when she was not there. The reason of this was that they were meeting three times a week at five o'clock in a house close to the Champs Élysées. Père Guinardon knew nothing of that. He did not know the full extent of his misfortune, but he suffered.

Monsieur Sariette shook his old friend by the hand; but he did not enquire for the young Octavie, for he refused to recognise the connexion. He would sooner have talked about Zéphyrine, who had been so cruelly deserted, and whom he hoped the old man would make his lawful wife. But Monsieur Sariette was prudent. He contented himself with asking Guinardon how he was.

"Perfectly well," was Guinardon's reply; but he felt ill, for either age and love-making had undermined his sturdy constitution, or else young Octavie's faithlessness had dealt her lover a fatal blow. "God be praised," he went on, "I still retain my powers of mind and body. I am chaste. Be chaste, Sariette. Chastity is strength."

That evening Père Guinardon had taken some specially valuable books out of the king-wood cabinet to show to a distinguished bibliophile, Monsieur Victor Meyer, and after the latter's departure he had dropped off to sleep without putting them back in their places. Books had an attraction for Monsieur Sariette, and seeing these particular volumes on the marble top of the cabinet, he began to examine them with interest. The first one he looked at was *La Pucelle*, in morocco, with the English continuation. Doubtless it pained his patriotic and

Christian heart to admire its text and illustrations, but a good copy was always virtuous and pure in his sight. Continuing to chat very affectionately with Guinardon, he picked up, one by one, the books which the antiquary had, for one reason or another — binding, illustrations, distinguished ownership, or scarcity — added to his stock.

Suddenly a glorious shout of joy and love broke from his lips. He had discovered the *Lucretius* of the Prior de Vendôme, his *Lucretius*, and he was clasping it to his bosom.

“Once again I behold you,” he sighed, as he pressed it to his lips.

At first Père Guinardon could not quite make out what his old friend was talking about; but when the latter declared to him that the volume was from the d’Esparvieu collection, that it belonged to him, Sariette, and that he was going to take it away without further ado, the antiquary completely woke up, got on his legs, declared emphatically that the book belonged to him, Guinardon, by right of true and lawful purchase, and that he would not part with it unless he got five thousand francs for it cash down.

“You don’t take in what I am telling you,” answered Sariette. “The book belongs to the d’Esparvieu library; I must restore it to its place.”

“*Pas de ça, Lisette*” — hummed Guinardon.

“The book belongs to me, I tell you!”

“You are crazy, my good Sariette!”

And noticing that, as a matter of fact, the librarian had a wandering look in his eye, he took the book from him, and tried to change the conversation.

“Have you seen, Sariette, that the rascals are going to rip up the Palais Mazarin, and cover up the very heart and centre of the Old Town, the finest and most venerable place in the whole of Paris, with the deuce knows what works of art of theirs? They are worse than the Vandals, for the Vandals, although they destroyed the buildings of antiquity, did not replace them with hideous and disgusting erections and atrocious bridges like the Pont d’Alexandre. And your poor Rue Garancière, Sariette, has fallen a prey to the barbarians. What have they done with the pretty bronze mask of the Palace fountain?”

Monsieur Sariette never listened to a word of all this.

“Guinardon, you have not understood me. Now listen. This book belongs to the d’Esparvieu library. It was taken away, how or by whom I know not. Dreadful and mysterious things went on in that library. But, anyhow, the book was stolen. I need scarcely appeal to your sentiments of scrupulous probity, my dear friend. You would not like to be regarded as the receiver of stolen goods. Give me the book. I will return it to Monsieur d’Esparvieu, who will duly requite you; of that

you may be sure. Rely on his generosity, and you will be acting like the downright good fellow that you are.”

The antiquary smiled a bitter smile.

“Catch me relying on the generosity of that old curmudgeon of a d’Esparvieu. Why, he’d skin a flea to get its coat. Look at me, Sariette, old boy, and tell me if I look like a dunderhead. You know perfectly well that d’Esparvieu refused to give fifty francs in a second-hand shop for a portrait of Alexandre d’Esparvieu, the founder of the family, by Hersent, and that consequently the founder of the family has had to remain on the Boulevard Montparnasse, propped against a Jew hawker’s stall, just opposite the cemetery, where all the dogs of the neighbourhood come and make water on him. Catch me trusting to Monsieur d’Esparvieu’s liberality! You’ve got some bright ideas in your head, you have!”

“Very well, Guinardon, I myself will undertake to pay you any indemnity that a board of arbitrators may fix upon. Do you hear?”

“Now don’t go and do the handsome for people who won’t give you so much as a thank-you. This man, d’Esparvieu, has taken your knowledge, your energies, your whole life for a salary that even a valet wouldn’t accept. So leave that idea alone. In any case it is too late. The book is sold.”

“Sold? To whom?” asked Sariette in agonized tones.

“What does that matter? You’ll never see it again. You’ll hear no more about it; it’s off to America.”

“To America! The *Lucretius* with the arms of Philippe de Vendôme and marginalia in Voltaire’s own hand! My *Lucretius* off to America!”

Père Guinardon began to laugh.

“My dear Sariette, you remind me of the Chevalier des Grieux when he learns that his darling mistress is to be transported to the Mississippi. ‘My dear mistress going to the Mississippi!’ says he.”

“No! no!” answered Sariette, very pale, “this book shall not go to America. It shall return, as it ought, to the d’Esparvieu library. Let me have it, Guinardon.”

The antiquary made a second attempt to put an end to an interview that now looked as if it might take an ugly turn.

“My good Sariette, you haven’t told me what you think of my Greco. You never so much as glanced at it. It is an admirable piece of work all the same.”

And Guinardon, putting the picture in a good light, went on:

“Now just look at Saint Francis here, the poor man of the Lord, the brother of Jesus. See how his fuliginous body rises heavenward like the smoke from an agreeable sacrifice, like the sacrifice of Abel.”

“Give me the book, Guinardon,” said Sariette, without turning his head; “give me the book.”

The blood suddenly flew to Père Guinardon's head.

"That's enough of it," he shouted, as red as a turkey-cock, the veins standing out on his forehead.

And he dropped the *Lucretius* into his jacket pocket.

Straightway old Sariette flew at the antiquary, assailed him with sudden fury, and, frail and weakly as he was, butted him back into young Octavie's arm-chair. Guinardon, in furious amazement, belched forth the most horrible abuse on the old maniac and gave him a punch that sent him staggering back four paces against the *Coronation of the Virgin*, by Fra Angelico, which fell down with a crash. Sariette returned to the charge, and tried to drag the book out of the pocket in which it lay hid. This time Père Guinardon would really have floored him had he not been blinded by the blood that was rushing to his head, and hit sideways at the work-table of his absent mistress. Sariette fastened himself on to his bewildered adversary, held him down in the arm-chair, and with his little bony hands clutched him by the neck, which, red as it was already, became a deep crimson. Guinardon struggled to get free, but the little fingers, feeling the mass of soft, warm flesh about them, embedded themselves in it with delicious ecstasy. Some unknown force made them hold fast to their prey. Guinardon's throat began to rattle, saliva was oozing from one corner of his mouth. His enormous frame quivered now and again beneath the grasp; but the tremors grew more and more intermittent and spasmodic. At last they ceased. The murderous hands did not let go their hold. Sariette had to make a violent effort to loose them. His temples were buzzing. Nevertheless he could hear the rain falling outside, muffled steps going past on the pavement, newspaper men shouting in the distance. He could see umbrellas passing along in the dim light. He drew the book from the dead man's pocket and fled.

The fair Octavie did not go back to the shop that night. She went to sleep in a little entresol underneath the bric-a-brac stores which Monsieur de Blancmesnil had recently bought for her in this same Rue de Courcelles. The workman whose task it was to shut up the shop found the antiquary's body still warm. He called Madame Lenain, the concierge, who laid Guinardon on the couch, lit a couple of candles, put a sprig of box in a saucer of holy water, and closed the dead man's eyes. The doctor who was called in to certify the death ascribed it to apoplexy.

Zéphyrine, informed of what had happened by Madame Lenain, hastened to the house, and sat up all night with the body. The dead man looked as if he were sleeping. In the flickering light of the candles El Greco's Saint mounted upwards like a wreath of smoke, the gold of the Primitives gleamed in the shadows. Near the deathbed a little woman by Baudouin was plainly discernible giving herself a

douche. All through the night Zéphyrine's lamentations could be heard fifty yards away.

"He's dead, he's dead!" she kept saying. "My friend, my divinity, my all, my love —— But no! he is not dead, he moves. It is I, Michel; I, your Zéphyrine. Awake, hear me! Answer me; I love you; if ever I caused you pain, forgive me. Dead! dead! O my God! See how beautiful he is. He was so good, so clever, so kind. My God! My God! My God! If I had been there he would not now be lying dead. Michel! Michel!"

When morning came she was silent. They thought she had fallen asleep. She was dead too.

CHAPTER XXXII

WHICH DESCRIBES HOW NECTAIRE'S FLUTE WAS HEARD IN THE TAVERN OF CLODOMIR

MADAME DE LA VERDELIÈRE having failed to force an *entrée* as sick-nurse, returned after several days had elapsed, — during the absence of Madame des Aubels, — to ask Maurice d'Esparvieu for his subscription to the French churches. Arcade led her to the bedside of the convalescent. Maurice whispered in the angel's ear:

"Traitor, deliver me from this ogress immediately, or you will be answerable for the evil which will soon befall."

"Be calm," said Arcade, with a confident air.

After the conventional complimentary flourishes, Madame de la Verdelière signed to Maurice to dismiss the angel. Maurice feigned not to understand. And Madame de la Verdelière disclosed the ostensible reason of her visit.

"Our churches," she said, "our beloved country churches, — what is to become of them?"

Arcade gazed at her angelically and sighed.

"They will disappear, Madame; they will fall into ruin. And what a pity! I shall be inconsolable. The church amid the villagers' cottages is like the hen amidst her chickens."

"Just so!" exclaimed Madame de la Verdelière with a delighted smile. "It is just like that."

"And the spires, Madame?"

"Oh, Monsieur, the spires!..."

"Yes, the spires, Madame, that stick up into the skies towards the little Cherubim, like so many syringes."

Madame de la Verdelière incontinently left the place.

That same day Monsieur l'Abbé Patouille came to offer the wounded man good counsel and consolation. He exhorted him to break with his bad companions and to be reconciled to his family.

He drew a picture of the sorrowful father, the mother in tears, ready to receive their long-lost child with open arms. Renouncing with manly effort a life of profligacy and deluding joys, Maurice would recover his peace and strength of mind, he would free himself from devouring chimeras, and shake off the Evil Spirit.

Young d'Esparvieu thanked Abbé Patouille for all his kindness, and made a protestation of his religious feelings.

“Never,” said he, “have I had such faith. And never have I been in such need of it. Just imagine, Monsieur l’Abbé, I have to teach my guardian angel his catechism all over again, for he has quite forgotten it!”

Monsieur l’Abbé Patouille heaved a deep sigh, and exhorted his dear child to pray, there being no other resource but prayer for a soul assailed by the Devil.

“Monsieur l’Abbé,” asked Maurice, “may I introduce my guardian angel to you? Do stay a moment; he has gone to get me some cigarettes.”

“Unhappy child!”

And Abbé Patouille’s fat cheeks drooped in token of affliction. But almost immediately they plumped up again, as a sign of light-heartedness. For in his heart there was matter for rejoicing. Public opinion was improving. The Jacobins, the Freemasons, the Coalitionists were everywhere in disgrace. The Smart Set led the way. The Académie Française was of the right way of thinking. The number of Christian schools was increasing by leaps and bounds. The young men of the Quartier Latin were submitting to the Church, and the École Normale exhaled the perfume of the seminary. The Cross was gaining the day; but money was wanted, — more money, always money.

After six weeks’ rest, Maurice was allowed by his doctor to take a drive. He wore his arm in a sling. His mistress and his friend went with him. They drove to the Bois, and took a gentle pleasure in looking upon the grass and the trees. They smiled on everything and everything smiled on them. As Arcade had said, their faults had made them better. By the unlooked-for ways of jealousy and anger, Maurice had attained to calm and kindliness. He still loved Gilberte and he loved her with an indulgent love. The angel still desired her as much as ever, but having once possessed her, his desire had lost the sting of curiosity. Gilberte forbore trying to please, and thereby pleased the more. They drank milk at the Cascade, and found it good. They were all three innocent. Arcade forgot the injustice of the old tyrant of the world. But he was soon to be reminded of it.

On entering his friend’s house, he found Zita awaiting him, looking like a statue in ivory and gold.

“You excite my pity,” she said to him. “The day is at hand the like of which has never dawned since the beginning of Time, and perhaps will never dawn again before the Sun enters with all its train into the constellation of Hercules. We are on the eve of surprising Ialdabaoth in his palace of porphyry, and you, who are burning to deliver the heavens, who were so eager to enter in triumph into your emancipated country, — you suddenly forget your noble purpose and fall asleep in the arms of the daughters of men. What pleasure can you find in intercourse with these unclean little animals, composed, as they are, of elements so unstable that they may be said to be in a state of constant evanescence? O Arcade! I was

indeed right to distrust you. You are but an intellectual; you do but feel idle curiosity. You are incapable of action.”

“You misjudge me, Zita,” replied the angel. “It is the nature of the sons of heaven to love the daughters of men. Corruptible though it be, the material part of women and of flowers charms the senses none the less. But not one of these little animals can make me forget my hatred and my love, and I am ready to rise up against Ialdabaoth.”

Zita expressed her satisfaction at seeing him in this resolute mood. She urged him to pursue the accomplishment of this vast undertaking with undiminished ardour. Nothing must be hurried or deferred.

“A great action, Arcade, is made up of a multitude of small ones; the most majestic whole is composed of a thousand minute details. Let us neglect nothing.”

She had come to take him to a meeting where his presence was required. They were to take a census of the revolutionaries.

She added but one word:

“Nectaire will be there.”

When Maurice saw Zita, he deemed her lacking in attraction. She failed to please him because she was perfectly beautiful and because true beauty always caused him painful surprise. Zita inspired him with antipathy when he learned that she was an angel in revolt and that she had come to seek Arcade to take him away among the conspirators.

The poor child tried to retain his companion by all the means that his wit and the circumstances afforded him. If his guardian angel would only remain with him, he would take him to a magnificent boxing-match, to a “revue” where he would witness the apotheosis of Poincaré, or, lastly, to a certain house he knew of where he would behold women remarkable for their beauty, talents, vices, or deformities. But the angel would not allow himself to be tempted, and said he was going with Zita.

“What for?”

“To plot the conquest of the skies.”

“Still the same nonsense! The conquest of —— but there, I proved to you that it was neither possible nor desirable.”

“Good night, Maurice.”

“You are going? Well, I will accompany you.”

And Maurice, his arm in a sling, went with Arcade and Zita all the way to Clodomir’s restaurant at Montmartre, where the tables were laid in an arbour in the garden.

Prince Istar and Théophile were already there, with a little creature who looked like a child, and was, in fact, a Japanese angel.

“We are only waiting for Nectaire,” said Zita.

And at that moment the old gardener noiselessly appeared. He took his seat, and his dog lay down at his feet. French cooking is the best in the world. It is a glory that will transcend all others when humanity has grown wise enough to put the spit above the sword. Clodomir served the angels, and the mortal who was with them, with a soup made of cabbages and bacon, a loin of pork and kidneys cooked in wine, thereby proving himself a real Montmartre cook, and showing that he had not been spoilt by the Americans, who corrupt the most excellent *chefs* of the City of Restaurants.

Clodomir brought forth some Bordeaux, which, though unrecorded among the renowned vintages of Médoc, gave evidence by its choice and delicate aroma of the high nobility of its origin. We must not omit to chronicle that, after this wine and many others had been drunk, the cellarman, in solemn state, produced a Burgundy choice and rare, full-bodied yet not heavy, generous yet delicate, rich with the true Burgundian mellowness, a noble and, withal, a somewhat heady wine, that brought delight alike to mind and sense.

“Hail to thee, Dionysus, greatest of the Gods!” cried old Nectaire, raising his glass on high. “I drink to thee who wilt restore the Golden Age, and give again to mortal men, who will become heroes as of old, the grapes which the Lesbians used to cull, long since, from the vines of Methymna; who wilt restore the vineyards of Thasus, the white clusters of Lake Mareotis, the storehouses of Falernus, the vines of the Tmolus, and the wine of Phanae, of all wines the king. And the juice thereof shall be divine, and, as in old Silenus’ day, men shall grow drunk with Wisdom and with Love.”

When the coffee was served, Prince Istar, Zita, Arcade, and the Japanese angel took it in turns to give an account of the forces assembled against Ialdabaoth. Angels, in exchanging eternal bliss for the sufferings of an earthly life, grow in intelligence, acquire the means of going astray and the faculty of self-contradiction. Consequently their meetings, like those of men, are tumultuous and confused. Did one of them deal in figures, the others immediately called them in question. They could not add one number to another without quarrelling, and arithmetic itself, subjected to passion, lost its certitude. The Kerûb, who had brought with him the pious Théophile, waxed indignant when he heard the musician praising the Lord, and rained down such blows on his head as would have felled an ox. But the head of a musician is harder than a bucranium, and the blows which Théophile received did not avail to modify that angel’s notion of divine providence. Arcade, having at great length set up his scientific idealism in

opposition to Zita's pragmatism, the beautiful archangel told him that he argued badly.

"And you are surprised at that!" exclaimed young Maurice's guardian angel. "I argue, like you, in the language of human beings. And what is human language but the cry of the beasts of the forests or the mountains, complicated and corrupted by arrogant anthropoids. How then, Zita, can one be expected to argue well with a collection of angry or plaintive sounds like that? Angels do not reason at all; men, being superior to the angels, reason imperfectly. I will not mention the professors who think to define the absolute with the aid of cries that they have inherited from the pithecanthropoid monkeys, marsupials, and reptiles, their ancestors! It is a colossal joke! How it would amuse the demiurge, if he had any brains!"

It was a beautiful starlight night. The gardener was silent.

"Nectaire," said the beautiful archangel, "play to us on your flute, if you are not afraid that the Earth and Heaven will be stirred to their depths thereby."

Nectaire took up his flute. Young Maurice lighted a cigarette. The flame burnt brightly for a moment, casting back the sky and its stars into the shadows, and then died out. And Nectaire sang of the flame on his divine flute. The silvery voice soared aloft and sang:

"That flame was a whole universe which fulfilled its destiny in less than a minute. Suns and planets were formed therein. Venus Urania apportioned the orbits of the wandering spheres in those infinite spaces. Beneath the breath of Eros — the first of the gods, — plants, animals, and thoughts sprang into being. In the twenty seconds which hurried by betwixt the life and death of those worlds, civilizations were unfolded, and empires sank in long decline. Mothers shed tears, and songs of love, cries of hatred, and sighs of victims rose upward to the silent skies.

"In proportion to its minuteness, that universe lasted as long as this one — whereof we see a few atoms glittering above our heads — has lasted or will last. They are, one no less than the other, but a gleam in the Infinite."

As the clear, pure notes welled up into the charmed air, the earth melted into a soft mist, the stars revolved rapidly in their orbits, the Great Bear fell asunder, its parts flew far and wide. Orion's belt was shattered; the Pole Star forsook its magnetic axis. Sirius, whose incandescent flame had lit up the far horizon, grew blue, then red, flickered, and suddenly died out. The shaken constellations formed new signs which were extinguished in their turn. By its incantations the magic flute had compressed into one brief moment the life and the movement of this universe which seems unchanging and eternal both to men and angels. It ceased, and the heavens resumed their immemorial aspect. Nectaire had

vanished. Clodomir asked his guests if they were pleased with the cabbage soup which, in order that it might be strong, had been kept simmering for twenty-four hours on the fire, and he sang the praises of the Beaujolais which they had drunk.

The night was mild. Arcade, accompanied by his guardian angel, Théophile, Prince Istar, and the Japanese angel, escorted Zita home.

CHAPTER XXXIII

HOW A DREADFUL CRIME PLUNGES PARIS INTO A STATE OF TERROR

THE city was asleep. Their footsteps rang loudly on the deserted pavement. Having reached the corner of the Rue Feutrier, half-way up Montmartre, the little company halted before the dwelling of the beautiful angel. Arcade was talking about the Thrones and Dominations with Zita, who, her finger on the bell, could not make up her mind to ring. Prince Istar was tracing the mechanism of a new sort of bomb on the pavement with the end of his stick, and bellowed so loudly that he woke the sleeping citizens and stirred into activity the amatory passions of the neighbouring Pasiphaës. Théophile was singing the barcarole from the second act of *Aline, Queen of Golconda* at the top of his voice. Maurice, his arm in a sling, was fencing left-handed with the Japanese, striking sparks from the pavement, and crying "A hit! a hit!" in a piercing voice.

Meanwhile Inspector Grolle at the corner of the next street was dreaming. He had the bearing of a Roman legionary and displayed all the characteristics of that proudly servile race, who, ever since men first took to building cities, have been the mainstay of Empires and the support of ruling houses. Inspector Grolle was very strong, but very tired. He suffered from an arduous profession and from lack of food. He was a man devoted to duty, but still a man, and he was unable to resist the wiles, the charms, and the blandishments of the gay ladies whom he met in swarms in the shadows along the empty streets and round about pieces of waste ground; he loved them. He loved like a soldier under arms. It tired him, but courage conquered fatigue. Though he had not yet reached the middle of Life's way, he longed for sweet repose and peaceful country pursuits. At the corner of the Rue Muller, on this mild night, he stood lost in thought. He was dreaming of the house where he was born, of the little olive wood, of his father's bit of ground, of his old mother, bent with long and heavy labour, whom he would never see again. Roused from his reverie by the nocturnal tumult, Inspector Grolle turned the corner of the street, and looked rather unfavourably at the band of loiterers, wherein his social instinct suspected enemies of law and order. He was patient and resolute. After a lengthy silence, he said, with awe-inspiring calm:

"Move on, there!"

But Maurice and the Japanese angel were fencing and heard nothing. The musician heard nothing but his own melodies. Prince Istar was absorbed in the explanation of explosive formulæ. Zita was discussing with Arcade the greatest

enterprise that had ever been conceived since the solar system issued from its original nebula, — and thus they all remained unconscious of their surroundings.

“Move on, I tell you!” repeated Inspector Grolle.

This time the angels heard the solemn word of warning, but either through indifference or contempt, they neglected to obey, and continued their talk, their songs, and their cries.

“So you want to be taken up, do you?” shouted Inspector Grolle, clapping his great hand on Prince Istar’s shoulder.

The Kerûb was indignant at this vile contact, and with one blow from his formidable fist sent the Inspector flying into the gutter. But Constable Fesandet was already running to his comrade’s aid, and they both fell upon the Prince, whom they belaboured with mechanic fury, and whom, notwithstanding his strength and weight, they would perchance have dragged all bleeding to the police station, had not the Japanese angel overset them one after the other without effort, and reduced them to writhing and shrieking in the mud, before Maurice, Arcade, and Zita had time to intervene. As to the angelic musician, he stood apart trembling, and invoked the heavens.

At this moment two bakers who were kneading their dough in a neighbouring cellar ran out at the noise, in their white aprons, stripped to the waist. With an instinctive feeling for social solidarity they took the side of the downfallen police. Théophile conceived a just fear at the sight of them, and fled away; they caught him and were about to hand him over to the guardians of the peace, when Arcade and Zita tore him from their hands. The fight continued, unequal and terrible, between the two angels and the two bakers. Like an athlete of Lysippus in strength and beauty, Arcade smothered his heavy adversary in his arms. The beautiful archangel drove her dagger into the baker who had attacked her. A dark stream of blood flowed down over his hairy chest, and the two white-capped supporters of the law sank to the ground.

Constable Fesandet had fainted face downwards in the gutter. But Inspector Grolle, who had got up, blew a blast on his whistle loud enough to be heard at the neighbouring police-station, and sprang upon young Maurice, who, having but one arm with which to defend himself, fired his revolver with his left hand at the inspector, who put his hand to his heart, staggered, and dropped down. He gave a long sigh, and the shadows of eternity darkened his eyes.

Meanwhile, windows opened one by one, and heads looked out on the street. A sound of heavy steps approached. Two policemen on bicycles debouched upon the street. Thereupon Prince Istar flung a bomb which shook the ground, put out the gas, shattered some of the houses, and enveloped the flight of young Maurice and the angels in a dense smoke.

Arcade and Maurice came to the conclusion that the safest thing to do after this adventure was to return to the little flat in the Rue de Rome. They would certainly not be sought for immediately and probably not at all, the bomb thrown by the Kerûb having fortunately wiped out all witnesses of the affair. They fell asleep towards dawn, and they had not yet awoke at ten o'clock in the morning when the concierge brought their tea. While eating his toast and butter and slice of ham, young d'Esparvieu remarked to the angel:

"I used to think that a murder was something very extraordinary. Well, I was mistaken. It is the simplest, the most natural action in the world."

"And of most ancient tradition," replied the angel. "For long centuries it was both usual and necessary for man to kill and despoil his fellows. It is still recommended in warfare. It is also honourable to attempt human life in certain definite circumstances, and people approved when you wanted to assassinate me, Maurice, because it appeared to you that I had been intimate with your mistress. But killing a police-inspector is not the action of a man of fashion."

"Be silent," exclaimed Maurice, "be silent, scoundrel! I killed the poor Inspector instinctively, not knowing what I was doing. I am grieved to my heart about it. But it is not I, it is you who are the guilty one; you who are the murderer. It was you who lured me along this path of revolt and violence which leads to the pit. You have been my undoing. You have sacrificed my peace of mind, my happiness, to your pride and your wickedness, and all in vain; for I warn you, Arcade, you will not succeed in what you are undertaking."

The concierge brought in the newspapers. On seeing them Maurice grew pale. They announced the outrage in the Rue de Ramey in huge headlines:

"An Inspector killed — Two cyclist policemen and two bakers seriously wounded — Three houses blown up, numerous victims."

Maurice let the paper drop, and said in a weak, plaintive voice:

"Arcade, why did you not slay me in the little garden at Versailles amidst the roses, to the song of the blackbirds?"

Meanwhile terror reigned in Paris. In the public squares, and in the crowded streets, house-wives, string-bag in hand, grew pale as they listened to the story of the crime, and consigned the perpetrators to the most dreadful punishment. Shop-keepers, standing at the doors of their shops, put it all down to the anarchists, syndicalists, socialists, and radicals, and demanded that special measures should be taken against them.

The more thoughtful people recognized the handiwork of the Jew and the German, and demanded the expulsion of all aliens. Many vaunted the ways of America and advocated lynching. In addition to the printed news sinister rumours became current. Explosions had been heard at various places;

everywhere bombs had been discovered; everywhere individuals, taken for malefactors, had been struck down by the popular arm and given up to justice, torn to ribbons. On the Place de la République a drunkard who was crying "Down with the police" was torn to pieces by the crowd.

The President of the Council and Minister of Justice held long conferences with the Prefect of Police, and they agreed to take immediate action. In order to allay the excitement of the Parisians, they arrested five or six hooligans out of the thirty thousand which the Capital contains. The chief of the Russian police, believing he recognised in this attack the methods of the Nihilists, demanded, on behalf of his Government, that a dozen refugees should be given up. The demand was immediately granted. Proceedings were also taken for certain individuals to be extradited to ensure the safety of the King of Spain.

On learning of these energetic measures, Paris breathed once more, and the evening papers congratulated the Government. There was excellent news of the wounded. They were out of danger and identified as their assailants all who were brought before them.

True, Inspector Grolle was dead; but two Sisters of Mercy kept vigil at his side, and the President of the Council came and laid the Cross of Honour on the breast of this victim of duty.

At night there were panics. In the Avenue de la Révolte the police, noticing a travelling acrobat's caravan on a piece of waste ground, took it for the retreat of a band of robbers. They whistled for help, and when they were a goodly number, attacked the caravan. Some worthy citizens joined them; fifteen thousand revolver-shots were fired, the caravan was blown up with dynamite, and among the débris they found the corpse of a monkey.

CHAPTER XXXIV

WHICH CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF THE ARREST OF BOUCHOTTE AND MAURICE, OF THE DISASTER WHICH BEFELL THE D'ESPARVIEU LIBRARY, AND OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE ANGELS

MAURICE D'ESPARVIEU passed a terrible night. At the least sound he seized his revolver that he might not fall alive into the hands of justice. When morning came he snatched the newspapers from the hands of the concierge, devoured them greedily, and gave a cry of joy; he had just read that Inspector Grolle having been taken to the Morgue for the post-mortem, the police-surgeons had only discovered bruises and contusions of a very superficial nature, and stated that death had been brought about by the rupture of an aneurism of the aorta.

"You see, Arcade," he exclaimed triumphantly; "you see I am not an assassin. I am innocent. I could never have imagined how extremely agreeable it is to be innocent."

Then he grew thoughtful, and — no unusual phenomenon — reflection dissipated his gaiety.

"I am innocent, — but there is no disguising the fact," he said, shaking his head, "I am one of a band of malefactors. I live with miscreants. You are in your right place there, Arcade, for you are deceitful, cruel, and perverse. But I come of good family and have received an excellent education, and I blush for it."

"I also," said Arcade, "have received an excellent education."

"Where was that?"

"In Heaven."

"No, Arcade, no; you never had any education. If good principles had been inculcated into you, you would still hold them. Such principles are never lost. In my childhood I learnt to revere my family, my country, my religion. I have not forgotten the lesson and I never shall. Do you know what shocks me most in you? It is not your perversity, your cruelty, your black ingratitude; it is not your agnosticism, which may be borne with at a pinch; it is not your scepticism, though it is very much out of date (for since the national awakening there is no longer any scepticism in France); — no, what disgusts me in you is your lack of taste, the bad style of your ideas, the inelegance of your doctrines. You think like an intellectual, you speak like a freethinker, you have theories which reek of radicalism and Combeism and all ignoble systems. Get along with you! you disgust me. Arcade, my old friend, Arcade, my dear angel, Arcade, my beloved child, listen to your guardian angel! Yield to my prayers, renounce your mad

ideas; become good, simple, innocent, and happy once more. Put on your hat, come with me to Nôtre-Dame. We will say a prayer and burn a candle together.” Meanwhile public opinion was still active in the matter; the leading papers, the organs of the national awakening, in articles of real elevation and real depth, unravelled the philosophy of this monstrous attack which was revolting to the conscience. They discovered the real origin, the indirect but effective cause in the revolutionary doctrines which had been disseminated unchecked, in the weakening of social ties, the relaxing of moral discipline, in the repeated appeals to every appetite, to every greedy desire. It would be needful, so as to cut down the evil at its root, to repudiate as quickly as possible all such chimeras and Utopias as syndicalism, the income-tax, etc., etc., etc. Many newspapers, and these not the least important, pointed out that the recrudescence of crime was but the natural fruit of impiety and concluded that the salvation of society lay in an unanimous and sincere return to religion. On the Sunday which followed the crime the congregations in the churches were noticed to be unusually large.

Judge Salneuve, who was entrusted with the task of investigation, first examined the persons arrested by the police, and lost his way among attractive but illusory clues; however, the report of the detective Montremain, which was laid before him, put him on the right road, and soon led him to recognise the miscreants of La Jonchère as the authors of the crime of the Rue de Ramey. He ordered a search to be made for Arcade and Zita, and issued a warrant against Prince Istar, on whom the detectives laid hands as he was leaving Bouchotte’s, where he had been depositing some bombs of new design. The Kerûb, on learning the detectives’ intentions, smiled broadly and asked them if they had a powerful motor-car. On their replying that they had one at the door, he assured them that was all he wanted. Thereupon he felled the two detectives on the stairs, walked up to the waiting car, flung the chauffeur under a motor-’bus which was opportunely passing, and seized the steering wheel under the eyes of the terrified crowd.

That same evening Monsieur Jeancourt, the Police Magistrate, entered Théophile’s rooms just when Bouchotte was swallowing a raw egg to clear her voice, for she was to sing her new song, “They haven’t got any in Germany,” at the “National Eldorado” that evening. The musician was absent. Bouchotte received the Magistrate, and received him with a hauteur which intensified the simplicity of her attire; Bouchotte was *en déshabille*. The worthy Magistrate seized the score of *Aline, Queen of Golconda*, and the love-letters which the singer carefully preserved in the drawer of the table by her bed, for she was an orderly young woman. He was about to withdraw when he espied a cupboard, which he opened with a careless air, and found machines capable of blowing up

half Paris, and a pair of large white wings, whose nature and use appeared inexplicable to him. Bouchotte was invited to complete her toilette, and, in spite of her cries, was taken off to the police-station.

Monsieur Salneuve was indefatigable. After the examination of the papers seized in Bouchotte's house, and acting on the information of Montremain, he issued a warrant for the arrest of young d'Esparvieu, which was executed on Wednesday, the 27th May, at seven o'clock in the morning, with great discretion. For three days Maurice had neither slept nor eaten, loved nor lived. He had not a moment's doubt as to the nature of the matutinal visit. At the sight of the police magistrate a strange calm fell on him. Arcade had not returned to sleep in the flat. Maurice begged the magistrate to wait for him, dressed with care, and then accompanied the magistrate a calmness of mind which was barely disturbed when the door of the Conciergerie closed on him. Alone in his cell, he climbed upon the table to look out. His tranquillity was due to his weariness of spirit, to his numbed senses, and to the fact that he no longer stood in fear of arrest. His misfortune endowed him with superior wisdom. He felt he had fallen into a state of grace. He did not think too highly or too humbly of himself, but left his cause in the hands of God. With no desire to cover up his faults, which he would not hide even from himself, he addressed himself in mind to Providence, to point out that if he had fallen into disorder and rebellion it was to lead his erring angel back into the straight path. He stretched himself on the couch and slept in peace.

On hearing of the arrest of a music-hall singer and of a young man of fashion, both Paris and the provinces felt painful surprise. Deeply stirred by the tragic accounts which the leading newspapers were bringing out, the general idea was that the sort of people the authorities ought to bring to justice were ferocious anarchists, all reeking and dripping from deeds of blood and arson; but they failed to understand what the world of Art and Fashion should have to do with such things. At this news, which he was one of the last to hear, the President of the Council and Keeper of the Seals started up in his chair. The Sphinxes that adorned it were less terrible than he, and in the throes of his angry meditation he cut the mahogany of his imperial table with his penknife, after the manner of Napoleon. And when Judge Salneuve, whose attendance he had commanded, appeared before him, the President flung his penknife in the grate, as Louis XIV flung his cane out of the window in the presence of Lauzun; and it cost him a supreme effort to master himself and to say in a voice of suppressed fury:

"Are you mad? Surely I said often enough that I meant the plot to be anarchist, anti-social, fundamentally anti-social and anti-governmental, with a shade of syndicalism. I have made it clear enough that I wanted it kept within these lines; and what do you go and make of it?... The vengeance of anarchists and aspirants

to freedom? Whom do you arrest? A singer adored of the nationalist public, and the son of a man highly esteemed in the Catholic party, who receives our bishops and has the *entrée* to the Vatican; a man who may be one day sent as ambassador to the Pope. At one blow you alienate one hundred and sixty Deputies and forty Senators of the Right on the very eve of a motion to discuss the question of religious pacification; you embroil me with my friends of to-day, with my friends of to-morrow. Was it to find out if you were in the same dilemma as des Aubels that you seized the love-letters of young Maurice d'Esparvieu? I can put your mind at rest on that point. You are, and all Paris knows it. But it is not to avenge your personal affronts that you are on the Bench."

"Monsieur le Garde des Sceaux," murmured the Judge, nearly apoplectic and in a choked voice. "I am an honest man."

"You are a fool ... and a provincial. Listen to me; if Maurice d'Esparvieu and Mademoiselle Bouchotte are not released within half an hour I will crush you like a piece of glass. Be off!"

Monsieur René d'Esparvieu went himself to fetch his son from the Conciergerie and took him back to the old house in the Rue Garancière. The return was triumphant. The news had been disseminated that Maurice had with generous imprudence interested himself in an attempt to restore the monarchy, and that Judge Salneuve, the infamous freemason, the tool of Combes and André, had tried to compromise the young man by making him out to be an accomplice of a band of criminals.

That was what Abbé Patouille seemed to think, and he answered for Maurice as for himself. It was known, moreover, that breaking with his father, who had rallied to the support of the Republic, young d'Esparvieu was on the high road to becoming an out-and-out Royalist. The people who had an inside knowledge of things saw in his arrest the vengeance of the Jews. Was not Maurice a notorious anti-Semite? Catholic youths went forth to hurl imprecations at Judge Salneuve under the windows of his residence in the Rue Guénégaud, opposite the Mint.

On the Boulevard du Palais a band of students presented Maurice with a branch of palm. Maurice made a charming reply.

Maurice was overcome with emotion when he beheld the old house in which his childhood had been spent, and fell weeping into his mother's arms.

It was a great day, unhappily marred by one painful incident. Monsieur Sariette, who had lost his reason as a consequence of the shocking events that had taken place in the Rue de Courcelles, had suddenly become violent. He had shut himself up in the library, and there he had remained for twenty-four hours, uttering the most horrible cries, and, turning a deaf ear alike to threats and entreaties, refused to come out. He had spent the night in a condition of extreme

restlessness, for all night long the lamp had been seen passing rapidly to and fro behind the curtains. In the morning, hearing Hippolyte shouting to him from the court below, he opened the window of the Hall of the Spheres and the Philosophers, and heaved two or three rather weighty tomes on to the old valet's head. The whole of the domestic staff — men, women, and boys — hurried to the spot, and the librarian proceeded to throw out books by the armful on to their heads. In view of the gravity of the situation, Monsieur René d'Esparvieu did not disdain to intervene. He appeared in night-cap and dressing-gown, and attempted to reason with the poor lunatic, whose only reply was to pour forth torrents of abuse on the man whom till then he had worshipped as his benefactor, and to endeavour to crush him beneath all the Bibles, all the Talmuds, all the sacred books of India and Persia, all the Greek Fathers, and all the Latin Fathers, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Gregory Nazianzen, Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, all the apologists, ay! and under the *Histoire des Variations*, annotated by Bossuet himself! Octavos, quartos, folios came crashing down, and lay in a sordid heap on the courtyard pavement. The letters of Gassendi, of Père Mersenne, of Pascal, were blown about hither and thither by the wind. The lady's-maid who had stooped down to rescue some of the sheets from the gutter got a blow on the head from an enormous Dutch atlas. Madame René d'Esparvieu had been terrified by the ominous sounds, and appeared on the scene without waiting to apply the finishing touches of powder and paint. When he caught sight of her, old Sarricte became more violent than ever. Down they came one after another as hard as he could pelt them; the busts of the poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity — Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Seneca, Epictetus — all lay scattered on the ground. The celestial sphere and the terrestrial globe descended with a terrifying crash that was followed by a ghastly hush, broken only by the shrill laughter of little Léon, who was looking down on the scene from a window above. A locksmith having opened the library door, all the household hastened to enter, and found the aged Sarricte entrenched behind piles of books, busily engaged in tearing and slashing away at the *Lucretius* of the Prior de Vendôme annotated in Voltaire's own hand. They had to force a way through the barricade. But the maniac, perceiving that his stronghold was being invaded, fled away and escaped on to the roof. For two whole hours he gave vent to shouts and yells that were heard far and wide. In the Rue Garancière the crowd kept growing bigger and bigger. All had their eyes fixed on the unhappy creature, and whenever he stumbled on the slates, which cracked beneath him, they gave a shout of terror. In the midst of the crowd, the Abbé Patouille, who expected every moment to see him hurled into space, was reciting

the prayers for the dying, and making ready to give him the absolution *in extremis*. There was a cordon of police round the house keeping order. Someone summoned the fire-brigade, and the sound of their approach was soon heard. They placed a ladder against the wall of the house, and after a terrific struggle managed to secure the maniac, who in the course of his desperate resistance had one of the muscles of his arm torn out. He was immediately removed to an asylum.

Maurice dined at home, and there were smiles of tenderness and affection when Victor, the old butler, brought on the roast veal. Monsieur l'Abbé Patouille sat at the right hand of the Christian mother, unctuously contemplating the family which Heaven had so plentifully blessed. Nevertheless, Madame d'Esparvieu was ill at ease. Every day she received anonymous letters of so insulting and coarse a nature that she thought at first they must come from a discharged footman. She now knew they were the handiwork of her youngest daughter, Berthe, a mere child! Little Léon, too, gave her pain and anxiety. He paid no attention to his lessons, and was given to bad habits. He showed a cruel disposition. He had plucked his sister's canaries alive; he stuck innumerable pins into the chair on which Mademoiselle Caporal was accustomed to sit, and had stolen fourteen francs from the poor girl, who did nothing but cry and dab her eyes and nose from morning till night.

No sooner was dinner over than Maurice rushed off to the little dwelling in the Rue de Rome, impatient to meet his angel again. Through the door he heard a loud sound of voices, and saw assembled in the room where the apparition had taken place, Arcade, Zita, the angelic musician, and the Kerûb, who was lying on the bed, smoking a huge pipe, carelessly scorching pillows, sheets, and coverlets. They embraced Maurice, and announced their departure. Their faces shone with happiness and courage. Alone, the inspired author of *Aline, Queen of Golconda*, shed tears and raised his terrified gaze to heaven. The Kerûb forced him into the party of rebellion by setting before him two alternatives: either to allow himself to be dragged from prison to prison on earth, or to carry fire and sword into the palace of Ialdabaoth.

Maurice perceived with sorrow that the earth had scarcely any hold over them. They were setting out filled with immense hope, which was quite justifiable. Doubtless they were but a few combatants to oppose the innumerable soldiers of the sultan of the heavens; but they counted on compensating for the inferiority of their numbers by the irresistible impetus of a sudden attack. They were not ignorant of the fact that Ialdabaoth, who flatters himself on knowing all things, sometimes allows himself to be taken by surprise. And it certainly looked as if the first attack would have taken him unawares had it not been for the warning

of the archangel Michael. The celestial army had made no progress since its victory over the rebels before the beginning of Time.

As regards armaments and material it was as out of date as the army of the Moors. Its generals slumbered in sloth and ignorance. Loaded with honours and riches, they preferred the delights of the banquet to the fatigues of war. Michael, the commander-in-chief, ever loyal and brave, had lost, with the passing of centuries, his fire and enthusiasm. The conspirators of 1914, on the other hand, knew the very latest and the most delicate appliances of science for the art of destruction. At length all was ready and decided upon. The army of revolt, assembled by corps each a hundred thousand angels strong, on all the waste places of the earth — steppes, pampas, deserts, fields of ice and snow — was ready to launch itself against the sky. The angels, in modifying the rhythm of the atoms of which they are composed, are able to traverse the most varied mediums. Spirits that have descended on to the earth, being formed, since their incarnation, of too compact a substance, can no longer fly of themselves, and to rise into ethereal regions and then insensibly grow volatilized, have need of the assistance of their brothers, who, though revolutionaries like themselves, nevertheless, stayed behind in the Empyrean and remained, not immaterial (for all is matter in the Universe), but gloriously untrammelled and diaphanous. Certes, it was not without painful anxiety that Arcade, Istar, and Zita prepared themselves to pass from the heavy atmosphere of the earth to the limpid depths of the heavens. To plunge into the ether there is need to expend such energy that the most intrepid hesitate to take flight. Their very substance, while penetrating this fine medium, must in itself grow fine-spun, become vaporised, and pass from human dimensions to the volume of the vastest clouds which have ever enveloped the earth. Soon they would surpass in grandeur the uttermost planets, whose orbits they, invisible and imponderable, would traverse without disturbing.

In this enterprise — the vastest that angels could undertake — their substance would be ultimately hotter than the fire and colder than the ice, and they would suffer pangs sharper than death.

Maurice read all the daring and the pain of the undertaking in the eyes of Arcade.

“You are going?” he said to him, weeping.

“We are going, with Nectaire, to seek the great archangel to lead us to victory.”

“Whom do you call thus?”

“The priests of the demiurge have made him known to you in their calumnies.”

“Unhappy being,” sighed Maurice.

Arcade embraced him, and Maurice felt the angel's tears as they dropped upon his cheek.

CHAPTER XXXV

AND LAST, WHEREIN THE SUBLIME DREAM OF SATAN IS UNFOLDED

CLIMBING the seven steep terraces which rise up from the bed of the Ganges to the temples muffled in creepers, the five angels reached, by half-obliterated paths, the wild garden filled with perfumed clusters of grapes and chattering monkeys, and, at the far end thereof, they discovered him whom they had come to seek. The archangel lay with his elbow on black cushions embroidered with golden flames. At his feet crouched lions and gazelles. Twined in the trees, tame serpents turned on him their friendly gaze. At the sight of his angelic visitors his face grew melancholy. Long since, in the days when, with his brow crowned with grapes and his sceptre of vine-leaves in his hand, he had taught and comforted mankind, his heart had many times been heavy with sorrow; but never yet, since his glorious downfall, had his beautiful face expressed such pain and anguish.

Zita told him of the black standards assembled in crowds in all the waste places of the globe; of the deliverance premeditated and prepared in the provinces of Heaven, where the first revolt had long ago been fomented.

“Prince,” she went on, “your army awaits you. Come, lead it on to victory.”

“Friends,” replied the great archangel, “I was aware of the object of your visit. Baskets of fruit and honeycombs await you under the shade of this mighty tree. The sun is about to descend into the roseate waters of the Sacred River. When you have eaten, you will slumber pleasantly in this garden, where the joys of the intellect and of the senses have reigned since the day when I drove hence the spirit of the old Demiurge. To-morrow I will give you my answer.”

Night hung its blue over the garden. Satan fell asleep. He had a dream, and in that dream, soaring over the earth, he saw it covered with angels in revolt, beautiful as gods, whose eyes darted lightning. And from pole to pole one single cry, formed of a myriad cries, mounted towards him, filled with hope and love. And Satan said:

“Let us go forth! Let us seek the ancient adversary in his high abode.” And he led the countless host of angels over the celestial plains. And Satan was cognizant of what took place in the heavenly citadel. When news of this second revolt came thither, the Father said to the Son:

“The irreconcilable foe is rising once again. Let us take heed to ourselves, and in this, our time of danger, look to our defences, lest we lose our high abode.”

And the Son, consubstantial with the Father, replied:

“We shall triumph under the sign that gave Constantine the victory.”

Indignation burst forth on the Mountain of God. At first the faithful Seraphim condemned the rebels to terrible torture, but afterwards decided on doing battle with them. The anger burning in the hearts of all inflamed each countenance. They did not doubt of victory, but treachery was feared, and eternal darkness had been at once decreed for spies and alarmists.

There was shouting and singing of ancient hymns and praise of the Almighty. They drank of the mystic wine. Courage, over-inflated, came near to giving way, and a secret anxiety stole into the inner depths of their souls. The archangel Michael took supreme command. He reassured their minds by his serenity. His countenance, wherein his soul was visible, expressed contempt for danger. By his orders, the chiefs of the thunderbolts, the Kerûbs, grown dull with the long interval of peace, paced with heavy steps the ramparts of the Holy Mountain, and, letting the gaze of their bovine eyes wander over the glittering clouds of their Lord, strove to place the divine batteries in position. After inspecting the defences, they swore to the Most High that all was in readiness. They took counsel together as to the plan they should follow. Michael was for the offensive. He, as a consummate soldier, said it was the supreme law. Attack, or be attacked, — there was no middle course.

“Moreover,” he added, “the offensive attitude is particularly suitable to the ardour of the Thrones and Dominations.”

Beyond that, it was impossible to obtain a word from the valiant chief, and this silence seemed the mark of a genius sure of himself.

As soon as the approach of the enemy was announced, Michael sent forth three armies to meet them, commanded by the archangels Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel. Standards, displaying all the colours of the Orient, were unfurled above the ethereal plains, and the thunders rolled over the starry floors. For three days and three nights was the lot of the terrible and adorable armies unknown on the Mountain of God. Towards dawn on the fourth day news came, but it was vague and confused. There were rumours of indecisive victories; of the triumph now of this side, now of that. There came reports of glorious deeds which were dissipated in a few hours.

The thunderbolts of Raphael, hurled against the rebels, had, it was said, consumed entire squadrons. The troops commanded by the impure Zita were thought to have been swallowed up in the whirlwind of a tempest of fire. It was believed that the savage Istar had been flung headlong into the gulf of perdition so suddenly that the blasphemies begun in his mouth had been forced backwards with explosive results. It was popularly supposed that Satan, laden with chains of adamant, had been plunged once again into the abyss. Meanwhile, the

commanders of the three armies had sent no messages. Mutterings and murmurs, mingling with the rumours of glory, gave rise to fears of an indecisive battle, a precipitate retreat. Insolent voices gave out that a spirit of the lowest category, a guardian angel, the insignificant Arcade, had checked and routed the dazzling host of the three great archangels.

There were also rumours of wholesale defection in the Seventh Heaven, where rebellion had broken out before the beginning of Time, and some had even seen black clouds of impious angels joining the armies of the rebels on Earth. But no one lent an ear to the odious rumours, and stress was laid on the news of victory which ran from lip to lip, each statement readily finding confirmation. The high places resounded with hymns of joy; the Seraphim celebrated on harp and psaltery Sabaoth, God of Thunder. The voices of the elect united with those of the angels in glorifying the Invisible and at the thought of the bloodshed that the ministers of holy wrath had caused among the rebels, sighs of relief and jubilation were wafted from the Heavenly Jerusalem towards the Most High. But the beatitude of the most blessed, having swelled to the utmost limit before due time, could increase no more, and the very excess of their felicity completely dulled their senses.

The songs had not yet ceased when the guards watching on the ramparts signalled the approach of the first fugitives of the divine army; Seraphim on tattered wing, flying in disorder, maimed Kerûbs going on three feet. With impassive gaze, Michael, prince of warriors, measured the extent of the disaster, and his keen intelligence penetrated its causes. The armies of the living God had taken the offensive, but by one of those fatalities in war which disconcert the plans of the greatest captains, the enemy had also taken the offensive, and the effect was evident. Scarcely were the gates of the citadel opened to receive the glorious but shattered remnants of the three armies, when a rain of fire fell on the Mountain of God. Satan's army was not yet in sight, but the walls of topaz, the cupolas of emerald, the roofs of diamond, all fell in with an appalling crash under the discharge of the electrophores. The ancient thunderclouds essayed to reply, but the bolts fell short, and their thunders were lost in the deserted plains of the skies.

Smitten by an invisible foe, the faithful angels abandoned the ramparts. Michael went to announce to his God that the Holy Mountain would fall into the hands of the demon in twenty-four hours, and that nothing remained for the Master of the Heavens but to seek safety in flight. The Seraphim placed the jewels of the celestial crown in coffers. Michael offered his arm to the Queen of Heaven, and the Holy Family escaped from the palace by a subterranean passage of porphyry. A deluge of fire was falling on the citadel. Regaining his post once more, the

glorious archangel declared that he would never capitulate, and straightway advanced the standards of the living God. That same evening the rebel host made its entry into the thrice-sacred city. On a fiery steed Satan led his demons. Behind him marched Arcade, Istar, and Zita. As in the ancient revels of Dionysus, old Nectaire bestrode his ass. Thereafter, floating out far behind, followed the black standards.

The garrison laid down their arms before Satan. Michael placed his flaming sword at the feet of the conquering archangel.

“Take back your sword, Michael,” said Satan. “It is Lucifer who yields it to you. Bear it in defence of peace and law.” Then letting his gaze fall on the leaders of the celestial cohorts, he cried in a ringing voice:

“Archangel Michael, and you, Powers, Thrones, and Dominations, swear all of you to be faithful to your God.”

“We swear it,” they replied with one voice.

And Satan said:

“Powers, Thrones, and Dominations, of all past wars, I wish but to remember the invincible courage that you displayed and the loyalty which you rendered to authority, for these assure me of the steadfastness of the fealty you have just sworn to me.”

The following day, on the ethereal plain, Satan commanded the black standards to be distributed to the troops, and the winged soldiers covered them with kisses and bedewed them with tears.

And Satan had himself crowned God. Thronging round the glittering walls of Heavenly Jerusalem, apostles, pontiffs, virgins, martyrs, confessors, the whole company of the elect, who during the fierce battle had enjoyed delightful tranquillity, tasted infinite joy in the spectacle of the coronation.

The elect saw with ravishment the Most High precipitated into Hell, and Satan seated on the throne of the Lord. In conformity with the will of God which had cut them off from sorrow they sang in the ancient fashion the praises of their new Master.

And Satan, piercing space with his keen glance, contemplated the little globe of earth and water where of old he had planted the vine and formed the first tragic chorus. And he fixed his gaze on that Rome where the fallen God had founded his empire on fraud and lie. Nevertheless, at that moment a saint ruled over the Church. Satan saw him praying and weeping. And he said to him:

“To thee I entrust my Spouse. Watch over her faithfully. In thee I confirm the right and power to decide matters of doctrine, to regulate the use of the sacraments, to make laws and to uphold purity of morals. And the faithful shall

be under obligation to conform thereto. My Church is eternal, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Thou art infallible. Nothing is changed.”

And the successor of the apostles felt flooded with rapture. He prostrated himself, and with his forehead touching the floor, replied:

“O Lord, my God, I recognise Thy voice! Thy breath has been wafted like balm to my heart. Blessed be Thy name. Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

And Satan found pleasure in praise and in the exercise of his grace; he loved to hear his wisdom and his power belauded. He listened with joy to the canticles of the cherubim who celebrated his good deeds, and he took no pleasure in listening to Nectaire’s flute, because it celebrated nature’s self, yielded to the insect and to the blade of grass their share of power and love, and counselled happiness and freedom. Satan, whose flesh had crept, in days gone by, at the idea that suffering prevailed in the world, now felt himself inaccessible to pity. He regarded suffering and death as the happy results of omnipotence and sovereign kindness. And the savour of the blood of victims rose upward towards him like sweet incense. He fell to condemning intelligence and to hating curiosity. He himself refused to learn anything more, for fear that in acquiring fresh knowledge he might let it be seen that he had not known everything at the very outset. He took pleasure in mystery, and believing that he would seem less great by being understood, he affected to be unintelligible. Dense fumes of Theology filled his brain. One day, following the example of his predecessor, he conceived the notion of proclaiming himself one god in three persons. Seeing Arcade smile as this proclamation was made, he drove him from his presence. Istar and Zita had long since returned to earth. Thus centuries passed like seconds. Now, one day, from the altitude of his throne, he plunged his gaze into the depths of the pit and saw Ialdabaoth in the Gehenna where he himself had long lain enchained. Amid the everlasting gloom Ialdabaoth still retained his lofty mien. Blackened and shattered, terrible and sublime, he glanced upwards at the palace of the King of Heaven with a look of proud disdain, then turned away his head. And the new god, as he looked upon his foe, beheld the light of intelligence and love pass across his sorrow-stricken countenance. And lo! Ialdabaoth was now contemplating the Earth and, seeing it sunk in wickedness and suffering, he began to foster thoughts of kindness in his heart. On a sudden he rose up, and beating the ether with his mighty arms, as though with oars, he hastened thither to instruct and to console mankind. Already his vast shadow shed upon the unhappy planet a shade soft as a night of love.

And Satan awoke bathed in an icy sweat.

Nectaire, Istar, Arcade, and Zita were standing round him. The finches were singing.

“Comrades,” said the great archangel, “no — we will not conquer the heavens. Enough to have the power. War engenders war, and victory defeat.

“God, conquered, will become Satan; Satan, conquering, will become God. May the fates spare me this terrible lot; I love the Hell which formed my genius. I love the Earth where I have done some good, if it be possible to do any good in this fearful world where beings live but by rapine. Now, thanks to us, the god of old is dispossessed of his terrestrial empire, and every thinking being on this globe disdains him or knows him not. But what matter that men should be no longer submissive to Ialdabaoth if the spirit of Ialdabaoth is still in them; if they, like him, are jealous, violent, quarrelsome, and greedy, and the foes of the arts and of beauty? What matter that they have rejected the ferocious Demiurge, if they do not hearken to the friendly demons who teach all truths; to Dionysus, Apollo, and the Muses? As to ourselves, celestial spirits, sublime demons, we have destroyed Ialdabaoth, our Tyrant, if in ourselves we have destroyed Ignorance and Fear.”

And Satan, turning to the gardener, said:

“Nectaire, you fought with me before the birth of the world. We were conquered because we failed to understand that Victory is a Spirit, and that it is in ourselves and in ourselves alone that we must attack and destroy Ialdabaoth.”

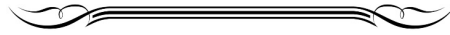
THE END

The Shorter Fiction



Anatole France studied at the Collège Stanislas in Paris, a private Catholic school, and after graduation he helped his father by working in his bookstore.

JOCASTA AND THE FAMISHED CAT



Translated by Agnes Farley **CONTENTS**

[JOCASTA](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

[CHAPTER V](#)

[CHAPTER VI](#)

[CHAPTER VII](#)

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[CHAPTER XI](#)

[CHAPTER XII](#)

[CHAPTER XIII](#)

[CHAPTER XIV](#)

[THE FAMISHED CAT](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

[CHAPTER V](#)

[CHAPTER VI](#)

[CHAPTER VII](#)

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[CHAPTER XI](#)

[CHAPTER XII](#)

[CHAPTER XIII](#)

[CHAPTER XIV](#)

NOTE

WHEN, in 1879, Monsieur France published *Jocaste et Le Chat Maigre*, his first work of fiction, it contained a preface comprising a dedicatory letter addressed to Monsieur Charles Edmond and a story entitled *André*. The latter, when, in 1885, he put together his book, *Le Livre de mon Ami*, was transferred to the new volume. The former disappeared from the later editions of *Jocaste*. As nothing that comes from the great writer's pen can fail to interest, the dedicatory letter is here reproduced, with a word or two on the modifications introduced into the story on its introduction into its new environment. A translation of *André* will be found in its proper place in the translation by Mr. J. Lewis May of *Le Livre de mon Ami* which will follow closely upon the appearance of the present volume. The letter is as follows: —

DEAR SIR, — I should have liked to offer you some inspiring tale such as you yourself know so well how to present. *Jocaste*, which is what I bring for your acceptance, is steeped in violence and unrest. It is a sinister story, and even the best among the persons concerned in it are not altogether immaculate.

I have appended to it a little chronicle which we will, if you are agreeable, entitle *Le Chat Maigre*, and in which you will encounter none but the scatter-brained. One of the most gifted writers of the century once remarked to a sober-minded acquaintance, "No one who is sane affords me much amusement." May my lunatics bring with them to your fireside an hour's philosophical entertainment!

How much better inspired were you on that All Souls' Day when, in some hamlet in Alsace, you overtook an old forester and an elderly schoolmaster! They each of them bore a wreath which they set on a grave; and then, being alone in the world on that day of hallowed memories, beneath a gloomy storm-rent sky, they went off to sup together at the forester's hut.

You stole unawares into the secret recesses of their sturdy simplicity, and all that you record of their conversation is helpful and gives a feeling of that beatific refreshment — *dulce refrigerium* — which the early Christians invoke on their sepulchral marbles at Rome.

Your schoolmaster and forester, although disciplined by age and the labours of life, have yet unwittingly preserved tender hearts stored with joyous recollections. The poets tell us of hoary oaks whose hollows shelter swarms of bees so that their rugged rind drops honey. The memory of your worthy dominie is packed with touching and artless anecdotes. Above all about a little girl the mention of whom carries him outside himself and some of whose admirable

sayings he quotes. I should like to chronicle one of them for the benefit of those who may read this letter after you.

“I set the little one on her feet again” (it is the schoolmaster who is speaking), “and hand in hand we resumed our way together. Something impelled me at the moment to confide to her the misfortune I had just sustained. ‘No more holiday-making to-day, my pet,’ I said to her finally; ‘we are in mourning. My brother — you knew him well, he loved you dearly, he used to bring you toys — now he lies dead. He will be laid under the sod. Do not cry, my darling; it is only I who need cry. Yes, he is dead. But there! Each one in his turn! As to the *fête*, we will put it off till next year. You will lose nothing by waiting.’ The child stopped short, and fixing her big terrified blue eyes on me said:

“‘Next year, then, your brother will not be dead any longer?’” (The day after All Saints’ Day — (*Le lendemain de la Toussaint*) in the *Revue Alsacienne*, May 1878.)

How this question, in its simple directness and sublime ignorance, pierces to our very marrow! At Bellevue there is a little creature, appropriately nicknamed the Elephant, since no longer ago than last year she could have been hidden with ease in her godmother’s muff, whose childish prattle is interspersed with utterances of as profound significance as this that you have so skilfully put on record.

A simple tale about a child has come to my ears which it would have gratified me to dedicate to you. But, alas, well as I am instructed as to its minutest details it will never be written by me. It would recall in more than one feature the delightful scenes at the Rookery at Blunderstone, and my characters, truthful as they might be, would grow pale and dwindle to vain shadows beside the ever charming inmates of Dickens’ cottage. After all, since I am only talking to you just now, I can very well tell you this story that will never be written. Here it is.

The tale is about the charming widow of a clever young surgeon, sprung from the peasantry, and her little boy, André. The child, as he grows, loses flesh and colour, so his mother resolves for his sake to pay a visit to his grandparents in their humble little farmhouse, and mother and child are received with open arms, the child in particular making a complete conquest of the old folks. The best bedroom was allotted to the Parisian visitors, a room which the grandparents had never occupied since their bridal night.

At this point in the reprinted story the author has, for some reason, struck out the following paragraph: —

The two old people slept as they were accustomed to do in the downstairs room behind the curtain that hung from the beam of the staircase. Madame

Trévière's nurse made her way timorously up a steep ladder into the attic, where she slept surrounded by onions.

The advent of the lovely young mother flutters the heart of a wealthy manufacturer, a patron of Millet and the Barbizon school, Philippe Lassalle, and he pays assiduous court to her. Little Andre instinctively recognises the menace of the interloper and exerts all his potent influence against the success of Lassalle. One night, when the child is being put to bed, he says, "Mamma, I'm afraid." At this point again the author has cut out a few words, for in the earlier version André continues: —

"I like being afraid. It's nice. It's like swimming" — swimming being in his customary talk his most forcible description of a pleasant sensation.

This adoption of an expression for which he made a meaning of his own is so eminently childlike a touch that it seems a thousand pities to have cut out the passage.

The widow sits by the child's cot and muses over a letter in which Lassalle has asked her to marry him, when the child stirs in his sleep and inquires whether his dead father can come back again. Being told no, he declares that he is glad because he loves his mother so much that he has no love left over for his father if he should come back.

The mother soothes him, saying, "Sleep on; he will not come back."

And then, perhaps desirous that the tale should not too closely resemble the chronicle of the early troubles of David Copperfield, Monsieur France closed his story thus: —

He will not come back. Monsieur Lassalle no longer nurses any hope. His appeal has met with a rebuff. Of an evening in his room hung with landscapes and bits of still-life, with his feet on the bars, as he fills his pipe and mixes his grog, he reflects that winter evenings are sufficiently gloomy when one sits alone. He has not seen the widow since; but when his friends ask him what has become of her, he answers bravely in a cheerful tone that disguises his profound disappointment, "She is still the beautiful Madame Trévière: more so than ever."

In fitting the tale into *Le Livre de mon Ami*, however, the author found a way to remove the widow's scruples without hinting at any Murdstone-like proclivities on the part of Monsieur Lassalle. In the later version the story ends thus: —

Nevertheless, when two months were over, he did come back, and he came back with the broad, sun-burnt features of Monsieur Lassalle, the new master of the house. And little André began to grow sallow and thin and listless.

He is cured again now. He loves his nurse with the love he used to bestow on his mother; but he doesn't know his nurse has got a young man.

The letter to Monsieur Edmond is then resumed as follows: —

There, in a few strokes, is the tale I shall never write. It is true. Accept, in default of better, the tales I *have* written, I hardly know how, or why. The narrator is like that inamorata of the old poet Mellin de Saint-Gelais who had more moons in her head (*Avoir la lune dans la tete* = To be a little mad. — LITTRE. The use of a corresponding idiom is rendered impracticable by the author's subsequent play upon the word *lune*.) than there are gondolas at Venice. I most certainly had a red moon (*Lune rousse* — The April moon, which gardeners assert turns young leaves and buds red: the effects it is said to produce are attributable to a nocturnal fall in the temperature. — LITTRE.) in my brain when I recast from unimpeachable materials the narrative which owes its title, *Jocaste* , to a circumstance as simple as it is singular. As for the moon that “governed” the *Chat Maigre* , it was the one that rises ruddily over the roofs of Paris. About this last there is nothing either mysterious or terrible. I beg you to accept these two tales as a feeble testimony of my gratitude and affection. — A. F.

JOCASTA

CHAPTER I

WHAT! Monsieur Longuemare, you put live frogs into your pocket? How disgusting!”

“When I get back to my room Mademoiselle, I shall nail one of them on a small board and lay bare his mesentery, having first excited it with a pair of delicate pincers.”

“But the poor frog will endure tortures.”

“That depends. It would suffer more, for instance, in the summer than in the winter. And if its mesentery should be inflamed, perhaps, because of some anterior lesion, the pain would be so intense that its heart would cease to beat.”

“What good can it do you to hurt an animal like that?”

“It helps me to construct my experimental theory of pain. I shall prove that the Stoics did not know what they were talking about, and that Zeno was an idiot. You don’t know who Zeno was? Well, don’t seek to make his acquaintance. He denied the reality of sensation, whereas I maintain that sensation is everything. You will possess an exact and sufficient notion of the Stoics when I tell you they were dull maniacs, who affectedly pretended to despise suffering. If I had one of the barbarians under my tweezers in the place of my frog, he would quickly find out if one can suppress suffering by an effort of the will. Besides, it is a good thing for living beings to be endowed with the faculty for suffering.”

“You must be joking. In what way can it be good to be able to suffer?”

“It is a necessary safeguard. If, for example, the flames did not scorch us intolerably when we go too near the fire, we should be roasted to the bone without knowing it.”

He gazed at her.

“And,” he added, after a moment, “pain is beautiful. Richet says, ‘There is such a strong affinity between intelligence and suffering, that the most intelligent beings are the most susceptible to pain.’”

“So naturally you think you are more capable of suffering than any one else. I would ask you to describe your sufferings to me, if I were not afraid of being indiscreet.”

“I have already told you, Mademoiselle, that Zeno was a fool. If I were in great pain I should scream. As for you, you have a most delicate organisation — your nerves are like sensitive strings; you present pain with a sonorous

instrument, an eight octave keyboard on which it could play, if it chose, the most elaborate and complicated variations.”

“Which in plain language means I am to be very unhappy. You are insupportable; one never knows if you are speaking seriously or not. And your ideas are so extraordinary that the little I understand of them makes me giddy. Will you answer me properly and sensibly, if you can, for once in your life? Is it true that you are leaving us and going very far away?”

“Yes, Mademoiselle, it is true. I have bidden an eternal farewell to Val de Grâce. (The military hospital in Paris.) I shall prescribe no more cooling draughts for the patients there. It is by my own request that I have been removed from the hospital staff and appointed assistant doctor in Cochin-China. I made up my mind on this point, as I do on all others, after most mature reflexion — you smile, you think I am frivolous. I will tell you my reasons for leaving France. First and foremost, I shall escape the tyranny of *concierges*, charwomen, landladies, waiters, old-clothes men, and all such inveterate enemies of domestic happiness. I shall no longer have to bear with the smile of the café waiter — by-the-bye, have you noticed that waiters always have magnificently shaped heads? This is a very acute observation, but it would be useless to develop to you the theories it suggests. I am going far from the Boulevard Saint-Michel, but I shall find at Shanghai osteological monuments which will enable me to finish my treatise on the dentition of the yellow races. I shall lose that bright colour, which according to you is the proof of insolent good health, and take on the more interesting appearance of a lemon whose days are numbered. I shall develop complicated disorders of the liver, and study them with lively curiosity. You must own that all this is worth the voyage?”

Thus spoke René Longuemare, assistant surgeon of the First Division, standing in a suburban garden that surrounded a small chalet. Before him was a lawn, a fountain with an artificial grotto, a Judas-tree, and holly bushes growing against the railings; beyond the garden, in the distance, lay the beautiful valley, with the Seine winding on the left between pale green banks, crossed on the right by the white line of an aqueduct, and disappearing into that immensity of roofs, steeples, and domes which is Paris. In the hazy distance the gilded rotunda of the Invalides flung back the rays of sunlight. It was a warm, blue day in July; a few little white clouds hung motionless in the sky.

The girl to whom René Longuemare was speaking sat in an iron garden-chair. She raised her great clear eyes to the young surgeon’s face, but remained silent — a somewhat sad, uncertain expression on her lips.

Her eyes, of an indefinite colour, were timid, but at the same time so languorous that the whole face they illuminated acquired a singular expression

of sensuousness, though her nose was straight and her cheeks slightly hollow.

She was so uniformly pale that other women in speaking of her were wont to say, "The girl has no complexion." Her mouth was too large and somewhat flaccid, but showed facility and benevolent instincts.

René Longuemare, with a visible effort, recommenced his detestable joking.

"No," he said; "I must own up, Mademoiselle; in leaving France I am running away from my bootmaker. I can't stand his German accent any longer." She asked him again if he was really going. He ceased smiling abruptly, and said:

"I am taking the train to-morrow morning, at seven fifty-five, and on the twenty-sixth I go aboard the steamship *Magenta* at Toulon."

He could hear the sound of the ivory billiard balls clicking against each other on the table, and from the chalet came a voice, with a strong southern intonation, proclaiming emphatically:

"Seven, fourteen."

He flung a hurried look through the glass doors at the players, frowned, and with a somewhat brusque farewell to the young girl, turned swiftly away, his face distorted and his eyes brimming with tears. The girl saw him thus for a moment in profile above the holly hedge, behind the iron lances of the railings. She rose and ran to the gate, her handkerchief pressed to her mouth as though to stifle a cry; then resolutely she stretched out her arms and called in a strangled voice:

"René!"

Her arms dropped to her side; it was too late, he did not hear.

She leaned her head against an iron bar. Her drawn features, the abandonment of her whole being, showed irreparable defeat. The southern voice called from the chalet:

"Hélène! the madeira."

It was Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac calling to his daughter. He was standing, his little figure drawn up to its full height before the board on which the billiard players marked their score by means of wooden rings strung on wires. With a wide, magnificent gesture he rubbed the end of his cue with chalk, his eyes sparkled beneath their thick bushy brows. He looked capable and well satisfied, although he had just been badly beaten at the game.

"Mr. Haviland," he said to his guest, "I am particularly anxious that my daughter herself should do us the honours of my madeira. I am like that, you see, patriarchal and biblical. Being an islander, I think you are especially qualified to appreciate good wine in general, and madeira in particular. Taste this, I beg you."

Mr. Haviland turned his dull eyes on H  l  ne and silently took the glass she offered him on a lacquered tray. He was a long personage, with long teeth and long feet — carroty, bald, and dressed in checked clothes. He wore a racing glass slung from his shoulder by a strap.

H  l  ne disappeared. She had looked at her father uneasily. She had appeared disturbed at hearing him pour forth his voluble politenesses. She sent word to say she was not feeling well, and wished to be excused appearing at dinner.

Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac filled the dining-room, which was painted like a boulevard caf  , with his noisy presence, fussily carving, passing dishes, pouring out wine, calling in loud tones for the fish-slice when it was just under his eyes, trying the edge of the knife with the gravity of a charlatan at a fair, and tucking his serviette high up in his waistcoat. He boasted of his wines, and talked for ten minutes about a certain dry Syracuse before uncorking it.

The gardener, a type of the suburban peasant hired by the year, waited at table. He was a sly, malicious-looking creature, who answered back when his master spoke to him, although the latter pretended not to notice his impertinence.

Mr. Haviland, a high-coloured, florid man, ate a great deal, became very red in the face, but did not change his melancholy expression, and hardly spoke.

Fellaire de Sisac, after declaring that he did not intend to talk about business, proceeded to expatiate on his principal operations. He was a commission agent, and found his clients mostly among landlords and shopkeepers whose property had been expropriated. The new streets and boulevards which were being so rapidly opened up by Monsieur Haussmann gave him plenty to do.

He must, as a matter of fact, have made a good deal of money in a short time (although he did not say so). For many years he was to be seen daily, with a portfolio under his arm, dragging his down-at-heel boots about the neighbourhood of the Rue Rambuteau. There in a dingy office at the end of a courtyard he held consultations with sundry pork-butchers in distress.

It was in this unhealthy place that he developed the pale, puffy cheeks which thenceforth hung down on either side of his face.

On the brass plate affixed to his door his name appeared first as “Fellaire,” followed by the words “de Sisac” in parenthesis, as indicating his birthplace: —

“Fellaire (de Sisac).”

On a new plate above the threshold of a new domicile, the parenthesis was replaced by a comma after the first name: —

“Fellaire, de Sisac.”

On a third plate, put up after a third removal, the comma was suppressed, and there was nothing to indicate its having once existed: —

“Fellaire de Sisac.”

Now there was no plate on the commission agent’s door. He occupied, when in town, an apartment ornamented with much looking-glass, on the first floor of a house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs; besides which he built for himself, as a country residence, the chalet at Meudon.

Monsieur Fellaire was a native of Sisac, near Saint-Mamet-Ja-Salvétat, in the department of Cantal, where his brother, the miller, still lived.

When Fellaire de Sisac learnt that a portion of that part of Paris, known as the Butte-des-Moulins or Windmill Hill, had to come down, so as to open up the approach to the Théâtre Français, he sent out cards, prospectuses, and circulars, and made visits to the owners and principal tradespeople of the condemned houses. On one of what he spoke of as his “rounds” he called on Mr. Haviland, who lived at the Hôtel Meurice, and was the proprietor of a large house situated at the foot of the Butte, near the theatre. This house had belonged to the Haviland family for nearly two centuries.

John Haviland, the banker, established offices there in 1789. He had placed considerable sums of money at the disposition of the Duke of Orleans, who would, he considered, surely succeed Louis XVI. if the French were, as he thought, tending towards a constitutional monarchy. But the plans of the ambitious banker were not furthered either by the violent march of events or by the naturally wavering duke, who went back to the royal cause and favoured the counter-revolution.

Haviland then put himself in communication with the queen through the intervention of the beautiful Mrs. Elliot, but on the tenth of August, after the definite fall of royalty, he was obliged to fly to England, though he remained in communication with the Duke of Brunswick and the princes. His cashier, David Ewart, a man then eighty-one years of age, insisted on remaining in Paris to look after the threatened interests of the bank. Not having been able to obtain a certificate of citizenship, and so looked on as “suspect,” he was arrested and taken to the Conciergerie, where for over four months he seemed to be forgotten. Finally, on the 1st Thermidor 1794, he was haled before the revolutionary tribunal, which condemned him to capital punishment as a conspirator, and he was guillotined the same day at the Barrière du Trône, then called the Barrière Renversée.

Haviland's bank was saved from ruin by the energetic fidelity of this old man, but the house on the Butte-des-Moulins ceased to be one of its branches, and was let for other purposes.

It was very black and dirty when marked for the pickaxe. The windows to the front were surmounted by the Louis XV. shell, and a head wearing a helmet still grimaced heroically above the keystone of the arch of the courtyard door; but it was squeezed between the mural signs of a dyer and cleaner and a locksmith, and was painted blue on one side and yellow on the other. To the right and left of the door, and under the archway, hung little boards displaying the names of copyists and dressmakers. Within, the stone staircase, with its magnificent balluster of wrought iron, was befouled with dust, spittle, and dead salad leaves, and permeated by an acrid alkaline smell. The squalling of children was audible on the landings, and through the half-open doors could be seen women in bedgowns and men in shirt-sleeves, the undress of the worker or the loafer.

Such was the Haviland house in its last days.

Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac, being entrusted with the interests of the owner, visited it. He noted that it possessed thirty yards of frontage, two shops with offices and dependencies, and afforded shelter besides to thirty-two trading enterprises of divers sorts, with their appurtenances, including a female costermonger who kept her barrow in the coach-house, and a sempstress who stitched at a sewing-machine in the garret.

A detailed account of the whole was given in a report destined to impress a due sense of its immense value on the Council of Indemnities, appointed by the city to satisfy expropriated landlords. If, as was not unlikely, the affair should come before a competent tribunal, de Sisac was to arrange with barrister and lawyer.

He invited Haviland to dine with him first in Paris and afterwards at Meudon; for he was hospitable to all his clients, partly from inclination, partly from policy. He could manage men better from behind a decanter, and became most persuasive at dessert. He was convivial, and liked opening bottles.

"This is life," he would say. In the less prosperous epochs of his existence he treated his customers to roast chestnuts and white wine on the oilcloth covered tables of some small café. This was in the days of consultations with embarrassed shopkeepers. Now he received his clients in his own house, with his own silver and linen marked with his initials.

The last red rays of the setting sun lighted up the dining-room of the chalet where Haviland and de Sisac sat over their coffee, the business man with his pendulous cheeks was watching his guest narrowly.

"Just try this brandy, dear islander," he said.

The appellation *insulaire* seemed to him an elegant synonym for Englishman. He would sometimes speak of Albion instead of England, though he admitted that this was a little romantic.

Haviland drank the brandy, asked for a glass of wine, and then said:

“I hope that Mademoiselle Fellaire is not seriously indisposed?”

De Sisac said he hoped so also, and Haviland relapsed into his usual silence.

At last he rose with an English awkwardness accentuated by arthritis, for his knees were crippled with this rheumatic affliction. With his yellow overcoat over his arm, he had already passed through the garden gate, when he spoke again.

“I have the honour,” he said to his host, “to ask you for the hand of your daughter, Mademoiselle Fellaire.”

The little man was probably about to make some adroit but petulant reply, when the Englishman put a paper into his hand.

“You will find there,” he said, “an exact account of my fortune. Let me have your answer by registered letter, please. Do not accompany me any farther. No.”

And he walked off stiffly towards the railway station.

Fellaire though not easily surprised, was startled. He trotted at a sprightly pace twelve times round the fountain before he could recover his composure, the moon shining on his fat inert face gave it the appearance of a mask.

“What?” he said; “this man who is no more to me than the two hundred other strangers I come into contact with in the course of the year; this man who has seen my daughter perhaps half-a-dozen times, and who scarcely opens his mouth, opens it now to make her a proposal of marriage! I wonder if it is Hélène who has arranged this little comedy for two actors so deftly? But no, I’m no fool; I know what is going on in my own house, and I don’t believe the poor child has spoken more than four words to him. I’m afraid she will not receive this proposition as she ought to.”

He stood still, biting his thumb, gazing fixedly ahead like a man measuring some obstacle; then he turned deliberately back to the chalet. He stopped in the dining-room and read the paper Haviland had given him, before going upstairs to his daughter’s room. He put his cigar down on the pink chintz of the mantelpiece, and drew a chair to the bedside. He might have been the family doctor as he asked:

“Well, and how are we now, my pet?”

As she did not answer, he added:

“Mr. Haviland inquired after you this evening in the most affectionate manner.”

Then, after a pause, he went on in the unctuous voice of a man who has dined well.

“What do you think of him?”

No answer came to his question, but by the light of the candle burning on the mantelpiece he could see her eyes were open and staring, her brows contracted with an air of painful reflexion. He judged rightly that she had guessed Haviland’s intentions, and no longer afraid of striking too sudden a blow, said:

“Mr. Haviland has made you an offer of marriage.”

“I don’t want to marry; I am quite happy with you.”

He settled himself more comfortably in the easy-chair, arranged his hands on his knees, drew a whistling breath through his throat, husky with spirits but soothed with sweetmeats, and said in a businesslike tone:

“You don’t ask me what my answer was, little girl?”

“Well, what was it?”

“My child, I said nothing which could in any way bind you. I want to leave you entirely free. I don’t consider that I have a right to impose my will on you. You know well enough I’m no tyrant.”

She sat up, her elbow on the pillow.

“No, you are a dear father, and if I don’t want to be married you won’t force me to be.”

“I tell you again, child,” he said good-naturedly, “you are as free as air, but we can discuss these little matters. I am your father, I love you, and there are lots of things you are old enough now to understand. Come, let’s talk like a pair of friends. We live together, you and I, and we live very comfortably; but we have not got what could be called a settled fortune. I am a self-made man, and success came to me late — too late. Much water will flow under the bridge before I can provide a dowry for you; and between this and then, who knows what may happen? You are twenty-two, and the offer you have had to-day is not to be despised. It is an extraordinary piece of luck, if I may say so. Haviland is not what one would call a young man. You see, my girl, I am quite impartial; but he is a gentleman, a real gentleman. He is very rich.”

With his mouth full, as it were, of this last word, he slapped the pocket in which was the paper the Englishman had given him, and went on, warming to the subject:

“This devil of a Haviland has the command of a magnificent fortune — houses, forests, farms, stocks and shares, everything.”

She shrugged her shoulders with a disgusted look, and he saw he had put things rather too brutally.

“Don’t imagine, child, that I want you to marry for money as they say; no, I love you and I only want you to be happy.”

He really did love his daughter, and paternal affection made his voice tremble.

“God is my witness that I only want your happiness. I know what sentiment is; when I married your mother she hadn’t a penny. To tell you the truth I am really a dreamer, a sentimentalist. I am very romantic at bottom. Do you know what I should have liked better than anything, if circumstances had permitted? — to live in the country and write poetry! But there, I was caught, body and soul, by business. Now I am dragged into it up to my neck. Good Lord! life isn’t all rose-coloured, one has to make certain sacrifices. Well, well, my girl, my dream has always been to spare you such sacrifices, to shield you from the troubles and miseries of existence. It is enough that your poor mother should have had to endure them, and die at the task — die at the task! Do you hear me?”

He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, much moved by the memory he had conjured up — as a matter of fact, his wife died of consumption at Niort, where her family lived, and where he had sent her to be out of the way; but he was intoxicated and maudlin with his own eloquence. He took his daughter’s face between his hands, covered it with kisses and burst forth again:

“Listen to me, my Lili. I know you, and I know you *must* have comfort, luxury even. It is my fault. I have been too ambitious. Nothing was too good or too fine for you. I have brought you up as a rich man’s child. You haven’t learnt how to wait on yourself or to keep accounts. If you are not well off you will surely be the most miserable of women, and it will be my fault. What a responsibility for your poor father! I should die of it. But here is Fortune knocking at your door, hey? Little girl, shall we let her in? See now; I love you — I adore you, my darling, but I know what is best for you. Love is never deceived. Let me settle this.”

Hélène asked in a careless tone if Mr. Haviland intended to live in Paris.

“Yes, certainly,” answered de Sisac, though he knew nothing whatever of Haviland’s plans. He added that his future son-in-law had elegant manners, and was still capable of turning the head of many a young woman. As to his feelings, they were most delicate,... it was difficult to imagine any one with such delicate feelings. Finally, as a last resource, he spoke of an hotel, carriages, and jewels.

Hélène was thinking that René Longuemare had gone, far away and for a long time, without a word of love, without a word of regret. If he had only said he would come back, that he would think of her — remember her. But no, he had said nothing. Evidently, then, he did not care for her. He only cared for his books, his phials, his scalpels, and his tweezers. He had liked her because she had been so willing to listen to him, that was all. He had said a thousand silly things to her, as he would to any girl. But supposing he cared for her secretly, as

she had often thought? Well, it would be a just revenge for his desertion. What her father said was true; she was made to be rich, she had a vocation for the luxurious life. And how could she resist? She was too tired to struggle; the first assault had overthrown her, and her father would return to the charge.

Hers was one of those souls which accept defeat in advance. Then, too, the love of this foreigner was flattering. She knew from certain indications how true and profound that love was: this man who was verging on the decline of life, who for twenty-five years had travelled all over the world without being able to dissipate his eternal *ennui*; this man, glacial towards every one else, had caught fire like a young man — he had known her for three months, and his visits to her had been almost silent, yet he offered her his hand and fortune; was he not strange, chivalrous, generous? Would it not be possible to love him! She raised her pretty face, with its undecided expression, towards her father and murmured:

“We will see.”

CHAPTER II

HÉLÈNE FELLAIRE had been brought up, in many respects, as a rich man's daughter. It is true she could remember periods in her childhood when her stockings were in holes, when her feet were often cold, and the food seemed to consist principally of plates of sausage from the cook-shop, which she particularly detested; when she had to spend long hours waiting in courtyards and doorways while one of the many removals of their household goods was in progress, when in the winter evenings her mother's face grew downcast.

When she thought of her mother, it was of some one who was always singing or scolding, restlessly active, or completely broken down; some one who was always tormented or tormenting.

One of her recollections was of their travelling together, where to or exactly at what time she could not recall, but it was when she was very young. One night her mother, having put her to bed, turned her face to the wall and sternly told her to go to sleep. Then the poor lady took off her chemise and washed it in the basin. It amused Hélène immensely to see her mother, rolled up in a shawl, busy among the soap-suds. Later on, when she understood that it was because they were too poor to pay a washerwoman, she felt frightened.

She was an affectionate, delicate creature from her infancy. Her heart would melt at the sight of suffering. She gave sweets and doll's clothes to poor children. She kept a sparrow in a cage and stuffed it with sugar; it was a source of joy and sorrow to her, for one day it perished miserably, crushed to death by a door.

"Praxo raised a tomb to her grasshopper, by whose death she learnt that all things must die."

Thus the poet of The Anthology makes the Ionian child speak.

The loss of the sparrow filled Hélène with a terror of death which did not leave her for many years.

Her father was a man with a winning tongue. He spent his money lavishly, and stayed out late at night, so that his wife, faded by poverty and ceaselessly shaken by jealousy, could not possess that quiet and peace of mind, that constant, watchful foresight parents need to enable them to direct skilfully and happily the appealing little souls they have brought into the world; so Hélène, hugged or smacked without knowing why, grew dull and stupid, and gave up trying to distinguish between right and wrong.

“This child will be the death of me!” Madame Fellaire would exclaim. “I don’t know what I have done that God should have afflicted me with such a monster.”

Then would follow a storm of vociferations, accompanied by sobs, clenched fists, and banging doors. The poor child used to creep away to bed and cry herself to sleep with a heavy heart. When morning came she would often be awakened by a shower of kisses, gentle words, and pretty little songs; her mother’s mood having been changed and brightened by a few tardy attentions from Monsieur Fellaire.

As for him, to Hélène’s mind he always appeared very handsome, very good, and very grand. His thick whiskers and his white waistcoats were marvels of elegance to her. Monsieur Fellaire was a god in his daughter’s eyes, but after the manner of gods, showed himself rarely. He was away all day, and came home late. Sometimes, when things outside went against him, he would have bursts of domestic assiduity. On such occasions he would take his Lili driving, or to the Zoological Gardens, or to a café, where she drank sugared water and even syrups. She would dip the end of her tongue in her father’s glass and grimace at the bitter taste of the green beverage. Such outings were delicious, but infrequent. The god faded away, leaving his wife more sullen and more irritable than before, and Hélène, sitting by her in her little chair, would dream lovingly of him and recall the dazzling vision of his wonderful white waistcoat; she was lazy, and happiest doing nothing, an occupation in which she succeeded best of all. Madame Fellaire never noticed the long silent reveries of her daughter, but a peal of infantine laughter would make her break out in reproaches.

Hélène was keenly and precociously alive to sensation. She instinctively loved luxury, and did what she could to improve the paternal ordinary. Her liking for the delicacies of the table and the refinements of dress delighted Monsieur Fellaire, who was a connoisseur on both points.

She was seven years old when he put her to school at Auteuil, at the Convent of the Ladies of Mount Calvary. The white dresses and the white faces of the Mothers, the peacefulness of the house and the unfailingly regular life, did her much good.

One day she was told that her mother, who had gone on a journey, would never return again. This “never again” frightened her — she sobbed bitterly. They dressed her in a black pinafore, and let her run loose in the garden. The garden was for her an immense mysterious country, full of living things — an enchanted world, a land of miracles. Her father came to see her there every week, and brought her cakes; his love and fatherly pride were most admirable.

Tired as he was with uselessly tramping the pavements, with climbing painfully up and down stairs, knocking at doors only to have them shut in his face; of writing his letters on the corner of some dirty café table; of following up chance clients, sometimes even to the suburban balls they frequented, where he would treat them to a bowl of mulled wine; nosing like a hound after pettifogging law disputes, he would appear every Thursday in the parlour of the Ladies of Calvary, brushed up, shining, gloved, freshly shaved, and with immaculate linen. There he showed only as a being happy and at ease. His fat white cheeks were most presentable. Mother Sainte-Geneviève, the superior of the house at Auteuil, showed him much consideration. Two of the elder girls dreamt of him at night.

Hélène admired him immensely.

Truly, Monsieur Fellaire was heroic in his own fashion. One day, when he had not a penny in his pocket, he saw the poems of Alfred de Musset on a friend's table and promptly borrowed the volume. "I want to re-read it for the hundredth time," he said, and went off and sold it on the *quais*, so as to buy the gloves he drew on carelessly next day, under the watchful eyes of the sister doorkeeper.

The cakes he took for Hélène and her friends on his weekly visits came from a celebrated pastrycook's, and the sweets were in most tasteful boxes full of mottoes and surprises. Mother Sainte-Geneviève, having conceived a great esteem for him, consulted him one day on some litigious matter. He gladly placed his time, his activity, and his knowledge at her disposal. She deigned to accept them. He was radiant with joy and pride. Such was his desire to please, that he tied up his notes and papers with blue ribbon, and managed to treat even legal matters with a degree of unction. When he ran through these documents with the Reverend Mother, he moistened his thumb with the tip of his tongue in a discreet and modest manner. As a matter of fact, each consultation was torture to him, but it was a delicious torture. He would listen for hours together to the explanations of the good lady, who was at once narrow-minded, mistrustful, obstinate, and gentle, and who promptly slipped out of everything with an ease born of long practice. She was a fine fair woman, a little puffy perhaps, and kept her eyes cast down and her hands in her sleeves, and spoke in a low voice. These manners intimidated him. He was more at ease with his usual clients, suburban publicans and manufacturers of patent hygienic belts, who would fling a bundle of judgment orders and summonses down on his roll-top desk, swearing horribly the while.

Mother Sainte-Geneviève had the grand manners of an abbess of the old régime. One of her affected elegances was to ignore the fact that Fellaire could

ever need money. He was constantly called on to make advances to the Community, to obtain even the smallest of which involved strategy which would have turned an ordinary brain. But what a pleasure it was for him to go to Vespers on Sunday and sit in the gallery of the chapel, which smelt of incense and orris root, and from his place he could see his daughter in the aisle, bending over her prayer-book, seated between the daughter of a councillor of State and the cousin of a Montenegrin prince! After contemplating her pretty hair, and her shoulders, a little thin and pointed in her brown merino bodice, the glasses of his spectacles would grow misty, and he would blow his nose as one does at the theatre after a moving scene. The business of the Community cost him some money, but brought him many useful acquaintances.

“I am becoming the fashion,” he said to himself, and his chest would swell with renewed ampleness beneath his fancy waistcoat, of white piqué, or printed, stamped, or spotted velvet.

As Hélène grew up, she grew beautiful. Her hair which for a long time had been like her mother’s, pale and faded, turned to a magnificent gold. She was gentle, slothful, easily discouraged, given to bursts of affection and sudden emotions. It was with difficulty they could coax her to eat anything in the refectory beyond salad and bread and salt. She had a friend, Cécile, at whose house she spent the half-holidays. This friend, the daughter of a stockbroker, was a little person of sixteen, at once childish, old-fashioned, and coquettish, neither ill-natured nor mischievous, too unimaginative to be vicious, and very rich. She had the mind of a dull woman of thirty, and her companions endowed her with an extraordinary prestige. She had a heavily upholstered bedroom in her father’s house at Passy, and here she and Hélène would pass hours eating bonbons. When the latter left this stuffy nest, something in her soul had withered, the outside world seemed duller, harder, and more repulsive — her spirits flagged. Her day-dream was to have a blue bedroom and to lie on a sofa reading novels all day long. She developed pains in her chest which quite pulled her down. One night there was a wild scare in the convent. At the cry of “Fire! fire!” all the girls jumped out of bed and, rolled in blankets and petticoats, rushed pell-mell down the staircase. The little ones came last, with outstretched arms, shrieking and stumbling in their long night-dresses. It was soon discovered to be merely a false alarm. Mother Sainte-Genève scolded the foolish creatures and congratulated Hélène on having had the good sense not to leave her bed. If she had not moved, it was from pure inertia and the species of cowardice with which she faced every incident of life. Things slipped by her, leaving her indifferent to her surroundings; she thought of nothing but dresses, jewels, horses, and boating excursions. She would burst into tears at the mention of her father’s name.

She left the convent knowing how to enter a drawing-room and play a waltz on the piano. She found the paternal house completely refurnished; she was to do the honours of it, and she had her blue bedroom.

Her father treated her with the kindness and liberality of an old lover for a young mistress. He took her to the little theatres, and to supper after the play. He thought this was the right thing to do. It was a cruel awakening for her when she discovered that this good, easy father was not the perfect gentleman she had supposed him to be in the convent parlour. His manners, which were a mixture of those of a quack doctor and a commercial traveller, wounded her terribly. She had learnt good behaviour with the Ladies of Mount Calvary, and knew instinctively what was right and proper.

Her beauty attracted men, but their vivacious admiration only roused her indignation. Not one among them proposed to marry her; they all resembled each other, and were all alike stupid and tiresome. Uneasy, affected, feverish, nail-biting creatures, they one and all seemed possessed with the desire to wear out their boots, their horses, and their lives as quickly as possible. Then came some one who interested her.

A young army surgeon, René Longuemare. He had been sent by his father, a road surveyor in the Ardennes, to consult Fellaire de Sisac on some matter of business; he returned again and again to the house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs and became a constant visitor there.

Although he was not handsome, being clumsily built, with a high-coloured face, and although his conversation was rough and obscure, Hélène liked to see him, and to hear him talk. He would hold forth on matters of religion and morality in a way which made her hair stand on end, but which amused her, though she but half understood what he said.

“Man is descended from a monkey,” he would say.

When she protested, he would develop his thesis in a way at once bold and comical.

Longuemare introduced some of his friends, and so a circle of young savants was formed in the house of the good Fellaire, who paid not the slightest attention to them.

The surgeon would advance theories like the following: —

“Virtue is a product, the same as phosphorus or vitriol.”

“Heroism and holiness are the results of congestion of the brain.”

“General paralysis is the only thing which makes a great man.”

“The gods are adjectives.”

“Things have always existed and will always exist.”

“How wicked of you!” she would say.

But she took pleasure in listening to the manly young voice. She admired, as a mysterious force, the free and expansive intelligence which, of an evening, between a cup of tea and a glass of kirsch, would fling pell-mell before her the eccentricity, the magnificence, and the horror of Nature, as a barbarian flings his tribute at the feet of a surprised and flattered queen. Meanwhile, from the salon came the murmur of doleful voices talking of unpaid notes of hand, of decisions of the Chamber of Commerce and disputed building accounts.

Then came a shadow, wandering silently among the divers groups — a big, stiff, red-headed shadow, at once grotesque and noble. It was the troubled soul of Mr. Haviland. Hélène never confounded him with the others; she recognised that he possessed a certain nobility and distinction of mind, and she knew that he loved her, although he never spoke to her.

As for Longuemare, he was naïf, in spite of his scientific audacity; he respected her profoundly, and admired her in silence. After having made some great show of brutality, he would talk to her in the most gentle and delicate way. He was always gay in her presence, partly because it was his nature, and partly from strength of will, for he loved her; and rather than tell her so, he would have bitten his tongue through. He had only his pay, while waiting for something better to turn up. He never doubted but that Mademoiselle Fellaire was rich. She used to tease him, and pretend to believe that he was frivolous, and even worse; but she was becoming strongly and profoundly attached to him, until the day when he came to Meudon to bid her a brusque farewell.

CHAPTER III

THE house on the Butte-des-Moulins had fallen; the mask with its one blue and one yellow cheek had crumbled beneath the pickaxe. The little room where the old cashier David Ewart was arrested, to be taken to the revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine, had gone with the rest. For some time clouds of grey dust rose from the ruins and whirled about the neighbouring streets, carrying particles of the old dwelling down the throats of men and horses. Now those who had inhabited it — the dyer and cleaner and the locksmith among others — could not have exactly indicated the spot where it had stood.

The domain of Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac at Meudon had grown considerably larger. The railings which formerly were quite near the house had retreated so as to take in a piece of neighbouring land, on which immediately sprang up a summer-house built like a Gothic château, with towers, battlements, and portcullis in brick. The property was entitled the Villa de Sisac. The plaster was still fresh when one day a placard appeared on the gate, announcing that the house, the chalet, and dependences were to be let or sold immediately.

The seasons succeeded each other, and still the placard swung in the wind. The sun and the rain wrinkled it and turned it yellow.

Then in the autumn days the silence of desolation fell on the hills of Meudon. Then, with heavy tread, musket on shoulder, and leather helmet on head, the German soldiers entered the abandoned chalet and took up their quarters there. They made fires in the furnace with the polished planks of the *parquets*. The roof was crushed by a shell. The great winter had come. France was invaded — Paris besieged. In this crumbling away of a people, the fortune of Fellaire disappeared for ever.

The cessation of all municipal work after the resignation of the Prefect of the Seine, under the ministry of Chevandier de Valdrôme, had already shaken the office in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs to its foundations. Luck had forsaken Fellaire, and he let himself go with the stream. He gave up dyeing his whiskers, and wore dusty frock-coats and tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles. He would stake in gambling dens the stray louis he still picked up here and there. Now that his daughter no longer kept his house, he received visits from ladies with yellow hair and painted faces, who sang on the stairs. He was seen one day at the Folies-Bergères with a woman on each arm. During the siege of Paris he became serious again, and started an insurance company, "The Phoenix of the National Guard." But no one paid any attention to it.

Hélène was married. She had been travelling for four years; the easy, careless life suited her. Tall, beautiful, dressed with a severe magnificence, she was much admired in hotels and casinos, where her indifference lent her an aristocratic air. She endeavoured to care for her husband. But though he was the most honourable and upright of men, he was terribly tiresome. He saw, heard, said and accomplished everything with equal gravity. Nothing was great or small in his eyes; everything was worthy of being taken into consideration. He would give his wife diamond ornaments, and then tease her childishly for ten hours about a sum of three francs which she could not account for. He made handsome presents in a narrow way, even his prodigalities wore an avaricious look. He interfered in all the extravagances of his young bride — not to check them, but to register them. He allowed her to spend lavishly, but on condition that she fulfilled every formality. A third of his life was spent in disputing about ha'pennies with hotel waiters. He was obstinately determined not to be robbed of a sou; and would willingly have ruined himself to foil the would-be robber. He calculated everything — distances to within a yard, longitudes and latitudes, heights, the rise and fall of the barometer, the number of degrees marked on the thermometer, the direction of the wind, the position of the clouds. At Naples he surveyed Virgil's tomb like a land surveyor. He had a mania for neatness, and could not bear to see a newspaper open on a sofa. He exasperated Hélène by picking up and returning to her twenty times a day the book or the embroidery which she had laid down. It made her think regretfully of her father, who would forget that he had put the stumps of his cigars on the damask arm-chairs. But all this was as nothing.

Hélène's great trouble was being forced to live with a man so absolutely devoid of imagination. The faculty was so foreign to Mr. Haviland that he was incapable of describing a sentiment or giving any interest to a thought. Since their marriage he had never opened his mouth, except to enunciate some direct, precise, and timely fact. No doubt he was very much in love, and very proud of his wife; but his love was like a fine rain: one of those kinds of rain which one neither sees nor hears — unceasing, penetrating, chilling.

Mr. Haviland's personal attendant was a Frenchman named Groult. He came from Avranches, and had been many years in his service. They had travelled twice round the world together and were inseparable.

Groult was not handsome. He had stiff, flaming-red hair, shifty green eyes, and walked with a limp; but he was of an exemplary cleanliness, and fulfilled his functions with perfect exactitude. He was married; his wife was also in Mr. Haviland's service. She remained in Paris and looked after the house he had built recently on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg.

Mr. Haviland was much interested in chemistry, and Groult helped him in the laboratory. He had a mania for drenching himself with medicine daily, and Groult looked after his travelling pharmacy. Besides manipulating drugs with much ability, he was adroit in many ways, and was even a good locksmith when occasion required. His horrible bony hands, with their enormous thumbs, could execute the most delicate tasks; but though endowed with an extraordinary aptitude for mechanical arts, he could never learn to write in the least degree legibly. He had composed an alphabet for himself which he alone could understand, and it was impossible to make out a letter or a figure of his accounts, which he scribbled on scraps of paper. The cooks and housemaids detested him because of his scrawls, his horrible hands, his lameness, the spots the chemicals left on his skin, and the smell of drugs with which he was impregnated; they nicknamed him "Clochon," and feared him like the devil; they considered him capable of any crime, but could find nothing to reproach him with. Groult was impeccable.

He inspired H  l  ne with an instinctive repugnance, and at first she tried to have him dismissed, but soon saw that he was indispensable to her husband, and resigned herself to the sight of him limping perpetually between her husband and herself. He did not appear to bear her any malice, and never comported himself towards her otherwise than as a perfect servant.

Madame's wish to be rid of him had not frightened him very much. He possessed the confidence of his master, who he knew would not separate from him lightly. There was a tie between Haviland and his servant Groult. For twenty years they had been searching together for Samuel Ewart.

Haviland was still a child when he heard for the first time the story of the old cashier David Ewart, and of his death on the scaffold in 1794. The sublime obstinacy of this brave man, quietly awaiting his doom while keeping the books his masters had confided to him, appeared most praiseworthy to the heir of the house of Haviland, whose sense of fitness and tenacity of purpose just fitted him to understand such practical devotion. He showed nothing of what he felt at the moment; but later on, when he had become master of his actions and his fortune, he began to search actively for some living descendant of the old cashier. He learnt that Andrew Ewart, great-grandson of David, was alive and settled as a merchant in Calcutta. Andrew had married an Anglo-Indian, and had gone into partnership with a Brahmin; their business was carried on under the name of Andrew Ewart, Li  ali  ali & Company. Haviland, accompanied by Groult, took the steamer to Calcutta, with the intention of finding Andrew and saying to him: "Your great-grandfather died in the service of mine, like a perfect gentleman. Allow me to shake you by the hand. Can I be of use to you in any way?"

When he arrived in Calcutta in 1849, he learnt that the firm of Andrew Ewart, Liçaliçali & Company had been dissolved by the decease of Andrew, who had died of cholera in June 1848, leaving a widow and a four-year-old son named Samuel; but Haviland could find no further trace of them. Mrs. Andrew, having been left unprovided for, had quitted Calcutta with her little child. Having learnt that Liçaliçali had settled in the Isle of Bourbon he went there, and found the Brahmin giving English lessons to the children of the governor of the colony. Liçaliçali told Haviland that Ewart's widow and son were living with her brother — a Mr. Johnson, a former officer in Her Majesty's service; beyond this he could hear nothing.

Every week an advertisement appeared in the *Times*, inviting Samuel Ewart (who at the time of Hélène's marriage must have been about twenty-seven years old) to present himself, or make known his place of residence to Martin Haviland, Esq., Paris; but Samuel Ewart gave no sign of life.

For twenty-five years Haviland pursued his researches, with no more apparent ardour or fatigue than when he entered on them. It was his task, and he took it up every morning as a carpenter takes up his plane. Groult held the threads of the affair in his hands, and disentangled them skilfully. He was particularly useful when it came to showing the door to some false Samuel Ewart; for many adventurers presented themselves to Haviland, as being the son and heir of the late Andrew.

Haviland's health became very bad in the autumn of the year 1871; he suffered from giddiness and insomnia. One day (it was at the beginning of the winter; they were living at Nice in the Villa des Oliviers) Hélène, who was reading a novel in the drawing-room, gave a cry of horror as her husband came in.

"Your eyes!" she said. "Look at your eyes in the glass!"

Haviland's blue eyes had turned black. His lips were trembling, and he seemed to be wandering in his mind as he murmured:

"Sam — Sam Ewart; he will come."

CHAPTER IV

THEY returned to Paris for the rest of the winter. The courtyard of the hotel was full of trunks, cases, and packages; their size and number filled Madame Groult with despair as she moved about among them. She wore a bed-jacket of flowered calico, and her body seemed as limp as the stuff which covered it. Madame Groult, flabby and agitated, resembled a bundle of rags moved by some invisible force.

Her face was perpetually bathed in a sort of steam, and she continually wiped it with her cottony forearm. She arranged the bonnet-boxes according to the directions of the lady's-maid; but naturally timid, the orders and counter-orders she received only made her lose her head, while the frizzy-haired maid, her cap-strings flung coquettishly back, made eyes at the grooms.

Hélène threw her travelling mantle on an armchair, and Mr. Haviland promptly took it up and folded it neatly. She turned impatiently to the window, and began to beat "The Turkish Patrol" on the glass. The dome of Les Invalides glimmered faintly under the foggy sky. All around was dull and grey, and she went sulkily away to her own room.

Groult announced Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac. The business man had come in haste to salute his son-in-law and embrace his daughter. He was buttoned up to the throat. His cracked and broken top-hat was beyond being treated with an iron, so water had been tried. It had been literally soaked, to make the rebellious nap lie down and to give it a little shine. The heels of Monsieur Fellaire's boots were worn down to such an extent that he was forced to walk like a duck in order to maintain his equilibrium.

Haviland did not offer him his hand.

Fellaire tried every means to warm up "his dear islander"—"his most highly-respected son-in-law." His metallic voice sounded like the striking of flint and steel, but he could get no spark out of Haviland. He said to himself that, after all, this devil of a man was naturally taciturn, and persisted obstinately in his efforts to electrify him. Seeing that no inquiry was made as to the state of his affairs, he said at last:

"By-the-bye, I won't conceal from you the fact that I have been through some very rough times lately. I have been through what one might call a crisis."

He could not very well conceal difficulties of this kind from Haviland, whom he had pursued with demands for money for the last four years. During the siege he had applied for a draft on a Paris banker by balloon, by carrier-pigeon, by

advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph*. Haviland had satisfied the first demand, the others he had not even replied to.

So Fellaire presented himself at Mr. Charles Simpson's bank, Rue de la Victoire, and by using the beloved and respected name of his son-in-law, borrowed a considerable sum. This artifice seemed to Haviland intolerably unworthy.

Fellaire therefore did not attempt to hide his troubles, but he said he had surmounted them, and had now a magnificent affair in hand. He assumed an attitude suited to the importance of the subject, stuck his arms akimbo, and drew a long breath.

"It is a matter," he said, fixing a Napoleonic look on the ceiling, "the essentially beneficent aspect of which will not escape you. It is a question of opening a working-men's bank on an entirely new basis. At an epoch when the over-rapid advance of the labouring classes has become embarrassing to the political economist, and presents, if I may say so, a permanent menace to society, the need becomes selfapparent for some institution which will inspire the proletariat with the sentiment of thrift. Freed now from the obstacles which the preceding government would certainly have put in the way of the foundation of an establishment of this nature, the moment has come in which to act—"

Just then a ray of sunlight — the only one in the salon, perhaps in the whole house — fell treacherously on Fellaire's wretched hat, and showed it up in all its misery. He paused for a moment, then continued energetically:

"And to act quickly."

He asked Haviland if he would like to hear the statutes of the proposed "working-men's bank."

Haviland answered, "No!"

Fellaire insisted that he should at least let him give a general idea of the way in which the bank was to be organised. He looked to his son-in-law for some valuable advice. And why not speak frankly? The business was worthy the attention of capitalists of the first rank, and he was anxious that Haviland should benefit by the advantages reserved for the original shareholders.

When he had finished speaking, Haviland rang the bell, the man-servant limped in.

"Groult," he said, "take away that cigar."

It was the stump of a much chewed penny cigar, which Fellaire on entering had deposited on the edge of a console table.

Haviland then looked Fellaire squarely in the face and said:

"I will not give you any advice, because you would not listen to it. I will not give you any money, because you would not pay me back. You are not a

gentleman — no! I beg you never to enter my house again. You can see Madame Haviland when and where you please.”

And he left the room.

Fellaire, though upset and staggered by this blow, feeling that everything had come to an end, yet had the courage to kiss his daughter gaily and keep up a few moments' chat about trifles. She received him with the tenderness of a child. In his easy-going nature there was something which corresponded with her laziness, and after all he was her father. With one glance of her woman's eye she had noted the ragged edges of his linen, the worn collar of his coat, the shabby hat — all the sordid details of his costume. She guessed the truth. But seeing her suspicious, he smiled — poor man, he spoke of the vast enterprises which were absorbing him. He accused himself of becoming negligent of his appearance as he grew older. He asked if she were happy, and told her to love her husband. Then, having embraced her effusively, he went downstairs with a heavy step — his back bent, his eyes dull, his chin dropped, his head hanging under his everlasting hat; he had aged by at least ten years.

Hélène saw that her husband and father had disagreed, and, although she guessed the cause of the rupture, she took part against Haviland. From that moment husband and wife began to bicker and exchange bitter allusions; they would quarrel without any apparent motive, so that explanations were out of the question.

As she had sudden emotional outbursts, she transferred her wasted affections abruptly to her husband's nephew, George Haviland — a smart, good-looking, blonde boy, with a loving but sulky nature. He was born at Avranches, and had been brought up in the Catholic religion, in the midst of the little English colony there. He was an orphan, and his uncle, who was also his guardian, had placed him as a day-scholar at the Collège Stanislas. Hélène spoilt him with the best intentions in the world. She would arrange his hair herself twenty times a day, to see which fashion suited him best. She would make him leave his studies in the evening to accompany her to a concert or to the theatre.

But her days were empty, and she often wept from sheer ennui. She would have liked to live in a garret alone with her father, and would run off in secret to visit him. He was living, for the time being, rent free—” drying the plaster” on the fourth storey of a new house in the Rue de Rome. These expeditions, on which she went trembling, and with her veil down, as though to a rendezvous, amused her immensely. Her father's rooms looked like a bachelor's lodgings; there were pipes among the papers on the table, the faded sofa was inviting and soft in spite of its broken springs. After she had kissed him on his big heavy cheeks, she would rummage in every corner. If she discovered some feminine

object, such as a parasol or a veil, she would pass over it, and with tight lips but laughing eyes pretend not to notice it. Her father watched her, in mute admiration and love. When she had turned over the papers, eaten the cakes, had something to drink, laughed, and pulled his whiskers, she would heave a deep sigh and depart; and he, settling his disarranged smoking-cap, would go with her to the landing and whisper at parting, "Love your husband, my dear; love him with all your heart."

As a matter of fact, she detested her husband. Leaning back in the cab, she would imagine him sitting in front of her, back to back with the cabman, with his lifeless eyes, and his cheeks like underdone beef, and would make a little grimace expressive of disgust.

Was there in the bottom of her soul, in the region of bygone days, the image of a countenance, half effaced by time, but still loveable, dear, the face of one who has departed never to return? Among the longings of this wearied woman were there perhaps some which groping out towards one being went a far far journey yet never reached their goal?

One day, when she had let a piece of embroidery, begun long since, fall to her knees as though it were too heavy a burden, she was noting with that fixed intentness associated with ennui the imperceptible irregularities of the glass in the window panes which, looked at sideways, seemed to waver into architectural outlines. Presently her maid brought her a visiting card from someone who had called and wished to see her.

She glanced at the card, sprang up, adjusted her curls, settled the pleats of her skirt, and went down to the drawing-room, transformed and animated, with a swan-like grace in the poise of her head, and a queenly sweep of her trailing robes.

CHAPTER V

RENÉ LONGUEMARE was standing before her. He was paler than formerly; his cheeks had filled out and his features softened, but his skin was sallow, and his eyes shone in a dark circle ploughed by fever contracted in the rice fields; he had still his old frank look, his wide affectionate smile, and his outspoken manner.

"You see," she said to him, "the world is small, and one comes back from the furthestmost parts of it. I am not surprised to see you, but I am very, very pleased."

They were ill at ease at first. Each one had lived a long span of life, of the details of which the other knew nothing. They sought about for common ground. She was the first to risk a cordial phrase, perhaps because she felt it her duty as mistress of the house, perhaps because she was tempted by some secret sentiment.

"I have often thought of you," she said. Then René plunged boldly into their mutual recollections. He spoke of the cups of tea at the house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, of their walks at Meudon, of her pink and white muslin frocks which the brambles tore, of Monsieur Fellaire's fine waistcoats, which they would make a rallying point on their excursions through the woods, as though it were the white plume of the Béarnais; and of all the nonsense they talked. She asked him if he still kept frogs in his pockets, and at the end of a quarter of an hour it seemed as though they had never been separated. When he began to tell her quietly of his travels, and of the monotonous fatigue of his service on an unhealthy station, she opened her beautiful humid eyes wide as she listened. Then she asked what he intended to do. He was tired, he said, of military service. He should send in his resignation, and settle down as a country doctor and village bone-setter: if some very innocent young girl had a fancy for raising poultry under his protection, he would marry her.

"Ah!" she said quickly, "you want to get married?"

But she knew from his answers that he was not serious; he had some great void in his heart, some sorrow, perhaps some souvenir.

George came back from school and burst in upon them with his lesson-books, then settled himself like a spoiled child to enjoy the distraction that this gentleman offered him. Hélène did not send him away, but told him to keep quiet and do his work. The doctor was relating an episode of his voyage, and the boy, noisily turning over the leaves of his dictionary, was biting his penholder

and turning his head as he listened to a story of sea-spiders eaten alive by one of the sailors on the deck of the ship, when the maid came in to say that Mr. Haviland was ill, and begged Madame to go to him at once.

Mr. Haviland's bedroom was very large, and filled with strange objects, all arranged in precise order. There was a cabinet full of sealed and labelled bottles. He had collected half a bottle of water from all the rivers he had crossed, and one could read on the labels — Tagus, Jordan, Simois, Eurotas, Tiber, Ohio. Another cabinet contained specimens of the marbles of the world. There was also a cupboard dedicated to historical souvenirs, and containing stones from Tasso's prison, Shakespeare's birthplace, Joan of Arc's hut, the tomb of Héloïse, leaves from the weeping willow of Saint Helena, a piece of poetry written by Lacenaire in the Conciergerie, a travelling-clock stolen from the Tuileries in 1848, a comb which had belonged to Mademoiselle Rachel; and in a glass tube, a hair from the head of Joseph Smith the Mormon prophet, besides other relics too numerous to be specified. Several large tables, made of pine wood, such as architects use for drawing-tables, were covered with phials, and the whole place exhaled a very pronounced pharmaceutical odour.

Haviland was lying on a sofa near his iron bedstead, a travelling rug over his legs. He was livid, save for the red patches on his cheeks. His eyes, unnaturally sombre, seemed to be starting from their orbits. He took hold of his wife's hands with the eager tenderness of a person who feels that everything is slipping away from him. He told her that he loved her, and was grateful to her; that he felt very ill, but hoped to recover, as he was well taken care of, and followed a treatment of his own which Groult knew how to apply. Then an attack of giddiness cut short his speech.

By-and-by he went on:

"I ought to warn you, Hélène, that I have wandering moments. They are a feature of my disease. You must take no notice of anything I may do at such times. Fortunately my affairs are in order. My will is with my notary."

He then told her that he had left her the income accruing from his fortune for her life, but that the capital, as was only right, was to go to George Haviland. He had also made a disposition in favour of his servant Groult, and had told him about it. He pressed his wife's hand, and fixing on her the strange and dolorous look he sometimes wore, begged her to listen carefully to what he was about to say.

"Out of respect for my memory if I die, my dear Hélène, look for Samuel Ewart, and execute my last wishes in his favour. In the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will come again to raise the dead, I conjure you to neglect nothing which may ensure that the last descendant of David Ewart shall

receive the money I have bequeathed him. I know he is alive, for sometimes of nights I see him. I should recognise him were he to come, and he will come.”

Suddenly the sick man fixed his eyes on a dark curtain which hung in heavy folds before a door, stretched out his trembling arm, and cried:

“There! there! before that door! There he is, there’s Sam Ewart. You can see the mark he bears on his neck, under his sailor’s shirt; it is a red mark because of his great-grandfather, old David — Sam! Sam! Oh my God!”

He fell back on the sofa breathing heavily. Hélène, who felt helpless and lost among the many medicine bottles, rang for Groult, who pushed her aside, rudely enough, and took possession of the invalid.

That night she could not sleep. As she lay watching the moonlight, she saw her husband, wrapped in a plaid, come down through his bedroom window, and walk straight to a well by the stables.

As she watched him breathlessly, her face pressed against the glass, she was conscious of a sharp pain at the roots of her hair, but could neither move nor cry out. Then she saw Groult come, half-dressed, from the outbuilding where he slept, and follow his master on tiptoe. She saw the latter peering down into the depths of the well. After some time he raised his head, and stretched his hand out as though to feel from which quarter the wind was blowing, after which he went back through the window to his room. She saw Groult shrug his shoulders and slouch off to his outbuilding, with a contemptuous gesture.

Madam Groult had appeared for a moment in her everlasting bed-jacket and an enormous frilled night-cap at the door of the lodge. When the door had closed upon them both Hélène thought she heard Groult ill-treating her.

Haviland had become a somnambulist.

The next day she found him up and dressed, peacefully and silently occupied in labelling numerous little stones which he had taken from famous monuments. He was writing on gummed paper the words “Coliseum,”

“Catacombs,”

“Tomb of Cecilia Metella.” His eyes which had recovered their normal colour, a dull blue, were quite expressionless.

But she did not feel reassured. She wanted to remain by him, and determined to sit by him herself and send for doctors, although he had strictly forbidden her to do so.

Groult came into the room with a bottle and a glass, from which he poured some syrup and handed it to his master, looking fixedly at Hélène the while. He watched her with a cynical familiarity, an audacious effrontery, that made her blush. A little while after drinking the syrup, Haviland was seized with giddiness and stupor. His pupils once more became extraordinarily dilated.

From this day, Hélène was tormented with a vague uneasiness. One evening, about five o'clock, she noticed the tracks of nailed shoes on the carpet of the room. The steps went in an oblique line right across the room from the outer door to that of the dressing-room. The tracks were extremely faint, and only visible because the rays of the sun were at that moment falling on the carpet, showing up the slight signs of pressure and the specks of white dust on the rich, soft Smyrna tissue. She was startled and called her maid, and they inspected the dressing-room minutely, but everything was in order. For some time she tried to explain to herself the meaning of these footsteps, but as she could find no solution to the problem, she tired of troubling herself, and fell back into her accustomed indifference.

When René Longuemare returned, Hélène, who was expecting him, had dressed her hair in the way in which she knew he liked it best. She could not hide her unhappiness from him, and weakly told him all the misery of her life, and how wretchedly her marriage had turned out. She knew that she loved him. She would have liked to be gathered to his broad, warm chest, to weep there, and forget everything. René remained very calm by the side of her. The more she confided in him, the more he felt that he must not abuse her confidence. He loved her respectfully; she represented the poetry of his bachelor's existence, where prose was not wanting. He had taken up his old habits in Paris, and every night he went to some little theatre, and to supper afterwards. There was a spacious and lofty place in his soul for an ideal creature, and in this place he had put Hélène. On her side, though tired and weak, abased in her own eyes by a loveless marriage, but reserved according to the habits of her class and circumspect from preference, she kept well under when in René's company whatever tendencies she might feel towards the too alluring or the too encouraging. So far exempt from all fault, it seemed to her quite impossible to contemplate committing one.

When she spoke to him of her husband's illness, René shook his head. It was probable that Mr. Haviland was treating himself wrongly. According to the symptoms described to him, the army doctor's diagnosis was that it was not a case of a natural disease following its usual course; he was inclined to attribute it rather to the intermittent action of some injurious agent, some poison. The dilatation of the pupil seemed to him to be unquestionably due to an immoderate use of belladonna or atropine. To light against his rheumatism, Haviland had evidently made use of chloro-hydrated sulphate of atropine, and now according to appearances was making a most disastrous abuse of this drug.

Hélène resolved to act on Rene's urgent advice to call in a doctor, also to nurse the sick man herself.

The following day she found him in an attic which he used as a workshop. He was planing a board with the greatest care, for he was a carpenter as well as a chemist. Seeing him so calm and rested, she thought she must have been dreaming. He talked about the cook, who was a thief, and whom he had sent away; it was Groult who had discovered his peculations. Every now and then he would lay his plane down on the bench and delicately remove a shaving caught in the guipure of his wife's dressing-gown. His eyes were clear and normal, and he had never shown such a lack of imagination.

She thought of René, so lively, so intelligent, his mind as full of interesting things as a well written book, his soul bursting with youth and strength; and her heart swelled with hate when she looked at the old man bent over his plane. Groult came at the usual time to bring his master his syrup. When he saw Héléne in the attic, where she had never before put her foot, he rolled his eyes at her like a furious cat.

Then, as on a previous occasion, while Haviland was drinking his syrup, he looked at her impudently, and growled something between his twisted lips. He was so ugly and so cynical that there and then in a flash she understood clearly and certainly without any question what it was he was doing.

She stretched out her hand, as though to snatch the glass from the old man's lips. Groult whispered in her ear, in an ill-mannered and menacing tone:

"Don't be childish."

She stood still, incapable of moving, white to the lips. Haviland finished the syrup and wiped his mouth.

The miserable woman rushed down the stairs, overcome, giddy, feeling as though at each step she would fall through the ground, frightened at her own immeasurable cowardice.

She did not dare to reappear before her husband: she heard that evening from her maid that he had been violently delirious, but that then he was resting. She had imagined him to be dead, and heaved a sigh of relief. She said to herself, "He lives; there is still time to speak, to act. I will not be the accomplice of a..."

Her nerves had been stretched beyond endurance, and she sank down exhausted and heavy with sleep. She thought of René, and her imagination pictured him clothed with all the visionary charm and magic of an absent loved one; her thoughts grew confused and painful. Her head was burning, yet she shivered and her teeth chattered. She experienced a sensation akin to joy, as she slipped into bed; then she lost all grasp on reality. She saw terrible figures passing so quickly she had not time to recognise them. Where was she? And what did this crowd of strangers, dressed in all sorts of theatrical costumes, want with her? Something hot, which she kept pushing from her with horror, weighed

on her chest and stifled her. It was a red cat whose eyes kept changing colour. She stuck out her elbows and bent her knees.

A nun came and straightened her bedclothes, but what was she doing there? There were two or three others, who prevented her from going out; yet she had something most important to do, something which could not be put off for one moment, though she was no longer sure what it was.

“Oh, my head! my poor head!” she cried. She was suffering so in her brain that she looked about for a wall, an iron wall, against which to strike her skull, and thus obtain relief. Oh! quick! If she could only make a good wide crack in it so as to let out the water which was boiling inside. An unfamiliar voice said, “Yes, more ice”; but she saw no ice. She was lost on a shore of burning sand, on the edge of a sea of molten lead. She called out, “René! René! take me to the woods at Meudon! Have you forgotten the time when you used to gather hawthorn there for me?”

She fell asleep. When she awoke she was quite childish, and recited in the monotonous tone of a schoolgirl bits of the Catechism and scraps of fables.

“I can’t learn my lessons,” she murmured. “Madame, my head aches; let me go home. I want to see Papa.”

One day she found herself sitting up in bed, very weak but very hungry. She learnt from the nun who was nursing her that she had been very ill for three weeks, but was now out of danger. She made a great effort to collect her thoughts, and asked:

“And my husband?”

The nun told her not to worry; he was well. Hélène breathed again.

During her convalescence she had several lapses of memory, and suffered from the great mental fatigue which ordinarily follows brain fever. There was only one clearly-defined feeling in her mind — terror at the thought of seeing her husband again. When she was told that Mr. Haviland, who was now convalescent himself, was coming to visit her in her room, she had a violent attack of palpitation of the heart. He looked at her affectionately, told her how much he loved her, and for the first time she saw a smile on his grave face. The smile came from within, so profound and so true that she could not but be moved and touched by it. She began to cry, and, turning to the old man, like a loving child put her arms round his neck; but he had already regained his usual stiffness.

By dint of a great effort she recalled across the vapours of her mind the memory of the two potions she had seen Groult pour out. She took her husband’s hands in her own and said to him supplicatingly:

“If you love me, if you wish to save us both from a horrible death, send away, I conjure you, your valet; send him away to-day, at once. What he has done is horrible — horrible. I cannot speak of it. Send him away; send him away.”

Mr. Haviland remembered that H         had always shown an aversion for the valet, and, seeing her so feeble, shaken by convulsive sobs and half fainting, he decided that though she was speaking unreasonably it was necessary for him to sacrifice his servant. He called him down from the laboratory and said to him:

“Groult, we must separate. I am quite satisfied with you, and I should have liked to keep you with me until my death — yes. But your presence in this house has become impossible, for reasons which I need not explain to you — no. I shall not change in any way the dispositions I have made in your favour. I tell you so, and you may believe me. You will leave the house on Friday. I will look after you until you get another place. I should like your wife to remain in my service, and I wish to continue in direct communication with you on all matters which concern Samuel Ewart. I have nothing more to say.”

Groult did not answer; he simply bent his head and left the room.

CHAPTER VI

IT was on a Friday that Groult was given notice to leave. On Saturday Haviland felt better than he had done for several months. He drove in the Bois de Boulogne with Hélène, whose health was now almost re-established.

The slight shaking of the carriage and the fresh air agreeably fatigued the two convalescents. Hélène was in the indifferent state born of lassitude. She accepted for the nonce with all her deadened heart the insipid husband and the monotonous fate which had fallen to her lot. Weakness brings with it such consolations. From sheer sick egoism she grew affectionate to the man seated by her side in the barouche, his knees under the fur rug which warmed her own. She glanced coldly at the trees, the lamp-posts, the foot-passengers whom the carriage left behind, at the houses in the Champs Élysées, with their coachmakers' showrooms, at the sanded alleys, where bowlegged grooms were leading horses up and down by the bridle in the shade; then at the Arc de Triomphe dominating the open space around it with heavy emphasis; then, to the left, at the avenue leading to the Bois, bordered on each side by a band of English gardens; she could see, to the right, horsemen galloping on the gravelled paths: all was bathed in the spring sunlight. The watering-pipes had already made their appearance, and men were dragging the long tubes on their little castors about the roads and sprinkling the legs of the half-frightened horses. Sometimes the wind and the shadow of a rapidly driven victoria passed over her face. A pale girl with red hair and painted lips, with her elbows well in as she held the reins, would drive quickly by, a groom with folded arms seated behind her. When the fresh air of the Bois was reached they drove more slowly; carriages gay with tiger skins, with bright spring toilets and happy faces followed one behind the other at a footpace. Salutations were exchanged between one carriage and another, smiling cavaliers bent down to talk to women lying back on the soft cushions beneath the shade of the lowered hoods. A workman's wedding-party went by on foot, in couples, in the opposite direction.

The stiffly-correct attitude of Haviland was not displeasing to Hélène; she liked his impassibility and his good style. The silence of the man, the calm expression of his face, the simplicity of his ideas pleased her now as so many delicate attentions bestowed on a convalescent. He was dearer to her now she felt she had saved his life. She was afraid of thinking too deeply, and enjoyed the delights of a restricted fatigue and a daily increasing strength. She cosseted herself with the luxuriousness of a chilly cat.

They got out at the Cascade, and drank a glass of milk at the Café.

The tables on each side of them were occupied by whispering old men and the rustle of dresses intermingled with the faint murmur of chattering women. In front of her three young fellows were talking at the top of their voices. She did not know the two facing her, but the one whose back was turned to her and who was almost wholly hidden by one of the waiters she recognised by the outline of his shoulders.

She felt a painful inward spasm, and something in her throat seemed to stifle her, the blood rushed hotly to her cheeks, an indescribable anguish which was at the same time a rapture of overpowering delight took possession of her.

Longuemare, the cause of all this trouble, was far from thinking she was so near him, and went on with the conversation so noisily begun, exaggerating outrageously, as was his habit, his views on the subject under discussion.

"The only practitioner whom I admire," he said to his comrades (who seemed, like himself, to have been lunching well), "the only one, is Pinel. He never gave any medicine to his patients for fear of checking the normal course of their disease. Satisfied if he could describe and classify a lesion, he prudently abstained from attempting to heal it. Before the magnificent progress of an open wound he remained attentive, respectful, motionless. What a doctor Pinel was!"

Renés voice was drowned in a burst of laughter; interruptions spouted forth and the three friends all began to talk at once. Hélène's throat grew dry, there was a buzzing in her head, her sight failed her, and perspiration broke out on her brow. Her husband, seeing her so pale, asked if she was tired, if she wished to return home. She looked at him, and he appeared odious to her. His face was covered with a network of little violet veins, and his cheeks were white and scaly, his eyes were dim and vacant: she almost regretted his recovery now.

When they rose up to go, Longuemare saw her; the look which he exchanged with Hélène seemed to draw them closely together.

The next day the old man could not leave his bed; all the symptoms of his intermittent malady had returned, and in a few days they became alarming. On Friday morning Hélène sent for a doctor. Her husband's appearance was alarming; his eyes were bloodshot and half out of their sockets; he was raving in delirium.

Dr. Hersent, who came while the attack was at its worst, gave him an antispasmodic and sedative medicine, which produced no visible effect. He declared that the case was very grave, that there was probably a profound lesion in the nerve centres, and, fearing that a serious termination might swiftly succeed his visit, insisted on holding a consultation that very evening. Just at this time

Groult, having got his wife to attend to his packing, had taken a cab and was leaving the house in accordance with the orders he had received.

Hélène remained with the sick man. Crushed by a nameless terror, she dared not look at him; then, suddenly seized with horrible curiosity, she stared at him with all her eyes; she must see — see what was passing, even if it killed her. The unhappy Haviland was struggling with two men-servants, who by great efforts kept him between the bedclothes. He was calling for his wife and for Samuel Ewart. Every note in his voice was altered; it sounded like the voice of another man and by so much the more appalling. He would whisper Hélène's name plaintively, and the next moment would break into shrill yells and sinister laughter. The contrast was so sudden it was impossible to understand how even a madman could change so rapidly from sad tenderness to furious irony. Horrible enough as the scene was in reality, Hélène's sick imagination increased it tenfold. She felt as if red hot wires were running from her head to her heels; a burning garment wrapped her round behind and before.

She listened attentively to what her husband was saying, but was the more distressed that she could not discover the vaguest meaning in his wanderings. If at that moment he had pointed his finger at her, denounced her openly and cursed her, it would have been a positive relief.

At ten o'clock in the evening the doctors, Hersent, Guérard, and Baldec, were gathered round the patient, who, in their presence, was seized with a trembling in every limb; then he sank back and appeared to be sleeping. A new torment, the worst of all, began for Hélène. All the old feelings of friendship and respect for the man who had so loyally loved her returned. She could not help weeping, yet her tears disgusted her; they were hypocritical tears, for was she not to blame?

Haviland's breathing was so rapid and so painful that all who heard it, with the exception of the doctors, felt oppressed. His bony hands were spread on the counterpane and scratched and plucked clumsily at it. Dr. Hersent took his left wrist; the pulse was weaker, his extremities were growing cold. His nose was pinched, his eyes sunk in. He rolled them round as though to see and recognise things for one last time, then he dropped his head back on the pillow and sighed three times. A gesture from the doctor announced that all was over; he was at rest.

When Hélène, who had been standing stiffly upright throughout his death agony, heard that he was dead, she felt a delicious sensation; it was as though the ground was opening beneath her and she was slipping away into nothingness. How sweet to cease from troubling, to cease *to be*: she fell fainting to the ground.

As the doctors, Guérard and Baldec, were leaving the house, they met a short gentleman, with big whiskers and tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles, in the hall. He took them by the hand and said with a solemn accent:

“Gentlemen, your efforts have been in vain; human skill, no matter how great it may be, has its limits. The princes of science cannot control Nature. I am one of those who respect courage even in defeat. I declare to you that Fellaire de Sisac will never forget the enlightened care you have lavished on his honourable and sympathetic son-in-law.”

Then Monsieur Fellaire marched with a slow grave step to the dining-room, where he ordered a light repast to be served to him.

Madame Groult, bathed in sweat and tears, was clucking mournfully in her lodge.

Dr. Hersent followed Hélène to her room, for he considered that her condition demanded some attention. When she saw this tall man all in black, whom she did not recognise, come in, she became delirious with fear. She stretched out her arms to him and shrieked:

“It was not I who did it! I swear to you it was not I!”

CHAPTER VII

MONSIEUR FELLAIRE showed immense activity after the death of his son-in-law. Attired in deep mourning he walked, with the nephew of the deceased, at the head of the funeral procession. The cortège went slowly down the outer boulevards to the Montparnasse Cemetery, where Haviland, who had adopted his wife's country, had bought a grave for himself and her. Fellaire's face was white and puffy from lack of sleep; he was not accustomed to rise so early in the morning. His reddened eyes and swollen eyelids behind his tortoiseshell spectacles gave an opportune expression of fatigue and melancholy to his face. Being stout, he naturally walked slowly and pompously. Aware of this advantage he made no effort to subdue or conceal his bulky importance. By a strange freak of fortune he was now able to wear a hat very different from that which he had deposited on the table in Haviland's drawing-room; the one he now carried was new and lustrous, with an immaculate lining. It lay on his arm like a gun on its carriage and appeared to be levelled at the hearse. His boots did not creak as loudly as usual; they only emitted a sort of discreet sigh at each step as though the funeral genii were hidden in them. He stood motionless before the Gothic tomb, his eyes behind their spectacles turned to heaven with a spiritual expression, while the workmen let the coffin down, spitting on their hands as the cords ran through them, and murmuring their "Oh's" and "Eh's" under their breath. One understood by his attitude that his thoughts had passed beyond the bronze portals of the mausoleum and were floating on wings of sublime philosophy in ethereal regions. He was wandering thus in the domain of idealism, detached from earthly existence, when a little fit of coughing reminded him that he still lived and was tight in the chest. Behind him and towering above him by a head was a group of fair-haired, large-framed Englishmen, erect and stiff in their well-cut clothes. Two business men, *habitués* of the Brasserie de Colmar and constant companions of Fellaire's at billiards and dominoes, stood a little way off whispering together. The servants were huddled in the pathway to the side of the tomb, and the sun, shining strongly, showed up the footmen's whiskers and the black ribbons in the maids' caps, revealed sleeves that were too full and glimpses of black trousers so much too long as to fall in great folds over the boots.

When the service was over, Fellaire received the complimentary condolences of those who had assisted at it with the air of a brave but heart-broken man. He thanked those who had joined him in paying the last duties to the deceased. He

seemed to recognise the presence of each person with particular satisfaction, although he did not know one among them. He shook their hands with an energy which was evidently meant to express, "Thank you — thank you. I will have courage; I will bear up." Only, when it was the turn of his old tavern companions, he barely accorded them the tips of his fingers, and frowningly repelled their expression of sympathy; he was afraid they would slap him on the shoulder and call him "Poor old chap."

He repeated his collective thanks many times, and finally addressed them to an assembly of persons who had been burying a magistrate, and who never understood what the singular gentleman in black wanted with them.

As it was impossible for him to distinguish between his son-in-law's friends and the rest of mankind, he would have gone on doing the honours of all the funerals throughout the day if they had happened to pass uninterruptedly before him.

From that time he never laid aside his mourning garments or his stoical and depressed mien. Every day he went to the Hôtel Haviland to luncheon and dinner. After dinner he would put his hand on George's head, and say with a sort of sob:

"This boy interests me."

At the Brasserie de Colmar, where he played billiards in the evening, he would often exclaim:

"It is not only a son-in-law that I have lost; it is a son — and a gentleman."

Julia, Madame Haviland's maid, must have heard the — strange — cry her mistress gave on — the appearance — of — the — doctor in her room — ; for — the next day there were mysterious whisperings at the grocer's and butcher's. The rumour that the Englishman of the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg had been poisoned, and that his wife was an accomplice — of — the — crime, spread in a few days throughout the neighbourhood. Dr. Hersent, who lived — in — the — Rue Saint-Dominie, — was — surprised upon the following Monday to hear his wife speak of the crime as a matter of general knowledge.

A long addiction to science and the practice of medicine had rendered Hersent careful in making researches, and he would not admit that there was, as a matter of fact, any reason to suspect Madame Haviland. He told his wife that it was against the etiquette of the profession to listen to such servants' gossip. At the same time, he was not quite easy in his mind; the disease to which Haviland had succumbed had not been sufficiently characterised in the burial certificate which he and the consulting physicians had signed, and he felt some qualms of self-reproach on the score of his negligence in this respect. He hoped that the

affair would have no further consequences, and confidently reckoned that there would be none.

CHAPTER VIII

LONGUEMARE, whose morning visit at the hospital had been protracted longer than usual on account of an epidemic of typhoid fever, did not arrive at the Montparnesse Cemetery until the funeral of Mr. Haviland was over. All that he saw of the ceremony was the sombre and energetic profile of Fellaire being conveyed home from the cemetery in a carriage drawn by two black horses, placed at his disposal for the occasion by the undertakers.

Retracing his steps at this sight, he passed between the sculptured urns and hour-glasses over the entrance gates, when he was accosted by a sprightly little man, who, with a great deal of gaiety, hailed him as a ghost, a spectre and a phantom, and hummed in a fine grave voice the opening lines from the air in "Robert the Devil"—"Nuns who repose."

It was an old class-mate of his, Bouteiller, who, celebrated at school for his ineptitude in science and letters, had become a reporter on an important daily newspaper. He had just heard, or approximately heard, three speeches pronounced over the grave of a member of the Institute. Taking Longuemare by the arm, he said:

"My dear fellow, dine with me to-night at Bréval's."

During dinner Longuemare was profoundly agitated, but hid, as his habit was, his emotion under a joking exterior, and talked on many questions dealing with love and women in scientific language relieved by shocking puns; they drank champagne throughout the dinner. Bouteiller made a practice of doing so, and said this wine was a professional necessity for him. He was always extremely busy, and spent what should have been the best hours of his life on the railway. He inaugurated statues in every town in France, followed the President of the Republic into inundated departments, assisted at aristocratic weddings, listened to lectures on the phylloxera, saw and heard everything and remained the least curious of men. There was only one place in the world which interested him, and that was Chatou, where he had a cottage and a boat. He thought of nothing else, whereas he ought to have thought of the whole world. A factory could not burn down without him. Naturally, Longuemare was led to speak of Haviland and his singular habits, of his death, and in a casual way, of poisoning by belladonna. At the same time Bouteiller was describing his boat; they understood each other perfectly. Towards ten o'clock the journalist said:

"My dear fellow, I must run round to the office. Wait for me at the Café de Suède; I have an appointment there."

At eleven they were both seated smoking at a zinc table, in the noise and light of the boulevard. Bouteiller was saying:

“You see you must have a rather short oar, which you can get a good grip on, and above all, thin at the end, so that it cuts the water like a knife”; when a young lad in a blouse and cap stopped in front of them and said:

“It is not to be to-night.”

Bouteiller gave him a couple of francs and sent him off. He seemed displeased.

“A special report which I had written up in advance, and which is no good now.”

Then by way of explanation he added:

“That young scamp knows how things are done at La Roquette. He has just told me that the man who committed the murder in the Rue du Château-des-Rentiers will not be executed to-night. By the way, you are a doctor; tell me if you think one suffers after having one’s head cut off?”

“I can easily tell you that,” said Longuemare, and he began a lengthy explanation.

“Life being a quantity, as Buffon says, it is susceptible to augmentation or diminution. The ‘vital knot’ Flourens talks of is rubbish. Now follow me carefully. If I say with Bichat that life is an assemblage of forces which resist death, I should add that these forces only resist for a longer or shorter period before final dissolution. Beheading produces a violent syncope, and abolishes sensibility in a measure which one may consider definite; but at the same time muscular life goes on. You must not confound—”

Here Bouteiller in despair broke in:

“No, no; I’d rather tell you at once that your explanation is too long, and I don’t understand a word of it. Science has always seemed to me terribly obscure. There are certain subjects, like the immortality of the soul, for instance, or the existence of God, which are so difficult. Fortunately God does not come into the news of the day — by-the-bye, what was the name of the Englishman you buried this morning? I think I could make a good ‘par.’ out of what you told me, if I embroidered it a little. You were saying that...?”

CHAPTER IX

GROULT having roughly ordered his wife to pack his bag, left Paris for Avranches, where he said he had business to attend to. As a matter of fact, he had inherited a bit of land in a neighbouring village. He put up at an inn in the suburbs, called the Red Horse. Here he was to be seen drinking in the company of farmers and graziers, pouring the entire contents of a small spirit decanter into his coffee-cup in true Norman fashion. He was more gay and outspoken than usual, talked willingly to the folks about him, accepted their courtesies, and treated them to drinks.

On Wednesday he took the train to Granville, where he arrived at nightfall, in most frightful weather. A bad squall, the sailors said. It was raining, and a high wind was blowing the light aslant in the gas-lamps, and howling in the narrow alleys. He went towards the old part of the town, and turned up a steep, narrow, and winding street full of the smell of fish. His left foot as it followed the right described the motion of a scythe in a wheat field, and his whole body swung at every step; still he went quickly on in the darkness, grumbling and cursing as he splashed up the water in the puddles.

By-and-by he came to a small, mean grocer's shop, the blurred windows of which contained two or three bottles of sweets; he went in without hesitating. There was a wooden staircase in the shop, with a bed covered in scarlet cotton, packed under it. The sole entrance to the house was through the shop, and its unflagged earthen floor had crumbled in places and bore traces of heavily nailed boots. No one was about, and Groult, without losing time by waiting for the grocer, mounted the stairs and knocked at a door on the second storey, just where the banisters ended. A little old man, holding a candle close under his chin, examined the visitor through the half-opened door before admitting him into a room encumbered with packets of torn papers, dog-eared ledgers, and burst and yawning portfolios, from which protruded ends of ancient legal documents, all heaped up and pressed solidly together. Piles of dusty papers and parchments leant against the walls, behind which one could hear the mice scurrying, in spite of the noisy wind in the chimney and the beating of the rain on the roof.

A mean and disordered bed, hung with ragged curtains, exposed its wretchedness and bareness in a shadowy corner. A thick layer of dust covered everything, making all objects uniformly grey; even the old man's face seemed to be spread with a coating of it. He was toothless, and his tongue moved and

mumbled ceaselessly between his withered lips. His eyes were pale green, and their quick restlessness reminded one of the swift mice nibbling audibly behind the wainscoting.

“Well,” said Groult, sitting down, “you wanted to speak to me; here I am. What’s the news?”

The old man licked his gums slowly, and said in a drawling nasal voice:

“I am very pleased to see you, my good Monsieur Groult — perhaps there is some news, perhaps there isn’t; it all depends upon how one looks at it.”

He was twiddling his grey beard as he spoke, and seemed to be counting his words and the bristles in it at the same time.

Groult interrupted him with an impatient growl.

“Dear me!” said the other; “you are in a great hurry! As sure as my name is Tancrède Reuline, and yours is Désiré Groult, I am ready to tell you everything I know that may interest you. Daddy Reuline is known all along the coast, from Carolles point to the Bréhal fisheries. Big and little all come to me. I do business with gentle and simple. No later than yesterday I collected a debt for Monsieur de Tancarville. Ah! my dear sir, it was what you might call a bad debt. Monsieur de Tancarville said to me in these very words, ‘Reuline, I was going to light my pipe with it.’ And only last week the Baroness Dubosq-Marienville—”

Groult interrupted by banging his fist down on the table, and Reuline, after a moment in which his lips moved without sound, went on in his slow nasal drawl:

“Now we will come, if you please, to your business. I am entirely at your disposition; we can’t possibly misunderstand each other. I found for you the birth certificate of a certain Mr. Samuel Ewart, and sundry other papers, enabling one to identify this person. I gave you the papers from hand to hand, as it were, without so much as asking what use you were going to make of them. I just did it to be of service to you.”

“What then?” asked Groult with a frown.

“Wait a bit — wait a bit,” said the Norman.

He moistened his lips and continued:

“It’s none of my business to inquire what interest you had in Samuel Ewart’s papers. I am very discreet, my good sir. Discretion is one of the leading virtues of my little trade. But suppose that Samuel Ewart is dead?”

“By God!” cried Groult, “if he is dead he won’t come to life again”; and he burst out laughing.

“Wait a bit,” said the old man (contemplating the pins carefully stuck in the sleeve of his coat)— “wait a bit. Suppose some person possesses a certified copy of his death certificate — the death certificate of Samuel Ewart who died in

Jersey without descendants, and that the possessor of this paper can produce it at the right moment.”

Groult spread out his enormous hands. He was exasperated at what he considered the treachery of his old accomplice, which seemed to make the other papers he had procured for him, at a great expense, useless.

“No tricks,” he said roughly; “act square.”

The Norman’s eyes blinked uneasily, but he answered in a calm voice:

“Whatever I said was for your own good; but I see it makes you angry, so let’s say no more about it and part good friends.”

He got up, and took a lipless pitcher containing a bunch of forget-me-nots from a dilapidated walnut secretary.

“See,” he said, putting the pitcher on the table, “they will last all the summer. Each time I go along the shore by Carteret, I gather a bunch in the ditch which runs by Monsieur de Laigle’s grounds.

I wrap them up in my handkerchief... As he spoke, he passed his hand gently over the blue flowers and shook off the faded petals. “If one takes care to pull up the roots with the stalks, the plant will live in water as it would in the ground. Dear me! I have neither wife nor child, dog nor cat, and one must be fond of something — I’m fond of flowers.”

Groult was not listening to him, he was biting his lips and gnawing at his nails. Suddenly he jumped up and shouted:

“You’ve got Samuel Ewart’s death certificate. Give it me. I want it, and I will have it.”

Reuline, with a furtive glance at the walnut secretary, put the pot of flowers carefully back in its place.

“Wait a bit,” he said—“wait a bit. I have got the paper, and I haven’t got it. Perhaps I could lay my finger on it, and then again perhaps I couldn’t; but let’s talk as if I could. I heard lately that Mr. Haviland (in whose service you have been a good many years, haven’t you?) was looking for this same Samuel Ewart. It is only natural that I should think of obliging him in his turn; he would be very glad to have news of Samuel Ewart, who died so unfortunately in Jersey.”

Reuline paused and looked narrowly at Groult.

He did not want to irritate him too much, but Groult answered quietly:

“If you want to send the certificate to my master you must be quick about it. He is probably dead by now, or not far off.”

The old man stuck his tongue in his cheek, and looked at Groult with such evident perspicacity in his green eyes that the latter felt uneasy.

“Poor Mr. Haviland! Well, well, such is life! But you seem very sure that your master will die! It seems, then, one can tell beforehand how certain

maladies will end. Well, well, who would have thought it! Now, to return to our business, Mr. Haviland will leave heirs who will certainly be glad to know what has become of Samuel Ewart. There is only one thing I want, my good sir, and that is to oblige everybody, if I can.”

Groult was quieter now. The wrinkles on his temples seemed to have gathered themselves into a sort of spiteful grin.

“But,” he said, “Haviland’s heirs won’t give you a penny for the paper. You would be a fool to send it to them. What good would it do you? Give it to me; I shall be able to pay you something for it later on.”

“Gently, gently. Suppose you explain your little business to me. Daddy Reuline is discretion itself.

When I know what it is all about I will see what is to be done.”

“I have nothing to explain to you.”

“Oh, good Lord! I know what’s the matter; you are shy. I must help you out. The late Samuel Ewart is put down for a round sum of money in Mr. Haviland’s will. Provided as you are, thanks to me, with papers establishing the identity of the defunct legatee, you will find a young man willing, for a consideration, to present himself at the lawyer’s office as Samuel Ewart, and receive as such the sum left to him. Good Lord! don’t try to deny it. One must not leave good money idle, and as poor Samuel can’t profit by it —

“But, my dear Groult, who is going to answer for the probity of this spurious Samuel Ewart? Suppose he kept everything for himself? It would be an indelicate proceeding on his part, and very unpleasant for you. These things have to be considered. There is so much dishonesty in this weary world! Think it over, be wise. I only want what is for your good.”

The old man stuck out the tip of his lizard’s tongue and continued:

“I am warning you, and forewarned is forearmed. I know the person who possesses Samuel Ewart’s death-certificate. This person is neither a Turk nor a Jew, wishes you no ill, and is most reasonable. And this is what I am authorised to say to you: Get hold of the legacy, and when you have got it, offer a decent share of it to this person, through my intermediary; not half of it — no, that would be too much, it doesn’t do to be too hard on folks — but something like a bonus of, well, fifty per cent. Otherwise this person, quite contrary to my advice, will insist on making the document public, and that would be awkward for you and painful to me.”

During this long harangue Groult had quietly pushed his chair further and further back into the shadow; now, gathering himself together, he leapt suddenly on Reuline, and, seizing him by the throat, cried out:

“Give me the paper, you old Jew, or I will strangle you!”

He was furious at being thus met by an unforeseen obstacle.

Reuline, who was yellow, thin, and dried-up, and who drew each breath as though it must be his last, resisted with the strength and suppleness of a man used to such tussles — his frequent quarrels with the sailors who pawned their watches with him for money to get drunk on kept him in good condition.

Such unexpected resistance only made Groult more frantic, who saw red, and pulled out his knife; it was a wicked-looking thing, with a pointed blade fastened into a brass-mounted boxwood handle, and was hardly ever out of Groult's hand; he was constantly using it for some purpose or another. The old man, in his struggles to get free, slipped and struck his forehead against the angle of the chimney-piece. Groult, still holding on, fell with him, and saw first a white scratch and then a stream of blood. Reuline's cries and the sight of the blood frightened him, and he lost his head. With singular lucidity he chose his spot and plunged the knife into the old man's breast. Then for a moment, which seemed to him endless, he paid no heed to anything. The man lay under him, resisting still with all his might, his mouth open, his green eyes rolling; then he let go and fell back, opening and shutting his hands convulsively as though trying to grasp something, then suddenly he was still.

His face showed no traces of violent emotion; he seemed to be smiling maliciously in his sleep.

With the end of his knife Groult prised open the lock of the secretary and began to rummage in it, tumbling the papers. The flame of the almost burnt-out candle flickered, and in the midst of the sudden silence the mice ran over the floor. He hunted through packets, portfolios, envelopes, flinging them down, as he finished with them, on to the corpse. Suddenly a bright light sprang up in the room; it was the paper round the candle end which had caught fire. He hunted through old card-board boxes, old blotting-pads, old leather cases, till at last he came on a stamped paper, which he thrust into his pocket with a sigh of relief. He blew out the candle, the wick of which was now floating in melted candle grease, and which, smoking and smelling, flared in his face and scorched his eyelashes before becoming extinct. — He felt about for his cap, and, having found it, went out of the room. He hesitated a moment on the landing before climbing noiselessly up the ladder leading to the attic; here he peered anxiously through the skylight into the street. — He could see, by the reflection of the light on the wet pavement, that the grocer's shop was not yet shut. Crouching behind some empty boxes, he waited a long time, his legs trembling, his throat dry, his head burning, starting and shivering at the slightest sound. Then, when at last the house and the street were asleep, he crept out, and found a cord with a hook at the end, which the grocer used for hauling bales of goods up into the attic; this

he tied to a pulley above the window, and slipped down it with the agility of a monkey.

CHAPTER X

HÉLÈNE had only one idea now that she had passed the convalescent stage, and that was to take possession of René, to hold him to her, and never to leave him. He should be her refuge and her strength. She felt quite certain that her fears would leave her when they were together. She would marry him and would lead a peaceful, warmly-sheltered life between her husband and her father. All her innocent past was bound up in these two men; no bad dream could come gliding over the pillow which she would arrange with so much love.

She knew nothing of the rumours growing and spreading about her in the Quartier.

There were no difficulties made about Mr. Haviland's will; it was opened and read to the heirs by the notary. In it he left his wife, Héléne Haviland *née* Fellaire, all the income accruing from his estate; at her death it was to go to his nephew, George Haviland, or his heirs direct, should he have any.

To Groult was left an annuity of twelve hundred francs.

The testator expressly desired that the personal property of George Haviland, which, he being a minor, his uncle had managed for him, should be entrusted to the care of his old and honourable friend, Mr. Charles Simpson, banker, of Paris.

But Mr. Charles Simpson was suffering from a disease of the spinal cord, caused by a fall from his horse, and therefore could not accept the office his deceased friend had wished to confide to him. Monsieur Fellaire, hearing of this, at once proposed to fill Mr. Simpson's place.

He showed, on divers occasions, the liveliest solicitude for the minor's welfare.

One day after lunch, as he was enjoying his cognac and cigars, he said to his daughter:

"I am as interested in that boy as if he was my own son. In fact, I feel a fatherly affection for him. These sentiments are not under our own control."

Then having piled up a pyramid of sugar in his cup, he went on:

"I really don't know what I would not do for that boy."

He smiled a gentle, melancholy smile as he contemplated the sugar, as though it were the hope, so lovingly conceived, of being useful to George, which he saw melting before his eyes. Then he tossed down the syrup formed by the collapsed pyramid and smiled anew.

Héléne looked at him uneasily; she guessed too well what he was about to propose. He drank a glass of cognac, and said:

“Poor Simpson, that was a most unlucky fall he had; it shows what weak creatures we all of us are! A month ago he was full of life and intelligence, and now he is almost idiotic. Perhaps I am exaggerating when I say intelligence; he never knew how to do business on a large scale; he was timid, never took any risks.”

And Fellaire lighted his cigar with a pompous air; he knew how to take risks!

Hélène, feeling very uncomfortable, remained silent. Her father, sitting there impassively smoking, in his black clothes, correct and massive, looked in the tobacco smoke like a hero in the clouds — the very apotheosis of a financier.

“Simpson was very cold, very formal,” he said; “I don’t know if he would ever have taken a really paternal interest in our George.”

Then, incapable of containing himself any longer, he went straight to the point. He dictated a letter to be addressed by Hélène to the family counsel, in which she proposed him as George Haviland’s guardian.

Standing up, his head thrown back, his finger pointing commandingly at the page:

“Write, my child, write,” he said:

“I feel assured that this choice would have had the approval of my husband .”

She hesitated before putting down this colossal lie, but looking at her father, he appeared to her such a worthy figure, with such a tranquil forehead and so calm an air of conviction, that she docilely wrote what he told her.

Fellaire, floating in the serene regions of his imaginary paternity, glowed with good intentions.

He took the letter to the post himself. Hélène, left alone, shuddered with shame and fear — she had betrayed the dead man.

“If he were to come back!” she thought. Suddenly she imagined she saw him with frightful distinctness standing before her. His face was absolutely devoid of all expression, so that it was impossible for her to penetrate the mystery of his thoughts. She knew the vision was imaginary, but she could not put it away from her.

Fellaire did not sleep that night. His ideas were working tumultuously under the scarlet handkerchief which served him for a night-cap. He turned over and over, and each time he did so rattled the water-bottle and glass standing on the mahogany table by the bedside, along with his pipe, his candlestick, and his spectacles. The silvery tinkle they made mingled harmoniously with his thoughts.

The magnificent but honest enterprises, which would mark his career as a trustee, filled him with anticipatory admiration. And that was not all. In his daughter he had a docile capitalist ready to his hand. He could embark on his

great enterprise, the dream of his life; he could bring forth the child of his midnight watches, his great work: "The Fiduciary Society for Granting Loans to Wage-earners."

The Government would certainly authorise the establishment of a society built on a solid basis of capital. The list of the Board of Directors, who should be chosen from among titled and decorated men, would inspire confidence at once.

At this point in his imaginings, Fellaire saw the terrible ghost of the "Phoenix of the National Guard" flit across his bed-curtains. He felt a cold sweat burst out under the triple folds of his bandana, but he drove away the importunate memory and plunged again into the contemplation of the future. He thought of a most effective emblem for "The Fiduciary" — two hands, emerging from lace cuffs, and clasping one another. He could already see this symbolic device printed on the headings of circulars and prospectuses, engrossed on tickets, bills of exchange, cheques, shares, stocks, and bank books, carved in stone, and of immense proportions, decorating the front of the building occupied by "The Fiduciary's" offices, which should be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the new opera-house — for the society would certainly buy a plot of ground and erect a building in a central situation.

The first ray of dawn filtered in through the blinds, and by its light Fellaire could see on his table a pile of unpaid bills from bootmakers and restaurant-keepers.

CHAPTER XI

THE day after the dinner at Bréval's, Longuemare, while lunching at a café, was looking over the newspapers. His eye fell on a column of general information signed "Spectator," a pseudonym he knew Bouteiller used; he frowned as he read the following paragraph: "Another well known and original figure has disappeared from our midst. Mr. Martin Haviland, whose funeral took place yesterday, has left an odd collection of curiosities in his magnificent hôtel on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg — some thousands of bottles containing water from all the rivers, streams, brooks, water-courses, fountains, and cascades in the world. Mr. Haviland was as remarkable for his charity as for his collections. His death, which will be much felt by the poor in the Quartier des Invalides, seems to be due to an abuse of belladonna, a drug he took to relieve the acute rheumatism from which he suffered. Such, at least, appears to be the opinion of the medical authorities. We are happy, by the exactness of our information, to be able to reduce this event, so painful in itself, to its rigid proportions."

The last lines of the paragraph threw René into a violent rage. He swore he would mark Bouteiller's face with his riding-whip. "Only I don't even know where the ape lives," he cried impatiently.

He went off to look for him at the offices of what was then the fashionable newspaper, and met him in the vestibule, between the bronze duck and the pink marble pigeon which sat, one on the letterbox and one on the receptacle for manuscripts. The fat reporter was just innocently opening his umbrella (it was raining), and his unconscious air of stupid good-nature disarmed Longuemare. He thought of the days when Bouteiller used to steal his Latin verses from his desk to copy at his leisure, and his heart softened. Bouteiller smiled with delight at sight of him, and cried out:

"Dine with me to-night at Bréval's, old chap; I count on you. Just off to the inauguration of the Grand Rabbi."

Longuemare stopped the way, and, thrusting the crumpled newspaper in his face, asked:

"What is the meaning of the last phrase of your paragraph? Who, to your knowledge, gave undue importance to this affair? Who has been suspected? and of what? Answer me."

Bouteiller stared roundly first at Longuemare, then at the paper, and answered with evident candour:

“I will tell you, my dear fellow. I put that in just to make the par interesting, that was all; and you see I have kept well within bounds. It is poignant, and yet does not compromise any one. I know what’s what. It’s understood, then, we meet to-night at Bréval’s.”

Longuemare turned from him with a shrug of the shoulders. He was shaken by conflicting emotions; his nerves were in a state of intense irritation. He passed from one mood to another — now violent, now sentimental, and felt in the mood for indiscretions. Undoubtedly he was in love with Héléne, and this was beginning to trouble him profoundly.

In the over-excitement imposed on all his faculties by this sentiment, he felt capable of anything. In one week he wrote an article for the *Medical Gazette*, composed his first sonnet, attached himself to a young person who sold flowers in a students’ dancing-hall, and spent a quarter’s pay on her in eight days. Then suddenly the sonnet, the article, and the flower-seller became equally insipid and uninteresting. He dragged through another dreary week; then one fine day decided that he could now with decency present himself at the hôtel on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg, and offer his condolences to the widow.

It seemed as though a century had passed since his last visit; and when he saw the big entrance-gates, the flight of steps in the courtyard leading to the hall door, the hall itself with its great earthenware stove, he felt as old as if he had lived through several lifetimes.

He waited for some minutes in the drawing-room before Héléne appeared. She seemed to him to be taller and paler in her black garments, as if he now saw her for the first time, yet she had not really changed much. During her convalescence, despite her mental tortures, she had become stouter and her cheeks less hollow; yet when he looked at her he felt a delicious sensation of novelty. Her eyes, under the fair hair which curled on her forehead, smiled in a vague and charming manner. She was the first to speak, and the trivial remark she made thrilled through him; he answered inconsequently. She, more mistress of herself, was secretly pleased at his evident emotion. He alluded slightly to her recent mourning, and then by an easy transition began to speak of the future.

What were his plans? she asked. He was going to leave the service, he said, and buy a practice; his father would advance him the money.

She approved of this, and suggested the Quartier Saint James, or the Parc de Neuilly, where she had several friends to whom she could introduce him. She promised to consult him herself, and to further his interests wherever possible. For herself, she did not know yet what she should do — she no longer cared for society; she intended to lead a retired life. Then from a feeling of delicacy, she added that probably she would not be so well off as people imagined; she had

only the income from Mr. Haviland's estate, and there were many legacies to be paid out of it.

"If I become quite poor you won't turn your back on me?" she asked. Which question he had the good taste not to answer.

They did not say a word of love, but every look which passed between them was eloquent. They breathed heavily, and had the sensation of swimming in a fluid at once suffocating and delicious. She said she was too hot.

He took her hand in his and held it lightly; she did not attempt to withdraw it. They were unconscious of what they did or said, only they would have gladly died in that supreme moment. Hélène was the first to break the spell. She took her hand from his, a shadow passed across her face, and after a moment she said with a sigh:

"I have done many things which I would not do again, but I am really better than I have appeared to be so far."

These words stirred the sleeping waters of memory, and René turned his head away to hide the tears that filled his eyes. It was she now who took his hand. But at that moment a step sounded in the hall.

"My dear — my dear," she said; and leaving the phrase unfinished, moved away from him to an armchair, into which she sank.

Fellaire, his entrance announced by the creaking of his boots, came in. He shook René's hand with effusion, and began to talk of the old times in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs.

"We brought you up, in a way," he said to the doctor. "We found you — you are our child. Well, well! you met some curious characters at my house in those days. It was a good school of observation for you. And since then you have travelled and seen many lands, like La Fontaine's pigeon. Ah, the sea! the sea!" He spoke of the poetry and the immensity of the ocean, and became quite emotional, until suddenly recollecting his letters, he asked permission to open them.

He sat down at a table, spreading himself, his papers and journals, so as to take up the most room possible, and went through his correspondence, hissing and growling over it contemptuously or impatiently, affecting to treat it at one moment with light disdain, and the next with intensely concentrated attention.

Hélène and René looked at each other in silence; they felt as if they two only existed in the world.

Finally Fellaire, after noisily signing his name to various documents, flung down his pen, and ringing the bell as though in his own house, gave instructions for his letters to be posted, and sighed contentedly. His humour had changed; he was good-natured, easy, a little inclined to tease. He suggested that they should

go and dine somewhere in the country — no one need know of it; it would not be exactly a pleasure trip. They must dine somewhere, why not have a snack at Meudon?

They all three enjoyed such impromptu excursions.

They found a restaurant at Meudon, with an arbour overlooking the river.

When Hélène untied her hat-strings, she raised her arms with a graceful movement that reminded one of the handles of an amphora. René was filled with admiration. Her fair curls clustered on her brow, her eyes shone softly beneath them. They exchanged a glance so profound and so limpid, it gave them the sensation of being merged in one another.

Fellaire, with heavy sighs, talked of the importance of business, and in return for a demand for ink and paper, was given a little muddy fluid in the bottom of a bottle, a rusty pen, and a sheet of blue foolscap, which he covered with figures before cramming it into his pocket.

Then he brusquely demanded if his young friend knew any shipowners at Toulon. He rolled out the word “shipowners” with so much pomposity that it seemed as though he had only asked the question with the intention of producing a telling effect, which was most probably the case.

At dinner he squeezed half a lemon over his fried fish with all the grace his fat, short, ring-laden fingers were capable of.

He contemplated the young couple benignly through his tortoiseshell spectacles, not without a secret desire to exhort them and bless them, as in a melodrama.

Before them, on the river, a landing-stage lay along the bank; a long narrow island, edged by a curtain of poplars, cut the horizon line; boats were passing up and down; women in light summer gowns moved among the trees, and called in silvery tones to the occupants of outriggers. The water blazed with the reflection of the setting sun; then the light faded from sky and earth, a fresh breeze sprang up in the sombre verdure, and René put a black shawl over Hélène’s shoulders. Fellaire, who had been telling stories and detailing the ingredients of dishes, unexpectedly began to admire the landscape, and to praise Providence for all its ways. Longuemare answered that Nature presents a scene of eternal carnage, in which everything lives by slaughtering something weaker than itself.

“Now, now, you are exaggerating,” said Fellaire.

The shadows were closing round them; but they were all three very happy, and two at least would have stayed on contentedly, had not the business man suddenly remembered the Café de Colmar; it was time to play his game of billiards and to meet his friends, the brokers and advertising agents.

“Children,” he said, knitting his thick eyebrows while consulting his watch, “time is flying, and I have an important engagement. Besides, it is going to rain.” The wind was rising, driving the clouds furiously across the sky, while a full red moon seemed to be scudding in the opposite direction. They went towards the narrow lane which leads from lower Meudon to the station on the heights. Hélène took René’s arm. She walked hesitatingly in the uncertain light, and they were silent; all at once she began to shiver.

“I am frightened,” she said.

A tall thin man, with feet disproportionately long, and dressed in rags, started up in front of them.

He pulled off a tattered straw hat, and showed a pale lean face, with two dull hollow eyes. He muttered some sort of a prayer for charity, as he held out his hand.

Hélène pressed closely against René and drew him away.

“Did you see?” she said. “He looked like — oh, I am frightened!”

René himself could not suppress a feeling of uneasiness. The beggar, as a matter of fact, did look like Mr. Haviland; and what made it more painful was that his appearance was so mournful and so dilapidated, he wore such an expression of irremediable suffering, that he suggested the frightful vision of Haviland — not as he used to look, but as he must look then, at that moment.

They climbed on, up the steep path bordered with hedges and walls, the pebbles slipped and rolled under their feet. Hélène stopped to look fixedly at something in the shadow. René could see nothing in front of her but a bed of nettles growing beside a milestone. But the widow saw more than these; she flung up her hands with a loud cry and fell backwards.

Fellaire tried to prop her against the stone. René, who was bending over her, told him to let her lie full length.

She was stiff and motionless. Only her lips moved, and a little froth gathered at their corners; her eyes stared blankly at the sky.

By-and-by, when she recovered consciousness, she did not seem to think of anything beyond her extreme fatigue. On reaching home, she begged her father to stay the night. She was frightened, she repeated. She gave René her hand — it was limp, lifeless, and icily cold; and she looked at him with an expression of utter hopelessness and discouragement.

CHAPTER XII

POOR terrified Hélène never ceased trembling. The visitors who came to see her, the friends whom she expected, and who for some reason did not come — noise, silence, her own apartments, the street itself, everything frightened her. She started at every encounter. Her old school friend Cécile, who had married years before into the money market, came with much ceremony. Between her airs and graces and babble, she showed a lurking curiosity which was torture to Hélène. The paragraph signed "Spectator" had piqued Cécile's curiosity, but she almost had to go away without satisfying it.

She was standing up, saying her farewell, when she thought better of it, and reseated herself.

"These journalists," she said; "they really have no common sense. What was it one of them said about the frightful misfortune which had befallen you, my poor dear? and its just proportions — proportions? I don't know what one means by proportions!"

Hélène answered in a scared voice:

"I don't understand you; I assure you that I am—"

She stopped before committing an irreparable blunder. She was just about to affirm her innocence.

She sent for the number of the journal, and could not sleep after reading it.

In the meantime, a criminal affair had come before the magistrates at Avranches, who were examining into it carefully. A certain Reuline, a pettifogging business agent of somewhat bad reputation, had been found murdered in his lodgings, Rue de Gesvre, Granville. Suspicion first fell on a drunken, debauched longshoreman, who had been to see Reuline about five o'clock the evening before the discovery of the crime. The grocer occupying the ground-floor of the house had seen this man coming down from Reuline's room, evidently in a state of violent excitement. But after a long and careful cross-examination, he was discharged.

Forced to turn his attention to another quarter, the magistrate went over the scene of the crime again. He noticed that the packets of papers which had evidently been taken out of the secretary, turned over rapidly and flung down on the body of the victim, formed several distinct groups — each one was wrapped in a paper envelope, with a name and address written on it. This mass of papers had been prudently left as it was when discovered. The body of the murdered man was drawn from under it with every precaution. One envelope was empty.

From its position on the top of the pile, it must have been among those last examined by the assassin. On it was written, "Monsieur Groult, care of Monsieur Haviland, Paris."

The name of Groult was found, not at Granville, but at Avranches, on the register of the Red Horse Inn. Groult was still there, when a warrant was issued against him, and he was arrested.

Hélène, after passing an atrocious night, learnt this piece of news from the papers.

She had seen her husband again; the frightful apparition had reappeared before her. It neither reproached her nor showed signs of hatred or anger; it merely stood looking at her in the grisly form in which her imagination clothed it. How could she continue to live if it came to her thus every night?

When her father arrived at lunch-time, she flung herself on him in a delirium of affection and fear; she lifted supplicating eyes to him; she held him so tightly that he said:

"Why, what is the matter? You are hurting me."

Then he added that though he had always mistrusted Groult, this was a most unexpected revelation. The wretched man's crime made him shiver; but in the night, he added, he had had an inspiration. He would find Samuel Ewart himself: he had that very morning written to the French Ambassador to England on the subject. He would follow up the search. And as he said it, his eye took on a sharp, keen look which seemed to pierce the ceiling.

It distressed Hélène to see him attaching himself to the dead man's interests.

"Father," she said, "wouldn't you like to go away with your daughter — far, far away?"

"Where?" said he, with busy good-nature. The idea of leaving the Café Colmar seemed to him absurd and monstrous. Recovering his surprise, he kissed Hélène on the brow.

"Baby," he murmured.

Then with his easy and indiscreet kindness, he brought forward a reason which would, he thought, keep the young widow in Paris.

"Our friend Longuemare would be disconsolate if you went away."

She replied gravely that Monsieur Longuemare must only think of marrying some innocent young girl. Then, with clasped hands and in a voice which seemed to come from the very depths of her soul:

"My God, my God! what a pitiless thing life is!"

He took her hands in his, and said in his unctuous, comfortable voice:

"What are you saying? what are you saying, my child?"

Laying his leather portfolio on the table, he lighted a big cigar, wreathed in the smoke of which he proceeded to draw up a memorandum about Samuel Ewart.

From that day Helene's terror and remorse continually increased, from no external reason, but merely by the workings of her sick brain. The visions became more frequent and more precise. It was difficult for her to distinguish them from reality.

As a result of Groult's cross-examination the magistrate ordered his domicile to be searched. A police commissioner, accompanied by a locksmith, appeared at the hôtel one morning. Madame Haviland was told that he had seized certain papers found in the lodge, and that he asked the favour of a few minutes' interview with the mistress of the house in the course of the next hour or two.

This request fell on Hélène like a blow from a mallet. She distinctly saw her husband in his room, decomposed, but correct, calm, and well satisfied. She saw him seated, turning over the pages of a review tranquilly, as a man who has just returned to his home.

Although his eyes had almost entirely disappeared and were mixed with clay and earth, he noticed a scrap of thread on the table-cloth, and removed it delicately, with the gesture so familiar in his lifetime. Then he vanished.

Hélène was now the prey of new fears. In her ignorance of things she imagined that justice, bent on dragging the confession of her most secret thoughts from her, would hound her on to the same scaffold as the servant Groult. She remembered everything she had read about the execution of Marie-Antoinette; she could feel the cold steel of the executioner's scissors on her neck. The madness of fear took complete possession of her. The rustling of her own dressing-gown made her half faint from fright.

Towards ten o'clock she heard a door bang. She flung open a window, whether with the idea of suicide or escape she did not know. It was only her nephew George returned at his usual time from school. He threw his books impatiently on the table, and, happening to look at his aunt, said:

"How big your eyes are to-day!"

He then began while waiting for breakfast to turn over his books, grumbling and pouting because he had some Greek to prepare. Sitting on the edge of his chair, one leg tucked under him, his chin resting on the table, he turned over the leaves of his dictionary.

He really translated well, in spite of his grimaces, but he wrote carelessly, blotting his paper, and licking up the ink with his tongue.

She listened stupidly to the noises from outside, and trembled each time that the boy kicked his foot against the bars of his chair. He was imitating the grave,

affected voice of his professor.

“You will notice, gentlemen, the harmony of Sophocles’ verses. We don’t know how to pronounce them; we pronounce them all wrong, but still what harmony! Monsieur Labrunière, you will conjugate the verb ‘didomi’ ten times. Yes, what harmony!”

Then in his own squeaky voice:

“Auntie, I swear to you that my professor wears paper collars. We call him Python; do you know why? One day he said: ‘Gentlemen, Python was a monster of repulsive ugliness and malignant spitefulness’; and Labrunière whispered, ‘Just like you.’ Labrunière is awfully funny. Do you know, Auntie, you are really a very pretty woman?” At last he fixed his wandering mind on the Greek text, which he went over, word by word, like a magpie, filling the room with his high-pitched tones, calling out the lines as he wrote them down, and stopping every now and then to count his marbles.

“Kara theion, the divine head, Iokastes of Jocasta, Tethneke is dead. (How stupid this is!) She went — pros ta numfika leche towards the nuptial couch, which means the bedroom. You notice, gentlemen, what a happy expression! how harmonious! komen spos tearing her hair; kalei she calls; Laion, Laius; nekron dead. You see, Auntie, in French a *laius* means a sermon, but in Greek it means an old fellow whom Jocasta had married, and the marriage had not turned out happily. *Tearing her hair she calls the dead Laius*.

From these scraps of Greek and French Hélène could make out an antique and noble story of a woman’s despair.

George hurried on, eager to get to the end.

“Kremasten ten gunaik we saw the woman hanged.” He signed his initials at the bottom of the paper, stuck out his tongue, all violet with ink, and chanted, “Hanged! hanged! I’ve finished.”

Hélène rose and went to her room. She was so calm, so precise, so certain of what she had to do; she seemed like a statue of Necessity.

Wrapped in her black shawl and her widow’s veil, she went down the servants’ staircase.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN she reached the street she staggered, dazzled by the brilliant morning sunshine, in which every object showed with extreme clearness. The carriages, the trees, the kiosks of the news-vendors, the most distant passers-by were all so distinctly outlined despite their smallness that they appeared close at hand. The light was painful to her; she saw everything with unconscious eyes. The most insignificant things, such as the numbers on the cabs and the names over the shops, engraved themselves on her vision in such minute detail as to be fatiguing to her worn nerves; they seemed to strike at her and wound her. She would have gone back, but she could not stop; all power of reflection had left her. A living woman had never before been so empty of thought. An idea had come to her, so simple, clear, and definite, it excluded all others. She walked on not even aware that she was walking, feeling as if she were flying and yet very weak, possessed only by this idea, incapable of a voluntary effort.

A little girl trotted in front of her carrying a baby and a bottle of milk. She watched the white drops as they fell one by one on the pavement; all the mental faculty that remained to her fixed itself on the spilt milk. Each drop that splashed over gave her a feeling as of physical pain.

When she reached the quays the freshness of the wide, open space, the effect of the light on the water, and the cool breeze from the river, drew a sigh from her.

She hesitated a moment, then, turning to the right, went on. The Quai d'Orsay was perfumed with the scent of flowers in the neighbouring gardens. A stream of omnibuses, cabs, business men, and agile work-girls pouring from the Rue du Bac to the Pont Royal stopped her for a few seconds. She crossed the bridge without looking at the water, and, turning again to the right, went down the steps to the shore, where, by a group of willow-trees, the floating baths were moored. She passed over the plank and on to the boat, which smelt of hot water and tar.

She waited quietly, biting the top of her parasol, while the white-aproned attendant prepared her bath; and went quietly into the cabin, saying she would ring when she wanted her bath-robe.

As soon as the little door closed behind her she drew back the calico curtains with an impatient gesture, and, opening the window, leant out, breathing deeply. The Seine flowed beneath with little shining ripples. From the washerwomen's boat moored on the opposite bank came the muffled sound of their wooden beaters. A buzz of voices rose above the men's enclosure at the side.

She looked on the bright scene with an indifferent, almost happy eye. With her black cashmere shawl drawn tightly round her shoulders, her widow's veil flung back over her bonnet and floating like a funereal cloud about her head, she was more beautiful than she had ever been. Her whole being seemed to exhale a voluptuous calm.

The screw of a steamer splashed as it drew near. The floating bridge of the bathing establishment oscillated slightly, and a steamer going to Point du Jour passed so close to her she could hear the voices of the passengers. Two vulgar looking young men leaning over the side eyed her boldly, thinking, no doubt, of the toilet she was going to lay aside.

She noticed them, and she heard the elder of the two, who was fair and had red patches on his cheeks, say:

“What a pretty woman! One wouldn't mind—”

But the boat had passed; the funnels were already being lowered under the arches of the Pont Royal.

Was it disdain or satisfaction that raised the corners of her mouth in a slight smile? She was calm; her eyes wandered quietly from one point to another without betraying the slightest uneasiness. She raised her pretty arms with a graceful gesture which would have fascinated more than one man, and passed her hand across her brow; then she closed the window, evidently indifferent to all she saw from it.

It was noon-day.

Two o'clock came, and she had not rung. At ten minutes past two the attendant, surprised at not having been called, opened the door of the cabin and asked if Madame needed anything.

There was no one in the bath, but opposite it, between the window and the looking-glass, a tall, dark figure hung.

The girl fled shrieking for help.

Hélène Haviland had hanged herself with one of her nephew's neckties to a clothes'-hook. She was wearing round her shoulders the shawl which René had wrapped her in a month before in the arbour at Meudon. Her knees were stiff, and the tips of her boots touched the floor. The body was leaning to the left against a chair, which had no doubt been placed there on purpose. The face was covered with her widow's veil. When this was raised, the face showed congested; the tongue, black and swollen, protruding from the mouth.

When the police commissioner appeared on the scene he remarked:

“Well, I have seen many women who have committed suicide; but this is the first I have seen who has hanged herself.”

CHAPTER XIV

LONGUEMARE was profoundly grieved at the hideous and ill-omened end of the woman he loved, though at first he did not appear overcome by it. He worked furiously at his profession; but he grew sombre, hard, and brutal. He showed none of his good qualities, save his zeal and intelligence as a surgeon. Quarrelsome with his companions, cynical with women, he wore out the most patient of his friends, and they left him alone. His irritability reached such a pitch he could not take a meal in his *crémérie* without disputing with the waiters, the landlord, or the young lady behind the counter.

A somewhat brusque observation from the head physician at the hospital caused him to send in his resignation, and one fine day he arrived unexpectedly at his father's house, in the depths of the Ardennes, without books, clothes, or linen, a three-weeks'-old beard and a sulky air.

The land surveyor was a little, dried-up, old man, who pruned his trees, bottled his wine, cemented the dilapidated tiles in the flooring of the rooms, chopped his firewood, and came and went, always busy and always interested in the smallest details of life. He shrugged his shoulders when he saw his son lying all the day long in the garden, an empty pipe in his mouth, and a tattered straw-hat on his head.

One day after dinner he confided to René that he had "a lump on his arm"; it did not hurt him, but seemed to increase in size. "What must he do for it?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied René, turning his back on the indignant old man.

With his pruning-knife or scissors in his hand, he would often pause, as though by chance, near the heap of hay on which his son sprawled for hours at a time.

"If you are ill, why don't you go to bed?" he would say; or, "If any one comes, I beg you in your own interests to change your clothes."

René acquired a habit of going out after each meal. A little river ran by the garden, and he would lie down among the rushes which grew on its banks. He did not indulge in day-dreams. Everything appeared to him to be painful, absurd, and hard; his grief had no charm, no beauty. He remained in this state for several weeks.

One day, as he was yawning stupidly at the water's edge, he saw some naked children, gliding with clumsy but pretty movements from one stone to another, in the bed of the river. These little creatures, with their yellow hair, and rosy,

laughing faces, calling, screaming, tumbling over one another, splashing about in the water, gave a joyous note to the dreary landscape. Longuemare called out to them on a sudden impulse, but they scuttled off, clinging on to the mossy stones by their hands and knees, diving to the muddy bottom, and not making much progress. One of them crawled into the crevice of an overhanging rock, where he thought he was safely hidden; but René caught him, and plucked him out of his hole like an eel. He could not have looked very cross, for the child was not frightened.

“Listen to — me, — you — little — savage,” — said the surgeon. “If — you — will — bring — me some — frogs, I will give you a bright new penny. You know how to catch frogs? I live over there at old Longuemare’s house.”

When he got the frogs he stayed in his room, which soon began to smell strongly of chemicals and tobacco. Daddy Longuemare would look up from weeding his borders, to the little window, outside which hung bunches of mutilated frogs strung on wires. — He — felt a — sort of — religious respect for his — son, — now — that he — was working. He took up as small a space as possible in the house, and moved about on the tips of his toes. He forbade the servant to go into René’s room while he was at work there, even to make the bed.

One day at table, as he was peeling a pear, he asked his son:

“Couldn’t I help you prepare your frogs? Wouldn’t you like me to cut you some little boards, for instance? I could paint them, and gum a layer of fine sand on them for you.”

“Gum fine sand on little boards? What on earth for?”

The father explained that he thought his son was making artistic groups of stuffed frogs.

“I have seen them most cleverly arranged,” he said, “in the naturalists’ shops in Paris, some of them had wooden swords, and were supposed to be fighting duels; some of them were playing piquet with miniature packs of cards, and some were sitting in an arbour, drinking out of doll’s glasses. They were most ingenious. I thought, my boy, you were doing things of that kind?”

He was much disappointed when he heard his son was only making experiments, which in his eyes were child’s play, only fit for schoolboys. From that moment his face resumed its anxious expression; and when, looking up from the garden, he perceived the frogs at the window, he would shake his head in a pitying manner.

One day René told him he was going away. When the two men said good-bye they assumed, each one, a gruff, off-hand tone of voice, an impassive visage and a stiff attitude; they separated with sullen firmness.

But the old man was weeping into his check handkerchief as he returned home, and his son, stretched on the bench of a third-class carriage, wiped his eyes as he filled his pipe.

At Reims two young fellows, shopmen apparently, got into the carriage. One of them was reading the *Petit Journal*, and telling the other the important bits of news.

“The ministerial crisis continues. — Great excitement caused at Gros-Caillou by an explosion. — The man Groult (Juste Désiré) was executed at six o’clock this morning, on the market-place at Granville.”

“What had he done?” asked the friend.

“He murdered an old man. He was accused also of having poisoned a rich Englishman, but the second crime was not proved at the trial. Don’t you remember the Groult affair?”

“No,” said the other; then after a moment’s silence:

“Does it give any details?”

“‘At four o’clock this morning the fatal engine,’” he read in a low voice — Longuemare did not catch the rest; and the owner of the newspaper, folding it up, said: “Up to the last moment he declared that the murder of his victim was not premeditated. All the same, he was an awful scoundrel.... I could do with a snack, couldn’t you?”

In Paris, Longuemare lived in a state of dull torpor. He had still a few hundred francs left from his pay in Cochin - China, so there was no immediate need for him to work. He rose at noon and went to the Luxembourg Gardens, where he would sit on a bench among the whirling leaves the autumn wind brought down. He would hold his head till his hands left their marks on his cheeks. The first cold weather made him seem more listless and heavy. He dragged through his days in the stifling atmosphere of some little café, without even reading the papers or playing billiards.

One day in spring he met an old acquaintance — Nouilhac, a big heavy fellow, a sort of half-peasant, whose father, a farmer in Auvergne, had left him a stocking full of money, which he spent with the appetite of a glutton and the stinginess of a serf; but as he was now approaching forty years of age, he was becoming more serious.

He had bought, in his own part of the country, a forgotten thermal spring, with its mouldy establishment, and was planning how to get visitors to it.

His pockets were full of bottles of mineral water, and prospectuses illustrated with vignettes showing Roman baths and a sixteenth-century piscina, copied from some old engravings. Offering a bottle to Longuemare, he said:

“Hot springs containing sulphur, chlorine, soda, arsenic, and iodo-bromine, and naturally effervescent.” Then he told a long tale about it.

The establishment was thirty miles from Clermont, on the border of a lake, at the foot of a superb basaltic mountain. The population of the village consisted of fifteen or twenty goat-herds and thirty goitrous men and women.

Nouilhac had inherited from his father three of four tumble-down dwellings in the same village, which, repainted and repaired, could be turned into cottages for visitors. The Hôtel de César opposite the baths could accommodate from thirty to forty people. Later on, a casino might be added. They must go slowly at first, but who could say what the future would bring forth. Finally, he asked Longuemare to join him. “Come,” said he; “you can be the doctor attached to the establishment.”

He had a deep respect, inspired by the unanimous opinion of their common friends, for the medical talents of the ex-army surgeon. All Longuemare’s comrades admitted that he possessed the eye and hand of a master.

His answer to Nouilhac was:

“Your baths are in a hole. No one will ever come to them, except perhaps a few scrofulous and scabby individuals, who will get worse there. If I go, it will be to stay the winter as well as the summer.”

He accepted, without disputing, the small salary Nouilhac offered. The latter considered that the doctor of the establishment would be well paid by the large international practice he was bound to make among the foreign visitors.

Longuemare spent the next day running about Paris buying the few clothes, books, and instruments he needed. Towards six o’clock in the evening, as he was coming down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, he stopped before a Punch and Judy show. A triple row of idlers was pressing against the cord which, passed round the trunks of the trees, enclosed a space reserved for paying spectators. Behind these, small children with discouraged faces peeped between the legs of a soldier and their nurse’s skirts.

A little apart from the crowd stood a bent heavy, unhealthily fat old man, whose wan face wore an expression of desolate inertia. He was dressed in a frock-coat — too short behind and too long in front — so shabby, it was rubbed yellow at the collar and wrists. He was looking at the Punch and Judy show, or rather kept his eyes in that direction, for his look floated vaguely between sky and earth.

At the sight of Monsieur Fellaire de Sisac, Longuemare felt much moved; all his fond recollections came surging to the surface of his soul.

Fellaire shook his hand, and tried to say something, but could not find words. Longuemare, with a kind of brusque tenderness and pity, said:

“Come — come along with me.”

“It just happens that I can,” answered Fellaire; “I have no business to do this evening.”

He was living in the Rue Truffaut, in the wilds of Batignolles, he said; and added, “It is not very central, but with the trams—”

Was it a day, or a hundred years, since they had last met they wondered, as they sat facing each other in a smoky restaurant in the Rue Montmartre.

They did not speak of her, but both saw her, in imagination, beside them.

When they were eating nuts after dinner, Longuemare told de Sisac about his plans for going to Mont-Dore, and what he was going to do there, adding quite simply:

“I am going to take you with me.”

The old man, rolling his startled eyes, cried out: “What! leave Paris! It isn’t possible. One can only live in Paris — and then my business?”

Pitiful though it was, Longuemare could not help smiling.

“Come with me, there will be plenty for you to do. You will be the inspector, controller, registrar.”

These titles struck de Sisac’s fancy, and he declared that “he was willing to give his adhesion to an enterprise that, and for which — in short, if his experience could be of any use.”

They made an appointment to meet next day. Longuemare, as he recrossed the bridge, said to himself:

“I can’t help it; I keep thinking that he is my father-in-law.”

The first season at the Baths was fairly successful. Some Russians, and a French family from Lyons, came to Nouilhac’s establishment. Fellaire stood about near the spring and tasted the water from time to time with a knowing air. His occupation was not very distinctly defined. Nouilhac would certainly not have engaged him but for Longuemare, and it was with the latter’s money that he paid him.

“Let him think that you are giving him a salary,” the doctor said; “and above all, don’t let him think that it is mine he is drawing. I can manage for myself.”

He gave a few consultations to the Russians, and was occasionally called into the mountains to see some peasant who had sprained his ankle while on a Sunday spree.

The visitors left with the swallows — not in a flock as they did, but in couples, or alone, one after the other.

The winter came. Snow covered the valley. On the jagged black granite rocks, and on the coloured marble slabs, ice hung in stalactites. The pine trees in the

ravines loomed like phantoms, big and shadowy through the mist. The horizon was closed in by a sea of darkness.

In the thermal establishment, the old-fashioned red and brown paint peeled off in flakes. Fellaire de Sisac played dominoes all day long with the landlord in the lower floor of the Hôtel de César, and Longuemare sat, his feet on the fire-dogs, smoking his pipe. From time to time he would feel the pulse in his left wrist with his right thumb, and murmur to himself in a low voice:

“Fever, tension, and acute pain in the hypochondriac region — cough, oppressed breathing, sympathetic pain in the right shoulder; nothing is wanting. I have developed a fine hepatic disease.”

And he smiled, for the first time for a year four months and six days.

THE FAMISHED CAT

CHAPTER I

FOR three days the November winds had been whipping the populous faubourg, now clothed in the first shadows of night. Puddles of water shone under the gas-lamps. A black mud, churned by the steps of men and horses, covered the road and the pavement. Workmen with their bags of tools on their shoulders, women returning from the cook-shop with portions of beef between two plates, scurried with bent backs before the rain with the sullen stolidity of beasts of burden.

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, tightly buttoned up in his black clothes, toiled with the populace along the muddy way leading to the top of Montmartre. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse carried his head high under his umbrella, which, much dilapidated by many bygone storms, fluttered in the wind like the wing of a big wounded bird. His jaw being prominent and his forehead receding, it was easy for his face to assume a horizontal attitude; so that his eyes, without his troubling to raise them, could see the sooty sky through the holes in the silk. Walking, now with feverish haste, now with dreamy slowness, he turned into a dark and filthy alley, edged along the wall covered with mouldy trellis-work, which surrounded a bathing establishment, and after a moment's hesitation entered an eating-house, where men, dressed like himself in torn and shabby black clothes, were silently feeding in a terrible atmosphere; the warm greasy odour of which was rendered further obnoxious by a repulsive smell of wet flannel costumes coming from the neighbouring baths.

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse bowed to the lady at the desk in his peculiar manner, flinging his head back with a grave smile. Then, having hung up his shining and battered top-hat, he sat down before a smeary marble table and smoothed his hair with the gesture which usually accompanied his meditation. The gas burnt with a hissing sound and fell full on the man's woolly hair and his mulatto face; the skin, with its colour half washed out by the snows and rains of European winters, looked dirty, as did also his wrinkled hands with their flat nails, marked at the ends by milky crescents. Without calling the waiter, without even looking towards the desk, he drew a newspaper from his pocket and began to read it in an audible voice. He hardly stopped to eat the calf's-head, of which portions had already been served to the other silent and resigned guests.

Having eaten, they faded away one after the other into the darkness and rain. Only one, toothless and gloomy, lingered over his dried raisins. The mulatto having emptied his decanter, at the bottom of which was a deposit of lees and crust, wiped his mouth, folded his napkin, put his paper in his breast pocket with

the air of a wrestler closing with his adversary, got up, took down his hat, and made towards the door. He was just stepping into the wet night when a small, purple-faced, oily man came out of a side door, grubby with greasy fingermarks, and limped into the dining-room. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse saluted the restaurant-keeper with one of his backward bows.

“Good-evening, Monsieur Godet,” said the fat man. “This is bad weather we are having, and it does a deal of harm! By the way, Monsieur Godet, if you could give me something on account tomorrow, I should be much obliged. I am not the man to worry you, as you know very well, but I have a heavy payment to make at the end of the week.”

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse replied in an accent at once oratorical and infantine, without pronouncing the r’s, that there was money owing to him, that he would draw on his editor next day without fail, that he could not think how he had come to neglect the eating-house keeper’s bill, but it was a mere trifle, anyway. The fat man, who did not seem dazzled by these promises, answered in a drawling tone:

“Don’t forget, Monsieur Godet. Good-night, Monsieur Godet.”

And Godet-Laterrasse disappeared in his turn in the darkness streaked with rain, which had already swallowed up the last lean diner in Bather’s Alley. All the ways of the world were open before him. He took that leading up the hill, which the tempest was besieging and drowning in a determined deluge. A blast of wind did its best to carry the mulatto off his feet, a traitorous gust turned his umbrella inside out. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse re-established the concavity of this domestic apparatus, but the silk, split in every part, floated like a black flag on the denuded framework. Under this grotesque and sinister standard he climbed up the steep steps of the Passage Cotin, which had now become a mountain torrent. He could hear nothing but the splashing of his footsteps, and the mysterious utterances of the wind. Invisible to all but himself, the vague shadows of an editor and a newspaper manager fled before him in the distance. He went up eighty steps, and stopped at a little door, over which was a lantern hanging from a creaking cord, and winking like a diseased eye. Entering the house, he stole furtively past the concierge’s lodge.

A rapping against the partition called him back. He opened the glass door in an agony of apprehension. A shrill and sexless voice coming from an alcove informed him there was a letter for him on the chest of drawers. He took the letter, and going down six sticky stairs entered his room. As soon as he had lit a candle he examined the envelope suspiciously.

The post had not brought him anything pleasant for many a long day. But, when he broke the seal and began to read, his white teeth flashed out in a half

smile. His childish nature, withered by poverty, brightened at the smallest piece of luck. At that moment he was glad to be alive. He turned out his pockets, and scraped together a little tobacco dust, mingled with crumbs and bits of fluff; this he stuffed into a short pipe, then he slipped voluptuously between the dirty sheets of his sofa-bed, and began to chant in a low voice the words of the letter which had so delighted him:

“DEAR SIR, — I am passing through Paris with my son Remi, whom I have brought up from Brest, where he has been at school. I thought you might prepare him for his degree. In education, as in everything, I am all for advanced ideas. Will you breakfast with us tomorrow, Saturday, at eleven o’clock, at the Grand Hotel, when we can perhaps come to some arrangement? — Faithfully yours,

“A. SAINTE-LUCIE.”

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, having finished chanting the letter, lighted his pipe and wrapped himself in smoke and dreams. What a caress of Fortune was this unexpected letter! He had met Sainte-Lucie in Paris towards the end of the Empire, at the house of some prominent democratic personage, and had even received a visit from him.

“It was,” thought the mulatto, “at the time that I was writing articles for the *Grand Universal Encyclopedia*. I was living in a fine furnished room in a hotel in the Rue de Seine. I must have my amiable visitor’s card somewhere still.” Stretching out his thin brown arm he reached an old cigar box full of papers from the mantelpiece, and began to rummage in it.

The slowly accumulated contents of a drawer had doubtless been emptied bodily into the box at the time of some removal, for the papers on the top were the oldest. An envelope which he opened only recalled distant and confused souvenirs. “Ah!” he thought, “this is from my poor brother, the coffee merchant at Saint Paul. He was not attracted to Paris; he was not wrought upon as I was by ideas,” and he read out haphazard:

“You must have learnt from the newspapers that a cyclone has passed over Bourbon Island and destroyed all the plantations. So I have gone into guano. And you? are you still writing rot for Parisian rags?”

“Unhappy man! unhappy man!” murmured Godet-Laterrasse. Leaning on his pillow he opened another letter in the same writing and read once more:

“I can’t send you any money, because, coffee having fallen, I had to invest all my available capital while the market was glutted with low-priced products. I

did a magnificent stroke of business. You will understand, therefore, that it is impossible for me to send you any money. Durand, who has just returned from Paris, tells me that you are still going in for public meetings and riots on the boulevards. You will get your head broken one of these days, and your friends will say you belonged to the secret police. When you are tired of playing the fool, come back to Bourbon. You can keep my shop; it is a lazy man's work which will suit you perfectly."

"Keep his shop! what blasphemy," cried Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse.

And he flung aside the impious letter. The bottom of the box was full of invitations to nonreligious funerals, judgment summonses, bills, and cuttings from newspapers. One of these, on the back of which was a pedicure's advertisement, illustrated by a bare foot on a stool, he read with a smile:

"One of our most valiant spirits, one of our most hardy pioneers of progress, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, a creole from Réunion Island, is putting the finishing touches to his great book, 'The Regeneration of Society by the Black Races.' One of the principal chapters of this important work is to appear immediately in *The Literary Funnel* "Alas!" thought Godet-Laterrasse, "just as the chapter was about to appear *The Literary Funnel* died. How many journals perish thus in the flower of their youth!"

ALIDOR SAINTE-LUCIE

BARRISTER

Formerly Minister of Public Instruction , and of the Navy , Member of the Chamber of Deputies, President of the Haitian Artistic Commission

GRAND HOTEL, PARIS

At last he found among a handful of visiting cards the one he was looking for. He considered it attentively and read it over:

And, in the midst of the smoke which filled the room, Godet-Laterrasse saw a vision of the gigantic mulatto arriving from Haïti, all smiles and money. He blew out the candle and went to sleep.

His dreams were peopled with spectres. The shade of the restaurant-keeper in Bather's Alley advanced limping towards him, and said, in a terrifyingly gentle voice, "Don't forget me, Monsieur Godet."

It was nearly nine o'clock, and it was still raining, when the first streak of day entered the room: when it did come, it was only the disgusting reflection of a dirty borrowed light. The room had no other outlook than on to the wall propping up the neighbouring house, a house which, with its five plaster storeys, overlooked all the roofs in the passage. This rugged bulging wall, cracked, broken, green, and sweating, was terminated by the brickwork balcony of an Italian terrace five or six yards higher than Godet-Laterrasse's room, which it clothed in eternal shadow. The window was separated from the wall by a boggy alley, two yards wide, strewn with salad leaves, egg-shells, and the remnants of paper kites.

When the mulatto awoke, he looked at the dripping window-panes, picked up his heavy boots, which had left a damp mark on the floor, and put them on regretfully. Then, having finished his austere toilet, he seized the ruins of his umbrella, and left the room. A confused grumbling met him as he passed the concierge's lodge.

"I have not forgotten your little bill, Madame Alexandre," he said.

He mounted the ten topmost steps of the Passage Cotin, and walked, in a river of mud, past the desolate façade of the Swiss Chalet, and the stone yards of the Votive Church. At the bottom of the Rue Lepic he stopped short, so as not to

walk over two bits of straw which formed a cross on the pavement, in front of a packer's shop. Having avoided this danger (for he was sure that to walk over a cross would bring him ill luck), his lofty mood returned to him, and with his magnificent head thrown back again he continued on his way, an intellectual conqueror, towards the heart of Paris, carrying high the eight-pointed framework of his dilapidated umbrella, which looked like the complicated weapon of a savage warrior.

CHAPTER II

MONSIEUR ALIDOR SAINTE-LUCIE, son of a rich merchant of Port-au-Prince, studied for the law in Paris, and returned to Haiti to be present at the coronation of Soulouque, crowned emperor under the name of Faustin I. As a coloured man, and a man of means, he had everything to fear from his black Majesty. He went bravely ahead in the face of danger, and made himself remarked in the imperial palace by his zeal in upholding the sovereign's policy. Appointed Attorney-General at the imperial court of Port-au-Prince, he had a few of his fellow-citizens shot, quite unmaliciously. He accepted from the emperor the office of Minister of Public Instruction, and of the Navy; then, thinking that he perceived a secret but energetic opposition springing up against him, he took a holiday, and made a trip to France.

From Paris he wrote letters warmly supporting the revolution which put an end to the sanguinary gaieties of the black empire, and returned to Haïti to be elected member of the Chamber of Deputies. His first act in the Assembly was to introduce a measure proposing to erect an expiatory monument to the memory of the victims of tyranny. Certainly, the least that the former Attorney-General could do for some of these victims, was to give them a tomb.

The project was taken into consideration, the proposition carried, and the citizen, Alidor Sainte-Lucie, was made president of the commission charged with the execution of this national work. Monsieur Alidor quite understood the advantage which this presidentship conferred on him. Whenever there was any shooting going on in the island he took out a passport and went to Paris to get new plans for the monument. He adored Paris because of its little theatres and its political cafés. At the end of twenty years the artistic commission was still in full activity.

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie was a very handsome mulatto, with an immense athletic frame. He carried his copper-coloured face proudly, and had, in spite of his flat nose, a grand air, especially since his hair, retreating from his brow, had left it shining like bronze. He made no attempt to disguise his age, and wore his grizzled beard clipped close. Very particular about his personal appearance, he affected white waistcoats and patent leather shoes, and saturated himself with heavy, sickly perfumes.

Thus well dressed and scented, his powerful figure showing off well in clothes of faultless English cut, he walked up and down his room at the Grand

Hotel, waiting for the tutor, while his son drew caricatures on the cover of a book, and a waiter laid a table for three persons, near the fire.

Sketches, models, plaster casts, sepia drawings, photographs, and plans of every sort for the commemorative monument to the victims of tyranny, lay about and encumbered the furniture. On a side table was a little pyramid of painted plaster covered with gilded palms; on the secretary stood a terra - cotta column surmounted by a sort of winged monkey, with the following inscription on the pedestal: "*To the Genius of Black Liberty.* " A photograph on the chimney-piece in front of the mirror represented a negress standing before a sarcophagus, on which she was depositing a roll of paper bearing these simple words: "*Artistic Commission; Monsieur Sainte-Lucie , president.* " Nothing more!

On the ground was a half-open hand in cast iron, a gigantic hand emerging from a curtain-like sleeve. A label hung from the wrist: "*Portion of Design No. 17, full size , E.D.* "

Three little golden brown rolls lay on the table-napkins. Monsieur Sainte-Lucie looked at the clock. Perhaps the crisp glazed crust of the bread aroused his appetite, or perhaps he was afraid of being kept waiting; his sleepy eyes, which a few moments before had shone so gently under their somewhat distended lids, suddenly flashed with a wild light. They softened again, however, when Godet-Laterrasse appeared in the doorway. As the waiter held back the curtain, one saw first a chin with an Adam's apple showing prominently above a white cotton cravat. Godet-Laterrasse bowed.

"My son, Remi," said Sainte-Lucie, presenting the young man, who, consenting to leave his unfinished sketch, came forward with a lazy swagger.

He was a handsome boy, with a pure olive complexion, who rolled his big, bored-looking eyes, and seemed to open his great sensual mouth at random.

When they sat down, Monsieur Sainte-Lucie took up twice as much room as Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse. The mulatto from Haïti was of a warm, golden tone, which appeared richer still when contrasted with the other's which seemed to have been smeared with soot and then badly washed. The mulatto from Bourbon was weak-looking, rumped, and muddy; but his naïvely pompous expression, and his childish pride, inspired the kind of pity one feels for a learned dog or an unfortunate genius.

The affair which brought them together was broached between the devilled kidneys and the green peas. It was Godet-Laterrasse who opened the question.

"Well, my friend," said he, tapping his future pupil on the shoulder, "so we are going to take our degree at the old university?"

Monsieur Alidor rose to the bait and said, crumbling his bread nonchalantly:

“As I wrote to you, my dear Godet — and, by-the-bye, I had a great deal of trouble to find your address. It was Brandt — you know Brandt, the tailor — who discovered it by the merest chance; it seems he was looking for you also.”

“It is quite possible,” said Godet-Laterrasse, making a movement as though to brush something away.

“As I wrote to you, I am counting on you to prepare this scamp here for his degree, and to make a man of him.”

Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse braced himself against the back of his chair till his head was almost horizontal, and said:

“Before we go further, my dear Sainte-Lucie, I must make my profession of faith. My principles are unshakable. I am a man of iron, whom you may break, but you cannot bend.”

“I know, I know,” said Sainte-Lucie, as he continued to crumble his bread.

“The education which I shall give your son will be essentially a liberal education.”

“I know, I know.”

“It is a civic degree which I shall ensure our Remi winning gloriously. In preparing him for it, I shall consider not so much the candidate for university honours as the legislator of the Haitian Republic. After all, what does that pedantic old witch of a university matter to me?”

The former Minister, who was a practical as well as an eloquent man, signed to him with his eyebrows not to talk in this way before his pupil; but the liberal preceptor, carried away by the sublimity of his personal ideas, went on:

“The university means monopoly, the university means routine, the university represents the enemy! Down with the university!” Then laying his hand on the arm of the young man, who seemed too indifferent to be surprised: “My friend, if I prepare you to take your degree, I shall teach you the primordial truths; so that when, on leaving my hands, you present yourself before the examiners at the Sorbonne, you will be their judge rather than they yours. You can say to the Caros and the Taillandiers, ‘I have principles, and you have none. It is that man of iron, it is Godet-Laterrasse, who has formed my mind.’ Ha! these fine gentlemen will know who I am some day!”

During this speech young Remi was tranquilly occupied in surreptitiously extracting lumps of sugar from the basin and slipping them into his pocket.

Monsieur Alidor, who was naturally inclined to appreciate eloquence, thought this method of preparing for an examination was fine, but a little perilous. As he was naturally very obstinate, however, he did not give up the idea of confiding his son to the creole from Bourbon.

“Remi,” he said, carelessly drawing a louis from his pocket, “go and get some cigars downstairs. Say that they are for me.”

Left alone with his guest, he continued to crumble his bread silently. He had a special way of holding his tongue, which was mysterious and imposing. Then, in the gentle voice of a man sure of his own strength, he pointed out to the future preceptor that it was a question of working to pass the examinations — an essentially practical enterprise; that the programme must be followed to the letter; and that, as a matter of fact, Greek and Latin were of more importance than primordial truths.

“Certainly, certainly,” replied the man of iron.

Asked if he had had any experience of teaching, his reply was vague.

They then came to the question of money.

The former Minister asked the tutor to accept a monthly salary of two hundred francs; but Godet-Laterrasse refused to consider this bagatelle, with an indignant shake of the head.

Remi came back with the cigars, followed by a slight good-looking man whose golden beard swept his chest. He did not take off the small soft hat he wore on the back of his head like a cap.

“You are welcome, Labanne,” said Sainte-Lucie, without rising to greet him. “Will you have a cigar?”

Labanne’s only answer was to take an amber-mounted meerschaum pipe and a tobacco-pouch with the arms of Brittany from his pocket. He walked round the room, looking with the air of a connoisseur at the photograph on the mantelpiece. Finally he threw a side-glance at the terra-cotta column.

“Who,” said he, “is the joker who furnished you with this model of a stove-pipe?” Then, affecting to be interested in the gilded pyramid, he closed his eyes and said:— “They have forgotten the slit to put the pennies through.” As the others did not understand, he added:— “Of course, the thing was meant for a money-box.”

“What can I do? I take what is given me,” said Sainte-Lucie philosophically. “You haven’t brought your design, have you, Labanne?”

“I am working at it,” replied the sculptor.

“No later than yesterday I read in a medical journal a most interesting article on the *pigmentum* of the black races; and I bought this morning, at a book-stall on the Quai Voltaire kept by a friend of mine, a treatise on the geological formation of the Antilles.”

“And what for?” asked Sainte-Lucie absolutely at a loss, although he knew the man he was dealing with.

“If I wish to execute my idea for the monument,” said Labanne in a disdainful tone, “I must, before I even touch the clay, have read fifteen hundred volumes. All is contained in all. It is an artificial and wrong method to attempt to treat any subject in an isolated fashion. Hullo! you here, Godet! By what chance? I didn’t see you before.”

The mulatto from Bourbon Island, who was leaning against the mantelpiece, his right hand stuck between the buttons of his frock-coat, smiled bitterly.

The sculptor, having re-lighted his pipe, went on:

“I am not merely a natural force, a brute force. I am not like the bird who laid *that* monkey,” pointing with the stem of his pipe to the genius of Black Liberty. “I am an intelligence, a conscience; I put thought into my work.”

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie nodded his head approvingly; but he insisted on the sculptor giving him a drawing, a simple sketch, which he could show to the Commissioners. He was leaving for Haïti in a week.

Labanne flung himself on the sofa and seemed lost in profound meditation.

At last, after knocking the ashes from his pipe and spitting on the carpet, he looked up at the ceiling and said:

“What right have we to create imaginary beings? Phidias, or Michael-Angelo, or So-and-So makes a figure which has a semblance of life, which forces itself on our attention and penetrates to our imaginations. It is the Athene of the Parthenon, it is Moses, or the Nymph of Asnières. It is spoken about, it is dreamed about. There is a being the more in the world! What will it do then? It will perturb minds, corrupt hearts, inflame the senses, and make a fool of the public generally. Every work of art, every creation of human genius is a dangerous illusion and a guilty fraud. Sculptors, painters, and poets are magnificent liars, sublime scoundrels — nothing more. I who now speak to you, I was madly in love for six months with the Antiope of the Salon Carré, which means that for six months that rascal of a Correggio had the laugh of me.

“Do you know my friend Branchut the moralist? He is ugly, but he doesn’t know it. He is poor and full of talent. His knowledge of Greek is the astonishment of all the cafés of the Quartier, and he has read Hegel. He lives on a roll of bread and a drink from the street fountains. When he has finished his bird-like repast, he writes divine things in the public gardens, or under doorways if it is raining. When he remembers, he comes and sleeps in my studio. One night he wrote a most subtle and learned commentary on the Phædo on the wall. Such is Branchut.

“Last year I lent him a coat and took him to see a Russian princess whose bust I was going to do; but she wanted the bust in marble and I could only see it in bronze. One can but realise what one sees, so the bust was never done. She

was looking for a professor of literature for her daughter Fédora, an extremely beautiful girl. I proposed Branchut, and he was accepted. Thanks to my recommendation and his shabby appearance, he was paid a month in advance. He bought two shirts, took a furnished room, and made acquaintance with German sausage.

“At the sixth lesson, while he was explaining the mechanism of Homer’s epic, he pinched Mademoiselle Fédora’s waist so furiously that she fled uttering shrill cries. He waited, ready to make reparation for his misdeed — he would have married his noble pupil, if necessary; but he was flung out of the door. I found him in my studio that evening. ‘Alas!’ he said, ‘it is all the fault of Saint Preux. Oh, Julie! oh, Jean-Jacques!’ So you see Rousseau wrote his magnificent and passionate novel and created his:

“‘Julie, amante faible et tombée avec gloire,’

just to lead my poor friend Branchut the moralist to make a fool of himself.”

Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie suppressed a yawn. His son, his head resting on his two hands, listened as though he were at the theatre. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, with a burning eye and a heaving chest, was preparing a crushing rejoinder; but Labanne rose, went to a side-table and picked up a newspaper. While he was tearing off a bit to light his pipe, his eye followed the printed lines with the instinct of the born reader.

“I say, Sainte-Lucie,” he asked, “is it possible that you believe in democracy?”

At these words Godet-Laterrasse drew himself together with a little, dry, cracking noise, like that of a pistol being loaded. But the former Minister only replied by an enigmatical smile.

Labanne stated his opinions. He liked aristocracies; he would have them strong, extravagant, violent. Art only flourished under an aristocracy, he said. He regretted the cruel, elegant morals of a military nobility.

“What a mean epoch we live in!” he said. “In depriving politics of their two necessary attributes — poison and the dagger — you have made them innocent, stupid, dull, chattering and bourgeois. Society is dying for want of a Borgia. In a democracy you will have neither impressive statues, nor marble palaces, nor eloquent and great-hearted courtesans, nor chiselled sonnets, nor concerts in gardens, nor golden goblets, nor exquisite crimes, nor perils, nor adventures. You will be happy in a flat, foolish, and deadly way. So be it.”

For some minutes Godet-Laterrasse had been making jerky movements, like a man who restrains himself with difficulty.

“Marvellous! marvellous!” he cried. “You are brilliantly witty, Monsieur Labanne; but remember, there are certain pleasantries which are blasphemous.”

He took his hat, shook his pupil’s hand, and told Monsieur Alidor he wished to say a few words to him in the hall.

Labanne heard the chinking of money, and when Monsieur Alidor re-appeared:

“What an innocent creature!” said Labanne; “but there is no harm in him.”

“Hush,” said Sainte-Lucie, and whispered something in Labanne’s ear.

“I wish I had known you wanted a tutor. I would have sent you my friend Branchut the moralist. Well, I am going back to the Quartier. Good-bye.”

This was how he spoke of what was to him the Quartier *far excellence* — the Quartier Latin.

Sainte-Lucie begged the sculptor to tell Remi, who did not know Paris, of a decent hotel near the Luxembourg.

Labanne, stroking his flaming beard, and Remi moving with the supple swing characteristic of his race, were descending the gilded staircase of the hotel side by side, when Sainte-Lucie, leaning over the banister, called out to his son:

“I warn you at once, in case I should forget, that I shall most probably not go to see General Télémaque; but I should be glad if you would pay him a visit, and it would please your mother. He lives at Courbevoie, near the barracks. Good-bye, good-bye.”

CHAPTER III

REMI could only recall vaguely the house where he was born at Port-au-Prince — the lordly mansion, in the Louis XVI. style, full of mutilated statues and half-effaced emblems; the dilapidated, crumbling inner court, planted with banana-trees; the heavy mahogany arm-chairs, ornamented with sphinxes' heads, in which he slept in the shade in the heavy noon-day silence; the luminous gaudy town, amusing as a big bazaar; and his godmother, Olivette's shop. How often, hidden behind the big cases, he had stolen the negress's bananas and sapotillas.

He could remember his mother; her burning eyes, imperious nose, greedy mouth and magnificent bronze chest, showing through a white muslin corsage, had imprinted their image on the child's memory. How often he had seen her, saturated with strong scents, her head flung back and her eyes flooded with tears, exasperating Monsieur Alidor by her brief and disdainful replies. One day he had thrown himself on her, grinding his teeth with fury, and had brought his stick down on the most beautiful shoulders in the Antilles.

But Remi had seen many things besides these. He had seen the bombardment and burning of Port-au-Prince, the pillaging, the massacres, the executions, and then more massacres and more executions. He had seen his godmother, Olivette, lying murdered in the midst of her staved-in barrels, and her assassins dead drunk with her whisky.

It was about this time that they made a long sea voyage, and landed one evening in a splendidly lighted city. France pleased him from the first. He was sent to a school in the Rue du Chateau at Nantes, on the benches of which he dragged out a monotonous and dreary existence, never ceasing to shiver. During the long lesson hours, he sucked sweets and drew caricatures. Every Thursday and every Sunday throughout the year the pupils, two and two in a long file, went for a walk under the old elms on the fortifications by the side of the fair, wide Loire.

He hated these promenades in the wind and the rain. He would pretend to be ill to be dispensed from them, and to be admitted to the infirmary, where he could huddle under the blankets, like a boa-constrictor in a glass case.

But he had muscles of steel when it came to jumping over the schoolhouse wall, and running to the other end of the town to buy a bottle of rum to make punch with, in the dormitory at night. He took his studies very easily, drew the portraits of all his masters in his copybooks, passed into the rhetoric class, learnt

nothing, forgot everything, was sent to Paris and confided to the care of Godet-Laterrasse.

Monsieur Sainte-Lucie had been at sea for three weeks, and the tutor had already begun the exercise of his functions by promenading his pupil on the outside of omnibuses from the Boulevard Saint-Michel to the Buttes Montmartre, and from the Madeleine to the Bastille.

Then he disappeared for a week. Remi, advised by Labanne, was living up under the tiles in a very good hotel in the Rue des Feuillantines; he got up at noon, went out to breakfast, walked about in the sunshine, contemplating with something of a savage's delight the imitation jewellery and other attractive rubbish in the shop windows, till at five o'clock it was time to sip his sweetened vermouth. Not having heard of his tutor for eight days, he had almost forgotten him, when, on the morning of the ninth, he received a telegram, making an appointment to meet him at two o'clock on the Pont des Saints Pères.

It was freezing, and a biting wind was blowing over the Seine. Remi took shelter, side by side with a policeman, against the cast-iron pedestal of one of the four plaster figures adorning the bridge; he stood with his shoulders hunched, and every now and then, to relieve the monotony of waiting, would stretch out his neck and watch a cargo of bullocks' horns being unloaded on the Pont Saint Nicolas. He had been there half-an-hour, and had just decided to make for the nearest café, when Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse emerged from the Louvre gateway, carrying a portfolio under his arm.

"I asked you to meet me to-day," he said, "so that we might buy the most necessary books. I am not going to bother about Virgil and Cicero; if you should need them you can find them easily enough at any of the second-hand stalls in the Rue Cujas. I am only going to see about the important ones, which will form your conscience as a man and as a citizen."

By-and-by they came to the Quai Voltaire, where they went into a bookseller's.

"Have you the works of Proudhon, Quinet, Cabet, and Esquiros?" asked Godet-Laterrasse.

The bookseller had these works, and he made a packet of them under the eyes of the buyers — a packet which Remi saw, with stupefaction, mount up like a tower.

"Sir," he said, simply, to the shopman, just as he was tying the string, "please add to the packet two or three novels by Paul de Kock. I began one at Nantes which amused me very much, but my class-master took it from me."

The bookseller replied in a dignified tone that he did not "keep" novels, and he was beginning again to tie the string when Godet-Laterrasse stopped him. He

had been thinking, and the result of his reflection was, that he borrowed from his pupil the two first volumes of Michelet's "History of France"; he wanted to look up something, he said.

They shook hands outside, and Laterrasse called out, as he scrambled on to his omnibus:

"Dig into Quinet this evening — hard."

For a moment his black silhouette stood out clearly on the top of the 'bus, then it sank, and was lost among the outlines of the ordinary people seated on the double row of benches.

When evening came, Remi was but little disposed to return to his room, where the fundamental books awaited him. He took the way to the Boulevard Saint-Michel instead, and walked towards Bullier's.

On reaching the Moorish door of the public ballroom, under which a crowd of students, shopmen, and girls were pouring in through a semicircle of gaping workmen and women, he caught sight of Labanne's golden beard. The sculptor was standing on the opposite pavement by a lamp-post, and in spite of the frost which powdered the trees, and the wind whipping the gas flame, he was reading a newspaper.

Sainte-Lucie went up to him.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," he said. "What you are reading must be very interesting."

"Not at all," replied Labanne, putting the paper in his pocket. "I was reading mechanically something very stupid. Will you come with me to 'The Famished Cat'?"

They stopped at the narrowest, the greasiest, the blackest, the smokiest, and the nastiest part of the Rue Saint-Jacques, and went into a shop full of little tables, at the end of which was a glass partition hung with white curtains. There were paintings on the walls, on the partition, on the ceiling even. For the most part they were bold, violent sketches, whose brilliant colour under the flickering of the two gas-jets was dazzling, in spite of the thick smoky atmosphere. Sainte-Lucie, who was very fond of pictures, at once singled out the most arresting canvases — a raven in the snow, and the nude body of an old woman hanging head down; a raw sirloin of beef wrapped in a piece of paper; and above all, a gutter-cat on a roof among the chimney-pots, outlining against an enormous ruddy moon its lean black back arched like a mediaeval bridge. This work, by a young master of the impressionist school, served as a sign for the establishment. Several young fellows were smoking and drinking round the tables.

A fat little woman with carefully dressed hair, the bib of whose white apron swelled like a sail, looked at Labanne with tender vivacity. Grains of gunpowder

seemed to sparkle in her eyes. She asked the sculptor for the terra-cotta cat he had promised her to put in the window between the dishes of sauer-kraut and salad bowls of stewed prunes.

“I have not forgotten your tabby — oh, full-handed Virginie,” replied Labanne; “but I don’t see him lean enough and famished enough as yet. Furthermore, I have only read five or six volumes on cats.”

Virginie, who was content to wait, told Labanne that it was most amiable of him to bring a new friend, that Monsieur Mercier and Monsieur Dion were already there, and then disappeared behind the partition — to the immediate neighbourhood of a water-tap, no doubt, for she could be heard rinsing glasses.

The new-comers sat down at a table, at which were already, seated two guests, to whom Sainte-Lucie was presented. The creole soon learnt that Dion, very young, thin, and fair, was a lyric poet, and that Mercier, small and dark, with glasses on his nose, was something very vague and very important. It was hot in the tavern, and Sainte-Lucie, feeling quite at his ease, smiled so that his big mouth gaped; while Virginie, observing him closely through the partition, concluded that he was handsome and distinguished looking. She admired his smooth, clear cheeks, so like the metal of the saucepans she polished.

The poet Dion asked Labanne, in a voice at once gentle and bitter, what had become of Bishop Gozlin.

For some time past there had been much talk at “The Famished Cat” about a statue of Bishop Gozlin, the order for which had been given, it was said, to Labanne, and which was destined to fill one of the niches of the new town-hall; this Labanne admitted, but produced no proof. He said he could not see Bishop Gozlin standing up in a niche; he could only see him seated in his episcopal chair.

Sainte-Lucie drank a glass of beer.

“You know,” said young Dion, “that we are starting a Review. Mercier has promised me an article; haven’t you, Mercier? You, Labanne, will do the fine arts. Monsieur Sainte-Lucie, I hope you will also give us something. We look to you to deal with the colonial question.”

Sainte-Lucie had seen so much that nothing could surprise him. He was drinking — he was warm — he was happy. “I am very sorry not to be able to render you such a slight service,” he replied, “but I have just come from Nantes, where I was at school, and I don’t know anything about the colonial question. Besides, I am not a writer.”

Dion was stupefied. He could not understand any one not being a writer; but he remembered that creoles are rather strange people.

“Well,” he said, “I shall publish my ‘Wild Love’ in the first number. You know my ‘Wild Love’?”

“Very old and bowed down, worn by ancient despair,
I would wander for aye in the night of thy hair.”

(“Très vieux, ployé, flétri par d’anciennes détresses,
Je veux errer sans fin dans la nuit de tes tresses.”)

“Did you write that?” cried Sainte-Lucie with sincere enthusiasm. “Why, it is beautiful.”

And he emptied his glass; he was delighted.

“Have you any funds for your Review?” asked the sceptic Labanne.

“Certainly,” replied the poet. “My grandmother has given me three hundred francs.”

Labanne was reduced to silence. He turned over the pages of some pamphlets he had bought on the Quais that afternoon.

“This is a very curious volume,” he said, looking at a little book with red edges. “It is a treatise by Saumaise (*Salmasius*) on usury (*de usuris*). I shall give it to Branchut.”

Then they recollected that Branchut had not come to “The Famished Cat” that evening.

“How is poor old Branchut-du-Tic?” asked the poet Dion. “Is he still falling at the feet of Russian princesses? He must give us an article for the Review.”

Sainte-Lucie asked Labanne if this Monsieur Branchut-du-Tic was the professor of literature he had heard him speak of one day at the Grand Hotel.”

“The same, young man,” said Labanne. “You will see him. But I must tell you that his name is simply Claude Branchut. His nose, which is very long, is agitated by nervous shivers, and afflicted with a strange undulating movement; hence the nickname we have bestowed on him. For the matter of that, Cato of Utica (*Caton d’Utique*) and Branchut-du-Tic are both Stoics.”

“Monsieur Sainte-Lucie,” said the poet, “I will read my verses to you, so that you can make your criticisms before they are published.”

“No, no,” cried Mercier, his little round face contracting under his spectacles; “you can read your verses to him when you are alone.”

Then the conversation turned on aesthetics. Dion considered that poetry was the natural and primeval language.

Mercier replied sourly.

“It was cries, not verses, which were the primitive and natural language. The first men did not exclaim:

“Yea, to his temple I come the Eternal to worship.”

They said, “*hoo hoo hoo! ba ba ba! quack!*” But are you a mathematician? No? Then it is no use arguing with you. I only argue with an adversary who knows the mathematical method.”

Labanne asserted that poetry was a sublime monstrosity, a magnificent disease. For him, a fine poem was a fine crime, and nothing else.

“Allow me,” said Mercier, adjusting his spectacles. “How far have you gone in mathematical analysis? I shall know by your answers if I can argue with you or not.”

Sainte-Lucie, emptying a fresh glass, said to himself: “My new friends are very peculiar, but very agreeable.”

Finally, as he understood literally nothing of the discussion, which became heated, he gave up trying to follow the tangled thread of discourse, and let his naïf bold eyes wander round the room. They encountered the amorous eyes of the fat Virginie, who, leaning against the glass door of the partition, was watching him as she wiped her red hands.

“She is a very agreeable woman,” he thought. Having drunk another *bock*, he became more confirmed in this opinion.

The tavern had emptied little by little. The founders of the Review alone remained round the saucers piled up on the table, like two porcelain towers in a Chinese village.

Virginie was about to pull down the iron shutters in front, when the door opened and a long pale person came in, dressed in a very short summer-jacket, with the collar turned up. Two enormous, flat, and abominably shod feet protruded in front of him.

“It is Branchut,” cried the Committee. “How do you do, Branchut?”

But Branchut was in a sombre mood.

“Labanne,” he said, “you took away, by mistake I sincerely hope, the key of your studio, and if I had not met you here, I should inevitably have had to pass the night out of doors.”

Branchut spoke with Ciceronian elegance. His eyes rolled terribly, and his nose twitched nervously from the root to the nostrils, but his mouth emitted only the purest and most dulcet sounds.

Labanne handed over his key, with an apology. Branchut would drink neither beer, coffee, cognac, nor chartreuse. He would not drink anything. Dion asked him for an article for his Review, but the moralist required a deal of coaxing.

“Take his commentary on the Phædo,” said Labanne, “which is written in charcoal all along the wall *of* my studio. You can have it copied, unless you prefer to take the wall to the printer.”

As soon as they left off asking him, he promised to write something. “It shall be,” he said, “a study in a particular style on the philosophers.”

He coughed, an oratorical cough, picked up an empty glass, placed it in front of him and proceeded leisurely.

“This is my point of view. There are two sorts of philosophers: those who place themselves behind the glass, like Hegel, and those who place themselves between the glass and myself, like Kant. Do you understand the point of view?”

Dion understood the point of view, so Branchut was able to continue.

“When,” he said, “a philosopher is behind my glass, do you know what I do — ?”

Here, having put out one of the lights and turned down the other, Virginie warned the gentlemen that it was half-past twelve, and they must go. Branchut, Mercier, and Labanne went out one after the other, stooping under the half-lowered shutter.

Sainte-Lucie, left alone in the dark shop, seized Virginie round the waist and gave her three or four kisses, wherever he could snatch them, on her neck or on her ear. Virginie resisted a moment, then she burst into sobs, and melted into the mulatto’s arms.

Branchut, meanwhile, standing on the pavement, was saying to Labanne: “Do you think I would take my glass and put it behind the philosopher?”

No! Or take the philosopher and — ?”

“Aren’t you coming, Sainte-Lucie?” cried the poet Dion, who was counting on reciting his verses to the creole all the way home.

But Sainte-Lucie did not answer.

CHAPTER IV

IT was snowing that morning; the muffled sound of the passing carriages came heavily through the windows of "The Famished Cat." A livid light threw up the pictures on the wall harshly, and made the painted figures look like corpses. Remi was seated at a little table in the deserted shop, devouring a beefsteak and potatoes, while Virginie stood motionless in front of him, her hands folded on her apron, her eyes contemplating him with the expression of a saint.

"It is tender, isn't it?" she said effusively. "Have you enough? There is a fine cut of cold roast beef in the kitchen; will you have some? You don't drink anything."

He was eating and drinking as hard as he could, while she eyed him devoutly. She said:

"I have given you some Gruyère cheese, which is so good it is *creeping*. Monsieur Potrel was very fond of Gruyère, especially when it crept."

Remi went on eating.

Then Virginie gave him fruit and jam in addition.

She remained absorbed for a long time in her mystic meditation, then sighed and said:

"Perhaps I am wrong in doing as I do. You will be like all the others, Monsieur Sainte-Lucie. All men are alike. But I am not like the average woman. When I attach myself to some one it is for life. I have told you how Potrel behaved to me. Now, frankly, was that the way to act? A man for whom I did everything. I mended his linen; I would have gone to the stake for him. He was clever, talented, everything, but he was ungrateful."

And the afflicted eyes of the lady turned to the picture of "The Famished Cat," as though to bid it bear witness to the ingratitude of Potrel.

Her ample chest heaved, her three chins trembled, as she added in a stifled voice:

"And to think that I am not sure that I don't still love him! If you were to abandon me I don't know what I should do. Are you coming this evening, darling? — What can I offer you, gentlemen?"

This last phrase, accompanied by a smile, was addressed to two customers who came in just then.

Sainte-Lucie was happy; he had been plucked gloriously by the examiners, but he warmed himself at every friendly stove, laughed his big sensual laugh, and amused himself with everything he saw and heard, without troubling about

anything further. The very slightly dissimulated favour with which Virginie regarded him had won him the respect of the guests at "The Famished Cat." Women mark with a distinctive sign the men they favour.

He found Labanne's studio even more attractive than Virginie's room. But the stove was never lighted. This made Remi angry; he was already a good draughtsman, and was beginning to paint. Labanne said:

"That fellow draws by instinct. He has no ideas, but he has the touch. I really believe that one must be as stupid as Potrel to model as well as he does."

Godet-Laterrasse had tried several times to recapture his pupil. He would come down sometimes towards mid-day, outside an omnibus from the heights of Montmartre, would burst breathlessly into Remi's room and cry out:

"Dig into Tacitus. Cheer up!"

He would say emphatically: *Nox eadem Britannici necem alque rogam conjunxit.* (A single night witnessed the death and the obsequies of Britannicus) Then he would get muddled over certain grammatical difficulties from which he would extricate himself by wandering remarks about the great writer, who, he said, had branded the foreheads of tyrants with a red-hot iron.

The lesson over, he would get up, and with a lordly gesture lay hold of two or three volumes of Prudhon or Ouinet, which slumbered unopened on the chest of drawers, and saying that he wished to refer to them, would put them under his arm. Remi never saw them again. In a few months' time there was nothing but a few odd books left of the enormous packet, and these he took one day and sold to a bookseller in the Rue Soufflot. There was no longer any talk about the fundamental works.

CHAPTER V

TIME went by. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse came now and then, to give his pupil a lesson. "The Famished Cat" did not occupy all of Remi's mind; he would stay in his room, munching exotic dainties, which he bought at the creole grocery in the Rue Tronchet.

Every day, now the weather was fine, he would open his window and look out into the street. He liked to see the horses go by; they seemed to him thin in the collar, long in the body, and big in the crupper. Of the women who passed below across the front of the hotel, he could only see the tops of their hats, their hair, their skirts puffed out behind, and occasionally a chin and a bust under it. He noticed the graceful swing or the comical waddle of all these creatures, going on their easy or difficult way. Such fugitive aspects of life amused him, and he did not spoil the spectacle by reflection. For no deep thought had as yet germinated under his thick hair.

What interested him most was the house opposite, which reared in front of his hotel its façade of new stone, with five windows to each storey. Through the half-open windows he could see bits of the wall papers, the woodwork of the dining-room, ends of gilded picture frames, and corners of furniture. All these things, diminished by distance (for the street was wide), appeared to him of the size and importance of a toy. The people who moved about in the rooms looked like marvellously finished dolls. If some startled head suddenly popped up among the tiles, through a skylight, and showed in the sunshine a bald cranium or a pair of winking eyes, the creole would go off in a long fit of laughter, and be inspired with dozens of sketches, which he afterwards tore up. In a few days he was familiar with all the people who moved about in the great stone hive across the way.

On the balcony of the fifth floor a half-pay captain (such he most surely was) sowed flower seeds in a box. On the intermediate storeys servants were to be seen beating fur rugs at the windows. Sometimes Remi would see a broom moving in front of the furniture, somnolent under its shroud-like coverings against the white panels. On the ground floor a house agent's clerk stood at a high desk and wrote throughout the day.

But Remi's eyes turned most frequently to the rooms on the fourth floor. There was never anything strange or mysterious there, nothing voluptuous, nothing which could call the blood to the young man's cheeks. The only remarkable thing about the windows was a cage full of canaries and a very small

pot of flowers. The apartment lighted by these windows was occupied by a middle-aged lady, slow but active and calm in her movements: her placid face, which appeared first at one window and then at another, was crowned by beautiful hair, which was nevertheless getting a little wide in the parting. Her daughter, who was still a child in short frocks, had inherited her mother's hair, but it was fairer and more luminous in quality, abundant and rich; she wore it separated in two masses by a fine line. She moved about like a boy, and did not know what to do with her arms and legs.

Remi entered, unseen, into the intimacy of these two people; he knew all the little monotonous events of their existence, the time for meals and for lessons, the time to go for a walk, and to bring in the bird-cage, the time when, armed with notepaper and books, to go off to classes. He knew that the ladies went out at eleven o'clock every Sunday, with prayer-books in their hands. At ten o'clock every morning during the week, the young girl sat down to the piano, whose brass handle shone near the window in the gilded drawing-room. Remi could see two little red hands, child's hands, running up and down the notes, playing scales he could not hear.

But she did not stay very long seated on the music-stool before the piano. She came to the window, and, if it was shut, lifted up the white curtain and looked into the street with frank audacity, and pressed the end of a small nose against the glass so that it became flat and white: then she would disappear as she had come, as a bird takes flight, without any appreciable reason. Both mother and daughter had large limpid eyes, childish eyes, emotionless eyes, which seemed to say, "Nothing has ever troubled, or ever will trouble, our affectionate peacefulness." The mother, who had no doubt been a widow for many years, was the quieter of the two. The kindly nature of the plump woman was visible in all her gestures, affectionate without being caressing, vigilant without being tiresome. Mademoiselle was more *brusque*. One day she even opened the window and leaned out on the balcony and made signs to two of her companions at church or school who were passing in the street below.

She did not show the slightest confusion when her mother fetched her in, and sent the maid, as Remi supposed, to ask the young ladies upstairs: they came up and evidently had very funny things to say to each other, for all three laughed merrily.

And their laughter reached Remi's ears, across the wide roadway, like the scarcely perceptible sound of scattering pearls.

Every day Remi walked by the Luxembourg Gardens, through the railings in the light morning mist he could see the undulating lawns and the groups of

exotic plants. He would go on to the Rue Carnot and into the studio, the key of which was always left for him under the mat.

Labanne's studio was so full of books that it might have been taken for a second-hand shop. Books were piled round abandoned studies, shrinking under their dry cloths. The floor was entirely covered with piled up books. One walked over leather bindings. Calf-skin backs, with gilded lines and corners, red edges, speckled edges, yellow, blue and red backs, many of them half torn off, lay about in heaps. Big dog-eared folios yawned in every corner, and the boards dropped to pieces beneath the shrivelling leather. A thick layer of dust slowly buried this mass of literature and science.

The walls had once been whitewashed. Bare, so far as the upper half was concerned, they were scribbled over to the height of a man's head, in small text hand, half in Greek half in French. It was the commentary on the Phædo, which Branchut had been inspired to write one sleepless night. The door was covered with inscriptions, traced by various people.

The topmost one, cut with a knife in capital letters, said:

“Woman is more bitter than death.”

The second, in round hand, in crayon, ran:

“Academicians are all bourgeois, Cabanel is a hairdresser's assistant.”

The third in pencil, in a cursive hand, said:

“Laud we the womanly form, which still, as of old, uplifts
Chants hieratic, in praise of the greatest of beauty's gifts.”

(“Gloire aux corps féminins qui, sur le mode antique,
Chantent l'hymne sacré de la beauté plastique.”)
PAUL DION.

The fourth, written in chalk, in an illiterate hand, said:

“I have brought back the clean linen. Monday I will call for the dirty at the porter's lodge.”

The fifth in charcoal, by Labanne himself, said:

“Athens, ever venerable city, if thou hadst not existed, the world would not yet know the meaning of beauty.”

The sixth, inscribed with a hair-pin, which had faintly scratched the paint, declared: “Labanne is a rat. I don’t care a damn for him. — MARIA.”

And there were many others on the door.

In a corner near the stove a horse-blanket was flung on a pile of books and papers. These papers, these books, and this horse-blanket formed the bed of the moralist Branchut.

One day when he was sitting on his horse-blanket dreaming about Demosthenes, German professors, and the Princess Fédora, Remi was copying a watering-pot and putting his tongue out in the excess of his preoccupation. Wanting to change a line in his drawing, he asked the philosopher if he had any stale bread-crumbs in his pocket, and inadvertently addressed him as Monsieur Branchut-du-Tic. Branchut, whom misfortune had made irascible, looked at him with eyes goggling like a lobster, a formidable shiver ran down his nose, and he left the studio in a rage.

The poet Dion, whom he found at the tavern, and Labanne, whom he discovered in front of a box of old books on the quay, took the matter in hand. The poet Dion declared that blood alone could wipe out the insult, but the sceptic Labanne was more humane, and brought about a sort of reconciliation. Remi bore no malice.

The moralist and the creole lived in peace for a month or two; till Branchut, whose fate it was to suffer through women, had the misfortune to look tenderly at the hostess of “The Famished Cat.” Now Branchut’s face, when he wished to express tenderness, was terribly like the face of an epileptic.

He ogled Virginie with bloodshot eyes starting from their orbits; she was terrified, and made a great fuss about her fright. She took every occasion to show the philosopher that he inspired her with virtuous horror; and as at the same time she cast languishing looks at Remi, Branchut suffered all the pangs of jealousy. He was unhappy, and became spiteful.

First of all he found fault with the gentle Labanne, who had doubly wronged him, inasmuch as he was possessed of a small private income, and had rendered the philosopher many services.

Solemnly every morning Branchut would return him the key of the studio, and every morning the sculptor quietly put it under the mat, where every evening Branchut would come and find it.

During the months of July and August Branchut became bitter, sceptical, and strong-minded. He posed as the superior man. He despised women, and said they were inferior beings. He affected not to look at Virginie, when he haughtily demanded bottles of beer from her, for which Labanne paid.

He put forth transcendental theories on art.

"I saw recently in a museum," he said, "the figure of a mammoth traced with a bit of pointed flint on a piece of fossil ivory. This figure dates from a prehistoric period — it predates the oldest of civilisations. It is the work of a stupid savage. But it reveals an artistic sentiment far superior to the most beautiful conceptions of Michael Angelo: it is at once ideal and true. And our best modern artists sacrifice truth to the ideal, or the ideal to truth."

Here he looked maliciously at Labanne, but the latter was quite happy; he approved and even enlarged on his philosopher friend's idea.

"Art," he said, "declines in proportion as thought develops. There were no sculptors left in Greece at the time of Aristotle. Artists are inferior creatures; they are like pregnant women — they bring forth they know not how. Praxiteles produced his Venus as the mother of Aspasia produced Aspasia — quite naturally and quite foolishly. The sculptors of Athens and Rome had not read the Abbé Winckelmann. They knew nothing of aesthetics, yet they made the Theseus of the Parthenon and the Augustus of the Louvre. A clever man produces nothing beautiful or great."

Branchut asked sourly:

"Then in that case why are you a sculptor — you who think you are a clever man? It is true that I have never seen anything of yours which resembled the least bit in the world a statue, a bust, or a bas-relief. You haven't even a clay model or a sketch to show, and it is certainly five years since you touched a chisel. If you keep your studio simply as a refuge for me, I owe it to you and I owe it to myself to tell you that I should not have the slightest trouble in finding another lodging. I have not given you, that I know of, the right to crush me with your charity."

But in spite of the greatness of his soul the philosopher could not remain long on these heights; he became weak once more. He forgot the mammoth in the museum, and could see none but Virginie. He fell into a deadly depression; yet he had a brief, bright hour in his life. He met Virginie one morning coming back from market, a basket on each arm, sweating, puffing, coughing, and choking with incipient asthma. He followed her, rather reluctantly, and she allowed him to carry the basket of meat. He was delighted, but his joy was the cause of his downfall. He hoped and dared everything. One evening he slipped into the kitchen and seized her in his arms as she was washing the dishes. She dropped a

plate and emitted heartrending cries; the Princess Fédora did not shriek so shrilly. This raised a great scandal. The poet Dion was pleased; Mercier's eyes twinkled behind his glasses; Labanne shrugged his shoulders. Remi was a little vexed, but he smiled to himself when he hit on a scheme for revenge.

It was the vengeance of a schoolboy and a savage, and he licked his lips at the thought of it. He let it sleep in his greedy lazy heart, like a pot of jam in a good housekeeper's store-closet.

The poet Dion was again talking about starting a review. The attempt of the previous year had failed because his grandmother's three hundred francs had to be wasted in domestic expenses; but he had received another present of the same sum.

"We must find a title," he said.

For two hours they discussed any number of possible and impossible appellations.

The next day Dion saluted the assembly at "The Famished Cat" with a triumphant cry: "I've got it: *The Idea. The Idea: A new Review.*"

And with his head on one side, his Apollo-like locks thrown back, his face illuminated by a smile, he turned over the pages of an imaginary magazine and read out, as it were in capital letters: "*The Idea: A new Review.* Paul Dion, editor."

"What idea?" asked Labanne, stroking his yellow beard.

"The idea of the mathematical basis, of course," replied Mercier.

"The idea of the superiority of poetry and ideality over prose and reality," replied Dion.

"And also, perhaps," insinuated the moralist Branchut in bitter-sweet tones, rubbing his flexible nose, "and also, perhaps, the idea of the new morality of which I propose to expound the theory, that is of course if it is agreeable to you."

Labanne remarked that the thing had better be called *The Ideas*, and not *The Idea*, as each one seemed to have his own.

But the first title was adhered to, and Dion wrote out on a sheet of notepaper, with the pen Virginie used for her accounts, a summary of the first number, which was to contain: 1. "An Address to the Reader," by Paul Dion.

2. "An article, as yet vague, on philosophy," by Claude Branchut.

3. "An article, still more vague, on the fine arts," by Emile Labanne.

4. "The Mistress who brings Death — a Poem," by Paul Dion.

5. "Something very vague on science," by Guillaume Mercier.

As to theatrical and literary criticisms, the editor would look after them.

The matter thus decided on, Dion discovered, in a badly-paved street near Saint-André des Arts, a printer in distress, who with dull indifference consented to print the magazine. He was a little, pale, bald man, whose melting-away aspect made one think of a candle-end burning in a draught. His affairs were in a pitiful condition. He was a hopeless printer, but he was a printer. He printed. He sent proofs which Dion befouled on all the tables in the café. But they were obliged to admit that copy was lacking, in spite of sundry poems sent from divers parts of Europe to the editor in chief of *The Idea*.

The first number seemed likely to be the more slender, since Branchut lost the pages of his article on philosophy in the various doorways as fast as he wrote them, and Labanne could not compose the first lines of his studies on art until he had read fifteen hundred volumes. Mercier's article did really exist; but the author, who was as cramped in his writing, in his style, and in his ideas, as he was in his clothes, could easily have put the whole thing on the two glasses of his spectacles. As for "The Mistress who brings Death," she was already in her third proof.

It was at this moment that Sainte-Lucie, appointed Secretary to the Staff, proposed to introduce Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse to the poet; he could not help but give them an article, he said.

It was a great occasion the night on which Godet-Laterrasse climbed down from the outside of an omnibus and entered Virginie's establishment. He turned the door-handle with the air of a man who knows himself in demand, and while his entrance was received with a flattering murmur, he crossed the shop with African majesty, tempered by creole languor. When he heard himself hailed as "dear master" by the poet Dion, he showed every tooth in his head, and smiled like an idol. But all of a sudden his face assumed an expression of haughty dislike. He had met Labanne's indifferent glance through the tobacco smoke. He had heard that Labanne had declared that he was going to represent him in an heroic attitude, with the dial of a clock in his waistcoat. Since then he considered him to be the most corrupt of sceptics. Filled with this thought, he turned his horizontal face towards Dion and Mercier, and said: "Young men, beware of scepticism; it is a poisonous breath which dries up the soul in its flower."

He promised to contribute to the magazine an unpublished chapter of his great work on the regeneration of humanity by the black races.

He explained his theory. The black races were untouched by the Christian leprosy, which for eighteen centuries had devoured the white peoples.

He told how, when he was but eleven years old, he was walking alone by the sea, and, looking at its immensity, he said to himself: "Priests can say what they

like; I will never believe that Christianity has done anything for the abolition of slavery.”

When he left, they escorted him to the omnibus. As it approached Sainte-Lucie hailed it. Godet-Laterrasse, having shaken hands all round, took his pupil affectionately by the shoulders, and, drawing him a little to one side, said: “I have forgotten my purse; it is most careless of me! Lend me a few sous.”

Then, having adroitly picked up a franc from the handful of change held out to him, he climbed on to the vehicle and called out: “Go ahead, Remi! Dig into Tacitus!”

CHAPTER VI

IT was quite natural that Remi should be plucked when he went up for his examination the second time. His prospects of a degree were becoming more and more misty and effaced. When Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse commented on his failures, which were certainly not surprising, he managed to make them appear mysterious and questionable.

"It is not you who have been plucked," he said; "it is I. They were aiming at me when they hit you, you may be sure. Ah! these gentlemen of the Sorbonne won't forgive me my last article."

When Remi heard remarks of this kind, he felt so completely knocked over that he did not exactly know if the baccalaureate was a literary examination or a secret society.

He passed the winter in a voluptuous torpor, and when the timid April sun shone on the walls it only half-awakened him.

The sparrows were twittering on the roofs. The half-pay captain was sowing seeds in his green boxes.

Windows, which had been closed for so long, their panes obscured by thick steam, now opened to the pale daylight and the first warm breath of spring. Remi, who had since the summer lost sight and recollection of his friends on the fourth storey, was pleased to see the cage full of canaries and the brass handle of the piano again.

When he caught sight, for the first time, of the mother and daughter in the gilt salon, he almost bowed in a friendly way to them.

A little old man was sitting on the sofa holding his hat and his umbrella between his knees; he seemed to be talking to them in an intimate fashion. He raised his arm, and Remi imagined that he was saying:

"How you have grown, Marie (or Jeanne, or Louise)! Why, you are quite a young lady!"

Remi felt a little cross at seeing a stranger seated in this fashion on his friend's sofa — not that the little old man was unpleasant looking; on the contrary, he had the air of a good fellow. But Remi did not know him, and the thought that the ladies had secrets from him made him unhappy. One cannot foresee everything. He shut his window, and sulked till the next day. He opened it in the morning just to see if the canaries' cage was in its usual place, and saw the young girl, in a round hat, chewing the top of her umbrella and prancing with the impatience of a young horse — a habit of hers when she was ready to go out,

and had to wait while her mother loitered, tying her bonnet-strings in front of the glass. But one must admit that a woman of forty-five can't dress as a little girl can in two or three birdlike darts.

The mother that day, as every day, inspected her daughter's toilet minutely. But there must have been something seriously wrong with the grey frock, for she said something which was received with all sorts of little impatient pouting movements with stamping and marks of despair. Finally, Mademoiselle undid the buttons of her corsage and pushed-to the window, which in a few seconds opened again of its own accord, so that Remi caught a glimpse of the mother standing up with the grey frock in her hand; she was putting a stitch in it, while Mademoiselle, clad in her stays and a short white petticoat, stood waiting.

She turned her head, and saw the student looking at her; then, with the pretty gesture of a child who is being bathed and is chilly, she covered her chest with her two arms. Her lips pronounced some words very rapidly, which were surely:

“Mamma — mamma.”

The mother shrugged her shoulders, and seemed to answer quite calmly:

“Good Lord, my dear! What does it matter?” Then she closed the window nonchalantly.

From that day Remi refrained, though he could not have said why, from observing his opposite neighbours too closely; but he thought they might go away, and he would never see them again, and the thought made him sad. He decided that the degree, as understood by Godet-Laterasse, was not a very important matter, and he resolved to be a painter. To paint seemed to him at once fine and simple. Then suddenly he remembered General T  l  maque.

“I must go and see him,” he said.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER his second failure, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, who was much taken up with public affairs, neglected his pupil considerably. Remi consoled himself for the absence of his tutor by drawing in Labanne's studio. The incomparable sculptor had recently discovered the works of the poet Colardeau in a box on the parapet of the Quai Malaquais, and was carried away with admiration for them.

"Colardeau is the greatest of all French poets," he said.

A heavy heat hung over the city of stone and asphalt, but the moralist Branchut was clothed in a thick overcoat of cloth with a long pile, which, one of his friends said, made him look like a scythe covered with goat's skin. His thoughts dwelt perpetually on woman, and he had never been in such a ferocious humour. He no longer had the appetite with which he had formerly eaten a ha'penny roll every day, but an inextinguishable thirst burnt him under his thick fleece. One day when Remi, under Labanne's direction, was copying for the hundredth time the water-jar, which stood in the winter on the studio stove, the moralist Branchut seized the model vase and went off to fill it at the pump. When he returned, with a wet nose and a dripping beard, the young creole cast a sidelong glance, full of meaning, at him. Branchut called for lightning from heaven, and longed for the deluge. He wrote obscure and terrible sentiments on leaves which he tore from Labanne's most valuable books. A storm freshened the atmosphere of the city and relieved the moralist's over-strained nerves.

Time went by, the passing seasons brought kites in the windy September skies, fogs on the October horizon, hot chestnuts at the doors of the wine shops, oranges on the barrows, the magic-lantern on the Savoyard's back; and when the roofs were covered with snow, the savoury smell of roasted goose in warm dining-rooms, on feast days, such as Christmas, New Year, and Twelfth Night. But time did not change Branchut's heart.

Towards four o'clock on the afternoon of Twelfth Night, Remi was crossing the Place Saint-Sulpice with the poet Dion; he looked at the icicles which hung from the four stone bishops and half hid them, and at the frozen water in the fountain under their feet. He rubbed his hands together, and laughed aloud.

"It won't be very warm on this Place at midnight," he said.

Then they began to discuss — Remi with childish joy, and Dion with more refined satisfaction — a letter they had just sent off by a commissionaire, the opening phrases of which they repeated to one another untiringly:

“You are dark and I am fair. You are strong and I am weak. I understand you, and I love you.”

They had evidently concocted some detestable practical joke, with which they felt pleased and proud.

That evening Branchut dined at “The Famished Cat” with Mercier, who was beginning to look old, and whose shrunken face was almost hidden by his spectacles, with Labanne, who had been much taken up for a week past with a seventeenth-century book on etiquette, the poet Dion, and Sainte-Lucie. Virginie gave them a cabbage soup of powerful bouquet. Branchut pushed away the smoking plateful Labanne offered him. Such heavy food choked him, he said. Labanne had not the slightest idea how to feed one of the *élite*.

A commissioner came in, asked for Monsieur Branchut, and handed him a violet-scented letter in a pearl-grey envelope with a blue monogram. As the philosopher read it, his sensitive nose twitched violently. At last he put it in his pocket (he was wearing a dress-coat Labanne had given him), and looked around mysteriously. All his thin and acrid blood rushed to his pimpled face; he was transfigured. His nose seemed illuminated by an interior flame. Dion was examining the hem of his table-napkin; Remi, with his knife in the salt-cellar, was making hills and valleys with the salt, and seemed entirely lost in the contemplation of the little polar landscapes he was creating, and destroying with the all-powerful capriciousness of a Lapland Jehovah.

The conversation which the commissioner had interrupted was quietly resumed, Labanne alone talking with any energy. Much interested in the etiquette of polite manners in the seventeenth century, he was regretting the days of Louis XIV., and said:

“The Great King was certainly not to be compared with Cæsar Borgia, but anyway he was better than the rights of man and immortal principles!”

Every now and then Branchut slipped his hand into the pocket of his coat and pressed something to his heart. He was lost in a profound reverie, and from his swollen and cracked lips there escaped at intervals suave words alluding to the possible regeneration of mankind by love. At eleven o’clock he rose to go out; first brushing his waistcoat with his cuff, which showed for him extraordinary refinement and unwonted attention to his personal appearance.

“See you to-morrow?” asked Labanne. The philosopher muttered mysteriously something about the probability of his total disappearance, and departed as quietly and swiftly as if he had wings. Shortly after, Dion and Labanne left “The Famished Cat.”

At midnight the moralist, in his dress-coat, was still walking round and round the fountain with its four bishops. The few belated passers-by went quickly

across the square. The water which had overflowed from the basin of the fountain froze on the asphalt, and Branchut slipped at every step. A bitter wind blew through the tails of his coat; but like a blind horse turning a mill-wheel, he turned and turned about the stone fountain indefatigably. The town-hall clock struck one and still the moralist revolved; the silence of the night was broken only by the monotonous tread of two policemen on their beat. At half-past one he drew out the scented note and read it over by the light of a street lamp.

“You are dark and I am fair. You are strong and I am weak. I understand you, and I love you. Come to-night at twelve o’clock to the fountain on the Place Saint-Sulpice.”

There could be no mistaking that, so the philosopher returned to his post. The hoar-frost covered him with a glittering powder; the tails of his coat hung heavy with moisture. The square was deserted. Still he waited. Deceived, disappointed, overcome, he dropped on to a bench and sat there motionless, his head in his hands. When at last he looked up, he thought he caught sight of Dion and Sainte-Lucie disappearing swiftly in the obscurity of the Rue Honoré-Chevalier. A sudden light burst in upon him; his nose trembled with indignation.

He swore to Labanne next day, as he lay draped in his horse-blanket, that he would kill Sainte-Lucie.

“I don’t care much for my life,” he said, “but I care still less for his.”

Labanne tried in vain to pacify him.

At the same time Remi was quietly and obliviously enjoying the warmth of his eider-down quilt, thinking to himself the while:

“I really must go and see General Télémaque one of these days.”

CHAPTER VIII

TÉLÉMAQUE, a linen cap on his head, a white apron round his waist, stood smiling on the threshold of his shop. The dusty avenue, with its meagre plane trees, was inundated by the bright morning sunshine. To the right the view extended as far as the barracks, from whence came a sound of trumpets; to the left, to the round, open space where the Emperor's statue should have been, but where there was only an empty pedestal. On either side of the wide avenue were low houses and bits of waste ground, with washerwomen's clothes-poles in rows. The wine shops at the street corners overlooking these bare patches were painted a brown-red, to attract the eye, and provoke the thirst of soldiers and workmen, even from a distance. All the rest, walls and waste ground alike, were a uniform grey. The two houses opposite to that occupied by Télémaque had plaster façades and were three storeys high. They were ornamented with balustrades, semicircular bow-windows, and niches containing busts — all cracking, peeling, mouldy, their broken windows patched with paper and hung with rags. Groups of children and dogs played in confused heaps in the dust, soldiers were walking slowly towards the river-bank, and straight-petticoated women came and went, carrying pails and baskets.

Télémaque's shop was painted red; in the window were to be seen a sirloin of beef and some steaks laid out on plates. Télémaque was swinging a dead rabbit by the ears and smiling. The lustrous enamel of his eyes subdued yet at the same time set off by his plump cheeks, illuminated his ebony face, with its flat nose and thick lips. His wool was still black and curly, but his forehead, which had yielded to a rectilinear baldness, rose as it receded, disclosing a portion of the skull of which the summit formed a sort of crest.

Miragoane, sitting on her haunches, looked with equal interest at men, animals, and things. Free from disturbing passions, her mind at ease, she warmed herself quietly in the sun. Sometimes she would stretch up her intelligent head and with curled-up tongue lick a little of the coagulated blood on the muzzle of the rabbit as it hung from Télémaque's hands; then, satisfied with this delicate piece of sensuality, she would look down the avenue again, and softly stir her tail.

Télémaque turned the skin of the rabbit inside out as easily as one turns a glove, then putting the skinless animal, glowing with the most brilliant hues, upon a small table, he adroitly cut it up and put the pieces in a dish. Then he went into the shop, the outer door of which opened on to a little garden in which

were several arbours. Having prepared his stew in the cleanest way, he sat down and dreamily watched the copper saucepan singing on the stove. His eyes, which were like the freshly-painted eyes on a new doll, stared vacantly; but no doubt they saw more than the tiled stove, the pewter counter, and the tables covered with American cloth, for he was murmuring to himself a strange, low chant, and talking to invisible beings. Then, having taken another look at the stew, which, as the cooks say, had started on a slow fire:

“Miragoane,” he said, “keep the shop.” Miragoane turned an intelligent eye on him, and came forward as far as the doorstep, where she sat down with an important air. Télémaque went upstairs to a nice bedroom hung with a pictured paper on which a boar-hunt was indefinitely repeated. This room was furnished with a walnut wardrobe, a bed with white cotton hangings, and four tables, and served as the landlord’s bedroom and as a diningroom for private parties on Sundays. Télémaque took a box out of the cupboard, and laying it on the table, opened it with much care. It was full of things wrapped in paper and silk handkerchiefs. He took out first a red shawl, then a pair of beaded epaulettes, some earrings, a cross, a regular plaster of obscure orders, and a big hat trimmed with braid and big gold tassels at each of its two points. When these treasures were spread on the table, he contemplated them with the astonished look of a child; he put the hat with its dangling tassels on his woolly head, wrapped himself in the red shawl, which had belonged to his wife Olivette, and looked at himself in his small shaving mirror.

He was living his past life over again, and had gone back to the time when he was a general. He saw the dazzling coronation ceremony of His Majesty Faustin I., the blue mantles of the dukes, princes and counts, the red coats of the barons; the black face of the Emperor with his golden crown; Olivette, who had come all in her court-dress, in a wheelbarrow, to take her place with the other ladies in the nave of the church.

Everything came back to him, the multi-coloured garments, the salutes of the cannon, the military, music, the cries of “Vive l’Empereur.” His imagination pictured the sumptuous entertainments of the imperial palace, where, beneath the candles and the crystal chandeliers, the ladies of the court danced, till in the furious excitement of waltzing their magnificent black bosoms burst through their white muslin bodices. He saw again his soldiers, drawn up for inspection on the arid and sunburnt plain. Ranked in order of battle they all presented arms to him, while he himself, Télémaque, with his hands behind his back, like Napoleon in the pictures, went up and down the ranks, and said:

“Soldiers, I am very pleased with you.”

Then his imagination presented more sombre pictures. He saw the events which had brought about his fall.

Soulouque, the Emperor, combined with his power as a sovereign the genius of a crafty and cruel child. In December 1851 he determined to make war on the Republic of San Domingo, and General Télémaque, at the head of his brigade, formed part of the expeditionary corps commanded by General Voltaire Castor, Comte de l'Ile-à-Vache. In his proclamation to the army the Emperor said: "Officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers! The men of the East, the cattle graziers of San Domingo, will fly before you. Forward!"

Full of confidence in his Emperor's word, General Télémaque marched proudly at the head of the black regiments which formed the vanguard — his tasselled hat on his head, and on his breast the imperial and military Order of Saint Faustin, as well as the grand cordon of the Haitian Legion of Honour. His uniform was heavily braided with gold, but his feet were bare. All of a sudden a vigorous rattle of musketry surprised him on the border of a plantation of bananas. Astonished, indignant, frightened, he turned his troubled face to his troops, and cried with sincere eloquence:

"Emperor made fun of poor people!"

At the general's words the brigade turned on its heels and ran off as fast as it could. Télémaque headed the flying column, putting into play the muscles of his monkey-like legs, and hanging out his tongue. He didn't give one thought to the guns, the tents, the packets of cartridges, and the cases of biscuit abandoned by the roadside. When Soulouque heard of this military achievement, he trembled in every limb. He had General Voltaire Castor shot by way of raising his spirits somewhat, and he ordered General Télémaque to be arrested; but the latter hid for a week in the bush, till the French consul, at the request of the beautiful Madame Sainte-Lucie, gave him shelter and smuggled him aboard the *Naiade*, just then sailing for Marseilles.

When Télémaque reached this point in his souvenirs, he took on the air of an intelligent dog who has been whipped, and hastily put the cross, the epaulettes, and the cocked-hat back in their wrappings. He looked uneasily out of the window for fear some one should have seen them from the avenue, and having replaced the precious box in the wardrobe and locked it up, he went downstairs again into the shop and poured a few drops of water into the savoury, simmering stew.

The hands of the clock which hung above the counter pointed to eleven, and a crowd of little urchins, with mops of hair in disorder and their shirts hanging out of their ragged breeches, came galloping up to the glass door in a cloud of dust. Télémaque appeared on the threshold bearing a soup-tureen full of bits of

chicken and cold fried fish, all cleanly wrapped in pieces of newspaper. Miragoane gravely and attentively superintended the distribution from the doorstep agitating her tail the while.

The little folks, tumbling over each other, pressed round the negro, who in a stern nasal voice gave the order:

“Right-about face.”

The children fell into line, hands down, chins up, casting longing looks at the soup-tureen.

Télémaque inspected them for some time with a serious pleasure.

“Answer to the roll,” he said. “Number one, number two, number three,” and handed to each one his ration. Numbers one, two, and three scampered off, with both hands hugging their portion of the titbits to their chests, and then wolfing it in a corner while they cast distrustful glances in all directions.

“Numbers four, five, six.”

Number six, who had red hair, knocked down number four, who was lame, and sent his chicken bone rolling into the gutter.

Miragoane cocked her ear, Number four picked up his bone, and General Télémaque, having thus provided for his army, returned to his cooking. Perceiving that the stew was all right, he took a little wooden gun, painted red, from a drawer and called Miragoane. She came up slowly, with drooping ears and a look which meant, “Good Lord! what is the use of all this! Why complicate life needlessly. It does not give me the slightest pleasure to be drilled. But I consent to do it just to be agreeable to my master — Télémaque.”

The dog stood on her hind legs, and hugged the wooden gun against her pink belly.

“Carry arms! Present arms!”

She obeyed the word of command till her legs grew tired, then she dropped on all fours again, and leaving her weapon on the tiles she gave herself a shake and went back to her place on the doorstep.

“Not well done — careless,” said Télémaque. “We must begin all over again to-morrow.”

But Miragoane, motionless and rigid, barked twice. Then she began to run from the doorstep to the stove, making her claws rattle on the tiles. Remi, wearing a bell-shaped straw hat of the kind used by boating-men, walked into the shop and proceeded to make himself known to Télémaque, who was too delighted to say a word. He turned his back and began to uncork a bottle of white wine. “That you, Massa Remi?” he said at last.

“Massa Remi, son of Massa Minister, godson of my poor wife Olivette, who sold arrack, cocoanuts, and sapotillas at Port-au-Prince. Black men kill her

wickedly in her shop, and drink her rum. It was printed in big letters in *Haiti Monitor*. Massa Morel-Latasse, the consul, read it to me. I was sad for Olivette, good woman. How please I am to see you, Massa Remi. Olivette not young when I marry her. They laugh at Télémaque for marrying old woman; but he know the more old a woman am, more good she cooks. Sit down, Massa Remi; dis white wine neber grow no older, 'cause we're going drink it," and he laughed long and loudly at his joke. When he had uncorked the bottle, blown away the wax round the mouth and filled the glasses, he became thoughtful and said:

"Life not last always, but death last always." Then leaning forward he put his thick lips close to Sainte-Lucie's ear and whispered:

"I've got nice little lot of money upstairs, in a bag, to make a fine tombstone for Olivette."

After this he grew more cheerful, asked after Madame Sainte-Lucie, who was a fine woman, he said, and wanted to know what Remi was doing in Paris.

"I am studying for my degree," answered the young man with a yawn.

Télémaque did not know what degree meant, but he supposed it was something good. He half closed his fawning eyes as he clinked glasses. Then he asked if Remi would not be a general some day.

"It's fine," he said, with a sigh, "it's fine to be a general, but it has its drawbacks."

"You were a general yourself once, Télémaque," said Remi, who found the negro amusing; "it was under that wicked ape of a Soulouque, wasn't it?"

Télémaque looked uneasy. His thick lips trembled.

"Massa Remi, you mustn't speak like dat of the Emperor," he stuttered.

Remi had heard his father say that the general was horribly afraid of Soulouque, whom he imagined to be still alive. So he added:

"Do you think his ghost will come in the night and drag you out of bed? He has been dead these last ten years."

The negro shook his head slowly.

"No, Massa Remi," he said.

It was no use Remi saying every one knew that Soulouque died in Jamaica in 1867. The negro replied:

"No, Massa Remi, the Emperor not dead, he in hiding," and Télémaque's forehead puckered over its hard skull.

From the copper saucepan came a pleasing odour of meat and spices. Télémaque sniffed it and grew cheerful again.

"Now we'll breakfast, Massa Remi," he said with a laugh.

He laid the cloth in an arbour hung with Virginia creeper; his little garden looked over fields of lettuces. The banks of the railway to Versailles barred the

horizon. Remi was gazing abstractedly at this meagre country, when the negro reappeared grinning from ear to ear above the smoking dish he carried in both hands.

"It something very good, Massa Remi," he said.

Miragoane, put in charge of the shop while they ate, which they did with a good appetite, turned at intervals towards the table with a resigned expression. When they had finished the rabbit, washed down with Argenteuil wine, they lingered lovingly over an excellent Brie cheese and new bread.

"You are very comfortable here, Télémaque," said Remi, who was himself perfectly happy.

Télémaque sighed deeply, for human nature is never satisfied.

"Do you know what is wanting in my restaurant, Massa Remi? my portrait in a gilt frame. It would look so well over the counter. As I told you, I have nice sum of money upstairs in a bag, for my poor Olivette's tombstone; but I would give a fair slice of it to the painter who did my portrait."

Sainte-Lucie assured the general he should have his portrait, without touching the money meant for his godmother's mausoleum.

"I am a painter," he said to the astonished Télémaque; "next time I come I will bring my box of colours and a canvas and make a portrait of you."

Miragoane announced the arrival of two customers, soldiers who wanted cans of beer. While Télémaque disappeared through the trap-door which shut in the stair to the cellar, Remi, whose pipe had gone out, went to the counter for a match, when who should he see going down the avenue but the little old gentleman he had caught sight of in the gilt drawing-room of the ladies in the Rue des Feuillantines, the same little old gentleman with the same white whiskers and the same umbrella.

"Télémaque, come here, quick, quick!" he cried.

The trap-door was raised, and Télémaque appeared like a subterranean but kindly genius. He laughed from the midst of the bottles of beer which he would have immediately proceeded to uncork and serve to the two waiting soldiers. But Remi caught him by his white jacket and led him, puzzled, to the threshold of the shop.

"Télémaque, do you know that old gentleman?" he asked, pointing a finger at the bent back of the worthy man.

The negro, hugging the two bottles against his chest, answered with a great peal of laughter:

"Why of course, Massa Remi; he my landlord, his name Massa Sarriette. I going to ask him to do some repair in my attic."

“Télémaque, you mustn’t ask that old man to do any repairs,” said Remi; adding in a severe voice:

“Do you pay your rent regularly, Télémaque?”

Was it to be supposed that a restaurant-keeper could live in the same house for twenty-one years and not pay his rent?

Remi then learnt that Monsieur Sarriette was considered a rich man, that he lived most of the time in Normandy, where he had property, and was always measuring public monuments with his umbrella.

The enthusiastic youth exclaimed:

“Télémaque, I will paint your portrait. I will paint you in your general’s uniform, with a red feather in your hat and four epaulettes.”

“That would be beautiful, Massa Remi,” said the black man with a grave and contrite air; “but you mustn’t do it, because it would vex the Emperor who is in hiding. You can paint me in black dress clothes with three diamond studs in my shirt.”

Remi, who never indulged in reflections of any kind, and was never surprised whatever happened around and about him, caught himself wondering, as he walked down the Avenue Saint Germain, why he had been so excited when he saw the old friend of the ladies in the Rue des Feuillantines go by.

CHAPTER IX

HAVING meditated profoundly on the pearl-grey letter on Twelfth Night, and the rendezvous at the fountain, Branchut the moralist finished by building up an ideal conception of these mysterious events. He no longer thirsted for Sainte-Lucie's blood; in his opinion the creole had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

The philosopher arrived, by the help of his inner consciousness alone, at a knowledge of the truth about his adventure. Filled with contempt for the assertions of Remi, who openly acknowledged himself to be the author of the pearl-grey letter, Branchut was convinced with all the certainty of intuition that it was written by an exquisite and unhappy woman of a rare nature and exceptional conditions.

By a series of inductions such as only the brain of a metaphysician could be capable of, the moralist proved to himself by the clearest evidence that this woman was a Danish princess, that her name was Vrang, and that after having attired herself for the appointment at the fountain of the four bishops with ornaments of the most strangely poetical and melancholy character, she had fallen dead in her boudoir, surrounded by tropical plants, whose perfume, symbolical of her love for Branchut, was at once delicious and mortal.

As these sad and elegant facts were revealed to him, one by one, by dint of subjective enquiry and internal cogitation, he communicated them to his friend Labanne, who found nothing surprising in them. His successive discoveries on the subject of the Princess Vrang, however, had the effect of plunging Branchut into a state of melancholy eloquence.

"I must expiate by the most refined tortures," he said, "the incomparable crime of having caused the death of this unparalleled creature, who was nervous as a racehorse, and learned as Hypatia."

Grievous twitchings affected all the nerves of his expressive nose. Vrang became his one idea; he lived only in her memory. In his despair he forgot to borrow any clothes from Labanne, and in his melancholy detachment wandered about the Boulevard Saint-Michel draped in his horse-blanket as in a shroud.

"You see," he would say to his friends when they stopped to speak to him, "I am in mourning." And he would point to his head, on which was something that had a vague resemblance to a crape, twisted round something that had a vague resemblance to a hat.

While he thus wore mourning for the Princess Vrang, Remi was becoming colder and colder towards the hostess of "The Famished Cat." He never ventured alone to the establishment, and would not even leave his companions to get a match from the table by the sink, where Virginie eternally rinsed glasses.

He was growing serious and painting zealously. There was another fellow now in Labanne's studio, a real hard worker, a muscular fellow as strong as a horse, who with sleeves turned up, and open shirt front showing his hairy chest, painted all day without saying a word. His peasant's face, deeply lined and coloured like the earth, garnished with a bristly beard, expressed no sentiment of any kind; his round eyes observed everything, but never gave a clue to his own thoughts. It was Potrel — Potrel of whose ingratitude Virginie was never tired of speaking. He had returned from Fontainebleau, where he had been painting for two years, and Labanne lent him a corner of his studio until the one he had taken at Montmartre should be vacant. Potrel spoke little, and badly: bending over his easel, his palette on his thumb, his eyes half shut, he would reply to all Labanne's wild theories the one word "Possibly," which he articulated as he revived with an indrawn breath the expiring ashes in the blackened bowl of his pipe. One day Labanne said to him:

"The absolute is unrealisable; no artist can express absolute beauty."

"Possibly," answered Potrel, and went on painting. He hired a model, an admirable little Italian, snivelling and cunning, who stole his tobacco, so Sainte-Lucie could now try his hand at "academies."

When Potrel got off his stool to stretch his legs, he would give Remi a few brief but clear words of advice and resume his work.

One morning, when he was scratching his beard and biting his nails, Remi asked him how it was he was not working. Potrel pointed with his hand in the direction of the skylight, and said:

"That cursed gewgaw there prevents my painting."

The "cursed gewgaw" was no other than the sun, just then filling the studio with blinding light.

Potrel had a huge appetite which he satisfied in cabmen's restaurants. When Remi spoke to him of "The Famished Cat," he would simply smile. One day, however, he asked if Virginie had kept her fine figure. After many vain attempts Remi succeeded in enticing him one evening to the establishment in the Rue Saint-Jacques. Virginie, red as a peony, brought him a large slice of ham.

"Eat it, Monsieur Potrel," she said. "It is very good, very delicate. See how white the fat is. You are not drinking anything. Try this beer; I bottled it last month. You used to be fond of beer."

And Potrel ate and drank, while Virginie, standing behind his chair, her face illuminated with a seraphic smile, gasped ecstatically at every mouthful the silent and robust man swallowed.

The hostess did not even notice when Remi left the tavern, and he gave a sigh of relief, like a man who has been eased from an oppressive weight.

On his way home he met the concierge of the house where the two ladies lived going into the wine shop, and a little farther on he saw the man's wife gossiping with the greengrocer. Then an idea suddenly occurred to him. He walked into the deserted lodge, and looked about to see if he could discover the name of the ladies on the fourth storey. Above one of the little pigeon-holes were the words "Madame Lourmel, rentière."

Next day he saw from the window Mademoiselle Lourmel giving her birds water in a small china cup. He watched her involuntarily with a warm and lively sympathy. She saw him, but it was only slowly that she turned aside her frank ingenuous gaze. He noticed that she was no longer a child, and that she was very pretty.

He went at this period several times a week to Courbevoie, and the portrait of Télémaque emerged little by little from the canvas. It was a very bad portrait, but Télémaque was enchanted with it. When the shop was shut at night, he would prop the painting up on a table between two lighted candles, and dance the Calenda before it, or else sing to it in a soft nasal voice:

"Canga-do-ki-la,
Canga-li."

Miragoane, seated on her haunches, gravely took part in the ceremonies. One day she affectionately licked the nose of the portrait: the paint was wet, but the damage done was easily repaired.

Télémaque had moments of regret that Olivette was not on the canvas beside him, dressed in her red shawl. It did not deeply distress him, however, and he continued to dance the Calenda.

CHAPTER X

REMI got up one morning with the pleasant thought in his mind, that he had finished the negro's portrait, and that it was in its way a remarkable work. He could see, framed in the window opposite his, two little hands tapping on the keys of a piano; they were no longer red, and did not tap so hard. He also noticed that the chandelier was imprisoned in a muslin bag, and that there was a great deal of bustling about in the ordinarily calm apartment.

The little hands shut down the piano-lid and disappeared, to reappear carrying leather bags and hat-boxes. Remi, who felt that something of importance was happening, stuck to his post of observation, and kept his eye on the approaches to the house. After two hours' watching he saw the porter come down carrying a pyramid of trunks and boxes; a cab stopped at the door, and he saw Madame Lourmel's servant pile still more travelling bags and boxes in it. Remi seized his paint-box, emptied all the money he had in his secretary into his pocket, and rushed bare-headed, in a jersey and his slippers, downstairs and into the street. He hailed the astonished driver of a passing cab and hurried him in pursuit of the vehicle which had just moved off under its tottering pyramid of luggage, and into which he had seen the skirts of a dress disappearing.

The two cabs crossed Paris, one behind the other, and drew up in the courtyard of the St. Lazare railway station. Remi followed the two ladies, and, still in his unconventional attire, climbed the stairs. Mademoiselle Lourmel turned her head to see this strange traveller, whom she recognised perfectly well. Her look showed a surprise which included amusement, and something of admiration. As he stood by Madame Lourmel at the ticket-office and heard her ask for two tickets for Avranches, he breathed a sigh of relief and also took a ticket for Avranches. Madame Lourmel went off with her daughter to register the luggage, and Remi, who had no formality of that kind to fulfil, decided to do a little useful shopping. He ran to a ready-made clothes-store in the Rue de la Pépinière, bought two or three suits without looking at them, and paid the shopkeeper, who had half a mind to have his extraordinary customer arrested. Suddenly Remi gave a cry of despair:

"Shoes!" he said; "shoes!"

The shopkeeper, a handsome Jew with a goat-like head, an amiable mouth and pitiless eyes, replied coldly that "he didn't keep the article."

"Give me yours, then," said the desperate creole.

But the Israelite, who was becoming more and more uneasy, looked so forbidding that Remi went off in his slippers, putting on some of the new clothes as he went along through the bustle of the garish street. He stopped to snatch a hat hanging outside a shop, and flung down the money for it. It was twenty-seven minutes past four already. Remi tore along towards the station, and by thirty-two minutes past he was in the waiting-room, which had probably never before been entered by a traveller in slippers. A pair of violet eyes welcomed him as he entered and seemed to say:

“We were waiting for you. You are very extraordinary with your brown skin, your new clothes put on all awry, and your bedroom slippers. But we are not in the least afraid of you or annoyed at you; you don’t look at all ill-tempered, and you have a bold air which is rather pleasing. This is all we have to say to you. If you want to know anything more you must ask mamma.”

If the daughter’s eyes talked after this fashion, Madame de Lourmel’s glance betrayed that sort of uneasiness noticeable in a hen when one coaxes her chickens from her with bread crumbs.

Remi left mother and daughter discreetly alone in their carriage, and settled himself at the other end of the train. Having taken his seat, the first question he asked himself was when, where, and how could he get some shoes; then, on counting his money, he found he had twenty-one francs thirty-five centimes left, and felt quite reassured. His second question was, if by any chance he was in love with Mademoiselle Lourmel.

CHAPTER XI

ABOUT a week after Remi's departure, Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse was seized with an ardent desire to see him. With a volume of Tacitus in his pocket, he went off to the Rue des Feuillantines, where he learnt that his pupil had disappeared.

A cloud crossed his noble brow, that brow which, if it had been a mirror, would only have reflected the sky, the gulls of the Pacific, and the constellations of the two hemispheres. People with superior minds are more given to presentiment than ordinary beings. Godet-Laterrasse had a presentiment. That is why, laying aside their old enmity, he went to see Labanne in his studio.

The sculptor, who had no idea of time or space, could tell him nothing. He took him to interview the opulent Virginie, who attributed Remi's flight to a secret sorrow, the nature of which she left unexplained; but she insinuated that she had not failed to anticipate this eventuality. If, as she feared, it was love which had driven Monsieur Sainte-Lucie to despair, she was truly grieved, but one could not please everybody, unless one was the sort of woman which is unfortunately too numerous in these days. She had done nothing to make Monsieur Remi jealous of Monsieur Potrel; she was an honest woman and had nothing to reproach herself with. She appealed to the picture of "The Famished Cat" to bear witness to her innocence, and returned to the dark corner, where she spent most of her time washing glasses.

With a mind full of care, Godet-Laterrasse returned to the heights of Montmartre. He came down again next day on the top of an omnibus and revisited the studio, which he had chosen as his centre of operations. There he found Branchut, who, in his horse-blanket, was occupied in writing a treatise on love. Full of his subject, Branchut proceeded to expound it.

"Love," he said, "can only be absolute between two beings who have never seen each other. Eternal absence is necessary for two souls to be in perfect harmony. Solitude is the condition necessary to the growth of a definite passion."

Godet-Laterrasse resisted the temptations to an oratorical duel on these sublime heights, and asked the moralist if he had seen Sainte-Lucie.

Branchut was totally ignorant of the creole's disappearance, but a sudden intuition enabled him to explain it. In the twinkling of an eye many things were revealed to him. According to him, this disappearance had a not remote connection with the death of the Princess Vrang. Sainte-Lucie's gloomy behaviour, in the circumstances that preceded and accompanied the lamentable

and poetic end of the Princess Vrang, was due, in the moralist's eyes, to an eternal remorse that had taken possession of the soul of this young man, frivolous in appearance, but Machiavellian in reality.

"Princess Vrang had to die," said the philosopher serenely. "It was needful for her to die, so that the love she felt for me might be realised in the absolute. Sainte-Lucie's crime has probably led him to suicide; he intercepted, over and over again, the letters the Princess had written to me, the text of which I have reconstructed from intuition! and with Satanic irony he gave me only the last one."

So said Branchut, whose nose twitched in his livid face touched with spots of colour, and whose eyes were haggard and bloodshot. Labanne arrived just in time to drag the unfortunate tutor out into the street, wildly shaking his umbrella above his head.

"My poor moralist!" said he, "he has never had finer ideas than he has now. A grain of phosphorus in the brain makes a man of genius; unhappily he has two grains, that's the misfortune!"

Labanne remembered having heard Sainte-Lucie speak enthusiastically of a black general who kept a restaurant at Courbevoie; the sculptor thought he might know something. Any way, he would like to see the negro himself.

They got on top of a tram, which took them to the Place de l'Etoile, where Labanne instinctively stopped at the first café, and, having ordered sundry bottles of beer, lost himself in interminable chatter. Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse answered him at great length, and though Labanne did not listen to him, he continued to talk. Many fine theories were aired. All of a sudden the sculptor made a gesture in the air with his thumb, and said:

"It would be quite possible to make that thing bearable to the eye."

"That thing" was the Arc de Triomphe.

"It would be simple, but you'll see no one will think of it. One need only establish a sufficient number of stalls at the foot of the edifice, and let them to cobblers, public letter-writers, and fried-potato sellers, especially the latter, because of the smoke. These stalls ought to be sordid, with incorrect, vulgarly-painted signs. The builders might be allowed to take stone from the monument itself, particularly at the corners; this would soften down the harsh outline. It would be desirable to fill up the holes resulting from these various depredations with a few spadefuls of earth, and plant beech-nuts and acorns. The beeches and oaks would spread out their green branches at different heights, and so break the monotony of the grey surface; their roots, pushing down into the masonry, would cause most picturesque cracks. There would have to be a lot of ivy, but that tenacious plant would not fail us; it thrives on stonework. The wind and the birds

would sow seeds of gilli-flowers, which love old walls, and a thousand other things in the dusty orifices. Saxifrage, eager for moisture, blackberries, and Virginia creeper would spring up and multiply at random. The top of the edifice would be honeycombed with pigeons' nests; the swallows would plaster theirs under the vaulting; troops of crows, attracted by the dead dormice and field mice, would swoop down at nightfall. Thus, the Arc de Triomphe, if kept up with some sort of intelligent care, would be looked at by poets, copied by painters, and considered as a work of art. Waiter, another *bock*. ”

Night was falling. The artist and the thinker decided that they would not go any further, so they took the tram back to Montparnasse.

CHAPTER XII

MADAME LOURMEL and her daughter settled themselves in a little stone house with a thatched roof at a small unfrequented seaside place, a few miles from Avranches.

Remi, happy and intoxicated with the salt air, went off with his paint-box to a neighbouring fair. He had only fourteen francs seventy centimes left, but he had a pair of shoes.

Lines of carts were drawn up on the outskirts of the market-place. Under the trees there was a great assembly of red faces, fringed with fair beards, the rumps of calves plastered with dung, horned cattle, pink muzzles, shining haunches, and white caps. The squealing of pigs being taken out of carts was heard above every other sound of man or beast. Women, with cotton fichus and gold chains round their necks, stood stolidly in their straight skirts by the waggons, keenly watching over them, while the men, in full-plaited blue blouses, did business over a pot of cider in some *cabaret* full of flies.

Remi passed under the holly branch above the door, and sat down at one of the tables with his pencil and paper. He made a sketch of a peasant, then another and another, then one of a group of peasants who were watching him. He said he would do the portrait of any one of them for a franc; but this offer did not loosen their pursestrings. "Go and get your sweethearts," he said; "I will draw them."

There was a murmur in the crowd, and three or four particularly jovial fellows pushed a bouncing girl in front of Remi. She was purple, almost violet, and she was laughing from ear to ear. Remi made a sketch of her, in which she could be recognised by her cap and her cross.

One of the jovial fellows pulled a franc out of a woollen stocking and handed it to the painter, then, neatly folding the picture in four, he tucked it under his smock.

The general opinion was that the Parisian could make a good likeness, and Remi went back with several pieces of silver in his pocket. He slept in the most rustic inn in the village, where Madame Lourmel had taken up her quarters, and appeared next day on the dazzling beach, where the striped bathing machines were drawn up in line.

The sea, blue on the horizon, was coming in slowly, breaking on the sand in oily green waves edged with foam. A soft damp sky, one of those treacherous skies which both caress and scorch the tender skins of city dwellers, arched in the round horizon. Skinny women in bathing costumes, their hair in water-proof

caps, were scurrying before the incoming waves. He saw Mademoiselle Lourmel; she was wearing a fluttering violet veil.

He wanted to throw his arms round her neck; but he caught sight of Monsieur Sarriette, with the same white whiskers and the same umbrella, coming down a little path to the shore.

“Good morning, Monsieur Sarriette,” he said to the astonished old man.

At the end of a quarter of an hour they were great friends.

“I am very fond of old monuments,” said Monsieur Sarriette, “and, believe me or not, I spent three weeks measuring all the walls of the Abbey on Saint-Michael’s Mount. I have a way of my own of taking measurements — I use my umbrella. The average height of the Abbey ramparts is seventy-two umbrellas, and in the church the pillars of the nave measure no less than thirty-seven umbrellas, three handles, and two ferrules.”

Monsieur Sarriette was delighted to hear that Remi was a painter. They arranged to explore the whole countryside together; Remi was to make sketches and Monsieur Sarriette was to measure the historical buildings.

THE FAMISHED CAT

“Present me to Madame Lourmel,” said Remi.

“Monsieur Remi Sainte-Lucie, son of Monsieur Sainte-Lucie, a former Minister of Haïti,” said the good man at this request.

Remi bowed low first to Madame Lourmel, who was dumb with astonishment, then to the girl, who opened her violet eyes widely and smiled with her flower-like mouth.

That evening Madame Lourmel and her daughter leaned at their window breathing the salt air and watching the moon rise over the sparkling sea.

“But, my dear child,” said Madame Lourmel, “we know nothing about his family, or his fortune, or his mode of life.”

“But, mamma, I love him,” answered the girl, with the audacity of innocence.

“What do you mean, Jeanne? You know nothing about him,” said the mother.

And Jeanne, whose beautiful eyes were shining with a slightly rebellious tenderness, answered:

“Perhaps I don’t know him, but I know him again.”

CHAPTER XIII

MONSIEUR ALIDOR SAINTE - LUCIE had been twelve hours in Paris and had not yet seen his son. He had looked for him at the railway station and waited in vain for him at the hotel. Remi's absence irritated him, his nerves were shaken by his long voyage, and in the peaceful bed at the hotel he could still feel the rolling of the ship and the oscillation of the express train. He awoke in a bad humour; the vague uneasiness of his limbs spread to his brain.

Lying back in a cab, jolted by the rough paving of the streets leading up to Montmartre, he thought with dissatisfaction of his son's education. Godet-Laterrasse did not appear to have troubled himself much about it. Four years had gone by and Remi had not taken his bachelor's degree. It was for such a result as this that he had chosen a poor but superior man as tutor. He had expected better things of Godet-Laterrasse, who spoke so eloquently and so austere in political cafés.

The letters the man wrote him annoyed him; they were so indefinite and so hollow. He was furthermore furious with Remi for not coming to the station to embrace him as he should have done. The smell of fried fish rose to his nostrils exasperatingly. The cab went slowly, drawn by a lean horse which, with a hanging head and a long tongue, offered its crupper to the whip. At last the cabman stopped without saying a word, and the hundred and sixty steps of the Passage Cotin rose steeply before the cab door. Monsieur Alidor, having alighted, handed the man a five-franc piece. The latter, pimply faced, huge and covered with dust, put it between his teeth without a word of explanation. Then followed a long mute comedy; the cabman turned his colossal body slowly on the seat, while he dived into one of his pockets from which he drew a bag. Then he stopped to survey his horse which shook convulsively, explored another pocket, urged his horse several paces forward to get out of the way of a waggon, from which there was not the slightest danger. Finally, he produced seven sous from the depths of his red waistcoat, and proffered them to his exasperated fare. It was all the change he had. Monsieur Alidor turned his back on him in a raging temper, and he drove away, grumbling and plying his whip.

The mulatto's irreproachable patent shoes cracked on the disjointed stones of the Passage Cotin as they climbed step by step the arduous way, which even in mid-summer was noxious and greasy. At length, after slipping upon the viscous steps of the interior staircase, Monsieur Alidor tugged viciously at the deer's foot, which served as a bell-pull at the mouldy doorway. After waiting several

minutes the door opened cautiously, and a head, enveloped in a multi-coloured handkerchief, peeped out. The superior man, aroused from a profound sleep, had only had time to slip into a pair of trousers spattered all over with mud of long standing. The room smelt of damp tobacco; a greenish light, nearly exhausted by the numerous indirect channels it traversed painfully, filtered through the dirty window. Political caricatures were pinned on the walls, the washing-stand was covered with tattered, unbound volumes, and a piece of soap, a comb, and half a roll of bread lay among the manuscripts and dictionaries on the writing-table. These things spoke so plainly of habits of sloth and disorder, that after one glance round the room, Sainte-Lucie felt he knew the tutor as well as if he had followed him from café to café for twenty years. The unfortunate creole tried to make up for the ignominy of his dwelling by the extreme dignity of his bearing.

"Excuse me," he said to the former minister, "for receiving you in the disordered cell of a modern anchorite." Then he added, drawing himself up, "We are the Benedictines of the nineteenth century." And he tried to smuggle into his pockets the combs and the crusts of bread which disfigured the table.

Sainte-Lucie had the sense to recognise that he had deceived himself, but had not been deceived. For the matter of that, how could Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse deceive any one? The poor, little, dirty lizard of a man was pitiful to behold, but if there was one sentiment foreign to Sainte-Lucie's soul, it was pity. And that he had only himself to blame, made him the less forgiving to the innocent tutor. In his anger he bit his lips, and his eyes grew sombre, but it pleased him for the moment to dissimulate. His gentle voice took on an accent which was almost caressing as he said:

"My dear Godet, forgive me for having surprised you in your bed" (here he threw a terrible glance at the object he politely named *a bed*). "You are the first person I have called on. We will go now and surprise Remi. I wrote to tell him of my arrival, but he did not trouble himself to meet me. I'll pull his ears for him."

At these words a shiver of terror shook the frame of the tutor, who however far he threw his head back still looked up into the tall mulatto's enigmatical face.

He tried to smile, and stammered out something about having given Remi a holiday for the day, and that he had no doubt gone into the country with his friends. The wretched man thus gained a day's respite; he spent it in researches which only tired him without resulting in any discovery.

By eight o'clock the next morning Monsieur Sainte-Lucie was again in the anchorite's cell, which the Benedictine of the nineteenth century had tidied up a little. He himself wore a white necktie, and that stoical expression which rendered him so remarkable on ceremonial occasions. It was not only fear of

Soulouque's former minister which troubled him. He had but small credit in Bather's Alley, and as he did not possess a franc in the world he was in a fix. The two hundred francs which the consul of Haïti remitted to him regularly every month went mostly in paying old debts to various tradesmen, for he was honest; what remained never lasted long. He loved to throw money about, and now he did not possess a franc. His misery, as he followed Sainte-Lucie, was so excessive it blinded him, made him giddy and little by little indifferent as to what might happen. The mulatto's voice ordering the cabman to drive to the Rue des Feuillantines brought him to his senses, and he endeavoured to postpone the climax for a few hours.

"Dear sir," he said, "we shall be more likely to find Remi in the afternoon, at the time for our lessons."

The sly, suspicious Sainte-Lucie felt that something was being hidden from him, but it afforded him a kind of pleasure to pile up grievances in his memory, so he replied with perfect good nature:

"Very well; we will go to breakfast. You must be hungry, Monsieur Godet."

They breakfasted in a café on the boulevard. The tutor ate little, and fearfully watched his huge companion devouring the mass of food that his bulk demanded. The man had never seemed to him so broad and so tall. Enormous muscular bronze arms were visible through the Haitian's cuffs with their gold links. He talked in a voice which was almost childishly gentle, and the twinkling of his cruel eyes was softened by the lashes he lowered so trustingly. And that trustfulness added to the tutor's anguish.

The breakfast dragged on to liqueurs and cigars, but finish it did at last; then a waiter called a cab, and parent and tutor started for the Rue des Feuillantines.

Nothing but a miracle could save him now, and Godet half expected, by the intervention of Providence, to find Remi in his room, "digging away at Tacitus."

The landlady of the hotel dashed his hopes to the ground with her first word.

"Monsieur Remi has not come back," she said; "you ought to inform the police."

Monsieur Alidor folded his arms and turned towards the tutor. The colour of his face was unchanged, but his lips were white and his eyes bloodshot.

"Where is he?" he hissed through his closed teeth. "You are responsible for him."

He stretched out his powerful hand and grasped the tutor's arm, who, as the earth did not open beneath him, flung back his head and contemplated the staircase. Even in his downfall he was sublime. Sainte-Lucie, looking round, saw rows of brass candlesticks on a shelf, beneath which hung keys each bearing a numbered tag and a spirit merchant's advertisement. These things bore witness

to European civilisation. Had he instead of them seen a sandy plain, the abrupt sides of a deep ravine, or the palm-trees of his native island, he would in all probability have given way to his desire to strangle the tutor. He abstained from so doing, out of respect for European manners, and contented himself with saying:

“I shall not leave you until you have found him.” Then began a series of drives in cabs to such places as Godet-Laterrasse could suggest. He dined with the mulatto in sumptuous restaurants, ate of succulent dishes, and received the obsequious smiles of waiters. In the evening he mounted the thickly carpeted staircase of Sainte-Lucie’s hotel, the inordinately elongated shadow of his inevitable companion mounting by his side. He was shown into a fine bedroom, and heard the key turn in the lock behind him. When the door opened next morning, it would be for him to resume his life of painful splendour.

There was always a cab waiting for them in the street, which took them on an unceasing round the whole day through. They drove to “The Famished Cat,” where Virginie assured the father of the lively interest she took in his son.

She had often mended Monsieur Remi’s linen, she said. She would have gone to the stake for him. She was not like so many women one sees about. “Go and look in the Morgue,” she added with a sigh.

She dived into her kitchen, and reappeared a moment later, her eyes screwed up and her nose red, and in her hand a bill which Monsieur Remi had not settled.

She profited too by the occasion to remind Monsieur Godet that he also owed her for sundry *bocks*. But the man of iron had forgotten his purse. Besides, he had given up the struggle; his ambulatory prison exhausted him. He was dragged from “The Famished Cat” to Labanne’s studio. The sculptor stroked his ruddy beard and declared that he did not as yet “see” the expiatory monument to the Victims of Tyranny, but that he was studying the flora of the Antilles. He showed Monsieur Sainte-Lucie an easel, already half buried under a pile of books.

“That was Remi’s easel,” he said; “the young scoundrel was beginning to paint as dexterously as a monkey.”

“Is my son a painter?” exclaimed Sainte-Lucie.

Then with a gesture which was now familiar to him, he hoisted the tutor into the cab which was waiting.

They went to the prefecture of police; they went to see Dion, who was busy writing a poem. On the wall hung a pair of crossed foils, and a death’s-head, wearing a mask fringed with lace, ornamented his bookcase.

They went to see Mercier, who was living with a high-coloured, formidably built dame — a *sage-femme* by profession.

They explored the deepest depths of Batignolles till they found Potrel painting in his studio. They went to see a young lady called Marie, and a young lady called Louise, who were very playful with the former minister and called him “papa.” One day, after an extra good breakfast, Godet-Laterrasse, seeing the cab already waiting to carry him off, asked if he might at least be allowed to go to his apartment to get a clean shirt and some socks. Sainte-Lucie, without answering him, ordered the cabman to stop at the first hosier’s he came to.

That same day they went to visit Télémaque. It was the first time that Miragoane had seen a cab stop at her master’s door, and she greeted it by barking furiously. When Télémaque saw Soulouque’s former minister get out of it, he was seized with respect and terror.

“That you, Massa Sainte-Lucie?” were the only words he could say, though his mouth remained open, and he cast furtive glances towards the cab, fearful lest the Emperor himself should be hidden in it. Once reassured on this point, he smiled widely at Monsieur Godet-Laterrasse, and went down into the cellar in search of bottled beer.

During his absence Sainte-Lucie examined the portrait, which in its gilded frame hung over the counter.

“Isn’t it fine, massa? isn’t it really beautiful?” said the negro, his head appearing above the trapdoor, on a level with the floor. “It is your son, massa, who painted it. Massa Remi, he is a sorcerer.”

The father turned two venomous eyes towards the tutor and said nothing.

When Télémaque learned from the former minister of Remi’s disappearance, he pondered for a long time. His half-closed eyes, like those of a cat dropping off to sleep, seemed to interrogate those of Miragoane. Finally he shook his head, and said with religious gravity:

“Massa, it is love which has carried away the young man. Young men are moved by love, and agitated, as Brother Voodoo is agitated when he dances on the serpent’s cage. There is something good about an old woman who knows how to cook: but there is something good, too, about a pretty young girl.”

Here Télémaque held his peace.

“Do you know where my son is?” asked Monsieur Sainte-Lucie.

“Yes, massa,” replied Télémaque; “he is where the young lady is.”

When he was asked where was the young lady of whom he spoke, he replied, with an infantine smile:

“I don’t know, massa.”

And nothing more could be got out of him, so Sainte-Lucie bundled the tutor with his packet of shirts and socks back into the cab, and conjured Télémaque to let him know anything he could find out about Remi.

CHAPTER XIV

TÉLÉMAQUE was dressed in his best black clothes, in which he looked so respectable that the waiter at the hotel unhesitatingly showed him up the main staircase.

“Good morning, massa,” he said to Monsieur Alidor, whom he found arrayed in a pink sleeping suit. “I know where Massa Remi is; he where the young lady is, and the young lady is at the seaside, at Avranches.”

He then explained that, having several times noticed the young man was much interested in Monsieur Sarriette, his landlord at Courbevoie, he thought that perhaps it might be because of something to do with a young lady. The butcher’s wife and the baker’s wife had both told him that Monsieur Sarriette, who received few visitors, was the guardian of a girl who had lost her father, and lived with her mother in the Rue des Feuillantines. Every one said the young lady was very pretty. Hearing further that Monsieur Sarriette had gone to join his ward at a little village near Avranches, Télémaque felt quite sure that Massa Remi had gone to Avranches too. He declared — that Brother Joseph the — prophet could not have divined things better, even though he had first danced on his serpent’s cage.

Monsieur Sainte-Lucie went at once to fetch the tutor from his prison. He was beginning to get used to his well-fed and stupefying life, and merely looked at the ceiling with the air of a poodle and a martyr, which he could so affectingly assume when, — with — cruel irony, he — was — ordered to pack his trunks. A waiter was sent out to buy him some handkerchiefs, and — soon, seated beside the mulatto, he was in the train going to Normandy. The two travellers spent the night at Avranches.

The next day, while the morning sun shone on the bay, turning its sands to silver, and showing up the brown crenellated buildings on Saint Michael’s Mount, Sainte-Lucie dragged Godet-Laterrasse to — the — omnibus which — was — to take them to the little bathing-place. He took his place in the *coupé*, and put his prisoner under the tilt, where he was squeezed between two packing-cases, the corners of which stuck into his sides. As soon as they reached the village, Sainte-Lucie locked his victim up in a bedroom in the hotel.

The landlady of the inn, being interrogated, told him that Monsieur Remi with his paint-box, accompanied by Monsieur Sarriette, had gone to the cliffs, and there, sure enough, after a ten minutes’ walk, Monsieur Alidor found his son tranquilly sketching the rocks. The father wanted to beat him with his walking-

stick, and at the same time hug him to his heart. He was still undecided which desire to satisfy when Remi saw him, and, springing up, threw his arms round his neck.

He was no longer the great sulky boy whom his father had left four years ago; he was a robust, well-grown young fellow, good-humoured and wide awake, with an honest, smiling face.

“How glad I am that you have come, papa,” he said. “I was just going to write to you. This is Monsieur Sarriette — let me present him to you; he will introduce you to Madame and Mademoiselle Lourmel.”

Monsieur Sarriette left off measuring the cliff with his umbrella and bowed.

That evening, beneath an innumerable cohort of stars, Monsieur Alidor Sainte-Lucie, adorned with all his creole airs and graces, offered his arm to Madame Lourmel, and led her for a stroll along the beach.

Remi walked by the side of Jeanne, and noted the blue shadows her long lashes cast on her rounded cheeks. She raised her eyes, cool as violets steeped in dew, to the young man, and a ray of moonlight shone on her pretty teeth, as she said:

“Mamma could not understand — she could not understand a bit — why you should travel in the same train with us, without a hat, too, and in your slippers and jersey. But I knew quite well that it was because you wanted to marry me.”

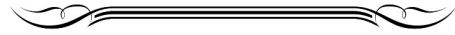
When Monsieur Alidor found himself alone with his son, he said in a half-scolding, half tender tone:

“She is a very nice girl. You don’t deserve such a nice girl. It was wrong of me not to tell Madame Lourmel the kind of life you have been leading in Paris, you young scamp. Well, anyhow, do you think you know how to paint?”

Then all of a sudden he struck his forehead.

“I have left that fool of a Godet locked up all this time in his room!” he cried.

BALTHASAR AND OTHER WORKS



Translated by Mrs. John Lane

CONTENTS

[BALTHASAR](#)

[THE CURÉ'S MIGNONETTE](#)

[M. PIGEONNEAU](#)

[THE DAUGHTER OF LILITH](#)

[LAETA ACILIA](#)

[THE RED EGG](#)

BALTHASAR

TO THE VICOMTE EUGÈNE MELCHIOR DE VOGUE

“Magos regos fere habuit Oriens.”

— Tertullian.

I.

In those days Balthasar, whom the Greeks called Saracin, reigned in Ethiopia. He was black, but comely of countenance. He had a simple soul and a generous heart. The third year of his reign, which was the twenty-second of his age, he left his dominions on a visit to Balkis, Queen of Sheba. The mage Sembobitis and the eunuch Menkera accompanied him. He had in his train seventy-five camels bearing cinnamon, myrrh, gold dust, and elephants' tusks.

As they rode, Sembobitis instructed him in the influences of the planets,* as well as in the virtues of precious stones, and Menkera sang to him canticles from the sacred mysteries. He paid but little heed to them, but amused himself instead watching the jackals with their ears pricked up, sitting erect on the edge of the desert.

* The East commonly held kings versed in magic.

At last, after a march of twelve days, Balthasar became conscious of the fragrance of roses, and very soon they saw the gardens that surround the city of Sheba. On their way they passed young girls dancing under pomegranate trees in full bloom.

“The dance,” said Sembobitis the mage, “is a prayer.”

“One could sell these women for a great price,” said Menkera the eunuch.

As they entered the city they were amazed at the extent of the sheds and warehouses and workshops that lay before them, and also at the immense quantities of merchandise with which these were piled.

For a long time they walked through streets thronged with chariots, street porters, donkeys and donkey-drivers, until all at once the marble walls, the purple awnings and the gold cupolas of the palace of Balkis, lay spread out before them.

The Queen of Sheba received them in a courtyard cooled by jets of perfumed water which fell with a tinkling cadence like a shower of pearls.

Smiling, she stood before them in a jewelled robe.

At sight of her Balthasar was greatly troubled.

She seemed to him lovelier than a dream and more beautiful than desire.

“My lord,” and Sembobitis spoke under his breath, “remember to conclude a good commercial treaty with the queen.”

“Have a care, my lord,” Menkera added. “It is said she employs magic with which to gain the love of men.”

Then, having prostrated themselves, the mage and the eunuch retired.

Balthasar, left alone with Balkis, tried to speak; he opened his mouth but he could not utter a word. He said to himself, “The queen will be angered at my silence.”

But the queen still smiled and looked not at all angry. She was the first to speak with a voice sweeter than the sweetest music.

“Be welcome, and sit down at my side.” And with a slender finger like a ray of white light she pointed to the purple cushions on the ground. Balthasar sat down, gave a great sigh, and grasping a cushion in each hand he cried hastily:

“Madam, I would these two cushions were two giants, your enemies; I would wring their necks.”

And as he spoke he clutched the cushions with such violence in his hands that the delicate stuff cracked and out flew a cloud of snow-white down. One of the tiny feathers swayed a moment in the air and then alighted on the bosom of the queen.

“My lord Balthasar,” Balkis said, blushing; “why do you wish to kill giants?”

“Because I love you,” said Balthasar.

“Tell me,” Balkis asked, “is the water good in the wells of your capital?”

“Yes,” Balthasar replied in some surprise.

“I am also curious to know,” Balkis continued, “how a dry conserve of fruit is made in Ethiopia?”

The king did not know what to answer.

“Now please tell me, please,” she urged.

Whereupon with a mighty effort of memory he tried to describe how Ethiopian cooks preserve quinces in honey. But she did not listen. And suddenly, she interrupted him.

“My lord, it is said that you love your neighbour, Queen Candace. Is she more beautiful than I am? Do not deceive me.”

“More beautiful than you, madam,” Balthasar cried as he fell at the feet of Balkis, “how could that possibly be!”

“Well, then, her eyes? her mouth, her colour? her throat?” the queen continued.

With his arms outstretched towards her, Balthasar cried:

“Give me but the little feather that has fallen on your neck and in return you shall have half my kingdom as well as the wise Sembobitis and Menkera the

eunuch.”

But she rose and fled with a ripple of dear laughter.

When the mage and the eunuch returned they found their master plunged deep in thought which was not his custom.

“My lord!” asked Sembobitis, “have you concluded a good commercial treaty?”

That day Balthasar supped with the Queen of Sheba and drank the wine of the palm-tree.

“It is true, then,” said Balkis as they supped together, “that Queen Guidace is not so beautiful as I?”

“Queen Candace is black,” replied Balthasar.

Balkis looked expressively at Balthasar.

“One may be black and yet not ill-looking,” she said.

“Balkis!” cried the king.

He said no more, but seized her in his arms, and the head of the queen sank back under the pressure of his lips. But he saw that she was weeping. Thereupon he spoke to her in the low, caressing tones that nurses use to their nurslings. He called her his little blossom and his little star.

“Why do you weep?” he asked. “And what must one do to dry your tears? If you have a desire tell me and it shall be fulfilled.”

She ceased weeping, but she was sunk deep in thought. He implored her a long time to tell him her desire. And at last she spoke.

“I wish to know fear.”

And as Balthasar did not seem to understand, she explained to him that for a long time past she had greatly longed to face some unknown danger, but she could not, for the men and gods of Sheba watched over her.

“And yet,” she added with a sigh, “during the night I long to feel the delicious chill of terror penetrate my flesh. To have my hair stand up on my head with horror. O! it would be such joy to be afraid!”

She twined her arms about the neck of the dusky king, and said with the voice of a pleading child:

“Night has come. Let us go through the town in disguise. Are you willing?”

He agreed. She ran to the window at once and looked through the lattice into the square below.

“A beggar is lying against the palace wall. Give him your garments and ask him in exchange for his camel-hair turban and the coarse cloth girt about his loins. Be quick and I will dress myself.”

And she ran out of the banqueting-hall joyfully clapping her hands one against the other.

Balthasar took off his linen tunic embroidered with gold and girded himself with the skirt of the beggar. It gave him the look of a real slave. The queen soon reappeared dressed in the blue seamless garment of the women who work in the fields.

“Come!” she said.

And she dragged Balthasar along the narrow corridors towards a little door which opened on the fields.

II.

The night was dark, and in the darkness of the night Balkis looked very small.

She led Balthasar to one of the taverns where wastrels and street porters foregathered along with prostitutes. The two sat down at a table and saw through the foul air by the light of a fetid lamp, unclean human brutes attack each other with fists and knives for a woman or a cup of fermented liquor, while others with clenched fists snored under the tables. The tavern-keeper, lying on a pile of sacking, watched the drunken brawlers with a prudent eye. Balkis, having seen some salt fish hanging from the rafters of the ceiling, said to her companion:

“I much wish to eat one of these fish with pounded onions.”

Balthasar gave the order. When she had eaten he discovered that he had forgotten to bring money. It gave him no concern, for he thought that he could slip out with her without paying the reckoning. But the tavern-keeper barred their way, calling them a vile slave and a worthless she-ass. Balthasar struck him to the ground with a blow of his fist. Whereupon some of the drinkers drew their knives and flung themselves on the two strangers. But the black man, seizing an enormous pestle used to pound Egyptian onions, knocked down two of his assailants and forced the others back. And all the while he was conscious of the warmth of Balkis’ body as she cowered close against him; it was this which made him invincible.

The tavern-keeper’s friends, not daring to approach again, flung at him from the end of the pot-house jars of oil, pewter vessels, burning lamps, and even the huge bronze cauldron in which a whole sheep was stewing. This cauldron fell

with a horrible crash on Balthasar's head and split his skull. For a moment he stood as if dazed, and then summoning all his strength he flung the cauldron back with such force that its weight was increased tenfold. The shock of the hurtling metal was mingled with indescribable roars and death rattles. Profiting by the terror of the survivors, and fearing that Balkis might be injured, he seized her in his arms and fled with her through the silence and darkness of the lonely byways. The stillness of night enveloped the earth, and the fugitives heard the clamour of the women and the carousers, who pursued them at haphazard, die away in the darkness. Soon they heard nothing more than the sound of dripping blood as it fell from the brow of Balthasar on the breast of Balkis.

"I love you," the queen murmured.

And by the light of the moon as it emerged from behind a cloud the king saw the white and liquid radiance of her half-closed eyes. They descended the dry bed of a stream, and suddenly Balthasar's foot slipped on the moss and they fell together locked in each other's embrace. They seemed to sink forever into a delicious void, and the world of the living ceased to exist for them. They were still plunged in the enchanting forgetfulness of time, space and separate existence, when at daybreak the gazelles came to drink out of the hollows among the stones.

At that moment a passing band of brigands discovered the two lovers lying on the moss.

"They are poor," they said, "but we shall sell them for a great price, for they are so young and beautiful."

Upon which they surrounded them, and having bound them they tied them to the tail of an ass and proceeded on their way.

The black man so bound threatened the brigands with death. But Balkis, who shivered in the cool, fresh air of the morning, only smiled, as if at something unseen.

They tramped through frightful solitudes until the heat of mid-day made itself felt. The sun was already high when the brigands unbound their prisoners, and, letting them sit in the shade of a rock, threw them some mouldy bread which Balthasar disdained to touch but which Balkis ate greedily.

She laughed. And when the brigand chief asked why she laughed, she replied:

"I laugh at the thought that I shall have you all hanged."

"Indeed!" cried the chief, "a curious assertion in the mouth of a scullery wench like you, my love! Doubtless you will hang us all by aid of that blackamoor gallant of yours?"

At this insult Balthasar flew into a fearful rage, and he flung himself on the brigand and clutched his neck with such violence that he nearly strangled him.

But the other drew his knife and plunged it into his body to the very hilt. The poor king rolled to earth, and as he turned on Balkis a dying glance his sight faded.

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At this moment was heard an uproar of men, horses and weapons, and Balkis recognised her trusty Abner who had come at the head of her guards to rescue his queen, of whose mysterious disappearance he had heard during the night.

Three times he prostrated himself at the feet of Balkis, and ordered the litter to advance which had been prepared to receive her. In the meantime the guards bound the hands of the brigands. The queen turned towards the chief and said gently: "You cannot accuse me of having made you an idle promise, my friend, when I said you would be hanged."

The mage Sembobitis and Menkera the eunuch, who stood beside Abner, gave utterance to terrible cries when they saw their king lying motionless on the ground with a knife in his stomach. They raised him with great care. Sembobitis, who was highly versed in the science of medicine, saw that he still breathed. He applied a temporary bandage while Menkera wiped the foam from the king's lips. Then they bound him to a horse and led him gently to the palace of the queen.

For fifteen days Balthasar lay in the agonies of delirium. He raved without ceasing of the steaming cauldron and the moss in the ravine, and he incessantly cried aloud for Balkis. At last, on the sixteenth day, he opened his eyes and saw at his bedside Sembobitis and Menkera, but he did not see the queen.

"Where is she? What is she doing?"

"My lord," replied Menkera, "she is closeted with the King of Comagena."

"They are doubtless agreeing to an exchange of merchandise," added the sage Sembobitis.

"But be not so disturbed, my lord, or you will redouble your fever."

"I must see her," cried Balthasar. And he flew towards the apartments of the queen, and neither the sage nor the eunuch could restrain him. On nearing the bedchamber he beheld the King of Comagena come forth covered with gold and glittering like the sun. Balkis, smiling and with eyes closed, lay on a purple couch. "My Balkis, my Balkis!" cried Balthasar. She did not even turn her head but seemed to prolong a dream.

Balthasar approached and took her hand which she rudely snatched away.

"What do you want?" she said.

"Do you ask?" the black king answered, and burst into tears.

She turned on him her hard, calm eyes.

Then he realised that she had forgotten everything, and he reminded her of the night of the stream.

“In truth, my lord,” said she, “I do not know to what you refer. The wine of the palm does not agree with you. You must have dreamed.”

“What,” cried the unhappy king, wringing his hands, “your kisses, and the knife which has left its mark on me, are these dreams?”

She rose; the jewels on her robe made a sound as of hail and flashed forth lightnings.

“My lord,” she said, “it is the hour my council assembles. I have not the leisure to interpret the dreams of your suffering brain. Take some repose. Farewell.”

Balthasar felt himself sinking, but with a supreme effort not to betray his weakness to this wicked woman, he ran to his room where he fell in a swoon and his wound re-opened.

IV

For three weeks he remained unconscious and as one dead, but having on the twenty-second day recovered his senses, he seized the hand of Sembobitis, who, with Menkera, watched over him, and cried, weeping:

“O, my friends, how happy you are, one to be old and the other the same as old. But no! there is no happiness on earth, everything is bad, for love is an evil and Balkis is wicked.”

“Wisdom confers happiness,” replied Sembobitis. “I will try it,” said Balthasar. “But let us depart at once for Ethiopia.” And as he had lost all he loved he resolved to consecrate himself to wisdom and to become a mage. If this decision gave him no especial pleasure it at least restored to him something of tranquillity. Every evening, seated on the terrace of his palace in company with the sage Sembobitis and Menkera the eunuch, he gazed at the palm-trees standing motionless against the horizon, or watched the crocodiles by the light of the moon float down the Nile like trunks of trees.

“One never wearies of admiring the beauties of Nature,” said Sembobitis.

“Doubtless,” said Balthasar, “but there are other things in Nature more beautiful even than palm-trees and crocodiles.”

This he said thinking of Balkis. But Sembobitis, who was old, said:

“There is of course the phenomenon of the rising of the Nile which I have explained. Man is created to understand.”

“He is created to love,” replied Balthasar sighing. “There are things which cannot be explained.”

“And what may those be?” asked Sembobitis.

“A woman’s treason,” the king replied.

Balthasar, however, having decided to become a mage, had a tower built from the summit of which might be discerned many kingdoms and the infinite spaces of Heaven. The tower was constructed of brick and rose high above all other towers. It took no less than two years to build, and Balthasar expended in its construction the entire treasure of the king, his father. Every night he climbed to the top of this tower and there he studied the heavens under the guidance of the sage Sembobitis.

“The constellations of the heavens disclose our destiny,” said Sembobitis.

And he replied:

“It must be admitted nevertheless that these signs are obscure. But while I study them I forget Balkis, and that is a great boon.”

And among truths most useful to know, the mage taught that the stars are fixed like nails in the arch of the sky, and that there are five planets, namely: Bel, Merodach, and Nebo, which are male, while Sin and Mylitta are female.

“Silver,” he further explained, “corresponds to Sin, which is the moon, iron to Merodach, and tin to Bel.”

And the worthy Balthasar answered: “Such is the kind of knowledge I wish to acquire. While I study astronomy I think neither of Balkis nor anything else on earth. The sciences are benificent; they keep men from thinking. Teach me the knowledge, Sembobitis, which destroys all feeling in men and I will raise you to great honour among my people.”

This was the reason that Sembobitis taught the king wisdom.

He taught him the power of incantation, according to the principles of Astrampsychos, Gobryas and Pazatas. And the more Balthasar studied the twelve houses of the sun, the less he thought of Balkis, and Menkera, observing this, was filled with a great joy.

“Acknowledge, my lord, that Queen Balkis under her golden robes has little cloven feet like a goat’s.”

“Who ever told you such nonsense?” asked the King.

“My lord, it is the common report both in Sheba and Ethiopia,” replied the eunuch. “It is universally said that Queen Balkis has a shaggy leg and a foot made of two black horns.”

Balthasar shrugged his shoulders. He knew that the legs and feet of Balkis were like the legs and feet of all other women and perfect in their beauty. And yet the mere idea spoiled the remembrance of her whom he had so greatly loved. He felt a grievance against Balkis that her beauty was not without blemish in the imagination of those who knew nothing about it. At the thought that he had possessed a woman who, though in reality perfectly formed, passed as a monstrosity, he was seized with such a sense of repugnance that he had no further desire to see Balkis again. Balthasar had a simple soul, but love is a very complex emotion.

From that day on the king made great progress both in magic and astrology. He studied the conjunction of the stars with extreme care, and he drew horoscopes with an accuracy equal to that of Sembobitis himself.

“Sembobitis,” he asked, “are you willing to answer with your head for the truth of my horoscopes?”

And the sage Sembobitis replied:

“My lord, science is infallible, but the learned often err.”

Balthasar was endowed with fine natural sense. He said:

“Only that which is true is divine, and what is divine is hidden from us. In vain we search for truth. And yet I have discovered a new star in the sky. It is a beautiful star, and it seems alive; and when it sparkles it looks like a celestial eye that blinks gently. I seem to hear it call to me. Happy, happy, happy is he who is born under this star, See, Sembobitis, how this charming and splendid star looks at us.”

But Sembobitis did not see the star because he would not see it. Wise and old, he did not like novelties.

And alone in the silence of night Balthasar repeated: “Happy, happy, happy he who is born under this star.”

V.

The rumour spread over all Ethiopia and the neighbouring kingdoms that King Balthasar had ceased to love Balkis.

When the tidings reached the country of Sheba, Balkis was as indignant as if she had been betrayed. She ran to the King of Comagena who was employing his time in forgetting his country in the city of Sheba.

“My friend,” she cried, “do you know what I have just heard? Balthasar loves me no longer!”

“What does it matter,” said the King of Comagena, “since we love one another?”

“But do you not feel how this blackamoor has insulted me?”

“No,” said the King of Comagena, “I do not.”

Whereupon she drove him ignominiously out of her presence, and ordered her grand vizier to prepare for a journey into Ethiopia.

“We shall set out this very night. And I shall cut off your head if all is not ready by sundown.”

But when she was alone she began to sob.

“I love him! He loves me no longer, and I love him,” she sighed in the sincerity of her heart.

And one night, when on his tower watching the miraculous star, Balthasar, casting his eyes towards earth, saw along black line sinuously curving over the distant sands of the desert like an army of ants. Little by little what seemed to be ants grew larger and sufficiently distinct for the king to be able to recognise horses, camels and elephants.

The caravan having approached the city, Balthasar distinguished the glittering scimitars and the black horses of the guards of the Queen of Sheba. He even recognised the queen herself, and he was profoundly disturbed, for he felt that he would again love her. The star shone in the zenith with a marvellous brilliancy. Below, extended on a litter of purple and gold, Balkis looked small and brilliant like the star.

Balthasar was conscious of being drawn towards her by some terrible power. Still he turned his head away with a desperate effort, and lifting his eyes he again saw the star. Thereupon the star spoke and said: "Glory to God in the Heavens and peace on earth to men of good will!

"Take a measure of myrrh, gentle King Balthasar, and follow me. I will guide thee to the feet of a little child who is about to be born in a stable between an ass and an ox.

"And this little child is the King of Kings. He will comfort all those who need comforting.

"He calls thee to Him, O Balthasar, thou whose soul is as dark as thy face, but whose heart is as guileless as the heart of a child.

"He has chosen thee because thou hast suffered, and He will give thee riches, happiness and love.

"He will say to thee: 'Be poor joyfully, for that is true riches.' He will also say to thee: 'True happiness is in the renunciation of happiness. Love Me and love none other but Me, because I alone am love.'"

At these words a divine peace fell like a flood of light over the dark face of the king.

Balthasar listened with rapture to the star. He felt himself becoming a new man.

Prostrate beside him, Sembobitis and Menkera worshipped, their faces touching the stone.

Queen Balkis watched Balthasar. She realised that never again would there be love for her in that heart filled with a love divine. She turned white with rage and gave orders for the caravan to return at once to the land of Sheba.

As soon as the star had ceased to speak, Balthasar and his companions descended from the tower.

Then, having prepared a measure of myrrh, they formed a caravan and departed in the direction towards which they were guided by the star. They journeyed a long time through unknown countries, the star always journeying in front of them.

One day, finding themselves in a place where three roads met, they saw two kings advance accompanied by a numerous retinue; one was young and fair of face. He greeted Balthasar and said:

“My name is Gaspar. I am a king, and I bear gold as a gift to the child that is about to be born in Bethlehem of Judea.”

The second king advanced in turn. He was an old man, and his white beard covered his breast.

“My name is Melchior,” he said, “and I am a king, and I bring frankincense to the holy child who is to teach Truth to mankind.”

“I am bound whither you are,” said Balthasar. “I have conquered my lust, and for that reason the star has spoken to me.”

“I,” said Melchior, “have conquered my pride, and that is why I have been called.”

“I,” said Gaspar, “have conquered my cruelty, and for that reason I go with you.”

And the three mages proceeded on their journey together. The star which they had seen in the East preceded them until, arriving above the place where the child lay, it stood still. And seeing the star standing still they rejoiced with a great joy.

And, entering the house they found the child with Mary his mother, and prostrating themselves, they worshipped him. And opening their treasures they offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh, as it is written in the Gospel.

THE CURÉ'S MIGNONETTE

TO JULES LEMAÎTRE

In a village of the Bocage I once knew a curé, a holy man who denied himself every indulgence and who cheerfully practised the virtue of renunciation, and knew no joy but that of sacrifice. In his garden he cultivated fruit-trees, vegetables and medicinal plants, but fearing beauty even in flowers, he would have neither roses nor jasmine. He only allowed himself the innocent luxury of a few tufts of mignonette whose twisted stems, so modestly flower-crowned, would not distract his attention as he read his breviary among his cabbage-plots under the sky of our dear Father in Heaven.

The holy man had so little distrust of his mignonette that he would often in passing pick a spray and inhale its fragrance for a long time. All the plant asked was to be permitted to grow. If one spray was cut, four grew in its place. So much so, indeed, that, the devil aiding, the priest's mignonette soon covered a vast extent of his little garden. It overflowed into the paths and pulled at the good priest's cassock as he passed, until, distracted by the foolish plant, he would pause as often as twenty times an hour while he read or said his prayers.

From springtime until autumn the presbytery was redolent of mignonette. Behold what we may come to and how feeble we are! Not without reason do we say that all our natural inclinations lead us towards sin! The man of God had succeeded in guarding his eyes, but he had left his nostrils undefended, and so the devil, as it were, caught him by the nose. This saint now inhaled the fragrance of mignonette with avidity and lust, that is to say, with that sinful instinct which makes us long for the enjoyment of natural pleasures and which leads us into all sorts of temptations.

Henceforth he seemed to take less delight in the odours of Paradise and the perfumes which are our Lady's merits. His holiness dwindled, and he might, perhaps, have sunk into voluptuousness and become little by little like those lukewarm souls which Heaven rejects had not succour come to him in the nick of time.

Once, long ago, in the Thebaid, an angel stole from a hermit a cup of gold which still bound the holy man to the vanities of earth. A similar mercy was vouchsafed to this priest of the Bocage. A white hen scratched the earth about the mignonette with such good-will that it all died.

We are not informed whence this bird came. As for myself, I am inclined to believe that the angel who in the desert stole the hermit's cup transformed

himself into a white hen on purpose to destroy the only obstacle which barred the good priest's path towards perfection.

M. PIGEONNEAU

TO GILBERT AUGUSTIN-THIERRY

I have, as everybody knows, devoted my whole life to Egyptian archaeology. I should be very ungrateful to my country, to science, and to my-self, if I regretted the profession to which I was called. In my early youth and which I have followed with honour these forty years. My labours have not been in vain. I may say, without flattering myself, that my article on *The Handle of an Egyptian mirror in the Museum of the Louvre* may still be consulted with profit, though it dates back to the beginning of my career.

As for the exhaustive studies which I subsequently devoted to one of the bronze weights found in 1851 in the excavations at the Serapeium, it would be ungracious for me not to think well of them, as they opened for me the doors of the Institute.

Encouraged by the flattering reception with which my researches of this nature were received by many of my new colleagues, I was tempted for a moment to treat in one comprehensive work of the weights and measures in use at Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Auletes (80-52). I soon recognised, however, that a subject so general could not be dealt with by the really profound student, and that positive science could not approach it without running a risk of incurring all sorts of mischances. I felt that in investigating several subjects at once I was forsaking the fundamental principles of archaeology. If to-day I confess my mistake, if I acknowledge the incredible enthusiasm with which I was inspired by a far too ambitious scheme, I do so for the sake of the young, who will thus learn by my example to conquer their imagination. It is our most cruel foe. The student who has not succeeded in stifling it is lost for ever to erudition. I still tremble to think in what depths I was nearly plunged by my adventurous spirit. I was within an ace of what one calls history. What a downfall! I should have sunk into art. For history is only art, or, at best, a false science. Who to-day does not know that the historians preceded the archaeologists, as astrologers preceded the astronomers, as the alchemists preceded the chemists, and as the monkeys preceded men? Thank Heaven! I escaped with a mere fright.

My third work, I hasten to say, was wisely planned. It was a monograph entitled, *On the toilet of an Egyptian lady of the Middle Empire from an unpublished picture*. I treated the subject so as to avoid all side issues, and I did not permit any generalising to intrude itself. I guarded myself against those

considerations, comparisons and views with which certain of my colleagues have marred the exposition of their most valuable discoveries. But why should a work planned so sanely have met with so fantastic a fate? By what freak of destiny should it have proved the cause of the monstrous aberration of my mind? But let me not anticipate events nor confuse dates. My dissertation was intended to be read at a public sitting of the five academies, a distinction all the more precious, as it rarely falls to the lot of works of this character. These academic gatherings have for some years past been largely attended by people of fashion.

The day I delivered my lecture the hall was crowded by a distinguished audience. Women were there in great numbers. Lovely faces and brilliant toilettes graced the galleries. My discourse was listened to with respect. It was not interrupted by those thoughtless and noisy demonstrations which naturally follow mere literary productions. No, the public preserved an attitude more in harmony with the nature of the work presented to them. They were serious and grave.

As I paused between the phrases the better to disentangle the different trains of thought, I had leisure to examine behind my spectacles the entire hall. I can truly say that not the faintest smile could be seen on any lips. On the contrary, even the freshest faces wore an expression of austerity. I seemed to have ripened all their intellects as if by magic. Here and there while I read some young people whispered to their neighbours. They were probably debating some special point treated of in my discourse.

More than that, a beautiful young creature of twenty-two or twenty-four, seated in the left corner of the north balcony, was listening with great attention and taking notes. Her face had a delicacy of features and a mobility of expression truly remarkable. The attention with which she listened to my words gave an added charm to her singular face. She was not alone. A big, robust man, who, like the Assyrian kings, wore a long curled beard and long black hair, stood beside her and occasionally spoke to her in a low voice. My attention, which at first was divided amongst my entire audience, concentrated itself little by little on the young woman. She inspired me, I confess, with an interest which certain of my colleagues might consider unworthy of a scientific mind such as mine, though I feel sure that none of them under similar circumstances would have been more indifferent than I. As I proceeded she scribbled in a little note-book; and as she listened to my discourse one could see that she was visibly swayed by the most contradictory emotions; she seemed to pass from satisfaction and joy to surprise and even anxiety. I examined her with increasing curiosity. Would to God I had set eyes on her and her only that day under the cupola!

I had nearly finished; there hardly remained more than twenty-five or thirty pages at most to read when suddenly my eyes encountered those of the man with the Assyrian beard. How can I explain to you what happened then, seeing that I cannot explain it to myself? All I can say is that the glance of this personage put me at once into a state of indescribable agitation. The eye-balls fixed on me were of a greenish colour. I could not turn my own away. I stood there dumb and open-mouthed. As I had stopped speaking the audience began to applaud. Silence being restored, I tried to continue my discourse. But in spite of the most violent efforts, I could not tear my eyes from those two living lights to which they were so mysteriously riveted. That was not all. By a more amazing phenomenon still, and contrary to all the principles of my whole life, I began to improvise. God alone knows if this was the result of my own freewill!

Under the influence of a strange, unknown and irresistible force I delivered with grace and burning eloquence certain philosophical reflections on the toilet of women in the course of the ages; I generalised, I rhapsodised, I grew eloquent-God forgive me-about the eternal feminine, and the passion which glides like a breath about those perfumed veils with which women know how to adorn their beauty.

The man with the Assyrian beard never ceased staring steadily at me. And I still continued to speak. At last he lowered his eyes, and then I stopped. It is humiliating to add that this portion of my address, which was quite as foreign to my own natural impulse as it was contrary to the scientific mind, was rewarded with tumultuous applause. The young woman in the north balcony clapped her hands and smiled.

I was followed at the reading-desk by a member of the Academy who seemed visibly annoyed at having to be heard after me. Perhaps his fears were exaggerated. At any rate he was listened to without too much impatience. I am under the impression that it was verse that he read.

The meeting being over, I left the hall in company with several of my colleagues, who renewed their congratulations with a sincerity in which I try to believe.

Having paused a moment on the quay near the lions of Creuzot to exchange a few greetings, I observed the man with the Assyrian beard and his beautiful companion enter a *coupé*. I happened accidentally to be standing next to an eloquent philosopher, of whom it is said that he is equally at home in worldly elegance and in cosmic theories. The young lady, putting her delicate head and her little hand out of the carriage door, called him by name and said with a slight English accent:

“My dear friend, you’ve forgotten me. That’s too bad!”

After the carriage had gone I asked my illustrious colleague who this charming person and her companion were.

“What!” he replied, “you do not know Miss Morgan and her physician Daoud, who cures all diseases by means of magnetism, hypnotism, and suggestion? Annie Morgan is the daughter of the richest merchant in Chicago. Two years ago she came to Paris with her mother, and she has had a wonderful house built on the Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne trice. She is highly educated and remarkably clever.”

“You do not surprise me,” I replied, “for I have reason to think that this American lady is of a very serious turn of mind.”

My brilliant colleague smiled as he shook my hand.

I walked home to the Rue Saint Jacques, where I have lived these last thirty years in a modest lodging from which I can just see the tops of the trees in the garden of the Luxembourg, and I sat down at my writing-table.

For three days I sat there assiduously at work, before me a little statuette representing the goddess Pasht with her cat’s head. This little monument bears an inscription imperfectly deciphered by Monsieur Grébault I was at work on an adequate interpretation with comments. The incident at the institute had left a less vivid impression on my mind than might have been feared. I was not unduly disturbed. To tell the truth, I had even forgotten it a little, and it required new occurrences to revive its remembrance.

I had, therefore, leisure during these three days to bring my version of the inscription and my notes to a satisfactory conclusion. I only interrupted my archaeological work to read the newspapers, which were loud in my praise.

Newspapers, absolutely ignorant of all learning, spoke in praise of that “charming passage” which had concluded my discourse. “It was a revelation,” they said, “and M. Pigeonneau had prepared a most agreeable surprise for us.” I do not know why I refer to such trifles, because, usually I am quite indifferent as to what they say about me in the newspapers.

I had been already closeted in my study for three days when a ring at the door-bell startled me. There was something imperious, fantastic, and strange in the motion communicated to the bell-rope which disturbed me, and it was with real anxiety that I went myself to open the door. And whom did I find on the landing? The young American recently so absorbed at the reading of my treatise. It was Miss Morgan in person.

“Monsieur Pigeonneau?”

“Yes.”

“I recognised you at once, though you are not wearing your beautiful coat with the embroidery of green palm-leaves. But, please don’t put it on for my

sake. I like you much better in your dressing-gown."

I led her into my study. She looked curiously at the papyri, the prints, and odds and ends of all kinds which covered the walls to the ceiling, and then she looked silently for some time at the goddess Pasht who stood on my writing-table. Finally she said:

"She is charming."

"Do you refer to this little monument, Madam? As a matter of fact, it is distinguished by an exceptional inscription of a sufficiently curious nature. But may I ask what has procured for me the honour of your visit?"

"O," she cried, "I don't care a fig for its remarkable inscriptions. There never was a more exquisitely delicate cat-face. Of course you believe that she is a real goddess, don't you, Monsieur Pigeonneau?"

I protested against so unworthy a suspicion.

"To believe that would be fetichism."

Her great green eyes looked at me with surprise.

"Ah, then, you don't believe in fetichism? I did not think one could be an archaeologist and yet not believe in fetichism. How can Pasht interest you if you do not believe that she is a goddess? But never mind! I came to see you on a matter of great importance, Monsieur Pigeonneau."

"Great importance?"

"Yes, about a costume. Look at me."

"With pleasure."

"Don't you find traces of the Cushite race in my profile?"

I was at loss what to say. An interview of this nature was so foreign to me.

"Oh, there's nothing surprising about it," she continued. "I remember when I was an Egyptian. And were you also an Egyptian, Monsieur Pigeonneau? Don't you remember? How very curious. At least, you don't doubt that we pass through a series of successive incarnations?"

"I do not know."

"You surprise me, Monsieur Pigeonneau."

"Will you tell me, Madam, to what I am indebted for this honour?"

"To be sure. I haven't yet told you that I have come to beg you to help me to design an Egyptian costume for the fancy ball at Countess N —— — 's. I want a costume that shall be absolutely accurate and bewilderingly beautiful. I have been hard at work at it already, M. Pigeonneau. I have gone over my recollections, for I remember very well when I lived in Thebes six thousand years ago. I have had designs sent me from London, Boulak and New York."

"Those would, of course, be more reliable." "No, nothing is so reliable as one's intuition. I have also studied in the Egyptian Museum of the Louvre. It is

full of enchanting things. Figures so slender and pure, profiles so delicate and clear cut, women who look like flowers, but, at the same time, with something at once rigid and supple. And a god, Bes, who looks like Sarcey! My goodness, how beautiful it all is!”

“Pardon me, but I do not yet quite understand — —”

“I haven’t finished. I went to your lecture on the toilet of a woman of the Middle Empire, and I took notes. It was rather dry, your lecture, but I grubbed away at it. By aid of all these notes I have designed a costume. But it is not quite right yet. So I have come to beg you to correct it. Do come to me to-morrow! Will you? Do me that honour for the love of Egypt! You will, won’t you? Till to-morrow, I must hurry off. Mama is in the carriage waiting for me.”

She disappeared as she said these last words, and I followed. When I reached the vestibule she was already at the foot of the stairs and from here I heard her clear voice call up:

“Till to-morrow. Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne, at the corner of the Villa Saïd.”

“I shall not go to see this mad creature,” I said to myself.

The next afternoon at four o’clock I rang the door-bell. A footman led me into an immense, well-lighted hall crowded with pictures and statues in marble and bronze; sedan chairs in *Vernis Martin* set with porcelain plaques; Peruvian mummies; a dozen dummy figures of men and horses in full armour, over which, by reason of their great height, towered a Polish cavalier with white wings on his shoulders and a French knight equipped for the tournament, his helmet bearing a crest of a woman’s head with pointed coif and flowing veil.

An entire grove of palm-trees in tubs reared their foliage in this hall, and in their midst was seated a gigantic Buddha in gold. At the foot of the god sat a shabbily dressed old woman reading the Bible.

I was still dazzled by these many marvels when the purple hangings were raised and Miss Morgan appeared in a white *peignoir* trimmed with swans-down. She was followed by two great, long-muzzled boarhounds.

“I was sure you would come, Monsieur Pigeonneau.”

I stammered a compliment.

“How could one possibly refuse anything to so charming a lady?”

“O, it is not because I am pretty that I am never refused anything. I have secrets by which I make myself obeyed.”

Then, pointing to the old lady who was reading the Bible, she said to me:

“Pay no attention to her, that is mama. I shall not introduce you. Should you speak she could not reply; she belongs to a religious sect which forbids unnecessary conversation. It is the very latest thing in sects. Its adherents wear

sackcloth and eat out of wooden basins. Mama greatly enjoys these little observances. But you can imagine that I did not ask you here to talk to you about mama. I will put on my Egyptian costume. I shan't be long. In the meantime you might look at these little things."

And she made me sit down before a cabinet containing a mummy-case, several statuettes of the Middle Empire, a number of scarabs, and some beautiful fragments of a ritual for the burial of the dead.

Left alone, I examined the papyrus with the more interest, inasmuch as it was inscribed with a name I had already discovered on a seal. It was the name of a scribe of King Seti I. I immediately applied myself to noting the various interesting peculiarities the document exhibited.

I was plunged in this occupation for a longer time than I could accurately measure, when I was warned by a kind of instinct that some one was behind me. I turned and saw a marvellous being, her head surmounted by a gold hawk and the pure and adorable lines of her young body revealed by a clinging white sheath. Over this a transparent rose-coloured tunic, bound at the waist by a girdle of precious stones, fell and separated into symmetrical folds. Arms and feet were bare and loaded with rings.

She stood before me, her head turned towards her right shoulder in a hieratic attitude which gave to her delicious beauty something indescribably divine.

"What! Is that you, Miss Morgan?"

"Unless it is Neferu-Ra in person. You remember the Neferu-Ra of Leconte de Lisle, the Beauty of the Sun?"

"Pallid and pining on her virgin bed,
Swathed in fine lawns from dainty foot to head.'{*}

* "Voici qu'elle languit sur son lit virginal,
Très pâle, enveloppée avec des fines toiles."

"But of course you don't know. You know nothing of verse. And yet verses are so pretty. Come! Let's go to work."

Having mastered my emotion, I made some remarks to this charming young person about her enchanting costume. I ventured to criticise certain details as departing from archaeological accuracy. I proposed to replace certain gems in the setting of the rings by others more universally in use in the Middle Empire. Finally I decidedly opposed the wearing of a clasp of *cloisonné* enamel. In fact, this jewel was a most odious anachronism. We at last agreed to replace this by a boss of precious stones deep set in fine gold. She listened with great docility, and seemed so pleased with me that she even asked me to stay to dinner. I excused

myself because of my regular habits and the simplicity of my diet and took my leave. I was already in the vestibule when she called after me:

“Well, now, is my costume sufficiently smart? How mad I shall make all the other women at the Countess’s ball!”

I was shocked at the remark. But having turned towards her I saw her again, and again I fell under her spell.

She called me back.

“Monsieur Pigeonneau,” she said, “you are such a dear man! Write me a little story and I will love you ever and ever and ever so much!”

“I don’t know how,” I replied.

She shrugged her shoulders and exclaimed:

“What is the use of science if it can’t help you to write a story! You must write me a story, Monsieur Pigeonneau.”

Thinking it useless to repeat my absolute refusal I took my leave without replying.

At the door I passed the man with the Assyrian beard, Dr. Daoud, whose glance had so strangely affected me under the cupola of the Institute.

He struck me as being of the commonest class, and I found it very disagreeable to meet him again.

The Countess N —— — ‘s ball took place about fifteen days after my visit. I was not surprised to read in the newspaper that the beautiful Miss Morgan had created a sensation in the costume of Neferu-Ra.

During the rest of the year 1886 I did not hear her mentioned again. But on the first day of the New Year, as I was writing in my study, a manservant brought me a letter and a basket.

“From Miss Morgan,” he explained, and went away. I heard a mewling in the basket which had been placed on my writing table, and when I opened it out sprang a little grey cat.

It was not an Angora. It was a cat of some Oriental breed, much more slender than ours, and with a striking resemblance, so far as I could judge, to those of his race found in great numbers in the subterranean tombs of Thebes, their mummies swathed in coarse mummy-wrappings. He shook himself, gazed about, arched his back, yawned, and then rubbed himself, purring, against the goddess Pasht, who stood on my table in all her purity of form and her delicate, pointed face. Though his colour was dark and his fur short, he was graceful, and he seemed intelligent and quite tame. I could not imagine the reason for such a curious present, nor did Miss Morgan’s letter greatly enlighten me. It was as follows:

“Dear Sir,

“I am sending you a little cat which Dr. Daoud brought back from Egypt, and of which I am very fond. Treat him well for my sake, Baudelaire, the greatest French poet after Stéphane Mallarmé, has said:

“The ardent lover and the unbending sage,
Alike companion in their ripe old age,
With the sleek arrogant cat, the household’s pride,
Slothful and chilly by the warm fireside.’{*}

* “Les amoureux fervents et les savants austères
Aiment également, dans leur mûre saison,
Les chats puissants et doux, orgueil de la maison,
Qui comme eux sont frileux et comme eux sédentaires.”

“I need hardly remind you that you must write me a story. Bring it on Twelfth Night. We will dine together.

“Annie Morgan.

“P.S. — Your little cat’s name is Porou.”

Having read this letter, I looked at Porou who, standing on his hind legs, was licking the black face of Pasht, his divine sister. He looked at me, and I must confess that of the two of us he was the less astonished. I asked myself, “What does this mean?” But I soon gave up trying to understand.

“It is expecting too much of myself to try and discover reason in the follies of this madcap,” I thought. “I must get to work again. As for this little animal, Madam Magloire my housekeeper can provide for his needs.”

Whereupon I resumed my work on a chronology, all the more interesting as it gave me the opportunity to abuse somewhat my distinguished colleague, Monsieur Maspéro. Porou did not leave my table. Seated on his haunches, his ears pricked, he watched me write, and strange to say I accomplished no good work that day. My ideas were all in confusion; there came to my mind scraps of songs and odds and ends of fairy-tales, and I went to bed very dissatisfied with myself. The next morning I again found Porou, seated on my writing-table, licking his paws. That day again I worked very badly; Porou and I spent the greater part of the day watching each other. The next morning it was the same, and also the morning after; in short, the whole week. I ought to have been distressed, but I must confess that little by little I began to resign myself to my ill-luck, not only with patience, but even with some amusement. The rapidity with which a virtuous man becomes depraved is something terrible. The morning preceding Twelfth Night, which fell on a Sunday, I rose in high spirits and hurried to my writing-table, where, according to his custom, Porou, had already preceded me. I took a handsome copy-book of white paper and dipped my pen

into the ink and wrote in big letters, under the watchful observation of my new friend:

“The Misadventures of a one-eyed Porter? .”

Thereupon, without ceasing to look at Porou, I wrote all day long in the most prodigious haste a story of such astonishing adventures, so charming and so varied that I was myself vastly entertained. My one-eyed porter mixed up all his parcels and committed the most absurd mistakes. Lovers in critical situations received from him, and quite without his knowledge, the most unexpected aid. He transported wardrobes in which men were concealed, and he placed them in other houses, frightening old ladies almost to death. But how describe so merry a story! While writing I burst out laughing at least twenty times. If Porou did not laugh, his solemn silence was quite as amusing as the most uproarious hilarity. It was already seven o'clock in the evening when I wrote the final line of this delightful story. During the last hour the room had only been lighted by Porou's phosphorescent eyes. And yet I had written with as much ease in the darkness as by the light of a good lamp. My story finished, I proceeded to dress. I put on my evening clothes and my white tie, and, taking leave of Porou, I hurried downstairs into the street. I had hardly gone twenty steps when I felt some one pull at my sleeve.

“Where are you running to, uncle, just like a somnambulist?”

It was my nephew Marcel who hailed me in this fashion. He is an honest, intelligent young man, and a house-surgeon at the Salpêtrière. People say that he has a successful medical career before him. And indeed he would be clever enough if he would only be more on his guard against his whimsical imagination.

“Why, I am on my way to Miss Morgan, to take her a story I have just written.”

“What, uncle! You write stories, and you know Miss Morgan? She is very pretty. And do you also know Dr. Daoud who follows her about everywhere?”

“A quack, a charlatan!”

“Possibly, uncle, and yet, unquestionably a most extraordinary experimentalist. Neither Bernheim nor Liégeois, not even Charcot himself, has obtained the phenomena he produces at will. He induces the hypnotic condition and control by suggestion without contact, and without any direct agency, through the intervention of an animal. He commonly makes use of little short-haired cats for his experiments.

“This is how he goes to work: he suggests an action of some kind to a cat, then he sends the animal in a basket to the subject he wishes to influence. The

animal transmits the suggestion he has received, and the patient under the influence of the beast does exactly what the operator desires.”

“Is this true?”

“Yes, quite true, uncle.”

“And what is Miss Morgan’s share in these interesting experiments?”

“Miss Morgan employs Dr. Daoud to work for her, and she makes use of hypnotism and suggestion to induce people to make fools of themselves, as it her beauty was not quite enough.”

I did not stop to listen any longer. An irresistible force hurried me on towards Miss Morgan.

THE DAUGHTER OF LILITH

TO JEAN PSICHARI

I had left Paris late in the evening, and I spent a long, silent and snowy night in the corner of the railway carriage. I waited six mortal hours at X ——— — , and the next afternoon I found nothing better than a farm-waggon to take me to Artigues. The plain whose furrows rose and fell by turns on either side of the road, and which I had seen long ago lying radiant in the sunshine, was now covered with a heavy veil of snow over which straggled the twisted black stems of the vines. My driver gently urged on his old horse, and we proceeded through an infinite silence broken only at intervals by the plaintive cry of a bird, sad even unto death. I murmured this prayer in my heart: "My God, God of Mercy, save me from despair and after so many transgressions, let me not commit the one sin Thou dost not forgive." Then I saw the sun, red and rayless, blood-hued, descending on the horizon, as it were, the sacred Host, and remembering the divine Sacrifice of Calvary, I felt hope enter into my soul. For some time longer the wheels crunched the snow. At last the driver pointed with the end of his whip to the spire of Artigues as it rose like a shadow against the dull red haze.

"I say," said the man, "are you going to stop at the presbytery? You know the curé?"

"I have known him ever since I was a child. He was my master when I was a student."

"Is he learned in books?"

"My friend, M. Safrac, is as learned as he is good."

"So they say. But they also say other things."

"What do they say, my friend?"

"They say what they please, and I let them talk."

"What more do they say?"

"Well, there are those who say he is a sorcerer, and that he can tell fortunes."

"What nonsense!"

"For my part I keep a still tongue! But if M. Safrac is not a sorcerer and fortune-teller, why does he spend his time reading books?"

The waggon stopped in front of the presbytery.

I left the idiot, and followed the cure's servant, who conducted me to her master in a room where the table was already laid. I found M. Safrac greatly changed in the three years since I had last seen him. His tall figure was bent He was excessively emaciated. Two piercing eyes glowed in his thin face. His nose,

which seemed to have grown longer, descended over his shrunken lips. I fell into his arms.

“My father, my father,” I cried, sobbing, “I have come to you because I have sinned. My father, my dear old master, whose profound and mysterious knowledge overawed my mind, and who yet reassured it with a revelation of maternal tenderness, save your child from the brink of a precipice. O my only friend, save me; enlighten me, you my only beacon!”

He embraced me, and smiled on me with that exquisite kindness of which he had given so many proofs during my childhood, and then he stepped back, as if to see me better.

“Well, adieu!” he said, greeting me according to the custom of his country, for M. Safrac was born on the banks of the Garonne, in the home of those famous wines which seemed the symbol of his own generous and fragrant soul.

After having taught philosophy with great distinction in Bordeaux, Poitiers and Paris, he asked as his only reward the gift of a poor cure in the country where he had been born and where he wished to die. He had now been priest at Artigues for six years, and in this obscure village he practised the most humble piety and the most enlightened sciences.

“Well, adieu! my child,” he repeated. “You wrote me a letter to announce your coming which has moved me deeply. It is true, then, that you have not forgotten your old master?”

I tried to throw myself at his feet

“Save me! save me!” I stammered.

But he stopped me with a gesture at once imperious and gentle.

“You shall tell me to-morrow, Ary, what you have to tell. First, warm yourself. Then we will have supper, for you must be very hungry and very thirsty.”

The servant placed on the table the soup-tureen out of which rose a fragrant column of steam. She was an old woman, her hair hidden under a black kerchief, and in her wrinkled face were strongly mingled the beauty of race and the ugliness of decay. I was in profound distress, and yet the peace of this saintly dwelling, the gaiety of the wood fire, the white table-cloth, the wine and the steaming dishes entered, little by little, into my soul. Whilst I ate I nearly forgot that I had come to the fireside of this priest to exchange the soreness of remorse for the fertilising dew of repentance. Monsieur Safrac reminded me of the hours, already long since past, which we had spent together in the college when he had taught philosophy.

“You, Ary,” he said to me, “were my best pupil. Your quick intelligence was always in advance of the thought of the teacher. For that reason I at once became

attached to you. I like a Christian to be daring. Faith should not be timid when unbelief shows an indomitable audacity. The Church nowadays has lambs only; and it needs lions. Who will give us back those learned fathers and doctors whose erudition embraced all sciences? Truth is like the sun; it requires the eye of an eagle to contemplate it.”

“Ah, M. Safrac, you brought to bear on all questions that daring vision which nothing dazzles. I remember that your opinions sometimes even startled those of your colleagues whom the holiness of your life filled with admiration. You did not fear new ideas. Thus, for instance, you were inclined to admit the plurality of inhabited worlds.”

His eyes kindled.

“What will the cowards say when they read my book? I have meditated, and I have worked under this beautiful sky, in this land which God has created with a special love. You know that I have some knowledge of Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and certain of the Indian dialects. You also know that I have brought here a library rich in ancient manuscripts. I have plunged profoundly into the knowledge of the tongues and traditions of the primitive East. This great work, by the help of God, will not have been in vain. I have nearly finished my book on ‘Origins,’ which re-establishes and upholds that Biblical exegesis of which an impious science already foresaw the imminent overthrow. God in His mercy has at last permitted science and faith to be reconciled. To effect this reconciliation I have started with the following premises:

“The Bible, inspired by the Holy Ghost, tells only the truth, but it does not tell all the truth. And how could it, seeing that its only object is to inform us of what is needful for our eternal salvation? Apart from this great purpose it has no other. Its design is as simple as it is infinite. It includes the fall and the redemption; it is the sacred history of man; it is complete and restricted. Nothing has been admitted to satisfy profane curiosity. A godless science must not be permitted to triumph any longer over the silence of God. It is time to say, ‘No, the Bible has not lied, because it has not revealed all.’ That is the truth which I proclaim. By the help of geology, prehistoric archaeology, the Oriental cosmogonies, Hittite and Sumerian monuments, Chaldean and Babylonian traditions preserved in the Talmud, I assert the existence of the pre-Adamites, of whom the inspired writer of Genesis does not speak, for the only reason that their existence did not bear upon the eternal salvation of the children of Adam. Furthermore, a minute study of the first chapters of Genesis has proved to me the existence of two successive creations separated by untold ages, of which the second is only, so to speak, the adaptation of a corner of the earth to the needs of Adam and his posterity.”

He paused, then he continued in a low voice and with a solemnity truly religious:

“I, Martial Safrac, unworthy priest, doctor of theology, submissive as an obedient child to the authority of our Holy Mother the Church, I assert with absolute certainty — yielding all due submission to our holy father the Pope and the Councils — that Adam, who was created in the image of God, had two wives, of whom Eve was the second.”

These singular words drew me little by little out of myself and filled me with a curious interest. I therefore felt something of disappointment when M. Safrac, planting his elbows on the table, said to me:

“Enough on that subject. Some day, perhaps, you will read my book, which will enlighten you on this point. I was obliged, in obedience to strict duty, to submit the work to Monseigneur, and to beg his Grace’s approval. The manuscript is at present in the archbishop’s hands, and any minute I may expect a reply which I have every reason to believe will be favourable. My dear child, try those mushrooms out of our own woods, and this native wine of ours, and acknowledge that this is the second promised land, of which the first was only the image and the forecast.”

From this time on our conversation, grown more familiar, ranged over our common recollections.

“Yes, my child,” said M. Safrac, “you were my favourite pupil, and God permits preferences if they are founded on impartial judgment. So I decided at once that there was in you the making of a man and a Christian. Not that great imperfections were not in evidence. You were irresolute, uncertain, and easily disconcerted. Passions, so far latent, smouldered in your soul. I loved you because of your great restlessness, as I did another of my pupils for quite opposite qualities. I loved Paul d’Ervy for his unswerving steadfastness of mind and heart.”

At this name I blushed and turned pale and with difficulty suppressed a cry, and when I tried to answer I found it impossible to speak. M. Safrac appeared not to notice my distress.

“If I remember aright, he was your best friend,” he added. “You have remained intimate ever since, have you not? I know he has started on a diplomatic career, and a great future is predicted for him. I hope that in happier times than the present he may be entrusted with office at the Holy See. In him you have a faithful and devoted friend.”

“My father,” I replied, with a great effort, “to-morrow I will speak to you of Paul d’Ervy and of another person.”

M. Safrac pressed my hand. We separated, and I went to the room which had been prepared for me. In my bed, fragrant with lavender, I dreamed that I was once again a child, and that as I knelt in the college chapel I was admiring the blonde and ecstatic women with which the gallery was filled, when suddenly out of a cloud over my head I seemed to hear a voice say:

“Ary, you believe that you love them in God, but it is God you love in them.”

The next morning when I woke I found M. Safrac standing at the side of my bed.

“Come, Ary, and hear the Mass which I am about to celebrate for your intention. After the Holy Sacrifice I shall be ready to listen to what you have to say.”

The Church of Artigues was a little sanctuary in the Norman style which still flourished in Aquitaine in the twelfth century. Restored some twenty years ago, it had received the addition of a bell-tower which had not been contemplated in the original plan. At any rate, poverty had safeguarded its pure bareness. I tried to join in the prayers of the celebrant as much as my thoughts would permit, and then I returned with him to the presbytery. Here we breakfasted on a little bread and milk, after which we went to M. Safrac’s room.

He drew a chair to the fireplace, over which hung a crucifix, and invited me to be seated, and seating himself beside me he signed to me to speak. Outside the snow fell. I began as follows:

“My father, it is ten years ago since I left your care and entered the world. I have preserved my faith, but, alas, not my purity. But it is unnecessary to remind you of my life; you know it, you my spiritual guide, the only keeper of my conscience. Moreover, I am in haste to arrive at the event which has convulsed my being. Last year my family had decided that I must marry, and I myself had willingly consented. The young girl destined for me united all the advantages of which parents are usually in search. More than that, she was pretty; she pleased me to such a degree that instead of a marriage of convenience I was about to make a marriage of affection. My offer was accepted, and we were betrothed. The happiness and peace of my life seemed assured when I received a letter from Paul d’Ervy who had returned from Constantinople and announced his arrival in Paris. He expressed a great desire to see me. I hurried to him and announced my marriage. He congratulated me heartily.

“‘My dear old boy,’ he said, ‘I rejoice in your happiness.’

“I told him that I counted on him to be my witness and he willingly consented. The date of my wedding was fixed for May 15, and he was not obliged to return to his post until the beginning of June.

“‘How lucky that is,’ I said to him. ‘And you?’

“‘Oh, I,’ he replied, with a smile which expressed in turn joy and sorrow, ‘I — what a change! I am mad — a woman — Ary. I am either very fortunate or very unfortunate! What name can one give to a happiness gained by an evil action? I have betrayed, I have broken the heart of a good friend... I carried off — yonder — in Constantinople — —’

M. Safrac interrupted me:

“My son, leave out of your narrative the faults of others and name no one.”

I promised to obey, and continued as follows:

“Paul had hardly ceased speaking when a woman entered the room. Evidently it was she; dressed in a long blue *peignoir*, she seemed to be at home. I will describe to you in one word the terrible impression she produced on me: she did not seem *natural*. I realise how vague is this expression and how inadequately it explains my meaning. But perhaps it will become more intelligible in the course of my story. But, indeed, in the expression of her golden eyes, that seemed at times to throw out sparks of light, in the curve of her enigmatical mouth, in the substance of her skin, at once brown and yet luminous, in the play of the angular and yet harmonious lines of her body, in the ethereal lightness of her footsteps, even in her bare arms, to which invisible wings seemed attached, and, finally, in her ardent and magnetic personality, I felt an indescribable something foreign to the nature of humanity; an indescribable something inferior and yet superior to the woman God has created in his formidable goodness, so that she should be our companion in this earthly exile. From the moment I saw her one feeling alone overmastered my soul and pervaded it; I felt a profound aversion towards everything that was not this woman.

“Seeing her enter, Paul frowned slightly, but changing his mind, he made an effort to smile.

“‘Leila, I wish to present to you my best friend.’

“Leila replied:

“‘I know M. Ary.’

“These words could not but seem strange as we had certainly never seen each other before; but the voice with which they were uttered was stranger still.

“If crystal could utter thought, so it would speak.

“‘My friend Ary,’ continued Paul, ‘is to be married in six weeks.’

“At these words Leila looked at me and I saw distinctly that her golden eyes said ‘No!’

“I went away greatly disturbed, nor did my friend show the slightest desire to detain me. All that day I wandered aimlessly through the streets, my heart empty and desolate; then, towards night, finding myself in front of a florist’s shop, I remembered my *fiancée*, and went in to get her a spray of white lilac. I had

hardly taken hold of the flowers when a little hand tore them out of my grasp, and I saw Leila, who turned away laughing. She wore a short grey dress and a jacket of the same colour and a small round hat. I must confess that this costume of a Parisian dressed for walking was most unbecoming to her fairy-like beauty and seemed a kind of disguise. And yet, seeing her so, I felt that I loved her with an undying love. I tried to rejoin her, but I lost her among the crowd and the carriages.

“From this time on I seemed to cease to live. I called several times at Paul’s without seeing Leila again. He always received me in a friendly manner, but he never spoke of her. We had nothing to say to each other, and I was sad when we parted. At last, one day, the footman said that his master was out. He added ‘Perhaps you would like to see Madame?’ I replied ‘Yes.’ O, my father, what tears of blood can ever atone for this little word! I entered. I found her in the drawing-room, half reclining on a couch, in a dress as yellow as gold, under which she had drawn her little feet. I saw her — but, no, I saw nothing. My throat was suddenly parched, I could not utter a word. A fragrance of myrrh and aromatic perfumes which emanated from her seemed to intoxicate me with languor and longing, as if at once all the odours of the mystic East had penetrated my quivering nostrils. No, this was certainly not a natural woman, for nothing human seemed to emanate from her. Her face expressed no emotion, either good or bad, beyond a voluptuousness at once sensual and divine. She doubtless noticed my suffering, for she asked with a voice as clear as the ripple of a mountain brook:

“‘What ails you?’

“I threw myself in tears at her feet and cried, ‘I love you madly!’”

“She opened her arms; then enfolding me with a lingering glance of her candid and voluptuous eyes:

“‘Why have you not told me this before?’

“Indescribable moment! I held Leila in my arms. It seemed as if we two together had been transported to Heaven and filled all its spaces. I felt myself become the equal of God, and my breast seemed to enfold all the beauty of earth and the harmonies of nature — the stars and the flowers, the forests that sing, the rivers and the deep seas. I had enfolded the infinite in a kiss....”

At these words Monsieur Safrac, who had listened to me for some moments with growing impatience, rose, and standing before the fireplace, lifted his cassock to his knees to warm his legs and said with a severity which came near being disdain:

“You are a wretched blasphemer, and instead of despising your crimes, you only confess them because of your pride and delight in them. I will listen no

more.”

At these words I burst into tears and begged his forgiveness. Recognising that my humility was sincere, he desired me to continue my confession on condition that I realised my own self-abasement.

I continued my story as follows, determined to make it as brief as possible:

“My father, I was torn by remorse when I left Leila. But, from the following day on, she came to me, and then began a life which tortured me with joy and anguish. I was jealous of Paul, whom I had betrayed, and I suffered cruelly.

“I do not believe that there is a more debasing evil than jealousy, nor one which fills the soul with more degrading thoughts. Even to console me Leila scorned to lie. Besides, her conduct was incomprehensible. I do not forget to whom I am speaking, and I shall be careful not to offend the ears of the *most* revered of priests. I can only say that Leila seemed ignorant of the love she permitted. But she had enveloped my whole being in the poison of sensuality. I could not exist without her, and I trembled at the thought of losing her.

“Leila seemed absolutely devoid of what we call moral sense. You must not, however, think that she was either wicked or cruel. On the contrary, she was gentle and compassionate. Nor was she without intelligence, but her intelligence was not of the same nature as ours. She said little, and she refused to reply to any questions that were asked her about her past. She was ignorant of all that we know. On the other hand, she knew many things of which we are ignorant.

“Educated in the East, she was familiar with all sorts of Hindoo and Persian legends, which she would repeat with a certain monotonous cadence and with an infinite grace. Listening to her as she described the charming dawn of the world, one would have said she had lived in the youth of creation. This I once said to her.

““It is true, I am old,”” she answered smiling.

M. Safrac, still standing in front of the fireplace, had for some time bent towards me in an attitude of keen attention.

“Continue,” he said.

“Often, my father, I questioned Leila about her religion. She replied that she had none, and that she had no need of one; that her mother and sisters were the daughters of God, but that they were not bound to Him by any creed. She wore a medallion about her neck filled with a little red earth which she said she had piously gathered because of her love for her mother.”

Hardly had I uttered these words when M. Safrac, pale and trembling, sprang forward, and, seizing my arm, *shouted* :

“She told the truth! I know now. I know who this creature was, Ary! Your instinct did not deceive you. It was not a woman. Continue, continue, I implore.”

“My father, I have nearly finished. Alas, for Leila’s love, I had broken my solemn plighted troth, I had betrayed my best friend. I had affronted God. Paul, having heard of Leila’s faithlessness, became mad with grief. He threatened her with death, but she replied gently:

“‘Kill me, my friend; I long to die, but I cannot.’

“For six months she gave herself to me; then one morning she said that she was about to return to Persia, and that she would never see me again. I wept, I moaned, I raved: ‘You have never loved me!’

“‘No, my friend,’ she replied gently. ‘And yet how many women who have loved you no better have denied you what you received from me! You still owe me some gratitude. Farewell.’

“For two days I was plunged in alternate fury and apathy! Then remembering the salvation of my soul, I hurried to you, my father. Here I am. Purify me, uplift me, strengthen my heart, for I love her still.”

I ceased. M. Safrac, his hand raised to his forehead, remained lost in thought. He was the first to break the silence.

“My son, this confirms my great discovery. What you tell me will confound the vainglory of our modern sceptics. Listen to me. We live today in the midst of miracles as did the first-born of men. Listen, listen! Adam, as I have already told you, had a first wife whom the Bible does not make mention of, but of whom the Talmud speaks. Her name was Lilith. Created, not out of one of his ribs, but from this same red earth out of which he himself had been kneaded, she was not flesh of his flesh. She voluntarily separated from him. He was still living in innocence when she left him to go to those regions where long years afterwards the Persians settled, but which at this time were inhabited by the pre-Adamites, more intelligent and more beautiful than the sons of men. She therefore had no part in the transgression of our first father, and was unsullied by that original sin. Because of this she also escaped from the curse pronounced against Eve and her descendants. She is exempt from sorrow and death; having no soul to be saved, she is incapable of virtue or vice. Whatever she does, she accomplishes neither good nor evil. The daughters that were born to her of some mysterious wedlock are immortal as she is, and free as she is both in their deeds and thoughts, seeing that they can neither gain nor lose in the sight of God. Now, my son, I recognise by indisputable signs that the creature who caused your downfall, this Leila, was a daughter of Lilith. Compose yourself to prayer. To-morrow I will hear you in confession.”

He remained silent for a moment, then drawing a paper out of his pocket, he continued:

“Late last night, after having wished you good night, the postman, who had been delayed by the snow, brought me a very distressing letter. The senior vicaire informs me that my book has been a source of grief to Monseigneur, and has already overshadowed the spiritual joy with which he looked forward to the festival of our Lady of Mount Carmel. The work, he adds, is full of foolhardy doctrines and opinions which have already been condemned by the authorities. His Grace could not approve of such unwholesome lucubrations. This, then, is what they write to me. But I will relate your story to Monseigneur. It will prove to him that Lilith exists and that I do not dream.”

I implored Monsieur Safrac to listen to me a moment more.

“When she went away, my father, Leila left me a leaf of cypress on which certain characters which I cannot decipher had been traced with the point of a style. It seems to be a kind of amulet.”

Monsieur Safrac took the light film which I held out to him and examined it carefully.

“This,” he said, “is written in Persian of the best period and can be easily translated thus:

“THE PRAYER OF LEILA, DAUGHTER OF LILITH

“My God, promise me death, so that I may taste of life. My God, give me remorse, so that I may at last find happiness. My God, make me the equal of the daughters of Eve.”

LAETA ACILIA

TO ARY RENAN

I.

Laeta Acilia lived in Marseilles during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. She had been married for several years to a Roman noble named Helvius, but she had no children, though she longed passionately to become a mother. One day as she went to the temple to pray to the gods she found the entrance crowded by a band of men, half naked, emaciated and devoured by leprosy and ulcers. She paused in terror on the lowest step of the temple. Laeta Acilia was not without compassion. She pitied the poor creatures, but she was afraid of them. Nor had she ever seen beggars as wild looking as those who at this moment crowded before her, livid, lifeless, their empty wallets flung at their feet. She grew pale and held her hand to her heart; she could neither advance nor escape, and she felt her limbs giving way under her when a woman of striking beauty detached herself from these unfortunates and came towards her.

“Fear nothing, young woman,” and the unknown spoke in a voice both grave and tender, “the men you see here are not cruel. They are the bearers not of falsehood and evil, but of truth and love. We have come from Judaea, where the Son of God has died and risen again. When He ascended to the right hand of His Father those who believed in Him suffered cruel wrongs. Stephen was stoned by the people. As for us, the priests placed us on board a ship without sails or rudder, and we were delivered over to the waters of the sea to the end that we should perish. But the God who loved us in His mortal life mercifully led us to the harbour of this town. Alas! the people of Marseilles are avaricious, idolatrous and cruel. They permit the disciples of Jesus to die of hunger and cold. And had we not taken refuge in this temple, which they deem sacred, they would already have dragged us to their gloomy prisons. And yet it would have been well had they welcomed us, since we bring good tidings.”

Having thus spoken the stranger held out her hand towards her companions and pointed to each in turn.

“That old man, lady,” she said, “who turns on you his serene gaze, that is Cedon, he whom, though blind from birth, the Master healed. Cedon now sees with equal clearness things both visible and invisible. That other old man, whose beard is as white as the snow on the mountains, is Maximin. This man, still so young, and who yet seems so weary, is my brother. He was possessed of great

wealth in Jerusalem. Near him stand Martha my sister and Mantilla, the faithful servant who in happier days gathered olives on the hillsides of Bethany.”

“And you,” asked Laeta Acilia, “you whose voice is so soft and whose face is so beautiful, what is your name?”

The Jewess replied:

“I am called Mary Magdalen. I divined by the gold embroidery on your raiment, and the unconscious pride of your bearing, that you are the wife of one of the principal citizens of this town. For this reason I have approached you, to the end that you may move the heart of your husband on behalf of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Say to this rich man: ‘Lord, they are naked, let us clothe them; they are anhungered and thirsty let us give them bread and wine, and God will restore to us in His Kingdom what was borrowed from us in His name.’”

Laeta Acilia replied:

“Mary, I will do as you ask. My husband is named Helvius; he is of noble rank and one of the richest citizens of the town; never for long does he refuse what I desire, for he loves me. Your companions have now ceased, O Mary, to fill me with fear. I shall even dare to pass close to them, though their limbs are polluted by ulcers, and I shall go to the temple to pray to the immortal gods to grant my wish. Alas! hitherto they have refused.”

Mary, with arms outstretched, barred her way.

“Beware, lady,” she cried, “of worshipping vain idols. Do not demand of images of stone words of hope and life. There is only one God, and with my hair I have wiped His feet.”

At these words the flashing of her eyes, dark as the sky in a storm, mingled with tears, and Laeta Acilia said to herself:

“I am pious, and I faithfully perform the ceremonies religion demands, but in this woman there is a strange feeling of a love divine.”

Mary Magdalen continued in ecstasy: “He was the God of Heaven and earth, and He uttered His parables seated on the bench by the threshold, under the shade of the old fig-tree. He was young and beautiful. He would have been glad to be loved. When he came to supper in my sister’s house I sat at His feet, and the words flowed from His lips like the waters of a torrent. And when my sister complained of my sloth, saying: ‘Master, tell her it is but right that she should aid me to prepare the supper,’ He smiled and made excuse for me, and permitted me to remain seated at His feet, and said that I had chosen the good part.

“One would have thought to see Him that He was but a young shepherd from the mountains, and yet His eyes flashed flames like those that issued from the brow of Moses. His gentleness was like the peace of night and His anger was more terrible than a thunderbolt. He loved the humble and the little ones. Along

the roadside the children ran towards Him and clung to His garments. He was the God of Abraham and Jacob, and with the same hands that had created the sun and the stars, He caressed the cheeks of the newly born whom their happy mothers held out to Him from the thresholds of their cottages. He was himself as simple as a child, and He raised the dead to life. Here among my companions you see my brother whom He raised from the dead. Behold, lady! Lazarus bears on his face the pallor of death, and in his eyes is the horror of one who has seen hell.”

But for some moments past Laeta Acilia had ceased to listen.

She raised towards the Jewess her candid eyes and her small, smooth forehead.

“Mary,” she said, “I am a pious woman, attached to the faith of my fathers. Unbelief is evil for our sex. And it does not beseem the wife of a Roman noble to accept new fashions in religions. And yet I must confess that there are some charming gods in the East. Your God, Mary, seems one of these. You have told me that He loves little children, and that He kisses them as they lie in the arms of their young mothers. By that I see that He is a God who is favourable to women, and I regret that He is not held in esteem among the aristocracy and the official classes, or I would gladly bring him offerings of honey-cakes. But, listen, Mary the Jewess, appeal to Him, you whom He loves, and demand of Him for me that which I dare not demand myself, and which my goddesses have refused.”

Laeta Acilia uttered these words with hesitation. She paused and blushed.

“What is it,” Mary Magdalen asked eagerly, “and what desire, lady, has your unsatisfied soul?”

Gaining courage little by little, Laeta Acilia replied:

“Mary, you are a woman, and though I know you not, I yet may confide to you a woman’s secret. During the six years that I have been married I have not had a child, and that is a great sorrow to me; I need a child to love; the love in my heart for the little creature I am awaiting, and who yet may never come, is stifling me. If your God, Mary Magdalen, grants me through your intercession what my goddesses have denied me, I shall say that He is a good God, and I will love Him and I will make my friends love Him. And like us they are young and rich, and they belong to the first families of the town.”

Mary Magdalen replied gravely:

“Daughter of the Romans, when you shall have received that for which you ask, may you remember this promise that you have made to the servant of Jesus.”

“I shall remember,” she replied. “In the meantime take this purse, Mary, and divide the money it contains among your companions. Farewell, I shall return to

my house. As soon as I arrive I will send baskets full of bread and meat for you and your friends. Tell your brother and your sister and your friends that they may without fear leave the sanctuary where they have taken refuge and go to some inn on the outskirts of the town. Helvius, who has great influence in the town, will prevent any one molesting them. May the gods protect you, Mary Magdalen! When it shall please you to see me again ask of the passers-by for the house of Laeta Acilia; any of the citizens will be able to show you the way without trouble.”

II.

It was six months later that Laeta Acilia, lying on a purple couch in the courtyard of her house, crooned a little song that had no sense and which her mother had sung before her. The water sang gaily in the fountain out of whose shallow basin rose young Tritons in marble, and the balmy-air gently stirred the murmuring leaves of the old plane-tree. Tired, languid, happy, heavy as a bee leaving the orchard, the young woman crossed her arms over her rounded body, and, having ceased her song, glanced about her and sighed in the fulness of pride.

At her feet her black, white and yellow slaves were busy with needle, shuttle and spindle, vying with each other as they worked at the garments for the expected infant. Laeta stretched out her hand and took a little cap which an old slave laughingly offered her. She placed it on her closed hand and laughed in turn. It was a little cap of purple and gold, silver and pearls, and splendid as the dreams of a poor African slave.

At that moment a stranger entered this interior court. She was clothed in a seamless garment of one piece, in colour like the dust of the roads. Her long hair was covered with ashes, but her face, worn by tears, still shone with glory and beauty.

The slaves, mistaking her for a beggar, were about to drive her away when Laeta Acilia, recognising her at the first glance, rose and ran towards her.

“Mary, Mary,” she cried, “it is true that you were the favourite of a god. He whom you loved on earth has heard you in Heaven, and through your intercession He has granted my prayer. See,” she added, and she showed her the little cap which she still held in her hand, “how happy I am and how grateful to you.”

“I knew it,” replied Mary Magdalen “and I have come, Laeta Acilia, to instruct you in the truth of Jesus Christ.”

Thereupon the Marseillaise dismissed her slaves, and offered the Jewess an ivory armchair with cushions embroidered in gold. But Mary Magdalen, pushing it back with disgust, seated herself on the ground with feet crossed in the shade of the great plane-tree stirred by the murmuring breeze.

“Daughter of the Gentiles,” she said, “you have not despised the disciples of the Lord. For this reason I will teach you to know Jesus as I know Him, to the end that you shall love Him as I love Him. I was a sinner when I saw for the first time the most beautiful of the sons of men.”

Thereupon she told how she had thrown herself at the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Leper, and how she had poured over the Master’s adored feet all the ointment of spikenard contained in the alabaster vase. She repeated the words the gentle Master had uttered in reply to the murmurs of His rough disciples.

“Why do you reprove this woman?” He had said. “That which she has done is well done. For the poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always. She has with forethought anointed My body for My burial. I tell you in truth that in the whole world, wherever the Gospel is preached, shall be told what she has done, and she shall be praised.”

She then described how Jesus had cast out the seven devils that had raged within her.

She added:

“Since then, enraptured and consumed by all the joys of faith and love, I have lived in the shadow of the Master as in a new Eden.”

She told her of the lilies of the fields upon which they had gazed together, and of that infinite happiness, the happiness born of faith alone. Then she described how He had been betrayed and put to death for the salvation of His people. She recalled the ineffable scenes of the passion, the burial and the resurrection.

“It was I,” she cried, “it was I who of all was the first to see Him. I found two angels clad in white seated, one at the head, the other at the feet, where we had laid the body of Jesus. And they said to me: ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’ ‘I weep because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.’”

“O joy! Jesus came towards me, and at first I thought He was the gardener. But he called me ‘Mary’ and I recognised His voice. I cried ‘Master’ and held out my arms, but He replied gently, ‘Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.’”

As she listened to this narrative Laeta Acilia lost little by little her sense of joy and contentment. Recalling the past and examining her own life, it seemed to her very monotonous in comparison to the life of the woman who had loved a god. Young and pious and a patrician, her own red-letter days were those on which she had eaten cakes with her girl friends. Visits to the circus, the love of Helvius and her needle-work also counted in her life. But what were these all in comparison to the scenes with which Mary Magdalen kindled her senses and her soul? She felt her heart stifling with bitter jealousy and vague regrets.

She envied this Jewess, whose radiant beauty still glowed under the ashes of penitence, her divine adventures, and even her sorrows.

“Begone, Jewess!” she cried, forcing back her tears with her hands. “Begone! But a moment since I was so contented, I believed myself so happy. I did not know that there were other joys than those which were mine. I knew of no other love than that of my good Helvius, and I knew of no other holy joy than to celebrate the mysteries of the goddesses in the manner of my mother and of my grandmother. O, now I understand! Wicked woman, you wished to make me discontented with the life I have led. But you have not succeeded! Why have you come to tell me of your love for a visible God? Why do you boast before me of having seen the resurrection of the Master since I shall not see Him? You even hoped to spoil the joy that is mine in bearing a child. It was wicked! I refuse to know your God. You have loved Him too much! To please Him one is obliged to fall prostrate and dishevelled at His feet. That is not an attitude which befits the wife of a noble! Helvius would be annoyed did I worship in such a way. I will have nothing to do with a religion that disarranges one’s hair! No indeed, I will not allow the little child I bear in my bosom to know your Christ! Should this poor little creature be a daughter she shall learn to love the little goddesses of baked clay that are not larger than my finger, and with these she can play without fear. These are the proper divinities for mothers and children. You are very audacious to boast of your love affairs and to ask me to share them. How could your God be mine? I have not led the life of a sinner, I have not been possessed of seven devils, nor have I frequented the highways. I am a respectable woman. Begone!”

And Mary Magdalen, perceiving that proselytising was not her vocation, retired to a wild cavern since called the Holy Grotto. The sacred historians

believe unanimously that Laeta Acilia was not converted to the faith of Christ until many years after this interview which I have faithfully recorded.

A NOTE ON A POINT OF EXEGESIS

I have been reproached for having in this story confused Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalen. I must confess at once that the Gospel seems to make of Mary who poured the perfume of spikenard over the feet of Jesus and of Mary to whom the Master said: "*Noli me tangere?*," two women absolutely distinct. Upon this point I am willing to make amends to those who have done me the honour to blame me.

Among the number is a princess who belongs to the Orthodox Greek Church. This does not in the least surprise me. The Greeks have always distinguished between the two Marys. It was not the same in the Western Church. On the contrary, the identity of the sister of Martha and Magdalen the sinner was early acknowledged.

The texts lend themselves but ill to this interpretation, but texts never present difficulties to any one but the pundits; the poetry of the people is more subtle than science: it can never be held in check, and it overcomes the obstacles which prove a stumbling-block to criticism. By a happy turn of the imagination popular fancy has welded the two Marys together and thus created the marvellous type of Mary Magdalen. It has been made sacred by legend, and it is the legend which has inspired my little story. In this I consider myself above reproach. Nor is that all! I am able, even, to invoke the authority of the learned, and I may, without vanity, say that the Sorbonne is on my side. The Sorbonne declared on December 1, 1521, that there is but one Mary.

THE RED EGG

TO SAMUEL POZZI

Dr. N —— — placed his coffee-cup on the mantelpiece, threw his cigar into the fire, and said to me: “My dear friend, you recently told me of the strange suicide of a woman tortured by terror and remorse. Her nature was fine and she was exquisitely cultivated. Being suspected of complicity in a crime of which she had been the silent witness, in despair at her own irreparable cowardice, she was haunted by a perpetual nightmare in which her husband appeared to her dead and decomposing and pointing her out with his finger to the inquisitive magistrates. She was the victim of her own morbid imagination. In this condition an insignificant and casual circumstance decided her fate.

“Her nephew, a child, lived with her. One morning he was, as usual, studying his lessons in the dining-room where she happened to be. The child began to translate word by word a verse of Sophocles, and as he wrote he pronounced aloud both the Greek and the translation:

The head divine; of Jocasta; is dead.... tearing her hair; she calls; Laios dead... we see; the woman hung. He added a flourish which tore the paper, stuck out his ink-stained tongue, and repeated in sing-song, ‘Hung, hung, hung!’

“The wretched woman, whose will-power had been destroyed, passively obeyed the suggestion in the word, repeated three times. She rose, and without a word or look went straight to her room. Some hours later the police-inspector, called to verify a violent death, made this reflection: ‘I have seen many women who have committed suicide, but this is the first time I have seen one who has hanged herself.’

“We speak of suggestion. Here is an instance which is at once natural and credible. I am a little doubtful, in spite of everything, of those which are arranged in the medical schools.

“But that a being in whom the will-power is dead obeys every external impulse is a truth which reason admits and which experience proves. The example which you cited reminds me of another one somewhat similar. It is that of my unfortunate comrade, Alexandre Le Mansel. A verse of Sophocles killed your heroine. A phrase of Lampridius destroyed the friend of whom I will tell you.

“Le Mansel, with whom I studied at the high school of Avranches, was unlike all his comrades. He seemed at once younger and older than he really was. Small and fragile, he was at fifteen years of age afraid of everything that alarms little children. Darkness caused him an overpowering terror, and he could never meet

one of the servants of the school, who happened to have a big lump on the top of his head, without bursting into tears. And yet at times, when we saw him close at hand, he looked quite old. His parched skin, glued to his temples, nourished his thin hair very inadequately. His forehead was polished like that of a middle-aged man. As for his eyes, they had no expression, and strangers often thought he was blind. His mouth alone gave character to his face. His sensitive lips expressed in turn a child-like joy and strange sufferings. The sound of his voice was clear and charming. When he recited his lessons he gave the verses their full harmony and rhythm, which made us laugh very much. During recreation he willingly joined our games, and he was not awkward, but he played with such feverish enthusiasm, and yet he was so absent-minded, that some of us felt an insurmountable aversion towards him.

“He was not popular, and we would have made him our butt had he not rather overawed us by something of savage pride and by his reputation as a clever scholar, for though he was unequal in his work he was often at the head of his class. It was said that he would often talk in his sleep and that he would leave his bed in the dormitory while sound asleep. This, however, we had not observed for ourselves as we were at the age of sound sleep.

“For a long time he inspired me with more surprise than sympathy. Then of a sudden we became friends during a walk which the whole class took to the Abbey of Mont St. Michel. We tramped barefooted along the beach, carrying our shoes and our bread at the end of a stick and singing at the top of our voices. We passed the postern, and having thrown our bundles at the foot of the ‘Michelettes,’ we sat down side by side on one of those ancient iron cannons corroded by five centuries of rain and fog.

“Looking dreamily from the ancient stones to the sky, and swinging his bare feet, he said to me: ‘Had I but lived in the time of those wars and been a knight, I would have captured these two old cannons; I would have captured twenty, I would have captured a hundred! I would have captured all the cannons of the English. I would have fought single-handed in front of this gate. And the Archangel Michel would have stood guard over my head like a white cloud.’

“These words and the slow chant in which he uttered them thrilled me. I said to him, ‘I would have been your squire. I like you, Le Mansel; will you be my friend?’ And I held my hand out to him and he took it solemnly.

“At the master’s command we put on our shoes, and our little band climbed the steep ascent that leads to the abbey. Midway, near a spreading fig-tree, we saw the cottage where Tiphaine Raguel, widow of Bertrand du Guesdin, lived in peril of the sea.

“This dwelling is so small that it is a wonder that it was ever inhabited. To have lived there the worthy Tiphaine must have been a queer old body, or, rather, a saint living only the spiritual life. Le Mansel opened his arms as if to embrace this sacred hut; then, falling on his knees, he kissed the stones, heedless of the laughter of his comrades who, in their merriment, began to pelt him with pebbles. I will not describe our walk among the dungeons, the cloisters, the halls and the chapel. Le Mansel seemed oblivious to everything. Indeed, I should not have recalled this incident except to show how our friendship began.

“In the dormitory the next morning I was awakened by a voice at my ear which said:

“‘Tiphaine is not dead,’ I rubbed my eyes as I saw Le Mansel in his shirt at my side. I requested him rather rudely to let me sleep, and I thought no more of this singular communication.

“From that day on I understood the character of our fellow pupil much better than before, and I discovered an inordinate pride which I had never before suspected. It will not surprise you if I acknowledge that at the age of fifteen I was but a poor psychologist. But Le Mansel’s pride was too subtle to strike one at once. It had no concrete shape, but seemed to embrace remote phantasms. And yet it influenced all his feelings and gave to his ideas, uncouth and incoherent though they were, something of unity.

“During the holidays that followed our walk to the Mont St. Michel, Le Mansel invited me to spend a day at the home of his parents, who were farmers and landowners at Saint Julien.

“My mother consented with some repugnance. Saint Julien is six kilometres from the town. Having put on a white waistcoat and a smart blue tie I started on my way there early one Sunday morning.

“Alexandre stood at the door waiting for me and smiling like a little child. He took me by the hand and led me into the ‘parlour.’ The house, half country, half town-like, was neither poor nor ill furnished. And yet my heart was deeply oppressed when I entered, so great was the silence and sadness that reigned.

“Near the window, whose curtains were slightly raised as if to satisfy some timid curiosity, I saw a woman who seemed old, though I cannot be sure that she was as old as she appeared to be. She was thin and yellow, and her eyes, under their red lids glowed in their black sockets. Though it was summer her body and her head were shrouded in some black woollen material. But that which made her look most ghastly was a band of metal which encircled her forehead like a diadem.

“‘This is mama,’ Le Mansel said to me, ‘she has a headache.’

“Madam Le Mansel greeted me in a plaintive voice, and doubtless observing my astonished glance at her forehead, said, smiling:

“‘What I wear on my forehead, young sir, is not a crown; it is a magnetic band to cure my headache.’ I did my best to reply when Le Mansel dragged me away to the garden, where we found a bald little man who flitted along the paths like a ghost. He was so thin and so light that there seemed some danger of his being blown away by the wind. His timid manner and his long and lean neck, when he bent forward, and his head, no larger than a man’s fist, his shy side-glances and his skipping gait, his short arms uplifted like a pair of flippers, gave him undeniably a great resemblance to a plucked chicken.

“My friend, Le Mansel, explained that this was his father, but that they were obliged to let him stay in the yard as he really only lived in the company of his chickens, and he had in their society quite forgotten to talk to human beings. As he spoke his father suddenly disappeared, and very soon an ecstatic clucking filled the air. He was with his chickens.

“Le Mansel and I strolled several times around the garden and he told me that at dinner, presently, I should see his grandmother, but that I was to take no notice of what she said, as she was sometimes a little out of her mind. Then he drew me aside into a pretty arbour and whispered, blushing:

“‘I have written some verses about Tiphaine Raguel. I’ll repeat them to you some other time. You’ll see, you’ll see.’

“The dinner-bell rang and we went into the dining-room. M. Le Mansel came in with a basket full of eggs.

“‘Eighteen this morning,’ he said, and his voice sounded like a cluck.

“A most delicious omelette was served. I was seated between Madame Le Mansel, who was moaning under her crown, and her mother, an old Normandy woman with round cheeks, who, having lost all her teeth, smiled with her eyes. She seemed very attractive to me. While we were eating roast-duck and chicken *à la crème* the good lady told us some very amusing stories, and, in spite of what her grandson had said, I did not observe that her mind was in the slightest degree affected. On the contrary, she seemed to be the life of the house.

“After dinner we adjourned to a little sitting-room whose walnut furniture was covered with yellow Utrecht velvet. An ornamental clock between two candelabra decorated the mantelpiece, and on the top of its black plinth, and protected and covered by a glass globe, was a red egg. I do not know why, once having observed it, I should have examined it so attentively. Children have such unaccountable curiosity. However, I must say that the egg was of a most wonderful and magnificent colour. It had no resemblance whatever to those Easter eggs dyed in the juice of the beetroot, so much admired by the urchins

who stare in at the fruit-shops. It was of the colour of royal purple. And with the indiscretion of my age I could not resist saying as much.

“M. Le Mansel’s reply was a kind of crow which expressed his admiration.

“‘That egg, young sir,’ he added, ‘has not been dyed as you seem to think. It was laid by a Cingalese hen in my poultry-yard just as you see it there. It is a phenomenal egg.’

“‘You must not forget to say,’ Madame Le Mansel added in a plaintive voice, ‘that this egg was laid the very day our Alexandre was born.’

“‘That’s a fact,’ M. Le Mansel assented.

“In the meantime the old grandmother looked at me with sarcastic eyes, and pressed her loose lips together and made a sign that I was not to believe what I heard.

“‘Humph!’ she whispered, ‘chickens often sit on what they don’t lay, and if some malicious neighbour slips into their nest a — —’

“Her grandson interrupted her fiercely. He was pale, and his hands shook.

“‘Don’t listen to her,’ he cried to me. ‘You know what I told you. Don’t listen!’

“‘It’s a fact!’ M. Le Mansel repeated, his round eye fixed in a side glance at the red egg.

“My further connection with Alexandre Le Mansel contains nothing worth relating. My friend often spoke of his verses to Tiphaine, but he never showed them to me. Indeed, I very soon lost sight of him. My mother sent me to Paris to finish my studies. I took my degree in two faculties, and then I studied medicine. During the time that I was preparing my doctor’s thesis I received a letter from my mother, who told me that poor Alexandre had been very ailing, and that after a serious attack he had become timid and excessively suspicious; that, however, he was quite harmless, and in spite of the disordered state of his health and reason he showed an extraordinary aptitude for mathematics. There was nothing in these tidings to surprise me. Often, as I studied the diseases of the nervous centres, my mind reverted to my poor friend at Saint Julien, and in spite of myself I foresaw for him the general paralysis which inevitably threatened the offspring of a mother racked by chronic nervous headaches and a rheumatic, addle-brained father.

“The sequel, however, did not, apparently, prove me to be in the right. Alexandre Le Mansel, as I heard from Avranches, regained his normal health, and as he grew towards manhood gave active proof of the brilliancy of his intellect. He worked with ardour at his mathematical studies, and he even sent to the Academy of Sciences solutions of several problems hitherto unsolved, which were found to be as elegant as they were accurate. Absorbed in his work, he

rarely found time to write to me. His letters were affectionate, clear, and to the point, and nothing could be found in them to arouse the mistrust of the most suspicious neurologist. However, very soon after this our correspondence ceased, and I heard nothing more of him for the next ten years.

“Last year I was greatly surprised when my servant brought me the card of Alexandre Le Mansel, and said that the gentleman was waiting for me in the ante-room.

“I was in my study consulting with a colleague on a matter of some importance. However, I begged him to excuse me for a moment while I hurried to greet my old friend. I found he had grown very old, bald, haggard, and terribly emaciated. I took him by the arm and led him into the *salon* .

“‘I am glad to see you again,’ he said, ‘and I have much to tell you. I am exposed to the most unheard-of persecutions. But I have courage, and I shall struggle bravely, and I shall triumph over my enemies.’

“These words disquieted me, as they would have disquieted in my place any other nerve specialist. I recognised a symptom of the disease which, by the fatal laws of heredity, menaced my friend, and which had appeared to be checked.

“‘My dear friend,’ I said, ‘we will talk about that presently. Wait here a moment. I just want to finish something. In the meantime take a book and amuse yourself.’

“You know I have a great number of books, and my drawing-room contains about six thousand volumes in three mahogany book-cases. Why, then, should my unfortunate friend choose the very one likely to do him harm, and open it at that fatal page? I conferred some twenty minutes longer with my colleague, and having taken leave of him I returned to the room where I had left Le Mansel. I found the unfortunate man in the most fearful condition. He struck a book that lay open before him and, which I at once recognised as a translation of the *Historia Augusta* . He recited at the top of his voice this sentence of Lampridius:

“‘On the day of the birth of Alexander Severus, a chicken, belonging to the father of the newly-born, laid a red egg — augury of the imperial purple to which the child was destined.’

“His excitement increased to fury. He foamed at the mouth. He cried: ‘The egg, the egg of the day of my birth. I am an Emperor. I know that you want to kill me. Keep away, you wretch!’ He strode down the room, then, returning, came towards me with open arms. ‘My friend,’ he said, ‘my old comrade, what do you wish me to bestow on you? An Emperor — an Emperor.... My father was right.... the red egg. I must be an Emperor! Scoundrel, why did you hide this book from me? This is a crime of high treason; it shall be punished! ‘I shall be Emperor! Emperor! Yes, it is my duty.... Forward.... forward!’”

“He was gone. In vain I tried to detain him. He escaped me. You know the rest. All the newspapers have described how, after leaving me, he bought a revolver and blew out the brains of the sentry who tried to prevent his forcing his way into the Elysée.

“And thus it happens that a sentence written by a Latin historian of the fourth century was the cause, fifteen hundred years after, of the death in our country of a wretched private soldier. Who will ever disentangle the web of cause and effect?

“Who can venture to say, as he accomplishes some simple act: ‘I know what I am doing.’ My dear friend, this is all I have to tell. The rest is of no interest except in medical statistics. Le Mansel, shut up in an insane asylum, remained for fifteen days a prey to the most violent mania. Whereupon he fell into a state of complete imbecility, during which he became so greedy that he even devoured the wax with which they polished the floor. Three months later he was suffocated while trying to swallow a sponge.”

The doctor ceased and lighted a cigarette. After a moment of silence, I said to him, “You have told me a terrible story, doctor.”

“It is terrible,” he replied, “but it is true. I should be glad of a little brandy.”

MOTHER OF PEARL



Translated by Frederic Chapman

CONTENTS

[THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA](#)

[AMYCUS AND CELESTINE](#)

[THE LEGEND OF SAINTS OLIVERIA AND LIBERETTA](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

[ST. EUPHROSINE](#)

[SCHOLASTICA](#)

[OUR LADY'S JUGGLER](#)

[THE MASS OF SHADOWS](#)

[LESLIE WOOD](#)

[GESTAS](#)

[THE MANUSCRIPT OF A VILLAGE DOCTOR](#)

[MEMOIRS OF A VOLUNTEER](#)

[DAWN](#)

[MADAME DE LUZY](#)

[THE BOON OF DEATH BESTOWED](#)

A TALE OF THE MONTH OF FLORÉAL IN THE YEAR II

THE LITTLE LEADEN SOLDIER

THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA

L. ÆLIUS LAMIA, born in Italy of illustrious parents, had not yet discarded the *toga prætexta* when he set out for the schools of Athens to study philosophy. Subsequently he took up his residence at Rome, and in his house on the Esquiline, amid a circle of youthful wastrels, abandoned himself to licentious courses. But being accused of engaging in criminal relations with Lepida, the wife of Sulpicius Quirinus, a man of consular rank, and being found guilty, he was exiled by Tiberius Caesar. At that time he was just entering his twenty-fourth year. During the eighteen years that his exile lasted he traversed Syria, Palestine, Cappadocia, and Armenia, and made prolonged visits to Antioch, Caesarea, and Jerusalem. When, after the death of Tiberius, Caius was raised to the purple, Lamia obtained permission to return to Rome. He even regained a portion of his possessions. Adversity had taught him wisdom.

He avoided all intercourse with the wives and daughters of Roman citizens, made no efforts towards obtaining office, held aloof from public honours, and lived a secluded life in his house on the Esquiline. Occupying himself with the task of recording all the remarkable things he had seen during his distant travels, he turned, as he said, the vicissitudes of his years of expiation into a diversion for his hours of rest. In the midst of these calm employments, alternating with assiduous study of the works of Epicurus, he recognized with a mixture of surprise and vexation that age was stealing upon him. In his sixty-second year, being afflicted with an illness which proved in no slight degree troublesome, he decided to have recourse to the waters at Baiæ. The coast at that point, once frequented by the halcyon, was at this date the resort of the wealthy Roman, greedy of pleasure. For a week Lamia lived alone, without a friend in the brilliant crowd. Then one day, after dinner, an inclination to which he yielded urged him to ascend the incline, which, covered with vines that resembled bacchantes, looked out upon the waves.

Having reached the summit he seated himself by the side of a path beneath a terebinth, and let his glances wander over the lovely landscape. To his left, livid and bare, the Phlegræan plain stretched out towards the ruins of Cumæ. On his right, Cape Misenum plunged its abrupt spur beneath the Tyrrhenian sea. Beneath his feet luxurious Baiæ, following the graceful outline of the coast, displayed its gardens, its villas thronged with statues, its porticos, its marble terraces along the shores of the blue ocean where the dolphins sported. Before him, on the other side of the bay, on the Campanian coast, gilded by the already

sinking sun, gleamed the temples which far away rose above the laurels of Posilippo, whilst on the extreme horizon Vesuvius looked forth smiling.

Lamia drew from a fold of his toga a scroll containing the *Treatise upon Nature*, extended himself upon the ground, and began to read. But the warning cries of a slave necessitated his rising to allow of the passage of a litter which was being carried along the narrow pathway through the vineyards. The litter being uncurtained, permitted Lamia to see stretched upon the cushions as it was borne nearer to him the figure of an elderly man of immense bulk, who, supporting his head on his hand, gazed out with a gloomy and disdainful expression. His nose, which was aquiline, and his chin, which was prominent, seemed desirous of meeting across his lips, and his jaws were powerful.

From the first moment Lamia was convinced that the face was familiar to him. He hesitated a moment before the name came to him. Then suddenly hastening towards the litter with a display of surprise and delight —

“Pontius Pilate!” he cried. “The gods be praised who have permitted me to see you once again!” The old man gave a signal to the slaves to stop, and cast a keen glance upon the stranger who had addressed him.

“Pontius, my dear host,” resumed the latter, “have twenty years so far whitened my hair and hollowed my cheeks that you no longer recognize your friend Ælius Lamia?”

At this name Pontius Pilate dismounted from the litter as actively as the weight of his years and the heaviness of his gait permitted him, and embraced Ælius Lamia again and again.

“Gods! what a treat it is to me to see you once more! But, alas, you call up memories of those long-vanished days when I was Procurator of Judæa in the province of Syria. Why, it must be thirty years ago that I first met you. It was at Caesarea, whither you came to drag out your weary term of exile. I was fortunate enough to alleviate it a little, and out of friendship, Lamia, you followed me to that depressing place Jerusalem, where the Jews filled me with bitterness and disgust. You remained for more than ten years my guest and my companion, and in converse about Rome and things Roman we both of us managed to find consolation — you for your misfortunes, and I for my burdens of State.”

Lamia embraced him afresh.

“You forget two things, Pontius; you are overlooking the facts that you used your influence on my behalf with Herod Antipas, and that your purse was freely open to me.”

“Let us not talk of that,” replied Pontius, “since after your return to Rome you sent me by one of your freedmen a sum of money which repaid me with usury.”

“Pontius, I could never consider myself out of your debt by the mere payment of money. But tell me, have the gods fulfilled your desires? Are you in the enjoyment of all the happiness you deserve? Tell me about your family, your fortunes, your health.”

“I have withdrawn to Sicily, where I possess estates, and where I cultivate wheat for the market. My eldest daughter, my best-beloved Pontia, who has been left a widow, lives with me, and directs my household. The gods be praised, I have preserved my mental vigour; my memory is not in the least degree enfeebled. But old age always brings in its train a long procession of griefs and infirmities. I am cruelly tormented with gout. And at this very moment you find me on my way to the Phlegræan plain in search of a remedy for my sufferings. From that burning soil, whence at night flames burst forth, proceed amid exhalations of sulphur, which, so they say, ease the pains and restore suppleness to the stiffened joints. At least, the physicians assure me that it is so.”

“May you find it so in your case, Pontius! But, despite the gout and its burning torments, you scarcely look as old as myself, although in reality you must be my senior by ten years. Unmistakably you have retained a greater degree of vigour than I ever possessed, and I am overjoyed to find you looking so hale. Why, dear friend, did you retire from the public service before the customary age? Why, on resigning your governorship in Judæa, did you withdraw to a voluntary exile on your Sicilian estates? Give me an account of your doings from the moment that I ceased to be a witness of them. You were preparing to suppress a Samaritan rising when I set out for Cappadocia, where I hoped to draw some profit from the breeding of horses and mules. I have not seen you since then. How did that expedition succeed? Pray tell me. Everything interests me that concerns you in any way.”

Pontius Pilate sadly shook his head.

“My natural disposition,” he said, “as well as a sense of duty, impelled me to fulfil my public responsibilities, not merely with diligence, but even with ardour. But I was pursued by unrelenting hatred. Intrigues and calumnies cut short my career in its prime, and the fruit it should have looked to bear has withered away. You ask me about the Samaritan insurrection. Let us sit down on this hillock. I shall be able to give you an answer in few words. Those occurrences are as vividly present to me as if they had happened yesterday.

“A man of the people, of persuasive speech — there are many such to be met with in Syria — induced the Samaritans to gather together in arms on Mount Gerizim (which in that country is looked upon as a holy place) under the promise that he would disclose to their sight the sacred vessels which in the ancient days of Evander and our father, Æneas, had been hidden away by an eponymous hero,

or rather a tribal deity, named Moses. Upon this assurance the Samaritans rose in rebellion; but having been warned in time to forestall them, I dispatched detachments of infantry to occupy the mountain, and stationed cavalry to keep the approaches to it under observation.

“These measures of prudence were urgent. The rebels were already laying siege to the town of Tyrathaba, situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim. I easily dispersed them, and stifled the as yet scarcely organized revolt. Then, in order to give a forcible example with as few victims as possible, I handed over to execution the leaders of the rebellion. But you are aware, Lamia, in what strait dependence I was kept by the proconsul Vitellius, who governed Syria not in, but against the interests of Rome, and looked upon the provinces of the empire as territories which could be farmed out to tetrarchs. The head-men among the Samaritans, in their resentment against me, came and fell at his feet lamenting. To listen to them, nothing had been further from their thoughts than to disobey Cæsar. It was I who had provoked the rising, and it was purely in order to withstand my violence that they had gathered together round Tyrathaba. Vitellius listened to their complaints, and handing over the affairs of Judaea to his friend Marcellus, commanded me to go and justify my proceedings before the Emperor himself. With a heart overflowing with grief and resentment I took ship. Just as I approached the shores of Italy, Tiberius, worn out with age and the cares of empire, died suddenly on the selfsame Cape Misenum, whose peak we see from this very spot magnified in the mists of evening. I demanded justice of Caius, his successor, whose perception was naturally acute, and who was acquainted with Syrian affairs. But marvel with me, Lamia, at the maliciousness of fortune, resolved on my discomfiture. Caius then had in his suite at Rome the Jew Agrippa, his companion, the friend of his childhood, whom he cherished as his own eyes. Now Agrippa favoured Vitellius, inasmuch as Vitellius was the enemy of Antipas, whom Agrippa pursued with his hatred. The Emperor adopted the prejudices of his beloved Asiatic, and refused even to listen to me. There was nothing for me to do but bow beneath the stroke of unmerited misfortune. With tears for my meat and gall for my portion, I withdrew to my estates in Sicily, where I should have died of grief if my sweet Pontia had not come to console her father. I have cultivated wheat, and succeeded in producing the fullest ears in the whole province. But now my life is ended; the future will judge between Vitellius and me.”

“Pontius,” replied Lamia, “I am persuaded that you acted towards the Samaritans according to the rectitude of your character, and solely in the interests of Rome. But were you not perchance on that occasion a trifle too much influenced by that impetuous courage which has always swayed you? You will

remember that in Judaea it often happened that I who, younger than you, should naturally have been more impetuous than you, was obliged to urge you to clemency and suavity.”

“Suavity towards the Jews!” cried Pontius Pilate. “Although you have lived amongst them, it seems clear that you ill understand those enemies of the human race. Haughty and at the same time base, combining an invincible obstinacy with a despicably mean spirit, they weary alike your love and your hatred. My character, Lamia, was formed upon the maxims of the divine Augustus. When I was appointed Procurator of Judaea, the world was already penetrated with the majestic ideal of the *pax romana*. No longer, as in the days of our internecine strife, were we witnesses to the sack of a province for the aggrandisement of a proconsul. I knew where my duty lay. I was careful that my actions should be governed by prudence and moderation. The gods are my witnesses that I was resolved upon mildness, and upon mildness only. Yet what did my benevolent intentions avail me? You were at my side, Lamia, when, at the outset of my career as ruler, the first rebellion came to a head. Is there any need for me to recall the details to you? The garrison had been transferred from Cæsarea to take up its winter quarters at Jerusalem. Upon the ensigns of the legionaries appeared the presentment of Caesar. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who did not recognize the indwelling divinity of the Emperor, were scandalized at this, as though, when obedience is compulsory, it were not less abject to obey a god than a man. The priests of their nation appeared before my tribunal imploring me with supercilious humility to have the ensigns removed from within the holy city. Out of reverence for the divine nature of Cæsar and the majesty of the empire, I refused to comply. Then the rabble made common cause with the priests, and all around the pretonum portentous cries of supplication arose. I ordered the soldiers to stack their spears in front of the tower of Antonia, and to proceed, armed only with sticks like lictors, to disperse the insolent crowd. But, heedless of blows, the Jews continued their entreaties, and the more obstinate amongst them threw themselves on the ground and, exposing their throats to the rods, deliberately courted death. You were a witness of my humiliation on that occasion, Lamia. By the order of Vitellius I was forced to send the insignia back to Caesarea. That disgrace I had certainly not merited. Before the immortal gods I swear that never once during my term of office did I flout justice and the laws. But I am grown old. My enemies and detractors are dead. I shall die unavenged. Who will now retrieve my character?”

He moaned and lapsed into silence. Lamia replied —

“That man is prudent who neither hopes nor fears anything from the uncertain events of the future. Does it matter in the least what estimate men may form of

us hereafter? We ourselves are after all our own witnesses, and our own judges. You must rely, Pontius Pilate, on the testimony you yourself bear to your own rectitude. Be content with your own personal respect and that of your friends. For the rest, we know that mildness by itself will not suffice for the work of government. There is but little room in the actions of public men for that indulgence of human frailty which the philosophers recommend.”

“We’ll say no more at present,” said Pontius. “The sulphureous fumes which rise from the Phlegræan plain are more powerful when the ground which exhales them is still warm beneath the sun’s rays. I must hasten on. Adieu! But now that I have rediscovered a friend, I should wish to take advantage of my good fortune. Do me the favour, Ælius Lamia, to give me your company at supper at my house to-morrow. My house stands on the seashore, at the extreme end of the town in the direction of Misenum. You will easily recognize it by the porch which bears a painting representing Orpheus surrounded by tigers and lions, whom he is charming with the strains from his lyre.

“Till to-morrow, Lamia,” he repeated, as he climbed once more into his litter. “To-morrow we will talk about Judæa.”

The following day at the supper hour Lamia presented himself at the house of Pontius Pilate. Two couches only were in readiness for occupants. Creditably but simply equipped, the table held a silver service in which were set out beccaficos in honey, thrushes, oysters from the Lucrine lake, and lampreys from Sicily. As they proceeded with their repast, Pontius and Lamia interchanged inquiries with one another about their ailments, the symptoms of which they described at considerable length, mutually emulous of communicating the various remedies which had been recommended to them. Then, congratulating themselves on being thrown together once more at Baiæ, they vied with one another in praise of the beauty of that enchanting coast and the mildness of the climate they enjoyed. Lamia was enthusiastic about the charms of the courtesans who frequented the seashore laden with golden ornaments and trailing draperies of barbaric broidery. But the aged Procurator deplored the ostentation with which by means of trumpery jewels and filmy garments foreigners and even enemies of the empire beguiled the Romans of their gold. After a time they turned to the subject of the great engineering feats that had been accomplished in the country; the prodigious bridge constructed by Caius between Puteoli and Baiæ, and the canals which Augustus excavated to convey the waters of the ocean to Lake Avernus and the Lucrine lake.

“I also,” said Pontius, with a sigh, “I also wished to set afoot public works of great utility. When, for my sins, I was appointed Governor of Judæa, I conceived

the idea of furnishing Jerusalem with an abundant supply of pure water by means of an aqueduct. The elevation of the levels, the proportionate capacity of the various parts, the gradient for the brazen reservoirs to which the distribution pipes were to be fixed — I had gone into every detail, and decided everything for myself with the assistance of mechanical experts. I had drawn up regulations for the superintendents so as to prevent individuals from making unauthorized depredations. The architects and the workmen had their instructions. I gave orders for the commencement of operations. But far from viewing with satisfaction the construction of that conduit, which was intended to carry to their town upon its massive arches not only water but health, the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave vent to lamentable outcries. They gathered tumultuously together, exclaiming against the sacrilege and impiety, and, hurling themselves upon the workmen, scattered the very foundation stones. Can you picture to yourself, Lamia, a filthier set of barbarians? Nevertheless, Vitellius decided in their favour, and I received orders to put a stop to the work.”

“It is a knotty point,” said Lamia, “how far one is justified in devising things for the commonweal against the will of the populace.”

Pontius Pilate continued as though he had not heard this interruption.

“Refuse an aqueduct! What madness! But whatever is of Roman origin is distasteful to the Jews. In their eyes we are an unclean race, and our very presence appears a profanation to them. You will remember that they would never venture to enter the pretorium for fear of defiling themselves, and that I was consequently obliged to discharge my magisterial functions in an open-air tribunal on that marble pavement your feet so often trod.

“They fear us and they despise us. Yet is not Rome the mother and warden of all those peoples who nestle smiling upon her venerable bosom? With her eagles in the van, peace and liberty have been carried to the very confines of the universe.

Those whom we have subdued we look on as our friends, and we leave those conquered races, nay, we secure to them the permanence of their customs and their laws. Did Syria, aforesaid rent asunder by its rabble of petty kings, ever even begin to taste of peace and prosperity until it submitted to the armies of Pompey? And when Rome might have reaped a golden harvest as the price of her goodwill, did she lay hands on the hoards that swell the treasuries of barbaric temples? Did she despoil the shrine of Cybele at Pessinus, or the Morimene and Cilician sanctuaries of Jupiter, or the temple of the Jewish god at Jerusalem? Antioch, Palmyra, and Apamea, secure despite their wealth, and no longer in dread of the wandering Arab of the desert, have erected temples to the genius of Rome and the divine Cæsar. The Jews alone hate and withstand us. They

withhold their tribute till it is wrested from them, and obstinately rebel against military service.”

“The Jews,” replied Lamia, “are profoundly attached to their ancient customs. They suspected you, unreasonably I admit, of a desire to abolish their laws and change their usages. Do not resent it, Pontius, if I say that you did not always act in such a way as to disperse their unfortunate illusion. It gratified you, despite your habitual self-restraint, to play upon their fears, and more than once have I seen you betray in their presence the contempt with which their beliefs and religious ceremonies inspired you. You irritated them particularly by giving instructions for the sacerdotal garments and ornaments of their high priest to be kept in ward by your legionaries in the Antonine tower. One must admit that though they have never risen like us to an appreciation of things divine, the Jews celebrate rites which their very antiquity renders venerable.”

Pontius Pilate shrugged his shoulders.

“They have very little exact knowledge of the nature of the gods,” he said. “They worship Jupiter, yet they abstain from naming him or erecting a statue of him. They do not even adore him under the semblance of a rude stone, as certain of the Asiatic peoples are wont to do. They know nothing of Apollo, of Neptune, of Mars, nor of Pluto, nor of any goddess. At the same time, I am convinced that in days gone by they worshipped Venus. For even to this day their women bring doves to the altar as victims; and you know as well as I that the dealers who trade beneath the arcades of their temple supply those birds in couples for sacrifice. I have even been told that on one occasion some madman proceeded to overturn the stalls bearing these offerings, and their owners with them. The priests raised an outcry about it, and looked on it as a case of sacrilege. I am of opinion that their custom of sacrificing turtledoves was instituted in honour of Venus. Why are you laughing, Lamia?”

“I was laughing,” said Lamia, “at an amusing idea which, I hardly know how, just occurred to me. I was thinking that perchance some day the Jupiter of the Jews might come to Rome and vent his fury upon you. Why should he not? Asia and Africa have already enriched us with a considerable number of gods. We have seen temples in honour of Isis and the dog-faced Anubis erected in Rome. In the public squares, and even on the race-courses, you may run across the Bona Dea of the Syrians mounted on an ass. And did you never hear how, in the reign of Tiberius, a young patrician passed himself off as the horned Jupiter of the Egyptians, Jupiter Ammon, and in this disguise procured the favours of an illustrious lady who was too virtuous to deny anything to a god? Beware, Pontius, lest the invisible Jupiter of the Jews disembark some day on the quay at

Ostia!" At the idea of a god coming out of Judæa, a fleeting smile played over the severe countenance of the Procurator. Then he replied gravely —

"How would the Jews manage to impose their sacred law on outside peoples when they are in a perpetual state of tumult amongst themselves as to the interpretation of that law? You have seen them yourself, Lamia, in the public squares, split up into twenty rival parties, with staves in their hands, abusing each other and clutching one another by the beard. You have seen them on the steps of the temple, tearing their filthy garments as a symbol of lamentation, with some wretched creature in a frenzy of prophetic exaltation in their midst. They have never realized that it is possible to discuss peacefully and with an even mind those matters concerning the divine which yet are hidden from the profane and wrapped in uncertainty. For the nature of the immortal gods remains hidden from us, and we cannot arrive at a knowledge of it. Though I am of opinion, none the less, that it is a prudent thing to believe in the providence of the gods. But the Jews are devoid of philosophy, and cannot tolerate any diversity of opinions. On the contrary, they judge worthy of the extreme penalty all those who on divine subjects profess opinions opposed to their law. And as, since the genius of Rome has towered over them, capital sentences pronounced by their own tribunals can only be carried out with the sanction of the proconsul or the procurator, they harry the Roman magistrate at any hour to procure his signature to their baleful decrees, they besiege the pretorium with their cries of 'Death!' A hundred times, at least, have I known them, mustered, rich and poor together, all united under their priests, make a furious onslaught on my ivory chair, seizing me by the skirts of my robe, by the thongs of my sandals, and all to demand of me — nay, to exact from me — the death sentence on some unfortunate whose guilt I failed to perceive, and as to whom I could only pronounce that he was as mad as his accusers. A hundred times, do I say! Not a hundred, but every day and all day. Yet it was my duty to execute their law as if it were ours, since I was appointed by Rome not for the destruction, but for the upholding of their customs, and over them I had the power of the rod and the axe. At the outset or my term of office I endeavoured to persuade them to hear reason; I attempted to snatch their miserable victims from death. But this show of mildness only irritated them the more; they demanded their prey, fighting around me like a horde of vultures with wing and beak. Their priests reported to Cæsar that I was violating their law, and their appeals, supported by Vitellius, drew down upon me a severe reprimand. How many times did I long, as the Greeks used to say, to dispatch accusers and accused in one convoy to the crows!

“Do not imagine, Lamia, that I nourish the rancour of the discomfited, the wrath of the superannuated, against a people which in my person has prevailed against both Rome and tranquillity. But I foresee the extremity to which sooner or later they will reduce us. Since we cannot govern them, we shall be driven to destroy them. Never doubt it. Always in a state of insubordination, brewing rebellion in their inflammatory minds, they will one day burst forth upon us with a fury beside which the wrath of the Numidians and the mutterings of the Parthians are mere child’s play. They are secretly nourishing preposterous hopes, and madly premeditating our ruin. How can it be otherwise, when, on the strength of an oracle, they are living in expectation of the coming of a prince of their own blood whose kingdom shall extend over the whole earth? There are no half measures with such a people. They must be exterminated. Jerusalem must be laid waste to the very foundation. Perchance, old as I am, it may be granted me to behold the day when her walls shall fall and the flames shall envelop her houses, when her inhabitants shall pass under the edge of the sword, when salt shall be strown on the place where once the temple stood. And in that day I shall at length be justified.”

Lamia exerted himself to lead the conversation back to a less acrimonious note.

“Pontius,” he said, “it is not difficult for me to understand both your long-standing resentment and your sinister forebodings. Truly, what you have experienced of the character of the Jews is nothing to their advantage. But I lived in Jerusalem as an interested onlooker, and mingled freely with the people, and I succeeded in detecting certain obscure virtues in these rude folk which were altogether hidden from you. I have met Jews who were all mildness, whose simple manners and faithfulness of heart recalled to me what our poets have related concerning the Spartan lawgiver. And you yourself, Pontius, have seen perish beneath the cudgels of your legionaries simple-minded men who have died for a cause they believed to be just without revealing their names. Such men do not deserve our contempt. I am saying this because it is desirable in all things to preserve moderation and an even mind. But I own that I never experienced any lively sympathy for the Jews. The Jewesses, on the contrary, I found extremely pleasing. I was young then, and the Syrian women stirred all my senses to response. Their ruddy lips, their liquid eyes that shone in the shade, their sleepy gaze pierced me to the very marrow. Painted and stained, smelling of nard and myrrh, steeped in odours, their physical attractions are both rare and delightful.”

Pontius listened impatiently to these praises.

“I was not the kind of man to fall into the snares of the Jewish women,” he said; “and since you have opened the subject yourself, Lamia, I was never able to approve of your laxity. If I did not express with sufficient emphasis formerly how culpable I held you for having intrigued at Rome with the wife of a man of consular rank, it was because you were then enduring heavy penance for your misdoings. Marriage from the patrician point of view is a sacred tie; it is one of the institutions which are the support of Rome. As to foreign women and slaves, such relations as one may enter into with them would be of little account were it not that they habituate the body to a humiliating effeminacy. Let me tell you that you have been too liberal in your offerings to the Venus of the Market-place; and what, above all, I blame in you is that you have not married in compliance with the law and given children to the Republic, as every good citizen is bound to do.” But the man who had suffered exile under Tiberius was no longer listening to the venerable magistrate. Having tossed off his cup of Falernian, he was smiling at some image visible to his eye alone.

After a moment’s silence he resumed in a very deep voice, which rose in pitch by little and little—” With what languorous grace they dance, those Syrian women! I knew a Jewess at Jerusalem who used to dance in a poky little room, on a threadbare carpet, by the light of one smoky little lamp, waving her arms as she clanged her cymbals. Her loins arched, her head thrown back, and, as it were, dragged down by the weight of her heavy red hair, her eyes swimming with voluptuousness, eager, languishing, compliant, she would have made Cleopatra herself grow pale with envy. I was in love with her barbaric dances, her voice — a little raucous and yet so sweet — her atmosphere of incense, the semi-somnolescent state in which she seemed to live. I followed her everywhere. I mixed with the vile rabble of soldiers, conjurers, and extortioners with which she was surrounded. One day, however, she disappeared, and I saw her no more. Long did I seek her in disreputable alleys and taverns. It was more difficult to learn to do without her than to lose the taste for Greek wine. Some months after I lost sight of her, I learned by chance that she had attached herself to a small company of men and women who were followers of a young Galilean thaumaturgist. His name was Jesus; he came from Nazareth, and he was crucified for some crime, I don’t quite know what. Pontius, do you remember anything about the man?”

Pontius Pilate contracted his brows, and his hand rose to his forehead in the attitude of one who probes the deeps of memory. Then after a silence of some seconds —

“Jesus?” he murmured, “Jesus — of Nazareth? I cannot call him to mind.”

AMYCUS AND CELESTINE

TO GEORGES DE PORTO-RICHE

PRONE upon the threshold of his rude cavern the hermit Celestine passed in prayer the eve of the Easter Festival, that unearthly night upon which the shuddering demons are hurled into the abyss. And whilst the shades still enveloped the earth, at the moment when the exterminating angel winged his flight across Egypt, Celestine shivered, for he was seized with anguish and unease. He heard from afar in the forest the cries of the wild cats and the shrill voices of the frogs. Immersed in the unholy darkness, he even doubted whether the glorious mystery could come to pass. But when he saw the first signals of the day, gladness entered into his heart together with the dawn; he realized that Christ was risen from the dead, and cried —

“Jesus is arisen from the grave. Love has conquered death. Alleluia! He is risen all glorious from the foot of the hill. Alleluia! The whole creation is restored and made anew. Darkness and evil are put to flight. Light and pardon encompass the world. Alleluia!”

A lark, awakened amidst the wheat, answered him with song.

“He is risen again. I have dreamed of nests and eggs — white eggs, flecked with brown. Alleluia! He is risen again.”

Then the hermit Celestine left his cavern to go to the neighbouring chapel and celebrate the holy Easter Feast.

As he passed through the forest he saw in the midst of a glade a splendid beech, whose bursting buds already gave passage to tiny leaves of a tender green. Garlands of ivy and fillets of wool were hung upon its branches, which spread out groundwards. Votive tablets fastened to its gnarled trunk spoke of youth and love, and here and there some Eros, fashioned in clay, shorn of garments and with outspread wings, balanced himself lightly upon a branch. At this sight the hermit Celestine knitted his whitened brows.

“It is the fairies’ tree,” he said, “and the country maidens, according to ancient custom, have laden it with offerings. My life is passed in struggling against these fairies, and no one could conceive the annoyance these tiny creatures cause me. They do not openly rebel against me. Each year at harvest time I exorcise the tree with the customary rites, and sing the Gospel of St. John to them.

“There is nothing better to be done. Holy water and the Gospel of St. John have power to put them to flight, and there is nothing more heard of the little damsels throughout the winter; but in the spring back they come once more, and each year one must begin all over again.

“And they are subtle; a single bush of hawthorn is large enough to shelter a whole swarm. And they cast their spells upon the young folks, both the youths and the maidens.

“As I have grown older my sight has become dim and now I can scarcely perceive their presence. They make a mock of me, sport under my nose and laugh in my beard. But when I was only twenty, I often saw them in the clearings dancing in circles beneath the light of the moon like garlands of flowers. Oh, Lord God, Thou who madest the heaven and the dew, praised be Thou in Thy works. But why didst Thou create unholy trees and fairy springs? Why hast Thou planted beneath the hazel the screaming mandrake? These things of nature seduce the young to sin, and are the cause of unnumbered labours to anchorites who, like myself, have undertaken the sanctification of Thy creatures. If only the Gospel of St. John still availed to put the demons to flight! But it is no longer enough, and I am perplexed to know what to do.”

And as the good hermit went sighing on his way, the tree — for it was a fairy tree — called to him with a fresh rustling.

“Celestine! Celestine! My buds are eggs — true Easter eggs. Alleluia! Alleluia!”

Celestine plunged into the wood without turning his head. He made his way with difficulty by a narrow path through the midst of thorns which tore his gown, when suddenly the road was barred to him by a young lad who came bounding out of a thicket. He was half-clothed in the skin of some beast, and was indeed rather a faun than a boy. His glance was penetrating, his nose flattened, his countenance laughing. His curly hair concealed the two little horns upon his stubborn forehead; his lips disclosed white pointed teeth; a fair forked beard descended from his chin. Upon his chest a golden down shone. He was agile and slender, and his cloven feet were hidden in the grass.

Celestine, who had made himself possessor of all the wisdom to be won by meditation, saw at once with whom he had to do, and raised his arm to make the sign of the cross. But the faun, seizing his hand, prevented him from completing the mighty spell. —

“Good hermit,” said he, “do not exorcise me.

For me, as for you, this day is a day of festival. You would be wanting in charity if you should plunge me in grief during the Easter Feast. If you are willing, we will stroll along together, and you will see that I am not malicious.”

By good fortune Celestine was well versed in the sacred sciences. He recalled to himself in these circumstances that St. Jerome in the desert had had for fellow-travellers both satyrs and centaurs who had confessed the Truth.

He said to the faun —

“Faun raise a hymn to God. Declare: He is risen.”

“He is indeed arisen,” replied the faun. “And behold me all gladness thereupon.”

Here the path widened, so that they walked side by side. The hermit became pensive, and reflected —

“He cannot be a demon since he has witnessed to the Truth. It is well that I refrained from grieving him. The example of the great St. Jerome has not been lost upon me.”

Then, turning towards his goat-footed companion, he asked him —

“What is your name?”

“I am called Amycus,” replied the faun. “I dwell in this wood, where I was born. I came to you, good father, because behind your long white beard your countenance was kindly. It seems to me that hermits must be fauns borne down by the years. When I am grown old I shall be like unto you.”

“He is risen,” said the hermit.

“He is indeed arisen,” said Amycus.

And thus conversing they climbed the hill on which arose a chapel consecrated to the true God. It was small and of homely construction. Celestine had built it with his own hands with the fragments of a temple of Venus. Within, the table of the Lord stood forth shapeless and uncovered.

“Let us fall down,” said the hermit, “and sing Alleluia, for He is arisen. And do you, mysterious being, remain kneeling whilst I offer the holy sacrifice.”

But the faun drew near to the hermit, and stroked his beard, and said —

“Venerable old man, you are wiser than I, and you can discern that which is invisible. But the woods and the springs are better known to me than to you. I will bring to God leafage and blossoms. I know the banks where the cress half opens its lilac clusters, the meadows where the cowslip blossoms in yellow bunches. I detect by its faint odour the mistletoe upon the wild apple tree. Already the blackthorn bushes are decked with a snowy crown of flowers. Wait for me, good father.”

With three goat-like leaps he was back in the woods, and when he returned Celestine fancied he beheld a walking hawthorn tree. Amycus had disappeared beneath his odorous harvest. He hung garlands of flowers about the rustic altar; he sprinkled it with violets, and said solemnly —

“I dedicate these flowers to the God who gave them being.”

And whilst Celestine celebrated the sacrifice of the mass, the goat-footed one bowed his horned head down to the very ground and worshipped the sun, and said —

“The earth is a vast egg which thou, O Sun, most holy Sun, dost render fruitful.”

From that day forward Celestine and Amycus lived together in fellowship. The hermit never succeeded, despite all his endeavours, in making the half-human creature understand the ineffable mysteries; but as through the exertions of Amycus the chapel of the true God was constantly hung with garlands, and more gaily decked than the fairies’ tree, the holy priest said —

“The faun is himself a hymn to God.”

And it was for this reason that he bestowed on him the rite of holy baptism.

Upon the hill where Celestine once raised the meagre chapel which Amycus garlanded with flowers from the hills, the woods, and the streams, there stands at the present day a church the nave of which goes back to the eleventh century, whilst the porch dates from the period of Henry II, when it was rebuilt in the style of the Renaissance. It is a place of pilgrimage, and the faithful assemble there to hold in pious memory the saints Amycus and Celestine.

THE LEGEND OF SAINTS OLIVERIA AND LIBERETTA

TO MADEMOISELLE JEANNE POUQUET

THE LEGEND OF
SAINTS OLIVERIA AND LIBERETTA

CHAPTER I

How Mess ire St. Berthold , son of Theodulus , King of Scotland , came over to the Ardennes to preach to the inhabitants of the Pays Porcin.

THE forest of the Ardennes extended at that time as far as the waters of the Aisne, and covered the Pays Porcin, in which now rises the town of Rethel. Its ravines swarmed with innumerable wild boars, stags of immense height of a species now extinct thronged in the impenetrable thickets, and wolves of prodigious strength were encountered in winter on the skirts of the woods. The basilisk and the unicorn had their quarters in that forest, as well as a frightful dragon, which later on, by the grace of God, met with destruction at the prayers of a holy hermit. And because in those days the mysteries of nature were revealed to men, and for the glory of the Creator things which were naturally invisible became visible, it was common to meet in the clearings nymphs, satyrs, centaurs, and aigypans.

Now it is in no respect doubtful that these malevolent beings have indeed been seen just as they have been described in the fables of the pagans. But it must be remembered that they are devils, as is apparent by their feet, which are cloven. Unhappily the fairies are not so easy to detect; these have all the appearance of damsels, and at times the resemblance is so pronounced that one must possess all the prudence of a hermit if one would avoid being deceived. The fairies also are demons, and there were in the forest of the Ardennes great numbers of them. It was for this very reason that that forest so abounded in mystery and horror.

The Romans in the time of Caesar had consecrated it to Diana, and the inhabitants of the Pays Porcin on the shores of the Aisne worshipped an idol in the form of a woman. They made offerings to her of cakes, milk, and honey, and sang hymns in her honour.

Now Berthold, the son of Theodulus, King of Scotland, having received holy baptism, lived in the palace of his father, more after the fashion of a hermit than of a prince. Close shut in his apartment, he spent the livelong day in reciting prayers and meditating upon the Holy Scriptures, and the desire kindled in him to imitate the labours of the apostles. Having learned through a miraculous source the abominations of the Pays Porcin, he straightway loathed and resolved to put an end to them.

He crossed the sea in a ship which had neither sail nor rudder, and which was drawn by a swan. Happily arrived in the Pays Porcin, he wandered through the

villages, the walled towns, and the castles, announcing the glad tidings.

“The God whom I preach to you,” he said, “is the only true God. He is one God in three Persons, and His Son was born of a Virgin.”

But these rude men answered him —

“Youthful stranger, it is very simple on your part to imagine that there is but one God. For the gods are countless. They dwell in the woods, the mountains, and the streams. There are even gods so intimate that they do not disdain a place by the hearths of pious men. Others, again, take up their station in the stables and byres, and so the race of the gods fills the whole universe. But what you have to say about a Divine Virgin is not without warrant. We know of a Virgin with a threefold countenance to whom we sing canticles, and say, ‘Hail most benign! Hail most terrible!’ She is called Diana, and beneath her silvery tread under the pale beams of the moon the mountain thyme bursts into blossom. She has not disdained to receive upon her couch blossoming hyacinths, the offering of shepherds and huntsmen like ourselves. Nevertheless, she remains ever virgin.”

Thus spake these ignorant men whilst they drove the apostle to the confines of the village, and pursued him with mocking words.

CHAPTER II

Of the meeting between Messire St. Berthold and the two sisters Oliveria and Liberetta.

NOW one day as he pursued his journey, overcome with weariness and grief, he fell in with two young girls, who were setting forth from their castle for a jaunt in the woods. He made several steps towards them, and then stood off at a distance for fear of alarming them, and said —

“Give ear, young virgins. I am Berthold, son of Theodulus, King of Scotland. But I have disdained perishable crowns that I might be worthy at last to receive at the hand of the angels the Crown that fadeth not away. And I journeyed hither in a ship, drawn by a swan, to bring you the glad tidings.”

“Sir Berthold,” replied the elder, “my name is Oliveria, and that of my sister is Liberetta. Our father, Thierry, who is also called Porphyrodimus, is the wealthiest lord in the country. Willingly will we listen to your good tidings.

But you appear overcome with fatigue. I counsel you to go and await us in the hall of our father, who is at this moment drinking the good ale with his friends. When he learns that you are a Scottish prince, he will without question assign you a place at his table. Farewell, till we meet again, Sir Berthold. We are going, my sister and I, to gather flowers as an offering to Diana.”

But the apostle Berthold replied —

“It is not for me to go and seat myself at a pagan’s table. This Diana whom you imagine to be a heavenly virgin is in very truth a demon out of hell. The true God is one God in three Persons, and Jesus Christ His Son became Man and died upon the cross for the salvation of all men. And verily I tell you, Oliveria and Liberetta, a drop of His blood flowed on behalf of each one of you.” Then he discoursed to them with so much ardour of the holy mysteries, that the hearts of the two sisters were moved thereby. The elder sister took up the discourse anew.

“Sir Berthold,” she said, “you disclose unheard-of mysteries. But it is not always an easy matter to distinguish truth from error. It would be painful to us to abandon our devotion to Diana. Nevertheless, let but a sign of the truth of your words appear to us, and we will believe in Jesus crucified.”

But the younger sister said to the apostle— “My sister Oliveria has asked for a sign because she is of a prudent nature and full of wisdom. But if your God is the true God, Sir Berthold, would that I might know and love Him without being impelled by a sign.”

The man of God understood by these words that Liberetta was born to become a great saint. And on this account he replied —

“Sister Liberetta and Sister Oliveria, I have resolved to retire into that forest, there to lead the eremitical life which is both desirable and rare. I shall dwell in a hut of interlaced boughs, and support life upon roots. I shall pray unceasingly to God to change the hearts of the men of this country, and I shall bestow my benediction on the springs, so that the fairy folk may cease to come thither for the beguiling of sinners. Nevertheless, my sister Oliveria shall receive the sign for which she has asked. And a messenger sent by the Lord himself shall guide you both to my hermitage in order that I may instruct you in the faith of Jesus Christ.” Having spoken after this fashion, St. Berthold gave his blessing to the two sisters with the imposition of hands. After which he fared forth into the forest, from which he never afterwards emerged.

CHAPTER III

How the unicorn came to the hall of Thierry , otherwise called Porphyrodimus , and conducted the two sisters Oliveria and Liberetta to the retreat of Messire St. Berthold , and of diverse marvels that ensued.

NOW one day, being alone in the kitchen, Oliveria was spinning wool beneath the chimney canopy when she saw approach her a beast of a perfect whiteness which had the body of a goat and the head of a horse, and which bore on its forehead a shining spear. Oliveria immediately recognized what animal it was, and as she had maintained her innocence she was not in the least afraid, being aware that the unicorn never does any harm to discreet maidens. And indeed the unicorn did but place his head gently upon Oliveria's knees. Then turning again towards the door, by the direction of its eyes it invited the young girl to follow it without.

Oliveria immediately called her sister, but when Liberetta entered the room the unicorn had disappeared; and so it came about that Liberetta, in accordance with her desire, acknowledged the true God without having been constrained by a sign.

The two sisters set forth in the direction of the forest, and the unicorn, who had once more become visible, walked ahead of them. They pursued throughout their journey the trail of the wild beasts. And it came to pass that when they had reached the depths of the wood, they saw the unicorn take to the water and swim across a torrent. Now when they came to the water's edge they were aware that it was both wide and deep. They leaned over it to see if perchance there might be any stepping-stones by means of which they could cross, but none such could they discover. Now whilst they were leaning upon a willow and gazing upon the foaming waters, the tree bent down suddenly and bore them without effort to the opposite shore.

Thus, then, they arrived at the hermitage, where St. Berthold imparted unto them the words of life. Upon their return, the willow uprearing itself again bore them back to the other side.

Each day they betook themselves to the dwelling of the holy man, and when they returned to their own home they found that all the thread on their distaffs had been spun by invisible hands. For these reasons, then, having received baptism, they believed in Jesus Christ.

For more than a year they received instruction from St. Berthold, when Thierry their father, who was also called Porphyrodimus, was seized with a cruel malady. Being aware that the end of their father was drawing nigh, his daughters instructed him in the Christian faith. He acknowledged the truth. And so it came about that his death was most meritorious. He was ensepulchred near to his mortal home in a place known as the Giant's Mountain, and in after days his tomb was venerated throughout the Pays Porcin.

Meanwhile the two sisters repaired daily to the dwelling of the holy hermit Berthold, and they gathered from his lips the words of life. But on a certain day when the rivers were greatly swollen by the melted snows, Oliveria, as she went through the vineyards, took a prop that she might with greater security cross the torrent whose much widened stream sped along riotously.

Liberetta, disdaining all human aid, declined to follow her example. She was the first to reach the torrent, her hands armed solely with the sign of the cross. And the willow bent down in its customary way. Then it rose erect once more, and when Oliveria in her turn desired to pass over it remained motionless. And the current broke her prop as if it had been a wisp of straw and carried it away. And Oliveria remained still on the hither side. But since she was discreet she recognized that she was justly punished for having doubted the heavenly powers, and for not having committed herself to the grace of God after the manner of her sister Liberetta. Thereafter she had no other thought but to win pardon for herself by works of penitence and self-denial. So being resolved, after the example of St. Berthold, to lead the eremitical life which is both desirable and rare, she remained in the forest on this side of the torrent, and built herself a hut of boughs interlaced at a spot where a spring gushed forth, which has since received the name of St. Olive's well.

CHAPTER IV

How Messire St. Berthold , and Mesdames Saints Liberetta and Oliveria came to their blissful consummation.

LIBERETTA having arrived at the dwelling of the blessed Berthold alone, found him in a contemplative attitude quite dead. His body, attenuated by fasting, exhaled a delicious fragrance. With her own hands she buried him. From this day forward the virgin Liberetta, having taken leave of the world, led the eremitical life on the other side of the torrent, in a hut by the edge of a spring, which has since been known as the well of St. Liberetta, or Liberia, whose miraculous waters cure fevers as well as divers maladies with which cattle are afflicted.

The two sisters never saw one another again in this world. But, by the intercession of the blessed Berthold, God sent into the Ardennes from the country of the Lombards the deacon Vulfai, or Valfroy, who overturned the idol of Diana and converted the inhabitants of the Pays Porcin to the Christian faith. Thereupon Oliveria and Liberetta were overwhelmed with joy.

But a little time after this the Lord called to Himself his servant Liberetta, and sent the unicorn to dig a grave and bury the body of the saint. Oliveria was aware, through a revelation, of the blissful death of her sister, Liberetta, and a voice said to her —

“Because you asked for a sign before you would believe, and took a prop to lean upon, the hour of your blissful death will be delayed and the day of your consummation postponed.”

And Oliveria replied to the voice —

“May the will of the Lord be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

She lived ten years longer in expectation of eternal beatitude, which commenced for her in the month of October, in the year of Our Lord 364.

ST. EUPHROSINE

TO GASTON-ARMAN DE CAILLAVET

The acts of St. Euphrosine of Alexandria, in religion Brother Smaragdus , as they were set forth in the Laura on Mount Athos by George the Deacon.

EUPHROSINE was the only daughter of a rich citizen of Alexandria, named Romulus, who was careful to have her instructed in music, dancing, and arithmetic in such fashion that at the close of her childhood she displayed a subtle and unusually adorned intelligence. She had not yet completed her eleventh year when the magistrates of Alexandria caused to be announced in the streets that a golden cup would be awarded as a prize to whomsoever should produce an exact reply to the three following questions.

First Question: I am the dusky child of a luminous sire; a wingless bird, yet I rise to the clouds. With no spark of malice, I yet draw tears from the eyes I encounter. Scarcely am I born when I vanish into air. Tell me, friend, what is my name?

Second Question: I beget my mother, yet am by her brought forth, and sometimes I am longer and sometimes shorter. Tell me, friend, what is my name?

Third Question: Antipater possesses as much as Nicomedes and a third of the share of Themistius. Nicomedes possesses as much as Themistius and a third of what Antipater owns. Themistius possesses ten minas and a third of what Nicomedes owns. What is the sum which belongs to each?

Now, on the day set apart for the gathering, a number of young men presented themselves before the judges in the hope of winning the golden cup, but not one of them gave correct replies. The president was about to bring the sitting to an end when the youthful Euphrosine, in her turn drawing near to the tribunal, asked to be heard. Every one admired the modesty of her bearing and the winsome shamefacedness which lent a blush to her cheeks.

“Most illustrious judges,” she said, lowering her eyes, “after having given the glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, the beginning and the end of all wisdom, I will endeavour to reply to the questions which your worships have propounded, and I will begin with the first. The dusky child is smoke, which is born of fire, rises in the air, and by its pungency draws tears from our eyes. So much for the first question.

“Now to reply to the second. That which begets its mother and is by her brought forth is nothing other than the day, which is sometimes long and sometimes short, according to the season. So much for the second question.

“And now to answer the third. Antipater possesses forty-five minas, Nicomedes has but thirty-seven and a half, whilst Themistius has twenty-two and a half. That is my third answer.”

The judges, marvelling at the correctness of these replies, awarded the prize to the youthful Euphrosine. Thereupon the most venerable among them, having risen, presented her with the golden cup, and encircled her forehead with a garland of papyrus by way of honouring the keen intelligence she had displayed. Then the virgin was conducted home to her father’s house to the sound of flutes amidst a great concourse of people.

But as she was a Christian and pious in no ordinary degree, far from being puffed up with these honours, she recognized their emptiness, and resolved that in the future she would apply the keenness of her intelligence to the solution of problems more worthy of attention — as, for example, the computation of the sum of the numbers represented by the letters of the name of Jesus, and the consideration of the wonderful properties of these numbers.

Meanwhile she grew in wisdom and in beauty, and was sought in marriage by very many young men. Amongst these was the Count Longinus, who possessed great wealth. Romulus received this suitor favourably, hoping that an alliance with this powerful man might assist him in the rehabilitation of his own affairs, which had got into disorder through his vast expenditure upon his palace, his plate, and his gardens. Romulus, who was one of the most lavish amongst the inhabitants of Alexandria, had above all squandered considerable sums in gathering together in his mansion, beneath a vast cupola, the most wonderful examples of mechanism, such as a globe as brilliant as a sapphire, bearing on it the heavenly constellations set out with exactitude in precious stones. There were also to be seen in this chamber a fountain, constructed by Hero, which distributed perfumed waters, and two mirrors so cunningly contrived that they converted the gazer, the one into a person of extreme height and slenderness, and the other into a person equally short and stout. But the most marvellous sight in this mansion was a hawthorn bush all covered with birds, which by ingenious mechanism both sang and fluttered their wings as if they had been alive. Romulus had expended the remains of his wealth in the acquisition of these mechanical toys, which fascinated him. This, then, was the reason for his favourable reception of the Count Longinus, the possessor of great wealth. He urged forward by all means in his power the consummation of a marriage from which he anticipated both happiness for his daughter and relief from anxiety in his old age. But each time that he recounted to Euphrosine the claims of Count Longinus, she turned her glance aside without making any reply. One day he said to her —

“Will you not admit, my daughter, that he is the handsomest, the wealthiest, and the noblest citizen in all Alexandria?”

Euphrosine replied discreetly —

“Willingly do I admit it, dear father. Indeed, I am convinced that Count Longinus surpasses all the citizens of this town in noble birth, worldly possessions, and personal beauty. Consequently, if I refuse to accept him as a husband there is little likelihood that any other will succeed where he has failed, and induce me to change my resolution, which is to consecrate my virginity to Jesus Christ.”

When he heard of this determination Romulus fell into a violent passion, and swore that he knew well enough how to force Euphrosine to espouse Count Longinus; and without breaking forth into idle threats, he added that this marriage was resolved upon in his mind, and that it would be carried through without delay, whilst if his paternal authority did not suffice he would add to it that of the Emperor, who being divine, would not allow a daughter to disobey her father in a matter which was of so much public and State importance as the marriage of a woman of patrician rank.

Euphrosine was aware that her father had great influence with the Emperor, who at that time lived at Constantinople. She perceived that in this perilous situation she had no hope of assistance except from Count Longinus himself. On this account she entreated him to come to her in the basilica for a private interview.

Impelled by hope as well as curiosity, Count Longinus betook himself to the basilica all bedecked with gold and precious stones. The maiden did not make him wait. But when he saw her appear with dishevelled hair, wrapped in a black veil like a suppliant, he drew an evil augury from the sight, and his heart was disturbed.

Euphrosine was the first to speak.

“Most illustrious Longinus,” she said to him, “if you love me as much as you declare, you will fear to do aught displeasing to me; and, indeed, it would be giving me a mortal blow were you to lead me away to your house to have your pleasure of this body, which, with my soul, I have dedicated to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the beginning and the end of all love.”

But Count Longinus answered her —

“Most illustrious Euphrosine, love is stronger even than our wills; that is why it behoves us to bow before him as before a jealous master. I shall act towards you after the fashion he ordains, which is to take you for my wife.”

“Is it becoming that a man — an illustrious man, too — should rob the Lord of His betrothed?”

“As to that, I shall take counsel from the bishops rather than from you.”

These plans threw the young girl into the most lively consternation. She realized that she had no compassion to expect from this man of violence, governed altogether by his senses, and that the bishops could not enforce recognition of secret vows made by her to God in solitude. And in the excess of her uneasiness she had recourse to an artifice so singular that it is more to be marvelled at than held up as an example.

Her resolution being taken, she feigned to yield to the wishes of her father and the entreaties of her lover. She even suffered them to fix a day for the ceremony of betrothal. Count Longinus had already caused the jewels and ornaments destined for his bride to be placed in the marriage coffers; he had ordered for her twelve gowns, upon which were embroidered scenes from the Old and the New Testament, the legends of the Greeks, the history of animals, as well as the divine presentments of the Emperor and Empress, with their retinue of lords and ladies. One of these coffers, moreover, contained books upon theology and arithmetic written in letters of gold upon sheets of parchment, purple tintured, and preserved between plates of ivory and gold.

Euphrosine, however, remained the day long shut up alone in her chamber, and the reason she gave for her withdrawal was that it behoved her to make ready her wedding garments.

“It would be most unfitting,” she said, “if certain portions of my vesture should be shaped and sewn by any other hands than mine.”

And in very truth she wielded her needle from morning till night. But that which she made ready secretly in this fashion was neither the symbolical veil of the virgin nor the white robe of the betrothed. What she prepared was the rough hood, short tunic, and loose breeches which the young artisans in towns are accustomed to wear while engaged in their labours. And whilst she fulfilled this undertaking she constantly invoked Jesus Christ, the beginning and the end of all the achievements of the upright. For this cause, then, she happily completed her clandestine task on the eighth day before that which had been fixed for the solemnization of the marriage. She remained all that day in prayer; then, after having presented herself, according to her custom, to receive her father’s kiss, she returned to her chamber and cut off her hair, which fell to her feet like skeins of gold, donned her short tunic, fastened the breeches about her waist with woollen straps, drew the hood down over her eyes, and, night having fallen, noiselessly left the house whilst all, masters and servants alike, were sleeping. Only the dog was still awake, but as he knew her he followed her for a short time in silence, and then returned to his kennel.

With rapid steps she made her way through the deserted city, where the only sounds audible were the occasional cries of drunken sailors and the heavy tread of the watchmen on duty in pursuit of robbers. And since God was with her she suffered no insult from man. Then, having passed through one of the gates of Alexandria, she set out towards the desert, following the course of the canals covered with papyrus and blue lotus. At the break of day she passed through a wretched village of working people. An old man was singing in front of his door whilst he polished a coffin made of sycamore wood. When she came abreast of him, he raised his hairy and featureless face, and cried out —

“By Jupiter! here comes the infant Eros, carrying a little pot of ointment to his mother! How delicate and pretty he is. In truth, he sparkles with attractiveness. They are liars who say that the gods have departed. For this youth is a veritable little god.”

Then the prudent Euphrosine, informed by this speech that the old man was a pagan, had pity upon his ignorance, and prayed to God for his salvation. That prayer was granted. The old man, who was a coffin-maker, bearing the name of Porou, was in course of time converted, and took the name of Philotheos.

Now, after a journey of a whole day, Euphrosine arrived at a monastery where, under the governance of the abbot Onophrius, six hundred monks observed the admirable rule of St. Pacomius. She asked to be led before Onophrius, and said to him —

“My father, I am called Smaragdus, and I am an orphan. I beg you to receive me into your holy habitation, to the end that I may there enjoy the delights of fasting and repentance.”

The abbot Onophrius, who had then attained the age of one hundred and six years, replied —

“Smaragdus, my child, beautiful are your feet, for they have guided you to this dwelling; beautiful are your hands, for they have knocked at this door. You hunger and thirst after fasting and abstinence. Come, and you shall be satisfied. Happy the child who flies from the world whilst yet he wears his robe of innocence. The souls of men are exposed to deadly perils in the towns, and particularly in Alexandria, on account of the women who flock there in great numbers. Woman is to man so great a danger that even at my age the thought alone sends a shudder through all my frame. If one with sufficient effrontery should presume to enter into this holy house, my arm would suddenly recover its strength to hale her hence with heavy blows from this pastoral cross. It is our duty, my son, to worship God in all His works; but it is a profound mystery of His providence that He should have created woman. Stay with us, Smaragdus, my child; for it is certainly God who has led you hither.”

After having been received in this fashion into the family of the holy man Onophrius, Euphrosine donned the monastic habit.

In her cell she praised the Lord, and rejoiced in her pious fraud upon this consideration, that her father and her lover would not fail to make search for her in all the convents for women in order to apprehend her by order of the Emperor, but that they would never succeed in finding her in this refuge where Jesus Christ Himself had lovingly hidden her.

For three years she led the most edifying life in her cell, and the virtues of the youthful Smaragdus perfumed the monastery. For this cause the abbot Onophrius entrusted her with the duties of guest-master or porter, counting upon the prudence of the young monk as to the reception of strangers, and above all the exclusion of any women who might attempt to enter the monastery. For, said the holy man, woman is impure, and the mere mark of her footsteps is an infectious pollution.

Now Smaragdus had been guest-master for five years, when a stranger knocked at the door of the monastery. It was a man who was still young; his habiliments were magnificent, and he retained a remnant of pride; but he was pale and emaciated, and his eyes were inflamed with a restless melancholy.

“Brother guest-master,” said this man, “conduct me into the presence of the holy abbot Onophrius, that he may assoil me, for. I am a prey to a mortal ill.”

Smaragdus, having begged the stranger to seat himself upon a stool, informed him that Onophrius, having reached his hundred and fourteenth year, had, in view of his approaching end, gone to visit the caves of the Holy Anchorites, Amon and Orcisus.

At this news the visitor sank down upon the stool and hid his head in his hands.

“I can no longer hope for healing, then,” he murmured.

And raising his head again, he added —

“It is the love of a woman that has reduced me to this miserable state.”

Not till then did Euphrosine recognize Count Longinus. She feared that he likewise might recognize her. But she soon reassured herself, and was seized with pity to see him looking so cast down and discomfited.

After a long silence, Count Longinus exclaimed —

“I would fain become a monk to escape from my despair.”

Then he told the story of his love, and how his betrothed, Euphrosine, had suddenly disappeared; how for eight years he had sought her and failed to find her, and how he was consumed and wasted with love and grief.

She answered him with a gentleness that was heavenly.

“My lord, this Euphrosine, whose love you so bitterly deplore, was not worthy of so much love. Her beauty was not so precious, except in the ideal you yourself have formed of it; in truth, it is vile and contemptible. It was perishable, and what remains of it is not worth a regret. You believe yourself unable to live without Euphrosine, and yet, if you should happen to meet her, you might even fail to recognize her.”

Count Longinus answered not a word, but this speech, or possibly the voice in which it was pronounced, made a happy impression on his soul. He departed in a more tranquil mood, and promised to return.

And indeed he did return, and being desirous of embracing the monastic life, he asked the holy abbot Onophrius for a cell, and made a ‘ gift to the monastery of all his possessions, which were immense. This was a source of great satisfaction to Euphrosine. But some time after this her heart was overwhelmed with a still greater joy.

It was in this way. A beggar, bending beneath the weight of his satchel and having only sordid rags to cover his nakedness, came to ask a morsel of bread from the charitable monks. In him Euphrosine recognized Romulus, her father; but pretending not to know who he was, she made him sit down, washed his feet, and set food before him.

“Child of God,” said the beggar, “I was not always a penniless wanderer such as now you see me. Once I possessed great wealth and a very beautiful daughter, who was also very prudent and very learned. She unravelled the enigmas propounded in the public competitions, and on one occasion even received from the magistrates the papyrus crown. I lost her — I lost all my possessions. I am consumed with regret for my daughter and my wealth. I had above all things a bush full of birds which, by a marvellous contrivance, sang as though naturally. And now I have not even a mantle to cover me. Nevertheless, I should be comforted if before I die I might see once again my well-beloved daughter.”

As he concluded these words Euphrosine threw herself at his feet, and said through her tears —

“My father, I am Euphrosine, your daughter, who one night fled from your house. And the dog did not bark. Your pardon, my father. For I have not accomplished these things except by the permission of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And after she had recounted to the old man the manner of her flight, disguised as a workman, to that very house where she had since passed eight peaceful years in hiding, she showed him a mark she had upon her neck. And by this sign Romulus recognized his daughter. He embraced her tenderly and bathed her in his tears, marvelling at the mysterious workings of the Lord.

And for this reason he resolved to become a monk and to take up his abode in the monastery of the holy abbot Onophrius. With his own hands he built himself a cell of reeds next to that of Count Longinus. They chanted the psalms and cultivated the ground. During the hours of rest they conversed upon the vanity of earthly affections and the riches of this world. But Romulus never disclosed anything to anybody concerning his wonderful recognition of his daughter Euphrosine, thinking it much for the best that Count Longinus and the abbot Onophrius should learn the details of her adventures in Paradise, when they would have attained a full understanding of the ways of God. Longinus never knew that his betrothed was close beside him. All three lived for several years longer in the practice of all the virtues, and by the special favour of Providence they all three fell asleep in the Lord almost at the same time. Count Longinus passed away first. Romulus died two months later, and St. Euphrosine, after she had closed his eyes, was during the same week called to heaven by Jesus Christ with the words: "Come, my dove." St. Onophrius followed them to the tomb, to which he descended full of merits in the hundred and thirty-second year of his age, on the holy day of Easter, in the year 395 after the incarnation of the Son of God. May the Archangel St. Michael make intercession for us! Here end the acts of St. Euphrosine. *Amen.*

Such is the narrative of George the Deacon, written in the Laura on Mount Athos at a period which may vary from the seventh to the fourteenth century of the Christian era. As to this I waver, since it is a matter of great uncertainty. This narrative is now for the first time published; I have the best of reasons for being sure on this point. I should be glad to have equally good reasons for thinking that it deserved to be put forth. I have translated with a fidelity which has doubtless been only too perceptible since it has infected my own style with a Byzantine stiffness the inconvenience of which seems to myself almost intolerable. George the Deacon told his tale with less gracefulness than Herodotus, or Plutarch even. So that one may perceive by his example that periods of decadence are sometimes less impregnated with charm and daintiness than is the common opinion nowadays. This demonstration is perhaps the principal merit my work can claim. That work will be criticized vigorously, and no doubt questions may be put to me to which I may find it difficult to reply. The text which I have followed is not in the hand of George the Deacon. I do not know if it is complete. I foresee that lacunae and interpolations will be pointed out. Monsieur Schlumberger will hold in suspicion various formularies employed in the course of the narrative, and Monsieur Alfred Rambaud will question the episode of the old man Porou. I reply beforehand that, having but a single text, I could do no other than follow it. It is in very bad condition and hardly legible. But one is

bound to declare that all the masterpieces of classical antiquity in which we take such delight have come down to us in the same condition. I have excellent reasons for believing that in transcribing the text of my Deacon I have made tremendous blunders, and that my translation teems with misconceptions. Possibly even it is nothing but a misconception from beginning to end. If this should not appear so patently as one might fear, it is because invariably the most unintelligible text has some sort of meaning to him who translates it. Were this not the case, erudition would cease to have any reason for continued existence. I have compared the narrative of George the Deacon with the passages in Rufinus and St. Jerome relating to St. Euphrosine. I am bound to say that it does not altogether agree with them. It is doubtless for this reason that my publisher has inserted this learned work in a light collection of tales.

SCHOLASTICA

TO MAURICE SPRONCK

AT the time of which we speak, which was the fourth century of the Christian era, the youthful Injuriosus, only son of a senator of Auvergne (so the municipal officers were called), sought in marriage a young girl named Scholastica, who, like himself, was the only child of a senator. His suit was favourably received. And the marriage ceremony having been celebrated, he conducted her to his house, and led her into the bridal chamber. Whereupon, with a mournful countenance, she turned herself to the wall and wept bitterly.

“What is the cause of your distress? Tell me, I beg of you.”

Then, as she maintained silence, he added —

“I entreat you by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to show me plainly the reason for your lamentations.”

Then she turned towards him and said —

“If I were to weep every day of life that remains to me, I should not shed tears enough to express the profound grief with which my heart is filled. This feeble body I had determined to preserve in all purity, and to present my virginity as an offering to Jesus Christ. Alas, and woe is me! that I am in such a fashion forsaken as to be unable to fulfil what I had resolved upon! Oh, day which never should have dawned upon me! Behold me severed from the heavenly spouse who had promised me paradise for a marriage portion and become the bride of a mortal man, whilst that head which should have been crowned with the roses of immortality, is decked, or rather disfigured, with roses which already begin to wither. Alas! that body which upon the margin of the fourfold stream of the Lamb should have been endued with the garment of purity, bears instead the vile burden of the nuptial veil. Ah! why was not the first day of my life even also the last? Happy had I been had I entered the gates of death ere a single drop of milk had passed my lips! Oh, that the kisses of my gentle nurses had been bestowed upon my bier! When you hold out your hands towards me, I recall the hands which for the salvation of the world were pierced with nails.”

And as she finished these words she wept bitterly.

The young man answered her persuasively —

“Scholastica, our parents are of the rich and noble amongst the dwellers in Auvergne, nor have yours more than a single daughter nor mine than an only son. They wished for our union as a means of continuing their families, lest after their death a stranger should enter into possession of their belongings.”

But Scholastica replied —

“This world is nothing, and riches are nothing, and this life itself is nothing. Is that life which is nothing but a waiting upon death? They alone live who, in unending blessedness, bathe in the Light, and know the joy of angels in the possession of God.”

At this moment Injuriousus, touched by grace, exclaimed — “Ah, sweet and simple words, the light of life eternal glances upon my eyes! Scholastica, if you wish to hold fast to that you have resolved, I also at your side will lead a virgin life.”

More than half reassured, and already smiling through her tears, she said — “Injuriousus, for a man to grant to a woman a boon such as this is a difficult matter. But if you should procure that we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, a part of the marriage portion which my spouse and Lord Jesus Christ has promised to me will I give unto you.”

Then, fortified by the sign of the cross, he said—” I shall do that which you desire.”

And clasping one another’s hands, they fell asleep.

And from that time forward, sharing the same nuptial couch, they passed their days in unexampled chastity. After ten years of trial Scholastica died.

According to the customs of the day, her body was borne into the basilica, in gala dress, and with uncovered face, to the chant of psalms, and followed by the whole populace.

Kneeling down beside her, in a loud voice Injuriousus uttered these words — “I give Thee hearty thanks, Lord Jesus, that Thou hast bestowed upon me strength to preserve Thy treasure uninjured.”

Upon these words, she that was dead rose up upon her funeral couch and smiled, and murmured softly — “My friend, why do you declare that which no man has asked of you?”

Whereupon she resumed her everlasting rest. Injuriousus soon followed her to the tomb. They buried him not far from her in the basilica of Saint Allire. The first night after he was laid there a miraculous rose tree sprang from the grave of the virgin bride and enwrapped both tombs in its flower-besprent embraces. So that on the morrow the folk beheld them bound fast one to the other by chains of roses. Recognizing by this sign the sanctity of the blessed Injuriousus and the blessed Scholastica, the priests of Auvergne held up these shrines to the veneration of the faithful. But in this province, which had been evangelized by Saints Allire and Nepotian, pagans still dwelt. One of these, by name Sylvanus, still held sacred the springs dedicated to the nymphs, hung votive pictures upon the branches of an ancient oak, and cherished by his fireside little images in clay representing the sun and the goddesses of fruitfulness. Half hidden amid the

foliage, the garden god watched over his orchard. Sylvanus passed his declining years in the writing of verse. He composed eclogues and elegies in a style a little stiff perhaps, but not wanting in skill, and into these poems, whenever he could manage to do so, he introduced verses from the bards of old. With the general populace he too visited the spot where the Christian spouses were laid, and the good man marvelled at the rose tree which decked the two tombs. And as, after his fashion, he was pious, he recognized therein a heavenly sign. But he attributed the prodigy to his own gods, and doubted nothing that the rose tree flourished by the will of Eros.

Said he: "Now that she is nothing but a vain shadow, the tristful Scholastica regrets the hours when love was timely and the pleasures she renounced. These roses, which come forth from her body and express her thoughts, say to us who still survive: Love while ye may. This prodigy indeed instructs us to taste the joys of life while it is yet time."

Thus reflected this simple pagan. Upon this subject he composed an elegy which by the greatest of chances I unearthed in the public library at Tarascon, on the binding of a Bible of the eleventh century, catalogued Michel Chasles Collection F n 7439, 17 *his*. The precious leaf which had so far escaped the notice of the learned, contains not fewer than eighty-four lines in a fairly legible Merovingian script probably dating from the seventh century. The text begins with these words — Nunc piget; et quaeris, quod non aut ista voluntas Tunc fuit....

(Now regret rankles, and thou cravest that
Thou didst reject....)

and finishes in this fashion —

Stringamus maesti carminis obsequio.

(Weave we the tribute of a mournful song.)

I shall not fail to publish the complete text so soon as I have finished deciphering it. And I do not doubt that Monsieur Leopold Delisle himself will undertake to present this invaluable document to the Academy of Inscriptions.

OUR LADY'S JUGGLER

TO GASTON PARIS

IN the days of King Louis there was a poor juggler in France, a native of Compiègne, Barnaby by name, who went about from town to town performing feats of skill and strength.

On fair days he would unfold an old worn-out carpet in the public square, and when by means of a jovial address, which he had learned of a very ancient juggler, and which he never varied in the least, he had drawn together the children and loafers, he assumed extraordinary attitudes, and balanced a tin plate on the tip of his nose. At first the crowd would feign indifference.

But when, supporting himself on his hands face downwards, he threw into the air six copper balls, which glittered in the sunshine, and caught them again with his feet; or when throwing himself backwards until his heels and the nape of the neck met, giving his body the form of a perfect wheel, he would juggle in this posture with a dozen knives, a murmur of admiration would escape the spectators, and pieces of money rain down upon the carpet.

Nevertheless, like the majority of those who live by their wits, Barnaby of Compiègne had a great struggle to make a living.

Earning his bread in the sweat of his brow, he bore rather more than his share of the penalties consequent upon the misdoings of our father Adam.

Again, he was unable to work as constantly as he would have been willing to do. The warmth of the sun and the broad daylight were as necessary to enable him to display his brilliant parts as to the trees if flower and fruit should be expected of them. In winter time he was nothing more than a tree stripped of its leaves, and as it were dead. The frozen ground was hard to the juggler, and, like the grasshopper of which Marie de France tells us, the inclement season caused him to suffer both cold and hunger. But as he was simple-natured he bore his ills patiently.

He had never meditated on the origin of wealth, nor upon the inequality of human conditions. He believed firmly that if this life should prove hard, the life to come could not fail to redress the balance, and this hope upheld him. He did not resemble those thievish and miscreant Merry Andrews who sell their souls to the devil. He never blasphemed God's name; he lived uprightly, and although he had no wife of his own, he did not covet his neighbour's, since woman is ever the enemy of the strong man, as it appears by the history of Samson recorded in the Scriptures.

In truth, his was not a nature much disposed to carnal delights, and it was a greater deprivation to him to forsake the tankard than the Hebe who bore it. For

whilst not wanting in sobriety, he was fond of a drink when the weather waxed hot. He was a worthy man who feared God, and was very devoted to the Blessed Virgin.

Never did he fail on entering a church to fall upon his knees before the image of the Mother of God, and offer up this prayer to her:

“Blessed Lady, keep watch over my life until it shall please God that I die, and when I am dead, ensure to me the possession of the joys of paradise.”

//

NOW on a certain evening after a dreary wet day, as Barnaby pursued his road, sad and bent, carrying under his arm his balls and knives wrapped up in his old carpet, on the watch for some barn where, though he might not sup, he might sleep, he perceived on the road, going in the same direction as himself, a monk, whom he saluted courteously. And as they walked at the same rate they fell into conversation with one another.

“Fellow traveller,” said the monk, “how comes it about that you are clothed all in green? Is it perhaps in order to take the part of a jester in some mystery play?”

“Not at all, good father,” replied Barnaby. “Such as you see me, I am called Barnaby, and for my calling I am a juggler. There would be no pleasanter calling in the world if it would always provide one with daily bread.”

“Friend Barnaby,” returned the monk, “be careful what you say. There is no calling more pleasant than the monastic life. Those who lead it are occupied with the praises of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints; and, indeed, the religious life is one ceaseless hymn to the Lord.”

Barnaby replied —

“Good father, I own that I spoke like an ignorant man. Your calling cannot be in any respect compared to mine, and although there may be some merit in dancing with a penny balanced on a stick on the tip of one’s nose, it is not a merit which comes within hail of your own. Gladly would I, like you, good father, sing my office day by day, and especially the office of the most Holy Virgin, to whom I have vowed a singular devotion. In order to embrace the monastic life I would willingly abandon the art by which from Soissons to Beauvais I am well known in upwards of six hundred towns and villages.”

The monk was touched by the juggler’s simplicity, and as he was not lacking in discernment, he at once recognized in Barnaby one of those men of whom it is said in the Scriptures: Peace on earth to men of good will. And for this reason he replied —

“Friend Barnaby, come with me, and I will have you admitted into the monastery of which I am Prior. He who guided St. Mary of Egypt in the desert set me upon your path to lead you into the way of salvation.”

It was in this manner, then, that Barnaby became a monk. In the monastery into which he was received the religious vied with one another in the worship of the Blessed Virgin, and in her honour each employed all the knowledge and all the skill which God had given him.

The prior on his part wrote books dealing according to the rules of scholarship with the virtues of the Mother of God.

Brother Maurice, with a deft hand copied out these treatises upon sheets of vellum.

Brother Alexander adorned the leaves with delicate miniature paintings. Here were displayed the Queen of Heaven seated upon Solomon's throne, and while four lions were on guard at her feet, around the nimbus which encircled her head hovered seven doves, which are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gifts, namely, of Fear, Piety, Knowledge, Strength, Counsel, Understanding, and Wisdom. For her companions she had six virgins with hair of gold, namely, Humility, Prudence, Seclusion, Submission, Virginity, and Obedience.

At her feet were two little naked figures, perfectly white, in an attitude of supplication. These were souls imploring her all-powerful intercession for their soul's health, and we may be sure not imploring in vain.

Upon another page facing this, Brother Alexander represented Eve, so that the Fall and the Redemption could be perceived at one and the same time — Eve the Wife abased, and Mary the Virgin exalted.

Furthermore, to the marvel of the beholder, this book contained presentments of the Well of Living Waters, the Fountain, the Lily, the Moon, the Sun, and the Garden Enclosed of which the Song of Songs tells us, the Gate of Heaven and the City of God, and all these things were symbols of the Blessed Virgin.

Brother Marbode was likewise one of the most loving children of Mary.

He spent all his days carving images in stone, so that his beard, his eyebrows, and his hair were white with dust, and his eyes continually swollen and weeping; but his strength and cheerfulness were not diminished, although he was now well gone in years, and it was clear that the Queen of Paradise still cherished her servant in his old age. Marbode represented her seated upon a throne, her brow encircled with an orb-shaped nimbus set with pearls. And he took care that the folds of her dress should cover the feet of her, concerning whom the prophet declared: My beloved is as a garden enclosed.

Sometimes, too, he depicted her in the semblance of a child full of grace, and appearing to say, "Thou art my God, even from my mother's womb."

In the priory, moreover, were poets who composed hymns in Latin, both in prose and verse, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and amongst the company was even a brother from Picardy who sang the miracles of Our Lady in rhymed verse and in the vulgar tongue.

III

BEING a witness of this emulation in praise and the glorious harvest of their labours, Barnaby mourned his own ignorance and simplicity.

“Alas!” he sighed, as he took his solitary walk in the little shelterless garden of the monastery, “wretched wight that I am, to be unable, like my brothers, worthily to praise the Holy Mother of God, to whom I have vowed my whole heart’s affection. Alas! alas! I am but a rough man and unskilled in the arts, and I can render you in service, blessed Lady, neither edifying sermons, nor treatises set out in order according to rule, nor ingenious paintings, nor statues truthfully sculptured, nor verses whose march is measured to the beat of feet. No gift have I, alas!”

After this fashion he groaned and gave himself up to sorrow. But one evening, when the monks were spending their hour of liberty in conversation, he heard one of them tell the tale of a religious man who could repeat nothing other than the Ave Maria. This poor man was despised for his ignorance; but after his death there issued forth from his mouth five roses in honour of the five letters of the name Mary (Marie), and thus his sanctity was made manifest.

Whilst he listened to this narrative Barnaby marvelled yet once again at the loving kindness of the Virgin; but the lesson of that blessed death did not avail to console him, for his heart overflowed with zeal, and he longed to advance the glory of his Lady, who is in heaven.

How to compass this he sought but could find no way, and day by day he became the more cast down, when one morning he awakened filled full with joy, hastened to the chapel, and remained there alone for more than an hour. After dinner he returned to the chapel once more.

And, starting from that moment, he repaired daily to the chapel at such hours as it was deserted, and spent within it a good part of the time which the other monks devoted to the liberal and mechanical arts. His sadness vanished, nor did he any longer groan.

A demeanour so strange awakened the curiosity of the monks.

These began to ask one another for what purpose Brother Barnaby could be indulging so persistently in retreat.

The prior, whose duty it is to let nothing escape him in the behaviour of his children in religion, resolved to keep a watch over Barnaby during his withdrawals to the chapel. One day, then, when he was shut up there after his custom, the prior, accompanied by two of the older monks, went to discover through the chinks in the door what was going on within the chapel.

They saw Barnaby before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, head downwards, with his feet in the air, and he was juggling with six balls of copper and a dozen knives. In honour of the Holy Mother of God he was performing those feats, which aforetime had won him most renown. Not recognizing that the simple fellow was thus placing at the service of the Blessed Virgin his knowledge and skill, the two old monks exclaimed against the sacrilege.

The prior was aware how stainless was Barnaby's soul, but he concluded that he had been seized with madness. They were all three preparing to lead him swiftly from the chapel, when they saw the Blessed Virgin descend the steps of the altar and advance to wipe away with a fold of her azure robe the sweat which was dropping from her juggler's forehead.

TO MONSIEUR JEAN FRANÇOIS BLADÉ, OF AGEN,
THE "PIOUS CHRONICLER" WHO HAS COLLECTED THE POPULAR
TALES OF GASCONY

THE MASS OF SHADOWS

THIS tale the sacristan of the church of St. Eulalie at Neuville d'Aumont told me, as we sat under the arbour of the White Horse, one fine summer evening, drinking a bottle of old wine to the health of the dead man, now very much at his ease, whom that very morning he had borne to the grave with full honours, beneath a pall powdered with smart silver tears.

"My poor father, who is dead" (it is the sacristan who is speaking), "was in his lifetime a gravedigger. He was of an agreeable disposition, the result, no doubt, of the calling he followed, for it has often been pointed out that people who work in cemeteries are of a jovial turn. Death has no terrors for them: they never give it a thought. I, for instance, Monsieur, enter a cemetery at night as little perturbed as though it were the arbour of the White Horse. And if by chance I meet with a ghost, I don't disturb myself in the least about it, for I reflect that he may just as likely have business of his own to attend to as I. I know the habits of the H — 97 dead, and I know their character. Indeed, so far as that goes, I know things of which the priests themselves are ignorant. If I were to tell you all I have seen you would be astounded. But a still tongue makes a wise head, and my father, who, all the same, delighted in spinning a yarn, did not disclose a twentieth part of what he knew. To make up for this he often repeated the same stories, and to my knowledge he told the story of Catherine Fontaine at least a hundred times.

"Catherine Fontaine was an old maid whom he well remembered having seen when he was a mere child. I should not be surprised if there were still, perhaps, three old fellows in the district who could remember having heard folks speak of her, for she was very well known and of excellent reputation, although poor enough. She lived at the corner of the Rue aux Nonnes, in the turret which is still to be seen there, and which formed part of an old half-ruined mansion looking on to the garden of the Ursuline nuns. On that turret can still be traced certain figures and half-obliterated inscriptions. The late Curé of St. Eulalie, Monsieur Levasseur, asserted that there are the words in Latin, *Love is stronger than death*, 'which is to be understood,' so he would add, 'of divine love.'

"Catherine Fontaine lived by herself in this tiny apartment. She was a lacemaker. You know, of course, that the lace made in our part of the world was formerly held in high esteem. No one knew anything of her relatives or friends. It was reported that when she was eighteen years of age she had loved the young Chevalier d'Aumont-Cléry, and been secretly affianced to him. But decent folk

didn't believe a word of it, and said it was nothing but a talc which had been concocted because Catherine Fontaine's demeanour was that of a lady rather than of a working woman, and because, moreover, she possessed beneath her white locks the remains of great beauty. Her expression was sorrowful, and on one finger she wore one of those rings fashioned by the goldsmith into the semblance of two tiny hands clasped together. In former days folks were accustomed to exchange such rings at their betrothal ceremony. I am sure you know the sort of thing I mean.

"Catherine Fontaine lived a saintly life. She spent a great deal of time in the churches, and every morning, whatever might be the weather, she went to assist at the six o'clock Mass at St. Eulalie.

"Now one December night, whilst she was abed in her little chamber, she was awakened by the sound of bells, and nothing doubting that they were ringing for the first Mass, the pious woman dressed herself and came downstairs and out into the street. The night was so obscure that not even the walls of the houses were visible, and not a ray of light shone from the murky sky. And such was the silence amid this black darkness, that there was not even the sound of a distant dog barking, and a feeling of aloofness from every living creature was perceptible. But Catherine Fontaine knew well every single stone she stepped on, and as she could have found her way to the church with her eyes shut, she reached without difficulty the corner of the Rue aux Nonnes and the Rue de la Paroisse, where the timbered house stands with the tree of Jesse carved on one of its massive beams. When she reached this spot she perceived that the church doors were open, and that a great light was streaming out from the wax tapers. She resumed her journey, and when she had passed through the porch she found herself in the midst of a vast congregation which entirely filled the church. But she did not recognize any of the worshippers, and was surprised to observe that all these people were dressed in velvets and brocades, with feathers in their hats, and that they wore swords in the fashion of days gone by. Here were gentlemen who carried tall canes with gold knobs, and ladies with lace caps fastened with coronet-shaped combs. Chevaliers of the Order of St. Louis extended their hands to these ladies, who concealed behind their fans painted faces, of which only the powdered brow and the patch at the corner of the eye were visible! And all of them proceeded to take up their places without the slightest sound, and as they moved neither the sound of their footsteps on the pavement nor the rustle of their garments could be heard. The lower places were filled with a crowd of young artisans in brown jackets, dimity breeches, and blue stockings, with their arms round the waists of very pretty blushing girls who lowered their eyes. Near the holy water stoups peasant women, in scarlet petticoats and laced bodices, sat

upon the ground as immovable as domestic animals, whilst young lads, standing up behind them, stared out from wide-open eyes and twirled their hats round and round on their fingers, and all these silent countenances seemed centred irremovably on one and the same thought, at once sweet and sorrowful. On her knees, in her accustomed place, Catherine Fontaine saw the priest advance towards the altar, preceded by two servers. She recognized neither priest nor clerks. The Mass began. It was a silent Mass, during which neither the sound of the moving lips nor the tinkle of the bell, vainly swung to and fro, was audible. Catherine Fontaine felt that she was under the observation and the influence also of her mysterious neighbour, and when, scarcely turning her head, she stole a glance at him, she recognized the young Chevalier d'Aumont-Cléry who had once loved her, and who had been dead for five-and-forty years. She recognized him by a small mark which he had over the left ear, and, above all, by the shadow which his long black eyelashes cast upon his cheeks. He was dressed in his hunting clothes, scarlet with gold lace, the very clothes he wore that day when he met her in St. Leonard's Wood, begged her for a drink, and stole a kiss. He had preserved his youth and his good looks. When he smiled he still displayed magnificent teeth. Catherine said to him in an undertone —

“Monseigneur, you who were my friend, and to whom in days gone by I gave all that a girl holds most dear, may God keep you in His grace! O, that he would at length inspire me with regret for the sin I committed in yielding to you; for it is a fact that, though my hair is white and I approach my end, I have not yet repented of having loved you. But, dear dead friend and noble seigneur, tell me, who are these folk, habited after the antique fashion, who are here assisting at this silent Mass?”

“The Chevalier d'Aumont-Cléry replied in a voice feebler than a breath, but none the less crystal clear —

“Catherine, these men and women are souls from purgatory who have grieved God by sinning as we ourselves sinned through love of the creature, but who are not on that account cast off by God, inasmuch as their sin, like ours, was not deliberate.

“Whilst, separated from those they loved upon earth, they are purified in the cleansing fires of purgatory, they suffer the pangs of absence, which is for them the most cruel of tortures. They are so unhappy that an angel from heaven takes pity upon their love-torment. By the permission of the Most High, for one hour in the night, he reunites each year lover to loved in their parish church, where they are permitted to assist at the Mass of Shadows, hand clasped in hand. These are the facts. If it has been granted to me to see thee here “before thy death, Catherine, it is a boon which has been bestowed by God's special permission.”

“And Catherine Fontaine answered him —

“‘I would die gladly enough, dear, dead lord, if I might recover the beauty that was mine when I gave you to drink in the forest.’

“Whilst they conversed thus under their breath, a very old canon was taking the collection and proffering to the worshippers a great copper dish, wherein they let fall, each in his turn, ancient coins which have long since ceased to pass current: écus of six livres, florins, ducats and ducatoons, jacobuses and rose-nobles, and the pieces fell silently into the dish. When at length it was placed before the Chevalier, he dropped into it a louis which made no more sound than had the other pieces of gold and silver.

“Then the old canon stopped before Catherine Fontaine, who fumbled in her pocket without being able to find a farthing. Then, being unwilling to allow the dish to pass without an offering from herself, she slipped from her finger the ring which the Chevalier had given her the day before his death, and cast it into the copper bowl. As the golden ring fell, a sound like the heavy clang of a bell rang out, and on the stroke of this reverberation the Chevalier, the canon, the celebrant, the servers, the ladies and their cavaliers, the whole assembly vanished utterly; the candles guttered out, and Catherine Fontaine was left alone in the darkness.”

Having concluded his narrative after this fashion, the sacristan drank a long draught of wine, remained pensive a moment, and then resumed his talk in these words: —

“I have told you this tale exactly as my father has told it to me over and over again, and I believe that it is authentic, because it agrees in all respects with what I have myself observed of the manners and customs peculiar to those who have passed away. I have associated a good deal with the dead ever since my childhood, and I know that they are accustomed to return to what they have loved.

“It is on this account that the miserly dead wander at night in the neighbourhood of the treasures they concealed during their lifetime. They keep a strict watch over their gold; but the trouble they give themselves, far from being of service to them, turns to their disadvantage; and it is not at all a rare thing to come upon money buried in the ground on digging in a place haunted by a ghost. In the same way deceased husbands come by night to harass their wives who have made a second matrimonial venture, and I could easily name several who have kept a better watch over their wives since death than ever they did while living.

“That sort of thing is blameworthy, for in all fairness the dead have no business to stir up jealousies. Still I do but tell you what I have observed myself. It is a matter to take into account if one marries a widow. Besides, the tale I have told you is vouched for in the manner following:

“The morning after that extraordinary night Catherine Fontaine was discovered dead in her chamber. And the beadle attached to St. Eulalie found in the copper bowl used for the collection a gold ring with two clasped hands. Besides, I’m not the kind of man to make jokes. Suppose we order another bottle of wine?...”

LESLIE WOOD

TO THE COMTESSE DE MARTEL-JANVILLE

THERE was music and private theatricals at Madame N— 's reception in the Boulevard Malesherbes.

Whilst on the outskirts of a display of bare shoulders the younger men at the doorway were suffocating in the stifling, scented air, we older guests, not without grumbling, were keeping ourselves cool in a little *salon* from which we could see nothing, and to which the voice of Mademoiselle Réjane only penetrated like the slightly metallic sound of a dragon-fly's flight. From time to time we could hear the laughter and applause burst forth in the sweltering room, and we were disposed to extend a mild tolerance to the entertainment we did not share. We were exchanging fairly amusing trivialities, when one of the company, a genial deputy, Monsieur B — , remarked —

“Did you know that Wood was here?”

At this statement each in turn exclaimed— “Wood? Leslie Wood? It's impossible. It is ten years since he was seen in Paris. Nobody knows what's become of him.”

“The story goes that he has established a black republic on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza.”

“What a tale! You know, of course, that he is fabulously wealthy, and that he is a past master in achieving the impossible. Well, he is living in Ceylon, in a fairy palace, in the midst of enchanted gardens, where the bayaderes never cease dancing night and day.”

“How can any one believe such balderdash? The truth is, that Leslie Wood has gone off with a Bible and a carbine to convert the Zulus.”

Monsieur B — interrupted in an undertone —

“There he is; there, do you see?”

And he drew our attention by a slight movement of the head and eyes to a man leaning against the doorway, dominating by his lofty stature the heads of the crowd huddled in front of him. He seemed engrossed in the performance.

That athletic carriage, the ruddy face with the white whiskers, the penetrating eyes and calm gaze, they could belong to no one else but Leslie Wood.

Recalling the inimitable letters which for ten years he contributed to the *World* , I said to Monsieur B —

“That man is the foremost journalist of our time.”

“You may possibly be right,” replied B — .

“At any rate, I am ready to assert that for twenty years past no one has known Europe as thoroughly as Leslie Wood.”

Baron Moïse, who was following our talk, shook his head.

“You don’t know the real Wood. I know him myself, though. He was before all things a financier. He had a better grasp of the money market than any one I know. What are you laughing at, Princess?”

Lolling expansively on the sofa, and in gloomy depression at being unable to smoke a cigarette, the Princess Zévorine had smiled.

“You neither of you understand Mr. Wood — neither of you,” she said. “He was always a mystic and a lover, never anything else.”

“I can’t agree to that,” replied Baron Moïse. “But I should be very glad to know where this devil of a fellow has been spending the best ten years of his life.”

“And at what period do you place those best ten years of life?”

“Between the fiftieth and sixtieth years; a man’s position is made by then, and he has nothing to do but enjoy his existence.”

“Baron, you can question Wood himself. He is coming towards us.”

The applause, this time rising to a furious pitch like the fall of a heavy body or the banging of doors, announced the close of the performance. The black-coated contingent leaving the doorways clear overflowed into the smaller *salon*, and as the company made their way in couples in the direction of the buffet, Leslie Wood approached us.

He shook hands with undemonstrative cordiality.

“An apparition! an apparition!” exclaimed Baron Moïse.

“Oh!” rejoined Wood, “one can’t reappear from any very remote quarter. The world is small.”

“Do you know what the Princess is saying about you, my dear Wood? She declares that you are nothing but a mystic. Now is that true?”

“Well it depends on what you mean by mystic.”

“The word is self-explanatory. A mystic is one who is preoccupied with the concerns of the next world. Now you are too well acquainted with the affairs of this world to trouble yourself about the next.”

At these words Wood slightly contracted his eyebrows.

“You are quite in the wrong, Moïse. The affairs of the other world are of far, far greater importance than those of the world we live in, Moïse.”

“What a man he is, this good Wood of ours!” exclaimed the Baron, with a sneer. “He is positively witty!”

The Princess replied very seriously —

“Mr. Wood, tell me that you are not witty. I thoroughly detest witty men.”

Upon this she rose, and said —

“Mr. Wood, will you take me to the buffet?”

An hour later, when Monsieur G — was holding both men and women spell-bound with his songs, I came across Leslie Wood and the Princess Zévorine again, alone in front of the deserted buffet.

The Princess was speaking with almost vehement enthusiasm of Count Tolstoi, whose friend she was. She described this great man who had descended to the lowliest life, donning the dress, and with it the spirit, of the moujik, and using the hands which had indited literary masterpieces in the manufacture of shoes for the poor.

To my great surprise, Wood was expressing approbation of a kind of life so completely opposed to common sense. In his slightly panting voice, to which the beginnings of asthma had given a singular sweetness, he said —

“Yes, Tolstoi is right. The whole of philosophy is contained in that phrase: ‘May the will of God be done!’ He has realized that all the woes of humanity are the outcome of the exercise of human will as distinct from the will divine. My only fear is that he may impair so noble a doctrine by fantastic and extravagant additions.”

“Oh!” returned the Princess in a subdued voice, and hesitating a little, “the Count’s teaching is only extravagant upon one point; that is, in inculcating the extension of the rights and duties of husbands to an extremely advanced period of their lives, and imposing on the saints of these latter days the fruitful old age of the patriarchs.”

Wood, himself elderly, replied with a restrained exaltation —

“And that again is excellent, very saintly even. Physical and natural love is becoming to all God’s creatures, and so long as it does not involve either dissension or restlessness, it maintains that divine simplicity, that saintly fleshiness without which there is no salvation. Asceticism is nothing but pride and rebellion. We must always bear in mind the example of that holy man Boaz, and let us remember that the Bible calls love the bread of old age.”

Then, all of a sudden, transported, illuminated, transfigured, ecstatic, and invoking with eyes and arms and his whole soul some invisible presence, he murmured —

“Annie! Annie! Annie, my best beloved, it is true, is it not, that our Lord desires his saints, whilst they are men and women, to love one another humbly, even as the beasts of the field?”

Upon this he fell exhausted into an arm-chair.

A terrific inhalation shook his broad chest, and in this condition his appearance was fuller of vitality than ever, like those machines that appear more

formidable when they are out of gear. The Princess Zévorine, without any show of astonishment, wiped his forehead with her handkerchief and gave him a glass of water, which he drank.

For my part I was dumbfounded. In this clairvoyant I was unable to recognize the man who in his study, littered with blue-books, had so many times conversed with me with the utmost clearheadedness upon Oriental affairs, the Treaty of Frankfort, and critical situations on the money market. As I allowed the Princess to observe my uneasiness, she said, with a shrug of the shoulders —

“It is easy to see you are French! You look upon every one as a madman who does not think exactly what you think yourself. You need not be uneasy; our friend Mr. Wood is levelheaded enough, perfectly levelheaded. Let us go and listen to G — .

When I had conducted the Princess to the principal *salon*, I prepared to leave. In the ante-chamber I found Wood putting on his overcoat. He did not appear to feel any ill effects from his attack.

“My dear fellow,” he said, “I think we are neighbours. I suppose you are still living on the Quai Malaquais, and I have taken up my quarters in a hotel in the Rue des Saints Pères. In dry weather like this it is a pleasure to go on foot. If you are willing we will stroll along together and chat.”

I agreed readily. On the doorstep he offered me a cigar, and held out a pocket electric torch for me to light it by.

“I find it very convenient,” he said, and proceeded to explain the principle of it very lucidly.

I recognized the Wood of old times again. We moved on perhaps a hundred paces along the street chatting on indifferent subjects. Then suddenly my companion put his hand quietly on my shoulder.

“My dear friend,” he began, “some of the things I said this evening cannot have failed to surprise you. You would probably like me to explain them.”

“I was intensely interested, my dear Wood, pray do.”

“I will do so willingly. I have the greatest admiration of your character. We may not regard life from the same point of view. But you are not one of those who repel an idea because it is new, and that is a disposition sufficiently rare, in France especially.”

“I fancy, however, my dear Wood, that for liberty of thought—”

“Oh! no, you are not, like the English, a race of theologians. But enough of that. I want to tell you in as few words as possible the history of my convictions. When you knew me fifteen years ago I was the correspondent of the *London World*. With us journalism is a more lucrative profession, and is held in higher esteem than with you. My appointment was a good one, and I fancy I reaped the

greatest possible advantages from it. I am familiar with business transactions, and I carried through some very profitable ones, and in a few years I achieved two very desirable things: influence and fortune. You are aware that I am a practical man.

“I have never worked without a goal in view. And, above all things, I aimed at attaining the supreme goal of life. Fairly exhaustive theological studies undertaken in my youth had convinced me that that goal lay outside the sphere of this terrestrial life. But I was yet in doubt as to the practical means of attaining it. As a result, I suffered cruelly. Uncertainty is absolutely insupportable to a man of my temperament.

“In this state of mind I turned my attention seriously to the psychical researches of Sir William Crookes, one of the most distinguished members of our Royal Society. I knew him personally, and needed no assurance that he was both a man of learning and a gentleman. He was at that time giving his attention to the case of a young woman endowed with psychic powers of an altogether uncommon nature, and, like Saul of old, he was fortunate enough to evoke the presence of an indisputable disembodied spirit.

“A charming woman, who had passed through the experience of earthly life and was now living the life beyond the tomb, lent herself to the experiments of the eminent spiritualist, and submitted to every test he could exact from her within the limits of decorum. I considered that investigations such as this, bearing on the point at which terrestrial existence borders on extra-terrestrial existence, would lead me, if I followed them step by step, to the discovery of that which it is above all necessary to know, that is to say, the true aim of life. But it was not long before I was disappointed in my hopes. The researches of my respected friend, although conducted with a precision which left nothing to be desired, did not result in a theological and moral conviction sufficiently unequivocal.

“Moreover, Sir William was suddenly deprived of the co-operation of the incomparable dead lady who had so graciously attended several of his spiritualistic séances.

“Discouraged by the incredulity of the public, and irritated by the sallies of his colleagues, he ceased to give any information relative to his psychic experiences. I communicated my discomfiture to the Reverend Mr. B — , with whom I had been on friendly terms from the time of his return from South Africa, where he had laboured as an evangelist in a devoted and systematic fashion truly worthy of old England.

“Mr. B — is, of all men, the one who has at all times exercised the most powerful and decisive influence over me.”

“He is very intellectual, then?” I asked.

“His knowledge of doctrine is profound,” replied Wood. “But better than all else he has a strong character, and you are aware, my dear fellow, that it is by force of character that men are swayed. My mischances occasioned no surprise to him; he attributed them to my lack of method, and, above all, to the pitiable moral infirmity I had shown on this occasion.

“‘Scientific experiments,’ he declared, ‘can never lead to discoveries in any other domain than that of science. How is it you did not understand this? Leslie Wood, you have been strangely heedless and frivolous. The Apostle Paul has told us that the Spirit searcheth all things. If we would discover spiritual truths we must set our feet on the spiritual path.’

“These words produced a profound impression on me.

“‘How then,’ I asked, ‘shall I enter on the spiritual path?’

“‘Poverty and simplicity must be your guides!’

Mr. B — replied. ‘Sell your goods and give the purchase money to the poor. You are renowned. Conceal yourself. Pray, and devote yourself to works of charity. Put on a spirit of simplicity and a pure soul and you will attain truth.’

“I resolved to follow out these precepts to the letter. I sent in my resignation as correspondent to the *World*. I realized my investments, which were in great part in commercial enterprises, and, fearing to repeat the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, I conducted this delicate operation in such a way as not to risk the loss of a penny of the capital which was no longer my own. Baron Moïse, who kept an eye on my negotiations, conceived an almost religious reverence for my financial genius.

By direction of Mr. B — , I handed over to the treasurer of the *Evangelical Society* the sums I had realized, and when I expressed to that eminent theologian my delight at being poor —

“‘Have a care,’ said he, ‘that in your poverty you do not indulge in exaltation at your prowess. It will serve you but ill to strip yourself outwardly if within your own breast you cherish a golden idol. Be humble!’”

Leslie Wood had reached this point in his narrative when we arrived at the Pont Royal. The Seine, upon whose surface the lights threw flickering reflections, flowed beneath the arches with a dull moan.

“I shall have to cut my story short,” Wood began once more. “Each episode of my new life would occupy a whole night to recount. Mr. B — , to whom I was as obedient as a child, sent me to the Basutos, commissioned to fight against the slave trade. There I lived under a tent alone with that hardy bedfellow whose name is danger, and through fever and drought became aware of the presence of God.

“At the end of five years Mr. B — recalled me to England. On the steamer I met a young girl. What a haunting face she had! She was a vision a thousand times more radiant than the phantom presence which appeared to Sir William Crookes!

“She was the orphan daughter of a colonel in the Indian army and she was poor. She had no particular beauty of features. Her pale complexion and emaciated face indicated suffering; but her eyes expressed all that one can imagine of heaven; her body seemed to glow gently with an inward light. How I loved her! At sight of her fathomed the hidden meaning of all creation! That simple young girl with one glance revealed to me the secret of the harmony of the spheres!

“Ah! she was simple, very simple, my monitress, my well-loved lady, sweet Annie Fraser! In her translucent soul I could read the sympathy she felt for me. One night, one serene night, when we were alone together on the deck of the ship in the presence of the seraphic company of the stars, which throbbed in chorus in the sky, I took her hand and said —

Annie Fraser, I love you. I believe that it would be good for us both for you to become my wife, but I am debarred from planning my own future in order that God may dispose of it as He sees fit. May it be His will to unite us! I have surrendered my own will into the hands of Mr. B — . When we reach England we will go together in search of him; will you, Annie Fraser? And if he gives his sanction we will marry.’

“She gave her consent. For the remainder of the voyage we read the Bible together.

“Immediately on our arrival in London I accompanied my fellow passenger to Mr. B— ‘s, and told him what the love of this young girl meant to me, and with what clear insight it inspired me.

“Mr. B — gazed for a long time on her with kindness.

“‘You may marry,’ he said at length. ‘The Apostle Paul has declared that the husband is sanctified by the wife, and the wife by the husband. But let your union resemble those held in honour amongst Christians in the primitive Church! Let it remain purely spiritual, and see that the angel’s sword lies between you in your bed. Go, now, and remain humble and secluded, and let not the world hear your name.’

“I married Annie Fraser, and I need scarcely tell you that we complied rigidly with the condition imposed on us by Mr. B — . For four years I delighted in that brotherly and sisterly union.

“By grace of simple little Annie Fraser I advanced in the knowledge of God. There was nothing now that could cause us suffering.

“Annie was ill, and her strength declined, and we repeated joyfully in union, ‘May the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven!’

“After four years of this life together, there came a day, a Christmas day, when Mr. B — summoned me to him.

“‘Leslie Wood,’ he said, ‘I have put you to the proof for your soul’s sake. But it would be to fall into papistical error to believe that the union of His creatures after the flesh is displeasing to God. Twice He blessed both animals and mankind in pairs, in the earthly Paradise, and in the ark of Noah. Go, and live henceforth with your wife, Annie Fraser, as a husband with his wife.’

“When I arrived home, Annie, my well-loved Annie, was dead....

“I own my weakness. It was with my lips and not with my heart that I pronounced the words, ‘O God, Thy will be done!’ and thinking upon Mr. B— ‘s tardy removal of the restrictions upon our love, I felt my mouth full of bitterness, and as it were ashes in my heart.

“So it was with a forlorn soul that I knelt down at the foot of the bed where, beneath a cross or roses, silent and white and with the faint violets of death on her cheeks, my Annie slept her last sleep.

“O thou of little faith! thou didst bid her adieu and remain a whole week plunged in barren sorrow that approached despair. How much rather shouldst thou, on the contrary, have rejoiced, both in body and soul!...

“On the night of the eighth day, as I was weeping, my forehead bowed upon the cold and empty bed, I had a sudden conviction that the beloved was near me in my chamber.

“Nor was I deceived. When I raised my head I saw Annie, smiling and radiant, holding out her arms to me. But how find words for what remains to tell? How express the ineffable? And is it permissible to reveal such mysteries of love?

“Clearly when Mr. B — said to me, ‘Live with Annie as a husband with his wife!’ he knew that love is stronger than death.

“Learn, then, my friend, that from that hour of forgiveness and joy my Annie has returned nightly to my side distilling celestial odours.”

He spoke with appalling exaltation.

We had slackened our pace. He stopped in front of a hotel of Moorish exterior.

“This is where I live,” he said. “Do you see that window on the second floor with the light in it? She is waiting for me.”

He left me abruptly.

Eight days later I learned from the newspapers of the sudden death of Leslie Wood, former correspondent of the *World* .

GESTAS

TO CHARLES MAURRAS

“‘Gestas,’ dixt li Signor, ‘entrez en Paradis.’”

“Gestas, dans nos anciens mystères, c’est le nom du larron crucifié à la droite de Jésus-Christ” (Augustin Thierry, *la Rédemption de Larmor*). (“‘Gestas,’ said the Lord, ‘enter into Paradise.’”

“Gestas, in our ancient mystery plays, was the name of the thief who was crucified on the right hand of Jesus Christ” (Augustin Thierry, *The Redemption of Larmor*.)

FOLKS say that we have amongst us at this very day a sad rogue named Gestas, who writes the sweetest songs in the world. It was written on his flat-featured face that he would be a sinner after the flesh, and towards evening evil exultation shines in his green eyes. He is no longer young. The protuberances on his skull have taken on the lustre of copper; the long hair falling about his neck has taken a greenish tinge. Nevertheless he is ingenuous, and has kept fast hold on the naive faith of his childhood. When he is not in hospital he occupies a little room in some squalid hotel between’ the Panthéon and the Jardin des Plantes. There, in the old impoverished quarter, every stone is familiar with his tread, the gloomy byways are tolerant of him, and one of these narrow lanes is entirely after his own heart; for, lined though it is with dram shops and boosing kens, it boasts on the corner of one of the houses an image of the Virgin in a blue niche behind bars. Of an evening he progresses from café to café, and at station after station, with pious orderliness, he takes his beer or his spirits: the exacting duties of the devotee of debauchery call for method and regularity. The night is far gone when, without knowing how, he once more reaches his den, and by a daily miracle discovers the sacking bed, upon which he falls fully dressed. There with clenched fists he sleeps the sleep of the vagabond and the child. But that sleep is brief.

As soon as dawn casts its pale radiance upon the window, and between the curtains darts its luminous shafts into the attic, Gestas opens his eyes, rises, shakes himself like an ownerless dog awakened by a kick, hurries down the long, spiral staircase, and once more sets his eyes delightedly on the street, the kind street which is so indulgent to the vices of the lowly and the poor. His eyelids wink at the clear light of the early morning; the nostrils, which recall Silenus, inhale the clean air. Vigorous and upright, one leg stiffened by rheumatism of long standing, he goes on his way leaning on his dog-wood stick, the ferrule of which he has worn out with twenty years of wandering. But in his

nocturnal adventures he has never lost either his pipe or his stick. And at the beginning of the day his appearance is that of a man perfectly simple and perfectly happy. Which is what he actually is. His greatest joy in life, which he buys at the sacrifice of sleep, is to go from bar to bar in the morning drinking white wine with the workmen. It is an innocent sort of tippling: the transparent wine, in the pale light of early morning, amongst the white blouses of the masons; there you have a symphony in whites which enchants this soul, of which vice has not yet subdued the candour.

Now one spring morning when he had sauntered in this fashion from his lodging as far as *The Little Moor*, Gestas had the satisfaction of seeing the door, over which appeared a Saracen's head in cast iron, gay with paint, thrown open as he came up, and so he reached the tin counter in the company of friends with whom he had no acquaintance: a gang of workmen from La Creuse, who clinked their glasses, talked of their own part of the country, and indulged in boasting after the manner of the twelve peers of Charlemagne. They drank a glass and cracked a crust; when one of them thought of a good thing he laughed very loudly at it, and so that his comrades might understand it the better gave them a good thump or two on the back with his fist. The older men, however, dispatched their potations slowly and silently. When these had all departed to their work, Gestas, the last left, quitted *The Little Moor* and made his way to *The Juicy Quince*, with the lance-headed railings of which he was familiar. Here, again, in excellent company, he had a drink, and even offered a glass to two mistrustful but mild guardians of the peace. After this he visited a third bar, the ancient wrought-iron sign of which represents two little men staggering under an enormous bunch of grapes, and there he was served by the lovely Madame Trubert, famous all the quarter through for her prudence, her strength, and her jollity. Then as he neared the fortifications he had yet another drink at the distillery where, in the shadow, the gleaming copper taps of the barrels attract the eye; and still another at the general shop where the green shutters were still fast closed between the two boxes of laurels; after which he returned to the most populous districts and ordered *vermouth* and the brandy known as marc in various cafés. Eight o'clock struck. He walked very erect, with a steady, rigid, solemn gait; he was astonished when women, running to buy provisions, with bare head and their hair twisted in a knot low on the neck, ran against him with their heavy baskets, or when he came into collision with some small girl grasping an enormous loaf in her arms. Still, at times, if he crossed the road the milkman's cart, with its clinking, rattling tin cans, would pull up so close to him that he could feel the horse's warm breath on his cheek. But he continued his

way unhasting and careless of the imprecations of the rustic milk-vendor. His gait, secure of support from his dog-wood stick, was calm and haughty. But internally the old man was staggering. Nothing was left of his early morning gaiety. The lark, whose joyous trills had thrilled through him with his earliest sips of the pale-hued wine, had sped away at a single flight, and now his soul was a murky rookery, where crows croaked hoarsely upon inky trees. He was mortally sad. A great disgust of himself welled up in his heart. The voice of his repentance, his shame, cried out in him: "Hog, hog! What a hog you are!" And he marvelled at that clear, angry voice, that superb angel's voice, which spoke mysteriously within himself, repeating: "Hog! hog! What a hog you are!" A yearning desire for innocence and purity woke in him. He wept; great tears fell down on his goat-like beard. He wept over himself. Obedient to the words of his Master, who said, "Weep for yourselves and for your children, O daughters of Jerusalem," he shed the bitter dew from his downcast eyes upon the body he had delivered up to the seven deadly sins, and upon the obscene fancies born of his drunkenness. The faith of his childhood revived in him, and spread out fresh vigorous tendrils. From his lips pathetic prayers flowed forth. He said under his breath: "O God, grant me to become once more even as the little child which once was I!" At the moment he offered up this simple petition he realized that he was standing under a church porch.

It was an old church, once white and comely beneath its lacework of stone, which time and the hand of man had marred. Now it had become as black as the Shulamite, and its beauty could only appeal to the hearts of poets; it was a church "little and poor and old," like the mother of François Villon, who perchance in her day came to kneel in its precincts, and saw on the walls, nowadays whitewashed, that painted paradise, the harps of which she believed she could hear, and that inferno where the damned suffered fiery torment, which caused the worthy soul to be much afraid. Gestas entered into the House of God. He saw no one within, not even any one to offer him holy water, not even a poor woman like the mother of François Villon. Ranged in seemly order in the nave, a congregation of chairs alone bore witness to the faith of the parishioners, and seemed to sustain public worship.

In the cool, moist shade afforded by the vaulting Gestas turned to his right towards the aisle where, close to the porch, before a statue of the Virgin, a pyramidal frame of iron displayed its pointed teeth, on which, however, not a single taper now burned. Then as he gazed on the image, white, pink, and blue in colour, smiling from the midst of little gold and silver hearts hung up as votive offerings, he bent his stiff old legs, wept tears like St. Peter, and sobbed out tender, disconnected words: "Holy Virgin, Mother, Mary, Mary, your child, your

child, Mother!” But very speedily he rose up again, took several rapid steps, and stopped in front of a confessional. Framed of oak, darkened by the passage of time, oiled as are the beams of an olive press, this confessional had the irreproachable, homely, intimate appearance of an old linen cupboard. On its panels religious symbols carved in shell-like lozenges and rusticated work called up the memory of the townswomen of the olden time, who had come hither to bow their caps with lofty erections of lace and lave their housewifely souls in this type of the cleansing piscina. Where they had set their knees Gestas set his, and with lips close up to the wooden grating called in a hushed voice: “Father! father!” As no one answered his call he knocked very gently with his finger on the wicket.

“Father! father!”

He wiped his eyes so as to see better through the holes in the grating, and thought he could make out through the dimness the white surplice of a priest.

He repeated —

“Father! father! pray listen to me. I am in need of confession, I must cleanse my soul; it is black and dirty; it disgusts me; it turns my stomach. Quick, father, the bath of repentance, the bath of pardon, the bath of Jesus. At the thought of my impurities my heart comes into my mouth, and I am ready to spew with disgust at my uncleanness. The bath, the bath of cleansing!”

Then he waited. Now fancying he perceived a hand, which made a sign to him from the depths of the confessional, now failing to discover in the alcove anything more than an empty seat, a long time passed. He remained motionless, his knees glued to the wooden step, his gaze intent on the wicket, whence he awaited the outpouring of pardon, peace, refreshment, health, innocence, reconciliation with God and himself, heavenly joy, submission to the divine love, the sovereign good. At intervals he murmured tender supplications —

“Monsieur le curé, father, monsieur le curé!

I thirst! give me to drink, give me that which is yours to give, the water of innocence, a white robe, and wings for my poor soul. Give me penitence and pardon!”

Receiving no reply, he knocked still harder at the grating, and said aloud —

“Confession, I beg of you!”

At last he lost patience, and rising, showered heavy blows with his dog-wood stick on the walls of the confessional, shouting —

“Ho, there, monsieur le curé! Ho, there, monsieur le vicaire!”

And in proportion as he raised his voice he knocked more loudly. The blows fell furiously on the confessional, causing clouds of dust to arise from it, and only evoking in reply to his violence the vibration of its worm-eaten old planks.

The verger, who was sweeping out the sacristy, ran forward with his sleeves turned up on hearing the noise. When he saw the man with the stick he stopped short for a moment, and then advanced towards him with the cautious reserve common to the officials who have grown white in the service of this lowliest of police. Arrived within earshot he demanded —

“What is it you want?”

“I want to confess.”

“Folks don’t come to confess at an hour like this.”

“I want to confess.”

“Be off with you!”

“I want to see the curé.”

“For what purpose?”

“To make my confession.”

“The curé can’t be seen just now.”

“The senior vicaire, then.”

“Nor he either. Now off you go.”

“The second vicaire, the third vicaire, the fourth vicaire, the youngest vicaire.”

“Be off with you.”

“Ah, then! would you let me die unshriven? It’s worse than it was in ’93, it seems!... Any little vicaire. How will it hurt you if I make my confession to some little vicaire not any taller than my arm? Take word to some priest that he must come to hear my confession. I’ll undertake to disclose to him a batch of sins rarer, more extraordinary, more interesting, you may take my word for it, than all those his chattering women penitents can trot out before him. You can tell him that he is wanted for a really fine confession.”

“Get away now!”

“But won’t you understand, you old Barabbas, you? I tell you that I wish to reconcile myself with the good God — by God, I do!”

Although he did not rejoice in the majestic stature of the verger of a rich parish, this official staff-bearer was vigorous enough. He took our poor Gestas by the shoulders and hurled him outside the doors.

Gestas, once in the street, had only one idea in his brain, which was to get back into the church by one of the side doors, so as, if possible, to steal a march on the verger from behind, and perhaps lay hands on some underling vicaire who would consent to hear his confession.

Unhappily for the success of this manœuvre, the church was surrounded on all sides by old houses, and Gestas was soon hopelessly entangled, without hope of delivery, in an inextricable maze of streets, lanes, courts, and alleys.

Amongst them, however, he discovered a wine merchant's, and there the poor penitent tried to find consolation in absinthe. He managed to do so. But a fresh fit of repentance soon overtook him. And it is this which supports his friends in the hope that he will win salvation. He has faith — simple, firm, childlike faith. It is works alone which he is lacking in. Nevertheless there is no need to despair of him, since he himself never despairs.

Without entering on the difficulties as to predestination — and they are not inconsiderable — nor weighing the opinions expressed on this subject by St. Augustine, Gottschalk, the Albigenses, the Wycliffites, the Hussites, Luther, Calvin, Jansenius, and the great Arnaud, one may venture to believe that Gestas is predestined to eternal felicity.

“Gestas,” said the Lord, “enter into Paradise.”

THE MANUSCRIPT OF A VILLAGE DOCTOR

TO MARCEL SCHWOB

DOCTOR H — , who recently died at Scrigny (Aisne), where he had practised medicine for more than forty years, left behind him a journal never intended for the public eye. I should not feel justified in publishing the manuscript *in extenso* , nor even in printing fragments of any considerable length, although, like Monsieur Taine, there is a large number of persons nowadays of the opinion that it is above all things desirable to print and circulate what was never planned for publication. Whatever these worthy folk may say, the fact that a writer is an amateur does not afford any guarantee that what he has to say will be interesting. The memoirs of Doctor H — would be wearisome from their mere monotonously moral note. And yet the man who wrote them, in his lowly environment, possessed an intellect quite out of the ordinary. This village doctor was philosopher as well as physician. Perhaps the closing pages of his journal might be perused without any exceptional distaste. I venture to transcribe them here: —

Extract from the Journal of the late Doctor H — , Physician at Scrigny (Aisne).

“It is an axiom of philosophy that nothing in this world is either altogether bad or altogether good. Pity, the tenderest, the most natural, the most useful of the virtues, is not at all times in place either with the soldier or the priest; both with priest and soldier there are occasions when it must be held in restraint — when confronted by the enemy, for instance. Officers do not make a practice of recommending it on the eve of battle, and in some old book I have read that Monsieur Nicole held it in distrust as the motive principle of concupiscence. There is nothing of the priest about me, and still less of the soldier. I am a doctor, and amongst the most insignificant of that profession, a country doctor. I have practised my art for long years and in obscurity, and I would assert that if pity alone can be a worthy stimulus to the adoption of our profession, we must lay it aside finally when we encounter those miseries which it has inspired us with the desire to alleviate. A doctor whom pity accompanies to the bedside of his patients will find his observation not sufficiently acute, his hands not sufficiently steady. We go wherever compassion for the human race calls, but we must leave pity behind us. Moreover, doctors for the most part find it an easy task to attain the callousness which is so necessary to them. That is a mental condition which cannot long elude them, and there are moral reasons for this. Pity speedily becomes blunted when brought into contact with suffering; there is

less disposition to deplore those misfortunes for which alleviation can be procured; finally, to the physician an illness offers a succession of interesting phenomena.

“From the time when I began the practice of medicine I flung myself into it with ardour. In the bodily ills disclosed to me I saw only opportunities for the practical application of my art. When a complaint developed without complications, I was able to see beauty in its conformity to the normal type. Those phenomena of disease, which offered apparent anomalies, awakened curiosity in my mind; so that I was enamoured of disease. What am I saying? From the point of view I espoused disease and health were possessed of indisputable personality. As an enthusiastic observer of the human mechanism, I found as much to admire in its more baleful affections as in its most healthy compliance with law. Willingly should I have exclaimed with Pinel: ‘What a magnificent cancer!’ That was a fine attitude of mind, and I was on my way to become a philosopher-physician. I only needed to have a genius for my art in order to enjoy completely, and enter into possession of, the full beauty of the theory of disease classification. It is the privilege of genius to unveil the splendour of things. Where the ordinary man would see only a disgusting wound, the naturalist worthy of the name stands enraptured before a battlefield on which the mysterious forces of life struggle for supremacy, in an encounter more inexorable, more terrifying than any that the strenuous abandon of Salvator Rosa ever depicted. I only caught glimpses of that spectacle of which the Magendies and Claude Bernards were familiar witnesses, and it was a distinction for me to do so; but though resigned to the career of a humble practitioner, I fortified myself, as a professional duty, in the habit of confronting grievous situations unemotionally. I gave my patients my energies and my intellect, I did not give them pity. God forbid that I should place any gift, howsoever precious, above His gift of pity! Pity is the widow’s mite; it is the incomparable offering of the poor man, who with generosity outstripping that of all the wealthy in this world of ours, gives with the gift of his tears a piece torn from his heart. For that very reason it is that pity must be dissociated from the carrying out of a professional duty, how noble soe’er that profession may be.

“To enter upon more particular considerations, I would say that the folk in whose midst I am living evoke in their misfortunes a sentiment which is not pity. There is something of truth in the theory that a man cannot inspire in another an emotion which he is incapable of experiencing himself. Now the peasantry in our part of the country are not tender-hearted. Harsh to others as to themselves, they drag out an existence morose in its gravity. That gravity, too, is contagious, and in their company sadness and dejection affect one’s mind. What is fine about

their moral outlook is that they preserve unscathed the nobler features of humanity. As they are not accustomed to think with any frequency or profundity, their thoughts assume naturally in certain circumstances a solemn tone. I have heard some of them give utterance at the point of death to brief, forcible speeches worthy of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. They can call forth one's admiration, but do not awaken one's sympathies. With them everything is quite simple, even their illnesses. Their sufferings are not accentuated by their imagination. They are not like those over-sensitive creatures who construct from their ills a monster more harassing than the ills themselves. They meet death so much as a matter of course that it is impossible to be greatly disturbed. To sum up, I might say that they are all so much alike that no shred of individuality vanishes as each one passes away.

"For the reasons which I have just set down it follows that I practise my profession of village doctor very peacefully. I never regret having chosen it. I sometimes think I am a little above it; but if it is vexatious to a man to feel himself above his position, the annoyance would certainly be greater if he felt unequal to it. I am not rich, and never shall be so long as I live. But of what use would money be to one who leads a solitary village life? My little grey mare, Jenny, is as yet only fifteen years old, and she still trots as easily as in the days of her first youth, especially when we are going in the direction of the stable. I do not, like my illustrious fellow-physicians in Paris, possess a gallery of pictures for the entertainment of my visitors, but I can show pear trees which the townsmen have nothing like. My orchard is famous for twenty leagues round, and the owners of the neighbouring châteaux come to beg cuttings from me.

"Now on a certain Monday — it will be a year ago this very day — as I was busy in my garden inspecting my espaliers, a farm servant came to beg me to call as soon as possible at Les Alies.

"I asked him whether Jean Blin, the farmer at Les Alies, had sustained a fall the previous day as he came home in the evening. For in my part of the country a sprain is a common Sunday occurrence, and it is not at all rare for a man to break two or three ribs that day on leaving the public-house. Jean Blin is not exactly a bad sort, but he likes drinking in company, and more than once he has known what it is like to wait for Monday's dawn at the bottom of a miry ditch.

"The farm servant replied that there was nothing the matter with Jean Blin, but that Éloi, Jean's little son, was seized with fever.

"Without another thought for my espaliers, I went in search of my hat and stick, and set out on foot for Les Alies, which is only twenty minutes' walk from my house. As I walked, my thoughts were on ahead with Jean Blin's little boy in the grip of a fever. His father was a peasant much like every other peasant, with

this peculiar difference, that the Intelligence which created him forgot to provide him with a brain. This great hulking Jean Blin has a head as thick as his fist. Divine wisdom has only furnished that particular skull with what was strictly indispensable, there's no getting over that. His wife, the best-looking woman in the place, is a noisy, bustling housewife, stolidly virtuous. Well, well! To this worthy couple a child had been given, who was easily the most delicate, the most spiritual little being that ever adorned this old world of ours. Heredity is responsible for some of the surprises in nature, and it has been well said that nobody knows what he is about when he fathers a child. Heredity, according to our honoured Nysten, is the biological phenomenon which is responsible for the fact that, in addition to the normal type of the species, ancestors transmit to their descendants certain peculiarities of organization and of aptitude. I admit it. But what peculiarities are transmitted and what are not, that is what is not very clear, even after a perusal of the learned works of Doctor Lucas and Monsieur Ribot. My neighbour, the notary, lent me last year a volume by Monsieur Emile Zola, and I observe that that author takes credit for particular discernment in this respect. 'Here,' he says, in substance, 'is an ancestor afflicted with neurosis; his descendants will show neuropathic tendencies, that is to say, when they do not do so; amongst them will be found some foolish and some intelligent individuals; one of them may even be a genius.' He has gone to the trouble of drawing up a genealogical chart to make his idea more easily apprehended. Well and good! The discovery is not particularly novel, and its expounder would unquestionably be ill-advised to vaunt himself upon it; it is none the less true, however, that it embraces practically all we know on the subject of heredity. And this is how it came about that Éloi, Jean Blin's little son, was an embodied intellect. He had the creative imagination. Many a time, when he was no higher than my walking-stick, I have come across him playing truant with the village urchins. Whilst they were reaching after nests, I have watched the little fellow constructing model mills and miniature syphons with pipes of straw. Inventive and unsociable he turned to nature. His schoolmaster despaired of ever making anything of so inattentive a child; and, to tell the truth, at eight years old Éloi was still ignorant of his letters. But at that age he learned to read and write with astonishing rapidity, and in six months became the best scholar in the village.

"He was the most affectionate and the most clinging child. I gave him a few lessons in mathematics, and was astounded at the fertility that his mind displayed at this early age. In fact — I own it without any fear of being ridiculed, for in an old man cut off from civilization some exaggeration is pardonable — I rejoiced to have detected in this little peasant the premonitions of one of those enlightened spirits which at long intervals shine forth in the midst of our

purblind race, and, impelled alike by the need of lavishing their affection and the desire for knowledge, are bound to effect something useful or beautiful wherever fate may assign them a place.

“My mind was occupied with musings of this kind as far as Les Alies. Entering the low-ceiled room, I found little Éloi ensconced in the big bed with cotton hangings, to which no doubt his parents had removed him on account of the gravity of his condition. He was lethargic; his head, though small and delicate, nevertheless made as great a dent in the pillow as if it had been of enormous weight. I stole near. His forehead was on fire; there was a disquieting redness about the conjunctive membrane; the temperature of the body was altogether too high. His mother and grandmother kept close to him, anxiously. Jean Blin, whose uneasiness prevented him from working, not knowing what to do, and being afraid to go away, stood with his hands in his pockets looking inquiringly first at one and then at another. The child turned his drawn face towards me, and scrutinizing me with an affectionate but heartbreaking glance, said in reply to my questions that his forehead and his eyes were both very painful, that he could hear noises which he knew were imaginary, and that he knew perfectly well who I was, his dear old friend.

“‘First he has shivering fits, and then he is feverishly hot,’ said his mother.

“Jean Blin, after ruminating for several minutes, remarked —

My belief is that what ails him is his inside.’

“Then he relapsed into silence.

“It had been only too easy for me to diagnose the symptoms of acute meningitis. I prescribed revulsive applications to the feet, and leeches behind the ears. I drew near to my little friend a second time,’ and tried to say something cheerful to him, more cheerful, alas! than facts warranted. But I was suddenly aware of an entirely new personal experience. Although I was completely self-possessed I seemed to see the sick child through a veil, and at such a distance that he appeared quite, quite small. This upsetting of my ideas of space was speedily followed by an analogous upheaval of my ideas of time. Although my visit had not lasted above five minutes, I received the impression that I had been in that low-ceiled room, in front of that bed with its white cotton hangings, for a long time, for a very long time, and that months and even years had rolled by whilst I was held motionless.

“By a mental effort which is perfectly natural to me, I there and then put these singular impressions under analysis, and the cause of them became quite clear to me. It was simple enough. Éloi was dear to me. At the sight of him so unexpectedly and so seriously ill I could not ‘get my bearings.’

It is the popular phrase, and it is appropriate. Moments of anguish appear to us unnaturally long. That is why I received the impression that the five or six minutes I had passed beside Éloi had something interminable about them. As to the fancy that the child was at a distance from me, that came from the idea that I was about to lose him. This idea, impressed on me against my will, had from the first moment assumed a character of absolute certainty.

“The following day Éloi was in a less alarming condition. The improvement continued for several days. I had sent into the town to procure ice, and this had had a good effect. But on the fifth day I recognized that he was in violent delirium. He talked a great deal, and amongst the disconnected words I heard him pouring out I could distinguish these —

“‘The balloon! the balloon! I have hold of the helm of the balloon. It rises. The sky is inky. Mamma, mamma! why won’t you come with me? I am steering my balloon to a place where it will be so beautiful! Come, it is stifling here.’

“That day Jean Blin followed me up the road. He slouched along with that air of embarrassment a man has who wants to say something and is yet afraid to say it. At last, after walking some twenty paces with me in silence, he stopped, and laying his hand on my arm said —

“‘See here, Doctor, it’s my belief that what ails the little chap is his inside.’

“I continued my way sorrowfully, and for the first time in my life my eagerness to see once more my pears and apricots did not avail to mend my pace. For the first time in forty years of practice I found the plight of one of my patients heartrending, and in my inmost self I bewailed the child I was powerless to save.

“Distracting pangs soon came to magnify my grief. I feared that my treatment had contributed to the development of the disease. I caught myself forgetting in the morning what I had prescribed the night before, uncertain in my diagnosis, nervous, and worried. I called in one of my fellow-practitioners, a clever young fellow, who had a practice in the next village. When he arrived, the poor little fellow, whose sight was already gone, was plunged in a profound coma.

“The following day he died.

“A year having elapsed after this misfortune, it happened that I was called in consultation to the county town. The fact is singular. The causes which led up to it are extraordinary; but as they have no connection with what I am relating, I do not record them here. After the consultation. Dr.

C — , physician to the prefecture, did me the honour to invite me to lunch with him and two other members of the profession. After lunch, where I found refreshment in conversation at once erudite and diversified, coffee was served to us in the doctor’s sanctum. As I approached the mantelpiece to put down my

empty cup, I saw hanging upon the mirror-frame a portrait which aroused in me so profound an emotion that it was with difficulty I refrained from crying out. It was a miniature, the portrait of a child. This child resembled in so striking a fashion the one I had been unable to cure — the child of whom I had been constantly thinking for a year past — that for a moment I could not avoid the thought that it was he himself. That supposition, however, was of course absurd. The black wooden frame, with the circlet of gold surrounding the miniature, proclaimed the taste of the end of the eighteenth century, and the child was depicted in a vest of pink and white striped material such as the little Louis XVII might have worn; but the face was out-and-out the face of my little Éloi. The same forehead, imperious and powerful — the forehead of a man beneath the curls of a cherub; the same fire in the eyes, the same suffering grace on the lips! Indeed, to the very same features was joined the identical expression!

“I had probably been examining this portrait for quite a long while when Dr. C — , clapping me on the shoulder, said —

“‘Ah, my friend, you have before you a family relic which I am proud to possess. My maternal grandfather was the friend of the illustrious man whom you see painted there in the days of his early boyhood, and it was from my grandfather that that miniature came into my possession.’

“I asked him to be good enough to tell me the name of his grandfather’s illustrious friend. Upon this he unhooked the miniature and held it out to me:

“‘See,’ he said, ‘on the exergue... *Lyon* , 1787. Doesn’t that recall anything to you? No? Well, that child of twelve was the great Ampère.’

“Then, in a flash, I had an exact perception, an unequivocal estimate of what death had swept away one year previously in the farmhouse of Les Alies.”

MEMOIRS OF A VOLUNTEER

TO PAUL ARÈNE

(All the incidents in these memoirs are authentic, and may be traced to various documents of the eighteenth century. Not a single detail, however apparently insignificant, is made use of for which indubitable authority cannot be produced. (AUTHOR.))

I WAS born in seventeen hundred and seventy in the rural outskirts of a small town in the Langres district, where my father, half townsman and half peasant, dealt in cutlery and tended his orchards. In this place certain nuns, although they only educated girls, consented to teach me to read since I was but a child, and they were good friends of my mother. On leaving their hands I took lessons in Latin from a priest in the town, a shoemaker's son, well grounded in the humanities. In the summer the shade of some old chestnut-trees served as a schoolroom, and close beside his hives the Abbé Lamadou interpreted Virgil's *Georgics* to me. I never dreamed that any one could be happier than I, and between my master and *Mlle.* Rose, the farrier's daughter, I lived in great contentment. But in this world no happiness is enduring. One morning, as my mother embraced me, she slipped an écu of six livres into my coat pocket. My luggage was packed. My father leaped on his horse and, taking me up behind him, carried me off to the college at Langres. All the time the journey lasted I was dreaming of my own little room, scented towards autumn time with the perfume of the fruit stored up in the loft; or of the close where my father took me on Sunday to gather apples from the trees he had grafted with his own hand; of Rose, of my sisters, of my mother; even of myself, unhappy exile! I could feel my heart thump, and it was with difficulty that I held back the tears which filled my eyelids. At length, after five hours' journey, we reached the town and set foot to ground in front of a huge door, on which I read with a shudder the word *College*. The principal, Father Féval, of the Oratory, received us in a big saloon with whitewashed walls. He was still a young man, of impressive appearance, and I found his smile reassuring. On all such occasions my father had displayed a naturalness, vivacity, and candour which never deserted him.

"Reverend Father," he said, placing his hand on me, "I bring you here my only son. His name is Pierre, after his godfather, and Aubier, his father's name, which I have handed on to him as stainless as I received it from my late dear father. Pierre is my only boy; his mother, Madeleine Ordalu, having presented me with one son and three daughters, whom I am bringing up to the best of my ability. To my daughters will fall the lot which it shall please God in the first place, and later on their husbands, to assign to them. They are said to be pretty, and I can't help believing it myself. But beauty is only a gay deceiver which it is best not to take into account. They will be handsome enough if they are only good enough. As to my son Pierre here before you (as he pronounced these words my father put his hand so heavily on my shoulder that he made me flinch),

provided that he fears God and knows enough Latin, he is to be a priest. Very humbly then, reverend father, I beg you to examine him at your leisure, so as to ascertain his genuine capacities. If you find any merit in him, let him remain with you. I will willingly pay whatever is needful. If, on the contrary, you consider that you can make nothing of him, send me word, and I will come and fetch him away at once, and teach him how to make knives like his father. For I am a cutler, at your service, reverend sir.”

Father Féval agreed to undertake what was asked of him. And upon this assurance, my father took leave of the principal and of me also. As he was very moved, and had some trouble to restrain his sobs, he assumed a stiff and harsh expression, and under the semblance of a farewell embrace bestowed a terrific thump. When he was gone, Father Féval drew me away from the parlour into a garden surrounded by a thick hedge. Then, as we passed beneath the shade of the trees, he said to me —

“O silvaï dulces umbras frondosaï!”
(O leafy woods diffusing grateful shade!)

I was fortunate enough to recognize in these archaic inflexions and ponderous prosody a line from old Ennius, and I replied glibly to Father Féval that Virgil was even more worthy than his antique predecessor to celebrate the beauty of these cool shades, *frigus opacum*. The principal seemed quite gratified at this compliment. He questioned me benevolently upon some rudimentary points, and when he had heard my replies —

“That will do,” he said. “If you work hard, very hard indeed, you will be able to keep up with the fourth class. Come with me. I should like to introduce you myself to your master and your fellow-pupils.”

Whilst our little walk lasted, my forlornness had somewhat abated, and I was conscious of feeling supported in my distress. But no sooner did I find myself surrounded by my class-fellows and in the presence of Monsieur Joursanvault, my master, than I sank back into abject despair. Monsieur Joursanvault was neither easy of access nor the possessor of the principal’s fine simplicity. He appeared to me very much more impressed with his own importance, and also more harsh and reserved. He was a little man with a big head, and his words found egress with a whistling noise between two white lips and four yellow teeth. I decided immediately that such a mouth as his was never intended to pronounce the name Lavinia, a name which I loved even better than that of Rose. For I may as well own it, the idyllic and royal fiancée of the unfortunate Turnus had been decked by my imagination with the most august charms. The ideal

image I had formed of her sufficed to eclipse the more everyday beauty of the farrier's daughter. Monsieur Joursanvault then, the master of the fourth class, pleased me little enough. My class-fellows inspired me with fear: they had every appearance of being unspeakably venturesome, and it was not without reason that I dreaded that my simplicity might goad them to ridicule. I was very much inclined to cry.

Self-respect, a more powerful emotion than my grief, alone enabled me to restrain my tears.

When evening came, I left the college and went off into the town in search of the quarters which my father had bespoken for me. I was to lodge with five other scholars at the house of an artisan, whose wife would do our cooking. Every month each of us paid him twenty-five sous.

At the outset my schoolfellows tried to tease me about my ill-cut clothes and my rustic appearance, but they gave up their efforts when they saw that they did not vex me. One of their number alone, the consumptive son of a lawyer, continued insolently to imitate my lumpish, awkward carriage, but I punished him with a fist so unexpectedly weighty that he was not disposed to resume his performance. Monsieur Joursanvault did not take very kindly to me, but as I fulfilled my tasks with regularity, I provided him with no occasion for punishment. As he displayed his authority in a violent, uncertain, and irritating fashion, he invited rebellion, and, as a matter of fact, there were several mutinous episodes in his class in which I, however, took no part. One day, as I was walking in the garden with the principal, who showed himself very kindly disposed to me, unluckily it came into my head to boast to him of my good conduct.

"Father," said I, "I took no part in the last escapade."

"There's nothing to boast about in that," replied Father Féval, with a touch of contempt which rent my heart.

He hated meanness above everything in the world. I made up my mind as he spoke never again to say or do anything despicable. And if from that day forward I have managed to keep free from lying and mean-spiritedness, I owe it entirely to that excellent man.

Monsieur Féval was in no respect a philosopher-priest; he exercised the virtues, but not the doctrines, of Rousseau's Vicaire Savoyard. He believed everything a priest ought to believe. But he had a horror of mummery, and could not endure the idea of demanding the interposition of God in trifling affairs. This appeared clearly enough on the Christmas Day when Monsieur Joursanvault came to him with a complaint against the impious jesters who, on the eve of the festival, had put ink in the holy water stoups.

The scandalized Joursanvault mumbled anathemas, and murmured —

“There is no disputing the fact, it is a black deed!”

“By reason of the ink,” replied our good principal calmly.

That upright man regarded weakness as the direct source of all ills. He often said: “Lucifer and the rebellious angels erred through pride. It is on that account that even in hell they have not ceased to hold rank as princes and kings, and to maintain an awful supremacy over the souls of the damned. If they had fallen through pettiness, in the midst of the flames they would now be the laughing-stock and sport of sinners, and the empery of evil would have slipped from their dishonoured hands.”

When the holidays came round it was a great joy to me to see my home once more. But I found it unaccountably shrunken. As I entered, my mother, bending over the hearth, was skimming the soup-kettle. She, too, my dear mother, seemed strangely diminutive to me, and I sobbed as I flung my arms round her.

With the skimmer in her hand she told me how age and trouble had rendered my father inactive, so that he was no longer able to look after his orchard; how my eldest sister was promised in marriage to the cooper’s son; how the sacristan of the parish had been found dead in his chamber, with a bottle in his hand, which his stark fingers clutched so firmly by the neck that it was thought at first that it could never be loosened from his hold. Yet it was scarcely decent to bear the sacristan’s body to the church still grasping his bottle of wish-wash. As I listened to my mother a clear realization of the flight of time and the passing of things temporal for the first time reached my brain. I fell into a sort of reverie.

“Well, well, my boy,” said my mother, “you look flourishing. Why, with your dimity jacket, you are already the very spit of a little *curé*. ”

At this moment Mademoiselle Rose came into the room, blushing and feigning to be completely surprised at the sight of me. I saw that she was interested in me, and felt secretly flattered. But in her presence I assumed the grave and reserved demeanour of the ecclesiastic. The greater part of these holidays I spent in walks with Monsieur Lamadou.

It had been agreed between us that we should talk nothing but Latin. So we went our ways through the midst of the lowly tasks of the tillers of the soil, with nature riotous around us, side by side, straight before us, grave, serious, guileless, disdainful of such utterly vain and common pleasures as we had knowledge of.

I returned to the college with the firm determination to take Holy Orders. Already I could see myself, like Monsieur Lamadou, wearing a great three-cornered hat and a cassock, with black breeches, woollen stockings, and buckled shoes, occupied now with the eloquence of Cicero, now with the doctrine of St.

Augustine, and gravely acknowledging the salutes of the women and the poor folk who bowed to me as I threaded my way through the crowd. Alas! a woman's shadow began to disturb this peaceful dream. Up to that time I had known nothing of women, except Lavinia in the *Æneid* and Mademoiselle Rose. Then I realized Dido, and flames seemed to rush through my veins. The image of the unhappy Queen, who, tortured by an irremediable wound, wandered in the forest of myrtles, bent at night over my troubled couch.

Moreover, if I walked out in the evening, I seemed to be aware of her dead white figure gliding between the bushes in the woods as the moon passes through the midst of the clouds. Obsessed by this dazzling image, I began to waver about taking Orders. Nevertheless, I assumed the dress of the ecclesiastic, which suited me admirably. When I visited my home for the first time thus attired, my mother curtsied to me, and Rose hid her face in her apron and wept. Then turning on me her lovely eyes, as pellucid as her tears, she said —

“I can't think what I am crying about, Monsieur Pierre!”

In this mood she was touching. But she did not in the least resemble the moon seen through the clouds. I did not love her; it was Dido I loved.

That year was signalized to me by a dreadful calamity. I lost my father, who sank very suddenly under an attack of water on the chest.

In his last moments he adjured his children to live honestly and piously, and blessed them. He died with a degree of resignation which was not in the least consonant with his character. It appeared to be without regret, with cheerfulness even, that he quitted a life to which he was strongly attached by all the bonds of a nature essentially vivacious. From him I learnt that it is easier to die than one would think, if one is but a good man.

I resolved that I, in my turn, would act a father's part to those elder sisters already marriageable, and to that tearful mother who, year by year, seemed to grow smaller, weaker, and more appealing.

Thus, then, in one moment, from a child I became a man. I finished my studies at the Oratory under excellent masters — Fathers Lance, Porriquet, and Marion, who had buried themselves in a wild and remote province to devote their brilliant faculties and a profound erudition which would have done honour to the Academy of Inscriptions to the education of a few poor children. The principal surpassed them all in loftiness of intellect and beauty of soul.

Whilst I was finishing my philosophical studies under those eminent teachers, a widespread rumour was conveyed to our distant province, and even penetrated the cloistral walls of the college. There was gossip about a convocation of the States General, and reforms were clamoured for, and great changes expected.

Some of the new publications which our masters permitted us to read proclaimed the approaching return of the Golden Age.

When the moment came for me to leave the college, I wept as I embraced Father Féval.

He held me clasped in his arms with profound emotion. Then he led me to the hedge-sheltered path where six years previously I had had my first conversation with him.

There, taking me by the hand, he bent over me, and looked into my eyes and said —

“Remember, dear child, that without principle intellect goes for nothing. You will perhaps live long enough to see the dawn of a new régime in this land of ours. These great changes cannot be brought about without disturbances. May you bear in mind in the midst of them what I am telling you now: in difficult situations intellect is but a sorry shield: virtue alone can suffice to safeguard him who merits safety.”.

Whilst he discoursed in this vein we emerged from the arbour, and the sun, already low on the horizon, bathed him in its warm crimson rays and lit up his handsome, thoughtful countenance. I was fortunate enough to retain a vivid impression of his words, which struck me forcibly, although at the time they were a little above my head. At that date I was only a schoolboy, and not a very brilliant one. Since then my eyes have been opened to the profundity and truth of his maxims by the terrible object-lesson of subsequent events.

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I HAD abandoned the idea of taking Orders. It was necessary to earn a livelihood. I had not learnt Latin with the idea of making cutlery in the suburbs of a small town. I indulged in ambitious dreams. Our little holding, our cows, our garden, were far from equal to the fulfilment of my ambitions. I discovered rusticity in Mademoiselle Rose. My mother conceived that a town such as Paris was necessary to the full development of my abilities. Without much difficulty I myself came to a similar conclusion. I ordered a coat from the best tailor in Langres. With this coat went a steel-hilted sword, which threw back the skirts and invested one with so smart an air that I doubted nothing I was on the road to fortune. Father Féval gave me a letter of recommendation to the Duc de Puybonne, and on the 12th of July, in the year of grace 1789, I climbed into the coach, not without tears, laden with Latin books, cakes, bacon, and kisses. I entered Paris by the Faubourg St.

Antoine, which appeared to me more hideous than the most squalid hamlets in my own province. With all my heart I bewailed both the unhappy folk who had their dwelling there and myself who had forsaken my father's house and orchard land to seek advancement amidst such a tatterdemalion crew. A wine merchant who had been my fellow-traveller explained, however, that these people were all in ecstasies over the destruction of an old prison known as the Bastille-St.-Antoine. He assured me that Monsieur Necker would soon bring back the Golden Age. But a wigmaker, who overheard our conversation, declared that, on the contrary, unless the King speedily dismissed him, Monsieur Necker would ruin the country.

"The Revolution," he added, "is a terrible misfortune. Nobody now dresses his hair. And people who neglect that duty are below the level of the beasts."

These words angered the wine merchant.

"Know, master barber," he interposed, "that a rejuvenescent race disdains idle trappings. I would punish you for your impertinence, if I had time to do so; but I am on my way to supply wine to Monsieur Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, who honours me with his friendship."

In this fashion they parted; and as for me, I betook myself on foot, with my Latin books, my bacon, and the memory of my mother's kisses to the house of the Duc de Puybonne, to present my letter of recommendation. His mansion was situated at the other end of the city in the Rue de Grenelle. The passers-by vied with one another in supplying me with directions, for the Duke was celebrated for his benevolence.

He received me cordially. Everything in his dress and in his manners was of the utmost simplicity. He had that contented demeanour which one only meets with in men who labour assiduously without being compelled.

He read Father Féval's letter, and remarked —

"This is a satisfactory letter of recommendation, but what are your acquirements?"

I replied that I was acquainted with Latin, a little Greek, ancient history, rhetoric, and poetry.

"What a list of accomplishments!" he rejoined, smiling. "But it would have been more to the point if you had had some notion of agriculture, the mechanical arts, commerce, banking, and industry. You are acquainted with the laws of Solon, now, I'll wager?"

I signified that I was.

"Very good, very good. But you know nothing about the English constitution. But no matter. You are young, and of an age to acquire knowledge. I will give you a place about my person, with an allowance of five hundred écus. Monsieur Mille, my secretary, will instruct you as to the duties I shall expect you to perform. Au revoir, monsieur."

A lackey conducted me to Monsieur Mille, who was writing at a table in the middle of a spacious white apartment. He signalled to me to wait. He was a little roundabout man, and his appearance was pleasant, but he rolled his eyes about ferociously, and seemed to be scolding under his breath as he wrote.

I heard him give utterance to the following words: "Tyrants, fetters, hell, man, Rome, slavery, liberty." I concluded he was mad. But when he had laid his pen aside he nodded his head to me and smiled.

"Well?" he said. "You are examining the apartment. It is as severe as that of an ancient Roman. No gilding on the panels, no fal-lals on the mantelpiece; nothing is left to remind us of the detestable times of the late king, nothing remains that is derogatory to the dignity of a free man (*un homme libre*). *Libre*, *Tibre*. I must jot that rhyme down. It's a good one, now, isn't it? 'Are you fond of verse, Monsieur Pierre Aubier?'"

I replied that I was only too much devoted to it, and that it would have served me better when I presented myself before the Duke if I had preferred Mr. Burke to Virgil.

"Virgil is a great man," replied Monsieur Mille. "But what is your opinion of Monsieur Chénier? For my part I know nothing finer than his *Charles IX*. I will not attempt to conceal from you that I am myself experimenting in tragedy, and at the very moment you entered I was finishing a scene with which I am not a little pleased. You appear to me to be a very trustworthy person. I am quite

willing to confide in you so far as to tell you what my tragedy is about, but you mustn't breathe a word. You realize how far-reaching the least indiscretion might be. I am composing a tragedy upon the subject of Lucretia."

Then taking up a large manuscript book he read out: "*Lucretia , a tragedy in five acts , dedicated to Louis the Well Beloved , the restorer of liberty to France .*"

He spouted some two hundred lines to me and then broke off, saying in excuse that the remainder was as yet uncorrected.

"The Duke's post-bag," he said with a sigh, "robs me of the best hours of the day. We are in correspondence with all the enlightened men in England, Switzerland, and America. And talking of this, I may tell you, Monsieur Aubier, that your employment will consist of copying and classifying letters. If you would like to be informed without delay as to the matters which are occupying our attention at this very moment, I will tell you. At Puybonne we are superintending a farm where certain English experts have been engaged to introduce into France such agricultural improvements as have been attained in Great Britain; We are importing from Spain a number of those silky-fleeced sheep the flocks of which have enriched Segovia with their wool. This is so arduous an undertaking that we have been compelled to enlist the cooperation of the King himself. Lastly, we are buying cows in Switzerland to present to our dependents.

"I can say nothing on the subject of our correspondence upon public affairs. Entire secrecy is preserved as to that. But you are, of course, aware that the efforts of the Duc de Puybonne are directed towards the introduction into France of the English constitutional system. Pardon my leaving you, Monsieur Aubier. I am due at the Comédie Française. *Alzire* is to be performed."

That night I slept in fine linen sheets, and I did not sleep well. I dreamed that my mother's bees were flying over the ruins of the Bastille and around the Duc de Puybonne, who smiled graciously, and was enveloped in an unearthly radiance.

The following morning at an early hour I betook myself to Monsieur Mille's room, and asked him if he had enjoyed himself at the theatre. He replied that he ventured to believe that the performance of *Alzire* had given him a clue to some of the methods by which Monsieur de Voltaire stirred the emotions of his audience. Then he set me to work copying letters referring to the purchase of the Swiss cows, which the generous magnate was bestowing on his dependents. Whilst I occupied myself with this task, Monsieur Mille said to me— "The Duke is kind-hearted. I have recorded his benevolent disposition in certain verses with

which I am not ill-pleased. Are you acquainted with the Puybonne estate? No! It is a domain of enchantment. My lines may open your eyes to its charms. I will recite them to you —

Delightful valley, haven of repose,
Groves ever verdant, where the limpid stream
Peacefully onward flows,
Whose dulcet murmurings seem
Like note of birds, chanting their amorous woes;
How my heart thrills your rural charms to view,
And longings seize me, 'neath your sheltering boughs
Her cherished name i' the beech's bark to hew.
In this fair spot our Puybonne reigns,
And uprightness and charity
Silently bear him company,
His spirit our happiness sustains.
The frolic shepherds, at his call,
Under the elms together come,
Who to his bounty, one and all,
Owe flocks, and herds, and home."

I was astounded. At Langres I had never heard anything so courtly, and I was impressed with the fact that the air of Paris contained a something inexpressible, which it was useless to seek elsewhere.

After dinner I set out to inspect the principal edifices of the town. The genius of art has spent two centuries in distributing his treasures on the glorious banks of the Seine. Hitherto I had only been acquainted with Gothic castles and churches, and their melancholy character, tinged with uncouthness, only awakens displeasing thoughts in the mind. Paris, it is true, still contains a certain number of these barbaric structures. The cathedral itself, which rises in that quarter of the town to which the term City is specially assigned, bears witness by the irregularity and confusion of its plan to the ignorance of the age in which it was erected. Parisians overlook its hideousness on the score of its antiquity. Father Féval was accustomed to say that everything antique is worthy of respect.

But what a different aspect do the buildings of the more cultured ages present! A regularity in plan, an exact proportion between the component parts, an uncrowded arrangement in the grouping, and then the charm of the various orders copied from the antique — all these qualities dazzle one in the creations of modern architects, and all unite to render the colonnade of the Louvre a

masterpiece worthy of France and its kings. Ah, what a town is Paris! Monsieur Mille showed me the theatre where the finest actresses in the world ally their voices and their charms to the inspired compositions of Mozart and Gluck. And in addition, he even took me to the gardens of the Luxembourg, where beneath the shade of venerable trees I saw Raynal walking side by side with Dussaulx. Ah, my honoured principal, my master, my father, my beloved Monsieur Féval! Would that you were witness to the joy, the rapture of your pupil, your son!

For six weeks I led the pleasantest of lives. All around me I heard talk of the return of the Golden Age, and I began to believe in the approach of the car bearing Saturn and Rhea within it. In the mornings, under Monsieur Mille's direction, I made copies of letters.

Monsieur Mille was a boon companion, always smiling, always uttering flowery speeches, always volatile as a zephyr.

After dinner I would read a few pages of the Encyclopaedia to our worthy employer, and then I was free till the following morning. One night I went with Monsieur Mille to supper at the Porcherons. At the entrance of this place of amusement stood a group of women wearing the national colours in their caps, and carrying flowers in a basket. One of them, approaching me, took me by the arm and said, "See, little master, I make you a present of this bunch of roses."

I blushed, and was at a loss what to say in reply. But Monsieur Mille, who knew the ways of the town, said to me —

"You must give a six-sous piece in exchange for those roses, and say something gallant to the pretty maiden."

I did both one and the other, and then inquired of Monsieur Mille if he thought the flower-seller was a well-conducted girl. He replied that there was very little likelihood of it, but that it was a duty to show courtesy to all women. Day by day I became more attached to the excellent Duc de Puybonne. He was the best and the most childlike of men. He did not consider that he had given anything whatever to the unfortunate unless it had cost him some self-sacrifice. He lived like a man of the people, and regarded the luxury of the rich as a preying upon the poor. His benefactions were well considered. One day, addressing us both, he said —

"No pleasure is more gratifying than to labour for the happiness of people unknown to you, whether by planting some useful tree, or by grafting on young saplings in the woods buds from which one day may spring fruit to assuage the thirst of some traveller astray."

The worthy Duke found no interests except in works of philanthropy. He laboured ardently to secure new constitutional forms to the kingdom. As a representative peer in the National Assembly he took his seat in the ranks of

those admirers of English liberty who were styled monarchical, by the side of Malouet and Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre. And although his party appeared even then defeated, he awaited with all the fervour of indomitable hope the oncoming of revolution in its most humane aspect. We shared his aspirations.

Despite numerous causes for uneasiness, we continued during the following year to be upheld by this enthusiasm. I accompanied Monsieur Mille to the Champ de Mars at the beginning of July. On this spot two hundred thousand persons of all ranks — men, women, children — were erecting with their own hands the altar upon which all were to swear that they would live free, or, if needs must, die free. Wigmakers in bluejackets, water-carriers, abbés, coal-heavers, capuchins, opera-singers in brocaded dresses with ribbons and feathers in their hair, all these side by side delved the sacred soil of their country. What an object-lesson in fraternity! We saw Monsieur Sieyès and Monsieur de Beauharnais trundling the same cart; we saw Father Gérard, passing like an ancient Roman from the Senate to the plough, wielding the spade and preparing the ground; we saw an entire family at work in the same spot — the father digging, the mother filling the wheelbarrow, and the children pushing it turn and turn about, whilst the youngest, only four years of age, borne in the arms of his Grandfather aged ninety-three, lisped out: “*Ah! ça ira! ça ira!*” We saw the Society of Journeymen Gardeners marching in procession with lettuces and daisies attached to the ends of their spades. Several other corporations followed them, preceded by a band: the Printers, whose banner bore this inscription: *Printings foremost ensign of Liberty*. Then the Butchers: upon their standard was painted a large knife, with these words: *Tremble , aristocrats! Behold the Journeymen Butchers*.

And even this took on the appearance for us of fraternity.

“Aubier, my friend, my brother,” exclaimed Monsieur Mille, “I am fired with poetical enthusiasm I am about to compose an ode which shall be dedicated to you. Listen: —

Friend, behold the concourse grand,
From far and wide assembled there,
The mainstays of our own loved land,
Whose banners proudly take the air:

Love it is directs their path
Toward the patriot altar-fires,
Each his bounden service hath

Vowed, till Life's last flame expires."

Monsieur Mille recited these lines heroically; he was little, but his gestures were magnificent. He was wearing an amaranth-coloured coat. These circumstances combined to draw attention to him, and by the time he had finished the foregoing he was surrounded by a ring of inquisitive people. He was applauded. In ecstasies, he went on —

"Unseal your eyes, direct your minds
Upon this solemn spectacle..."

(Ouvre tes yeux, fixe ton âme
Sur ce spectacle solennel...)

But scarcely had he uttered these words before a lady, decked with an immense black hat and feathers, flung herself into his arms and clasped him close against the fichu she wore round her shoulders.

"Ah, how splendid!" she cried. "Monsieur Mille, permit me to embrace you."

A Capuchin who occupied a place in the ring of onlookers, bent his chin down on to his spade and clapped his hands at the sight of such a capacious embrace. Then some of the young patriots who stood by pushed him laughingly in the direction of the demonstrative lady, who transferred her embraces to him in the midst of popular acclamations. Monsieur Mille embraced me, and I embraced Monsieur Mille.

"Such splendid lines!" cried the lady with the outrageous hat. "Bravo, Mille! They are worthy of Jean Baptiste."

"Oh!" said Monsieur Mille, bashfully hanging his head, his cheeks round and red as apples.

"Yes, absolutely worthy of Jean Baptiste," repeated Madame. "They must be set to the tune of '*Le serin qui te fait envie*.' " (The canary which spurs you to rivalry.)

"You are too flattering," Monsieur Mille replied. "Permit me, Madame Berthemet, to present to you my friend Pierre Aubier, a Limousin gentleman. He is a man of parts, and will soon be accustomed to the ways of Paris."

"The dear creature," Madame Berthemet rejoined, as she pressed my hand. "Let him come to see us. You must bring him, Monsieur Mille. We have a little music always on Thursdays. Is he fond of music? But what a foolish question! Only a barbarian given over to every savage passion could fail to love music."

Come this next Thursday, Monsieur Aubier; my daughter Amélie will sing you a ballad.”

As she spoke, Madame Berthemet motioned to a young lady dressed in white, with a Greek headdress, whose fair hair and blue eyes seemed to me the loveliest in the world. I blushed as I bowed. But she did not appear to notice my embarrassment.

As we returned to the Puybonne mansion I did not attempt to conceal from Monsieur Mille the profound impression the beauty of this charming creature had made on me.

“In that case,” replied Monsieur Mille, “I shall have to add a strophe to my ode.”

And after reflecting for a few seconds, he added, “There now, I have managed it.

If some maiden, fair and fond,
To your wooing yields consent,
Only wedlock’s sacred bond
Must your mutual vows cement.

But the altar where you hie
Must a patriot altar be,
Or the Heaven you dare defy
Will avenge your treachery.”

(Si d’une belle honnête et sage
Tu sais un jour te faire aimer,
Le nœud sacré du mariage
Est le seul que tu dois former;
Mais à l’autel de la Patrie
Courez tous deux pour vous unir,
Que jamais votre foi trahie
N’ordonne au ciel de vous punir.)

Alas! Monsieur Mille did not possess that gift of foretelling future events which was in former ages ascribed to poets. Our days of happiness were already numbered, and all our dazzling illusions were doomed to extinction. The day following the Federation fête the nation awakened to a sense of harrowing

dissension. Weak and narrow-minded, the king ill fulfilled the limitless trust the people had placed in him.

The criminal emigration of princes and nobility was impoverishing the country, antagonizing the people, and conducing to war. The political clubs overawed the National Assembly. The acrimony of the populace became more and more menacing. And whilst the nation was a prey to agitators, neither did I possess my heart in peace. I had met Amélie again. I had become the constant guest of her family, and never a week passed that did not find me two or three times a visitor at the house they lived in, in the Rue Neuve St. Eustache. Their fortunes, at one time flourishing, had flagged considerably owing to the Revolution, and I may venture to say that ill-luck ripened our friendship. As Amélie became poorer I found myself more sympathetic, and I loved her. I loved without hope. Who was I, poor little peasant lad, that I should be pleasing to so charming a townswoman?

I marvelled at her gifts. By composing music, painting, or translating some English romance, she courageously shut out the consciousness of misfortune, both public and private. Whenever she saw any one she displayed an aloofness which, so far as I was concerned, would relapse freely into playful banter. It was clear that though her heart was untouched she found my company diverting. Her father was the handsomest grenadier in the district, but in all other respects a nonentity. As to Madame Berthemet, she was, despite a petulant disposition, the best of women. She was brimming with enthusiasm. She appreciated parakeets, political economists, and Monsieur Mille's poetry to the swooning point. She was fond of me when she could spare time, but much of hers was taken up by the gazettes and the opera. Next to her daughter there was no one in the world whom it gave me greater pleasure to meet.

I had progressed greatly in the good graces of the Duc de Puybonne. I was no longer engaged in the copying of letters: he entrusted me with the most delicate transactions, and often confided to me matters as to which Monsieur Mille himself was left in ignorance.

Moreover, he had lost faith, if not courage. The humiliating flight of Louis XVI distressed him more than I can say; yet after the return from Varennes he appeared unintermittently in the entourage of the royal prisoner, who had despised his advice and been suspicious of his loyalty. My dear master remained immutably faithful to moribund royalty. On the 10th of August he was at the Château, and it was by a sort of miracle that he eluded the mob and managed to get back to his house. During the night I was summoned to him. I found him disguised in the clothes of one of his stewards.

“Farewell,” he said to me. “I am leaving a country delivered over to all sorts of abominations and crimes. The day after to-morrow I shall have landed on the coast of England. I am taking with me three hundred louis; it is all I have been able to get together of what I own. I am leaving behind me property to a considerable amount. I have no one to trust my interests to but yourself. Mille is a fool. Take my affairs into your keeping. I know that you will incur danger in doing so; but I think highly enough of you to burden you with a compromising load.”

I seized his hands, kissed them, and bathed them with tears; it was my only answer.

Whilst he escaped from Paris under cover of his disguise and a forged passport with which he was provided, I burned in the various fireplaces in the house papers which would have sufficed to compromise whole families, and cost the lives of hundreds of people. During the days that followed I was lucky enough to be able to dispose — at very poor prices, it is true — of the Duc de Puybonne’s carriages, horses, and plate, and in this fashion I salvaged some seventy or eighty thousand livres, which crossed the Channel. It was not without encountering the greatest dangers that I carried these delicate negotiations through. My life hung in the balance. The Terror prevailed in the capital the day following the 10th of August. In those streets which only the previous evening were enlivened by the motley variety of costumes, where the cries of hawkers and the clatter of horses had resounded, solitude and silence now reigned. All the shops were closed; the citizens, concealed in their dwellings, trembled both for their friends and for themselves.

The barriers were guarded, and it was impossible for any one to leave the appalling city. Patrols of men armed with pikes paraded the streets. Domiciliary inspections were the only subject of conversation. In my chamber, high up in the roof of the mansion, I could hear the tramp of the armed citizens, the hammering of pikes and the butts of muskets against the neighbouring doors, and the wailing and screaming of the occupants, who were dragged off to the sections. And after the *sansculottes* had terrorized the peaceable dwellers in the neighbourhood throughout the day, they would assemble in the shop of my neighbour the grocer; there they would drink, dance the carmagnole, and shriek the *Ça ira* till morning dawned, so that it was impossible for me to close my eyes all night.

My uneasiness increased the distress of insomnia. I could not but fear that some valet might have betrayed me, and that my arrest was already ordered.

Just then a fever of denunciation spread through the town. Never a scullion but believed himself a Brutus for the betrayal of the masters who had furnished him with a living.

I was continuously on the alert, and a faithful servant was ready to warn me at the first sound of the knocker. Fully dressed I would throw myself on my bed or into an arm-chair. I carried about with me the key of the small gate in the garden. But as those execrable September days dragged on, when I learned that hundreds of prisoners had been massacred without the least public protest, and under the approving eyes of the magistrates, horror at length got the better of fear in my mind, and I blushed to be taking such precautions for my safety, and defending with so much forethought an existence which the crimes of my country should have rendered worthless.

No longer did I shrink from showing myself in the streets or encountering the patrols. Nevertheless, I clung to life. I possessed a powerful charm against my anguish and grief. One delightful vision banished from my sight the whole sombre panorama which unrolled itself before me. I loved Amélie, and her youthful countenance omnipresent to my imagination, held me spell-bound. I loved without hope. Nevertheless, I seemed to myself less unworthy of her now that I was acting like a man of courage. I dared, too, to fancy that the dangers to which I was exposed might render me more interesting to her.

In this frame of mind then I went to see her one morning. I found her alone. She talked to me with more benignity than she had ever before displayed. Her eyes were cast heavenwards, and tears fell from them. At the sight I was plunged in the most indescribable distress. I threw myself at her feet, seized her hand, and bathed it with tears.

“O, my brother!” she exclaimed, compelling me to rise. I had not realized up to that moment the bitter sweetness the name of brother can hold. I addressed her with my whole soul’s tenderness.

“Yes,” I cried, “the times are frightful. Mankind is steeped in wickedness. Let us away. Happiness is to be sought in solitude. There are still distant islands where it is possible to live in innocence and freedom from oppression. Let us depart. We will seek for happiness beneath the palms that cast their shade over the tomb of Virginia.”

As I talked in this fashion she seemed to be in a dream, and her eyes had a far-away look; but I could not tell whether her dream and mine were one and the same.

III

I SPENT the rest of the day in the most harrowing suspense. I was powerless either to indulge in rest or to engage in any occupation. Solitude was repellent, and company uncongenial. In this mood I wandered haphazard along the streets and quays of the town, sorrowfully gazing at the mutilated armorial achievements on the fronts of the houses, and at the decapitated saints in the church porches. Thus preoccupied I found myself unconsciously in the garden of the Palais Royal, where a motley crowd of pedestrians had gathered to drink coffee and glance over the gazettes. The wooden galleries, by the way, had not ceased to present a festal appearance at all hours.

In consequence of the declaration of war and the progress of the allied armies, the Parisians had fallen into the habit of seeking for news at the Tuileries and the Palais Royal. In fine weather the crowd would be considerable, and anxiety even brought in its train a certain degree of distraction.

Many of the women, simply attired after the Greek fashion, wore the national colours, either at the waist or in the headdress. I felt more lonely than ever in this crowd; all the noise, the movement which surrounded me, only served, so to say, to drive back and concentrate my thoughts upon myself.

“Alas!” I said to myself, “have I said enough? Have I shown my feelings unmistakably? Or rather, have I said too much? Will she ever consent to receive me again, now that she knows I love her? But does she know it? and does she care to know it?”

In this fashion I groaned over the uncertainty of my fate, when my attention was violently diverted by the tones of a familiar voice. I raised my eyes and saw Monsieur Mille standing up in a café and singing in the midst of a group of women “patriots” and “citizens.” He was dressed as a national guard, and with his left arm he encircled a young woman, in whom I recognized one of the flower-sellers from Ramponneau. To the tune of *Lisette* he was singing these words: —

“Though patriots hundreds strong
To break our bonds are fain,
Women, in thousands, long
To readjust the chain;
Tradition holds them fast,
With pitying scorn they view
Whoso abhors the past

And welcomes in the new.”

This verse was received with a murmur of approval. Monsieur Mille smiled, bowed gracefully, and then, turning to his companion, recommenced his song —

“Ah! not with such join hands,
Sophie, beloved maid!
Philosophy’s commands
Yield kindlier, holier aid:
Her guidance she outpours
On those — O happy chance! —
Who to Her rights restores
Our own, our much wronged France.”

Applause followed, and Monsieur Mille, drawing from his pocket a bunch of ribbons, handed it to Sophie as he resumed his song —

“Hasten then, far and wide,
This gay cockade to show,
Which fills my breast with pride,
When to my guard I go.
What’s gold, with tawdry glint,
To the bud which half uncloses?
This badge of triple tint
Outvies the fairest roses.”

Sophie fastened the ribbon in her cap, and swept the audience with a glance comprehending both triumph and vacancy. Again there was applause. Monsieur Mille bowed. He gazed at the crowd without recognizing me or anybody else; or, rather, in that crowd he was conscious only of himself.

“Ah! monsieur,” exclaimed my neighbour, who in his enthusiasm was bestowing on me a tender embrace; “ah! if the Prussians or the Austrians could see that! They would shudder, monsieur! We were betrayed into their hands at Longwy and Verdun. But if they reached Paris it would be their tomb. The spirit of the populace is altogether martial. I have just come from the Tuileries gardens, monsieur. There I heard some singers stationed in front of the statue of Liberty giving voice to the war song of the *Marseillais*. A frenzied crowd was

shouting in chorus the refrain '*Aux armes , citoyens!* ' If the Prussians had only been there! They would have disappeared underground!"

The man who thus discoursed to me was a very ordinary person, neither handsome nor ugly, neither short nor tall. He was as like his neighbour as two peas, and there was nothing about him individual or distinctive. As he spoke rather loudly he was soon surrounded. After coughing impressively, he continued —

"The enemy is approaching from Chalons. We must encircle them with a ring of steel. Citizens, it is we who must have an eye to the public welfare. Put not your trust in generals, nor in staff officers and troops of the line, nor in ministers of State, even though you have elected them yourselves; no, not even in your representatives at the Convention. We must be our own salvation."

"Bravo!" cried some one in the audience; "let us fly to Chalons!"

A little man here made a spirited interruption.

"Patriots have no business to leave Paris until the traitors have been exterminated."

These words were uttered in a voice which I instantly recognized. On that point I could not be deceived. That tremendous head wagging about on a narrow pair of shoulders, that dull livid face, that shape at once mean and monstrous, could belong to none other than my old schoolmaster — Father Joursanvault. His cassock had given place to a wretched jacket. His countenance sweated hate and apostasy. I looked in another direction, but I could not avoid hearing the old Oratorian continue his discourse in this manner:

"Enough blood was not shed during the glorious days of September. The populace is ever too inclined to magnanimity, and has been too tender towards conspirators and traitors."

At these terrible words I took to my heels horror-struck. In my childhood I had suspected Monsieur Joursanvault of being neither just nor benevolent. I disliked him, indeed. But I was far from fathoming the blackness of his soul. At the discovery that my old master was nothing but an unprincipled rascal, I was overwhelmed with mingled bitterness and grief.

"Oh, that I were still but a child!" I exclaimed. "What is the use of life if it cannot bring us to anything better than dilemmas such as this? Dear principal, dear Father Féval, my recollections of you must temper the sorrows that overwhelm me! Into what dangers has the tempest cast you, my dear and only master? This I know, at any rate, that wherever you may be, humanity, pity, and heroism prevail all around you. You taught me, reverend master, the worth of rectitude and courage. You foresaw the days of trial and strengthened my heart. May your pupil, your son, never show himself too unworthy of your care!"

I had hardly concluded this mental invocation when I felt inspired with fresh courage. And my thoughts harking back by a natural inclination to my dear Amélie, I realized all in a moment what my duty was, and resolved to fulfil it. I had disclosed my feelings to Amélie; was I not bound to make the same declaration to Madame Berthemet?

I was only a few paces from the door, for in my self-communing I had naturally drifted towards the house which contained my Amélie. I entered and made my avowal.

Madame Berthemet smilingly replied that my conduct was very praiseworthy. Then, adopting a graver tone, she said —

“I am going to make you my confidant since I cannot otherwise satisfy you. Do not delude yourself; you must abandon all hope. My daughter is beloved by the Chevalier de St. Ange, and I believe that she is not insensible to his devotion. I should be glad enough, however, if she were to dismiss him from her thoughts. For our fortunes are on the wane from day to day, and the Chevalier’s love is consequently put to a test which the most ardent sentiments are not always proof against.”

The Chevalier de St. Ange! I shuddered at the name. I had a rival, and that rival the most fascinating of poets, the most attractive of novelists. Birth, connections, good looks, talents, he possessed everything calculated to smooth his path. Only the previous evening I had observed in a lady’s hands a tortoiseshell box, with a portrait in miniature, mounted on the lid, of the Chevalier de St. Ange, in the uniform of a dragoon.

As I caught sight of it I envied him, as did every other man of his acquaintance, his manly elegance and inimitable grace. Every morning I could hear my neighbour, the mercer’s wife, singing at her doorstep the immortal ballad known as *The Pledge* —

Thou who shouldst never have seen the light,
Pledge, beloved, that my fault endears
Never, ah never, thou luckless wight,
Frailty of mine to thine eyes bring tears.

But a little while since I had been reading with delight the philosophical romance which opened the doors of the French Academy to the Chevalier de St. Ange; that admirable *Cynégyre* which leaves far behind it the *Numa Pompilius* of Monsieur Florian. “Your *Cynégyre*,” said the venerable Monsieur Sedaine to the Chevalier de St. Ange, as he received him into the illustrious company, “your *Cynégyre* was dedicated to the manes of Fénelon, and the offering was not

unworthy of the altar.” Such was my rival — the impassioned author of *The Pledge* — a man of whom people spoke in one breath with Fénelon and Voltaire! I could not overcome my embarrassment; astonishment numbed my distress.

“What, Madame!” I exclaimed, “the Chevalier de St. Ange!” — .

“Yes,” rejoined Madame Berthemet, shaking her head, “a brilliant writer. But do not imagine for a moment that he is personally the man you would conjecture from his heroical poems. Alas! as our fortunes diminish his love ebbs with them.”

She added kindly that she regretted that her daughter’s choice had not fallen upon me.

“Talents,” she said, “do not make for happiness. On the contrary, men endowed with extraordinary powers, poets and orators, ought to live single.

What need of companions have they who cannot mate with their equals. Their genius alone is sufficient to foster egoism. One cannot be an eminent man without incurring the penalties.”

But I was no longer heedful of her remarks. I could not shake off my astonishment. Her disclosure had killed my love. I had never hoped for its return, and, without hope, love is not endued with any considerable vitality. Mine died at the utterance of a single word.

The Chevalier de St. Ange! Shall I admit it? Although my heart bled, my self-esteem experienced a sort of satisfaction at the thought that, forestalled by such a rival, anybody else, no matter who, would have met the same fate as myself. I pressed a hundred kisses on Madame Berthemet’s hands, and left her house calmly, silently, slowly, a mere shadow of the ardent lover who had entered but an hour before, determined to make a clean breast of his scruples and his passion to the mother of Amélie. I was disconsolate. Not that I suffered. I was simply filled with surprise, shame, and fear at the discovery that I could outlive what had seemed the best part of me, my love.

As I crossed the Pont Neuf to regain my deserted faubourg, I saw in the open space, at the foot of the pedestal upon which the statue of Henri IV had recently been erected, a singer from the Academy of Music, who was declaiming in a moving voice the hymn of the *Marseillais*. The crowd which had collected round him, with bare heads, took up the refrain in chorus, “*Aux armes , citoyens!* ” But when the singer struck up the last verse, “*Amour sacré de la Patrie ,*” in slow and solemn tones, a shiver of unearthly exaltation passed through the crowd. At the line —

Liberté liberté chérie ...

I fell on my knees upon the pavement, and beheld all the people around me likewise fallen prostrate. O, my country, my country! what spells do you weave that your children worship you so? Even from out the mire and the blood your image rises radiant. My country! happy are they who die for you. The sun, which was now dipping towards the horizon, surrounded by blood-hued clouds, lit into liquid flame the waters of the most famous of rivers. Hail to you, ultimate illumination of my days of happiness!

Alack! into what a winter of discontent I passed that night! When I closed the door of my little chamber in the roof of the Duc de Puybonne's mansion, I felt as though I were cementing the stone over my own tomb.

"All is over!" I said through my sobs. "I love Amélie no longer. But how is it that I am forced to remind myself of the fact so untiringly? How is it that, loving her no longer, I cannot turn my thoughts away from her? Why do I lament so bitterly the uprooting of my wretched love?"

Cruel anxieties were added to my personal sorrows. The state of public affairs was driving me to desperation. My destitution was extreme, and, far from cherishing the hope of obtaining work, I was reduced to concealing myself for fear of being arrested as a suspicious character.

Monsieur Mille had not put in an appearance at the house since the 10th of August. I have no idea where he lodged; but he never missed a single sitting of the Commune, and every day before the municipality, amid enthusiastic applause from the *tricoteuses* and *sans-culottes* he would recite a new patriotic hymn. Indeed he was the most patriotic of poets, and citizen Dorat-Cubières himself, beside him, was a timid *Feuillant*, under the grave suspicion of the demagogues. I had been engaged in incriminating transactions; moreover, Monsieur Mille made no attempt to visit me, and my own scruples made it an easy duty for me not to go in search of him. Nevertheless, being a good-hearted man, he sent me his collection of songs when the printing was completed. Ah, how slight the resemblance between his second muse and his first! The latter had been powdered, painted, perfumed. The new one resembled a fury, with serpents for locks of hair. I can still recall the song of the *sansculottes*, which aimed at being very malicious. It began thus —

Long, long enough, yea far too long
Dread tyranny has claimed our song,
And despots swayed our lot.
Now breaks the dawn of Liberty,
Of Law, and fair Equality:

All hail! the SansCulottes!

The trial of the king aroused me to indescribable distress. My days rolled by in horror. One morning there was a knock at the door. I divined somehow that it proceeded from a gentle and friendly hand. I opened, and Madame Berthemet flung herself into my arms.

“Save me, save us!” she said. “My brother, Monsieur Eustance, my only brother, was scheduled as an *émigré* and came to seek shelter in my house. He was denounced and arrested. He has been in prison now for five days. Luckily the accusation which hangs over him is vague and ill-founded. My brother was never an *émigré*. To effect his release, all that is necessary is that some one who can vouch for his unbroken residence in France will give evidence in his favour. I begged the Chevalier de St. Ange to do me this service. He prudently begged to be excused. Well! my friend, my son, that service which it would be perilous to him to render me, to you will be still more perilous; yet I come to ask it of you.”

I thanked her for her request as if it had been a favour. And, indeed, it was so to be regarded, and of a quality so inestimable that an upright man could scarcely be honoured by a greater.

“Well enough I knew that you would not refuse!” exclaimed Madame Berthemet, embracing me. “But this is not all,” she added. “You will need to procure a second witness; they demand that two shall come forward if my brother is to be released. Oh, my friend, what times we are living in! Monsieur de St. Ange keeps aloof from us; our misfortunes embarrass him; and Monsieur Mille would be afraid to visit folks under suspicion. Who would have thought it, my friend — who would have thought it? Do you remember Federation Day? We were all brimful of enthusiasm about fraternity, and I had on a very becoming dress.”

She was in tears when she left me. I descended the stairs almost immediately after her to go in search of a guarantor, and to tell the truth I was considerably puzzled to put my hands on one. As I bowed my head in my hands I realized that I had a beard of eight days’ growth, which might render me an object of suspicion; so I betook myself at once to my barber’s at the corner of the Rue St. Guillaume. This barber was a very worthy fellow named Larisse, as tall as a poplar and as restless as an aspen. When I entered his shop he was attending to a wine merchant of the neighbourhood, who with his face smothered in lather was pouring out all sorts of playful threats.

“Ah, my fine fellow, you dandifier of fine ladies,” he was saying, “your head will be cut off and stuck on the end of a pike to gratify your aristocratic

inclinations. Every enemy of the people must add his quota to the basket, from the fat Capet to the slim Larisse. And, *ça ira*, so it will be!”

Monsieur Larisse, paler than moonshine and fluttering like a leaf, observed the utmost precautions as he shaved the chin of the abusive patriot.

I can affirm that never did barber experience greater terror. And from this circumstance I drew a happy augury for the success of the design I had suddenly conceived. It was my intention, to be plain, to ask Monsieur Larisse to accompany me before the committee as the second guarantor.

“He is such a coward,” I reflected, “that he will never dare to protest.”

The wine merchant withdrew muttering fresh threats, and left me alone with the barber, who, still trembling, fastened a napkin round my neck.

“Ah, monsieur!” he whispered in my ear, in a voice feebler than a sigh, “hell is let loose upon us! Was it for the accommodation of demons like this that I studied the art of hairdressing? The heads which did honour to my skill are now in London or in Coblentz. How is Monseigneur le Duc de Puybonne? He was a good master.”

I informed him that the Duke was living in London, and giving writing lessons. Indeed, the Duke had managed recently to convey to me a paper in which he told me that he was living, perfectly contented, in London, on four shillings and sixpence a day.

“It may be so,” replied Monsieur Larisse, “but in London hairdressing is not performed as it is in Paris. The English can make constitutions, but they don’t know how to make wigs, and their powder is not nearly white enough.”

Monsieur Larisse soon had me shaven. I had not a very harsh beard at that time. Scarcely had he closed his razor than, seizing him by the wrist, I said to him firmly —

“My dear Monsieur Larisse, you are a valiant man; you are coming with me before the General Assembly of the Section des Postes in the one-time church of St. Eustache. There you will bear witness jointly with me that Monsieur Eustance has never been an *émigré*.”

At these words Monsieur Larisse grew pale, and murmured in inanimate tones —

“But I am not acquainted with Monsieur Eustance.”

“For that matter, neither am I,” I replied.

Which was indeed strictly true. I had correctly diagnosed the character of Monsieur Larisse. He was dumbfounded. His very fear thrust him into the perilous emprise. I took him by the arm and he followed me unresistingly.

“But you are leading me to my death,” he said softly.

“To glory rather,” I replied.

I don't know whether he was familiar with the tragedians, but he was sensible of the honour and appeared flattered. He had some knowledge of literature, for loosing my arm to go into his back shop, he said —

“A moment, dear sir; let me at least put on my best coat. In the olden times the victims were decked with flowers. I find it recorded in the *Almanack for Honest Men*. ”

From his chest of drawers he took a blue coat which he flung round his long, mobile body. Thus attired he accompanied me to the General Assembly of the Section des Postes, which was sitting continuously.

On the threshold of the desecrated church, on the door of which was inscribed the motto, “*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death*, ” Monsieur Larisse felt the sweat break out on his forehead; nevertheless he went in. One of the citizens who was sleeping there on a heap of empty bottles, half aroused himself to inquire our business, and then sent us on to the revolutionary committee of the Section.

I knew this committee through having accompanied Monsieur Berthemet there on two occasions. The president of it was a small lodging-house keeper in the Rue de la Truanderie, whose most regular customers were ladies of easy virtue. Amongst the members there were an itinerant knife-grinder, a porter, and a dyer and cleaner named Bistac. It was with the knife-grinder that we had to do. He was seated informally with his sleeves turned up; we found him a good-natured fellow.

“Citizens,” he said, “from the moment you place before me an attestation in due form, I have no objections to raise, because I am a magistrate and consequently the proper formalities are all I demand. I would only add one word. A man who has intelligence and character ought not to be authorized to leave Paris at a moment like this. Because, you see, citizens—”

He hesitated, and then, making use of gesture to express his meaning, he stretched out his bare and muscular arm and then moved it to his forehead, which he tapped with a finger, and continued—” It is not of this alone” (here he indicated his arm, the working tool) “that we have need, but of this also” (here he motioned to his forehead, the seat of intellect).

He then boasted of his natural gifts, and lamented that his parents had not contrived to give him any instruction. Then he set himself to the task of signing our declaration. Despite his good will this was a long process. Whilst, with hands accustomed to the grindstone, he painfully manipulated the pen, Bistac the cleaner came into the room. Bistac had not the genial nature of the grinder. His soul was all Jacobin. At sight of us his forehead puckered and his nostrils swelled: he scented the aristocrat.

“Who are you?” he demanded of me.

“Pierre Aubier.”

“Oh, oh! Pierre Aubier, and I suppose you flatter yourself that you will sleep in your own bed to-night?”

I put a cool face on the situation, but my companion began to shudder in every limb. His bones rattled so loudly that Bistac’s attention was attracted, and, forgetting me, he turned his scrutiny on to poor Larisse.

“You have all the marks of a conspirator, in my opinion,” said Bistac in a terrible voice. “What is your profession?”

“A barber, at your service, citizen.”

“All barbers are Feuillants!”

Terror commonly inspired Monsieur Larisse to the most courageous actions. He has since confessed to me that at this moment he had all the difficulty in the world to prevent himself from shouting “Long live the King!” As a matter of fact, he did no such thing, but replied proudly that he owed small thanks to the Revolution, which had suppressed wigs and powder, and that he was tired of living in a continual state of apprehension.

“Take off my head,” he added. “I should prefer to get my dying over, rather than to live in constant fear.”

Bistac became perplexed at talk like this.

Meanwhile, the knife-grinder, who was revolving many confused but kindly thoughts in his brain, recommended us to withdraw.

“Off with you, citizens,” he said; “but bear in mind that the Republic has need of this.”

And he pointed to his forehead.

Madame Berthemet’s brother was released next day. The mother of Amélie expressed abundance of gratitude and embraced me — it was a way she had. She did better.

“You have,” said she, “acquired a right to the gratitude of Amélie. I am desirous that my daughter should herself come and express her indebtedness to you. She owes you an uncle. It is less than a mother, it is true; but what commendations does not your courage deserve....”

She went in search of Amélie.

Left alone in the drawing-room, I waited. I asked myself whether I had the strength to see her once more. I feared, I hoped. I died a thousand deaths.

In about five minutes Madame Berthemet reappeared, alone.

“You must excuse an ungrateful girl,” she said.

“My daughter refuses to come. ‘I could not endure his presence,’ she declared. ‘The sight of him would be torture to me; henceforth I hate him. By

showing greater courage than the man I love, he has gained a cruel advantage. I will never see him again while I live. He is generous: he will forgive me.”

After she had repeated this speech to me Madame Berthemet concluded with these words:

“Forget the ungrateful child!”

I promised to endeavour to do so, and I kept my word. Events contributed to my success. The Terror reigned. That appalling day, the 31st of May, snatched their last hopes from those of the moderate party.

Several times I was denounced as a conspirator on the score of the correspondence I maintained with the Duc de Puybonne, and I was continually risking both liberty and life.

I had no longer a certificate of citizenship, and, not daring to apply for one for fear of being instantly put under arrest, my existence had become unendurable.

There was a demand just then for twelve hundred thousand men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. I entered my name. On the 7th of Brumaire in the year II, at six o’clock in the morning, I set out on the way to Nancy to join my regiment. With a forage cap on my head, a knapsack on my back, and wearing the jacket called a carmagnole, I felt myself fairly martial in appearance.

From time to time I turned my gaze back on the great city where I had suffered so much and loved so profoundly. Then, wiping away a tear, I resumed my journey. I decided to sing in order to cheer myself up, and I began the hymn of the *Marseillais* —

Allons , enfants de la Patrie!

At the first halting-place I presented my credentials to some peasants, who sent me to pass the night in the stable on the straw. There I enjoyed a delicious sleep, and as I awakened I thought —

“Well, this is better. I am no longer in danger of the guillotine. So far as I can judge, I am no longer in love with Amélie — or rather I never have been in love with her. I am going to carry a sword and a gun. I shall have nothing else to fear but the Austrian bullets. Brindamour and Trompelmort are right: there is no finer calling than that of a soldier. But who would have dreamed when I was studying Latin under the flowering apple trees at Monsieur Lamadou’s that one day I should take arms in defence of the Republic? Ah! Monsieur Féval, who could have foreseen that your little pupil Pierre would march away to the wars?”

At the next halt a worthy woman put me to sleep in white sheets because I reminded her of her son.

The following day I lodged with a canoness who put me in a loft open to the wind and rain, and even this she did with a very perturbed mind, for a defender of the Republic seemed to her so very near to a dangerous species of brigand.

Finally, I came up with my corps on the banks of the Meuse. I received a sword. At this I reddened with gratification, and felt myself at least a foot taller. Do not laugh at me on that account; it was a case of vanity, I admit it; but vanity goes to the making of a hero. We were scarcely fitted out before we received orders to start for Maubeuge.

We arrived on the Sambre on a dark night. Silence was all around. We could see fires flickering on the hills on the opposite side of the river. I was told that they were the bivouacs of the enemy. Then my heart thumped as if it would burst.

It was from Titus Livy that I had got my ideas of war. But I call you to witness, woods, meadows, hills, banks of the Sambre and the Meuse, that those ideas were delusive. War, such as I took part in, consists of passing through burnt-up villages, sleeping in the mire, listening to the whistle of bullets through the long and melancholy sentry duty of nights; but of single combats and ordered battlefields I saw never a sign. We slept but little, and did not eat at all. Floridor, my sergeant, an old soldier of the French Guard, swore that the life we were leading was festive; he exaggerated, but we were not unhappy, for we had the consciousness of doing our duty and being useful to our country.

We were justly proud of our regiment, which had covered itself with glory at Wattignies. For the greater part it was made up of soldiers of the old *régime*, stout and well instructed. As a large number of men had perished in various engagements, the gaps had been filled up anyhow with youthful recruits. Without the veterans who encircled us we should have been worth nothing. It takes a good deal of time to make a soldier, and in war enthusiasm is no substitute for experience.

My colonel was a one-time nobleman from my native province. He treated me kindly. A lifelong Royalist, a countryman not a townsman, a soldier not a courtier, he had long delayed exchanging the white coat of His Majesty's troops for the blue coat of the soldiers of the year 11. He detested the Republic, and dedicated the remainder of his life to it.

I bless Providence for having guided me to the frontier, since there virtue still survives.

[Written in bivouac, on the Sambre, between septidi the 27th of Frimaire, and sextidi the 6th of Nivôse, in the year II of the French Republic, by Pierre Aubier, volunteer.]

DAWN

TO MADEMOISELLE LÉONIE BERNARDINI

THE Cours-La-Reine was deserted. The green banks of the Seine, the ancient pollarded beeches whose shadows began to stretch out towards the east, the calm azure of the sky, cloudless, breezeless, unthreatening but unsmiling, all were wrapped in the deep silence that marks the summer day. A pedestrian coming from the Tuileries made his way slowly towards the hills of Chaillot. His figure was of the agreeable slightness characteristic of early youth, and he wore the coat, breeches, and black stockings indicative of the bourgeois, whose supremacy had at length come round. Yet his countenance was rather that of the dreamer than of the enthusiast. He had a book in his hand; and his finger between the leaves marked the place he had reached, but he had ceased to read. Now and then he stopped and strained his ears to catch the faint yet terrible murmur which rose up from Paris, and in this muffled noise, feebler than a sigh, he fancied he could distinguish cries of death and hate, joy and love, drum-beats, the sound of firearms — all the din, in fact, of insensate fury and sublime enthusiasm which ascends heavenward from crowded streets at the outbreak of revolution. At times he turned his head and shuddered. Everything reported to him, everything he had seen and heard for some hours past filled his brain with confused and terrible pictures: the Bastille captured by the people and already denuded of its battlements; the provost of the merchants' guild slain by a pistol-shot in the midst of a furious crowd; the governor, the venerable de Launay, hewn down on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville; the dreadful populace, pale as famine or as deathly fear, drunken, beside itself, dazed by the vision of blood and glory, reeling from the Bastille to the Grève, and above the heads of a hundred thousand deluded people the bodies of the victims swinging from a lamp-post, and the oak-crowned brow of one of the exultant clad in a uniform of blue and white; the conquerors with the registers, the keys and the silver plate belonging to the ancient fortress, mounting amid acclamation the blood-stained steps; and at their head the popular magistrates La Fayette and Bailly, overwrought, uplifted, amazed, their feet dabbled in blood, their heads touching the clouds with pride! Then, fear still paramount with the unleashed rabble, at the scattered noises customarily attendant on the return of the Royal troops to the town at night, the tearing down of the palace railings for conversion into pikes, the pillage of the arsenals, the construction by the citizens of street barricades,

and the transportation by the women to the roofs of houses of stones to hurl down on the foreign regiments!

These scenes of violence were reconstructed in his dreamy youthful imagination in subdued tones. He had taken his favourite book, an English work entitled *Meditations Among the Tombs*, and made his way along the Seine, under the trees of the Cours-la-Reine, towards the white house which, night and day, filled his thoughts. All was calm around him. On the river bank he noticed the anglers sitting with their feet in the water, and he followed the course of the stream in an abstracted mood. When he reached the slopes of the hills of Chaillot he met a patrol party, keeping an eye on the communications between Paris and Versailles. This troop, armed with guns, muskets, and halberds, included artisans wearing their aprons of leather or serge, lawyers dressed in black, one priest, and a bearded, bare-legged giant in a shirt. They challenged every would-be passer-by: communications between the Court and the governor of the Bastille had been detected and a surprise was feared.

But this pedestrian was young and of ingenuous appearance. He had scarcely uttered a word or two before the troop smilingly permitted him to continue his journey.

He ascended the slope of a lane odorous of flowering elder, and stopped half-way up in front of a garden gate. This garden was but little, but by means of winding alleys and abrupt turns the space for exercise was considerably extended. Into a pool where ducks were disporting themselves, willows dipped the tips of their branches. At the corner by the street a light alcove had been constructed, and a grass plot spread its freshness in front of the house. Here, on a rustic bench, with her head bent, a young woman was seated; her face was hidden by a large straw hat wreathed with natural flowers. Over her dress, which was of white and rose colour, in stripes, she wore a fichu, fastened at the waistline, this latter a trifle high, giving the skirt an added length that was not unbecoming. Her arms, encased in tight sleeves, were at rest. A basket of an antique pattern, which lay at her feet, held balls of wool. Close by her a child was piling up heaps of sand with his shovel. His blue eyes shone through a tangle of golden hair.

The young woman remained motionless and, as it were, spell-bound, and the young man standing at the gate could not bring himself to break so sweet a spell. At length she raised her head and disclosed a youthful, almost infantile face, with pure rounded lines which imparted a natural expression of gentleness and friendliness. He bowed before her, and she held out her hand.

“How do you do, Monsieur Germain? What is the news?— ‘What news do you bring with you?’ as the song says. I don’t know very much, except songs.”

“Pardon me, Madame, for having disturbed your dreams. I was gazing at you. Alone, motionless, your head resting on your hand, it seemed as though you must be the angel of meditation.”

“Alone! alone!” she replied, as if this were the only word she had heard. “Alone! Is she ever alone?”

And seeing that he was looking at her uncomprehendingly, she added —

“Enough of that! It is nothing but a fancy of mine that — What is your news?”

Thereupon he went over the events of the famous day, the taking of the Bastille, the foundation of liberty.

Sophie listened to him gravely; then she said —

“It is our duty to rejoice, but our joy should be the austere joy which comes of sacrifice. Henceforth the French are their own men no longer; they are the servants of the Revolution which is about to reform the world.”

As she was speaking the child approached and threw himself joyously across her knees.

“Look, mamma! Look at my pretty garden!” Embracing him, she said —

“You are right, little Emile, it is the wisest thing in the world to lay out a pretty garden.”

“Yes, he is right,” added Germain; “what gallery glowing with porphyry and gold can be compared with a green alley?”

And reflecting how sweet it would be to give this fair woman the support of his arm and lead her to the shade of the trees —

“Ah!” he exclaimed, flashing a meaning glance at her, “what are men and revolutions to me!”

“No, no!” she rejoined, “I cannot so abruptly turn my thoughts from a great people, intent on inaugurating the reign of justice. My attachment to the new ideas surprises you, Monsieur Germain. We have only known one another for quite a brief time. You are not aware, of course, that my father taught me to read in the *Social Contract* and the Gospels. One day, as we were walking, he pointed out Jean Jacques Rousseau to me. I was only a child, but I dissolved in tears at sight of the gloomy countenance of the wisest of men. I grew up a hater of prejudice. Later on my husband, like myself a disciple of the philosophy of nature, decided that our son should be called Emile, and that he should be taught to labour with his hands. In his last letter, written three years ago on board the ship upon which he perished some days afterwards, he continues to urge on my attention Rousseau’s precepts upon education. I am saturated with the new spirit of the age. It is my conviction that we must struggle for justice and truth.”

“Like yourself, Madame,” sighed Germain, “I have a horror of fanaticism and tyranny; like yourself, I am in love with liberty, but my soul is drained of its strength. At every moment my thoughts escape my control.” I am no longer master of myself, and I suffer accordingly.”

The young woman did not reply. An elderly man pushed open the gate and came forward with his arms raised, waving his hat. He wore neither powder nor wig. A few long grey hairs fell down on each side of his bald head. He wore a complete suit of grey ratteen; his stockings were blue and his shoes buckleless.

“Victory! victory!” he cried. “The monster is delivered into our hands, Sophie, and I am the bearer of the news to you.”

“Neighbour, I have just heard of it from Monsieur Marcel Germain, whom I want to introduce to you. His mother and mine were friends at Angers. During the six months he has spent in Paris he has been kind enough to come to see me from time to time in the seclusion of my hermitage. Monsieur Germain, this gentleman is my neighbour and friend, Monsieur Franchot de La Cavanne, a man of letters.”

“Say rather, ‘Nicolas Franchot, labourer.’”

“I know, dear friend, that you thus signed your treatise on the Corn Trade. I will say then, to gratify you, although I expect your hands are much more adroit with the pen than with the plough, Monsieur Nicolas Franchot, labourer.”

The older man grasped Marcel’s hand and exclaimed —

“It has fallen, then, that fortress which has so many times engulfed the wronged and the guiltless! Those bolts behind which I passed eight months, deprived both of air and light, have been torn from their places. It was one-and-thirty years ago, on the 17th of February, 1758, that I was cast into the Bastille for having written an epistle on tolerance. Now, to-day, at length the people have avenged me. Right and I are triumphant together. The memory of this day will remain so long as the universe endures. I call as witness to it the sun which saw Harmodius perish, and the brood of Tarquin put to flight!”

The piercing voice of Monsieur Franchot frightened little Emile, who clutched his mother’s dress. Franchot, suddenly becoming aware of the child’s presence, lifted him from the ground and said enthusiastically —

“Happier than we have been, dear child, you will grow up free!”

But Emile, terrified, turned his face away and uttered loud cries.

“Gentlemen,” said Sophie, as she wiped away her little son’s tears, “will you be so kind as to stay to supper with me? I am expecting Monsieur Duvernay, provided he is not detained by the bedside of one of his patients.”

Then turning towards Marcel —

“You must know that Monsieur Duvernay, the king’s physician, is an elector of Paris without the walls. He would be a deputy of the National Assembly if, like Monsieur de Condorcet, he had not out of modesty declined the honour. He is a man of great attainments, and it will be both pleasant and profitable to you to hear him converse.”

“Young man,” added Franchot, “I am acquainted with Monsieur Jean Duvernay, and I know one circumstance about him which does him honour. Two years ago the queen summoned him to attend on the Dauphin, who was threatened with decline. At that time Duvernay was residing at Sevres, whither one of the Court carriages was sent every morning to convey him to Saint Cloud, where the royal child lay ill. One day the carriage returned to the palace empty. Duvernay had not come. The following day the queen reproached him for absenting himself.

“Doctor,” she said, “you forgot your patient the Dauphin, then?”

“Madame,” replied the worthy man, “I am caring for your son assiduously, but yesterday I was detained by the bedside of a peasant woman in labour.”

“Well now!” remarked Sophie, “wasn’t that noble of him, and oughtn’t we to be proud of our friend!”

“Yes; it was fine,” replied Germain.

A grave, sweet voice close beside them here interposed —

“I do not know,” said the voice, “what it is that is exciting you to admiration; but it is pleasant to hear your transports. In these days there are so many admirable deeds to be witnessed.”

The man who spoke wore a powdered wig and a delicate lace frill. It was Jean Duvernay. Marcel recognized his face from the engravings he had seen in the shops in the Palais Royal.

“I have just come from Versailles,” said Duvernay. “I owe to the Duke of Orleans the pleasure of seeing you this memorable day, Sophie. He brought me in his coach as far as Saint Cloud. The rest of the way I travelled in the most convenient fashion — I mean on my own feet.”

And as a matter of fact, his silver-buckled shoes and black stockings were covered all over with dust.

Emile clung with his little hands to the steel buttons which glittered on the doctor’s coat, and Duvernay, coaxing him on to his knee, found material for smiles in glimpses at the little creature’s budding soul. Sophie summoned Nanon. A sturdy girl appeared, who picked up and carried the child off in her arms, stifling beneath resounding kisses his despairing cries.

The table was laid in the garden alcove. Sophie hung her straw hat on a willow branch; her fair hair fell in curls about her cheeks.

“You will sup in the simplest possible way,” she said, “in the English fashion.”

From the spot where they were seated they could see the Seine, the roofs of the city, the domes and the steeples. The spectacle rendered them as silent as though they were looking out on Paris for the first time. After a while they spoke of the occurrences of the day, of the Assembly, of universal suffrage, of the breaking down of class barriers, and Monsieur Necker’s banishment. All four were agreed that a lasting liberty was at length achieved. Monsieur Duvernay foretold the rise of a new order, and applauded the wisdom of the legislators popularly elected. But his mind was not uplifted, and at times it seemed as though his hopes were alloyed with a certain uneasiness. Nicolas Franchot did not observe the same moderation. He proclaimed the peaceful triumph of the people and the era of fraternity.

Vainly did the physician, vainly the young woman assure him —

“It is only now that the struggle begins. We are only as yet at our first victory.”

“Philosophy is our ruler,” he would reply. “What benefits will not Reason shower on men who accept her all potent sway! The Golden Age which the poets fabled will become a reality. All ills will disappear with the fanaticism and tyranny which gave them birth. The virtuous and enlightened man will enjoy all possible felicity. What do I say? By the aid of physicians and chemists he will even succeed in attaining immortality upon earth.”

Sophie listened to him, but shook her head.

“If you wish to deprive us of death,” she said, “find, us first a fountain of youth. Without that your immortality awakens my apprehension.”

The old philosopher laughingly asked her if she found the Christian doctrine of resurrection more comforting.

“For my part,” he said, after emptying his glass, “I am inclined to fear lest the angels and saints should feel impelled to favour the choir of virgins at the expense of the company of dowagers.”

“I do not know,” replied the young woman, in a meditative tone and lifting her eyes to his, “I do not know what value these poor charms, framed out of the dust of the earth, may have in the eyes of angels; but I am sure that divine omnipotence will be better able to repair the ravages of time, if in so blissful an abode such redress should be needful, than all your physics and your chemistry will ever succeed in doing in this world. You, who are an atheist, Monsieur Franchot, and do not believe that God reigns in the heavens, you cannot understand anything about the Revolution, which is the advent of God upon earth.”

She rose. Night had fallen, and in the distance under their eyes the great town starred itself with lights.

Marcel offered his arm to Sophie, and whilst the older men argued with one another, the two sauntered together along the sombre alleys. Marcel found them charming, and Sophie supplied him in turn with their names and associations.

"Here," she said, "we are in the Allée de Jean Jacques, which leads to the Salon d'Emile. This alley was straight. I had it deflected so that it should pass under the old oak. All day long it gives shade to this rustic bench, which I have called 'Friendship's Rest.'

"We will sit down for a moment on this bench," said Sophie.

They sat down. In the silence Marcel could hear the fluttering of his own heart.

"Sophie, I love you," he murmured, and captured her hand.

She drew it away gently, and pointing out to the young man that a light breeze had set the leaves rustling —

"Do you hear that?" she said.

"I hear the wind among the leaves."

She shook her head, and said in tones as sweet as a chant —

"Marcel, Marcel! Who tells you that is the wind among the leaves? Who tells you that we are alone? Are you, then, after all, one of those commonplace souls which have failed to discern any of the mysterious portents of the world unseen?"

And as he questioned her with a glance that was all bewilderment —

"Monsieur Germain," she said, "be so kind as to go upstairs to my room. You will find a little book on the table, and bring it to me..."

He obeyed. All the while he was absent the young widow gazed at the dusky foliage shivering in the night wind. He returned with a little gilt-edged volume.

"*The Idylls of Gesner*; yes, that is it," said Sophie. "Open the book at the place where the marker lies, and, if your eyes are good enough to read by moonlight, read."

He read these words:

"Ah! Often will my soul come to hover around you; often when, inflamed by a noble and sublime thought, you are meditating in solitude, a light breath will brush your cheek: at such a moment may your soul be conscious of a gladdening thrill!..."

She stopped him.

"Now do you understand, Marcel, that we are never alone, and that there are words to which I can never listen so long as a breath blown landward from the sea shall set in motion the leaves of the oaks."

The voices of the two older men drew near.

“God is Goodness,” said Duvernay.

“God is evil,” said Franchot, “and we shall extinguish it.”

Both of them, and Marcel also, took leave of Sophie.

“Adieu, gentlemen,” she said. “Let us all cry, ‘Hurrah for Liberty, and long live the King!’ And you, dear neighbour, do not hinder us from dying when we shall need to die.”

MADAME DE LUZY

TO MARCEL PROUST

(From a manuscript dated September 15th, 1792.)

AS I entered, Pauline de Luzy held out her hand to me. Then for a moment we remained silent. Her scarf and straw hat were thrown carelessly on an arm-chair.

The prayer from *Orpheus* was open on the spinet. Going towards the window, she watched the sun sinking to the blood-red horizon.

“Madame,” I said at length, “do you remember the words you said two years ago this very day, at the foot of that hill on the bank of the river towards which at this moment your eyes are turned?”

“Do you remember how, with your hand waving in a prophetic gesture, you called up before me, as in a vision, the coming days of trial, of crime and terror? On my very lips you arrested my confession of love, and bade me live and labour for justice and liberty. Madame, since your hand, which I could not anoint with kisses and tears enough, pointed out the way to me, I have pursued it unfaltering. I have obeyed you; I have written and spoken for the cause. For two years, I have withstood the blunder-headed starvelings who are the source of dissension and hate, the demagogues who seduce the people by violent demonstrations of pretended sympathy, and the poltroons who do homage to the coming powers.”

She stopped me with a motion of her hand, and made a sign to me to listen. Then we heard borne across the scented spaces of the garden, where birds were warbling, distant cries of “Death!”

“To the gallows with the aristocrat!”— “Set his head on a pike!”

Pale and motionless she held a finger to her lips.

“It is,” I said, “some unhappy wretch being pursued. They are making domiciliary visits and effecting arrests in Paris night and day. It is possible they may force an entrance here. I ought to withdraw for fear of compromising you. Although I am but little known in this neighbourhood, I am, as times go, a dangerous guest.”

“Stay!” she adjured me.

For the second time cries rent the calm evening air. They were mingled now with the tramp of feet and the noise of fire-arms. They came nearer; then we heard a voice shout: “Close the approaches, so that he cannot escape, the scoundrel!”

Madame de Luzy seemed to grow calmer in proportion to the increasing nearness of the danger.

“Let us go up to the second floor,” she said; “we shall be able to see through the sunblinds what is going on outside.”

But scarcely had we opened the door when, on the landing, we beheld a half-dressed fugitive, his face blanched with terror, his teeth chattering and his knees knocking together. This apparition murmured in a strangled voice —

“Save me! Hide me! They are there.... They burst open my gate — overran my garden. They are coming....”

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MADAME DE LUZY, recognizing Planchonnet, the old philosopher who occupied the neighbouring house, asked him in a whisper —

“Has my cook caught sight of you? She is a Jacobin!”

“Nobody has set eyes on me.”

“God be praised, neighbour!”

She led him into her bedroom, whither I followed them. A consultation was necessary. Some hiding-place must be hit upon where she could keep Planchonnet concealed for several days, or at least for several hours, whatever time it might take to deceive and tire out the search party. It was agreed that I should keep the approaches under observation, and that when I gave the signal, the unfortunate man should make his escape by the little garden gate.

Whilst he waited, he was unable to remain standing. He was completely paralysed with terror.

He endeavoured to make us understand that he was being hounded down -for having conspired with Monsieur de Cazotte against the Constitution, and for having on the 10th of August formed one of the defenders of the Tuileries — he, the enemy of priests and kings. It was an infamous calumny. The truth was that Lubin was venting his hate upon him — Lubin, hitherto his butcher, whom he had a hundred times had a mind to lay a stick about to teach him to give better weight, and who was now presiding over the section in which he had formerly been a mere stallholder.

As he uttered the name in strangled tones, he was persuaded that he actually saw Lubin, and hid his face in his hands. And of a truth there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs. Madame de Luzy shot the bolts and pushed the old man behind a screen. There was a hammering at the door, and Pauline recognized the voice of her cook, who called out to her to open, that the municipal officers were at the gate with the National Guard, and that they had come to make an inspection of the premises.

“They say,” the woman added, “that Planchonnet is in the house. I know very well that it is not so, of course. I know you would never harbour a scoundrel of that sort; but they won’t believe my word.”

“Well, well, let them come up,” replied Madame de Luzy through the door. “Let them go all over the house, from cellar to garret.”

As he listened to this dialogue, the wretched Planchonnet fainted behind the screen, and I had a good deal of trouble in resuscitating him by sprinkling water on his temples. When I had succeeded —

“My friend,” the young woman whispered to her old neighbour, “trust in me. Remember that women are resourceful.”

Then, calmly, as though she had been engaged in some daily domestic duty, she drew her bedstead a little out from its alcove, took off the bedclothes, and with my assistance so arranged the three mattresses as to contrive a space next the wall between the highest and the lowest of them.

Whilst she was making these arrangements, a loud noise of shoes, sabots, gunstocks, and raucous voices broke out on the staircase. This was for all three of us a terrible moment; but the noise ascended by little and little to the floor above our heads. We realized that the searchers, under the guidance of the Jacobin cook, were ransacking the garrets first. The ceiling cracked; threats and coarse laughter were audible, and the sound of kicks and bayonet-thrusts against the wainscot. We breathed again, but there was not a second to lose. I helped Planchonnet to slip into the space contrived for him between the mattresses.

As she watched our efforts, Madame de Luzy shook her head. The bed thus disturbed had a suspicious appearance.

She endeavoured to give it a finishing touch; but in vain, she could not make it look natural.

“I shall have to go to bed myself,” she said.

She looked at the clock; it was exactly seven, and she felt that it would look extraordinary for her to be in bed so early. As to feigning illness, it was useless to think of it: the Jacobin cook would detect the ruse.

She remained thoughtful for some seconds; then calmly, simply, with royal unconcern, she undressed before me, got into bed, and ordered me to take off my shoes, my coat, and my cravat.

“There is nothing for it but for you to be my lover, and for them to surprise us together. When they arrive you will not have had time to rearrange your disordered clothes. You will open the door to them in your vest, (The vest was worn under the coat. It was a sort of waistcoat, longer than ours, and provided with sleeves of full length. (AUTHOR.)) with your hair rumped.”

All our arrangements were made when the search party, with many exclamations of “*Sacré!*” and “*Peste!*” descended from the garrets.

The unfortunate Planchonnet was seized with such a paroxysm of trembling that he shook the whole bed.

Moreover, his breathing grew so stertorous that it must have been almost audible in the corridor.

“It’s a pity,” murmured Madame de Luzy. “I was so satisfied with my little artifice. But never mind; we won’t despair. May God be our aid!” A heavy fist shook the door.

“Who knocks?” Pauline inquired.

“The representatives of the Nation.”

“Can’t you wait a minute?”

“Open, or we shall break the door down!”

“Go and open the door, my friend.”

Suddenly, by a sort of miracle, Planchonnet ceased to tremble and gasp.

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LUBIN was the first to enter. He had his scarf round him, and was followed by a dozen men armed with pikes. Casting his eyes first on Madame de Luzy and then on me—" *Peste!* " he exclaimed. "It seems we are disturbing a pair of lovers. Excuse us, pretty one!"

Then turning to his followers, he remarked —

"The *sans-culottes* are the only folks who know how to behave."

But despite his theories this encounter had evidently put him in good spirits.

He sat down on the bed, and raising the chin of the lovely high-bred woman, said —

"It is plain that that pretty mouth wasn't made to mumble paternosters day and night. It would have been a pity if it were. But the Republic before all things. We are seeking the traitor, Planchonnet. He is here, I'm certain of it. I must have him. I shall get him guillotined. It will make my fortune."

"Search for him, then!"

They looked under the chairs and tables, in the cupboards, thrust their pikes under the bed, and probed the mattresses with their bayonets.

Lubin' scratched his ear and looked at me sily. Madame de Luzy, dreading that I might be subjected to an embarrassing catechism, said —

"Dear friend, you know the house as well as I do myself. Take the keys and show Monsieur Lubin all over it. I am sure you will be delighted to act as guide to such patriots."

I led them to the cellars, where they turned over the piles of faggots, and drank a fairly large number of bottles of wine; after which Lubin staved in the full casks with, the butt end of his gun, and leaving the cellar flooded with wine, gave the signal of departure. I conducted them out as far as the gate, which I shut on their very heels, and then ran back to let Madame de Luzy know that we were out of danger.

When she heard this, she bent her head over the side of the bed next the wall, and called —

"Monsieur Planchonnet! Monsieur Planchonnet!"

A faint sigh was the response.

"God be praised!" she exclaimed. "Monsieur Planchonnet, you occasioned me the most appalling fear. I thought you were dead."

Then turning towards me —

"My poor friend, you used to take so much delight in declaring, from time to time, that you loved me; you will never tell me so again!"

THE BOON OF DEATH BESTOWED

WHEN he had for a long while tramped through the deserted streets, André at last went and sat down on the bank of the Seine and watched the water lapping the base of the hill where, in the vanished days of joy and hope, Lucie, his dear mistress, had her home.

For long enough he had not felt so restful.

At eight o'clock he took a bath. Then he strolled into a restaurant in the Palais Royal, and glanced through the newspapers whilst his meal was preparing. In the *Courier of Equality* he read the list of the condemned prisoners who had been executed on the Place de la Révolution on the 24th of Floréal.

He ate his breakfast heartily. Then he rose, looked in a glass to make sure that he was presentably dressed, and that his colour was not likely to betray him, and set out at an easy pace to the other side of the river towards the low house at the corner of the Rue de Seine and the Rue Mazarine. Here were the quarters of Citizen Lardillon, deputy public prosecutor at the revolutionary tribunal, a man well disposed towards André, who had known him first as a capuchin at Angers, and later as a *sans-culotte* in Paris.

He rang, and after an interval of some few minutes, a figure appeared behind a grating commanding the entrance, and Citizen Lardillon, having prudently satisfied himself as to the appearance and name of his visitor, at length threw open the door. His face was broad, his colour high, his eyes glittering, his lips moist, and his ears red. He looked a jovial but worried man. He led André into his ante-chamber.

There, on a small round table, a meal for two was set out. There was a chicken, a pie, a ham, a terrine of foie-gras and various cold meats in aspic. On the floor six bottles were cooling in a pail. A pineapple, cheese of various kinds, and preserved fruits occupied the mantelpiece, and flasks of liqueurs were deposited on a desk littered with papers.

Through the half-open door of the adjoining room a large bed was visible, not yet made.

"Citizen Lardillon," began André, "I have come to beg a favour of you."

"I am quite ready to grant it, citizen, provided it involves no risk to the security of the Republic."

André smilingly replied —

"The service I ask you to do me is not in the least compromising to the safety of either the Republic or yourself."

At a sign from Lardillon, André sat down. "Citizen deputy," he said, "you are aware that for the last two years I have been conspiring against your friends, and that I am the author of the pamphlet entitled, *The Altars of Fear*. You will not be doing me a favour in having me arrested. You will only be doing your duty. Moreover, that is not the service I ask at your hands. But listen: my mistress, to whom I am devoted, is in prison."

Lardillon nodded his head to indicate that he approved of the devotion André confessed to.

"I am sure that you are not unfeeling, Citizen Lardillon. I beg you to procure my reunion with the woman I love, and to have me conveyed to Port Libre as speedily as may be."

"Come, come," said Lardillon, and a smile played upon his lips, which were both delicate and firm, "it is a greater boon than life that you demand of me. You require me to bestow happiness on you, citizen!"

He stretched out the arm nearest to the bedroom, and called — "Epicharis! Epicharis!"

A big, dark woman entered, her arms and throat still bare, for she had only got as far with her *toilette* as a chemise and petticoat, though a cockade was fastened in her hair.

"Nymph of mine," said Lardillon as he drew her on to his knees, "look upon the face of this citizen, and never forget it! Like us, Epicharis, he is tender-hearted; like us, he realizes that the greatest of ills is to be separated from the beloved one. He wishes to go to prison — ay, to the guillotine — with his mistress, Epicharis. Can I withhold this boon from him?"

"No!" answered the girl, as she tapped the checks of the carmagnole-clad monk.

"You are right, my goddess. We shall be earning the gratitude of two devoted lovers. Citizen Germain, give me your address, and this very night you shall sleep in the Bourbe."

"That is agreed?" said André.

"That is agreed," replied Lardillon as he offered him his hand. "Go and find your fair friend, and tell her how you saw Epicharis in Lardillon's embrace. I trust that that recollection may stir your hearts to joyous measures."

André replied that possibly they would be able to call up even more affecting memories, but that he was none the less grateful to Lardillon, and that he only regretted that it was not likely to be in his power to be of service to him in return.

"A humane action needs no recompense," replied Lardillon.

Then he rose, and clasping Epicharis to his heart, said —

“Who knows when our own turn may come?”

*Omnes eodem cogimur: omnium
Versatur urna; serius ocius
Sors exitura , et nos in æternum
Exilium impositura cymbæ.*

(We all must tread the paths of Fate,
And ever shakes the mortal Urn,
Whose Lot embarks us, soon or late,
On Charon’s Boat, ah! never to return.

FRANCIS’S *Horace*.) “In the meanwhile, let us
drink! Citizen, will you join us at table?”

Epicharis said it would only be polite of him, and made to seize him by the arm. But he tore himself away, relying on the promise the deputy public prosecutor had made.

A TALE OF THE MONTH OF FLORÉAL IN THE YEAR II

TO MADEMOISELLE JEANNE CANTEL

I

THE turnkey had shut the door of the house of detention upon her who was formerly known as the Comtesse Fanny d'Avernay, whose arrest is described in the gaol register as a step taken "in the interests of public safety," though her actual crime was that she had given shelter to enemies of the Government.

And now she is actually within the venerable edifice in which, once upon a time, the recluses of Port Royal indulged their craving for solitude and community life combined, and out of which it was easy to contrive a prison without making any structural change.

Seated on a bench whilst the registrar enters her name, she thinks — "Ah, God, why are these things permitted; and what more do You demand of me?"

The turnkey's aspect is rather surly than evil, and his daughter, who is pretty, looks enchanting in her white cap, with cockade and knot of ribbons in the national colours. By this turnkey Fanny is conducted to a large courtyard, in the middle of which grows a fine acacia. There she will wait till he has prepared a bed and a table for her in a room which already contains five or six prisoners, for the house is crowded. Vainly each day is the overplus of tenants led to the revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine. Each day anew the committees fill up the gaps thus created.

In the courtyard Fanny catches sight of a young woman busy cutting a device of initials on the bark of the tree, and at once recognizes Antoinette d'Auriac, a friend of her childhood.

"What, you here, Antoinette?"

"And you, Fanny? Get them to put your bed by the side of mine. We shall have countless things to tell one another."

"Yes, numbers of things.... And Monsieur d'Auriac, Antoinette?"

"My husband? Upon my word, my dear, I had rather forgotten him. It is unfair on my part. To me he has always been irreproachable.... I fancy that at the present moment he is in prison somewhere or other."

"And what were you doing just now, Antoinette?"

"Pooh!... What o'clock is it? If it's five, the friend whose name I was interlacing on the bark there with my own has ceased to exist, for at midday he was haled away to the revolutionary tribunal. His name was Gesrin, and he was a volunteer in the army of the North. I made his acquaintance here in the prison."

We passed some agreeable hours together at the foot of this tree. He was a worthy young fellow.... But I must set about making you feel at home, my dear.”

And seizing Fanny by the waist, she carried her off to the room where she herself slept, and obtained the turnkey’s promise not to part her from her friend.

They decided that the following morning they would join forces in washing the floor of their room.

The evening meal, meagrely provided by a patriotic eating-house keeper, was served in common. Each prisoner brought his plate and his wooden cover (metal covers were not allowed), and received his portion of pork and cabbage. At that coarse repast Fanny met women whose gaiety astonished her. As in the case of Madame d’Auriac, their headdresses were scrupulously arranged and they wore unimpeachable costumes. Though death was in sight, they had not lost the womanly desire to please. Their conversation was as gallant as their persons, and Fanny was soon abreast of the love affairs which were knit and unknit in these gloomy courtyards where death lent a keener edge to love. Then, overcome with an indescribable agitation, she was seized with a great longing to clasp another hand in her own.

She called to mind the man who loved her, to whom she had never yielded herself, and a pang of regret, cruel as remorse, rent her heart. Tears as scalding as tears of passion coursed down her cheeks. By the light of the smoky lamp which lit up the table she took note of her companions, whose eyes glittered with fever, and she thought — “We are condemned to die, all of us. How is it that I am sad and perturbed in spirit, whilst for these women life and death are equally a matter of no concern?”

And all night she wept upon her pallet.

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TWENTY long monotonous days have passed heavily by. The courtyard where the lovers were wont to go in search of quiet and shade is deserted this evening. Fanny, stifled in the moist air of the corridors, has just sat down on the mound of turf which encircles the base of the old acacia that gives the courtyard its shade. The acacia is in flower, and the breeze passing through its branches emerges charged with the heavy perfume. Fanny catches sight of a scrap of paper fastened to the bark of the tree underneath the device which Antoinette traced there. On this paper she reads some verses by the poet Vigée, like herself a prisoner.

Here hearts, from taint of treason free,
Calm victims were of calumny.
Thanks to the shade outspread above
They banished grief in dreams of love.
It heard their sighs and tender fears,
They oft bedewed it with their tears.
You, whom a time less menacing
Shall to this bare enclosure bring,
Spare yet awhile the kindly tree
Which anguish quelled, and strength upheld,
And half bestowed felicity.

After reading these lines, Fanny relapsed into a thoughtful mood. She mentally reviewed her life, calm and even, her loveless marriage, the state of her own mind, interested in music and poetry, inclined to friendship, sober, untroubled; and then she thought of the love lavished on her by a gallant gentleman, which had wrapped her in its protective folds, yet been accepted unresponsively, as she was better able to realize in the silence of her prison. And, recognizing that she was about to die, she broke down. A sweat of mortal agony rose to her forehead. In her anguish she raised her burning eyes to the star-strewn sky, and wringing her hands murmured — “Ah, God, give back to me one little gleam of hope!”

At this moment a light footstep approached. It was Rosine, the turnkey’s daughter, coming for a surreptitious talk with her.

“Citizeness,” the pretty girl said to her, “tomorrow evening a man who loves you will be waiting on the Avenue de l’Observatoire with a carriage. Take this

parcel; it contains clothes like those I am wearing; during supper you will put them on in your bedroom. You are of the same height and fair colouring as myself. In the dusk we might easily be taken one for the other. A warder who is in love with me, and who has engaged in the plot with us, will come up to your room and bring you the basket which I take when I go marketing.

“With him you will descend the staircase (of which he carries a key) leading to my father’s lodge. On that side of the prison the outer gate is neither locked nor guarded. You will only have to avoid being seen by my father. My lover will place himself with his shoulder against the little window of the lodge and say, as if he were talking to me: ‘Au revoir, Citizeness Rose, and don’t be so mischievous!’ You will then go quietly into the street. Whilst this is going on I shall leave by the main gate, and we shall join one another in the carriage which is to carry us away.”

As she listened to these words, Fanny drank in the breath of spring and reawakening nature. With the whole energy of her being, palpitating with life, she longed for liberty. She could perceive, could taste the safety that was within her grasp. And as into the same draught was distilled an aroma of love, — she — clasped her hands on — her breast — to restrain — her — happiness. — But, little — by little, — consideration, a — powerful — factor in — her character, got the better of sentiment. She gazed — steadily on — the — turnkey’s — daughter, — and said — “Why is it, dear child, that you are prepared to devote yourself in this way to the interests of one whom you scarcely know?”

“Oh,” replied Rose, this time forgetting to use the familiar form of speech she had been employing hitherto, “it’s because your kind friend will give me a large sum of money as soon as you are free, and then I shall be able to marry Florentin, my lover. You see, citizeness, that I am working entirely in my own interests. But I am better pleased to be the means of rescuing you than one of the others.”

“I thank you for that, my child, but why the preference?”

“Because you are so dainty, and your good friend must be so weary of being separated from you. It is agreed, isn’t it?”

Fanny stretched out her hand to take the parcel of clothes Rose was offering her.

But immediately afterwards she drew it back.

“Rose, do you realize that if we are discovered it would mean death to you?”

“Death!” exclaimed the young girl. “You terrify me. Oh, no, I didn’t know that!”

Then, as quickly reassured —

“But, citizeness, your kind friend would manage to hide me.”

“There isn’t a spot in Paris that would prove a safe hiding-place. I thank you for your devotion, Rose; but I can’t take advantage of it.”

Rose stood as if thunderstruck.

“But you will be guillotined, citizeness, and I shall not be able to marry Florentin!”

“Be easy, Rose. I can do you a service although I can’t accept what you offer.”

“Oh, no, no! It would be cheating you out of your money.”

The turnkey’s daughter begged and prayed and wept for long enough. She went on her knees and raised the hem of Fanny’s skirt.

Fanny gently pushed the girl’s hand away and turned her head aside. A moonbeam displayed the peacefulness of the fair face.

It was a lovely night, and a light breeze was moving. The prisoners’ tree shook its perfumed branches and scattered its wan flowers upon the head of the voluntary victim.

THE LITTLE LEADEN SOLDIER

TO MADAME GASTON MEYER

THAT particular night the fever induced by influenza prevented me from sleeping, and presently I heard very distinctly three smart taps on the glass door of a cabinet at the side of my bed, a cabinet in which I kept in an inextricable medley little figures in Dresden china or biscuit of Sèvres, terra-cotta statuettes from Tanagra or Myrina, little Renaissance bronzes, Japanese ivory carvings, Venetian glass, Chinese cups, boxes in Vernis Martin, lacquer trays, enamel caskets — in fact, a thousand nothings which a kind of fetish worship causes one to treasure, and which have the power of reviving memories of bygone hours, both gay and melancholy. The taps were faint but perfectly unmistakable, and by the light of the nightlight I perceived that they proceeded from a little leaden soldier installed amid the contents of the cabinet, who was making efforts to regain his liberty. He was successful, for soon beneath the weight of his fist the glazed door swung wide open. To tell the truth, I was not so surprised as might be expected. To my mind that little soldier had always worn a suspicious appearance. And during the two years since Madame G. M — had given him to me, I had been prepared for all sorts of impertinences from him. His uniform is blue turned up with red; he is a *Garde française*, and it is common knowledge that that regiment was not remarkable for discipline.

“Ho, there!” I called out. “What’s your name, La Fleur, Brindamour, La Tulipe! can’t you make less noise and let me sleep in peace? I am anything but well.” — .

The rascal replied with a growl:

“I haven’t changed much, my good man, since I took the Bastille, a hundred years back. On top of that a good many cans of good liquor were emptied.

I doubt if many leaden soldiers of my age are still in existence. Good night to you. I am off to parade.”

“La Tulipe,” I replied with severity, “your regiment was disbanded by order of Louis XVI on the 31st of August, 1789. There is no longer any reason for you to attend parade. Stay where you are in the cabinet!”

La Tulipe twirled his moustache, and then, throwing a sly glance of contempt in my direction, retorted:

“What! do you mean to say you don’t know that every year on the night of the 31st of December, when the children are asleep, our great review takes place, and the leaden soldiers march in procession over the roofs and between the chimneys still joyfully pouring forth the smoke arising from the dying embers of the Yule log? It’s a desperate charge, and many a rider takes part in it with never

a head on his shoulders. The shades of all the leaden soldiers who have fallen in battle pass by in the rage of combat. Nothing but bent bayonets and broken swords is to be seen. And the spirits of dead dolls, all ashen-faced in the moonbeams, watch them as they go by.”

This harangue put me in a quandary.

“Come now, La Tulipe, you mean to say it is a custom, a solemn custom? I have the profoundest respect for all ancient customs and usages, traditions, legends, and popular beliefs. That is what we call folk-lore — a subject we find a great deal of amusement in studying. La Tulipe, it is a great satisfaction to me to learn that you are an observer of tradition. On the other hand, I am not at all sure that I ought to let you leave that cabinet.”

“Indeed you ought,” said a clear musical voice which I had not heard before, but which I instantly recognized for that of the young woman from Tanagra, who, wrapped in the folds of her himation, occupied a place next to the *Garde française*, on whom she looked down from the graceful dignity of her superior stature. “Indeed you ought. All customs handed down to us by our ancestors are equally worthy of respect. Our fathers knew better than we what is permissible and what forbidden, for they were nearer to the gods. It is only proper, then, to allow this Galatian to perform the warlike rites of his ancestors. In my time they did not wear a ridiculous blue dress turned up with red like our friend here. Their only covering was their buckler. And we held them in great awe. They were barbarians. You yourself are just as much of a Galatian and barbarian. It is all in vain that you have read the poets and historians: you have no true conception of the beauty of life. You were not in the marketplace when I used to be spinning wool from Miletus in the courtyard of the house, under the old mulberry tree.”

I compelled myself to answer with moderation —

“Lovely Pannychis, your insignificant Greek folk conceived certain forms so beautiful that the eyes and hearts of the judicious will never tire of them. But every day in your marketplace such a quantity of drivel was babbled as would give occupation to one of our municipal councils for a whole session. I have no regrets at never having been a citizen of Larissa or Tanagra. At the same time I admit that what you have said is reasonable. It is fitting that customs should be maintained, otherwise they would cease to be customs. Fair Pannychis, who didst spin wool from Miletus under the ancient mulberry tree, not in vain have you assailed my ears with words of good counsel; for on your advice I give La Tulipe permission to go whithersoever folk-lore may call him.”

Then a little dairymaid in biscuit of Sèvres, her hands resting on her churn, turned towards me with glances of entreaty.

“Monsieur, do not let him go. He has promised to marry me. He falls in love with every woman he meets. If he goes, I shall never set eyes on him again.”

And, hiding her plump cheeks in her apron, she began to weep uncontrollably.

La Tulipe had grown as red as the trimmings of his coat: he could not endure scenes, and he found it extremely distasteful to listen to reproaches which he had richly merited. I reassured my little dairymaid as well as I could, and begged my *Garae française* on no account to loiter about after the review in some Circe’s grot. He promised, and I said good-bye to him. But he made no attempt to start. It was extraordinary, but he remained perfectly still on his shelf, as motionless as the dainty trifles surrounding him. I let him perceive my surprise.

“Patience!” he exclaimed. “I cannot set out under your very eyes in that fashion, without infringing every law of the occult world. When you have gone to sleep I shall make off easily enough on a moonbeam, for I am full of expedients. But there is no great hurry, and I can still wait another hour or two. We have nothing better to amuse us than conversation. How would you like me to tell you some tale of days gone by? I know plenty such.”

“Yes, tell us one,” said Pannychis.

“Tell us one,” said the dairymaid.

“Go ahead then, La Tulipe,” said I in my turn.

He sat down, filled his pipe, asked for a glass of beer, coughed, and began his tale with these words: —

THE LEADEN SOLDIER’S STORY

Ninety-nine years ago to the very day, I was standing on a round table with a dozen of my comrades, all of them as like me as if they had been my brothers. Some were standing, some lying down, several had sustained injuries to the head or legs: we were the heroic remnant of a box of leaden soldiers bought the previous year at the fair of Saint Germain. The room was hung with pale blue silk. It contained a spinet with the Prayer from Orpheus open upon it, a few chairs with lyreshaped backs, a lady’s *escritoire* of mahogany, a white bed decked with roses; and all along the cornice were perched pairs of doves. Everything combined to convey an impression of affecting charm. The lamp diffused its soft light, and the flame on the hearth quivered like wings beating in the dusk. Clad in a dressing-gown, and seated in front of her *escritoire*, her delicate neck bending beneath the circling masses of her magnificent fair hair, Julie was turning over the letters tied up with ribbons, which had lain hidden in the drawers of the bureau.

Midnight strikes; the outward sign of the imaginary leap from one year to another. The dainty timepiece, on which is poised a laughing, golden Cupid, proclaims that the year 1793 has come to an end.

Just as the hands of the clock meet, a small phantom figure makes its appearance. Through a door which stands half open, a pretty child has crept out of the dressing-room, where he has his bed, and run in his nightshirt to fling himself into his mother's arms and wish her a happy new year.

"A happy new year, Pierre?... Ah! thank you, thank you! But do you know what a happy year is?"

He thought he did; but, all the same, she wished to make quite sure that he knew.

"A year is happy, my darling, when it passes on its way bringing us neither hatreds nor fears."

She embraces him; then she carries him back to the bed he has escaped from, and then returns to her seat in front of the *escritoire*. She glances first at the flames leaping on the hearth, and then at the letters from which dried flowers are falling. It is heartrending to have to burn them. Yet it must be done. For these letters, if they were discovered, would consign to the guillotine both him who wrote them and her who received them. If it was only herself that was in danger, she would not burn them, so weary is she of her contest for life with the executioners. But she thinks of him, proscribed, denounced, pursued, hidden away, in some garret at the other end of Paris. A single one of these letters would be enough to put his pursuers on his track and deliver him over to death.

Pierre is sleeping snugly in the neighbouring dressing-room; the cook and Nanon have gone to their rooms in the upper regions. The intense silence of a snow-clad town reigns all around. The keen, clear air brightens the flame on the hearth. Julie has made up her mind to burn these letters, and it is a task she cannot carry out — how well she knows it! — without recalling events of the profoundest sadness. She will burn the letters, but not until she has read them through once again.

The letters are all arranged in succession, for Julie imparts to everything around her a measure of the orderliness which is natural to her.

These, already growing yellow, date from three years ago, and in the silence of the night Julie lives over again the magic hours. Not a single page is surrendered to the flames until she has conned it over at least ten times, syllable by treasured syllable.

The stillness all around her is unbroken. From time to time she goes to the window, raises the curtain, glances through the oppressive gloom at the tower of Saint Germain des Prés silvered by the moon, and then resumes her slow labours

of pious destruction. Why should she not for the last time rejoice over these delicious pages? Why deliver to the flames these cherished lines ere she has for ever imprinted them on her heart. Stillness prevails everywhere, and her spirit leaps with youth and love.

She reads —

“Though absent, I behold you, Julie. I go on my way, surrounded by images which my mind conjures up. I behold you, not cold and unnerved, but alive, animated, ever changing, yet ever perfect. Around you in my dreams I gather the most gorgeous spectacles the world can yield. How happy is Julie’s lover! He finds charms in all things, since in all things he finds her. In loving her it is life he loves; he marvels at this world which she irradiates; he treasures this earth which she adorns. Love unveils to him the hidden mystery of things. He apprehends the infinite forms of creation; they all display to him symbols of Julie; he hears the unnumbered voices of nature; they all murmur in his ear the name of Julie. He plunges his gaze rapturously into the inmost heart of the daylight, with the thought that that fortunate light bathes also the countenance of Julie, and casts as it were a divine caress on the loveliest of human forms. This evening the earliest stars will thrill his being; he will say: ‘Perhaps at this very moment she too is gazing on them.’ He inhales her in all the odours borne on the air. He desires to kiss the very ground she treads on....

“My Julie, if I am fated to fall beneath the axe of the persecutor, and like Algernon Sidney to die for liberty, death itself will be unable to restrain my indignant ghost in the land of shades which holds not you. I shall fly to you, my beloved. Often will my spirit return to hover around you.”

She reads and dreams. Night is coming to a close. Already a pallid light pierces the curtains: it is morning. The servants have begun their work. She must finish her own. Has she caught the sound of voices? No; all around her is silence, still....

Yes, all around is silence, for the snow deadens the tramp of feet. They are coming; they halt outside. Blows fall heavily on the door.

She has not time to hide the letters, to close the escritoire. All she can do she does; she takes the papers in armfuls and throws them underneath the sofa, the valance of which touches the floor; a few letters are scattered on the carpet; she pushes them under with her foot, seizes a book, and flings herself into a chair.

The president of the district enters, followed by a dozen of his pikemen. He is an elderly chair-caner named Brochet, who shivers with ague, and whose bloodshot eyes roam in an unspeakably loathsome fashion.

He makes a sign to his men to keep guard over the approaches, and then turning to Julie, announces —

“We have just received information, citizeness, that you are in correspondence with the agents of Pitt, and with émigrés and conspirators in the prisons. In the name of the law, I am here to take possession of your papers. It is now some time since you were pointed out to me as an aristocrat of the most dangerous type. Citizen Rapoix, whom you see before you” (here he indicated one of his followers), “has confessed that in the severe winter of 1789, you gave him both money and clothes with a view to corrupting him. Magistrates of a timid tendency and wanting in patriotism have shown you leniency over long. But I am master now, in my turn, and you shall not escape the guillotine. Deliver up your papers, citizeness!”

“Take them yourself,” said Julie; “my escritoire is unlocked.”

There still remained in the drawers certain certificates of births, marriages, and deaths, tradesmen’s bills, and title-deeds, which one by one Brochet examined. He fumbled with them, and laid them aside with the suspicious air of a man who reads but poorly, and from time to time exclaimed: “Scandalous! The name of the so-called kin? is not effaced. Scandalous, scandalous, I call it!”

From his manner Julie concludes that his visit will be lengthy and scrupulous. She cannot resist taking a furtive glance at the side of the sofa, and she sees at once the corner of a letter peeping out from under the valance like the white ear of a cat. At this sight her agony vanishes suddenly. The certainty that she is lost brings back to her a quiet assurance, and her face takes on a calm indistinguishable from an expression of complete security. She has no doubt that the men will observe this scrap of paper so patent to her own eyes. Its whiteness on the red carpet positively screams at her. But she cannot guess whether they will discover it at once or whether some time must first elapse. This doubt occupies and distracts her mind. At this tragic moment she indulges in a sort of joke with herself as she watches the patriots moving further away from or nearer to the sofa.

Brochet, who has finished with the papers in the escritoire, becomes impatient, and declares that he will certainly find what he has come in search of.

He overthrows the furniture, turns the pictures round, and raps the panelling with the pommel of his sword to detect hiding-places. He can discover nothing. He smashes a panel of looking-glass to see if anything is concealed behind it. There is nothing.

Whilst this is going on his men raise some of the squares of parquet. They declare with oaths that a beggarly aristocrat is not going to have the laugh of honest *sans-culottes*. But never one of them espies the little white wisp which peeps from under the valance of the sofa.

They march Julie into the other rooms of the suite and demand all her keys. They burst open the cupboards, shiver the windows to splinters, smash up the chairs, drag the stuffing from the upholstery. And they find nothing.

Still Brochet is not yet despondent; he returns to the bedroom.

“In God’s name! the papers are here; I’m certain of it!”

He examines the sofa, declares that it has a suspicious appearance, probes it five or six times with his sword from end to end. Still he finds no traces of what he seeks, utters a horrible oath, and gives his men orders to depart.

He is already at the door, when, returning a step or two towards Julie, he raises his fist and shouts —

“Live in dread of my return! I am the sovereign people!”

And he goes out, last of all.

At length all are gone. She hears the clatter of their tread grow fainter on the staircase. She is saved! Her imprudence has not betrayed him — him whom she loves! She runs, with a jubilant little laugh, to embrace the tiny Pierre, who is sleeping with his fists clenched, just as though everything round his cradle had not been turned upside down.

When he had finished his tale, La Tulipe relighted his pipe, which had gone out, and emptied his glass.

“My friend,” I said, “justice is a virtue. For a *Garde française* it must be admitted that you are a finished story-teller. But I have a strong impression that I have already heard that story somewhere.”

“It may be that Julie herself related it. She was a creature of infinite wit.”

“And what became of her?”

“She knew some happy times in the days of the Consulate. Nevertheless, of an evening she would whisper sorrowful secrets to the trees in her park. You see, Monsieur, she was better armed against death than against love.”

“And he who wrote such elegant letters?”

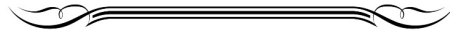
“He became a baron and prefect under the Empire.”

“And little Pierre?”

“He died a colonel of *gendarmérie*, at Versailles, in 1859.”

“The deuce he did!”

THE WELL OF SAINT CLARE



Translated by Alfred Allinson

CONTENTS

[PROLOGUE](#)

[SAN SATIRO](#)

[MESSER GUIDO CAVALCANTI](#)

[LUCIFER](#)

[THE LOAVES OF BLACK BREAD](#)

[THE MERRY-HEARTED BUFFALMACCO](#)

[THE LADY OF VERONA](#)

[THE HUMAN TRAGEDY](#)

[THE MYSTIC BLOOD](#)

[A SOUND SECURITY](#)

[HISTORY OF DOÑA MARIA D'AVALOS AND DON FABRICIO, DUKE
D'ANDRIA](#)

[BONAPARTE AT SAN MINIATO](#)

PROLOGUE

THE REVEREND FATHER ADONE DONI

Τὰ γὰρ φυσικὰ, καὶ τὰ ἠθικὰ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μαθηματικὰ, καὶ τοὺς ἐγκυκλίους λόγους, καὶ περὶ τεχνῶν, πᾶσαν εἶχεν ἐμπειρίαν. — *Diogenes Laërtius*, IX, 37. 1

I was spending the Spring at Sienna. Occupied all day long with meticulous researches among the city archives, I used after supper to take an evening walk along the wild road leading to Monte Oliveto, where I would encounter in the twilight huge white oxen under ponderous yokes dragging a rustic wain with wheels of solid timber — all unchanged since the times of old Evander. The church bells knelled the peaceful ending of the day, while the purple shades of night descended sadly and majestically on the low chain of neighbouring hills. The black squadrons of the rooks had already sought their nests about the city walls, but relieved against the opalescent sky a single sparrow-hawk still hung floating with motionless wings above a solitary ilex tree.

I moved forward to confront the silence and solitude and the mild terrors that lowered before me in the growing dusk. The tide of darkness rose by imperceptible degrees and drowned the landscape. The infinite of starry eyes winked in the sky, while in the gloom below the fireflies spangled the bushes with their trembling love-lights.

These living sparks cover all the Roman Campagna and the plains of Umbria and Tuscany, on May nights. I had watched them in former days on the Appian Way, round the tomb of Cæcilia Metella — their playground for two thousand years; now I found them dancing the selfsame dance in the land of St. Catherine and of Pia de' Tolomei, at the gates of Sienna, that most melancholy and most fascinating of cities. All along my path they quivered in the bents and brushwood, chasing one another, and ever and anon, at the call of desire, tracing above the roadway the fiery arch of their darting flight.

On the white ribbon of the road, in these clear Spring nights, the only person I used to encounter was the Reverend Father Adone Doni, who at the time was, like myself, working in the old Academy *degli Intronati*. I had taken an instant liking for the Cordelier in question, a man who, grown grey in study, still preserved the cheerful, facile humour of a simple, unlettered countryman. He was very willing to converse; and I greatly relished his bland speech, his cultivated yet artless way of thought, his look of old Silenus purged at the baptismal font, the play of his passions at once keen and refined, the strange, alluring personality that informed the whole man. Assiduous at the library, he was also a frequent visitor to the marketplace, halting for choice in front of the

peasant girls who sell oranges, and listening to their unconventional remarks. He was learning, he would say, from their lips the true *Lingua Toscana* .

All I knew of his past life, about which he never spoke, was that he was born at Viterbo, of a noble but miserably impoverished family, that he had studied the humanities and theology at Rome, as a young man had joined the Franciscans of Assisi, where he worked at the Archives, and had had difficulties on questions of faith with his ecclesiastical superiors. Indeed I thought I noticed myself a tendency in the Father towards peculiar views. He was a man of religion and a man of science, but not without certain eccentricities under either aspect. He believed in God on the evidence of Holy Scripture and in accordance with the teachings of the Church, and laughed at those simple philosophers who believed in Him on their own account, without being under any obligation to do so. So far he was well within the bounds of orthodoxy; it was in connection with the Devil that he professed peculiar opinions. He held the Devil to be wicked, but not absolutely wicked, and considered that the fiend's innate imperfection must always bar him from attaining to the perfection of evil. He believed he discerned some symptoms of goodness in the obscure manifestations of Satan's activity, and without venturing to put it in so many words, augured from these the final redemption of the pensive Archangel after the consummation of the ages.

These little eccentricities of thought and temperament, which had separated him from the rest of the world and thrown him back upon a solitary existence, afforded me amusement. He had wits enough; all he lacked was common sense and appreciation of ordinary everyday things. His life was divided between phantoms of the past and dreams of the future; the actual present was utterly foreign to his notions. For his political ideas, these came simultaneously from antique Santa Maria degli Angeli and the revolutionary secret societies of London, and were a combination of Christian and socialist. But he was no fanatic; his contempt for human reason was too complete for him to attach great importance to his own share in it. The government of states appeared to him in the light of a huge practical joke, at which he would laugh quietly and composedly, as a man of taste should. Judges, civil and criminal, caused him surprise, while he looked on the military classes in a spirit of philosophical toleration.

I was not long in discovering some flagrant contradictions in his mental attitude. He longed with all the charity of his gentle heart for the reign of universal peace. Yet at the same time he had a *penchant* for civil war, and held in high esteem that Farinata degli Uberti, who loved his native Florence so boldly and so well that he constrained her by force and fraud, making the Arbia run red with Florentine blood the while, to will and think precisely what he

willed and thought himself. For all that, the Reverend Father Adone Doni was a tender-hearted dreamer of dreams. It was on the spiritual authority of St. Peter's chair he counted to establish in this world the kingdom of God. He believed the Paraclete was leading the Popes along a road unknown to themselves. Therefore he had nothing but deferential words for the *Roaring Lamb of Sinigaglia* and the *Opportunist Eagle of Carpineto*, as it was his custom to designate Pius IX and Leo XIII respectively.

Agreeable as was the Reverend Father's conversation to me, I used, out of respect for his freedom of action and my own, to avoid showing myself too assiduous in seeking his society inside the city walls, while on his side he observed an exquisite discretion towards myself. But in our walks abroad we frequently managed to meet as if by accident. Half a league outside the Porta Romana the high road traverses a hollow way between melancholy uplands on either hand, relieved only by a few gloomy larches. Under the clayey slope of the northern escarpment and close by the roadside, a dry well rears its light canopy of open ironwork.

At this spot I would encounter the Reverend Father Adone Doni almost every evening, seated on the coping of the well, his hands buried in the sleeves of his gown, gazing out with mild surprise into the night. The gathering dusk still left it possible to make out on his bright-eyed, flat-nosed face the habitual expression of timid daring and graceful irony which was impressed upon it so profoundly. At first we merely exchanged formal good wishes for each other's health, peace and happiness. Then I would take my place by his side on the old stone well-head, that bore some traces of carving. It was still possible, in full daylight, to distinguish a figure with a head bigger than its body and representing an Angel, as seemed indicated by the wings.

The Reverend Father never failed to say courteously:

"Welcome, Signore! Welcome to the Well of St. Clare."

One evening I asked him the reason why the well bore the name of this favourite disciple of St. Francis. He informed me it was because of a very edifying little miracle, which for all its charm had unfortunately never found a place in the collection of the *Fioretti*. I begged him to oblige me by telling it, which he proceeded to do in the following terms:

"In the days when the poor man of Jesus Christ, Francis, son of Bernardone, used to journey from town to town teaching holy simplicity and love, he visited Sienna, in company with Brother Leo, the man of his own heart. But the Siennese, a covetous and cruel generation, true sons of the She-Wolf on whose milk they boasted themselves to have been suckled, gave a sorry welcome to the holy man, who bade them take into their house two ladies of a perfect beauty, to

wit Poverty and Obedience. They overwhelmed him with obloquy and mocking laughter, and drove him forth from the city. He left the place in the night by the Porta Romana. Brother Leo, who tramped alongside, spoke up and said to him:

“‘The Siennese have written on the gates of their city,— “Sienna opens her heart to you wider than her doors.” And nevertheless, brother Francis, these same men have shut their hearts against us.’

“And Francis, son of Bernardone, replied:

“‘The fault is with me, be sure of that, brother Leo, little lamb of God. I have not known how to knock at the doors of their hearts forcefully and skilfully enough. I am far below the fellows who set a bear dancing in the Great Piazza. For they draw together a great crowd by exhibiting the rude coarse beast, whilst I that had ladies of celestial fairness to show them, I have attracted no one. Brother Leo, I charge you, on your holy obedience, to say thus to me: “Brother Francis, you are a poor man, without any merit whatsoever, a stumbling-block and a very rock of offence!” And all the while Brother Leo was hesitating to obey, the holy man suffered grievously within himself. As he went on his murky way, his thoughts turned to pleasant Assisi, where he had left behind him his sons in the spirit, and Clare, daughter of his soul. He knew how Clare was exposed to great tribulations for the love of holy Poverty. And he doubted whether his well-beloved daughter were not sick of body and soul, and weary of well-doing, in the house of St. Damian.

“So sore did these doubts weigh on him, that arrived at this spot where the road enters the hollow way between the hills, he seemed to feel his feet sink into the ground at each step he took. He dragged himself as far as the Well here, which was then in its pristine beauty and full of limpid water, and fell exhausted on the well-head where we are seated at this moment. A long while the man of God remained bent over the mouth of the well. After which, lifting up his head, he said joyfully to Brother Leo: ‘What think you, brother Leo, lamb of God, I have seen in the Well?’

“And Brother Leo answered:

“‘Brother Francis, you saw the moon reflected in the well.’

“‘My brother,’ replied the Saint of God, ‘it is not our sister the Moon I saw in the well, but by the Lord, the true countenance of sister Clare, and so pure and shining so bright with a holy joy that all my doubts were instantly dispelled, and it was made plain to me that our sister enjoys at this present hour the full content God accords his chosen vessels, loading them with the treasures of Poverty.’

“So saying, the good St. Francis drank a few drops of water in the hollow of his hand, and arose refreshed.

“And that is why the name of St. Clare was given to this Well.”

Such was the tale told by the Reverend Father Adone Doni.

Night after night I returned to find the amiable Cordelier sitting on the edge of the mystic well. I would seat myself by his side, and he would tell over for my benefit some fragment of history known only to himself. He had many delightful stories of the sort to relate, being better read than any one else in the antiquities of his country. These lived again and grew bright and young in his head, as if it contained an intellectual Fountain of Eternal Youth. Ever fresh pictures flowed from his white-fringed lips. As he spoke, the moonlight bathed his beard in a silver flood. The crickets accompanied the narrator’s voice with the shrilling of their wing-cases, and ever and anon his words, uttered in the softest of all dialects of human speech, would be answered by the fluted plaintive croaking of the frogs, which hearkened from across the road — a friendly, if apprehensive audience.

I left Sienna towards the middle of June; and I have never seen the Reverend Father Adone Doni since. He clings to my memory like a figure in a dream; and I have now put into writing the tales he told me on the road of Monte Oliveto. They will be found in the present volume; I only hope they may have retained, in their new dress, some vestiges of the grace they had in the telling at the Well of St. Clare.

1 “For of physical and ethical science, no less than of mathematics and the common round of learning, as well as concerning arts, he possessed full knowledge and experience.”

SAN SATIRO

TO ALPHONSE DAUDET

SAN SATIRO

*Consors paterni luminis,
Lux ipse lucis et dies,
Noctem canendo rumpimus;
Assiste postulantibus.*

*Aufer tenebras mentium;
Fuga catervas dæmonum;
Expelle somnolentiam,
Ne pigritantes obruat. 1*

(Breviarium Romanum
Third day of the week: at matins.)

Fra Mino had raised himself by his humility above his brethren, and still a young man, he governed the Monastery of Santa Fiora wisely and well. He was devout, and loved long meditations and long prayers; sometimes he had ecstasies. After the example of his spiritual father, St. Francis, he composed songs in the vernacular tongue in celebration of perfect love, which is the love of God. And these exercises were without fault whether of metre or of meaning, for had he not studied the seven liberal Arts at the University of Bologna?

Now one evening, as he was walking under the cloister arches, he felt his heart filled with trouble and sadness at the remembrance of a lady of Florence he had loved in the first flower of his youth, ere the habit of St. Francis was a safeguard to his flesh. He prayed God to drive away the image; nevertheless his heart continued sad within him.

“The bells,” he pondered, “say like the Angels, AVE MARIA; but their voice is lost in the mists of heaven. On the cloister wall yonder, the Master Perugia delights to honour has painted marvellous well the three Marys contemplating with a love ineffable the body of the Saviour. But the night has veiled the tears in their eyes and the dumb sobs of their mouths, and I cannot weep with them. Yonder Well in the middle of the cloister garth was covered but now with doves that had come to drink, but these are flown away, for they found no water in the hollows of the carven well-head. And behold. Lord! my soul falls silent like the

bells, is darkened like the holy Marys, and runs dry like the well. Why, Jesus my God! why is my heart arid, and dark, and dumb, when Thou art its dayspring, and the song of birds, and the water-brook flowing from the hills?"

Fra Mino dreaded to return to his cell, and thinking prayer would dispel his melancholy and calm his disquiet, he passed into the Monastery Church by the low door leading from the cloister. Silence and gloom filled the building, raised more than a hundred and fifty years before on the foundations of a ruined Roman Temple by the great Margaritone. He traversed the Nave, and went and knelt in the Chapel behind the High Altar dedicated to San Michele, whose legend was painted in fresco on the wall. But the dim light of the lamp hanging from the vault was insufficient to show the Archangel fighting with Satan and weighing souls in the balance. Only the moon, shining through the great window, threw a pale ray over the Tomb of San Satiro, where it lay under an arcade to the right of the Altar. This tomb, in shape resembling the great vats used at vintage time, was more ancient than the Church and in all respects similar to a Pagan sarcophagus, except that the sign of the Cross was to be seen traced in three different places on its marble sides.

Fra Mino remained for hours prostrate before the Altar; but he found it impossible to pray, and at midnight felt himself weighed down under the same heaviness that overcame Jesus Christ's disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. And lo! as he lay there without courage or counsel, he saw as it were a white cloud rise above the tomb of San Satiro, and presently observed that this cloud was made up of a multitude of cloudlets, of which each one was a woman. They floated in the dim air; and through their light raiment shone the whiteness of their light limbs. Then Fra Mino saw how among them were goat-footed young men who were chasing them. These were naked, and nothing hid the terrifying ardour of their desires. And the nymphs fled away from them, while beneath their racing steps there sprang up flowery meadows and brooks of water. Each time a goat-foot put out his hand to seize one of them, a sallow would shoot up suddenly to hide the nymph in its hollow trunk as in a cave, and the grey leaves shivered with light murmurings and spurts of mocking laughter.

When all the women were hidden in the sallows, their goat-footed lovers, sitting on the grass of the new-come meadows, breathed in their flutes of reeds and drew from them sounds to destroy the peace of any creature of the earth. The nymphs were fascinated, and soon began to peep out between the branches, and one by one deserting the shady covert, drew near under the irresistible attraction of the music. Then the goat-men rushed upon them with a demoniac fury. Folded in the arms of their ruthless assailants, the nymphs strove to keep up a while longer their raillery and loud laughter, but the mirth died on their lips. With

heads thrown back and eyes swooning with joy and terror, they could only call upon their mother, or scream a shrill "You are killing me," or keep a sullen silence.

Fra Mino longed to turn his head, but he could not, and his eyes remained wide open in spite of himself.

Meanwhile the nymphs, winding their arms about the goat-men's loins, fell to biting and caressing and provoking their hairy lovers, and body intertwined with body, they enfolded and bathed them in their tender flesh that was sweeter and softer and more living than the water of the brook which ran by them under the willows.

At the sight, Fra Mino fell, in mind and intention, into deadly sin. He desired to be one of these demons, half men and half beasts, and hold to his bosom, after their carnal fashion, the fair lady of Florence he had loved in the flower of his years, and who was now dead.

But already the goat-men were scattering through the country-side. Some were busied gathering honey in the hollow trunks of oaks, others carving reeds into the shape of flutes, or butting one against the other, crashing their horned brows together. Meantime the bodies of the nymphs, sweet wrecks of love, lay motionless, strewing the meadows. Fra Mino lay groaning on the Chapel flags; for so fierce had been the desire of sin within him that now he was filled full of bitter shame at his own weakness.

Suddenly one of the nymphs, chancing as she lay to turn her eyes upon him, cried out:

"A man! a man!"

And pointing him out to her companions:

"Look, sisters; yonder is no goat-herd, he has no flute of reed beside him. Nor yet do I recognize him for the master of one of those rustic farmsteads whose garden-close, sloping to the hill-side beneath the vines, is guarded by a Priapus hewn out of a stump of beech. What would he among us, if he is neither goat-herd, nor neat-herd, nor gardener? His looks are harsh and gloomy, and I cannot read in his eyes the love of the gods and goddesses that people the wide sky, the woods and mountains. He wears a barbarous habit; perhaps he is a Scythian. Let us approach the stranger, my sisters, and make sure he is not come as a foe to sully our fountains, hew down our trees, tear open our hill-sides and betray to cruel men the mystery of our happy lurking places. Come with me, Mnaïs; come, Ægle, Neæra and Melibœa.

"On! on!" returned Mnaïs, "on, with our arms in hand!"

"On! on!" all cried in chorus.

Then Fra Mino saw them spring up, and gather great handfuls of roses, and advance upon him in a long line, each armed with roses and thorns. But the distance that separated them from him, which at first had seemed very short, for indeed he thought almost to touch them and felt their breath on his face, appeared suddenly to increase, and he watched them coming as though from out a far-off forest. Impatient to be at him, they began to run, threatening him with their cruel flowers, while menaces flew from their flower-like lips. And lo! as they came nearer, a change was wrought in them; at each step they lost something of their grace and beauty, and the bloom of their youth faded as fast as the roses in their hands. First their eyes grew hollow and the mouth fell in. The neck, but now so pure and white, hung in great hideous folds, and grey elf-locks draggled over their wrinkled brows. On they came; and their eyes were circled with red, their lips drawn in upon the toothless gums. On they came, carrying dead roses in their arms, which were black and writhen as the old vine stocks the peasants of Chianti burn for firewood in the winter nights. On they came, with shaking heads and palsied thighs, tottering and trembling.

Arrived at the spot where Fra Mino stood rooted to the ground with affright, they were no better than a crowd of horrid witches, bald and bearded, nose and chin touching, and bosoms hanging loose and flabby. They came crowding round him:

“Ah, ha! the pretty darling!” cried one. “He is as white as a sheet, and his heart beats like a hare the dogs are snapping at. Ægle, sister mine, say, what must be done with him?”

“Neæra mine!” Ægle replied, “why! we must open his breast, tear out his heart and put a sponge in its place instead.”

“Not so!” said Melibœa. “That were making him pay too dear for his curiosity and the pleasure he has had in surprising our frolic. Enough for this time to inflict a light chastisement. Say, shall we give him a good whipping?”

Straightway surrounding the Monk, the sisters dragged his gown above his head and belaboured him with the handfuls of thorns they still held.

The blood was beginning to come, when Neæra signed to them to stop:

“Enough!” she cried! “he is my gallant, I tell you! I saw him just now casting tender eyes at me; I would content his wishes, and grant him my favours without more delay.”

She smiled alluringly; and a long, black tooth projecting from her mouth tickled his nostril. She murmured softly:

“Come, come, my Adonis!”

Then suddenly, wild with rage:

“Fie, fie! his senses are benumbed. His coldness offends my charms. He scorns me; avenge me, comrades! Mnaïs, Ægle, Melibœa, avenge your sister!”

At this appeal, one and all, lifting their thorny whips, fell to scourging him so savagely that Fra Mino’s body was soon one wound from head to toe. Now and again they would stop to cough and spit, only to begin afresh, plying their whips more vigorously than ever. Only sheer weariness induced them to leave off.

“I hope,” Neæra then said, “next time he will not do me the undeserved insult I still blush to remember. We will spare his life; but if he betrays the secret of our sports and pleasures, we will surely kill him. Good-bye to you, my pretty boy!”

So saying, the old woman suddenly squatted down over the Monk and drowned him in a torrent of very filthy liquid. Each sister followed suit and did the like; then one after the other they re-entered the tomb of San Satiro, slipping in through a tiny crack in the lid, leaving their victim lying full length in a stream of a most intolerable stench.

When the last had disappeared, — the cock crew. Then Fra Mino at last found himself able to rise from the earth. Broken with fatigue and pain, benumbed with cold, shuddering with fever, half stifled with the foul exhalations of the poisonous liquor, he set his clothing straight and dragged himself to his cell, just as day broke.

From that night on, Fra Mino never had a moment’s peace. The recollection of what he had seen in the Chapel of San Michele, above San Satiro’s tomb, disturbed him in the Church services and in all his pious exercises. He trembled when he visited the Church along with his fellows; and as his turn came, according to the rule, to kiss the pavement of the Choir, his lips shuddered to encounter the traces of the nymphs’ presence, and he would murmur: “O! my Saviour, dost not Thou hear me say what Thou didst Thyself say to Thy Father, Lead us not, we beseech Thee, into temptation?” At first he had thought of sending to the Lord Bishop an account of what he had witnessed. But on riper reflexion, he became convinced it were better to meditate at leisure on these extraordinary events and only divulge them after a more exhaustive study of all the circumstances. Besides it so happened that the Lord Bishop, allied with the Guelphs of Pisa against the Ghibellines of Florence, was at that moment waging war with such right good will that for a whole month he had not so much as unbuckled his cuirass. And that is why, without saying a word to anyone, Fra Mino made profound researches on the tomb of San Satiro and the Chapel containing it. Deeply versed in the knowledge of books, he investigated many texts, both ancient and modern; yet found no glimmer of enlightenment in any of

them. Indeed the only effect of the works on Magic which he studied was to double his uncertainty.

One morning, after labouring all the night as was his wont, he was fain to refresh his heart with a walk in the fields. He took the hilly path which, winding between the vines and the elms they are wedded to, leads to a wood of myrtles and olives, sacred in old days to the Roman gods. His feet bathed in the wet grass, his brow refreshed by the dew that distilled from the pointed leaves of the Guelder roses, Fra Mino wandered long in the forest, till he came upon a spring over which the wild tamarisks gently swayed their light foliage and the downy clusters of their pink berries. Lower down amid the willows, where the water formed a wider pool, herons stood motionless, while the smaller birds sang sweetly in the branching myrtles. The scent of mint rose moist and fragrant from the ground, and the grass was spangled with the flowers of which our Lord said that "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Fra Mino sat down on a mossy stone and praising God, Who made the heavens and the dew, he fell to pondering the hidden mysteries of Nature.

Now the remembrance of all he had seen in the Chapel of San Michele never left his thoughts; so he sat meditating, his head between his hands, wondering for the thousandth time what the dream might signify: "For indeed," he said to himself, "such a vision must needs have a meaning; it should even have several, which it behoves to discover, whether by sudden illumination, or by dint of an exact applying of the scholastic rules. And I deem that, in this especial case, the poets I studied at Bologna, such as Horace the Satirist and Statius, should likewise be of great help to me, seeing many verities are intermingled with their fables."

After long pondering these thoughts within his breast, and others more subtle still, he lifted his eyes and perceived he was not alone. Leaning against the cavernous trunk of an ancient holm-oak, an old man stood gazing at the sky through the leaves, and smiling to himself. Above his hoary brow peeped out two shorty blunt horns. His nose was flat with wide nostrils, and from his chin depended a white beard, through which were visible the rugged muscles of the neck. A shaggy growth of hair covered his breast, while from the thighs downwards his limbs showed a thick fleece that trailed down to his cloven feet. He held to his lips a flute of reed, from which he drew a feeble sound of music. Then he began to sing in a voice that left the words barely distinguishable:

Laughing she fled,
Her teeth in the golden grape;
After I sped,

And clasping her flying shape,
I quenched my drouth
On the fruit at her mouth.

Astounded at these strange sights and sounds, Fra Mino crossed himself. Still the old man showed no mark of confusion, but cast a long and artless look at the Monk. Amid the deep wrinkles that scored his face, the clear blue eyes sparkled like the waters of a spring through the rugged bark of a grove of oaks.

“Man or beast,” shrilled Mino, “I command you in the name of the Saviour to say who you are.”

“My son,” replied the old man, “I am San Satiro! Speak not so loud, for fear of frightening the birds.”

Then Fra Mino resumed, in a quieter tone:

“Forasmuch, old man, as you shrank not before the dread sign of the Cross, I cannot hold you to be a demon or some foul spirit escaped out of Hell. But if verily and indeed you are a man, as you say you are, or rather the soul of a man sanctified by the deeds of a good life and by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, expound, I pray you, the mystery of your goat’s horns and your shaggy limbs ending in those black, cloven hoofs.”

At the question, the old man lifted up his arms towards heaven, and said:

“My son, the nature of men and animals, of plants and stones, is the secret of the immortal gods, and I know as little as yourself what is the reason of these horns wherewith my brow is decked, and which the Nymphs used in olden days to wind about with garlands of flowers. I cannot tell you the meaning of the two wrinkled folds that droop from my neck, nor why I have the feet of a wanton goat. But I would have you know, my son, there was once in these woods a race of women having horned brows like mine and shaggy thighs. Yet were their bosoms round and white, and their belly and polished loins shone in the light. The sun was young then, and loved to fleck them with his golden arrows, as they lay beneath the shady foliage. They were very fair, my son; but alas! they have vanished from the woods, every one. My mates have perished likewise, and I am left lonely, the last of my tribe.”

“I would fain know your age, old man, and your lineage and country.”

“My son, I was born of the Earth long ere Jupiter had dethroned Saturn, and my eyes have looked upon the flowery freshness of the new-created World. Not yet had the human race emerged from the clay. Alone with me, the dancing Satyr girls set the ground ringing with the rhythmic beat of their double hoofs. They were taller and stronger and fairer than either Nymphs or Women; and their ampler loins received abundantly the seed of the first-born of Earth.

“Under the reign of Jupiter the Nymphs began to inhabit fountains and forests and mountains; while the Fauns, accoupling with the Nymphs, formed light-footed bands that roamed the woods together. Meantime I spent a happy life, tasting at will the clusters of the wild grapes and the lips of the laughing Faun-girls. I enjoyed deep and restful slumbers amid the lush grass; and I would celebrate on my rustic flute Jupiter, Saturn’s successor, for it is of my nature to praise the gods, masters of the world.

“Alas! and I am grown old, for I am but a god, and the centuries have blanched the hairs of my head and of my bosom, and have extinguished the fire of my reins. I was already heavily weighted with years when the Great Pan died, and Jupiter, meeting the same lot he had laid upon Saturn, was dethroned by the Galilean. Since then I have dragged out an ever-flagging life, so feeble and languid that at last it fell out I died, and was entombed. And verily I am now but the shadow of myself. If I still exist a little, it is because nothing ever really perishes, and none is suffered altogether to die out. Death must never be more perfect and complete than life. Beings lost in the Ocean of Things are like the waves you may watch, my child, rising and falling in the Adriatic Sea. They have neither beginning nor end, they are born and die insensibly. Insensibly as the waves, my soul passes. A faint far-off memory of the satyr girls of the Golden Age yet brightens my eyes, and on my lips float soundlessly the ancient hymns of praise.”

This said, he fell silent. Fra Mino gazed at the old man, and knew him, that he was a phantom and nothing more.

“Yes! you may indeed be a goat-foot,” he told him gravely, “without being a demon; ’tis not a thing wholly incredible. Such creatures as God framed to have no part in Adam’s heritage, these can no more be damned than they can be saved. I can never believe that the Centaur Cheiron, who was wiser than men are, is suffering eternal torments in the belly of Leviathan. A traveller who penetrated once into Limbo, relates how he saw him seated in a grassy spot and conversing with Rhipheus, the most righteous man of all the Trojans. Others indeed affirm that Holy Paradise itself has been opened to admit Rhipheus of Troy. Any way the case is one where doubt is not unlawful. But you lied, old man, when you told me you were a Saint, who are not so much even as a man.”

The goat-foot made answer:

“My son, when I was young, I was no more used to lie than the sheep whose milk I sucked or the he-goats with which I would butt in the joy of my strength and beauty. Lies were unknown in those times, nor had the sheep’s fleece yet learned to assume factitious hues; and my soul has remained unchanged from that day to this. See, I go naked as in the golden age of Saturn; and my spirit is

veiled as little as my body. I am no liar. And why indeed should you deem It a thing so extraordinary, my son, that I have become a Saint in the train of the Galilean, albeit no offspring of the first mother some name Eve and others Pyrrha, and whom it is very meet to reverence under either title? Nay! for that matter, neither is St. Michael woman-born. I know him, and at times we have talks together, he and I. He tells me of the days when he was an ox-herd on Mount Garganus....”

But here Fra Mino interrupted the Satyr:

“I cannot suffer you to say St. Michael was an ox-herd, because he guarded the cattle of a man whose name was Garganus, the same as the Mountain. But there, I would fain learn, old man, how you were made a Saint.”

“Listen,” replied the goat-foot, “and your curiosity shall be satisfied.

“When men coming from the East proclaimed in the fair vale of Arno how that the Galilean had dethroned Jupiter, they hewed down the oaks whereon the country folk were used to hang up little goddesses of clay and votive tablets; they planted crosses over against the holy fountains, and forbade the shepherds any more to carry to the grottos of the Nymphs offerings of wine and milk and cakes. Naturally enough this angered all the tribe of Fauns and Pans and Sylvan Genii, and in their wrath these attacked the apostles of the new God. When the holy men were asleep of nights, on their bed of dry leaves, the Nymphs would steal up and pull their beards, while the young Fauns, slipping into their stable, would pluck out hairs from their she-ass’s tail. In vain I sought to disarm their simple malice and exhort them to submission. ‘My children,’ I would warn them, ‘the days of easy gaiety and light laughter are gone by.’ But they were reckless, and would not hearken; and a sore price they paid for their heedlessness.

“But for myself, had I not seen the reign of Saturn come to an end? and I deemed it natural and just that Jupiter should perish in his turn. I was prepared to acquiesce in the downfall of the great old gods, and offered no resistance to the emissaries of the Galilean. Nay! I did them sundry little services. Better acquainted than they with the forest paths, I would gather mulberries and sloes, and lay them on leaves at the threshold of their grotto, and make them little presents of plovers’ eggs. Then, if they were building a cabin, I would carry the timber and stones for them on my back. In gratitude, they poured water on my brow, invoking on my head the peace of Jesus Christ.

“So I lived with them and in their way; and those who loved them, loved me. As they were honoured, so was I, and my sanctity seemed as great as theirs.

“I have told you, my son, I was already very old in those days. The sun had scarce heat enough to warm my benumbed limbs. I was no better than an old

rotten tree, that has lost its crown of fresh leaves and singing birds. Each returning Autumn brought my end nearer; and one Winter's morning they found me stretched motionless by the roadside.

"The Bishop, followed by his Priests and all the people, celebrated my obsequies. Then I was laid in a great tomb of white marble, marked in three places with the sign of the Cross, and bearing carved on the slab in front the words *Sanctus Satyrus* , within a garland of roses.

"In those times, my son, tombs were erected along the roadsides. Mine was placed two miles out from the city, on the Florence road. A young plane-tree grew up over it, and threw its shadow across it, dappled with sunlight and full of bird songs and twitterings, freshness and joy. Near by, a fountain flowed over a bed of water-weed, where the boys and girls came laughing merrily to bathe together. It was a charming spot — and soon a holy one as well. Thither young mothers would bring their babies and let them touch the marble of the tomb, that they might grow up sturdy and straight in all their limbs. The country folk one and all believed that new-born infants presented at my grave must one day surpass their fellows in strength and courage. This is why they brought me all the flower of the gallant Tuscan race. Moreover the peasants often led their asses thither in hopes of making them prolific. My memory was revered; each year at the return of Spring, the Bishop used to come with his Clergy to pray over my bones, and I could watch far away through the meadow grass the slow approach of Cross and Candle in procession, the scarlet canopy, and the chanting acolytes. Thus it was, my son, in the days of good King Berengar.

"Meantime, the Satyrs and the Satyr girls, the Fauns and Nymphs, dragged out a wretched, wandering life. No more altars of meadow turf for them, no more wreaths of flowers, no more offerings of milk and wheat and honey. Only now and then at long intervals some goat-herd would furtively lay a tiny cheese on the threshold of the sacred grot, whose entrance was almost blocked now with thorns and brambles. But it was merely the rabbits and squirrels came to eat these poor dainties. The Nymphs were dwellers in distant forests and gloomy caves, driven forth of their old homes by the apostles from the East. And to hinder their ever returning more, the priests of the Galilean God poured over trees and stones a charmed water, and pronounced magic words, and set up crosses where roads met in the forest; for the Galilean, my son, is learned in the art of incantations. Better than Saturn, better than Jupiter, he knows the virtue of formularies and mystic signs. Thus the poor rustic Divinities could no more find refuge in their sacred woods. The company of long-haired, goat-footed Satyrs, that beat of yore their mother earth with sounding hoof, was but a cloud of pale,

dumb shadows trailing along the mountain-side like the morning mist the Sun melts and dispels.

“Buffeted, as by a fierce wind, by the wrath of Heaven, their spectral forms would be whirled eddying all day long in the dust of the roads. The night on the contrary was somewhat less hostile to them. Night is not wholly the Galilean God’s; He shares its dominion with the devils. As the shades of night descended from the hills, Fauns and Faun-women, Nymphs and Pans, came huddling beneath the shelter of the tombs along the roadside, and there under the kindly empire of the infernal powers would enjoy a brief repose. Of all the tombs they liked mine the best, as that of a reverend ancestor of their own. Soon all assembled under that part of the cornice which, giving South, was quite free of moss and always dry. Thither the airy folk came flying every evening as surely as doves to the dovecote. They easily found room, grown tiny now and light as the chaff that scuds before the winnowing-fan. For my own part, sallying out from my quiet death-chamber, I would sit down sometimes in the midst of them under shelter of the marble edge-tiles, and in a feeble, whistling voice sing them songs of the days of Saturn and Jupiter; then they would remember the happy times gone by for ever. Under the eyes of Diana, they would join to make a show of their ancient pastimes, and the belated traveller would seem to see the night mists of the meadows in the moonlight mimic the intertwining limbs of lovers. And in very deed they were little more than a fleeting fog themselves. The cold tried them sorely. One night, when the snow shrouded the fields, the Nymphs Ægle, Neæra, Mnaïs and Melibœa glided through the cracks in the marble into the narrow, gloomy chamber where I dwell. Their comrades crowded after in their train, and the Fauns, dashing in pursuit of them, quickly joined them too. My house became their house. We scarcely ever left it, except to visit the woods, when the night was fine and clear. Even then they would make haste to return at the first cock-crow. For you must know, my son, that alone of the horned race I have leave to appear on this earth by the light of day. It is a privilege attached to my Saintship.

“My tomb now inspired more veneration than ever among the country people, and every day young mothers came to present their nurslings to me, lifting the naked babes in their arms. When the sons of St. Francis settled in the land and built a monastery on the hill-side, they craved the Bishop’s leave to transfer my monument to their Church and there keep it as a sacred thing. The favour was granted, and I was borne in great pomp to the Chapel of San Michele, where I repose to this day. My rustic family was carried thither along with me. It was a signal honour; but I confess I regretted the broad highway, where I could watch at dawn the peasant women carrying on their heads their basketfuls of grapes

and figs and red aubergines. Time has hardly softened my regret, and I would I were still beneath the plane-tree on the Sacred Way.

“Such is my life,” ended the old Satyr. “It flows on pleasantly, gentle and unobtrusive, down all the ages of the world. If a touch of sadness mingles with the joy of it, ’tis because the gods have willed it so. Oh! my son, let us praise the gods, masters of the universe!”

Fra Mino stood thinking a while. Then he said:

“I understand now the meaning of what I saw, during that evil night, in the Chapel of San Michele. Still one point remains dark to my mind. Tell me why, old man, the Nymphs who, dwell with you, and couple with the fauns, changed into old women of squalid ugliness when they came nigh me.”

“Alas! my son,” answered the Saint, “time spares neither men nor gods. These last are immortal only in the imagination of the short-lived race of men. In reality they suffer the penalties of age, and verge, as the centuries go by, towards irreparable decay. Nymphs grow old as well as women. No rose but turns into an arid hip at last; no Nymph but ends as an ugly Witchwife. Watching as you did the frolic of my little household, you saw how the memory of their bygone youth yet beautifies the Nymphs and Fauns in the moment of their loves, and how their ardour, reanimated an instant, can reanimate their charms. But the ruin of centuries shows again directly after. Alas! alas! the race of the Nymphs is old, very old and decrepit.”

Fra Mino asked yet another question:

“Old man! if what you say is true, and you have won to blessedness by mysterious ways, if it is true — however absurd — that you are a Saint, how comes it you house in your tomb with these phantoms which know not to praise God, and which pollute with their indecencies the temple of the Lord? Answer me, old man!”

But the goat-footed Saint, without a word of answer, vanished softly away into thin air.

Seated on a mossy stone beside the spring, Fra Mino pondered the discourse he had just listened to, and found it contained, along with some passages impenetrably obscure, others that were full of clearness and enlightenment.

“This Satyr Saint,” he reflected, “maybe likened to the Sibyl, who in the pantheon of the false gods, proclaimed the coming Redeemer to the Nations. The mire of old-world falsehoods yet clings about the hoofs of his feet, but his forehead is uplifted to the light, and his lips confess the truth.”

As the shadow of the beeches was lengthening along the grassy hill-side, the Monk rose up from his stone and began to descend the narrow path that led to the House of the Sons of St. Francis. But he dared not let his eyes rest on the

flowers sleeping on the surface of the pools, for he saw in them the likeness of the wanton nymphs. He got back to his cell at the moment when the bells were sounding the *Ave Maria*. It was a small, white chamber, furnished simply with a bed, a stool, and one of the high desks writers use. On the wall a mendicant friar had painted years ago, in the manner of Giotto, a representation of the holy Marys at the foot of the Cross. Below this painting, a shelf of wood, as black and polished as the beams of an ancient oil-press, was covered with books. Of these, some were sacred, others profane, for Fra Mino was a student of the classic poets, to the end he might praise God in all the works of men, and blessed the good Virgil for having prophesied the birth of the Saviour, when the bard of Mantua declares to the Nations: *Jam redit et Virgo*. 2

On the window-sill a tall lily stood in a vase of coarse earthenware, for Fra Mino loved to trace the name of the Blessed Virgin inscribed in the gold dust of the flower's calyx. The window itself, which opened very high up in the wall, was small, but the sky could be seen from it, blue above the purple hills.

Ensconced in this pleasant tomb of his life and longings, Mino sat down before the narrow desk, with its two shelves at top, where he was accustomed to devote himself to his studies. Then, dipping his reed in the inkhorn fastened to the side of the little coffer that held his sheets of parchment, his brushes, and his colours and gold dust, he besought the flies, in the name of the Lord, not to annoy him, and began to write the account of all he had seen and heard in the Chapel of San Michele, during his night of torment, as well as on the day just done, in the woods by the stream side. And first of all, he traced these lines on the parchment:

"A true record of those things which Fra Mino, of the Order of Friars Minors, saw and heard, and which he doth here relate for the instruction of the Faithful. To the praise of Jesus Christ and the glory of the blessed and humble poor man of Christ, St. Francis. Amen."

Then he set down in order in writing, without omitting aught, all he had noted of the nymphs that turned into witches and the old man with horns on his brow, whose voice quavered in the woods like a last sigh of the Classic flute and a first prelude of the Christian harp. While he wrote, the birds sang; and night closed in slowly, blotting out the bright colours of the day. The Monk lighted his lamp, and went on with his writing. As he recounted each several marvel he had made acquaintance with, he carefully expounded its literal, and its spiritual, signification, all according to the rules of rhetoric and theology. And just as men fence about cities with walls and towers to make them strong, so he supported all his arguments with texts of Scripture. He concluded from the singular

revelations he had received: firstly, that Jesus Christ is Lord of all creatures, and is God of the Satyrs and the Pans, as well as of men. This is why St. Jerome saw in the Desert Centaurs that confessed Jesus Christ; secondly, that God had communicated to the Pagans certain glimmerings of light, to the end they might be saved. Likewise the Sibyls, for instance the Cumæan, the Egyptian and the Delphic, did these not foreshadow, amid the darkness of the Gentiles, the Holy Cradle, the Rods, the Reed, the Crown of Thorns and the Cross itself? For which reason St. Augustine admitted the Erythræan Sibyl into the City of God. Fra Mino gave thanks to God for having taught him so much learning; and a great joy flooded his heart to think Virgil was among the elect. And he wrote gleefully at the bottom of the last leaf:

“Here endeth the Apocalypse of Brother Mino, the poor man of Jesus Christ. I have seen the aureole of the blessed Saints crowning the horned forehead of the Satyr, in token that Jesus Christ hath redeemed from the shades of limbo the sages and poets of Antiquity.”

The night was already far spent when, having finished his task, Fra Mino stretched himself upon his bed to snatch a little repose. Just as he was dropping asleep, an old woman came in at the window, riding on a moonbeam. He recognized her instantly for the ugliest of the witches he had seen in the Chapel of San Michele.

“My sweet,” she said, addressing him, “what have you been doing this day? Yet we warned you, I and my pretty sisters, you must not reveal our secrets. For if you betrayed us, we told you we should kill you. And sorry I should be, for indeed I love you tenderly.”

She clipped him in her arms, called him her heavenly Adonis, her darling, her little white ass, and lavished a thousand ardent caresses on him.

Anon, when he repulsed her with a spasm of disgust,

“Child, child!” she said to him, “you scorn me, because my eyes are rimmed with red, my nostrils rotted with the acrid, fetid humour they distil, and my gums adorned with a single tooth, and that black and extravagantly long. Such is your Neæra to-day, it is too true. But if you love me, I shall once more become, by you and for you, what I was in the golden days of Saturn, when my youth was in blossom amid the blossoms of the young, flower-decked world. ’Tis love, oh! my young god, that makes the beauty of things. To restore my beauty, all that is needed is a little courage. Up, Mino, be bold and show your mettle!”

At these words, which were accompanied by appropriate gestures, Fra Mino, shuddering with fear and horror, felt himself swoon away, and slipped from his bed on to the pavement of his cell. As he fell, he seemed to catch a glimpse,

between his half-closed lids, of a nymph of perfect shape and peerless beauty, whose naked body rolled over his like waves of milk.

He woke in broad daylight, bruised and broken by his fall. The leaves of the manuscript he had written the night before still littered the desk. He read them through again, folded and sealed them with his seal, put the roll inside his gown, and unheeding the menaces the witches had twice over given him, started to carry his revelations to the Lord Bishop, whose Palace lifted its battlements above the roofs in the middle of the city. He found him donning his spurs in the Great Hall, surrounded by his men-at-arms. For the Bishop was just then at war with the Ghibellines of Florence. He asked the Monk to what he owed his visit, and on being informed of the matter, invited him there and then to read out his report. Fra Mino obeyed, and the Bishop heard out his tale to the end. He had no special lights on the subject of apparitions; but he was animated with an ardent zeal for the interests of the Faith. Without a day's delay, and not suffering the cares of the War to distract him from his purpose, he appointed twelve famous Doctors in Theology and Canon Law to examine into the affair, urging them to give a definite and speedy decision. After mature inquiry and not without again and again cross-questioning Fra Mino, the Doctors determined the best thing to do was to open the tomb of San Satiro in the Chapel of San Michele, and go through a course of special exorcisms on the spot. As to the points of doctrine raised by Fra Mino, they declined to pronounce a formal opinion, inclining however to regard as rash, frivolous and new-fangled the arguments advanced by the Franciscan.

Agreeably to the advice of the learned Doctors and by order of the Bishop, the tomb of San Satiro was opened. It was found to contain nothing but a handful of ashes, which the priests sprinkled with holy water. At this there rose a white vapour, from which issued a sound of faint and feeble groans.

The night following this pious ceremony Fra Mino dreamed that the witches, bending over his bed, were tearing his heart out of his bosom. He rose at dawn, tortured with sharp pains and devoured by a raging thirst. He dragged himself as far as the cloister well, where the doves used to drink. But no sooner had he drained down a few drops of water that filled a hollow in the well-head than he felt his heart swell within him like a sponge, and with a stifled cry to God, he choked and died.

1 "Partner of the Father's light, light of light and day of day, we break the dusk of night with psalms; help us now, Thy suppliants. Remove the darkness of our minds; scatter the demon hosts away; expel the sin of drowsiness, lest we be slack in serving Thee."

2 Now the Virgin too returns.

MESSER GUIDO CAVALCANTI

TO JULES LEMAÎTRE

MESSER GUIDO CAVALCANTI

Guido, di Messer Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, fu un de' migliori loici che avesse il mondo, et ottimo filosofo naturale.... E perciò che egli alquanto tenea della opinione degli Epicuri, si diceva tra la gente volgare che queste sue speculazioni eran solo in cercare se trovar si potesse che Iddio non fosse .1

(The Decameron of Messer Giovanni
Boccaccio, Sixth Day, Novella IX.)

DIM
NON. FVI. ME.
MINI. NON. SVM.
NON. CVRO. DO.
NNIA. ITALIA. AN.
NORVM. XX. HIC.
QVIESCO.2

(Inscription from the *Cippus of Donnia
Italia* as read by M. Jean-François
Bladé.)

Messer Guido Cavalcanti was, in the twentieth year of his age, the most agreeable and the best-built man of all the Florentine nobles. Beneath his long, dark locks, which escaping from under his cap, fell in jetty curls over his white brow, his eyes, that had a golden gleam in them, shone out with a dazzling brilliance. He possessed the arms of Hercules and the hands of a Nymph. His shoulders were broad, and his figure slim and supple. He was well skilled in breaking difficult horses and wielding heavy weapons, and a peerless rider at the ring. Whenever he passed along the city streets to hear Mass at San Giovanni or San Michele, or walked by Arno side in the water-meadows, that were pranked with flowers like a beautiful picture, if any fair ladies, going in a troop together, met him in the way, they never failed to say the one to the other with a blush: "See, yonder is Messer Guido, son of the Lord Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti. 'Tis a very St. George for comeliness, pardi!" And men report that Madonna Gemma, wife of Sandro Bujamonte, one day sent her Nurse to let him know how she

loved him with all her soul, and was like to die of longing. Nor less ardently was he invited to join the Companies the young Florentine lords were used in those days to form among themselves, feasting, supping, gaming and hunting together, and sometimes so dearly loving each other that one and all would wear garments of a like cut and colour. But with equal disdain he shunned the society of Florentine ladies and the assemblages of her young Nobles; for so proud and fierce was his humour, he took no pleasure but in solitude.

He would often stay all the day shut up in his chamber, then forth to wander solitary beneath the holm-oaks that bordered the Ema road at the hour when the first stars are a-tremble in the pale evening sky. If by chance he encountered riders of his own age, he never laughed, and said little — and that little was not always comprehensible. His strange bearing and ambiguous words were a grief and a grievance to his comrades — and above all to Messer Betto Brunelleschi, for he dearly loved Messer Guido, and had no fonder wish than to make him one of the Brotherhood which embraced the richest and the handsomest young noblemen of Florence, and of which he was himself the glory and the delight. For indeed Messer Betto Brunelleschi was reputed the fine flower of chivalry and the most perfect knight of all Tuscany — after Messer Guido.

One day as the latter was just entering the Porch of Santa Maria Novella, where the Monks of the Order of Saint Dominic kept at that time a number of books that had been brought to Italy by the Greeks, Messer Betto, who was crossing the Piazza at the moment, loudly hailed his friend:

“Hola! Guido mine,” he shouted, “whither away now, this bright day, that invites you, methinks, to go fowling in the hills rather than hide in the gloom of the Cloister yonder? Do me a favour, and come to my house at Arezzo, where I will play the flute to you, for the pleasure of seeing you smile.”

“Grammercy!” replied Messer Guido, without so much as deigning to turn his head. “I am away to see my Lady.”

And so saying, he entered the Church, which he crossed with a rapid step, recking as little of the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the Altar as of Messer Betto, sitting stiff on his horse outside the door, astounded at the words he had just heard. Guido pushed open a low portal leading to the Cloisters, followed the Cloister wall, and arrived in the Library, where Fra Sisto was painting the figures of angels. There, after saluting the good Brother, he drew out from a great painted chest one of the books newly come from Constantinople, laid it on a desk and began to turn over the leaves. It was a Treatise on Love, writ in Greek by the divine Plato. Messer Guido sighed; his hands began to tremble and his eyes filled with tears.

“Alas!” he muttered; “hid beneath these signs is the Light, and I cannot see it.”

He said thus to himself, because the knowledge of the Greek tongue was then altogether lost in the West. After many a long-drawn groan, he took the book, and kissing it, laid it in the iron chest like a beautiful dead woman in her coffin. Then he asked the good Fra Sisto to give him the Manuscript of the Speeches of Cicero, which he read, till the shades of evening, glooming down on the cypresses in the Cloister garden, spread their batlike wings over the pages of his book. For you must know Messer Guido Cavalcanti was a searcher after truth in the writings of the Ancients, and was for treading the arduous ways that lead mankind to immortality. Devoured by the noble longing of discovery, he would set out in canzones the doctrines of the old-world Sages concerning Love which is the path to Virtue.

A few days later, Messer Betto Brunelleschi came to visit him at his own house on the promenade of the Adimari, at the peep of day, the hour when the lark sings in the corn. He found him still abed, and after kissing him, said tenderly:

“My Guido, my Guido lad! put me out of my pain. Last week you told me you were on your way to visit your Lady in the Church and Cloister of Santa Maria Novella. Ever since I have been turning, turning your words in my head, without fathoming their meaning. I shall have no peace till you have given me an explanation of them. I beseech you, tell me what you meant — so far, that is, as your discretion shall suffer you, seeing the matter doth concern a lady.”

Messer Guido burst out a-laughing. Raising himself on his elbow in bed, he looked Messer Betto in the eyes.

“Friend!” said he, “the Lady I spoke to you of hath more than one habitation. The day you saw me going to visit her, I found her in the Library of Santa Maria Novella. But alack! I heard but the one half of her discourse, for she spoke to me in both of the two languages that flow like honey from her adorable lips. First she delivered me a discourse in the tongue of the Greeks, which I could not comprehend, then she addressed me in the dialect of the Latins with a wondrous wisdom. And so well pleased was I with her conversation that I am right fain to marry her.”

“Tis at the least,” said Messer Betto, “a niece of the Emperor of Constantinople, or his natural daughter.... How name you her?”

“If needs be,” answered Messer Guido, “we must give her a love name, such as every poet gives to his mistress. I will call her Diotima, in memory of Diotima of Megara, who showed the way to the lovers of Virtue. But her public and avowed name is Philosophy, and ’tis the most excellent bride a man can find. I

want no other, and I swear by the gods to be faithful unto death, which doth put an end to life and thought.”

When he heard these sentiments, Messer Betto struck his forehead with his hand and cried:

“Per Bacco! but I never guessed the riddle! Friend Guido, you have the subtlest wit under the red lily of Florence. I heartily commend your taking to wife so high a dame. Of a surety, will spring of this union a numerous progeny of canzones, sonnets and ballades. I promise to baptize you these pretty babes to the sound of my flute, with dainty mottoes galore and gallant devices. I am the more rejoiced at this spiritual wedlock, seeing it will never hinder you, when the time comes, to marry according to the flesh some fair and goodly lady of the city.”

“Nay! you are out,” returned Messer Guido. “They that celebrate the espousals of the mind should leave carnal marriage to the profane vulgar, which includes the great Lords, the Merchants and the Handicraftsmen. If like me you had known my Diotima, you would have learned, friend Betto, that she doth distinguish two sorts of men, on the one hand such as, being fruitful only by the body, strive but for that coarse and commonplace immortality that is won by the generation of children, on the other they whose soul conceives and engenders what is meet for the soul to produce, to wit the Good and Beautiful. My Diotima hath willed I should be of the second sort, and I will not go against her good pleasure, and copy the mere brutes that breed and procreate.”

Messer Betto Brunelleschi by no means approved of this resolution. He pointed out to his friend that in life we must adapt ourselves to the different conditions and modes of existence suitable to the different ages, that after the epoch of pleasures comes that of ambition, and that it was good and prudent, as youth waned, to contract alliance with some rich and noble family, affording access to the great offices of the Republic, such as Prior of the Arts and Liberty, Captain of the People, or Gonfalonier of Justice.

Seeing however that his friend only received his advice with a lip of disgust, as if it were some bitter drug, he said no more on the point, for fear of angering him, deeming it wise to trust to time, which will change men’s hearts and reverse the strongest resolutions.

“Sweet Guido,” he interposed gaily, “tell me this much at any rate. Doth your lady suffer you to have delight with pretty maids and to take part in our diversions?”

“For that matter,” replied Messer Guido, “she hath no more care of such things than of the encounters that small dog you see asleep yonder at the foot of

my bed may make in the street. And in very deed they are of no account, provided a man doth himself attach no value to them.”

Messer Betto left the room a trifle piqued at his friend’s scornful bearing. He continued to feel the liveliest affection for his friend, but thought it unbecoming to press him overmuch to attend the fêtes and entertainments he gave all the Winter long with an admirable liberality. At the same time the gentlemen of his Company resented hotly the slight the son of the Signor Cavalcante de’ Cavalcanti did them by refusing to share their society. They began to rally him on, his studies and poring over books, declaring that by dint of so feeding on parchment, like the Monks and the rats, he would end up by growing to resemble these, and would anon have nothing to show but a pointed snout and three long hairs for beard, peeping out from under a black hood, and that Madonna Gemma herself would cry out at sight of him:

“Venus, my Patroness! what a pass have his books brought my handsome St. George to! He is good for naught now but to throw away his lance and hold a writing-reed in hand instead.” So they miscalled him sore, saying he toyed only with the bookworms and spiders, and was tied to the apron-strings of Mistress Philosophia. Nor did they stop short at such-like light raillery, but let it be understood he was too learned by far to be a good Christian, that he was given over to Magic Arts, and held converse with the Devils of Hell.

“Folk do not lurk in hiding like that,” they said to each other, “for any reason but to foregather with the Devils, male and female, and get gold of them as the price of revolting and shameful acts.”

To crown all, they charged him with sharing those false and pernicious doctrines of Epicurus which had already seduced an Emperor at Naples and a Pope in Rome, and threatened to turn the peoples of Europe into a herd of swine, without a thought of God and their own immortal souls. “A mighty fine gain,” they ended up, “when his studies have brought him to forswear the Holy Trinity!” This last charge they bruited abroad was the most formidable of all, and might easily work ruin on Messer Guido.

Now Messer Guido Cavalcanti was well aware of the mockery they made of him in the Companies by reason of the careful heed he had of eternal things; and this was why he shunned the society of living men and sought rather to the dead.

In those days the Church of San Giovanni was surrounded with Roman tombs. Thither would Messer Guido often come at *Ave Maria* and meditate far into the silent night. He believed, as the Chronicles reported, that this fair Church of San Giovanni had been a Pagan Temple before it was a Christian Church, and the thought pleased his soul, which was enamoured of the old-world mysteries. Especially he loved to look on these tombs, where the sign of the

Cross found no place, but which bore Latin inscriptions and were adorned with carven figures of men and gods. They were long cubes of white marble, on the sides of which could be made out representations of banquets and hunting parties, the death of Adonis, the fight of Lapithæ and Centaurs, the refusal of the chaste Hippolytus, the Amazons. Messer Guido would read the lettering with anxious care, and try hard to penetrate the meaning of these fables. One tomb in particular occupied him more than all the rest, for it showed him two Loves, each holding a torch, and he was curious to discover the nature of these two Loves. Well! one night that he was pondering on these things more deeply than ever, a shadow rose up above the lid of the tomb — a luminous shadow, as when you see, or fancy you see, the moon shining faintly through a cloud. Gradually it took the shape of a beautiful virgin, and said thus in a voice softer than the reeds waving in the wind:

“I am she that sleeps within this tomb, and I am called Julia Læta. I lost the light on my marriage-day, at the age of sixteen years, three months and nine days. Since then, whether I am, or am not, I cannot tell. Never question the dead, stranger, for they see naught, and a thick night environs them. ’Tis said that such as in life knew the cruel joys of Venus roam the glades of a dense forest of myrtles. For me who died a virgin, I sleep a dreamless sleep. They have graven two Loves on the stone of my sepulchre. One gives mortals the light of day; the other quenches it in their tender eyes for ever. The countenance of both is the same, a smiling countenance, for birth and death are two twin brothers, and all is joy to the Immortal Gods. I have spoken.”

The voice fell silent, like the rustling of leaves when the wind drops. The transparent shadow vanished away in the light of dawn, which descended clear and white on the hills; and the tombs of San Giovanni grew wan and silent once again in the morning air. And Messer Guido pondered:

“The truth I foresaw, hath been made manifest to me. Is it not writ in the Book the Priests use, ‘Shall the dead praise Thee, O Lord?’ The dead are without thought or knowledge, and the divine Epicurus was well advised when he enfranchised the living from the vain terrors of the life to come.”

A troop of horsemen pricking across the Piazza abruptly broke up his meditations. It was Messer Betto and his Company away to hunt the cranes along the brookside of Peretola.

“So ho!” cried one of them, whose name was Bocca, “see yonder, Messer Guido the Philosopher, who scorns us for our good life and gentle ways and merry doings. He seems half frozen.”

“And well he may be,” put in Messer Doria, who was reputed a wag. “His lady, the Moon, whom he kisses tenderly all night, hath hied her behind the hills

to sleep with some shepherd swain. He is eat up with jealousy; look you, how green he is!”

They spurred their horses among the tombs, and drew up in a ring about Messer Guido.

“Nay! nay! Messer Doria,” returned Bocca, “the lady Moon is too round and bright for so black a gallant. If you would know his mistresses, they be here. Here he comes to find them in their bed, where he is less like to be stung of fleas than of scorpions.”

“Fie! Out upon the vile necromancer!” exclaimed Messer Giordano, crossing himself; “see what learning leads to! Folk disown God, and go fornicating in Pagan graveyards.”

Leaning against the Church wall, Messer Guido let the riders have their say. When he judged they had voided all the froth of their shallow brains over him:

“Gentle cavaliers,” he answered, smiling, “you are at home. I am your host, and courtesy constrains me to receive your insults without reply.”

So saying, he bounded over the tombs and walked quietly away. The horsemen looked at one another in amazement; then bursting out laughing, they gave spur to their steeds. As they were galloping along the Peretola Road, Messer Bocca said to Messer Betto:

“Who can doubt now but this Guido is gone mad? He told us we were at home in the graveyard. And to say such a thing, he must needs have lost his wits.”

“True it is,” replied Messer Betto, “I cannot imagine what he meant to have us understand by talking in such a sort. But he is used to expressing himself in dark sayings and subtle parables. He hath tossed us a bone this time must be opened to find the marrow.”

“Pardi!” ejaculated Messer Giordano; “my dog may have this bone to gnaw, and the Pagan that threw it to boot.”

They soon reached the banks of the Peretola brook, whence the cranes may be seen rising in flocks at daybreak. During the chase, which was abundantly successful, Messer Betto Brunelleschi never ceased pondering the words Guido had used. And by dint of much thinking, he discovered their signification. Hailing Messer Bocca with loud cries, he said to him:

“Come hither, Messer Bocca! I have just guessed what it was Messer Guido meant us to understand. He told us we were at home in a graveyard, because the ignorant be for all the world like dead men, who, according to the Epicurean doctrine, have no faculty of thought or knowledge.”

Messer Bocca replied, shrugging his shoulders, he understood better than most how to fly a Flanders hawk, to make knife-play with his enemies, and to

upset a girl, and this was knowledge sufficient for his state in life.

Messer Guido continued for several years more to study the science of Love. He embodied his reflexions in canzones, which it is not given to all men to interpret, composing a book of these verses that was borne in triumph through the streets, garlanded with laurel. Then, seeing the purest souls are not without alloy of terrestrial passions, and life bears us one and all along in its sinuous and stormy course, it fell out that at the turning-point of youth and age, Messer Guido was seduced by the ambitions of the flesh and the powers of this world. He wedded, to further his projects of aggrandizement, the daughter of the Lord Farinata degli Uberti, the same who one time reddened the Arbia with the blood of the Florentines. He threw himself into the quarrels of the citizens with all the pride and impetuosity of his nature. And he took for mistresses the Lady Mandetta and the Lady Giovanna, who represented the one the Albigenians, the other the Ghibellines. It was the time when Messer Dante Alighieri was Prior of the Arts and Liberty. The city was divided into two hostile camps, those of the Bianchi and the Neri. One day when the principal citizens were assembled in the Piazza of the Frescobaldi, the Bianchi on one side the square and the Neri on the other, to assist at the obsequies of a noble lady of Florence, the Doctors and the Knights were seated as the custom was, on raised benches, while in front of them the younger men sat on the ground on rush mats. One of the latter standing up to settle his cloak, those who were opposite thought he was for defying them. They started to their feet in turn, and bared their swords. Instantly every one unsheathed, and the kinsmen of the dead lady had all the difficulty in the world to separate the combatants.

From that day, Florence ceased to be a town gladdened by the work of its handicraftsmen, and became a forest full of wolves ravening for each other's blood. Messer Guido shared these savage passions, and grew gloomy, restless and sullen. Never a day passed but he exchanged sword-thrusts with the Neri in the streets of Florence, where in old days he had meditated on the nature and constitution of the soul. More than once he had felt the assassin's dagger on his flesh, before he was banished with the rest of his faction and confined in the plague-stricken town of Sarzana. For six months he languished there, sick with fever and hate. And when eventually the Bianchi were recalled, he came back to his native city a dying man.

In the year 1300, on the third day after the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he found strength enough to drag himself as far as his own fair Church of San Giovanni. Worn out with fatigue and grief, he lay down on the tomb of Julia Læta, who in the old days had revealed to him the mysteries the profane know nothing of. It was the hour when the Church bells ring out through the

quivering air of evening a long-drawn farewell to the setting sun. Messer Betto Brunelleschi, who was crossing the Piazza on his way home from his country house, saw amid the tombs two haggard falcon's eyes burning in a fleshless face, and recognizing the friend of his youth, was seized with wonder and pity.

He approached him, and kissing him as he used in former days, said with a sigh:

“Ah! Guido mine! what fire is it hath consumed you away thus? You burned up your life in science first, and then in public affairs. I beseech you, quench somewhat the ardour of your spirit; comrade, let us husband our strength, and, as Riccardo the blacksmith says, make up a fire to last.”

But Guido Cavalcanti put his hand on his lips.

“Hush!” he whispered, “hush! not a word more, friend Betto. I wait my lady, her who shall console me for so many vain loves that in this world have betrayed me and that I have betrayed. It is equally cruel and useless to think and to act. This I know. The curse is not so much to live, for I see you are well and hearty, friend Betto, and many another man is the same. The curse is not to live, but to know we live. The curse is to be conscious and to will. Happily there is a remedy for these evils. Let us say no more; I await the lady whom I have never wronged, for never have I doubted but she was gentle and true-hearted, and I have learned by much pondering how peaceful and secure it is to slumber on her bosom. Many fables have been told of her bed and dwelling-places. But I have not believed the lies of the ignorant crowd. So it is, she cometh to me as a mistress to her lover, her brow garlanded with flowers and her lips smiling.”

He broke off with these words, and fell dead over the ancient tomb. His body was buried without any great pomp in the Cloister of Santa Maria Novella.

1 “Guido, son of Messer Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, was one of the best Logicians the world held, and a most finished Natural Philosopher.... And forasmuch as in some degree he held by the opinion of the Epicureans, it was therefore said among the vulgar folk how that these his speculations were only pursued for to discover if it might be there was no God.”

2 “To the Gods of the Lower World. — I was not. I remember. I am not and I heed not. I, Donnia Italia, a maid of twenty, rest here.”

LUCIFER

TO LOUIS GANDERAX

LUCIFER

E si compiacque tanto Spinello di farlo orribile e contrafatto, che si dice (tanto può alcuna fiata l'immaginazione) che la detta figura da lui dipinta gli apparve in sogno, domandandolo dove egli l'avesse veduta si brutta. 1

(*Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori* , da Messer Giorgio Vasari.— “Vita di Spinello.”)

Andrea Tafi, painter and worker-in-mosaic of Florence, had a wholesome terror of the Devils of Hell, particularly in the watches of the night, when it is given to the powers of Darkness to prevail. And the worthy man's fears were not unreasonable, for in those days the Demons had good cause to hate the Painters, who robbed them of more souls with a single picture than a good little Preaching Friar could do in thirty sermons. No doubt the Monk, to instil a soul-saving horror in the hearts of the faithful, would describe to the utmost of his powers “that day of wrath, that day of mourning,” which is to reduce the universe to ashes, *teste David et Sibylla* , borrowing his deepest voice and bellowing through his hands to imitate the Archangel's last trump. But there! it was “all sound and fury, signifying nothing,” whereas a painting displayed on a Chapel wall or in the Cloister, showing Jesus Christ sitting on the Great White Throne to judge the living and the dead, spoke unceasingly to the eyes of sinners, and through the eyes chastened such as had sinned by the eyes or otherwise.

It was in the days when cunning masters were depicting at Santa-Croce in Florence and the Campo Santo of Pisa the mysteries of Divine Justice. These works were drawn according to the account in verse which Dante Alighieri, a man very learned in Theology and in Canon Law, wrote in days gone by of his journey to Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, whither by the singular great merits of his lady, he was able to make his way alive. So everything in these paintings was instructive and true, and we may say surely less profit is to be had of reading the most full and ample Chronicle than from contemplating such representative, works of art. Moreover, the Florentine masters took heed to paint, under the shade of orange groves, on the flower-starred turf, fair ladies and gallant knights, with Death lying in wait for them with his scythe, while they

were discoursing of love to the sound of lutes and viols. Nothing was better fitted to convert carnal-minded sinners who quaff forgetfulness of God on the lips of women. To rebuke the covetous, the painter would show to the life the Devils pouring molten gold down the throat of Bishop or Abbess, who had commissioned some work from him and then scamped his pay.

This is why the Demons in those days were bitter enemies of the painters, and above all of the Florentine painters, who surpassed all the rest in subtlety of wit. Chiefly they reproached them with representing them under a hideous guise, with the heads of bird and fish, serpents' bodies and bats' wings. This sore resentment which they felt will come out plainly in the history of Spinello of Arezzo.

Spinello Spinelli was sprung of a noble family of Florentine exiles, and his graciousness of mind matched his gentle birth; for he was the most skilful painter of his time. He wrought many and great works at Florence; and the Pisans begged him to complete Giotto's wall-paintings in their Campo Santo, where the dead rest beneath roses in holy earth shipped from Jerusalem. At last, after working long years in divers cities and getting much gold, he longed to see once more the good city of Arezzo, his mother. The men of Arezzo had not forgotten how Spinello, in his younger days, being enrolled in the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Misericordia, had visited the sick and buried the dead in the plague of 1383. They were grateful to him beside for having by his works spread the fame of their city over all Tuscany. For all these reasons they welcomed him with high honours on his return.

Still full of vigour in his old age, he undertook important tasks in his native town. His wife would tell him:

"You are rich, Spinello. Do you rest, and leave younger men to paint instead of you. It is meet a man should end his days in a gentle, religious quiet. It is tempting God to be for ever raising new and worldly monuments, mere heathen towers of Babel. Quit your colours and your varnishes, Spinello, or they will destroy your peace of mind."

So the good dame would preach, but he refused to listen, for his one thought was to increase his fortune and renown. Far from resting on his laurels, he arranged a price with the Wardens of Sant' Agnolo for a history of St. Michael, that was to cover all the Choir of the Church and contain an infinity of figures. Into this enterprise he threw himself with extraordinary ardour. Rereading the parts of Scripture that were to be his inspiration, he set himself to study deeply every line and every word of these passages. Not content with drawing all day long in his workshop, he persisted in working both at bed and board; while at dusk, walking below the hill on whose brow Arezzo proudly lifts her walls and

towers, he was still lost in thought. And we may say the story of the Archangel was already limned in his brain when he started to sketch out the incidents in red chalk on the plaster of the wall. He was soon done tracing these outlines; then he fell to painting above the high altar the scene that was to outshine all the others in brilliancy. For it was his intent therein to glorify the leader of the hosts of Heaven for the victory he won before the beginning of time. Accordingly Spinello represented St. Michael fighting in the air against the serpent with seven heads and ten horns, and he figured with delight, in the bottom part of the picture, the Prince of the Devils, Lucifer, under the semblance of an appalling monster. The figures seemed to grow to life of themselves under his hand. His success was beyond his fondest hopes; so hideous was the countenance of Lucifer, none could escape the nightmare of its foulness. The face haunted the painter in the streets and even went home with him to his lodging.

Presently when night was come, Spinello lay-down in his bed beside his wife and fell asleep. In his slumbers he saw an Angel as comely as St. Michael, but black; and the Angel said to him:

“Spinello, I am Lucifer. Tell me, where had you seen me, that you should paint me as you have, under so ignominious a likeness?”

The old painter answered trembling, that he had never seen him with his eyes, never having gone down alive into Hell, like Messer Dante Alighieri; but that, in depicting him as he had done, he was for expressing in visible lines and colours the hideousness of sin.

Lucifer shrugged his shoulders, and the hill of San Gemignano seemed of a sudden to heave and stagger.

“Spinello,” he went on, “will you do me the pleasure to reason awhile with me? I am no mean Logician; He you pray to knows that.”

Receiving no reply, Lucifer proceeded in these terms:

“Spinello, you have read the books that tell of me. You know of my enterprise, and how I forsook Heaven to become the Prince of this World. A tremendous adventure, — and a unique one, had not the Giants in like fashion assailed the god Jupiter, as yourself have seen, Spinello, recorded on an ancient tomb where this Titanic war is carved in marble.”

“It is true,” said Spinello, “I have seen the tomb, shaped like a great tun, in the Church of Santa Reparata at Florence. ’Tis a fine work of the Romans.”

“Still,” returned Lucifer, smiling, “the Giants are not pictured on it in the shape of frogs or chameleons or the like hideous and horrid creatures.”

“True,” replied the painter, “but then they had not attacked the true God, but only a false idol of the Pagans. ’Tis a mighty difference. The fact is clear,

Lucifer, you raised the standard of revolt against the true and veritable King of Earth and Heaven.”

“I will not deny it,” said Lucifer. “And how many sorts of sins do you charge me with for that?”

“Seven, it is like enough,” the painter answered, “and deadly sins one and all.”

“Seven!” exclaimed the Angel of Darkness; “well! the number is canonical. Everything goes by sevens in my history, which is close bound up with God’s. Spinello, you deem me proud, angry and envious. I enter no protest, provided you allow that glory was my only aim. Do you deem me covetous? Granted again; Covetousness is a virtue for Princes. For Gluttony and Lust, if you hold me guilty, I will not complain. Remains *Indolence* .”

As he pronounced the word, Lucifer crossed his arms across his breast, and shaking his gloomy head, tossed his flaming locks:

“Tell me, Spinello, do you really think I am indolent? Do you take me for a coward? Do you hold that in my revolt I showed a lack of courage? Nay! you cannot. Then it was but just to paint me in the guise of a hero, with a proud countenance. You should wrong no one, not even the Devil. Cannot you see that you insult Him you make prayer to, when you give Him for adversary a vile, monstrous toad? Spinello, you are very ignorant for a man of your age. I have a great mind to pull your ears, as they do to an ill-conditioned schoolboy.”

At this threat, and seeing the arm of Lucifer already stretched out towards him, Spinello clapped his hand to his head and began to howl with terror.

His good wife, waking up with a start, asked him what ailed him. He told her with chattering teeth, how he had just seen Lucifer and had been in terror for his ears.

“I told you so,” retorted the worthy dame; “I knew all those figures you will go on painting on the walls would end by driving you mad.”

“I am not mad,” protested the painter. “I saw him with my own eyes; and he is beautiful to look on, albeit proud and sad. First thing to-morrow I will blot out the horrid figure I have drawn and set in its place the shape I beheld in my dream. For we must not wrong even the Devil himself.”

“You had best go to sleep again,” scolded his wife. “You are talking stark nonsense, and unchristian to boot.”

Spinello tried to rise, but his strength failed him and he fell back unconscious on his pillow. He lingered on a few days in a high fever, and then died.

1

“And so successful was Spinello with his horrible and portentous Production that it was commonly reported — so great is alway the force of fancy — that the said figure (of Lucifer trodden underfoot by St. Michael in the Altar-piece of the Church of St. Agnolo at Arezzo) painted by him had appeared to the artist in a dream, and asked him in what place he had beheld him under so brutish a form.”

Lives of the most Excellent Painters , by Giorgio Vasari.— “Life of Spinello.”

THE LOAVES OF BLACK BREAD

TO MADEMOISELLE MARY FINALY

THE LOAVES OF BLACK BREAD

*Tu tibi divitias stolidissime congeris amplas
Negasque micam pauperi;
Advenit ecce dies qua saevis ignibus ardens
Rogabis aquae guttulam. 1*

(*Navis stultifera* , Sebastian Brandt, 1507, fol, xix.)

In those days Nicolas Nerli was a banker in the noble city of Florence. Tierce was no sooner sounded than he was at his desk, and at none he was seated there still, poring all day long over the figures he wrote in his table-books. He lent money to the Emperor and to the Pope. And if he did not lend to the Devil, it was only because he was afraid of bad debts with him they call the Wily One, and who is full of cunning and trickery. Nicolas Nerli was bold and unscrupulous; he had won great riches and robbed many folks of their own. Wherefore he was highly honoured in the city of Florence. He dwelt in a Palace where the light of God's day entered only by narrow windows; and this was a wise precaution, for the rich man's house must be a castle, and they who possess much wealth do well to defend by force what they have gotten by cunning.

Accordingly the windows were guarded with bars and the doors with chains. Outside, the walls were painted in fresco by clever craftsmen, who had depicted thereon the Virtues under the likeness of women, the Patriarchs, the Prophets and the Kings of Israel. Tapestries hung in the rooms within, displaying the histories of Alexander and Tristram, as they are told us in legends. Nicolas Nerli set all the city talking of his wealth by the pious foundations he established. He had raised an Hospital beyond the walls, the frieze of which, carved and painted, represented the most honourable actions of his own life; in gratitude for the sums of money he had given towards the completion of Santa Maria Novella, his portrait was suspended in the choir of that Church. In it he was shown kneeling, with praying hands, at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, easily recognizable by his cap of red worsted, his furred hood, his yellow face swimming in fatness and his little keen eyes. His good wife, Monna Bismantova, a worthy-looking woman with a mournful air, and seeming as though no man could ever have taken aught of pleasure with her, was on the other side of the Virgin in the humble attitude of supplication. Nicolas Nerli was one of the chiefest citizens of the Republic;

seeing he had never spoken against the laws, and because he had never regarded the poor nor such folk as the great and powerful condemn to fine and exile, nothing had lowered in the estimation of the Magistrates the high repute he had won in their eyes by reason of his great riches.

Returning one winter evening later than usual to his Palace, he was surrounded on the threshold by a band of half-naked mendicants who held out their hands and asked alms.

He repulsed them with hard words. But hunger making them as fierce and bold as wolves, they formed a circle round him, and begged him for bread in hoarse, lamentable voices. He was just stooping to pick up stones to throw at them when he saw one of his serving-men coming, carrying on his head a basketful of loaves of black bread, intended for the stablemen, kitchen helpers and gardeners.

He signed to the pantler to approach, and diving both hands into the basket, tossed the loaves to the starving wretches. Then entering the house, he went to bed and fell asleep. In the night, he was smitten with apoplexy and died so suddenly he believed himself still in his bed when he saw, in a place "as dark as Erebus," St. Michael the Archangel shining in the brightness that issued from his own presence.

Balance in hand, the Archangel was engaged in filling the scales. Recognizing in the scale that hung lowest certain jewels belonging to widow women that he had in pledge, a great heap of clippings from pieces he had filched dishonestly, and sundry very fine gold coins which were unique and which he had acquired by usury or fraud, Nicolas Nerli comprehended it was his own life, now come to an end, that St. Michael was at that instant weighing before his eyes.

"Good Sir!" he said, "good St. Michael! if you put in the one scale all the lucre I have gotten in my life, set in the other, if it please you, the noble foundations whereby I have so splendidly shown my piety. Forget not the Duomo of Santa Maria Novella, to which I contributed a good third; nor my Hospital beyond the walls, that I built entirely out of my own pocket."

"Never fear, Nicolas Nerli," answered the Archangel; "I will forget nothing."

And with his own heavenly hands he set in the lighter scale the Duomo of Santa Maria Novella and the Hospital with its frieze all carved and painted. But the scale did not drop an inch.

At this the Banker was sorely disquieted.

"Good St. Michael! think again. You have not put this side of the balance my fine holy-water stoup I gave to San Giovanni, nor the pulpit in Sant' Andrea,

where the baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ is depicted life-size. The artist charged me a pretty penny for it.”

The Archangel put both pulpit and stoup atop of the Hospital in the scale, but still it never stirred. Nicolas Nerli began to feel a cold sweat bathing his brow.

“Good Sir! dear Archangel!” he asked, “are you quite certain your balances are true?”

St. Michael replied, smiling, that they were of a different pattern from the balances the brokers of Paris use and the money-changers of Venice, and were precisely accurate.

“What!” sighed Nicolas Nerli, his face as white as chalk. “Duomo, pulpit, basin, Hospital with all its beds, do they weigh no more than a bit of straw, a pinch of down from a bird’s breast?”

“See for yourself, Nicolas!” said the Archangel; “so far the weight of your iniquities much outweighs the light load of your good works.”

“Then I must go to Hell,” cried the Florentine; and his teeth chattered with horror.

“Patience, Nicolas Nerli,” returned the Weigher of Souls, “patience! we are not done yet. There is something left.”

So saying, the Blessed St. Michael took the loaves of black bread the rich man had tossed the night before to the poor beggars. He laid them in the scale containing the good works, which instantly fell, while the other rose, and the two scales remained level. The beam dropped neither to right nor left, and the needle marked the exact equality of the two loads.

The Banker could not believe his eyes; but the glorious Archangel said solemnly:

“See, Nicolas Nerli; you are good neither for Heaven nor Hell. Begone! Go back to Florence! multiply through the city the loaves you gave last night with your own hand, in the dusk, when no man saw you — and you shall be saved. It is not enough that Heaven open its doors to the thief that repented and the harlot that wept. The mercy of God is infinite, and able to save even a rich man. Do this; multiply the loaves whose weight you see weighing down my balances. Begone!”

Then Nicholas Nerli awoke in his bed. He resolved to follow faithfully the counsel of the Archangel, and multiply the bread of the poor, and so enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

For the three years he spent on earth after his first death, he was very pitiful to the unfortunate and a great giver of alms.

1 “You heap up in your folly ample riches for yourself, and refuse a crumb of bread to the poor man; lo! the day is at hand when burning in cruel flames, you

shall beg for a drop of water.” — *Ship of Fools*.

THE MERRY-HEARTED BUFFALMACCO

TO EUGÈNE MÜNTZ

THE MERRY-HEARTED BUFFALMACCO

Buonamico di Cristofano detto Buffalmacco pittore Fiorentino, il qual fu discepolo d' Andrea Tafi, e come uomo burlevole celebrato da Messer Giovanni Boccaccio nel suo Decamerone, fu come si sa carissimo compagno di Bruno e di Calendrino pittori ancor essi faceti e piacevole, e, come si può vedere nell' opere sue sparse per tutta Toscana, di assai buon giudizio nell' arte sua del dipignere.

*(Vite de' più eccellenti pittori , da Messer Giorgio Vasari— “Vita di Buonamico Buffalmacco.”)*¹

1”Buonamico di Cristofano, known as Buffalmacco, a Florentine painter, the same that was pupil of Andrea Tafi, and celebrated as a burlesque character by Messer Giovanni Boccaccio in his *Decameron* was as we know bosom friend of Bruno and Calendrino, also painters and of an even more witty and merry humour than himself, and as may be seen in his works scattered throughout Tuscany, of no mean judgement in his art of painting.” (*Lives of the most Excellent Painters* by Messer Giorgio Vasari.— “Life of Buonamico Buffalmacco.”)

THE COCKROACHES

In his callow youth, Buonamico Cristofani, Florentine, surnamed Buffalmacco by reason of his merry humour, served his apprenticeship in the workshop of Andrea Tafi, painter and worker-in-mosaic. Now the said Tafi was a very knowledgeable master. Sojourning at Venice in the days when Apollonius was covering the walls of San Marco with mosaics, he had discovered by means of a trick certain secrets the Greek craftsmen were for keeping sedulously to themselves. Returning to his native city, he won so high a repute in the art of composing pictures by arranging together a countless number of little differently coloured cubes of glass, he could not supply all the demands addressed to him for works of the sort, and all day and every day, from matins to vespers, he was busy, mounted on a scaffold in some Church or other, depicting the dead Christ, or Christ in His glory, the Patriarchs and Prophets, or the history of Job or of Noah. And as he was likewise keen to paint in fresco, with pounded colours, in the manner of the Greeks, which was then the only one known, he refused himself all rest, and gave his apprentices none either. He used to tell them:

“They who like myself are in possession of noble secrets and excel in their art should keep both mind and hand ceaselessly active to carry out their enterprises, so as to win much wealth and leave a long memory behind them. And if I, old and broken down as I am, spare myself no trouble, you are bound to do your utmost to help me with all your strength, which is fresh, hearty and undiminished.”

And in order that his colours, his tesserae of molten glass and his impastos might be all ready prepared by dawn of day, he forced the lads to rise in the middle of the night. Nothing could well be more hateful to Buffalmacco, who was in the habit of supping plentifully, and loved to run the streets at an hour when, as they say, all cats are grey. He went to bed late and slept sound, his conscience being clear enough after all. Accordingly, when Tafi’s shrill voice woke him up out of his beauty sleep, he would only turn round on his pillow and pretend to be deaf. But his master invariably persisted, and at a pinch would go into the apprentice’s room and very soon have the sheets dragged off the bed and a jug of cold water emptied over the sluggard’s head.

Poor Buffalmacco, shivering and half dressed, would away grumbling, to grind the colours in the dark, cold workroom, cudgelling his wits the while,

grinding and cursing all the time, to think of some way of escaping such harsh and humiliating treatment in future. Long he sought in vain; but his mind was an active one, and one morning early a happy thought struck him.

To put this in execution, Buffalmacco waited till his master was out of the way. Directly day broke, Andrea Tafi, as his habit was, pocketed the flask of Chianti and the three eggs that formed his regular breakfast, and bidding his pupils melt the glass tesserae according to the directions, and take every possible pains, went off to work in the famous church of San Giovanni, a marvellously beautiful building, constructed with admirable art in the Classical manner. At the time he was executing on its walls a series of mosaics representing the Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, Powers, Thrones and Dominions; the chief acts of the Almighty, from the Creation of Light to the Deluge; the history of Joseph and his brethren, the history of Jesus Christ from the moment He was conceived in His Mother's womb till His Ascension into Heaven, and the life of St. John Baptist. Seeing the infinite pains he took to fix the pieces truly in the cement and arrange them artistically, he expected both profit and fame as the result of this great work and the host of figures it contained. Then, directly the master was gone, Buffalmacco hastened to make his preparations for the enterprise he was bent upon. He went down into the cellar, which, communicating as it did with a baker's next door, was full of cockroaches drawn thither by the smell of the sacks of flour. Everybody knows how cockroaches, or kitchen-beetles, swarm in bakeries, inns and corn-mills. These are a sort of crawling, stinking insects, with long, ungainly, shaggy legs and an ugly shell of a dirty yellow.¹

During the Civil Wars that stained the Arbia red and fertilized the olive-yards with the blood of nobles, these loathsome insects had two names in Tuscany: the Florentines called them Siennese, and the Siennese Florentines.²

The good Buffalmacco laughed to see the creatures all moving up and down and in and out, looking for all the world like tiny shields of a host of pigmy knights jousting in a fairy tourney.

"Ah, ah!" he cried to himself, "they are may-bugs bedevilled, that's what they are! They would not enjoy the springtime, and Jupiter punished them for their sluggishness. He has condemned them to crawl about in the dark, weighed down by their useless wings — an object-lesson to men to make the most of life in the heyday of youth and love."

This was what Buffalmacco said to himself; for he was ready enough, like other folk, to see in nature a symbol of his own passions and inclinations, which were to drink, to divert himself with pretty women and sleep his fill in a warm bed in winter and a nice cool one in summer.

However, he had not visited the cellar to ponder on symbols and emblems, and he was not long in carrying out his plan. He caught two dozen of the cockroaches, without regard to sex or age, and popped them in a bag he had brought with him for the purpose. This done, he proceeded to hide the bag under his bed, and returned to the workroom, where his comrades Bruno and Calendrino were painting, from the master's sketches, the good St. Francis receiving the stigmata, and meantime devising some way of hoodwinking Memmi the cobbler, whose wife was comely and obliging.

Buffalmacco, who was not less expert, far from it, than his two comrades, mounted the ladder and started painting the wings of the seraphic crucifix that came down from heaven to mark the Blessed Saint with the five wounds of love, taking the utmost pains to blend in the celestial pinions all the tenderest hues of the rainbow. The task occupied him all day, and when old Tafi came back from San Giovanni, he could not refrain from bestowing a few words of commendation on his pupil. This cost him no small effort, for age and riches had made him both cross and critical.

"My lads," he said, addressing the apprentices, "those wings are painted with a good deal of spirit. Buffalmacco might go far in the art of painting, if he would only apply himself more vigorously. But there, his mind is far too much set on self-indulgence; and great achievements can only be accomplished by steady labour. Now Calendrino here would beat you all, with his industry — if he were not a born fool."

In such fashion Andrea Tafi improved the occasion with a proper severity. Then, having said his say, he went to the kitchen to take his supper, which consisted of a bit of salt fish; after that he betook himself to his chamber, lay down in his bed, and was soon snoring. Meantime Buffalmacco made his usual round through every quarter of the city where wine was to be had cheap and girls cheaper still. This done, he got home again half an hour or so before the time Tafi generally woke. He drew out the bag from under his bed, took the cockroaches one by one, and by means of a short, sharp needle fastened a little wax taper on the back of each. Lighting the tapers, he let the insects loose, one after the other, in the room. The creatures are too stupid to feel pain, or if they do, to manifest any great panic. They set off crawling over the floor, at a pace which surprise and perhaps some vague terror made a trifle quicker than usual. Before long they started describing circles, not because it is, as Plato says, a perfect figure, but as a result of the instinct that always makes insects turn round and round, in their efforts to escape any unknown danger. Buffalmacco looked on from the vantage-ground of his bed, on which he had thrown himself, and congratulated himself on the success of his device. And indeed nothing could be

more marvellous than these lights showing a miniature presentment of the harmony of the spheres, such as it is set out by Aristotle and his commentators. The cockroaches themselves were invisible; only the little flames they carried could be seen, which seemed to be all alive. Just as these same lights were weaving in the darkness of the room more cycles and epicycles than ever Ptolemy and the Arabs observed as they watched the motions of the planets, Tafi's voice made itself heard, shriller than ever, what with a cold in the head and what with annoyance.

"Buffalmacco! Buffalmacco, I say!" screamed the old fellow, coughing and spitting, "get up, I say! Get up, you scoundrel! In less than an hour's time, it will be broad daylight. The bugs in your bed must be built like very Venuses, you are so loath to leave 'em. Up, you sluggard! If you don't rise this instant, I'll drag you from between the sheets by the hair of your head and your long ears!"

These were the sort of terms in which the master would call his pupil out of bed in the dusk of every morning, such was his zeal for painting and mosaic-work. On this occasion receiving no reply, he drew on his hose, but without taking time to pull them any higher than his knees, and started for his apprentice's bedroom, stumbling at every step. This was exactly what Buffalmacco expected, and directly he heard the clatter of his master's footsteps on the stairs, he turned his nose to the wall and pretended to be fast asleep. And there was old Tafi shouting up the stairs:

"Hilloa! but you're a grand sleeper. I'll have you out of your slumbers, I will, though you should be dreaming this very moment that the eleven thousand virgins are slipping into your bed, begging you to teach 'em what's what."

With these words on his lips, Andrea Tafi shoved the door of the room violently open.

Then, catching sight of the points of fire running all over the floor, he stopped dead on the landing and fell a-trembling in every limb.

"They're devils," he thought, "never a doubt of it, — devils and evil spirits. Why! they move with a sort of mathematical precision, which is their strong point, I've always been told. Naturally the Demons hate us painters, who depict them under hideous shapes, in contrast with the Angels we represent in glory, an aureole about their brows and waving wings of dazzling splendour. The unhappy boy is beset with devils; I can count at least a thousand around his pallet. No doubt he has angered Lucifer himself, by drawing some horrible picture of him. 'Tis only too likely these ten thousand imps here will leap upon him and carry him off alive to Hell. His doom is fixed. And alack! I have myself figured, in mosaic and other ways, very odious caricatures of Devils, and they have good reason to bear me a grudge too."

The thought redoubled his fears, and hauling up his hose, he took to his heels, too much terrified to think of facing the hundred thousand hobgoblins he had seen wheeling round and round with bodies of fire, and dashed down the stairs as fast as ever his old legs would carry him. Buffalmacco had a fine laugh under the sheets, and for once in a way slept on till broad daylight. Nor did his master ever again dare to go and wake him.

1 It would be better to speak of the wing-cases. “Shell” is an utterly unsuitable word — not in the least fitting. The Oriental cockroach is in question, an insect familiar in almost every part of Europe.

2 In Russia they are termed Prussians, and in Prussia Russians. The French call them *cafards* (canting creatures, hypocrites).

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THE ASCENDING UP OF ANDREA TAFI

Andrea Tafi, of Florence, being chosen to decorate the cupola of San Giovanni with mosaics, carried out the said work in the most perfect fashion. Every figure was treated in the Greek manner, which Tafi had learned during his sojourn at Venice, where he had seen workmen busy adorning the walls of San Marco. He had even brought back with him from that city a Greek by name Apollonius, who knew excellent secrets for designing in mosaic. This Apollonius was a skilful workman and a very clever man. He knew the proportions to be given to the different parts of the human body and the material for mixing the best cement.

Fearing the Greek might carry his knowledge and address to some other painter of the city, Andrea Tafi never left his side day or night. Every morning he took him with him to San Giovanni, and brought him home every evening to his own house, facing San Michele, and made him sleep there with his two apprentices, Bruno and Buffalmacco, in a room separated merely by a partition from his own bed-chamber. And as this partition left half a foot between the top and the beams of the ceiling, whatever was said in one room could easily be overheard in the other.

Now Tafi was a man of decent manners and pious. He was not like some painters who, on leaving the Churches where they have been depicting God creating the world and the infant Jesus in his holy mother's arms, go straight to houses of ill fame to play dice and drink, play the pipes and cuddle the girls. He had never wished for better than his good wife, albeit she was by no means made and moulded by the Creator to afford any great delight to men; for she was a very dry and a very chilling personage. Then, after God had removed her from this world to a better, in his loving mercy, Andrea took no other woman to his bosom either by marriage or otherwise. On the contrary he was strictly continent, as became his years, sparing himself both expense and vexation, and pleasing God to boot, who recompenses in the next world the privations men endure in this. Andrea Tafi was chaste, sober and well-advised.

He said his prayers with unfailing regularity, and being got to bed, he never fell asleep without first invoking the Blessed Virgin in these words:

“Holy Virgin, Mother of God, which for Thy merits wast exalted alive to Heaven, stretch forth Thy hand full of grace and mercy to me, to lift me up to that blessed Paradise where Thou sittest on a chair of gold.”

And this petition old Tafi did not mumble between the two or three teeth he had left, but spoke it out in a loud, strong voice, persuaded it is the singing, as they say, makes the song, and that if you want to be heard, it is best to shout. Thus it came about that Master Tafi's supplication was overheard every night by Apollonius the Greek and the two young Florentines who lay in the next chamber. Now it so happened Apollonius was likewise of a merry humour, every whit as ready for a jest as Bruno or Buffalmacco. All three itched sore to play off some trick on the old painter, who was a just man and a god-fearing, but hard-fisted withal and a cruel taskmaster. Accordingly one night, after listening to the old fellow's customary address to the Virgin, the three comrades fell a-laughing under the bed-clothes and cutting a hundred jokes. Presently, when they heard him snoring, they began asking each other in whispers what jape they could play off on him. Well knowing the holy terror the old man had of the Devil, Apollonius proposed to go, dressed in red, with horns and a mask, to drag him out of bed by the feet. But the ingenious Buffalmacco had a better suggestion to offer:

"To-morrow we will provide ourselves with a good stout rope and a pulley, and I undertake to give you the same evening a highly diverting exhibition."

Apollonius and Bruno were curious to know what the pulley and rope were to be used for, but Buffalmacco refused to say. Nevertheless they promised faithfully to get him what he wanted; for they knew him to possess the merriest wit in the world and the most fertile in amusing contrivances, having earned his nickname of Buffalmacco for these very qualities. And truly he knew some excellent turns, that have since become legendary.

The three friends, having nothing now to keep them awake, fell asleep under the moon, which looking in at the garret window, pointed the tip of one of her horns, as if in mockery, at old Tafi. They slept sound till daybreak, when the master began hammering on the partition, and called out, coughing and spitting as usual.

"Get up, master Apollonius! Up with you, apprentices! Day's come; Phœbus has blown out the sky candles! Quick's the word! 'Life is short, and art long.'"

Then he began threatening Bruno and Buffalmacco he would come and start them out with a bucket of cold water, jeering and asking them:

"Is your bed so delicious, eh? Have you got Helen of Troy there, you're so loath to quit the sheets?"

Meanwhile he was slipping on his hose and his old, worn hood. This done, he sallied out, to find the lads waiting on the landing, fully dressed and with their tools all ready.

That morning, in the fair Church of San Giovanni, on the planking that mounted to the cornice, the work went on merrily for a while. For the last week the master had been trying his hardest to give a good representation according to the recognized rules of art of the baptism of Jesus Christ. He had just begun putting in the fishes swimming in the Jordan. Apollonius was mixing the cement with bitumen and chopped straw, pronouncing words of might known only to himself; while Bruno and Buffalmacco were picking the little cubes of stone to be used, and Tafi arranging them according to the sketch he had made on a slab of slate he held in his hand. But just when the master was busiest over the job, the three friends sprang lightly down the ladder and slipped out of the Church. Bruno went off to the house of Calendrino, outside the walls, in search of a pulley that was used for hoisting corn into the granary. At the same time Apollonius hurried away to Ripoli to see an old lady, the wife of a Judge, whom he had promised to provide with a philtre to draw lovers to her side, and persuading her that hemp was indispensable for compounding the potion, got her to hand him over the well-rope, a good stout piece of cord.

The two friends next met at Tafi's house, where they found Buffalmacco awaiting them. The latter at once set to work to attach the pulley firmly to the king-post of the roof, above the partition separating the master's sleeping-room from his apprentices'. Then, after passing the old lady's well-rope through the pulley, he left one end hanging down in their own chamber, while he went into his master's apartment and fastened the bed to the other extremity, by each corner. He took good care the rope should be concealed behind the curtains, so that nothing out of the way might be visible. When all was done, the three companions went back to San Giovanni.

The old man, who had been so busily engaged as scarcely to have noticed their absence, addressed them with a beaming face:

"Look you," he said, "how those fish sparkle with divers colours, and particularly with gold, purple and blue, as creatures should which inhabit the ocean and the rivers, and which possess so marvellous a brilliancy of hues only because they were the first to submit to the empire of the goddess Venus, as is all explained in the legend."

Thus the master discoursed in a way full of grace and good sense. For you must know he was a man of wit and learning, albeit his humour was so saturnine and grasping, above all when his thoughts turned toward filthy lucre. He went on:

"Now is not a painter's trade a good one and deserving of all praise? it wins him riches in this world and happiness in the next. For be sure Our Lord Jesus

Christ will welcome gratefully in His holy Paradise craftsmen like myself who have portrayed His veritable likeness.”

And Andrea Tafi was glad at heart to be at work upon this great picture in mosaic, whereof several portions are yet visible at San Giovanni to this day. Presently when night came and effaced both form and colour in all the Church, he tore himself regretfully from the river Jordan and sought his house. He supped in the kitchen off a couple of tomatoes and a scrap of cheese, went upstairs to his room, undressed in the dark and got into bed.

No sooner was he laid down than he made his customary prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

“Holy Virgin, Mother of God, which for Thy merits wast exalted alive to Heaven, stretch forth Thy hand full of grace and mercy to me, to lift me up to Paradise!”

The moment was come which the three companions had been eagerly awaiting in the neighbouring room.

They grasped the rope’s end that hung down the partition from the pulley, and scarcely had the good old fellow finished his supplication when at a sign from Buffalmacco they hauled so vigorously on the cord, that the bed fastened at the other end began to rise from the floor. Master Andrea, feeling himself being hoisted aloft, yet without seeing how, got it into his head it was the Blessed Virgin answering his prayer and drawing him up to Heaven. He was panic-stricken and fell a-screaming in a quavering voice:

“Stop, stop, sweet Lady! I never asked it should be now!”

And as the bed rose higher and higher, the rope working smoothly and noiselessly over the pulley, the old man poured out the most pitiful supplications to the Virgin Mary:

“Good Lady! sweet Lady! don’t pull so! Ho, there! Let go, I say!” But she seemed not to hear a word. At this he grew furiously angry and bellowed:

“You must be deaf, you wooden-head! Let go, *bitch of a Madonna* !”

Seeing he was leaving the floor for good and all, his terror increased yet further; and, calling upon Jesus, he besought Him to make His holy Mother listen to reason. It was high time, he asseverated, she should give up this mischancy Assumption. Sinner that he was, and son of a sinner, he could not, and he would not, go up to Heaven before he’d finished the river Jordan, the waves and the fishes, and the rest of Our Blessed Lord’s history. Meanwhile the canopy of the bed was all but touching the beams of the roofing, and Tafi was crying in desperation:

“Jesus, unless you stop your Blessed Mother this instant, the roof of my house, which cost a fine penny, will most certainly be burst up. For I see for sure

I'm going slap through it. Stop! stop! I can hear the tiles cracking."

Buffalmacco perceived that by now his master's voice was actually strangling in his throat, and he ordered his companions to let go the rope. This they did, the result being that the bed, tumbling suddenly from roof to floor of the room, crashed down on the boards, breaking the legs and splitting the panels; simultaneously the bedposts toppled over and the canopy, curtains, hangings and all fell atop of Master Andrea, who, thinking he was going to be smothered, started howling like a devil incarnate. His very soul staggered under the shock, and he could not tell whether he was fallen back again into his chamber or pitched headlong into Hell.

At this point the three apprentices rushed in, as if just awakened by the noise. Seeing the ruins of the bed lying smothered in clouds of dust, they feigned intense surprise, and instead of going to the old man's help, asked him if it was the Devil had done the mischief. But he only sighed heavily, and said:

"It's all up with me; pull me out of this. I'm a dying man!"

At last they dragged him from among the débris, under which he was ready to suffocate, and placed him sitting up with his back to the wall. He breathed hard, coughed and spat, and:

"My lads," he said, "but for the timely succour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hurled me back to earth again with a violence you can plainly see the effects of, I should at this present moment be in the circle of Heaven named the crystalline or *primum mobile*. His holy Mother would not listen to a word. In my fall, I have lost three teeth, which, without being exactly sound, still did me good service. Moreover, I have an agonizing pain in my right side and in the arm that holds the brush."

"My master," said Apollonius pityingly, "you must have received some internal hurts, which is a very dangerous thing. At Constantinople, in the risings, I discovered how much more deadly such injuries are than mere external wounds. But never fear, I am going to charm away the mischief with spells."

"Not for worlds!" put in the old man; "that were a deadly sin. But come hither, all three, and do me the service, an you will, of rubbing me well in the worst places."

They did as he asked, and never left him till they had pretty well scarified every bit of skin off the old fellow's back and loins.

The good lads made it their first business to sow the story broadcast through the city. This they did to such good effect that there was not man, woman nor child in Florence could look Master Andrea Tafi in the face without bursting out laughing. Now one morning Buffalmacco was passing down the Corso, Messer Guido, the son of the Signor Cavalcanti, who was on his way to the marshes to

shoot crane, stopped his horse, called the apprentice to him, and tossed him his purse with the words:

“Ho! gentle Buffalmacco, here’s somewhat to drink to the health of Epicurus and his disciples.”

You must know Messer Guido was of the sect of the Epicureans and loved to marshal well-arranged arguments against the existence of God. He was used to declare the death of men is precisely the same as that of beasts.

“Buffalmacco,” added the young nobleman, “this purse I have given you is for payment of the very instructive, complete and profitable experiment you made, when you sent old Tafi to Heaven — who, seeing his carcass taking the road to the Empyrean, began to squeal like a pig being killed. This proves plainly he had no real assurance in the promised joys of Paradise — which are, it must be allowed, far from certain. In the same way as nurses tell children fairy-tales, vague things are talked concerning the immortality of mortal men. The vulgar herd thinks it believes these tales, but it does not really and truly. Hard fact comes and shivers the poets’ fables. There is nothing assured but the sad life of this world. Horace, the Roman poet, is of my opinion when he says: *Serus in cælum redeas* .”¹

1 “*May it be long ere you return to heaven your home* .” — Ode 2 of Book I, addressed to Augustus.



THE MASTER

Having learned the art of preparing and using the proper coats and colours, as well as the secret of painting figures in the good manner of Cimabuë and Giotto, the young Buonamico Cristofani, the Florentine, surnamed Buffalmacco, abandoned the workshop of his master Andrea Tafi, and proceeded to establish himself in the quarter of the fullers, immediately opposite to the house known by the sign of the Goose's Head. Now in those days, like fair ladies outvying one another in wearing gowns brodered with flowers, the towns of Italy made it their pride to cover the walls of their Churches and Cloisters with paintings. Among all these, Florence was the most sumptuous and magnificent, and was the place of all others for a Painter to live in. Buffalmacco knew how to give his figures movement and expression; and, while far behind the divine Giotto for beauty of design, he pleased the eye by the gay exuberance of his inventions. So he was not long in getting commissions in considerable numbers. It only depended on himself to win riches and fame with all speed. But his chief idea was to amuse himself in company of Bruno di Giovanni and Nello, and squander along with them, in debauchery, all the money he made.

Now the Abbess of the Ladies of Faenza, established at Florence, determined about this time to have the Church of their Nunnery decorated with frescoes. Hearing that there lived in the quarter of the fullers and wool-carders a very clever painter named Buffalmacco, she despatched her Steward thither to come to an arrangement with him as to the execution of the proposed paintings. The master agreed to the terms offered and undertook the commission readily enough. He had a scaffolding erected in the Nunnery Church and on the still moist plaster began to paint, with wondrous vigour of execution, the history of Jesus Christ. First of all, to the right of the Altar, he illustrated the massacre of the Holy Innocents, and succeeded in expressing so vividly the grief and rage of the mothers trying vainly to save their little ones from the Roman soldiers' hands, that the very wall seemed to chant like the faithful in Church, "*Cur, Crudelis Herodes?...*" Drawn thither by curiosity, the Nuns used to come, two or three of them together, to watch the master at work. At sight of all these despairing mothers and murdered babes, they could not help sobbing and shedding tears. In particular there was one little fellow Buffalmacco had drawn

lying in his swaddling bands, smiling and sucking his thumb, between a soldier's legs. The Nuns begged and prayed this one might not be killed:

"Oh! spare him," they said to the Painter. "Do take care the soldiers don't see him and kill him!"

The good Buffalmacco answered:

"For love of you, dear sisters, I will protect him all I can. But these murderers are filled with so savage a rage, it will be a difficult matter to stop them."

When they declared "The baby *is* such a little darling!..." he offered to make each of them a little darling prettier still.

"Thank you kindly!" they answered back, laughing.

The Abbess came in her turn to assure herself with her own eyes that the work was being done satisfactorily. She was a lady of very high birth, named Usimbalda, a proud, severe and careful personage. Seeing a man working without cloak or hood, and like a common labourer wearing only shirt and hose, she mistook him for some apprentice lad and did not condescend so much as to speak to him. She came again and again, five or six times, to the Chapel, without ever seeing any one more important than this working fellow she deemed only fit to grind the colours. Out of all patience at last, she showed him she was far from satisfied.

"My lad," she bade him, "tell your master from me he must come and work himself at the pictures I commissioned him to paint. I meant them to be the work of his own hand, not a mere apprentice's."

Far from declaring himself, Buffalmacco put on the look and voice of a poor working-man, and humbly answered Usimbalda, that he saw plain enough he was not of the sort to inspire confidence in so noble a lady, and that his duty was to obey.

"I will inform my master," he went on; "and he will not fail to put himself at the orders of My Lady Abbess."

With this assurance, the Lady Usimbalda left the Church. No sooner was he alone than Buffalmacco arranged on the scaffolding, just at the spot where he was at work, two stools with a crock on the top. Then going to the corner where he had laid them, he pulled out his cloak and hat, which as it happened were in a very fair state of freshness, and put them on the lay figure he had improvised; next, he stuck a brush in the spout of the crock, which was turned towards the wall. This done, after assuring himself the thing had quite the look of a man busy painting, he decamped with all speed, determined to keep away till he had seen what happened.

Next day the Nuns paid their usual visit to the scene of action. But finding instead of the merry fellow they were accustomed to, a stately gentleman who

held himself in the stiffest of attitudes and seemed entirely indisposed to laugh and talk, they were afraid and took to flight.

Madame Usimbaldi on the contrary, when *she* returned to the Church, was delighted to see the master at work in lieu of the apprentice.

She proceeded to give him much valuable advice, exhorting him for a good ten minutes to paint figures that should be modest, noble and expressive — before she discovered she was addressing her remarks to a crock.

She would hardly have found out her mistake even then, had she not grown impatient at receiving no reply, and pulling the master by his cloak, brought crock, stool, hat, brush and all tumbling at her feet. Then, as she was by no means wanting in sense, she saw it was intended as a lesson not to judge the artist by his dress. She sent her steward to Buffalmacco, and begged him to finish what he had begun.

He completed the work greatly to his credit. Connoisseurs especially admired in these frescoes the figure of the Crucified Redeemer, the three Marys weeping at the foot of the Cross, Judas hanged on a tree, and a man blowing his nose. Unfortunately the paintings were all destroyed along with the Church of the Nunnery of the Ladies of Faenza.

IV

THE PAINTER

Equally famous for his wit and humour and for his skill in devising figure subjects on the walls of Church and Cloister, Buonamico, surnamed Buffalmacco, had already left his youth behind when he was invited from Florence to Arezzo by the Lord Bishop of that city, who wished the halls of his Palace decorated with paintings. Buffalmacco undertook the commission, and directly the walls were duly laid with stucco, started on a picture of the Adoration of the Wise Men.

In the course of a few days he had painted in King Melchior complete, mounted on a white horse, looking for all the world as if he were alive. His horse's saddle-cloth was scarlet, dotted with precious stones.

Now all the time he was at work, the Bishop's pet monkey sat staring intently at his proceedings, never taking his eyes off him. Whether the painter was squeezing his tubes, mixing his colours, beating up his eggs or laying on the colour with his brush on the moist surface, the creature never lost one of his movements. It was a baboon brought from Barbary for the Doge of Venice in one of the State Galleys. The Doge made a present of it to the Bishop of Arezzo, who thanked his Magnificence, reminding him prettily how King Solomon's ships had in like fashion imported from the land of Ophir apes and peacocks, as is related in the First Book of Kings (x. 22). And there was nothing in all his Palace Bishop Guido held more precious than this baboon.

He left the animal to roam at liberty about the halls and gardens, where it was for ever at some mischievous trick or another. One Sunday, during the painter's absence, the creature climbed up on the scaffolding, laid hold of the tubes, mixed up the colours in a way of its own, broke all the eggs it could find, and began plying the brush on the wall, as it had seen the other do. It worked away at King Melchior and his horse, never leaving off till the whole composition was repainted according to its own ideas.

Next morning Buffalmacco, finding his colours all topsy-turvy and his work spoiled, was both grieved and angry. He was persuaded some painter of Arezzo, who was jealous of his superior skill, had played him this dirty trick, and went straight to the Bishop to complain. The latter urged him to set to work again and repair with all speed what had been ruined in a manner so mysterious. He undertook that for the future two soldiers should keep guard night and day

before the frescoes, with orders to drive their lances through any one who should dare to come near. On this condition, Buffalmacco agreed to resume his task, and two soldiers were put on sentry close at hand. One evening, just as he was leaving the hall, his day's work finished, the soldiers saw the Lord Bishop's ape spring so nimbly into his place on the scaffold and seize the colour-tubes and brushes with such rapidity there was no possibility of stopping him. They shouted lustily to the painter, who came back just in time to see the baboon paint over for the second time King Melchior, the white horse and the scarlet saddle-cloth. The sight was like to move poor Buffalmacco at one and the same time to laughter and tears.

He went off to the Bishop and thus addressed him:

"My Lord Bishop, you are good enough to admire my style of painting; but your baboon prefers a different. What need to have had me summoned here, when you had a master painter in your own household? It may be he lacked experience. But now he has nothing left to learn, my presence here is quite unnecessary, and I will back to Florence."

Having so said, the good Buffalmacco returned to his inn, in great vexation. He ate his supper without appetite and went to bed in a very dismal frame of mind.

Then the Lord Bishop's ape appeared to him in a dream, not a mere mannikin as he was in reality, but as tall as Monte San Gemignano, cocking up a prodigious tail and tickling the moon. He was squatted in an olive wood among the farms and oil-presses, while betwixt his legs a narrow road ran alongside a row of flourishing vineyards. Now the said road was thronged with a multitude of pilgrims, who defiled one by one before the painter's eyes. And lo! Buffalmacco recognized the countless victims of his practical jokes and merry humour generally.

He saw, to begin with, his old master Andrea Tafi, who had taught him how men win renown by practice of the arts, and whom in return he had befooled again and again, making him mistake for devils of hell a dozen wax tapers pinned on the backs of a lot of great cockroaches, and hoisting him in his bed to the joists of the ceiling, so that the poor old fellow thought he was being carried up to heaven and was in mortal terror.

He saw the wool-carder of the *Gooses Head*, and his wife, that notable woman, at the spinning-wheel. Into this good dame's cooking-pot Buffalmacco had been wont every evening to throw big handfuls of salt through a crack in the wall, so that day after day the wool-carder would spit out his porridge and beat his wife.

He saw Master Simon de Villa, the Bolognese physician, to be known by his Doctor's cap, the same he had pitched into the cesspool beside the Convent of the Nuns of Ripoli. The Doctor ruined his best velvet gown, but nobody pitied him, for regardless of his good wife's claims, a plain woman but a Christian, he had longed to bed with Prester John's Chinchimura, who wears horns betwixt her sinful buttocks. Good Buffalmacco had persuaded the Doctor he could take him o' nights to the Witches' Sabbath, where he went himself with a merry company to make love to the Queen of France, who gave him wine and spices for his doughty deeds. Simon accepted the invitation, hoping he should be treated right royally too. Then Buffalmacco having donned a beast's skin and a horned mask such as they wear at merry-makings, came to Master Simon, declaring he was a devil ordered to conduct him to the Sabbath. Taking him on his shoulders, he carried him to the edge of a pit full of filth, where he pitched him in head first.

Next Buffalmacco saw Calendrino, whom he had got to believe that the stone Heliotropia was to be found in the plain of the Mugnone, which stone possesses the virtue of rendering invisible whosoever bears it about his person. He took him to Mugnone along with Bruno da Giovanni, and when Calendrino had picked up a very large number of stones, Buffalmacco suddenly pretended he could not see him, crying out: "The scamp has given us the slip; an I catch him, I'll bang his behind with this paving-stone!" And he landed the stone exactly where he said he would, without Calendrino having any right to complain, because he was invisible. This same Calendrino was without any sense of humour, and Buffalmacco played on his simplicity so far as to make him actually believe he was with child, and got a brace of fat capons out of him as fee for his safe delivery.

Next Buffalmacco saw the countryman for whom he had painted the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus in her arms, afterwards changing the babe into a bear's cub.

He saw moreover the Abbess of the Nuns of Faenza, who had commissioned him to paint the walls of the Convent Church in fresco, and he told her on his oath and honour you must mix good wine with the colours, if the flesh tints are to be really brilliant. So the Abbess gave him for every Saint, male or female, depicted in his pictures a flask of the wine reserved for Bishops' drinking, which he poured down his throat, trusting to vermilion to bring out the warm tints. The same Lady Abbess it was he deceived, making her take a pitcher with a cloak thrown over it for a master painter, as has been already recounted.

Buffalmacco saw, besides, a long line of other folks he had befooled, cajoled, cozened and bemocked. Closing the rear, marched with crozier, mitre and cope,

the great Sant' Ercolano, whom in a merry mood he had represented in the Great Square of Perugia, girt about with a garland of gudgeons.

All as they passed paid their compliment to the ape which had avenged them; and the monster, opening a great mouth wider than the jaws of hell, broke into a mocking laugh.

For the first time in his life Buffalmacco had a downright bad night's rest.

THE LADY OF VERONA

TO HUGUES REBELL

THE LADY OF VERONA

*“Puella autem moriens dixit: ‘Satanas, trado tibi corpus meum cum anima mea.’” (Quadragesimale opus declamatum Parisiis in ecclesia Sti. Johannis in Gravia per venerabilem patrem Sacrae scripturae interpretem eximium Ol. Maillardum, 151.1)*¹

The following was found by the Reverend Father Adone Doni, in the Archives of the Monastery of Santa Croce, at Verona.

Signora Eletta of Verona was so wondrous fair and of so perfect a grace of body, that the learned of the city, they who had knowledge of history and legend, were used to call her lady mother by the names of Latona, Leda and Semele, making implication thereby of their belief that the fruit of her womb had been framed in her by a god, Jupiter, rather than by any mortal man, such as were her husband and lovers. But the wiser heads, notably the Fra Battista, whose successor I am as Superior of Santa Croce, held that such exceeding beauty of the flesh came of the operation of the Devil, who is an artist in the sense the dying Nero understood the word when he said, *“Qualis artifex pereo !”*² And we may be sure Satan, the enemy of God, who is cunning to work the metals, excels likewise in the moulding of human flesh.

I myself, who am writing these lines, possessing no small acquaintance with the world, have many a time seen church bells and figures of men wrought by the Enemy of Mankind — and the craftsmanship thereof admirable. Likewise have I had knowledge of children engendered in women by the Devil, but on this matter my tongue is tied by the obligation of secrecy binding on every Confessor. I will limit myself, therefore, to saying that many strange tales were bruited concerning the birth of the Signora Eletta. I saw this lady for the first time on the Piazza of Verona on Good Friday of the year 1320, when she had just completed her fourteenth year. And I have beheld her since in the public walks and the Churches ladies most favour. She was like a picture painted by a very excellent limner.

She had hair of wavy gold, a white brow, eyes of a colour never seen but in the precious stone called aquamarine, cheeks of rose, a nose straight and finely cut. Her mouth was a Cupid’s bow, that wounded with its smiles; and the chin was as full of laughter as the mouth. Her whole body was framed to perfection

for the delight of lovers. The breasts were not of exaggerated size; yet showed beneath the muslin two swelling globes of a full and most winsome roundness. As well by reason of my sacred character, as because I never saw her but clad in her walking dress and her limbs half hidden, I will not describe the other parts of her fair body, which one and all proclaimed their perfection through the stuffs that veiled them. I will only assure you, that when she was in her accustomed place in the Church of San Zenone, there was never a movement she could make, whether to rise to her feet or drop on her knees or prostrate herself with forehead touching the stones, as is meet to do at the instant of the elevation of the blessed body of Jesus Christ, without straightway inspiring the men that saw her with an ardent longing to hold her pressed to their bosom.

Now it came about that Signora Eletta married, when about the age of fifteen, Messer Antonio Torlota, an Advocate. He was a very learned man, of good repute, and wealthy, but already far advanced in years, and so heavy and misshapen, that seeing him carrying his papers in a great leathern bag, you could scarcely tell which bag it was dragging about the other.

It was pitiful to think how, as the result of the holy sacrament of wedlock, which is instituted among men for their glory and eternal salvation, the fairest lady of Verona was bedded with so old a man, all ruinate in health and vigour. And wise folk saw with more pain than wonder that, profiting by the freedom allowed her by her husband, busied all night long as he was solving the problems of justice and injustice, Messer Torlota's young wife welcomed to her bed the handsomest and most proper cavaliers of the city. But the pleasure she took therein came from herself, not from them at all. It was her own self she loved, and not her lovers. All her enjoyment was of the loveliness of her own proper flesh, and of nothing else. Herself was her own desire and delight, and her own fond concupiscence. Whereby, methinks, the sin of carnal indulgence was, in her case, enormously aggravated.

For, albeit, this sin must ever divide us from God — a sufficient sign of its gravity — yet is it true to say that carnal offenders are regarded by the Sovereign Judge, both in this world and the next, with less indignation than are covetous men, traitors, murderers, and wicked men who have made traffic of holy things. And the reason of this is that the naughty desires sensualists entertain, being directed towards others rather than to themselves, do still show some degraded traces of true love and gentle charity.

But nothing of the kind was to be seen in the adulterous amours of the Signora Eletta, who in every passion loved herself and herself only. And herein was she much wider separated from God than so many other women who gave way to their wanton desires. For in their case these desires were towards others,

whereas the Lady Eletta's had none but herself for their object. What I say hereanent, I say to make more understandable the conclusion of the matter, which I must now relate.

At the age of twenty she fell sick and felt herself to be dying. Then she bewailed her fair body with the most piteous tears. She made her women dress her out in her richest attire, looked long and steadfastly at herself in the mirror, fondled with both hands her bosom and hips, to enjoy for the last time her own exceeding beauty. And, aghast at the thought of this body she so adored being eaten of the worms in the damp earth, she said, as she breathed her last, with a great sigh of faith and hope:

“Satan, best beloved Satan! take thou my soul and my body; Satan, gentle Satan! hear my prayer: take, take my body along with my soul.”

She was borne to San Zenone, as custom ordains, with her face uncovered; and, within the memory of man, none had ever seen a dead woman look so lovely. While the priests were chanting the offices for the dead around her bier, she lay as if swooning with delight in the arms of an invisible lover. When the ceremony was over, the Signora Eletta's coffin, carefully closed and sealed, was deposited in holy ground, amid the tombs that surrounded San Zenone, and of which some are Ancient Roman monuments. But next morning the earth they had thrown over the dead woman was found removed, and there lay the coffin open and empty.

1 “But the dying girl said, ‘Satan, I give over my body to you along with my soul.’” (Lenten Sermon preached at Paris in the Church of St. Jean-en-Grève by that venerable father and excellent expounder of Holy Scripture, Olivier Maillard, 1511.)

2 “What an artist dies in me!” “Oh! the loss to Art! the loss to Art!”

THE HUMAN TRAGEDY

TO J.H. ROSNY

THE HUMAN TRAGEDY

Πᾶς δ' ὀδυνηρὸς βίος ἀνθρώπων,
κοῦκ ἔστι πόων ἀνάπαυσις.
ἄλλο τι τοῦ ζῆν φίλτερον, ἄλλ' ὃ
σκότος ἀμπίσχων κρύπτει νεφέλαις.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* , 190 sqq.)¹

1 “All the life of man is full of pain, and there is no surcease of sorrow. If there be aught better elsewhere than this present life, it is hid shrouded in the clouds of darkness.”

FRA GIOVANNI

In those days the holy man, who, born though he was of human parents, was veritably a son of God, and who had chosen for his bride a maiden that folk open the door to as reluctantly as to Death itself, and never with a smile, — the poor man of Jesus Christ, St. Francis, was gone up to the Skies. Earth, which he had perfumed with his virtues, kept only his body and the fruitful seed of his words. His sons in the spirit grew meantime, and multiplied among the Peoples, for the blessing of Abraham was upon them.

Kings and Queens girded on the cord of St. Francis, the poor man of Jesus Christ. Men in multitudes sought in forgetfulness of self and of the world the secret of true happiness; and flying the joy of life, found a greater joy.

The Order of St. Francis spread fast through all Christendom, and the Houses of the Poor Men of the Lord covered the face of Italy, Spain, the two Gauls and the Teutonic lands. In the good town of Viterbo arose a House of peculiar sanctity. In it Fra Giovanni took the vows of Poverty, and lived humble and despised, his soul a garden of flowers fenced about with walls.

He had knowledge by revelation of many truths that escape clever and world-wise men. And ignorant and simple-minded as he was, he knew things unknown to the most learned Doctors of the age.

He knew that the cares of riches make men ill-conditioned and wretched, and that coming into the world poor and naked, they would be happy, if only they would live as they were born. He was poor and merry-hearted. His delight was in obedience; and renouncing the making of plans of any sort for the future, he relished the bread of the heart. For the weight of human actions is a heavy load, and we are trees bearing poisoned fruit. He was afraid to act, for is not all effort painful and useless? He was afraid to think, for thought is evil.

He was very humble, knowing how men have nothing of their own that they should boast of, and that pride hardens the heart. He knew, moreover, that they who possess for all wealth only the riches of the spirit, if they make boast of their treasure, so far lower themselves to the level of the great ones of the earth.

And Fra Giovanni outdid in humility all the Monks of the House of Viterbo. The Superior of the Monastery, the holy Brother Silvester, was less righteous than he, forasmuch as the master is less righteous than the servant, the mother less innocent than the babe.

Observing that Fra Giovanni had a way of stripping himself of his gown to clothe the suffering members of Jesus Christ, the Superior forbade him, in the name of holy obedience, to give away his garments to the poor. Now the same day this command was laid on him, Giovanni went, as his wont was, to pray in the woods that cover the slopes of Monte Cunino. It was Winter time; snow was falling, and the wolves coming down into the villages.

Fra Giovanni kneeling down at the foot of an oak, spoke to God, as might one friend to another, and besought Him to take pity on all orphans, prisoners and captives, to take pity on the master of the fields sorely harried by the Lombard usurers, to take pity on the stags and hinds of the forest chased by the hunters, and on all trapped creatures, whether of fur or feathers. And lo! he was rapt away in an ecstasy, and saw a hand pointing in the sky.

When presently the sun had slipped behind the mountains, the man of God arose from his knees and took the path to the Monastery. On the white, silent road thither, he met a beggar, who asked him an alms for the love of God.

“Alas!” he told him, “I have nothing but my gown, and the Superior has forbidden me to cut it in two so as to give away the half. Therefore I cannot divide it with you. But if you love me, my son, you will take it off me whole and undivided.”

On hearing these words, the beggar promptly stripped the Friar of his gown.

So Fra Giovanni went on his way naked under the falling snow, and entered the city. As he was crossing the Piazza with nothing on but a linen cloth about his loins, the children who were running at play in the Great Square made mock at him. In derision, they shook their fists in his face with the thumb stuck between the first and middle fingers, and threw snow at him mixed with mud and small stones.

Now there lay in the Great Square some logs of timber for the woodwork of a house, and one of the logs happened to be balanced across another. Two children ran and took their places, one at each end of the beam, and began playing see-saw — two of the same children who had made mock of the holy man and thrown stones at him.

He went up to them now smiling, and said:

“Dear little children, will you suffer me to share your game?”

And sitting down on one end of the beam, he see-sawed up and down against the two little ones.

And some of the citizens happening to pass that way, said, wondering:

“Truly and indeed the man is out of his wits.”

But after the bells had rung the *Ave Maria*, Fra Giovanni was still at see-saw. And it chanced that certain Priests from Rome, who had come to Viterbo to visit

the Mendicant Friars, whose fame was great through the world, just then crossed the Great Square. And hearing the children shouting, "Look! little Brother Giovanni's here," the Priests drew near the Monk, and saluted him very respectfully. But the holy man never returned their salute, but making as though he did not see them, went on see-sawing on the swaying beam. So the Priests said to each other:

"Come away; the fellow is a mere dunce and dullard!"

Then was Fra Giovanni glad, and his heart overflowed with joy. For these things he did out of humility and for the love of God. And he put his joy in the scorn of men, as the miser shuts his gold in a cedarn chest, locked with a triple lock.

At nightfall he knocked at the Monastery door, and being admitted, appeared among the Brethren naked, bleeding, and covered with mire. He smiled and said:

"A kind thief took my gown, and some children deemed me worthy to play with them."

But the Brothers were angry, because he had dared to pass through the city in so undignified a plight.

"He feels no compunction," they declared, "about exposing the Holy Order of St. Francis to derision and disgrace. He deserves the most exemplary punishment."

The General of the Order, being warned a great scandal was ruining the sacred Society, called together all the Brethren of the Chapter, and made Fra Giovanni kneel humbly on his knees in the midst of them all. Then, his face blazing with anger, he chid him harshly in a loud, rough voice. This done, he consulted the assembly as to the penance it was meet to impose on the guilty Brother.

Some were for having him put in prison or suspended in an iron cage from the Church steeple, while others advised he should be chained up for a madman.

And Fra Giovanni, beaming with satisfaction, told them:

"You are very right, my Brethren; I deserve these punishments, and worse ones still. I am good for nothing but foolishly to waste and squander the goods of God and of my Order."

And Brother Marcian, who was a man of great sternness both of life and doctrine, cried:

"Hear him! he talks like a hypocrite; that honeyed voice of his issues from a whited sepulchre."

And Fra Giovanni said again:

"Brother Marcian, I am indeed capable of every infamy — but for God's good help."

Meantime the General was pondering over the strange behaviour of Fra Giovanni, and he besought the Holy Spirit to inspire the judgment he was to give. And lo! as he prayed, his anger was changed into admiration. He had known St. Francis in the days when that Angel of Heaven, born of a woman, was a sojourner in this world, and the ensample of the favourite follower of Christ had taught him the love of spiritual perfection.

So his soul was enlightened, and he recognized in the works of Fra Giovanni a divine innocency and beauty.

“My brethren,” he said at length, “far from blaming our Brother, let us admire the grace he receives so abundantly from God. In very truth he is a better man than we. What he has done, he has done in imitation of Jesus Christ, who ‘suffered the little children to come unto Him,’ and let the Roman soldiers strip Him of His garments.”

Then he thus addressed the kneeling Fra Giovanni:

“This, Brother, is the penance I lay upon you. In the name of that holy obedience you owe St. Francis, I command you go forth into the country, and the first beggar you meet, beg him to strip you of your tunic. Then, when he has left you naked, you must come back into the city, and play in the Public Square With the little children.”

Having so said, the General of the Order came down from his chair of state, and, raising Fra Giovanni from the ground, fell on his own knees before him and kissed his feet. Then, turning to the assembled Monks, he said to them:

“In very truth, my Brethren, this man is the good God’s plaything.”

THE LAMP

In those days the truth was revealed to Fra Giovanni that the riches of this world come from God and should be the heritage of the poor, who are the favourite children of Jesus Christ.

Christian folk were busy celebrating the Saviour's birth; and Fra Giovanni had come to the town of Assisi, which is set upon a mountain-top, and from this mountain first rose the Sun of Charity.

Now the day before Christmas eve, Fra Giovanni was kneeling in prayer before the Altar under which St. Francis sleeps in a stone coffin. And he was meditating, dreaming how St. Francis was born in a stable, like Jesus. And while he was pondering, the Sacristan came up to him and asked him of his goodness to look after the Church while he ate his supper. Church and Altar were both loaded with precious ornaments; gold and silver were there in abundance, for the sons of St. Francis had long fallen from their early poverty, and had received gifts from the Queens of the Earth.

Fra Giovanni assured the Sacristan:

"Go, Brother, and enjoy your meal. I will guard the Church, as Our Lord would have it guarded."

And so saying, he went on with his meditations. And as he knelt there alone in prayer, a poor woman entered the Church and asked an alms of him for the love of God.

"I have nothing," the holy man replied; "but the Altar is loaded with ornaments, and I will go see if I cannot find something to give you." A golden lamp hung above the Altar, decked about with silver bells. Examining the lamp, he said to himself:

"Those little bells are but idle vanities. The true ornament of yonder Altar is the body of St. Francis, which reposes naked under the flags with a black stone for a pillow."

And drawing his knife from his pocket, he detached the little silver bells, one after the other, and gave them to the poor woman.

Presently, when the Sacristan, his meal finished, returned to the Church, Fra Giovanni, the holy man of God, said to him:

"Never trouble, my brother, about the little bells that belonged to the lamp. I have given them away to a poor woman who had need of them."

Now Fra Giovanni did in this wise, because he knew by revelation that all the things in this world, belonging to God, belong of rights to the poor.

And he was blamed on earth by men whose thoughts were given over to riches. But he was found praiseworthy in the sight of the Divine Goodness.



THE SERAPHIC DOCTOR

Fra Giovanni was not proficient in the knowledge of letters, and he rejoiced in his ignorance as being an abundant source of humiliations.

But after watching one day in the Cloister of Santa Maria degli Angeli a number of Doctors of Theology in meditation on the perfections of the Most Holy Trinity and the Mysteries of the Passion, he began to doubt whether they did not possess the love of God more fully than he, by reason of their wider knowledge.

He was afflicted in his soul, and for the first time in his life fell into melancholy. But sadness was unnatural to one in his estate; for joy is the inheritance of the poor.

He resolved to carry his difficulty to the General of the Order, to be rid of it as of a galling burden. Now Giovanni di Fidanza was General of the Order in those days.

In the cradle he had received from St. Francis himself the name of Bonaventure. He had studied Theology at the University of Paris; and he excelled in the science of Love, which is the science of God. He knew the four degrees which lift the creature to his Creator, and he pondered on the mystery of the six wings of the Cherubim. This was the reason why he was called the Seraphic Doctor.

And he was well aware that Science is vain without Love. Fra Giovanni found him walking in his garden, on the terrace overlooking the city.

It was a Sunday; and the handicraftsmen of the town and the peasants who work in the vineyards were climbing, at the foot of the terrace, the steep street that leads to the Church.

And Fra Giovanni, seeing Brother Bonaventure in the garden, in the midst of the lilies, drew near and said:

“Brother Bonaventure, free my mind of the doubt that is tormenting me, and tell me: Can an ignorant man love God with as great love as a learned Doctor of the Church?”

And Brother Bonaventure answered:

“I will tell you the truth, Fra Giovanni; a poor old woman may not only equal but surpass all the Doctors of Theology in the world. And seeing the sole

excellence of man lies in loving, I tell you again — the most ignorant of women shall be exalted in Heaven above the Doctors.”

Fra Giovanni, on hearing these words, was filled with great joy; and, leaning out over the low wall of the garden, looked lovingly at the passers-by. Then he cried out at the top of his voice:

“Ho! you poor women, ignorant and simple-minded, you shall be set in Heaven above Brother Bonaventure.”

And the Seraphic Doctor, hearing the good Brother’s proclamation, smiled sweetly where he stood among the lilies of his garden.

IV

THE LOAF ON THE FLAT STONE

Forasmuch as the good St. Francis had bidden his sons to “Go, beg your bread from door to door,” Fra Giovanni was one day sent to a certain city. Having passed the Gate, he went up and down the streets to beg his bread from door to door, according to the rule of the Order, for the love of God.

But the folk of that city were more covetous than the men of Lucca, and harder than they of Perugia. The bakers and tanners who were dicing before their shop-doors, repulsed the poor man of Jesus Christ with harsh words. Even the young women, holding their new-born babes in their arms, turned their faces from him. And when the good Brother, whose joy was in dishonour, smiled at the refusals and insults he received,

“He is laughing at us,” said the townsmen to each other. “He is a born fool — or say rather a vagabond impostor and a drunkard. He has over-drunk himself with wine. It were a sin and a shame to give him so much as a crumb of bread from our hutch.”

And the good Brother answered:

“You say true, my friends; I am not worthy to stir your pity, nor fit to share the food of your dogs and your pigs.”

The children, who were just then coming out of school, overheard what was said, and ran after the holy man shouting:

“Madman! Madman!” — and pelted him with mud and stones.

Then Fra Giovanni went forth into the country. The city was built on the slope of a hill, and was surrounded by vineyards and oliveyards. He descended the hill by a hollow way, and seeing on either side the grapes of the vines that hung down from the branches of the elms, he stretched out his arm and blessed the clusters. Likewise he blessed the olive and the mulberry trees and all the wheat of the lowlands.

Meantime he was both hungry and thirsty; and he took delight in thirst and hunger.

At the end of a cross-road, he saw a wood of laurels; and it was the habit of the Begging Friars to go and pray in the woods, amongst the poor animals cruel men hunt and harry. Accordingly Fra Giovanni entered the wood, and fared on by the side of a brook that ran clear and singing on its way.

Presently he saw a flat stone beside the brook, and at the same moment a young man of a wondrous beauty, clad in a white robe, laid a loaf of bread on

the stone, and disappeared.

And Fra Giovanni knelt down and prayed, saying:

“O God, how good art Thou, to send Thy poor man bread by the hand of one of Thy Angels; O blessed poverty! O very glorious and most sumptuous poverty!”

And he ate the loaf the Angel had brought, and drank the water of the brook, and was strengthened in body and in soul. And an invisible hand wrote on the walls of the city: “Woe, woe to the rich!”

V

THE TABLE UNDER THE FIG-TREE.

Following the example of St. Francis, his well-beloved Father, Fra Giovanni used to visit the Hospital of Viterbo to help the lepers, giving them to drink and washing their sores.

And if they blasphemed, he used to tell them, "You are the chosen sons of Jesus Christ." And there were some lepers of a very humble spirit whom he would gather together in a chamber, and with whom he took delight as a mother does surrounded by her children.

But the Hospital walls were very thick, and daylight entered only by narrow windows high up above the floor. The air was so fetid the lepers could scarce live in the place at all. And Fra Giovanni noted how one of them, by name Lucido, who showed an exemplary patience, was slowly dying of the evil atmosphere.

Fra Giovanni loved Lucido, and would tell him:

"My brother, you are Lucido, and no precious stone is purer than your heart, in the eyes of God."

And observing how Lucido suffered more sorely than the others from the poisonous air they breathed in the Lepers' Ward, he said to him one day:

"Friend Lucido, dear Lamb of the Lord, while the very air they breathe in this place is pestilence, in the gardens of Santa Maria degli Angeli we inhale the sweet scent of the laburnums. Come you with me to the House of the Poor Brethren, and you will find relief."

So speaking, he took the Leper by the arm, wrapped him in his own cloak and led him away to Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Arrived at the gate of the Monastery, he summoned the Doorkeeper with happy shouts of exultation:

"Open!" he cried, "open to the friend I am bringing you. His name is Lucido, and a good name it is, for he is a very pearl of patience."

The Brother opened the Gate; but the instant he saw in Fra Giovanni's arms a man whose face, livid and all but expressionless, was covered over with scales, he knew him for a leper, and rushed off in terror to warn the Brother Superior. The latter's name was Andrea of Padua, and he was a man of very holy life. Nevertheless when he learned that Fra Giovanni was bringing a leper into the House of Santa Maria degli Angeli, he was very wroth, and coming to him with a face burning with anger, bade him:

“Stay there outside, with the man. You are a senseless fool to expose your brethren thus to contagion.”

Fra Giovanni only looked on the ground without venturing any reply. All the joy was gone from his face; and Lucido, seeing him troubled:

“Brother!” said he, “I am grieved you are made sad because of me.”

And Fra Giovanni kissed the leper on the cheek.

Then he said, turning to the Superior:

“Will you suffer me, my Father, to stay outside the Gate with this man, and share my meal with him?” — to which the Father Superior answered:

“Even do as you please, seeing you set up yourself above the holy rule of obedience.”

And with these harsh words he went back again into the Monastery.

Now in front of the Gate was a stone bench under a fig-tree, and on this bench Fra Giovanni set down his bowl. But while he was supping with the Leper, the Father Superior had the Gate thrown open, and came and sat under the fig-tree and said:

“Forgive me, Fra Giovanni, for having given you offence. I am come hither now to share your meal.”

VI

THE TEMPTATION

Then Satan sat him down on the brow of a hill, and gazed down at the House of the Poor Brethren. He was black and beautiful, like a young Egyptian. And he thought in his heart:

“Forasmuch as I am the Enemy of Mankind and the Adversary of God, therefore will I tempt these Monks, and I will tell them what is kept hid by Him who is their Friend. Lo! I will afflict these men of Religion by telling them the truth, and I will darken their spirit, uttering to them words of verity and reasonableness. I will plunge reflexion like a sword in their reins; and so soon as they shall know the reality of things, they will be unhappy. For joy there is none but in illusion, and peace is only to be found in ignorance. And because I am the Master of such as study the nature of plants and animals, the virtue of stones, the secrets of fire, the courses of the stars and the influence of the planets, for this reason men have named me the Prince of Darkness. Likewise they call me the Willy One, because by me was constructed the plummet-line whereby Ulpian straightened out the Law. And my kingdom is of this world. Well then, I will try these Monks, and I will make them to know their works are evil, and that the tree of their Charity bears bitter fruit. Yea! I will tempt them without hate and without love.”

Thus said Satan in his heart. Meantime, as the shades of evening were lengthening along the base of the hills and the cottage chimneys were smoking for the evening meal, the holy man Giovanni issued from out the wood where he was wont to pray, and turned into the road leading to Santa Maria degli Angeli, saying:

“My house is the house of joy and delight, because it is the house of poverty.”

And seeing Fra Giovanni wending his way homewards, Satan thought:

“Lo! here is one of those men I am come to tempt”; — and drawing his black cloak over his head, he advanced along the high road, which was bordered with terebinths, to meet the holy man.

Now Satan had made himself like a widow-woman with a veil, and when he had joined Fra Giovanni, he put on a honeyed voice and asked an alms of him, saying:

“Give me an alms for the love of Him who is your friend, and whom I am not worthy so much as to name.”

And Fra Giovanni answered:

“It happens so, I have with me a little silver cup a nobleman of the countryside gave me, to have it melted down and used for the Altar of Santa Maria degli Angeli. You may take that, lady; and I will go to-morrow and ask the nobleman to let me have another of the same weight for the Blessed Virgin. Thus will his wishes be accomplished, and over and above, you will have gotten an alms for the love of God.”

Satan took the cup and said:

“Good brother, suffer a poor widow-woman to kiss your hand. For verily the hand that gives gifts is soft and fragrant.”

Fra Giovanni replied:

“Lady, be heedful not to kiss my hand. On the contrary, begone with all speed. For, methinks, you are winsome of face, albeit black as the Magian King that bore the frankincense and myrrh; and it is not becoming I should look on you longer, seeing how danger is forever dogging the lonely man’s steps. Wherefore suffer me now to leave you, commending you to God’s care. And forgive me, if I have failed aught in politeness towards you, lady. For the good St. Francis was used to say: ‘Courtesy shall be the ornament of my sons, as the flowers bedeck the hill-sides.’”

But Satan said again:

“Good Father, inform me at the least of a guest-house, where I may pass the night honestly.”

Fra Giovanni replied:

“Go, mistress, to the House of St. Damian, where dwell the poor ladies of Our Lord. She who will welcome you is Clare, and indeed she is a clear mirror of purity; the same is the Duchess of Poverty.”

And Satan said again:

“My Father, I am an adulterous woman, and I have lain with many men.”

And Fra Giovanni said:

“Lady, if I really deemed you laden with the sins you tell of, I would crave of you as a high honour to kiss your feet, for I am less worth than you, and your crimes are little compared with mine. Yet have I received greater favours of Heaven than have been accorded to you. For in the days when St. Francis and his twelve disciples were still upon earth, I lived with Angels of Heaven.”

And Satan returned:

“My Father, when I asked you an alms for the love of Him who loves you, I was cherishing in my heart a wicked intent, and I am fain to tell you what this was. I wander the roads a-begging, in order to collect a sum of money I destine for a man of Perosa who is my paramour, and who has promised me, on

handling this money, to kill traitorously a certain knight I hate, because when I offered my body to him, he scorned me. Well! the total was yet incomplete; but now the weight of your silver cup has made it up. So the alms you have given me will be the price of blood. You have sold a just man to death. For the Knight I told you of is chaste, temperate and pious, and I hate him for this cause. 'Tis you will have brought about his murder. You have laid a weight of silver in the scale of crime, to bear it down."

Hearing these words, the good Fra Giovanni wept, and drawing aside, he fell on his knees in a thorn-brake, and prayed the Lord, saying:

"O Lord, make this crime to fall neither on this woman's head nor on mine nor on that of any of Thy creatures, but let it be put beneath Thy feet, which were pierced with the nails, and be washed in Thy most precious blood. Distil on me and on this my sister of the highway a drop of hyssop, and we shall be purified, and shall overpass the snow in whiteness."

But the Enemy fled away, thinking:

"This man I have not been able to tempt by reason of his utter simplicity."

VII

THE SUBTLE DOCTOR

Satan returned and sat on the Mountain that looks towards Viterbo, laughing under its crown of olives. And he said in his heart: "I will tempt that man yonder." He conceived this purpose in his spirit, because he had seen Fra Giovanni, girt about with a cord, and a sack over his shoulder, crossing the meadows below on his way to the city to beg his bread there according to the rules.

So Satan took on the appearance of a holy Bishop, and came down into the plain. A mitre was on his head sparkling with precious stones, that flashed like actual fire in the sunlight. His cope was covered with figures embroidered and painted so beautifully no craftsman in all the world could have wrought their like.

Amongst the rest he was depicted himself, in silk and gold, under the guise of a St. George and a St. Sebastian, as also under that of a Virgin St. Catherine and the Empress Helena. The loveliness of the faces troubled the mind and saddened the heart. The garment was truly of a wondrous workmanship, and nothing so rich and rare is to be seen in the Treasuries of Churches.

Thus decked in cope and mitre, and majestic as St. Ambrose, the glory of Milan, Satan pursued his way, leaning on his crozier, over the flowery plain.

Presently nearing the holy man, he hailed him and said:

"Peace be with you!"

But he said not of what sort this peace was; and Fra Giovanni supposed it was the peace of the Lord. He thought to himself:

"This Bishop, who gives me the salutation of peace, was doubtless in his lifetime a sainted Pontiff and a blessed Martyr unshakable in his constancy. That is why Jesus Christ has changed the wooden cross to a golden in the hands of this gallant Confessor of the Faith. To-day he is powerful in Heaven; and lo! after his holy and happy death, he walks in these meadows that are painted with flowers and brodered with pearls of dew."

Such were the good Giovanni's thoughts, and he was in no wise abashed. So saluting Satan with a deep reverence, he said:

"Sir! you are exceeding gracious to appear to a poor man such as I. But indeed these meadows are so lovely, 'tis no wonder if the Saints of Paradise

come to walk here; they are painted with flowers and brodered with pearls of dew. The Lord did very kindly when he made them.”

And Satan said to him:

“It is not the meadows, it is your heart I am fain to look at; I have come down from the Mountain to speak with you. I have, in bygone Centuries, held many high disputations in the Church. Amid the assembled Doctors my voice would boom forth like thunder, and my thoughts flash like lightning. I am very learned, and they name me the Subtle Doctor. I have disputed with God’s Angels. Now I would hold dispute with you.”

Fra Giovanni made answer:

“Nay! but how should the poor little man that I am hold dispute with the Subtle Doctor? I know nothing, and my simplicity is such I can keep nothing in my head but those songs in the vulgar tongue where they have stuck in rhymes to help the memory, as in

‘Jesus, mirror of my soul,
Cleanse my heart and make it whole.’

or in

‘Holy Mary, Maid of Flowers,
Lead me to the Heavenly Bowers.’

And Satan answered:

“Fra Giovanni, the Venetian ladies amuse their leisure and show their adroitness in fitting a multitude of little pieces of ivory into a box of cedar-wood, which at the set-off seemed all too small to contain so many. In the same fashion I will pack ideas into your head that no one would have dreamed it could ever hold; and I will fill you with a new wisdom. I will show that, thinking to walk in the right way, you are straying abroad all the while like a drunken man, and that you are driving the plough without any heed to draw the furrows straight.”

Fra Giovanni humbled himself, saying:

“It is most true I am a fool, and do nothing but what is wrong.”

Then Satan asked him:

“What think you of poverty? “ — and the holy man replied:

“I think it is a pearl of price.”

But Satan retorted:

“You pretend poverty is a great good; yet all the while you are robbing the poor of a part of this great good, by giving them alms.”

Fra Giovanni pondered over this, and said:

“The alms I give, I give to Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose poverty cannot be diminished, for it is infinite. It gushes from Him as from an inexhaustible fountain; and its waters flow freely for His favourite sons. And these shall be poor always, according to the promise of the Son of God. In giving to the poor, I am giving not to men, but to God, as the citizens pay tax to the Podestà, and the rate is for the City, which of the money it so receives supplies the town’s needs. Now what I give is for paving the City of God. It is a vain thing to be poor in deed, if we be not poor in spirit. The gown of frieze, the cord, the sandals, the wallet and the wooden bowl are only signs and symbols. The Poverty I love is spiritual, and I address her as *Lady*, because she is an idea, and all beauty resides in this same idea.”

Satan smiled, and replied:

“Your maxims, Fra Giovanni, are the maxims of a wise man of Greece, Diogenes by name, who taught at their Universities in the times when Alexander of Macedon was waging his wars.”

And Satan said again:

“Is it true you despise the goods of this world?”

And Fra Giovanni replied:

“I do despise them.”

And Satan said to him:

“Look you! in scorning these, you are scorning at the same time the hard-working men who produce them, and so doing, fulfil the order given to your first father, Adam, when he was commanded, ‘In the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat bread.’ Seeing work is good, the fruit of this work is good too. Yet you work not, neither have any care for the work of others. But you receive and give alms, in contempt of the law laid on Adam and on his seed through the ages.”

“Alas!” sighed Brother Giovanni, “I am laden with crimes, and at once the most wicked and the most foolish man in all the world. Wherefore never heed me, but read in the Book. Our Lord said, ‘Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin.’ Again he said, ‘Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

Then Satan lifted up his hand, with the gesture of one who disputes and prepares to count off his arguments on the fingers. And he said:

“Giovanni, Giovanni! what was written in one sense, you read in another; you are less like a Doctor at his desk than an ass at the manger. So must I correct you, as a master corrects his scholar. It is written the lilies of the field have no

need to spin — because they are beautiful, and beauty is a virtue. Again it is written how Mary is not to do the household tasks, because she is doing lovingly to Him who has come to see her. But you, who are not beautiful nor yet instructed, like Mary, in the things of love, you drag out a contemptible existence wandering the highways.”

Giovanni made reply:

“Sir! just as a Painter will depict on a narrow panel of wood an entire city with its houses and towers and walls, so you have painted in a few words my soul and my similitude with a wondrous exactness. And I am altogether what you describe. But if I followed perfectly the rule established by St. Francis, that Angel of God, and if I practised spiritual poverty to the full, I should be the lily of the fields and I should have the good part of Mary.”

But Satan interrupted him, and cried:

“You profess to love the poor, yet you prefer the rich man and his riches, and adore Him who possesses treasures to give away.”

And Fra Giovanni answered:

“He I love possesses not the good things of the body, but those of the spirit.”

And Satan retorted:

“All good things are of the flesh, and are tasted of through the flesh. This Epicurus taught, and Horace the Satirist said the same in his Verses.”

At these words the holy man only sighed and said:

“Sir! I cannot tell what you mean.”

Satan shrugged his shoulders and said:

“My words are exact and literal, yet the man cannot tell what I mean. I have disputed with Augustine and Jerome, with Gregory and him of the Golden Mouth, St. Chrysostom. And they comprehended me still less. Miserable men walk groping in the dark, and Error lifts over their head her monstrous canopy. Simple and sage alike are the plaything of eternal falsehood.”

And Satan said again to the holy man Giovanni:

“Have you won happiness? If you have happiness, I shall not prevail against you. A man’s thoughts are only stirred by sorrow, and their meditations by grief. Then, tortured by fears and desires, he turns anxiously in his bed and rends his pillow with lies. What use to tempt this man? He is happy.”

But Fra Giovanni sighed:

“Sir! I am less happy since listening to you. Your words trouble my mind.”

On hearing this, Satan cast away his pastoral staff, his mitre and his cope; and stood there naked and unashamed. He was black and more beautiful than the loveliest of the Angels.

He smiled gently, and said to the holy man:

“Friend, be comforted. I am the Evil Spirit.”

VIII

THE BURNING COAL

Now Brother Giovanni was simple of heart and spirit, and his tongue was tied; he knew not the secret of speaking to his fellow-men.

But one day when he was praying, as his habit was, at the foot of an ancient holm-oak, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and saluting him, said:

“I salute you, because it is I who visit the simple-minded, and announce the mysteries to virgins.”

And the Angel held in his hand a burning coal. This he laid on the holy man’s lips, and spoke again, and said:

“By virtue of this fire shall your lips remain pure, and they shall glow with eloquence. I have burned them, and they shall be burned. Your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall speak to your fellows. For men must hear the word of life, and learn how they shall not be saved but by innocency of heart. For this cause the Lord has unloosed the tongue of the simple and innocent.”

Then the Angel went back again to Heaven. And the holy man was seized with terror, and he prayed, saying:

“O God, my heart is so sore troubled I cannot find on my lips the sweet savour of the fire Thy Angel hath touched them with.

“Thou wouldst chasten me, O Lord, seeing Thou dost send me to speak to the folk, who will not hearken to my words. I shall be hateful to all men, and Thy priests themselves will declare, ‘He is a blasphemer!’

“For Thy reason is contrary to the reason of men. Nevertheless Thy will be done.”

Then he rose up from his knees, and set out on his way citywards.

IX

THE HOUSE OF INNOCENCE

On that day Fra Giovanni had left the Monastery at early dawn, the hour when the birds awake and begin singing. He was on his way to the city and he thought within himself: "I am going to the city to beg my bread and to give bread to other beggars; I shall give away what I receive, and take back what I have given. For it is good to ask and to receive for the love of God. And he who receives is the brother of him who gives. And we should not consider too curiously which of the twain brothers we are, because truly the gift is naught, but everything is in the gracious giving.

"He that receives, if he have gracious charity, is the equal of him that gives. But he who sells is the enemy of him who buys, and the seller constrains the buyer to be his foe. Herein lies the root of the curse that poisons cities, as the venom of the serpent is in his tail. And it must needs be a Lady set her foot on the serpent's tail, and that Lady is Poverty. Already hath she visited King Louis of France in his Tower; but never yet entered among the Florentines, because she is chaste and will not put foot in a place of ill repute. Now the money-changer's shop is an ill place, for it is there Bankers and Changers commit the most heinous of sins. Harlots sin in the brothels; but their sin is not so great as is that of the Bankers, and whosoever grows rich by banking and money-dealing.

"Verily I say unto you, Bankers and Money-changers shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, nor yet bakers, nor dealers in drugs, nor such as practise the trade of wool, which is the boast of the City of the Lily. Forasmuch as they give a price to gold, and make a profit out of exchange, they are setting up idols in the face of men. And when they declare 'Gold has a value,' they tell a lie. For Gold is more vile than the dry leaves that flutter and rustle in the Autumn wind under the terebinths. There is nothing precious save the work of men's hands, when God gives it His countenance."

And lo! as he was meditating in this wise, Fra Giovanni saw that the Mountain side was torn open, and that men were dragging great stones from its flank. And one of the quarrymen was lying by the wayside, with a rag of coarse cloth for all covering; and his body was disfigured by bitter marks of the biting cold and scorching heat. The bones of his shoulders and chest showed all but bare beneath the meagre flesh; and Despair looked out grim and gaunt from the black cavern of his eyes.

Fra Giovanni approached him, saying:

“Peace be with you!”

But the quarryman made no answer, and did not so much as turn his head. So Fra Giovanni, thinking he had not heard, repeated:

“Peace be with you!” — and then the same words again for the third time.

At last the quarryman looked up at him sullenly, and growled:

“I shall have no peace till I am dead. Begone, cursed black crow! you wish me peace; that shows you are a glozing cheat! Go to, and caw to simpler fools than I! I know very well the quarryman’s lot is an utterly miserable one, and there is no comfort for his wretchedness. I hale out stones from dawn to dark, and for price of my toil, all I get is a scrap of black bread. Then when my arms are no longer as strong as the stones of the mountain, and my body is all worn out, I shall perish of hunger.”

“Brother!” said the holy man Giovanni; “it is not just or right you should hale out so much stone, and win so little bread.”

Then the quarryman rose to his feet and pointing,

“Master Monk,” said he, “what see you up yonder on the hill?”

“Brother, I see the walls of the City.”

“And above them?”

“Above them I see the roofs of the houses, which crown the ramparts.”

“And higher still?”

“The tops of the pines, the domes of the Churches and the Belltowers.”

“And higher still?”

“I see a Tower overtopping all the rest, and crowned with battlements. It is the Tower of the Podestà.”

“Monk, what see you above the battlements of that Tower?”

“I see nothing, brother, above the battlements save the sky.”

“But I,” cried the quarryman, “I see upon that Tower a hideous giant brandishing a club, and on the club is inscribed: OPPRESSION. Yea! Oppression is lifted up above the citizens’ heads on the Great Tower of the Magistrates and the City’s Laws.”

And Fra Giovanni answered:

“What one man sees, another cannot see, and it may be the horrid shape you describe is set on the Tower of the Podestà yonder, in the city of Viterbo. But is there no remedy for the ills you endure, my brother? The good St. Francis left behind him on this earth so full a fountain of consolation that all men may draw refreshment therefrom.”

Then the quarryman spoke after this fashion:

“Men have said, ‘This mountain is ours.’ And these men are my masters, and it is for them I hew stone. And they enjoy the fruit of my labour.”

Fra Giovanni sighed:

“Surely men must be mad to believe they own a mountain.”

But the quarryman replied:

“Nay! they are not mad; and the Laws of the City guarantee them their ownership. The citizens pay them for the stones I have hewn, which are marbles of great price.”

And Fra Giovanni said:

“We must change the laws of the City and the habits of the citizens. St. Francis, that Angel of God, has given the example and shown the way. When he resolved, by God’s command, to rebuild the ruined Church of St. Damian, he did not set out to find the master of the quarry. He did not say, ‘Go buy me the finest marbles, and I will give you gold in exchange.’ For the holy man, who was called the son of Bernardone and who was the true son of God, knew this, that the man who sells is the enemy of the man who buys, and that the art of Trafficking is more mischievous, if possible, than the art of War. Wherefore he did not apply to the master-masons or any of them that give marble and timber and lead in exchange for money. But he went forth into the Mountain and gathered his load of wood and stones, and bore it himself to the spot hallowed to the memory of the Blessed Damian. With his own hands, by help of the mason’s line, he laid the stones to form the walls; and he made the cement to bind together the stones one to another. Finished, it was a lowly circuit of roughly fashioned stones, the work of a weakling. But who considers it with the eyes of the soul recognizes therein an Angel’s thought. For the mortar of this wall was not worked with the blood of the unfortunate; this house of St. Damian was not raised with the thirty pieces of silver paid for the blood of that Just Man, which, rejected by Iscariot, go travelling the world ever since, passing from hand to hand, to buy up all the injustice and all the cruelty of the earth.

“For, alone of all others, this house is founded on Innocence, stablished on Love, based on Charity, and alone of all others it is the House of God.

“And I tell you verily, quarryman and brother, the poor man of Jesus Christ, in doing these things, gave to the world an example of Justice, and one day his foolishness shall shine forth as wisdom. For all things in this earth are God’s and we are His children; and it is meet the children should share alike in His inheritance. That is, each should get what he has need of. And seeing grown men do not ask for broth, nor babes for wine, the share of each shall not be the same, but each shall have the heritage that is fitting for him.

“And labour shall be a joyful thing, when it is no longer paid. 'Tis gold only, the cursed gold, that makes the sharing uneven. When each man shall go severally to the Mountain for his stone, and carry his load to the city on his own back, the stone shall weigh light and it shall be the stone of cheerfulness. And we will build the house of joy and gladness, and the new city shall rise from its foundations. And there shall be neither rich nor poor, but all men will call themselves poor men, because they will be glad to bear a name that brings them honour.”

So spoke the gentle Fra Giovanni, and the unhappy quarryman thought to himself:

“This man clad in a shroud and girt with a cord has proclaimed new tidings. I shall not see the end of my miseries, for I am going to die of hunger and exhaustion. But I shall die happy, for my eyes, before they close, will have beheld the dawn of the day of Justice.”

X

THE FRIENDS OF ORDER

Now in those days there was in the very illustrious city of Viterbo a Confraternity of sixty old men. These counted among their number many of the chief men of the place; and their objects were the accumulation of honours and riches, and the pursuit of virtue. The Brotherhood included a Gonfalonier of the Republic, Doctors of either faculty, Judges, Merchants, Money-changers of conspicuous piety, and one or two old Soldiers of Fortune grown too ancient and feeble for the Wars.

Seeing they were banded together for the purpose of stirring up their fellow-citizens to goodness and good order, and to bear mutual witness to the practice of these virtues, they gave themselves the title of *The Friends of Order*. This name was inscribed on the banner of the Confraternity, and they were all of one mind to persuade the poor to follow goodness and good order, to the end no changes might be made in the Constitution.

Their habit was to meet on the last day of each month, in the Palace of the Podestà, to make inquiry of each other what of good had been done in the city during the month. And to such of the poorer citizens as had done well and orderly, they used to present pieces of money.

Now on a certain day the Friends of Order were holding meeting. At one end of the Hall was a raised platform covered with velvet, and over the platform a magnificent canopy of state, held up by four figures carved and painted. These figures represented Justice, Temperance, Strength and Chastity; and beneath the canopy sat the Officers of the Brotherhood. The President, who was entitled the Dean, took his place in the middle on a golden chair, which in richness was scarce inferior to the throne that once upon a time the disciple of St. Francis saw prepared in Heaven for the poor man of the Lord. This seat of state had been presented to the Dean of the Brotherhood to the end that in him should be honoured all the goodness done in the city.

And as soon as the Members of the Confraternity were ranged in the fitting order, the Dean got up to speak. He congratulated any serving-maids that served their masters without receiving wages, and spoke highly of the old men who, having no bread to eat, did not ask for any.

And he said:

“These have done well, and we shall reward them. For it behoves that goodness be rewarded, and it is our bounden duty to pay the price of it, being as we are the first and foremost citizens of the city.”

And when he finished speaking, the crowd of the general folk that stood under the platform clapped their hands.

But no sooner had they done applauding than Fra Giovanni lifted up his voice from the midst of the miserable, poverty-stricken band, and asked loudly:

“What is goodness?”

At this great clamour arose in the assembly, and the Dean shouted:

“Who was it spoke?”

And a red-haired man who was standing among the people, answered:

“It was a Monk, by name Giovanni, who is the disgrace of his Cloister. He goes naked through the streets, carrying his clothes on his head, and gives himself up to all sorts of extravagances.”

Next a Baker spoke up and said:

“He is a madman or a miscreant! He begs his bread at the Bakers’ doors.”

Then a number of those present, shouting noisily and dragging Fra Giovanni by the gown, tried to hustle him out of the hall, while others more angry still, began throwing stools and breaking them over the holy man’s head. But the Dean rose from his seat under the canopy, and said:

“Leave the man in peace, so that he may hear me and be confounded. He asks what goodness is, because goodness is not in him and he is devoid of virtue. I answer him, ‘The knowledge of goodness resides in virtuous men; and good citizens carry within them a proper respect for the laws. They approve what has been done in the city to insure to each man enjoyment of the riches he may have acquired. They support the established order of things, and are ready to fly to arms to defend the same. For the duty of the poor is to defend the good things belonging to the rich; and this is how the union betwixt citizens is maintained. This is goodness and good order. Again, the rich man has his serving-man bring out a basket full of bread, which he distributes to the poor; and this is goodness again.’ These are the lessons this rough, ignorant fellow required to be taught.”

Having so said, the Dean sat down, and the crowd of poor folks raised a murmur of approval. But Fra Giovanni, stepping on one of the stools that had been thrown at his head with contumely and insult, addressed them all and said:

“Hear the words of comfort! Goodness resides not in men, for men know not of themselves what is good. They are ignorant of their own nature and destiny. What seems good, may be evil all the while; and what is deemed useful, harmful. No man can choose the things meet for him, because he knows not his

own needs, but is like the little child sitting in the meadows, that sucks for wholesome milk the juice of the deadly nightshade. The babe does not know that the nightshade is a poison; but its mother knows. This is why goodness is to do the will of God.

“It is false to say, ’Tis I teach goodness, and goodness is to obey the city laws.’ For the Laws are not of God; they are of man, and share in man’s craft and cunning and imperfection. They are like the rules children make in the Square of Viterbo, when they are playing ball. Goodness is not in customs nor in laws; it is in God and in the accomplishment of God’s will upon earth, and it is neither by law-makers nor magistrates that God’s will is accomplished upon the earth.

“For the great men of this world do their own will, and their will is contrary to God’s. But they who have stripped off pride and know there is no goodness in them, these men receive noble gifts, and God Himself distils His sweetness within them like honey in the hollow of the oaks.

“And we must be the oak-tree full of honey and dew. Humble, ignorant and simple folks, these have knowledge of God; and by them shall God’s kingdom be stablished on earth. Salvation is not in the strength of laws nor in the multitude of soldiers; it is in poverty and humbleness of spirit.

“Say not, ‘Goodness is in me, and I teach goodness.’ Rather say, ‘Goodness is in God on high.’ Over long have men hardened their hearts in their own wisdom. Over long have they set up the Lion and the She-Wolf above the Gates of their Cities. Their wisdom and their prudence have brought about slavery and wars and the shedding of much innocent blood. Wherefore you should put your guidance in God’s hand, as the blind man trusts himself to his dog’s guidance. Fear not to shut the eyes of your spirit and have done with Reason, for has not Reason made you unhappy and wicked? By Reason have you grown like the man who, having guessed the secrets of the Beast crouching in the cavern, waxed proud of his knowingness, and deeming himself wiser than his fellows, slew his father and wedded his mother.

“God was not with him; but He is with the humble and simple-minded. Learn not to will and He will put His will in you. Seek not to guess the riddles of the Beast. Be ignorant, and you shall not fear to go astray. ’Tis only wise men that are deceived.”

Fra Giovanni having thus spoken, the Dean got up and said:

“The miscreant has insulted me, and I willingly forgive him the insult. But he has spoken against the laws of Viterbo, and it is meet he should be punished.”

So Fra Giovanni was led before the Judges, who had him loaded with chains and cast him into the city gaol.

XI

THE REVOLT OF GENTLENESS

The holy man Giovanni was chained to a massive pillar in the middle of the dungeon over which the river flowed.

Two other prisoners were plunged along with him in the thick and fetid darkness. Both these had realized and proclaimed the injustice of the Laws. One was for overthrowing the Republic by force. He had been guilty of startling assassinations, and his hope was to purify the city with fire and sword. The other trusted to be able to change men's hearts, and had delivered very persuasive discourses. Inventor of wise laws, he counted on the charms of his genius and the innocence of his life to induce his fellow-citizens to submit to them. But both had met with the same doom.

When they learned how the holy man was chained alongside of them for having spoken against the laws of the city, they congratulated him. And the one who had invented wise laws, said to him:

"If ever, brother, we are restored to liberty, seeing you think as I do, you shall help me to persuade the citizens that they ought to set up above them the empire of just laws."

But the holy man Giovanni answered him:

"What matter for Justice being in the Laws, if it is not in men's hearts? And if men's hearts are unjust, what gain shall it be that Equity reign in the Courts of Law?

"Say not, 'We will stablish just laws, and we will render to every man what is his due.' For no one is just, and we know not what is meet for men. We are no less ignorant what is good for them and what is evil. And whensoever the Princes of the People and the Chiefs of the Commonwealth have loved Justice, they have caused the slaying of many folk.

"Give not the compass and the level to the false measurer; for with true instruments, he will make untrue apportionments. And he will say: 'See, I carry on me the level, the rule and the square, and I am a good measurer.' So long as men shall be covetous and cruel, will they make the most merciful laws cruel, and will rob their brethren with words of love on their lips. This is why it is vain to reveal to them the words of love and the laws of gentleness.

"Set not up laws against laws, nor raise tables of marble and tables of brass before men's eyes. For whatever is written on the tables of the Law, is written in

letters of blood.”

So spoke the holy man. And the other prisoner, — he who had committed startling murders, and contrived the ruin that was to save the city, approved his words and said:

“Comrade, you have spoken well. Know you, I will never set up law against law, right rule against crooked rule; my wish is to destroy the law by violence and compel the citizens to live thenceforth in happy freedom. And know further that I have slain both judges and soldiers, and have committed many crimes for the public good.”

Hearing these words, the man of the Lord rose, stretched out his manacled arms in the heavy darkness and cried:

“Ill betide the violent! for violence ever begets violence. Whosoever acts like you is sowing the earth with hate and fury, and his children shall tear their feet with the wayside briars, and serpents shall bite their heel.

“Ill betide you! for you have shed the blood of the unjust judge and the brutal soldier, and lo! you are become like the soldier and the judge yourself. Like them you bear on your hands the indelible stain.

“A fool the man who says, ‘We will do evil-doing in our turn, and our heart shall be comforted. We will be unjust, and it shall be the beginning of justice.’ Evil-doing is in evil desiring. Desire nothing, and evil-doing will be done away. Injustice hurts only the unjust; I shall suffer no harm of it, if I am just. Oppression is a sword whose hilt wounds the hand of him who holds it; but its point cannot pierce the heart of the man who is simple-minded and good and kind.

“For such an one nothing is dangerous, if he fear nothing. To endure all things, is to endure nothing. Let us be good and kindly, and the whole round world shall be the same. For the world will be an instrument for your goodness, and your persecutors will work to make you better and more beautiful.

“You love life, and this is an affection which rules the heart of every man. Then love suffering; for to live is to suffer. Never envy your cruel masters; rather have compassion for the commanders of armies. Pity the Publicans and Judges; the proudest of them have known the stings of grief and the terrors of death. Happier you, because your consciences are void of offence; for you, let grief lose its bitterness and death its terrors.

“Be ye God’s children, and tell yourselves, ‘All is well in Him.’ Beware of pursuing even the public good with overmuch violence and avidity, for fear something of cruelty mar your integrity. Rather should your desire of universal loving-kindness have the unction of a prayer and the soft fervour of a hope.

“Fair the table, whereat every man shall get his just portion, and the guests shall each one wash the other’s feet. But say not, ‘I will set up this table by force in the streets of the city and in the public squares.’ For it is not knife in hand you must call together your brethren to the feast of Justice and Gentleness. Of its own accord must the board be spread in the Campo di Marte, by virtue of graciousness and good will.

“This shall be a miracle; and be sure, miracles are not wrought save by faith and love. If you disobey your masters, let it be by love. Neither fether nor kill them, but tell them rather, ‘I will never slay my brothers, nor throw them into chains.’ Endure, suffer, submit, will what God wills, and your will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. What seems evil is evil, and what seems good is good. Striving and discontent is the true curse of mankind. Let us then be peaceful and content, and never strike the wicked, for fear we make ourselves like them.

“If we have not the good fortune to be poor in very deed, let us not make ourselves rich men in spirit, and heartbound to the things of this world that make folk unjust and unhappy. Let us suffer persecution with gentleness, and be those chosen vessels that turn into balm the gall poured into them.”

XII

WORDS OF LOVE

Then the Judges had the holy man, Giovanni, brought before them chained to him who had thrown Greek fire in the Palace of the Priors. And they said to the holy man:

“You are alongside of the guilty because you are not on our side. For whosoever is not with good citizens is with evil.”

And the holy man answered them:

“There are neither good nor evil among men; but all alike are unhappy. And they who suffer neither hunger nor contumely, they are afflicted by riches and power. It is not given to any man born of woman to escape the miseries of life, and the son of woman is like a fever patient, who turns and turns in his bed, and can find no rest, because he will not lie down on the Cross of Jesus, his head among the thorns, and take his joy in suffering. Yet is it in suffering that joy is found; and they who love know this.

“I companion with Love, but that man with Hate; and for this cause we can never come together. And I say to him, ‘Brother, you have done ill, and your crime is great and grievous,’ And I speak so, because Charity and Love urge me. But you, you condemn yonder guilty man in the name of Justice. But invoking Justice, you take a vain oath, for there is no such thing as Justice among men.

“We are all of us guilty. And when you say, ‘The life of peoples is in our hand,’ you are lying, and you are the coffin which declares, ‘I am the cradle.’ The life of peoples is in the harvests of the fields, which grow yellow beneath the Lord’s sight. It is in the vines hanging from the elms, and in the smiles and tears wherein heaven bathes the fruits of the trees in the orchard closes. It is not in the laws, which are made by the rich and powerful for the maintenance of their own power and riches.

“Ye forget how ye are all born poor and naked. And He who came to lie in the manger at Bethlehem, has come without profiting you. And He must needs be born again and be crucified a second time for your salvation.

“The man of violence has laid hold of the arms you forged; and is well compared to the warriors you hold in honour because they have destroyed cities. What is defended by force shall be attacked by force. And if you have wit to read the book you have written, you will find what I say therein. For you have put in your book that the right of nations is the right of war; and you have

glorified violence, paying honours to conquering generals and raising statues in your public squares to them and their war-horses.

“And you have laid it down, ‘There is violence that is right, and violence that is wrong. And this is the right of nations and this is the law.’ But so soon as the men shall have put you outside the law, they will be the law, even as you became the law, when you had overthrown the tyrant that was the law before you.

“Now, be assured, it is very certain that there is no true right save in the renouncing of right. There is no hallowed law save in love. There is no Justice save in Charity. ’Tis not by force we should resist force, for strife only hardens the fighters’ hearts and the issue of battles is aye dubious. But if we oppose gentleness to violence, this latter getting no hold upon its adversary, falls dead of itself.

“It is related by learned men in the *Bestiaries* how the unicorn, which bears on its forehead a flaming sword, transfixes the hunter in his coat-of-mail, but falls to its knees before a pure virgin. Be ye gentle-hearted, therefore, and simple-souled; keep your heart pure, and ye shall fear nothing.

“Put not your trust in the sword of the Condottieri, for did not the shepherd boy’s smooth stone pierce Goliath’s brow? But be ye strong in love, and love them that hate you. Hate, when unreturned, is robbed of half its sting; and what is left is weak, widowed, and like to die. Strip yourselves, that other men strip you not. Love your enemies, that they become your friends. Forgive, that ye may be forgiven. Say not, ‘Gentleness is a bane to the shepherds of the peoples.’ For how can you know, seeing these have never tried? They profess by harshness to have lessened the evil of the world. Yet is evil still rampant among men, and there is never a sign of its growing less.

“I said to some, ‘Be not oppressors,’ and to others, ‘Rise not in revolt against oppression,’ — and neither hearkened to me. They cast the stone of derision at me. Because I was on all men’s side, each reproached me and said, ‘You are not on my side.’

“I said, ‘I am the friend of the wretched.’ But you never thought I was your friend, because in your pride, you know not that you are wretched. Nevertheless the wretchedness of the master is more cruel than that of the slave. My tender pity for your woes only made you think I was mocking you; and the oppressed deemed me to be of the party of the oppressors. ‘He has no bowels,’ they said. Nay! but I am on the side of love and not of hate. This is why you scorn me; and because I preach peace on earth, you hold me for a fool. You think my words wander all ways, like the steps of a drunken man. And it is very true I walk your fields like those harpers who on the eve of battles, come to play before the tents. And the soldiers say, as they listen: ‘’Tis some poor simpletons come playing the

tunes we heard long ago in our mountains.' I am this harper that roams between the hosts in battle array of hostile armies. When I think whither human wisdom leads, I am glad to be a madman and a simpleton; and I thank God that He has given me the harp to handle and not the sword."

XIII

THE TRUTH

The holy man Giovanni was very straitly confined in gaol, where he was fastened by chains to rings built into the wall. But his soul was unfettered, and no tortures had been able to shake his firmness. He promised himself he would never betray the faith that was in him, and was ready to be witness and martyr of the Truth, to the end he might die in God. And he said to himself, "Truth shall go along with me to the scaffold. She shall look at me and weep and say, 'My tears flow, seeing it is for my sake this man is going to his death.'"

And as the holy man was thus holding colloquy of his own thoughts in the solitude of his dungeon, a knight entered into the prison, without ever the doors having been opened. He was clad in a red mantle, and carried in his hand a lighted lantern.

Fra Giovanni accosted him and said:

"What is your name, subtle sir, that slips through prison walls?"

And the knight made answer:

"Brother, what use to tell you the names folk give me? For you I will bear the one you shall call me by. Know this, I am come to you full of helpfulness and goodwill, and being informed you dearly love the Truth, I bring you a word touching this same Truth that you have taken for lady and companion."

And Fra Giovanni began to tender thanks to his visitor. But the knight stopped him in the midst, saying:

"I warn you, this word of mine will seem to you at the first empty and of no account, for it is with it as with a tiny key, that the heedless man throws away without using.

"But the careful householder tries it in lock after lock, till he finds at last it opens a chest full of gold and precious stones.

"Wherefore I say to you, Fra Giovanni, seeing you have chosen peradventure to take Truth for your Lady and darling, it behoves you greatly to know concerning her all that may be known. Well then, know that she is *white*. And from her appearance, which I will describe you, you shall gather her nature, which will be very useful to you in making up to her and kissing her fair body with all sorts of pretty caresses, after the fashion of a lover fondling his mistress. Therefore take it as proven, brother mine, that she is *white*."

After hearkening to these words, the holy man Giovanni answered:

“Subtle Sir, the meaning of your discourse is not so hard to guess as you would seem to fear. And my wit, albeit naturally thick and dull, was instantly transfixed by the fine point of your allegory. You say that Truth is white to manifest the perfect purity that is in her, and show clearly she is a lady of immaculate virtue. And truly I picture her to myself such as you describe, overpassing in whiteness the lilies of the garden and the snow that in winter clothes the summits of Monte Alverno.”

But the visitor shook his head and said:

“Nay! Fra Giovanni, that is not the meaning of my words, and you have in no wise broken the bone to extract the marrow. I instructed you that Truth is white, *not* that she is pure; and it shows little discernment to think that she is pure.”

Grieved at what he now heard, the holy man Giovanni replied:

“Even as the Moon, when the Earth hides the Sun’s light from her, is darkened by the thick shadow of this World, where was wrought the crime of our mother Eve, so, most Subtle Sir, you have obscured a plain saying under baffling phrases. Thus we have you astray in the dark; for indeed Truth is pure, coming from God, the fountain of all purity.”

But the Opponent retorted:

“Fra Giovanni, your logic is at fault, or you would know that purity is an inconceivable quality. This is what the shepherds of Arcady did, so they say, who named pure gods the gods they knew not the nature of.”

Then the good Fra Giovanni sighed and said:

“Sir! your words are dark and wrapped in sadness. At times in my sleep angels have visited me. Their words I could not comprehend; but the mystery of *their* thought was full of joy.”

Hereupon the subtle visitor resumed:

“Come, Fra Giovanni, let us argue it out both of us according to the rules of syllogism.”

But the holy man answered:

“Nay! I cannot argue with you; I have neither wish nor wit for the task.”

“Well then!” returned the Subtle Sophist, “I must needs find another Opponent.”

And in a moment, lifting the index finger of his left hand, he made with his right out of a corner of his gown a red cap for this finger. Then holding it up before his nose,

“Look!” he said, “look at this finger. He’s a learned Doctor now, and I am going to hold a learned argument with him. He’s a Platonist, maybe Plato himself.

“Messer Plato, what is purity? I wait your answer, Messer Plato. Oh! you say. Consciousness is pure. Consciousness only when it is devoid of everything which may be seen, heard, handled, in one word proved by the senses. You grant me further, — yes! you nod your cap, that Truth will be pure Truth under the same conditions, that is to say provided only you make her dumb, blind, deaf, legless, paralytic, crippled of all her limbs. And I am quite ready to allow that in this state she will escape the delusions that make mock of mankind, and will have no temptations to play the runagate. You are a scoffer, and you have made much mock at the world. Doff your cap.”

And the Opponent, dropping the corner of his gown, once more addressed the holy man Giovanni:

“My friend, these old Sophists knew not what Truth was. But I, who am a student of physics and a great observer of natural curiosities, you may believe me when I tell you she is white, or, more strictly speaking, whiteness itself.

“From which we must not conclude, I have told you before, that she is pure. Consider the Lady Eletta, of Verona, whose thighs were like milk; think you for this they were abstract from the world in general, withdrawn in the invisible and intangible, which is the pure, according to the Platonic doctrine? You would be much mistaken if you supposed so.”

“I do not know this Lady Eletta you speak of,” said the holy man Giovanni.

“She gave herself and her living body,” said the Opponent, “to two Popes, sixty Cardinals, fourteen Princes, eighteen merchants, the Queen of Cyprus, three Turks, four Jews, the Lord Bishop of Arezzo’s ape, a hermaphrodite, and the Devil. But we are wandering from our subject, which is to discover the proper character of Truth.

“Now, if this character is not purity, as I have just established it cannot be in argument with Plato himself, it is conceivable it may be impurity, which impurity is the necessary condition of all existing things. For have we not just seen how the pure has neither life nor consciousness? And you must yourself, I trow, have learned amply from experience that life and all pertaining thereto is invariably compound, blended, diversified, liable to increase and decrease, unstable, soluble, corruptible — never pure.”

“Doctor,” replied Giovanni, “your reasons are nothing worth, forasmuch as God, who is all pure, exists.”

But the Subtle Doctor retorted:

“If you would read your books more carefully, my son, you would see it is said of Him you have just named, *not*, ‘He exists,’ but, ‘He is.’ Now to exist and to be are not one and the same thing, but two opposite things. You are alive, and do you not say yourself, ‘I am nothing; I am as if I were not’? And you do not

say, 'I am he who is.' Because to live, is each moment to cease to be. Again you say, 'I am full of impurities,' forasmuch you are not a single thing, but a blending of things that stir and strive."

"Now do you speak wisely," answered the holy man, "and I see by your discourse that you are very deep read, Subtle Sir, in the sciences, divine as well as human. For true indeed it is God is He who is."

"By the body of Bacchus," exclaimed the other, "He is, and that perfectly and universally. Wherefore are we dispensed from seeking Him in any single place, being assured He is to be discovered neither more nor less in any one spot than in any other, and that you cannot find so much as a pair of old spatterdashes without their due share of Him."

"Admirably put, and most true," returned Giovanni. "But it is right to add that He is more particularly in the sacred elements, by the way of transubstantiation."

"More than that!" added the learned Doctor; "He is actually edible in them. Note moreover, my son, that He is round in an apple, long-shaped in an aubergine, sharp in a knife and musical in a flute. He has all the qualities of substances, and likewise all the properties of figures. He is acute and He is obtuse, because He is at one and the same time all possible triangles; his radii are at once equal and unequal, because He is both the circle and the ellipse — and He is the hyperbola besides, which is an indescribable figure."

While the holy Giovanni was still pondering these sublime verities, he heard the Subtle Doctor suddenly burst out a-laughing. Then he asked him:

"Why do you laugh?"

"I am laughing," replied the Doctor, "to think how they have discovered in me certain oppositions and contradictions, and have reproached me bitterly for the same. It is very true I have many such. But they fail to see that, if I had them all, I should then be like the Other."

The holy man asked him:

"What other is it you speak of?"

And the Adversary answered:

"If you knew of whom I speak, you would know who I am. And my wisest words you would be loath to listen to, for much ill has been said of me. But, if you remain ignorant who I am, I can be of much use to you. I will teach you how intensely sensitive men are to the sounds that the lips utter, and how they let themselves be killed for the sake of words that are devoid of meaning. This we see with the Martyrs, — and in your own case, Giovanni, who look forward with joy to be strangled and then burned to the singing of the Seven Psalms, in the Great Square of Viterbo, for this word *Truth*, for which you could not by any possibility discover a reasonable interpretation.

“Verily you might ransack every hole and corner of your dim brain, and pick over all the spiders’ webs and old iron that cumber your head, without ever lighting on a picklock to open this word and extract the meaning. But for me, my poor friend, you would get yourself hanged and your body burned for a word of one syllable which neither you nor your judges know the sense of, so that none could ever have discovered which to despise the most, hangmen or hanged.

“Know then that Truth, your well-beloved mistress, is made up of elements compacted of wet and dry, hard and soft, cold and hot, and that it is with this lady as with women of common humanity, in whom soft flesh and warm blood are not diffused equally in all the body.”

Fra Giovanni doubted in his simplicity whether this discourse was altogether becoming. The Adversary read the holy man’s thought, and reassured him, saying:

“Such is the learning we are taught at School. I am a Theologian, I!”

Then he got up, and added:

“I regret to leave you, friend; but I cannot tarry longer with you. For I have many contradictions to pose to many men. I can taste no rest day nor night; but I must be going ceaselessly from place to place, setting down my lantern now on the scholar’s desk, now at the bed’s head of the sick man who cannot sleep.”

So saying, he went away as he had come. And the holy man Giovanni asked himself: “Why did this Doctor say, Truth was white, I wonder?” And lying in the straw he kept revolving this question in his head. His body shared the restlessness of his mind, and kept turning first one side then the other in search of the repose he could not find.

XIV

GIOVANNI'S DREAM

And this is why, left alone in his dungeon, he prayed to the Lord, saying:

“O Lord! Thy loving-kindness is infinite toward me, and Thy favour manifest, seeing Thou hast so willed I should lie on a dunghill, like Job and Lazarus, whom Thou didst love so well. And Thou hast given me to know how filthy straw is a soft and sweet pillow to the just man. And Thou, dear Son of God, who didst descend into Hell, bless Thou the sleep of Thy servant where he lies in the gloomy prison-house. Forasmuch as men have robbed me of air and light, because I was steadfast to confess the truth, deign to enlighten me with the glory of the everlasting dayspring and feed me on the flames of Thy love, O living Truth, O Lord my God!”

Thus prayed the holy man Giovanni with his lips. But in his heart he remembered the sayings of the Adversary. He was troubled to the bottom of his spirit, and in much trouble and anguish of mind he fell asleep.

And seeing the thought of the Adversary weighed heavy on his slumbers, his sleep was not like the little child's lying on its mother's breast, a gentle sleep of smiles and milk. And in his dreams he beheld a vast wheel that shone with colours of living fire.

It was like those rose windows of flower-like brilliancy that glow over the doors of Churches, the masterpieces of Gothic craftsmen, and display in the translucent glass the history of the Virgin Mary and the glory of the Prophets. But the secret of these rose windows is unknown to the Tuscan artificer.

And this wheel was great and dazzling and brighter a thousandfold than the best wrought of all the rose windows that ever were divided by compass and painted with brush in the lands of the North. The Emperor Charlemagne saw not the like the day he was crowned.

The only man who ever beheld a wheel more splendid was the poet who, a lady leading him, entered clothed in flesh into Holy Paradise. The rose was of living light, and seemed alive itself, every age and every condition, in an eager crowd, formed the nave and spokes and felloe. They were clad each according to his estate, and it was easy to recognize Pope and Emperor, Kings and Queens, Bishops, Barons, Knights, ladies, esquires, clerks, burghers, merchants, attorneys, apothecaries, labourers, ruffians, Moors and Jews. Moreover, seeing all that live on this earth were shown on the wheel, Satyrs and Cyclopes were there, and Pygmies and Centaurs such as Africa nurses in her burning deserts,

and the men Marco Polo the traveller found, who are born without heads and with a face below their navel.

And from betwixt the lips of each there issued a scroll, bearing a device. Now each device was of a hue which did not appear in any other, and in all the incalculable multitude of devices, no two could have been discovered of the same appearance. Some were dyed purple, others painted with the bright colours of the sky and sea, or the shining of the stars, yet others green as grass. Many were exceeding pale, many again exceeding dark and sombre, the whole so ordered that the eye found in these devices every one of the colours that paint the universe.

The holy man Giovanni began to decipher them, by this means making himself acquainted with the divers thoughts of divers men. And after reading on a good while, he perceived that these devices were as much diversified in the sense of the words as in the hues of the letters, and that the sentences differed one from the other in such sort that there was never a single one did not flatly contradict every other.

But at the same time he noted that this contradiction which existed in the head and body of the maxims did not continue in their tail, but that they all agreed together very accurately in their lower extremity, all ending in the same fashion, seeing each and all terminated in these words, *Such is Truth* .

And he said in his heart:

“These mottoes are like the flowers young men and maidens pluck in the water-meadows by the Arno, to make them into posies. For these flowers are readily gathered together by the tails, while the heads keep separate and fight amongst themselves in hue and brilliancy. And it is the same with the opinions of human beings.”

And the holy man found in the devices a host of contradictions regarding the origin of sovereignty, the fountains of knowledge, pleasure and pain, things lawful and things unlawful. And he discovered likewise mighty difficulties in connection with the shape of the Earth and the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Heretics and Arabs and Jews, the monsters of the African desert and the Epicureans, who all had their place, a scroll in their lips, on the wheel of fire.

And each sentence ended in this way, *Such is Truth* . And the holy man Giovanni marvelled to see so many truths all diversely coloured. He saw red, and blue, and green, and yellow, but he saw no white — not even the one the Pope made proclamation of, to wit, “On this rock have I built my Church and committed thereto the crowns of all the world.” Indeed this device was all red and as if blood-stained.

And the holy man sighed:

“Then I am never to find on the wheel of the universe the pure, white Truth, the immaculate and candid Truth, I would find.”

And he called upon Truth, crying with tears in his eyes:

“Truth! Truth! for whose sake I am to die, show yourself before your martyr’s eyes.”

And lo! as he was wailing out the words, the living wheel began to revolve, and the devices, running one into the other, no longer kept distinct, while on the great disk came circles of every hue, circles wider and wider the further they were from the centre.

Then as the motion grew faster, these circles disappeared one by one; the widest vanished first, because the speed was swiftest near the felloe of the wheel. But directly the wheel began to spin so fast the eye could not see it move and it seemed to stand motionless, the smallest circles too disappeared, like the morning-star when the sun pales the hills of Assisi.

Then at the last the wheel looked all white; and it overpassed in brilliance the translucent orb where the Florentine poet saw Beatrice in the dewdrop. It seemed as though an Angel, wiping the eternal pearl to cleanse it of all stains, had set it on the Earth, so like was the wheel to the Moon, when she shines high in the heavens lightly veiled under the gauze of filmy clouds. For at these times no shadow of a man carrying sticks, no mark at all, shows on her opalescent surface. Even so never a stain was visible on the wheel of light.

And the holy man Giovanni heard a voice which said to him:

“Behold that same white Truth you were fain to contemplate. And know it is built up of the divers contradictory truths, in the same fashion as all colours go to make up white. The little children of Viterbo know this, for having spun their tops striped with many colours on the flags on the Great Market. But the doctors of Bologna never guessed the reasons for this appearance. Now in every one of the devices was a portion of the Truth, and all together make up the true and veritable device.”

“Alas! and alas!” replied the holy man, “how am I to read it? For my eyes are dazzled.”

And the voice answered:

“Very true, there is naught to be seen there but flashing fire. No Latin letters, nor Arabic, nor Greek, no cabalistic signs, can ever express this device; and no hand is there may trace it in characters of flame on palace walls.

“Friend, never set your heart on reading what is not written. Only know this, that whatsoever a man has thought or believed in his brief lifetime is a parcel of this infinite Truth; and that, even as much dirt and disorder enter into what we

call the order of nature, that is the clean and proper ordering of the universe, so the maxims of knaves and fools, who make the mass of mankind, participate in some sort in that general and universal Truth-which is absolute, everlasting and divine. Which makes me sore afraid, by the by, it may very like not exist at all.”

And with a great burst of mocking laughter, the voice fell silent.

Then the holy man saw a long leg stretched out, in red hose, and inside the shoe the foot seemed cloven and like a goat's, only much larger. And it gave the wheel of light so shrewd a kick on the rim of its fellow, that sparks flew out as they do when the blacksmith smites the iron with his hammer, and the great wheel leapt into the air to fall far away, broken into fragments. Meantime the air was filled with such piercing laughter that the holy man awoke.

And in the livid gloom of the dungeon, he thought sadly:

“I have no hope or wish left to know Truth, if, as has just been manifested to me, she only shows herself in contradictions and inconsistencies. How shall I dare by my death to be witness and martyr of what men must believe, now the vision of the wheel of the universe has made me see how every particular falsehood is a parcel of general Truth, absolute and unknowable? Why, O my God, have you suffered me to behold these things, and let it be revealed to me before my last sleep, that Truth is everywhere and that she is nowhere?”

And the holy man laid his head in his hands and wept.

XV

THE JUDGMENT

Fra Giovanni was led before the Magistrates of the Republic to be judged according to the laws of Viterbo. And one of the Magistrates said to the guards:

“Take his chains off him. For every person accused should appear freely before us.”

And Giovanni thought:

“Why does the Judge pronounce words that are not straight?”

And the first of the Magistrates began to question the holy man, and said to him:

“Giovanni, bad man that you are, being thrown in prison by the august clemency of the laws, you have spoken against those laws. You have contrived with wicked men, chained in the same dungeon as yourself, a plot to overthrow the order established in this city.”

The holy man Giovanni made answer:

“Nay! I but spoke for Justice and Truth. If the laws of the city are agreeable to Justice and Truth, I have not spoken against them. I have only spoken words of loving-kindness. I said:

“‘Strive not to destroy force by force. Be peaceable in the midst of wars, to the end the spirit of God may rest on you like a little bird on the top of a poplar in the valley that is flooded by the torrent.’ I said, ‘Be gentle toward the men of violence.’”

Then the Judge cried out in anger:

“Speak! tell us who are the men of violence.”

But the holy man said:

“You are for milking the cow that has given all her milk, and would learn of me more than I know.”

However the Judge imposed silence on the holy man, and he said:

“Your tongue has discharged the arrow of your discourse, and its shot was aimed at the Republic. Only it has lighted lower, and turned back upon yourself.”

And the holy man said:

“You judge me, not by my acts and my words, which are manifest, but by my motives, which are visible only to God’s eye.”

And the Judge replied:

“Nay! if we could not see the invisible and were not gods upon earth, how would it be possible for us to judge folk? Do you not know a law has just been passed in Viterbo, which punishes even men’s secret thoughts? For the police of cities is for ever being perfected, and the wise Ulpian, who held the rule and the square in the days of Cæsar, would be astonished himself, if he could see our rules and squares, improved as they are.”

And the Judge said again:

“Giovanni, you have been conspiring in your prison against the common weal.”

But the holy man denied having ever conspired against the weal of Viterbo. Then the Judge said:

“The gaoler has given testimony against you.”

And the holy man asked the Judge:

“What weight will my testimony have in one scale, when that of the gaoler is in the other?”

The Judge answered:

“Why! yours will kick the beam.”

Wherefore the holy man held his peace henceforth.

Then the Judge declared:

“Anon you were talking, and the words you said proved your perfidy. Now you say nothing, and your silence is the avowal of your crime. So you have confessed your guilt twice over.”

And the Magistrate they entitled the Accuser rose and said:

“The illustrious city of Viterbo speaks by my voice, and my voice shall be grave and calm, because it is the public voice. And you will think you are listening to a bronze statue speaking, for I make accusation not with my heart and bowels, but with the tables of bronze whereon the Law is inscribed.”

And straightway he began to gesticulate furiously and utter a raging torrent of words. And he declaimed the argument of a play, in imitation of Seneca the Tragedian: and this drama was filled full of crimes committed by the holy man Giovanni. And the Accuser represented in succession all the characters of the tragedy. He mimicked the groans of the victims and the voice of Giovanni, the better to strike awe into his audience, who seemed to hear and see Giovanni himself, intoxicated with hate and evildoing. And the Accuser tore his hair and rent his gown and fell back exhausted on his august seat of office.

And the Judge who had questioned the accused before took up the word again and said:

“It is meet a citizen defend this man. For none, so says the law of Viterbo, may be condemned without having been first defended.”

Thereupon an Advocate of Viterbo got up on a stool and spoke in these terms:

“If this monk has said and done what is laid to his charge, he is very wicked. But we have no proof that he has spoken and acted in the manner supposed. Moreover, good sirs, had we this proof, it would behove us to consider further the extreme simplicity of the man and the feebleness of his understanding. He was the laughing-stock of the children in the Public Square. He is ignorant; he has done a thousand extravagances. For my own part I believe he is beside himself. What he says is worthless nonsense, and there is nothing sensible he can do. I think he has been frequenting seditious societies; and goes about repeating what he heard there, without understanding a word of it. He is too dull-witted to be punished. Look out for his instructors; it is they are to blame. There are many difficulties in the matter, and the wise man has told us, ‘In doubt, refrain from action.’”

Having so said, the Advocate stepped down from his stool. And Brother Giovanni received his death sentence. And he was informed he was to be hanged in the Square where the peasant women come to sell fruit and vegetables and the children to play knucklebones.

Next a very illustrious Doctor of Law, who was one of the Judges, got up and said:

“Giovanni, it behoves you to subscribe consent to the sentence condemning you, for being pronounced in the name of the city, it is pronounced by yourself, inasmuch as you are part and parcel of the city. You have an honourable part in it, as citizen, and I will convince you that you ought to be well content to be strangled by the city’s judgment.

“Know this, the satisfaction of the whole comprehends and embraces the satisfaction of the parts, and seeing you are a part — a vile and miserable part, yet still a part — of the noble city of Viterbo, your condemnation which satisfies the community should be no less satisfactory to yourself.

“And I will further prove you that you should rightly consider death doom agreeable and fitting. For there is no other thing so useful and becoming as is the law, which is the just measure of things, and you ought to be pleased to have received this same just and proper measure. In accordance with the rules stablished by Cæsar Justinian, you have got your due. Your condemnation is just, and therefore a pleasant and a good thing. But, were it unjust and tainted and contaminated with ignorance and iniquity (which God forbid), still it would be incumbent on you to approve the same.

“For an unjust sentence, when it is pronounced in the prescribed forms of law, participates in the virtue of the said forms and through them continues august, efficacious and of high merit. What it contains of wrong is temporary and of

little consequence, and concerns only the particular instance, whereas the good in it derives from the fixity and permanence of the organization of the laws, and therefore is it agreeable to the general dictates of justice. Wherefore Papinian declares it is better to give false judgment than none at all, seeing how men without justice are no better than wild beasts in the woods, whereas by justice is made manifest their nobleness and dignity, as is seen by the example of the Judges of the Areopagus, who were held in special honour among the Athenians. So, seeing it is necessary and profitable to give judgment, and that it is not possible to do so without fault or mistake, it follows that mistake and faultiness are comprised in the excellence of Justice and participate in the said excellence. Accordingly, supposing you deemed your sentence unfair, you should find satisfaction in this unfairness, inasmuch as it is united and amalgamated with fairness, just as tin and copper are fused together to make bronze, which is a precious metal and employed for very noble purposes, in the fashion Pliny describes in his Histories.”

The learned Doctor then proceeded to enumerate the conveniencies and advantages which flow from expiation and wash away sin, as the maids every Saturday wash the courtyards of their masters’ houses. And he demonstrated to the holy man what a boon it was for him to be condemned to death by the august good pleasure of the Commonwealth of Viterbo, which had granted him judges and a defender. And so soon as the Doctor’s eloquence was exhausted and he fell silent, Fra Giovanni was fettered once more and led back to prison.

XVI

THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD

Now on the morning appointed for his hanging, the holy man Giovanni was lying sound asleep. And the Subtle Doctor came and opened the door of his prison cell, and pulling him by the sleeve, cried:

“Ho! there, son of woman, awake! The day is just unclosing his grey eyes. The lark is singing, and the morning mists kissing the mountain sides. Clouds glide along the hills, soft and sinuous, snow-white with rosy reflexions, — which are the flanks and bosoms and loins of immortal nymphs, divine daughters of the rivers and the sky, maidens of the morn old Oceanus leads forth along the heights, — a flock multiform as his waves, and who welcome to their cool, fresh arms, on a couch of hyacinths and anemones, the gods, masters of the world, and the shepherd swains loved of goddesses. For there are shepherds their mothers bore beautiful and worthy the bed of the nymphs that dwell in the water-springs and woodlands.

“And for myself, who have deeply studied the secrets of nature, seeing but now these clouds curling wantonly round the bosom of the hill, I was filled with mysterious longings at the sight, longings I know nothing of but that they spring from the region of my loins, and that, like the infant Hercules, they showed their strength from the very cradle. And these longings were not merely after rosy mists and floating clouds; they pictured very precisely a wench named Monna Libetta I made acquaintance with once in travelling, at Castro, at an inn where she was serving-maid and at the free disposal of the muleteers and soldiers frequenting it.

“But the picture I framed in my mind of Monna Libetta, this morning, as I fared along the slopes of the hills, was wondrously embellished by the tenderness of recollection and the regrets of separation, and she was tricked out with all the pretty fancies that, springing from the loins as I said, presently send their fragrant fire coursing through all the body’s soul, transfusing it with languishing ardours and pains that are a delicious pleasure.

“For I would have you know, my Giovanni, that looking at her calmly and coldly, the girl was not greatly different from all the rest of the country wenches that, in the plains of Umbria and the Roman Marches, go afield to milk the cattle. She had dark eyes, slow and sullen, a sunburnt face, a big mouth, the bosom heavy, the belly tanned and the forepart of the legs, from the knee,

shaggy with hair. Her laugh was ready and rude, in a general way; but in act with a lover, her face grew dark and transfigured as if with wonder at the presence of a god. 'Twas this had attached me to her, and I have many a time pondered since on the nature of this attachment, for I am learned and curious to search out the reasons of things.

“And I discovered the force that drew me toward this girl Monna Libetta, maid-servant at the inn of Castro, was the same that governs the stars in heaven and that there is one force and one only in the world, which is Love. And it is likewise Hate, as is shown by the case of this same Monna Libetta, who was fiercely fondled, and just as fiercely beaten.

“And I mind me how a groom in the Pope’s stables, who was her chief lover, struck her so savagely one night in the hay-loft where he was bedding with her, that he left her lying there for dead. And he rushed crying through the streets that the vampires had strangled the girl. These be subjects a man must needs ponder if he would gain some notion of true physics and natural philosophy.”

Thus spoke the Subtle Doctor. And the holy man Giovanni sitting up on his bedding of dung, answered:

“Nay! Doctor, is this language meet to address to a man that is to be hanged in a very short while? Hearing you, I am filled with doubt whether your words are the words of a good man and a great Theologian, or if they do not rather come from an evil dream sent by the Angel of Darkness.”

But the Subtle Doctor made answer:

“Who talks of being hanged? I tell you, Giovanni, I am come hither, at the earliest peep of day, to set you free and help you to fly. See! I have donned a gaoler’s habit; the prison door stands open. Quick! up and away!”

At this the holy man rose to his feet, and answered:

“Doctor, take heed what you are saying. I have made the sacrifice of my life, and I admit it has cost me dear to make it. If trusting to your word that I am restored to life, I am then led to the place of execution, I must needs make a second sacrifice more grievous than the first, and suffer two deaths instead of out. And I confess to you my desire of martyrdom is vanished away, and a longing come upon me to breathe the air of day under the branches of the mountain pines.”

The Subtle Doctor made reply:

“It happens that was just my intent to lead you away under the pines rustling in the wind with the soft sighing of a flute. We will break our fast sitting on the mossy slope overlooking the city. Come with me! Why do you tarry?”

And the holy man said:

“Before going hence with you, I would fain know clearly who you are. I am fallen from my first constancy; my courage is no better now than a straw blown about on the wasted threshing-floor of my virtue. But I am left my faith in the Son of God, and to save my body, I would ill like to lose my soul.”

“Verily,” cried the Subtle Doctor, “think you verily I have any desire of your soul! Is it then so fair a maid and sweet a lady you are afraid I may rob you of it? Nay! keep it, friend; I could make nothing of it.”

The holy man was scarce assured by what he heard, for the other’s words breathed no pious odour. But, as he was exceeding eager to be free, he asked no more questions, but followed the Doctor and passed the wicket of the prison by his side.

Only when he was without, he inquired:

“Who are you, you who send dreams to men and set prisoners free? You have the beauty of a woman and the strength of a man, and I admire you, though I cannot love you.”

And the Subtle Doctor answered:

“You will love me so soon as I have made you suffer. Men cannot love but those who make them suffer; and there is no love except in pain.”

And so conversing, they left the city and began climbing the mountain paths. And after faring far, they saw at the entering in of a wood a red-tiled house, before which was a wide terrace overlooking the plain, planted with fruit trees and bordered with vines.

So they sat down in the courtyard at the foot of a vine trunk; its leaves were gilded by the Autumn and from the boughs hung clusters of grapes. And a girl brought them milk and honey and cakes of maize.

Presently the Subtle Doctor, stretching out his arm, plucked a scarlet-cheeked apple, bit into it and gave it to the holy man. And Giovanni ate and drank; and his beard was all white with milk and his eyes laughed as he gazed up at the sky, which filled them with blue light and joy. And the girl smiled.

Then the Subtle Doctor said:

“Look at yonder child; she is far comelier than Monna Libetta.”

And the holy man, intoxicated with milk and honey, and made merry with the light of day, sang songs his mother was used to sing when she carried him as a babe in her arms. They were songs of shepherds and shepherdesses, and they spoke of love. And as the girl stood listening on the threshold of the door, the holy man left his seat and ran staggering towards her, took her in his arms and showered on her cheeks kisses full of milk, laughter and joy.

And the Subtle Doctor having paid the reckoning, the two travellers hied them toward the plain.

As they were walking between the silvery willows that border the water, the holy man said:

“Let us sit; for now I am weary.”

So they sat down beneath a willow, and watched the water-flies curling their sword-like leaves on the river banks and the bright-coloured flies flashing over the surface. But Giovanni’s laughter was ceased, and his face was sad.

And the Subtle Doctor asked him:

“Why are you so pensive?”

And Giovanni answered him:

“I have felt through you the sweet caress of living things, and I am troubled at heart. I have tasted the milk and the honey. I have looked on the servant-maid standing at the threshold and seen that she was comely. And disquietude is in my soul and in my flesh.

“What a long road I have travelled since I have known you. Do you remember the grove of holm-oaks where I saw you the first time? For be sure, I recognize you.

“You it was visited me in my hermit’s cell and stood before me with woman’s eyes sparkling through a transparent veil, while your alluring mouth instructed me in the entanglements of Right and Wrong. Again it was you appeared in the meadows clad in a golden cope, like an Ambrose or an Augustine. Then I knew not the curse of thought; but you set me thinking. You put pride like a coal of fire on my lips; and I learned to speculate. But as yet, in the untrained freshness of my wit and raw youthfulness of mind, I felt no doubt. But again you came to me, and gave me uncertainty to feed on and doubt to drink like wine. So comes it, that this day I taste through you the entrancing illusion of things, and that the soul of woods and streams, of sky and earth, and living shapes, penetrates my breast.

“And lo! I am a miserable man, because I have followed after you, Prince of men!”

And Giovanni gazed at his companion, who stood there beautiful as day and night. And he said to him:

“Through you it is I suffer, and I love you. I love you because you are my misery and my pride, my joy and my sorrow, the splendour and the cruelty of things created, because you are desire and speculation, and because you have made me like unto yourself. For verily your promise in the Garden, in the dawn of this world’s days, was not vain, and I have tasted the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, O Satan.”

Presently Giovanni resumed again.

“I know, I see, I feel, I will, I suffer. And I love you for all the ill you have done me. I love you, because you have undone me.”

And, leaning on the Archangel’s shoulder, the man wept bitterly.

THE MYSTIC BLOOD

TO FÉLIX JEANTET

THE MYSTIC BLOOD

La Bocca sua non diceva se non Jesù e Caterina, e così dicendo ricevatti el capo nelle mani mie, fermando l'occhio nella Divina Bontà, e dicendo: lo voglio....

(Le lettere di S. Caterina da Siena.

— xcvi, Gigli e Burlamacchi.)¹

The good town of Sienna was like a sick man that seeks vainly for a restful place in his bed, and thinks, by turning about and about, to cheat his pain. Again and again had she changed the government of the Republic, which passed from the Consuls to the Assemblies of the Burghers, and, originally entrusted to the Nobles, was subsequently exercised by the money-changers, drapers, apothecaries, furriers, silk-mercens and all such citizens as were concerned with the superior arts and crafts. But these worthies having shown themselves weak and self-seeking, the People expelled them in their turn and entrusted the sovereign power to the petty artisans. In the year 1368 of the glorious Incarnation of the Son of God, the Signory was composed of fourteen Magistrates chosen from among the hosiers, butchers, locksmiths, shoemakers, and stonemasons, who together formed a Great Council known as the *Mount of the Reformers*. They were a plebeian band, rough and hard as the bronze She-Wolf, emblem of their city, which they loved with an affection at once filial and formidable. But the People, which had set them up over the Commonwealth, had suffered another body to continue in existence, though subordinate to them, the Twelve to wit, who came from the class of Bankers and wealthy Merchants. These men were in conspiracy with the Nobles, at the Emperor's instigation, to sell the City to the Pope of Rome.

The German Kaiser was the life and soul of the plot, promising the aid of his landsknechts to guarantee success. He was in the utmost haste to have the affair ended, hoping with the price of the bargain, he might be able to redeem the Crown of Charlemagne, pledged for sixteen hundred florins with the Florentine Bankers.

Meantime, they of the *Reformers' Mount*, who formed the Signory, held firm the rod of government and watched heedfully over the safety of the Republic. These artisans, officers of a free People, had refused the Emperor, when he came within their walls, bread, water, salt and fire; they had driven him forth the city groaning and trembling, and they now condemned the conspirators to death. Guardians of the town founded by Remus long ago, they copied the sternness of

the first Consuls of Rome. But their city, which went clad in silk and cloth-of-gold, was ever ready to slip betwixt their fingers, like a lascivious, false-hearted wanton; and fear and anxiety made them implacable.

In the year 1370 they discovered that a nobleman of Perugia, Ser Niccola Tuldo, had been sent by the Pope to stir up the Siennese, in connivance with the Kaiser, to deliver up the city to the Holy Father. The young Lord in question was in the prime of manly beauty, and had learned in the company of fair ladies those arts of flattery and seductive compliment he now proceeded to practise in the Palace of the Salimbeni and the shops of the money-changers. And, for all his light heart and empty head, he gained over to the Pope's side many burghers and some artisans. Informed of his intrigues, the Magistrates of the *Mount of the Reformers* had him brought before their august Council, and after questioning him underneath the gonfalon of the Republic, which shows a Lion rampant for device, they declared him guilty of attempted outrage against the liberties of the City.

He had answered with mere smiling scorn to the questions of these cobbler fellows and butchers. But when he heard his sentence of death pronounced, he fell into ecstasy of deep astonishment, and was led away to prison as if in a trance. No sooner was he locked up in his cell than, awaking from his stupor, he began to regret the life he was to lose with all the ardour of his young blood and impetuous character; visions of all its pleasures, arms, women, horses, crowded before his eyes, and at the thought he would never enjoy the delights more, he was carried away by so furious a despair he beat with fists and forehead on the walls of his dungeon, and gave vent to such wild howls as were audible over all the neighbourhood, even in the burghers' houses and the drapers' booths. The gaoler coming in to know the cause of the uproar, found him covered with blood and foaming at the mouth.

Ser Niccola Tuldo never left off howling with rage for three days and three nights.

The thing was reported to the *Mount of the Reformers*. The members of the most august Signory, after despatching their more pressing business, examined into the case of the unhappy man in the condemned cell.

Leone Rancati, brickmaker by trade, said:

"The man must pay with his head for his crime against the Commonwealth of Sienna; and none can relieve him of this debt, without encroaching on the sacred rights of the City our mother. He must needs die; but his soul is his Maker's, and it is not meet that through our fault he die in this sinful state of madness and despair. Therefore should we use all the means within our competence to assure his eternal salvation."

Matteino Renzano, the baker, a man famed for his wisdom, rose in his turn and said:

“Well spoken, Leone Rancati! The case demands we send to the condemned man Catherine, the fuller’s daughter.”

The advice was approved by all the Signory, who resolved to invite Catherine to visit Niccola Tuldo in his prison.

In those days Catherine, daughter of Giacomo the fuller, filled all the city of Sienna with the perfume of her virtues. She dwelt in a little cell in her father’s house and wore the habit of the Sisters of Penitence. She carried girt about her under her gown of white linen an iron chain, and scourged herself an hour long every day. Then, showing her arms covered with wounds, she would cry, “Behold my pretty red roses!” She cultivated in her chamber lilies and violets, wherewith she wove garlands for the altars of the Virgin and the Saints. And all the while she would be singing hymns in the vulgar tongue to the praise of Jesus and Mary His Mother. In those mournful times, when the city of Sienna was a hostel of sorrow, and a house of joy to boot, Catherine was ever visiting the unhappy prisoners, and telling the prostitutes: “My sisters, how fain would I hide you in the loving wounds of the Saviour!” A maiden so pure, fired with so sweet charity, could nowhere have budded and blossomed but at Sienna, which under all its defilements and amid all its crimes, was still the City of the Blessed Virgin.

Apprised by the Magistrates, Catherine betook herself to the public gaol on the morning of the day Ser Niccola Tuldo was to die. She found him stretched on the stone floor of the dungeon, bellowing blasphemies. Raising the white veil the blessed St. Dominic himself had come down from Paradise to lay upon her brow, she showed the prisoner a countenance of heavenly beauty. As he gazed at her in wonder, she leant over him to wipe away the spume that defiled his mouth.

Ser Niccola Tuldo, turning on her eyes that still retained their savage ferocity, cried out:

“Begone! I hate you, because you are of Sienna, the city that slays me. Oh! Sienna, she-wolf indeed, that with her vile claws tears out the throat of a noble gentleman of Perugia! Horrid she-wolf! unclean and inhuman hell-hound!”

But Catherine made answer:

“Nay! brother, what is a city, what are all the cities of the earth, beside the City of God and the holy Angels? I am Catherine, and I am come to call you to the everlasting nuptials.”

The sweet voice and beaming face shed a sudden peace and radiance over the savage soul of Niccola Tuldo. He remembered the days of his innocence, and

cried like a child.

The sun, rising above the Apennines, was just whitening the prison walls with its earliest rays. Catherine said:

“Look, the dawn! Up, up, my brother, for the eternal nuptials! Up, I say!”

And raising him from the ground, she drew him into the Chapel, where Fra Cattaneo confessed him.

Ser Niccola Tuldo then listened devoutly to the holy Mass and received the body of Our Lord. This done, he turned to Catherine and said:

“Stay with me; do not leave me, and I shall be well, and shall die content.”

The bells began to toll the signal for the execution.

Then Catherine answered:

“Gentle brother, I will wait you at the place of Justice.”

At this, Ser Niccola smiled and said, as if ravished with bliss:

“Joy! joy! the Delight of my soul will wait me at the holy place of Justice!”

Catherine pondered and prayed, finally saying:

“Gracious Lord, Thou hast indeed wrought in him a great enlightenment, seeing he calls holy the place of Justice.”

Ser Niccola went on:

“Yes! I shall hie me thither, strong in heart and rejoicing. I weary, as though I had a thousand years to wait, to be there, where I shall find you once more.”

“Farewell till the nuptials, the everlasting nuptials!” Catherine cried again, as she left the prison.

The condemned man was served with a little bread and wine, and supplied with a black cloak; then he was led forth along the precipitous streets, to the sound of trumpets, between the city guards, beneath the banner of the Republic. The ways swarmed with curious onlookers, and women lifted their little ones in their arms, showing them the man doomed to die.

Meantime Niccola Tuldo was dreaming of Catherine, and his lips, that had so long been bitter, opened softly as though to kiss the likeness of the blessed maid.

After climbing for some while the rude brick-paved road, the procession reached one of the heights dominating the city, and the condemned man saw suddenly, with his eyes that were soon to see no more, the roofs, domes, cloisters, and towers of Sienna, and further away the walls that followed the slope of the hills. The sight reminded him of his native town, the gay city of Perugia, surrounded with its gardens, where springs of living water sing amid the fruits and flowers. He saw once more in fancy the terrace that looks over the vale of Trasimene, whence the eye drinks in the light of day with delight.

And the yearning for life tore his heart afresh, and he sighed:

“Oh! city of my fathers! Oh! house of my birth!”

But presently the thought of Catherine re-entered his soul, filling it to the brim with gladness and sweet peace.

Finally they arrive in the Market Square, where each Saturday the peasant girls of Camiano and Granayola display their citrons, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, and hail the housewives with merry appeals to buy, not unmixed with high-spiced jests. It was there the scaffold was erected; and there Ser Niccola beheld Catherine kneeling in prayer, her head resting on the block.

He climbed the steps with eager joy. At his coming, Catherine rose and turned toward him with all the look of a bride once more united to her spouse; she insisted on baring his neck with her own hands and placing her dear one on the block as on a marriage bed.

Then she knelt down beside him. Thrice he repeated in fervent tones, “Jesus, Catherine!” — after which the executioner struck with his sword, and the maiden caught the severed head within her hands. Hereupon all the victim’s blood seemed to be suffused in her, and to fill her veins with a flood as soft as warm milk; a fragrant odour set her nostrils quivering, while before her swooning eyes floated the shadows of angels. Filled with wonder and joy unspeakable, she fell softly into the depths of celestial ecstasy.

Two women of the third Order of St. Dominic, who stood at the foot of the scaffold, seeing her stretched there motionless, hastened to raise her up and support her in their arms. The holy maid, coming to herself, told them: “I have seen the heavens opened!”

One of the women made as though to wash away with a sponge the blood that covered St. Catherine’s robe, but she stopped her, crying out eagerly:

“No, no! leave the blood, leave it; never rob me of my purple and my perfumes!”

1 “His mouth spake no word but only Jesus and Caterina, and with these words I received his head in my two hands, as he closed his eyes in the Divine Goodness, and said: I will....” (*Letters of St. Catherine of Sienna* — xcvi, ed. Gigli e Burlamacchi.)

A SOUND SECURITY

TO HENRI LAVEDAN

A SOUND SECURITY

. *Par cest ymage*
Te doing en pleige Jhesu-Crist
Qui tout fist, ainsi est escript:
il te pleige tout ton avoir;
Ne peuz nulz si bon pleige avoir.

(Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages ,
*publ. par. G. Paris et U. Robert.)*¹

Of all the merchants of Venice, Fabio Mutinelli was the most exact in keeping his engagements. In all cases he showed himself free-handed and sumptuous in his dealings, — above all where ladies and churchmen were concerned. The elegance and honesty of his character were renowned throughout the State, and all admired at San Zanipolo an altar of gold he had offered to St. Catherine for the love of the fair Catherine Manini, wife of the Senator Alesso Cornaro. Being very wealthy, he had numerous friends, whom he entertained at feasts and helped at need from his purse. However, he incurred heavy losses in the war against the Genoese and in the Naples troubles. It fell out, moreover, that thirty of his ships were taken by the Uscoque pirates or foundered at sea. The Pope, to whom he had lent great sums of money, refused to repay a doit. The result of all was, the magnificent Fabio Mutinelli was stripped bare in brief space of all his riches. After selling his Palace and plate to pay what he owed, he found himself left without anything. But clever, bold, well practised in affairs and in the vigour of his powers, his only thought was to make head once more against fortune. He made careful calculation and judged that five hundred ducats were needful for him to take the sea again and attempt fresh enterprises for which he augured happy and sure success. He asked the Signor Alesso Bontura, who was the richest citizen of the Republic, to oblige him by lending him the five hundred ducats. But the good Bontura, holding that if daring wins great gains, 'tis prudence only keeps the same, refused to expose so great a sum to the risks of sea and shipwreck. Fabio next applied to the Signor Andrea Morosini, whom he had benefited in former days in a thousand ways.

“My dear Fabio,” answered Andrea, “to any one else but you I would willingly lend this sum. I have no affection for gold, and on this point act according to the maxims of Horace the Satirist. But your friendship is dear to me, Fabio Mutinelli, and I should be running the risk of losing it, if I lent you money. For more often than not, the commerce of the heart comes to a bad end betwixt debtor and creditor. I have known but too many instances.”

So saying, the Signor Andrea kissed the Merchant with all seeming tenderness, and shut the door in his face.

Next day, Fabio went to see the Lombard and Florentine bankers. But not one of them would agree to lend him so much as twenty ducats without security. All day long he hurried from one counting-house to another, but was everywhere met by much the same answer:

“Signor Fabio, we all know you well for the most upright merchant of this city, and it is with regret we must refuse you what you ask. But the morality of trade requires it.”

That evening, as he was making sadly for home, the courtesan Zanetta, who was bathing in the canal, hung on to his gondola and gazed amorously into his eyes. In the days of his prosperity he had had her one night into his Palace and had treated her very kindly, for he was of a gay and gracious humour.

“Sweet Signor Fabio,” she said to him, “I am aware of your misfortunes; they are the talk of all the town. Hear me; I am not rich, but I have some jewels at the bottom of a little coffer. An you will accept them of a poor girl that would serve you, I shall know God and the Virgin love me.”

And it was a true word, that in the prime of her youth and fine flower of her beauty, the fair Zanetta was poor. Fabio answered her:

“Kind Zanetta, there is more nobility in the hovel where you dwell than in all the Palaces of Venice.”

For three days longer Fabio visited the banks and fondacos without discovering any one willing to lend him money. Everywhere he received an unfavourable answer, and listened to speeches that always came to this:

“You did very wrong to sell your plate to pay your debts. Money is lent to a man in debt, but not to one without furniture and plate.”

The fifth day he made his way, in despair, as far as the Corte delle Galli, which men also call the Ghetto, and which is the quarter the Jews inhabit.

“Who knows,” he kept saying to himself, “if I may not get from one of the Circumcised what the Christians have denied me?”

He proceeded therefore between the Calle San Geremia and the Calle San Girolamo along a narrow evil-smelling canal, the entrance of which was barred with chains every night, by order of the Senate. While hesitating to know which

Usurer he should first apply to, he remembered to have heard speak of an Israelite named Eliezer, son of Eliezer Maimonides, who was said to be exceedingly rich and of a wondrous subtle spirit. Accordingly, inquiring out the house of the Jew Eliezer, he stopped his gondola before the door. Above the entrance was seen a representation of the seven-branched candlestick, which the Jew had had carved as a sign of hope, in expectation of the promised days when the Temple should rise again from its ashes.

The Merchant now entered a hall lighted by a copper lamp with twelve wicks that were burning smokily. Eliezer the Jew was there, seated before his scales. The windows of the house were walled up, because he was an Unbeliever.

Fabio Mutinelli approached and thus accosted him:

“Eliezer, over and over again have I called you dog and renegade heathen. There have been times, when I was younger and in the flush of early manhood, I have cast stones and mud at folks going along the Canal who wore the round patch of yellow sewn on their shoulder, so that I may likely have struck one of your friends or perhaps yourself. I tell you this, not to affront you, but out of fairness, at the same instant I come to ask you to do me a very great service.”

The Jew lifted his arm, which was as dry and gnarled as an ancient vine-stock:

“Fabio Mutinelli, the Father which is in Heaven shall judge us, one and the other. What is the service you are come to ask of me?”

“Lend me five hundred ducats for a year.”

“Men do not lend without security. Doubtless you have learned this from your own people. What is the security you offer?”

“You must know, Eliezer, I have not a denier left, not one gold cup, not one silver goblet. Neither have I a friend left. One and all, they have refused to do me the service I ask of you. I have nothing in all the world but my honour as a merchant and my faith as a Christian. I offer you for security the holy Virgin Mary and her Divine Son.”

At this reply, the Jew, bending down his head as a man does to ponder and consider, stroked his long white beard for a while. Presently he looked up and said:

“Fabio Mutinelli, take me to see this security you offer. For it is meet the lender be put in presence of the pledge proposed for his acceptance.”

“You are within your rights,” returned the Merchant, “rise therefore and come.”

So saying, he led Eliezer to the Chiesa dell’ Orto, near the spot called the *Field of the Moors*. Arrived there and pointing to the figure of the Madonna, which stood above the High Altar, the brow wreathed with a circlet of precious

stones and the shoulders covered with a gold-broidered mantle, holding in her arms the Child Jesus sumptuously adorned like his mother, the Merchant said to the Jew:

“Yonder is my security.”

Eliezer looked with a keen eye and a calculating air first at the Christian Merchant, then at the Madonna and Child; then presently bowed his head in assent and said he would accept the pledge offered. He returned with Fabio to his own house, and there handed him the five hundred ducats, well and truly weighed:

“The money is yours for a year. If at the end of that time, to the day, you have not paid me back the sum with interest at the rate fixed by the law of Venice and the custom of the Lombards, you can picture yourself, Fabio Mutinelli, what I shall think of the Christian Merchant and his security.”

Fabio, without a moment's loss of time, bought ships and loaded up with salt and other sorts of merchandise, which he disposed of in the cities of the Adriatic shore to great advantage. Then, with a fresh cargo aboard, he set sail for Constantinople, where he bought carpets, perfumes, peacock feathers, ivory and ebony. These goods his agents exchanged along the coasts of Dalmatia for building timber, which the Venetians had contracted for from him in advance. By these means, in six months' time, he had multiplied tenfold the amount the Jew had lent him.

But one day that he was taking his diversion with some Greek women, aboard his vessel, which lay in the Bosphorus, having put out too far to sea, he was captured by pirates and carried prisoner to Egypt, though, by rare good fortune, his gold and merchandise were in a safe place all the while. The pirates sold him to a Saracen lord, who putting him in fetters, sent him afield to till the wheat, which grows very finely in that country. Fabio offered his master to pay a heavy ransom, but the Paynim's daughter, who loved him and was fain to bring him to the end she desired, over-persuaded her father not to let him go at any price. Reduced to the necessity of trusting to himself alone for release, he filed his irons with the tools given him for tilling the ground, made good his escape to the Nile and threw himself into a boat. Casting loose, he got to the sea, which was not far off, and when on the point of death from thirst and hunger, was rescued by a Spanish vessel bound for Genoa. But, after keeping her course a week, the ship was caught in a storm which drove her on the coast of Dalmatia. In making the shore, she was wrecked on a reef. All the crew were drowned except Fabio, who reached the beach after much difficulty, clinging to a hen-coop. There he lay senseless, but was presently succoured by a handsome widow, named Loreta,

whose house was upon the seashore. She had him carried to it, put him to bed in her own chamber, watched over him and lavished every care for his recovery.

On coming to himself, he smelt the perfume of myrtles and roses, and looking out of window saw a garden that descended in successive declivities to the sea. Signora Loreta, standing at his bed's head, took up her viol and began playing a tender air.

Fabio, ravished with gratitude and pleasure, fell to kissing the lady's hands a thousand times over. He thanked her earnestly, assuring her he was less touched by the saving of his life than by the fact of his owing his recovery to the pains of so fair a benefactress.

Presently he rose and went to walk with her in the garden, and sitting down to rest in a thicket of myrtles, he drew the young widow on his knee and manifested his gratitude by a thousand caresses.

He found her not insensible to his efforts and spent some hours by her side drowned in amorous delight. But soon he grew pensive, and suddenly asked his hostess what month they were in, and what day of the month precisely it then was.

And when she told him, he fell to groaning and lamenting sore, finding it lacked but twenty-four short hours of a full year since he had received the five hundred ducats of Eliezer the Jew. The thought of breaking his promise and exposing his pledge to the reproaches of the Circumcised was intolerable to him. Signora Loreta inquiring the reason of his despair, he told her the whole story; and being a very pious woman and an ardent votress of the Holy Mother of God, she shared his chagrin to the full. The difficulty was not to procure the five hundred ducats; a Banker in a neighbouring town had had such a sum in his hands for the last six months at Fabio's disposition. But to travel from the coast of Dalmatia to Venice in four-and-twenty hours, with a broken sea and contrary winds, was a thing beyond all hope.

"Let us have the money ready to begin with," said Fabio.

And when one of his hostess's serving-men had brought the sum, the noble Merchant ordered a vessel to be brought close in to the shore. In her he laid the bags containing the ducats, then went to the Signora Loreta's Oratory in search of an image of the Virgin with the Infant Jesus — an image of cedar-wood and greatly revered. This he set in the little bark, near the rudder, and addressed in these words:

"Madonna, you are my pledge. Now the Jew Eliezer must needs be paid to-morrow; 'tis a question of mine honour and of yours, Madonna, and of your Son's good name. What a mortal sinner, such as I, cannot do, you will assuredly accomplish, unsullied Star of the Sea, you whose bosom suckled Him who

walked upon the waters. Bear this silver to Eliezer the Jew, in the Ghetto at Venice, to the end the Circumcised may never say you are a bad surety.”

And pushing the bark afloat, he doffed his hat and cried softly:

“Farewell, Madonna! farewell!”

The vessel sailed out to sea, and long the merchant and the widow followed it with their eyes. When night began to close in, a furrow of light was seen marking her wake over the waters, which were fallen to a dead calm.

At Venice next morning Eliezer, on opening his door, saw a bark in the narrow canal of the Ghetto laden with full sacks and manned by a little figure of black wood, flashing in the clear morning sunbeams. The vessel stopped before the house where the seven-branched candlestick was carved; and the Jew recognized the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus, pledge of the Christian Merchant.

1 “... By this image I take Jesus Christ in pledge for you, Him who wrought all men’s salvation, as is writ in Scripture: He is pledge against all your fortune; so good a pledge can no man have.” (*Miracles of Our Lady, as they Fell out to Sundry* — G. Paris and U. Robert.)

HISTORY OF DOÑA MARIA D'AVALOS AND DON FABRICIO, DUKE D'ANDRIA

TO HENRY GAUTHIER-VILLARS

HISTORY OF DOÑA MARIA D'AVALOS AND DON FABRICIO, DUKE D'ANDRIA

*Done Marie d'Avalos, l'une des belles princesses du païs, mariée
avec le prince de Venouse, laquelle s'estant enamourachée du
comte d'Andriane, l'un des beaux princes du païs aussy, et
s'estans tous deux concertez à la jouissance et le mari l'ayant
decouverte ... les fit tous deux massacrer par gens appostez;
si que le lendemain on trouva ces deux belles moictiez et créatures
exposées et tendues sur le pavé devant la porte de la maison,
toutes mortes et froides, à la veue de tous les passants, qui
les larmoyoit et plaignoient de leur misérable estat. 1*

(Pierre de Bourdeilles, abbé et
Seigneur de Brantôme.
Recueil des dames, seconde partie .)

It was a day of high rejoicing at Naples, when the Prince of Venosa, a rich and puissant Lord, was wed to Doña Maria, of the illustrious house of Avalos.

Drawn by horses bedizened with scales, feathers or furs, in such wise as to figure forth dragons, griffins, lions, lynxes, panthers and unicorns, were twelve cars which did bear through all the city an host of naked men and women, gilded all over, for to represent the Gods of Olympus, come down to Earth to do honour to the Venosian nuptials. On one of these cars was to be seen a young lad with wings treading underfoot three old hags of an hideous ugliness. A tablet was fixed up above the car to display the meaning thereof, to wit: LOVE VANQUISHETH THE FATAL SISTERS. Whereby 'twas to be understood that the new-wedded pair would enjoy many a long year of happiness by each other's side.

But this presage of Love, more strong than the Fates, was false withal. Two years after her marriage, one day she was gone abroad a-fowling, Doña Maria d'Avalos saw the Duke d'Andria, which was a gallant, handsome and well-knit man, and did straight love the same. An honest girl and a well-born, heedful of her noble name and still in that callow youth when women have not gotten boldness yet to match their naughty desires, she sent no go-between to the

nobleman for to make assignation in Church or at her own abode. She never told her love, but did bide the time when her good star should bring beside her him which had grown in the twinkling of an eye more dear to her than the day. She had not to tarry long. For the Duke d'Andria had noted her beauty, and went straightway to pay his court to the Prince of Venosa. Encountering Doña Maria in the Palace with no other by, he did beseech her in right gentle, and withal gallant and masterful wise, that very favour she was herself well disposed and well resolved to grant him. She did lead him to her chamber instantly, and did there refuse him naught of all he was fain to have of her.

But when he did proffer her his thanks for that she had graciously yielded to his desires, she made answer:

“My Lord, the desire was mine own more than it was yours. I, it was, was fain we should lie in the arms one of the other, as we be now laid, in this bed, to the which I will aye make you dearly welcome, as oft as it shall please you to come thither.”

Every time she was able so to do, from that day forth Doña Maria d'Avalos would receive in her chamber the Duke d'Andria and this was many a time and oft, for the Prince of Venosa went much to the chase and would sometimes spend whole weeks together diverting him with his friends in one of his pleasure houses he had in the country parts.

The whole while that Doña Maria was abed with her lover, her nurse Lucia would stand a-watching at the chamber door, telling of her beads and trembling sore lest the Prince perchance should return home against all expectation.

'Twas indeed a nobleman mightily feared by reason of his jealous and grim humour. His enemies did reproach him for his cunning and cruelty, naming him mongrel cur of fox and she-wolf, stinking hound, if ever stinking hound was. But his friends would commend him, for that he kept ever in sure memory whatsoever of right or wrong folk did him, and would in no wise suffer patiently any injury wrought him or his.

During the space of three full months which were now gone by the lovers had great joy of each other and content of their desires without or let or hindrance, when one morning the Nurse came to seek Doña Maria in her chamber, and spake thus to her:

“Listen, my pearl of pearls; albeit my words this day will be neither of flowers nor sugar-plums, but of a right serious and fearsome matter. My Lord the Prince of Venosa hath heard some ill report concerning you and the Duke d'Andria.

“But now I saw him in the Palace court, as he was a-mounting his horse. He was gnawing his moustache — a fell sign with him. He was in talk with two

fellows, which had little of the air about them of leading honest lives; all I heard him tell them was, 'See ye, without being seen!' Of such sort the orders the noble Prince was charging them withal. And the worst is, he did stop dead whenas he set eyes on me. My own little pearl of price, so true as God is in the Holy Sacrament, an if the Prince find you with the Lord Duke d'Andria, he will kill both the twain of you. You will be a dead woman; and ah! me, what will become of me?"

The Nurse spake on in this wise and besought her mistress long and sore; but Doña Maria d'Avalos did send her away without deigning so much as one word of answer.

As it was Springtide she went forth that same day a-walking in the country with some ladies of the city. They were following a path bordered with thorn-trees all a-bloom, when one of the ladies said thus to her:

"Dogs will sometimes come and stick at travellers' heels, Doña Maria. Well! look, to-day we be dogged by a great black and white hound!"

And the Princess, turning her head to see, did recognize a certain Dominican monk which was used to come each day to the courtyard of the Palazzo Venosa for to rest in the shade there, and in winter-time to warm him in the great kitchen.

Meanwhile the Nurse, seeing her lady mistress paid no heed to her words, ran to warn the Duke d'Andria. Moreover the said Duke had reasons of his own to fear the sweet secret of his loves had been unhappily discovered. The very evening afore, finding himself followed by a pair of ruffians armed with arquebuses, he had killed one of the twain with a sword-thrust, while the other had taken to his heels. The Duke felt no doubt now but these two rascals had been set at him by the Prince of Venosa.

"Lucia," he said to the Nurse, "I must needs shudder at this danger, seeing it doth threaten my Lady Maria d'Avalos no less than myself. Tell her I will not return again to her chamber, cost me what regrets it will, before that the Prince's suspicions be lulled asleep."

These words the Nurse did report the same evening to Doña Maria, which did hearken to them with impatience, biting her lip till the blood came.

Learning that the Prince was at the moment abroad, she bade her Nurse go straight to fetch the Duke d'Andria, and bring him into her chamber; and so soon as he was come spake thus to him:

"My gracious Lord, a day spent apart from you is to me the cruellest of torments. I shall not fear to die; but I have not the fortitude to endure your absence. You should not have loved me, if you had not the hardihood to brave all for love of me. You should not have loved me if there were aught else in all

the world you set above my love, even mine own honour and mine own life. Choose; either you shall see me every day as aforetime, or you shall never see me more.”

He made answer:

“Well and good then, Lady, and so be it; for, indeed, there is no room for ill or evil henceforth betwixt us twain! Verily I do love you as you would have me love you, even more than your own life.”

And that day, which was a Thursday, they did tarry a long time, close pressed one against the other. Naught of moment fell out ere the Monday of the next week, on the which day the Prince did apprise his wife how that he was setting forth with a numerous train for Rome, whither he was called by the Pope, which was his kinsman. And in very deed a score of horses were then standing ready saddled and bridled in the Great Court. Then did the Prince kiss his wife’s hand, as he was used to do on taking leave of her for any lengthy absence. Last of all, when he was now a-horseback, he did turn his face to her and say:

“God have you in His keeping, Doña Maria!” and so rode forth with his company behind him.

Soon as ever she thought her husband’s troop to be gotten forth of the walls, the Princess bade her Nurse summon the Duke d’Andria to her. The old woman besought her to defer a meeting that might easily be cause of such sore calamity.

“My dove,” she cried, falling on her knees, her hands uplifted in supplication, “receive not the Duke to-day! All night long I heard the Prince’s men grinding swords. Yet another thing, my flower of flowers, the good brother that cometh day by day to our kitchen to seek his dole of bread, hath but now overset a salt-cellar of salt with the sleeve of his gown. Give your lover a little repose, little one. Your pleasure will be all the greater to have him again presently, and he will love you all the better for the respite.”

But Doña Maria d’Avalos said:

“Nurse, an if he be not here in one quarter of an hour, I will send you back home to your brethren in the mountains.”

And when the Duke d’Andria was by her side she did welcome him with an exceeding great joy.

“My Lord,” cried she, “this will be a good day for us, and the night better still. I shall keep you till the dawn.”

And straightway did they exchange betwixt them an host of kisses and fond caresses. Presently, after doffing their clothes, they gat them to bed, and held each the other close embraced so long that evening found them yet pressed in each other’s arms. Then, for that they were sore hungered, Doña Maria drew

forth of her marriage chest a pasty, dried conserves, and a flask of wine, the which she had been heedful to lay by therein.

After the twain had eaten and drunk their fill, playing the while all sorts of pretty plays, the moon rose and did look in so friendly at the window that they were fain to wish her welcome. So they went forth upon the balcony, and there, breathing the freshness and softness of the night, did watch the fireflies dancing in the dark bushes. All were still save only the shrilling of the insects in the grass. Then there came a sound of footsteps along the street, and Doña Maria did recognize the poor monk which was wont to haunt the kitchen and the Palace courtyards, the same she had encountered one day in the flowery path where she was a-walking with two ladies — her companions. She shut to the window softly, and to bed again with her lover. 'Twas deep in the night, and they were lying so, kissing and murmuring the softest nothings ever were inspired by Love, whether at Naples or any other spot in all the wide world, when of a sudden they caught a noise of steps mounting the stairway and the rattle of arms; at the same time they beheld a red glow shining through the chinks of the door. And they heard the Nurse's voice shrieking, "Jesu Maria! I am a dead woman." The Duke d'Andria sprang up, leapt upon his sword, and cried:

"Up, Doña Maria! We must leap forth by the window."

But, rushing to the balcony and leaning out, he saw how the street was guarded and all bristling with pikes.

Thereupon he came back to Doña Maria, which said:

"'Tis the end of all! But know this, I do not regret aught of what I have done, my dear, dear Lord!"

And he made answer:

"Well and good then, and so be it!" and did haste to don his trunks.

Cracking and crunching under the mighty blows struck by them outside, the door was meantime a-trembling, and the panels began to gape.

He spake again and said:

"Fain would I know who hath betrayed and sold us thus."

At the instant he was seeking his shoon, the one half of the door gave way, and a troop of men, bearing arms and torches, threw themselves into the chamber. The Prince of Venosa was in their midst, shouting: "Have at the traitor! Kill! Kill!"

Lustily did three swordsmen attack the Duke, but he set him in front of the bed, where was Doña Maria, and made valiant stand against the caitiffs.

Six men were there in all, led on by the Prince, being of his bosom friends every one or his own varlets. Albeit blinded by the dazzle of the torches, the

Duke d'Andria did contrive to parry several thrusts, and gave back some shrewd blows himself. But catching his foot in the platters lying on the floor, with the remains of the paste and preserves, he fell over backward. Finding himself on his back, a sword's point at his throat, he did seize the blade in his left hand; the man, snatching it back, cut off three of his fingers, and the sword was bent. Then, as the Duke d'Andria was heaving forward his shoulders to rise, one of the fellows struck him a blow over the head which did break in the bones of his skull. At this all six did hurl them upon him, and slew him, lunging with such savage haste they did wound each other.

Whenas the thing was done, the Prince of Venosa bade them stand quietly aside; and marching upon Doña Maria, which till now had tarried still beside the bed, he drave her before his sword's point into the corner of the chamber where was the marriage chest. And there, holding her at bay, he did hiss in her face one word:

"Puttana !" (Harlot!)

Shamed by reason of her nakedness, she went to drag to her some of the bedclothes, which were hanging over the bedside. But he stayed her with a thrust of his sword, which did graze her white side.

Then, leaning against the wall, hands and arms held up to veil her eyes, she stood waiting.

The other never left off crying:

"Puttaccia! Puttaccia! " (Whore! Whore!)

Then, forasmuch as he did yet tarry, and slew her not, she was afraid. He saw that she was afraid, and said gleefully:

"You are afraid!"

But pointing her finger at the dead body of the Duke d'Andria, she made answer:

"Fool! what think you I can have to fear now?"

And, to make a seeming of being no more terrified, she sought to recall a song-tune she had sung many a time as a girl, and began humming the same, or rather hissing it, betwixt her teeth.

The Prince, furious to see how she defied him, did now prick her with his point in the belly, crying out:

"Ah! Sporca-puttaccia !" (Fie! Filthy trull!) Exultant, she stayed her singing, and said:

"Sir, 'tis two years sithence I have been to confession."

At this word the Prince of Venosa bethought him how that, an if she died and were damned, she might return by night and drag him down to Hell along with her. He asked her:

“Will you not have a Confessor?”

She did ponder an instant, then shaking her head:

“’Tis useless. I cannot save my soul. I repent me not. I cannot, and I will not, repent. I love him! I love him! Let me die in his arms.”

With a quick movement, she did thrust the sword aside, threw her on the bleeding corse of the Duke d’Andria, and lay clipping her dead lover in her arms.

Seeing her so, the Prince of Venosa did lose what patience he had kept till then, to the end he might not kill her ere he had made her suffer. He drave his blade through her body. She cried, “Jesu!” rolled over, sprang to her feet, and after a little shudder that shook her every limb, fell to the floor dead.

He struck her several blows more in the belly and bosom; then said to his varlets:

“Go throw these two pieces of carrion at the foot of the Great Staircase, and open wide the Palace doors, that men may note my vengeance at the same time as the insult done mine honour.”

He bade strip the lover’s corse bare like the other.

The men did as they were bidden. And all the day the bodies of the Duke d’Andria and Doña Maria lay naked at the bottom of the steps. The passers-by drew near to see them. And the news of the bloody deed being spread about the city, a great press of curious onlookers came crowding before the Palace. Some said, “Lo! a good deed well done!” Others, and these the more part, at sight of so lamentable a spectacle, were filled with ruth. Yet durst they not openly commiserate the Prince’s victims, for fear of evil handling by his armed dependents, which were set to guard the bodies. Young men gazed at the Princess’s corse, for to discover the traces of that beauty which had been her undoing, while the little children would be expounding one to the other the meaning of that they saw.

Doña Maria lay stretched on her back. The lips were drawn back, displaying the teeth in a ghastly smile. Her eyes stood wide open, the whites only showing. Six wounds were upon her, three in the belly, which was greatly swollen, two in the bosom, one in the neck. The last had bled profusely, and the dogs kept fawning up to lick it.

Towards nightfall, the Prince bade set torches of resin, like as on days of festival, in the bronze rings fixed in the Palace walls, and eke kindle great fires in the Courtyard, to the end all men might see the criminals plain. At midnight, a pious widow brought coverings and spread the same over the dead bodies. But, by the Prince’s commandment, these were incontinent torn away again.

The Ambassador of Spain informed of the unseemly treatment meted to a lady of the Spanish house of Avalos, came in person urgently to entreat the Prince of Venosa to stay these outrages, which did insult the noble memory of the Duke de Pescara, uncle to Doña Maria, and offend in their tomb so many great Captains of whose blood the said lady was descended. But he with drew after profiting naught by his intercession; and writ a letter thereanent to his Catholic Majesty. The poor bodies were left shamefully exposed as before. Toward the latter end of the night, the curious having ceased to come any more, the guards were withdrawn.

Then a Dominican monk, which had all the day lurked about the great doors, did slip within the vestibule by the smoky light of the dying torches, crept to the steps where Doña Maria lay, and threw himself on her corse.

1 “Doña Maria d’Avalos, one of the fair Princesses of the land, and married to the Prince of Venosa, was enamoured of the Count d’Andriane, likewise one of the noble Princes of the country. So being both of them come together to enjoy their passion, and the husband having discovered it ... had the twain of them slain by men appointed thereto. In such wise that next morning the fair and noble pair, unhappy beings, were seen lying stretched out and exposed to public view on the pavement in front of the house door, all dead and cold, in sight of all passers-by, who could not but weep and lament over their piteous lot.”

BONAPARTE AT SAN MINIATO

TO ARMAND GENEST

BONAPARTE AT SAN MINIATO

*Quand, simple citoyen, soldat d'un peuple libre,
Aux bords de l'Éridan, de l'Adige et du Tibre,
Foudroyant tour à tour quelques tyrans pervers,
Des nations en pleurs, sa main brisait les fers....*

(Marie-Joseph Chénier, *La Promenade* .)1

Napoléon, après son expédition de Livourne, se rendant à Florence, coucha à San Miniato chez un vieil abbé Buonaparte....

(*Mémorial de Saint-Hélène* , par le
comte de Las Cases, réimpression
de 1823, 1824, t. I^{er}, .)2

“Je fus sur le soir à San Miniato. J’y avais un vieux chanoine de parent....”

(*Mémoires du docteur F. Antommarchi,*
sur les derniers moments de
Napoléon 1825, t. I^{er} .)3

After occupying Leghorn and closing that port against the English men-of-war, General Bonaparte proceeded to Florence to visit the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand, who alone of all the princes of Europe had honestly and honourably fulfilled his engagements with the French Republic. In token of esteem and confidence, he went there without escort, accompanied only by the officers of his Staff. Amongst other sights he was shown the arms of the Buonapartes carved over the gateway of an old house. He was already aware that a branch of his family had been fruitful and multiplied at Florence in days of yore, and that a last descendant of this the ancient race was still alive. This was a certain Canon of San Miniato, now eighty years of age. In spite of all the pressing affairs he had to attend to, he made a point of paying him a visit. Napoleon Bonaparte was always strongly moved by feelings of natural affection.

On the eve of his departure from Florence, he made his way with some of his officers to the hill of San Miniato, which crowned with its walls and towers,

risers from the plain at half a league's distance from the city.

Old Canon Buonaparte welcomed with agreeable and dignified politeness his young kinsman and the French officers who accompanied him — Berthier, Junot, Orderly Officer in Chief Chauvet and Lieutenant Thézard. He regaled them with a supper *à l'italienne*, which lacked neither the cranes of Peretola nor the little sucking-pig scented with aromatic herbs, nor the best vintages of Tuscany, Naples and Sicily. Uncompromising Republicans as Brutus himself, they drank to France and Freedom. Their host acknowledged the toast; then turning to the General whom he had seated on his right hand;

“Nephew!” said he, “are you not curious to examine the genealogical tree painted on the wall yonder? You will be gratified to see from it that we are descended from the Lombard Cadolingians, who from the tenth to the twelfth centuries covered themselves with glory by their fidelity to the German Emperors, and from whom sprung, prior to the year 1100, the Buonapartes of Treviso and the Buonapartes of Florence, the latter stock proving by far the more illustrious.”

At this the officers began to whisper together and laugh. Orderly Officer Chauvet asked Berthier behind his hand if the Republican General felt flattered to possess amongst his ancestors a lot of slaves serving the Two-headed Eagle, while Lieutenant Thézard was ready to take his oath the General owed his birth to good *sans-culottes* and nobody else. Meanwhile the Canon went on with a long string of boasts concerning the nobility of his house and lineage.

“Know this, nephew,” he finished by saying, “our Florentine ancestors well deserved their name. They were ever of the *bon parti*, and steadfast defenders of Mother Church.”

At these words, which the old fellow had uttered in a high, clear voice, the General, who so far had been scarcely listening, gathered his wandering wits together, and raising his pale, thin face, with its classically moulded features, threw a piercing look at his interlocutor, which closed his lips instantly.

“Nay! uncle,” he cried, “let us have done with these follies! the rats of your garret are very welcome to these moth-eaten parchments for me.”

Then he added in a voice of brass:

“The only nobility I vaunt is in my deeds. It dates from the 13th Vendémiaire of Year IV, the day I swept the Royalist Sections with cannon-shot from the steps of St. Roch. Come, let us drink to the Republic! 'Tis the arrow of Evander, which falls not to earth again, and is transformed into a star!”

The officers answered the appeal with a shout of enthusiasm. It was a moment when Berthier himself felt a Republican's and a Patriot's fire.

Junot exclaimed: “Napoleon had no need for ancestors; 'twas enough for him

his soldiers had acclaimed him Corporal at the Bridge of Lodi.”

The wines had the dry smack of gunflint and the bouquet of powder, and the company imbibed freely. Lieutenant Thézard was soon in a condition that rendered him incapable of concealing his sentiments. Proud of the wounds and the kisses of women he had enjoyed in lavish abundance in this campaign, at once so heroic and so gallant and gay, he informed the Canon without more ado, that following in the steps of Bonaparte, the French were going to march round the world, upsetting Thrones and Altars in every land, giving the girls bastards and ripping up the bellies of all fanatics.

The old Priest only went on smiling, and replied he was willing enough to sacrifice to their noble rage, not indeed the pretty girls, whom he besought them rather to treat cannily, but the Fanatics, the chiefest foes, he said, of Holy Church.

Junot promised him to deal leniently with the Nuns; he could heartily commend some of them, having found them to possess tender hearts and the whitest of skins.

Orderly Officer Chauvet maintained we should take account of the influence exercised by the cloistered life on the complexion of young women; you see, he was a student of natural philosophy.

“Between Genoa and Milan,” he went on, “we tasted largely of this sort of forbidden fruit. One may profess to be without prejudices; still, a pretty bosom does look prettier half hid by the Veil. I set no value on religious vows, yet I am free to confess I attach a very special value to a fine leg if it belongs to a Nun. Strange contradictions of the human heart!”

“Fie! fie!” put in Berthier; “what pleasure can you find in upsetting the wits and troubling the senses of these unhappy victims of fanaticism? What! are there no women of condition in Italy, to whom you could offer your vows at fêtes, under the Venetian cloak that favours little intrigues so admirably? Is it nothing that Pietra Grua Mariani, Madame Lambert, Signora Monti, Signora Gherardi of Brescia, are fair and gallant dames?”

As he ran over the names of these Italian toasts, he was thinking of the Princess Visconti. This great lady, finding herself unable to enthrall Bonaparte, had given herself to his Chief of the Staff, whom she loved with a fire of wantonness and a refined sensuality which left their mark on the weak-kneed Berthier for the rest of his days.

“For my own part,” interrupted Lieutenant Thézard, “I shall never forget a little water-melon seller on the steps of the Duomo, who....”

The General rose from his chair with a gesture of impatience. A bare three hours was left them for sleep, as they were to start at dawn.

“Never trouble, kinsman, about our sleeping accommodation,” he said, addressing the Canon. “We are soldiers; a bundle of hay is good enough for us.”

But their excellent host had had beds prepared. His house was bare and unornamented, but of vast proportions. He conducted the French officers, one after the other, to the rooms assigned them, and wished them a good night.

Left alone in his chamber, Bonaparte threw off his coat and sword, and proceeded to scrawl a pencil note to Josephine — twenty illegible lines, in which his violent, yet calculating, spirit spoke loudly. Then, folding the letter, he abruptly drove the woman’s image from his mind, as you push-to a drawer. He unrolled a plan of Mantua, and selected the point on which he should concentrate his fire.

He was still absorbed in his calculations when he heard a knock at the door. He thought it was Berthier; but it proved to be the Canon, who came to ask him for a few minutes’ conversation. Under his arm he carried two or three parchment-covered portfolios. The General looked at these documents with something of a quizzical air. He felt certain they contained the genealogy of the Buonapartes, and anticipated their leading to a never-ending talk. However, he suffered no trace of his impatience to appear.

He was never morose or angry but when he deliberately made up his mind to be so. Now he had no sort of wish to offend his worthy kinsman; on the contrary, he was anxious to make himself agreeable to him. Moreover, he was not really sorry to learn the nobility of his race, now his Jacobin officers were no longer there to laugh or take umbrage at the matter. He begged the Canon to take a seat, who did so, and, laying his registers on the table, said:

“I made a beginning during supper, nephew, of telling you about the Buonapartes of Florence; but I gathered by the look you gave me, it was not then the place or time to enlarge on such a subject. I broke off therefore, reserving the essential part of what I have to say for the present moment. I beg of you, kinsman, to hear me with great attention.

“The Tuscan branch of our family produced some excellent representatives, among whom should be named Jacopo di Buonaparte, who witnessed the sack of Rome in 1527 and wrote an account of that event, also Niccolò, author of a Comedy entitled *La Vedova* that was declared the work of another Terence. However, it is not of these two famous ancestors I now wish to speak, but rather of a third, who eclipses them as much in glory as the sun outshines the stars. Know then that your family counts amongst its members a man of saintly life, deemed worthy of Beatification and the title of blessed, Fra Bonaventura, disciple of the reformed Order of St. Francis, who died in 1593 in the odour of Sanctity.”

The old man bent his head reverently as he pronounced the name. Then he resumed with a fire scarcely to have been expected from one of his years and easy character:

“Fra Bonaventura! Ah, kinsman! ’tis to him, to this good Father, you owe the success of your arms. He was beside you, doubt it not, when you annihilated, as you told us at supper, the enemies of your party on the steps of St. Roch. This Capuchin Friar has been your helper ‘mid the smoke of battles. But for him, be assured, you would not have been victorious, whether at Montenotte or Millesimo or Lodi. The marks of his patronage are too striking and self-evident to be ignored, and in your success I plainly discern a miracle of the good Fra Bonaventura. But what is most important you should know, is this; the holy man had a purpose of his own in view when, giving you the advantage even over Beaulieu himself, he led you from victory to victory to this antique roof under which you rest to-night with an old man’s blessing to keep you. I am here for the very purpose of revealing his intentions to you. Fra Bonaventura wished you should be informed of his merits, that you should hear of his fasts and austerities and the whole year’s silence he once condemned himself to endure. He would have you touch his hair-shirt and scourge, and his knees stiffened so at the altars that he walked bent double like the letter Z. For this it was he has brought you into Italy, where he was for contriving you an opportunity of returning him benefit for benefit. For you must know, good kinsman, if the Friar has helped you greatly, in your turn, you can be of the greatest use to him.”

With these words, the Canon laid his hands on the heavy portfolios that loaded the table, and drew a deep breath.

Bonaparte said nothing, but waited quietly for the Canon to go on with his remarks, which diverted him greatly. Never was any one easier to amuse than Napoleon.

After recovering breath, the old man resumed:

“Why, yes! kinsman, you can be of the greatest use to Fra Bonaventura, who in his present situation needs your help. He was beatified many years ago, but is still waiting his admission to the Calendar of Saints. He is thinking long, is the good Father Bonaventura. Yet what can I, a poor Canon of San Miniato, do for him to secure him the honour he has earned? His enrolment demands an outlay that goes far beyond my fortune and even the resources of the Bishopric! Poor Canon! Poor Diocese! Poor Duchy of Tuscany! Poor Italy! they are all poor together. It is you, kinsman, must ask the Pope to recognize Fra Bonaventura’s claim. He will certainly grant you so much. His Holiness will never refuse, for your sake, to add another Saint to the Calendar. Great honour will accrue to yourself and your family, and the good Friar will always be ready to afford you

his patronage. Do you not realize the advantages of having a Saint in the family?"

And the Canon, pointing to the portfolios, urged the General to put them in his valise and take them with him. Their contents consisted of the memorial relating to the Canonization of the Blessed Friar Bonaventura, together with documents in corroboration of his claim.

"Promise me," he added, "that you will see to this matter, the most important that can concern you."

Bonaparte restrained his strong inclination to laugh.

"I am unfortunately situated," he objected, "for undertaking a case for Canonization. You are aware that the French Republic is taking measures to exact compensation from the Court of Rome for the murder of her Ambassador Bassville, foully assassinated."

The Canon protested eagerly:

"Corpo di Bacco! the Court of Rome will find excuses enough; all due compensation will be accorded, and our kinsman will be placed on the Calendar, never fear."

"The negotiations are far from being concluded at present," replied the Republican General. "The Roman Curia has yet to recognize the civil constitution of the French clergy and to break up and abolish the Inquisition, which is an offence to humanity and an unjustifiable encroachment on the rights of Nations."

The old man only smiled and said:

"Mio caro figliuolo Napoleone, the Pope knows perfectly well folk must both give and take. He will be reasonable, and yield a point where necessary. He is for all time, long-suffering and a man of peace."

Bonaparte pondered deeply awhile, as though a series of quite new ideas were taking muster in his powerful brain. Then suddenly breaking silence,

"You do not realize," he said, "the spirit of the age. We are highly irreligious in France; impiety is deeply rooted in our soil. You do not know the progress achieved by the ideas of Montesquieu, Raynal and Rousseau. Public worship is abolished; veneration is a thing of the past. You must have seen this from the scandalous talk my officers indulged in just now at your own table."

The good Canon shook his head:

"Ah, yes! those fine young men, they are wild fellows enough, dissipated and reckless! It is only a passing phase. Ten years more, and they will be thinking less of the girls and more of going to Mass. The Carnival is a matter of a few days, and even this mad one of your French Revolution will not last for long. The Church is eternal."

Napoleon declared bluntly he cared too little about Religion himself to meddle in a purely ecclesiastical matter like this.

Thereupon the Canon looked him in the eyes and told him:

“My son, I understand men. I can divine your nature; you are no sceptic. Take up this case, the Blessed Father Bonaventura’s case. He will repay you the services you may render him. For myself, I am over old to witness the success of this noble enterprise. I must die soon; but knowing it to be in your hands, I shall die happy. Above all, never forget, my kinsman, that all power comes of God by the instrumentality of his priests.”

He rose to his feet, raised his arms to bless his young kinsman and withdrew.

Left alone, Bonaparte turned over the leaves of the ponderous Memorial by the smoky light of his candle, as he pondered over the power of the Church, and told himself the Papacy was a more enduring institution than ever the Constitution of the Year III was likely to be.

A knock was heard at the door. It was Berthier, come to inform the General that all was ready for their departure.

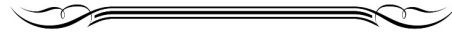
1 “When, a plain citizen, soldier of a free people, by the banks of the Eridanus, the Adige and the Tiber, blasting with his lightnings one after another recalcitrant tyrants, his hand brake the fetters of the nations that wept...”

2 “Napoleon, visiting Florence after his Leghorn expedition, lay one night at San Miniato at the house of an old Abbé Buonaparte...” (*Memorial of St. Helena* , by the Count de Las Cases — reprint of 1823, 1824, Vol. I, .)

3 “I stayed for the night at San Miniato. I had a relative living there, an old Canon...” (*Memoirs of Dr. F. Antommarchi on the Last Moments of Napoleon* , 1825, vol. I, .)

THE END

CLIO



Translated by Winifred Stephens Whale

CONTENTS

[THE BARD OF KYME](#)

[KOMM OF THE ATREBATES](#)

[FARINATA DEGLI UBERTI; OR, CIVIL WAR](#)

[THE KING DRINKS](#)

[LA MUIRON](#)

[THE CHATEAU DE VAUX-LE-VICOMTE](#)

[PREFACE](#)

[PART I](#)

[PART II](#)

TO ÉMILE ZOLA

THE BARD OF KYME

ALONG the hill-side he came, following a path which skirted the sea.

His forehead was bare, deeply furrowed and bound by a fillet of red wool. The sea-breeze blew his white locks over his temples and pressed the fleece of a snow-white beard against his chin. His tunic and his feet were the colour of the roads which he had trodden for so many years. A roughly made lyre hung at his side. He was known as the Aged One, and also as the Bard. Yet another name was given him by the children to whom he taught poetry and music, and many called him the Blind One, because his eyes, dim with age, were overhung by swollen lids, reddened by the smoke of the hearths beside which he was wont to sit when he sang. But his was no eternal night, and he was said to see things invisible to other men. For three generations he had been wandering ceaselessly to and fro. And now, having sung all day to a King of Ægea, he was returning to his home, the roof of which he could already see smoking in the distance; for now, after walking all night without a halt for fear of being overtaken by the heat of the day, in the clear light of the dawn he could see the white Kyme, his birthplace. With his dog at his side, leaning on his crooked staff, he walked with slow steps, his body upright, his head held high because of the steepness of the way leading down into the narrow valley and because he was still vigorous in his age. The sun, rising over the mountains of Asia, shed a rosy light over the fleecy clouds and the hill-sides of the islands that studded the sea. The coast-line glistened. But the hills that stretched away eastward, crowned with mastic and terebinth, lay still in the freshness and the shadow of night.

The Aged One measured along the incline the length of twelve times twelve lances and found, on the left, between the flanks of twin rocks, the narrow entrance to a sacred wood. There, on the brink of a spring, rose an altar of unhewn stones.

It was half hidden by an oleander the branches of which were laden with dazzling blossoms. The well-trodden ground in front of the altar was white with the bones of victims. All around, the boughs of the olive-trees were hung with offerings. And farther on, in the awesome shadow of the gorge, rose two ancient oaks, bearing, nailed to their trunks, the bleached skulls of bulls. Knowing that this altar was consecrated to Phoebus, the Aged One plunged into the wood, and, taking by its handle a little earthenware cup which hung from his belt, he bent over the stream which, flowing over a bed of wild parsley and water-cress, slowly wound its way down to the meadow. He filled his cup with the spring-

water, and, because he was pious, before drinking he poured a few drops before the altar. He worshipped the immortal gods, who know neither pain nor death, while on earth generation follows generation of suffering men. He was conscious of fear; and he dreaded the arrows of Leto's sons. Full of sorrows and of years, he loved the light of day and feared death. For this reason an idea occurred to him. He bent the pliable trunk of a sapling, and drawing it towards him hung his earthenware cup from the topmost twig of the young tree, which, springing back, bore the old man's offering up to the open sky.

White Kyme, wall-encircled, rose from the edge of the sea. A steep highway, paved with flat stones, led to the gate of the town. This gate had been built in an age beyond man's memory, and it was said to be the work of the gods. Carved upon the lintel were signs which no man understood, yet they were regarded as of good omen. Not far from this gate was the public square, where the benches of the elders shone beneath the trees. Near this square, on the landward side, the Aged One stayed his steps. There was his house. It was low and small, and less beautiful than the neighbouring house, where a famous seer dwelt with his children. Its entrance was half hidden beneath a heap of manure, in which a pig was rooting. This dunghill was smaller than those at the doors of the rich. But behind the house was an orchard, and stables of unquarried stone, which the Aged One had built with his own hands. The sun was climbing up the white vault of heaven, the sea wind had fallen. The invisible fire in the air scorched the lungs of men and beasts. For a moment the Aged One paused upon the threshold to wipe the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand. His dog, with watchful eye and hanging tongue, stood still and panted.

The aged Melantho, emerging from the house, appeared on the threshold and spoke a few pleasant words. Her coming had been slow, because a god had sent an evil spirit into her legs which swelled them and made them heavier than a couple of wineskins. She was a Carian slave and in her youth the King had bestowed her on the bard, who was then young and vigorous. And in her new master's bed she had conceived many children. But not one was left in the house. Some were dead, others had gone away to practise the art of song or to steer the plough in distant Achaian cities, for all were richly gifted. And Melantho was left alone in the house with Areta, her daughter-in-law, and Areta's two children.

She went with the master into the great hall with its smoky rafters. In the midst of it, before the domestic altar, lay the hearthstone covered with red embers and melted fat. Out of the hall opened two stories of small rooms; a wooden staircase led to the upper chambers, which were the women's quarters. Against the pillars that supported the roof leant the bronze weapons which the

Aged One had borne in his youth, in the days when he followed the kings to the cities to which they drove in their chariots to recapture the daughters of Kyme whom the heroes had carried away. From one of the beams hung the skin of an ox.

The elders of the city, wishful to honour the bard, had sent it to him on the previous day. He rejoiced at the sight of it. As he stood drawing a long breath into a chest which was shrunken with age, he took from beneath his tunic, with a few cloves of garlic remaining from his alfresco supper, the King of Ægea's gift; it was a stone fallen from heaven and precious, for it was of iron, though too small for a lance-tip. He brought with him also a pebble which he had found on the road. On this pebble, when looked at in a certain light, was the form of a man's head. And the Aged One, showing it to Melantho, said:

"Woman, see, on this pebble is the likeness of Pakoros, the blacksmith; not without permission of the gods may a stone thus present the semblance of Pakoros."

And when the aged Melantho had poured water over his feet and hands in order to remove the dust that defiled them, he grasped the shin of beef in his arms, placed it on the altar and began to tear it asunder. Being wise and prudent, he did not delegate to women or to children the duty of preparing the repast; and, after the manner of kings, he himself cooked the flesh of beasts.

Meanwhile Melantho coaxed the fire on the hearth into a flame. She blew upon the dry twigs until a god wrapped them in fire. Though the task was holy, the Aged One suffered it to be performed by a woman because years and fatigue had enfeebled him. When the flames leapt up he cast into them pieces of flesh which he turned over with a fork of bronze. Seated on his heels, he inhaled the smoke; and as it filled the room his eyes smarted and watered; but he paid no heed because he was accustomed to it and because the smoke signified abundance. As the toughness of the meat yielded to the fire's irresistible power, he put fragments of it into his mouth and, slowly masticating them with his well-worn teeth, ate in silence. Standing at his side, the aged Melantho poured the dark wine into an earthenware cup like that which he had given to the god.

When he had satisfied hunger and thirst, he inquired whether all in house and stable was well. And he inquired concerning the wool woven in his absence, the cheese placed in the vat and the ripe olives in the press. And, remembering that his goods were but few, he said:

"The heroes keep herds of oxen and heifers in the meadows. They have a goodly number of strong and comely slaves; the doors of their houses are of ivory and of brass, and their tables are laden with pitchers of gold. The courage of their hearts assured them of wealth, which they sometimes keep until old age.

In my youth, certes, I was not inferior to them in courage, but I had neither horses nor chariots, nor servants, nor even armour strong enough to vie with them in battle and to win tripods of gold and women of great beauty. He who fights on foot with poor weapons cannot kill many enemies, because he himself fears death. Wherefore, fighting beneath the town walls, in the ranks, with the serving men, never did I win rich spoil."

The aged Melantho made answer:

"War giveth wealth to men and robs them of it.

My father, Kyphos, had a palace and countless herds at Mylata. But armed men despoiled him of all and slew him. I myself was carried away into slavery, but I was never ill-treated because I was young. The chiefs took me to their bed and never did I lack food. You were my best master and the poorest."

There was neither joy nor sadness in her voice as she spoke.

The Aged One replied:

"Melantho, you cannot complain of me, for I have always treated you kindly. Reproach me not with having failed to win great wealth. Armourers are there and blacksmiths who are rich. Those who are skilled in the construction of chariots derive no small advantage from their labours. Seers receive great gifts. But the life of minstrels is hard."

The aged Melantho said:

"The life of many men is hard."

And with heavy step she went out of the house, with her daughter-in-law, to fetch wood from the cellar. It was the hour when the sun's invincible heat prostrates men and beasts, and silences even the song of the birds in the motionless foliage. The Aged One stretched himself upon a mat, and, veiling his face, fell asleep.

As he slumbered he was visited by a succession of dreams, which were neither more beautiful nor more unusual than those which he dreamed every day. In these dreams appeared to him the forms of men and of beasts. And, because among them he recognized some whom he had known while they lived on the green earth and who having lost the light of day had lain beneath the funeral pile, he concluded that the shades of the dead hover in the air, but that, having lost their vigour, they are nothing but empty shadows. He learned from dreams that there exist likewise shades of animals and of plants which are seen in sleep. He was convinced that the dead, wandering in Hades, themselves form their own image, since none may form it for them, unless it were one of those gods who love to deceive man's feeble intellect. But, being no seer, he could not distinguish between false dreams and true; and, weary of seeking to understand

the confused visions of the night, he regarded them with indifference as they passed beneath his closed eyelids.

On awakening, he beheld, ranged before him in an attitude of respect, the children of Kyme, whom he instructed in poetry and music, as his father had instructed him. Among them were his daughter-in-law's two sons. Many of them were blind, for a bard's life was deemed fitting for those who, bereft of sight, could neither work in the fields nor follow heroes to war.

In their hands they bore the offerings in payment for the bard's lessons, fruit, cheese, a honeycomb, a sheep's fleece, and they waited for their master's approval before placing it on the domestic altar.

The Aged One, having risen and taken his lyre which hung from a beam in the hall, said kindly:

"Children, it is just that the rich should give much and the poor less. Zeus, our father, hath unequally apportioned wealth among men. But he will punish the child who withholds the tribute due to the divine bard."

The vigilant Melantho came and took the gifts from the altar. And the Aged One, having tuned his lyre, began to teach a song to the children, who with crossed legs were seated on the ground around him.

"Hearken," he said, "to the combat between Patrocles and Sarpedon. This is a beautiful song."

And he sang. He skilfully modulated the sounds, applying the same rhythm and the same measure to each line; and, in order that his voice should not wander from the key, he supported it at regular intervals by striking a note upon his three-stringed lyre. And, before making a necessary pause, he uttered a shrill cry, accompanied by a strident vibration of strings. After he had sung lines equal in number to double the number of fingers on his two hands, he made the children repeat them. They cried them out all together in a high voice, as, following their master's example, they touched the little lyres which they themselves had carved out of wood and which gave no sound.

Patiently the Aged One sang the lines over and over until the little singers knew every word. The attentive children he praised, but those who lacked memory or intelligence he struck with the wooden part of his lyre, and they went away to lean weeping against a pillar of the hall. He taught by example, not by precept, because he believed poesy to be of hoary antiquity and beyond man's judgment. The only counsels which he gave related to manners. He bade them:

"Honour kings and heroes, who are superior to other men. Call heroes by their own name and that of their father, so that these names be not forgotten. When you sit in assemblies gather your tunic about you and let your mien express grace and modesty."

Again he said to them:

“Do not spit in rivers, because rivers are scared. Make no change, either through weakness of memory or of your own imagining, in the songs I teach you, and when a king shall say unto you: ‘These songs are beautiful. From whom did you learn them?’ you shall answer: ‘I learnt them from the Aged One of Kyme, who received them from his father, whom doubtless a god had inspired.’”

Of the ox’s shin, there yet remained a few succulent morsels. Having eaten one of them before the hearth and smashed the bone with an axe of bronze, in order to extract the marrow, of which he alone in the house was worthy to partake, he divided the rest of the meat into portions which should nourish the women and children for the space of two days.

Then he realized that soon nothing would be left of this nutritious food, and he reflected:

“The rich are loved by Zeus and the poor are not. All unwittingly I have doubtless offended one of those gods who live concealed in the forests or the mountains, or perhaps the child of an immortal; and it is to expiate my involuntary crime that I drag out my days in a penurious old age. Sometimes, without any evil intention, one commits actions which are punishable because the gods have not clearly revealed unto men that which is permitted and that which is forbidden. And their will remains obscure.” Long did he turn over those thoughts in his mind, and, fearing the return of cruel hunger, he resolved not to remain idly in his dwelling that night, but this time to go towards the country where the Hermos flows between rocks and whence can be seen Orneia, Smyrna and the beautiful Hissia, lying upon the mountain, which, like the prow of some Phoenician boat, plunges into the sea. Wherefore, at the hour when the first stars glimmer in the pale sky, he girded himself with the cord of his lyre and went forth, along the sea-shore, toward the dwellings of rich men, who, during their lengthy feasts, love to hearken to the praise of heroes and the genealogies of the gods.

Having, according to his custom, journeyed all night, in the rosy dawn of morning he descried a town perched upon a high headland, and he recognized the opulent Hissia, dove-haunted, which from the summit of her rock looks down upon the white islands sporting like nymphs in the glistening sea. Not far from the town, on the margin of a spring, he sat down to rest and to appease his hunger with the onions which he had brought in a fold of his tunic.

Hardly had he finished his meal when a young girl, bearing a basket on *hex* head, came to the spring to wash linen. At first she looked at him suspiciously, but, seeing that he carried a wooden lyre slung over his torn tunic and that he

was old and overcome with fatigue, she approached him fearlessly, and, suddenly, seized with pity and veneration, she filled the hollows of her hands with drops of water with which she moistened the minstrel's lips.

Then he called her a king's daughter; he promised her a long life, and said:

"Maiden, desire floats in a cloud about thy girdle.

Happy the man who shall lead thee to his couch. And I, an old man, praise thy beauty like the bird of night which cries all unheeded upon the nuptial roof. I am a wandering bard. Daughter, speak unto me pleasant words."

And the maiden answered:

"If, as you say and as it seemeth, you are a musician, then no evil fate brings you to this town. For the rich Meges to-day receiveth a guest who is dear to him; and to the great of the town, in honour of his guest, he giveth a sumptuous feast. Doubtless he would wish them to hear a good minstrel. Go to him. From this very spot you may see his house. From the seaward side it cannot be approached, because it is on that high breeze-swept headland, which juts out into the waves. But if you enter the town on the landward side, by the steps cut in the rock, which lead up the vine-clad hill, you will easily distinguish from all the other houses the abode of Meges. It has been recently whitewashed, and it is more spacious than the rest." And the Aged One, rising with difficulty on limbs which the years had stiffened, climbed the steps cut in the rock by the men of old, and, reaching the high table-land whereon is the town of Hissia, he readily distinguished the house of the rich Meges.

To approach it was pleasant, for the blood of freshly slaughtered bulls gushed from its doors and the odour of hot fat was perceptible all around. He crossed the threshold, entered the great banqueting-hall and, having touched the altar with his hand, approached Meges, who was carving the meat and ordering the servants. Already the guests were ranged about the hearth, rejoicing in the prospect of a plenteous repast. Among them were many kings and heroes. But the guest whom Meges desired to honour by this banquet was a King of Chios, who, in quest of wealth, had long navigated the seas and endured great hardship. His name was Oineus. All the guests admired him because, like Ulysses in earlier days, he had escaped from innumerable shipwrecks, shared in the islands the couch of enchantresses and brought home great treasure. He told of his travels and his labours, interspersing them with inventions, for he had a nimble wit.

Recognizing the bard by the lyre which hung at his side, the rich Meges addressed the Aged One and said:

"Be welcome. What songs knowest thou?"

The Aged One made answer:

“I know ‘The Strife of Kings’ which brought such great disaster to the Achaians, I know ‘The Storming of the Wall.’ And that song is beautiful.

I know also ‘The Deception of Zeus,’

‘The Embassy’ and ‘The Capture of the Dead.’ And these songs are beautiful. I know yet more — six times sixty very beautiful songs.”

Thus did he give it to be understood that he knew many songs; but the exact number he could not tell.

The rich Meges replied in a mocking tone:

“In the hope of a good meal and a rich gift, wandering minstrels ever say that they know many songs; but, put to the test, it is soon seen that they remember but a few lines, with the constant repetition of which they tire the ears of heroes and of kings.”

The Aged One answered wisely:

“Meges,” he said, “you are renowned for your wealth. Know that the number of the songs I know is not less than that of the bulls and heifers which your herdsmen drive to graze on the mountain.” Meges, admiring the Old Man’s intelligence, said to him kindly:

“A small mind would not suffice to contain so great a number of songs. But, tell me, is what thou knowest about Achilles and Ulysses really true? For many are the lies in circulation touching those heroes.”

And the bard made answer:

“All that I know of the heroes I received from my father, who learned it from Muses themselves, for in earlier days in cave and forest the immortal Muses visited divine singers. No inventions will I mingle with the ancient tales.”

Thus did he speak, and wisely. Nevertheless to the songs he had known from his youth upward he was wont to add lines taken from other songs or the fruit of his own imagination. He himself had composed wellnigh the whole of certain songs. But, fearing lest man should disapprove of them, he did not confess them to be his own work. The heroes preferred the ancient tales which they believed to have been dictated by a god, and they objected to new songs. Wherefore, when he repeated lines of his own invention, he carefully concealed their origin. And, as he was a true poet and followed all the ancient traditions, his lines differed in no way from those of his ancestors; they resembled them in form and in beauty, and, from the beginning, they were worthy of immortal glory.

The rich Meges was not unintelligent. Perceiving the Aged One to be a good singer, he gave him a place of honour by the hearth and said to him: “Old Man, when we have satisfied our hunger, thou shalt sing to us all thou knowest of Achilles and Ulysses. Endeavour to charm the ears of Oineus, my guest, for he is a hero full of wisdom.” And Oineus, who had long wandered over the sea, asked

the minstrel whether he knew “The Voyages of Ulysses.” But the return of the heroes who had fought at Troy was still wrapped in mystery, and no one knew what Ulysses had suffered in his wanderings over the pathless sea.

The Old Man answered:

“I know that the divine Ulysses shared Circe’s couch and deceived the Cyclops by a crafty wile. Women tell tales about it to one another. But the hero’s return to Ithaca is hidden from the bards. Some say that he returned to possess his wife and his goods, others that he put away Penelope because she had admitted her suitors to her bed, and that he himself, punished by the gods, wandered ceaselessly among the people, an oar upon his shoulder.”

Oineus replied:

“In my travels I have heard that Ulysses died at the hands of his son.”

Meanwhile Meges distributed the flesh of oxen among his guests. And to each one he gave a fitting morsel. Oineus praised him loudly.

“Meges,” he said, “one can see that you are accustomed to give banquets.”

The oxen of Meges were fed upon the sweetsmelling herbs which grow on the mountain-side. Their flesh was redolent thereof, and the heroes could not consume enough of it. And, as Meges was constantly refilling a capacious goblet which he afterwards passed to his guests, the repast was prolonged far into the day. No man remembered so rich a feast.

The sun was going down into the sea, when the herdsmen who kept the flocks of Meges upon the mountain came to receive their share of the wine and victuals. Meges respected them because they grazed the herds not with the indolence of the herdsmen of the plain, but armed with lances of iron and girded with armour in order to defend the oxen against the attacks of the people of Asia. And they were like unto kings and heroes, whom they equalled in courage. They were led by two chiefs, Peiros and Thoas, whom the master had chosen as the bravest and the most intelligent. And, indeed, handsomer men were not to be seen. Meges welcomed them to his hearth as the illustrious protectors of his wealth. He gave them wine and meat as much as they desired.

Oineus, admiring them, said to his host:

“In all my travels, I have never seen men with limbs so well formed and muscular as those of these two master herdsmen.”

Then Meges uttered injudicious words. He said: “Peiros is the stronger in wrestling, but Thoas the swifter in the race.”

At these words, the two herdsmen looked angrily at one another, and Thoas said to Peiros:

“You must have given the master some maddening drink to make him say that you are the better wrestler.”

Then Peiros answered Thoas testily:

“I flatter myself that I can conquer you in wrestling. As for racing, I leave to you the palm which the master has given. For you who have the heart of a stag could not fail to possess his feet.”

But the wise Oineus checked the herdsmen’s quarrel. He artfully told tales showing the danger of wrangling at feasts. And, as he spoke well, he was approved. Peace having been restored, Meges said to the Aged One:

“My friend, sing us ‘The Wrath of Achilles’ and the ‘Gathering of the Kings.’”

And the Aged One, having tuned his lyre, poured forth into the thick atmosphere of the hall great gusts of sound.

He drew deep breaths, and all the guests hearkened in silence to the measured words which recalled ages worthy to be remembered. And many marvelled how so old a man, one withered by age like a vine-branch which beareth neither fruit nor leaves, could emit such powerful notes. For they did not understand that the power of the wine and the habit of singing imparted to the musician a strength which otherwise would have been denied him by enfeebled nerve and muscle.

At intervals a murmur of praise rose from the assembly like a strong gust of wind in the forest. But suddenly the herdsmen’s dispute, appeased for a while, broke out afresh. Heated with wine, they challenged one another to wrestle and to race. Their wild cries rose above the musician’s voice, and vainly he endeavoured to make the harmonious sounds which proceeded from his mouth and his lyre heard by the assembly. The herdsmen who followed Peiros and Thoas, flushed with wine, struck their hands and grunted like hogs. They had long formed themselves into rival bands which shared the chiefs’ enmity.

“Dog!” cried Thoas.

And he struck Peiros a blow on the face which drew blood from his mouth and nostrils. Peiros, blinded, butted with his forehead against the chest of Thoas and threw him backwards, his ribs broken. Straightway the rival herdsmen cast themselves upon one another, exchanging blows and insults.

In vain did Meges and the Kings endeavour to separate the combatants. Even the wise Oineus himself was repulsed by the herdsmen whom a god had bereft of reason. Brass vessels flew through the air on all sides. Great ox-bones, smoking torches, bronze tripods rose and fell upon the combatants. The interlaced bodies of men rolled over the hearth on which the fire was dying, in the midst of the liquor which flowed from the burst wineskins.

Dense darkness enveloped the hall, a darkness full of groans and imprecations. Arms, maddened by frenzy, seized glowing logs and hurled them into the darkness. A blazing twig struck the minstrel as he stood still and silent.

Then a voice louder than all the noise of combat cursed these impious men and this profane house. And, pressing his lyre to his breast, he went out of the dwelling and walked along the high headland by the sea. To his wrath had given place a great feeling of fatigue and a bitter disgust with men and with life.

A longing for union with the gods filled his breast. All things lay wrapped in soft shadows, the friendly silence and the peace of night. Westward, over the land which men say is haunted by the shades of the dead, the divine moon, hanging in the clear sky, shed silver blossoms upon the smiling sea. And the aged Homer advanced over the high headland until the earth, which had borne him so long, failed beneath his feet.

KOMM OF THE ATREBATES

1

IN a land of mists, near a shore which was beaten by the restless sea and swept by billowy waves of sand raised by the Ocean winds, the Atrebates had settled on the shifting banks of a broad stream. There, amid pools of water and in forests of oak and of birch, they lived protected by their stockades of felled tree-trunks. There they bred horses excellent for draught-work, large-headed, short-necked, broad-chested and muscular, and with powerful haunches. On the outskirts of the forest they kept huge swine, wild as boars. With their great dogs they hunted wild beasts, the skulls of which they nailed on to the walls of their wooden houses. They lived on the flesh of these creatures and on fish, both of the salt-water and the fresh. They grilled their meat and seasoned it with salt, vinegar and cumin. They drank wine, and, at their stupendous feasts, seated at their round tables, they grew drunken. There were among them women who, acquainted with the virtue of herbs, gathered henbane, vervain and that healing plant called savin, which grows in the moist hollows of rocks. From the sap of the yew-tree they concocted a poison. The Atrebates had also priests and poets who knew things hidden from ordinary men.

These forest-dwellers, these men of the marsh and the beach, were of high stature. They wore their fair hair long, and they wrapped their great white bodies in mantles of wool of the colour of the vine-leaf when it grows purple in the autumn. They were subject to chiefs who held sway over the tribes.

The Atrebates knew that the Romans had come to make war on the peoples of Gaul, and that whole nations with all their possessions had been sold beneath their lance. News of happenings on the Rhone and the Loire had reached them speedily. Words and signs fly like birds. And that which, at sunrise, had been said in Genabum of the Carnutes was heard in the first watch of the night on the Ocean strand. But the fate of their brethren did not trouble them, or rather, being jealous of them, they rejoiced in the sufferings which they endured at Caesar's hand. They did not hate the Romans, for they did not know them. Neither did they fear them, since it seemed to them impossible for an army to penetrate through the forests and marshes which surrounded their dwellings. They had no towns, although they gave the name to Nemetacum, (The modern Arras. — *Trans.*) a vast enclosure encircled by a palisade, which, in case of attack, served as a refuge for warriors, women and herds. As we have said, they had throughout their country other similar places of refuge, but these were smaller. To them, also, they gave the name of towns.

It was not upon their enclosures of felled trees that they relied for resistance to the Romans, whom they knew to be skilled in the capture of cities defended by stone walls and wooden towers. But they relied rather on their country's lack of roads. The Roman soldiers, however, themselves constructed the roads over which they marched. They dug the ground with a strength and rapidity unknown to the Gauls of the dense forest, among whom iron was rarer than gold. And one day the Atrebates were astounded to learn that the Roman road, with its milestones and its fine paved highway, was approaching their thickets and marshes. Then they made alliance with the people scattered through the forest which they called the Impenetrable, and numerous tribes entered into a league against Cæsar. The chiefs of the Atrebates uttered their war-cry, girded themselves with their baldrics of gold and of coral, donned their helmets adorned with the antlers of the stag, or the elk, or with buffalo horns, and drew their daggers, which were not equal to the Roman sword. They were vanquished, but because they were courageous they had to be twice conquered.

Now among them was a chief who was very rich. His name was Komm. He had a great store of torques, bracelets and rings in his coffers. Human heads he had also, embalmed in oil of cedar. They were the heads of hostile chiefs slain by himself or by his father or his father's father. Komm enjoyed the life of a man who is strong, free and powerful.

Followed by his weapons, his horses, his chariots and his Breton bulldogs, by the multitude of his fighting men and his women, he would wander without let or hindrance over his boundless dominions, through forest or along river-bank, until he came to a halt in one of those woodland shelters, one of those primitive farms of which he possessed a great number. There, at peace, surrounded by his faithful followers, he would fish, hunt the wild beasts, break in his horses and recall his adventures in war. And, as soon as the desire seized him, he would move on. He was a violent, crafty, subtle-minded man excelling in deed and in word. When the Atrebates shouted their war-cry, he forbore to don the helmet which was adorned with the horns of an ox. He remained quietly in one of his wooden houses full of gold, of warriors, or horses, of women, of wild pigs and smoked fish. After the defeat of his fellow-countrymen, he went and found Cæsar and placed his brains and his influence at the service of the Romans. He was well received. Concluding rightly that this clever, powerful Gaul would be able to pacify the country and hold it in subjection to Rome, Cæsar bestowed upon him great powers and nominated him King of the Atrebates. Thus Komm, the chieftain, became Commius Rex. He wore the purple, and coined money whereon appeared his likeness in profile, his head encircled by a diadem with

sharp points like those of the Greek and barbarian kings who wore their crowns as tokens of their friendship with Rome.

He was not execrated by the Atrebates. His sagacious and self-interested behaviour did not discredit him with a people devoid of Greek and Roman ideas of patriotism and citizenship. These savage, inglorious Gauls, ignorant of public life, esteemed cunning, yielded to force and marvelled at royal power, which seemed to them a magnificent innovation. The majority of these people, rough woodlanders or fishermen of the misty coast, had a still better reason for not blaming the conduct and the prosperity of their chieftain; not knowing that they were Atrebates, nor even that Atrebates existed, the King of the Atrebates concerned them but little. Wherefore Komm was not unpopular.

And if the favour of Rome meant danger to him, that danger did not come from his own people.

Now in the fourth year of the war, towards the end of summer, Caesar armed a fleet for a descent upon Britain. Desiring to secure allies in the great Island, he resolved to send Komm as his ambassador to the Celts of the Thames, with the offer of an alliance with Rome. Sagacious, eloquent and by birth akin to the Britons — for certain tribes of the Atrebates had settled on both banks of the Thames — Komm was eminently fitted for this mission.

Komm was proud of his friendship with Cæsar. But he was in no hurry to discharge this mission, of the dangers of which he was fully aware. To induce him to undertake it Cæsar was compelled to grant him many favours. From the tribute paid by other Gallic towns he exempted Nemetacum, which was already growing into a city and a metropolis, so rapidly did the Romans develop the countries which they conquered. He somewhat relaxed the rigorous rule of the conquerors by restoring to it its rights and its own laws. Further, he gave Komm to rule over the Morini, who were the neighbours of the Atrebates on the seashore.

Komm set sail with Caius Volusenus Quadratus, prefect of cavalry, appointed by Cæsar to conduct a reconnaissance in Britain. But when the ship approached the sandy beach at the foot of the bird-haunted white cliffs, the Roman refused to disembark, fearing unknown danger and certain death. Komm landed with his horses and his followers and spoke to the British chiefs who had come to meet him. He counselled them to prefer profitable friendship with the Romans to their pitiless wrath. But these chiefs, the descendants of Hu, the Powerful, and of his comrades in arms, were proud and violent. They listened impatiently to Komm's words. Anger clouded their woad-stained countenances, and they swore to defend their Island against the Romans.

“Let them land here,” they cried, “and they will disappear like the snow on the sand of the seashore when the south wind blows upon it.”

Holding Cæsar’s counsel to be an insult, they were already drawing their daggers from their belts and preparing to put to death the herald of shame.

Standing bowed over his shield in the attitude of a suppliant, Komm invoked the name of brother by which he was entitled to call them. They were sons of the same fathers.

Wherefore the Britons forbore to slay him. They conducted him in chains to a great village near the coast. Passing down a road bordered by huts of wattle-work, he noticed high flat stones, fixed in the ground at irregular intervals, and covered with signs which he thought to be sacred, for it was not easy to decipher their meaning. He perceived that the huts of this great village, though poorer, were not unlike those of the villages of the Atrebates. In front of the chiefs’ dwellings poles were erected from which hung the antlers of deer, the skulls of boars and the fair-haired heads of men. Komm was taken into a hut which contained nothing save a hearthstone still covered with ashes, a bed of dried leaves and the image of a god shapen from the trunk of a lime-tree. Bound to the pillar which supported the thatched roof, the Atrebate meditated on his ill luck and sought in his mind for some magic word of power or some ingenious device which should deliver him from the wrath of the British chieftains.

And to beguile his wretchedness, after the manner of his ancestors, he composed a song of menace and complaint, coloured by pictures of his native woods and mountains, the memory of which filled his heart.

Women with babes at the breast came and looked at him curiously and questioned him as to his country, his race and his adventures. He answered them kindly. But his soul was sad and wracked by cruel anxiety.

2

Detained until the end of summer on the Morini shore, Cæsar set sail one night about the third watch, and by the fourth hour of day had sight of the Island. The Britons awaited him on the beach. But neither their arrows of hard wood nor their scythed chariots, nor their long-haired horses trained to swim in the sea among the shoals, nor their countenances made terrible with paint gave check to the Romans. The Eagle surrounded by legionaries touched the soil of the barbarians' Island. The Britons fled beneath a shower of stone and lead hurled from machines which they believed to be monsters. Struck with terror, they ran like a herd of elks before the spear of the hunter.

When towards evening they had reached the great village near the coast, the chiefs sat down on stones ranged in a circle by the road-side and took counsel. All night they continued to deliberate; and when dawn began to gleam on the horizon, while the larks' song pierced the grey sky, they went into the hut where Komm of the Atrebates had been enchained for thirty days. They looked at him respectfully because of the Romans. They unbound him. They offered him a drink made of the fermented juice of wild cherries. They restored to him his weapons, his horses, his comrades, and, addressing him with flattering words, they entreated him to accompany them to the camp of the Romans and to ask pardon for them from Caesar the Powerful.

"Thou shalt persuade him to be our friend," they said to him, "for thou art wise and thy words are nimble and penetrating as arrows. Among all the ancestors whose memory is enshrined in our songs, there is not one who surpasses thee in sagacity."

It was with joy Komm of the Atrebates heard these words. But he concealed his pleasure, and, curling his lips into a bitter smile, he said to the British chiefs, pointing to the fallen willow leaves that were driven in eddies by the wind:

"The thoughts of vain men are stirred like these leaves and ceaselessly carried in every direction. Yesterday they took me for a madman and said I had eaten of the herb of Erin that maddens the grazing beasts. To-day they perceive in me the wisdom of their ancestors. Nevertheless I am as good a counsellor one day as another, for my words depend neither upon the sun nor upon the moon, but upon my understanding. As the reward of your ill-doing, I ought to deliver you up to the wrath of Cæsar, who would cut off your hands and put out your eyes, so that begging bread and beer in the wealthy villages you would testify to his might and justice throughout the Island of Britain. Notwithstanding I will forget the wrong you have done me. I will remember that we are brethren, that the Britons

and the Atrebates are the fruit of the same tree. I will act for the good of my brethren who drink the waters of the Thames. Caesar's friendship, which I came to their Island to offer them, I will restore to them now that they have lost it through their folly. Caesar, who loves Komm, and has made him to be King over the Atrebates and the Morini who wear collars of shells, will love the British chiefs, painted with glowing colours, and will establish them in their wealth and power, because they are the friends of Komm, who drinketh the waters of the Somme."

And Komm of the Atrebates spake again and said: "Learn from me that which Caesar shall say unto you when you bend over your shields at the foot of his tribunal and that which it behooveth you in your wisdom to reply unto him. He will say unto you: 'I grant you peace. Deliver up to me noble children as hostages.' And you will make answer: 'We will deliver up unto you our noble children. And we will bring you certain of them this very day. But the greater number of our noble children are in the distant places of this Island, and to bring them hither will take many days.'"

The chiefs marvelled at the subtle mind of the Atrebate. One of them said to him:

"Komm, thou art possessed of a great understanding, and I believe thy heart to be filled with kindness toward thy British brethren who drink the waters of the Thames. If Caesar were a man, we should have courage to fight against him, but we know him to be a god because his vessels and his engines of war are living creatures and endowed with understanding. Let us go and ask him to pardon us for having fought against him and to leave us in possession of our sovereignty and of our riches."

Having thus spoken, the chiefs of the Island of Fogs leapt upon their horses, and set forth towards the seashore where the Romans were encamped near the cove where their deep-keeled ships lay at anchor, not far from the beach up which they had drawn their galleys. Komm rode beside them. When they beheld the Roman camp, which was surrounded by ditches and palisades, traversed by wide and regular thoroughfares and covered with tents over which soared the Roman eagles and floated the wreaths of the standards, they paused in amazement and inquired by what art the Romans had built in one day a town more beautiful and greater than any in the Isle of Mists.

"What is that?" cried one of them.

"It is Rome," replied the Atrebate. "The Romans bear Rome with them everywhere."

Introduced into the camp, they repaired to the foot of the tribunal, where the Proconsul sat surrounded by the fasces. His eyes were like the eagle's; and he

was pale in his purple.

Komm assumed a suppliant's attitude and entreated Caesar to pardon the British chiefs.

"When they fought against you," he said, "these chiefs did not act according to their own heart, the dictates of which are always noble. When they drove against you their chariots of war, they obeyed, they commanded not. They yielded to the will of the poor and humble tribesmen who assembled in great numbers against you; for they lacked understanding and were incapable of comprehending your might. You know that in all things the poor are inferior to the rich. Deny not your friendship to these men, who possess great wealth and can pay tribute."

Cæsar granted the pardon which the chiefs implored, and said unto them:

"Deliver up to me as hostages the sons of your princes."

The most venerable of the chiefs replied:

"We will deliver up unto you our noble children. And some of them we will bring to you this very day. But the children of our nobles are most of them in the distant places of our Isle, and to bring them hither will take many days."

Cæsar inclined his head as a sign of assent. Thus, by the Atrebate's counsel, the chiefs surrendered but a few young boys and those not of the highest nobility.

Komm remained in the camp. At night, being unable to sleep, he climbed the cliff and looked out to sea. The surf was breaking on the rocks. The wind from the Channel mingled its sinister moaning with the roaring of the waves. The wild moon, in its stately passage through the clouds, cast a fleeting light on to the water. The Atrebate, with the keen eye of the savage, piercing through the shadow and the mist, perceived ships, surprised by the tempest, toiling in the waves and the wind. Some, helpless and drifting, were being driven by the billows, the foam of which shone upon their sides like a pale gleam; others were putting out to sea. Their sails swept the waves like the wings of some fishing bird. These were the ships that were bringing Cæsar's cavalry, and they were being scattered by the storm. The Gaul, joyfully breathing the sea air, paced awhile along the edge of the cliff; and soon he descried the little bay, where the Roman galleys which had alarmed the Britons lay dry upon the sand. He saw the tide approach them gradually, then reach them, raise them, hurl them one against the other and batter them, while the deep-keeled ships in the cove were tossed to and fro at anchor by a furious wind which carried away their masts and rigging like so many wisps of straw. Dimly he discerned the confused movements of the panic-stricken legionaries running along the beach. Their shouts reached his ear like the noise of a storm. Then he raised his eyes to the divine moon, worshipped

by the Atrebates who dwell on river-banks and in the deep forests. In the stormy British sky she hung like a shield. He knew that it was she, the copper moon at the full, that had brought this spring tide and caused the tempest, which was now destroying the Roman fleet. And on the cliff, in the majestic night, by the furious sea, there came to the Atrebat the revelation of a secret, mysterious force, more invincible than that of Rome.

When they heard of the disaster that had overtaken the fleet the Britons joyfully realized that Caesar commanded neither the Ocean nor the moon, the friend of lonely shores and deep forests. They saw that the Roman galleys were not invincible dragons, since the tide had shattered them and cast them, with their sides rent open, on the sand of the beach. Filled once again with the hope of destroying the Romans, they thought of slaying a great number by the arrow and the sword, and of throwing those that were left into the sea. Wherefore every day they appeared more and more assiduous in Caesar's camp. They brought the legionaries smoked meats and the skins of the elk. They assumed a kindly expression; they spoke honeyed words, and admiringly they felt the muscular arms of the centurions.

In order to appear more submissive still, the chiefs surrendered their hostages; but they were the sons of enemies on whom they wished to be revenged, or uncomely children not born of families who were the issue of the gods. And, when they believed that the little dark men confidently relied upon their friendliness, they gathered together the warriors of all the villages on the banks of the Thames, and, uttering loud cries, they hurled themselves against the camp gates. These gates were defended by wooden towers. The Britons, unacquainted with the art of carrying fortified positions, could not penetrate through the outer circle, and many of the chiefs with woad-stained visages fell at the foot of the towers. Once again the Britons knew that the Romans were endowed with superhuman strength. Therefore on the morrow they came to implore Caesar's pardon and to promise him their friendship.

Cæsar received them with a passive countenance, but that very night he caused his legions to embark in the hastily repaired ships and made for the Morini coast. Having lost hope of receiving his support of his cavalry which the tempest had scattered, he abandoned for the time the conquest of the Isle of Mists.

Komm of the Atrebates accompanied the army on its return to the Morini shore. He had embarked on the vessel which bore the Proconsul. Cæsar, curious concerning the customs of the barbarians, asked him whether the Gauls did not consider themselves the descendants of Pluto and whether it were not on that account that they reckoned time by nights instead of by days. The Atrebat could

not give him the true reason for this custom. But he told Caesar that in his opinion at the birth of the world night had preceded day.

“I believe,” he added, “that the moon is more ancient than the sun. She is a very powerful divinity and the friend of the Gauls.”

“The divinity of the moon,” answered Caesar, “is recognized by Romans and Greeks. But think not, Commius, that this planet, which shines upon Italy and upon the whole earth, is especially favourable to the Gauls.”

“Take heed, Julius,” replied the Atrebate, “and weigh your words. The moon that you here behold fleeing through the clouds is not the moon which at Rome shines on your marble temples. Though she be big and bright, this moon could not be seen in Italy. The distance is too great.”

3

Winter came and covered Gaul with darkness, with ice and with snow. The hearts of the warriors in their wattle huts were moved as they thought on the chiefs and their retainers whom Caesar had slain or sold by auction. Sometimes to the door of the hut came a man begging bread and showing his wrists with the hands cut off by a lictor. And the warriors' hearts revolted. Words of wrath passed from mouth to mouth. They assembled by night in the depths of the woods and the hollows of the rocks.

Meanwhile King Komm with his faithful followers hunted in the forests, in the land of the Atrebates. Every day, a messenger in a striped mantle and red braces came by secret paths to the King, and, slackening the speed of his horse as he drew near to him, said in a low voice:

"Komm, will you not be a free man in a free country? Komm, will you any longer submit to be a slave of the Romans?"

Then the messenger disappeared along the narrow path, where the fallen leaves deadened the sound of his galloping horse.

Komm, King of the Atrebates, remained the Romans' friend. But gradually he persuaded himself that it behooved the Atrebates and the Morini to be free, since he was their King. It annoyed him to see Romans, settled at Nemetacum, sitting in tribunals, where they dispensed justice, and geometricians from Italy planning roads through the sacred forests. And then he admired the Romans less since he had seen their ships broken against the British cliffs and their legionaries weeping by night on the beach. He continued to exercise sovereignty in Caesar's name. But to his followers he darkly hinted at the approach of war.

Three years later the hour had struck: Roman blood had flowed in Genabum. The chieftains allied against Caesar assembled their fighting men in the Arverni Hills. Komm did not love these chiefs. Rather did he hate them, some because they were richer than he in men, in horses and in lands; others because of the profusion of the gold and the rubies which they possessed; others, again, because they said that they were braver than he and of nobler race. Nevertheless he received their messengers, to whom he gave an oak-leaf and a hazel twig as a sign of affection. And he corresponded with the chiefs who were hostile to Caesar by means of twigs cut and knotted in such a manner as to be unintelligible save to the Gauls, who knew the language of leaves.

He uttered no war-cry. But he went to and fro among the villages of the Atrebates, and, visiting the warriors in their huts, to them he said:

"Three things were the first to be born: man, liberty, light."

He made sure that, whenever he should utter the war-cry, five thousand warriors of the Morini and four thousand warriors of the Atrebates would at his call buckle on their baldrics of bronze. And, joyfully thinking that in the forest the fire was smouldering beneath its ashes, he secretly passed over to the Treviri in order to win them for the Gallic cause.

Now, while he was riding with his followers beneath the willows on the banks of the Moselle, a messenger wearing a striped mantle brought him an ash bough bound to a spray of heather, in order to give him to understand that the Romans had suspected his designs and to enjoin him to be prudent. For such was the meaning of the heather tied to the ash. But he continued on his way and entered into the country of the Treviri. Titus Labienus, Cæsar's lieutenant, was encamped there with ten legions. Having been warned that King Commius was coming secretly to visit the chiefs of the Treviri, he suspected that his object was to seduce them from their allegiance to Rome. Having had him followed by spies, he received information which confirmed his suspicions. He then resolved to get rid of this man. He was a Roman, a son of the divine City, an example to the world, and by force of arms he had extended the Roman peace to the ends of the earth. He was a good general and an expert in mathematics and mechanics. During the leisure of peace, beneath the terebinths in the garden of his Campanian villa, he held converse with magistrates touching the laws, the morals and the customs of peoples. He praised the virtues of antiquity and liberty. He read the works of Greek historians and philosophers. His was a rare and polished intellect. And because Komm was a barbarian, unacquainted with things Roman, it seemed to Titus Labienus good and fitting that he should have him assassinated.

Being informed of the place where he was, he sent to him his master of horse, Caius Volusenus Quadratus, who knew the Atrebate, for they had been commissioned to reconnoitre together the coasts of the isle of Britain before Cæsar's expedition hither; but Volusenus had not ventured to land. Therefore, by the command of Labienus, Cæsar's lieutenant, Volusenus chose a few centurions and took them with him to the village where he knew Komm to be. He could rely upon them. The centurion was a legionary promoted from the ranks, who as a sign of his office carried a vine-stock with which he used to strike his subordinates. His chiefs did what they liked with him. As an instrument of conquest he was second only to the navy. Volusenus said to his centurions:

"A man will approach me. You will suffer him to advance. I shall hold out my hand to him. At that moment you will strike him from behind, and you will kill him."

Having given these orders, Volusenus set forth with his escort. In a sunken way, near the village, he met Komm with his followers. The King of the Atrebates, aware that he was suspected, would have turned his horse. But the master of the horse called him by name, assured him of his friendship and held out his hand to him.

Reassured by those signs of friendship, the Atrebate approached. As he was about to take the proffered hand a centurion struck him on the head with his sword and caused him to fall bleeding from his horse. Then the King's followers threw themselves upon the little band of Romans, scattered them, took up Komm and carried him away to the nearest village, while Volusenus, who believed his task accomplished, crept back to the camp with his horsemen.

King Komm was not dead. He was carried secretly into the country of the Atrebates, where he was cured of his terrible wound. Having recovered, he took this oath:

"I swear never to meet a Roman save to kill him." Soon he learnt that Cæsar had suffered a severe defeat at the foot of the Gergovian Mount and forty-six centurions of his army had fallen beneath the walls of the town. Later he was told that the confederates commanded by Vercingétorix were besieged in the country of the Mandubi, at Alesia, a famous Gallic fortress founded by Hercules of Tyre. Then, with a following of warriors, Morini and Atrebates, he marched to the frontier of the Edni, where an army was assembling to relieve the Gauls in Alesia. The army was numbered and was found to consist of two hundred and forty thousand foot and eight thousand horse. The command was entrusted to Viridomar and Eboracorus of the Edni, Vergasillaun of the Averni and Komm of the Atrebates.

After a long and arduous march, Komm, with his chiefs and fighting-men, reached the mountainous country of the Edni. From the heights surrounding the plateau of Alesia he beheld the Roman camp and the earthworks dug all around it by those little dark men, who waged war with the mattocks and the spade rather than with the javelin and the sword. This seemed to him to augur ill, for he knew that against trenches and machines the Gauls were of less avail than against human breasts. He himself, though well versed in the stratagems of war, understood little of the engineering art of the Romans. After three great battles, during which no break was made in the enemy's fortifications, the terrific rout of the Gauls carried off Komm as a blade of grass is whirled away in a storm. In the mêlée he had perceived Cæsar's red mantle and taken it for an omen of defeat. Now he fled furiously down the track cursing the Romans, but content that the Gallic chieftains, of whom he was jealous, were suffering with him.

4

For a year Komm lived in hiding in the forests of the Atrebates. There he was safe, because the Gauls hated the Romans, and having themselves submitted to the conquerors they had a great respect for those who refused them obedience. On the river-bank and in the green-wood, accompanied by his followers, he led a life not differing greatly from that he had lived as the chief of many tribes. He gave himself up to hunting and fishing, devised stratagems and drank fermented drinks, which, though depriving him of the knowledge of human affairs, enabled him to understand those that are divine. But his soul had suffered a change, and it pained him to be no longer free. All the chiefs of his people had been killed in battle, or had died beneath the lash, or, bound by the lictor, had been led away to a Roman prison. No longer did a bitter envy of them possess him; for now all his hatred was concentrated upon the Romans. He bound to his horse's tail the golden circlet which he, as the friend of the Senate and the Roman people, had received from the Dictator. To his dogs he gave the names of Caesar, Caius and Julius. When he saw a pig he stoned it, calling it Volusenus. And he composed songs like those which he had heard in his youth, eloquently expressing the love of liberty.

Now, it happened that one day, absorbed in the chase, having wandered away from his followers, he climbed the high, heather-dad tableland which commands Nemetacum, and, gazing thence, he saw with amazement that the huts and stockades of his town had vanished, and that in a wall-encircled enclosure rose temples and houses of an architecture so prodigious as to inspire him with the horror and fear caused by works of magic. For he could not believe that in so short a time such dwellings could have been constructed by natural means.

He forgot the birds on the moorland, and, prone on the red earth, he lay and gazed long upon the strange town. Curiosity, stronger than fear, kept his eyes wide open. Until evening he gazed upon the spectacle. Then there came to him an overpowering desire to enter the town. Beneath a stone on the heath he hid his golden torques, his bracelets, his jewelled belts and his weapons of chase. Retaining only his knife, hidden under his mantle, he descended the wooded hill-side. As he passed through the moist undergrowth, he gathered some mushrooms, so that he might appear as a poor man coming to sell his wares in the market. And in the third watch of the night he entered the town through the Golden Gate. It was kept by legionaries who allowed peasants bringing in food to pass. Thus the King of the Atrebates, disguised as a poor man, was readily enabled to penetrate as far as the Julian way. This was bordered by villas; it led

to the Temple of Diana, the white façade of which was already adorned with interlacing arches of purple, azure and gold. In the grey morning light Komm saw figures painted on the walls of the houses. They were ethereal pictures of dancing girls and scenes drawn from a history of which he was ignorant: a young virgin whom heroes were offering up as a sacrifice, a mother in her fury plunging a dagger into her two children as yet unweaned, a man with the hoofs of a goat raising his pointed ears in surprise, when, unrobing a sleeping and reclining virgin, he discovers her to be at once a youth and a woman. And there were in the courtyard other pictures representing modes of love unknown to the peoples of Gaul. Though passionately addicted to wine and women, he had no idea of Ausonian voluptuousness, because he had no clear idea of the variety of human forms and because he was untroubled by the desire for beauty. Having come to this town, which had once been his, in order to satisfy his hatred and inflame his wrath, he filled his heart with fury and loathing. He detested Roman art and the mysterious devices of the Roman painters. And in all these census figures on the city portals he saw but little, because his eyes lacked discernment save in observing the foliage of trees or the clouds in a dark sky.

Bearing his mushrooms in a fold of his mantle, he passed along the broad-paved streets. Beneath a door over which was a phallus illuminated by a little lamp he saw women wearing transparent tunics, who were watching for the passers-by. He approached with the intention of offering them violence. An old woman appeared, who in a squeaky voice said sharply:

“Go thy way. This is not a house for peasants who reek of cheese. Return to thy cows, herdsman.”

Komm replied that he had had fifty women, the most beautiful of the Atrebates, and possessed coffers full of gold. The courtesans began to laugh, and the old woman cried:

“Be off, drunkard!”

And it seemed to him that the duenna was a centurion armed with a vine-stock, with such splendour did the majesty of the Roman people shine throughout the Empire!

With one blow of his fist Komm broke her jaw and serenely pursued his way, while the narrow passage of the house was filled with shrieks, howls and lamentations. On the left he passed the temple of Diana of the Ardeni and crossed the forum between two rows of porches. When he recognized the goddess Roma standing on her marble pedestal, wearing a helmet, with her arm outstretched to command the peoples, in order to insult her, he performed before her the most ignoble of natural functions.

He was now coming to the end of the buildings of the town. Before him extended the stone circle of the amphitheatre as yet barely outlined, but already immense. He sighed:

“O race of monsters!”

And he advanced among the shattered and trampled vestiges of Gallic huts, the thatched roofs of which once extended like some motionless army and which were now degraded into less even than ruins — into little more than a heap of manure spread upon the ground. And he reflected:

“Behold what remains of so many ages of men! Behold what they have made of the dwellings wherein the chiefs of the Atrebates hung their arms!”

The sun had risen over the grades of the amphitheatre, and with insatiable and inquisitive hatred the Gaul wandered among the vast enclosures filled with bricks and stones. His large blue eyes gazed on these stony monuments of conquest, and he shook his long fair locks in the fresh breeze. Thinking himself alone, he muttered curses. But not far from the stone-masons’ yard he perceived, at the foot of an oak-crowned hillock, a man seated on a mossy stone in a crouching position, with his mantle thrown over his head. He wore no insignia; but on his finger was the knight’s ring, and the Atrebaté knew enough of a Roman camp to recognize a military tribune. This soldier was writing on tablets of wax and appeared wrapt in thought. Having long remained motionless, he raised his head, pensive, with his style to his lips, looked about him vacantly, then gazed down again and resumed his writing. Komm saw his full face and perceived that he was young, and that he had a gentle, high-born air.

Then the Atrebaté chief recalled his oath. He felt for his knife beneath his cloak, slipped behind the Roman with the agility of the savage and plunged the blade into the middle of his back. It was a Roman blade. The tribune uttered a deep groan and sank down. A trickle of blood flowed from one corner of his mouth. The waxen tablets remained on his tunic between his knees. Komm took them and looked eagerly at the signs traced thereon, thinking them to be magic signs the knowledge of which would give him great power. They were letters which he could not read and which were taken from the Greek alphabet then preferred to the Latin alphabet by the young *littérateurs* of Italy.

Most of these letters were effaced by the flat end of the style; those which remained were Latin lines in Greek metre, and here and there they were intelligible:

TO PHŒBE, ON HER TOMTIT

O thou, whom Varius loved more than his eyes,
Thy Varius, wandering beneath the rainy sky of Galata...
And the couple sang in their golden cage of gold.

O my white Phoebe, with prudent hand give
Millet and fresh water to thy frail captive.
She sits, she is a mother: a mother is timid.

Oh! come not to the misty Ocean's strand,
Phoebe, for fear...
... Thy white feet and thy limbs
So nimbly moving to the crotalum's rhythm.

And neither the gold of Croesus nor the purple of Attala,
But thy fresh arms, thy breasts....

A faint sound ascended from the waking town. Past the remnants of the Gallic huts where a few barbarians, fierce though of humble rank, were still lurking in the trenches, the Atrebate fled, and through a breach in the wall he leapt into the open country.

5

When, through the legionaries' sword, the lictor's lashes and Cæsar's flattering words Gaul was at length completely pacified, Marcus Antonius, the quaestor, came to take up his winter quarters in Nemetacum of the Atrebates. He was the son of Julia, Cæsar's sister. His functions were those of paymaster to the troops. It was for him, also, to apportion the booty captured, in accordance with established rules. This booty was immense; for the conquerors had discovered bars of gold and carbuncles under the stones of sacred places, in the hollows of oaks and in the still water of pools; they had collected golden utensils from the huts of exterminated tribes and their chiefs.

Marcus Antonius brought with him many scribes and land surveyors who set to work upon the apportionment of lands and movable goods, and would have perpetrated many useless writings had not Cæsar prescribed for them simple and rapid methods of procedure. Merchants from Asia, workmen, lawyers and other settlers came in crowds to Nemetacum; and the Atrebates who had quitted their town returned one by one, curious, astonished, filled with wonder. The Gauls, for the most part, were now proud to wear the toga and to speak the tongue of the magnanimous sons of Remus. Having shaved off their long moustaches they had resembled Romans. Those who had succeeded in retaining any wealth employed a Roman architect to build them a house with an inner porch, rooms for the women and a fountain adorned with shell-work. They had paintings of Hercules, Mercury and the Muses in their dining-room, and would sup reclining on couches.

Komm, though himself illustrious and the son of an illustrious father, had lost most of his followers. Nevertheless he refused to submit, and led a wandering, warlike life in company with a few fighting-men who were addicted to plunder and rape, or who, like their chief, were possessed of a keen desire for liberty or of hatred for the Romans. They followed him into impenetrable forests, into marshes and even into those moving islands which occur in the broad estuaries of rivers. They were entirely devoted to him, but they addressed him without respect, as a man speaks to his equal, because they were actually his equals in courage, in the extremes of continual hardships, of poverty and wretchedness. They dwelt in trees or in the clefts of rocks. They sought out caverns worn in the friable stone by the water gushing down narrow valleys. When there were no beasts to hunt, they fed on blackberries and arbutus berries. They were excluded from towns by their fear of the Romans or by the vigilance of the Roman guards. In few villages were they readily received. Komm, however, always found a

welcome in the huts scattered over the wind-swept sands which border the lazy waters of the Somme estuary. The dwellers on these dunes fed on fish. Poor, dishevelled, buried among the blue thistles of their barren soil, they had had no experience of Roman might. They received Komm and his companions into their subterranean abodes, which were covered with reeds and stones rounded by the Ocean. They listened to him attentively, having never heard any man talk so well. He said to them:

“Know who are the friends of the Atrebates and the Morini who live on the seashore and in the deep forest.

“The moon, the forest and the sea are the friends of the Morini and the Atrebates. And neither the sea nor the forest nor the moon loves the little dark men who follow Cæsar.

“Now the sea said to me: ‘Komm, I am hiding the ships of the Veneti in a lonely cove on my shore.’

“The forest said to me: ‘Komm, I will provide a secure shelter for thee who art an illustrious chieftain, and for thy faithful companions.’

“The moon said to me: ‘Komm, thou hast seen me in the isle of the Britons shattering the Roman ships. I command the clouds and the winds, and I will refuse to shine upon the drivers of the chariots which bear victuals to the Romans of Nemetacum, in order that thou mayest take them by surprise in the darkness of the night.’

“Thus spoke unto me the sea, the forest and the moon. And this I bid you:

“Leave your boats and your nets and come with me. You will all be chiefs in war and of great renown. We shall fight great and profitable battles. We shall win victuals, treasure and women in abundance. Behold in what manner:

“I know so completely the whole country of the Atrebates and the Morini that there is not a single river, nor pool, nor rock with the situation of which I am unacquainted. And likewise every road, every path with its exact length and its precise direction lies as clear in my mind as upon the soil of our ancestors. Great and royal indeed must be my mind thus to encompass the whole land of the Atrebates. But know that many another country is likewise contained in it — the lands of the Britons, the Gauls and the Germans. Wherefore, had it been given me to command the peoples, I should have conquered Caesar and driven the Romans out of this country. Wherefore we, you and I who speak, shall surprise the couriers of Marcus Antonius and the convoys of food destined for the town which has been reft from me. We shall surprise them without difficulty, for I know along which roads they travel, and their soldiers will not discover us since they know not the roads we shall take. And were they to follow on our tracks, we

should escape from them in the ships of the Veneti, which would bear us to the isle of the Britons.”

With such words Komm inspired his hosts with confidence on the misty seashore. And he finally won them over by giving them pieces of gold and iron, the last vestiges of the treasure which had once been his. They said to him:

“We will follow thee wherever it please thee to lead us.”

He led them by unknown ways to the edge of the Roman road. When he saw horses grazing on the bush grass near the abode of a rich man, he gave them to his companions.

Thus he gathered together a body of horsemen which was joined by those of the Atrebates who desired to wage war for the sake of booty, and by some deserters from the Roman camp. The latter Komm did not receive, in order not to break the oath which he had sworn never again to look a Roman in the face save to slay him. But he had them questioned by some one of intelligence, and dismissed them with food for three days. Sometimes all the male folk of a village, young and old, entreated him to receive them as his followers.

These men had been completely despoiled by the tax-gatherers of Marcus Antonius, who in addition to the imposts which Caesar levied had demanded others, which were not due, and had fined chiefs for imaginary offences. In short, these publicans, after filling the coffers of the State, took care to enrich themselves at the expense of barbarians whom they thought a stupid people, and whose importunate complaints could always be silenced by the executioner's axe. Komm chose the strongest of these men. The others were dismissed, despite their tears and their entreaties not to be left to die of hunger or at the hands of the Romans. He did not wish for a great army, because he did not wish to wage a great war as Vercingétorix had done.

In a few days he had, with his little band, captured several convoys of flour and cattle, massacred isolated legionaries up to the very walls of Nemetacum and terrified the Roman population of the town.

“These Gauls,” said the tribunes and centurions, “are cruel barbarians, mockers of the gods, enemies of the human race. Scorning their plighted word, they offend the majesty of Rome and of Peace. They deserve to be made an example. We owe it to humanity to chastise these criminals.”

The complaints of the settlers and the cries of the soldiers penetrated into the quaestor's tribunal.

At first Marcus Antonius paid no heed to them. In well-heated, well-closed halls he was busied with actors and courtesans who were representing on the stage the works of that Hercules whom he resembled in feature, in the cut of his short curly beard, and in the vigour of his limbs. Clothed in a lion's skin, club in

hand, Julia's robust son threw fictitious monsters to the ground and with his arrow pierced a false hydra. Then, suddenly exchanging the lion's pelt for Omphale's robe, he likewise changed his passion.

Meanwhile convoys were being intercepted, bands of soldiers surprised, harried and put to flight, and one morning the centurion, G. Fusius, was found hanging disembowelled from a tree near the Golden Gate.

In the Roman camp it was known that the author of this brigandage was Commius, formerly king by the grace of Rome, now a robber chieftain. Marcus Antonius commanded energetic action to be taken in order to assure the safety of soldiers and settlers. And, foreseeing that the crafty Gaul would not easily be captured, he bade the Proctor straightway to make some terrible example. In order to carry out his chief's design, the Proctor caused the two richest Atrebatas in the city of Nemetacum to be brought before his tribunal.

One was by name Vergal, the other Ambrow.

Both were of illustrious birth, and they had been the first of their tribe to make friends with Cæsar. Poorly rewarded for their prompt submission, robbed of all their honours and of a great part of their wealth, ceaselessly annoyed by coarse centurions and covetous lawyers, they had ventured to whisper a few complaints. Imitating the Romans and wearing the toga, they lived in Nemetacum, vain and simple-minded, proud and humiliated. The Proctor examined them, condemned them to suffer the traitors' death and on that very day handed them over to the lictors. They died doubting Roman justice.

Thus did the quaestor by his firmness banish fear from the hearts of the settlers, who presented him with a laudatory address. The municipal councillors of Nemetacum, blessing his paternal vigilance and his piety, decreed that a bronze statue should be raised in his honour. After this several Roman merchants, having ventured out of the town, were surprised and slain by Komm's horsemen.

6

The prefect of the body of cavalry stationed at Nemetacum of the Atrebates was Caius Volusenus Quadratus, the same who had formerly enticed King Commius into a trap and had said to the centurions of his escort: "When I hold out my hand as a sign of friendship you will strike from behind." Caius Volusenus Quadratus was held in high esteem in the army because of his obedience to the call of duty and his unflinching courage. He had received rich rewards and enjoyed the honours due to military virtue. Marcus Antonius appointed him to hunt down Commius.

Volusenus zealously carried out the mission confided to him. He planned ambuscades for Komm, and, keeping in constant touch with his robber bands, harassed them incessantly. Meanwhile the Atrebate, a cunning master of guerrilla warfare, wore out the Roman cavalry by his swift movements and surprised isolated soldiers. As a matter of religious sentiment he slew his prisoners, trusting thus he propitiate the gods. But the gods hide their thoughts as well as their countenances. And it was after one of these pious performances that Komm fell into the greatest danger. Wandering in the land of the Morini, he had just slain by night on a stone in the forest two young and handsome prisoners, when on issuing from the wood he and all his men were surprised by the cavalry of Volusenus, which, being better armed and better skilled in manoeuvring, surrounded him and killed many of his warriors and their horses. He succeeded, however, in making his escape, accompanied by the bravest and the cleverest of the Atrebates. They fled; they galloped at full speed over the plain, towards the beach where the misty Ocean rolls its pebbles over the sand. And, looking round, they saw the Roman helmets gleaming far behind them.

Komm had a fair hope of escaping. His horses were swifter and less heavily laden than the enemy's. He reckoned on reaching in time the boats awaiting him in a neighbouring cove, and with his faithful followers making for the land of the Britons.

Thus thought the chief, and the Atrebates rode in silence. Now a drop in the ground on a clump of dwarf-trees would hide the horsemen of Volusenus. Then on the immense grey plain the two companies would again come in sight of one another, but separated by an increasingly wide interval. The pale bronze helmets were outdistanced and Komm could distinguish naught to the rear save a cloud of dust moving on the horizon. Already the Gauls were breathing with delight the salt sea air. But as they drew nigh the shore the dusty incline caused the pace of the Gallic horses to slacken, and Volusenus began to gain on them.

Faint, almost imperceptible, the sound of Roman voices was caught by the keen ears of the barbarians, when, beyond the wind-bent larches, they first descried from the summit of a dune the masts of ships that lay gathered in the bend of the lonely shore. They uttered one long cry of joy. And Komm congratulated himself on his prudence and good luck. But, having begun their descent to the beach, they paused half-way down, seized with fear and horror, as they perceived the fine boats of the Veneti, broad keeled, lofty of stem and stern, now high and dry on the sand, there to remain for many a long hour, while far away in the distance gleamed the waves of the low tide. At this sight they sat inertly, stricken dumb, stooping over their steaming horses, which with muscles relaxed bowed their heads to the land breeze which blinded them as it blew their long manes into their eyes.

In the confusion and the silence resounded the voice of the chief crying:

“To the ships, horsemen! The wind is good! To the ships I”

They obeyed without understanding. And, pushing on to the ships, Komm bade them unfurl the sails. They were the skins of beasts dyed bright colours. No sooner were they unfurled than the rising wind filled the sails.

The Gauls wondered what could be the object of this manœuvre and whether the chief hoped to see the stout oaken keels ploughing through the sand of the beach as if it were the water of the Ocean. Some thought there might yet be time for flight, others of meeting death while slaying the Romans.

Meanwhile Volusenus, at the head of his horsemen, was climbing the hill which borders on the pebbled, sandy shore. Rising from the bottom of the cove he saw the masts of the ships of the Veneti. Perceiving the sails unfurled and filled with a favourable wind, he bade his troops halt, called down obscene curses on the head of Commius, groaned over his horses, which had perished in vain, and, turning bridle, commanded his men to return to camp.

“What is the good,” he thought, “of pursuing the bandits any farther? Commius has embarked. He has set sail, and, borne by such a wind, he is already far beyond the reach of the javelin.”

Soon afterwards Komm and the Atrebates reached the thickets and the moving islands, which they filled with the sound of their heroic laughter.

Six months later Komm again took the field. One day Volusenus surprised him, with a score of horsemen, on open ground. With the prefect was about an equal number of men and horses. He gave the order to attack. The Atrebat, whether he feared his inability to meet the charge, or whether he planned some stratagem, signed to his followers to flee, and himself wildly dashed across the immense plain in a long, galloping flight, hard pressed by Volusenus. Then, suddenly, he turned, and, followed by his Gauls, threw himself furiously on the

Prefect of the Horse and, with one thrust of his lance, pierced his thigh. At the sight of their general struck down the Romans fled in amazement. Then the discipline of their military training asserted itself, enabling them to overcome the natural instinct of fear; they returned to pick up Volusenus just as Komm, full of a fierce delight, was pouring upon him the most ferocious insults. The Gauls could not withstand the little Roman band, which, forming a compact mass, charged them vigorously and slew or captured the greater number. Commius almost alone escaped, thanks to his horse's speed.

Volusenus was carried back in a dying state to the Roman camp. But, thanks to the leech's art or the strength of his own constitution, he recovered from his wound. In this fray Commius had lost everything, his faithful warriors and his hatred. Satisfied with his vengeance, henceforth tranquil and content, he sent a messenger to Marcus Antonius. This messenger, having been admitted to the quæstor's tribunal, spoke thus:

"Marcus Antonius, King Commius promises to appear in any place which shall be indicated to him, to do all that thou shalt command and to give hostages. One thing only he asks — that he shall be spared the disgrace of ever appearing before a Roman."

Marcus Antonius was magnanimous.

"I understand," said he, "that Commius may be somewhat disgusted by his interviews with our generals. I excuse him from ever appearing before any of us. I grant him his pardon; and I receive his hostages."

What happened afterwards to Komm of the Atrebates is unknown; the rest of his life cannot be traced.

FARINATA DEGLI UBERTI; OR, CIVIL WAR

Ed ei s'ergea col petto e con la fronte,
Come avesse lo inferno in gran dispetto.

Inferno, Can. 10.

AS he sat on the terrace of his tower, the aged Farinata degli Uberti fixed his keen gaze on the battlemented town. Standing at his side, Fra Ambrogio looked at the sky that was blushing with the rosy hues of evening and crowning with its fiery blossoms the garland of hills which encircles Florence. From the neighbouring banks of the Amo the perfume of myrtles was wafted upwards into the still air. The birds' last cries had re-echoed from the bright roof of San-Giovanni. Suddenly there came the sound of two horses passing over the sharp pebbles from the riverbed which paved the road, and two young riders, handsome as two St. Georges, emerging from the narrow street, rode past the windowless palace of the Uberti. When they were at the foot of the Ghibelline tower one spat as a sign of contempt; the other, raising his arm, put his thumb between his fore and his middle finger. Then both, spurring their horses, reached the wooden bridge at a gallop. Farinata, a witness of this insult offered to his name, remained tranquil and silent. His shrivelled cheeks trembled and briny tears moistened his yellow eyeballs. Finally, he shook his head three times and said: "Why does this people hate me?"

Fra Ambrogio did not reply. And Farinata continued to gaze down upon the city, which he could no longer see save through the bitter mist which veiled his eyes. Then, turning towards the monk his thin face with its eagle nose and threatening jaws, he asked again: "Why does this people hate me?"

The monk made a gesture as if he would drive away a fly.

"What matters to you, Messer Farinata, the obscene insolence of two striplings bred in the Guelf towers of Oltarno?"

FARINATA.

Nothing to me, indeed, are those two Frescobaldi, minions of the Romans, sons of pimps and prostitutes. I fear not the scorn of such as they. Neither for my friends nor, especially, for my enemies is it possible to despise me. My sorrow is to feel weighing upon me the hatred of the people of Florence.

FRA AMBROGIO.

Hatred has prevailed in cities since the sons of Cain introduced pride with the arts, and since the two Theban horsemen satisfied their fraternal hatred by shedding each other's blood. Insult breeds wrath, and wrath insult With unfailing fecundity hatred engenders hatred.

FARINATA.

But how can love engender hatred? And wherefore am I odious to my well-beloved city?

FRA AMBROGIO.

Since you wish it, Messer Farinata, I will give you an answer. But from my lips you will have naught but truthful words. Your fellow citizens cannot forgive you for having fought at Montaperto, beneath Manfred's white banner, on the day when the Arbia was stained with Florentine blood. And they hold that on that day, in that fatal valley, you were not the friend of your city.

FARINATA.

What! I have not loved her! To live her life, to live for her alone, to suffer fatigue, hunger, thirst, fever, sleeplessness, and that most terrible of woes, exile; to brave death at every hour, to risk falling alive into the hands of those whom my death alone would not suffice to content; to dare everything, to endure everything for her sake, for her good, to rescue her from the power of my enemies, who were hers, to induce her whether she would or not to follow wholesome advice, to espouse the right cause, to think as I thought myself, with the noblest and the best, to wish her entirely beautiful and subtle and generous, to sacrifice for this object alone my possessions, my sons, my neighbours, my friends; in her interest alone to render myself liberal, avaricious, faithful, perfidious, magnanimous, criminal, this was not to love my city! Who loved her, then, if I did not?

FRA AMBROGIO.

Alas, Messer Farinata, your pitiless love caused violence and craft to take arms against the city and cost the lives of ten thousand Florentines!

FARINATA.

Yes, my affection for my city was as strong as that, Fra Ambrogio. And the deeds it inspired me to perform are worthy to serve as examples to our sons and our sons' sons. That the memory of them might not perish I would write of them myself, if I had a head for writing. When I was young, I composed love-songs, which ladies marvelled at and the clerks put into their books. With that exception, I have always despised letters as greatly as the arts, and I have no more troubled to write than to weave wool. Let every man follow my example and act according to his rank in life. But you, Fra Ambrogio, who are a very learned scribe, it is for you to relate the great enterprises I have led. Great honour would it bring you, if you told them not as a monk, but as a noble, for they are knightly and noble deeds. Such a story would show how active I have been. And of all that I have done I regret nothing.

I was exiled, the Guelfs had slain three of my kinsfolk. Sienna received me; of this my enemies made such a grievance that they incited the Florentines to march in arms against the hospitable city. For the exiles, for Sienna, I asked the aid of Caesar's son, the King of Sicily.

FRA AMBROGIO.

It is only too true: you were the ally of Manfred, the friend of the Sultan of Luceria, of the astrologer, the renegade, the excommunicated.

FARINATA.

Then we swallowed the Pontiff's excommunications like water. I know not whether Manfred had learned to read destiny in the stars, but true it is that he made much of his Saracen horsemen. He was as prudent as he was brave, a sagacious prince, careful of the blood of his men and of the gold in his coffers.

He replied to the Siennese that he would grant them succour. He made great promises in order to inspire great gratitude. He gave them but meagre fulfilment through craft and fear of diminishing his own power. He sent his banner with one hundred German horsemen. Disappointed and incensed, the Siennese spoke of rejecting this contemptible aid. I gave them better counsel and taught them the art of passing a cloth through a ring. One day, having gorged the Germans with wine and meat, I induced them to make a sortie at so unlucky a moment that they fell into an ambuscade and were all slain by the Guelfs of Florence, who took Manfred's white banner and trailed it in the dust at the end of an ass's tail. Straightway I informed the Sicilian of the insult. He felt it, as I had foreseen, and, to execute vengeance, he sent eight hundred horsemen, with a goodly number of infantry, under the command of Count Giordano, who was reputed to be the equal of Hector of Troy. Meanwhile Sienna and her allies assembled their militia. Before long our strength was thirteen thousand fighting men. We were fewer than were the Guelfs of Florence. But among them were false Guelfs who merely awaited the hour to declare themselves Ghibellines, while among our Ghibellines there were no Guelfs. Thus having on my side, not all the advantage (one never has all), but advantages which were great and un hoped for, I was impatient to engage in a battle, which, if won, would destroy my enemies, and, if lost, would only crush my allies. I hungered and thirsted after this battle. To make the Florentine army engage in it I used every means of which I could conceive, I sent to Florence two minor friars charged secretly to inform the Council that, seized with repentance and desiring to buy my fellow-citizens' pardon by rendering some signal service, I was ready for ten thousand florins to deliver up into their hands one of the gates of Sienna; but that for the success of the enterprise it would be necessary for the Florentine army, in as great strength as was possible, to advance to the banks of the Arbia, under the pretence of coming to the aid of the Guelfs of Montacino. When my two friars had departed, my mouth spat out the pardon it had asked, and, perturbed by a terrible anxiety, I waited. I feared lest the nobles of the Council should realize the folly of sending an army to the Arbia. But I hoped that the project, by its very extravagance, would please the plebeians and that they would adopt it all the more eagerly because of the opposition of the nobles, whom they mistrusted. And so it happened: the nobility discerned the snare, but the artisans fell into it. They were in the majority on the Council. At their command the Florentine army set forth and carried out the plan which I had formed for its destruction. How beautiful was that dawn, when, riding into a little band of exiles, I saw the sun pierce the white morning mist and shine on the forest of Guelf lances which covered the slopes of La Malenal I had put my hand on my enemies. But a little more

artfulness and I was sure of destroying them. By my advice, Count Giordano caused the infantry of the commune of Sienna to defile three times before their eyes, changing their helmets after their first and second appearances, in order that they might seem more numerous than they actually were; and thus he showed them to the Guelfs, first red, as an omen of blood; then green, as an omen of death; then half-black, half-white, as an omen of captivity. True omens! O what delight! when, charging the Florentine horse, I beheld it waver and wheel in circles like a flight of crows, when I saw the man in my pay, him whose name I may not utter for fear of defiling my lips, strike down with one blow of his sword the standard which he had come to defend, and all the horsemen, looking vainly henceforth for their rallying point, the white and blue colours, flee panic-stricken, trampling one another down, while we in their pursuit slaughtered them like pigs brought to market. Only the artisans of the commune stood their ground. Then we had to slay round the bleeding quarry. Finally, there remained before us naught save corpses and cowards, who joined hands to come to us and on their knees to beg for mercy. And I, content with my work, stood apart.

FRA AMBROGIO.

Alas, accursed valley of the Arbia! It is said that after so many years it still smells of death, that by night, deserted, haunted by wild beasts, it resounds with the howls of the white witches. Was your heart so hard, Messer Farinata, that it did not dissolve in tears when, on that evil day, you saw the flower-clad slopes of La Malena drinking Florentine blood?

FARINATA.

My only grief was to think that thus I had shown my enemies the way to victory and that, by humbling them after ten years of pride and power, I had suggested to them what they themselves might do in turn after the lapse of so many years. I reflected that, since with my aid Fortune's wheel had taken this turn, the wheel might take another turn and humble me and mine in the dust. This presentiment cast a shadow over the dazzling light of my joy.

FRA AMBROGIO.

It seemed to me as if you justly detested the treachery of that man who trailed in dirt and blood the standard beneath which he had set out to fight. I myself, who know that the mercy of the Lord is infinite, I, even, doubt whether Bocca will not take his place in hell with Cain, Judas and Brutus, the parricide. But if Bocca's crime is so execrable, do you not repent having caused it? And think you not, Messer Farinata, that you yourself, by drawing the Florentine army into a snare, offended the just God and did that which is not lawful?

FARINATA.

Everything is lawful to him who obeys the dictates of a vigorous mind and a strong heart. When I deceived my enemies I was magnanimous, not treacherous. And if you make it a crime to have employed, in order to save my party, the man who tore down his party's standard, then you are wrong, Fra Ambrogio, for nature, not I, had made him a traitor, and it was I, not nature, who turned his treachery to good use.

FRA AMBROGIO.

But since you loved your city even when fighting against her, it must have been painful to you that you were able to overcome her only with the aid of the Siennese, her enemies. Were you not somewhat ashamed at this?

FARINATA.

Wherefore should I have been ashamed? Could I have re-established my party in the city in any other way? I made alliance with Manfred and the Siennese. Had it been necessary, I would have sought the alliance of those African giants who have but one eye in the middle of their foreheads and who feed upon human flesh, according to the report of Venetian navigators who have seen them. The pursuit of such an interest is no mere game played according to rule, like chess or draughts. If I had judged one thing lawful and another unlawful, think you that my adversaries would have been bound by such rules? No, indeed, we on Arbia's banks were not playing a game of dice under the trellis, tablets on knee and little white pebbles to mark the score. It was conquest that we were working for. And each side knew it.

Nevertheless, I grant you, Fra Ambrogio, that it would have been better to settle our quarrel between Florentines alone. Civil war is so grand, so noble, so fine a thing, that it should, if possible, be waged without alien intervention. Those who engage in it should be fellow-citizens and preferably nobles, who would bring to it an unwearying arm and keen intelligence.

I would not say the same of foreign wars. They are useful, even necessary enterprises, undertaken to maintain or extend the boundaries of State or to promote traffic in merchandise. Generally speaking, neither profit nor honour results from waging these great wars unaided. A wise people will employ mercenaries, and delegate the enterprise to experienced captains who know how to win much with few men. Nothing but professional courage is needed, and it is better to spill gold than blood. One cannot put one's heart into it. For it would hardly be wise to hate a foreigner because his interests are opposed to ours, while it is natural and reasonable to hate a fellow-citizen who opposes what one esteems useful and good. In civil war alone can one display a discerning mind, an inflexible soul and the fortitude of a heart filled with anger or with love.

FRA AMBROGIO.

I am the poorest servant of the poor. But I have one master alone; he is the King of Heaven. I should be false to Him were I not to say, Messer Farinata, that the only warrior worthy of the highest praise is he who marches beneath the cross, singing: *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.

The blessed Dominic, whose soul, like a sun, rose on the darkened Church in a night of falsehood, taught us, concerning war against heretics, that the more fiercely and bitterly it is fought the more does it display charity and mercy. And he must have known, he who, bearing the name of the Prince of the Apostles, like the stone from David's sling, struck the Goliath of heresy on the forehead. Between Como and Milan he suffered martyrdom. From him my order derives great honour. Whosoever draws sword against such a soldier is another Antiochus, fighting for our Lord Jesus Christ. But, having instituted empires, kingdoms and republics, God suffers them to be defended by arms, and He looks down upon the captains who, having called upon Him, draw sword for the deliverance of their country. But He turns away His countenance from the citizen who strikes His city and sheds its blood, as you were so ready to do, Messer Farinata, undeterred by the fear that Florence, exhausted and rent by you, might have no strength to withstand her enemies. In the ancient chronicles it is

written that cities weakened by internecine warfare offer an easy prey to the foreigner who lies in wait to destroy them.

FARINATA.

Monk, is it best to attack the lion when he watches or when he sleeps? Now, I have kept awake the lion of Florence. Ask the Pisans if they had reason to rejoice at having attacked him at a time when I had made him furious. Search in the ancient histories and you will find there also, perhaps, that cities which are seething within are ready to scald the enemy who lurks without, but that a people made lukewarm by peace at home has no desire for war abroad. Know that it is dangerous to offend a city vigilant and noble enough to maintain internal warfare, and say not again that I have weakened my city.

FRA AMBROGIO.

Nevertheless, you know that she was like to perish after the fatal day of the Arbia. The panic-stricken Guelfs had sallied forth from her gates and had taken the sad road to exile. The Ghibelline diet, convoked at Empoli by Count Giordano, decided to destroy Florence.

FARINATA.

It is true. All wished that not a stone should be left upon another. All said, "Let us crush this nest of Guelfs." I alone rose to defend her. I alone shielded her from harm. To me the Florentines owe the very breath of life. Those who insult me and spit upon my threshold, had they any piety in their hearts, would honour me as a father. I saved my city.

FRA AMBROGIO.

After you had ruined it. Nevertheless, may that day at Empoli be counted to you for righteousness in this world and the next, Messer Farinata! And may St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence, bear to the ear of our Lord the words which you uttered in the assembly of the Ghibellines! Repeat to me, I pray you, those praiseworthy words. They are diversely reported, and I would know them

exactly. Is it true, as many say, that you took as your text two Tuscan proverbs — one of the ass, the other of the goat?

FARINATA.

That of the goat I hardly remember, but I have a clearer recollection of the proverb of the ass. It may be, as some have said, that I confused the two proverbs. That matters not. I rose and spoke somewhat thus: “The ass bites at the roots as hard as he can. And you, following his example, will bite without discrimination, to-morrow as yesterday, not discerning that which should be destroyed and that which should be respected. But know that I have suffered so much and fought so long only in order to dwell in my city. I shall therefore defend her and die, if need be, sword in hand.”

I said not another word and I went out. They ran after me, and, endeavouring to appease me by their entreaties, they swore to respect Florence.

FRA AMBROGIO.

May our sons forget that you were at the Arbia and remember that you were at Empoli! You lived in cruel days, and I do not think it easy either for a Guelf or a Ghibelline to see salvation. May God, Messer Farinata, save you from hell and receive you after your death into His blessed Paradise.

FARINATA.

Paradise and hell are but the creations of our own mind. Epicurus taught this, and many since his day have known it to be true. You yourself, Fra Ambrogio, have you not read in your book: “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth Beasts; as the one dieth so dieth the other.” But if, like ordinary souls, I believed in God, I would pray to him to leave the whole of me here after death, that soul and body alike might be buried in my tomb beneath the walls of my beautiful San Giovanni. All around are coffins hewn out of stone by the Romans to receive their dead. Now they are open and empty. In one of those beds I would wish to rest and sleep at last. In life I suffered bitterly in exile, and yet I was but a day’s journey from Florence. Farther away I should have been more

wretched still. I desire to remain for ever in my beloved city. May my descendants remain there also.

FRA AMBROGIO.

It fills me with horror to hear you blaspheme the God who created heaven and earth, the mountains of Florence and the roses of Fiesole. And that which most terrifies me, Messer Farinata degli Uberti, is that you contrive to invest evil with a certain nobility. If, contrary to the hope which I still cherish, infinite mercy were not to be vouchsafed to you, I believe you would be a credit to hell.

THE KING DRINKS

IN the city of Troyes, in the year of grace, 1428, Canon Guillaume Chappedelaine was elected by the Chapter to be King of the Epiphany, in accordance with the custom which then prevailed throughout Christian France. For the canons were wont to choose one of their number and to designate him as king because he was to take the place of the King of kings and to gather them all round his table, until such time as Jesus Christ Himself should gather them, as they all hoped, into His holy paradise.

Sieur Guillaume Chappedelaine owed his election to his virtuous life and his generosity. He was a rich man. Both the Burgundian and the Armagnac captains, when ravaging Champagne, had spared his vineyards. For this good fortune he was indebted first, to God and then to himself, to the kindness he had shown to the two factions which were at that time rending asunder the kingdom of the lilies. His wealth had contributed not a little to his election; for in that year a *setier* (An obsolete measure varying according to place. In 1703, in the Orkney and Shetland Isles a setten of barley was about twenty-eight pounds' weight.) of com fetched eight francs, five-and-twenty eggs six sous, a young pig seven francs, while throughout the winter Churchmen had been reduced to eat cabbages like villeins.

Wherefore on the Feast of the Epiphany, Sieur Guillaume Chappedelaine, clothed in his dalmatica, holding in his hand a palm-branch in lieu of a sceptre, took his place in the cathedral choir, beneath a canopy of cloth of gold. Meanwhile, out in the sacristy, there came forth three canons, wearing crowns upon their heads. One was robed in white, another in red, the third in black. They stood for the three kings of the East, the Magi, and, going down to that part of the church which represents the foot of the cross, they chanted the Gospel of St. Matthew. A deacon, bearing at the end of a pole five lighted candles, to symbolize the miraculous star which led the Magi to Bethlehem, ascended the great nave and entered the choir. The three canons followed him singing, and, when they reached this passage in the gospel, *Et intrantes domum, invenerunt puerum cum Maria, matre ejus, et procidentes adoraverunt eum*, they stopped in front of Sieur Guillaume Chappedelaine and bowed low before him. Then came three children, bearing salt and spices, which Sieur Guillaume graciously received after the manner of the Infant King who had accepted the myrrh, the gold and the frankincense of the kings of this world. After this divine service was celebrated with due devoutness.

In the evening the canons were invited to sup with the King of the Epiphany. Sieur Guillaume's house was close against the apse of the cathedral. It was recognizable by the golden hood on a shield of stone which adorned its low door. That night the great hall was strewn with foliage and lit by twelve torches of fir-wood. The whole Chapter sat down to the table, groaning beneath a lamb cooked whole. There were present Sieurs Jean Bruant, Thomas Alépée, Simon Thibouville, Jean Coquemard, Denys Petit, Pierre Corneille, Barnabé Videloup and François Pigouchel, canons of Saint-Pierre, Sieur Thibault de Saugles, knight and hereditary lay canon, and, at the bottom of the table, Pierrolet, the little clerk, who, although he could not write, was Sieur Guillaume's secretary and served him at Mass. He looked like a girl dressed up as a boy. He it was who on Candlemas Day appeared as an angel. It was also the custom on Ember Wednesday in December, when the coming of the Angel Gabriel to announce to Mary the mystery of the Incarnation was read at Mass, for a young girl to be placed on a platform and for a child with wings to tell her that she was about to become the mother of the Son of God. A stuffed dove was suspended over the girl's head. For two years Pierrolet had represented the angel of the Annunciation.

But his soul was far from being as sweet as his countenance. He was violent, foolhardy and quarrelsome, and he often provoked boys older than himself. He was suspected of being immoral; and in truth the soldiers garrisoned in the towns set no good example. Little notice, however, was taken of his bad habits. That which most vexed Sieur Guillaume was that Pierrolet was an Armagnac and for ever quarrelling with the Burgundians. The canon repeatedly told him that such a state of mind was not only wicked but absolutely devilish in that good town of Troyes, where the late Henry V of England had celebrated his marriage with Madame Catherine of France and where the English were the rightful masters, for all power is of God. *Omnis potestas a Deo*.

The guests having taken their places, Sieur Guillaume recited the *Benedicite* and every one began to eat in silence. Sieur Jean Coquemard was the first to speak. Turning to Sieur Jean Bruant, his neighbour, he said:

"You are wise and learned. Did you fast yesterday?"

"It was seemly so to do," replied Sieur Jean Bruant. "In the rubric, the eve of the Epiphany is described as a vigil and a vigil is a fast."

"Pardon me," retorted Sieur Jean Coquemard. "But I, together with notable doctors of divinity, hold that an austere fast accords ill with the joy of the faithful as they recall the birth of our Saviour which the Church continues to celebrate until the Epiphany."

“In my opinion,” replied Sieur Jean Bruant, “those who do not fast on these vigils have fallen away from our ancient piety.”

“And in mine,” cried Sieur Jean Coquemard, “those who by fasting prepare for the most joyful of festivals are guilty of following customs censored by the majority of our bishops.”

The dispute between the two canons began to wax bitter.

“Not to fast! What lack of zeal!” exclaimed Sieur Jean Bruant.

“To fast! How obstinate!” said Sieur Jean Coquemard. “You are one of those proud, reckless men who love to stand alone.”

“You are one of the weak who meekly follow the corrupt herd. But even in these wicked times of ours I have my authorities. *Quidam asserunt in vigilia Epiphania jejunandum.*”

“That settles the question. *Non jejunetur!*”

“Peace! Peace!” cried Sieur Guillaume from the depths of his great raised seat. “You are both right: it is praiseworthy of you, Jean Coquemard, to partake of food on the eve of the Epiphany, as a sign of rejoicing, and of you, Jean Bruant, to fast on the same vigil, since you fast with seemly gladness.”

This utterance was approved by the whole Chapter.

“Not Solomon himself could have pronounced a wiser judgment,” cried Sieur Pierre Corneille.

And Sieur Guillaume, having put to his lips ‘his goblet of silver gilt, Sieurs Jean Bruant, Jean Coquemard, Thomas Alépée, Simon Thibouville, Denys Petit, Pierre Corneille, Barnabé Videloup and François Pigouchel all cried with one voice:

“The King drinks! the King drinks!”

The uttering of this cry was part of the festival, and the guest who failed to join in it risked a severe penalty.

Sieur Guillaume, seeing that the flagons were empty, ordered more wine to be brought, and the servants grated the horse-radish which should stimulate the thirst of the guests.

“To the health of Monsignor, Bishop of Troyes and of the Regent of France,” said Sieur Guillaume, rising from his canonical seat.

“Right willingly, sieur,” said Thibault of Saulges, knight. “But it is an open secret that our Bishop is disputing with the Regent touching the double tithe which Monsignor of Bedford is exacting from Churchmen, under the pretext of financing the Crusade against the Hussites. Thus we are about to mingle in one toast the healths of two enemies.”

“Ha ha!” replied Sieur Guillaume. “But healths are proposed for peace and not for war. I drink to King Henry Vi’s Regent of France and to the health of

Monsignor, Bishop of Troyes, whom we all elected two years ago.”

The canons, raising their goblets, drank to the health of the Bishop and of the Regent Bedford.

Meanwhile there was raised at the bottom of the table a young and as yet piping voice, which cried: “To the health of the Dauphin Louis, the true King of France!”

It was the little Pierrolet, whose Armagnac sympathies, heated by the canon’s wine, were finding expression.

No one took any notice, and Sieur Guillaume having drunk again they all cried in chorus:

“The King drinks! The King drinks!”

The guests, all speaking at once, were noisily discussing matters both sacred and profane.

“Have you heard,” said Thibault de Saulges, “that the Regent has sent ten thousand English to take Orleans?”

“In that case,” said Sieur Guillaume, “the town will fall into their hands, as have already Jargeau and Beaugency, and so many good cities of the kingdom.”

“That remains to be seen!” said the little Pierrolet, growing red.

But, he being at the far end of the table, once again no one heard him.

“Let us drink, monsignors,” said Sieur Guillaume, who was doing the honours of his table lavishly.

And he set the example by raising his great cup of silver gilt.

More loudly than ever the cry resounded:

“The King drinks! The King drinks!”

But after the thunder of the toast had rolled away, Sieur Pierre Corneille, who was seated rather low down at the table, said bitterly:

“Monsignors, I denounce the little Pierrolet. He did not cry ‘The King drinks!’ Thereby he has transgressed our rights and customs, and he must be punished.”

“He must be punished!” repeated in chorus Sieurs Denys Petit and Barnabe Videloup.

“Let chastisement be meted out to him,” said, in his turn, Sieur Guillaume. “His hands and face must be smeared with soot, for such is the custom.”

“It is the custom!” cried all the canons together.

And Sieur Pierre Corneille went to fetch soot from the chimney, while Sieurs Thomas Alépée and Simon Thibouville, laughing unrestrainedly, threw themselves upon the child and held his arms and legs.

But Pierrolet escaped out of their hands, then, standing with his back to the wall, he drew a little dagger from his belt and swore that he would plunge it into

the throat of anyone who came near him.

Such violence highly amused the canons, and especially Sieur Guillaume. Rising from his seat, he went up to his little secretary, followed by Pierre Corneille, who held in his hand a shovelful of soot.

“It is I,” he said in unctuous tones, “who for his punishment will make of this naughty child a negro, a servant of that black King Balthazar who came to the manger. Pierre Corneille, hold out the shovel.”

And, with a gesture as deliberate as that with which he would have sprinkled holy water upon the faithful, he threw a pinch of soot into the face of the child who, rushing upon him, plunged his dagger into Sieur Guillaume’s stomach.

The canon uttered a long sigh and fell with his face to the ground. His guests crowded round him. They saw that he was dead.

Pierrolet had disappeared. A search was made for him all over the town, but he could not be found.

Later it became known that he had enlisted in Captain La Hire’s company. At the Battle of Patay, under the Maid’s eyes, he took prisoner an English captain and was dubbed a knight.

LA MUIRON

“And sometimes, during our long evenings, the Commander-in-Chief would tell us ghost stories, a species of story in the telling of which he excelled. ” — *Mémoires du Comte Lavallette*.

FOR more than three months Bonaparte had been without news from Europe, when on his return from Saint-Jean-d’Acre he sent an envoy to the Turkish admiral under the pretext of negotiating an exchange of prisoners, but in reality in the hope that Sir Sidney Smith would stop this officer on the way and enlighten him as to recent events; whether, as might be expected, these had been unfavourable to the Republic. The General calculated rightly. Sir Sidney had the envoy brought to his ship and received him there with honour. Having entered into conversation, the English commander soon learnt that the Syrian army was totally without despatches or information of any kind. He showed the Frenchman the newspapers lying open on the table and, with perfidious courtesy, invited him to take them away with him.

Bonaparte spent the night in his tent reading them. In the morning he had resolved to return to France in order to assume the government in the place of those who were on the point of being overthrown. Once he had set foot on the soil of the Republic, he would crush the weak and violent government which was rendering the country a prey to fools and rogues, and he alone would occupy the vacant place. Before he could carry out his plan, however, he must cross the Mediterranean in defiance of adverse winds and British squadrons. But Bonaparte could see nothing save his purpose and his star. By an extraordinary stroke of good luck he had received the Directory’s permission to leave the Egyptian army and to appoint his own successor.

He summoned Admiral Gantheaume, who had been at head-quarters since the destruction of the fleet, and instructed him quickly and secretly to arm two Venetian frigates, which were at Alexandria, and to direct them to a certain lonely point upon the coast. In a sealed document he appointed General Kléber Commander-in-Chief. Then, under the pretext of making a tour of inspection, taking with him a squadron of guides, he went to the Marabou inlet. On the evening of the 7th of Fructidor in the year VII, at the junction of two roads, whence the sea was visible, he came face to face with General Menou, who was returning with his escort to Alexandria. Finding it impossible and unnecessary to

keep his secret any longer, he took a brusque farewell of these soldiers, urged them to acquit themselves well in Egypt and said:

“If I have the good luck to set foot in France, the reign of the chatterboxes will be over!”

He seemed to say this spontaneously and, so to speak, in spite of himself. Yet such an announcement was well calculated to justify his flight and to suggest future power.

He jumped into the boat, which at nightfall drew alongside of the frigate, *La Muiron*. Admiral Gantheaume welcomed him beneath his flag with these words:

“I command under your star.”

And he set sail immediately. With the General were Lavallette, his aide-de-camp, Monge and Berthollet. The frigate, *La Carrère*, which served as a convoy, had on board the wounded generals, Lannes and Murat, and Messieurs Denon, Costaz and Parseval-Grandmaison.

Hardly had they started when the wind dropped. The Admiral proposed to return to Alexandria lest dawn should find them in sight of Aboukir, where the enemy’s fleet lay at anchor. The faithful Lavallette entreated the General to agree. But Bonaparte pointed seawards.

“Have no fear. We shall get through.”

After midnight a fair breeze began to blow. By dawn the flotilla was out of sight of land. As Bonaparte was walking alone on deck, Berthollet came up to him.

“General, you were well advised to tell Lavallette not to be afraid and that we should be able to continue on our course.”

Bonaparte smiled.

“I reassured one who is weak but devoted. Your character, Berthollet, is different, and to you I shall speak differently. The future must not be counted upon. The present alone matters. One must dare and calculate, and leave the rest to luck.”

And, quickening his steps, he muttered:

“Dare... calculate... avoid any cast-iron plan... conform to circumstances, follow where they lead. Take advantage of the slightest as well as of the greatest opportunities. Attempt only the possible, and all that is possible.”

At dinner that day, when the General reproached Lavallette with his timidity on the previous evening, the aide-de-camp replied that at present his fears were different but not less, and that he was not ashamed to confess them, because they concerned the fate of Bonaparte, consequently the fate of France and of the world.

“I learned from Sir Sidney’s secretary,” he said, “that the commodore

believes in keeping out of sight during a blockade. So, knowing his strategy and his character, we must expect to find him in our way. And in that case..."

Bonaparte interrupted him.

"In that case you cannot doubt that our intuition and our skill would rise superior to our danger. But you flatter that young madman when you regard him as capable of any consecutive and methodical action. Smith ought to be captain of a fire-ship." Bonaparte was not fair to the formidable commander who had been the cause of his misfortune at Saint-Jean-d'Acre; and his injustice arose doubtless from a wish to attribute his failure to a turn of fortune rather than to his adversary's skill.

The Admiral raised his hand as if to emphasize the resolve which he was about to express.

"If we meet the English cruisers, I will go on board *La Carrère*, and, you may depend upon it, I will keep them so well occupied that they will give *La Muiron* time to escape."

Lavallette opened his mouth. He was about to observe that *La Muiron* was not a fast sailer and that consequently such an opportunity would be lost upon her. But he feared to displease the General, and swallowed: his words. Bonaparte, however, read his thoughts; and, taking him by the coat button, said:

"Lavallette, you are a good fellow, but you will never be a good soldier. You never think enough of your advantages, and you are for ever concerned with irreparable disadvantages. We cannot make this frigate a fast sailer. But you must think of the crew, animated with the brightest enthusiasm and capable of working miracles, if need be. You forget that our boat is *La Muiron*. I myself gave her that name. I was at Venice. Invited to christen the frigate which had just been armed, I seized the opportunity of honouring the memory of one who was dear to me, of my aide-de-camp, who fell on the bridge of Arcola while protecting his General with his own body under a hail of shot and shell. In this ship we sail to-day. Can you doubt that its name augurs well for us?"

For a while longer he continued to hearten them with his glowing words. He then remarked that he would retire to rest. It was known on the morrow that he had decided to endeavour to avoid the British squadrons by some four or five weeks' sailing along the African coast.

Henceforth day followed day in uneventful monotony. *La Muiron* kept in sight of the low, unfrequented coast, which was not likely to be reconnoitred by the enemy's ships, and every half league she tacked without venturing out to sea. Bonaparte passed his days in conversation and in reverie. Sometimes he was heard to murmur the names of Ossian and Fingal. Sometimes he asked his aide-

decamp to read aloud Vertot's *Revolutions* or Plutarch's *Lives*. He appeared neither anxious nor impatient, nor preoccupied, more, probably, through a natural disposition to live in the present than as the result of self-control. He seemed to take a melancholy pleasure in contemplating that sea which, whether angry or serene, threatened his destiny and divided him from his object. On rising from table, when the weather was fine, he would go on deck and half recline on a gun-carriage in the same somewhat unsociable and forlorn attitude that was his when, as a child, he would lie propped up by his elbows on the rocks of his native isle. The two scientists, the Admiral, the Captain of the frigate and the aide-de-camp, Lavallette, would stand round him. And the conversation, which he carried on by fits and starts, most frequently turned on some new scientific discovery. Monge was not a brilliant talker; but his conversation revealed him as a clear, logical thinker. Inclined to consider utility even in physics, he was always a patriot and a good citizen. Berthollet was a better philosopher and more given to evolving general theories.

"It will not do," he said, "to represent chemistry as the mysterious science of metamorphoses, a new Circe, waving her magic wand over nature. Such ideas may flatter vivid imaginations; but they will not satisfy thoughtful minds, who are striving to prove that the transformations of bodies are subject to the general laws of physics."

He had a presentiment that the reactions, which the chemist provokes and observes, occur under precise mechanical conditions which some day may be the subject of exact calculation. And, constantly recurring to this idea, he would apply it to a variety of data, known or surmised. One evening Bonaparte, who had no sympathy with pure speculation, brusquely interrupted him:

"Your theories...! Mere soap-bubbles born of a breath and dissipated by a breath. Chemistry, Berthollet, is no more than a game when not applied to the requirements of war or industry. In all his researches the man of science should set before him some definite great and useful object, like Monge, who, in order to manufacture gunpowder, sought nitre in cellars and stables."

But Monge himself, as well as Berthollet, insisted on representing to the General the necessity of understanding phenomena and submitting them to general laws, before attempting practical applications, and they argued that any other procedure would lead to the dangerous obscurity of empiricism.

Bonaparte agreed. But he feared empiricism more than ideology. And suddenly he inquired of Berthollet:

"Do you, with your explanations, hope to penetrate into the infinite mystery of nature, to enter on the unknown?"

Berthollet replied that, without pretending to explain the universe, the scientist rendered humanity the greatest service by substituting a rational view of natural phenomena for the terrors of ignorance and superstition.

“Is he not man’s true benefactor,” added Berthollet, “who delivers him from the phantoms introduced into the soul by the fear of an imaginary hell, who rescues him from the yoke imposed by priests and soothsayers, who expels from his mind the terrors of dreams and omens?”

Night rested like a vast shadow on the great expanse of sea. In a moonless and cloudless sky, multitudes of stars glittered like a suspended shower. For a moment the General remained lost in meditation. Then, lifting up his head and half rising, he pointed to the dome of heaven, and with the uncultured voice of the young herdsman and the hero of antiquity he pierced the silence:

“Mine is a soul of marble which nothing can perturb, a heart inaccessible to common weaknesses. But you, Berthollet, do you understand sufficiently what life and death are? Have you explored their confines so far as to be able to affirm that they are without mystery? Are you sure that all apparitions are no more than the phantoms of a diseased brain? Can you explain all presentiments? General La Harpe had the stature and the heart of a Grenadier. His intelligence was in its element in battle. There it shone. At Fombio, for the first time, on the evening before his death, he was struck dumb, as one who is stunned, frozen by a strange and sudden fear. You deny apparitions. Monge, did you not meet Captain Aubelet in Italy?”

At this question, Monge tried to remember, then shook his head. No, he did not recollect Captain Aubelet.

Bonaparte resumed:

“I had observed him at Toulon, where he won his epaulettes, like a hero of ancient Greece. He was as young, as handsome, as courageous as a soldier from Platea. Struck by his serious air, his clear-cut features and the look of wisdom on his young countenance, his superior officers had nicknamed him Minerva, and the Grenadiers also called him by that name, though they were ignorant of its significance.

“Captain Minerva!” cried Monge. “Why did you not call him that at first? Captain Minerva was killed beneath the walls of Mantua a few weeks before I arrived in that city. His death had made a great impression, because it was associated with marvellous happenings which were related to me, though I do not remember them exactly. All I recollect is that General Miollis ordered Captain Minerva’s sword and gorget, crowned with laurels, to be carried at the head of the column which one feast day defiled in front of Virgil’s grotto, as a tribute to the memory of the poet of heroes.”

“Aubelet’s,” resumed Bonaparte, “was that perfectly calm courage which I have never observed in anyone save Bessières. His passions were of the noblest. And in everything he sacrificed himself. He had a brother in arms, Captain Demarteau, a few years his senior, whom he loved with all the affection of a great heart. Demarteau did not resemble his friend. Impulsive, passionate, equally eager for pleasure and for danger, he was always the life and soul of the camp. Aubelet was the proud devotee of duty, Demarteau the joyous lover of glory. The latter returned his comrade’s affection. In those two friends the story of Nisus and Euryalus was re-enacted beneath our flag. The end, both of one and the other, was surrounded with extraordinary circumstances. They were told to me, Monge, as to you, but I paid better heed, although at that time my mind was occupied with greater affairs. I desired to take Mantua without delay and before a new Austrian army had time to enter Italy. Nevertheless I found time to read a report of the incidents which had preceded and followed Captain Aubelet’s death. Certain of these incidents border on the miraculous. Their cause must either be assigned to unknown faculties, which man may acquire in unique moments, or to the intervention of an intelligence superior to ours.”

“General, you must exclude the second hypothesis,” said Berthollet. “An observer of nature never perceives the intervention of a superior intelligence.”

“I know that you deny the existence of Providence,” replied Bonaparte. “That may be permissible for a scientist shut up in his study, but not for a leader of peoples who can only control the ordinary mind through a community of ideas. If you would govern men, you must think with them on all great subjects. You must move with public opinion.”

And, raising his eyes to the light flaming in the darkness on the pinnacle of the mainmast, he said, with hardly a pause:

“The wind blows from the north.”

He had changed the subject with the suddenness which was his wont and which had caused some one to say to M. Denon:

“The General shuts the drawer.”

Admiral Gantheaume observed that they could not expect the wind to change before the first days of autumn.

The light was flaring towards Egypt. Bonaparte looked in that direction. His gaze plunged into space; and, speaking in staccato tones, he let fall these words:

“If only they can hold out yonder! The evacuation of Egypt would be a commercial and military disaster. Alexandria is the capital of the controllers of Europe. Thence, I shall destroy England’s commerce and I shall change the destiny of India.... For me, as for Alexander, Alexandria is the fortress, the port, the arsenal whence I start to conquer the world and whither I cause the wealth of

Africa and Asia to flow. England can only be conquered in Egypt. If she were to take possession of Egypt, she instead of us would be the mistress of the world. Turkey is on her death-bed. Egypt assures me the possession of Greece. For immortality my name shall be inscribed by that of Epaminondas. The fate of the world hangs upon my intelligence and Kléber's firmness."

For some days afterwards the General remained silent. He had read to him the *Révolutions de la République romaine*, the story of which seemed to him to drag unbearably. The aide-de-camp, Lavallette, had to gallop through the Abbé Vertot's pages. And even then Bonaparte's patience would be exhausted, and, snatching the book from his hands, he would ask for Plutarch's *Lives*, of which he never tired. He considered that, though lacking broad and clear vision, they were permeated with an overpowering sense of destiny.

So one day, after his siesta, he summoned his reader and bade him resume the *Life of Brutus*, where he had left off on the previous evening. Lavallette opened the book at the page marked, and read:

"Then, as he and Cassius were preparing to leave Asia with the whole of their army (the night was very dark, and but a feeble light burned in his tent; a profound silence reigned throughout the whole camp and he himself was wrapt in thought), it seemed to him that he saw some one enter his tent. He looked towards the door and he perceived a horrible spectre, whose countenance was strange and terrifying, who approached him and stood there in silence. He had the courage to address it. 'Who art thou,' he asked, 'a man or a god? What comest thou to do here and what desirest thou of me?'

'Brutus,' replied the phantom, 'I am thy evil genius, and thou shalt see me at Philippi.' Then Brutus, unperturbed, said: 'I will see thee there.' Straightway the phantom disappeared, and Brutus, to whom the servants, whom he summoned, said that they had seen and heard nothing, continued to busy himself with his affairs."

"It is here," cried Bonaparte, "in this watery solitude, that such a scene has its most gruesome effect. Plutarch narrates well. He knows how to give animation to his story, how to make his characters stand out. But the relation between events escapes him. One cannot escape one's fate. Brutus, who had a commonplace mind, believed in strength of will. A really superior man would not labour under that delusion. He sees how necessity limits him. He does not dash himself against it. To be great is to depend on everything. I depend on events which a mere nothing determines. Wretched creatures that we are, we are

powerless to change the nature of things. Children are self-willed. A great man is not. What is a human life? The curve described by a projectile.”

The Admiral came to tell Bonaparte that the wind had at length changed. The passage must be attempted. The danger was urgent. Vessels detached from the English fleet, anchored off Syracuse, commanded by Nelson, were guarding the sea which they were about to traverse between Tunis and Sicily. Once the flotilla had been sighted the terrible Admiral would be down upon them in a few hours.

Gantheaume doubled Cape Bon by night with all lights out. The night was clear. The watch sighted a ship's lights to the north-east. The anxiety which consumed Lavallette had attacked even Monge. Bonaparte, seated, as usual, on his gun-carriage, displayed a tranquillity which might be deemed real or simulated according to the view taken of his fatalism! whether it arose merely from a sanguine temper and the capacity for self-deception or was simply one of his numerous poses. After discussing with Monge and Berthollet various matters of physics, mathematics and military science, he went on to speak of certain superstitions from which perhaps his mind was not completely emancipated.

“You deny the miraculous,” he said to Monge. “But we live and die in the midst of the miraculous. You told me the other day that you had scornfully put out of your mind the extraordinary happenings associated with Captain Aubelet's death. Perhaps Italian credulity had embroidered them too elaborately. And that may excuse you. Listen to me. On the 9th of September, at midnight, Captain Aubelet was in bivouac before Mantua. The overpowering heat of the day had been followed by a night freshened by the mists rising from the marshy plain. Aubelet, feeling his cloak, became aware that it was wet. And, as he was shivering slightly, he went near to a fire which the Grenadiers had lit in order to heat their soup, and he warmed his feet, seated on a pack-saddle. Gradually the night and the mist enveloped him. In the distance he heard the neighing of horses and the regular cries of the sentinels. The captain had been there for some time, anxious, sad, his eyes fixed on the ashes in the brazier, when a tall form rose noiselessly at his side. He felt it near him and dared not turn his head. Nevertheless, he did turn, and recognized his friend, Captain Demarteau, in his usual attitude, his left hand on his hip and swaying slightly to and fro. At this sight Captain Aubelet felt his hair stand on end. He could not doubt the presence of his brother-in-arms, and yet he could not believe it, for he knew that Captain Demarteau was on the Maine with Jourdan, who was threatening the Archduke Charles. But his friend's aspect increased Aubelet's alarm, for though Demarteau's appearance was perfectly natural there was in it notwithstanding something unfamiliar. It was Demarteau, and yet there was something in him which could not fail to inspire fear. Aubelet opened his mouth. But his tongue

froze, he could utter no sound. It was the other who spoke: 'Farewell! I go where I must. We shall meet to-morrow!' He departed with a noiseless step.

"On the morrow, Aubelet was sent to reconnoitre at San Giorgio. Before going, he summoned his first lieutenant and gave him such instructions as would enable him to replace his captain. 'I shall be killed to-day,' he added, 'as surely as Demarteau was killed yesterday.'

"And he described to several officers what he had seen in the night. They believed him to be suffering from an attack of the fever which had begun to declare itself among the troops encamped in the Mantuan marshes.

"Aubelet's company completed its reconnaissance of the San Giorgio Fort without hindrance. Having achieved its object, it fell back on our positions. It was marching under the cover of an olive wood. The first lieutenant, approaching the captain, said to him:— 'Now, Captain Minerva, you no longer doubt that we shall bring you back alive?'

"Aubelet was about to reply, when a bullet whistled through the leaves and struck him on the forehead.

"A fortnight later a letter from General Joubert, which the Directory communicated to the Italian army, announced the death of the brave Captain Demarteau, who fell on the field of honour on the 9th of September."

As soon as he had finished his story the General left the group of silent listeners, to pace the deck with long strides and in silence.

"General," said Gantheaume, "we have passed the most dangerous part of our course."

The next day he bore towards the north, intending to sail along the Sardinian coast as far as Corsica and thence to make for the coast of Provence; but Bonaparte wished to land at a headland in Languedoc, fearing that Toulon might be occupied by the enemy.

La Muiron was making for Port-Vendres when a squall threw her back on Corsica and compelled her to put into Ajaccio. The whole population of the Island flocked thither to greet their compatriot and crowned the heights dominating the gulf. After a few hours' rest, hearing that the whole French coast was clear of the enemy, they set sail for Toulon. The wind was fair, but not strong.

Now, amidst the tranquillity which he had communicated to all, Bonaparte alone appeared agitated, impatient to land, now and again clapping his small hand suddenly to his sword. The ardent desire to reign which had been fermenting within him for three years, the spark of Lodi, had set him in a blaze. One evening, while the indented coast-line of his native island was fading away

into the distance, he suddenly began to talk with a rapidity which confused the syllables of the words he spoke:

“If a stop is not put to it, chatterers and fools will complete the downfall of France. Germany lost at Stockach, Italy lost at the Trebbia; our armies beaten, our Ministers assassinated, contractors gorged with gold, our stores empty and deserted, invasion imminent, to this a weak and dishonest government has brought us.

“Upright men are authority’s only support. The corrupt fill me with an invincible loathing. There is no governing with them.”

Monge, who was a patriot, said firmly:

“Probity is as necessary to liberty as corruption to tyranny.”

“Probity,” replied the General, “is a natural and profitable quality in men born to govern.”

The sun was dipping its reddened and magnified disc beneath the misty circle of the horizon. Eastward the sky was sown with light clouds like the petals of a falling rose. On the surface of the sea the blue and rosy waves rolled softly. A ship’s sail appeared on the horizon, and the telescope of the officer on duty showed her to be flying the British flag.

“Have we escaped countless dangers only to perish so near our desired haven!” exclaimed La Valette.

Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders.

“Is it still possible to doubt my good luck and my destiny?”

And he continued his train of thought:

“A clean sweep must be made of these rogues and fools. They must be replaced by a compact government, swift and sure in action, like the lion. There must be order. Without order, there can be no administration, without administration, no credit, no money, but the ruin of the State and of individuals. A stop must be put to brigandage, to speculation, to social dissolution. What is France without a government? Thirty millions of grains of sand. Power is everything. The rest is nothing. In the wars of Vendée forty men made themselves the masters of a department. The whole mass of the people desire peace at any price, order and an end of quarrelling. Fear of Jacobins, Emigres, Chouans will throw them into the arms of a master.”

“And this master?” inquired Berthollet. “He will doubtless be a military leader?”

“Not at all,” replied Bonaparte swiftly. “Not at all! A soldier never will be the master of this nation, a nation illuminated by philosophy and science. If any General were to attempt the assumption of power, his audacity would soon be punished. Hoche thought of doing so. I know not whether it was love of pleasure

or a true appreciation of the situation that restrained him; but the blow will assuredly recoil on any soldier who attempts it. For my part, I admire that French impatience of the military yoke, and I have no hesitation in admitting that the civil power should be pre-eminent in the State.”

On hearing such a declaration, Monge and Berthollet looked at one another in amazement. They knew that Bonaparte, in spite of the perils, known and unknown, was about to grasp at power; and they failed to comprehend words which would seem to deny him that which he so ardently coveted. Monge, who, at the bottom of his heart, was a lover of liberty, began to rejoice. But the General, who divined their thoughts, replied to them immediately: “Of course, if the nation were to discover in a soldier such civil qualities as would render him an efficient administrator and ruler, it would place him at the head of affairs; but it would have to be as a civil not as a military leader. Such must needs be the feeling of any civilized, intelligent and educated nation.”

After a moment’s silence, Bonaparte added:

“I am a member of the Institute.”

For a few moments longer the English ship was visible on the purpling belt of the horizon; then it disappeared.

On the morning of the next day, the watch sighted the coast of France. Yonder was Port-Vendres. Bonaparte fixed his gaze on the low, faint streak of land. A tumult of thoughts was surging in his mind. He had a striking and confused impression of arms and togas; in the silence of the sea an immense clamour filled his ears. And amidst visions of Grenadiers, magistrates, legislators and human crowds, he saw smiling and languishing, her handkerchief to her lips, her throat bare, Josephine, the remembrance of whom burned in his blood.

“General,” said Gantheaume, pointing to the coast, which was growing bright in the morning sunshine, “I have brought you whither destiny called you. You, like Æneas, reach a shore promised you by the gods.”

Bonaparte landed at Fréjus on the 17th of Vendémiaire in the year VIII.

THE CHATEAU DE VAUX-LE-VICOMTE

PREFACE

IN 1656, Foucquet was forty-one years of age. For five years he had been Attorney-General in the Paris Parliament, and for three Comptroller of Finance, having been appointed to the control of the Treasury at the close of the troubles which had afflicted France during the minority of Louis XIV. He had successfully weathered a difficult period, and had acquired no little confidence in his genius and his guiding star. Now, in the prime of life, feeling securely established in office, he proceeded to order his life in accordance with the magnificence of his tastes. Ambitious, pleasure-loving, adoring all that was great and beautiful, sensitive to all that exalts or caresses the soul, he called upon the Arts to surround him with the symbols of glory and of pleasure. The miracles of Vaux were the outcome of this demand, which was first satisfied, then cruelly punished.

On the 2nd of August, 1656, in the presence of Le Vau, his architect, Foucquet signed the plans and estimates for this mansion of Vaux, which was to be built within four years, in a new and noble style. It was to be adorned with magnificent paintings, with statues and tapestries; it was to command a view over gardens, grottoes and bewitching ornamental waters; to abound in gold plate and gems and valuables of every kind. It was destined to receive, with a luxury hitherto unknown, the most powerful and the most beautiful alike, to welcome the Court and the King. Thereafter, when the last lights of a miraculous festival had been extinguished, it was to be the home, for ever, of only solitude and desolation.

Nevertheless, to Nicolas Foucquet remains the honour of having discerned and selected men of superior talent, and of having been the first to employ those great masters of French Art whose works have shed an enduring splendour over the reign of Louis XIV. After he had disgraced his Minister, the King could not do better than take from him his architect Louis Le Vau, his painter Charles Le Brun and his gardener André Le Nostre, and remove to Paris the looms which Foucquet had set up at Maincy and which became the Manufacture des Gobelins. But there was something which the King could not appropriate: the taste, the feeling for art, the delicate yet profound instinct for the beautiful which endeared the Comptroller to all the artists who worked for him. Le Brun, on

whom the King showered benefits, regretted notwithstanding his generous host of Vaux.

It is said that during his trial, when in danger of a capital sentence, Foucquet, on leaving the Court, was walking, strongly guarded, past the Arsenal, when seeing some men at work he asked what they were making. Hearing that they were at work on a basin for a fountain, he went to look at the latter and gave his opinion of it. Then, turning to Artagnan, the Musketeer, who was in charge of him, he said, smiling: "You are wondering why I meddle in such a business? It is because I used to be something of an expert in these matters." And Foucquet spoke the truth. He was surely a sincere lover of the arts whom the sight of men at work upon a fountain could suddenly distract from the thought of dungeons and the imminence of the scaffold.

PART I

NICOLAS FOUCQUET

THE Foucquets were citizens of Nantes, and in the sixteenth century they traded with the West Indies. By these maritime expeditions they gained great possessions and a peculiar quality of mind, a crafty and audacious spirit which may be discerned in their descendants. Nicolas Foucquet, with whom alone we are concerned here, was born in 1615. He was the third son of François Foucquet, a King's Councillor, and of Marie Manpeou, who had twelve children, six sons and six daughters. This François Foucquet, originally councillor in the Rennes Parliament, purchased a place in the Paris Parliament, became a Councillor of State, and was for a while Ambassador in Switzerland. He was a collector: he formed a collection of medals and books which Peiresc, when he passed through Paris, visited with great interest, jotting down in his note-book particulars of the more remarkable objects.

In the Councillor's exalted hobbies some have sought to discern the origin of the taste displayed by his son Nicolas in the matter of the ancient sculpture and the pictures which he spent great sums in collecting.

As for Marie Manpeou, she came of an old and honourable legal family. Left a widow in 1640, she sought repose, after her numerous maternal duties, only in the practice of asceticism and in works of Christian charity. She lived, in retreat, a life wholly occupied in the giving of alms, the application of remedies and the recitation of prayers. She was one of those strong-minded women who, like Madame Legras and Madame de Miramion, were moved at once to a courageous pity and angelic melancholy by the spectacle of the miseries and crimes of war. The ordering of her life was in almost all respects comparable to that of a Sister of Mercy. Far from rejoicing at the promotion of her sons, it was with deep anxiety that she beheld them captive to the seductions of a world which she knew to be evil. Nicolas especially and his brother, the Abbé Basile, alarmed her by the extent of their ambition. The Comptroller's fall, which disconcerted all France, left her untroubled. On hearing that her son had been cast down from the heights of pomp and power, she is said to have thrown herself upon her knees, exclaiming:—"I thank Thee, O my God!

I have always prayed to Thee for his salvation: now the path to it is open." This saintly idea implies a perfection which is alarming because it is utterly inhuman: it is difficult to recognize maternal affection thus transfigured and freed from the weakness of the flesh which naturally accompanies it. Yet even this mother, for twenty years dead to the world, was perturbed when she knew

that her son's life was threatened. Every day throughout the Comptroller's long trial she was to be seen at the door of the Arsenal, where the Court was sitting, and she petitioned the judges, MME. FOUCQUET

Que mon fils est heureux, que j'aime sa prison!
Il est guéri du moins de ce mortel poison.
Par ses malheurs son âme à présent éclairée,
Voit comme dans la Cour elle était égarée.
Plût à Dieu que sa grâce ouvre si bien ses yeux
Qu'il ne les tourne plus que du côté des Cieux.

LA REINE MERE

Il peut, quoique Colbert lui déclare la guerre,
Ouvrir encor les yeux du côté de la terre.

MME. FOUCQUET

Si la terre, Madame, a du péril pour lui,
J'aime mieux à mes yeux le voir mort aujourd'hui.

(Le livre abominable de 1665 qui courait en manuscrit parmi le monde, sous le nom de Molière (comédie en vers sur le procès de Foucquet), découvert et publié sur une copie du temps par Louis-Auguste Ménard. Paris, Firmin Didot et Cie" 1883, 2 vols. Vol. II, p. 116.) The book is neither abominable nor a comedy of any kind. It consists of five Dansenist dialogues in the most insipid style. M. Louis-Auguste Ménard, who attributes this rhymed play to Molière, cannot expect many to share his extraordinary opinion.

The young Queen was ill at the time. Foucquet's mother sent her one of the plasters she was in the habit of making for the poor, and she was so fortunate as to save the wife of him who was seeking to ruin her son. At least, the Queen's recovery is generally attributed to Madame Foucquet's remedy.

We shall see later that the cure did not produce any change of heart in the King.

This incident, however, refers to the downfall of a fortune of which we must first explain the beginnings, and the progressive stages. This I shall do without entering into details of administration or business. I am not writing an essay on the politics or finances of the days of Mazarin. My sole endeavour will be to depict the tastes, the manners and the mind of the creator and the host of Vaux. Vaux is the centre of my design.

In 1635, Nicolas Foucquet, at the age of twenty, entered the magistracy as Master of Requests. The Masters of Requests were regarded as forming part of the Parliament, where they sat above the Councillors. From among those officers the Kings had long been accustomed to choose the commissaries whom they despatched into the provinces, to superintend the administration of justice and finance, or to the armies, when they were charged with all that concerned the policing and the maintenance of the troops.

Their journeys were known as the circuits of the Masters of Requests. They gave rise, at a date unknown, to a new office, that of Intendant, which grew in importance with the increase of the royal power. The young Foucquet, in 1636, was sent as Intendant of justice to the district of Grenoble.

The difficulties attending such a mission were great; and Richelieu could not have been ignorant of them. He had, however, diminished them somewhat by suspending the sittings of the provincial parliament which was the Intendants' natural enemy. But Fouquet found the people of Le Dauphiné agitated by the memory of the religious wars and ardently engaging in new disputes in respect of certain taxes levied on the goods of the third estate from which the nobility and the clergy were exempt. The decree of the Royal Council which abolished the citizens' grievances remained a dead letter. Feeling ran high. Fouquet did not succeed in alleviating it. After a revolt which he had been unable either to prevent or to repress he was recalled to Paris. From an inexperienced youth of twenty-one Richelieu could not have expected services which could only have been rendered by an old hand, experienced in negotiation, such, for example, as the Intendant of Guyenne, the skilful and resolute Servien. The opinion is seldom held to-day that the great Minister employed the system of Intendants as a regular instrument of his policy; which may explain how he came to confide to an apprentice a mission which is regarded as of secondary importance. The office of Intendant was not a permanent one, so that Fouquet's recall was doubtless not regarded as an absolute disgrace. Nevertheless, during the five years of life and power which yet remained to him, Richelieu, as far as we know, never again employed the young Master of Requests.

But Mazarin, having become first Minister, sent him, in 1647, to the Army of the North, which was under the command of Gassion and Rantzau. The leaders' disagreements were arresting the army's progress. Rantzau was a drunkard whom Gassion could not tolerate. Gassion, sober, energetic and fearless, displayed a brutality insufferable even in a soldier of fortune. He forgot himself so far as to strike in the face a captain of Condé's regiment who had misunderstood his orders. The whole regiment determined to withdraw and the officers struck their tents. Only with great difficulty were they persuaded to remain. Touching this incident, Fouquet wrote to Mazarin:— "All are agreed that M. le Maréchal de Gassion committed a serious abuse in striking the captain of His Royal Highness's regiment. Every one condemned such an action, considering that M. le Maréchal should have sent him to prison, or should even have struck him with his sword, or fired his pistol at him, if he thought it necessary; but that it would have been better not to have resorted to such an extreme measure."

We ought not, I think, to pass over a fact which permitted Fouquet to display, for the first time, as far as we are aware, that spirit of moderation which, until his reason became clouded, enabled him for a time to serve the State so well.

Mazarin was not slow to discern the Intendants merits. In 1648, at the time of the first disturbances, thinking to quit Paris and withdraw with the Court to Saint-Germain, he sent Foucquet to Brie “with orders there to collect large stores of grain for the maintenance of the army.” The Intendant established himself at Lagny and commandeered supplies from the peasants of Brie and Ile-de-France. He was then instructed to compile a list of those Parisians who possessed châteaux or country-houses in the suburbs of the city. Promising to preserve these properties from fire and pillage during the war, Mazarin taxed the owners. In reality he mulcted the rich of the money which he needed. When the Fronde was a thing of the past, Foucquet, as procurator of Ile-de-France, accompanied the King into Normandy, Burgundy, Poitou and Guyenne.

On his return from this royal progress, he bought, with the Cardinal’s approval, the post of Attorney-General in the Paris Parliament. From this office a certain Sieur Méliand retired in Foucquet’s favour, “receiving in return Foucquet’s office of Master of Requests, estimated by the son of the said Sieur Méliand as being worth more than fifty thousand crowns, plus a sum of one hundred thousand crowns in money.”

If Foucquet obtained preferment, it was not without the aid of a young clerk at the War Office, who at that time displayed a great deal of friendliness towards him, but was destined, eleven years later, to bring about his downfall, take his office and endeavour to procure his death. Colbert, who was then on terms of friendship with Foucquet, employed his interest with Le Tellier to recommend the ambitious Intendant. In August, 1650, he wrote to the Secretary of State for War: “M. Foucquet, who has come here by order of His Eminence, has already on three several occasions assured me that he is possessed of an ardent desire to become one of your particular servants and friends because of the peculiar estimation in which he holds your attainments, and that he has no particular connections with any other person which would prevent his receiving this honour.... I thought it would be very suitable, he being a man of birth and merit and even capable, one day, of holding high office, if you in return were to offer him some friendly advances, since it is not a question of entering into an engagement which might be burdensome to you, but merely of receiving him favourably and of making him some show of friendship when you meet? If you are of my opinion in this matter, I beg you to let me know as much in the first letter with which you honour me; nor can I refrain from assuring you, with all the respect which is your due, that I do not think I could possibly repay you a part of all that I owe you in better coin than by acquiring for you a hundred such friends, were I only sufficiently worthy to do so.”

This is a warm recommendation. We have quoted it in order that the reader may see with what confidence Foucquet inspired his friends, even in those early days, and how highly they thought of him. Moreover, it is interesting to find Colbert praising Foucquet. The latter was installed in, his new appointment on the 10th of October, 1650. He was thenceforth the first of the King's servants at the head of that bar which the two Advocates General Omer Talon and Jérôme Bignon had caused to be renowned for its eloquence. An instrument of that great body which dealt with the administration of justice, controlled political affairs, exercised an influence over finance, whose jurisdiction extended over Ile-de-France, Picardy, Orléanais, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, Poitou, Angoumois, Champagne, Bourbonnais, Berry, Lyonnais, Forez, Beaujolais and Auvergne, the Attorney-General, Nicolas Foucquet, subdued the fleurs-de-lys to the policy of the Cardinal. Between such virtuous fools as the worthy Broussel, who, through very honesty, would have surrendered his disarmed country to the foreigner, and the Minister who had humiliated the house of Austria, threatened the Emperor even in his hereditary dominions, conquered Roussillon, Artois, Alsace, and who now sought to assure France of her natural boundaries, Foucquet's genius was too lucid and his views too far-reaching to permit him to hesitate for a moment.

He remained attached to Mazarin's fortunes when the Minister's downfall seemed permanent. In 1651, that inauspicious year, he never ceased his endeavours to win supporters in the *bourgeoisie* and in the army, for the exiled Minister on whose head a price had been set. And when the Prince de Condé, in his manifesto of the 12th of April, 1652, confessed that he had formed ties, both within and without the kingdom, with the object of its preservation, it was the Attorney-General, Nicolas Foucquet, who uttered a protest which compelled the Prince to strike out of his manifesto the shameful avowal of his alliance with Spain, the enemy of France. He contributed not a little to ruin the cause of the Princes in Paris. When Turenne had defeated their army near Etampes (5th May, 1652), the Parliament wished to open negotiations for peace. The Attorney-General repaired to Saint-Germain, bearing to the King the complaints of his good city of Paris. The speech which he delivered on this occasion has been preserved. Its general tone is resolute; its language, sober and concise, contrasting with the obscure and unintelligible style affected by the judicial eloquence of the period. This address is the only example which we possess of Nicolas Foucquet's oratorical talent. It will be found in M. Chéruel's *Mémoires*. Here are a few passages from it:

".. Sire, I have been commissioned to inform Your Majesty of the destitution to which the majority of your subjects have been reduced. There is no limit to the crimes and excesses committed by the military. Murders, violations,

burnings and sacrileges are now regarded merely as ordinary actions; far from committing them in secret, the perpetrators boast of them openly. To-day, Sire, Your Majesty's troops are living in such licence and such disorder that they are by no means ashamed to abandon their posts in order to despoil those of your subjects who have no means of resistance. In broad daylight, in the sight of their officers, without fear of recognition or apprehension of punishment, soldiers break into the houses of ecclesiastics, noblemen and your highest officials....

"I will not attempt, Sire, to represent to Your Majesty the greatness of the injury done to your cause by such public depredations, and the advantage which your enemies will derive therefrom, beholding the most sacred laws publicly violated, the impunity of crime firmly established, the source of your revenues exhausted, the affections of the people alienated and your authority derided. I shall only entreat Your Majesty, in the name of your Parliament and all your subjects, to be moved to pity by the cries of your poor people, to give ear to the groans and supplications of the widows and orphans, and to endeavour to preserve whatever remains, whatever has escaped the fury of those barbarians whose sole desire is for blood and the slaughter of the innocents....

"Make manifest, Sire, O make manifest at the outset of your reign, your natural kindness of heart, and may the compassion which you will feel for so many sufferers call down the blessings of heaven upon the first years of your majority, which will doubtless be followed by many and far happier years, if the desires and prayers of your Parliament and of all your good subjects be granted."

These words had little effect. The war continued; the people's sufferings increased; in the city the disturbances became more violent; several councillors were killed, and the *hotel de ville* was invaded and pillaged by the populace and by the troops of the princes. In the face of such disorders, which the magistrates could neither tolerate nor repress, the Attorney-General, accompanied by several notables, members of the Parliament, went to the King, who listened to his counsel. To the Cardinal he demonstrated the necessity of holding the Parliament and the Court in the same place, in order to display to the kingdom the spectacle of the King and his senate on the one hand and the rebel Princes on the other; and it was by his advice that a decree was issued on the 31st of July which ordered the removal of the Parliament from Paris to Pontoise, where the Court then was. Foucquet with the utmost energy devoted himself to the execution of this politic measure.

On the 7th of August, the first President, Mathieu Molé, presided at Pontoise over a solemn session in which the members present constituted themselves into the one and only Parliament of Paris. This assembly requested the King to dismiss Mazarin, and this they did in concert with Mazarin himself, who rightly

believed his departure to be necessary. But he counted on speedily resuming his place beside the King. In the meanwhile he corresponded with Foucquet, in whom he placed the utmost confidence, "without reservation of any kind," and whom he consulted on matters of State. Still, there was one point on which they did not think alike. Mazarin eagerly desired to return to Paris with the King, and, as it seemed, for the time being, that this desire could not be gratified, His Eminence was not displeased that the state entry into the capital should be delayed. Foucquet, on the other hand, was in favour of an immediate return to the Louvre. On this subject he wrote to the Cardinal: "There is not one of the King's servants, in Paris or out of it, who is not convinced that in order to make himself master of the city the King has only to desire as much, and that if the King sends to the inhabitants asking that two of the city gates shall be held by a regiment of his guards, and then proceeds directly to the Louvre, all Paris will approve such a masterful action and the Princes will be compelled to take flight. There is no doubt that on the very first day the King's orders will be obeyed by all. The legitimate officers will be restored to the exercise of their function, the gates will be closed to enemies; such an amnesty as Your Eminence would wish will be published, and our friends will be reunited in the Louvre in the King's presence. So universal will be the rejoicing and so loud the public acclamations that no one will be found so bold as to dissent."

A few days later, on the 21st of October, amid popular acclamation, Louis XIV entered Paris. The stripling monarch brought with him peace, that beneficent peace which had been prepared by the tactful firmness of the Attorney-General.

Now, Mazarin's friends had only to hasten his recall. This the Attorney-General and his brother, the Abbé Basile, succeeded in obtaining, and the Cardinal entered Paris on the 3rd of February, 1652. The office of Superintendent of the Finances had then been vacant for a month owing to the death, on the 2nd of January, of the holder, the Duc de La Vieuville. Despite the unfavourable condition of the kingdom's finances this office was most eagerly coveted. And the very disorder and obscurity which enveloped all the Superintendent's operations excited the hopes of those men whom the Marquis d'Effiat compared with "the cuttle-fish which possesses the art of clouding the water to deceive the eyes of the fisher who espies it." Then the Superintendent had not the actual handling of the public moneys. Income and expenditure were in the hands of the Treasurers. But he ordered all State expenditure, charging it without appeal to the various resources of the Kingdom. He was answerable to the King alone. If, apparently, all his actions were subject to a strict control, in reality he worked in absolute secrecy. In the year we have now reached, 1653,

the Treasury's poverty and the Cardinal's laxity permitted every abuse. Money must be found at any cost; all expedients were good and all rules might be infringed.

Things had been going badly for a long while. Since the Regent, Marie de Médicis, had madly dissipated the savings amassed by the prudent Sully, the State has subsisted upon detestable expedients, such as the creation of offices, the issue of Government Stocks, the sale of charters of pardon, the alienation of rights and domains. The Treasury was in the hands of plunderers, no accounts were kept. In 1626, Superintendent d'Effiat found it impossible to arrive at any accurate knowledge of the resources at the State's disposal or at the amount of expenditure incurred by the military and naval services. Richelieu, when he came into power, began by condemning to death a few of the tax farmers-general. Had it not been for "these necessities which do not admit of the delay of formalities," he might perhaps have restored the finances to order. But these necessities overwhelmed him and compelled him to resort to fresh expedients. He was driven to court the tax-farmers, whom he would rather have hanged, and to borrow from them at a high rate of interest the King's money which they were detaining in their coffers. Exports, imposts and the salt tax were all controlled by the tax-farmers. An Italian adventurer, Signor Particelli d'Hémery, whom Mazarin appointed Superintendent in 1646, created one hundred and sixty-seven offices and alienated the revenue of 87,600,000 livres of capital. In 1648 the State suffered a shameful bankruptcy and the troubles of the Fronde supervened, aggravating yet further a situation which would have been desperate in any country other than inventive and fertile France.

The office of Superintendent, which the worthy La Vieuville had held since 1649, was disputed after his death by the Marshals de l'Hôpital and de Villeroy, by the President de Maisons, who had held it already during the civil war, by Abel Servien, who during his already long life had proved himself a harsh and precise administrator, a skilful man of business and a thoroughly honest man, and, finally, by Nicolas Foucquet, who in public opinion was unlikely to be appointed.

Foucquet, on the very day of La Vieuville's death, had written the Cardinal a letter, partly in cipher, of which the following is the text: —

"I was impatiently awaiting the return of Your Eminence in order to inform you in detail of all that I have learned of the cause of past disorders and their remedies; but as the bad administration of public finance is one of the chief causes of the discreditable condition of public affairs, the death of the Superintendent and the necessity of appointing his successor compel me to explain to Your Eminence in this letter what I had determined to communicate to

you by word of mouth on your arrival, and to impress upon you the importance of choosing some one of acknowledged probity who will be trusted by the public and who will keep inviolate faith with Your Eminence. I will venture to say that in the inquiries which I have made into the means of ending the present evils and avoiding still greater ones in future, I have found that everything depended upon the will of the Superintendent. Perhaps I should be able to make myself useful to His Majesty and Your Eminence were you to think fit to employ me in this office. I have studied the means of filling it successfully. I know that there would be nothing inconsistent in my employment, and several of my friends to whom I owe this idea have promised me in this connection to make efforts to be of service to the King of a nature too considerable to be ignored. It therefore remains for Your Eminence to judge of the capacity with which eighteen years' service in the the Council as Master of Requests and in various other offices may have endowed me; and as for my affection for you and my fidelity in your service I flatter myself that Your Eminence is persuaded that I am inferior to no one in the Kingdom. My brother will be my surety; and I am certain that he would never pledge his word to Your Eminence whatever interest he may feel in that which concerns me, were he not fully satisfied with my intentions and my conduct hitherto and had we most thoroughly discussed Your Eminence's interests in this connection. Once again let me protest that you may rely upon us absolutely, and that you will never be disappointed, since no one in the world has more at heart the advantage and the glory of Your Eminence. I entreat you to let no one hear of this affair until it is settled." Recalled by his adherents, Mazarin returned to Paris, very discreetly, the 3rd of February. One of his first acts was to appoint a Superintendent.

He divided the office between Nicolas Foucquet, his own supporter, and Abel Servien, who was singled out for this employment by his own character and by public opinion. To act in conjunction with the two Superintendents he appointed three Directors of Finance, one Comptroller-General and eight Intendants. Such an arrangement served to please two people; but it had the disadvantage of costing the Treasury a million livres a year. As a matter of fact, it was, as we shall see, to cost much more. According to the terms of his commission, Foucquet was in no way subordinate to his colleague, but age, experience, vigilant industry and a tried and distinguished probity gave Servien the chief authority. Foucquet was young; he might wait. He held the office which he had so greatly desired. Alas, in desiring it he had desired what was to be his ruin! Henceforth his pious mother might apply to him the words of Scripture: *Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum.*

If he speedily entered upon the path of the merely expedient, can we be surprised? Both necessity and the Cardinal's wishes drove him to it. In 1654, he found money necessary to oppose an army led by the rebel, Condé. How? By creating new offices and selling them to the highest bidder. A detestable method; but it is questionable whether, considering the state of the Treasury, it would have been possible to devise any better. At all events, at this cost the Spaniards were defeated. Unhappily there is no doubt whatever that Foucquet had to provide not only for the expenses of the war, but for the exigencies of Mazarin, who, through the medium of Colbert, obtained from the Treasury the millions with which he enriched his family. Mazarin himself became a farmer of the revenue and derived enormous profits from the bread of the wretched soldiers. "By appearing under the name of Albert, or another," he concealed his part in these transactions. The letter is extant in which he himself suggests this broker's trick. He also made use of what were called *ordonnances de Comptant*. The term was applied to decrees authorizing the payment of money, the employment of which was not specified. To-day we should describe it as dipping into the secret funds; and the Cardinal did dip into them with both hands. Sometimes Foucquet endeavoured to resist these criminal demands, but in the end he always gave way. Mazarin must have known that he was not intractable since he always appealed to him rather than to Servien, even in matters like orders for the payment of officials which were the special function of the senior Superintendent. Foucquet deducted certain payments; from the proceeds of tax-farming; from the farmers of the salt-tax he received one hundred and twenty thousand livres a year; from the farmers of the Bordeaux convey fifty thousand livres; from the farmers of the customs one hundred and forty thousand livres. The clerks who handled this last contribution added for themselves a sum of twenty thousand livres. It is probable that the bargain was not concluded without the distribution of a few "bonuses" in the offices. And when we recollect that these customs were duties imposed on wine and on food and drink in general, on the very life, therefore, of the poor, one cannot forbear from cursing Mazarin's murderous and impious cupidity, for it was for the Cardinal that Foucquet deducted these payments. He remitted these sums without receiving any formal receipt, and there is reason to believe that he himself kept some part of them.

Following Mazarin's example, Foucquet himself became a tax-farmer under a false name; moreover, he lent the State's money to the State itself, and was repaid with heavy interest. Again, following Mazarin's example, he made the public Treasury pay the cost of the promotion and the alliances of his family. On the 12th of February, 1657, his only daughter by his marriage with Marie Fourché, lady of the manor of Quehillac, married the eldest son of the Comte de

Charost, Governor of Calais and Captain of the King's Guard. She brought her husband five hundred thousand livres. When this alliance was contracted, the first Madame Foucquet was dead and the Superintendent had married as his second wife Marie-Madeleine de Castille-Villemareuil, the only daughter of François de Castille, President of one of the Chambers of the Paris Parliament. The Castilles were merchants, reputed to be very wealthy, who had certainly made rich marriages. Marie-Madeleine provided no matter for gossip so long as the union was happy. She doubtless played but an insignificant part in entertainments which offended her modesty and the brilliance of which was intended rather to please her rivals than herself. Her husband, it would seem, at all events, always esteemed her as she deserved and, where she was concerned, never wholly departed from that urbanity which was natural to him. He was one of those men who understand how to please a woman while they are deceiving her. In the Superintendent's house a work of art or a statue celebrated the apparent union of husband and wife. In France it was then becoming the fashion to represent as allegorical figures the lives of great men whom earlier painters had portrayed in the costume and with the attributes of their patron Saints. Conforming to the new custom, the Superintendent ordered from his favourite sculptor, the skilful Michel Anguier, a group of Madame Foucquet and her four children. She appeared as Charity. The group was said to be one of the master's finest works. Guillet de Saint-Georges, in his *Vie de Michel Anguier*, expressly says that Foucquet ordered from this artist "a Charity, bearing in her arms a sleeping child, with another at her feet and two close at hand, to represent Madame Foucquet and her children and to testify the affection and unity which reigned in this family."

An act of homage at once commonplace and ostentatious, yet just and prophetic, rendered to a wife whose lovely nobility of heart was to be revealed only by misfortune. Somewhat withdrawn in the season of prosperity, it was only when those whom she loved were unhappy that Madame Foucquet revealed herself. During the slow investigation of the accusers, Madame Foucquet saw that her husband's furniture, which had been placed under a seal, was carefully guarded; and this vigilance was inspired by the noblest of motives. "Any loss or injury," she said, "would tend to involve the creditors in absolute ruin, and among them are an incredible number of poor families of all sorts of artisans."

She was seen, during her husband's trial, with her mother-in-law at the Arsenal gates, presenting petitions to the judges. When he was condemned she asked permission to rejoin in prison the husband who had betrayed and forsaken her in his hours of happiness. No sooner was this sad favour granted than she hastened to avail herself of it. Having consoled him in captivity, she closed his

eyes in death. Left a widow, she followed the example set by many lonely ladies of rank in those days: she withdrew to a convent. For her retreat she chose the royal Abbey of Val-de-Grâce of Notre-Dame de la Crèche, which was on the left bank of the Seine, in the Rue Saint-Jacques. This Benedictine convent, as we know, owed its origin to a vow of Queen Anne, who built it when she at length had a King. Thus the walls within which this lady retired to shelter her widowhood were a hymn of thanksgiving in stone, a monument of gratitude to God for His gift to France of the persecutor of Nicolas Foucquet. Did she not realize this? Or did her piety forbid her to nourish any bitterness toward the enemies of her house? There were, no doubt, old ties between her and the nuns of Val-de-Grâce. It must not be supposed that she lived in a cell the life of a recluse. To do so would be to show little knowledge of convents as they were in those days. The nuns were the innkeepers of the period. Sumptuously lodged in buildings dependent on the community, the ladies lived a quiet but still worldly life, keeping their own servants, paying and receiving visits. Such was Madame Foucquet's position at Val-de-Grâce. She devoted herself, it is true, to the practices of religion; and we know, for example, that, having obtained the body of St. Liberatus, a martyr of the African Church, she had it borne in a procession, on the 27th of August, 1690, to the parish church of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas. She occupied a pavilion in the convent garden, where, in default of gold and silver plate, she kept a few pieces of furniture worthy of her rank. In the month of March, 1700, a royal edict ordered private persons to declare and to take to the Mint all furniture in which there was any gold or silver; and Madame Foucquet, widow, declared to the commissioner of her district that she possessed "a camp bed adorned with cloth of gold and silver, with chairs to match, hangings of gold damask, single width, twenty chairs and a bedstead in wood inlaid with gold, a sofa in the same with six places, a tapestry bed and chairs trimmed with gold fringe, six small consoles, twelve little gilt stands, two small round tables, two other tables and a bureau partly gilt, and a small bed upholstered with gold and silver lace."

Madame Foucquet survived her husband thirty-six years. She died in Paris in 1716 "in great piety," says Saint-Simon, "having withdrawn from the world, and having, during the whole of her life, constantly engaged in good works."

Foucquet had an exalted soul. He was born to tempt fortune and to take Fate by storm. As early as 1655 he was cherishing the boldest designs.

Realizing that in proportion as he obliged the Cardinal the latter grew suspicious of him, since each service that he rendered was a secret of which he became the inconvenient guardian, the Superintendent resolved to assure himself by his power against the chance of disgrace. With this object he began to think

of converting the port of Concarneau and the fortress of Ham, which belonged to his brother, into strongholds, where his adherents might assemble in arms in case the Cardinal were to attempt to lay hands on him. He therefore drew up a detailed programme of the project, recommending his supporters to go for orders to the house of Madame de Plessis-Bellière. "She knows my true friends," he said, "and among them there may be those who would be ashamed not to take part in anything proposed by her on my behalf."

This lady, who was so much in Foucquet's confidence, was the widow of a lieutenant-general in the King's army. She had never refused Foucquet anything: but gallantry was by no means her first concern. It was even said that she saved herself the trouble of contributing in person to the Superintendent's pleasures and that she preferred providing for them to satisfying them herself. She was a strong-minded woman, and a great politician, even in that age of intrigue, ambitious and proud enough to do herself credit, as we shall see later, by her display of loyalty and devotion. In Foucquet's project, should occasion arise, she, in conjunction with the Governors of Ham and Concarneau, was to provide those two fortresses with men and with victuals. The Marquis de Charost, Foucquet's son-in-law, was to defend himself in Calais, of which town he was the governor. The Governors of Amiens, Havre and Arras were to assume an equally threatening attitude. As allies at Court the rebel Minister counted on M. de la Rochefoucauld, Marsillac, his son, and Bournonville; in Parliament on MM. de Harlay, Manpeou, Miron and Chenut; at sea, on Admiral de Neuchèse et Guinan. We may note, in passing, that in the matter of his friends he was mistaken in fully half of them. He gave it to be understood that Spain might be appealed to. If his arrest were sustained and his trial instituted, there would be civil war. A monstrous project, a chimerical conception which it was childish to write downy and which served only to make doubly sure the ruin of its mad inventor.

It was during this period of folly and of splendour that Foucquet, with a magnificence hitherto unequalled, created the estate and château of Vaux-le-Vicomte, near Melun.

We shall treat separately, in a special chapter, of all that concerns this subject.

At the same time he continued to provide for his safety. In order to assure it with greater certainty he bought, on the 5th September, 1658, the island and fortress of Belle-Isle for a sum of 1,300,000 livres, of which 400,000 were paid in cash.

Once the possessor of this fortress, Foucquet applied himself to placing it in a state of defence. He despatched engineers thither to fortify the citadel; from

Holland he brought ships and cannon. Modifying his plan of defence, he substituted Belle-Isle for Ham and Concarneau.

Belle-Isle was to him what her milk-pail was to Perrette. He dreamed of deriving more wealth from it than the whole of Holland from her ports. Madame de Motteville got wind of these chimerical hopes. "The friends of Foucquet," wrote this lady, "have said — and apparently they have told the truth — that the Superintendent, who was indeed capable, by virtue of his courage and his genius, of many great projects, had conceived that of building a town the excellent harbour of which was to attract all the trade of the North, thereby depriving Amsterdam of these advantages, and rendering a great service to the King and the State." Foucquet was at this time at the height of his power. In spite of his motto, he will not rise any higher, unless his constancy in misfortune may be taken to have raised him above himself, in which case he may be said to have grown greater in prison by the knowledge of the vanity of all that had previously attracted him.

But it is the man in his prosperous days, the friend of art and of literature, Foucquet the magnificent, and Foucquet the voluptuous, whom we are describing here. No better description can be given of him than to reproduce the portrait which Nanteuil executed from life.

(It is the portrait which is reproduced at the beginning of the French edition, because it seems to us at once both the truest and the happiest picture of the extraordinary man who, both in letters and in art, inaugurated the century of Louis XIV. The head, three-quarter profile, is turned to the left. It is a medallion inscribed with the words: "Messire Nicolas Foucquet, chevalier, vicomte de Melun et de Vaux, Conseiller du Roy, Ministre d'État, Surintendant des Finances et Procureur général de Sa Majesté." Signed "R. Nanteuil ad vivum ping, et sculpebat, 1661." The style is at once soft and firm, the workmanship pure and finished, the rendering of the colours excellent. This engraving was executed after a drawing or a pastel which Nanteuil had done from life, and which is lost. This work, and the engraving which perpetuates it, seem to me to form the origin of a whole family of portraits, of which we will mention several.

(1) — A shaded bust, on a piedouche, bearing Foucquet's arms. The arrangement is bad, the inscription; Ne faut-il que l'on avoue Qu'on trouve en luytous ce qu'on espéroit.

C'est un surintendant tel que l'on désiroit.

Personne ne s'en plaint, tout le monde s'en loue.

Signed: "Van Schupper faciebat. P. de la Serre."

(2) — The head in an oval border. Raised hangings which What do we see there? Large features, eager, charming eyes, in roomy orbits, the shining pupils of which gleam beneath their lids with an expression at once of shrewdness and of pleasure. A long, straight nose, rather thick, a full-lipped mouth beneath a fine moustache; finally, that smiling reveal a country scene, with dogs coursing. The inscription: “Messire Nicolas Foucquet, chevalier, vicomte de Melun et de Vaux, Ministre d’État, Surintendant des finances de Sa Majesté et son procureur général au Parlement de Paris.”

(1) — A much damaged copy. The face is pale and elongated, the expression melancholy and sanctimonious. It is an oval medallion, 1654, without signature, Paris, chez Daret.

(2) — The same, chez Louis Boissevin, in the Rue Saint-Jacques.

(3) — The same, with this quatrain:

Si sa fidélité parut incomparable En conservant l’Estat, Sa prudence
aujourd’huy n’est pas moins admirable D’en augmenter l’éclat.

(4) — Medallion. The picture is much disfigured; the inscription:

Qu’il a de probité, de sçavoir et de zelle, Qu’il paroît généreux, magnanime et prudent, Que son esprit est fort, que son cœur est fidelle, Toutes ces qualités l’on fait Surintendant.

(5) — Medallion, with drapery. Very bad. Signature: “Baltazar Moncornet, excud.”

(6) — The same, with a frame of foliage, 1658.

(7) — A small copy, reversed, executed after Foucquet’s expression which he retained even during his trial. The face is pleasing, but there is something disquieting about it. The costume is rich; not that of a gallant knight, or of a great noble, but of a magistrate. A little cap, a broad collar, a dark robe; the dress of a lawyer, but of a magnificent lawyer; for over the robe is thrown a sort of dalmatic of Genoa velvet, with a large flowered pattern. What this portrait does not reproduce is the charm of the original. Foucquet possessed a sovereign grace; he death, the date of which is indicated, 23rd March, 1680. It is old, hard, dark and damaged. Signature: “Nanteuil, pinxit, Gaillard, sculpt.”

A portrait of Lebrun deserves honourable mention after that of Nanteuil. The features are practically the same as in the engraving by Eugene Reims; but the expression is not so keen, nor so cheerful. The head, three-quarter profile, is turned to the right This picture is the original of the three following engravings:

(1) — A large oval. Signature: “C. Lebrun pinx, F. Poilly sculpt.” Inscription:

Illustrissimus vir Nicolaus Foucquet Generalis in Supremo regii Ærarii Præfectus: V. Comes Melodunensis, etc.

In a later copy, Foucquet’s arms replace the Latin inscription.

(2) — A spoiled and softened copy, very careless workmanship. Signature: “C. Mellan del et F.”

(3) — An imitation. Foucquet, seated in a straight-backed armchair, with large wrought nail-heads, with a casket on knee knew how to please, to inspire affection. It is true that he possessed a key to all hearts — access to an inexhaustible treasury. He gave much, but it is true also that he gave wisely, and he was naturally the most generous of men.

Poets he succoured with a noble delicacy. Since it is true that he usurped the rights which were then attributed to the Sovereign, his master, by disposing of the public revenue as though it were his own, at least he made a royal use of the King’s treasure by the table beside him. He holds a pen in his right hand, and paper in his left. Inscription: *Magna videt, majora latent; ecce aspids artis*

*Clarum opus, et virtus clarior arte latet,
Umbra est et fulget, solem miraris in umbra
Quid sol ipse micat, cujus et umbra micat.*

Signature: “Ægid. Rousselet, sculpt., 1659.”

(4) — An imitation. Signature: “Larmessin, 1661.” Finally, we must mention a full-length portrait, which seems inspired by the foregoing. The Superintendent is standing, wearing a long robe; he holds in his right hand a small bag, in his left a paper. A raised curtain displays, on the right, a country scene, with a torrent, a rock and a fortified chateau. In the sky, Renown puts a trumpet to her mouth. In her left hand she holds another trumpet with a bannerette on which is written: “*Quo non ascendet?*” Inscription: *A quel degré d’honneur ne peut-il pas monter*

S’il s’élève tousjours par son propre courage?

Son nom et sa vertu lui donnent l’avantage

De pouvoir tout prétendre et de tout mériter.) dispensing some of it to Corneille, to La Fontaine and to Molière. The rest was spent on buildings, furniture, tapestries and so forth; and this, again, when all is said, was a royal habit, if regarded, as it should be, in the light of ancient institutions. If Foucquet cannot be justified — and how can he be, since there were poor in France in those days? — at least his conduct is explained, in some degree excused, by the institutions, and, above all, by the public morality of his period.

While his Château de Vaux was building, Foucquet lived at Saint-Mandé, in a house sumptuously surrounded by beautiful gardens. These gardens adjoined the park where Mazarin used to spend the summer. The financier had only to pass through a door when he wished to visit the Minister. The estate of Saint-Mandé

was formed by the union of two estates bought from Mme de Beauvais, Anne of Austria's first lady-in-waiting. Gradually, Fouquet acquired more land and added wings to the main building, so that the whole construction cost at least 1,100,000 livres; and yet the finest part of it remained unexecuted."

We may form some idea of the beautiful things which Fouquet had collected in this house by consulting the inventory preserved in the Archives, and published by M. Bonnaffé, "of the statues, busts, scabella, columns, tables and other works in marble and stone at Saint-Mandé."

Among these things there are many antiques. Most of the modern pieces of sculpture are by Michel Anguier, who passed three years, 1655 — 58, at Saint-Mandé. There he executed the group of *La Charité* which has already been mentioned, and a *Hercules* six feet in height, as well as "thirteen statues, life-size, copied from the most beautiful antiques of Rome, notably the *Laocoön*, *Hercules*, *Flora*, and *Juno* and *Jupiter*." This we are told by Germain Brice. He had seen them in a garden in the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, where they were in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Germain Brice also tells us that in those days eight other statues, by the same sculptor, and also coming from Saint-Mandé, adorned the house of the Marquise de Louvois at Choisy. We learn also, from other sources, that one of the ceilings of Saint-Mandé was painted by Lebrun. Finally, the Abbé de Marolles speaks of the beautiful things which Fouquet had painted at Saint-Mandé, and the Latin inscriptions which were entrusted to Nicolas Gervaise, his physician. We may remark in this connection that Louis XIV, who in art did little more than continue Fouquet's undertakings, derived from the functions which the Superintendent conferred upon this Nicolas Gervaise the ideas of that little Academy, the Academy of Inscriptions and Medals, which he founded five or six years later.

But the most famous room in the house of which we are now speaking was the library, because the noblest room in any house is that in which books are lodged, and because La Fontaine and Corneille used to linger in the library of Saint-Mandé. It was there that the poets used to wait for the Superintendent. "Every one knows," said Corneille, "that this great Minister was no less the Superintendent of belles-lettres than of finance; that his house was as open to men of intellect as to men of affairs, and that, whether in Paris or in the country, it is always in his library that one waits for those precious moments which he steals from his overwhelming occupations, in order to gratify those who possess some degree of talent for successful writing."

It was in this gallery that La Fontaine, as well as Corneille, used to sit waiting until the master of the house had leisure to receive the poet and his verses. One

day he waited a whole hour. Monsieur le Surintendant was occupied; whether with finance or with love posterity cannot hope to know. Nevertheless, the good man found the time short: he passed it in his own company. Unfortunately, the *suisse* unceremoniously dismissed “the lover of the Muses,” who, having returned home, wrote an ep:le which should assure his being received the next time. “I will not be importunate,” he said:

Je prendrai votre heure et la mienne.
Si je vois qu’on vous entretienne,
J’attendrai fort paisiblement

En ce superbe appartement
Ou l'on a fait d'étrange terre
Depuis peu venir à grand-erre
(Non sans travail et quelques frais)
Des rois Céphrim et Kiopès
Le cercueil, la tombe ou la bière:
Pour les rois, ils sont en poussière:
C'est là que j'en voulais venir.

Il me fallut entretenir
Avec les monuments antiques,
Pendant qu'aux affaires publiques
Vous donniez tout votre loisir.
(Certes j'y pris un grand plaisir
Vous semble-t-il pas que l'image
D'un assez galant personnage
Sert à ces tombeaux d'ornement).
Pour vous en parler franchement,
Je ne puis m'empêcher d'en rire.
Messire Orus, me mis-je à dire,
Vous nous rendez tous ébahis:

Les enfants de votre pays
Ont, ce me semble, des bavettes
Que je trouve plaisamment faites.
On m'eut expliqué tout cela,
Mais il fallut partir de là
Sans entendre l'allégorie.
Je quittai donc la galerie,
Fort content parmi mon chagrin,
De Kiopès et de Céphrim,
D'Orus et de tout son lignage,
Et de maint autre personnage.
Puissent ceux d'Egypte en ces lieux,
Fussent-ils rois, fussent-ils dieux,
Sans violence et sans contrainte,

Se reposer dessus leur plinthe
Jusques au brut du genre humain!
Ils ont fait assez de chemin
Pour des personnes de leur taille.
Et vous, seigneur, pour qui travaille
Le temps qui peut tout consumer,
Vous, que s'efforce de charmer
L'Antiquité qu'on idolâtre,
Pour qui le dieu de Cléopâtre
Sous nos murs enfin abordé,
Vient de Memphis à Saint-Mandé:
Puissiez vous voir ces belles-choses
Pendant mille moissons de roses....

At once absurd and charming is this song which the Gallic lark composed to the sarcophagi of Africa. It is hardly necessary to say that the coffins, at the strange shape of which La Fontaine wondered, had never enclosed the bodies of "Kiopès and of Céphrim." Messire Orus had not told his secrets to the most lovable of our poets. We must not forget that the scholars of that time were as ignorant on this point as our friend.

These two mummy-cases were the first which had been brought to Paris from the banks of the Nile. They bore their history written upon them, but no one knew how to read it. The chance guess of some admirer had attributed to them a royal origin, The truth is that they had been discovered twenty-five years earlier in a pyramid by the inhabitants of the province of Saïd; transported to Cairo, then to Alexandria, they were bought by a French trader, who landed them at Marseilles on the 4th September, 1632, where they were acquired, it is believed, by a collector of that town, M. Chemblon.

There was then at Rome a German Jesuit, by name Athanasius Kircher, a man of vivid imagination, very learned, who, having dabbled in physics, chemistry, natural history, theology, antiquities, music, ancient and modern languages, invented the magic lantern. This reverend Father really knew Coptic, and thought he knew something of the language of the ancient Egyptians. To prove this he wrote a large quarto volume entitled *Lingua Ægyptiaca restituta*, which proves quite the contrary. But it is very easy to deceive oneself, especially when one is a scholar. A brother of his in Jesus, Father Brusset, told him of the arrival of the two ancient coffins, and Father Kircher went to Marseilles to see them. Later he treated of them in his *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*, a pleasant day-dream in four

folio volumes; La Fontaine's, in the Saint-Mandé library, was at all events shorter.

About the year 1659 the sarcophagi were bought for Foucquet, and taken to the Superintendent's house. When La Fontaine saw them they no longer contained the bodies which Egyptian piety had destined them to preserve. The two mummies had been unceremoniously relegated to an outhouse.

As for the sarcophagi themselves, Foucquet had intended to send them to his house at Vaux. He had conceived the charming idea of restoring them from the land of exile to the pyramid from which they had been taken. But his days of prosperity were numbered. This project was to be swept away like a drop of water in the great shipwreck. The two sarcophagi, seized at Saint-Mandé, where they had remained, were valued on the 26th of February, 1656, at 800 livres, and were classified as "two ancient mausoleums, representing a king and queen."

A sculptor, whose name remains unknown, bought them at the public sale which followed Foucquet's condemnation. He then gave them to Le Nôtre. Le Nôtre, having passed from the service of Foucquet into that of the King, was then living in a little pavilion at the Tuileries, into which the two mausoleums, as the inventory calls them, could not enter. They were therefore highly inconvenient guests. They were placed "in a little garden of the Tuileries, where these rare curiosities remained for a long time exposed to the injurious effect of the atmosphere and greatly neglected."

Finding that he had no use for them, Le Nôtre presented them to a neighbour and friend, M. d'Ussé, Comptroller of the King's Household, whose garden adjoined that of the Tuileries. M. d'Ussé had them placed "at the end of a bowered alley." According to the virtuoso, Germain Brice, the Comptroller, did not realize their value and their rarity. A Flora or a Pomona, smiling on her marble pedestal, would have been more to his liking. Nevertheless he had them taken to his estate of Ussé, in Touraine, which shows that he did not disdain them. Thus the repose which La Fontaine desired for these worshippers of Messire Orus was denied them. Even yet they had not made their last journey. M. d'Ussé had married a child of twelve, who was the daughter of a great man. Her name was Jeanne-Françoise de Vauban. Her father, then Commissary-General of Fortifications, paid a visit of some length to his son-in-law. He could not resist the temptation of shifting the soil, and he made a terrace; at the foot of this terrace he constructed a niche for the two "mausoleums." Now, half a century later there lived at a distance of five miles from Ussé an antiquarian called La Sauvagère, who went up and down the country examining ancient stones, for stones had voices before to-day. He did not fail to go to Ussé. He saw the sarcophagi, and marvelled at them. He wrote about them to Court de Géblin,

who replied to his letter. Court de Géblin was investigating the origin of the world. This time he thought he had found it.

La Sauvagère published plates of the sarcophagi and of the hieroglyphics which covered them. Here was a fine subject for conjecture. After thirty years, La Sauvagère's enthusiasm had not cooled. To the Prince de Montbazon, who had just bought the château, and the Egyptians with it, he ordained fervently:—"Prince, there you have something which is by itself worth the whole of your estate."

In 1807 the Egyptians were still in the niche where Vauban had installed them. The Marquis de Chalabre then sold the estate of Ussé, which he had inherited from his father, but he kept the sarcophagi and took them to Paris to his apartment.

Then they disappeared, and, in 1843, no one knew what had become of them. M. Bonardot, the archaeologist, who displayed so much care in the preservation of old engravings, visited that year the cemetery of the old Abbey of Longchamps. By the edge of a path he discovered two stones sticking out of the ground. Having poked about with his stick, he saw that these stones were in the form of heads, and by the hair-dressing he recognized two Egyptians. He made inquiries, and learned that they were the two sarcophagi, sent there by M. de Chalabre's son, and forgotten. M. de Chalabre was then dying; his heirs had the Egyptians disinterred and gave them to the Louvre Museum, and there they are to-day. Their names have been deciphered. They are not royal names. One is called Hor-Kheb, the other Ank-Mer.

They wear their beards in beard-cases, according to the custom of their time and country, and it was these beard-cases that La Fontaine took for bibs.

The gallery of Saint-Mandé, which contained these two monuments that we have followed so far afield, was magnificently decorated with thirteen ancient gods in marble, life-size, and thirty-three busts in bronze or marble, placed on pedestals. Among these busts were those of Socrates and Seneca. Imagine these faces, brown or luminous, ranged about the chamber, where the books displayed the sombre resplendence of their brown and gilt backs. Imagine the pictures, the cabinets of medals, the tables of porphyry, the mosaics; imagine a thousand precious curiosities, and you will have some idea of this gallery, the rich treasures of which were to be dispersed almost as soon as they had been collected.

The Superintendent had little time for reading, but he loved to turn over the pages of his books, for he was a well-read man. He promised himself the pleasures of learned, leisurely study in his old age, when he would no longer read a welcome in ladies' eyes. Meanwhile, he had had twenty-seven thousand

volumes arranged on the shelves of his gallery, around those two sarcophagi the story of which had carried us so far afield from Saint-Mandé and the last days of Mazarin. These twenty-seven thousand volumes comprised seven thousand in folio, twelve thousand in quarto and eight thousand in octavo. They were not all in the gallery. There was, in particular, a room for the “Alcorans, the Talmuds and some old Bible commentaries.”

The rich collection of printed books which he had gathered together embraced universal history, medicine, law, natural history, mathematics, oratory, theology and philosophy, as well as the fine arts, represented by illustrated volumes.

These books, of which it would not be possible to compile a catalogue to-day, were not, it would seem, contained in beautiful morocco bindings, finely gilt and richly adorned with coats of arms, like those which honoured Mazarin’s library. The financier had bought hastily, in a wholesale fashion, books already bound, so that we cannot rank him among the great bibliophiles, although he may be numbered among the lovers of books.

That Foucquet loved books, as he loved gardens, as he loved everything flattering to the taste of a well-bred man, that he even preferred books to anything else, there is no doubt, for we have irrefutable testimony of the fact. In the *Conseils de la Sagesse*, which he wrote in prison, may be found this beautiful phrase: “You know that formerly I used to find convention in my books.”

Alas, why did he not oftener listen to those consolers which speak so gently and so softly, and which can bestow every blessing upon the heart that is innocent of desire? *In angello cum libello*. Therein, perhaps, resides all wisdom. But, if every one sat in his corner and read, what would books be about? They are filled with the sorrows and the errors of men, and it is by saddening us that they give us consolation. Yes, there was in Foucquet the stuff of a librarian in the great style of a Peiresc or a Naudé. But this stuff was but a fragment of the whole piece. Caesar, also, would have been the first book-lover of his day if he had not been eager to conquer and to reign, if he had not possessed a genius for organizing Rome and the world. One needs a childlike candour and a pious zeal if one would shut oneself up with the dust of old books, with the souls of the dead. The humble book-lover who holds this pen, for his own part, savours with delight that reposeful charm, but he knows well that the purity of this charm can only be bought at the price of renunciation and resignation.

A word as to what became of Foucquet’s library. But let the reader not be alarmed; the fate of the twenty-seven thousand volumes which composed it will not occupy us so long as that of the two Egyptian sarcophagi. This library was sold by auction, like the rest of the Superintendent’s movables. Guy Patin wrote from Paris on the 25th February, 1665: “M. Foucquet’s effects are about to be

sold. There is a fine library. It is said that M. Colbert wants it." Perhaps Colbert did want it, but for the King. Colbert was not a second Foucquet.

Carcasi, the keeper of the Royal Library, bought for the King about thirteen thousand volumes. The accounts of the King's buildings mention, under the date of January, 1667, the payment of six thousand livres "to the Sieur Mandat, liquidator of the assets of M. Foucquet, for the price of the books which the King has had bought from the Library of Saint-Mandé." And another payment of fourteen thousand livres "to the Sieur Arnoul for books on the History of Italy, which His Majesty has also bought."

As for the manuscripts, they were bought by various libraries and scattered. The catalogue which the purchasers compiled of these manuscripts forms a small duodecimo volume of sixty-two pages, entitled: *Mémoires des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de M. Foucquet, qui se vendent à Paris, chez Denis Thierry, Frédéric Léonard, Jean Dupuis, rue Saint-Jacques, et Claude Barbin, au Poids. M. D. C. LXVII.*

So much for the house; now for the guests. We have already met La Fontaine and Corneille in the gallery. We shall see them there again; they are assiduous visitors. Old Corneille brings his grievances thither. Poor, half forgotten, he was then labouring under the blow of the failure of his *Pertharite*. His great genius was wearing out, was becoming harsh and uncouth, and poor Pertharite, King of the Lombards, who was too fond of his wife Rodelinde, had met with a bad reception in the theatre. Corneille, who was slow to take a hint, for acuteness is not a characteristic of men of his temperament, nevertheless understood that the hour of retreat had sounded. With a vestige of pride, which became his genius, he pretended to take initiation in the retirement which was forced upon him. "It is better," he said, "that I should withdraw on my own account rather than wait until I am flatly told to do so; and it is just that after twenty years' work I should begin to see that I am growing too old to be still fashionable. At any rate, I have this satisfaction: that I leave the French stage better than I found it, with regard both to art and to morals."

A touching and a noble farewell, but a painful one. Foucquet recalled him; a kind word and a small pension sufficed to cheer the old man's heart, to console him for long neglect, and for the languishing of his fame. He presented his new benefactor with an epistle full of gratitude: *Oui, généreux appui de tout notre Parnasse,*

Tu me rends ma vigueur lorsque tu me fais grâce,
Ee je veux bien apprendre à tout notre avenir
Que tes regards bénins ont su me rajeunir.

Je sens le même feu, je sens la même audace
Qui fit plaindre le Cid, qui fit combattre Horace,
Et je me trouve encor la main qui crayonna
L'âme du grand Pompée et l'esprit de Cinna.
Choisis-moi seulement quelque nom dans
L'histoire Pour qui tu veuilles place au Temple de la Gloire,
Quelque nom favori qu'il te plaise arracher
A la nuit de la tombe, aux cendres du bûcher.
Soit qu'il faille ternir ceux d'Énée et d'Achille
Par un noble attentat sur Homère et Virgile,
Soit qu'il faille obscurcir par un dernier effort
Ceux que j'ai sur la scène affranchis de la mort;
Tu me verras le même, et je te ferai dire,
Si jamais pleinement ta grande âme m'inspire,
Que dix lustres et plus n'ont pas tout emporté,
Cet assemblage heureux de force et de clarté,
Ces prestiges secrets de l'aimable imposture,
Qu'à l'envie m'ont prêtés et l'art et la nature.
N'attends pas toutefois que j'ose m'enhardir,
Ou jusqu' à te dépeindre ou jusqu' à t'applaudir,
Ce serait présumer que d'une seule vue
Jamais vu de ton cœur la plus vaste étendue,
Qu'un moment suffirait à mes débiles yeux
Pour démêler en toi ces dons brillants des cieux,
De qui l'inépuisable et perçante lumière.
Sitôt que tu parais, fait baisser la paupière.
J'ai déjà vu beaucoup-en ce moment heureux,
Je t'ai vu magnanime, affable, généreux,
Et ce qu'on voit à peine après dix ans d'excuses,
Je t'ai vu tout à coup libéral pour les Muses.

This, after all, is little more than a receipt expressed in Spanish style. None the less, the poet promises the financier that he will treat the subject which the latter indicates. Foucquet gave him three subjects to choose from. *Œdipe* was one of the three; it was the one which Corneille chose. He treated it, and we may say that he treated it gallantly. He endowed his heroes with wonderfully polite manners. It is charming to hear Theseus, Prince of Athens, saying to the beautiful Dirce: Quelque ravage affreux qu'étaie ici la peste,

L'absence aux vrais amants est encor plus funeste.

Old Corneille, delighted with himself for having conceived such beautiful things, flattered himself that *Œdipe* was his masterpiece, although it had taken him only two months to write it; he had made haste in order to please the Superintendent. This work, which was in the fashion and was, after all, from the pen of the great Corneille, was received with favour. The gazeteer, Loret, bears witness to this in the execrable verses of a poet who has to write so much a week: Monsieur de Corneille l'aîné,

Depuis peu de temps a donné
A ceux de l'hôtel de Bourgogne
Son dernier ouvrage ou besogne,
Ouvrage grand et signalé,
Qui *VŒdipe* est intitulé,
Ouvrage, dis-je, dramatique,
Mais si tendre et si pathétique,
Que, sans se sentir émouvoir,
On ne peut l'entendre ou le voir.
Jamais pièce de cette sorte
N'eut l'élocution si forte;
Jamais, dit-on, dans l'univers,
On n'entendit de si beaux vers.

We mentioned that Foucquet, when proposing to Corneille the subject of *Œdipe*, suggested two other subjects, one of which was *Camma*. The third we do not know. Camma, who slays her husband's murderer upon the altar to which he has led her, is no commonplace heroine. Corneille was a good kinsman; he passed on *Camma* to his brother Thomas, who made a pretty dull tragedy out of it; such was the custom of this excellent person. Thomas also participated in the Superintendent's generosity. He dedicated to Foucquet his tragedy *La Mort de Commode*, in return for the "generous marks of esteem" and benefits which he had received. He said, with charming politeness, "I wished to offer myself, and you have singled me out."

Pellisson, a brilliant wit and a capable man, became, after 1656, one of Foucquet's principal clerks. He had for Mademoiselle de Scudéry a beautiful affection which he loaded with so many adornments that it seems to-day to have been a miraculous work of artifice. It was marvellously decked out and embellished; an exquisite work of art. Had they both been handsome, they would not have introduced into their liaison so many complications; they would have

loved each other naturally. But he was ugly, so was she, and as one must love in this world — everybody says so — they loved each other with what they had, with their pretty wit and their subtlety. Being able to do no better, they created a masterpiece.

Pellisson was an assiduous guest at the Saturdays of this learned and “precious” spinster. There he met Madame du Plessis-Bellière, whose friendship for Foucquet is well known to us. Witty herself, she was naturally inclined to favour wit in the new Sappho, who was then publishing *Clelie* in ten volumes, and in Pellisson, her relations with whom were as pleasant as they were discreet. She introduced them both to the Superintendent, who lost no time in attaching them both to himself in order not to separate these two incomparable lovers. Pellisson paid Mademoiselle de Scudéry’s debt by writing a *Remerciement du siècle à M. le surintendant Foucquet*, and presently on his own account he fabricated a second *Remerciement*, full of those elaborate allegories which people revelled in at that period, but which to-day would send us to sleep, standing.

Pellisson, having become the Superintendent’s steward, bargained with his tax-farmers and corrected his master’s love-letters, for he was a resourceful person; and, as he piqued himself especially on his wit, he obligingly served as Foucquet’s intermediary with men of letters. On his recommendation the Superintendent gave a receipt for the taxes of Forez to the poet Jean Hesnault, who thus found at Saint-Mandé an end of the poverty which he had so long paraded up and down the world, in the Low Countries, in England and in Sicily. Jean Hesnault was an intelligent person, but untrustworthy:— “Loving pleasure with refinement,” says Bayle, “delicately and artistically debauched.”

A pupil of Gassendi, like Molière, Bernir and Cyrano, he was an atheist, and did not conceal the fact. For the rest, he was a good poet, and he had a great spirit. Was it his audacious, profound and melancholy philosophy which recommended him to the Superintendent’s favour? Hardly. Foucquet in his times of good fortune was far too much occupied with the affairs of this world to be greatly interested in those of another. And when misfortune brought him leisure, he is said to have sought consolation in piety. However that may be, the kindness which he showed to Jean Hesnault was not bestowed upon an ungrateful recipient. Hesnault, as we shall see, appeared among the most ardent defenders of the Superintendent in the days of his misfortune. Foucquet also counted among his pensioners a man as pious as Hesnault was the reverse. I refer to Guillaume de Brébeuf, a Norman nobleman, who translated the *Pharsale*, who was extremely zealous in converting the Calvinists of his province. He was

always shivering with fever; but his greatest misfortune was his poverty. Cardinal Mazarin had made him many promises; it was Foucquet who kept them.

He also helped Boisrobert, who was growing old. Now, old age, which is never welcome to anybody, is most unwelcome to buffoons. This poetical Abbé, whom Richelieu described as “the ardent solicitor of the unwilling Muses,” had long been accustomed to ask, to receive and to thank. Compliments cost him nothing, and he stuffed his collected *Epîtres en vers*, published in 1658, with eulogies, in which Foucquet is compared to the heroes, the gods and the stars. Gombault, who wrote in a more concise style, and was a shepherd on Parnassus, dedicated his *Danaïdes* to him, by way of expressing his thanks. Before 1658 this poet of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had experienced the financier’s generosity. As for poor Scarron, he was in an unfortunate position. He, unhappy man, had taken part in the Fronde. He had decried Jules, and Jules, not generally vindictive, was not forgiving in this case, where to forgive was to pay. Foucquet treated the Frondeur as a beggar, and then, repenting, gave him a pension of 1600 livres. Nevertheless, he remained indigent and needy. His creditors often hammered violently at the knocker of his iron-clamped door, making a terrible noise in the street. Once the poet was blockaded by certain nasty-looking fellows. Three thousand francs, which Foucquet sent through the excellent Pellisson, came just in the nick of time to deliver him from prison. Madame Scarron was in the good books of Madame la Surintendante. From Foucquet she obtained for her husband the right to organize a company of unloaders at the city gates. The waggoners, doubtless, would have been just as well pleased to do without these unloaders, who made them pay through the nose, but the crippled poet who directed them received by this means a revenue of between two and three thousand livres.

I forgot Loret; the worst of men, because the worst of rhymers, and there is nothing in the world worse than a bad poet. Yet every one must live — at least, so it is said — and Loret lived, thanks to Foucquet. He received his pittance on condition that he would moderate his praises. Foucquet was a man of taste; he feared tactless praises, a fear which we can hardly appreciate to-day. Nevertheless, in spite of these remonstrances, Loret did not cease to be eulogistic. It was after having celebrated in very bad verses Foucquet as a demigod that he added: J’en pourrais dire d’avantage,

Mais â ce charmant personnage
Les éloges ne plaisent pas;
Les siens sont pour lui sans appas.
Il aime peu qu’on le loue,

Et touchant ce sujet, j'avoue
Que l'excellent sieur Pellisson
M'a fait plusieurs fois la leçon;
Mais, comme son rare mérite
Tout mon cœur puissamment excite,
Et que ce sujet m'est très cher,
J'aurais peine à m'en empêcher.

But enough about this gazetteer, who, after all, was not a bad fellow, although he never wrote anything but foolishness, and let us come to the poet whose delightful genius even to-day sheds a glory over the memory of Nicolas Foucquet.

La Fontaine was presented to Foucquet by his uncle, Jannart, in the course of the year 1654. He was then absolutely unknown outside his town of Château-Thierry, where he was said to have courted a certain Abbess, and to have been seen at night hastening over a frosty road, with a dark lantern in his hand and white stockings on his feet. That was his only fame. If he was then occupied with poetry, it was for himself alone, and to the knowledge, perhaps, of only a few friends.

Jacques Jannart, his uncle, or, to be more precise, the husband of the aunt of La Fontaine's wife, was King's Counsellor and Deputy Attorney-General in the Paris Parliament. He was a great personage and a good man. He was not displeased that his nephew should be a poet, should commit follies and should borrow money. He himself was not innocent of gallantry, and was inclined to interpret the law in favour of fair ladies. He thought that La Fontaine's poetry would please the Superintendent and that the Superintendent's patronage would please the poet.

Foucquet had good taste; La Fontaine pleased him; indeed, he has the merit of having been the first to appreciate the poet. He gave him a pension of one thousand francs on condition that he should produce a poem once a quarter. What is the date of this gift I do not know; the poet's receipts do not go further back than 1659, if Mathieu Marais was correct in attributing to this same year a poem which precedes the receipts, and which the poet published in 1675 with this description: *M. [Foucquet] having said that I ought to give him something for his endeavour to make my verses known, I sent, shortly after, this letter to [Madame Foucquet.]*

In this poem he jokes about the engagement which he had entered into with the Superintendent for the receipt of his pension:

Je vous l'avoue, et c'est la vérité,
Que Monseigneur n'a que trop mérité
La pension qu'il veut que je lui donne.
En bonne foi je ne sache personne
A qui Phébus s'engageât aujourd'hui
De la donner plus volontiers qu'à lui.

Pour acquitter celle-ci chaque année,
Il me faudra quatre termes égaux;
A la Saint-Jean je promets madrigaux,
Courts et troussés et de taille mignonne;
Longue lecture en été n'est pas bonne.
Le chef d'octobre aura son tour après,
Ma Muse alors prétend se mettre en frais.
Notre héros, si le beau temps ne change,
De menus vers aura pleine vendange.
Ne dites point que c'est menu présent,
Car menus vers sont en vogue à présent.
Vienne l'an neuf, ballade est destinée;
Qui rit ce jour, il rit toute l'année.

Pâques, jour saint, veut autre poésie;
J'envoyerais lors, si Dieu me prête vie,
Pour achever toute la pension,
Quelque sonnet plein de dévotion.
Ce terme-là pourrait être le pire.

On me voit peu sur tels sujets écrire,
Mais tout au moins je serai diligent,
Et, si j'y manque, envoyez un sergent,

Faites saisir sans aucune remise
Stances, rondeaux et vers de toute guise.
Ce sont nos biens: les doctes nourrissons
N'amassent rien, si ce n'est des chansons.

This engagement was kept, with certain modifications, for a year at least. The poet's acknowledgments were in a graceful and natural style, unequalled since the time of Marot. The ballad for the midsummer quarter was sent to Madame la Surintendante: Reine des cœurs, objet délicieux,

Que suit l'enfant qu'on adore en des lieux
Nommés Paphos, Amathonte et Cythère,
Vous qui charmez les hommes et les dieux,
En puissiez-vous dans cent ans autant faire.

We have seen Madame Foucquet as Charity; now we see her as Venus. But it was only to poets that she was a goddess; in reality she was a good woman whose mental qualities were lacking in charm; she was sympathetic only in misfortune.

La Fontaine, in this poem, asks Madame Foucquet whether "one of the Smiles" whom she "has for secretary" will send him a glorious acquittal. Now, the Smile who was Madame la Surintendante's secretary was Pellisson. As we have said, he was a wit. It delighted him to think himself a Smile hovering round the Venus of Vaux. As for the acknowledgment he was asked for, he composed two, one in his own name, and the other in that of his divine Surintendante. Here is the first, which is called the Public Acknowledgment: Par devant moi sur Parnasse notaire,

Se présenta la reine des beautés,
Et des vertus le parfait exemplaire,
Qui lut ces vers, puis les ayant comptés,
Pesés, revus, approuvés et vantés,
Pour le passé voulut s'en satisfaire,
Se réservant le tribut ordinaire,
Pour l'avenir aux termes arrêtés.
Muses de Vaux et vous, leur secrétaire,
Voilà l'acquit tel que vous souhaitez.
En puissiez-vous dans cent ans autant faire.

Here is the second, under private seal, in the name of the Surintendante:

De mes deux yeux, ou de mes deux soleils
J'ai lu vos vers qu'on trouve sans pareils,
Et qui n'ont rien qui ne me doive plaire.
Je vous tiens quitte et promets vous fournir
De quoi par tout vous le faire tenir,
Pour le passé, mais non pour l'avenir.
En puissiez-vous dans cent ans autant faire.

But Jean could not lay restraint upon himself. As he himself ingenuously admits, he divided his life into two parts: one he passed in sleeping, the other in doing nothing. For writing verse was doing nothing for him, it came to him so naturally. But he could not do it if he were obliged. In October, the second quarter, when his second receipt fell due, we find the poet very much embarrassed. He sends a poem, the refrain of which betrays this embarrassment: To promise is one thing, to keep one's promise is another.

In the first quarter of 1660, all he produced was a dizaine for Madame Foucquet. Foucquet, not unnaturally, mildly objected; and the poet replied:

Bien vous dirai qu'au nombre s'arrêter
N'est pas le mieux, seigneur....

Foucquet was content and did not trouble his poetic debtor any further. The latter thought that he would pay his debt by a descriptive poem of some length, but this poem, *Le Songe de Faux*, was never finished. The terrible awakening was near at hand.

We have already seen La Fontaine in the gallery at Saint-Mandé. Whilst he was waiting Foucquet was busy, whether with an affair of State or of the heart is doubtful, for he burnt the candle at both ends. "He took everything upon himself," says the Abbé de Choisy, "he aspired to be the first Minister, without losing a single moment of his pleasures. He would pretend to be working alone in his study at Saint-Mandé; and the whole Court, anticipating his future greatness, would wait in his antechamber, loudly praising the indefatigable industry of this great man, while he himself would go down the private staircase into a garden, where his nymphs, whose names I might mention if I chose, and they were not among the least distinguished, awaited him, and for no small

reward. He would send sometimes three, sometimes four thousand pistoles to the ladies of his heart, and some of the most charming sought to please him.

Would it be true, however, to say with Nicolas:

Never did a Superintendent meet with a cruel lady.

Madame de Sévigné was wooed by Foucquet, and yet she had no difficulty in escaping from him. She made him understand that she would give nothing and accept nothing. She was reasonable; he became so. "Reduced to friendship, he transformed his love," says Bussy, "into an esteem for a virtue hitherto unknown to him." Madame de Sévigné was not alone obdurate.

Madame Scarron, beautiful and prudish, found a way to obtain great benefits from Foucquet without involving her reputation. When the Superintendent granted her a favour, it was Madame Foucquet whom she thanked. Thus, for the privilege which we have mentioned: "Madame," she writes to Madame la Surintendante, "I will not trouble you further about the matter of the unloaders. It is happily terminated through the intervention of that hero to whom we all owe everything, and whom you have the pleasure of loving. The provost of the merchants listened to reason as soon as he heard the great name of M. Foucquet. I entreat of you, Madame, to allow me to come and thank you at Vaux. Madame de Vassé has assured me that you continue to regard me kindly, and that you will not consider me an intruder in those alleys where one may reflect with so much reason, and jest with so much grace."

Madame Foucquet, who was a kind woman, wished to keep Madame Scarron about her; but the cunning fly would not allow itself to be caught. She wrote to her indiscreet benefactress: "Madame, my obligation towards you did not permit me to hesitate concerning the proposition which Madame Bonneau made me on your behalf. It was so flattering to me, I am so disgusted with my present circumstances, and I have so much respect for you, that I should not have wavered for a moment, even if the gratitude which I owe you had not influenced me; but, Madame, M. Scarron, although your indebted and very humble servant, cannot give his consent. My entreaties have failed to move him, my reasons to persuade him. He implores you to love me less, or at any rate to display your affection in a way which would be less costly to him. Read his request, Madame, and pardon the ardour of a husband who has no other resource against tedium, no other consolation in all his misfortunes than the wife whom he loves. I told Madame Bonneau that if you shorten the term I might, perhaps, obtain his consent, but I see that it is useless thus to flatter myself, and that I had too far

presumed upon my power. I entreat of you, Madame, to continue your kindness towards me. No one is more attached to you than I am, and my gratitude will cease only with my life.

Mademoiselle du Fouilloux was no prude; quite the contrary. She appeared at Court in 1652; she showed herself and she pleased.

Une fleur fraîche et printanière,
Un nouvel astre, une lumière,
Savoir l'aimable du Fouilloux,
Dont plusieurs beaux yeux sont jaloux,
D'autant que cette demoiselle
Est charmante, brillante et belle,
Ayant pour escorte l'Amour,
A fait son entrée à la Cour
Et pris le nom, cette semaine,
De fille d'honneur de la reine.

She figured in all the ballets in which the King danced, and Loret sings that in 1658:

Fouilloux, l'une des trois pucelles,
Comme elle est belle entre les belles,
Par ses attraits toujours vainqueurs,
Y faisait des rafles de cœurs.

Foucquet lost his heart to her. He spoke; he gained a hearing. Mademoiselle du Fouilloux, frivolous and calculating, was doubly made for him. Their liaison was intimate and political. Fouilloux was absolutely self-interested; she did not ask for what was her due, being too great a lady for that, but she demanded it by means of a third person, and even insisted upon advances. "I will tell you," wrote this go-between, "that I have seen Fouilloux prepared to entreat me to find a way to inform you, as if on my own account, that I knew you would please her if you would advance one hundred pistoles on this year's pension."

We know also, from the same source, that the beauty asked for money to pay her debts, and did not pay them. Here is the end of the note; "Mademoiselle du Fouilloux has assured me that, of all the money that you have given her, she has not paid a halfpenny. She has gambled it all away." We must do justice to Foucquet, and to Fouilloux; they were very reasonable. Fouilloux's one thought

was to have her own establishment, and she had her eye on an honest man, something of a simpleton, but of good family, whom she had watched by the Superintendent's police.

In those days the Queen's ladies-in-waiting were flattered in song. Fouilloux had verses addressed to her:

Fouilloux sans songer à plaire
Plaît pourtant infiniment
Par un air libre et charmant.
C'est un dessein téméraire
Que d'attaquer sa rigueur.
Si j'eusse été sans affaires
La belle aurait eu mon cœur.

Other verses celebrate Menneville:

Toute la Cour est éprise

De ces attraits glorieux
Dont vous enchantez les yeux,
Menneville; ma franchise
S'y devrait bien engager;
Mais mon cœur est place prise
Et vous n'y sauriez loger.

This Menneville, celebrated in such bad verse, was, with Fouilloux, the prettiest woman at Court. On this matter we have the testimony of Jean Racine, who, banished to the depths of the provinces, wrote to his friend La Fontaine, citing Fouilloux and Menneville as examples of beauty. "I cannot refrain from saying a word as to the beauties of this province.... There is not a village maiden, nor a cobbler's wife, who might not vie in beauty with the Fouilloux and the Menneilles.... All the women here are dazzling, and they deck themselves out in a manner which is to them the most natural fashion in the world, and as for the attractions of their person, *Colors verm, corpus solidum et succi plenum*.

Of the two, Menneville is thought to have been the more beautiful. A song says of her:

Cachez-vous, filles de la reine,
Petites,
Car Menneville est de retour,
M'amour.

She sold herself to the Superintendent. As she did not equal Fouilloux in her genius for intrigue, Foucquet used her more kindly. While this lady-in-waiting was yielding to the suit of the seigneur of Vaux, she was trying to force the Duc de Damville to marry her, as he had promised. Like Fouilloux, she begged the Superintendent to help her to get settled. He did so with a good grace, and sent the fair lady fifteen thousand crowns, which ought to have decided Damville. The latter hesitated. An accident decided for him: he died.

There were no pleasures, no distractions — if we employ the word in the strict sense which Pascal then gave it — there were no means of enjoyment and oblivion for which Foucquet had not the most tremendous capacity. Business and building were not enough to absorb his vast energies. He was a gambler. The stakes at his tables were terribly high. So they were at Madame Foucquet's. In one day Gourville won eighteen thousand livres from the Comte d'Avaux. No

money was laid on the table, but at the end of the game the players settled their accounts. They played not only for money, but for gems, ornaments, lace, collars, valued at seventy to eighty pistoles each.

Foucquet, playing against Gourville, in one day lost sixty thousand livres. "He played," said Gourville, "with cut cards which were worth ten or twenty pistoles each. I put one thousand pistoles before me almost desiring that he should win back something, which did happen. Nevertheless, he was not pleased to see I was leaving the game."

This wild play was not altogether to the Superintendent's disadvantage. In the end his intimate friends, who were great personages, were ruined, and came to him for mercy. Thus, for instance, he held in his power Hugues de Lyonne — the great Lyonne. But he himself was at his last gasp, and overwhelmed with anxiety.

Sole Superintendent of Finance since Servien's death, on the 17th February, 1659, Foucquet had filled Mazarin's crop without having won him, for Mazarin loved and served only himself, his own people and the State. As a private individual he was self-interested, covetous and miserly. As a public man he desired the good of the kingdom, the greatness of France. He was never grateful to his public servants for anything they did for his own person. Foucquet felt this; he perceived that he had no hold over this man, and that Mazarin, when dying, might ruin him, having no further need of him.

For Mazarin was dying; he was dying with all the heartrending regret of a Magnifico who feels that he is being torn from his jewels, his tapestries and his books — beautifully bound in morocco, delicately tooled — and also, by a curious inconsistency, with the serenity of a great statesman, of another Richelieu, full of a generous grief that he could no longer play his part in those great affairs which had rendered his life illustrious. He was anxious to assure the prosperity of the kingdom after his death. "Sire," he said to the young Louis XIV, "I owe you everything, but I think I can in a manner discharge my debt by giving you Colbert."

At the very point of death he was conferring with the King in secret conversations, which caused Foucquet great anxiety, precisely because they were concealed from him. Then, at length, the light of eyes which had so long sought for gold and sumptuous draperies, and pierced the hearts of men, was finally extinguished.

On the 9th March, 1661, as Foucquet, leaving his house of Saint-Mandé, was crossing the Gardens on foot to go to Vincennes, he met young Brienne, who was getting out of his couch, and learned from him the great news.

“He is dead, then!” murmured Foucquet. “Henceforth I shall not know in whom to confide. People always do things by halves. Oh, how distressing! The King is waiting for me, and I ought to be there among the first! My God! Monsieur de Brienne, tell me what is happening, so that I may not commit any indiscretion through ignorance.”

The day after Mazarin’s death the King of twenty-three summoned Foucquet, with the Chancellor, Seguier, the Ministers and Secretaries of State, and addressed them in these words: “Hitherto I have been content to leave my affairs in the hands of the late Cardinal. It is time for me to control them myself. You will help me with your counsels when I ask you for them. Gentlemen, I forbid you to sign anything, not even a safe conduct, or a passport, without my command. I request you to give me personally an account of everything every day, to favour no one in your lists of the month. And you, Monsieur le Surintendant, I have explained to you my wishes; I request you to employ M. Colbert, whom the late Cardinal has recommended to me.” Foucquet thought that the King was not speaking seriously. That error ruined him.

He believed that it would be easy to amuse and deceive the youthful mind of the King, and he set to work to do so with all the ardour, all the grace and all the frivolity of his nature. He determined to govern the kingdom and the King. Foucquet did not know Louis XIV, and Louis XVI did know Foucquet. Warned by Mazarin, the King knew that Foucquet was engaged in dubious proceedings, and was ready to resort to any expedient. He knew, also, that he was a man of resource and of talent. He took him apart and told him that he was determined to be King, and to have a precise and complete knowledge of State affairs; that he would begin with finance; it was the most important part of his administration, and that he was determined to restore order and regularity to that department. He asked the Superintendent to instruct him minutely in every detail, and he bade him conceal nothing, declaring that he would always employ him, provided that he found him sincere. As for the past, he was prepared to forget that, but he wished that in future the Superintendent would let him know the true state of the finances.

In speaking thus, Louis XIV told the truth. He has explained himself in his *Mémoires*. “It may be a cause of astonishment,” he says, “that I was willing to employ him at a time when his peculations were known to me, but I knew that he was intelligent and thoroughly acquainted with all the most intimate affairs of State, and this made me think that, provided he would confess his past faults and promise to correct them, he might render me good service.”

No one could speak more wisely, more kindly; but the audacious Foucquet did not realize that there was something menacing in this wisdom and this

kindness. He was possessed of a spirit of imprudence and error. He was labouring blindly to bring about his own fall. Day by day, despite the advice of his best friends, he presented the King with false accounts of his expenditure and revenue. For five months he believed that he was deceiving Louis XIV, but every evening the King placed his accounts in the hands of Colbert, whom he had nominated Intendant of Finance, with the special duty of watching Foucquet. Colbert showed the King the falsifications in these accounts. On the following day the King would patiently seek to draw some confession from the guilty Minister, who, with false security, persisted in his lies.

Henceforth Foucquet was a ruined man. From the month of April, 1661, Colbert's clerks did not hesitate to announce his fall. He began to be afraid, but it was too late. He went and threw himself at the King's feet — it was at Fontainebleau — he reminded him that Cardinal Mazarin had regulated finance with absolute authority, without observing any formality, and had constrained him, the Superintendent, to do many things which might expose him to prosecution. He did not deny his own personal faults, and admitted that his expenditure had been excessive. He entreated the King to pardon him for the past, and promised to serve him faithfully in the future. The King listened to his Minister with apparent goodwill; his lips murmured words of pardon, but in his heart he had already passed sentence on Foucquet.

Is it true that some private jealousy inspired the King's vengeance? Foucquet, according to the Abbé de Choisy, had sent Madame de Plessis-Bellière to tell Mademoiselle de Lavallière that the Superintendent had twenty thousand pistoles at her service. The lady had replied that twenty million would not induce her to take a false step. "Which astonished the worthy intermediary, who was little used to such replies," adds the Abbé. However this may be, Foucquet soon perceived that the fortress was taken, and that it was dangerous to tread upon the heels of the royal occupant. But in order to repair his fault he committed a second, worse than the first. Again it is Choisy who tells us. "Wishing to justify himself to her, and to her secret lover, he himself undertook the mission of go-between, and, taking her apart in Madame's antechamber, he sought to tell her that the King was the greatest prince in the world, the best looking, and other little matters. But the lady, proud of her heart's secret, cut him short, and that very evening complained of him to the King."

Such a piece of audacity, and one so clumsy, could only irritate the young and royal lover. Nevertheless it was not to a secret jealousy, but to State interest, that Louis XIV sacrificed his prevaricating Minister.

His intentions are above suspicion. It was in the interest of the Crown and of the State alone that he acted. Yet we can but feel surprised to find so young a

man employing so much strategy and so much dissimulation in order to ruin one whom he had appeared to pardon. In this piece of diplomacy Louis XIV and Colbert both displayed an excess of skill. With perfidious adroitness they manoeuvred to deprive Foucquet of his office of Attorney-General, which was an obstacle in their way, for an officer of the Parliament could be tried only by that body, and Foucquet had so many partisans in Parliament that there was no hope that it would ever condemn him.

Louis XIV displayed an apparent confidence in Foucquet and redoubled his favours; Colbert, acting with the King, was constantly praising his generosity. He was, at the same time, inducing him to testify his gratitude by filling the treasury without having recourse to bargains with supporters, which were so burdensome to the State. Foucquet replied: "I would willingly sell all that I have in the world in order to procure money for the King."

Colbert refrained from pressing him further, but he contrived to lead the conversation to the office of Attorney-General. Foucquet told him one day that he had been offered fifteen hundred thousand livres for it.

"But, sir," answered Colbert, "do you wish to sell it? It is true that it is of no great use to you. A Minister who is Superintendent has no time to watch lawsuits." The matter did not go any farther at that time; but they returned to it later, and Foucquet, thinking himself established in his sovereign's favour, said one day to Colbert that he was inclined to sell his office in order to give its price to the King. Colbert applauded this resolution, and Foucquet went immediately to tell Louis XIV, who thanked him and accepted the offer immediately. The trick was played.

The King had done his part to bring about this excellent result by making Foucquet think that he would create him a *chevalier de L'Ordre*, and first Minister, as soon as he was no longer Attorney-General. Here is a deal of duplicity to prepare the way for an act of justice! Foucquet sold his office for fourteen hundred thousand livres to Achille de Harlay, who paid for it partly in cash. A million was taken to Vincennes, "where the King wished to keep it for secret expenditure."

Loret announced this fact in his letter of the 14th August:

Ce politique renommé
Qui par ses bontés m'a charmé,
Ce judicieux, ce grand homme
Que Monseigneur Foucquet on nomme,
Si généreux, si libéral,
N'est plus procureur général.

Une autre prudente cervelle,
Que Monsieur Harlay on appelle,
En a par sa démission
Maintenant la possession.

As a further act of prudence, and in order completely to lay Foucquet's suspicions to rest, Louis XIV accepted the entertainment which Foucquet offered him in the Château de Vaux. "For a long time," said Madame de Lafayette, "the King had said that he wanted to go to Vaux, the Superintendent's magnificent house, and although Foucquet ought to have been too wary to show the King the very thing that proved so plainly what bad use he had made of the public finances, and though the King's natural kindness ought to have prevented him from visiting a man whom he was about to ruin, neither of them considered this aspect of the affair."

The whole Court went to Vaux on the 17th August, 1661.

These festivities exasperated Louis, XIV. "Ah, Madame," he said to his mother, "shall we not make all these people disgorge?" Infallible signs announced the approaching catastrophe. In his Council, the King proposed to suppress those very orders to pay cash which served, as we have said, to cover the secret expenditure of the Superintendents. The Chancellor strongly supported the proposal. "Do I count for nothing, then?" cried Foucquet indiscreetly. Then he suddenly corrected himself and said that other ways would be found to provide for the secret expenses of the State. "I myself will provide for them," said Louis XIV. Nevertheless, Foucquet, though deprived of the gown, was still a formidable enemy. Before he could be reduced his Breton strongholds must be captured. The prudent King had thought of this, and presently conceived a clever scheme. As there was need of money, it was resolved to increase the taxation of the State domains. This impost, described euphemistically as a gratuitous gift, was voted by the Provincial Assemblies. The presence of the King seemed necessary in order to determine the Breton Estates to make a great financial sacrifice, and Foucquet himself advised the King to go to Nantes, where the Provincial Assembly was to be held. Foucquet himself helped to bring about his own ruin. At Nantes he had a sorrowful presentiment of this. He was suffering from an intermittent fever, the attacks of which were very weakening. "Why," he said, in a low voice to Brienne, "is the King going to Brittany, and to Nantes in particular? Is it not in order to make sure of Belle-Isle?" And several times in his weakness he murmured:— "Nantes, Belle-Isle!" When Brienne went out, he embraced him with tears in his eyes.

The King arrived at Nantes on the 1st of September, and took up his abode at the Château. Foucquet had his lodging at the other end of the town, in a house which communicated with the Loire by means of a subterranean passage. In that way he could reach the river, where a boat was waiting for him, and escape to Belle-Isle.

Summoned by the King, on the 5th September, at seven o'clock in the morning, he went to the Council Meeting, which was prolonged until eleven o'clock. During this time meticulous measures were taken for his arrest, and for the seizure of his papers. The Council over, the King detained Foucquet to discuss various matters with him. Finally, he dismissed him, and Foucquet entered his chair. Having passed through the gate of the Château, he had entered a little square near the Cathedral, when D'Artagnan, 2nd Lieutenant of the Company of Musketeers, signed to him to get out. Foucquet obeyed, and D'Artagnan read him the warrant for his arrest. The Superintendent expressed great surprise at this misfortune, and asked the officer to avoid attracting public attention. The latter took him into a house which was near at hand; it was that of the Archdeacon of Nantes, whose niece had been Foucquet's first wife. A cup of broth was given to the prisoner; the papers he had on him were taken and sealed. In one of the King's coaches he was conveyed to the Château d'Angers. There he remained for three months, from the 7th of September to the 1st of December.

Meanwhile his prosecution was being prepared. Certain letters from women, found in a casket at Saint-Mandé, were taken to Fontainebleau, and given to the King. They combined a great deal of gallantry with a great deal of politics. Many women's names were to be read in them, or guessed at. Madame Scarron's was mentioned and even Madame de Sévigné's, but in an innocent connection. On the whole, only one woman, Menneville, was shown to be guilty.

Foucquet was removed from Angers to Saumur. Taken on the 2nd of December to La Chapelle-Blanche, he lodged on the 3rd in a suburb of Tours, and from the 4th to the 25th of December remained in the Château d'Amboise. Shortly after Foucquet's departure, La Fontaine, in company with his uncle, Jannart, who had been exiled to Limousin, halted below the Château and swept his eyes over the fair and smiling valley.

"All this," he said, "poor Monsieur Foucquet could never, during his imprisonment here, enjoy for a single moment. All the windows of his room had been blocked up, leaving only a little gap at the top. I asked to see him; a melancholy pleasure, I admit, but I did ask. The soldier who escorted us had no key, so that I was left for a long time gazing at the door, and I got them to tell me how the prisoner was guarded. I should like to describe it to you, but the recollection is too painful.

Qu'est-il besoin que je retrace
Une garde au soin non pareil,
Chambre murée, étroite place,
Quelque peu d'air pour toute grâce;
Jours sans soleil,
Nuits sans sommeil;
Trois portes en six pieds d'espace!
Vous peindre un tel appartement,
Ce serait attirer vos larmes;
Je l'ai fait insensiblement,
Cette plainte a pour moi des charmes.

Nothing but the approach of night could have dragged me from the spot."

On the 31st December, Foucquet reached Vincennes. As he passed he caught sight of his house at Saint-Mandé, in which he had collected all that can flatter and adorn life, and which he was never again to inhabit. He was, indeed, to remain in the Bastille until after his condemnation; that is to say, for more than three years; and he left that fortress only to suffer an imprisonment of which the protracted severity has become a legend.

The public anger was now loosed upon the stricken financier. The people whose poverty had been insulted by his ostentatious display wished to snatch him from his guards and tear him to pieces in the streets. Several times during the journey from Nantes, D'Artagnan had been obliged to protect his prisoner from riotous mobs of peasants. In the higher classes of society the indignation was fully as bitter, although it was only expressed in words.

Society never forgave Foucquet for having allowed his love-letters to be seized. It was considered that to keep and classify women's letters in this manner was not the act of a gallant gentleman. Such was the opinion of Chapelain, who wrote to Madame de Sévigné: — "Was it not enough to ruin the State, and to render the King odious to his people by the enormous burdens which he imposed upon them, and to employ the public finances in impudent expenditure and insolent acquisitions, which were compatible neither with his honour nor with his office, and which, on the other hand, rather tended to turn his subjects and his servants against him, and to corrupt them? Was it necessary to crown his irregularities and his crimes, by erecting in his own honour a trophy of favours, either real or apparent, of the modesty of so many ladies of rank, and by keeping a shameful record of his commerce with them in order that the shipwreck of his fortunes should also be that of their reputations?

“Is this consistent with being, I do not say an upright man, in which capacity, his flatterers, the Scarrons, Pellissons and Sapphos, and the whole of that self-interested scum have so greatly extolled him, but a man merely, a man with a spark of enlightenment, who professes to be something better than a brute? I cannot excuse such scandalous, dastardly behaviour, and I should be hardly less enraged with this wretch if your name had not been found among his papers.”

We can admire such generous indignation, but it is hard to be called “self-interested scum” when one is merely faithful in misfortune.

The truth is that Foucquet still had friends; the women and the poets did not abandon him. Hesnault, to whom he had given a pension, was not a favourite of the Muses, but he showed himself a man of feeling, and his courageous fidelity did him credit. He attacked Colbert in an eloquent sonnet, which was circulated everywhere by the prisoner’s friends: *Ministre avare et lâche, esclave malheureux,*

Qui gémit sous le poids des affaires publiques,
Victime dévouée aux chagrins politiques,
Fantôme révééré sous un titre onéreux:

Vois combien des grandeurs le comble est dangereux;
Contemple de Foucquet les funestes reliques,
Et tandis qu’à sa perte en secret tu t’appliques,
Crains qu’on ne te prépare un destin plus affreux!

Sa chute, quelque jour, te peut être commune;
Crains ton poste, ton rang, la cour et la fortune;
Nul ne tombe innocent d’où l’on te voit monté.

Cesse donc d’animer ton prince à son supplice,
Et près d’avoir besoin de toute sa bonté,
Ne le fais pas user de toute sa justice.

This sonnet was circulated privately. It was generally read with pleasure, for Colbert was not liked, and it will not be inappropriate to cite here an anecdote for which Bayle is responsible.

When the sonnet was mentioned to the Minister, he asked: “Is the King offended by it?” And when he was told that he was not, “Then neither am I,” he said, “nor do I bear the author any ill will.”

If Molière kept silence, Corneille, on the contrary, now gave proof of his greatness of soul; by praising Pellisson's fidelity, he showed that he shared it:

En vain pour ébranler ta fidèle constance,
On vit fondre sur toi la force et la puissance;
En vain dans la Bastille, on t'accabla de fers,
En vain on te flatta sur mille appas divers;
Ton grand cœur, inflexible aux rigueurs, aux caresses,
Triompha de la force et se rit des promesses;
Et comme un grand rocher par l'orage insulté
Des flots audacieux méprise la fierté,
Et, sans craindre le bruit qui gronde sur sa tête,
Voit briser à ses pieds l'effort de la tempête,
C'est ainsi, Pellisson, que dans l'adversité,
Ton intrépide cœur garde sa fermeté,
Et que ton amitié, constante et généreuse,
Du milieu des dangers sortit victorieuse.

Poor Loret found it difficult at first to collect his bewildered wits and relate the catastrophe. It was a terrible affair; he didn't know much about it, and he says still less. But, far from accusing the fallen Minister, he was inclined to pity and esteem him. This was courageous; and his bad verses were a kind action: Notre Roi, qui par politique

Se transportait vers l'Amorique,
Pour raisons qu'on ne savait pas,
S'en revient, dit-on, à grands pas.
Je n'ai su par aucun message
Les circonstances du voyage:
Mais j'ai du bruit commun appris,
C'est-à-dire de tout Paris,
Que par une expresse ordonnance,

Le sieur surintendant de France
Je ne sais pourquoi ni comment,
Est arrêté présentement
(Nouvelles des plus surprenantes)
Dans la ville et château de Nantes,
Certes, j'ai toujours respecté
Les ordres de Sa Majesté
Et crû que ce monarque auguste
Ne commandait rien que de juste;
Mais étant rémemoratif
Que cet infortuné captif
M'a toujours semblé bon et sage
Et que d'un obligeant langage
Il m'a quelquefois honoré,
J'avoue en avoir soupiré,
Ne pouvant, sans trop me contraindre,
Empêcher mon cœur de le plaindre.
Si, sans préjudice du Roi
(Et je le dis de bonne foi)

Je pouvais lui rendre service
Et rendre son sort plus propice
En adoucissant sa rigueur,
Je le ferais de tout mon cœur;
Mais ce seul désir est frivole,
Et prions Dieu qu'il le console.
En l'état qu'il est aujourd'hui,
C'est tout ce que je puis pour lui.

In time poor Loret did more; he tried to deny his benefactor's crimes. "I doubt half of them," he said in the execrable style of the rhyming Gazetteer:

Et par raison et par pitié, Et même pour la conséquence Je passe le tout sous silence.

Pellisson was admirable. He wrote from the Bastille, where he was imprisoned, eloquent defences in which, neglecting his own cause, he sought only to justify Foucquet. His defence followed the same lines as that of Foucquet himself. He pleaded the necessities of France, the need of provisioning and equipping her armies and of fortifying her strongholds. He imagined a case in which Mazarin himself might have been criticized for the means by which he had procured money for the war and ensured victory. "In all conscience," he said, "what man of good sense could have advised him to reply in other than Scipio's words: 'Here are my accounts: I present them but only to tear them up. On this day a year ago I signed a general peace, and the contract of the King's marriage, which gave peace to Europe. Let us go and celebrate this anniversary at the foot of the altar.'"

Mademoiselle de Scudéry distinguished herself by her zeal on behalf of her friend, formerly so powerful, and now so unfortunate. Pecquet, whom the Superintendent had chosen as his doctor, in order that he might discourse with him on physics and philosophy, the learned Jean Pecquet, was inconsolable at having lost so good a master. He used to say that Pecquet had always rhymed, and always would rhyme with Foucquet. As for La Fontaine, all know how his fidelity, rendered still more touching by his ingenuous emotions and the spell of his poetry, adorns and defends the memory of Nicolas Foucquet to this very day. Nothing can equal the divine complaint in which the truest of poets grieved over the disgrace of his magnificent patron.

ÉLÉGIE

Remplissez l'air de cris en vos grottes profondes,

Pleurez, nymphes de Vaux, faites croître vos ondes;
Et que l'Anqueil enflé ravage les trésors
Dont les regards de Flore ont embelli vos bords.
On ne blâmera point vos larmes innocentes,
Vous pourrez donner cours à vos douleurs pressantes;
Chacun attend de vous ce devoir généreux:
Les destins sont contents, Oronte est malheureux

“In a letter written under the name of M. de la Visclède, to the permanent secretary of the Academy of Pau, in 1776, Voltaire,” says M. Marty-Laveaux, “quotes these verses, and adds: ‘He (La Fontaine) altered the word *Cabale* when he had been made to realize that the great Colbert was serving the King with great equity, and was not addicted to cabals. But La Fontaine had heard some one make use of the term, and had fully believed that it was the proper word to use.’”

Vous Pavez vu naguère au bord de vos fontaines,
Qui sans craindre du sort les faveurs incertaines,
Plein d'éclat, plein de gloire, adoré des mortels,
Recevait des honneurs qu'on ne doit qu'aux autels.

Hélas! qu'il est déchu de ce bonheur suprême!
Que vous le trouverez différent de lui-même!
Pour lui les plus beaux jours sont de secondes nuits,
Les soucis dévorans, les regrets, les ennuis,
Hôtes infortunés de sa triste demeure,
En des gouffres de maux le plongent à toute heure
Voilà le précipice où l'ont enfin jeté
Les attraits enchanteurs de la prospérité!
Dans les palais des Rois cette plainte est commune;
On n'y connaît que trop les jeux de la fortune,
Ses trompeuses faveurs, ses appas inconstants:
Mais on ne les connaît que quand il n'est plus temps,
Lorsque sur cette mer on vogue à pleines voiles,
Qu'on croit avoir pour soi les vents et les étoiles.
Il est bien malaisé de régler ses désirs;
Le plus sage s'endort sur la foi des zéphirs.

Jamais un favori ne borne sa carrière,
Il ne regarde point ce qu'il laisse en arrière;
Et tout ce vain amour des grandeurs et du bruit
Ne le saurait quitter qu'après l'avoir détruit.
Tant d'exemples fameux que l'histoire en raconte
Ne suffisaient-ils pas sans la perte d'Oronte?
Ah! si ce faux éclat n'eût point fait ses plaisirs,
Si le séjour de Vaux eût borné ses désirs
Qu'il pouvait doucement laisser couler son âge!
Vous n'avez pas chez vous ce brillant équipage,
Cette foule de gens qui s'en vont chaque jour
Saluer à longs flots le soleil de la cour:
Mais la faveur du ciel vous donne en récompense
Du repos, du loisir, de l'ombre et du silence,
Un tranquille sommeil, d'innocents entretiens,
Et jamais à la cour on ne trouve ces biens.
Mais quittons ces pensers, Oronte nous appelle.
Vous, dont il a rendu la demeure si belle,
Nymphes, qui lui devez vos plus charmants appas,
Si le long de vos bords Louis porte ses pas,
Tâchez de l'adoucir, fléchissez son courage;
Il aime ses sujets, il est juste, il est sage;
Du titre de clément, rendez-le ambitieux;
C'est par là que les Rois sont semblables aux dieux.
Du magnanisme Henri qu'il contemple la vie;
Dès qu'il put se venger, il en perdit l'envie.
Inspirez à Louis cette même douceur:
La plus belle victoire est de vaincre son coeur.
Oronte est à présent un objet de clémence;
S'il a cru les conseils d'une aveugle puissance,
Il est assez puni par son sort rigoureux,
Et c'est être innocent que d'être malheureux!

La Fontaine, not satisfied with this poem, addressed an ode to the King on Foucquet's behalf. But the ode is far from equalling the elegy.

... Oronte seul, ta creature,
Languit dans un profond ennui,
Et les bienfaits de la nature

Ne se répandent plus sur lui.
Tu peux d'un éclat de ta foudre
Achever de le mettre en poudre;
Mais si les dieux à ton pouvoir
Aucunes bornes n'ont prescrites,
Moins ta grandeur a de limites,
Plus ton courroux en doit avoir.
Va-t-en punir l'orgueil du Tibre;
Qu'il se souviene que ses lois
N'ont jadis rien laissé de libre
Que le courage des Gaulois.
Mais parmi nous sois débonnaire:
A cet empire si sévère
Tu ne te peux accoutumer;
Et ce serait trop te contraindre:

Il se hait de tant vivre après un tel malheur, Et, s'il espère encor, ce n'est qu'en sa douleur, C'est là le seul plaisir qui flatte son courage, Car des autres plaisirs on lui défend l'usage. Voilà, voilà l'effet de cette ambition Qui fait de ses pareils l'unique passion.

Les étrangers te doivent craindre,
Yes sujets te veulent aimer.

These verses refer to the attack made by the Corsicans on the Guard of Alexander VII, who, on the 20th August, 1667, fired on the coach of the Duc de Créqui, the French Ambassador.

L'amour est fils de la clémence,
La clémence est fille des dieux;

Sans elle toute leur puissance
Ne serait qu'un titre odieux.
Parmi les fruits de la victoire,
César environné de gloire
N'en trouva point dont la douceur
A celui-ci pût être égale,
Non pas même aux champs où
Pharsale L'honora du nom de vainqueur.

Laisse-lui donc pour toute grâce
Un bien qui ne lui peut durer,
Après avoir perdu la place
Que ton cœur lui fit espérer.
Accorde-nous les faibles restes
De ses jours tristes et funestes,
Jours qui se passent en soupirs:
Ainsi les tiens filés de soie
Puissent se voir comblés de joie,
Même au delà de tes désirs.

La Fontaine submitted this ode to Foucquet, who sent it back to him with various suggestions. The prisoner requested that the reference to Rome should be suppressed. Doubtless he did not understand it, not having heard in prison of the attack upon the French Ambassador at the Papal Court. He also disapproved of the allusion to the clemency of the victor of Pharsalia. "Cæsar's example," he said, "being derived from antiquity would not, I think, be well enough known." He also noted a passage — which I do not know — "as being too poetical to please the King." The last suggestion speaks of a true nobility of mind. It refers to the last passage, in which the poet implores the King to grant the life of "Oronte." Foucquet wrote in the margin: "You sue too humbly for a thing that one ought to despise."

La Fontaine did not willingly give in on any of these points; to the last suggestion he replied as follows: "The sentiment is worthy of you, Monsignor, and, in truth, he who regards life with such indifference does not deserve to die. Perhaps you have not considered that it is I who am speaking, I who ask for a favour which is dearer to us than to you. There are no terms too humble, too pathetic and too urgent to be employed in such circumstances. When I bring you on to the stage, I shall give you words which are suitable to the greatness of your

soul. Meanwhile permit me to tell you that you have too little affection for a life such as yours is.”

It was in the month of November only that a Chamber was instituted by Royal Edict with the object of instituting financial reforms, and of punishing those who had been guilty of maladministration. Foucquet was to appear before this Chamber. It met solemnly in the month of December. The greater part of it was composed of Members of the Parliament, but it also included Members of the *Chambre des Comptes*, the *Cour des Aides*, the Grand Council and the Masters of Requests. The magistrates who composed it were, to mention those only who sat in it as finally constituted: The Chancellor Pierre Seguier, first President of the Parliament of Paris, who presided; Guillaume de Lamoignon, deputy president; the President de Nesmond; the President de Pontchartrain; Poncet, Master of Requests; Olivier d’Ormesson, Master of Requests; Voysin, Master of Requests; Besnard de Réze, Master of Requests; Regnard, Catinat, De Brillac, Fayet, Councillors in the Grand Chamber of the Paris Parliament; Massenau, Councillor in the Toulouse Parliament; De la Baulme, of the Grenoble Parliament; Du Verdier, of the Bordeaux Parliament; De la Toison, of the Dijon Parliament; Lecormier de Sainte-Hélène, of the Rouen Parliament; Raphélis de Roquesante, of the Aix Parliament; Hérault, of the Rennes Parliament; Noguès, of the Pau Parliament; Ferriol, of the Metz Parliament; De Moussy, of the Paris *Chambre des Comptes*; Le-Bossu-le-Jau, of the Paris *Chambre des Comptes*; Le Féron, of the *Cour des Aides*; De Baussan, of the *Cour des Aides*; Cuissotte de Gisaucourt, of the Grand Council; Pussort, of the Grand Council.

It must be recognized that the creation of such a Chamber of Justice was in conformity with the rules of the public law as it then existed. Had not Chalais and Marillac, Cinq-Mars and Thou, been judged by commissions of Masters of Requests and Councillors of the Parliament? And, if our sense of legality is wounded when we behold the accusing Monarch himself choosing the judges of the accused man, we must remember this maxim was then firmly established: “All justice emanates from the King.” By this very circumstance the Chamber of Justice of 1661 was invested with very extensive powers; it became the object of public respect, and of the public hopes, for the poor, deeming it powerful, attributed to it the power of helping the wretched populace, after it had punished those who robbed them.

Such illusions are very natural, and one may wonder whether any government would be possible if unhappy persons did not, from day to day, expect something better on the morrow.

Thus the tribunal constituted by the King was no unrighteous tribunal; yet there was no security in it for the accused. He was apparently ruined. Condemned beforehand by the King and by the people, everything seemed to fail him, but he did not fail himself. After having wrought his own ruin, Foucquet worked out his own salvation, if he may be said to have saved himself when all he saved was his life.

His first act was to protest energetically against the competence of the Chamber; he alleged that, having held office in the Parliament for twenty-five years, he was still entitled to the privileges of its officers, and he recognized no judges except those of that body, of both Chambers united. Having made this reservation, he consented to reply to the questions of the examining magistrates, and his replies bore witness to the scope and vigour of a mind which was always collected. The Chamber, on its side, declared itself competent, and decided that the trial should be conducted as though Foucquet were dumb; that is, that there would be no cross-examination, and no pleading. By this method of procedure the Attorney-General put his questions in writing, and the accused replied in writing. As the documents of the prosecution and of the defence were produced, the recorders prepared summaries for the judges.

It is obvious that in such a case the reporters, who are the necessary intermediaries between the magistrates and the parties to the case, possess considerable influence, and that the issue of the lawsuit depends largely on their intelligence and their morality. Consequently, the King wished to reserve to himself the right of appointing them, although according to tradition, this belonged to the President of the Chamber.

Messieurs Olivier d'Ormesson and Le Cormier de Sainte-Hélène were chosen by the Royal Council, and their names were put before the First President, Guillaume de Lamoignon. This magistrate apologized for being unable to accede to the King's wish, alleging that M. Olivier d'Ormesson and M. de Sainte-Hélène would be suspected by the accused; at least, he feared so. "This fear," replied the King, "is only another reason for appointing them."

Lamoignon — and it did him honour — gave way only upon the King's formal command.

That was quite enough to make Lamoignon suspected by Foucquet's enemies. Powerful as they were, he did nothing to reassure them; on the contrary, he saw that the accused was granted the assistance of counsel, and that the forms of procedure were scrupulously observed. When one day Colbert was trying to discover his opinions, Lamoignon made this fine reply: "A judge ought never to declare his opinion save once, and that above the fleurs-de-lys."

The King, growing more and more suspicious, nominated Chancellor Séguier to preside over the Chamber. Lamoignon, thus driven from his seat, withdrew, but unostentatiously, alleging as his reason that Parliamentary affairs occupied the whole of his time."

In vain the King and Colbert, alarmed at having themselves dismissed so upright a magistrate, endeavoured to restore him to a position of diminished authority; he was deaf to entreaties, and was content to say to his friends: "*Lavavi manus meas; quomodo inquinabo eas?* " Old Séguier, who though lacking in nobility of soul possessed brilliant intellectual powers, grew more servile than ever. Feeling that he had not long to live, he promptly accepted dishonour. In this trial his conduct was execrable and his talents did not, on this occasion, succeed in masking his partiality. Great jurisconsult though he was, he did not understand finance, and this stupendous trial was altogether too much for an old man of seventy-four. He was always impatiently complaining of the length of the trial, which, he declared, would outlast him.

With audacity and skill Foucquet held his own against this violent judge. Brought up in chicanery, the accused was acquainted with all the mysteries of procedure. He made innumerable difficulties; sometimes he accused a judge, sometimes he challenged the accuracy of an inventory, sometimes he demanded documents necessary for the defence. In short, he gained time, and this was to gain much. The more protracted the trial, the less he had to fear that its termination would be a capital sentence.

The King was not at all comfortable as to its issue; his activity was unwearying, and he never hesitated to throw his whole weight into the balance. The public prosecutor, Talon, was not an able person; he allowed himself to be defeated by the accused, and was immediately sacrificed. He was replaced by two Masters of Requests, Hotmann and Chamillart. One of the recorders caused the Court a great deal of anxiety; this was the worthy Olivier d'Ormesson. Efforts were made to intimidate him, but in vain; to win him over, but equally in vain. He was punished. His offices of Intendant of Picardy and Soissonnais were taken away from him. Finally, the idea was conceived of enlisting his father, and of trying to induce the old man to corrupt the honesty of his son. Old André would not lend himself to these attempts at corruption; he replied that he was sorry that the King was not satisfied with his son's behaviour. "My son," he added, "does what I have always recommended him to do: he fears God, serves the King, and he renders justice without distinction of person."

The Court and the Minister were, indeed, exceeding all bounds; Séguier, Pussort, Sainte-Hélène and others displayed the most odious partiality. False

inventories were drawn up; the official reports of the proceedings were falsified. The King carried off the Court of Justice with him to Fontainebleau, fearing lest it should become independent in his absence. This was going too far; Foucquet grew interesting.

Public opinion, at first hostile to the accused, had almost completely turned in his favour, when, more than three years after his arrest, on the 14th October, 1664, the Attorney-General, Chamillart, pronounced his conclusions, which were to the effect that Foucquet, "attainted and convicted of the crime of high treason, and other charges mentioned during the trial," should be "hanged and strangled until death should follow, on a gallows erected on the Place de la Rue Sainte-Antoine, near the Bastille."

The trial was generally regarded as being overweighted. Turenne said, in his picturesque manner, that the cord had been made too thick to strangle M. Foucquet. The financiers, always influential, having recovered from their first alarm, tried to save a man who, in his fall, might drag them down with him. For, in so comprehensive an accusation, who was there that was not compromised?

Colbert was now detested; as a result his enemy appeared less black. As for the Chamber itself, it was divided into two parts, almost of equal strength. On the one hand there were those who, like Séguier and Pussort, wished to please the Court by ruining Foucquet, and on the other those who, like Olivier d'Ormesson, favoured the strict administration of justice, exempt from anger and hatred.

It was on the 14th November, 1664, that Nicolas Foucquet appeared for the first time before the Chamber, which sat in the Arsenal. He wore a citizen's costume, a suit of black cloth, with a mantle. He excused himself for appearing before the Court without his magistrate's robe, declaring that he had asked for one in vain. He renewed the protest which he had made previously against the competency of the Chamber, and refused to take the oath. He then took his place on the prisoners' bench and declared himself ready to reply to the questions which might be put to him.

The accusations made against him may be classified under four heads: payment collected from the tax-farmers; farmerships which he had granted under fictitious names; advances made to the Treasury; and the crime of high treason, projected but not executed, proved by the papers discovered at Saint-Mandé.

Foucquet's defence, which disdained petty expedients, was powerful and adroit. He confessed irregularities, but he held that the disorders of the administration in a time of public disturbance were responsible for them. According to him, the payments levied on the tax-farmers were merely the repayment of his advances, and that the imposts which he had appropriated were

the same. As for the loans which he had made to the State, they were an absolute necessity. To the insidious and insulting questions of the Chancellor he replied with the greatest adroitness. He was as bold as he was prudent. Only once he lost patience, and replied with an arrogance likely to do him harm. He certainly interested society. Ladies, in order to watch him as he was being reconducted to the Bastille, used to repair, masked, to a house which looked on to the Arsenal. Madame de Sévigné was there. "When I saw him," she said, "my legs trembled, and my heart beat so loud that I thought I should faint. As he approached us to return to his gaol, M. d'Artagnan nudged him, and called his attention to the fact that we were there. He thereupon saluted us, and assumed that laughing expression which you know so well. I do not think he recognized me, but I confess to you that I felt strangely moved when I saw him enter that little door. If you knew how unhappy one is when one has a heart fashioned as mine is fashioned, I am sure you would take pity on me."

All that was known about his attitude intensified public sympathy. The judges themselves recognized that he was incomparable; that he had never spoken so well in Parliament, and that he had never shown so much self-possession.

The last Interrogatory, that of the 4th December, turned on the scheme found at Saint-Mandé, and was particularly favourable to the accused.

Foucquet replied that it was nothing but an extravagant idea which had remained unfinished, and was repudiated as soon as conceived. It was an absurd document, which could only serve to make him ashamed and confused, but it could not be made the ground of an accusation against him. As the Chancellor pressed him and said, "You cannot deny that it is a crime against the State," he replied, "I confess, sir, that it is an extravagance, but it is not a crime against the State. I entreat these gentlemen," he added, turning towards the judges, "to permit me to explain what is a crime against the State. It is when a man holds a great office; when he is in the secret confidence of his Sovereign, and suddenly takes his place among that Sovereign's enemies; when he engages his whole family in the cause; when he induces his son-in-law to surrender the passes and to open the gates to a foreign army of intruders in order to admit it to the interior of the kingdom. Gentlemen, that is what is called a crime against the State."

The Chancellor, whose conduct during the Fronde every one remembered, did not know where to look, and it was all the judges could do not to laugh. The cross-examination over, the Chamber listened to the opinion of the reporters and pronounced sentence. On the 9th of December, Olivier d'Ormesson began his report. He spoke for five successive days, and his conclusion was perpetual exile, confiscation of goods and a fine of one hundred thousand livres, of which half should be given to the Public Treasury, and the other half employed in

works of piety. Le Cormier de Sainte-Hélène spoke after Olivier d'Ormesson. He continued for two days, and concluded with sentence of death. Pussort, whose vehement speech lasted for five hours, came to the same conclusion.

On the 18th December, Hérault, Gisaucourt, Noguès and Ferriol concurred, as did Le Cormier de Sainte-Hélène, and Roquesante after them, in the opinion of Olivier d'Ormesson.

On the following day, the 19th, MM. de La Toison, Du Verdier, de La Baume and de Massenau also expressed the same opinion; but the Master of Requests, Poncet, came to the opposite conclusion. Messieurs Le Féron, de Moussy, Brillac, Regnard and Besnard agreed with the first recorder. Voysin was of the opposite opinion. President de Pontchartrain voted for banishment, and the Chancellor, pronouncing last, voted for death. Thirteen judges had pronounced for banishment, and nine for death. Foucquet's life was saved.

"All Paris," said Olivier d'Ormesson, "awaited the news with impatience. It was spread abroad everywhere, and received with the greatest rejoicing, even by the shopkeepers. Every one blessed my name, even without knowing me. Thus M. Foucquet, who had been regarded with horror at the time of his imprisonment, and whom all Paris would have been immeasurably delighted to see executed directly after the beginning of his trial, had become the subject of public grief and commiseration, owing to the hatred which every one felt for the present Government, and that, I think, was the true cause of the general acclamation."

On the 22d of December, this same Olivier d'Ormesson having gone to the Bastille to give D'Artagnan his discharge for the Treasury registers, the gallant Musketeer embraced him and said: "You are a noble man!"

Foucquet, as a matter of form, protested against the sentence of a tribunal whose competence he did not recognize. And the sentence did not please the King, who commuted banishment into imprisonment for life in the fortress of Pignerol. Such a commutation, which was really an aggravation of the sentence, is cruel and offends our sense of justice. Nevertheless, one must recognize that such a measure was dictated by reasons of State. Foucquet, had he been free, would have been dangerous. He would certainly have intrigued; his plots and strategies would have caused the King much anxiety. The religion of patriotism had not yet taken root in the heart of the great Condé's contemporaries. The strongest bond then uniting citizens was loyalty to the King. Foucquet was liberated from that bond by his master's hatred and anger. It was to be expected that the fallen Minister would probably have conspired against France with foreign aid. These previsions justified the severity of the King, who throughout the whole business appeared hypocritical, violent, pitiless and patriotic.

The wisdom of the King's action is proved by Foucquet's conduct at Pignerol, where he arrived in January, 1665. There, in spite of the most vigilant supervision, he succeeded in carrying on intrigues. He could not communicate with any living soul. He had neither ink nor pens, nor paper at his disposal. This able man, whose genius was quickened by solitude, attempted the impossible in order to enter into communication with his friends. He manufactured ink out of soot, moistened with wine. He made pens out of chicken bones, and wrote on the margin of books which were lent to him, or on handkerchiefs. But his warder, Saint-Mars, detected all these contrivances. The servants whom the prisoner had won over were arrested, and one of them was hanged.

In the end, these futile energies were defeated by captivity and disease. Foucquet became addicted to devotional exercises. Like Mademoiselle de la Vallière, he wrote pious reflections.

It is even thought that he composed religious verses, for it is known that he asked for a dictionary of rhymes, which was given to him.

For seven years he had been cut off from living men. Then a voice called him. It was Lauzun, who was imprisoned at Pignerol, and who had made a hole in the wall. Lauzun told his companion news of the outer world. Foucquet listened eagerly, but when the Cadet de Gascogne told him that he held a general's commission, and that he had married La Grande Mademoiselle, at first with the approval of the King, and then against it, Foucquet considered him mad and ceased to believe anything that he said.

About 1679, Foucquet's captivity at length became less severe; he was permitted to receive his family. But it was too late; those fourteen cruel years had irreparably undermined his strong constitution; his sight had grown weak; he was losing his teeth; he was suffering pain in his whole body, and his piety was increasing with his weakness. He died in March, 1680, just as he had received permission to go and drink the waters of Bourbon. His body, which had been laid in the crypt of Sainte-Claire de Pignerol, Madame Foucquet had transferred the following year to the church of the Convent of the Visitation in the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine. The register of this church contains the following entry: "On the 28th March, 1681, Messire Nicolas Foucquet was buried in our church, in the Chapel of Saint-François de Sales. He had risen to the highest honours in the magistracy; had been Councillor in Parliament, Master of Requests, Attorney-General, Superintendent of Finance, and Minister of State."

Whatever may be said to the contrary, posterity does not judge with equity, for it is partial; it is indifferent, and makes but hasty work of the trial of the dead who appear before it. And posterity is not a Court of Justice; it is a noisy mob, in which it is impossible to make oneself heard, but which, at rare intervals, is

dominated by some great voice. Finally, its judgments are not definitive, since another posterity follows which may cancel the sentence of the first, and pronounce new ones, which again may be revoked by a new posterity. Nevertheless, certain cases seem to have been definitely lost in the court of mankind, and I find myself constrained to rank with these the case of Foucquet. He was an embezzler, and was definitely condemned on this point — condemned without appeal. As for extenuating circumstances, it is not difficult to find them. Illustrious examples, even more, perpetual solicitings and the impossibility of observing any regularity in troubled times, impelled him to steal, both for the State and for certain great men. Of his thefts he kept something; he kept too much. He was guilty, doubtless, but his fault seems greatly mitigated when one remembers the circumstances and the spirit of the time.

I am going to say something which is a kind of redemption of Nicolas Foucquet's memory; I will say it in two charming lines which are attributed to Pellisson, and which appear to have been written by Foucquet's friend, the fabulist. Pellisson, in an epistle to the King, said of Foucquet: D'un esprit élevé, négligeant l'avenir,

Il toucha les trésors, mais sans les retenir.

This it is which redeems and exalts this man. He was liberal, he loved to give, and he knew how to give, and let it not be said in the name of any morbid and morose morality that, even if he had taken the State's money without retaining it, he was only the more guilty, uniting prodigality to unscrupulousness. No, his liberality remains honourable; it showed that the principle which prompted his embezzlements was not a vile one, that, if this man was ruined, the cause of his ruin was not natural baseness, but the blind impulse of a naturally magnificent temperament. Thus Foucquet will live in history as the consoler of the aged Corneille, and the tactful patron of La Fontaine.

No one will deny his faults, the crimes he committed against the State, but for a moment one may forget them, and say that what was truly noble, and even nobly foolish in his temperament, half atones for the evil which has been only too thoroughly proved.

PART II

THE CHÂTEAU DE VAUX

DURING his trial Foucquet declared that he had begun the building of his house at Vaux as early as 1640. On this point his memory betrayed him. Reference to the inscription on an engraving by Perelle, after Israël Silvestre, assigns the commencement of work upon the house to the year 1653, but there is no doubt that Israel Silvestre planned the chateau on lines which were not absolutely final. Nor was the *ne varietur* plan, signed in 1666, exactly followed. It is not until 1657 that the registers of the parish of Maincy attest the presence of foreign workmen who had come to undertake certain building operations on the estate of Vaux.

The architect, Louis Levau, employed by Foucquet, was not a beginner. He had already built "a house at the apex of the island of Notre-Dame which is none other than the Hôtel Lambert, the ingenious novelties of which were greatly admired. Especially noteworthy was the chamber of Madame de Torigny, on the second floor, which Le Sueur had decorated with a grace which recalls the mural paintings of Herculaneum. This chamber was called the Italian room, "Because," said Guillet de Saint-Georges, "the beauty of the woodwork and the richness of the panelling took the place of tapestry."

Levau, born in 1612, was forty-three years of age when he signed the *ne varietur* plan. We know little about the life of this man whose work is so famous. A document of the 23rd March, 1651, describes him as "a man of noble birth, Councillor and Secretary to the King, House and Crown of France." He then lived in Paris, in the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, with his wife and his three young children, Jean, Louis and Nicolas.

Besides the Hôtel Lambert and the Chateau de Vaux, we are indebted to him for the design for the Collège des Quatre-Nations, now the Palace of the Institute; the Maison Bautru, called by Sauvai "La Gentille," and engraved by Marot; the Hôtel de Pons, in the Rue du Colombier (to-day the Rue du Vieux-Colombier), built for President Tambruneau; the Hôtel Deshameaux, which, according to Sauvai, had an Italian room; the Hôtel d'Hesselin in the Ile Saint-Louis; the Hôtel de Rohan, in the Rue de l'Université; the Château de Livry, since known as Le Raincy, built for the Intendant of Finances, Bordier; the Château de Seignelay; a château near Troyes; and the Château de Bercy. We may add that Louis Levau, having become first architect to the King, succeeded

Gamard in directing the works of the church of Saint-Sulpice, and that he, in his turn, was succeeded by Daniel Gillard in 1660.

Louis Levau died in Paris. His body was carried to the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, his parish church, on Saturday, the nth October, 1670, as attested by the register of this church. There, under the above date, may he read: "On the said day was buried Messire Louys Levau, aged 57 or thereabouts, who died this morning at three o'clock. In his life a Councillor of the King in his Council, general Superintendent of His Majesty's buildings, first Architect of his buildings, Secretary to His Majesty and the House and Crown of France, etc., taken from the Rue des Fossés, from the ancient Hôtel de Longueville."

To create the estate of Vaux in its prodigious magnificence, it was necessary to destroy three villages: Vaux-le-Vicomte, with its church and its mill, the hamlet of Maison-Rouge and that of Jumeau. The gigantic works which were necessary are hardly imaginable; immense rocks were carried away; deep canals were excavated.

Foucquet hurried on the work with all the impatience of his intemperate mind. As early as 1657 the animation which prevailed in the works was so great that it was spoken of as something immoderate, as though more befitting royalty. Foucquet felt that it was of importance to conceal proceedings which gave the impression of enormous expenditure. He wrote on the 8th of February, 1657:

"A gentleman of the neighbourhood, who is called Villevessin, told the Queen that he was lately at Vaux, and that in the workshop he counted nine hundred men. In order to avoid this as far as may be, you must carry out my design of putting up screens, and keeping the doors shut. I should be glad if you would advance all the work as far as possible before the season when everybody goes into the country, and I want you to avoid, as far as possible, having a large number of workpeople together."

If we compare the statement made by M. de Villevessin with a note written by Foucquet on the 21st November, 1660, we may conclude that at one time there were eighteen thousand workmen occupied on the buildings and the gardens.

Such works could not be kept secret. Colbert, jealous for his King and perhaps for himself, came to visit them in secret. Watel, Foucquet's steward — he who later entered the King's service, the story of whose death is well known — Watel, faithful servant, surprised Colbert making his inspection, and told his master. Foucquet took some precautions, but none the less the matter created a bad impression at Court. One day when the King, with Monsieur, was inspecting

the building operations at the Louvre, he complained to his brother that he had no money to complete this great building. Whereupon Monsieur replied jokingly:— “Sire, Your Majesty need only become Superintendent of Finance for a single year, and then you will have plenty of money for building.”

These immense works necessitated great institutions. Foucquet founded at Maincy a hospital called La Charité, where the workmen were received when they were ill.

Tapestry rooms were also established at Maincy. There, according to Le Brun’s designs, were executed *Les Chasses de Méléagre* and *l’ Histoire de Constantin*.

Le Brun himself settled at Maincy, with his wife Suzanne, in the autumn of 1658.

This great artist did not merely provide cartoons for tapestry; he decorated the ceilings of the halls of the château with allegorical paintings. Several pieces of sculpture also were executed from his drawings. Thus the four lions which are still seen at the foot of the staircase leading to the great Terrace des Grottes were designed by the painter; or, at least, so Mlle, de Scudéry says. These lions have almost human countenances. We know that the art of the eighteenth century was very free in its treatment of wild animals. The face expresses pride as well as gentleness. Lying in its innocent claws is a squirrel, pursued by a viper. Colbert again!

Now I must recall the great days of Vaux. They were not many, and the most brilliant was the last.

After the marriage of the King and the Infanta at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, the Court took the road to Paris. It halted at Fontainebleau, and Foucquet received it at Vaux with that audacious magnificence which he preferred even to the realities of power. The courtiers walked in the gardens, where the fountains were playing, and a wonderful supper was served. The gazetteer Press has preserved for us a list of the fruits and flowers which adorned the tables, as well as “preserves of every colour, the fritters and pastries and other dishes which were served there.”

A year later the Château de Vaux received the widow of Charles I, Henriette of France, Queen of England. She was accompanied by her daughter, Henrietta of England, and the Duc d’Orléans, her son-in-law. Henrietta, or, to give her her title, Madame, was in all the brilliance of her youth, had a genius both for affairs of gallantry and matters of State. She lived as though in haste, consuming in coquetry and in intrigue a life which was not fated to be a lone one. A woman of this character, so nearly related to the King, was bound to interest the ambitious Foucquet. He received her with all the refinements of magnificence. After dinner he had a Comedy played before her. The piece was by Molière himself, who was

already greatly admired for his naturalness and truth to life. The play was then completely new; it had not been seen either by the town or the Court. It was *L'Ecole des Maris*.

Shortly afterwards the Château of Vaux was to witness a yet more brilliant festivity — the last of all. When Foucquet invited the King, he was possessed by a spirit of un wisdom and of error; all about him, men and things alike, cried out to him in vain: Blind! blind!

The King set out from Fontainebleau on the 17th August, 1661, and came to Vaux in a coach, in which he was accompanied by Monsieur, the Comtesse d'Armagnac, the Duchesse de Valentinois and the Comtesse de Guiche. The Queen-Mother came in her own coach, and Madame in her litter. The young Queen, detained at Fontainebleau by her pregnancy, was not present at that cruel festivity. More than six thousand persons were invited. The King and the Court began by visiting the park. All were loud in their admiration of the great fountains. "There was," says La Fontaine, "great discussion as to which was the best, the Cascade, the Wheat-Sheaf Jet, the Fountain of the Crown or the Animals." The chateau also was inspected and Le Brun's pictures greatly admired.

The King could ill contain his wrath at a display of luxury which seemed stolen from him, and which he was later on to imitate at Versailles, with all the diligence of a good pupil. He was angered, so it is said, by an allegorical picture into which Le Brun had obviously introduced the portrait of Mademoiselle de la Vallière. The fact may be doubted, but it is certain that the courtiers, with eyes sharpened by envy, remarked on all the panelling Foucquet's device: "*Quo non ascendant* or *Quo non ascendet?*" accompanying a squirrel (or foucquet) climbing up a tree. Louis XIV, according to Choisy, conceived the idea of arresting his insolent subject on the spot, and it was the Queen-Mother, who had long been Foucquet's friend, who prevented him from doing so. But such impatience is not consistent with that patient duplicity which the King displayed in this connection. Almost at that very moment, did he not ask his hospitable subject for another festival to celebrate the churching of the young Queen?

After the château and grounds had been visited, there was a lottery in which every guest won something: the ladies jewels, the men weapons. Then a supper was served, provided by Watel, the cost of which was valued at one hundred and twenty thousand livres. "Great were the delicacy and the rarity of the dishes," says La Fontaine, "but greater still the grace with which Monsieur le Surintendant and Madame la Surintendante did the honours of their house." The pantry of the château then contained at least thirty-six dozen plates of solid gold

and a service of the same metal. After supper the guests went to the Allée des Sâpins, where a stage had been erected.

Mechanical stage effects were then much in vogue. Those of Vaux were wonderful. The mechanism was the work of Torelli, and the scenery was painted by Le Brun.

Deux enchanteurs pleins de savoir
Firent tant, par leur imposture,
Qu'on crut qu'ils avaient le pouvoir
De commander à la nature.
L'un de ces enchanteurs est le sieur Torelli,
Magicien expert et faiseur de miracles;
Et l'autre, c'est Lebrun, par qui Vaux embelli
Présente aux regardants mille rares spectacles.
Rocks were seen to open, and statues moved.

The scene represented a grim rock in a lonely desert. Suddenly the rock changed to a shell, and, the shell having opened, there came forth a nymph. This was Béjart, who recited a prologue by Pellisson. "In this prologue, Béjart, who represents the nymph of the fountain where the action is taking place, commands the divinities, who are subject to her, to leave the statues in which they are enshrined, and to contribute with all their power to His Majesty's amusement. Straightway the pedestals and the statues which adorn the stage move, and there emerge from them, I know not how, fauns and bacchantes, who form a ballet. It is very amusing to see a god of boundaries delivered of a child which comes into the world dancing."

The ballet was followed by the play which had been conceived, written and rehearsed in a fortnight. It was Molière's *Les Fâcheux*. The play, as we know, has interludes of dancing, and concludes with a ballet. "It is Terence," was the verdict. No doubt, but it is a devilish bad Terence.

The night was one of those fiery nights of which Racine writes in the most worldly of his tragedies. Fireworks shot into the air. There was a rain of stars; then, when the King departed, the lantern on the dome which surmounted the château burst into flames, vomiting sheaves of rockets and fiery serpents. We know what a sad morrow succeeded that splendid night.

My task is completed.

Madame Foucquet, of whose biography we have already given an outline, obtained a legal separation of her property from her husband's before the sentence of the 19th December, 1664. She was able to retain a considerable part

of her fortune. "On the 19th March, 1673, she bought back from the creditors, for one million two hundred and fifty thousand livres, the Viscounty of Melun, with the estate of Vaux, and made a donation thereof to her son, Louis-Nicolas Fouquet, by various deeds, dated 1683, 1689, 1703. Her son having died without posterity in 1705, she sold the estate on the 29th August, 1705, to Louis-Hector, Duc de Villars, Marshal of France, who parted with it on the 27th August, 1764, to C.-Gabriel de Choiseuû, Duc de Praslin and peer of France, for one million six hundred thousand livres." The château remained in the family of Choiseul-Paraslin until the 6th July, 1875.

By a piece of good fortune it then passed into the hands of M. A. Sommier. From that day one may say that art and letters have been vigilant in its preservation, for M. Sommier combines the most perfect taste with a love of art, and Madame Sommier is the daughter of M. de Barante, the famous historian.

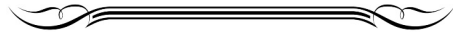
But for M. Sommier it was not enough to preserve this historical monument. His artistic munificence was prepared for any sacrifice in order to restore those cascades and grottos at which La Fontaine had marvelled, and which had fallen into ruins, been overgrown with brushwood, in which vipers lurked and rabbits burrowed. In this noble task M. Sommier was fortunately aided by a learned architect, M. Destailleurs. M. Rodolphe Pfnor, my collaborator and friend, holds it an honour to associate himself with the praises which I here bestow upon the understanding liberality of M. Sommier. M. Pfnor, by reason of his skill in architecture and the arts of design, is competent to give these praises a real and absolute value. Be it understood that I speak for him as well as for myself.

It is just that art and letters should unite in congratulating M. Sommier. The restorer of the Château de Vaux has deserved well of both. It was reserved for him to realize in all its splendour *Le Songe Vaux*. He has uttered the command in a voice which has been obeyed:

Fontaines, jaillissez,
Herbe tendre, croissez
Le long de ces rivages.
Venez, petits oiseaux,
Accorder vos ramages
Au doux bruit de leurs eaux.

THE END

CRAINQUEBILLE, PUTOIS, RIQUET AND OTHER PROFITABLE TALES



Translated by Winifred Stephens Whale **CONTENTS**

[CRAINQUEBILLE](#)
[PUTOIS](#)
[RIQUET](#)
[THE MEDITATIONS OF RIQUET](#)
[THE NECKTIE](#)
[THE MONTIL MANŒUVRES](#)
[ÉMILE](#)
[ADRIENNE BUQUET](#)
[THE INTAGLIO](#)
[LA SIGNORA CHIARA](#)
[UPRIGHT JUDGES](#)
[THE OCEAN CHRIST](#)
[JEAN MARTEAU](#)
[MONSIEUR THOMAS](#)
[A SERVANT'S THEFT](#)
[EDMÉE, OR CHARITY WELL BESTOWED](#)

TO

ALEXANDRE STEINLEN

AND TO

LUCIEN GUITRY

WHO, THE FORMER IN A SERIES OF ADMIRABLE DRAWINGS THE
LATTER IN A FINE DRAMATIC CREATION, HAVE INVESTED WITH A
TRAGIC GREATNESS THE HUMBLE FIGURE OF MY POOR
COSTERMONGER.

NOTE

The section entitled “Riquet” forms Chapter 11 of “Monsieur Bergeret à Paris” and is here included as an introduction to Riquet’s “Meditations.”

A story entitled “Onésime Dupont” appears both in the volume here presented and in the one entitled “Pierre Nozière.” In the English edition it will be reproduced in the latter volume only.

CRAINQUEBILLE

IN every sentence pronounced by a judge in the name of the sovereign people, dwells the whole majesty of justice. The august character of that justice was brought home to Jérôme Crainquebille, costermonger, when, accused of having insulted a policeman, he appeared in the police court. Having taken his place in the dock, he beheld in the imposing sombre hall magistrates, clerks, lawyers in their robes, the usher wearing his chains, *gendarmes*, and, behind a rail, the bare heads of the silent spectators. He, himself, occupied a raised seat, as if some sinister honour were conferred on the accused by his appearance before the magistrate. At the end of the hall, between two assessors, sat the Président Bourriche. The palm-leaves of an officer of the Academy decorated his breast. Over the tribune were a bust representing the Republic and a crucifix, as if to indicate that all laws divine and human were suspended over Crainquebille's head. Such symbols naturally inspired him with terror. Not being gifted with a philosophic mind, he did not inquire the meaning of the bust and the crucifix; he did not ask how far Jesus and the symbolical bust harmonized in the Law Courts. Nevertheless, here was matter for reflection; for, after all, pontifical teaching and canon law are in many points opposed to the constitution of the Republic and to the civil code. So far as we know the Decretals have not been abolished. To-day, as formerly, the Church of Christ teaches that only those powers are lawful to which it has given its sanction. Now the French Republic claims to be independent of pontifical power. Crainquebille might reasonably say:

“Gentlemen and magistrates, in so much as President Loubet has not been anointed, the Christ, whose image is suspended over your heads, repudiates you through the voice of councils and of Popes. Either he is here to remind you of the rights of the Church, which invalidate yours, or His presence has no rational signification.”

Whereupon President Bourriche might reply:

“Prisoner Crainquebille, the kings of France have always quarrelled with the Pope. Guillaume de Nogaret was excommunicated, but for so trifling a reason he did not resign his office. The Christ of the tribune is not the Christ of Gregory VII or of Boniface VIII. He is, if you will, the Christ of the Gospels, who knew not one word of canon law, and had never heard of the holy Decretals.”

Then Crainquebille might not without reason have answered:

“The Christ of the Gospels was an agitator. Moreover, he was the victim of a sentence, which for nineteen hundred years all Christian peoples have regarded

as a grave judicial error. I defy you Monsieur le Président, to condemn me in His name to so much as forty-eight hours' imprisonment."

But Crainquebille did not indulge in any considerations either historical, political or social. He was wrappd in amazement. All the ceremonial, with which he was surrounded, impressed him with a very lofty idea of justice. Filled with reverence, overcome with terror, he was ready to submit to his judges in the matter of his guilt. In his own conscience he was convinced of his innocence; but he felt how insignificant is the conscience of a costermonger in the face of the panoply of the law, and the ministers of public prosecution. Already his lawyer had half persuaded him that he was not innocent.

A summary and hasty examination had brought out the charges under which he laboured.

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CRAINQUEBILLE'S MISADVENTURE

UP and down the town went Jérôme Crainquebille, costermonger, pushing his barrow before him and crying: "Cabbages! Turnips! Carrots!" When he had leeks he cried: "Asparagus!" For leeks are the asparagus of the poor. Now it happened that on October 20, at noon, as he was going down the Rue Montmartre, there came out of her shop the shoemaker's wife, Madame Bayard. She went up to Crainquebille's barrow and scornfully taking up a bundle of leeks, she said:

"I don't think much of your leeks. What do you want a bundle?"

"Sevenpence halfpenny, mum, and the best in the market!"

"Sevenpence halfpenny for three wretched leeks?"

And disdainfully she cast the leeks back into the barrow.

Then it was that Constable 64 came and said to Crainquebille:

"Move on."

Moving on was what Crainquebille had been doing from morning till evening for fifty years. Such an order seemed right to him, and perfectly in accordance with the nature of things. Quite prepared to obey, he urged his customer to take what she wanted.

"You must give me time to choose," she retorted sharply.

Then she felt all the bundles of leeks over again. Finally, she selected the one she thought the best, and held it clasped to her bosom as saints in church pictures hold the palm of victory.

"I will give you seven pence. That's quite enough; and I'll have to fetch it from the shop, for I haven't anything on me."

Still embracing the leeks, she went back into the shop, whither she had been preceded by a customer, carrying a child.

Just at this moment Constable 64 said to Crainquebille for the second time:

"Move on."

"I'm waiting for my money," replied Crainquebille.

"And I'm not telling you to wait for your money; I'm telling you to move on," retorted the constable grimly.

Meanwhile, the shoemaker's wife in her shop was fitting blue slippers on to a child of eighteen months, whose mother was in a hurry. And the green heads of the leeks were lying on the counter.

For the half century that he had been pushing his barrow through the streets, Crainquebille had been learning respect for authority. But now his position was a peculiar one: he was torn asunder between what was his due and what was his duty. His was not a judicial mind. He failed to understand that the possession of an individual's right in no way exonerated him from the performance of a social duty. He attached too great importance to his claim to receive seven pence, and too little to the duty of pushing his barrow and moving on, for ever moving on. He stood still.

For the third time Constable 64 quietly and calmly ordered him to move on. Unlike Inspector Montauciel, whose habit it is to threaten constantly but never to take proceedings, Constable 64 is slow to threaten and quick to act. Such is his character. Though somewhat sly he is an excellent servant and a loyal soldier. He is as brave as a lion and as gentle as a child. He knows naught save his official instructions.

"Don't you understand when I tell you to move on?"

To Crainquebille's mind his reason for standing still was too weighty for him not to consider it sufficient. Therefore, artlessly and simply he explained it:

"Good Lord! Don't I tell you that I am waiting for my money."

Constable 64 merely replied:

"Do you want me to summons you? If you do you have only to say so."

At these words Crainquebille slowly shrugged his shoulders, looked sadly at the constable, and then raised his eyes to heaven, as if he would say:

"I call God to witness! Am I a law-breaker? Am I one to make light of the by-laws and ordinances which regulate my ambulatory calling? At five o'clock in the morning I was at the market. Since seven, pushing my barrow and wearing my hands to the bone, I have been crying: 'Cabbages! Turnips! Carrots!' I am turned sixty. I am worn out. And you ask me whether I have raised the black flag of rebellion. You are mocking me and your joking is cruel."

Either because he failed to notice the expression on Crainquebille's face, or because he considered it no excuse for disobedience, the constable inquired curtly and roughly whether he had been understood.

Now, just at that moment the block of traffic in the Rue Montmartre was at its worst. Carriages, drays, carts, omnibuses, trucks, jammed one against the other, seemed indissolubly welded together. From their quivering immobility proceeded shouts and oaths. Cabmen and butchers' boys grandiloquent and drawling insulted one another from a distance, and omnibus conductors, regarding Crainquebille as the cause of the block, called him "a dirty leek."

Meanwhile, on the pavement the curious were crowding round to listen to the dispute. Then the constable, finding himself the centre of attention, began to

think it time to display his authority:

“Very well,” he said, taking a stumpy pencil and a greasy notebook from his pocket.

Crainquebille persisted in his idea, obedient to a force within. Besides, it was now impossible for him either to move on or to draw back. The wheel of his barrow was unfortunately caught in that of a milkman’s cart.

Tearing his hair beneath his cap he cried:

“But don’t I tell you I’m waiting for my money! Here’s a fix! *Misère de misère! Bon sang de bon sang!* ”

By these words, expressive rather of despair than of rebellion, Constable 64 considered he had been insulted. And, because to his mind all insults must necessarily take the consecrated, regular, traditional, liturgical, ritual form so to speak of *Mort aux vaches*, thus the offender’s words were heard and understood by the constable.

“Ah! You said: *Mort aux vaches* . Very good. Come along.”

Stupefied with amazement and distress, Crainquebille opened his great rheumy eyes and gazed at Constable 64. With a broken voice proceeding now from the top of his head and now from the heels of his boots, he cried, with his arms folded over his blue blouse:

“I said ‘*Mort aux vaches* ’? I? ... Oh!”

The tradesmen and errand boys hailed the arrest with laughter. It gratified the taste of all crowds for violent and ignoble spectacles. But there was one serious person who was pushing his way through the throng; he was a sad-looking old man, dressed in black, wearing a high hat; he went up to the constable and said to him in a low voice very gently and firmly:

“You are mistaken. This man did not insult you.”

“Mind your own business,” replied the policeman, but without threatening, for he was speaking to a man who was well dressed.

The old man insisted calmly and tenaciously. And the policeman ordered him to make his declaration to the Police Commissioner.

Meanwhile Crainquebille was explaining:

“Then I did say ‘*Mort aux vaches!* ’ Oh!...”

As he was thus giving vent to his astonishment, Madame Bayard, the shoemaker’s wife, came to him with sevenpence in her hand. But Constable 64 already had him by the collar; so Madame Bayard, thinking that no debt could be due to a man who was being taken to the police-station, put her sevenpence into her apron pocket.

Then, suddenly beholding his barrow confiscated, his liberty lost, a gulf opening beneath him and the sky overcast, Crainquebille murmured:

“It can’t be helped!”

Before the Commissioner, the old gentleman declared that he had been hindered on his way by the block in the traffic, and so had witnessed the incident. He maintained that the policeman had not been insulted, and that he was labouring under a delusion. He gave his name and profession: Dr. David Matthieu, chief physician at the Ambroise-Paré Hospital, officer of the Legion of Honour. At another time such evidence would have been sufficient for the Commissioner. But just then men of science were regarded with suspicion in France.

Crainquebille continued under arrest. He passed the night in the lock-up. In the morning he was taken to the Police Court in the prison van.

He did not find prison either sad or humiliating. It seemed to him necessary. What struck him as he entered was the cleanliness of the walls and of the brick floor.

“Well, for a clean place, yes, it is a clean place. You might eat on the floor.”

When he was left alone, he wanted to draw out his stool; but he perceived that it was fastened to the wall. He expressed his surprise aloud:

“That’s a queer idea! Now there’s a thing I should never have thought of, I’m sure.”

Having sat down, he twiddled his thumbs and remained wrapped in amazement. The silence and the solitude overwhelmed him. The time seemed long. Anxiously he thought of his barrow, which had been confiscated with its load of cabbages, carrots, celery, dandelion and corn-salad. And he wondered, asking himself with alarm: “What have they done with my barrow?”

On the third day he received a visit from his lawyer, Maître Lemerle, one of the youngest members of the Paris Bar, President of a section of La Ligue de la Patrie Française.

Crainquebille endeavoured to tell him his story; but it was not easy, for he was not accustomed to conversation. With a little help he might perhaps have succeeded. But his lawyer shook his head doubtfully at everything he said; and, turning over his papers, muttered:

“Hm! Hm! I don’t find anything about all this in my brief.”

Then, in a bored tone, twirling his fair moustache he said:

“In your own interest it would be advisable, perhaps, for you to confess. Your persistence in absolute denial seems to me extremely unwise.”

And from that moment Crainquebille would have made confession if he had known what to confess.



CRAINQUEBILLE BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES

PRESIDENT BOURRICHE devoted six whole minutes to the examination of Crainquebille. This examination would have been more enlightening if the accused had replied to the questions asked him. But Crainquebille was unaccustomed to discussion; and in such a company his lips were sealed by reverence and fear. So he was silent: and the President answered his own question; his replies were staggering. He concluded: "Finally, you admit having said, '*Mort aux vaches* .' "

"I said, '*Mort aux vaches!* ' because the policeman said, '*Mort aux vaches!* ' so then I said '*Mort aux vaches!* ' "

He meant that, being overwhelmed by the most unexpected of accusations, he had in his amazement merely repeated the curious words falsely attributed to him, and which he had certainly never pronounced. He had said, "*Mort aux vache!* " as he might have said, "I capable of insulting anyone! how could you believe it?"

President Bourriche put a different interpretation on the incident.

"Do you maintain," he said, "that the policeman was, himself, the first to utter the exclamation?"

Crainquebille gave up trying to explain. It was too difficult.

"You do not persist in your statement. You are quite right," said the President.

And he had the witness called.

Constable 64, by name Bastien Matra, swore he spoke the truth and nothing but the truth. Then he gave evidence in the following terms:

"I was on my beat on October 20, at noon, when I noticed in the Rue Montmartre a person who appeared to be a hawker, unduly blocking the traffic with his barrow opposite No. 328. Three times I intimated to him the order to move on, but he refused to comply. And when I gave him warning that I was about to charge him, he retorted by crying: '*Mort aux vaches!* ' Which I took as an insult."

This evidence, delivered in a firm and moderate manner, the magistrates received with obvious approbation. The witnesses for the defence were Madame Bayard, shoemaker's wife, and Dr. David Matthieu, chief physician to the Hospital Ambroise Paré, officer of the Legion of Honour. Madame Bayard had

seen nothing and heard nothing. Dr. Matthieu was in the crowd which had gathered round the policeman, who was ordering the costermonger to move on. His evidence led to a new episode in the trial.

"I witnessed the incident," he said, "I observed that the constable had made a mistake; he had not been insulted. I went up to him and called his attention to the fact. The officer insisted on arresting the costermonger, and told me to follow him to the Commissioner of Police. This I did. Before the Commissioner, I repeated my declaration.

"You may sit down," said the President. "Usher, recall witness Matra."

"Matra, when you proceeded to arrest the accused, did not Dr. Matthieu point out to you that you were mistaken?"

"That is to say, Monsieur le Président, that he insulted me."

"What did he say?"

"He said, '*Mort aux vaches!*'"

Uproarious laughter arose from the audience.

"You may withdraw," said the President hurriedly.

And he warned the public that if such unseemly demonstrations occurred again he would clear the court. Meanwhile, Counsel for the defence was haughtily fluttering the sleeves of his gown, and for the moment it was thought that Crainquebille would be acquitted.

Order having being restored, Maître Lemerle rose. He opened his pleading with a eulogy of policemen: "those unassuming servants of society who, in return for a trifling salary, endure fatigue and brave incessant danger with daily heroism. They were soldiers once, and soldiers they remain; soldiers, that word expresses everything...."

From this consideration Maître Lemerle went on to descant eloquently on the military virtues. He was one of those, he said, who would not allow a finger to be laid on the army, on that national army, to which he was so proud to belong.

The President bowed. Maître Lemerle happened to be lieutenant in the Reserves. He was also nationalist candidate for Les Vieilles Haudriettes. He continued:

"No, indeed, I do not esteem lightly the invaluable services unassumingly rendered, which the valiant people of Paris receive daily from the guardians of the peace. And had I beheld in Crainquebille, gentlemen, one who had insulted an ex-soldier, I should never have consented to represent him before you. My client is accused of having said: '*Mort aux vaches!*' The meaning of such an expression is clear. If you consult *Le Dictionnaire de la Langue Verte* (slang) you will find: '*Vachard* a sluggard, an idler, one who stretches himself out lazily

like a cow instead of working. *Vache* , one who sells himself to the police; spy.’ *Mort aux vaches* is an expression employed by certain people. But the question resolves itself into this: how did Crainquebille say it? And, further, did he say it at all? Permit me to doubt it, gentlemen.

“I do not suspect Constable Matra of any evil intention. But, as we have said, his calling is arduous. He is sometimes harassed, fatigued, overdone. In such conditions he may have suffered from an aural hallucination. And, when he comes and tells you, gentlemen, that Dr. David Matthieu, officer of the Legion of Honour, chief physician at the Ambroise-Paré Hospital, a gentleman and a prince of science, cried: ‘*Mort aux vaches* ,’ then we are forced to believe that Matra is obsessed, and if the term be not too strong, suffering from the mania of persecution.

“And even if Crainquebille did cry: ‘*Mort aux vaches* ,’ it remains to be proved whether such words on his lips can be regarded as an offence. Crainquebille is the natural child of a costermonger, depraved by years of drinking and other evil courses. Crainquebille was born alcoholic. You behold him brutalized by sixty years of poverty. Gentlemen you must conclude that he is irresponsible.”

Maitre Lemerle sat down. Then President Bourriche muttered a sentence condemning Jérôme Crainquebille to pay fifty francs fine and to go to prison for a fortnight. The magistrates convicted him on the strength of the evidence given by Constable Matra.

As he was being taken down the long dark passage of the Palais, Crainquebille felt an intense desire for sympathy. He turned to the municipal guard who was his escort and called him three times:

“‘Cipal! ... ‘cipal! ... Eh! ‘cipal!’” And he sighed:

“If anyone had told me only a fortnight ago that this would happen!”

Then he reflected:

“They speak too quickly, these gentlemen. They speak well, but they speak too quickly. You can’t make them understand you. ... ‘cipal, don’t you think they speak too quickly?’”

But the soldier marched straight on without replying or turning his head.

Crainquebille asked him:

“Why don’t you answer me?”

The soldier was silent. And Crainquebille said bitterly:

“You would speak to a dog. Why not to me? Do you never open your mouth? Is it because your breath is foul?”

IV

AN APOLOGY FOR PRESIDENT BOURRICHE

AFTER the sentence had been pronounced, several members of the audience and two or three lawyers left the hall. The clerk was already calling another case. Those who went out did not reflect on the Crainquebille affair, which had not greatly interested them; and they thought no more about it. Monsieur Jean Lermite, an etcher, who happened to be at the Palais, was the only one who meditated on what he had just seen and heard. Putting his arm on the shoulder of Maître Joseph Aubarrée, he said:

“President Bourriche must be congratulated on having kept his mind free from idle curiosity, and from the intellectual pride which is determined to know everything. If he had weighed one against the other the contradictory evidence of Constable Matra and Dr. David Matthieu, the magistrate would have adopted a course leading to nothing but doubt and uncertainty. The method of examining facts in a critical spirit would be fatal to the administration of justice. If the judge were so imprudent as to follow that method, his sentences would depend on his personal sagacity, of which he has generally no very great store, and on human infirmity which is universal. Where can he find a criterion? It cannot be denied that the historical method is absolutely incapable of providing him with the certainty he needs. In this connexion you may recall a story told of Sir Walter Raleigh.

“‘One day, when Raleigh, a prisoner in the Tower of London, was working, as was his wont, at the second part of his “History of the World,” there was a scuffle under his window. He went and looked at the brawlers; and when he returned to his work, he thought he had observed them very carefully. But on the morrow, having related the incident to one of his friends who had witnessed the affair and had even taken part in it, he was contradicted by his friend on every point. Reflecting, therefore, that if he were mistaken as to events which passed beneath his very eyes, how much greater must be the difficulty of ascertaining the truth concerning events far distant, he threw the manuscript of his history into the fire.’

“If the judges had the same scruples as Sir Walter Raleigh, they would throw all their notes into the fire. But they have no right to do so. They would thus be flouting justice; they would be committing a crime. We may despair of knowing, we must not despair of judging. Those who demand that sentences pronounced

in Law Courts should be founded upon a methodical examination of facts, are dangerous sophists, and perfidious enemies of justice both civil and military. President Bourriche has too judicial a mind to permit his sentences to depend on reason and knowledge, the conclusions of which are eternally open to question. He founds them on dogma and moulds them by tradition, so that the authority of his sentences is equal to that of the Church's commandments. His sentences are indeed canonical. I mean that he derives them from a certain number of sacred canons. See, for example, how he classifies evidence, not according to the uncertain and deceptive qualities of appearances and of human veracity, but according to intrinsic, permanent and manifest qualities. He weighs them in the scale, using weapons of war for weights. Can anything be at once simpler and wiser? Irrefutable for him is the evidence of a guardian of the peace, once his humanity be abstracted, and he conceived as a registered number, and according to the categories of an ideal police. Not that Matra (Bastien), born at Cinto-Monte in Corsica, appears to him incapable of error. He never thought that Bastien Matra was gifted with any great faculty of observation, nor that he applied any secret and vigorous method to the examination of facts. In truth it is not Bastien Matra he is considering, but Constable 64. A man is fallible, he thinks. Peter and Paul may be mistaken. Descartes and Gassendi, Leibnitz and Newton, Bichat and Claude Bernard were capable of error. We may all err and at any moment. The causes of error are innumerable. The perceptions of our senses and the judgment of our minds are sources of illusion and causes of uncertainty. We dare not rely on the evidence of a single man: *Testis unus, testis nullus*. But we may have faith in a number. Bastien Matra, of Cinto-Monte, is fallible. But Constable 64, when abstraction has been made of his humanity, cannot err. He is an entity. An entity has nothing in common with a man, it is free from all that confuses, corrupts and deceives men. It is pure, unchangeable and unalloyed. Wherefore the magistrates did not hesitate to reject the evidence of the mere man, Dr. David Matthieu, and to admit that of Constable 64, who is the pure idea, an emanation from divinity come down to the judgment bar.

“By following such a line of argument, President Bourriche attains to a kind of infallibility, the only kind to which a magistrate may aspire. When the man who bears witness is armed with a sword, it is the sword's evidence that must be listened to, not the man's. The man is contemptible and may be wrong. The sword is not contemptible and is always right. President Bourriche has seen deeply into the spirit of laws. Society rests on force; force must be respected as the august foundation of society. Justice is the administration of force. President Bourriche knows that Constable 64 is an integral part of the Government. The Government is immanent in each one of its officers. To slight the authority of

Constable 64 is to weaken the State. To eat the leaves of an artichoke is to eat the artichoke, as Bossuet puts it in his sublime language. (*Politique tirée de l'Ecriture sainte, passim.*)

“All the swords of the State are turned in the same direction. To oppose one to the other is to overthrow the Republic. For that reason, Crainquebille, the accused, is justly condemned to a fortnight in prison and a fine of fifty francs, on the evidence of Constable 64. I seem to hear President Bourriche, himself, explaining the high and noble considerations which inspired his sentence. I seem to hear him saying:

“I judged this person according to the evidence of Constable 64, because Constable 64. is the emanation of public force. And if you wish to prove my wisdom, imagine the consequences had I adopted the opposite course. You will see at once that it would have been absurd. For if my judgments were in opposition to force, they would never be executed. Notice, gentlemen, that judges are only obeyed when force is on their side. A judge without policemen would be but an idle dreamer. I should be doing myself an injury if I admitted a policeman to be in the wrong. Moreover, the very spirit of laws is in opposition to my doing so. To disarm the strong and to arm the weak would be to subvert that social order which it is my duty to preserve. Justice is the sanction of established injustice. Was justice ever seen to oppose conquerors and usurpers? When an unlawful power arises, justice has only to recognize it and it becomes lawful. Form is everything; and between crime and innocence there is but the thickness of a piece of stamped paper. It was for you, Crainquebille, to be the strongest. If, after having cried: “*Mort aux vaches!* ” you had declared yourself emperor, dictator, President of the Republic or even town councillor, I assure you you would not have been sentenced to pass a fortnight in prison, and to pay a fine of fifty francs. I should have acquitted you. You may be sure of that.

“Such would have doubtless been the words of President Bourriche; for he has a judicial mind, and he knows what a magistrate owes to society. With order and regularity he defends social principles. Justice is social. Only wrong-headed persons would make justice out to be human and reasonable. Justice is administered upon fixed rules, not in obedience to physical emotions and flashes of intelligence. Above all things do not ask justice to be just, it has no need to be just since it is justice, and I might even say that the idea of just justice can have only arisen in the brains of an anarchist. True, President Magnaud pronounces just sentences; but if they are reversed, that is still justice.

“The true judge weighs his evidence with weights that are weapons. So it was in the Crainquebille affair, and in other more famous cases.”

Thus said Monsieur Jean Lermite as he paced up and down the Salle des Pas

Perdus.

Scratching the tip of his nose, Maître Joseph Aubarrée, who knows the Palais well, replied:

“If you want to hear what I think, I don’t believe that President Bourriche rose to so lofty a metaphysical plane. In my opinion, when he received as true the evidence of Constable 64, he merely acted according to precedent. Imitation lies at the root of most human actions. A respectable person is one who conforms to custom. People are called good when they do as others do.”

V

CRAINQUEBILLE SUBMITS TO THE LAWS OF THE REPUBLIC

HAVING been taken back to his prison, Crainquebille sat down on his chained stool, filled with astonishment and admiration. He, himself, was not quite sure whether the magistrates were mistaken. The tribunal had concealed its essential weakness beneath the majesty of form. He could not believe that he was in the right, as against magistrates whose reasons he had not understood: it was impossible for him to conceive that anything could go wrong in so elaborate a ceremony. For, unaccustomed to attending Mass or frequenting the Elysée, he had never in his life witnessed anything so grand as a police court trial. He was perfectly aware that he had never cried "*Mort aux vaches!*" That for having said it he should have been sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment seemed to him an august mystery, one of those articles of faith to which believers adhere without understanding them, an obscure, striking, adorable and terrible revelation.

This poor old man believed himself guilty of having mystically offended Constable 64, just as the little boy learning his first Catechism believes himself guilty of Eve's sin. His sentence had taught him that he had cried: "*Mort aux vaches!*" He must, therefore have cried "*Mort aux vaches!*" in some mysterious manner, unknown to himself. He was transported into a supernatural world. His trial was his apocalypse.

If he had no very clear idea of the offence, his idea of the penalty was still less clear. His sentence appeared to him a solemn and superior ritual, something dazzling and incomprehensible, which is not to be discussed, and for which one is neither to be praised nor pitied. If at that moment he had seen President Bourriche, with white wings and a halo round his forehead, coming down through a hole in the ceiling, he would not have been surprised at this new manifestation of judicial glory. He would have said: "This is my trial continuing!"

On the next day his lawyer visited him:

"Well, my good fellow, things aren't so bad after all! Don't be discouraged. A fortnight is soon over. We have not much to complain of."

"As for that, I must say the gentlemen were very kind, very polite: not a single rude word. I shouldn't have believed it. And the *cipal* was wearing white gloves. Did you notice?"

"Everything considered, we did well to confess."

"Perhaps."

“Crainquebille, I have a piece of good news for you. A charitable person, whose interest I have elicited on your behalf, gave me fifty francs for you. The sum will be used to pay your fine.”

“When will you give me the money?”

“It will be paid into the clerk’s office. You need not trouble about it.”

“It does not matter. All the same I am very grateful to this person.” And Crainquebille murmured meditatively: “It’s something out of the common that’s happening to me.”

“Don’t exaggerate, Crainquebille. Your case is by no means rare, far from it.”

“You couldn’t tell me where they’ve put my barrow?”

VI

CRAINQUEBILLE IN THE LIGHT OF PUBLIC OPINION

AFTER his discharge from prison, Crainquebille trundled his barrow along the Rue Montmartre, crying: "Cabbages, turnips, carrots!" He was neither ashamed nor proud of his adventure. The memory of it was not painful. He classed it in his mind with dreams, travels and plays. But, above all things, he was glad to be walking in the mud, along the paved streets, and to see overhead the rainy sky as dirty as the gutter, the dear sky of the town. At every corner he stopped to have a drink; then, gay and unconstrained, spitting in his hands in order to moisten his horny palms, he would seize the shafts and push on his barrow. Meanwhile a flight of sparrows, as poor and as early as he, seeking their livelihood in the road, flew off at the sound of his familiar cry: "Cabbages, turnips, carrots!" An old house wife, who had come up, said to him as she felt his celery:

"What's happened to you, Père Crainquebille? We haven't seen you for three weeks. Have you been ill? You look rather pale."

"I'll tell you, M'ame Mailloche, I've been doing the gentleman."

Nothing in his life changed, except that he went oftener to the pub, because he had an idea it was a holiday and that he had made the acquaintance of charitable folk. He returned to his garret rather gay. Stretched on his mattress he drew over him the sacks borrowed from the chestnut-seller at the corner which served him as blankets and he pondered: "Well, prison is not so bad; one has everything one wants there. But all the same one is better at home."

His contentment did not last long. He soon perceived that his customers looked at him askance.

"Fine celery, M'ame Cointreau!"

"I don't want anything."

"What! nothing! do you live on air then?"

And M'ame Cointreau without deigning to reply returned to the large bakery of which she was the mistress. The shopkeepers and caretakers, who had once flocked round his barrow all green and blooming, now turned away from him. Having reached the shoemaker's, at the sign of l'Ange Gardien, the place where his adventures with justice had begun, he called:

"M'ame Bayard, M'ame Bayard, you owe me sevenpence halfpenny from last time."

But M'ame Bayard, who was sitting at her counter, did not deign to turn her head.

The whole of the Rue Montmartre was aware that Père Crainquebille had been in prison, and the whole of the Rue Montmartre gave up his acquaintance. The rumour of his conviction had reached the Faubourg and the noisy corner of the Rue Richer. There, about noon, he perceived Madame Laure, a kind and faithful customer, leaning over the barrow of another costermonger, young Martin. She was feeling a large cabbage. Her hair shone in the sunlight like masses of golden threads loosely twisted. And young Martin, a nobody, a good-for-nothing, was protesting with his hand on his heart that there were no finer vegetables than his. At this sight Crainquebille's heart was rent. He pushed his barrow up to young Martin's, and in a plaintive broken voice said to Madame Laure: "It's not fair of you to forsake me."

As Madame Laure herself admitted, she was no duchess. It was not in society that she had acquired her ideas of the prison van and the police-station. But can one not be honest in every station in life? Every one has his self respect; and one does not like to deal with a man who has just come out of prison. So the only notice she took of Crainquebille was to give him a look of disgust. And the old costermonger resenting the affront shouted:

"Dirty wench, go along with you."

Madame Laure let fall her cabbage and cried:

"Eh! Be off with you, you bad penny. You come out of prison and then insult folk!"

If Crainquebille had had any self-control he would never have reproached Madame Laure with her calling. He knew only too well that one is not master of one's fate, that one cannot always choose one's occupation, and that good people may be found everywhere. He was accustomed discreetly to ignore her customers' business with her; and he despised no one. But he was beside himself. Three times he called Madame Laure drunkard, wench, harridan. A group of idlers gathered round Madame Laure and Crainquebille. They exchanged a few more insults as serious as the first; and they would soon have exhausted their vocabulary, if a policeman had not suddenly appeared, and at once, by his silence and immobility, rendered them as silent and as motionless as himself. They separated. But this scene put the finishing touch to the discrediting of Crainquebille in the eyes of the Faubourg Montmartre and the Rue Richer.

VII

RESULTS

THE old man went along mumbling:

“For certain she’s a hussy, and none more of a hussy than she.”

But at the bottom of his heart that was not the reproach he brought against her. He did not scorn her for being what she was. Rather he esteemed her for it, knowing her to be frugal and orderly. Once they had liked to talk together. She used to tell him of her parents who lived in the country. And they had both resolved to have a little garden and keep poultry. She was a good customer. And then to see her buying cabbages from young Martin, a dirty, good-for-nothing wretch; it cut him to the heart; and when she pretended to despise him, that put his back up, and then ...!

But she, alas! was not the only one who shunned him as if he had the plague. Every one avoided him. Just like Madame Laure, Madame Cointreau the baker, Madame Bayard of l’Ange Gardien scorned and repulsed him. Why! the whole of society refused to have anything to do with him.

So because one had been put away for a fortnight one was not good enough even to sell leeks! Was it just? Was it reasonable to make a decent chap die of starvation because he had got into difficulties with a copper? If he was not to be allowed to sell vegetables then it was all over with him. Like a badly doctored wine he turned sour. After having had words with Madame Laure, he now had them with every one. For a mere nothing he would tell his customers what he thought of them and in no ambiguous terms, I assure you. If they felt his wares too long he would call them to their faces chatterer, soft head. Likewise at the wine-shop he bawled at his comrades. His friend, the chestnut-seller, no longer recognized him; old Père Crainquebille, he said, had turned into a regular porcupine. It cannot be denied: he was becoming rude, disagreeable, evil-mouthed, loquacious. The truth of the matter was that he was discovering the imperfections of society; but he had not the facilities of a Professor of Moral and Political Science for the expression of his ideas concerning the vices of the system and the reforms necessary; and his thoughts evolved devoid of order and moderation.

Misfortune was rendering him unjust. He was taking his revenge on those who did not wish him ill and sometimes on those who were weaker than he. One

day he boxed Alphonse, the wine-seller's little boy, on the ear, because he had asked him what it was like to be sent away. Crainquebille struck him and said:

"Dirty brat! it's your father who ought to be sent away instead of growing rich by selling poison."

A deed and a speech which did him no honour; for, as the chestnut-seller justly remarked, one ought not to strike a child, neither should one reproach him with a father whom he has not chosen.

Crainquebille began to drink. The less money he earned the more brandy he drank. Formerly frugal and sober he himself marvelled at the change.

"I never used to be a waster," he said. "I suppose one doesn't improve as one grows old."

Sometimes he severely blamed himself for his misconduct and his laziness:

"Crainquebille, old chap, you ain't good for anything but liftin' your glass."

Sometimes he deceived himself and made out that he needed the drink.

"I must have it now and then; I must have a drop to strengthen me and cheer me up. It seems as if I had a fire in my inside; and there's nothing like the drink for quenching it."

It often happened that he missed the auction in the morning and so had to provide himself with damaged fruit and vegetables on credit. One day, feeling tired and discouraged, he left his barrow in its shed, and spent the livelong day hanging round the stall of Madame Rose, the tripe-seller, or lounging in and out of the wine-shops near the market. In the evening, sitting on a basket, he meditated and became conscious of his deterioration. He recalled the strength of his early years: the achievements of former days, the arduous labours and the glad evenings: those days quickly passing, all alike and fully occupied; the pacing in the darkness up and down the Market pavement, waiting for the early auction; the vegetables carried in armfuls and artistically arranged in the barrow; the piping hot black coffee of Mère Théodore swallowed standing, and at one gulp; the shafts grasped vigorously; and then the loud cry, piercing as cock crow, rending the morning air as he passed through the crowded streets. All that innocent, rough life of the human pack-horse came before him. For half a century, on his travelling stall, he had borne to townsfolk worn with care and vigil the fresh harvest of kitchen gardens. Shaking his head he sighed:

"No! I'm not what I was. I'm done for. The pitcher goes so often to the well that at last it comes home broken. And then I've never been the same since my affair with the magistrates. No, I'm not the man I was."

In short he was demoralized. And when a man reaches that condition he might as well be on the ground and unable to rise. All the passers-by tread him under foot.

VIII

THE FINAL RESULT

POVERTY came, black poverty. The old costermonger who used to come back from the Faubourg Montmartre with a bag full of five-franc pieces, had not a single coin now. Winter came. Driven out of his garret, he slept under the carts in a shed. It had been raining for days; the gutters were overflowing, and the shed was flooded.

Crouching in his barrow, over the pestilent water, in the company of spiders, rats and half-starved cats, he was meditating in the gloom. Having eaten nothing all day and no longer having the chestnut-seller's sacks for a covering, he recalled the fortnight when the Government had provided him with food and clothing. He envied the prisoners' fate. They suffer neither cold nor hunger, and an idea occurred him:

"Since I know the trick why don't I use it?"

He rose and went out into the street. It was a little past eleven. The night was dark and chill. A drizzling mist was falling, colder and more penetrating than rain. The few passers-by crept along under cover of the houses.

Crainquebille went past the Church of Saint-Eustache and turned into the Rue Montmartre. It was deserted. A guardian of the peace stood on the pavement, by the apse of the church. He was under a gas-lamp, and all around fell a fine rain looking reddish in the gaslight. It fell on to the policeman's hood. He looked chilled to the bone; but, either because he preferred to be in the light or because he was tired of walking he stayed under the lamp, and perhaps it seemed to him a friend, a companion. In the loneliness of the night the flickering flame was his only entertainment. In his immobility he appeared hardly human. The reflection of his boots on the wet pavement, which looked like a lake, prolonged him downwards and gave him from a distance the air of some amphibious monster half out of water. Observed more closely he had at once a monkish and a military appearance. The coarse features of his countenance, magnified under the shadow of his hood, were sad and placid. He wore a thick moustache, short and grey. He was an old copper, a man of some two-score years. Crainquebille went up to him softly, and in a weak hesitating voice, said: "*Mort aux vaches!* "

Then he awaited the result of those sacred words. But nothing came of them. The constable remained motionless and silent, with his arms folded under his

short cloak. His eyes were wide open; they glistened in the darkness and regarded Crainquebille with sadness, vigilance and scorn.

Crainquebille, astonished, but still resolute, muttered:

“Mort aux vaches! I tell you.”

There was a long silence in the chill darkness and the falling of the fine penetrating rain. At last the constable spoke:

“Such things are not said.... For sure and for certain they are not said. At your age you ought to know better. Pass on.”

“Why don’t you arrest me?” asked Crainquebille.

The constable shook his head beneath his dripping hood:

“If we were to take up all the addle-pates who say what they oughtn’t to, we should have our work cut out!... And what would be the use of it?”

Overcome by such magnanimous disdain, Crainquebille remained for some time stolid and silent, with his feet in the gutter. Before going, he tried to explain:

“I didn’t mean to say: *Mort aux vaches!* to you. It was not for you more than for another. It was only an idea.”

The constable replied sternly but kindly:

“Whether an idea or anything else it ought not to be said, because when a man does his duty and endures much, he ought not to be insulted with idle words.... I tell you again to pass on.”

Crainquebille, with head bent and arms hanging limp, plunged into the rain and the darkness.

PUTOIS

WHEN we were children, our tiny garden, which you could go from end to end of in twenty strides, seemed to us a vast universe, made up of joys and terrors,” said Monsieur Bergeret.

“Do you remember Putois, Lucien?” asked Zoé, smiling as was her wont, with lips compressed and her nose over her needlework.

“Do I remember Putois! ... Why, of all the figures which passed before my childhood’s eyes, that of Putois remains the clearest in my memory. Not a single feature of his face or of his character have I forgotten. He had a long head. ...”

“A low forehead,” added Mademoiselle Zoé.

Then antiphonally, in a monotonous voice, with mock gravity, the brother and sister recited the following points of a kind of police description:

“A low forehead.”

“Wall-eyed.”

“Furtive looking.”

“A crow’s-foot on his temple.”

“High cheek-bones, red and shiny.”

“His ears were ragged.”

“His face was blank and expressionless.”

“It was only by his hands, which were constantly moving, that you divined his thoughts.”

“Thin, rather bent, weak in appearance.”

“In reality of unusual strength.”

“He could easily bend a five-franc piece between his thumb and forefinger.”

“His thumb was huge.”

“He spoke with a drawl.”

“His tone was unctuous.”

Suddenly Monsieur Bergeret cried eagerly:

“Zoé! We have forgotten his yellow hair and his scant beard. We must begin again.”

Pauline had been listening with astonishment to this strange recital. She asked her father and her aunt how they had come to learn this prose passage by heart, and why they recited it like a Litany.

Monsieur Bergeret replied gravely:

“Pauline, what you have just heard is the sacred text, I may say the liturgy of the Bergeret family. It is right that it should be transmitted to you in order that it may not perish with your aunt and me. Your grandfather, my child, your

grandfather, Eloi Bergeret, who was not one to be amused with trifles, set a high value on this passage, principally on account of its origin. He entitled it 'The Anatomy of Putois.' And he was accustomed to say that in certain respects he set the anatomy of Putois above the anatomy of Quaresmeprenant. 'If the description written by Xenomanes,' he said, 'is more learned and richer in rare and precious terms, the description of Putois greatly excels it in the lucidity of its ideas and the clearness of its style.' Such was his opinion, for in those days Doctor Ledouble, of Tours, had not yet expounded chapters thirty, thirty-one and thirty-two of the fourth book of Rabelais."

"I can't understand you," said Pauline.

"It is because you don't know Putois, my daughter. You must learn that, in the childhood of your father and your aunt Zoé, there was no more familiar figure than Putois. In the home of your grandfather Bergeret, Putois was a household word. We all, in turn, believed that we had seen him."

"But who was Putois?" asked Pauline.

Instead of replying her father began to laugh, and Mademoiselle Bergeret also laughed, though her lips were closed.

Pauline looked first at one then at the other. It seemed to her odd that her aunt should laugh so heartily, and odder still that she should laugh at the same thing as her brother; for strange to say the minds of the brother and sister moved in different grooves.

"Tell me who Putois was, papa. Since you want me to know, tell me."

"Putois, my child, was a gardener. The son of honest farmers of Artois, he had set up as a nurseryman at Saint-Omer. But he was unable to please his customers and failed in business. He gave up his nursery and went out to work by the day. His employers were not always satisfied."

At these words, Mademoiselle Bergeret, still laughing, remarked:

"You remember, Lucien, when father couldn't find his ink-pot, his pens, his sealing-wax or his scissors on his desk, how he used to say: 'I think Putois must have been here'."

"Ah!" said Monsieur Bergeret, "Putois had not a good reputation."

"Is that all?" asked Pauline.

"No, my child, it is not all. There was something odd about Putois; we knew him, he was familiar to us and yet"

. . . . "He did not exist," said Zoé.

Monsieur Bergeret looked reproachfully at her.

"What a thing to say, Zoé! Why thus break the charm? Putois did not exist! Dare you say so, Zoé? Can you maintain it? Before affirming that Putois did not exist, that Putois never was, you should consider the conditions of being and the

modes of existence. Putois existed, sister. But it is true that his was a peculiar existence.”

“I understand less and less,” said Pauline, growing discouraged.

“The truth will dawn upon you directly, child. Know that Putois was born in the fullness of age. I was still a child; your aunt was a little girl. We lived in a small house, in a suburb of Saint-Omer. Our parents led a quiet retired life, until they were discovered by an old lady of Saint-Omer, Madame Cornouiller, who lived in her manor of Monplaisir, some twelve miles from the town, and who turned out to be my mother’s great aunt. She took advantage of the privilege of friendship, to insist on our father and mother coming to dine with her at Monplaisir every Sunday. There they were bored to death. But the old lady said it was right for relatives to dine together on Sundays, and that only ill-bred persons neglected the observance of this ancient custom. Our father was miserable. His sufferings were pitiful to behold. But Madame Cornouiller did not see them. She saw nothing. My mother bore it better. She suffered as much as my father, and perhaps more, but she contrived to smile.”

“Women are made to suffer,” said Zoé.

“Every living creature in the world is born to suffer, Zoé. It was in vain that our parents refused these terrible invitations; Madame Cornouiller’s carriage came to fetch them every Sunday afternoon. They were bound to go to Monplaisir; it was an obligation which they could not possibly avoid. It was an established order which only open rebellion could disturb. At length my father revolted, and swore he would not accept another of Madame Cornouiller’s invitations. To my mother he left the task of finding decent pretexts and varying reasons for their repeated refusals; it was a task for which she was ill fitted; for she was incapable of dissimulation.”

“Say rather, Lucien, that she was not willing to dissimulate. Had she wished she could have fibbed like anyone else.”

“It is true that when she had good reasons she preferred giving them to inventing bad ones. You remember, sister, that one day she said at table: ‘Fortunately Zoé has whooping-cough: so we shall not have to go to Monplaisir for a long time’.”

“Yes, that did happen,” said Zoé.

““You recovered, Zoé. And one day Madame Cornouiller came and said to our mother: ‘My dear, I am counting on you and your husband coming to dine at Monplaisir on Sunday.’ Our mother had been expressly enjoined by her husband to give Madame Cornouiller some plausible pretext for refusing. In her extremity the only excuse she could think of was absolutely devoid of probability: ‘I am

extremely sorry, madame, but it will be impossible. On Sunday I expect the gardener.'

"At these words Madame Cornouiller looked through the glazed door of the drawing-room at the wilderness of a little garden, where the spindle-trees and the lilacs looked as if they never had and never would make the acquaintance of a pruning-hook. 'You are expecting the gardener! What for? To work in your garden!'

"Then, our mother, having involuntarily cast eyes on the patch of rough grass and half-wild plants, which she had just called a garden, realized with alarm that her excuse must appear a mere invention. 'Why couldn't this man come on Monday or Tuesday to work in your . . . garden? Either of these days would be better. It is wrong to work on Sunday. Is he occupied during the week?'

"I have often noticed that the most impudent and the most absurd reasons meet with the least resistance; they disconcert the opponent. Madame Cornouiller insisted less than might have been expected of a person so disinclined to give in. Rising from her chair she asked: 'What is your gardener's name, dear?'

"'Putois,' replied our mother promptly.

"Putois had a name. Henceforth he existed. Madame Cornouiller went off mumbling: 'Putois! I seem to know that name. Putois? Putois! Why, yes, I know him well enough. But I can't recall him. Where does he live? He goes out to work by the day. When people want him, they send for him to some house where he is working. Ah! Just as I thought; he is a loafer, a vagabond ... a good-for-nothing. You should beware of him, my dear.'

"Henceforth Putois had a character."

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MONSIEUR GOUBIN and Monsieur Jean Marteau came in. Monsieur Bergeret told them the subject of the conversation:

“We were talking of the man whom my mother one day caused to exist, and created gardener at Saint-Omer. She gave him a name. Henceforth he acted.”

“I beg you pardon, sir?” said Monsieur Goubin, wiping his eye-glasses. “Do you mind saying that over again?”

“Willingly,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “There was no gardener. The gardener did not exist. My mother said: ‘I expect the gardener!’ Straightway the gardener existed — and acted.”

“But, Professor,” inquired Monsieur Goubin, “how can he have acted if he did not exist?”

“In a manner, he did exist,” replied Monsieur Bergeret.

“You mean he existed in imagination,” scornfully retorted Monsieur Goubin.

“And is not imaginary existence, existence?” exclaimed the Professor. “Are not mythical personages capable of influencing men? Think of mythology, Monsieur Goubin, and you will perceive that it is not the real characters, but rather the imaginary ones that exercise the profoundest and the most durable influence over our minds. In all times and in all lands, beings who were no more real than Putois, have inspired nations with love and hatred, with terror and hope, they have counselled crimes, they have received offerings, they have moulded manners and laws. Monsieur Goubin, think on the mythology of the ages. Putois is a mythological personage, obscure, I admit, and of the humblest order. The rude satyr, who used to sit at table with our northern peasants, was deemed worthy to figure in one of Jordaëns’ pictures, and in a fable of La Fontaine. The hairy son of Sycorax was introduced into the sublime world of Shakespeare. Putois, less fortunate, will be for ever scorned by poets and artists. He is lacking in grandeur and mystery; he has no distinction, no character. He is the offspring of too rational a mind; he was conceived by persons who knew how to read and write, who lacked the enchanting imagination which gives birth to fables. Gentlemen, I think what I have said is enough to reveal to you the true nature of Putois.”

“I understand it,” said Monsieur Goubin.

Then Monsieur Bergeret continued:

“Putois existed. I maintain it. He was. Consider, gentlemen, and you will conclude that the condition of being in no way implies matter; it signifies only the connexion between attribute and subject, it expresses merely a relation.”

“Doubtless,” said Jean Marteau, “but to be without attributes is to be practically nothing. Some one said long ago: ‘I am that I am.’ Pardon my bad memory; but one can’t recollect everything. Whoever it was who spoke thus committed a great imprudence. By those thoughtless words he implied that he was devoid of attributes and without relation, wherefore he asserted his own non-existence and rashly suppressed himself. I wager that he has never been heard of since.”

“Then your wager is lost,” replied Monsieur Bergeret. “He corrected the bad effect of those egotistical words by applying to himself a whole string of adjectives. He has been greatly talked of, but generally without much sense.”

“I don’t understand,” said Monsieur Goubin.

“That does not matter,” replied Jean Marteau.

And he requested Monsieur Bergeret to tell them about Putois.

“It is very kind of you to ask me,” said the Professor. “Putois was born in the second half of the nineteenth century, at Saint-Omer. It would have been better for him had he been born some centuries earlier, in the Forest of Arden or in the Wood of Broceliande. He would then have been an evil spirit of extraordinary cleverness.”

“A cup of tea, Monsieur Goubin,” said Pauline.

“Was Putois an evil spirit then?” inquired Jean Marteau.

“He was evil,” replied Monsieur Bergeret; “in a certain way, and yet not absolutely evil. He was like those devils who are said to be very wicked, but in whom, when one comes to know them, one discovers good qualities. I am disposed to think that justice has not been done to Putois. Madame Cornouiller was prejudiced against him; she immediately suspected him of being a loafer, a drunkard, a thief. Then, reflecting that since he was employed by my mother, who was not rich, he could not ask for high pay, she wondered whether it might not be to her advantage to engage him in the place of her own gardener, who had a better reputation, but also, alas! more requirements. It would soon be the season for trimming the yew-trees. She thought that if Madame Eloi Bergeret, who was poor, paid Putois little, she who was rich might give him still less, since it is the custom for the rich to pay less than the poor. And already in her mind’s eye she beheld her yew-trees cut into walls, spheres and pyramids, all for but a trifling outlay. ‘I should look after Putois,’ she said to herself, ‘and see that he did not loaf and thief. I risk nothing and save a good deal. These casual labourers sometimes do better than skilled workmen.’ She resolved to make the experiment, she said to my mother: ‘Send Putois to me, my dear. I will give him work at Monplaisir.’ My mother promised. She would willingly have done it. But really it was impossible. Madame Cornouiller expected Putois at Monplaisir

and expected him in vain. She was a persistent person, and, once having made a resolve, she was determined to carry it out. When she saw my mother, she complained of having heard nothing of Putois. 'Did you not tell him, my dear, that I was expecting him?' 'Yes, but he is so strange, so erratic ... 'Oh! I know that sort of person. I know your Putois through and through. But no workman can be so mad as to refuse to come to work at Monplaisir. My house is well known, I should think. Putois will come for my instructions, and quickly, my dear. Only tell me where he lives; and I will go and find him myself.' My mother replied that she did not know where Putois lived, he was not known to have a home, he was without an address. 'I have not seen him again, Madame. He seems to have gone into hiding.' She could not have come nearer the truth. And yet Madame Cornouiller listened to her with mistrust. She suspected her of beguiling Putois and keeping him out of sight for fear of losing him or rendering him more exacting. And she mentally pronounced her overselfish. Many a judgment generally accepted and ratified by history has no better foundation."

"That is quite true," said Pauline.

"What is true?" asked Zoé, who was half asleep.

"That the judgments of history are often false. I remember, papa, that you said one day: 'It was very naive of Madame Roland to appeal to an impartial posterity, and not to see that if her contemporaries were malevolent, those who came after them would be equally so.'"

"Pauline," inquired Mademoiselle Zoé, sternly, what has that to do with the story of Putois?"

"A great deal, aunt."

"I don't see it."

Monsieur Bergeret, who did not object to digressions, replied to his daughter:

"If every injustice were ultimately repaired in this world, it would never have been necessary to invent another for the purpose. How can posterity judge the dead justly? Into the shades whither they pass can they be pursued, can they there be questioned? As soon as it is possible to regard them justly they are forgotten. But is it possible to be just? What is justice? At any rate, in the end, Madame Cornouiller was obliged to admit that my mother was not deceiving her, and that Putois was not to be found.

"Nevertheless, she did not give up looking for him. Of all her relations, friends, neighbours, servants and tradesmen she inquired whether they knew Putois. Only two or three replied that they had never heard of him. The majority thought they had seen him. 'I have heard the name,' said the cook, 'but I can't put a face to it.' 'Putois! Why! I know him very well,' said the road surveyor, scratching his ear. 'But I couldn't exactly point him out to you.' The most

precise information came from Monsieur Blaise, the registrar, who declared that he had employed Putois to chop wood in his yard, from the 19th until the 23rd of October, in the year of the comet.

“One morning, Madame Cornouiller rushed panting into my father’s study: ‘I have just seen Putois,’ she exclaimed. ‘Ah! Yes. I’ve just seen him. Do I think so? But I am sure. He was creeping along by Monsieur Tenchant’s wall. He turned into the Rue des Abbesses; he was walking quickly. Then I lost him. Was it really he? There’s no doubt of it. A man about fifty, thin, bent, looking like a loafer, wearing a dirty blouse.’ Such is indeed Putois’ description,’ said my father. ‘Ah! I told you so! Besides, I called him. I cried: Putois! and he turned round. That is what detectives do when they want to make sure of the identity of a criminal they are in search of. Didn’t I tell you. it was he! ... I managed to get on his track, your Putois. Well! he is very evil looking. And it was extremely imprudent of you and your wife to employ him. I can read character; and though I only saw his back, I would swear that he is a thief, and perhaps a murderer. His ears are ragged; and that is an infallible sign.’ ‘Ah! you noticed that his ears were ragged’ ‘Nothing escapes me. My dear Monsieur Bergeret, if you don’t want to be murdered with your wife and children, don’t let Putois come into your house again. Take my advice and have all your locks changed.’

“Now a few days later it happened that Madame Cornouiller had three melons stolen from her kitchen garden. As the thief was not discovered, she suspected Putois. The *gendarmes* were summoned to Monplaisir, and their statements confirmed Madame Cornouiller’s suspicions. Just then gangs of thieves were prowling around the gardens of the countryside. But this time the theft seemed to have been committed by a single person, and with extraordinary skill. He had not damaged anything, and had left no footprint on the moist ground. The delinquent could be none other than Putois. Such was the opinion of the police sergeant; who had long known all about Putois, and was making every effort to put his hand on the fellow.

“In the *Journal de Saint-Omer* appeared an article on the three melons of Madame Cornouiller. It contained a description of Putois, according to information obtained in the town. ‘His forehead is low,’ said the newspaper, ‘he is wall-eyed; his look is shifty, he has a crow’s foot on the temple, high cheek-bones red and shiny. His ears are ragged. Thin, slightly bent, weak in appearance, in reality he is extraordinarily strong: he can easily bend a five-franc piece between his thumb and forefinger.

“‘There were good reasons,’ said the newspaper, ‘for attributing to him a long series of robberies perpetrated with marvellous skill.’

“Putois was the talk of the town. One day it was said that he had been arrested and committed to prison. But it was soon discovered that the man who had been taken for Putois was a pedlar named Rigobert. As nothing could be proved against him, he was discharged after a fortnight’s precautionary detention. And still Putois could not be found. Madame Cornouiller fell a victim to another robbery still more audacious than the first. Three silver teaspoons were stolen from her sideboard.

“She recognized the hand of Putois, had a chain put on her bedroom door and lay awake at night.”

III

ABOUT ten o'clock, when Pauline had gone to bed, Mademoiselle Bergeret said to her brother:

"Don't forget to tell how Putois seduced Madame Cornouiller's cook."

"I was just thinking of it, sister," replied her brother. "To omit that incident would be to omit the best part of the story. But we must come to it in its proper place. The police made a careful search for Putois but they did not find him. When it was known that he could not be found, every one made it a point of honour to discover him; and the malicious succeeded. As there were not a few malicious folk at Saint-Omer and in the neighbourhood, Putois was observed at one and the same time in street, field and wood. Thus, another trait was added to his character. To him was attributed that gift of ubiquity which is possessed by so many popular heroes. A being capable of travelling long distances in a moment, and of appearing suddenly in the place where he is least expected, is naturally alarming. Putois was the terror of Saint-Omer. Madame Cornouiller, convinced that Putois had robbed her of three melons and three teaspoons, barricaded herself at Monplaisir and lived in perpetual fear. Bars, bolts and locks were powerless to reassure her. Putois was for her a terribly subtle creature, who could pass through dosed doors. A domestic event redoubled her alarm. Her cook was seduced; and a time came when she could conceal her fault no longer. But she obstinately refused to indicate her betrayer.

"Her name was Gudule," said Mademoiselle Zoé.

"Her name was Gudule; and she was thought to be protected against the perils of love by a long and forked beard. A beard, which suddenly appeared on the chin of that saintly royal maiden venerated at Prague, protected her virginity. A beard, which was no longer young, sufficed not to protect the virtue of Gudule. Madame Cornouiller urged Gudule to utter the name of the man who had betrayed her and then abandoned her to distress. Gudule burst into tears, but refused to speak. Threats and entreaties were alike useless. Madame Cornouiller made a long and minute inquiry. She diplomatically questioned her neighbours — both men and women — the tradesmen, the gardener, the road surveyor, the *gendarmes* ; nothing put her on the track of the culprit. Again she endeavoured to extract a full confession from Gudule. 'In your own interest, Gudule, tell me who it is.' Gudule remained silent. Suddenly Madame Cornouiller had a flash of enlightenment: 'It is Putois!' The cook wept and said nothing. 'It is Putois! Why did I not guess it before? It is Putois! You unhappy girl! Oh you poor, unhappy girl!'

“Henceforth Madame Cornouiller was persuaded that Putois was the father of her cook’s child. Every one at Saint-Omer, from the President of the Tribunal to the lamplighter’s mongrel dog, knew Gudule and her basket. The news that Putois had seduced Gudule filled the town with laughter, astonishment and admiration. Putois was hailed as an irresistible lady-killer and the lover of the eleven thousand virgins. On these slight grounds there was ascribed to him the paternity of five or six other children born that year, who, considering the happiness that awaited them and the joy they brought to their mothers, would have done just as well not to put in an appearance. Among others were included the servant of Monsieur Maréchal, who kept the general shop with the sign of ‘Le Rendezvous des Pêcheurs,’ a baker’s errand girl, and the little cripple of the Pont-Biquet, who had all fallen victims to Putois’ charms. ‘The monster!’ cried the gossips.

“Thus Putois, invisible satyr, threatened with woes irretrievable all the maidens of a town, wherein, according to the oldest inhabitants, virgins had from time immemorial lived free from danger.

“Though celebrated thus throughout the city and its neighbourhood, he continued in a subtle manner to be associated especially with our home. He passed by our door, and it was believed that from time to time he climbed over our garden wall. He was never seen face to face. But we were constantly recognizing his shadow, his voice, his footprints. More than once, in the twilight, we thought we saw his back at the bend of the road. My sister and I were changing our opinions of him. He remained wicked and malevolent, but he was becoming childlike and simple. He was growing less real, and, if I may say so, more poetical. He was about to be included in the naïve cycle of children’s fairy tales. He was turning into Croquemitaine, into Père Fouettard, into the dustman who shuts little children’s eyes at night. He was not that sprite who by night entangles the colt’s tail in the stable. Not so rustic or so charming, yet he was just as frankly mischievous; he used to draw ink moustaches on my sister’s dolls. In our beds we used to hear him before we went to sleep: he was caterwauling on the roofs with the cats, he was barking with the dogs; he was groaning in the mill-hopper; he was mimicking the songs of belated drunkards in the street.

“What rendered Putois present and familiar to us, what interested us in him was that his memory was associated with all the objects that surrounded us. Zoé’s dolls, my exercise-books, the pages of which he had so often blotted and crumpled, the garden wall over which we had seen his red eyes gleam in the shadow, the blue flower-pot one winter’s night cracked by him if it were not by the frost; trees, streets, benches, everything reminded us of Putois, our Putois, the children’s Putois, a being local and mythical. In grace and in poetry he fell

far short of the most awkward wild man of the woods, of the uncouthest Sicilian or Thessalian faun. But he was a demi-god all the same.

“To our father Putois’ character appeared very differently, it was symbolical and had a philosophical signification. Our father had a vast pity for humanity. He did not think men very reasonable. Their errors, when they were not cruel, entertained and amused him. The belief in Putois interested him as a compendium and abridgment of all the beliefs of humanity. Our father was ironical and sarcastic; he spoke of Putois as if he were an actual being. He was sometimes so persistent, and described each detail with such precision, that our mother was quite astonished. ‘Anyone would say that you are serious, my love, she would say frankly, and yet you know perfectly’ He replied gravely ‘The whole of Saint-Omer believes in the existence of Putois. Could I be a good citizen and deny it? One must think well before suppressing an article of universal belief.’

“Only very clear-headed persons are troubled by such scruples. At heart my father was a follower of Gassendi. He compromised between his individual views and those of the public: with the Saint-Omerites he believed in the existence of Putois, but he did not admit his direct intervention in the theft of the melons and the seduction of the cook. In short, like a good citizen he professed his faith in the existence of Putois, and he dispensed with Putois when explaining the events which happened in the town. Wherefore, in this case as in all others, he proved himself a good man and a thoughtful.

“As for our mother, she felt herself in a way responsible for the birth of Putois, and she was right. For in reality Putois was born of our mother’s taradiddle, as Caliban was born of a poet’s invention. The two crimes, of course, differed greatly in magnitude, and my mother’s guilt was not so great as Shakespeare’s. Nevertheless, she was alarmed and dismayed at seeing so tiny a falsehood grow indefinitely, and so trifling a deception meet with a success so prodigious that it stopped nowhere, spread throughout the whole town, and threatened to spread throughout the whole world. One day she grew pale, believing that she was about to see her fib rise in person before her. On that day, her servant, who was new to the house and neighbourhood, came and told her that a man was asking for her. He wanted he said, to speak to Madame. ‘What kind of a man is he?’ ‘A man in a blouse. He looked like a country labourer.’ ‘Did he give his name?’ ‘Yes, Madame.’ ‘Well, what is it?’ ‘Putois.’ ‘Did he tell you that that was his name?’ ‘Putois, yes Madame.’ ‘And he is here?’ ‘Yes, Madame. He is waiting in the kitchen.’ ‘You have seen him?’ ‘Yes, Madame.’ ‘What does he want?’ ‘He did not say. He will only tell Madame.’ ‘Go and ask him.’

“When the servant returned to the kitchen, Putois was no longer there. This meeting between Putois and the new servant was never explained. But I think that from that day my mother began to believe that Putois might possibly exist, and that perhaps she had not invented.”

RIQUET

QUARTER DAY had come. With his sister and daughter, Monsieur Bergeret was leaving the dilapidated old house in the Rue de Seine to take up his abode in a modern flat in the Rue de Vaugirard. Such was the decision of Zoé and the Fates.

During the long hours of the morning, Riquet wandered sadly through the devastated rooms. His most cherished habits were upset. Strange men, badly dressed, rude and foul-mouthed, disturbed his repose. They penetrated even to the kitchen where they stepped into his dish of biscuit and his bowl of fresh water. The chairs were carried off as fast as he curled himself up on them; the carpets were pulled roughly from under his weary limbs. There was no abiding-place for him, not even in his own home.

To his credit, be it said, that at first he attempted resistance. When the cistern was carried off he barked furiously at the enemy. But no one responded to his appeal; no one encouraged him, there was no doubt about it his efforts were regarded with disapproval. Mademoiselle Zoé said to him sharply: "Be quiet!" And Mademoiselle Pauline added: "Riquet, you are silly!"

Henceforth he would abstain from useless warnings. He would cease to strive alone for the public weal. In silence he deplored the devastation of the household. From room to room he sought in vain for a little quiet. When the furniture removers penetrated into a room where he had taken refuge, he prudently hid beneath an as yet unmolested table or chest of drawers. But this precaution proved worse than useless; for soon the piece of furniture tottered over him, rose, then fell with a crash threatening to crush him. Terrified, with his hair all turned up the wrong way, he fled to another refuge no safer than the first.

But these inconveniences and even dangers were as nothing to the agony he was suffering at heart. His sentiments were the most deeply affected.

The household furniture he regarded not as things inert, but as living benevolent creatures, beneficent spirits, whose departure foreshadowed cruel misfortunes. Dishes, sugar-basins, pots and pans, all the kitchen divinities; arm-chairs, carpets, cushions, all the fetishes of the hearth, its lares and its domestic gods had vanished. He could not believe that so great a disaster would ever be repaired. And sorrow filled his little heart to overflowing. Fortunately Riquet's heart resembled human hearts in being easily distracted and quick to forget its misfortunes.

During the long absence of the thirsty workmen, when old Angélique's broom raised ancient dust from the floor, Riquet breathed an odour of mice and watched the flight of a spider; thus was his versatile mind diverted. But he soon relapsed into sadness.

On the day of departure, when he beheld things growing hourly worse and worse, he grew desperate. It seemed to him above all things disastrous when he saw the linen being piled in dark cases. Pauline with eager haste was putting her frocks into a trunk. He turned away from her, as if she were doing something wrong. He shrank up against the wall and thought to himself: "Now the worst has come; this is the end of everything." Then, whether it were that he believed things ceased to exist when he did not see them, or whether he was simply avoiding a painful sight, he took care not to look in Pauline's direction. It chanced that as she was passing to and fro she noticed Riquet's attitude. It was sad: but to her it seemed funny, and she began to laugh. Then, still laughing, she called out: "Come here! Riquet, come to me!" But he did not stir from his corner, and would not even turn his head. He was not then in the mood to caress his young mistress, and, through some secret instinct, through a kind of presentiment, he was afraid of approaching the gaping trunk. Pauline called him several times. Then, as he did not respond, she went and took him up in her arms. "How unhappy we are!" she said to him; "what is wrong then?" Her tone was ironical. Riquet did not understand irony. He lay in Pauline's arms, sad and inert, affecting to see nothing and to hear nothing. "Riquet, look at me!" She said it three times and three times in vain. Then, pretending to be in a rage: "Silly creature," she cried, "in with you"; and she threw him into the trunk and shut the lid on him. At that moment her aunt having called her, she went out of the room, leaving Riquet in the trunk.

He was seized with wild alarm; for he was very far from supposing that he had been playfully thrown into the trunk for a mere joke. Esteeming his situation about as bad as it could be, he was desirous not to make it worse by any imprudence. So he remained motionless for a few moments, holding his breath. Then he deemed it expedient to explore his dark prison. With his paws he felt the skirts and the linen on to which he had been so cruelly precipitated, endeavouring to find some way out of this terrible place. He had been thus engaged for two or three minutes, when he was called by Monsieur Bergeret, who had been getting ready to go out.

"Riquet! Riquet! Come for a walk on the quays, that is the land of glory. True they have disfigured it by erecting a railway station of hideous proportions and striking ugliness. Architecture is a lost art. They have pulled down a nice looking house at the corner of the Rue du Bac. They will doubtless put some

unsightly building in its place. I trust that at least our architects may abstain from introducing on to the Quai d'Orsay that barbarous style of which they have given such a horrid example at the corner of the Rue Washington and the Champs Élysées! ... Riquet! Riquet! Come for a walk on the quays. That is a glorious land. But architecture has deteriorated sadly since the days of Gabriel and of Louis. ... Where is the dog? ... Riquet! Riquet!"

The sound of Monsieur Bergeret's voice was a great consolation to Riquet. He replied by making a noise with his paws, scratching frantically against the wicker sides of the trunk.

"Where is the dog?" her father asked Pauline as she was returning with a pile of linen in her arms.

"He is in the trunk, Papa."

"What, in the trunk! Why is he there?" asked Monsieur Bergeret.

"Because he was silly," replied Pauline.

Monsieur Bergeret liberated his friend. Riquet followed him into the hall, wagging his tail. Then a sudden thought occurred to him. He went back into the room, ran up to Pauline and rubbed against her skirt. And not until he had wildly caressed her as evidence of his loyalty did he rejoin his master on the staircase. He would have felt himself deficient in wisdom and religious feeling had he failed to display these signs of affection to one who had been so powerful as to plunge him into a deep trunk.

In the street, Monsieur Bergeret and his dog beheld the sad sight of their household furniture scattered over the pavement. The removers had gone off to the public-house round the corner, leaving the plate-glass mirror of Mademoiselle Zoé's wardrobe to reflect the passing procession of girls, workmen, shopkeepers, and Beaux Arts students, of drays, carts and cabs, and the chemist's shop with its bottles and its serpents of Æsculapius. Leaning against a post was Monsieur Bergeret senior, smiling in his frame, mild, pale and delicate looking, with his hair ruffled. With affectionate respect the son contemplated his parent whom he moved away from the post. He likewise lifted out of harm's way Zoé's little table, which looked ashamed at finding itself in the street.

Meanwhile Riquet was patting his master's legs with his paws, looking up at him with sorrowing beautiful eyes, which seemed to say:

"Thou, who wert once so rich and so powerful, canst thou have become poor? Canst thou have lost thy power, O my Master? Thou permittest men clothed in vile rags to invade thy sitting-room, thy bedroom, thy dining-room, to throw themselves upon thy furniture and pull it out of doors, to drag down the staircase thy deep arm-chair, thy chair and mine, for in it we repose side by side in the

evening and sometimes in the morning too. I heard it groan in the arms of those tatterdemalions; that chair which is a fetish and a benignant spirit. Thou didst offer no resistance to the invaders. But if thou dost no longer possess any of those genii who once filled thy dwelling, if thou hast lost all, even those little divinities, which thou didst put on in the morning when getting out of bed, those slippers which I used to bite in my play, if thou art indigent and poor, O my Master, then what will become of me?"

THE MEDITATIONS OF RIQUET

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MEN, beasts and stones grow great as they come near and loom enormous when their are upon me. It is not so with me. I remain equally great wheresoever I am.

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When my master places for me beneath the table the food which he was about to put into his own mouth, it is in order that he may tempt me and that he may punish me if I yield to temptation. For I cannot believe that he would deny himself for my sake.

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The smell of dogs is sweet in the nostrils.

IV

My master keeps me warm when I lie behind him in his chair. It is because he is a god. In front of the fire-place is a hot stone. That stone is divine.

V

I speak when I please. From my master's mouth proceed likewise sounds which make sense. But his meaning is not so dear as that expressed by the sounds of my voice. Every sound that I utter has a meaning. From my master's lips come forth many idle noises. It is difficult but necessary to divine the thoughts of the master.

VI

To eat is good. To have eaten is better. For the enemy who lieth in wait to take your food is quick and crafty.

VII

All is flux and reflux. I alone remain.

VIII

I am in the centre of all things; men, beasts and things, friendly and adverse, are ranged about me.

IX

In sleep one beholdeth men, dogs, horses, trees, forms pleasant and unpleasant.
When one awaketh these forms have vanished.

X

Reflection . I love my master, Bergeret, because he is powerful and terrible.

XI

An action for which one has been beaten is a bad action. An action for which one has received caresses or food is a good action.

XII

At nightfall evil powers prowl round the house. I bark in order that my master may be warned and drive them away.

XIII

Prayer . O my master, Bergeret, god of courage, I adore thee. When thou art terrible, be thou praised. When thou art kind be thou praised. I crouch at thy feet: I lick thy hands. When, seated before thy table spread, thou devourest meats in abundance, thou art very great and very beautiful. Very great art thou and very beautiful when, striking fire out of a thin splint of wood, thou changest night into day. Keep me in thine house and keep out every other dog. And thou, Angélique, the cook, divinity good and great, I fear thee and I venerate thee in order that thou mayest give me much to eat.

XIV

A dog who lacketh piety towards men and who scorneth the fetishes assembled in his master's house liveth a miserable and a wandering life.

XV

One day, from a broken pitcher, filled with water which was being carried across the parlour, water ran on to the polished floor. A thrashing must have been the punishment of that dirty pitcher.

XVI

Men possess the divine power of opening all doors. I by myself am only able to open a few. Doors are great fetishes which do not readily obey dogs.

XVII

The life of a dog is full of danger. If he would escape suffering he must be ever on the watch, during meals and even during sleep.

XVIII

It is impossible to know whether one has acted well towards men. One must worship them without seeking to understand them. Their wisdom is mysterious.

XIX

Invocation . O Fear, Fear august and maternal, Fear sacred and salutary, possess me, in danger fill me, in order that I may avoid that which is harmful, lest, casting myself upon the enemy, I suffer for my imprudence.

XX

Vehicles there are which horses pull through the street. They are terrible. Other vehicles there are which move of themselves breathing loudly. These are also fearful. Men in rags are detestable, likewise such as carry baskets on their heads or roll casks. I do not love children who utter loud cries and flee from and pursue each other swiftly in the streets. The world is full of hostile and dreadful things.

THE NECKTIE

MONSIEUR BERGERET was hammering nails into the wall of his new flat. Becoming aware that he was enjoying the work, he began to wonder why it gave him pleasure to knock nails into the wall. He found the reason and lost the pleasure. For the pleasure had consisted in hammering the nails without thinking of the reason of anything. Then, as he hung his father's portrait in the place of honour in the drawing-room, he meditated on the sorrows of a philosophical mind.

"It tips forward too much," said Zoé.

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. It looks as if it were going to fall."

Monsieur Bergeret shortened the cord from which the picture hung.

"It isn't straight," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"Is it not?"

"No it hangs perceptibly too much to the left."

Monsieur Bergeret carefully readjusted it.

"And now how is it?"

"It hangs too much to the right."

Monsieur Bergeret did his best to bring the picture-frame into line with the horizon, and then drew back three steps in order to inspect his handiwork.

"I think it is right," he said.

"It is all right now," said Zoé. "It worries me when a picture isn't straight."

"You are not the only one whom it worries, Zoé. There are many who feel like you. Any irregularity in simple matters is irritating because it is so easy to see the difference between what is and what ought to be. Some people cannot bear to see a badly hung wall-paper. The conditions of our humanity are indeed terrible and atrocious when a crooked picture frame upsets us."

"There is nothing extraordinary in that, Lucien. Little things occupy a large place in life. You yourself are constantly interested in trifles."

"All the years that I have been gazing at this potrait I have never remarked before what strikes me at this moment. I have just perceived that this portrait of our father is the portrait of a young man."

"Why, of course, Lucien. When the artist Gosselin, on his return from Rome, painted father, he was not more than thirty."

"True, sister. But when I was a boy the portrait appeared to me that of a man well on in years, and that impression clung to me. Now it has suddenly vanished.

The colours of Gosselin's picture have lost their brightness; the flesh has assumed an amber tint under the varnish; the lines have grown vague, merging into shadow of an olive hue. Our father's face seems to retreat further and further into a far-distant background. But that smooth forehead, those large bright eyes, the dear pure line of the delicate cheeks, the black hair thick and shining, belong, I see it now for the first time, to a man in the flower of his youth."

"Certainly," said Zoé.

"His dress and the style of his hair are those of the old days when he was young. He wears his hair ruffled. His bottle-green coat has a high collar, he wears a nankin waistcoat and his broad black silk stock tie is wound three times round his neck."

"Ten years ago old men were still to be seen wearing ties like that," said Zoé.

"Possibly," said Monsieur Bergeret. "But it is certain that Monsieur Malorey never wore any others."

"You mean the Dean of the Faculté des Lettres at Saint-Omer, Lucien.... It is thirty years and more since his death."

"He was over sixty, Zoé, when I was less than twelve — but it was then that I committed a most daring outrage on his tie."

"I think I remember that rather stupid joke," said Zoé.

"No, Zoé, you do not remember my joke. If you did you would not speak of it like that. You know that Monsieur Malorey was very particular about his personal appearance and that he was always very dignified. You remember also that he was extremely decorous. He had an old-fashioned way of speaking, which was delightful. One day when he had invited our parents to dinner for the second time he himself offered a dish of artichokes to our mother, saying: 'Just a little more of the underpart, Madame.' He was speaking according to the best traditions of politeness and of language. For our ancestors never spoke of 'the bottom of an artichoke.' But the term was antiquated and our mother had great difficulty to keep from laughing. I cannot remember, Zoé, how we came to know the artichoke story."

Zoé, who was hemming white curtains, replied: "We heard it because our father related it one day without noticing that we were present."

"And ever afterwards, Zoé, you could never see Monsieur Malorey without wanting to laugh."

"You laughed also."

"No, Zoé, I did not laugh at that. That which amuses other men does not make me laugh, that which amuses me does not make other men laugh. I have

often noticed it. I see the ludicrous where no one else perceives it. I am gay and I am sad in the wrong places, and it has often made me look like a fool.”

Monsieur Bergeret climbed a ladder in order to hang a view of Mount Vesuvius by night, during an eruption; the picture was a water-colour which he had inherited from a paternal ancestor.

“But I have not told you, sister, what I said to Monsieur Malorey.”

“Lucien, while you are on the ladder, please put up the curtain-rods,” said Zoé.

“I will,” said her brother. “We were then living in a little house in a suburb of Saint-Omer.”

“The curtain-rings are in the nail-box.”

“I have them.... A little house with a garden.”

“A very pretty garden,” said Zoé. “It was full of lilac bushes. On the lawn was a vase in terra cotta, at the end a maze, and a grotto rockery, and on the wall two large blue pots.”

“Yes, Zoé, two large blue pots. One morning, one summer morning, Monsieur Malorey came to our house to consult some books, that were not in his own library and which he could not have found in the town library, because it had been destroyed in a fire. My father had placed his study at the Dean’s disposal and the offer had been accepted. It was arranged that when he had collated his texts he would stay and lunch with us.”

“Just see if the curtains are too long, Lucien.”

“I will. ...”

“That morning the heat was stifling. Among the still leaves even the birds were silent. Sitting under a tree in the garden, I perceived in the shaded study the back of Monsieur Malorey and his long hair resting on the collar of his frock-coat. Save that his hand was moving over a sheet of paper, he did not stir. There was nothing extraordinary in that. He was writing. But what did appear to me unusual ...”

“Well, are they long enough?”

“Not by four inches, my good Zoé.”

“What, four inches? Show me Lucien.”

“Look. ... What did appear to me unusual was to see Monsieur Malorey’s tie on the windowsill. Overcome by the heat, the Dean had unwound the black cravat that three times encircled his neck. And the long piece of black silk hung from side to side out of the open window. I was seized with an uncontrollable desire to take it. I crept softly up to the wall of the house, I stretched my arm towards the tie, I pulled it; nothing stirred in the study; I pulled it again; there it was in my hand; I went and hid it in one of the large blue pots in the garden.”

“It was not a very brilliant joke, Lucien.”

“No. .. I hid it in one of the large blue pots and I took care to cover it with leaves and moss. Monsieur Malorey continued for some time at work in the study. I watched his motionless back and the long white hair flowing over the collar of his frock-coat. Then the servant called me to lunch. As I entered the dining-room the most unexpected sight met my gaze. Between our father and mother I saw Monsieur Malorey grave, calm, but without his necktie. He had all his usual dignity. He was even august. But he was not wearing his tie. This filled me with surprise. I knew he could not be wearing it, since it was in the blue pot. And yet I was prodigiously astonished to see him without it. “I cannot think, Madame,” he said softly to our mother.... She interrupted him: “My husband will lend you one, dear sir.”

“And I reflected: ‘I hid it in jest, he failed to find it in earnest.’ But I was astonished.”

THE MONTIL MANŒUVRES

THE engagement had begun; everything was going well. At ten o'clock in the morning General Decuir, of the southern army, whose brigade occupied a strong position beneath the woods of Saint-Colomban, effected a brilliant reconnaissance which demonstrated the absence of the enemy. Then the soldiers broke their fast, and the General, leaving his escort at Saint-Luchaire, drove, accompanied by Captain Varnot, in the motor-car which had come to fetch him, to the Château de Montil, where the Baronne de Bonmont had invited him to lunch. The village of Montil was hung with flags. At the entrance to the park, the General passed beneath a triumphal arch erected in his honour and decorated with flags, trophies and branches of oak interwoven with boughs of laurel.

On the steps of her castle the Baronne de Bonmont received the General and led him into a vast hall hung with weapons and glittering with steel.

"Your residence is superb, Madame, and the country is beautiful," said the General. "I have often been to shoot about here, chiefly with the Brécés, where I had the pleasure of meeting your son, if I am not mistaken."

"No, you are not mistaken," said Ernest de Bonmont, who had driven the General from Saint-Luchaire. "And to say one is bored at the Brécés is to put it mildly!"

It was a small luncheon party. Besides the General, the Captain, the Baronne and her son, there were only Madame Worms-Clavelin and Joseph Lacrisse.

"You must take things as you find them!" said Madame de Bonmont placing the General on her right at a table decorated with flowers over which towered an equestrian statue of Napoleon in Sèvres porcelain.

At a glance the General took in the long gallery hung with the finest Van Orley tapestries.

"You have plenty of room here!"

"The General might have brought his brigade," said the Captain.

"I should have been delighted to receive it," replied the Baronne smiling.

The talk was simple, quiet and cordial. Every one had the good taste to avoid politics. The General was a royalist. He did not say so, but it was well known. His manners were perfect. His two sons had been arrested for crying: "Panama!" on the boulevards when President Loubet came into office. The General's own attitude had always been discreet. Horses and cannon were the topics of conversation.

"The new 75 is a gem," said the General.

“One cannot too highly commend the ease with which the firing is regulated. It is really wonderful,” added Captain Varnot.

“And during the manœuvres,” said Madame Worms-Clavelin, “by a new and ingenious arrangement the covers of the ammunition wagons serve as a shelter for the gunners.”

Madame la Préfète was congratulated on her military knowledge.

Madame Worms-Clavelin appeared to equal advantage when she spoke of Notre-Dame des Belles-Feuilles.

“You know, General, that in this department, no further away than Brécé, we have a miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin.”

“I have heard of it,” replied the General.

“Before he was made a Bishop,” continued Madame Worms-Clavelin, “the Abbé Guitrel was greatly interested in the apparitions of Notre-Dame des Belles-Feuilles. He even wrote a little book to prove that Notre-Dame des Belles-Feuilles is the special protectress of the French army.”

“Tell me where I can procure a copy and I will read it,” said the General.

Madame Worms-Clavelin promised to send him the book.

In short throughout the meal not a word was uttered that could be called offensive or tending to the malicious. After lunch, there was a walk in the park. Then Captain Varnot took his leave.

“Let my escort wait for me at Saint-Luchaire, Captain,” said the General. And turning to Lacrisse, he said: “Manœuvres are a picture of war, but they are not a true picture because everything is thought out and planned whereas in war it is the unexpected that happens.”

“Will you come and see the pheasantry, General?” said Madame de Bonmont.

“With pleasure, Madame.”

She turned round.

“Are you not coming, Ernest?”

Ernest had been stopped on his way by the worthy Raulin, mayor of Montil.

“Excuse me, Baron,” he was saying. “But if you could say a word to General Decuir me, if only the artillery would pass over St. John’s Hill, across my lucerne field.”

“What! Haven’t you a good crop, Raulin? Is that why you want it trampled on?”

“Not at all, not at all. The crop is excellent, Baron; the harvest next month promises to be good. But compensation is good also. Last time it was Houssiaux who had it. Isn’t it my turn now? I am mayor, I bear all the burdens of the commune, is it not fair therefore that when there is any bonus to be given....?”

The General was taken to the pheasantry.

"It is time," he said, "that I rejoined my brigade."

"Oh! You will reach it in no time with my thirty horse-power," said the young baron.

They inspected the kennels, the stables and the gardens.

"Your roses are superb," said the General, who was fond of flowers. Through the perfumed air there boomed the sound of cannon.

"It has a festal sound and uplifts the heart," said Lacrisse.

"Like the sound of bells," said Madame Worms-Clavelin.

"You are a true Frenchwoman, Madame," said the General. "Every word you utter breathes the purest patriotism."

It was four o'clock. The General could not stay a minute longer. Fortunately in "the thirty horse-power" he would reach his brigade in no time.

With the young baron, Lacrisse and the chauffeur he entered the car, and once again passed beneath his triumphal arch.

In forty minutes he was at Saint-Luchaire. But his escort was not there. In vain the four motorists looked for Captain Varnot. The village was deserted. Not a soldier to be found. A butcher was passing in his cart. They asked him where Decuir's division was: he replied: "Try the Cagny road. Just now I heard firing in the direction of Cagny, and it was loud too, I can assure you."

"Cagny, where is that?" inquired the General.

"Don't you trouble, I know," said the Baron. "I will drive you there."

And, as the drive would be a long one, he gave the General a dust-coat, a cap and goggles.

They started on the departmental road; they passed Saint-André, Villeneuve, Letaf, Saint-Porçain, Truphême, Mirange, and they saw the Cagny pond shining like brass in the light of the setting sun. On the high-road, they met dragoons of the northern army who knew nothing of the whereabouts of the Decuir brigade, but they maintained that the southern army was engaged at Saint-Paulain.

Saint-Paulain was forty-five kilometres distant, in the direction of Montil.

The car turned round, went back down the departmental road, returned through Mirange, Truphême, Saint-Porçain, Letaf, Villeneuve and Saint-André.

"Put on more speed," ordered the Baron.

And the car passed through the streets of Verry-les-Fougerais, Suttières and Rary-la-Vicomté, raising a cloud of dust golden like a glory and crushing pigs and poultry. Two kilometres from Saint-Paulain, they came on the outposts of the southern army holding La Saulaie, Mesville and Le Sourdaie. There they learned that the whole of the northern army was on the other side of the Ilette.

They drove towards Torcy-la-Mirande in order to strike the river by the heights of Vieux-Bac.

When in the course of an hour they began to perceive by the evening light a sheet of white mist hanging over the low lying meadows: "Gad," said the young Baron, "we can't cross: the Ilette Bridge is destroyed."

"What!" exclaimed the General, "the Ilette Bridge destroyed? What's that you say? The Bridge destroyed!"

"Why, General! yes. In the plan of the manœuvres the Bridge is destroyed in theory."

The General did not appreciate the joke.

"I admire your wit young man," he said sharply.

At Vieux-Bac they thundered across the iron bridge and followed the ancient Roman road, which connects Torcy-la-Mirande with the chief town of the department. In the sky, Venus was kindling her silver flame close by the crescent moon. They travelled about thirty kilometres without meeting any troops. At Saint-Évariste there was a terrible hill to climb. The car groaned like a tired beast but did not stop. Coming down it went over some stones and was on the point of capsizing in a ditch. Then the road was excellent as far as Mallemanche, where they arrived at night, during a surprise.

The sky was glittering with stars. Trumpets were sounding. Lanterns were casting a yellow gleam on the blue road. Foot soldiers were pillaging the houses. The inhabitants were at the windows.

"Although merely theoretical it is all extremely impressive," said Lacrisse.

The General was told that his brigade was in possession of Villeneuve on the left wing of the victorious army. The enemy was in full retreat.

Villeneuve is at the junction of the Ilette and the Claine, twenty kilometres from Mallemanche.

"We must make for Villeneuve!" said the General. "At last we know what we have to do, and a good thing too."

The Villeneuve road was so encumbered with artillery, ammunition wagons and gunners asleep and wrapped in their great cloaks, that it was very difficult for the car to thread its way. A canteen-woman sitting in a cart decorated with Chinese lanterns hailed the motorists and offered them coffee and liqueurs.

"We won't say no," replied the General.

"We have swallowed dust enough during the manœuvres."

"They drank a liqueur and pressed on to Villeneuve, which was occupied by the infantry.

"But where is my brigade?" cried the General, who was growing anxious.

They questioned eagerly all the officers they met. But no one could give them news of the Decuir brigade.

"What! no news? Then it is not at Villeneuve? Incredible!"

"Gentlemen," they heard in a woman's voice, shrill and bell-like. They looked up and beheld a head studded with curl-papers; it belonged to the postmistress.

"Gentlemen, there are two Villeneuves. This is Villeneuve-sur-Claine. Perhaps it is Villeneuve-la-Bataille that you want.

"Perhaps," said the Baron.

"That is a long way off," said the postmistress. You must go first to Montil. . . . Do you know Montil?"

"Yes," replied the Baron, "we know Montil."

"Then you go on to Saint-Michel-du-Mont; you take the main road and"

From the window of a neighbouring house with gilded scutcheons came out a head wrapped in a comforter: "Gentlemen"

And the notary of Villeneuve-sur-Claine gave his advice:

"To reach Villeneuve-la-Bataille, you would do better to cross through the Forest of Tongues. . . . You go to La Croix du Perron, you turn to the right . . ."

"That's enough. I know the Forest of Tongues," said the Baron, "I have hunted there with the Brécés. . . . Thank you, sir. . . . Thank you, Mademoiselle."

"Don't mention it," said the postmistress.

"At your service, gentlemen," said the notary.

"What if we went to the inn and had a cocktail?" said the Baron.

"I should like something to eat," said Lacrisse. "I am done up."

"Courage, gentlemen," said the General. "We will make up for it at Villeneuve-la-Bataille."

And they started. They passed through Vély, La Roche, Les Saules, Meulette, La Taillerie and entered the Forest of Tremble. A dazzling light ran before them into the shades of night and of the forest. They reached La Croix-du-Perron, then the Roi-Henri cross-roads. They fled wildly through the silence and solitude. They saw the deer glide by and the lights in the charcoal-burners' huts. Suddenly in a deep cutting the ominous noise of an explosion made them shudder. The car skidded and knocked up against a tree.

"What is the matter?" asked the General, who had been thrown head over heels.

Lacrisse groaned; he was lying on a bed of fern.

But Ernest, lantern in hand, was saying dismally:

"The tyre has burst. . . . But worse than that the front wheel is twisted."

ÉMILE

MADemoiselle BERGERET was silent. She smiled, which was unusual.

"Why are you laughing, Zoé?" asked Monsieur Bergeret.

"I was thinking of Émile Vincent."

"What Zoé! You can think of that excellent man, whom we have just lost, whom we loved and whom we mourn, and you can laugh!"

"I laugh because I can see him again as he used to be, and the old memories are the strongest. But you should know, Lucien, that all smiles are not joyful any more than all tears are sorrowful. It takes an old maid to explain that."

"I am not unaware, Zoé, that laughter is the result of nervous agitation. Madame de Custine as she bade adieu in the prison to her husband condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, was seized with a fit of uncontrollable laughter at the sight of a prisoner walking past her in dressing-gown and night-cap, with his face painted and a candle in his hand."

"That is not at all the same thing," said Zoé.

"No," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "But I remember what happened to me when I heard of the death of poor Demay who used to sing comic songs at the cafés concerts. It was one evening during a reception at the Prefecture. Worms-Clavelin said: 'Demay is dead.'

"I for my part received the tidings in decorous sadness. And, reflecting that never again should I hear that wondrous woman sing: *Je cas' des noisett's en m'asseyant d'ssus*, I tasted to the dregs all the melancholy the thought engendered. I let it drip into my soul and relapsed into silence. The Chief Secretary, Monsieur Lacarelle, exclaimed in his deep voice, through his military moustache: 'Demay dead! What a loss to the gaiety of France!' 'It was in the evening paper,' said Judge Pilloux. 'True,' added General Cartier de Chalmont gently, 'and I am informed that she died consoled by the rites of the Church.'

"At the General's simple words suddenly a strange, incongruous vision flashed before my eyes. I imagined the end of the world as it is described in the 'Dies Irae,' according to the testimony of David and the Sibyl. I beheld the age reduced to ashes; I saw the dead issuing forth from their tombs, and, at the angel's summons, crowding before the Judgment Seat, and the massive Demay mother-naked at the Lord's right hand. At this conception I burst out laughing in the presence of the astonished officials civil and military. But worse still, the vision obsessed me and I added between bursts of laughter: 'You will see that by

her very presence, she will upset the solemnity of the Last Judgment.' Never, Zoé, were words less comprehensible, less relevant."

"You are absurd, Lucien. I never have those curious visions. I smiled because I imagined our poor friend Vincent just as he was in life. That was all. It was quite natural. I mourn for him with all my heart. We never had a better friend."

"I too was very fond of him, Zoé, and I too when I think of him am tempted to smile. It was strange how so much military ardour came to reside in so small a body and how a soul so heroic could dwell in a form so spruce and plump. His life passed quietly in the suburb of a provincial town. He was a brushmaker at Les Tintelleries. But there was room in his heart for something besides his business."

"He was even smaller than Uncle Jean," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"And he was martial, he was civic, he was imperial," said Monsieur Bergeret.

"He was a very excellent man," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"He was in the war of 1870, Zoé. In that year he was twenty. I was only twelve. He seemed to me old and full of years. One day in the Terrible Year, he entered our peaceful provincial dwelling with the clashing of steel. He came to bid us farewell. He was dressed in the startling uniform of a *franc-tireur*. Protruding from his scarlet belt were the butts of two horse-pistols. And because a smile must enter even into the most tragic moments, the unconscious humour of some unknown armourer had hitched him to an enormous cavalry sword. Do not blame me for the expression, Zoé; it occurs in one of Cicero's letters. 'Whoever,' says the orator, 'hitched my son-in-law to that sword?'

"What astonished me most in the equipment of our friend Émile Vincent was this huge sword. To my childish mind it seemed to augur victory. You, Zoé, I believed, were more impressed by his boots, for you looked up from your work and cried: 'Why it is Puss in Boots!'"

"Did I say 'Puss in Boots.' Poor Émile."

"You said 'Puss in Boots'; and you need not regret it, Zoé. Madame d'Abrantès in her Memoirs relates how a young girl seeing Napoleon, then young and slender, ridiculously accoutred as a General of the Republic, likewise called him 'Puss in Boots.' Bonaparte never forgave her for it. Our friend was more magnanimous; the title did not offend him. Émile Vincent and his company were placed under the command of a general who did not like *francs-tireurs*, and who thus harangued them: 'It is not everything to be dressed for a carnival. You must know how to fight.'

"The caustic speech did not trouble my friend Vincent. He was splendid throughout the campaign. One day he was seen to approach the enemy's outposts with all the calm of a short-sighted man and a hero. He could not see

three steps before him. Nothing could make him retreat. For the remaining thirty years of his life, while he was making carpet-brooms, he lived on the memory of that campaign. He read military newspapers, presided over meetings of his former companions in arms, was present at the unveiling of monuments raised to the soldiers of 1870. When from time to time there were erected on French soil monuments to Vercingetorix, to Jeanne d'Arc, to the soldiers of the Loire, at the head of the workmen in his factory, Émile defiled before them. He made patriotic speeches. And, here Zoé, we approach a scene in the comedy of life, the melancholy humour of which may one day be appreciated. During the Dreyfus Affair it occurred to Émile Vincent to say that Esterhazy was a fraud and a traitor. He said it because he knew it was so and because he was far too candid ever to conceal the truth. From that day he was regarded as the enemy of his country and of the army. He was treated as a traitor and an alien. He suffered from heart disease, and his grief at this treatment aggravated the malady. He died of sorrow and of shock. The last time I saw him he was talking of military tactics and strategy. They were his favourite topic of conversation. Although the campaign of '70, in which he had served, was conducted with the greatest disorder and confusion, he was persuaded that the art of war is the finest of all arts. And I fear that I must have vexed him by saying that properly speaking there is no art of war, for the arts that are really employed in campaigns are those of peace; baking, farriery, the maintenance of order, chemistry, etc."

"Why did you say such things, Lucien?" asked Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"Because I was convinced of their truth," replied her brother. "What is called strategy is really the art practised by Cook's agency. It consists in crossing rivers by way of bridges and getting the other side of mountains through passes. As for military tactics, the rules are childish. Great Captains pay no attention to them. Although they would never admit it, they leave much to chance. Their art is to create prejudices in their favour. Conquest becomes easy to them when they are believed to be unconquerable. It is only on a plan that a battle assumes that aspect of order and regularity which reveals a dominant will."

"Poor Émile Vincent!" sighed Mademoiselle Bergeret. "He was indeed passionately fond of the army. And I agree with you that he must have suffered cruelly when he found military society treating him as an enemy. General Cartier de Chalmot's wife was very hard on him. She knew better than anyone that he subscribed largely to military charities. And yet she would have nothing to do with him when she heard that he had called Esterhazy a fraud and a traitor. She broke with him in the most undisguised fashion. One day when he came to her house, she went close up to the hall where he was waiting and exclaimed so that

he might hear her: 'Tell him that I am not at home.' Nevertheless she is not a malicious woman."

"No certainly," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "She acted according to that holy simplicity of which still better examples may be found in earlier times. Only commonplace virtues are left to us nowadays. And poor Émile died of nothing but grief."

I crack nuts by sitting on them.

ADRIENNE BUQUET

WE were finishing our dinner. at the tavern when Laboullée said to me:

“I admit that second-sight, hypnotic suggestion from a distance, presentiments subsequently fulfilled, all those phenomena dependent on a condition of the organism at present ill-defined, are not for the most part proved in such a manner as to satisfy the demands of scientific criticism. They nearly all rest on evidence which, though genuine, permits of some uncertainty as to the nature of the phenomena. That the facts about them are vague, I admit. But that they are possible I cannot doubt since I myself have witnessed one. By a happy chance I was myself enabled to make the minutest scrutiny. You may believe me when I tell you that I proceeded methodically and that I was careful to eliminate every possibility of error.”

As he uttered this sentence, the young doctor with both hands smote his hollow chest padded with pamphlets and inclined towards me across the table his bald head with its projecting forehead.

“Yes, my good fellow,” he added, “by a wonderful stroke of luck one of those phenomena described by Myers and Podmore as ‘phantoms of the living’ took place in all its phases before the very eyes of a man of science. I observed everything and noted everything down.”

“I am listening.”

“The time of the occurrence,” resumed Laboullée, “was the summer of ‘91. My friend, Paul Buquet, of whom I have often spoken to you, was then living with his wife in a little flat in the Rue de Grenelle, opposite the fountain. You did not know Buquet?”

“I have seen him two or three times. A big fellow, bearded up to the eyes. His wife was dark, pale, large featured with long grey eyes.”

“Exactly: a bilious temperament, nervous but fairly well balanced. However, when a woman lives in Paris her nerves get the upper hand and — then the deuce is in it. Did you ever see Adrienne?”

“I met her one evening in the Rue de la Paix, standing with her husband in front of a jeweller’s window, her eyes fixed on some sapphires. A good-looking woman and deucedly well dressed for the wife of a poor wretch buried in the cellars of a manufacturing chemist. Buquet was never successful, was he?”

“For five years Buquet had been working for the firm of Jacob, manufacturers of photographic materials and apparatus in the Boulevard Magenta. From day to day he expected to be made a partner. Although he did not earn his thousands, he

had a fairly good position. His prospects were not bad. He was a patient, simple fellow and hard working. He was the kind to succeed in the long run. Meanwhile his wife cost him little. Like a true Parisian, she was an excellent manager, for ever making wonderful bargains in linen, frocks, laces and jewels. She astonished her husband by her cleverness in dressing extremely well on nothing at all and Paul was gratified to see her always looking so nice and wearing such elegant under-linen. But these details cannot interest you."

"My dear Laboullée, I am very interested."

"At any rate all this chatter is beside the point. As you know I was Paul Buquet's schoolfellow. We knew each other in the second class at Louis-le-Grand; and we had not lost sight of one another when, at the age of twenty-six, before he had made his position, he married Adrienne for love, and with nothing but what she stood up in, as we say. Our friendship did not cease with his marriage. Rather, Adrienne was kind to me, and I used often to dine with the young couple. As you know, I am doctor to the actor Laroche; I mix with theatrical folk, who from time to time give me tickets. Adrienne and her husband were very fond of the theatre. When I had a box for the evening I used to go and dine with them and take them afterwards to the Comédie-Française. At dinner time I was always sure to find Buquet, who came home from his factory regularly at half-past six, his wife and their friend Géraud."

"Géraud," I inquired, "Marcel Géraud who was in a bank and who used to wear such beautiful ties?"

"The very same. He was a constant visitor at the house. Being a confirmed bachelor and sociable, he dined there every day. He used to bring lobsters, *pâtés* and all kinds of dainties. He was pleasant, amiable and taciturn. Buquet could not get along without him, and we used to take him to the theatre."

"How old was he?"

"Géraud? I don't know. Between thirty and forty....One day when Laroche had given me a box, I went as usual to the Rue de Grenelle, to my friends, the Buquets. I was rather late, and when I arrived dinner was ready. Paul was complaining of being hungry; but Adrienne could not make up her mind to sit down to table in Géraud's absence. 'My children,' I cried, 'I have a box in the second row for the Français! They are playing "Denise"! 'Come,' said Buquet, 'let us have dinner quickly and try not to miss the first act.' The servant put dinner on the table. Adrienne seemed anxious, and it was evident that she turned against every mouthful. Buquet was noisily swallowing vermicelli, catching the threads hanging from his moustache with his tongue. 'Women are extraordinary,' he exclaimed. 'Just fancy, Laboullée, Adrienne is anxious because Géraud has not come to dinner this evening. She imagines all manner of

things. Tell her how absurd she is. Géraud may have been detained. He has his business. He is a bachelor; no one has a right to ask him how he spends his time. What surprises me is that he should devote nearly all his evenings to us. It is very good of him. The least we can do is to leave him some liberty. My principle is never to worry about what my friends are doing. But women are different.' Madame Buquet in a trembling voice rejoined: 'I am anxious. I fear something may have happened to Monsieur Géraud.' Meanwhile Buquet was hurrying on the meal. 'Sophie!' he called to the servant, 'bring in the beef, the salad! Sophie! the cheese! the coffee.' I observed that Madame Buquet had eaten nothing. 'Come,' said her husband, 'go and dress; and don't make us lose the first act. A play by Dumas is very different from an operetta of which all you want is to catch an air or two. Every play of Dumas' is a series of logical deductions, not one of which must be lost. Go, my love; as for me I have only to put on my frock-coat.' She rose, and slowly, as if almost against her will, passed into her room.

"We drank our coffee, her husband and I, smoking our cigarettes. 'That good Géraud,' said Paul, 'I am vexed all the same that he isn't here this evening. He would have been glad to see "Denise." But can you understand Adrienne's worrying over his absence? I have tried in vain to make her understand that the good fellow may have business which he does not confide to us. Who can tell? Why it may be a love affair! She won't understand. Give me a cigarette.' Just as I was handing him my case, we heard proceeding from the next room a long cry of terror followed by a dull bumpish thud, the sound of something falling. 'Adrienne!' cried Buquet. And he rushed into the bedroom. I followed. We found Adrienne lying full length on the floor, motionless, her face white and her eyes turned up. There was no epileptic or kindred symptom, no foam on the lips. The limbs were extended but not rigid. The pulse was rapid and unequal. I helped her husband to put her into an arm-chair. Almost immediately her circulation was restored; the blood rushed to her face, which was generally of a dull white. 'There,' she said, pointing to her wardrobe mirror, 'there! I saw him there. As I was fastening my bodice, I saw him in the glass. I turned round, thinking he was behind me. But seeing no one I understood and fell.'

"Meanwhile I was trying to ascertain whether she had sustained any injury from her fall and I found none. Buquet was giving her sugared *eau des carmes*. 'Come, my love,' he was saying, 'gather yourself together! Who was it you saw? What do you say?' She turned white again. 'Oh! I saw him, him, Marcel.' 'She saw Géraud! that is odd,' cried Buquet. 'Yes, I saw him,' she resumed gravely: 'he looked at me without speaking, like that.' And she assumed a haggard look. Buquet turned towards me wonderingly. 'Don't be anxious,' I replied, 'such

illusions are not serious, they may proceed from indigestion. We will consider the matter at leisure. For the moment we may put it on one side. At La Charité I know a patient suffering from gastric disease who used to see cats under all the furniture.'

"In a few minutes Madame Buquet having completely recovered, her husband took out his watch and said: 'If you think that the theatre will not do her any harm, Laboullée, it is time we started. I will tell Sophie to go for a cab.' Adrienne quickly put on her hat. 'Paul! Paul! Doctor! do listen: let us go to Monsieur Géraud's first. I am anxious, more anxious than I can tell you.'

"'You are mad!' cried Buquet. 'Whatever do you imagine is wrong with Géraud? We saw him yesterday in perfect health.'

"She gave me a look so imploring that the burning intensity of it went straight to my heart. 'Laboullée, my friend, let us go at once to Monsieur Géraud's.'

"I could not refuse her, she asked so entreatingly. Paul was grumbling: he wanted to see the first act. I said to him: 'We had better go to Geraud's, it will not take us far out of our way.' The cab was waiting for us. I called to the driver: '5 Rue du Louvre. And as quick as you can.'

"Géraud lived at number 5 Rue du Louvre, not far from his bank, in a little three-roomed flat filled with neckties. They were the good fellow's weakness. Barely had we stopped at the door when Buquet leaped from the cab and looking in at the porter's lodge, asked: 'How is Monsieur Géraud?' The *concierge* replied: 'Monsieur Géraud returned at five o'clock and took his letters. He has not gone out since. If you want to see him, it is the back staircase, on the fourth floor, to the right.' But Buquet was already at the cab door, crying: 'Géraud is at home. You see, my love, how absurd you were. To the Comédie Française, driver.' Then Adrienne almost threw herself out of the cab. 'Paul, I implore you, go up to Géraud's. See him. See him, you must.'

"'Go up four flights!' he said, shrugging his shoulders. 'Adrienne you will make us miss the play. Really, when a woman once gets an idea into her head. ...'

"I remained alone in the cab with Madame Buquet, and I saw her eyes turned towards the house door and gleaming in the darkness. At length Paul returned: 'Well,' he said, 'I rang three times and without an answer. After all, my love, he must have had his reasons for not wishing to be disturbed. He may be with a woman. There would be nothing astonishing in that.' Adrienne's look became so tragic, that I myself felt anxious. When I came to think of it, it was unnatural for Géraud, who never dined at home, to remain up there from five o'clock in the afternoon until half-past seven. 'Wait here for me,' I said to Monsieur and Madame Buquet, 'I will go and speak to the *concierge* .' The woman also

thought it strange that Géraud should not have gone out to dinner as usual. It was she who waited on the fourth-floor tenant, so she had the key of the flat. She took it down from the rack and offered to go up with me. When we had reached the landing, she opened the door, and from the vestibule called three or four times: 'Monsieur Géraud!' Receiving no reply, she ventured to enter the first room which was the bedroom. Again she called: 'Monsieur Géraud! Monsieur Géraud!' No reply. It was quite dark. We had no matches. 'There must be a box of Swedish matches on the *table de nuit*,' the woman said, beginning to tremble and afraid to move. I began to feel on the table and my fingers came in contact with a sticky substance. 'There is no mistake about that,' I thought, 'It is blood.'

"When at length we had lit a candle, we saw Géraud stretched on his bed, with a wound in his head. His arm was hanging down on to the carpet where his revolver had fallen. A letter stained with blood was open on the table. It was in his handwriting and addressed to Monsieur and Madame Buquet. It began thus: 'My dear friends, you have been the charm and joy of my life.' It went on to tell them of his resolve to die without clearly explaining for what reason, but he hinted that financial embarrassment was the cause of his suicide. I perceived that death had taken place about an hour ago. So that he had killed himself at the very moment when Madame Buquet had seen him in the glass.

"Now is not this just what I was telling you, a perfectly authentic case of second sight, or to use a more exact term an instance of that curious psychical synchronism which science is studying to-day with a zeal which far surpasses its success."

"It may be something quite different," I replied. "Are you quite sure that there was nothing between Marcel Géraud and Madame Buquet?"

"Why?... I never noticed anything. And after all, what would that prove? ..."

THE INTAGLIO

I HAD come to him at noon by invitation. We lunched in the dining-room long as a church nave, a veritable treasure-house filled with the ancient gold and silver work he has collected. I found him not exactly sad but meditative. His conversation now and again suggested the light and graceful turn of his wit. An occasional word revealed the rare delicacy of his artistic tastes and his passion for sport, by no means allayed by a terrible fall from his horse which had split his head open. But constantly the flow of his ideas was checked as if they had been barred by some obstacle.

From this conversation, which was somewhat fatiguing to follow, all I retain is that he had just sent a couple of white peacocks to his chateau of Raray and that without any special reason he had for three weeks been neglecting his friends, forsaking even the most intimate, Monsieur and Madame N.

It was plain enough to me that he had not asked me to come and listen to confidences such as those. While we were taking our coffee, I asked him what it was he had to tell me. He looked at me rather surprised:

“Had I anything to tell you?”

“*Dame* ! You wrote: ‘Come and lunch tomorrow. I want to talk to you.’”

As he was silent I took the letter from my pocket and showed it to him. The address was in his attractive running hand, somewhat irregular. On the envelope there was a seal in violet wax.

He passed his hand over his forehead.

“I remember. Be so kind as to go to Féral’s, he will show you a study by Romney; a young woman; golden hair the reflection of which gilds her cheeks and forehead. . . . Pupils dark blue, giving a bluish tinge to the whole eye. . . . The warm freshness of her complexion. . . . It is delicious. And an arm like gold-beater’s skin. However, look at it and see if. . . .”

He paused. And with his hand on the door handle:

“Wait for me. I will put on my coat and we will go out together.”

Left alone in the dining-room, I went to the window, and, more attentively than before, examined the seal of violet wax. It bore the imprint of an antique intaglio, representing a satyr raising the veil of a nymph who was asleep at the foot of a pillar, under a laurel-tree. During the best Roman period the subject was a favourite one with painters and with engravers of precious stones. This representation appeared to me excellent. The purity of the style, the perfect

feeling for form, the harmonious grouping, converted this scene no longer than one's finger-nail, into a composition vast and imposing.

I was under the spell when my friend appeared through the half-open door.

"Come, let's be off," he said.

He had his hat on and seemed to be in a hurry to go out.

I congratulated him on his seal.

"I was not aware that you possessed this beautiful gem."

He replied that he had not had it long, only about six weeks. It was a find. He took it from the finger on which he wore it set in a ring, and put it in my hand.

It is well known that stones engraved in this fine classic style are generally cornelians. I was somewhat surprised therefore to see a dull gem, of a dark violet. "What!" I cried, "an amethyst."

"Yes, a melancholy stone and unlucky. Do you think it is a genuine antique?"

He called for a magnifying glass. And now I was better able to admire the carving of the intaglio. It was obviously a masterpiece of Greek glyptography dating from the early Empire. Among all the precious stones in the Museum at Naples I had never seen anything more beautiful. With the glass it was possible to distinguish on the pillar an emblem often found on monuments dedicated to some subject of the Bacchic cycle. I pointed it out to him.

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled. The gem was in an open setting. It occurred to me to examine the reverse; and I was very surprised to find thereon an inscription of a clumsy crudity dating evidently from a period much less remote than that of the intaglio. In a measure these signs resembled the engraving on those Abraxas stones so familiar to antiquaries. In spite of my inexperience I believed them to be magic signs. That was also my friend's opinion.

"It is thought," he said, "to be a cabalistic formula, imprecations taken from a Greek poet ..."

"Which poet?"

"I am not very well up in them."

"Theocritus."

"Theocritus perhaps."

Through the glass I could make out distinctly a group of four letters:

K H P H

“That doesn’t spell a name,” said my friend.

“I pointed out to him that in Greek it is the equivalent of:

K E R E

And I gave him back the stone. He looked at it long in a dazed manner and then put it on to his finger.

“Come,” he said briskly. “Come.”

“Where are you going?”

“Towards the Madeleine. And you?”

“I? Where am I going? *Parbleu!* I am going to Gaulot’s to see a horse which he refuses to buy until I have looked at it. For, as you know, I am an authority on horses and something of a veterinary surgeon to boot. I may describe myself also as a furniture broker, an upholsterer, an architect, a gardener, and if need be a stock-jobber. Ah! my friend if only I had the energy I would cut out all the Jews.”

We went out into the *faubourg* ; and, as we walked my friend assumed a gait very different from his habitual nonchalance. His pace soon became so rapid that I had difficulty in keeping up with him. In front of us was a woman rather well dressed. He called my attention to her.

“Her back is round, and she is heavy of figure. But look at her ankle. I am sure the leg is charming. Have you not noticed that the build of horses, of women, and of all fine animals is very much the same? Coarse and large in the fleshy parts, their limbs become thin towards the joints, where they display the fineness of the bones. Look at that woman; above her waist she is not worth a glance. But her limbs! How free, how powerful! How well balanced the movement of her walk! And how fine the leg just above the ankle! And the thigh I am sure is nervously supple and really beautiful.”

Then he added with that acquired wisdom which he was ever ready to communicate:

“You must not ask everything from one woman; you must take beauty where you find it. It is deucedly rare, is beauty!”

Whereupon, through a mysterious association of ideas, he raised his left hand and looked at his intaglio. I said to him:

“Then have you abandoned your little armorial tree and taken as your crest that marvellous Bacchante?”

“Ah! Yes, the beech, the *fau* of Du Fau. In Poitou, under Louis XVI, my great grandfather was what was then called a nobleman, that is he was an ennobled commoner. Later he joined a revolutionary club at Poitiers and acquired national property, which procures for me to-day, in a society of Jews and Americans, the friendship of princes and the rank of an aristocrat. Why did I forsake the *fau* of

the Du Fau? Why? It was worth almost as much as the *chêne* of Duchesne de la Sicotière. And I have exchanged it for a bacchante, a barren laurel and an emblematical stone.”

Just as with ironical emphasis he was uttering these words, we reached the house of his friend Gaulot; but Du Fau passed the two copper knockers representing Neptune, gleaming on the door like bath taps.

“I thought you were so eager to go and see Gaulot?”

He appeared not to hear me and quickened his step. He continued breathlessly as far as the Rue Matignon, down which he turned. Then suddenly he stopped in front of a tall, melancholy, five-storied house. In silence he looked anxiously at the flat stucco façade with its numerous windows.

“Are you going to be there long?” I asked him. “Do you know that Madame Cère lives in this house?”

I knew that name would annoy him. Madame Cère was a woman whose artificial beauty, well-known venality and obvious stupidity he had always detested. Old and of neglected appearance she was suspected of being a shop-lifter and appropriating lace. But in a weak almost plaintive voice, he replied:

“Do you think so?”

“I am sure of it. Look at those windows on the second story and those hideous curtains with red leopards.”

He shook his head.

“But certainly Madame Cère lives there. At this very moment she is probably behind one of those red leopards.”

He seemed as if he would like to call on her. I expressed my surprise.

“Once you could not tolerate her. That was when every one considered her beautiful and ornamental; when she inspired fatal passion and tragic love you used to say: ‘If it were only for the coarseness of her skin the woman would fill me with insurmountable disgust. But besides she is flat-chested and big-jointed.’ Now, when all her charms have faded, have you succeeded in discovering one of those little points of beauty, with which as you were saying just now, we ought to be contented? What do you make of the fineness of her ankle and the nobility of her heart? A tall gawky woman without bust or hips, who, as she entered a salon, cast a sweeping gaze round the room, and by this simple trick attracted a crowd of those vain and imbecile creatures who ruin themselves for women devoid of natural charms.”

I paused, rather ashamed of having spoken thus of a woman. But this woman had given such abundant proof of her revolting malice, that I could not resist the feeling of repugnance she inspired. In truth I should not have expressed myself thus, had I not been convinced of her falseness and her evil disposition.

Moreover I had the satisfaction of perceiving that Du Fau had not heard a single word of what I had said.

He began to talk as if to himself.

“Whether I call on her or not it is all the same. For six weeks I have visited nowhere without meeting her. Houses, which I have not entered for many years, I now return to, why I know not! Queer houses too!”

Unable to comprehend the lure which drew him, I left him there, standing in front of the open door. That Du Fau, who had loathed Madame Cère when she was beautiful, that he, who had repulsed her advances when she was in her prime, should seek her now that she was old and a victim of drugs, must result from a deterioration which I had not expected in my friend. Such an uncommon vagary I should have declared impossible if in the obscure domain of sensual pathology one could ever be sure of anything.

A month later, I left Paris without an opportunity of again meeting Paul Du Fau. After spending a few days in Brittany, I went to stay with my cousin B — at Trouville. Her children were there with her. The first week of my visit to the Chalet des Alcyons was spent in giving lessons in water-colours to my nieces, in teaching my nephews to fence and in hearing my cousin play Wagner.

On Sunday morning I went with the family as far as the church, and while they were at mass I wandered about the town. Walking along the beach road lined with toy stalls and curiosity shops, I saw in front of me Madame Cère. Languid, solitary and forlorn, she was going down to the bathing-huts. The dragging of her feet suggested that her shoes were down at heel. Her frock, torn and crumpled, seemed to be dropping off her body. For one moment she looked round. Her hollow vacant eyes and her hanging lip positively alarmed me. While the women cast sidelong glances at her, she went on her way dismal and indifferent.

Obviously the poor woman was poisoned with morphia. At the end of the street she stopped before the shop window of Madame Guillot, and, with her long thin hand, began to feel the laces. Her eager glance at that moment reminded me of the tattle that circulated about her in the big shops. The stout Madame Guillot, who was showing out some customers, appeared at the door. And Madame Cère, putting down the lace, resumed her dreary walk to the beach.

“You haven’t bought anything for a long time! What a bad customer you are!” cried Madame Guillot as she saw me. Come, look at some buckles and fans which the young ladies, your nieces, thought very pretty. How good looking they grow, the young ladies!”

Then she looked at the disappearing form of Madame Cère and shook her head as if to say:

“Isn’t it unfortunate? Eh?”

I had to buy some paste buckles for my nieces. While my purchase was being wrapped up, through the shop window I saw Du Fau going down to the beach. He was walking very quickly with an anxious air. In the manner of agitated persons, he was biting his nails, which enabled me to observe that he wore the amethyst on his finger.

I was surprised to see him, especially as he said he was going to Dinard. He has a chalet there and harriers. When I fetched my cousin from church, I asked her whether she knew that Du Fau was at Trouville. She nodded. Then, slightly embarrassed:

“Our poor friend is quite absurd. He is tied to that woman. And really. . . .”

She paused and then resumed:

“It is he who pursues her. I can’t understand it.”

Du Fau was indeed pursuing her. In a few days I had certain proof of it. I saw him constantly dogging the steps of Madame Cère and of Monsieur Cère, whom no one knows whether to regard as a stupid or an obliging husband. His dulness saves him and makes it possible to give him the benefit of the doubt. Once this woman was blindly set on attracting Du Fau, who is a useful friend in households ostentatious but not wealthy. But Du Fau made no attempt to conceal his dislike for her. He used to say in her presence: “An artificially beautiful woman is more detestable than an ugly woman. The latter may offer pleasant surprises. The other is naught but a fruit filled with ashes.” On that occasion the strength of Du Fau’s feeling imparted to its expression a biblical elevation of style. Now Madame Cère ignored him. Grown indifferent to men, she now cared only for her De Pravaz syringe and her friend, the Countess V ———. These two women were inseparable; and the innocence of their friendship was thought to be rendered possible by the circumstance that they were both moribund. Nevertheless Du Fau was always with them on their excursions. One day I saw him carrying Monsieur Cère’s heavy field-glasses slung over his shoulders. He persuaded Madame Cère to go out in a boat with him, and the whole beach fixed its eyes upon them with an unholy glee.

Naturally enough while he was in such an ignominious position I had little desire for his society. And as he was perpetually in a kind of somnambulistic state, I quitted Trouville without having exchanged a dozen words with my unhappy friend, whom I left a prey to the Cères and Countess V ———.

One evening in Paris I met him again. It was at the house of his friends and neighbours, the N ——— ‘s, who are charming hosts. In the arrangement of their beautiful house in the Avenue Kléber, I recognized the excellent taste of Madame N ——— united to that of Du Fau, and blending very harmoniously

together. There were not many present, only a few friends. As in the past, Paul Du Fau displayed that turn of wit peculiar to him, that refined delicacy touched with a flavour of the most picturesque brutality. Madame N —— is intelligent and the conversation in her salon is quite good. Nevertheless when I first entered the talk was extremely commonplace. A magistrate, Monsieur le Conseiller Nicolas, was relating at length that hackneyed tale of the sentry box, wherein every sentinel in turn committed suicide, and which had to be pulled down in order to put a stop to this novel epidemic. After which Madame N —— asked me if I believed in talismans. Monsieur le Conseiller Nicolas relieved my embarrassment by saying that I, being an unbeliever, was bound to be superstitious.

“You are quite right,” replied Madame N —— . “He believes neither in God nor the devil. And he adores stories of the other world.”

I looked at this charming woman while she was speaking; and I admired the unobtrusive grace her cheeks, her neck and her shoulders. Her whole person gives one the idea of something rare and precious. I do not know what Du Fau thinks of Madame N —— ‘s foot. To me it is beautiful.

Paul Du Fau came and shook hands with me. I noticed that he was no longer wearing his ring.

“What have you done with your amethyst?”

“I have lost it.”

“What! An intaglio more beautiful than any in Rome and Naples! You have lost it?”

Without giving him time to reply, N —— , who is always at his side, exclaimed:

“Yes, it is a curious story. He has lost his amethyst.”

N —— is an excellent fellow, very self confident, a trifle diffuse, and of a simplicity which sometimes provokes a smile. Noisily he called to his wife:

“Marthe, my love, here is some one who has not yet heard that Du Fau has lost his amethyst.”

And turning to me:

“Why, it is quite a story. Would you believe it? Our friend had absolutely forsaken us. I used to say to my wife: ‘What have you done to Du Fan?’ She would reply: ‘What have I done? Why nothing, my love.’ It was incomprehensible. But our astonishment doubled when we heard that he was always with that poor Madame Cère.”

Madame N —— interrupted her husband: “What has that got to do with it?”

But N —— insisted:

“Excuse me, my love! But I must mention it in order to explain the history of the amethyst. Well, this summer our friend Du Fau refused to come with us to the country as he had been in the habit of doing. My wife and I had given him a very hearty invitation. But he remained at Trouville, with his cousin de Maureil, in very dull society.”

Madame N —— protested.

“It is true,” repeated N ——, “very dull society. He spent his time going out in a boat with Madame Cère.”

Du Fau calmly observed that there was not one word of truth in what N —— was saying. The latter putting his hand on his friend’s shoulder said:

“I defy you to contradict me.”

And he finished his story.

“Day and night Du Fau went out with Madame Cère, or with her ghost, for it is said that Madame Cère is nothing but the ghost of her former self. Cère stayed on the beach with his field-glasses. During one of these excursions Du Fau lost his amethyst. After this mischance he declined to stay a day longer at Trouville. He left the place without bidding anyone farewell, took train and came to us, at Les Eyzies, where we had given up expecting him. It was two o’clock in the morning. ‘Here I am,’ he said calmly. There’s eccentricity for you!”

“And the amethyst?” I asked.

“It is true,” replied Du Fau, “that it fell into the sea. It lies buried in the sand. At least no fisherman has in the traditional manner brought it to land in the belly of a fish.”

A few days later, I paid one of my customary visits to Hendel in the Rue de Chateaudun. And I inquired whether he had not some curiosity with which to tempt me. He knows that I am so old fashioned as to collect ancient bronzes and marbles. Silently he opened a glass case, reserved for amateurs, and took out a little Egyptian scribe in pietra dura, of primitive workmanship, a veritable treasure! When I heard its price, I myself put it back, not without a longing glance. Then in the case I perceived the imprint in wax of the intaglio I had so much admired at Du Fau’s. I recognized the nymph, the pillar, the laurel. It was beyond the possibility of a doubt.

“Did you ever have the gem?” I asked Hendel.

“Yes, I sold it last year.”

“A fine gem! Where did you get it?”

“It came from the collection of Mark Delion, the financier, who five years ago committed suicide on account of a society lady.... Madame... perhaps you know her... Madame Cère.

LA SIGNORA CHIARA

PROFESSOR GIACOMO TEDESCHI of Naples is a doctor well known in the town. His house, which is decidedly odoriferous, is near the Incoronata. It is frequented by all kinds of persons, and particularly by the beautiful maidens who at Santa Lucia traffic in the harvest of the sea. He sells drugs for all maladies; he is not above extracting a decayed tooth; he is an adept, the day after a festival, at sewing up the gaping skin of a bravo; and he knows how to use the long shore dialect interspersed with academical Latin so as to impart confidence to his patients laid out on the longest, the most rickety, the most creaking and the dirtiest operating-chair to be found in any seaport in the universe. He is a man of slender build, of full face, with little green eyes and a long nose overhanging a thin-lipped mouth; his round shoulders, his pot belly and his thin legs recall the pantaloons of bygone times.

Late in life Giacomo married the young Chiara Mammi, daughter of an old convict highly esteemed in Naples, who, having become a baker on the Borgo di Santo, died lamented by the whole town. Ripened by the sun which gilds the grapes of Torre and the oranges of Sorrento, the beauty of Chiara blossomed in glowing splendour.

Professor Giacomo Tedeschi held the fitting belief that his wife was as virtuous as she was beautiful. Moreover he knew how strong is the sentiment of feminine honour in a bandit's family. But he was a doctor and aware of the disturbances and weaknesses to which the nature of woman is liable. He felt some anxiety when Ascanio Ranieri of Milan, who had set up as ladies' tailor on the Piazza dei Martiri, took to visiting his house. Ascanio was young, handsome and always smiling. The daughter of the heroic Mammi, the patriot baker, was certainly too good a Neapolitan to forget her duty with a townsman of Milan. Nevertheless Ascanio showed a preference for visiting the house near the Incoronata during the doctor's absence, and the signora willingly received him unchaperoned.

One day when the Professor came home earlier than he was expected, he surprised Ascanio on his knees to Chiara. While the signora departed with the measured step of a goddess, Ascanio rose to his feet.

Giacomo Tedeschi approached him with every sign of the most anxious solicitude.

"My friend, I see that you are ill. You did well to come to see me. I am a doctor and vowed to the relief of human suffering. You are in pain, do not deny

it. Your face is aflame. It is headache, an acute headache, doubtless. How wise of you to come to see me. You were waiting for me impatiently, I am sure. Yes, a terrible headache. While uttering these words, the old man, strong as a Sabine bull, was pushing Ascanio into his consulting-room and forcing him to recline in that famous operating-chair, which for forty years had borne the weight of suffering Neapolitans.

Then holding him inexorably there:

“I see what it is, your tooth is aching. That’s it! Yes, your toothache is very bad.”

He took from a case an enormous dentist’s forceps, prised open his capacious mouth and with a turn of the forceps pulled out a tooth. Ascanio fled, spitting blood from his streaming jaw, and Professor Giacomo Tedeschi shrieked after him with savage joy:

“A fine tooth! a fine, a very fine tooth! ...”

UPRIGHT JUDGES

UPRIGHT judges I have indeed seen,” said Jean Marteau. “It was in a picture. I had gone to Belgium to escape from an inquisitive magistrate, who insisted that I had conspired with anarchists. I did not know my accomplices and my accomplices did not know me. But that presented no difficulty to the magistrate. Nothing embarrassed him. Though he was perpetually weighing evidence his sense of values remained undeveloped. His persistence terrified me. I went to Belgium and stopped at Antwerp, where I became a grocer’s assistant. In the picture gallery one Sunday I saw two upright judges in a painting by Mabuse. They are of a type now extinct. I mean the type of peripatetic judges who used to travel at a jog-trot on their ambling nags. Foot soldiers, armed with lances and partisans form their escort. Bearded and hairy, these two judges, like the kings in old Flemish bibles, wear an eccentric yet magnificent headdress suggestive at once of a nightcap and a diadem. Their brocaded robes are richly adorned. The old master has succeeded in imparting to them a grave, calm and gentle air. Their horses are as mild and calm as they. Nevertheless these two judges differed both in character and in point of view. You can see that at once. One holds a paper in his hand and with his finger points to the text. The other, his left hand on the pommel of his saddle, is raising his right with more benevolence than authority. Between thumb and forefinger he appears to be holding an impalpable powder. And the hand thus carefully posed for this gesture suggests an intellect cautious and subtle. They are upright both of them, but obviously the first adheres to the letter, the second to the spirit. Leaning against the rail which separates them from the public, I listened to their talk. Said the first judge:

“I hold to the written word. The first law was written on stone as a sign that it would last as long as the world.”

The other judge made answer:

“Every law is out of date as soon as it is written. For the hand of the scribe is slow, the mind of man is nimble and his destiny is uncertain.”

Then these two excellent old men pursued their sententious discussion:

First judge . The law is stable.

Second judge . The law is never fixed.

First judge . Coming forth from God it is immutable.

Serond judge . Proceeding naturally from society it is dependent upon the changing conditions of this life.

First judge . It is the will of God, which changeth not.

Second judge . It is the will of man which changeth ever.

First judge . It was before man and is superior to him.

Second judge . It is of man, infirm as he, and like unto him capable of perfection.

First judge . Judge, open thy book and read what is written therein. For it is God who dictated to such as believed in Him: *Sic locutus est patribus nostris, Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula.*

Second judge . That which is written by the dead will be erased by the living. Were it not so, the will of those who have passed away would impose itself upon those who yet survive; and the dead would be the living and the living the dead.

First judge . To laws prescribed by the dead the living owe obedience. The quick and the dead are contemporaries before God. Moses and Cyrus, Cæsar, Justinian and the Emperor of Almaine yet reign over us. For in the sight of the Eternal One we are their contemporaries.

Second judge . The living owe obedience to the laws prescribed by the living. For our instruction in that which is permitted and that which is forbidden Zoroaster and Numa Pompilius rank below the cobbler of Saint Gudule.

First judge . The first laws were revealed to us by the Infinite Wisdom. The best laws are those which are nearest to that source.

Second judge . Do you not see that every day new laws are made and that Constitutions and codes differ according to time and place?

First judge . New laws proceed from those that are ancient. They are the young branches of the same tree nourished by the same sap.

Second judge . From the ancient tree of the law there is distilled a bitter juice. Ceaselessly is the axe laid unto that tree.

First judge . It is not for the judge to inquire whether the laws are just, since they must necessarily be so. He has only to administer them justly.

Second judge . It is for us to inquire whether the law that we administer be just or unjust, because if we discover it to be unjust, it is possible for us to introduce some modification into the application we are forced to make of it.

First judge . The criticism of laws is not compatible with the respect we owe to them.

Second judge . If we do not recognize the severity of the law how can we temper it?

First judge . We are judges, not legislators or philosophers.

Second judge . We are men.

First judge . A man is incapable of judging men. A judge, when he goes to the seat of justice, puts off his humanity. He assumes divinity and no longer

tastes either joy or sorrow.

Second judge . When justice is not dispensed with sympathy it becomes the cruellest injustice.

First judge . Justice is perfect when it is literal.

Second judge . When justice is not spiritual it is absurd.

First judge . The principle of laws is divine and the consequences which flow from them are no less divine. But even if law were not wholly of God, if it were wholly of man, it would still be necessary to administer it according to the letter. For the letter is fixed, the spirit is fleeting.

Second judge . Law is wholly of man. It was born foolish and cruel in the early glimmerings of human reason. But were it of divine essence, it should be followed according to the spirit not according to the letter, for the letter is dead and the spirit is living.

Having thus conversed, the two upright judges dismounted and with their escort approached the Tribunal, whither they must go, in order to render unto each man his due. Their horses, tied to a stake, under a great elm, conversed together. The first judge's horse spoke first:

"When horses inherit the earth," he said (and the earth will doubtless belong to them one day, for the horse is obviously the ultimate end and the final object of creation), "when the earth is the horse's and we are free to act as we will, we will live under laws like men and we will take delight in imprisoning, hanging and breaking on the wheel our fellow creatures. We will be moral beings. It shall be proved by the prisons, the gibbets and the strappados which shall be erected in our towns. There shall be legislative horses. What do you think, Roussin?"

Roussin, who was the second judge's steed, replied that in his opinion the horse was the king of creation and he confidently hoped that sooner or later his kingdom would come.

"And when we have built towns, Blanchet," he added, "we must, as you say, establish a system of police in them. In those days I would have the laws of horses equine, that is favourable to horses and for the equine weal."

"What do you mean by that, Roussin?" asked Blanchet.

"My meaning is the natural one. I demand that the law shall secure for each his share of corn and his place in the stable, and that each be permitted to love as he will during the season. For there is a time for everything. In short I would have the laws of horses in conformity with nature."

"I hope," replied Blanchet, "that the ideas of our legislators will be more elevated than yours, Blanchet. They will make laws according as they are inspired by that celestial horse who has created all horses. He is all good since he

is all powerful. Power and goodness are his attributes. He fore-ordained his creatures to endure the bit, to drag at the halter, to feel the spur and to die beneath the whip. You talk of love, comrade; he ordained that many of us should be made geldings. It is his command. The laws must maintain this worshipful behest.

“But are you quite sure, my friend,” inquired Roussin, “that these evils proceed from the celestial horse that has created us, and not merely from man his inferior creation?”

“Men are the ministers and the angels of the celestial horse,” replied Blanchet. “His will is manifest in everything that happens. His will is good. Since he wishes us ill, it must be that ill is good. If therefore the law is to do us good it must make us suffer. And in the Empire of horses we shall be constrained and tortured in every way, by means of edicts, decrees, sentences, judgments and ordinances in order to please the heavenly horse.”

“Roussin,” added Blanchet, “you must have the head of an ass not to understand that the horse was brought into the world to suffer, and that if he does not suffer he fails to fulfil his destiny and that from happy horses the heavenly horse turns away his face.”

THE OCEAN CHRIST

THAT year many of the fishers of Saint-Valéry had been drowned at sea. Their bodies were found on the beach cast up by the waves with the wreckage of their boats; and for nine days, up the steep road leading to the church were to be seen coffins borne by hand and followed by widows, who were weeping beneath their great black-hooded cloaks, like women in the Bible.

Thus were the skipper Jean Lenoël and his son Désiré laid in the great nave, beneath the vaulted roof from which they had once hung a ship in full rigging as an offering to Our Lady. They were righteous men and God-fearing. Monsieur Guillaume Truphème, priest of Saint-Valéry, having pronounced the Absolution, said in a tearful voice:

“Never were laid in consecrated ground there to await the judgment of God better men and better Christians than Jean Lenoël and his son Désiré.”

And while barques and their skippers perished near the coast, in the high seas great vessels foundered. Not a day passed that the ocean did not bring in some flotsam of wreck. Now one morning some children who were steering a boat saw a figure lying on the sea. It was a figure of Jesus Christ, life-size, carved in wood, painted in natural colouring, and looking as if it were very old. The Good Lord was floating upon the sea with arms outstretched. The children towed the figure ashore and brought it up into Saint-Valéry. The head was encircled with the crown of thorns. The feet and hands were pierced. But the nails were missing as well as the cross. The arms were still outstretched ready for sacrifice and blessing, just as He appeared to Joseph of Arimathea and the holy women when they were burying him.

The children gave it to Monsieur le Curé Truphème, who said to them:

“This image of the Saviour is of ancient workmanship. He who made it must have died long ago. Although to-day in the shops of Amiens and Paris excellent statues are sold for a hundred francs and more, we must admit that the earlier sculptors were not without merit. But what delights me most is the thought that if Jesus Christ be thus come with open arms to Saint-Valéry, it is in order to bless the parish, which has been so cruelly tried, and in order to announce that he has compassion on the poor folk who go a-fishing at the risk of their lives. He is the God who walked upon the sea and blessed the nets of Cephas.”

And Monsieur le Curé Truphème, having had the Christ placed in the church on the cloth of the high altar, went off to order from the carpenter Lemerre a beautiful cross in heart of oak.

When it was made, the Saviour was nailed to it with brand new nails, and it was erected in the nave above the churchwarden's pew.

Then it was noticed that His eyes were filled with mercy and seemed to glisten with tears of heavenly pity.

One of the churchwardens, who was present at the putting up of the crucifix, fancied he saw tears streaming down the divine face. The next morning when Monsieur le Curé with a choir-boy entered the church to say his mass, he was astonished to find the cross above the churchwarden's pew empty and the Christ lying upon the altar.

As soon as he had celebrated the divine sacrifice he had the carpenter called and asked him why he had taken the Christ down from his cross. But the carpenter replied that he had not touched it. Then, after having questioned the beadle and the sidesmen, Monsieur Truphème made certain that no one had entered the church since the crucifix had been placed over the churchwarden's pew.

Thereupon he felt that these things were miraculous, and he meditated upon them discreetly. The following Sunday in his exhortation he spoke of them to his parishioners, and he called upon them to contribute by their gifts to the erection of a new cross more beautiful than the first and more worthy to bear the Redeemer of the world.

The poor fishers of Saint-Valéry gave as much money as they could and the widows brought their wedding-rings. Wherefore Monsieur Truphème was able to go at once to Abbeville and to order a cross of ebony, highly polished and surmounted by a scroll with the inscription I.N.R.I. in letters of gold. Two months later it was erected in the place of the former and the Christ was nailed to it between the lance and the sponge.

But Jesus left this cross as He had left the other; and as soon as night fell He went and stretched Himself upon the altar.

Monsieur le Curé, when he found Him there in the morning, fell on his knees and prayed for a long while.

The fame of this miracle spread throughout the neighbourhood, and the ladies of Amiens made a collection for the Christ of Saint-Valéry. Monsieur Truphème received money and jewels from Paris, and the wife of the Minister of Marine, Madame Hyde de Neuville, sent him a heart of diamonds. Of all these treasures, in the space of two years, a goldsmith of La Rue St. Sulpice, fashioned a cross of gold and precious stones which was set up with great pomp in the church of Saint-Valéry on the second Sunday after Easter in the year 18 — . But He who had not refused the cross of sorrow, fled from this cross of gold and again stretched Himself upon the white linen of the altar.

For fear of offending Him, He was left there this time; and He had lain upon the altar for more than two years, when Pierre, son of Pierre Caillou, came to tell Monsieur le Curé Truphème that he had found the true cross of Our Lord on the beach.

Pierre was an innocent; and, because he had not sense enough to earn a livelihood, people gave him bread out of charity, he was liked because he never did any harm. But he wandered in his talk and no one listened to him.

Nevertheless Monsieur Truphème, who had never ceased meditating on the Ocean Christ, was struck by what the poor imbecile had just said. With the beadle and two sidesmen he went to the spot, where the child said he had seen a cross, and there he found two planks studded with nails, which had long been washed by the sea and which did indeed form a cross.

They were the remains of some old shipwreck. On one of these boards could still be read two letters painted in black, a J and an L; and there was no doubt that this was a fragment of Jean Lenoël's barque, he who with his son Désiré had been lost at sea five years before.

At the sight of this, the beadle and the sidesmen began to laugh at the innocent who had taken the broken planks of a boat for the cross of Jesus Christ. But Monsieur le Curé Truphème checked their merriment. He had meditated much and prayed long since the Ocean Christ had arrived among the fisherfolk, and the mystery of infinite charity began to dawn upon him. He knelt down upon the sand, repeated the prayer for the faithful departed, and then told the beadle and the sidesmen to carry the flotsam on their shoulders and to place it in the church. When this had been done he raised the Christ from the altar, placed it on the planks of the boat and himself nailed it to them, with the nails that the ocean had corroded.

By the priest's command, the very next day this cross took the place of the cross of gold and precious stones over the churchwarden's pew. The Ocean Christ has never left it. He has chosen to remain nailed to the planks on which men died invoking His name and that of His Mother. There, with parted lips, august and afflicted He seems to say:

"My cross is made of all men's woes, for I am in truth the God of the poor and the heavy-laden."

JEAN MARTEAU

A DREAM

THE talk fell on sleep and dreams.

Jean Marteau said that one dream had left an indelible impression on his mind.

“Was it a prophetic dream?” inquired Monsieur Goubin.

“In itself,” replied Jean Marteau, “the dream was not remarkable, not even for its incoherence. But its images presented themselves with a painful vividness which is quite unique. Nothing I ever experienced, nothing, was ever so real to me, so actual as the visions of this dream. In that lies its interest. It enabled me to understand the illusions of a mystic. Had I been less rational I should certainly have taken it to be an apocalypse and a revelation, and I should have derived therefrom principles of conduct and a rule of life. I ought to tell you that I dreamed this dream under peculiar circumstances. It was in the spring of 1895; I was twenty. Having recently arrived in Paris I was in difficulties. That night I had lain down in a copse of the Versailles wood. I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. I suffered no pain. I was in a state of calm and ease, disturbed occasionally by a feeling of anxiety. It seemed to me as if I was neither asleep nor awake. A little girl, quite a little girl in a blue-hooded cape, and a white apron, was walking with crutches over a plain. With every step she took her crutches grew and raised her like stilts. They soon became higher than the poplars on the river’s bank. A woman who saw my surprise said to me: “Don’t you know that in the spring crutches grow? But there are times when the size increases with alarming rapidity.”

A man whose face I could not see, added: “It is the climacteric hour.”

Then with a soft and mysterious sound which alarmed me, all around me the grass began to grow. I arose and reached a plain covered with wan plants, cottony and dead. There I met Vernaux, who was my only friend in Paris, where he lived as penuriously as I. Long we walked side by side in silence. In the sky the stars, huge and rayless, were like discs of pale gold.

I knew the cause of this appearance and I explained it to Vernaux: “It is an optical phenomenon,” I said, “our eyes are out of focus.”

And with infinite care and minuteness I engaged in a demonstration which chiefly turned upon the exact correspondence between the human eye and the astronomical telescope. While I was reasoning thus, Vernaux found on the

ground some leaden-coloured grass, an enormous black hat, boat shaped, with a brim, a band of gold braid and a diamond buckle. Putting it on his head, he said: "It is the lord mayor's hat." "Obviously," I replied, and I resumed my demonstration. So arduous was it that the perspiration dropped from my forehead. I was always losing the thread and beginning again vaguely with the phrase: "The great saurians who swam in the tepid waters of the primitive ocean had eyes constructed like a telescope. ..."

I continued until I perceived that Vernaux had disappeared. It was not long before I found him again in a hollow. He was on a spit, roasting over a brushwood fire. Indians with their hair tied on the tops of their heads were basting him with a long-handled spoon and were turning the spit. In a clear voice Vernaux said to me: "Mélanie has been here."

Then only did I perceive that he had the head and neck of a chicken. But all I could think of was how to find Mélanie, who, by a sudden inspiration I knew to be the most beautiful of women. I ran, and, having reached the edge of a wood, by the moonlight I saw a white form fleeting before me. Hair of a glorious red fell over her neck. A silver light caressed her shoulders, a blue shadow filled the hollow in the middle of her gleaming back; and, as she ran, her dimples in their rise and fall seemed to smile with a divine smile. I distinctly saw the azure shadow on her leg augment or diminish according to the motion of the limb. I noticed also the pink soles of her feet. Long did I pursue her without fatigue and with a step light as the flight of a bird. But a dark shadow veiled her, and her perpetual flight led me into a path so narrow that it was blocked completely by a little iron stove. It was one of those stoves with long bent pipes which are used in studios. It was at a white heat. The door was incandescent and all around the metal was red hot. A cat with its hair all shorn was sitting on it and looking at me. As I drew near I perceived through the cracks in its scorched skin an ardent mass of liquid metal which filled its body. It was miauling, and I understood that it was asking for water. In order to find some, I descended the slope on which was a cool wood of birch and ash trees. A stream ran through it at the bottom of a ravine. But I could not approach it on account of the blocks of sandstone and tufts of dwarf oaks by which it was overhung. As I slipped on a mossy stone my left arm came away from my shoulder without causing a wound or any pain. I took it in my right hand; it was cold and numb; its touch made me shudder. I reflected that now I was in danger of losing it and how wearisome a drudgery it would be for the rest of my life to have to watch ceaselessly over it. I resolved to order an ebony box wherein I might keep it when it was not in use. As it was very cold in this damp hollow I quitted it by a rustic path which led me on to a wind-swept plateau, where all the trees were bent as if in sorrow. There along a

yellow road a procession was passing. It was countrified and humble, just like the Rogation procession in the village of Brécé, which our Master, Monsieur Bergeret, knows so well. There was nothing singular about the clergy, the confraternities, or the faithful except that no one had any feet and that they all moved upon little wheels. Under the canopy I recognized Monsieur l'Abbé Lantaigne, who had become village priest and was weeping tears of blood. I wanted to call out to him: "I am *ministre plenipotentiaire* ." But my voice choked in my throat, and a great shadow coming down upon me caused me to raise my head. It was one of the little lame girl's crutches. They had now ascended into the sky some thousand metres, and I perceived the child like a little black spot against the moon. The stars had grown still larger and paler, and among them I distinguished three planets, the spherical form of which was quite visible to the eye. I even thought I could recognize spots on their surface. But these spots did not correspond to the drawings of those on Mars, Jupiter and Saturn which I had once seen in astronomical books.

My friend Vernaux having come up, I asked him whether he could not see the canals on the planet Mars. "The Ministry is defeated," he said.

He bore no sign of the spit I had seen transfixing him, but he still had a chicken's head and neck, and he was dripping with gravy. I felt an uncontrollable desire to demonstrate my optical theory to him and to resume my argument where I had left it. "The great saurians," I said, "which swam in the tepid waters of the primitive ocean had eyes constructed like a telescope...."

Instead of listening to me, he went up to a reading-desk, which was there in the field, opened an antiphonary and began to crow like a cock.

Out of all patience, I turned my back on him and jumped into a tram that was passing. Inside I found a vast dining-hall, like those in great hotels or on board Atlantic liners. It was all flowers and glass. As far as one could see there were seated at table women in low frocks and men in evening dress in front of candelabra and crystal chandeliers forming an infinite vista of light. A steward came round with meat to which I helped myself. But it emitted a disgusting odour and it made me feel sick before I tasted it. Besides *I was not hungry* . The diners left the table before I had swallowed a mouthful. While the servants were taking away the candles, Vernaux came up to me and said: "You did not notice the lady in the low-necked dress who was sitting next you. It was Mélanie. Look."

And through the door he pointed to shoulders flooded with a white light, out in the darkness under the trees. I leapt out, I rushed in pursuit of the charming form. This time I caught it up, I touched it. For one moment I felt a delicious

throbbing beneath my fingers. But she slipped from my arms and I was embracing briars.

That was my dream.

“Truly your dream was sad,” said Monsieur Bergeret, to quote the simple Stratonice:

“‘A vision of oneself may arouse no little disgust.’”

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THE LAW IS DEAD BUT THE JUDGE IS LIVING

A FEW days later, said Jean Marteau, I happened to be lying in a thicket of the Bois de Vincennes. I had eaten nothing for thirty-six hours.

Monsieur Goubin wiped his eyeglasses. His eyes were kind but his glance was keen. He looked hard at Jean Marteau and said to him reproachfully:

“What? Again you had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours?”

“Again,” replied Jean Marteau, “I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. But I was wrong. One ought not to go without food. It is not right. Hunger should be a crime like vagrancy. But as a matter of fact the two offences are regarded as one and the same; article 269 inflicts from three to six months’ imprisonment on those who lack means of subsistence. Vagrancy, according to the code, is the condition of vagrants, of vagabonds, persons without any fixed dwelling or means of subsistence, who exercise no specific trade or profession. They are great criminals.”

“It is curious,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “that the state of vagrancy, punishable by six months’ imprisonment and ten years’ police supervision, is precisely the same as that in which the good St. Francis placed his companions at St. Mary of the Angels and the daughters of St. Clare. If St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua came to preach in Paris to-day they would run great risk of being clapped into the prison van and carried off to the police court. Not that I mean to denounce to the authorities the mendicant monks who now swarm among us. They possess means of livelihood; they exercise all manner of trades.”

“They are respectable because they are rich,” said Jean Marteau. “It is only the poor who are forbidden to beg. Had I been discovered beneath my tree I should have been thrown into prison and that would have been justice. Possessing nothing, I was assumed to be the enemy of property; and it is just to defend property against its enemies. The august task of the judge is to assure to every man that which belongs to him, to the rich his wealth, to the poor his poverty.”

“I have reflected on the philosophy of law,” said Monsieur Bergeret, “and I have perceived that the whole structure of social justice rests upon two axioms: robbery is to be condemned: the result of robbery is to be respected. These are the principles which assure the security of individuals and maintain order in the State. If one of these tutelary principles were to be disregarded the whole of

society would fall to pieces. They were established in the beginning of time. A chief clothed in bearskin, armed with an axe of flint and with a sword of bronze, returned with his comrades to the stone entrenchments, wherein were enclosed the children of the tribe and the troops of women and of reindeer. They brought back with them youths and maidens from the neighbouring tribe and stones fallen from the sky, which were precious because out of them could be made swords which would not bend. The chief ascended a hillock in the middle of the enclosure and said: 'These slaves and this iron, which I have taken from men weak and contemptible are mine. Whosoever shall lay hands upon them shall be struck down by my axe.' Such is the origin of law. Its spirit is ancient and barbarous. And it is because justice is the ratification of all injustice that it reassures every one.

"A judge may be benevolent, for men are not all bad; the law cannot be benevolent because it is anterior to all ideas of benevolence. The changes which have been introduced into it down the ages have not altered its original character. Jurists have rendered it subtle, but they have left it barbaric. Its very ferocity causes it to be respected and regarded as august. Men are given to worship malevolent gods, and that which is not cruel seems to them not worth their adoration. The judged believe in the justice of laws. Their morality is that of the judges; both one and the other believe that a punished action is penal. In the police court or at the assizes I have often been touched to see how the accused and the judge agree perfectly in their ideas of good and evil. They have the same prejudices and a common morality."

"It cannot be otherwise," said Jean Marteau. "A poor creature who has stolen from a shop window a sausage or a pair of shoes has not on that account looked deeply and boldly into the very origin of law and the foundation of justice. And those who like ourselves are not afraid to behold in the origin of Codes a sanction of violence and iniquity, are incapable of stealing a halfpenny."

"But after all," said Monsieur Goubin, "there are just laws."

"Do you think so?" inquired Jean Marteau.

"Monsieur Goubin is right," said Monsieur Bergeret. "There are just laws. But law having been instituted for the defence of society, in its spirit cannot be more equitable than that society. As long as society is founded upon injustice the function of laws will be to defend and maintain that injustice. And the more unjust they are the worthier of respect they will appear. Notice also that, ancient as most of them are, they do not exactly represent present unrighteousness but past unrighteousnesses which is ruder and crasser. They are monuments of the Dark Ages which have lingered on into brighter days."

"But they are being improved," said Monsieur Goubin.

“They are being improved,” said Monsieur Bergeret. “The Chamber and the Senate work at them when they have nothing else to do. But the heart of them remains; and it is bitter. To be frank, I should not greatly fear bad laws if they were administered by good judges. The law is unbending, it is said, I do not believe it. There is no text which may not receive various interpretations. The law is dead. The magistrate is living: he possesses this great advantage over the law. Unfortunately he seldom uses it. Generally he schools himself to be colder, more insensible, more dead than the code he applies. He is not human; he knows no pity. In him the caste spirit stifles all human sympathy.

“I am only speaking now of honest judges.”

“They are in the majority,” said Monsieur Goubin.

“They are in the majority,” replied Monsieur Bergeret, “if we refer to common honesty and everyday morals. But is an approach to common honesty sufficient equipment for a man who, without falling into error or abuse has to wield the enormous power of punishing? A good judge should possess at once a kind heart and a philosophic mind. That is much to ask from a man who has his way to make and is determined to win advancement in his profession. Leaving out of account the fact that if he displays a morality superior to that of his day he will be hated by his fellows and will arouse universal indignation. For we condemn as immoral all morality which is not our own. All who have introduced any novel goodness into the world have met with the scorn of honest folk. That is what happened to President Magnaud.”

“I have his judgments here, collected in a little volume with commentaries by Henri Leyret. When these judgments were pronounced they provoked the indignation of austere magistrates and virtuous legislators. They are stamped with noble thoughts and tender kindness. They are full of pity, they are human, they are virtuous. In the Law Courts President Magnaud was thought not to have a judicial mind, and the friends of Monsieur Méline accused him of lacking respect for property. And it is true that the considerations on which the judgments of President Magnaud repose are singular, for at every line one meets the thoughts of an independent mind and the sentiments of a generous heart.”

Taking from the table a little crimson volume, Monsieur Bergeret turned over the pages and read:

“Honesty and delicacy are two virtues infinitely easier to practise when one lacks nothing than when one is destitute of everything.”

“That which cannot be avoided ought not to be punished.”

“In order to judge equitably the crime or the poor the judge should for the moment forget his own well-being, in order as far as possible to place himself in

the sad situation of a being whom every one has deserted.”

“In his interpretation of the law the judge should not merely bear in mind the special case which is submitted to him, he should take into consideration the wider consequences for good or for evil which his sentence may involve.”

“It is the workman alone who produces and who risks his health or his life for the exclusive profit of his master, who endangers nothing but his capital.”

“I have quoted almost haphazard,” added Monsieur Bergeret, closing the book. “These are novel words. They are the echo of a great soul.”

MONSIEUR THOMAS

I ONCE knew an austere judge. His name was Thomas de Maulan. He was a country gentleman. During the seven years ministry of Marshal MacMahon he had become a magistrate in the hope that one day he would administer justice in the king's name. He had principles which he believed to be unalterable, having never attempted to examine them. As soon as one examines a principle one discovers something beneath it and perceives that it was not a principle at all. Both his religious and his social principles Thomas de Maulan kept outside the range of his curiosity.

He was judge in the court of first instance in the little town of X ———, where I was then living. His appearance inspired esteem and even a certain sympathy. His figure was tall, thin, and bony, his face was sallow. His extreme simplicity gave him a somewhat distinguished air. He liked to be called Monsieur Thomas, not that he despised his social position, but because he considered himself too poor to support it. I knew enough of him to recognize that his appearance was not deceptive and that though weak in character and narrow in intelligence he had a noble soul. I discovered that he possessed high moral qualities. But, having had occasion to observe him in the fulfilment of his functions as examining magistrate and judge, I perceived that his very uprightness and his conception of duty rendered him cruel and sometimes completely deprived him of insight. His extreme piety caused him to be unconsciously obsessed by the ideas of sin and expiation, of crime and punishment; and it was obvious that in punishing criminals he experienced the agreeable sensation of purifying them. Human justice he regarded as a faint yet beautiful reflection of divine justice. In childhood he had been taught that suffering is good, that it is a merit in itself, a virtue, an expiation. This he believed firmly; and he held that suffering is the due of whomsoever has sinned. He loved to chastise. His punishments were the outcome of his kindness of his heart. Accustomed to give thanks to the God who, for his eternal salvation, afflicted him with toothache and colic as a punishment for Adam's sin, he sentenced vagrants and vagabonds to imprisonment and reparation as one who bestows benefits. His legal philosophy was founded upon his catechism; his pitilessness proceeded from his directness and simplicity of mind. One could not call him cruel. But not being sensual neither was he sensitive. He had no precise physical idea of human suffering. His conception of it was purely moral and dogmatic. There was something mystic in his preference for the system of solitary confinement, and it was not without a certain

joyfulness of heart and eye that one day he showed me over a fine prison which had recently been built in his district: a white thing, clean, silent, terrible; cells arranged in a circle, and the warder in the centre in an observation chamber. It looked like a laboratory constructed by lunatics for the manufacture of lunatics. And malevolent lunatics indeed are those inventors of the solitary system who in order to convert a wrongdoer into a moral being subject him to a régime which turns him into an imbecile or a savage. That was not the opinion of Monsieur Thomas. He gazed with silent satisfaction on those atrocious cells. At the back of his mind was the idea that the prisoner is never alone since God is with him. And his calm, self-satisfied glance seemed to say: "Here I have brought five or six persons face to face with their Creator and Sovereign Judge. There is no more enviable fate in the world."

It fell to this magistrate's lot to conduct the inquiry in several cases, among others in that of a teacher. Lay and clerical education were then at open war. The republicans having denounced the ignorance and brutality of the priests, the clerical newspaper of the district accused a lay teacher of having made a child sit on a red-hot stove. Among the country aristocracy this accusation found credence. Revolting details were related and the common gossip aroused the attention of justice. Monsieur Thomas, who was an honest man, would never have listened to his passions, had he known them to be passions. But he regarded them as duties because they were religious. He believed it to be his duty to consider complaints urged against a godless school, and he failed to perceive his extreme eagerness to consider them. I must not omit to say that he conducted the inquiry with meticulous care and infinite trouble. He conducted it according to the ordinary methods of justice, and he obtained wonderful results. Thirty school children, persistently interrogated, replied at first badly, afterwards better, and finally very well. After a month's examination, they replied so well that they all gave the same answer. The thirty depositions agreed, they were identical, literally identical, and these children who on the first day said they had seen nothing, now declared with one unfaltering voice, employing exactly the same words, that their little schoolfellow had been seated bare-skinned, on a red-hot stove. Monsieur le Juge Thomas was congratulating himself on so satisfactory a result, when the teacher proved irrefutably that there had never been a stove in the school. Then Monsieur Thomas began to suspect that the children were lying. But what he never perceived was that he himself had unwittingly dictated their evidence and taught it to them by heart.

The prosecution was nonsuited. The teacher was dismissed the court after having been severely reprimanded by the judge, who strongly urged him in the future to restrain his brutal instincts. Outside his deserted school the priest's

scholars made a hullabaloo. And when he went out he was greeted with cries of “Ha! ha! *Grille-Cul* (Roast-back)”; and stones were thrown at him. The Inspector of Primary Schools being informed of the state of affairs, drew up a report stating that this teacher had no authority over his pupils and concluding that his immediate transference to another school would be advisable. He was sent to a village where a dialect was spoken which he did not understand. Even there he was called *Grille-Cul*. It was the only French term that was known there.

During my intercourse with Monsieur Thomas I learnt how all evidence given before an examining magistrate comes to be uniform in style. He received me in his room whilst with the assistance of his clerk he was examining a witness. I was about to withdraw, but he begged me to remain, saying that my presence would in no way interfere with a proper administration of justice.

I sat down in a corner and listened to the questions and answers:

“Duval, did you see the accused at six o’clock in the evening?”

“That is to say, Monsieur le Juge, my wife was at the window. Then she said to me: ‘There’s Socquardot going by!’”

“His presence under your window must have struck her as remarkable since she took the trouble to mention it to you particularly. And did the gait of the accused arouse your suspicion?”

“I will tell you how it was, Monsieur le Juge. My wife said to me: ‘There’s Socquardot going by!’ Then I looked and said ‘Why yes, it’s Socquardot!’”

“Precisely! Clerk, write down: At six o’clock in the evening, the couple Duval saw the accused loafing round the house and walking with a suspicious gait.”

Monsieur Thomas put a few more questions to the witness, who was a day labourer by occupation: he received replies and dictated to his clerk their translation into judge’s jargon. Then the witness listened to the reading of his evidence, signed it, bowed and withdrew.

“Why,” I asked, “do you not record the evidence as it is given you instead of translating it into words never used by the witness?”

Monsieur Thomas gazed at me with astonishment and replied calmly:

“I do not understand your meaning. I record the evidence as faithfully as possible. Every magistrate does. And in all the law reports there is not a single instance of evidence having been altered or distorted by a judge. If, in conformity with the invariable custom of my colleagues, I modify the exact terms used by the witnesses, it is because such witnesses as this Duval, whom you have just heard, express themselves badly, and it would be derogatory to the dignity of justice to record incorrect, low and frequently gross expressions when

there is no point in doing so. But, my dear sir, I think you fail to realize the conditions of a judicial examination. You must bear in mind the object of the magistrate in recording and classifying evidence. It is not for his own enlightenment alone but for that of the tribunal. It is not enough for him to see the case clearly, it must be equally clear to the minds of the judges. He has therefore to bring into prominence those charges which are sometimes concealed beneath the incoherent or diffuse story of a witness or confused by the ambiguous replies of the accused. If it were to be registered without order or method the most convicting evidence would lose its point and the majority of criminals would escape punishment."

"But surely," I asked, "a proceeding which consists in fixing the wandering thoughts of witnesses must be very dangerous."

"It would be if magistrates were not conscientious. But I never yet met a magistrate who was not deeply conscious of his duty. And yet I have sat on the Bench with Protestants, Deists and Jews. But they were magistrates."

"At least you must admit, Monsieur Thomas, that your method possesses one disadvantage: when you read the written account of his evidence to the witness, he can hardly understand it, since you have introduced into it terms he is not accustomed to employ and the sense of which escapes him. What does your expression 'suspicious gait' convey to the mind of this labourer?"

He replied eagerly:

"I have thought of that, and against this danger I have taken the greatest precautions. I will give you an example. A short time ago a witness of a somewhat limited intelligence and of whose morals I was ignorant, appeared not to attend to the clerk's reading of the witness's evidence. I had it read a second time, having urged the deponent to give it his sustained attention. By what I could see he did nothing of the kind. Then in order to bring home to him a more correct appreciation of his duty and his responsibility I made use of a stratagem. I dictated to the clerk one final phrase which contradicted everything that had gone before. I asked the witness to sign. Then, just as he was putting pen to paper, I seized his arm. 'Wretch!' I cried, 'you are about to sign a declaration contrary to the one you have made and by so doing to commit a crime'."

"Well! and what did he say to you?"

"He replied piteously: 'Monsieur le Juge, you are cleverer than I, you must know best what I ought to write.'"

"You see," added Monsieur Thomas, "that a judge anxious to fulfil his function well can guard himself against any danger of making a mistake. Believe me, my dear sir, judicial error is a myth."

A SERVANT'S THEFT

ABOUT ten years ago, perhaps more, perhaps less, I visited a prison for women. It was an old chateau, built in the reign of Henry IV; and its high slate roofs frowned down upon a dark little southern town on the banks of a river. The governor of the prison had reached the age of superannuation. He wore a black wig and a white beard. He was an extraordinary governor. He had ideas of his own and kindly feelings. He had no illusions concerning the morals of his three hundred prisoners, but he did not consider them to be greatly inferior to the morals of any three hundred women collected haphazard in a town.

"Here as elsewhere we have all sorts and conditions," his gentle, tired glance seemed to say.

As we crossed the courtyard, a long string of prisoners was returning from a silent walk and going back to the workshops. Many of them were old and of hard, sullen aspect. My friend Dr. Cabane, who was with us, pointed out to me that nearly all these women had characteristic physical defects, that squinting was not uncommon among them, that they were degenerates and that nearly all were marked with the stigma of crime or at least of misdemeanour.

The governor slowly shook his head. I saw that he was disinclined to admit the theories of criminologists. He was evidently still convinced that in our social groups the guilty do not greatly differ from the innocent.

He took us to the workshops. We saw the bakers, the laundresses and the needlewomen at their tasks. The atmosphere of work and neatness imparted almost a cheerful air to the place. The governor treated the women kindly. The most stupid and the most perverse failed to exhaust his patience and his benevolence. His opinion was that one should excuse many things in those with whom one lives and that one should not ask too much even from misdemeanants and criminals. Unlike most persons, he did not require thieves and procuresses to be perfect because they were being punished. He had little faith in the moral efficacy of punishment, and he despaired of making his prison a school of virtue. Being far from the belief that persons are rendered better by suffering, he spared these unfortunate women as much suffering as possible. I do not know whether he was religious, but for him the idea of expiation had no moral significance.

"I give my own interpretation to the rules," he said, before applying them. I myself explain them to the prisoners. For example, one rule is absolute silence. Now if they were to be absolutely silent they would become mad or imbecile. That such is the object of the rule I cannot think for one moment. I say to them:

the rule commands you to keep silent. What does that mean? It means that the wardresses must not hear you speak. If you are heard you will be punished; if you are not heard you will incur no reproach. You have not to give me an account of your thoughts. If your words make no more sound than your thoughts then your words are no affair of mine. Thus admonished, they endeavour to speak without, if one may say so, uttering any sound. They are not driven mad and the rule is kept.”

I inquired whether his superiors approved of his interpretation of prison rules. He replied that inspectors frequently reproached him, and that then he conducted them to the outer gate and said: “You see this railing; it is of wood. If you confined men here, in a week’s time there would not be one left. The idea of escaping never occurs to women. But it is prudent not to make them furious. As it is, prison life conduces neither to physical nor to moral health. I resign my governorship if you subject them to the torture of silence.”

The infirmary and the dormitories, which we visited next, were in great white-washed halls which retained nothing of their ancient splendour except monumental mantelpieces in grey stone and black marble surmounted by pompous Virtues in high relief. The figure of Justice the work of some Italianate Flemish artist of about 1600, with bare neck and hip protruding through parted drapery, held suspended from one stout arm its unequally balanced scales, the plates of which clinked against each other like cymbals. This goddess seemed to menace with the point of her sword a little sickly form lying on an iron bedstead, upon which was a mattress as thin as a folded towel. It looked like a child.

“Well! And are you better?” asked Dr. Cabane.

“Oh! yes, sir, much better.”

And she smiled. “Come then, you must be good and you will get well.”

She looked at the doctor with wide eyes full of joy and hope.

“This little girl has been very ill,” said Dr. Cabane.

And we passed on.

“What was her offence?”

“It was no mere offence, it was a crime.”

“Ah!”

“Infanticide.”

At the end of a long corridor, we entered an almost cheerful little room, furnished with cupboards and with windows which, devoid of iron bars, looked on to the country. Here a very pretty young woman was writing at a desk. Standing near her another with a good figure was looking for a key in a bunch hanging from her waist. I might have taken them for the governor’s daughters. He informed me that they were two prisoners.

“Did you not notice that they wear prisoner’s dress?”

I had not noticed it, doubtless because they did not wear it like the others.

“Their dresses are better made and they wear smaller caps which show their hair.”

“It is very difficult,” replied the old governor, “to prevent a woman showing her hair when it is beautiful. These two are subject to the ordinary regulations and compelled to work.”

“What are they doing?”

“One is keeper of the records and the other is librarian.”

There was no need to ask: their offences were crimes of passion. The governor made no secret that he preferred criminals to misdemeanants.

“I know some criminals,” he said, “who are as it were aloof from their crime. It was a flash in their life. They are capable of straightforwardness, courage and generosity. I could not say as much for my thieves. Their mediocre and commonplace wrongdoing is woven into the very tissue of their existence. They are incorrigible. And the baseness which was the cause of their misdemeanour reveals itself over and over again in their conduct. The penalty imposed on them is relatively light, and, as they have little sensibility either physical or moral, they generally bear it easily.”

“But it does not follow;” he added quickly, “that these unhappy creatures are unworthy of pity and do not deserve to have an interest taken in them. The longer I live the more clearly do I see that the so-called criminal is in reality merely unfortunate.”

He took us into his room and told a warder to bring him prisoner 503.

“I am going to show you something,” he said, “which I entreat you to believe has not been arranged purposely for you; it will inspire you doubtless with some novel reflections on lawbreaking and its punishment. What you are about to see and hear I have seen and heard a hundred times in my life.”

A prisoner accompanied by a wardress entered the room. She was a young peasant girl, rather pretty, sweet and simple looking.

“I have some good news for you,” said the governor. “The President of the Republic, having been told of your good conduct, remits the remainder of your sentence. You will be liberated on Saturday.”

She was listening with her mouth half open, her hands clasped below the waist. But she was not quick to grasp ideas.

“Next Saturday you will leave this place. You will be free.”

This time she understood, her hands rose in a gesture of distress, her lips trembled. “Is it true that I must go away? Then what will become of me? Here I

was fed, clothed and everything. Could you not tell the good gentleman that it is better for me to stay where I am?"

Gently but firmly the governor showed her that she could not refuse the mercy shown her; then he informed her that on her departure she would receive a certain sum, ten or twelve francs.

She went out weeping.

I inquired what she had done.

He turned over a register.

"503. She was servant in a farmhouse.... She stole a petticoat from her mistress.... A theft committed by a servant.... On such offences, you must know, the law is very severe."

EDMÉE, OR CHARITY WELL BESTOWED

HORTEUR, the founder of *l'Etoile*, the political and literary editor of *La Revue Nationale* and of *Le Nouveau Siècle Illustré*, Horteur, having received me in his editorial room, from the depths of his editorial arm-chair addressed me thus:

“My good Marteau, write me a story for the special number of *Le Nouveau Siècle*. Three hundred lines for New Year’s Day. Something amusing with a high society atmosphere.”

I told Horteur that that was not in my line, at least not in the sense in which he understood it, but that I was prepared to write him a story.

“I should like it to be entitled,” he said, “a tale for the rich.”

“I should prefer a tale for the poor.”

“That is what I mean. A tale to inspire the rich with pity for the poor.”

“But that is precisely what I object to. I do not want the rich to have pity on the poor.”

“Curious!”

“No, it is not curious, but scientific. In my opinion the pity of the rich for the poor is an insult and a denial of human brotherhood. If you wish me to address the rich I shall say: ‘Spare the poor your pity: they have no use for it. Wherefore pity and not justice? You have an account with them. Settle it. This is no question of sentiment. It is a matter of economics. If that which you are pleased to give them is calculated to prolong their poverty and your wealth, the gift is iniquitous and the tears you mingle with it will not render it just. “You must make restitution,” as the attorney said to the judge after good Brother Maillard’s sermon. You give alms in order to avoid making restitution. You give a little in order to keep much, and you gloat over it. For a like reason the tyrant of Samos threw his ring into the sea. But the Nemesis of the gods declined to receive the offering. A fisherman brought back the tyrant his ring in a fish’s belly. And Polycrates was despoiled of all his wealth’.”

“You are joking.”

“I am not joking. I want to make the rich understand that they are benevolent on the cheap, that their generosity costs them little, that they only make the creditor curl his lip, and that such is not the way to conduct business. It is an opinion which may be of use to them.”

“And these are the ideas you propose to express in *Le Nouveau Siècle* in order to increase the circulation! Not a bit of it my friend! Not a bit of it!”

“Why do you insist on the rich man assuming towards the poor an attitude different from that which he assumes towards the rich and powerful? He pays the rich what he owes them, and if he owe them nothing he pays them nothing. That is honest. If he be honest let him do the same for the poor. And do not say that the rich owe the poor nothing. I do not believe that a single rich man thinks so. It is upon the extent of the debt that opinions begin to differ. And no one is in a hurry to solve the problem. It is thought better to leave the matter vague. Every one is aware that he is in debt. But what he owes is uncertain, and so from time to time a little is paid on account. That is called philanthropy, and it is profitable.”

“But, my dear fellow, there is no common sense in what you have been saying. Possibly I am more of a Socialist than you, but I am practical. To relieve suffering, to prolong a life, to redress some particle of social injustice is to attain a result. The little good one does is at any rate done. It is not everything but it is something. If the story I ask you to write goes home to the hearts of a hundred of my rich subscribers and induces them to give it will be so much won from evil and suffering. Thus little by little the lot of the poor is rendered bearable.”

“Is it good for the lot of the poor to be bearable? Poverty is indispensable to wealth and wealth to poverty. These two evils beget one another and foster one another. The condition of the poor does not need to be improved, but to be suppressed. I will not encourage the rich to give alms, because their alms are poisoned, because their alms do good to the giver and harm to the receiver, because in short, wealth being of itself hard and cruel it must not put on the deceitful appearance of kindness. Since you wish me to write a story for the rich, I will say to them: ‘Your poor are your dogs whom you feed in order that they may bite. Your bedesmen become the hounds of the propertied classes who bay at the proletariat. The rich give only to those who ask. The workers ask nothing, and they receive nothing’.”

“But the infirm, the aged and the orphaned?...” “They have the right to live. For them I would not excite pity, I would appeal to justice.”

“All this is mere theorizing! To return to reality. You will write me a New Year’s Story, and you may introduce a suggestion of Socialism. Socialism is quite fashionable. It is even a distinction. Of course I am not referring to the Socialism of Guesde or of Jaurès, but to a moderate Socialism such as men of the world intelligently and rightly oppose to collectivism. Have some young faces in your story. It will be illustrated and readers like pictures to be pleasing. Bring a young girl on the scene, a charming young girl. It will not be difficult.”

“No, it is not difficult.”

“Could you not introduce a little chimney-sweep? I have an illustration ready, a coloured engraving, which represents a young girl giving alms to a little chimney-sweep on the steps of the Madeleine. This would be an opportunity for using it.... It is cold, the snow is falling: the pretty girl is dropping a coin into the chimney-sweep’s hand. Can you see it?”

“I see it.”

“You will develop that theme.”

“I will develop it. The little sweep, in a transport of gratitude throws his arms round the girl’s neck. She happens to be the daughter of the Comte de Linotte. He gives her a kiss, imprinting on the charming child’s cheek a little round O of soot. A perfectly enchanting little O, quite round and quite black. He loves her. Edmée (her name is Edmée) is not indifferent to so sincere and ingenuous an attachment.... I fancy the idea is sufficiently pathetic.”

“Yes. You will be able to make something of it.”

“You encourage me to continue. On her return to her sumptuous home in the Boulevard Malesherbes, for the first time in her life Edmée is reluctant to wash her face: she would like to preserve the imprint of those lips on her cheek. Meanwhile the little sweep has followed her to her door. Rapt in ecstasy he stands beneath the adorable young girl’s window.... Will that do?”

“Why, yes!”

“I continue. The next morning, lying on her little white bed, Edmée sees the little sweep coming down the chimney. Without any ado he throws himself on the charming child and covers her with little round O’s of soot. I omitted to tell you that he is extremely handsome. While thus delightfully occupied he is surprised by the Comtesse de Linotte. She screams, she calls for help. But so absorbed is he that he neither sees nor hears.”

“My dear Marteau....”

“So absorbed is he that he neither sees nor hears. The Comte hastens into the room. He has the soul of a true aristocrat. He takes up the little sweep by the seat of his breeches...and throws him out of the window—”

“My dear Marteau....”

“I hasten to conclude.... Nine months later the little sweep married the high-born maiden. And it was high time too. Such was the result of charity well bestowed.”

“My dear Marteau, you have amused yourself long enough at my expense.”

“Not a bit of it. I must finish. Having married Mademoiselle de Linotte, the little sweep became a papal count and was ruined on the Turf. To-day he is a stove dealer at Montparnasse in the Rue de la Gaîté. His wife keeps his shop and sells stoves at eighteen francs apiece payable in eight months.”

“My dear Marteau it isn’t the least bit funny.”

“Beware, my dear Horteur. What I have just told you is really Lamartine’s *Chute d’un Ange* and Alfred de Vigny’s *Eloa* . And, taking it all round, it is better than your tearful tales, which make folk believe that they are very kind when they are not kind at all, that they do good when they do nothing of the sort, that it is easy for them to be benevolent when it is the most difficult thing in the world. My story is moral. Moreover it is optimistic and ends well. For, in her shop in the Rue de la Gaîté, Edmée found the happiness which in amusements and festivities she would have sought in vain, had she been married to a diplomat or an officer.... My dear editor, are we agreed: Will you have *Edmée, or Charity well Bestowed* for the *Nouveau Siècle Illustré*? ”

“You ask me that in all seriousness? ...”

“In all seriousness I ask you. If you will not have my story, I will publish it elsewhere.”

“Where?”

“In some high class journal.”

“I dare you to do so.”

“You will see.”

The *Figaro* , under the editorship of Monsieur de Rodays, published *Edmée ou La Charité bien placée* . It was, so to speak, offered as a New Year’s gift to the readers of that paper.

THE MERRIE TALES OF JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE



Translated by Alfred Allinson

CONTENTS

[OLIVIER'S BRAG](#)

[THE MIRACLE OF THE MAGPIE](#)

[BROTHER JOCONDE](#)

[FIVE FAIR LADIES OF PICARDY, OF POITOU, OF TOURAINE, OF
LYONS, AND OF PARIS](#)

[A GOOD LESSON WELL LEARNT](#)

[SATAN'S TONGUE-PIE](#)

[CONCERNING AN HORRIBLE PICTURE](#)

[MADemoiselle DE DOUCINE'S NEW YEAR'S PRESENT](#)

[MADemoiselle ROXANE](#)

OLIVIER'S BRAG

The Emperor Charlemagne and his twelve peers, having taken the palmer's staff at Saint-Denis, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They prostrated themselves before the tomb of Our Lord, and sat in the thirteen chairs of the great hall wherein Jesus Christ and his Apostles met together to celebrate the blessed sacrifice of the Mass. Then they fared to Constantinople, being fain to see King Hugo, who was renowned for his magnificence.

The King welcomed them in his Palace, where, beneath a golden dome, birds of ruby, wrought with a wondrous art, sat and sang in bushes of emerald.

He seated the Emperor of France and the twelve Counts about a table loaded with stags, boars, cranes, wild geese, and peacocks, served in pepper. And he offered his guests, in ox-horns, the wines of Greece and Asia to drink. Charlemagne and his companions quaffed all these wines in honour of the King and his daughter, the Princess Helen. After supper Hugo led them to the chamber where they were to sleep. Now this chamber was circular, and a column, springing in the midst thereof, carried the vaulted roof. Nothing could be finer to look upon. Against the walls, which were hung with gold and purple, twelve beds were ranged, while another greater than the rest stood beside the pillar.

Charlemagne lay in this, and the Counts stretched themselves round about him on the others. The wine they had drunk ran hot in their veins, and their brains were afire. They could not sleep, and fell to making brags instead, and laying of wagers, as is the way of the knights of France, each striving to outdo the other in warranting himself to do some doughty deed for to manifest his prowess. The Emperor opened the game. He said:

"Let them fetch me, a-horseback and fully armed, the best knight King Hugo hath. I will lift my sword and bring it down upon him in such wise it shall cleave helm and hauberk, saddle and steed, and the blade shall delve a foot deep underground."

Guillaume d'Orange spake up after the Emperor and made the second brag.

"I will take," said he, "a ball of iron sixty men can scarce lift, and hurl it so mightily against the Palace wall that it shall beat down sixty fathoms' length thereof."

Ogier, the Dane, spake next.

"Ye see yon proud pillar which bears up the vault. To-morrow will I tear it down and break it like a straw."

After which Renaud de Montauban cried with an oath:

“‘Od’s life! Count Ogier, whiles you overset the pillar, I will clap the dome on my shoulders and hale it down to the seashore.”

Gérard de Rousillon it was made the fifth brag.

He boasted he would uproot single-handed, in one hour, all the trees in the Royal pleasaunce.

Aimer took up his parable when Gérard was done.

“I have a magic hat,” said he, “made of a sea-calf’s skin, which renders me invisible. I will set it on my head, and to-morrow, whenas King Hugo is seated at meat, I will eat up his fish and drink down his wine, I will tweak his nose and buffet his ears. Not knowing whom or what to blame, he will clap all his serving-men in gaol and scourge them sore, — and we shall laugh.”

“For me,” declared Huon de Bordeaux, whose turn it was, “for me, I am so nimble I will trip up to the King and cut off his beard and eyebrows without his knowing aught about the matter. ‘T is a piece of sport I will show you to-morrow. And I shall have no need of a sea-calf hat either!”

Doolin de Mayence made his brag too. He promised to eat up in one hour all the figs and all the oranges and all the lemons in the King’s orchards.

Next the Due Naisme said in this wise:

“By my faith! *I* will go into the banquet hall, I will catch up flagons and cups of gold and fling them so high they will never light down again save to tumble into the moon.”

Bernard de Brabant then lifted his great voice:

“I will do better yet,” he roared. “Ye know the river that flows by Constantinople is broad and deep, for it is come nigh its mouth by then, after traversing Egypt, Babylon, and the Earthly Paradise. Well, I will turn it from its bed and make it flood the Great Square of the City.”

Gérard de Viane said:

“Put a dozen knights in line of array. And I will tumble all the twelve on their noses, only by the wind of my sword.”

It was the Count Roland laid the twelfth wager, in the fashion following:

“I will take my horn, I will go forth of the city and I will blow such a blast all the gates of the town will drop from their hinges.”

Olivier alone had said no word yet. He was young and courteous, and the Emperor loved him dearly.

“Olivier, my son,” he asked, “will you not make your brag like the rest of us?”

“Right willingly, sire,” Olivier replied.

“Do you know the name of Hercules of Greece?”

“Yea, I have heard some discourse of him,” said Charlemagne. “He was an idol of the misbelievers, like the false god Mahound.”

“Not so, sire,” said Olivier. “Hercules of Greece was a knight among the Pagans and King of a Pagan kingdom. He was a gallant champion and stoutly framed in all his limbs. Visiting the Court of a certain Emperor who had fifty daughters, virgins, he wedded them all on one and the same night, and that so well and throughly that next morning they all avowed themselves well-contented women and with naught left to learn. He had not slighted ever a one of them. Well, sire, an you will, I will lay my wager to do after the fashion of Hercules of Greece.”

“Nay, beware, Olivier, my son,” cried the Emperor, “beware what you do; the thing would be a sin. I felt sure this King Hercules was a Saracen!”

“Sire,” returned Olivier, “know this — I warrant me to show in the same space of time the selfsame prowess with one virgin that Herailes of Greece did with fifty. And the maid shall be none other but the Princess Helen, King Hugo’s daughter.”

“Good and well,” agreed Charlemagne; “that will be to deal honestly and as a good Christian should. But you were in the wrong, my son, to drag the fifty virgins of King Hercules into your business, wherein, the Devil fly away with me else, I can see but one to be concerned.”

“Sire,” answered Olivier mildly, “there is but one of a truth. But she shall win such satisfaction of me that, an I number the tokens of my love, you will to-morrow see fifty crosses scored on the wall, and that is *my* brag.”

The Count Olivier was yet speaking when lo! the column which bare the vault opened. The pillar was hollow and contrived in such sort that a man could lie hid therein at his ease to see and hear everything. Charlemagne and the twelve Counts had never a notion of this; so they were sore surprised to behold the King of Constantinople step forth. He was white with anger and his eyes flashed fire.

He said in a terrible voice:

“So this is how ye show your gratitude for the hospitality I offer you. Ye are ill-mannered guests. For a whole hour have ye been insulting me with your bragging wagers. Well, know this, — you, Sir Emperor, and ye, his knights; if to-morrow ye do not all of you make good your boasts, I will have your heads cut off.”

Having said his say, he stepped back within the pillar, which shut to again closely behind him. For a while the twelve paladins were dumb with wonder and consternation. The Emperor was the first to break the silence.

“Comrades,” he said, “’tis true we have bragged too freely. Mayhap we have spoken things better unsaid. We have drunk overmuch wine, and have shown

unwisdom. The chiefest fault is mine; I am your Emperor, and I gave you the bad example. I will devise with you to-morrow of the means whereby we may save us from this perilous pass; meantime, it behoves us to get to sleep. I wish you a good night. God have you in his keeping!”

A moment later the Emperor and the twelve peers were snoring under their coverlets of silk and cloth of gold.

They awoke on the morrow, their minds still distraught and deeming the thing was but a nightmare. But anon soldiers came to lead them to the Palace, that they might make good their brags before the King’s face.

“Come,” cried the Emperor, “come; and let us pray God and His Holy Mother. By Our Lady’s help shall we easily make good our brags.”

He marched in front with a more than human majesty of port. Arriving anon at the King’s Palace, Charlemagne, Naisme, Aimer, Huon, Doolin, Guillaume, Ogier, Bernard, Renaud, the two Gérards, and Roland fell on their knees and, joining their hands in prayer, made this supplication to the Holy Virgin:

“Lady, which art in Paradise, look on us now in our extremity; for love of the Realm of the Lilies, which is thine own, protect the Emperor of France and his twelve peers, and give them the puissance to make good their brags.”

Thereafter they rose up comforted and fulfilled of bright courage and gallant confidence, for they knew that Our Lady would answer their prayer.

King Hugo, seated on a golden throne, accosted them, saying:

“The hour is come to make good your brags. But an if ye fail so to do, I will have your heads cut off. Begone therefore, straightway, escorted by my men-at-arms, each one of you to the place meet for the doing of the fine things ye have insolently boasted ye will accomplish.”

At this order they separated and went divers ways, each followed by a little troop of armed men. Whiles some returned to the hall where they had passed the night, others betook them to the gardens and orchards. Bernard de Brabant made for the river, Roland hied him to the ramparts, and all marched valiantly. Only Olivier and Charlemagne tarried in the Palace, waiting, the one for the knight that he had sworn to cleave in twain, the other for the maiden he was to wed.

But in very brief while a fearful sound arose, awful as the last trump that shall proclaim to mankind the end of the world. It reached the Great Hall of the Palace, set the birds of ruby trembling on their emerald perches and shook King Hugo on his throne of gold.

’Twas a noise of walls crumbling into ruin and floods roaring, and high above the din blared out an ear-splitting trumpet blast. Meanwhile messengers had come hurrying in from all quarters of the city, and thrown themselves trembling at the King’s feet, bearing strange and terrible tidings.

“Sire,” said one, “sixty fathoms’ length of the city walls is fallen in at one crash.”

“Sire,” cried another, “the pillar which bare up your vaulted hall is broken down, and the dome thereof we have seen walking like a tortoise toward the sea.”

“Sire,” faltered a third, “the river, with its ships and its fishes, is pouring through the streets, and will soon be beating against your Palace walls.”

King Hugo, white with terror, muttered:

“By my faith! these men are wizards.”

“Well, Sir King,” Charlemagne addressed him with a smile on his lips, “the Knight I wait for is long of coming.”

The King sent for him, and he came. He was a knight of stately stature and well armed. The good Emperor clave him in twain, as he had said.

Now while these things were a-doing, Olivier thought to himself:

“The intervention of Our Most Blessed Lady is plain to see in these marvels; and I am rejoiced to behold the manifest tokens she vouchsafes of her love for the Realm of France. Not in vain have the Emperor and his companions implored the succour of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God. Alas! *I* shall pay for all the rest, and have my head cut off. For I cannot well ask the Virgin Mary to help me make good *my* brag. ’Tis an enterprise of a sort wherein ’twould be indiscreet to crave the interference of Her who is the *Lily of Purity*, the *Tower of Ivory*, the *Guarded Door* and the *Fenced Orchard-Close*. And, lacking aid from on high, I am sore afraid I may not do so much as I have said.”

Thus ran Olivier’s thoughts, when King Hugo roughly accosted him with the words:

“’T is now your turn, Count, to fulfil your promise.”

“Sire,” replied Olivier, “I am waiting with great impatience for the Princess your daughter. For you must needs do me the priceless grace of giving me her hand.”

“That is but fair,” said King Hugo. “I will therefore bid her come to you and a chaplain with her for to celebrate the marriage.”

At church, during the ceremony, Olivier reflected:

“The maid is sweet and comely as ever a man could desire, and too fain am I to clip her in my arms to regret the brag I have made.”

That evening, after supper, the Princess Helen and the Count Olivier were escorted by twelve ladies and twelve knights to a chamber, wherein the twain were left alone together.

There they passed the night, and on the morrow guards came and led them both before King Hugo. He was on his throne, surrounded by his knights. Near by stood Charlemagne and the peers.

“Well, Count Olivier,” demanded the King, “is your brag made good?”

Olivier held his peace, and already was King Hugo rejoiced at heart to think his new son-in-law’s head must fall. For of all the brags and boasts, it was Olivier’s had angered him worst.

“Answer,” he stormed. “Do you dare to tell me your brag is accomplished?”

Thereupon the Princess Helen, blushing and smiling, spake with eyes downcast and in a faint voice, yet clear withal, and said,— “Yea!”

Right glad were Charlemagne and the peers to hear the Princess say this word.

“Well, well,” said Hugo, “these Frenchmen have God and the Devil o’ their side. It was fated I should cut off none of these knights’ heads.... Come hither, son-in-law,” — and he stretched forth his hand to Olivier, who kissed it.

The Emperor Charlemagne embraced the Princess and said to her:

“Helen, I hold you for my daughter and my son’s wife. You will go along with us to France, and you will live at our Court.”

Then, as his lips lay on the Princess’s cheek, he rounded softly in her ear:

“You spake as a loving-hearted woman should. But tell me this in closest confidence, — Did you speak the truth?”

She answered:

“Sire, Olivier is a gallant man and a courteous. He was so full of pretty ways and dainty devices for to distract my mind, *I* never thought of counting. Nor yet did *he* keep score. Needs therefore must I hold him quit of his promise.”

King Hugo made great rejoicings for his daughter’s nuptials. Thereafter Charlemagne and his twelve peers returned back to France, taking with them the Princess Helen.

THE MIRACLE OF THE MAGPIE

LENT, of the year 1429, presented a strange marvel of the Calendar, a conjunction that moved the admiration not only of the common crowd of the Faithful, but eke of Clerks, well learned in Arithmetic. For Astronomy, mother of the Calendar, was Christian in those days. In 1429 Good Friday fell on the Feast of the Annunciation, so that one and the same day combined the commemoration of the two several mysteries which did commence and consummate the redemption of mankind, and in wondrous wise superimposed one on top of the other, Jesus conceived in the Virgin's womb and Jesus dying on the Cross. This Friday, whereon the mystery of joy came so to coincide exactly with the mystery of sorrow, was named the "Grand Friday," and was kept holy with solemn Feasts on Mount Anis, in the Church of the Annunciation. For many years, by gift of the Popes of Rome, the sanctuary of Mount Anis had possessed the privilege of the plenary indulgences of a great jubilee, and the late-deceased Bishop of Le Puy, Élie de Le-strange, had gotten Pope Martin to restore this *pardon*. It was a favour of the sort the Popes scarce ever refused, when asked in due and proper form.

The *pardon* of the Grand Friday drew a great crowd of pilgrims and traders to Le Puy-en-Velay. As early as mid February folk from distant lands set out thither in cold and wind and rain. For the most part they fared on foot, staff in hand. Whenever they could, these pilgrims travelled in companies, to the end they might not be robbed and held to ransom by the armed bands that infested the country parts, and by the barons who exacted toll on the confines of their lands. Inasmuch as the mountain districts were especially dangerous, they tarried in the neighbouring towns, Clermont, Issoire, Brioude, Lyons, Issingeaux, Alais, till they were gathered in a great host, and then went forth on their road in the snow. During Holy Week a strange multitude thronged the hilly streets of Le Puy, — pedlars from Languedoc and Provence and Catalonia, leading their mules laded with leather goods, oil, wool, webs of cloth, or wines of Spain in goat-skins; lords a-horseback and ladies in wains, artisans and traders pacing on their mules, with wife or daughter perched behind, Then came the poor pilgrim folk, limping along, halting and hobbling, stick in hand and bag on back, panting up the stiff climb. Last were the flocks of oxen and sheep being driven to the slaughterhouses.

Now, leant against the wall of the Bishop's palace, stood Florent Guillaume, looking as long and dry and black as an espalier vine in winter, and devoured pilgrims and cattle with his eyes.

“Look,” he called to Marguerite the lace-maker, “look at yonder fine heads of bestial.”

And Marguerite, squatted beside her bobbins, called back:

“Yea, fine beasts, and fat withal!”

Both the twain were very bare and scant of the goods of this world, and even then were feeling bitterly the pinch of hunger. And folk said it came of their own fault. At that very moment Pierre Grandmange the tripe-seller was saying as much, where he stood in his tripe-shop, pointing a finger at them. “‘T would be sinful,” he was crying, “to give an alms to such good-for-nothing varlets.” The tripe-seller would fain have been very charitable, but he feared to lose his soul by giving to evil-livers, and all the fat citizens of Le Puy had the selfsame scruples.

To say truth, we must needs allow that, in the heyday of her hot youth, Marguerite the lace-maker had not matched St. Lucy in purity, St. Agatha in constancy, and St. Catherine in staidness. As for Florent Guillaume, he had been the best scrivener in the city. For years he had not had his equal for engrossing the Hours of Our Lady of Le Puy. But he had been over fond of merrymakings and junketings. Now his hand had lost its cunning, and his eye its clearness; he could no more trace the letters on the parchment with the needful steadiness of touch. Even so, he might have won his livelihood by teaching apprentices in his shop at the sign of the Image of Our Lady, under the choir buttresses of *The Annunciation*, for he was a fellow of good counsel and experience. But having had the ill fortune to borrow of Maître Jacquet Coquedouille the sum of six livres ten sous, and having paid him back at divers terms eighty livres two sous, he had found himself at the last to owe yet six livres two sous to the account of his creditor, which account was approved correct by the judges, for Jacquet Coquedouille was a sound arithmetician. This was the reason why the scrivenry of Florent Guillaume, under the choir buttresses of *The Annunciation*, was sold, on Saturday the fifth day of March, being the Feast of St. Theophilus, to the profit of Maître Jacquet Coquedouille. Since that time the poor penman had never a place to call his own. But by the good help of Jean Magne the bell-ringer and with the protection of Our Lady, whose Hours he had aforetime written, Florent Guillaume found a perch o’ nights in the steeple of the Cathedral.

The scrivener and the lace-maker had much ado to live. Marguerite only kept body and soul together by chance and charity, for she had long lost her good looks and she hated the lace-making. They helped each other. Folks said so by way of reproach; they had been better advised to account it to them for righteousness. Florent Guillaume was a learned clerk. Well knowing every word of the history of the beautiful Black Virgin of Le Puy and the ordering of the

ceremonies of the great *pardon* , he had conceived the notion he might serve as guide to the pilgrims, deeming he would surely light on someone compassionate enough to pay him a supper in guerdon of his fine stories. But the first folk he had offered his services to had bidden him begone because his ragged coat bespoke neither good guidance nor clerkly wit; so he had come back, downhearted and crestfallen, to the Bishop's wall, where he had his bit of sunshine and his kind gossip Marguerite. "They reckon," he said bitterly, "I am not learned enough to number them the relics and recount the miracles of Our Lady. Do they think my wits have escaped away through the holes in my gaberdine?"

"'Tis not the wits," replied Marguerite, "escape by the holes in a body's clothes, but the good natural heat. I am sore a-cold. And it is but too true that, man and woman, they judge us by our dress. The gallants would find me comely enough yet if I was accoutred like my Lady the Comtesse de Clermont."

Meanwhile, all the length of the street in front of them the pilgrims were elbowing and fighting their way to the Sanctuary, where they were to win pardon for their sins.

"They will surely suffocate anon," said Marguerite. "Twenty-two years ago, on the Grand Friday, two hundred persons died stifled under the porch of *The Annunciation* . God have their souls in keeping! Ay, those were the good times, when I was young!"

"'Tis very true indeed, that year you tell of, two hundred pilgrims crushed each other to death and departed from this world to the other. And next day was never a sign to be seen of aught untoward."

As he so spake, Florent Guillaume noted a pilgrim, a very fat man, who was not hurrying to get him assoiled with the same hot haste as the rest, but kept rolling his wide eyes to right and left with a look of distress and fear. Florent Guillaume stepped up to him and louted low.

"Messire," he accosted him, "one may see at a glance you are a sensible man and an experienced; you do not rush blindly to the *pardon* like a sheep to the slaughter. The rest of the folk go helter-skelter thither, the nose of one under the tail of the other; but you follow a wiser fashion. Grant me the boon to be your guide, and you will not repent your bargain."

The pilgrim, who proved to be a gentleman of Limoges, answered in the patois of his countryside, that he had no use for a scurvy beggarman and could very well find his own way to *The Annunciation* for to receive pardon for his faults. And therewith he set his face resolutely to the hill. But Florent Guillaume cast himself at his feet, and tearing at his hair:

“Stop! stop! messire,” he cried; “i’ God’s name and by all the Saints, I warn you go no farther! ‘T will be your death, and you are not the man we could see perish without grief and dolour. A few steps more and you are a dead man! They are suffocating up yonder. Already full six hundred pilgrims have given up the ghost. And this is but a small beginning! Do you not know, messire, that twenty-two years ago, in the year of grace one thousand four hundred and seven, on the selfsame day and at the selfsame hour, under yonder porch, nine thousand six hundred and thirty-eight persons, without reckoning women and children, trampled each other underfoot and perished miserably? An you met the same fate, I should never smile again. To see you is to love you, messire; to know you is to conceive a sudden and overmastering desire to serve you.”

The Limousin gentleman had halted in no small surprise and turned pale to hear such discourse and see the fellow tearing out his hair in fistfuls. In his terror he was for turning back the way he had come. But Florent Guillaume, on his knees in the mud, held him back by the skirt of his jacket.

“Never go that way, messire! not that way. You might meet Jacquet Coquedouille, and you would be all in an instant turned into stone. Better encounter the basilisk than Jacquet Coquedouille. I will tell you what you must do if, like the wise and prudent man your face proclaims you to be, you would live long and make your peace with God. Harken to me; I am a scholar, a Bachelor. To-day the holy relics will be borne through the streets and crossways of the city. You will find great solace in touching the carven shrines which enclose the cornelian cup wherefrom the child Jesus drank, one of the wine-jars of the Marriage at Cana, the cloth of the Last Supper, and the holy foreskin. If you take my advice, we will go wait for them, under cover, at a cookshop I wot of, before which they will pass without fail.”

Then, in a wheedling voice, without loosing his hold of the pilgrim’s jacket, he pointed to the lace-maker and said:

“Messire, you must give six sous to yonder worthy woman, that she may go buy us wine, for she knows where good liquor is to be gotten.”

The Limousin gentleman, who was a simple soul after all, went where he was led, and Florent Guillaume supped on the leg and wing of a goose, the bones whereof he put in his pocket as a present for Madame Ysabeau, his fellow lodger in the timbers of the steeple, — to wit, Jean Magne the bell-ringer’s magpie.

He found her that night perched on the beam where she was used to roost, beside the hole in the wall which was her storeroom wherein she hoarded walnuts and hazel-nuts, almonds and beech-nuts. She had awoke at the noise of his coming and flapped her wings; so he greeted her very courteously, addressing her in these obliging terms:

“Magpie most pious, lady recluse, bird of the cloister, Margot of the Nunnery, sable-frocked Abbess, Church fowl of the lustrous coat, all hail!”

Then offering her the goose bones nicely folded in a cabbage leaf:

“Lady,” he said, “I bring you here the scraps remaining of a good dinner a gentleman from Limoges gave me. His countrymen are radish eaters; but I have taught this one to prefer an Anis goose to all the radishes in the Limousin.”

Next day and the rest of the week Florent Guillaume, — for he could never light on his fat friend again nor yet any other good pilgrim with a well-lined travelling wallet, — fasted *a solis ortu usque ad occasum*, from rising sun to dewy eve. Marguerite the lace-maker did likewise. This was very meet and right, seeing the time was Holy Week.

II.

Now on Holy Easter Day, Maître Jacquet Coquedouille, a notable citizen of the place, was peeping through a hole in a shutter of his house and watching the countless throng of pilgrims passing down the steep street. They were wending homewards, happy to have won their pardon; and the sight of them greatly magnified his veneration for the Black Virgin. For he deemed a lady so much sought after must needs be a puissant dame. He was old, and his only hope lay in God’s mercy. Yet was he but ill-assured of his eternal salvation, for he remembered how many a time he had ruthlessly fleeced the widow and the orphan. Moreover, he had robbed Florent Guillaume of his scrivenry at the sign of Our Lady. He was used to lend at high interest on sound security. Yet could no man infer he was a usurer, forasmuch as he was a Christian, and it was only the Jews practised usury, — the Jews, and, if you will, the Lombards and the men of Cahors.

Now Jacquet Coquedouille went about the matter quite otherwise than the Jews. He never said, like Jacob, Ephraim, and Manasses, “I am lending you money.” What he did say was, “I am putting money into your business to help your trafficking,” a different thing altogether. For usury and lending upon interest were forbidden by the Church, but trafficking was lawful and permitted.

And yet at the thought how he had brought many Christian folk to poverty and despair, Jacquet Coquedouille felt the pangs of remorse, as he pictured the sword of Divine Justice hanging over his head. So on this holy Easter Day he was fain to secure him against the Last Judgment by winning the protection of Our Lady. He thought to himself she would plead for him at the judgment seat of her divine Son, if only he gave her a handsome fee. So he went to the great chest

where he kept his gold, and, after making sure the chamber door was shut fast, he opened the chest, which was full of angels, flor-ins, esterlings, nobles, gold crowns, gold ducats, and golden sous, and all the coins ever struck by Christian or Saracen. He extracted with a sigh of regret twelve deniers of fine gold and laid them on the table, which was crowded with balances, files, scissors, gold-scales, and account books. After shutting his chest again and triple-locking it, he numbered the deniers, renumbered them, gazed long at them with looks of affection, and addressed them in words so soft and sweet, so affable and ingratiating, so gentle and courteous, it seemed rather the music of the spheres than human speech.

“Oh, little angels!” sighed the good old man. “Oh, my dear little angels! Oh, my pretty gold sheep, with the fine, precious fleece!”

And taking the pieces between his fingers with as much reverence as it had been the body of Our Lord, he put them in the balance and made sure they were of the full weight, — or very near, albeit a trifle clipped already by the Lombards and the Jews, through whose hands they had passed. After which he spoke to them yet more graciously than before:

“Oh, my pretty sheep, my sweet, pretty lambs, there, let me shear you! ‘T will do you no hurt at all.”

Then, seizing his great scissors, he clipped off shreds of gold here and there, as he was used to clip every piece of money before parting with it. And he gathered the clippings carefully in a wooden bowl that was already half full of bits of gold. He was ready to give twelve angels to the Holy Virgin; but he felt no way bound to depart from his use and wont. This done, he went to the aumry where his pledges lay, and drew out a little blue purse, broidered with silver, which a dame of the petty trading sort had left with him in her distress. He remembered that blue and white are Our Lady’s colours.

That day and the next he did nothing further. But in the night, betwixt Monday and Tuesday, he had cramps, and dreamt the devils were pulling him by the feet. This he took for a warning of God and our Blessed Lady, tarried within doors pondering the matter all the day, and then toward evening went to lay his offering at the feet of the Black Virgin.

III

THAT same day, as night was closing in, Florent Guillaume thought ruefully of returning to his airy bedchamber. He had fasted the livelong day, sore against the grain, holding that a good Christian ought not to fast in the glorious Resurrection week. Before mounting to his bed in the steeple, he went to offer a pious prayer to the Lady of Le Puy. She was still there in the midst of the Church at the spot where she had offered herself on the Grand Friday to the veneration of the Faithful. Small and black, crowned with jewels, in a mantle blazing with gold and precious stones and pearls, she held on her knees the Child Jesus, who was as black as his mother and passed his head through a slit in her cloak. It was the miraculous image which St. Louis had received as a gift from the Soldan of Egypt and had carried with his own hands to the Church of Anis.

All the pilgrims were gone now, and the Church was dark and empty. The last offerings of the Faithful were spread at the feet of the beautiful Black Virgin, displayed on a table lit with wax tapers. You could see amongst the rest a head, hearts, hands, feet, a woman's breasts of silver, a little boat of gold, eggs, loaves, Aurillac cheeses, and in a bowl full of deniers, sous, and groats, a little blue purse brodered with silver. Over against the table, in a huge chair, dozed the priest who guarded the offerings.

Florent Guillaume dropped on his knees before the holy image, and said over to himself this pious prayer:

"Lady, an it be true that the holy prophet Jeremias, having beheld thee with the eyes of faith ere ever thou wast conceived, carved with his hands out of cedar-wood in thy likeness the holy image before which I am at this present kneeling; an it be true that afterward King Ptolemy, instructed of the miracles wrought by this same holy image, took it from the Jewish priests, bare it to Egypt and set it up, covered with precious stones, in the temple of the idols; an it be true that Nebuchadnezzar, conqueror of the Egyptians, seized it in his turn and had it laid amongst his treasure, where the Saracens found it when they captured Babylon; an it be true that the Soldan loved it in his heart above all things, and was used to adore it at the least once every day; an it be true that the said Soldan had never given it to our saintly King Louis, but that his wife, who was a Saracen dame, yet prized chivalry and knightly prowess, resolved to make it a gift to the best knight and worthiest champion of all Christendom; in a word, an this image be miraculous, as I do firmly credit, have it do a miracle, Lady, in favour of the poor clerk who hath many a time writ thy praises on the vellum of

the service books. He hath sanctified his sinful hands by engrossing in a fair writing, with great red capitals at the beginning of each clause, 'the fifteen joys of Our Lady,' in the vulgar tongue and in rhyme, for the comforting of the afflicted. 'Tis pious work this. Think of it, Lady, and heed not his sins. Give him somewhat to eat. 'Twill both do me much profit, and bring thee great honour, for the miracle will appear no mean one to all them that know the world. Thou hast this day gotten gold, eggs, cheeses, and a little blue purse broidered with silver. Lady, I grudge thee none of the gifts that have been made thee. Thou dost well deserve them, yea, and more than they. I do not so much as ask thee to make them give me back what a thief hath robbed me of, a thief by name Jacquet Coquedouille, one of the most honoured citizens of this thy town of Le Puy. No, all I ask of thee is not to let me die of hunger. And if thou grant me this boon, I will indite a full and fair history of thine holy image here present."

So prayed Florent Guillaume. The soft murmur of his petition was answered only by the deep-chested, placid snore of the sleeping priest. The poor scrivener rose from his knees, stepped noiselessly adown the nave, for he was grown so light his footfall could scarce be heard, and, fasting as he was, climbed the tower stairs that had as many steps as there are days in the year.

Meanwhile Madame Ysabeau, slipping under the cloister gate, entered her Church. The pilgrims had driven her away, for she loved peace and solitude. The bird came forward cautiously, putting one foot slowly in front of the other, then stopped and craned her neck, casting a suspicious look to right and left. Then giving a graceful little jump and shaking out her tail feathers, she hopped up to the Black Madonna. Then she stood stock still a few moments, scrutinising the sleeping watchman and questioning the darkness and silence with eyes and ears alert. At last with a mighty flutter of wings she alighted on the table of offerings.

IV

MEANWHILE Florent Guillaume had settled himself for the night in the steeple. It was bitter cold. The wind came blowing in through the luffer-boards and fluted and organed among the bells to rejoice the heart of the cats and owls. And this was not the only objection to the lodging. Since the earthquake of 1427, which had shaken the whole church, the spire was dropping to pieces stone by stone and threatened to collapse altogether in the first storm. Our Lady suffered this dilapidation because of the people's sins.

Presently Florent Guillaume fell asleep, which is a token of his innocence of heart. What dreams he dreamt is clean forgot, except that he had a vision in his sleep of a lady of consummate beauty who came and kissed him on the mouth. But when his lips opened to return her salute, he swallowed two or three woodlice that were walking over his face and by their tickling had deluded his sleeping senses into the agreeable fancy. He awoke, and hearing a noise of wings beating above his head, he thought it was a devil, as was very natural for him to opine, seeing how the evil spirits flock in countless swarms to torment mankind, and above all at night time. But the moon just then breaking through the clouds, he recognised Madame Ysabeau and saw she was busy with her beak pushing into a crack in the wall that served her for storehouse a blue purse broidered with silver. He let her do as she list; but when she had left her hoard, he clambered onto a beam, took the purse, opened it, and saw it contained twelve good gold deniers, which he clapped in his belt, giving thanks to the incomparable Black Virgin of Le Puy. For he was a clerk and versed in the Scriptures, and he remembered how the Lord fed his prophet Elias by a raven; whence he inferred that the Holy Mother of God had sent by a magpie twelve deniers to her poor penman, Florent Guillaume.

On the morrow Florent and Marguerite the lace-maker ate a dish of tripe, — a treat they had craved for many a long year.

So ends the Miracle of the Magpie. May he who tells the tale live, as he would fain live, in good and gentle peace, and all good hap befall such folk as shall read the same.

BROTHER JOCONDE

THE Parisians were far from loving the English and found it hard to put up with them. When, after the obsequies of the late King Charles VI, the Duke of Bedford had the sword of the King of France borne before him, the people murmured. But what cannot be cured must be endured. Besides, though the capital hated the English, it loved the Burgundians. What more natural for citizen folk, and especially for money-changers and traders, than to admire Duke Philip, a prince of seemly presence and the richest nobleman in Christendom. As for the “little King of Bourges,” a sorry-looking mortal and very poor, strongly suspected, moreover, of foul murder at the Bridge of Montereau, what had he about him to please folk withal? Scorn was the sentiment felt for him, and horror and loathing for his partisans. For ten years now had these been riding and raiding around the walls, pillaging and holding to ransom. No doubt the English and Burgundians did much the same; when, in the month of August, 1423, Duke Philip came to Paris, his men-at-arms had ravaged all the country about. And they were friends and allies of course; but after all they only came and went. The Armagnacs, on the contrary, were always in the field, stealing whatever they could lay their hands upon, firing farmsteads and churches, killing women and children, deflowering virgins and nuns, hanging men by the thumbs. In 1420 they threw themselves like devils let loose on the village of Champigny and burnt up altogether oats, wheat, lambs, cows, oxen, children, and women. They did the like and worse at Croissy. A very great clerk of the University declared they wrought all wickedness that can be wrought and conceived, and that more Christian folk had been martyred at their hands than ever Maximian or Diocletian did to death.

At the news that these accursed Armagnacs were at the gates of Compiègne and occupying the neighbouring castles and their lands, the folk of Paris were sore afraid. They believed that the Dauphin’s soldiers had sworn, if they entered Paris, to slay whomsoever they found there. They affirmed openly that Messire Charles de Valois had given up to his men’s mercy town and townsmen, great and small, of every rank and condition, men and women, and that he proposed to drive the plough over the site of the city. The inhabitants mostly believed the tale; so they set the St. Andrew’s cross on their coats, in token that they were of the party of the Burgundians. Their hatred was doubled, and their fears with it, when they learned that Brother Richard and the Maid Jeanne were at the head of

King Charles' army. They knew nothing of the Maid save from the rumour of the victories she was reported to have won at Orleans. But they deemed she had vanquished the English by the Devil's aid, by means of spells and enchantments.

The Masters of the University all said: "A creature in shape of a woman is with the Armagnacs. What it is, God knows!"

For Brother Richard, they knew him well. He had come to Paris before, and they had hearkened reverently to his sermons. He had even persuaded them to renounce those games of chance for which they had been used to forget meat and drink and the services of the Church. Now, at the tidings that Brother Richard was on foray with the Armagnacs and winning over for them by his well-hung tongue good towns like Troyes in Champagne, they called down on him the curse of God and his Saints. They tore out of their hats the leaden medals inscribed with the holy name of Jesus, which the good Brother had given them, and to show in what detestation they held him, resumed dice, bowls, draughts, and all other games they had renounced at his exhortation.

The city was strongly fortified, for in the days when King Jean was a prisoner of the English, the citizens of Paris, seeing the enemy in the heart of the Kingdom, had feared a siege and had hastened to put the walls in a state of defence. They had surrounded the place with moats and counter-moats. The moats, on the left bank of the river, were dug at the foot of the walls forming the old circle of fortification. But on the right bank there were faubourgs, both extensive and well built, outside the walls and almost touching them. The new moats enclosed a part of these, and the Dauphin Charles, King Jean's son, afterward had a wall built along the line of them. Nevertheless there was some feeling of insecurity, for the Cathedral Chapter took measures to put the relics and treasure out of reach of the enemy.

Meantime, on Sunday, August 21st, a Cordelier, by name Brother Joconde, entered the town. He had made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and was said, like Brother Vincent Ferrier and Brother Bernardino of Sienna, to have enjoyed by the abounding grace of God many revelations anent the forthcoming end of the world. He gave out that he would preach his first sermon to the Parisians on Tuesday following, St. Bartholomew's day, in the Cloister of "The Innocents." On the eve of that day more than six thousand persons spent the night in the Cloister. At the foot of the platform wherefrom he was to preach, the women sat squatted on their heels, and amongst them Guillaumette Dyonis, who was blind from birth. She was the child of an artisan who had been killed by the Burgundians in the woods of Boulogne-la-Grande. Her mother had been carried off by a Burgundian man-at-arms, and none knew what had become of her. Guillaumette was fifteen or sixteen years of age. She lived at "The Innocents" on

what she made by spinning wool, at which trade there was not a better worker to be found in all the town. She went and came in the streets without the help of any and knew everything as well as those who can see. As she lived a good and holy life and fasted often, she was favoured with visions. In especial she had been accorded notable revelations by the Apostle St. John concerning the troubles that then beset the Kingdom of France. Now, as she was reciting her Hours at the foot of the platform, under the great Dance of Death, a woman called Simone la Bardine, who was seated on the ground beside her, asked her if the good Brother was not coming soon.

Guillaumette Dyonis could not see the tailed gown of green and the horned wimple which Simone la Bardine wore; yet she knew by instinct the woman was no honest dame. She felt a natural aversion for light women and the sort the soldiers called their sweethearts or “doxies,” but it had been revealed to her that we should hold such in great pity and deal compassionately with them. Wherefore she answered Simone la Bardine gently:

“The good Father will come soon, please God. And we shall have no reason to regret having waited, for he is eloquent in prayer and his sermons turn the folk to devotion more even than those of Brother Richard, who spake in these Cloisters in the springtime. He knows more than any man living of the times that shall come and shall show us strange portents. I trow we shall gain great profit of his words.”

“God grant it,” sighed Simone la Bardine. “But are you not very sorry to be blind?”

“No. I wait to see God.”

Simone la Bardine made her mantle into a cushion, and said:

“Life is all ups and downs. I live at the top of the Rue Saint-Antoine. ‘T is the finest part of the city and the merriest, for the best hostelries are in the Place Baudet and thereabout. Before the Wars there was aye abundance there of hot cakes and fresh herrings and Auxerre wine by the tun. With the English famine entered the town. Now is there neither bread in the bin nor firewood on the hearth. One after other the Armagnacs and the Burgundians have drunk up all the wine, and there is naught left in the cellar but a little thin, sour cider and sloe-juice. Knights armed for the tourney, pilgrims with their cockleshells and staves, traders with their chests full of knives and little service-books, where are they gone? They never come now to seek a lodging and good living in the Rue Saint-Antoine. But the wolves quit covert in the forests and prowl of nights in the faubourgs and devour little children.”

“Put your trust in God,” Guillaumette Dyonis answered her.

“Amen!” returned Simone la Bardine. “But I have not told you the worst. On the Thursday before St. John’s day, at three after midnight, two Englishmen came knocking at my door. Not knowing but they had come to rob me or break up my chests and coffers out of mischief, or do some other devilment, I shouted to them from my window to go their ways, that I did not know them and I was not going to open the door. But they only hammered louder, swearing they were going to break in the door and come in and cut off my nose and ears. To stop their uproar I emptied a crockful of water on their heads; but the crock slipped out of my hands and broke on the back of one fellow’s neck so unchancily that it felled him. His comrade called up the watch. I was haled to the Châtelet and clapped in prison, where I was very hardly handled, and only escaped by paying a heavy sum of money. I found my house pillaged from cellar to attic. From that day my affairs have gone from bad to worse, and I have naught in the wide world but the clothes I stand up in. In very despair I have come hither to hear the good Father, who they say abounds in comforting words.”

“God, who loves you,” said Guillaumctte Dyonis, “has moved you in all this.”

Then a great silence fell on the crowd as Brother Joconde appeared. His eyes flashed like lightning. When he opened his lips, his voice pealed out like thunder.

“I have come from Jerusalem,” he began; “and to prove it, see in this wallet are roses of Jericho, a branch of the olive under which Our Saviour sweated drops of blood, and a handful of the earth of Calvary.”

He gave a long narrative of his pilgrimage. And he added:

“In Syria I met Jews travelling in companies; I asked them whither they were bound, and they told me: ‘We are flocking in crowds to Babylon, because in very deed the Messiah is born among men, and will restore us our heritage, and stablish us again in the Land of Promise.’ So said these Jews of Syria. Now the Scriptures teach us that he they call the Messiah is, in truth, Antichrist, of whom it is said he must be born at Babylon, chief city of the kingdom of Persia, be reared at Bethsaida, and dwell in his youth at Chorazin. That is why Our Lord said: ‘Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!’

“The year that is at hand,” went on Brother Joconde, “will bring the greatest marvels that have ever been beheld.

“The times are at hand. He is born, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked man, the beast from out the abyss, the abomination of desolation. He comes from the tribe of Dan, of which it is written: ‘Dan shall be a serpent in the way, an adder in the path.’

“Brethren, soon shall ye see returning to this earth the Prophets Elias and Enoch, Moses, Jeremias, and St. John Evangelist. And lo! the day of wrath is dawning, the day which ‘*solvet sæclum in favilla, teste David et Sibylla.*’ Wherefore now is the time to repent and do penance and renounce the false delights of this world.”

At the good Brother’s word bosoms heaved with remorse and deep-drawn sighs were heard. Not a few, both men and women, were near fainting when the preacher cried:

“I read in your souls that ye keep mandrakes at home, which will bring you to hell fire.”

It was true. Many Parisians paid heavily to the old witch-wives, who profess unholy knowledge, for to buy mandrakes, and were used to keep them treasured in a chest. These magic roots have the likeness of a little man, hideously ugly and misshapen in a weird and diabolic fashion. They would dress them out magnificently, in fine linen and silks, and the mannikins brought them riches, chief source of all the ills of this world.

Next Brother Joconde thundered against women’s extravagant attire.

“Leave off,” he bade them, “your horns and your tails! Are ye not shamed so to bedizen yourselves like she-devils? Light bonfires, I say, in the public streets, and cast therein and burn your damnable head-gear, — pads and rolls, erections of leather and whalebone, wherewith ye stiffen out the front of your hoods.”

He ended by exhorting them with so much zeal and loving-kindness not to lose their souls, but put themselves in the grace of God, that all who heard him wept hot tears. And Simone la Bardine wept more abundantly than any.

When, finally, coming down from his platform, Brother Joconde crossed the cloister and graveyard, the people fell on their knees as he went by. The women gave him their little ones to bless, or besought him to touch medals and rosaries for them. Some plucked threads from his gown, thinking to get healing by putting them, like relics of the Saints, on the places where they were afflicted. Guillaumette Dyonis followed the good Father as easily as if she saw him with her bodily eyes. Simone la Bardine trailed behind her, sobbing. She had pulled off her horned wimple and tied a kerchief round her head.

Thus they marched, the three of them, along the streets, where men and women, who had been at the preaching, were kindling fires before their doors to cast therein head-gear and mandrake roots. But on reaching the river bank, Brother Joconde sat down under an elm, and Guillaumette Dyonis came up to him and said:

“Father, it hath been revealed to me in vision that you are come to this Kingdom to restore the same to good peace and concord. I have had myself

many revelations concerning the peace of the Kingdom.”

Next Simone la Bardine took up her parable and said:

“Brother Joconde, I lived once in a fine house in the Rue Saint-Antoine, near by the Place Baudet, which is the fairest quarter of Paris, and the wealthiest. I had a matted chamber, mantles of cloth of gold, and gowns trimmed with miniver, enough to fill three great chests; I had a feather-bed, a dresser loaded with pewter, and a little book wherein you saw in pictures the story of Our Lord. But since the wars and pillagings that devastate the Kingdom, I have lost everything. The gallants never come now to take their pleasure in the Place Baudet. But the wolves come there instead to devour little children. The Burgundians and the English are as bad as the Armagnacs. Would you have me go with you?”

The Monk gazed a while in silence at the two women; and deeming it was Jesus Christ himself had led them to him, he received them for his Penitents, and thereafter the twain followed him wherever he went. Every day he preached to the people, now at “The Innocents,” now at the Porte Saint-Honoré, or at the Halles. But he never went outside the Walls, by reason of the Armagnacs, who were raiding all the countryside round the city.

His words led many souls to a better life; and at the fourth sermon he preached in Paris, he received for Penitents Jeannette Chastenier, wife of a merchant-drapeer on the Pont-au-Change, and another woman, by name Opportune Jadoin, who nursed the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu and was no longer very young. He admitted likewise into his company a gardener of the Ville-l’Evêque, a lad of about sixteen, Robin by name, who bare on his feet and hands the stigmata of the crucifixion, and was shaken by a sore trembling of all his limbs. He often saw the Holy Virgin in corporeal presence, and heard her speech and savoured the divine odours of her glorified body. She had entrusted him with a message for the Regent of England and for the Duke of Burgundy. Meantime the army of Messire Charles of Valois entered the town of Saint-Denis. And no man durst from that day go out of Paris to harvest the fields or gather aught from the market-gardens which covered the plain to the northward of the city. Instantly famine prices ruled, and the inhabitants began to suffer cruelly. And they were further exasperated because they believed themselves betrayed. It was openly said that certain folk, and in especial certain men of Religion, suborned by Messire Charles of Valois, were watching for the best time to stir up trouble and bring in the enemy in an hour of panic and confusion. Haunted by this fear, which was not perhaps altogether baseless, the citizens who kept guard of the ramparts showed scant mercy to any men of evil looks whom they found loitering near the Gates and whom they might suspect, on the most trivial

evidence, of making signals to the Armagnacs. On Thursday, September 8th, the good people of Paris awoke without any fear of being attacked before the next day. This day, September 8th, was the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, and it was an established custom with the two factions that tore the Kingdom in twain to keep holy the feast-days of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Yet at this holy season the Parisians, on coming forth from Mass, learnt that, notwithstanding the sacredness of the day, the Armagnacs had appeared before the Porte Saint-Honoré and had set fire to the outwork which defended its approach. It was further reported that Messire Charles of Valois was posted, for the time being, along with Brother Richard and the Maid Jeanne, in the Hog Market without the Walls. The same afternoon, through all the city, on either side the bridges, shouts of fear arose— “Save yourselves! fly, the enemy are come in, all is lost!” The cries were heard even inside the Churches, where pious folks were singing Vespers. These came flying out in terror and ran to their houses to take refuge behind barred doors.

Now the men who went about raising these cries were emissaries of Messire Charles of Valois. In fact, at that very time, the Company of the Maréchal de Rais was making assault on the Walls near by the Porte Saint-Honoré. The Armagnacs had brought up in carts great bundles of faggots and wattled hurdles to fill up the moats, and above six hundred scaling-ladders for storming the ramparts. The Maid Jeanne, who was nowise as the Burgundians believed, but lived a pious life and guarded her chastity, set foot to ground, and was the first down into a dry moat, which for that cause was easy to cross. But thereupon they found themselves exposed to the arrows and cross-bolts that rained down thick and fast from the Walls. Then they had in front of them a second moat. Wherefore were the Maid and her men-at-arms sore hampered. Jeanne sounded the great moat with her lance and shouted to throw in faggots.

Inside the town could be heard the roar of cannon, and all along the streets the citizens were running, half accoutred, to their posts on the ramparts, knocking over as they went the brats playing about in the gutters. The chains were drawn across the roadways, and barricades were begun. Tribulation and tumult filled all the place.

But neither the Brother Joconde nor his Penitents saw aught of it, forasmuch as they took heed only of eternal things, and deemed the vain agitation of men to be but a foolish game. They marched through the streets singing the “Veni creator spiritus,” and crying out: “Pray, for the times are at hand.”

Thus they made their way in good array down the Rue Saint-Antoine, which was densely crowded with men, women, and children. Coming presently to the Place Baudet, Brother Joconde pushed through the throng and mounted a great

stone that stood at the door of the Hôtel de la Truie, which Messire Florimont Lecocq, the master of the house, used to help him mount his mule. This Messire Florimont Lecocq was Sergeant at the Châtelet Prison and a partisan of the English.

So, standing on the great stone, Brother Joconde preached to the people. "Sow ye," he cried, "sow ye, good folk; sow abundantly of beans, for He which is to come will come quickly."

By the beans they were to sow, the good Brother signified the charitable works it behoved them accomplish before Our Lord should come, in the clouds of heaven, to judge both the quick and the dead. And it was urgent to sow these works without tarrying, for that the harvest would be soon. Guillaumette Dyonis, Simone la Bardine, Jeanne Chastenier, Opportune Jadoin, and Robin the gardener, stood in a ring about the Preacher, and cried "Amen!"

But the citizens, who thronged behind in a great crowd, pricked up their ears and bent their brows, thinking the Monk was foretelling the entry of Charles of Valois into his good town of Paris, over which he was fain — at any rate, so they believed — to drive the ploughshare.

Meanwhile the good Brother went on with his soul-awakening discourse.

"Oh! ye men of Paris, ye are worse than the Pagans of old Rome."

Just then the mangonels firing from the Porte Saint-Denis mingled their thunder with Brother Joconde's voice and shook the bystanders' hearts within them. Some one in the press cried out, "Death! death to traitors!" All this time Messire Florimont Lecocq was within-doors doing on his armour. He now came forth at the noise, before he had buckled his leg-pieces. Seeing the Monk standing on his mounting-block, he asked: "What is this good Father saying?" And a chorus of voices answered: "Telling us that Messire Charles of Valois is going to enter the city," while others cried:

"He is against the folk of Paris," and others again:

"He would fain cozen and betray us, like the Brother Richard, who at this very time is riding with our enemies."

But Brother Joconde made answer: "There be neither Armagnacs, nor Burgundians, nor French, nor English, but only the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Ye are lewd fellows and your women wantons."

"Go to, thou apostate! thou sorcerer! thou traitor!" yelled Messire Florimont Lecocq, — and lugging out his sword, he plunged it in the good Brother's bosom.

With pale lips and faltering voice, the man of God still managed to say:

"Pray, fast, do penance, and ye shall be forgiven, my brethren..."

Then his voice choked, as the blood poured from his mouth, and he fell on the stones. Two knights, Sir John Stewart and Sir George Morris, threw themselves on the body and pierced it with more than a hundred dagger thrusts, vociferating:

“Long life to King Henry! Long life to my Lord the Duke of Bedford! Down with the Dauphin! Down with the mad Maid of the Armagnacs! Up, up! To the Gates, to the Gates!”

Therewith they ran to the Walls, drawing off with them Messire Florimont and the crowd of citizens.

Meanwhile the holy women and the gardener tarried about the bleeding corse. Simone la Bardine lay prostrate on the ground, kissing the good Brother’s feet and wiping away his blood with her unbound hair.

But Guillaumette Dyonis, standing up with her arms lifted to heaven, cried in a voice as clear as the sound of bells:

“My sisters, Jeanne, Opportune and Simone, and you, my brother, Robin the gardener, let us be going, for the times are at hand. The soul of this good Father holds me by the hand, and it will lead me aright. Wherefore ye must follow along with me. And we will say to those who are making cruel war upon each other: ‘Kiss and make peace. And if ye must needs use your arms, take up the cross and go forth all together to fight the Saracens.’ Come! my sisters and my brother.”

Jeanne Chastenier picked up the shaft of an arrow from the ground, brake it, and made a cross, which she laid on good Brother Joconde’s bosom. Then these holy women, and the gardener with them, followed after Guillaumette Dyonis, who led them by the streets and squares and alleys as if her eyes had seen the light of day. They reached the foot of the rampart, and by the stairway of a tower that was left unguarded, they mounted onto the curtain-wall. There had been no time to furnish it with its hoardings of wood; so they went along in the open. They proceeded toward the Porte Saint-Honoré, by this time enveloped in clouds of dust and smoke. It was there the Maréchal de Rais and his men were making assault. Their bolts flew thick and fast against the ramparts, and they were hurling faggots into the water of the great moat. On the hog’s-back parting the great moat from the little, stood the Maid, crying: “Yield, yield you to the King of France.” The English had abandoned the top of the wall in terror, leaving their dead and wounded behind them. Guillaumette Dyonis walked first, her head high and her left arm extended before her, while with her right hand she kept signing herself reverently. Simone la Bardine followed close on her heels. Then came Jeanne Chastenier and Opportune Jadoin. Robin the gardener brought up the rear, his body all shaking with his infirmity, and showing the divine stigmata on his hands. They were singing canticles as they walked.

And Guillaumette, turning now toward the city and now toward the open country, cried: "Brethren, embrace ye one another. Live in peace and harmony. Take the iron of your spearheads and forge it into ploughshares!"

Scarce had she spoken ere a shower of arrows, some from the parapet-way where a Company of Citizens was defiling, some from the hog's-back where the Armagnac men-at-arms were massed, flew in her direction, and therewith a storm of insults:

"Wanton! traitress! witch!"

Meanwhile she went on exhorting the two sides to stablish the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon earth and to live in innocency and brotherly love, till a cross-bow bolt struck her in the throat and she staggered and fell backward.

It was which could laugh the louder at this, Armagnacs or Burgundians. Drawing her gown over her feet, she lay still and made no other stir, but gave up her soul, sighing the name of Jesus. Her eyes, which remained open, glowed like two opals.

Short while after the death of Guillaumette Dyonis the men of Paris returned in great force to man their Wall, and defended their city right valorously. Jeanne the Maid was wounded by a cross-bow bolt in the leg, and Messire Charles of Valois' men-at-arms fell back upon the Chapelle Saint-Denis. What became of Jeanne Chastenier and Opportune Jadoin no one knows. They were never heard of more. Simone la Bardine and Robin the gardener were taken the same day by the citizens on guard at the Walls and handed over to the Bishop's officer, who duly brought them before the Courts. The Church adjudged Simone heretic, and condemned her for salutary penance to the bread of suffering and the water of affliction. Robin was convicted of sorcery, and, persevering in his error, was burned alive in the Place du Parvis.

FIVE FAIR LADIES OF PICARDY, OF POITOU, OF TOURAINE, OF LYONS, AND OF PARIS

ONE day the Capuchin, Brother Jean Chavaray, meeting my good master the Abbé Coignard in the cloister of “The Innocents,” fell into talk with him of the Brother Olivier Maillard, whose sermons, edifying and macaronic, he had lately been reading.

“There are good bits to be found in these sermons,” said the Capuchin, “notably the tale of the five ladies and the go-between...” You will readily understand that Brother Olivier, who lived in the reign of Louis XI and whose language smacks of the coarseness of that age, uses a different word. But our century demands a certain politeness and decency in speech; wherefore I employ the term I have, to wit, *go-between*.

“You mean,” replied my good master, “to signify by the expression a woman who is so obliging as to play intermediary in matters of love and love-making. The Latin has several names for her, — as *lena*, *conciliatrix*, also *internuntia libidinum*, ambassadress of naughty desires. These prudish dames perform the best of services; but seeing they busy themselves therein for money, we distrust their disinterestedness. Call yours a *procuress*, good Father, and have done with it; ‘t is a word in common use, and has a not unseemly sound.”

“So I will, Monsieur l’Abbé,” assented Brother Jean Chavaray. “Only don’t say *mine*, I pray, but the Brother Olivier’s. A procuress then, who lived on the Pont des Tournelles, was visited one day by a knight, who put a ring into her hands. ‘It is of fine gold,’ he told her, ‘and hath a balass ruby mounted in the bezel. An you know any dames of good estate, go say to the most comely of them that the ring is hers if she is willing to come to see me and do at my pleasure.’

“The procuress knew, by having seen them at Mass, five ladies of an excellent beauty, — natives the first of Picardy, the second of Poitou, the third of Touraine, another from the good city of Lyons, and the last a Parisian, all dwelling in the Cite or its near neighbourhood.

“She knocked first at the Picard lady’s door. A maid opened, but her mistress refused to have one word to say to her visitor. She was an honest woman.

“The procuress went next to see the lady of Poitiers and solicit her favours for the gallant knight. This dame answered her:

“Prithee, go tell him who sent you that he is come to the wrong house, and that I am not the woman he takes me for.’

“She too is an honest woman; yet less honest than the first, in that she tried to appear more so.

“The procuress then went to see the lady from Tours, made the same offer to her as to the other, and showed her the ring.

“‘I’ faith,’ said the lady, ‘but the ring is right lovely.’

“‘‘T is yours, an you will have it.’

“‘I will not have it at the price you set on it. My husband might catch me, and I should be doing him a grief he doth not deserve.’

“This lady of Touraine is a harlot, I trow, at bottom of her heart.

“The procuress left her and went straight to the dame of Lyons, who cried:

“‘Alack! my good friend, my husband is a jealous wight, and he would cut the nose off my face to hinder me winning any more rings at this pretty tilting.’

“This dame of Lyons, I tell you, is a worthless good-for-naught.

“Last of all the procuress hurried to the Parisian’s. She was a hussy, and answered brazenly:

“‘My husband goes Wednesday to his vineyards; tell the good sir who sent you I will come that day and see him.’

“Such, according to Brother Olivier, from Picardy to Paris, are the degrees from good to evil amongst women. What think you of the matter, Monsieur Coignard?”

To which my good master made answer:

“‘T is a shrewd matter to consider the acts and impulses of these petty creatures in their relations with Eternal Justice. I have no lights thereanent. But methinks the Lyons dame who feared having her nose cut off was a more good-for-nothing baggage than the Parisian who was afraid of nothing.”

“I am far, very far, from allowing it,” replied Brother Jean Chavaray. “A woman who fears her husband may come to fear hell fire. Her Confessor, it may be, will bring her to do penance and give alms. For, after all, that is the end we must come at. But what can a poor Capuchin hope to get of a woman whom *nothing* terrifies?”

A GOOD LESSON WELL LEARNT

IN the days of King Louis XI there lived at Paris, in a matted chamber, a citizen dame called Violante, who was comely and well-liking in all her person. She had so bright a face that Master Jacques Tribouillard, doctor in law and a renowned cosmographer, who was often a visitor at her house, was used to tell her:

“Seeing you, madame, I deem credible and even hold it proven, what Cucurbitus Piger lays down in one of his scholia on Strabo, to wit, that the famous city and university of Paris was of old known by the name of Lutetia or Leucecia, or some such like word coming from *Leukê*, that is to say, ‘the white,’ forasmuch as the ladies of the same had bosoms white as snow, — yet not so clear and bright and white as is your own, madame.”

To which Violante would say in answer:

“‘T is enough for me if my bosom is not fit to fright folks, like some I wot of. And, if I show it, why, ’tis to follow the fashion. I have not the hardihood to do otherwise than the rest of the world.”

Now Madame Violante had been wedded, in the flower of her youth, to an Advocate of the Parlement, a man of a harsh temper and sorely set on the arraignment and punishing of unfortunate prisoners. For the rest, he was of sickly habit and a weakling, of such a sort he seemed more fit to give pain to folks outside his doors than pleasure to his wife within. The old fellow thought more of his blue bags than of his better half, though these were far otherwise shapen, being bulgy and fat and formless. But the lawyer spent his nights over them.

Madame Violante was too reasonable a woman to love a husband that was so unlovable. Master Jacques Tribouillard upheld she was a good wife, as steadfastly and surely confirmed and stablished in conjugal virtue as Lucretia the Roman. And for proof he alleged that he had altogether failed to turn her aside from the path of honour. The judicious observed a prudent silence on the point, holding that what is hid will only be made manifest at the last Judgment Day. They noted how the lady was over fond of gewgaws and laces and wore in company and at church gowns of velvet and silk and cloth of gold, purfled with miniver; but they were too fair-minded folk to decide whether, damning as she did Christian men who saw her so comely and so finely dressed to the torments of vain longing, she was not damning her own soul too with one of them. In a

word, they were well ready to stake Madame Violante's virtue on the toss of a coin, cross or pile, — which is greatly to the honour of that fair lady.

The truth is her Confessor, Brother Jean Turelure, was for ever upbraiding her.

“Think you, madame,” he would ask her, “that the blessed St. Catherine won heaven by leading such a life as yours, baring her bosom and sending to Genoa for lace ruffles?”

But he was a great preacher, very severe on human weaknesses, who could condone naught and thought he had done everything when he had inspired terror. He threatened her with hell fire for having washed her face with ass's milk.

As a fact, no one could say if she had given her old husband a meet and proper head-dress, and Messire Philippe de Coetquis used to warn the honest dame in a merry vein:

“See to it, I say! He is bald, he will catch his death of cold!”

Messire Philippe de Coetquis was a knight of gallant bearing, as handsome as the knave of hearts in the noble game of cards. He had first encountered Madame Violante one evening at a ball, and after dancing with her far into the night, had carried her home on his crupper, while the Advocate splashed his way through the mud and mire of the kennels by the dancing light of the torches his four tipsy lackeys bore. In the course of these merry doings, a-foot and on horseback, Messire Philippe de Coetquis had formed a shrewd notion that Madame Violante had a limber waist and a full, firm bosom of her own, and there and then had been smit by her charms.

He was a frank and guileless wight and made bold to tell her outright what he would have of her, — to wit, to hold her naked in his two arms.

To which she would make answer:

“Messire Philippe, you know not what you say. I am a virtuous wife,” —

Or another time:

“Messire Philippe, come back again tomorrow,—”

And when he came next day she would ask innocently:

“Nay, where is the hurry?”

These never-ending postponements caused the Chevalier no little distress and chagrin. He was ready to believe, with Master Tribouillard, that Madame Violante was indeed a Lucretia, so true is it that all men are alike in fatuous self-conceit! And we are bound to say she had not so much as suffered him to kiss her mouth, — only a pretty diversion after all and a bit of wanton playfulness.

Things were in this case when Brother Jean Turelure was called to Venice by the General of his Order, to preach to sundry Turks lately converted to the true Faith.

Before setting forth, the good Brother went to take leave of his fair Penitent, and upbraided her with more than usual sternness for living a dissolute life. He exhorted her urgently to repent and pressed her to wear a hair-shirt next her skin, — an incomparable remedy against naughty cravings and a sovran medicine for natures over prone to the sins of the flesh.

She besought him: “Good Brother, never ask too much of me.”

But he would not hearken, and threatened her with the pains of hell if she did not amend her ways. Then he told her he would gladly execute any commissions she might be pleased to entrust him with. He was in hopes she would beg him to bring her back some consecrated medal, a rosary, or, better still, a little of the soil of the Holy Sepulchre which the Turks carry from Jerusalem together with dried roses, and which the Italian monks sell.

But Madame Violante preferred a quite other request:

“Good Brother, dear Brother, as you are going to Venice, where such cunning workmen in this sort are to be found, I pray you bring me back a Venetian mirror, the clearest and truest can be gotten.”

Brother Jean Turelure promised to content her wish.

While her Confessor was abroad, Madame Violante led the same life as before. And when Messire Philippe pressed her: “Were it not well to take our pleasure together?” she would answer: “Nay! ‘t is too hot. Look at the weathercock if the wind will not change anon.” And the good folk who watched her ways were in despair of her ever giving a proper pair of horns to her crabbed old husband. “‘T is a sin and a shame!” they declared.

On his return from Italy Brother Jean Turelure presented himself before Madame Violante and told her he had brought what she desired.

“Look, madame,” he said, and drew from under his gown a death’s-head.

“Here, madame, is your mirror. This death’s-head was given me for that of the prettiest woman in all Venice. She was what you are, and you will be much like her anon.”

Madame Violante, mastering her surprise and horror, answered the good Father in a well-assured voice that she understood the lesson he would teach her and she would not fail to profit thereby.

“I shall aye have present in my mind, good Brother, the mirror you have brought me from Venice, wherein I see my likeness not as I am at present, but as doubtless I soon shall be. I promise you to govern my behaviour by this salutary thought.”

Brother Jean Turelure was far from expecting such pious words. He expressed some satisfaction.

“So, madame,” he murmured, “you see yourself the need of altering your ways. You promise me henceforth to govern your behaviour by the thought this fleshless skull hath brought home to you. Will you not make the same promise to God as you have to me?”

She asked if indeed she must, and he assured her it behoved her so to do.

“Well, I will give this promise then,” she declared.

“Madame, this is very well. There is no going back on your word now.”

“I shall not go back on it, never fear.”

Having won this binding promise, Brother Jean Turelure left the place, radiant with satisfaction. And as he went from the house, he cried out loud in the street:

“Here is a good work done! By Our Lord God’s good help, I have turned and set in the way toward the gate of Paradise a lady, who, albeit not sinning precisely in the way of fornication spoken of by the Prophet, yet was wont to employ for men’s temptation the clay whereof the Creator had kneaded her that she might serve and adore him withal. She will forsake these naughty habits to adopt a better life. I have thoroughly changed her. Praise be to God!”

Hardly had the good Brother gone down the stairs when Messire Philippe de Coetquis ran up them and scratched at Madame Violante’s door. She welcomed him with a beaming smile, and led him into a closet, furnished with carpets and cushions galore, wherein he had never been admitted before. From this he augured well. He offered her sweetmeats he had in a box.

“Here be sugar-plums to suck, madame; they are sweet and sugared, but not so sweet as your lips.”

To which the lady retorted he was a vain, silly fop to make boast of a fruit he had never tasted.

He answered her meetly, kissing her forthwith on the mouth.

She manifested scarce any annoyance and said only she was an honest woman and a true wife. He congratulated her and advised her not to lock up this jewel of hers in such close keeping that no man could enjoy it. “For, of a surety,” he swore, “you will be robbed of it, and that right soon.”

“Try then,” said she, cuffing him daintily over the ears with her pretty pink palms.

But he was master by this time to take whatsoever he wished of her. She kept protesting with little cries:

“I won’t have it. Fie! fie on you, messire! You must not do it. Oh! sweetheart... oh! my love... my life! You are killing me!”

Anon, when she had done sighing and dying, she said sweetly:

“Messire Philippe, never flatter yourself you have mastered me by force or guile. You have had of me what you craved, but ‘t was of mine own free will, and I only resisted so much as was needful that I might yield me as I liked best. Sweetheart, I am yours. If, for all your handsome face, which I loved from the first, and despite the tenderness of your wooing, I did not before grant you what you have just won with my consent, ‘t was because I had no true understanding of things. I had no thought of the flight of time and the shortness of life and love; plunged in a soft languor of indolence, I reaped no harvest of my youth and beauty. However, the good Brother Jean Turelure hath given me a profitable lesson. He hath taught me the preciousness of the hours. But now he showed me a death’s-head, saying: ‘Suchlike you will be soon.’ This taught me we must be quick to enjoy the pleasures of love and make the most of the little space of time reserved to us for that end.”

These words and the caresses wherewith Madame Violante seconded them persuaded Messire Philippe to turn the time to good account, to set to work afresh to his own honour and profit and the pleasure and glory of his mistress, and to multiply the sure proofs of prowess which it behoves every good and loyal servant to give on suchlike an occasion.

After which, she was ready to cry quits. Taking him by the hand, she guided him back to the door, kissed him daintily on the eyes, and asked:

“Sweetheart Philippe, is it not well done to follow the precepts of the good Brother Jean Turelure?”

SATAN'S TONGUE-PIE

SATAN lay in his bed with the flaming curtains. The physicians and apothecaries of Hell, finding their patient had a white tongue, inferred he was suffering from a weakness of the stomach and prescribed a diet at once light and nourishing.

Satan swore he had no appetite for aught but a certain earthly dish, which women excel in making when they meet in company, to wit, tongue-pie.

The doctors agreed there was nothing could better suit His Majesty's stomach.

In an hour's time the dish was set before the King; but he found it insipid and tasteless.

He sent for his Head Cook and asked him where the pie came from.

"From Paris, sire. It is quite fresh; 'twas baked this very morning, in the Marais Quarter, by a dozen gossips gathered round the bed at a woman's lying-in."

"Ah! now I know the reason it is so flavourless," returned the Prince of Darkness. "You have not been to the best cooks for dishes of the sort. Citizens' wives, they do their best; but they lack delicacy, they lack the fine touch of genius. Women of the people are clumsier still. For a real good tongue-pie a Nunnery is the place to go to. There's nobody to match these old maids of Religion for a pretty skill in compounding all the needful ingredients, — fine spices of rancour, thyme of backbiting, fennel of insinuation, bay-leaf of calumny."

This parable is taken from a sermon of the good Father Gillotin Landoulle, a poor, unworthy Capuchin.

CONCERNING AN HORRIBLE PICTURE

THE WHICH WAS SHOWED IN A TEMPLE AND OF SUNDRY
LIMNINGS OF A RIGHT PACIFIC AND AMOROUS SORT THE WHICH
THE SAGE PHILEMON HAD HANGED IN HIS LIBRARIE AND OF A
NOBLE PORTRAITURE OF THE POET HOMER THE WHICH THE
AFORESAID PHILEMON DID PRIZE ABOVE ALL OTHER LIMNINGS

PHILEMON was used to confess how, in the fire of his callow youth and fine flower of his lustie springal days, he had been stung with murderous frenzie at view of a certaine picture of Apelles, the which in those times was showed in a temple. And the said picture did present Alexander the Great laying on right shrewdly at Darius, king of the Indians, whiles round about these twain, soldiers and captains were a-slaying one another with a savage furie and in divers strange fashions. And the said work was right cunningly wrought and in very close mimicrie of nature. And none, an they were in the hot and lustie season of their life, could cast a look thereon without being stirred incontinent to be striking and killing poor harmlesse folk for the sole sake of donning so rich an harnesse and bestriding such high-stepping chargers as did these good codpieces in their battle, — for that young blood doth aye take pleasure in horseflesh and the practise of arms. This had the aforesaid Philemon proven in his day. And he was used to say how ever after 'twas his wont to turn aside his eyen of set purpose from suchlike pictures of wars and bloodshed, and that he did so heartily loathe these cruelties as that he could not abear to behold them even set forth in counterfeit presentment.

And he was used to say that any honest and prudent wight must needs be sore offended and scandalized by all this appalling array of armour and bucklers and the horde of warriors Homer calls *Corythaioloi* (glancing-helmed) by reason of the terrifying hideousness of their head-gear, and that the portrayal of these same fighting fellows was in very truth unseemly, as contrarie to good and peaceable manners, immodest, no thing in the world being more shameful then homicide, and eke lascivious, as alluring folk to cruelty, the which is the worst of all allurements. For to entice to pleasant dalliaunce is a far lesse heinous fault.

And the aforesaid Philemon was used to say that it was honest, decent, of good ensample and entirely modest to show by painting, chiselling, or any other fine artifice the scenes of the Golden Age, to wit maidens and young men interlacing limbs in accord with the craving of kindly Nature, or other the like

delectable fancy, as of a Nymph lying laughing in the grass. And on her ripe smiling mouth a Faun is crushing a purple grape.

And he was used to say that belike the Golden Age had never flourished save only in the fond imagining of the poets, and that our first forebears of human kind, being yet barbarous and silly folk, had known naught at all thereof; but that, an the said age could not credibly be deemed to have been at the beginning of the world, we might well wish it should be at the end, and that meanwhiles it was a gracious boon to offer us a likeness of the same in pictured image.

And like as it is (so he would say) obscene,— ‘t is the word Virgil writes of dogs wallowing in the mud and mire, — to depict murderers, whoreson men-at-arms, fighting-men, conquering heroes and plundering thieves, wreaking their foul and wicked will, yea! and poor devils licking the dust and swallowing the same in great mouthfuls, and one unhappie wretch that hath been felled to the earth and is striving to get to his feet againe, but is pinned down by an horse’s hoof pressing on his chops, and another that looketh piteously about him for that his pennon hath been shorn from him and his hand with it, — so is it of right subtile and so to say heavenly art to exhibit prettie blandishments, caresses, frolickings, beauties and delights, and the loves of the Nymphs and Fauns in the woods. And he would have it there was none offence in these naked bodies, clothed upon enow with their owne grace and comeliness.

And he had in his closet, this same Philemon aforesaid, a very marvellous painting, wherein was limned a young Faun in act to filch away with a craftie hand a light cloth did cover the belly of a sleeping Nymph. ‘T was plain to see he was full fain of his freak and seemed to be saying: The body of this young goddess is so sweet and refreshing as that the fountaine springing in the shade of the woods is not more delightsome. How I do love to look upon you, soft sweet lap, and prettie white thighs, and shady cavern at once terrifying and entrancing! And over the heads of the twain did hover winged Cupids and watched them laughingly, whiles fair dames and their gallants, their brows wreathen with flowers, footed it on the lush grass.

And he had, the aforesaid Philemon, yet other limnings of cunning craftsmanship in his closet. And he did prize very high the portraiture of a good doctor a-sitting in his cabinet writing at a table by candle-light. The said cabinet was fully furnished with globes, gnomons, and astrolabes, proper for meting the movements of the orbs of heaven, the which is a right praiseworthy task and one that doth lift the spirit to sublime thoughts and the exceeding pure love of Venus Urania.

And there was hanging from the joists of the said cabinet a great serpent and crocodile, forasmuch as they be rarities and very needful for the due

understanding of anatomy. And he had likewise, the said doctor, amid his belongings, the books of the most excellent philosophers of Antiquity and eke the treatises of Hippocrates. And he was an ensample to young men which should be fain, by hard swinking, to stuff their pates with as much high learning and occult lore as he had under his own bonnet.

And he had, the aforesaid Philemon, painted on a panel that shined like a polished mirror a portraiture of Homer in the guise of an old blind man, his beard white as the flowers of the hawthorn and his temples bound about with the fillets sacred to the god Apollo, which had loved him above all other men. And, to look at that good old man, you deemed verily his lips were presently to ope and break into words of *mélodie*.

MADemoiselle de DOUCINE'S NEW YEAR'S PRESENT

ON January 1st, in the forenoon, the good M. Chanterelle sallied out on foot from his hôtel in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. He felt the cold and was a poor walker; so it was a real penance to him to face the chilly air and the bleak streets which were full of half-melted snow. He had refused to take his coach by way of mortifying the flesh, having grown very solicitous since his illness about the salvation of his soul. He lived in retirement, aloof from all society and company, and paid no visits save to his niece, Mademoiselle de Doucine, a little girl of seven.

Leaning on his walking-cane, he made his way painfully to the Rue Saint-Honoré and entered the shop of Madame Pinson at the sign of the *Panier Fleuri*. Here was displayed an abundant stock of children's toys to tempt customers seeking presents for this New Year's Day of 1696. You could scarce move for the host of mechanical figures of dancers and tipplers, birds in the bush that clapped their wings and sang, cabinets full of wax puppets, soldiers in white and blue ranged in battle array, and dolls dressed some as fine ladies, others as servant wenches, for the inequality of stations, established by God himself among mankind, appeared even in these innocent mannikins.

M. Chanterelle chose a doll. The one he selected was dressed like the Princess of Savoy on her arrival in France, on November 4th. The head was a mass of bows and ribbons; she wore a very stiff corsage, covered with gold filigrees, and a brocade petticoat with an overskirt caught up by pearl clasps.

M. Chanterelle smiled to think of the delight such a lovely doll would give Mademoiselle de Doucine, and when Madame Pinson handed him the Princess of Savoy wrapped up in silk paper, a gleam of sensuous satisfaction flitted over his kind face, pinched as it was with illness, pale with fasting and haggard with the fear of hell.

He thanked Madame Pinson courteously, clapped the Princess under his arm and walked away, dragging his leg painfully, towards the house where he knew Mademoiselle de Doucine was waiting for him to attend her morning levée.

At the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, he met M. Spon, whose great nose dived almost into his lace cravat.

"Good morning, Monsieur Spon," he greeted him. "I wish you a happy New Year, and I pray God everything may turn out according to your wishes."

“Oh! my good sir, don’t say that,” cried M. Spon. “‘T is often for our chastisement that God grants our wishes. *Et tribuit eis petittonem eorum* .”

“’Tis very true,” returned M. Chanterelle, “we do not know our own best interests. I am an example myself, as I stand before you. I thought at first that the complaint I have suffered from for the last two years was a curse; but I see now it is a blessing, since it has removed me from the abominable life I was leading at the play-houses and in society. This complaint, which tortures my limbs and is like to turn my brain, is a signal token of God’s goodness toward me. But, sir, will you not do me the favour to accompany me as far as the Rue du Roule, whither I am bound, to carry a New Year’s gift to my niece Mademoiselle de Doucine?”

At the words M. Spon threw up his arms and gave a great cry of horror.

“What!” he exclaimed. “Can it be M. Chanterelle I hear say such things, — and not some profligate libertine? Is it possible, sir, that living as you do a religious and retired life, I see you all in a moment plunge into the vices of the day?”

“Alack! I did not think I was plunging into vice,” faltered M. Chanterelle, trembling all over. “But I sorely lack a lamp of guidance. Is it so great a sin then to offer a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine?”

“Yes, a great and terrible sin,” replied M. Spon. “And what you are offering this innocent child to-day is meeter to be called an idol, a devilish simulacrum, than a doll. Are you not aware, sir, that the custom of New Year’s gifts is a foul superstition and a hideous survival of Paganism?”

“No, I did not know that,” said M. Chanterelle.

“Let me tell you, then,” resumed M. Spon, “that this custom descends from the Romans, who seeing something divine in all beginnings, held the beginning of the year holy also. Hence, to act as they did is to do idolatry. You make New Year’s offerings, sir, in imitation of the worshippers of the God Janus. Be consistent, and like them consecrate to Juno the first day of every month.”

M. Chanterelle, hardly able to keep his feet, begged M. Spon to give him his arm, and while they moved on, M. Spon proceeded in the same vein:

“Is it because the Astrologers have fixed on the first of January for the beginning of the year that you deem yourself obliged to make presents on that day? Pray, what call have you to revive at that precise date the affection of your friends. Was their love dying then with the dying year? And will it be so much worth the having when you have reanimated it by dint of cajolements and baneful gifts?”

“Sir,” returned the good M. Chanterelle, leaning on M. Spon’s arm and trying hard to make his tottering steps keep pace with his impetuous companion’s, “sir,

before my sickness, I was only a miserable sinner, taking no heed but to treat my friends with civility and govern my behaviour by the principles of honesty and honour. Providence hath deigned to rescue me from this abyss, and I direct my conduct since my conversion by the admonitions the Director of my conscience gives me. But I have been so light-minded and thoughtless as not to seek his advice on this question of New Year's gifts. What you tell me of them, sir, with the authority of a man alike admirable for sober living and sound doctrine, amazes and confounds me."

"Nay! that is indeed what I mean to do," resumed M. Spon,— "to confound you, and to illumine you, not indeed by my own lights, which burn feebly, but by those of a great Doctor. Sit you down on that wayside post."

And pushing M. Chanterelle into the archway of a carriage gate, where he made himself as easy as circumstances allowed, M. Spon drew from his pocket a little parchment-bound book, which he opened, and after hunting through the pages, lighted on a passage which he proceeded to read out loud amid a gaping circle of chimney-sweeps, chamber-maids, and scullions who had collected at the resounding tones of his voice:

"'We who hold in abhorrence the festivals of the Jews, and who would deem strange and outlandish their Sabbaths and New Moons and other Holy Days erst loved of the Almighty, we deal familiarly with the Saturnalia and the Calends of January, with the Matronalia and the Feast of the Winter Solstice; New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all our thoughts; merrymakings and junketings are in every house. The Heathens guard their religion better; they are heedful to observe none of our Feasts, for fear of being taken for Christians, while we never hesitate to make ourselves look like Heathens by celebrating their Ceremonial Days.'

"You hear what I say," went on M. Spon. "'T is Tertullian speaks in this wise and from the depths of Africa displays before your eyes, sir, the odiousness of your behaviour. He it is upbraids you, declaring how 'New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all your thoughts. You keep holy the feasts of the Heathen.' I have not the honour to know your Confessor. But I shudder, sir, to think of the way he neglects his duty toward you. Tell me this, can you rest assured that at the day of your death, when you come to stand before God, he will be at your side, to take upon him the sins he hath suffered you to fall into?"

After haranguing in this sort, he put back his book in his pocket and marched off with angry strides, followed at a distance by the astonished chimney-sweeps and scullions.

The good M. Chanterelle was left sitting alone on his post with the Princess of Savoy, and thinking how he was risking the eternal pains of hell fire for

giving a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece, he fell to pondering the unfathomable mysteries of Religion.

His legs, which had been tottery for several months, refused to carry him, and he felt as unhappy as ever a well-meaning man possibly can in this world.

He had been sitting stranded in this distressful mood on his post for some minutes when a Capuchin friar stepped up and addressed him:

“Sir, will you not give New Year’s presents to the Little Brethren who are poor, for the love of God?”

“Why! what! good Father,” M. Chanterelle burst out, “you are a man of religion, and you ask me for New Year’s gifts?”

“Sir,” replied the Capuchin, “the good St. Francis bade his sons make merry with all simplicity. Give the Capuchins wherewith to make a good meal this day, that they may endure with cheerfulness the abstinence and fasting they must observe all the rest of the year, — barring, of course, Sundays and Feast Days.”

M. Chanterelle gazed at the holy man with wonder:

“Are you not afraid, Father, that this custom of New Year’s gifts is baneful to the soul?”

“No, I am not afraid.”

“The custom comes to us from the Pagans.”

“The Pagans sometimes followed good customs. God was pleased to suffer some faint rays of his light to pierce the darkness of the Gentiles. Sir, if you refuse to give *us* presents, never refuse a boon to our poor little ones. We have a home for foundlings. With this poor crown I shall buy each child a little paper windmill and a cake. They will owe you the only pleasure perhaps of all their life; for they are not fated to have much joy in the world. Their laughter will go up to heaven; when children laugh, they praise the Lord.”

M. Chanterelle laid his well-filled purse in the poor friar’s palm and got him down from his post, saying over softly to himself the word he had just heard:

“When children laugh, they praise the Lord.”

Then his soul was comforted and he marched off with a firmer step to carry the Princess of Savoy to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece.

MADemoiselle ROXANE

MY good master, M. l'Abbé Coignard, had taken me with him to sup with one of his old fellow-students, who lodged in a garret in the Rue Gît-le-Cour. Our host, a Premonstratensian Father of much learning and a fine Theologian, had fallen out with the Prior of his House for having writ a little book relating the calamities of Mam'zelle Fanchon. The end of it was he turned tavern-keeper at The Hague. He was now returned to France and living precariously by the sermons he composed, which were full of high argument and eloquence. After supper he had read us these same calamities of Mam'zelle Fanchon, source of his own, and the reading had kept us there till a late hour. At last I found myself without-doors with my good master, under a wondrous fine summer's night, which made me straightway comprehend the verity of the ancient fables regarding the loves of Diana and feel how natural it is to employ in soft dalliance the silent, silvery hours of night. I said as much to M. l'Abbé Coignard, who retorted that love is to blame for many and great ills.

"Tournebroche, my son," he asked me, "have you not just heard from the mouth of yonder good Monk how, for having loved a recruiting sergeant, a clerk of M. Gaulot's mercer at the sign of the Truie-qui-file, and the younger son of M. le Lieutenant-Criminel Leblanc, Mam'zelle Fanchon was clapped in hospital? Would you wish to be any of these, — sergeant or clerk or limb of the law?"

I answered I would indeed. My good master thanked me for my candid avowal, and quoted some verses of Lucretius to persuade me that love is contrary to the tranquillity of a truly philosophical soul.

Thus discoursing, we were come to the round-point of the Pont-Neuf. Leaning our elbows on the parapet, we looked over at the great tower of the Châtelet, which stood out black in the moonlight.

"There might be much to say," sighed my good master, "on this justice of the civilized nations, the punishments whereof in retaliation are often more cruel than the crime itself I cannot believe that these tortures and penalties that men inflict on their fellows are necessary for the safeguarding of States, seeing how from time to time one and another legal cruelty is done away with without hurt to the commonweal. And I hold it likely that the severities they still maintain are no whit more useful than those they have abolished. But men are cruel. Come away, Tournebroche, my dear lad; it grieves me to think how unhappy prisoners

are even now lying awake behind those walls in anguish and despair. I know they have done faultily, but this doth not hinder me from pitying them. Which of us is without offence?"

We went on our way. The bridge was deserted save for a beggarman and woman, who met on the causeway. The pair drew stealthily into one of the recesses over the piers, where they lurked together on the door-step of a hucksters booth. They seemed well enough content, both of them, to mingle their joint wretchedness, and when we went by were thinking of quite other things than craving our charity. Nevertheless my good master, who was the most compassionate of men, threw them a half farthing, the last piece of money left in his breeches pocket.

"They will pick up our obol," he said, "when they have come back to the consciousness of their misery. I pray they may not quarrel then over fiercely for possession of the coin."

We passed on without further rencounter till on the Quai des Oiseleurs we espied a young damsel striding along with a notable air of resolution. Hastening our pace to get a nearer view, we saw she had a slim waist and fair hair in which the moonbeams played prettily. She was dressed like a citizen's wife or daughter.

"There goes a pretty girl," said the Abbé; "how comes it she is out of doors alone at this hour of night?"

"Truly," I agreed, "'tis not the sort one generally encounters on the bridges after curfew."

Our surprise was changed to alarm when we saw her go down to the river bank by a little stairway the sailors use. We ran towards her; but she did not seem to hear us. She halted at the edge; the stream was running high, and the dull roar of the swollen waters could be heard some way off. She stood a moment motionless, her head thrown back and arms hanging, in an attitude of despair. Then, bending her graceful neck, she put her two hands over her face and kept it hid behind her fingers for some seconds. Next moment she suddenly grasped her skirts and dragged them forward with the gesture a woman always uses when she is going to jump. My good master and I came up with her just as she was taking the fatal leap, and we hauled her forcibly backward. She struggled to get free of our arms; and as the bank was all slimy and slippery with ooze deposited by the receding waters (for the river was already beginning to fall), M. l'Abbé Coignard came very near being dragged in too. I was losing my foothold myself. But as luck would have it, my feet lighted on a root which held me up as I crouched there with my arms round the best of masters and this despairing young thing. Presently, coming to the end of her strength and

courage, she fell back on M. l'Abbé Coignard's breast, and we managed all three to scramble to the top of the bank again. He helped her up daintily, with a certain easy grace that was always his. Then he led the way to a great beech-tree at the foot of which was a wooden bench, on which he seated her.

Taking his place beside her:

"Mademoiselle," he said gently, "you need have no fear. Say nothing just yet, but be assured it is a friend sits by you."

Next, turning to me, my master went on:

"Tournebroche, my son, we may congratulate ourselves on having brought this strange adventure to a good end. But I have left my hat down yonder on the river bank; albeit it has lost pretty near all its lace and is thread-bare with long service, it was still good to guard my old head, sorely tried by years and labours, against sun and rain. Go see, my son, if it may still be found where I dropped it. And if you discover it, bring it me, I beg, — likewise one of my shoe buckles, which I see I have lost. For my part I will stay by this damsel we have rescued and watch over her slumber."

I ran back to the spot we had just quitted and was lucky enough to find my good master's hat. The buckle I could not espy anywhere. True, I did not take any very excessive pains to hunt for it, having never all my life seen my good master with more than one shoe buckle. When I returned to the tree, I found the damsel still in the same state, sitting quite motionless with her head leant against the trunk of the beech. I noticed now that she was of a very perfect beauty. She wore a silk mantle trimmed with lace, very neat and proper, and on her feet light shoes, the buckles of which caught the moonbeams.

I could not have enough of examining her. Suddenly she opened her drooping lids, and casting a look that was still misty at M. Coignard and me, she began in a feeble voice, but with the tone and accent, I thought, of a person of gentility:

"I am not ungrateful, sirs, for the service you have done me from feelings of humanity; but I cannot truthfully tell you I am glad, for the life to which you have restored me is a curse, a hateful, cruel torment."

At these sad words my good master, whose face wore a look of compassion, smiled softly, for he could not really think life was to be for ever hateful to so young and pretty a creature.

"My child," he told her, "things strike us in a totally different light according as they are near at hand or far off. It is no time for you to despair. Such as I am, and brought to this sorry plight by the buffets of time and fortune, I yet make shift to endure a life wherein my pleasures are to translate Greek and dine sometimes with sundry very worthy friends. Look at me, mademoiselle, and say, — would you consent to live in the same conditions as I?"

She looked him over; her eyes almost laughed, and she shook her head. Then, resuming her melancholy and mournfulness, she faltered:

“There is not in all the world so unhappy a being as I am.”

“Mademoiselle,” returned my good master, “I am discreet both by calling and temperament; I will not seek to force your confidence. But your looks betray you; any one can see you are sick of disappointed love. Well, ‘t is not an incurable complaint. I have had it myself, and I have lived many a long year since then.”

He took her hand, gave her a thousand tokens of his sympathy, and went on in these terms:

“There is only one thing I regret for the moment, — that I cannot offer you a refuge for the night, or what is left of it. My present lodging is in an old château a long way from here, where I am busy translating a Greek book along with young Master Tournebroche whom you see here.”

My master spoke the truth. We were living at the time with M. d’Astarac, at the Château des Sablons, in the village of Neuilly, and were in the pay of a great alchemist, who died later under tragic circumstances.

“At the same time, mademoiselle,” my master added, “if you should know of any place where you think you could go, I shall be happy to escort you thither.”

To which the girl answered she appreciated all his kindness, that she lived with a kinswoman, to whose house she could count on being admitted at any hour; but that she had rather not return before daylight. She was fain, she said, not to disturb quiet folks’ sleep, and dreaded moreover to have her grief too painfully renewed by the sight of her old, familiar surroundings.

As she spoke thus, the tears rained down from her eyes. My good master bade her:

“Mademoiselle, give me your handkerchief, if you please, and I will wipe your eyes. Then I will take you to wait for daybreak under the archways of the Halles, where we can sit in comfort under shelter from the night dews.”

The girl smiled through her tears.

“I do not like,” she said, “to give you so much trouble. Go your way, sir, and rest assured you take my best thanks with you.”

For all that she laid her hand on the arm my good master offered her, and we set out, all the three of us, for the Halles. The night had turned much cooler. In the sky, which was beginning to assume a milky hue, the stars were growing paler and fainter. We could hear the first of the market-gardeners’ carts rumbling along to the Halles, drawn by a slow-stepping horse, half asleep in the shafts. Arrived at the archways, we chose a place in the recess of a porch distinguished by an image of St. Nicholas, and established ourselves all three on a stone step,

on which M. l'Abbé Coignard took the precaution of spreading his cloak before he let his young charge sit down.

Thereupon my good master fell to discoursing on divers subjects, choosing merry and enlivening themes of set purpose to drive away the gloomy thoughts that might assail our companion's mind. He told her he accounted this rencounter the most fortunate he had ever chanced on all his life, and that he should ever cherish a fond recollection of one who had so deeply touched him, — all this, however, without ever asking to know her name and story.

My good master thought no doubt that the unknown would presently tell him what he refrained from asking. She broke into a fresh flood of weeping, heaved a deep sigh and said:

"I should be churlish, sir, to reward your kindness with silence. I am not afraid to trust myself in your hands. My name is Sophie T —— — . You have guessed the truth; 'tis the betrayal of a lover I was too fondly attached to has brought me to despair. If you deem my grief excessive, that is because you do not know how great was my assurance, how blind my infatuation, and you cannot realize how enchanting was the paradise I have lost."

Then, raising her lovely eyes to our faces, she went on:

"Sirs, I am not such a woman as your meeting me thus at night time might lead you to suppose. My father was a merchant. He went, in the way of trade, to America, and was lost on his way home in a shipwreck, he and his merchandise with him. My mother was so overwhelmed by these calamities that she fell into a decline and died, leaving me, while still a child, to the charge of an aunt, who brought me up. I was a good girl till the hour I met the man whose love was to afford me indescribable delights, ending in the despair wherein you now see me plunged."

So saying, Sophie hid her face in her handkerchief. Presently she resumed with a sigh:

"His worldly rank was so far above my own I could never expect to be his except in secret. I flattered myself he would be faithful to me. He swore he loved me, and easily overcame my scruples. My aunt was aware of our feelings for one another, and raised no obstacles, for two reasons, — because her affection for me made her indulgent, and because my dear lover's high position impressed her imagination. I lived a year of perfect happiness only equalled by the wretchedness I now endure. This morning he came to see me at my aunt's, with whom I live. I was haunted by dark forebodings. As I dressed my hair but an hour or so before, I had broken a mirror he had given me. The sight of him only increased my misgivings, for I noticed instantly that his face wore an unaccustomed look of constraint... Oh! sir, was ever woman so unhappy as I?..."

Her eyes filled again with tears; but she kept them back under her lids, and was able to finish her tale, which my good master deemed as touching, but by no means so unique, as she did herself.

“He informed me coldly, though not without signs of embarrassment, that his father having bought him a Company, he was leaving to join the colours. First, however, he said, his family required him to plight his troth to the daughter of an Intendant of Finances; the connection was advantageous to his fortune and would bring him means adequate to support his rank and make a figure in the world. And the traitor, never deigning to notice my pale looks, added in his soft, caressing voice which had made me so many vows of affection, that his new obligations would prevent his seeing me again, at least for some while. He assured me further that he was still my friend and begged me to accept a sum of money in memory of the days we had passed together.

“And with the words he held out a purse to me.

“I am telling you the truth, sirs, when I assure you I had always refused to listen to the offers he repeated again and again, to give me fine clothes, furniture, plate, an establishment, and to take me away from my aunt’s, where I lived in very narrow circumstances, and settle me in a most elegant little mansion he had in the Rue di Roule. My wish was that we should be united only by the ties of affection, and I was proud to have of his gift nothing but a few jewels whose sole value came from the fact of his being the donor. My gorge rose at the sight of the purse he offered me, and the insult gave me strength to banish from my presence the impostor whom in one moment I had learnt to know and to despise. He faced my angry looks unabashed, and assured me with the utmost unconcern that I could know nothing of the paramount obligations that fill the existence of a man of quality, adding that he hoped eventually, when I looked at things quietly, I should come to see his behaviour in a better light. Then, returning the purse to his pocket, he declared he would readily find a way of putting the contents at my disposal in such a manner as to make it impossible for me to refuse his liberality. Thus leaving me with the odious, the intolerable implication that he was going to make full amends by these sordid means, he made for the door to which I pointed without a word. When he was gone, I felt a calmness of mind that surprised myself. It arose from the resolution I had formed to die. I dressed with some care, wrote a letter to my aunt asking her forgiveness for the pain I was about to cause her by my death, and went out into the streets. There I roamed about all the afternoon and evening and a part of the night, moving from busy thoroughfare to deserted lane without a trace of fatigue, postponing the execution of my purpose to make it more sure and certain under the favouring conditions of darkness and solitude. Possibly too I found a certain weak pleasure

in dallying with the thought of dying and tasting the mournful satisfaction of my coming release from my troubles. At two o'clock in the morning, I went down to the river's brink. Sirs, you know the rest, — you snatched me from a watery grave. I thank you for your goodness, — though I am sorry you saved my life. The world is full of forsaken women. I did not wish to add another to the number."

Sophie then fell silent and began weeping afresh. My good master took her hand with the greatest delicacy.

"My child," he said, "I have listened with a tender interest to the story of your life, and I own 'tis a sad tale. But I am happy to discern that your case is curable. Not only was your lover unworthy of the favours you showed him and has proved himself on trial a selfish, cruel-hearted libertine, but I see plainly your love for him was only an impulse of the senses and the effect of your own sensibility, the particular object of which mattered far less than you imagine. What there was rare and excellent in the liaison came from you. Well then, nothing is lost, since the source still remains. Your eyes, which have thrown a glamour of the fairest hues over, I doubt not, a very ordinary individual, will not cease to go on shedding abroad elsewhere the same bright rays of charming self-delusion."

My good master said more in the same strain, dropping from his lips the finest words ever heard anent the tribulations of the senses and the errors lovers are prone to. But, as he talked on, Sophie, who for some while had let her pretty head droop on the shoulder of this best of men, fell softly asleep. When M. l'Abbé Coignard saw his young friend was wrapped in a sound slumber, he congratulated himself on having discoursed in a vein so meet to afford repose and peace to a suffering soul.

"It must be allowed," he chuckled, "my sermons have a beneficent effect."

Not to disturb Mademoiselle's slumbers, he took a thousand pretty precautions, amongst others constraining himself to talk on uninterruptedly, not unreasonably apprehensive that a sudden silence might awake her.

"Tournebroche, my son," he said, turning to me, "look, all her sorrows are vanished away with the consciousness she had of them. You must see they were all of the imagination and resided in her own thought. You must understand likewise they sprang from a certain pride and overweening conceit that goes along with love and makes it very exacting. For, in truth, if only we loved in humbleness of spirit and forgetfulness of self, or merely with a simple heart, we should be content with what is vouchsafed us and should not straightway cry treason when some slight is put on us. And if some power of loving were left us

still, after our lover had deserted us, we should await the issue in calmness of mind to make what use of it God should please to grant."

But the day was just breaking by this time, and the song of the birds grew so loud it drowned my good master's voice. He made no complaint on this score.

"Hearken," he said, "to the sparrows. They make love more wisely than men do."

Sophie awoke in the white light of dawn, and I admired her lovely eyes, which fatigue and grief had ringed with a delicate pearly-grey. She seemed somewhat reconciled to life, and did not refuse a cup of chocolate which my good master made her drink at Mathurine's door, the pretty chocolate-seller of the Halles.

But as the poor child came into more complete possession of her wits, she began to trouble about sundry practical difficulties she had not thought of till then.

"What will my aunt say? And whatever can I tell her?" she asked distractedly.

The aunt lived just opposite Saint-Eustache, less than a hundred yards from Mathurine's archway. Thither we escorted her niece; and M. l'Abbé Coignard, who had quite a venerable look, though one shoe *was* unbuckled, accompanied the fair Sophie to the door of her aunt's lodging and pitched that lady a fine tale:

"I had the happy fortune," he informed her, "to encounter your good niece at the very moment when she was assailed by four footpads armed with pistols, and I shouted for the watch so lustily that the thieves took to their heels in a panic. But they were not quick enough to escape the sergeants who, by the rarest chance, ran up in answer to my outcries. They arrested the villains after a desperate tussle. I took my share of the rough and tumble, and I thought at first I had lost my hat in the fray. When all was over, we were all taken, your niece, the four footpads and myself, before his Honour the Lieutenant-Criminel, who treated us with much consideration and detained us till daylight in his cabinet, taking down our evidence." The aunt answered drily:

"I thank you, sir, for having saved my niece from a peril which, to say the truth, is not the risk a girl of her age need fear the most, when she is out alone at night in the streets of Paris."

My good master made no answer to this; but Mademoiselle Sophie spoke up and said in a voice of deep feeling:

"I do assure you, Aunt, Monsieur l'Abbé saved my life."

Some years after this singular adventure, my master made the fatal journey to Lyons from which he never returned. He was foully murdered, and I had the ineffable grief of seeing him expire in my arms. The incidents of his death have

no connexion with the matter I speak of here. I have taken pains to record them elsewhere; they are indeed memorable, and will never, I think, be forgotten. I may add that this journey was in all ways unfortunate, for after losing the best of masters on the road, I was likewise forsaken by a mistress who loved me, but did not love me alone, and whose loss nearly broke my heart, coming after that of my good master. It is a mistake to suppose that a man who has received one cruel blow grows callous to succeeding strokes of calamity. Far otherwise; he suffers agonies from the smallest contrarieties. I returned to Paris in a state of dejection almost beyond belief.

Well, one evening, by way of enlivening my spirits, I went to the Comédie, where they were playing *Bajazet*, one of Racine's excellent pieces. I was particularly struck by the charm and beauty, no less than the originality and talent, of the actress who took the part of Roxane. She expressed with a delightful naturalness the passion animating that character, and I shuddered as I heard her declaim in accents that were harmonious and yet terrible the line:

Écoutez Bajazet, je sens que je vous aime.{*}

* "Hearken, Bajazet, I feel I love you."

I never wearied of gazing at her all the time she occupied the stage, and admiring the beauty of her eyes that gleamed below a brow as pure as marble and crowned by powdered locks all spangled with pearls. Her slender waist too, which her hoop showed off to perfection, did not fail to make a vivid impression on my heart. I had the better leisure to scrutinize these adorable charms as she happened to face in my direction to deliver several important portions of her rôle. And the more I looked, the more I felt convinced I had seen her before, though I found it impossible to recall anything connected with our previous meeting. My neighbour in the theatre, who was a constant frequenter of the Comédie, told me the beautiful actress was Mademoiselle B ——— —, the idol of the pit. He added that she was as great a favourite in society as on the boards, that M. le Duc de La ——— — had made her the fashion and that she was on the highroad to eclipse Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

I was just leaving my seat after the performance when a "femme de chambre" handed me a note in which I found written in pencil the words:

"Mademoiselle Roxane is waiting for you in her coach at the theatre door."

I could not believe the missive was intended for me; and I asked the abigail who had delivered it if she was not mistaken in the recipient.

"If I *am* mistaken," she replied confidently, "then you cannot be Monsieur de Tournebroche, that is all."

I ran to the coach which stood waiting in front of the House, and inside I recognized Mademoiselle B —— — , her head muffled in a black satin hood.

She beckoned to me to get in, and when I was seated beside her:

“Do you not,” she asked me, “recognize Sophie, whom you rescued from drowning on the banks of the Seine?”

“What! you! Sophie — Roxane — Mademoiselle B —— — , is it possible? —”

My confusion was extreme, but she appeared to view it without annoyance.

“I saw you,” she went on, “in one corner of the pit. I knew you instantly and played for you. Say, did I play well? I am so glad to see you again!—”

She asked me news of M. l’Abbé Coignard, and when I told her my good master had just perished miserably, she burst into tears.

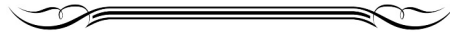
She was good enough to inform me of the chief events of her life:

“My aunt,” she said, “used to mend her laces for Madame de Saint-Remi, who, as you must know, is an admirable actress. A short while after the night when you did me such yeoman service, I went to her house to take home some pieces of lace. The lady told me I had a face that interested her. She then asked me to read some verses, and concluded I was not without wits. She had me trained. I made my first appearance at the Comédie last year. I interpret passions I have felt myself, and the public credits me with some talent. M. le Duc de La —— — exhibits a very dear friendship for me, and I think he will never cause me pain and disappointment, because I have learnt to ask of men only what they can give. At this moment he is expecting me at supper. I must not break my word.”

But, reading my vexation in my eyes, she added:

“However, I have told my people to go the longest way round and to drive slowly.”

THE SEVEN WIVES OF BLUEBEARD AND OTHER MARVELLOUS TALES



Translated by D. B. Stewart

CONTENTS

THE SEVEN WIVES OF BLUEBEARD

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

THE MIRACLE OF THE GREAT ST. NICOLAS

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF THE DUCHESS OF CICOGNE AND OF MONSIEUR DE BOULINGRIN

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

THE SHIRT

CHAPTER I. KING CHRISTOPHE, HIS GOVERNMENT, HIS HABITS AND
HIS MALADY

CHAPTER II. DR. RODRIGUE

CHAPTER III. MESSIEURS DE QUATREFEUILLES AND DE SAINT-SYLVAIN SEARCH FOR A HAPPY MAN IN THE KING'S PALACE

CHAPTER IV. JERONIMO

CHAPTER V. THE ROYAL LIBRARY

CHAPTER VI. MARSHAL THE DUC DE VOLMAR

CHAPTER VII. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WEALTH AND HAPPINESS

CHAPTER VIII. THE SALONS OF THE CAPITAL

CHAPTER IX. THE HAPPINESS OF BEING LOVED

CHAPTER X. WHETHER HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN NO LONGER BEING CONSCIOUS OF ONESELF

CHAPTER XI. SIGISMOND DUX

CHAPTER XII. WHETHER VICE IS A VIRTUE

CHAPTER XIII. MONSIEUR LE CURE MITON

CHAPTER XIV AND LAST. A HAPPY MAN

THE SEVEN WIVES OF BLUEBEARD

CHAPTER I

THE strangest, the most varied, the most erroneous opinions have been expressed with regard to the famous individual commonly known as Bluebeard. None, perhaps, was less tenable than that which made of this gentleman a personification of the Sun. For this is what a certain school of comparative mythology set itself to do, some forty years ago. It informed the world that the seven wives of Bluebeard were the Dawns, and that his two brothers-in-law were the morning and the evening Twilight, identifying them with the Dioscuri, who delivered Helena when she was rapt away by Theseus. We must remind those readers who may feel tempted to believe this that in 1817 a learned librarian of Agen, Jean-Baptiste Pérès, demonstrated, in a highly plausible manner, that Napoleon had never existed, and that the story of this supposed great captain was nothing but a solar myth. Despite the most ingenious diversions of the wits, we cannot possibly doubt that Bluebeard and Napoleon did both actually exist.

An hypothesis no better founded is that which Consists in identifying Bluebeard with the Marshal de Rais, who was strangled by the arm of the Law above the bridges of Nantes on 26th of October, 1440. Without inquiring, with M. Salomon Reinach, whether the Marshal committed the crimes for which he was condemned, or whether his wealth, coveted by a greedy prince, did not in some degree contribute to his undoing, there is nothing in his life that resembles what we find in Bluebeard's; this alone is enough to prevent our confusing them or merging the two individuals into one.

Charles Perrault, who, about 1660, had the merit of composing the first biography of this *seigneur*, justly remarkable for having married seven wives, made him an accomplished villain, and the most perfect model of cruelty that ever trod the earth. But it is permissible to doubt, if not his sincerity, at least the correctness of his information. He may, perhaps, have been prejudiced against his hero. He would not have been the first example of a poet or historian who liked to darken the colours of his pictures. If we have what seems a flattering portrait of Titus, it would seem, on the other hand, that Tacitus has painted Tiberius much blacker than the reality. Macbeth, whom legend and Shakespeare accuse of crimes, was in reality a just and a wise king. He never treacherously murdered the old king, Duncan. Duncan, while yet young, was defeated in a great battle, and was found dead on the morrow at a spot called the Armourer's Shop. He had slain several of the kinsfolk of Gruchno, the wife of Macbeth. The latter made Scotland prosperous; he encouraged trade, and was regarded as the

defender of the middle classes, the true King of the townsmen. The nobles of the clans never forgave him for defeating Duncan, nor for protecting the artisans. They destroyed him, and dishonoured his memory. Once he was dead the good King Macbeth was known only by the statements of his enemies. The genius of Shakespeare imposed these lies upon the human consciousness. I had long suspected that Bluebeard was the victim of a similar fatality. All the circumstances of his life, as I found them related, were far from satisfying my mind, and from gratifying that craving for logic and lucidity by which I am incessantly consumed. On reflection, I perceived that they involved insurmountable difficulties. There was so great a desire to make me believe in the man's cruelty that it could not fail to make me doubt it.

These presentiments did not mislead me. My intuitions, which had their origin in a certain knowledge of human nature, were soon to be changed into certainty, based upon irrefutable proofs.

In the house of a stone-cutter in St. Jean-des-Bois, I found several papers relating to Bluebeard; amongst others his defence, and an anonymous complaint against his murderers, which was not proceeded with, for what reasons I know not. These papers confirmed me in the belief that he was good and unfortunate, and that his memory has been overwhelmed by unworthy slanders. From that time forth, I regarded it as my duty to write his true history, without permitting myself any illusion as to the success of such an undertaking. I am well aware that this attempt at rehabilitation is destined to fall into silence and oblivion. How can the cold, naked Truth fight against the glittering enchantments of Falsehood?

CHAPTER II

SOMEWHERE about 1650 there lived on his estate, between Compiègne and Pierrefonds, a wealthy noble, by name Bernard de Montragoux, whose ancestors had held the most important posts in the kingdom. But he dwelt far from the Court, in that peaceful obscurity which then veiled all save that on which the king bestowed his glance. His castle of Guillettes abounded in valuable furniture, gold and silver ware, tapestry and embroideries, which he kept in coffers; not that he hid his treasures for fear of damaging them by use; he was, on the contrary, generous and magnificent. But in those days, in the country, the nobles willingly led a very simple life, feeding their people at their own table, and dancing on Sundays with the girls of the village.

On certain occasions, however, they gave splendid entertainments, which contrasted with the dullness of everyday life. So it was necessary that they should hold a good deal of handsome furniture and beautiful tapestries in reserve. This was the case with Monsieur de Montragoux.

His castle, built in the Gothic period, had all its rudeness. From without it looked wild and gloomy enough, with the stumps of its great towers, which had been thrown down at the time of the monarchy's troubles, in the reign of the late King Louis. Within it offered a much pleasanter prospect. The rooms were decorated in the Italian taste, as was the great gallery on the ground floor, loaded with embossed decorations in high relief, pictures and gilding.

At one end of this gallery there was a closet usually known as "the little cabinet." This is the only name by which Charles Perrault refers to it. It is as well to note that it was also called the "Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses," because a Florentine painter had portrayed on the walls the tragic stories of Dirce, daughter of the Sun, bound by the sons of Antiope to the horns of a bull, Niobe weeping on Mount Sipylus for her children, pierced by the divine arrows, and Procris inviting to her bosom the javelin of Cephalus. These figures had a look of life about them, and the porphyry tiles with which the floor was covered seemed dyed in the blood of these unhappy women. One of the doors of the Cabinet gave upon the moat, which had no water in it.

The stables formed a sumptuous building, situated at some distance from the castle. They contained stalls for sixty horses, and coach-houses for twelve gilded coaches. But what made Guillettes so bewitching a residence were the woods and canals surrounding it, in which one could devote oneself to the pleasures of angling and the chase.

Many of the dwellers in that country-side knew Monsieur de Montragoux only by the name of Bluebeard, for this was the only name that the common people gave him. And in truth his beard was blue, but it was blue only because it was black, and it was because it was so black that it was blue. Monsieur de Montragoux must not be imagined as having the monstrous aspect of the threefold Typhon whom one sees in Athens, laughing in his triple indigo-blue beard. We shall get much nearer the reality by comparing the *seigneur* of Guillettes to those actors or priests whose freshly shaven cheeks have a bluish gloss.

Monsieur de Montragoux did not wear a pointed beard like his grandfather at the Court of King Henry II; nor did he wear it like a fan, as did his great-grandfather who was killed at the battle of Marignan. Like Monsieur de Turenne, he had only a slight moustache, and a chin-tuft; his cheeks had a bluish look; but whatever may have been said of him, this good gentleman was by no means disfigured thereby, nor did he inspire any fear on that account. He only looked the more virile, and if it made him look a little fierce, it had not the effect of making the women dislike him. Bernard de Montragoux was a very fine man, tall, broad across the shoulders, moderately stout, and well favoured; albeit of a rustic habit, smacking of the woods rather than of drawing-rooms and assemblies. Still, it is true that he did not please the ladies as much as he should have pleased them, built as he was, and wealthy. Shyness was the reason; shyness, not his beard. Women exercised an invincible attraction for him, and at the same time inspired him with an insuperable fear. He feared them as much as he loved them. This was the origin and initial cause of all his misfortunes. Seeing a lady for the first time, he would have died rather than speak to her, and however much attracted he may have been, he stood before her in gloomy silence. His feelings revealed themselves only through his eyes, which he rolled in a terrible manner. This timidity exposed him to every kind of misfortune, and, above all, it prevented his forming a becoming connection with modest and reserved women; and betrayed him, defenceless, to the attempts of the most impudent and audacious. This was his life's misfortune.

Left an orphan from his early youth, and having rejected, owing to this sort of bashfulness and fear, which he was unable to overcome, the very advantageous and honourable alliances which had presented themselves, he married a Mademoiselle Colette Passage, who had recently settled down in that part of the country, after amassing a little money by making a bear dance through the towns and villages of the kingdom. He loved her with all his soul. And to do her justice, there was something pleasing about her, though she was what she was a fine woman with an ample bosom, and a complexion that was still sufficiently

fresh, although a little sunburnt by the open air. Great were her joy and surprise on first becoming a lady of quality. Her heart, which was not bad, was touched by the kindness of a husband in such a high position, and with such a stout, powerful body, who was to her the most obedient of servants and devoted of lovers. But after a few months she grew weary because she could no longer go to and fro on the face of the earth. In the midst of wealth, overwhelmed with love and care, she could find no greater pleasure than that of going to see the companion of her wandering life, in the cellar where he languished with a chain round his neck and a ring through his nose, and kissing him on the eyes and weeping. Seeing her full of care, Monsieur de Montragouz himself became careworn, and this only added to his companion's melancholy. The consideration and forethought which he lavished on her turned the poor woman's head. One morning, when he awoke, Monsieur de Montragoux found Colette no longer at his side. In vain he searched for her throughout the castle.

The door of the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses was open. It was through this door that she had gone to reach the open country with her bear. The sorrow of Bluebeard was painful to behold. In spite of the innumerable messengers sent forth in search of her, no news was ever received of Colette Passage.

Monsieur de Montragoux was still mourning her when he happened to dance, at the fair of Guillettes, with Jeanne de La Cloche, daughter of the Police Lieutenant of Compiègne, who inspired him with love. He asked her in marriage, and obtained her forthwith. She loved wine, and drank it to excess. So much did this taste increase that after a few months she looked like a leather bottle with a round red face atop of it. The worst of it was that this leather bottle would run mad, incessantly rolling about the reception-rooms and the staircases, crying, swearing, and hiccoughing; vomiting wine and insults at everything that got in her way. Monsieur de Montragoux was dazed with disgust and horror. But he quite suddenly recovered his courage, and set himself, with as much firmness as patience, to cure his wife of so disgusting a vice, Prayers, remonstrances, supplications, and threats: he employed every possible means. All was useless. He forbade her wine from his cellar: she got it from outside, and was more abominably drunk than ever.

To deprive her of her taste for a beverage that she loved too well, he put valerian in the bottles. She thought he was trying to poison her, sprang upon him, and drove three inches of kitchen knife into his belly. He expected to die of it, but he did not abandon his habitual kindness.

"She is more to be pitied than blamed," he said.

One day, when he had forgotten to close the door of the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, Jeanne de La Cloche entered by it, quite out of her mind, as usual, and seeing the figures on the walls in postures of affliction, ready to give up the ghost, she mistook them for living women, and fled terror-stricken into the country, screaming murder. Hearing Bluebeard calling her and running after her, she threw herself, mad with terror, into a pond, and was there drowned. It is difficult to believe, yet certain, that her husband, so compassionate was his soul, was much afflicted by her death.

Six weeks after the accident he quietly married Gigonne, the daughter of his steward, Traignel. She wore wooden shoes, and smelt of onions. She was a fine-looking girl enough, except that she squinted with one eye, and limped with one foot. As soon as she was married, this goose-girl, bitten by foolish ambition, dreamed of nothing but further greatness and splendour. She was not satisfied that her brocade dresses were rich enough, her pearl necklaces beautiful enough, her rubies big enough, her coaches sufficiently gilded, her lakes, woods, and lands sufficiently vast. Bluebeard, who had never had any leaning toward ambition, trembled at the haughty humour of his spouse. Unaware, in his straightforward simplicity, whether the mistake lay in thinking magnificently like his wife, or modestly as he himself did, he accused himself of a mediocrity of mind which was thwarting the noble desires of his consort, and, full of uncertainty, he would sometimes exhort her to taste with moderation the good things of this world, while at others he roused himself to pursue fortune along the verge of precipitous heights. He was prudent, but conjugal affection bore him beyond the reach of prudence. Gigonne thought of nothing but cutting a figure in the world, being received at Court, and becoming the King's mistress. Unable to gain her point, she pined away with vexation, contracting a jaundice, of which she died. Bluebeard, full of lamentation, built her a magnificent tomb.

This worthy *seigneur* overwhelmed by constant domestic adversity, would not perhaps have chosen another wife: but he was himself chosen for a husband by Mademoiselle Blanche de Gibeaux, the daughter of a cavalry officer, who had but one ear; he used to relate that he had lost the other in the King's service. She was full of intelligence, which she employed in deceiving her husband. She betrayed him with every man of quality in the neighbourhood. She was so dexterous that she deceived him in his own castle, almost under his very eyes, without his perceiving it. Poor Bluebeard assuredly suspected something, but he could not say what. Unfortunately for her, while she gave her whole mind to tricking her husband, she was not sufficiently careful in deceiving her lovers; by which I mean that she betrayed them, one for another. One day she was surprised in the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, in the company of a gentleman

whom she loved, by a gentleman whom she had loved, and the latter, in a transport of jealousy, ran her through with his sword. A few hours later the unfortunate lady was there found dead by one of the castle servants, and the fear inspired by the room increased.

Poor Bluebeard, learning at one blow of his ample dishonour, and the tragic death of his wife, did not console himself for the latter misfortune by any consideration of the former. He had loved Blanche de Gibeaux with a strange ardour, more dearly than he had loved Jeanne de La Cloche, Gigonne Traignel, or even Colette Passage. On learning that she had consistently betrayed him, and that now she would never betray him again, he experienced a grief and a mental perturbation which, far from being appeased, daily increased in violence. So intolerable were his sufferings that he contracted a malady which caused his life to be despaired of.

The physicians, having employed various medicines without effect, advised him that the only remedy proper to his complaint was to take a young wife. He then thought of his young cousin, Angèle de La Garandine, whom he believed would be willingly bestowed upon him, as she had no property. What encouraged him to take her to wife was the fact that she was reputed to be simple and ignorant of the world. Having been deceived by a woman of intelligence, he felt more comfortable with a fool. He married Mademoiselle de La Garandine, and quickly perceived the falsity of his calculations. Angèle was kind, Angèle was good, and Angèle loved him; she had not, in herself, any leanings toward evil, but the least astute person could quickly lead her astray at any moment. It was enough to tell her: "Do this for fear of bogies; comes in here or the werewolf will eat you;" or "Shut your eyes, and take this drop of medicine," and the innocent girl would straightway do so, at the will of the rascals who wanted of her that which it was very natural to want of her, for she was pretty. Monsieur de Montragouz, injured and betrayed by this innocent girl, as much as and more than he had been by Blanche de Gibeaux, had the additional pain of knowing it, for Angèle was too candid to conceal anything from him. She used to tell him: "Sir, some one told me this; some one did that to me; some one took so and so away from me; I saw that; I felt so and so." And by her ingenuousness she caused her lord to suffer torments beyond imagination. He endured them like a Stoic. Still he finally had to tell the simple creature that she was a goose, and to box her ears. This, for him, was the beginning of a reputation for cruelty, which was not fated to be diminished. A mendicant monk, who was passing Gulliettes while Monsieur de Montragouz was out shooting woodcock, found Madame Angèle sewing a doll's petticoat. This worthy friar, discovering that she was as foolish as she was beautiful, took her away on his donkey, having persuaded her

that the Angel Gabriel was waiting in a wood, to give her a pair of pearl garters. It is believed that she must have been eaten by a wolf, for she was never seen again.

After such a disastrous experience, how was it that Bluebeard could make up his mind to contract yet another union? It would be impossible to understand it, were we not well aware of the power which a fine pair of eyes exerts over a generous heart.

The honest gentleman met, at a neighbouring château which he was in the habit of frequenting, a young orphan of quality, by name Alix de Pontalcin, who, having been robbed of all her property by a greedy trustee, thought only of entering a convent. Officious friends intervened to alter her determination and persuade her to accept the hand of Monsieur de Montragoux. Her beauty was perfect. Bluebeard, who was promising himself the enjoyment of an infinite happiness in her arms, was once more deluded in his hopes, and this time experienced a disappointment, which, owing to his disposition, was bound to make an even greater impression upon him than all the afflictions which he had suffered in his previous marriages. Alix de Pontalcin obstinately refused to give actuality to the union to which she had nevertheless consented.

In vain did Monsieur de Montragoux press her to become his wife; she resisted prayers, tears, and objurgations, she refused her husband's lightest caresses, and rushed off to shut herself into the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, where she remained, alone and intractable, for whole nights at a time.

The cause of a resistance so contrary to laws both human and divine was never known; it was attributed to Monsieur de Montragoux's blue beard, but our previous remarks on the subject of his beard render such a supposition far from probable. In any case, it is a difficult subject to discuss. The unhappy husband underwent the cruellest sufferings. In order to forget them, he hunted with desperation, exhausting horses, hounds, and huntsmen. But when he returned home, foundered and overtired, the mere sight of Mademoiselle de Pontalcin was enough to revive his energies and his torments. Finally, unable to endure the situation any longer, he applied to Rome for the annulment of a marriage which was nothing better than a trap; and in consideration of a handsome present to the Holy Father he obtained it in accordance with canon law. If Monsieur de Montragoux discarded Mademoiselle de Pontalcin with all the marks of respect due to a woman, and without breaking his cane across her back, it was because he had a valiant soul, a great heart, and was master of himself as well as of Guillettes. But he swore that, for the future, no female should enter his apartments. Happy had he been if he had held to his oath to the end!

CHAPTER III

SOME years had elapsed since Monsieur de Montragoux had rid himself of his sixth wife, and only a confused recollection remained in the countryside of the domestic calamities which had fallen upon this worthy *seigneur's* house. Nobody knew what had become of his wives, and hair-raising tales were told in the village at night; some believed them, others did not. About this time, a widow, past the prime of life, Dame Sidonie de Lespoisse, came to settle with her children in the manor of La Motte-Giron, about two leagues, as the crow flies, from the castle of Guillettes. Whence she came, or who her husband had been, not a soul knew. Some believed, because they had heard it said, that he had held certain posts in Savoy or Spain; others said that he had died in the Indies; many had the idea that the widow was possessed of immense estates, while others doubted it strongly. However, she lived in a notable style, and invited all the nobility of the countryside to La Motte-Giron. She had two daughters, of whom the elder, Anne, on the verge of becoming an old maid, was a very astute person: Jeanne, the younger, ripe for marriage, concealed a precocious knowledge of the world under an appearance of simplicity. The Dame de Lespoisse had also two sons, of twenty and twenty-two years of age; very fine well-made young fellows, of whom one was a Dragoon, and the other a Musketeer. I may add, having seen his commission, that he was a Black Musketeer. When on foot, this was not apparent, for the Black Musketeers were distinguished from the Grey not by the colour of their uniform, but by the hides of their horses. All alike wore blue surcoats laced with gold. As for the Dragoons, they were to be recognized by a kind of fur bonnet, of which the tail fell gallantly over the ear. The Dragoons had the reputation of being scamps, a scapegrace crowd, witness the song:

“Mama, here the dragoons come,
Let us haste away.”

But you might have searched in vain through His Majesty's two regiments of Dragoons for a bigger rake, a more accomplished sponger, or a viler rogue than Cosme de Lespoisset. Compared with him, his brother was an honest lad. Drunkard and gambler, Pierre de Lespoisse pleased the ladies, and won at cards; these were the only ways of gaining a living known to him.

Their mother, Dame de Lespoisse, was making a splash at Motte-Giron only in order to catch gulls. As a matter of fact, she had not a penny, and owed for everything, even to her false teeth. Her clothes and furniture, her coach, her

horses, and her servants had all been lent by Parisian moneylenders, who threatened to withdraw them all if she did not presently marry one of her daughters to some rich nobleman, and the respectable Sidonie was expecting to find herself at any moment naked in an empty house. In a hurry to find a son-in-law, she had at once cast her eye upon Monsieur de Montragoux, whom she summed up as being simple-minded, easy to deceive, extremely mild, and quick to fall in love under his rude and bashful exterior. Her two daughters entered into her plans, and every time they met him, riddled poor Bluebeard with glances which pierced him to the depths of his heart. He soon fell a victim to the potent charms of the two Demoiselles de Lespoisse. Forgetting his oath, he thought of nothing but marrying one of them, finding them equally beautiful. After some delay, caused less by hesitation than timidity, he went to Motte-Giron in great state, and made his petition to the Dame de Lespoisse, leaving to her the choice of which daughter she would give him. Madame Sidonie obligingly replied that she held him in high esteem, and that she authorized him to pay his court to whichever of the ladies he should prefer.

“Learn to please, monsieur,” she said. “I shall be the first to applaud your success.”

In order to make their better acquaintance, Bluebeard invited Anne and Jeanne de Lespoisse, with their mother, brothers, and a multitude of ladies and gentlemen to pass a fortnight at the castle of Guillettes. There was a succession of walking, hunting, and fishing parties, dances and festivities, dinners and entertainments of every sort. A young *seigneur*, the Chevalier de Merlus, whom the ladies Lespoisse had brought with them, organized the beats. Bluebeard had the best packs of hounds and the largest turnout in the countryside. The ladies rivalled the ardour of the gentlemen in hunting the deer. They did not always hunt the animal down, but the hunters and their ladies wandered away in couples, found one another, and again wandered off into the woods. For choice, the Chevalier de la Merlus would lose himself with Jeanne de Lespoisse, and both would return to the castle at night, full of their adventures, and pleased with their day’s sport.

After a few days’ observation, the good *seigneur* of Montragoux felt a decided preference for Jeanne, the younger sister, rather than the elder, as she was fresher, which is not saying that she was less experienced. He allowed his preference to appear; there was no reason why he should conceal it, for it was a befitting preference; moreover, he was a plain dealer. He paid court to the young lady as best he could, speaking little, for want of practice; but he gazed at her, rolling his rolling eyes, and emitting from the depths of his bowels sighs which might have overthrown an oak tree. Sometimes he would burst out laughing,

whereupon the crockery trembled, and the windows rattled. Alone of all the party, he failed to remark the assiduous attentions of the Chevalier de la Merlus to Madame de Lespoisse's younger daughter, or if he did remark them he saw no harm in them. His experience of women was not sufficient to make him suspicious, and he trusted when he loved. My grandmother used to say that in life experience is worthless, and that one remains the same as when one begins. I believe she was right, and the true story that I am now unfolding is not of a nature to prove her wrong.

Bluebeard displayed an unusual magnificence in these festivities. When night arrived the lawns before the castle were lit by a thousand torches, and tables served by men-servants and maids dressed as fauns and dryads groaned under all the tastiest things which the countryside and the forest produced. Musicians provided a continual succession of beautiful symphonies. Towards the end of the meal the schoolmaster and schoolmistress, followed by the boys and girls of the village, appeared before the guests, and read a complimentary address to the *seigneur* of Montragoux and his friends. An astrologer in a pointed cap approached the ladies, and foretold their future love-affairs from the lines of their hands, Bluebeard ordered drink to be given for all his vassals, and he himself distributed bread and meat to the poor families.

At ten o'clock, for fear of the evening dew, the company retired to the apartments, lit by a multitude of candles, and there tables were prepared for every sort of game: lansquenet, billiards, reversi, bagatelle, pigeon-holes, turnstile, porch, beast, hoca, brelan, draughts, backgammon, dice, basset, and calbas. Bluebeard was uniformly unfortunate in these various games, at which he lost large sums every night. He could console himself for his continuous run of bad luck by watching the three Lespoisse ladies win a great deal of money. Jeanne, the younger, who often backed the game of the Chevalier de la Merlus, heaped up mountains of gold. Madame de Lespoisse's two sons also did very well at reversi and basset; their luck was invariably best at the more hazardous games. The play went on until late into the night. No one slept during these marvellous festivities, and as the earliest biographer of Bluebeard has said: "They spent the whole night in playing tricks on one another." These hours were the most delightful of the whole twenty-four; for then, under cover of jesting, and taking advantage of the darkness, those who felt drawn toward one another would hide together in the depths of some alcove. The Chevalier de la Merlus would disguise himself at one time as a devil, at another as a ghost or a werewolf in order to frighten the sleepers, but he always ended by slipping into the room of Mademoiselle Jeanne de Lespoisse. The good *seigneur* of Montragoux was not overlooked in these games. The two sons of Madame de Lespoisse put

irritant powder in his bed, and burnt in his room substances which emitted a disgusting smell. Or they would arrange a jug of water over his door so that the worthy *seigneur* could not open the door without the whole of the water being upset upon his head. In short, they played on him all sorts of practical jokes, to the diversion of the whole company, and Bluebeard bore them with his natural good humour.

He made his request, to which Madame de Lespouisse acceded, although, as she said, it wrung her heart to think of giving her girls in marriage.

The marriage was celebrated at Motte-Giron with extraordinary magnificence. The Demoiselle Jeanne, amazingly beautiful, was dressed entirely in *point de France*, her head covered with a thousand ringlets. Her sister Anne wore a dress of green velvet, embroidered with gold. Their mother's dress was of golden tissue, trimmed with black chenille, with a *parure* of pearls and diamonds. Monsieur de Montragoux wore all his great diamonds on a suit of black velvet; he made a very fine appearance; his expression of timidity and innocence contrasting strongly with his blue chin and his massive build. The bride's brothers were of course handsomely arrayed, but the Chevalier de la Merlus, in a suit of rose velvet trimmed with pearls, shone with unparalleled splendour.

Immediately after the ceremony, the Jews who had hired out to the bride's family and her lover all these fine clothes and rich jewels resumed possession of them and posted back to Paris with them.

CHAPTER IV

FOR a month Monsieur de Montragoux was the happiest of men. He adored his wife, and regarded her as an angel of purity. She was something quite different, but far shrewder men than poor Bluebeard might have been deceived as he was, for she was a person of great cunning and astuteness, and allowed herself submissively to be ruled by her mother, who was the cleverest jade in the whole kingdom of France. She established herself at Guillettes with her eldest daughter Anne, her two sons, Pierre and Cosme, and the Chevalier de la Merlus, who kept as close to Madame de Montragoux as if he had been her shadow. Her good husband was a little annoyed at this; he would have liked to keep his wife always to himself, but he did not take exception to the affection which she felt for this young gentleman, as she had told him that he was her foster-brother.

Charles Perrault relates that a month after having contracted this union, Bluebeard was compelled to make a journey of six weeks' duration on some important business. He does not seem to be aware of the reasons for this journey, and it has been suspected that it was an artifice, which the jealous husband resorted to, according to custom, in order to surprise his wife. The truth is quite otherwise. Monsieur de Montragoux went to Le Perche to receive the heritage of his cousin of Outarde, who had been killed gloriously by a cannon-ball at the battle of the Dunes, while casting dice upon a drum.

Before leaving, Monsieur de Montragoux begged his wife to indulge in every possible distraction during his absence.

"Invite all your friends, madame," he said, "go riding with them, amuse yourselves, and have a pleasant time."

He handed over to her all the keys of the house, thus indicating that in his absence she was the sole and sovereign mistress of all the *seigneurie* of Guillettes.

"This," he said, "is the key of the two great wardrobes; this of the gold and silver not in daily use; this of the strong-boxes which contain my gold and silver; this of the caskets where my jewels are kept; and this is a pass-key into all the rooms. As for this little key, it is that of the Cabinet, at the end of the Gallery, on the ground floor; open everything, and go where you will."

Charles Perrault claims that Monsieur de Montragoux added:

"But as for the little Cabinet, I forbid you to enter that; and I forbid you so expressly that if you do enter it, I cannot say to what lengths my anger will not go."

The historian of Bluebeard in placing these words on record, has fallen into the error of adopting, without, verification, the version concocted after the event by the ladies Lespoisse. Monsieur de Montragoux expressed himself very differently. When he handed to his wife the key of the little Cabinet, which was none other than the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, to which we have already frequently alluded, he expressed the desire that his beloved Jeanne should not enter that part of the house which he regarded as fatal to his domestic happiness. It was through this room, indeed, that his first wife, and the best of all of them, had fled, when she ran away with her bear; here Blanche de Gibeauxmex had repeatedly betrayed him with various gentlemen; and lastly, the porphyry pavement was stained by the blood of a beloved criminal. Was not this enough to make Monsieur de Montragoux connect the idea of this room with cruel memories and fateful forebodings?

The words which he addressed to Jeanne de Lespoisse convey the desires and impressions which were troubling his mind. They were actually as follows:

“For you, madame, nothing of mine is hidden, and I should feel that I was doing you an injury did I fail to hand over to you all the keys of a dwelling which belongs to you. You may therefore enter this little cabinet, as you may enter all the other rooms of the house; but if you will take my advice you will do nothing of the kind, to oblige me, and in consideration of the painful ideas which, for me, are connected with this room, and the forebodings of evil which these ideas, despite myself, call up into my mind. I should be inconsolable were any mischance to befall you, or were I to bring misfortune upon you. You will, madame, forgive these fears, which are happily unfounded, as being only the outcome of my anxious affection and my watchful love.”

With these words the good *seigneur* embraced his wife and posted off to Le Perche.

“The friends and neighbours,” says Charles Perrault, “did not wait to be asked to visit the young bride; so full were they of impatience to see all the wealth of her house. They proceeded at once to inspect all the rooms, cabinets, and wardrobes, each of which was richer and more beautiful than the last; and there was no end to their envy and their praises of their friend’s good fortune.”

All the historians who have dealt with this subject have added that Madame de Montsagoux took no pleasure in the sight of all these riches, by reason of her impatience to open the little Cabinet. This is perfectly correct, and as Perrault has said: “So urgent was her curiosity that, without considering that it was unmannerly to leave her guests, she went down to it by a little secret staircase, and in such a hurry that two or three times she thought she would break her neck.” The fact is beyond question. But what no one has told us is that the reason

why she was so anxious to reach this apartment was that the Chevalier de la Merlus was awaiting her there.

Since she had come to make her home in the castle of Guillettes she had met this young gentleman in the Cabinet every day, and oftener twice a day than once, without wearying of an intercourse so unseemly in a young married woman. It is Impossible to hesitate, as to the nature of the ties connecting Jeanne with the Chevalier: they were anything but respectable, anything but chaste, Alas, had Madame de Montragoux merely betrayed her husband's honour, she would no doubt have incurred the blame of posterity; but the most austere of moralists might have found excuses for her. He might allege, in favour of so young a woman, the laxity of the morals of the period; the examples of the city and the Court; the too certain effects of a bad training, and the advice of an immoral mother, for Madame Sidonie de Lespoisse countenanced her daughter's intrigues. The wise might have forgiven her a fault too amiable to merit their severity; her errors would have seemed too common to be crimes, and the world would simply have considered that she was behaving like other people. But Jeanne de Lespoisse, not content with betraying her husband's honour, did not hesitate to attempt his life.

It was in the little Cabinet, otherwise known as the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, that Jeanne de Lespoisse, Dame de Montragoux, in concert with the Chevalier de la Merlus, plotted the death of a kind and faithful husband. She declared later that, on entering the room, she saw hanging there the bodies of six murdered women, whose congealed blood covered the tiles, and that recognizing in these unhappy women the first six wives of Bluebeard, she foresaw the fate which awaited herself. She must, in this case, have mistaken the paintings on the walls for mutilated corpses, and her hallucinations must be compared with those of Lady Macbeth. But it is extremely probable that Jeanne imagined this horrible sight in order to relate it afterwards, justifying her husband's murderers by slandering their victim.

The death of Monsieur de Montragouz was determined upon. Certain letters which lie before me compel the belief that Madame Sidonie Lespoisse had her part in the plot. As for her elder daughter, she may be described as the soul of the conspiracy. Anne de Lespoisse was the wickedest of the whole family. She was a stranger to sensual weakness, remaining chaste in the midst of the profligacy of the house; it was not a case of refusing pleasures which she thought unworthy of her; the truth was that she took pleasure only in cruelty. She engaged her two brothers, Cosme and Pierre, in the enterprise by promising them the command of a regiment.

CHAPTER V

IT now rests with us to trace, with the aid of authentic documents, and reliable evidence, the most atrocious, treacherous, and cowardly domestic crime of which the record has come down to us. The murder whose circumstances we are about to relate can only be compared to that committed on the night of the 9th March, 1449, on the person of Guillaume de Flavvy, by his wife Blanche d'Overbreuc, a young and slender woman, the bastard d'Orbandas, and the barber Jean Bocquillon.

They stifled Guillaume with a pillow, battered him pitilessly with a club, and bled him at the throat like a calf. Blanche d'Overbreuc proved that her husband had determined to have her drowned, while Jeanne de Lespoisse betrayed a loving husband to a gang of unspeakable scoundrels. We will record the facts with all possible restraint. Bluebeard returned rather earlier than expected. This it was gave rise to the quite mistaken idea that, a prey to the blackest jealousy, he was wishful to surprise his wife. Full of joy and confidence, if he thought of giving her a surprise it was an agreeable one. His kindness and tenderness, and his joyous, peaceable air would have softened the most savage hearts. The Chevalier de la Merlus, and the whole execrable brood of Lespoisse saw therein nothing but an additional facility for taking his life, and possessing themselves of his wealth, still further increased by his new inheritance.

His young wife met him with a smiling face, allowing herself to be embraced and led to the conjugal chamber, where she did everything to please the good man. The following morning she returned him the bunch of keys which had been confided to her care. But there was missing that of the Cabinet of the Unfortunate Princesses, commonly called the little Cabinet. Bluebeard gently demanded its delivery, and after putting him off for a time on various pretexts Jeanne returned it to him.

There now arises a question which cannot be solved without leaving the limited domain of history to enter the indeterminate regions of philosophy.

Charles Perrault specifically states that the key of the little Cabinet was a fairy key, that is to say, it was magical, enchanted, endowed with properties contrary to the laws of nature, at all events, as we conceive them. We have no proof to the contrary. This is a fitting moment to recall the precept of my illustrious master, Monsieur du Clos des Lunes, a member of the Institute: "When the supernatural makes its appearance, it must not be rejected by the historian." I shall therefore content myself with recalling as regards this key, the

unanimous opinion of all the old biographers of Bluebeard; they all affirm that it was a fairy key. This is a point of great importance. Moreover, this key is not the only object created by human industry which has proved to be endowed with marvellous properties. Tradition abounds with examples of enchanted swords. Arthur's was a magic sword. And so was that of Joan of Arc, on the undeniable authority of Jean Chartier; and the proof afforded by that illustrious chronicler is that when the blade was broken the two pieces refused to be welded together again despite all the efforts of the most competent armourers. Victor Hugo speaks in one of his poems of those "magic stairways still obscured below." Many authors even admit that there are men-magicians who can turn themselves into wolves. We shall not undertake to combat such a firm and constant belief, and we shall not pretend to decide whether the key of the little Cabinet was or was not enchanted, for our reserve does not imply that we are in any uncertainty, and therein resides its merit. But where we find ourselves in our proper domain, or to be more precise within our own jurisdiction, where we once more become judges of facts, and writers of circumstances, is where we read that the key was flecked with blood. The authority of the texts does not so far impress us as to compel us to believe this. It was not flecked with blood. Blood had flowed in the little cabinet, but at a time already remote. Whether the key had been washed or whether it had dried, it was impossible that it should be so stained, and what, in her agitation, the criminal wife mistook for a blood-stain on the iron, was the reflection of the sky still empurpled by the roses of dawn.

Monsieur de Montragoux, on seeing the key, perceived none the less that his wife had entered the little cabinet. He noticed that it now appeared cleaner and brighter than when he had given it to her, and was of opinion that this polish could only come from use.

This produced a painful impression upon him, and he said to his wife, with a mournful smile:

"My darling, you have been into the little cabinet. May there result no grievous outcome for either of us! From that room emanates a malign influence from which I would have protected you. If you, in your turn should become subjected to it, I should never get over it. Forgive me; when we love we are superstitious."

On these words, although Bluebeard cannot have frightened her, for his words and demeanour expressed only love and melancholy, the young lady of Montragoux began shrieking at the top of her voice: "Help! Help! he's killing me!" This was the signal agreed upon. On hearing it, the Chevalier de la Merlus and the two sons of Madame de Lespoisse were to have thrown themselves upon Bluebeard and run him through with their swords.

But the Chevalier, whom Jeanne had hidden in a cupboard in the room, appeared alone. Monsieur de Montragoux, seeing him leap forth sword in hand, placed himself on guard. Jeanne fled terror-stricken, and met her sister Anne in the gallery. She was not, as has been related, on a tower; for all the towers had been thrown down by order of Cardinal Richelieu. Anne was striving to put heart into her two brothers, who, pale and quaking, dared not risk so great a stake. Jeanne hastily implored them: "Quick, quick, brothers, save my lover!" Pierre and Cosme then rushed at Bluebeard. They found him, having disarmed the Chevalier de la Merlus, holding him down with his knee; they treacherously ran their swords through his body from behind, and continued to strike at him long after he had breathed his last.

Bluebeard had no heirs. His wife remained mistress of his property. She used a part of it to provide a dowry for her sister Anne, another part to buy captains' commissions for her two brothers, and the rest to marry the Chevalier de la Merlus, who became a very respectable man as soon as he was wealthy.

THE MIRACLE OF THE GREAT ST. NICOLAS

ST. NICOLAS, Bishop of Myra in Lycia, lived in the time of Constantine the Great. The most ancient and weighty of those authors who have mentioned him celebrate his virtues, his labours, and his worth: they give abundant proofs of his sanctity; but none of them records the miracle of the salting-tub. Nor is it mentioned in the Golden Legend. This silence is important: still one does not willingly consent to throw doubt upon a fact so widely known, which is attested by the ballad which all the world knows: "There were three little children

In the fields they went to glean."

This famous text expressly states that a cruel pork-butcher put the innocents "like pigs into the salting-vat." That is to say, he apparently preserved them, cut into pieces, in a bath of brine. This is, to be sure, how pork is cured: but one is surprised to read further on that the three little children remained seven years in pickle, whereas it is usual to begin withdrawing the pieces of flesh from the tub, with a wooden fork, at the end of about six weeks. The text is explicit: according to the elegy, it was seven years after the crime that St. Nicolas entered the accursed hostelry. He asked for supper. The landlord offered him a piece of ham: "Wilt eat of ham? 'Tis dainty food.'

'I'll have no ham: it is not good.

'Wilt cat a piece of tender veal?

'I will not make of that my meal.

Young salted flesh I want, and that Has lain seven years within the vat.

Wheras the butcher heard this said Out of the door full fast he fled."

The Man of God immediately resuscitated the tender victims by the laying of hands on the salting-tub.

Such is, in substance, the story of the old anonymous rhyme. It bears the inimitable stamp of honesty and good faith. Scepticism seems ill-inspired when it attacks the most vital memories of the popular mind. It is not without a lively satisfaction that I have found myself able to reconcile the authority of the ballad with the silence of the ancient biographers of the Lycian pontiff. I am happy to proclaim the result of my long meditations and scholastic researches. The miracle of the salting-tub is true, in so far as essentials are concerned, but it was not the blessed Bishop of Myra who performed it; it was another St. Nicolas, for there were two: one, as we have already stated, Bishop of Myra in Lycia; the other more recent, Bishop of Trinquetalle in Vervignole. For me was reserved the task of distinguishing between them. It was the Bishop of Trinquetalle who

rescued the three little boys from the salting-tub. I shall establish the fact by authentic documents, and no one will have occasion to deplore the end of a legend.

I have been fortunate enough to recover the entire history of the Bishop Nicolas and the children whom he resuscitated. I have fashioned it into in a narrative which will be read, I hope, with both pleasure and profit.

CHAPTER I

NICOLAS, a scion of an illustrious family of Vervignole, showed marks of sanctity from his earliest childhood, and at the age of fourteen vowed to consecrate himself to the Lord. Having embraced the ecclesiastical profession, he was raised, while still young, by popular acclamation and the wish of the Chapter, to the see of St. Cromadaire, the apostle of Vervignole, and first Bishop of Trinquéballe. He exercised his pastoral ministry with piety, governed his clergy with wisdom, taught the people, and feared not to remind the great of Justice and Moderation. He was liberal, profuse in almsgiving, and set aside for the poor the greater part of his wealth.

His castle proudly lifted its crenelated walls and pepper-pot roofs from the summit of a hill overlooking the town. He made of it a refuge where all who were pursued by the secular arm might find a place of refuge. In the lower hall, the largest to be seen in all Vervignole, the table laid for meals was so long that those who sat at one end saw it lose itself in the distance in an indistinct point, and when the torches upon it were lighted it recalled the tail of the comet which appeared in Vervignole to announce the death of King Comus. The holy St. Nicolas sat at the upper end. There he entertained the principal folk of the town and of the kingdom, and a multitude of clergy and laymen. But on his right there was always reserved a seat for the poor man who might come begging for his bread at the door.

Children, particularly, aroused the solicitude of the good St. Nicolas. He delighted in their innocence, and he felt for them with the heart of a father and the bowels of a mother. He had the virtues and the morals of an apostle. Yearly, in the dress of a simple monk, with a white staff in his hand, he would visit his flock, desirous of seeing everything with his own eyes; and in order that no adversity or disorder should escape his notice he would traverse, accompanied by a single priest, the wildest parts of his diocese, crossing, in winter, the flooded rivers, climbing mountains, and plunging into the thick forests. One day, having ridden since dawn upon his mule, in company with the Deacon Modernus, thorny thickets through which his mount with difficulty forced a winding path. The Deacon Modernus followed him with much difficulty on his mule, which carried the baggage.

Overcome with hunger and fatigue, the man of God said to Modernus:

“Let us halt here, my son, and if you still have a little bread and wine we will sup here, for I feel that I hardly have the strength to proceed further, and you,

although the younger, must be nearly as tired as I.”

“Monseigneur,” answered Modernus, “there remains neither a drop of wine nor a crumb of bread; for, by your orders, I gave all to some people on the road, who had less need of it than ourselves.”

“Without a doubt,” replied the Bishop, “had there been a few scraps left in your wallet we should have eaten them with pleasure, for it is fitting that those who govern the Church should be nourished on the leavings of the poor. But since you have nothing left it is because God has desired it so, and He has surely desired it for our good and profit. It is possible that He will for ever hide from us the reason of this favour: perhaps, on the other hand, He will quickly make it manifest. Meanwhile, I think the only thing left for us is to push on until we find some arbutus berries and blackberries for our own nourishment, and some grass for our mules, and, being thus refreshed, to lie down upon a bed of leaves.”

“As you please, Monseigneur,” answered Modernus, pricking his mount.

They travelled all night, and a part of the following morning; then, having climbed a fairly steep ascent, they suddenly found themselves at the border of the wood, and beheld at their feet a plain covered by a yellowish sky, and crossed by four white roads, which lost themselves in the mist. They took that to the left, an old Roman road, formerly frequented by merchants and pilgrims, but deserted since the war had laid waste this part of Vervignole. Dense clouds were gathering in the sky, across which birds were flying; a stifling atmosphere weighed down upon the dumb, livid earth. Lightning flashed on the horizon. They urged on their wearied mules. Suddenly a mighty wind bent the tops of the trees, making the boughs crack and the battered foliage moan. The thunder muttered, and heavy drops of rain began to fall.

As they made their way through the storm, the lightning flashing about them, along a road which had become a torrent, they perceived, by the light of a flash, a house outside which there hung a branch of holly, the sign of hospitality.

The inn appeared deserted; nevertheless, the host advanced towards them, a man fierce yet humble, with a great knife at his belt, and asked what they wished for.

“A lodging, and a scrap of bread, with a drop of wine,” answered the Bishop, “for we are weary and benumbed with cold.”

While the host was fetching wine from the cellar, and Modernus was taking the mules to the stable, St. Nicolas, sitting at the hearth beside a dying fire, cast a glance round the smoky room. Dust and dirt covered the benches and casks; spiders spun their webs between the worm-eaten joists, whence hung scanty bunches of onions. In a dark corner the salting-tub displayed its iron-hooped belly.

In those days the demons used to take a hand in domestic life in a far more intimate fashion than they do to-day. They haunted houses, concealed in the salt-box, the butter-tub, or some other hiding-place; they spied upon the people of the house, and watched for the opportunity to tempt them and lead them into evil. Then, too, the angels made more frequent appearances among Christian folk.

Now a devil, as big as a hazel-nut, who was hidden among the burning logs, spoke up and said to the holy Bishop:

“Look at that salting-tub, Father; it is well worth a look. It is the best salting-tub in the whole of Vervignole. It is, indeed, the model and paragon of salting-tubs. When the master here, Seigneur Garum, received it from the hands of a skilful cooper he perfumed it with juniper, thyme, and rosemary. Seigneur Garum has not his equal in bleeding the meat, boning it, and cutting it up, carefully, thoughtfully, and lovingly, and steeping it in salted liquors by which it is preserved and embalmed. He is without a rival for seasoning, concentrating, boiling down, skimming, straining, and decanting the pickle. Taste his mild-cured pork, father, and you will lick your fingers: taste his mild-cured pork, Nicolas, and you will have something to say about it.”

But in these words, and above all in the voice that uttered them (it grated like a saw), the holy Bishop recognized an evil spirit. He made the sign of the Cross, whereupon the little devil exploded with a horrible noise and a very bad smell, just like a chestnut thrown into the fire without having had its skin split.

And an angel from Heaven appeared, resplendent in light and said to Nicolas:

“Nicolas, beloved of the Lord, you must know that three little children have been in that salting-tub for seven years; Garum, the innkeeper, cut up these tender infants, and put them in salt and pickle. Arise, Nicolas, and pray that they may come to life again. For, if you intercede for them, O Pontiff, the Lord, who loves you, will restore them to life.”

During this speech Modernus entered the room, but he did not see the angel, nor did he hear him, for he was not sufficiently holy to be able to communicate with the heavenly spirits.

The angel further said:

“Nicolas, son of God, lay your hands on the salting-tub, and the three children will be resuscitated.”

The blessed Nicolas, filled with horror, pity, zeal, and hope, gave thanks to God, and when the innkeeper reappeared with a jug in either hand, the Saint said to him in a terrible voice:

“Garum, open the salting-tub!”

Whereupon, Garum, overcome by fear, dropped both his jugs.

And the saintly Bishop Nicolas stretched out his hands, and said:

“Children, arise!”

At these words, the lid of the salting-tub was lifted up, and three young boys emerged.

“Children,” said the Bishop, “give thanks to God, who through me, has raised you from out the salting-tub.”

And turning towards the innkeeper, who was trembling in every limb, he said:

“Cruel man, recognize the three children whom you shamefully put to death. May you loathe your crime, and repent, that God may pardon you!”

The innkeeper, filled with terror, fled into the storm, amidst the thunder and lightning.

CHAPTER II

ST. NICOLAS embraced the three children and gently questioned them about the miserable death which they had suffered. They related that Garum, having approached them while they were gleaning in the fields, had lured them into his inn, had made them drink wine, and had cut their throats while they slept.

They still wore the rags in which they had been clothed on the day of their death, and they retained, after their resurrection, a wild and timid air. The sturdiest of the three, Maxime, was the son of a half-witted woman, who followed the soldiers to war, mounted on an ass. One night he fell from the pannier in which she carried him, and was left abandoned by the roadside. From that time forward he had lived solely by theft. The feeblest, Robin, could hardly recall his parents, peasants in the highlands, who being too poor or too avaricious to support him had deserted him in the forest. The third, Sulpice, knew nothing of his birth, but a priest had taught him his alphabet. The storm had ceased; in the buoyant, limpid air the birds were calling loudly to one another. The smiling earth was green. Modernus having fetched the mules, Bishop Nicolas mounted his, and carried Maxime wrapped in his cloak: the deacon took Sulpice and Robin upon his crupper, and they set off toward the city of Trinquetalle.

The road unfolded itself between fields of corn, vineyards, and meadows. As they went along the great Saint Nicolas who already loved the children with all his heart, examined them on subjects suitable to their age, and asked them easy questions such as: "How much is five times five?" or "What is God?" He obtained no satisfactory answers. But, far from shaming them for their ignorance, he thought only of gradually dissipating it by the application of the best pedagogic methods.

"Modernus," he said, "we will teach them firstly the truths necessary for salvation, and secondly the liberal arts, especially music, so that they may sing the praises of the Lord. It will also be expedient to teach them rhetoric, philosophy, and the history of men, plants, and animals. I desire that they shall study, in their habits and their structure, the animals, all of whose organs, in their wonderful perfection, attest the glory of the Creator."

Scarcely had the venerable Pontiff concluded this speech when a peasant woman passed along the road, dragging by the halter an old mare so heavily laden with branches cut with their leaves on that her knees were trembling, and she stumbled at every step.

“Alas,” sighed the great St. Nicolas, “here is a poor horse carrying more than its burden. He has unfortunately fallen into the hands of unjust and hard-hearted masters. One should not overload any creature, not even beasts of burden.”

At these words the three boys burst out laughing. The Bishop having asked why they laughed so loudly:

“Because — —” said Robin.

“That is — —” said Sulpice.

“We laughed,” said Maxime, “because you mistook a mare for a horse. Can’t you see the difference? It is very plain to me. Don’t you know anything about animals?”

“I think,” said Modernus, “the first thing is to teach these children manners.”

At every town, borough, village, hamlet or castle by which he passed, St. Nicolas showed the people the children rescued from the salting-tub, and related the great miracle performed by God, on his intercession; whereupon they were all very joyful, and blessed him. Informed by messengers and travellers of so prodigious an occurrence, the entire population of Trinquetalle came out to meet their pastor, unrolling precious carpets and scattering flowers in his path. The citizens, their eyes wet with tears, gazed at the three victims who had escaped from the salting-tub, and cried: “The Lord be praised!” But the poor children knew no better than to laugh and stick out their tongues; this caused further wonder and compassion, as being a palpable proof of their innocence and misfortune.

The saintly Bishop Nicolas had an orphan niece, Mirande by name, who had just reached her seventh year, and was dearer to him than the light of his eyes. A worthy widow by name Basine was rearing her in piety, good manners, and ignorance of evil. The three miraculously saved children were confided to the care of this lady. She was not lacking in judgment. She quickly saw that Maxime had courage, Robin prudence, and Sulpice the power of reflection. She devoted herself to confirming these good qualities, which, by the corruption common to the whole human race, tended unceasingly to become perverted and distorted; for Robin’s cautiousness turned easily into hypocrisy, and mostly hid a greedy covetousness; Maxime was subject to fits of rage, and Sulpice frequently and obstinately expressed false ideas in very important matters. However, they were but mere children who went bird’s-nesting, stole the garden fruit, tied cooking-pots to dogs’ tails, put ink in the holy water font, and cow-itch in Modernus’ bed.

At night, wrapped in white sheets and walking on stilts, they would go into the gardens, and frighten into a swoon the serving-maids belated in their lovers’ arms. They would cover the seat which Madame Basine was wont to use with bristling spikes, and when she sat down they would delight in her sufferings,

observing the confusion with which she openly applied a heedful and comforting hand to the damaged spot, for she would not for all the world have been lacking in modesty.

In spite of her age and virtues, this lady inspired them with neither love nor fear. Robin called her an old goat, Maxime an old she-ass, and Sulpice, the ass of Balaam. They teased little Mirande in all sorts of ways; they would dirty her pretty clothes by making her fall face downward on the stones. Once they pushed her head right up to the neck into a barrel of treacle. They taught her to sit astride railings, and to climb trees, contrary to the decorum of her sex; they taught her words and manners that smacked of the inn and the salting-tub. Following their example, she called Madame Bassne “an old goat,” and even, taking the part for the whole, “old goat’s rump.” But she remained completely innocent. The purity of her soul was unchangeable.

“I am fortunate,” said the holy Bishop Nicolas, “in that I rescued these children from the salting-tub, to make them good Christians. They will become faithful servants of God, and their merits will be accounted to me.”

Now, by the third year after their resurrection, when they were already tall and well-made, on a day of spring, as they were all playing in the field beside the river, Maxime in a moment of facetiousness and natural high spirits, threw the Deacon Modernus into the water. Hanging on to the branch of a willow-tree, Modernus called for help. Robin ran up, made as though to draw him out by the hand, took off his ring, and fled.

Meanwhile, Sulpice, sitting motionless on the bank with his arms crossed, said:

“Modernus is making a bad end. I can see six devils, in the form of flittermice, ready to seize his soul as it comes out of his mouth.”

When this serious affair was reported to him by Madame Basine and Modernus, the holy Bishop was much afflicted and fell a-sighing.

“These children,” he said, “were reared in suffering, by unworthy parents. The excess of their misfortunes has caused the deformity of their characters. We must redress their wrongs by enduring patience, and persevering kindness.”

“Monseigneur,” answered Modernus, who was chattering with fever in his dressing-gown, and sneezing under his nightcap, for his bath had given him a cold, “it is possible that their wickedness is derived from the wickedness of their parents. But how do you explain, father, the fact that neglect has produced in each of them different and, so to speak, contrary vices, and that the desertion and destitution into which they were thrown before they were put in the salting-tub has made one avaricious, a second violent, and the third a visionary? And in your place, my Lord, I should feel most uneasy about the last.”

“Each of these children,” answered the Bishop, “has yielded in his weak spot. Ill-treatment has deformed their souls in those portions that offered the least resistance. Let us straighten them out with a thousand precautions, for fear of increasing the evil instead of diminishing it. Mildness, clemency, and forbearance are the only means which should ever be employed for the improvement of men, heretics of course excepted.”

“No doubt, Monseigneur, no doubt,” said Modernus, sneezing three times. “But you cannot have a good education without chastisement, nor discipline without discipline. I know what I am about. If you do not punish these three little ragamuffins, they will grow up worse than Herod. I assure you I am right.”

“Modernus could not be mistaken,” said Madame Basine.

The Bishop did not answer. With the widow and the Deacon, he paced the length of a hawthorn hedge, which breathed forth an agreeable fragrance of honey and bitter almonds. In a slight hollow, where the soil received the water from a neighbouring spring, he stopped before a bush, whose twisted, close-packed branches were covered with gleaming, clean-cut leaves and white clusters of flowers.

“Look,” he said, “at this leafy, fragrant shrub, this lovely may, this noble thorn-bush, so strong and vigorous. Observe that it is in more abundant leaf, and more glorious with bloom, than all the other thorns in the hedge. But notice also that the pale bark of its branches bears only a few thorns, which are weak and soft and blunt. What is the reason of this? It is because, growing in a rich, moist soil, quiet and secure in the wealth which sustains its life, it has utilized all the juices of the earth to augment its power and its glory, and being too strong to dream of arming against its feeble enemies, it has devoted itself entirely to the joys of its magnificent and delicious fertility. Now come a few steps up this rising path, and look at this other hawthorn, which having with difficulty issued from a dry, stony soil, languishes, deficient in both wood and leaves, and has had no other thought during its hard life than to defend itself against the innumerable enemies that threaten the weal. It is nothing but a bundle of thorns. It has employed the little sap which it received in fashioning innumerable spears, broad at the base, hard and sharp, which but ill restore confidence to its apprehensive weakness. It has nothing left over for fruitful and fragrant blossom. My friends, we are like the hawthorns. The care given to our childhood makes us better. Too harsh an up bringing hardens us.”

CHAPTER III

WHEN Maxime was approaching his seventeenth year he filled the holy Bishop Nicolas with grief and the diocese with scandal by forming and training a company of rogues of his own age, with a view to kidnapping the girls of a village called Grosses-Nates, situated at a distance of four leagues from Trinqueballe. The expedition was marvellously successful. The ravishers entered the village by night, clasping to their bosoms the dishevelled virgins, who vainly uplifted to heaven their burning eyes and imploring hands. But when the fathers, brothers, and betrothed of these ravished maidens sought them out, they refused to return to the place of their birth, alleging that they felt too deeply shamed, and preferred to hide their dishonour in *the* arms that had caused it. Maxime, who, for his share, had taken the three most beautiful, was living in their company in a little manor dependent upon the episcopal See. In the absence of their ravisher, the Deacon Modernus arrived, by order of the Bishop, to knock at their door, answering that he came to set them free. They refused to open; and when he represented to them the abomination of their lives they dropped upon his head a crockful of dishwater, with the crock, by which his skull was fractured.

Armed with a gentle severity, the holy Bishop reproached Maxime for this violence and disorder:

“Alas,” he said, “did I draw you from out of the salting-box to the ruin of the virgins of Vervignole?”

And he reproached him with the magnitude of his offence. But Maxime shrugged his shoulders, and turned his back, without making any reply.

At that moment King Berlu, in the fourteenth year of his reign, was assembling a powerful army to fight the Mambournians, the determined enemies of his kingdom, who, having entered Vervignole, were ravaging and depopulating the richest provinces of that great country.

Maxime left Trinqueballe without saying goodbye to a soul. When he was some leagues distant from the town, seeing in a field a mare of moderate quality, except that she was blind in one eye and lame, he jumped on her back and galloped off. On the following morning, accidentally meeting a farm lad who was taking a great plough horse to water, he immediately dismounted, bestrode the great horse, and ordered the lad to mount the blind mare, and to follow him, saying that he would take him for his squire should he prove satisfactory. Thus equipped Maxime presented himself to King Berlu, who accepted his services. He became in a very short time one of Vervignole’s greatest captains.

Meanwhile, Sulpice was giving the holy Bishop cause for perhaps more cruel, and certainly more momentous, uneasiness; for if Maxime sinned grievously, he sinned without malice, and offending God without thought, and, so to speak, unknowingly. But Sulpice set himself to do evil with a greater and more unusual malignity. Being destined from early youth for the Church he assiduously studied letters, both sacred and profane; but his soul was a corrupted vessel, wherein Truth was turned into Error. He sinned in spirit; he erred in matters of faith with surprising precocity. At an age when people have as yet no ideas at all, he overflowed with wrong ones. A thought occurred to him which was doubtless suggested by the devil. In a field belonging to the Bishop he gathered a multitude of boys and girls of his own age and, climbing into a tree, he exhorted them to leave their fathers and mothers to follow Jesus Christ, and to go in parties through the country-side, burning priories and presbyteries in order to lead the Church back into evangelical poverty. This youthful mob, led away by emotion, followed the sinner along the roads of Vervignole, singing canticles, burning barns, pillaging chapels, and devastating the ecclesiastical lands. Many of these crazy creatures perished of fatigue, hunger, and cold, or were killed by villagers. The episcopal palace re-echoed with the complaints of the priesthood and the lamentations of mothers.

The pious Bishop Nicolas sent for the originator of these disorders. With extreme mildness, and infinite sadness, he reproached him for having misused the Word for the misleading of souls, and reminded him that God had not picked him out of the salting-tub in order that he should attack the property of our Holy Mother, the Church.

“Consider, my son,” he said, “the greatness of your offence. You appear before your pastor charged with turmoil, sedition, and murder.”

But young Sulpice, maintaining a horrid calm, answered with a voice full of assurance, that he had not sinned, neither had he offended God; but, on the contrary, he had acted in accordance with the bidding of Heaven, for the good of the Church. And he professed before the dismayed Bishop the false doctrines of the Manicheans, the Arians, the Nestorians, the Sabellians, the Vaudois, the Albigenses, and the Bégards. So eager was he to embrace these monstrous errors that he did not see how they contradicted one another, and were mutually devoured in the bosom that cherished and revived them.

The pious Bishop endeavoured to lead Sulpice back into the right path, but he failed to overcome the unhappy lad’s obstinacy.

Having dismissed him, he knelt and prayed.

“I thank thee, O Lord, for having sent me this young man, as a whetstone on which to sharpen my patience and my charity.”

While two of the children he had rescued from the salting-tub were causing him so much pain, St. Nicolas was obtaining some consolation from the third. Robin showed himself neither violent in his actions nor arrogant in his thoughts. He had not the sturdy, ruddy appearance of Maxime; nor the grave, audacious manner of Sulpice. Small, thin, yellow, lined, and shrunken, of humble, obsequious and reverential bearing, he devoted himself to assisting the Bishop and clergy, helping the clerks to keep the accounts of the episcopal revenues, and making complicated calculations with the assistance of balls threaded on rods; he even multiplied and divided numbers in his head, without the use of slate or pencil, with a rapidity and accuracy that would have been admired even in a past master of money and finance. For him it was a pleasure to keep the books of the Deacon Modernus, who, growing old, used to muddle the figures and fall asleep at his desk. To oblige the Bishop, and obtain money for him, he spared neither trouble nor fatigue. From the Lombards, he learnt how to calculate both the simple and compound interest on a sum of money for a day, week, month, or year; he feared not to visit the filthy Jews in the black lanes of the Ghetto, in order to learn, by mingling with them, the standard of metals, the price of precious stones, and the art of clipping coin. Ultimately, with a little store which he had accumulated by marvellous industry in Vervignole, in Mondousiana, and even in Mambournia, he attended the fairs, tournaments, pardons, and jubilees, to which people of all conditions flocked from all parts of Christendom: peasants, burghers, clerics, and *seigneurs*; there he changed their money, and every time he returned a little richer than he had departed. Robin did not spend the money he had made, but brought it to the Bishop.

St. Nicolas was extremely hospitable, and very liberal in almsgiving. He spent all his property and that of the Church in making gifts to pilgrims and assisting the unfortunate. Thus he continually found himself short of money; and he was much obliged to Robin for the skill and energy with which the young treasurer obtained the sums which he required. The condition of penury in which the holy Bishop had placed himself owing to his magnificence and liberality was greatly aggravated by the condition of the times. The war which was ravaging Vervignole also ruined the Church in Trinqueballe. The soldiery who were fighting in the country-side about the town pillaged the farms, levied contributions on the peasantry, drove out the religious orders, and burned the castles and abbeys.

The clergy and the faithful could no longer contribute to the expenses of their creed, and thousands of peasants, fleeing from the free-booters came daily to beg their bread at the door of the episcopal palace. For their sakes, the good St. Nicolas felt the poverty which he had never felt for his own. Fortunately, Robin

was always ready to lend him money, which the holy pontiff naturally agreed to return in more prosperous times.

Alas, the war was now raging throughout the kingdom, from north to south, from east to west, attended by its two inseparable companions, famine and pestilence. The peasantry turned robbers, and the monks followed the armies. The inhabitants of Trinqueballe, having neither wood for firing, nor bread to eat, died like flies at the approach of winter. Wolves entered the outlying parts of the town, devouring little children. At this sad juncture, Robin came to inform the Bishop that not only was he unable to provide any further sum of money, however small, but that being unable to obtain anything from his debtors, and being pressed by his creditors, he had been compelled to hand over all his assets to the Jews.

He brought this distressing news to his benefactor with the obsequious politeness which was usual to him; but he appeared a great deal less afflicted than he might have been in this greivous extremity. As a matter of fact, he was hard put to it to conceal, under a long face, his joyous feelings and his lively satisfaction. The parchment of his dry, humble, yellow eyelids ill concealed the light of joy which shone from his sharp eyes.

Sadly stricken, St. Nicolas remained quiet and serene under the blow.

“God will soon re-establish our declining affairs,” he said. “He will not permit the house which He has built to be overthrown.”

“That is true,” said Modernus, “but you may be sure that Robin, whom you drew out of the salting-tub, has made an arrangement with the Lombards of Pont-Vieux and the Jews of the Ghetto to despoil you, and that he is retaining the lion’s share of the plunder.”

Modernus spoke the truth. Robin had lost no money. He was richer than ever, and had just been appointed treasurer to the King.

CHAPTER IV

AT this time Mirande was nearing the close of her seventeenth year. She was beautiful, and well grown. An air of purity, innocence, and artlessness hung round her like a veil. The length of her eyelashes, which barred her blue eyes, and the childlike smallness of her mouth, gave the impression that evil could never find means to enter into her. Her ears were so tiny, so fine, so finished and so delicate, that the least modest of men could never have dared to breathe into them any but the most innocent of speeches. In the whole of Ver-vigbole no virgin inspired so much respect, and none had greater need to do so, for she was marvellously simple, credulous, and defenceless.

The pious Bishop Nicolas, her uncle, cherished her more dearly every day, and was more deeply attached to her than one should be to any of God's creatures. He loved her, undoubtedly, in God; but he also loved her for herself; he took great delight in her, and he loved to love her; it was his only weakness. The Saints themselves are not always able to cut through all the ties of the flesh.

St. Nicolas loved his niece, with a pure love, but not without gratification of the senses. On the day following that on which he had learned of Robin's bankruptcy, he went to see Mirande in order to hold pious converse with her, as was his duty, for he stood in the place of a father to her, and had taken charge of her education.

She lived in the upper town, near the Cathedral in a house called "The House of the Musicians," because there were to be seen on its front men and animals playing on divers instruments. There were, notably, an ass playing a flute, and a philosopher, recognizable by his long beard and ink-horn, clashing cymbals. Every one explained these figures according to his fancy. It was the finest dwelling-house in the town.

The Bishop found his niece crouching on the floor, with dishevelled hair, her eyes glittering with tears, by the side of an empty, open coffer, in a room full of confusion.

He inquired of her the reason of this affliction, and of the disorder that prevailed around her. Turning upon him her despairing gaze, she told him with a thousand sighs that Robin, the Robin who had escaped from the salting-tub, the darling Robin, having many a time told her that if she ever wanted a dress, an ornament or a jewel, he would gladly lend her the money wherewith to buy it, she had frequently had recourse to his kindness, which appeared inexhaustible; but that very morning a Jew called Seligmann had come to her with four

sheriff's officers, had presented the notes, signed by herself, which she had given Robin, and as she had not the money to pay them he had taken away all the clothes, head-dresses and jewels which she possessed.

"He has taken," she sobbed, "my bodices and petticoats of velvet, brocade and lace; my diamonds, my emeralds, my sapphires, my jacinths, my amethysts, my rubies, my garnets, and my turquoises; he has taken my great diamond cross, with angels' heads in enamel, my large necklace, consisting of two table diamonds, three cabochons, and six knots each of four pearls; he has taken my great collar of thirteen table diamonds, and twenty hanging pearls!"

And without saying more she wept bitterly into her handkerchief.

"My daughter," answered the saintly Bishop, "a Christian virgin is sufficiently adorned when she wears modesty for a necklace, and chastity for a girdle. None the less, as the scion of a most noble and most illustrious family it was right that you should wear diamonds and pearls. Your jewels were the treasury of the poor, and I deplore the fact that they should have been snatched from you."

He assured her that she would certainly recover them, either in this world or the next; he said everything possible to assuage her regret, and soothe her sorrow, and he comforted her. For she had a tender soul, which longed for consolation. But he himself left her full of affliction.

On the following day, as he was about to celebrate Mass in the cathedral, the holy Bishop saw coming towards him, in the sacristy, the three Jews, Seligmann, Issachar, and Meyer, who, wearing green hats and fillets upon their shoulders, very humbly presented him the notes which Robin had made over to them. As the venerable pontiff could not pay diem, they called up twenty porters, with baskets, sacks, picklocks, carts, cords, and ladders, and commenced to pick the locks of the wardrobes, coffers, and tabernacles. The holy man cast on them a look which would have destroyed three Christians. He threatened them with the penalties of sacrilege, both in this world and the next, he pointed out that their mere presence in the house of the God, whom they had crucified, called down the fire of heaven upon their heads. They listened with the calm of people for whom anathema, reprobation, malediction, and execration were their daily bread. He then prayed to them, besought them, and promised to pay as soon as he could, twofold, threefold, tenfold, a hundredfold, the debt which they had acquired. They excused themselves politely for being unable to postpone the little transaction. The Bishop threatened to sound the tocsin, to rouse against them the people who would kill them like dogs for profaning, violating, and stealing the miraculous images and holy relics. They smilingly pointed to the sheriff's officers, who were guarding them. They were protected by King Berln,

for they lent him money. At this sight the holy Bishop, recognizing that resistance would be rebellion, and remembering Him who replaced the ear of Malchus, remained inert and speechless, and bitter tears dropped from his eyes. Seligmann, Issachar, and Meyer took away the golden shrines enriched with precious stones, enamels and cabochons, the reliquaries in the form of chalices, lanterns, naves, and towers, the portable altars of alabaster encased in gold and silver, the coffers enamelled by the skilful craftsmen of Limoges and the Rhine, the altar-crosses, the Gospels bound in carved ivory and antique cameos, the desks ornamented with festoons of trailing vines, the consular registers, the pyxes, the candelabra and candlesticks, the lamp, of which they blew out the sacred flame, and spilt the blessed oil on the tiles, the chandeliers like enormous crowns, the duplets with beads of pearl and amber, the eucharistie doves, the ciboria, the chalices, the patens, the kisses of peace, incense boxes and flagons, the innumerable ex-votos — hands, arms, legs, eyes, mouths, and hearts, all of silver — the nose of King Sidoc, the breast of Queen Blandine, and the head in solid gold of Saint Cromadaire, the first apostle of Vervignole, and the blessed patron of Trinquéballe. They even carried off the miraculous image of St. Gibbosine, whom the people of Vervignole had never invoked in vain in time of pestilence, famine, or war. This very ancient and venerable image was made of leaves of beaten gold nailed upon a core of cedar-wood, and was covered with precious stones of the bigness of ducks' eggs, which emitted fiery rays of red, blue, yellow and violet and white. For the past three hundred years her enamelled eyes, wide open in her golden face, had compelled such respect from the inhabitants of Trinquéballe that they saw her in their dreams, splendid and terrible, threatening them with the direst penalties if they failed to supply her with sufficient quantities of virgin-wax and crown-pieces. St. Gibbosine groaned, trembled, and tottered on her pedestal, and allowed herself to be carried away without resistance, out of the basilica to which, from time immemorial, she had drawn innumerable pilgrims.

After the departure of these sacrilegious thieves the holy Bishop Nicolas ascended the steps of the despoiled altar, and consecrated the blood of our Lord in an old silver chalice, of German origin, thin and deeply dented. He prayed for the afflicted, and in particular for Robin, whom, by the will of God, he had rescued from the salting-box.

CHAPTER V

SHORTLY after this, King Berlu defeated the Mambournians in a great battle. He was, at first, unaware of the fact, for armed conflicts always present a great confusion, and during the last two hundred years the Vervignolians had lost the habit of victory. But the precipitate and disordered flight of the Mambournians informed him of his advantage. Instead of fighting a rear-guard action he pursued the enemy, and regained half his kingdom. The victorious army entered the city of Trinquéballe, all beflagged and beflowered in its honour, and in that illustrious capital of Vervignole it committed a great number of rapes, thefts, murders, and other cruelties, burnt several houses, sacked the churches, and took from the cathedral all that the Jews had left there, which, truth to tell, was not much.

Maxime, who having become a knight and commander of eighty lances, had largely contributed to the victory, was one of the first to enter the city, and repaired straightway to the House of the Musicians, where dwelt the beautiful Mirande, whom he had not seen since his departure for the war. He found her in her bower, plying her distaff, and fell upon her with such impetuosity that the young lady lost her innocence without, so to speak, realizing that she had done so. And when, having recovered from her surprise, she exclaimed: "Is it you, Seigneur Maxime? What are you doing here?" and was preparing as in duty bound to resist her aggressor, he was quietly walking down the street, readjusting his armour and ogling the girls.

Possibly she would have entirely overlooked this offence, had it not been that some time later she found that she was about to become a mother. Captain Maxime was then fighting in Mambournia. All the town knew her shame: she confided it to the great St. Nicolas, who, on learning this astonishing news, lifted his eyes to heaven, and said:

"Lord, did you rescue this man from the salting-tub only as a ravening wolf to devour my sheep? Your wisdom is adorable; but your ways are dark, and your designs mysterious."

And in that same year, on the Sunday of Mid-Lent, Sulpice threw himself at the feet of the holy Bishop, saying:

"From my earliest youth, my keenest wish has been to consecrate myself to the Lord. Allow me, father, to embrace the monastic state, and to make my profession in the monastery of the mendicant friars of Trinquéballe."

“My son,” answered the good St. Nikolas, “there is no worthier condition than that of the monk. Happy is he who in the shade of the cloister takes shelter from the tempests of the age. But of what avail to flee the storm if the storm is within oneself? Of what avail to affect an outward show of humility, if one’s bosom contains a heart full of pride? What shall you profit by donning the livery of obedience if your soul be in revolt? I have seen you, my son, fall into more errors than Sabellius, Alius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Manes, Pelagius, and Pachosius combined, and revive, before your twentieth year, twelve centuries of peculiar opinions. It is true that you have not been very obstinate in any of them, but your successive recantations appear to betray less submission to our Holy Mother the Church than eagerness to rush from one error to another, to leap from Manicheeism to Sabellianism, and from the crime of the Albigenses to the ignominies of the Vaudois.”

Sulpice listened to this discourse with a contrite heart, a simplicity of mind and submissiveness, that drew tears from the great St. Nicolas.

“I deplore, repudiate, condemn, reprove, detest, execrate, and abominate my errors, past, present, and future,” he said. “I submit myself to the Church fully and entirely, totally and generally, purely and simply; and I have no belief but her belief, no faith but her faith, no knowledge but her knowledge: I neither see, hear, nor feel, save only through her. She might tell me that the fly which has but now settled on the nose of the Deacon Modernus was a camel, and I should incontinently, without dispute, contest, murmur, resistance, hesitation or doubt, believe, declare, proclaim, and confess, under torture and unto death, that it was a camel that settled on the nose of the Deacon Modernus. For the Church is the Fountain of Truth, and I am nought by myself but a vile receptacle of Error.”

“Take care, my father,” said Modernus. “Sulpice is capable of overdoing submission to the Church even to the point of Heresy. Do you not see that he submits with frenzy, in transports and swooning? Is wallowing in submission a good way of submitting? He is annihilating himself; he is committing suicide.”

But the Bishop reprimanded his deacon for holding such ideas, which were contrary to charity, and sent the postulant to the noviciate of the mendicant friars of Trinquetalle.

Alas, at the end of a year those priests, till then so quiet and humble, were torn by frightful schisms, plunged into a thousand errors against the Catholic truth, their days filled with disorder, and their souls with sedition! Sulpice inspired the brothers with this poison. He sustained against his superiors that there was no longer any true Pope, since miracles no longer accompanied the elections of the Sovereign Pontiffs; nor, rightly speaking, any Church, since Christians had ceased to live the life of the apostles and the first of the faithful;

that there was no purgatory; that it was not necessary to confess to a priest if one confessed to God; that men do wrong in making use of moneys of gold and silver, for they should share in common the fruits of the earth. These abominable maxims, which he forcibly sustained, were combated by some, and adopted by others, causing horrible scandals. A little later Sulpice taught the doctrine of perfect purity, which nothing can soil, and the good brothers' monastery became like a cage of monkeys. This pestilence did not remain confined within the walls of a monastery. Sulpice went preaching through the city; his eloquence, the internal fire by which he was consumed, the simplicity of his life, and his unshakable courage touched all hearts.

On hearing the voice of the reformer, the ancient city, evangelized by St. Cromadaire, and enlightened by St. Gibbosine, fell into disorder and dissolution; every sort of extravagance and impiety was committed there, by day and by night. In vain did the great St. Nicolas warn his flock by exhortations, threats, and fulminations. The evil increased unchecked, and it was sad to see the contagion spreading itself among the well-to-do townsfolk, the lords, and the clergy, as much as and more than among the poor artisans and the small tradesfolk.

One day when the man of God was lamenting the deplorable state of the church of Vervignole in the cloister of the cathedral, his meditations were disturbed by strange shrieks, and he saw a woman, stark naked, walking on all fours, with a peacock's feather for a tail. As she came nearer, she barked, sniffed, and licked the ground. Her fair head was covered with mud, and her whole body was a mass of filth. In this unhappy creature the holy Bishop Nicolas recognized his niece Mirande.

"What do you there, my daughter?" he cried. "Why are you naked, and wherefore do you walk on your hands and knees? Have you no shame?"

"No, uncle, I am not ashamed," sweetly replied Mirande. "I should, on the contrary, be ashamed of any other gesture, or method of progression. If one wishes to please God, it is thus that one should behave. The holy Brother Sulpice taught me to conduct myself thus, in order to resemble the beasts, who are nearer to God than is Man, in that they have not sinned. So long as I am in the state in which you see me, there will be no danger of my sinning. I have come, uncle, to beg you in all love and charity to do likewise; for unless you do you cannot be saved. Remove, I beg, your clothes, and adopt the posture of the animals, in whom God joyfully sees His image which has not been distorted by sin. I give you this advice by order of the holy brother Sulpice, and consequently by order of God Himself, for the holy brother is in the Lord's secrets. Strip yourself

naked, uncle, and come with me, so that we may show ourselves to the people for their edification.”

“Can I believe my eyes and ears?” gasped the holy Bishop, whose voice was stifled by sobs. “I had a niece blooming in beauty, virtue, and piety; the three children whom I rescued from the salting-tub have reduced her to the miserable condition in which I now see her. The first has despoiled her of all her property, an abundant source of alms, and the patrimony of the poor; the second has robbed her of her honour, and the third has turned her into a heretic.”

He threw himself on the flagstones, embracing his niece, begging her to renounce so evil a way of life, and adjuring her to reclothe herself, and walk on her feet like a human being, ransomed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But she replied only by sharp yelps and lamentable shrieks.

Before long the town of Trinqueballe was filled with naked men and women, walking on all fours and barking; they called themselves the Edenites, and their ambition was to lead back the world to the times of perfect innocence, before the unfortunate creation of Adam and Eve.

The Reverend Father Gilles Caquerole, a Dominican, inquisitor of the faith in the city, university, and ecclesiastical province of Trinqueballe, became uneasy concerning this novelty, and proceeded to look into it minutely. In the most urgent fashion, by letters under his seal, he invited the Bishop Nicolas, in co-operation with himself, to arrest, imprison, interrogate, and sentence these enemies of God, and especially their principal leaders, the Franciscan monk, Sulpice, and a dissolute woman named Mirande. The great St. Nicolas burned with an ardent zeal for the unity of the Church and the destruction of heresy, but he dearly loved his niece. He hid her in the episcopal palace, and refused to hand her over to the inquisitor Caquerole, who denounced him to the Pope as an abettor of disorder and the propagator of a new and very detestable heresy. The Pope enjoined Nicolas to no longer withhold the guilty one from her legitimate judges. Nicolas eluded the injunction, protested his obedience, and did not obey. The Pope fulminated against him in the Bull *Maleficus pastor*, in which the venerable pontiff was accused of being a disobedient member of the Church, a heretic, or one smelling of heresy, a keeper of concubines, a committer of incest, a corrupter of the people, an old woman and a meddling old fool, and was passionately admonished.

In this way the Bishop did himself a great deal of harm without any benefit to his beloved niece. King Berlu, having been threatened with excommunication if he did not lend his secular arm to the Church in pursuit of the Edenites, sent some men-at-arms to the episcopal palace of Trinqueballe.

They tore Mirande from her asylum: she was brought before the inquisitor Caquerole, thrown into a deep dungeon, and fed upon bread which the jailers' dogs had refused; but what afflicted her most was that she was forcibly compelled to don an old frock and a hood, and that she could no longer be certain of not sinning.

The monk Sulpice escaped the investigations of the Holy Office and succeeded in reaching Mambournia, and found an asylum in a monastery of that kingdom, where he established new sects even more pernicious than the previous one.

Nevertheless, heresy, fortified by persecution, and exulting in danger, now spread its ravages over the whole of Vervignole. All over the kingdom there were seen in the fields thousands of naked men and women, nibbling the grass, bleating, lowing, roaring, neighing, and contending at night with sheep, cattle, and horses for the use of stable and manger. The inquisitor informed the Holy Father of these horrible scandals, and warned him that so long as the Protector of the Edenites, the odious Nicolas, remained seated on the throne of St. Cromadaire, the evil could only continue to increase. Conformably with this advice the Pope hurled against the Bishop, like a thunderbolt, the Bull *Deterrima quondam*, by which he deprived him of all his ecclesiastical functions, and cut him off from the communion of the faithful.

CHAPTER VI

CRUSHED by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, steeped in bitterness, overwhelmed by affliction, the holy Nicolas stepped down without regret from his illustrious seat, and departed, no more to return thither, from the city of Trinquéballe, which for thirty years had witnessed his pontifical virtues and apostolic labours. There is in western Vervignole a lofty mountain, whose peaks are covered with perpetual snow; from its flanks there descend, in spring, the foaming sonorous cascades that fill the valley torrents with a water as blue as the sky. There, in a region where grow the larch, the arbutus, and the hazel, some hermits supported themselves on berries and milk. This mountain is called that of the Saviour. It was here that St. Nicolas resolved to take refuge, and, far from the world, to weep for his sins and those of man.

As he was climbing the mountain in search of some wild spot where he might establish his habitation, having emerged above the clouds which are almost always gathered about the flanks of the peak, he saw upon the threshold of a hut an old man sharing his bread with a tame hind. His hair fell over his forehead, and nothing could be perceived of his face but the tip of his nose and a long white beard.

The holy Nicolas greeted him with these words:

“Peace be with you, brother.”

“It delights to dwell upon this mountain,” answered the recluse.

“I also,” replied the holy Nicolas, “have come hither to end, in calm, days which have been disturbed by the tumult of the times and the malignity of men.”

As he was speaking in this wise, the hermit gazed at him attentively.

“Are you not,” he said at length, “the Bishop of Trinquéballe, that Nicolas whose work and virtues are extolled by men?”

When, by a sign, the holy pontiff admitted that he was that man, the hermit threw himself at his feet.

“Monseigneur, to you I owe the saving of my soul, if, as I hope, my soul is saved.”

Nicolas raised him with kindness, and asked him:

“My brother, how have I had the happiness to work for your salvation?”

“Twenty years ago,” replied the recluse, “when I was an innkeeper at the edge of a wood, on a deserted road, I saw one day, in a field, three little children gleaned. I lured them to my house, gave them wine to drink, cut their throats in their sleep, cut them up into small pieces, and salted them. On seeing them

emerge from the salting-tub I was frozen with terror; owing to your exhortations my heart melted; I experienced a salutary repentance, and, fleeing from men, I came to this mountain, where I consecrated my days to God. He bestowed His peace upon me.”

“What,” cried the holy Bishop, “you are that cruel Garum, guilty of so heinous a crime! I praise God that he has accorded you a peaceful heart, after the horrible murder of three children, whom you put in the salting-tub like pigs; but as for me, alas! for having drawn them out of it my life has been filled with tribulation, my soul steeped in bitterness, and my Bishopric laid wholly desolate. I have been deposed, excommunicated by the common Father of the Faithful. Why have I been so cruelly punished for what I did?”

“Let us worship God,” said Garum, “and let us not ask His motives.”

The great St. Nicolas, with his own hands, built a hut near that of Garum, and there, in prayer and penitence, he ended his days.

**THE STORY OF THE DUCHESS OF CICOGNE
AND OF MONSIEUR DE BOULINGRIN**

CHAPTER I

THE story of the Sleeping Beauty is well known; we have excellent accounts of it, both in prose and in verse. I shall not undertake to relate-it again; but, having become acquainted with several memoirs of the time which have remained unpublished, I discovered some anecdotes relating to King Cloche and Queen Satine, whose daughter it was that slept a hundred years, and also to several members of the Court who shared the Princess's sleep. I propose to communicate to the public such portions of these revelations as have seemed to me most interesting.

After several years of marriage, Queen Satine gave the King, her husband, a daughter who received the names of Paule-Marie-Aurore. The baptismal festivities were planned by the Duc des Hoisons, grand master of the ceremonies, in accordance with a formulary dating from the Emperor Honorius, which was so mildewed and so nibbled by rats that it was impossible to decipher any of it.

There were still fairies in those days, and those who had titles used to go to Court. Seven of them were invited to be godmothers, Queen Titania, Queen Mab, the wise Vivien, trained by Merlin in the arts of enchantment, Melusina, whose history was written by Jean d'Arras, and who became a serpent every Saturday (but the baptism was on a Sunday), Urgèle, White Anna of Brittany, and Mourgue who led Ogier the Dane into the country of Avalon.

They appeared at the castle in robes of the colour of time, of the sun, of the moon, and of the nymphs, all glittering with diamonds and pearls. As all were taking their places at table an old fairy called Alcuine, who had not been invited, was seen to enter.

"Pray do not be annoyed, madame," said the King, "that you were not of those invited to this festivity; it was believed that you were either dead or enchanted."

Since the fairies grew old, there is no doubt that they used to die. They all died in time, and everybody knows that Melusina became a kitchen wench in Hell. By means of enchantment they could be imprisoned in a magic circle, a tree, a bush, or a stone, or changed into a statue, a hind, a dove, a footstool, a ring, or a slipper. But as a fact it was not because they thought her dead or enchanted that they had not invited the fairy Alcuine; it was because her presence at the banquet had been regarded as contrary to etiquette. Madame de Maintenon was able to state without the least exaggeration that "there are no

austerities in the convents like those to which Court etiquette subjects the great.” In accordance with his sovereign’s royal wish the Duc des Hoisons had not invited the fairy Alcuine, because she had one quartering of nobility too few to be admitted to Court. When the Ministers of State represented that it was of the utmost importance to humour this powerful and vindictive fairy, of whom they would make a dangerous enemy if they excluded her from the festivities, the King replied in peremptory tones that she could not be invited, as she was not qualified by birth.

This unhappy monarch, even more than his predecessors, was a slave to etiquette. His obstinacy in subordinating the greatest interests and most urgent duties to the smallest exigencies of an obsolete ceremonial, had more than once caused serious loss to the monarchy, and had involved the realm in formidable perils. Of all these perils and losses, those to which Cloche had exposed his house by refusing to stretch a point of etiquette in favour of a fairy, without birth, yet formidable and illustrious, were by no means the hardest to foresee, nor was it least urgent to avert them.

The aged Alcuine, enraged by the contempt to which she had been subjected, bestowed upon the Princess Aurore a disastrous gift. At fifteen years of age, beautiful as the day, this royal child was to die of a fatal wound, caused by a spindle, an innocent weapon in the hands of mortal women, but a terrible one when the three spinstress Sisters twist and coil thereon the thread of our destinies and the strings of our hearts.

The seven godmothers could modify, but could not annul Alcuine’s decree, and thus the fate of the Princess was determined. “Aurore will prick her hand with a spindle; she will not die of it, but will fall into a sleep of a hundred years, from which the son of a king will come to arouse her.”

CHAPTER II

ANXIOUSLY the King and Queen consulted, in respect of the decree pronounced upon the Princess in her cradle, all persons of learning and judgment, notably Monsieur Gerberoy, perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, and Dr. Gastinel, the Queen's accoucheur. "Monsieur Gerberoy," Satine inquired, "can one really sleep a hundred years?" "Madame," answered the Academician, "we have examples of sleep, more or less prolonged, some of which I can relate to Your Majesty. Epimenides of Cnossos was born of the loves of a mortal and a nymph. While yet a child he was sent by Dosiades, his father, to watch the flocks in the mountains. When the warmth of midday enveloped the earth, he laid himself down in a cool, dark cave, and there he fell into a slumber which lasted for fifty-seven years. He studied the virtues of the plants, and died, according to some, at the age of a hundred and fifty-four years; according to others at the age of two hundred and ninety-eight.

"The story of the seven sleepers of Ephesus is related by Theodore and Rufinus, in a manuscript sealed with two silver seals. Briefly expounded, these are the principal facts. In the year 25 of our Lord, seven of the officers of the Emperor Decius, who had embraced the Christian religion, distributed their goods to the poor, retired to Mount Celion, and there all seven fell asleep in a cave. During the reign of Theodore the Bishop of Ephesus found them there, blooming like roses. They had slept for one hundred and forty-four years.

"Frederick Barbarossa is still asleep. In the crypt beneath a ruined castle, in the midst of a dense forest, he is seated before a table round which his beard has twisted seven times. He will awake to drive away the crows which croak around the mountain.

"These, madame, are the greatest sleepers of whom History has kept a record."

"They are all exceptions," answered the Queen. "You, Monsieur Gastinel, who practise medicine, have you ever seen people sleep a hundred years?"

"No, madame," replied the accoucheur, "I have not exactly seen any such, nor do I ever expect to do so; but I have seen some curious cases of lethargy, which, if you desire, I will bring to Your Majesty's notice.

"Ten years ago a demoiselle Jeanne Caillou, being admitted to the Hôtel-Dieu, there slept for six consecutive years. I myself observed the girl Léonide Montauciel, who fell asleep on Easter Day in the year '61, and did not awake until Easter Day of the following year."

“Monsieur Gastinel,” demanded the King, “can the point of a spindle cause a wound which will send one to sleep for a hundred years?”

“Sire, it is not probable,” answered Monsieur Gastinel, “but in the domain of pathology, we can never say with certainty, ‘This will or will not happen.’”

“One might mention Brunhild,” said Monsieur Gerberoy, “who was pricked by a thorn, fell asleep, and was awakened by Sigurd.”

“There was also Guenillon,” said the Duchess of Cicogne, first lady-in-waiting to the Queen. And she hummed: She was sent to the wood

To gather some nuts,
The bush was too high,
The maid was too small.

The bush was too high,
The maid was too small,
She pricked her poor hand
With a very sharp thorn.

She pricked her poor hand
With a very sharp thorn,
From the pain in her finger The maid fell asleep.

“What are you thinking of, Cicogne?” said the Queen. “You are singing.”

“Your Majesty will forgive me,” replied the Duchess. “It was to ward off the bad luck.”

The King issued an edict, whereby all persons were forbidden under pain of death to spin with spindles, or even to have spindles in their possession. All obeyed. They still used to say in the country districts: “The spindles must follow the mattock,” but it was only by force of habit. The spindles had disappeared.

CHAPTER III

MONSIEUR DE LA ROCHECOUPÉE, the Prime Minister who, under the feeble King Cloche, governed the kingdom, respected popular beliefs, as all great statesmen respect them. Caesar was Pontifex Maximus, and Napoleon had himself crowned by the Pope. Monsieur de La Rochecoupée admitted the power of the fairies. He was by no means sceptical, by no means incredulous. He did not suggest that the prediction of the seven godmothers was false. But, being helpless, he did not allow it to disturb him. His temperament was such that he did not worry about evils which he was impotent to remedy. In any case, so far as could be judged, the occurrence foretold was not imminent. Monsieur de La Rochecoupée viewed events as a statesman, and statesmen never look beyond the present moment. I am speaking of the shrewdest and most far-sighted. After all, supposing one day the King's daughter did fall asleep for a hundred years, it was, in his eyes, purely a family matter, seeing that women were excluded from the throne by the Salic Law.

He had, as he said, plenty of other fish to fry. Bankruptcy, hideous bankruptcy was ever present, threatening to consume the wealth and the honour of the nation. Famine was raging in the kingdom, and millions of unfortunate wretches were eating plaster instead of bread. That year the opera ball was more brilliant and the masques finer than ever.

The peasantry, artisans, and shopkeepers, and the girls of the theatre, vied with one another in grieving over the fatal curse inflicted by Alcuine upon the innocent Princess. The lords of the Court, on the contrary, and the princes of the blood royal, appeared very indifferent to it. And there were on all hands men of business and students of science who did not believe in the award of the fairies, for the very good reason that they did not believe in fairies.

Such a one was Monsieur Boulingrin, Secretary of State for the Treasury. Those who ask how it was possible that he should not believe in them since he had seen them are unaware of the lengths to which scepticism can go in an argumentative mind. Nourished on Lucretius, imbued with the doctrines of Epicurus and Gassendi, he often provoked Monsieur de La Rochecoupée by the display of a cold disbelief in fairies.

The Prime Minister would say to him: "If not for your own sake, be a believer for that of the public. Seriously, my dear Boulingrin, that there are moments when I wonder which of us two is the more credulous in respect of fairies. I never think of them, and you are always talking of them."

Monsieur de Boulingrin dearly loved the Duchess of Cicogne, wife of the ambassador to Vienna, first lady-in-waiting to the Queen, who belonged to the highest aristocracy of the realm; a witty woman, somewhat lean, and a trifle close, who was losing her income, her estates, and her very chemise at faro. She showed much kindness to Monsieur de Boulingrin, lending herself to an intercourse for which she had no temperamental inclination, but which she thought suitable to her rank, and useful to her interests. Their intrigue was conducted with an art which revealed their good taste, and the elegance of the prevailing morality; the connection was openly avowed, and thereby stripped of all base hypocrisy; but it was at the same time so reserved in appearance that even the severest critics saw no cause for censure in it.

During the time which the Duchess yearly spent on her estate, Monsieur de Boulingrin used to stay in an old pigeon-house, separated from his friend's château by a sunken road, which skirted a marsh, where by night the frogs among the reeds tuned their diligent voices.

Now, one evening when the last rays of the setting sun were dying the stagnant water with the hue of blood, the Secretary of State for the Treasury saw at the cross-roads three young fairies who were dancing in a circle and singing:

“Trois filles dedans un pré

Mon coeur vole

Mon coeur vole

Mon coeur vole à votre gré.”

They enclosed him within their circle, and their light and airy forms sped swiftly about him. Their faces, in the twilight, were dim and transparent; their tresses shone like the will-o'-the-wisp. They repeated:

“Trois filles dedans un pré!” until, dazed and ready to fall, he begged for mercy.

Then said the most beautiful, opening the circle:

“Sisters, give leave to Monsieur de Boulingrin to pass, that he may go to the castle, and kiss his ladylove.”

He went on without having recognized the fairies, the mistresses of men's destinies, and a little farther on he met three old beggar women, who were walking bowed low over their sticks; their faces were like three apples roasted in the cinders. From their rags protruded bones which had more dirt than flesh upon them. Their naked feet ended in fleshless toes of immoderate length, like the bones of an ox-tail.

As soon as they saw him approaching they smiled upon him and threw him kisses; they stopped him on his way, calling him their darling, their love, their pet, and covered him with caresses which he was powerless to evade, for the

moment he made a movement to escape, they dug into his flesh the sharp claws at the tips of their fingers.

“Isn’t he handsome? Isn’t he lovely?” they sighed.

For some time they raved on, begging him to love them. Then, seeing they could not rouse his senses, which were frozen with horror, they covered him with abuse, hammered him with their staves, threw him on the ground and trod him underfoot. Then, when he was crushed, broken, aching, and crippled in every limb, the youngest, who was at least eighty years of age, squatted upon him and treated him in a manner too infamous to describe. He was almost suffocated; immediately afterwards the other two, taking the place of the first, treated the unfortunate gentleman in the same way.

Finally all three made off, saluting him with: “Good night, Endymion!” “To our next meeting, Adonis!” “Good-bye, beautiful Narcissus!” and left him swooning.

When he came back to his senses, a toad near him was whistling deliciously like a flute, and a cloud of mosquitoes were dancing before the moon. He rose with great difficulty and limpingly pursued his journey.

Once again Monsieur de Boulingrin had failed to recognize the fairies, mistresses of the destinies of men.

The Duchess of Cicogne awaited him impatiently.

“You come very late, my friend,” she said.

He answered, as he kissed her fingers, that it was very kind of her to reproach him. His excuse was that he had been somewhat unwell.

“Boulingrin,” she said, “sit down there.”

And she confided to him that she would be very happy to accept from the royal treasury a present of two thousand crowns, as a fitting compensation for the unkindness of fate, faro having for the last six months been terribly against her.

Informed that the matter was urgent, Boulingrin wrote immediately to Monsieur de La Rochecoupée to ask for the necessary sum of money.

“La Rochecoupée will be delighted to obtain it for you,” he said. “He is a helpful person and takes pleasure in serving his friends. I may add that in him one perceives greater talents than are commonly seen in the favourites of Princes. He has taste, and a head for business; but he is lacking in philosophy. He believes in fairies, relying on his senses — —”

“Boulingrin,” said the Duchess, “you stink like a tom-cat.”

CHAPTER IV

SEVENTEEN years, day by day, had elapsed since the fairies' decree. The Princess was as beautiful as a star. The King, Queen, and Court were in residence at the rural palace of Eaux-Perdues. Need I relate what happened then? It is well known how the Princess Aurore, wandering one day through the castle, came to the top of a keep, where, in a garret, she found a dear old woman, all alone, plying her distaff. She had never heard of the King's regulations, forbidding the use of spindles.

"What are you doing, my good woman?" asked the Princess.

"I am spinning, my dear child," replied the old woman, who did not recognize her.

"Ah, how pretty it looks," replied the Princess. "How do you do it? Give it to me, that I may see if I can do it as well."

No sooner had she picked up the spindle, than she pricked her hand with it, and fell swooning.{*} King Cloche, when he heard that the fairies' decree had been accomplished, ordered that the sleeping Princess should be placed in the Blue Chamber, on a bed of azure embroidered with silver. Shocked, and full of consternation, the courtiers made ready to weep, practised sighing, and assumed an expression of deep affliction. Intrigues were formed in every direction; it was reported that the King had discharged his Ministers. The blackest calumnies were hatched. It was said that the Duc de La Rochecoupée had concocted a draught to send the Princess to sleep, and that Monsieur de Boulingrin was his accomplice.

* Contes de Perrault, édition Aadré Lefevre, -108

The Duchess of Cicogne climbed the secret staircase to the chambers of her old friend, whom she found in his night-cap, smiling, for he was reading *La Fiancée du roi de Garbe* .

Cicogne told him the news, and how the Princess was lying on a blue bed in a state of lethargy.

The Secretary of State listened attentively.

"You do not believe, I hope, my dear friend, that the fairies have anything to do with it?" he said.

For he did not believe in fairies, although three of them, ancient and venerable, had overpowered him with their love and their staves, and had drenched him to the skin in a disgusting liquid, in order to prove their existence to him. The defect of the experimental method pursued by these ladies is that the

experiment was addressed to the senses, whose testimony one can always challenge.

"The fairies have had everything to do with it!" cried the Duchess. "The Princess's accident may have the most unfortunate results for you and for me. People will not fail to attribute it to the incapacity of the Ministers, and possibly to their malevolence. Can one tell how far calumny may reach? You are already accused of niggardliness. According to what is being said, you refused, on my advice, to pay for warders for the young and unfortunate Princess. Worse than that, there are rumours of black magic, of casting spells. The storm has got to be faced. Show yourself, or you are lost!"

"Calumny," said Boulingrin, "is the curse of this world. It has killed the greatest of men. Whoever honestly serves his King must make up his mind to pay tribute to that crawling, flying horror."

"Boulingrin," said Cicogne, "get dressed." And she snatched off his night-cap, and threw it down by the bed-side.

A few minutes later they were in the antechamber of the apartment in which Aurore was sleeping, and seating themselves on a bench they waited to be introduced.

Now at the news that the decree of the Fates had been accomplished, the fairy Vivien, one of the Princess's godmothers, repaired in great haste to Eaux-Perdues, and in order that when she awoke her god-daughter should have a Court she touched every one in the castle with her ring. "Governesses, maids of honour, women of the bedchamber, noblemen, officers, grooms of the chamber, cooks, scullions, messengers, guards, beadles, pages, and footmen; she also touched the horses in the stables, the grooms, the great mastiffs in the yard, and little Pouffe, the Princess's lap-dog, which lay near her upon her bed. The very spits in front of the fire, loaded with pheasants and partridges, went to sleep."{*}

* Contes de Perrault, édition Aadré Lefevre,

Meanwhile, Cicogne and Boulingrin waited side by side upon their bench.

"Boulingrin," whispered the Duchess in her old friend's ear, "does it not seem to you that there is something suspicious in this business? Don't you suspect an intrigue on the part of the King's brothers to get the poor man to abdicate? He is well known as a good father. They may well have wished to throw him into despair."

"It is possible," answered the Secretary of State. "In any case the fairies have nothing whatever to do with the matter. Only old countrywomen can still believe these cock-and-bull stories."

"Be quiet, Boulingrin," said the Duchess. "There is nothing so hateful as a sceptic. He is an impertinent person who laughs at our simplicity. I detest strong-

minded people; I believe what I ought to believe; but in this particular case, I suspect a dark intrigue.”

At the moment when Cicogne spoke these words, the fairy Vivien touched them both with her ring, and sent them to sleep like the rest.

CHAPTER V

IN a quarter of an hour there grew all round about the park such an immense quantity of trees, large and small, with thorns and briars interlaced,-that neither man nor beast could pass; so that only the tops of the castle towers could be seen, and these only from a long way off.{*} Once, twice, thrice, fifty, sixty, eighty, ninety, and a hundred times did Urania close the circle of Time: the Sleeping Beauty and her Court, with Boulingrin beside the Duchess on the bench in the antechamber, still slept on.

* Contes de Perrault, p-88.

Whether one regard Time as a mode of the unique substance, whether it be defined as one of the forms of the conscious ego, or an abstract phase of the immediate externality, or whether one regard it purely as a law, a relation resulting from the progression of Reality, we can affirm that one hundred years is a certain space of time.

CHAPTER VI

EVERY one knows the end of the enchantment, and how, after a hundred terrestrial cycles, a prince favoured by the fairies penetrated the enchanted wood, and reached the bed where slept the Princess. He was a little German princeling, with a pretty moustache, and rounded hips. As soon as she woke up, she fell, or rather rose so much in love, that she followed him to his little principality in such a hurry that she never said a word to the people of her household, who had slept with her for a hundred years.

Her first lady-in-waiting was quite touched thereby, and exclaimed with admiration: "I recognize the blood of my kings." Boulingrin woke up beside the Duchess de Cicogne at the same time as the Princess and all her household. As he rubbed his eyes, his mistress said: "Boulingrin, you have been asleep." "Not at all, dear lady, not at all." He spoke in good faith. Having slept without dreaming for a hundred years, he did not know that he had been asleep.

"I have been so little asleep," he said, "that I can repeat what you said a minute ago."

"Well, what did I say?"

"You said, 'I suspect a dark intrigue.'"

As soon as it awoke, the whole of the little Court was discharged; every one had to fend for himself as best he could.

Boulingrin and Cicogne hired from the castle steward an old seventeenth-century trap drawn by an animal which was already very aged before it went to sleep for a hundred years, and drove to the station of Eaux-Perdues, where they caught a train which, in two hours, deposited them in the capital of the country. Great was their surprise at all that they saw and heard. But by the end of a quarter of an hour they had exhausted their astonishment, and nothing surprised them any more. As for themselves, nobody took the slightest interest in them. Their story was perfectly incomprehensible, and awakened no curiosity, for our minds are not interested in anything that is too obvious, or too difficult to follow.

As one may well believe, Boulingrin had not the remotest idea what had happened to him. But when the Duchess said that it was not natural, he answered:

"Dear lady, allow me to observe that you have been badly trained in physics. Nothing exists which is not according to Nature."

There remained to them neither friends, relations, nor property. They could not identify the position of their house. With the little money they had they

bought a guitar, and sang in the streets. By this means they gained sufficient to support themselves. At night Cicogne staked at manille, in the inns, the coppers that had been thrown her during the day, while Boulingrin, with a bowl of warm wine in front of him, explained to the company that it was ridiculous to believe in fairies.

THE SHIRT

“It was only a young shepherd, listlessly reclining upon the grass of the meadow, and beguiling his solitude by the notes of a pipe. His clothes had been forcibly removed, but...” (*Grand Dictionnaire*, de Pierre Larousse, article “Chemise,” t. IV, p. 5, col. 4).

CHAPTER I. KING CHRISTOPHE, HIS GOVERNMENT, HIS HABITS AND HIS MALADY

CHRISTOPHE V was not a bad king.

He minutely observed the rules of Parliamentary government, and he never opposed the will of the Chambers. This submission did not cost him very much, for he had observed that while there are several means of attaining power, there is only one means of retaining it, and only one way of behaving when it is yours; that whatever were the origin, principles, ideas, and opinions of his ministers, they all governed in one and the same fashion; and that, despite certain purely formal divergencies, they repeated one another's sayings with reassuring exactitude. Unhesitatingly, therefore, he appointed to power all those persons nominated by the Chambers, always preferring the revolutionaries, as being the most eager to impose their authority.

For his own part, he applied himself more especially to foreign affairs. He frequently made diplomatic journeys, dined and hunted with the kings, his cousins, and boasted himself to be the best Foreign Minister imaginable. When at home he kept himself in countenance as well as the miseries of the times would allow. He was neither greatly loved nor greatly respected by his people, which assured him of this inestimable advantage, that he could never cause disappointment. Exempt from the affections of the public, he was never threatened by the unpopularity which is the assured lot of whomsoever is popular.

His kingdom was wealthy. Commerce and industry flourished there, yet without undergoing such expansion as to cause anxiety to neighbouring States. Above all, its finances commanded admiration. The solidity of its credit appeared unshakable; financiers referred to it with enthusiasm and affection, their eyes moist with generous tears And thereby a certain honour was reflected upon King Christophe.

The peasants held him responsible for the bad harvests, but these were rare. The fertility of the soil and the patience of the tillers caused the land to abound in fruits and grains, wines and flocks. The factory hands, by their violent and unceasing demands, alarmed the middle classes, who relied on the King to protect them from the social revolution: the workers, on the other hand, could not overthrow him, for they were the weaker; nor did they wish to do so, since they could not see that they had anything to gain by his fall. He never assisted

them, neither did he oppress them, with the result that they were always a menace and never a danger.

The sovereign could count upon the army; its tone was good. The tone of the army invariably is good; all measures are taken to ensure that it shall remain so; this is the first necessity of the State. For were it to lose this tone the Government would be overthrown immediately.

King Christophe protected religion. Truth to tell, he was not a devout person, and in order that his ideas should not be contrary to his faith, he took the useful precaution of never examining a single article of the latter. He heard Mass in his chapel, and was always pressing respectful attentions and favours upon his bishops, amongst whom were to be found three or four ultramontanes who overwhelmed him with abuse.

The baseness and servility of his magistracy inspired him with an insurmountable disgust. He could not conceive how his subjects could endure so unjust a justice; but these magistrates counterbalanced their shameful weakness in respect of the strong by an inflexible harshness toward the weak.

Their severity reassured "the interests" and commanded respect.

Christophe V had noticed that his decrees produced either no appreciable effect whatever, or else results which were the contrary of those which he expected. Consequently he refrained from action. His orders and decorations were his best instruments of sovereignty. He awarded them to his opponents, who were thereby degraded and satisfied.

The Queen had presented him with three sons. She was ugly, shrewish, stupid, and avaricious, but the people, who knew that she was neglected and deceived by the King, covered her with praise and homage. After having had experience of a multitude of women of every condition, the King chiefly frequented the society of Madame de la Poule, his intercourse with whom had become a habit. He had always loved novelty in women; but a strange woman was, for him, no longer a novelty, and the monotony of continual change oppressed him. He would return in disgust to Madame de la Poule, and this lack of novelty which seemed so tedious in those whom he saw for the first time, he bore with more patiently in an old friend. Nevertheless she bored him intensely and persistently. At times, being quite worn out by the insipidity of her eternal sameness, he tried to vary her by disguises, making her dress up as a Tyrolean, an Andalusian, a Capuchin friar, a captain of Dragoons, or a nun; but never for a moment did he fail to find her insipid.

His chief occupation was hunting — an hereditary function of kings and princes, handed down to them from the earliest of mankind; an antique necessity

which has become a sport; a toil in which the great find pleasure. There is no pleasure without fatigue. Christophe V hunted six days a week.

One day, in the forest, he said to Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles, his first Equerry:

“What a bore stag-hunting is!”

“Sire,” answered the Equerry, “you will be very glad of a rest after the hunt.”

“Quatrefeuilles,” sighed the King, “there was a time when I took pleasure in getting tired, and then in resting. Now I find no pleasure in either. For me, every occupation has the emptiness of idleness, and rest wearies me as much as painful toil.”

After reigning for ten years without wars or revolutions, regarded by his subjects as a clever politician, established as an arbiter by kings, there existed in the world no pleasure for Christophe V to taste. Plunged into the deepest despondency, he would often say:

“I have always black spots before my eyes, and under the cartilages of my ribs I feel a rock upon which Melancholy is enthroned.”

He lost sleep and appetite.

“I can no longer eat,” he would say to Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles, seated before his splendid service of silver gilt. “Alas, it is not the pleasures of the table I regret; I never enjoyed them; that is a pleasure no king ever enjoyed. I have the worst table in my kingdom. Only the common folk eat well: the rich have cooks who rob and poison them. The greatest cooks are those that rob and poison the most, and I have the greatest cooks in Europe. All the same, I was naturally greedy, and, like anyone else, I should have loved dainty tit-bits, had my state allowed of it.”

He complained of pains in the loins, and weights on his stomach; of weakness, with shortness of breath and palpitation of the heart. Now and again a dull flush of nerveless heat would rise to his face.

“I feel,” he used to say, “a still, dull, continuous pain, to which one gets accustomed, which is pierced, from time to time, by sudden flashes of overwhelming agony. Hence my sluggishness and my distress.”

His head swam: he suffered from fits of dizziness, headaches, cramps, spasms, and shooting pains in his sides, which stopped his breathing.

The King’s two principal physicians, Dr. Saumon and Professor Machellier, diagnosed neurasthenia.

“A morbid unity badly relaxed,” said Saumon. “A nosological entity insufficiently defined, and by that very fact indiscernible.”

Professor Machellier interrupted him:

“Call it rather, Saumon, a true pathological Proteus, which, like the Old Man of the Sea, incessantly changes its form in the grasp of the practitioner, and assumes the most fantastic and most terrifying shapes; by turns the vulture of the gastric ulcer, or the serpent of nephritis, it suddenly lifts the yellow face of jaundice, displays the red cheek-bones of tuberculosis, or grips with the strangling hands which lead one to believe that there is a hypertrophy of the heart; in short, it represents the spectre of all the disastrous ills that flesh is heir to, until, yielding to medical treatment, and acknowledging itself defeated, it flees in its true shape of simulated disease.”

Dr. Saumon was handsome, suave, and charming. He was loved by the ladies, in whom he loved himself. An elegant scientist, a fashionable physician, he could recognize aristocracy even in a caecum or a peritoneum, and was able exactly to observe the social grades dividing uterus from uterus. Professor Machellier, little, short and fat, shaped like a tub, a profuse talker, was even more foolish than his colleague Saumon. He had the same pretensions, and more difficulty in sustaining them. They loathed each other; but, having perceived that by quarrelling they would mutually destroy one another, they affected a perfect understanding, and a complete communion of thought: no sooner had one expressed an idea than the other made it his. Although each had a hearty contempt for the other's ability and intelligence, they feared not to exchange opinions between themselves, knowing that they risked nothing, neither losing nor gaining by the exchange, seeing they were merely medical opinions.

At first the King's illness caused them no uneasiness. They hoped that the patient would recover while they were treating him, and that this coincidence would be noted to their advantage. With common accord they prescribed an austere life (*Quibus nervi dolent Venus inimica*), a tonic diet, exercise in the open air, and a carefully considered application of hydrotherapy. Saumon, with the approval of Machellier, prescribed sulphuret of carbon and methyl-chloride; Machellier, Saumon acquiescing, indicated opiates, chloral and bromides.

But several months elapsed, and the King's condition did not seem to improve in the least. And presently his sufferings became more acute.

“I feel,” said Christophe V to them one day, lying on a long chair, “as if a nest of rats were nibbling my bowels, whilst a horrible dwarf, a hooded goblin, wearing a red tunic, and shoes, had gone down into my stomach, and was attacking it with a pickaxe, and making a deep hole.”

“Sire,” said Dr. Saumon, “that is a sympathetic pain.”

“I find it antipathetic,” answered the King.

Professor Machellier intervened:

“Sire, neither Your Majesty’s stomach nor intestine is diseased. If they cause you pain it is, we will say, in sympathy with your solar plexus, whose innumerable nervous fibres, mingled and confused, tug in all directions at the bowel and the stomach like so many incandescent platinum wires.”

“Neurasthenia,” said Machellier, “a true pathological Proteus.”

But the King dismissed them both.

When they had gone:

Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain, the senior private secretary, said:

“Sire, pray consult Dr. Rodrigue.”

“Yes, Sire,” said Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles, “send for Dr. Rodrigue. There’s nothing else to be done.”

At that time Dr. Rodrigue was astonishing the world. He was to be seen almost simultaneously in all the countries of the globe. He charged such enormous fees that millionaires recognized his value. His colleagues, all over the world, whatever they thought of his knowledge and character, spoke with respect of a man who had raised medical fees to a figure hitherto unheard of. Many praised his methods, pretending that they had mastered them and were applying them at reduced rates, thereby contributing to his world-wide celebrity. But as Dr. Rodrigue was pleased to exclude from his therapeutic all laboratory products and pharmaceutical preparations, and as he never observed the formulas of the pharmacopeia, his curative methods presented a disconcerting eccentricity and certain inimitable peculiarities.

Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain, although without personal experience of Rodrigue, possessed absolute faith in him, and believed in him as in God.

He begged the King to summon the doctor who worked miracles. In vain.

“I shall stick to Saumon and Machellier,” said Christophe V. “I know them, and I know they can do nothing; while I do not know what this Rodrigue might do.”

CHAPTER II. DR. RODRIGUE

THE King had never much liked his two usual physicians. After six months' illness he found them perfectly insupportable; as soon as he caught sight, of the handsome moustache which crowned Dr. Saumon's everlasting and triumphant smile, and the two wisps of black hair plastered over Machellier's pate, he ground his teeth and savagely averted his glance. One night he threw out of the window all their draughts, pills, and powders, which filled the room with a richly depressing smell. Not only did he cease to carry out their orders, but he even took pains to do the reverse of what they prescribed; he remained lying down when they recommended exercise, moved about when they ordered rest, ate when they put him on diet, fasted when they recommended stuffing; and revealed to Madame de la Poule an ardour so unaccustomed that she was unable to believe the testimony of her senses, and thought she must be dreaming. But he was no whit the better; so true it is that Medicine is a deceptive art, and that its precepts are equally vain in whichever sense one takes them. He got no worse, but he got no better.

His numerous and varied pains never left him. He complained that a colony of ants had established itself in his brain, and that this industrious and warlike community was there digging galleries, chambers, and storehouses, carrying thither provisions and materials; depositing eggs by the thousand, raising young, sustaining sieges, delivering and repulsing assaults, and fighting bloody engagements. He said he could feel it when some warrior cut with his steely mandibles through the hard, thin corselet of an enemy.

"Sire," said Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain, "send for Dr. Rodrigue. He will surely cure you."

But the King shrugged his shoulders, and in a moment of weakness and absent-mindedness he asked once more for medicine, and again began to diet. He no longer visited Madame de la Poule, and zealously swallowed pilules of nitrate of aconitine, which were then in the first flush of their radiant youth. Following on this abstinence and this treatment, he was seized with such an attack of suffocation that his tongue protruded from his mouth and his eyes from his head. His bed was placed standing up like a grandfather's clock, and his congested face looked like a red dial.

"The cardiac plexus is in open rebellion," said Professor Machellier.

"In a state of great effervescence," added Dr. Saumon.

Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain thought it a good opportunity once more to recommend Dr. Rodrigue, but the King declared that he had no need of yet another doctor. —

“Sire,” answered Saint-Sylvain, “Dr. Rodrigue is not a physician.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Christophe V. “What you say, Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain, is all to his advantage, and prejudices me in his favour. If he is not a physician, what is he?”

“A scientist, a man of genius, Sire, who has discovered the marvellous and unsuspected properties of matter in the radiant state, and applies them to medicine.”

But the King, in a tone which allowed of no reply, requested his private secretary to refer no more to this charlatan.

“I will never receive him, never!”

Christophe V passed the summer in a fairly tolerable fashion. He went for a cruise in a two-hundred-ton yacht with Madame de la Poule dressed as a cabin-boy. He received at breakfast the President of a Republic, a King and an Emperor, and in conjunction with them assured the peace of the world. It was wearisome work arranging the destinies of the nations, but having found in Madame de la Poule’s cabin an old novel of the kind written for shop-girls, he read it with a passionate interest that procured him for some hours a delicious oblivion of reality. In short, except for a few headaches, a few attacks of neuralgia, some touches of rheumatism, and the boredom of existence, he managed fairly well. The autumn brought with it his old tortures. He endured the horrible sufferings of a man wrapped in ice from his waist to his feet, with his chest enveloped in flames. Yet what he suffered with still greater fear and horror were sensations which he was unable to express of unutterable conditions. There were some, he said, which made his hair stand on end. He was eaten up with anaemia, and his weakness increased daily, without diminishing his capacity for suffering.

“Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain,” he said one morning, after a bad night, “you have several times spoken to me of Dr. Rodrigue. Send for him.”

At that moment Dr. Rodrigue was reported to be at the Cape, in Melbourne, and in St. Petersburg. Cablegrams and radiograms were instantly despatched to these places. Less than a week had passed before the King was urgently asking for Dr. Rodrigue. As the days went by, he asked every minute: “Will he not be here soon?” It was pointed out to him that His Majesty was not a client to be despised, and that Rodrigue was wont to travel with astonishing swiftness. But nothing could calm the sick man’s impatience.

“He will not come,” he sighed. “You’ll see that he will not come.”

A telegram arrived from Genoa, announcing that Rodrigue was sailing on board the *Preussen*. Three days later the world-famed doctor, after having paid a visit of insolent deference to his colleagues, Saumon and Machellier, presented himself at the Palace.

He was younger and better looking than Dr. Saumon, with a prouder and more aristocratic air. Out of respect for Nature, whom he obeyed in all things, he allowed his hair and beard to grow, so that he bore a resemblance to those ancient philosophers whom the Greeks have represented in marble.

After examining the King, he said:

“Sire, the physicians, who speak of illnesses as the blind speak of colours, say that you are suffering from neurasthenia, or weakness of the nerves. But, when they have diagnosed your complaint, they will not be any better able to cure it, for an organic tissue cannot be reconstituted save by the same means that Nature employed to build it up, and of these means they are ignorant. Now what are the means, the processes, of Nature? She knows neither hand nor tool; she is subtle and spiritual; for her most powerful and massive constructions she employs the infinitely tenuous particles of matter, the atom, the protyle. From an impalpable mist she makes rocks, metals, plants, animals, and men. How? By attraction, gravitation, transpiration, penetration, imbibition, endosmosis, affinity and sympathy. She makes a grain of sand exactly as she made the Milky Way; the harmony of the spheres reigns equally in both; they both exist by reason of the movement of the particles which compose them, which is their musical soul, amorous and always in motion. Between the stars in the sky, and the dust which is dancing in the ray of sunlight crossing this room, there is no structural difference, and the smallest of these atoms of dust is as wonderful as Sirius, for the miracle in all the bodies of the universe is the infinite minuteness of which they are compact, and by which they are animated. That is how Nature works. From the imperceptible, the impalpable, the imponderable, she has derived this vast world, accessible to our senses, which our mind weighs and measures, and that of which we ourselves are made is no more than a breath. Let us work, as she does, through the imponderable, the impalpable, the imperceptible, by loving attraction and subtle penetration. That is the principle. How shall it be applied in the present case? How to restore life to the exhausted nerves? That is what we have to consider.

“First of all, what are the nerves? If we ask for a definition the meanest physiologist, even a Machellier or a Saumon, will give it us. What are the nerves? They are cords, fibres, which proceed from the brain and the spinal column, and distribute themselves through every part of the body, in order to transmit sensorial excitations, and to cause the motor organs to function. They

are therefore sensation and movement. That is enough to teach us their inward constitution, to reveal their essence: by whatever name we call it, it is identical with that which in the order of sensations we call Pleasure, and in the moral order Happiness. Wherever there is an atom of Pleasure and Happiness there will be found the material that repairs the nerves. When I speak of an atom of Pleasure I refer to a material object, a definite substance, a body capable of passing through the four states, solid, liquid, gaseous and radiant, a body of which one can determine the atomic weight. The joy and sadness of which men, animals, and plants have experienced the effect since the dawn of things are real substances; they are matter, since they are mind, and since under her three aspects of matter, mind, and movement, Nature is one. It is therefore merely a matter of procuring atoms of joy in sufficient numbers, and of introducing them into the system by endosmosis and cutaneous aspiration. For this reason I prescribe that you must wear the shirt of a happy man.”

“What!” cried the King. “You wish me to wear the shirt of a happy man?”

“Next your shin, Sire, in order that your dry skin may aspire the particles of Happiness which the sudorific glands of the happy man have exhaled through the excretory canals of his thriving dermis. For you are not ignorant of the functions of the skin; it inspires and exhales, and effects incessant exchanges according to the environment in which it is placed.”

“Then that is the remedy which you order me, Monsieur Rodrigue?”

“Sire, it would be impossible to order a more rational one. I find nothing in the pharmacopeia which would take its place. Ignorant of nature, and incapable of imitating her, our quacks merely concoct a few drugs in their laboratories which are always dangerous and seldom efficacious. The medicaments which we cannot concoct, such as leeches, mountain air, natural thermal waters, asses’ milk, wild cat’s skin, and the humours exuding from a happy man, we must take ready made....

Do you not know that a raw potato carried in the pocket removes rheumatic pains? You do not want a natural remedy. You prefer artificial or chemical remedies; drugs; you must have drops and powders; but have you much reason to be satisfied with your drops and powders?”

The King apologized, and promised to obey.

Dr. Rodrigue, who had already reached the door, turned and said:

“Let it be slightly warmed before you put it

CHAPTER III. MESSIEURS DE QUATREFEUILLES AND DE SAINT-SYLVAIN SEARCH FOR A HAPPY MAN IN THE KING'S PALACE

(ANXIOUS to wear this shirt, by which he expected to be healed, Christophe V sent for Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles, his First Equerry, and Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain, his private secretary, and directed them to procure it for him with the least possible delay. It was arranged that they should maintain an absolute secrecy with regard to the object of their search. There was indeed reason to fear that if the public came to know the kind of remedy the King required, a host of afflicted persons, and in particular the most unfortunate, the most hopelessly crippled by poverty, would offer their shirts in the hope of a reward. It was also feared that the anarchists might send poisoned shirts.

These two gentlemen considered that they would be able to obtain Dr. Rodrigue's remedy without leaving the Palace, and took up a position in the royal ante-chamber, where they could watch the courtiers go by. Those they saw had a despondent air and emaciated faces; they were consumed with a longing for an appointment, an order, a privilege or a button. But on descending to the great apartments, they found Monsieur du Bocage asleep in an arm-chair. The corners of his mouth turned up to his cheek-bones; his nostrils dilated, his cheeks round and shining like two suns, his throat melodious, his belly quiet and rhythmical; smiling, exuding joy from the top of his glistening cranium down to the turned-out toes of the light slippers which terminated his widely separated legs.

At the sight of him, Quatrefeuilles said:

"We need seek no farther. When he wakes up we will ask him for his shirt."

At that moment the sleeper rubbed his eyes, stretched himself, and looked piteously about him. The corners of his mouth dropped, his cheeks fell, and his eyelids drooped like the washing outside poor folks' windows; his whole person expressed boredom, regret, and disappointment.

Recognizing the equerry and the private secretary, he said:

"Ah, gentlemen, I have just had a beautiful dream. I dreamed that the King had raised my lands of La Bocage to a Marquisate. Alas, it is nothing but a dream, and I know only too well that the King's intentions are quite otherwise."

“Let us get on,” said Saint-Sylvain. “It is getting late; we have no time to lose.”

In the gallery, they came across a peer of the realm who astonished everybody by the strength of his character, and the profundity of his mind. His enemies did not deny his disinterestedness, his sincerity, or his courage. It was known that he was writing his memoirs, and every one flattered him in the hope that they might cut a respectable figure there in the eyes of posterity.

“Perhaps he is happy,” said Saint-Sylvain.

“Let’s ask him,” said Quatrefeuilles.

They accosted him, exchanged a few remarks, and then, turning the conversation to the subject of Happiness, put to him the question that interested them.

“Riches, and Honour,” he said, “do not interest me, and even the most legitimate and natural affections, family ties, and the pleasures of friendship cannot fill my heart. I care for nothing but the public good; it is the unhappiest of passions, and the most cruelly thwarted of affections.

“I have enjoyed power; I have refused to support, with the funds of the Treasury and the blood of our soldiers, the expeditions organized by filibusters and merchants for their own enrichment, and the public ruin; I did not surrender the army and the fleet as a prey to contractors, and I was subjected to the calumnies of all the rogues who reproached me, amid the plaudits of the imbecile mob, with betraying the sacred interests and the glory of my mother country. No one has supported me against these high-class thieves. Seeing of what folly and cowardice popular opinion is compounded, I regret absolute power. The King’s weakness drives me desperate; the littleness of the great is to me a disgusting spectacle; the incapacity and dishonesty of the ministers, and the ignorance, baseness, and venality of the people’s representatives throw me alternately into fits of rage and stupor. To console myself for the ills which I endure by day I record them at night, and thus I disgorge the gall upon which I feed.”

Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain raised their hats to the noble peer, and, walking a few steps down the gallery, they found themselves confronted by a very small man, apparently hump-backed, for his back was visible over his head. He was mincing along in a waddling conspicuous manner.

“It is useless to ask him,” said Quatrefeuilles.

“Who knows?” said Saint-Sylvain.

“Believe me; I know him,” replied the Equerry. “I am in his confidence. He is quite pleased with himself, and perfectly satisfied with his appearance; and he has reason to be so. That little hump-back is a favourite with the women. Ladies

of the Court and the city, actresses, merchants' wives, female rakes, cocottes, prudes, religious women — the proudest, the most beautiful are at his feet. In satisfying them, he is losing his health and even his life, and now, having fallen into a melancholy, he is enduring the burden of being a mascot."

The sun was setting, and learning that the King would not appear that day the last courtiers were quitting the apartments.

"I would gladly give my shirt," said Quatrefeuilles. "I may say that I have a happy temperament. Always contented, I drink, eat, and sleep well. I am complimented on my cheerful expression, and I am reckoned good looking; I have no complaint to make about my face. But I feel a weight and heat in the bladder, which take all the joy out of life. This morning I got rid of a stone as big as a pigeon's egg. I fear that my shirt would be of no value to the King."

"I would gladly give mine," said Saint-Sylvain, "but I also have a stone. It is my wife. I married the ugliest and most malicious creature that ever existed, and although we know that future is in God's hands, I make bold to assert that she is the ugliest and most malicious person that ever will exist, for the repetition of such an original is so highly improbable that one may regard it as impossible. There are some tricks which Nature never plays twice." Then leaving this painful subject, he said: "Quatrefeuilles, my friend, we have been lacking in judgment. It is not at Court, or among the mighty of this world, that we must search for a happy man."

"You speak like a philosopher," replied Quatrefeuilles. "You express yourself like that beggarly Jean-Jacques. You do yourself an injustice. There are just as many men who are happy, and worthy of being so, in the palaces of kings, and in the houses of the aristocracy, as in the cafes frequented by men of letters, or the cabarets to which the artisans resort. If we have not found a happy man to-day beneath this roof it is only because it is getting late, and we have not had a suitable chance. Let us visit the Queen's card-table to-night and we shall have better luck."

"Look for a happy man at a gaming table!" exclaimed Saint-Sylvain. "One might as well look for a pearl necklace in a turnip-field, or for truth in the mouth of a statesman! The Spanish Ambassador is giving a party to-night; the whole city will be there. Let us go thither, and we shall easily lay our hands on a good and suitable shirt."

"It has happened to me sometimes," said Quatrefeuilles, "to place my hand on the chemise of a happy woman. It was a real pleasure. But our happiness was but momentary. If I tell you this, it is not to boast (there is really no reason why I should), nor to recall past joys, which may return, for, contrary to the proverb, every age has the same pleasures. My intention is far different; it is more serious,

and more virtuous, and refers directly to the august mission with which we are both entrusted: it is to submit to you an idea which has just come into my mind. Don't you think, Saint-Sylvain, that in prescribing the shirt of a happy man, Dr. Rodrigue was using the term 'man' in the generic sense, regarding the whole human species, without reference to sex, and meaning a woman's chemise as much as a man's shirt? For my part, I am inclined to believe it, and if you were of the same opinion we could extend the field of our researches and more than double our chances of success, for in a polished and elegant society such as our own, the women are happier than the men; we do more for them than they for us. Saint-Sylvain, our task being thus enlarged, we could divide it. Thus, for example, from to-night until to-morrow morning I could look for a happy woman while you were searching for a happy man. Admit, my friend, that a lady's chemise is a delicate article. I have already handled one that would pass through a ring; the batiste was finer than a cobweb. And what do you say, my friend, to that chemise which a lady at the Court of France, in the time of Marie-Antoinette, wore at a ball worked into her head-dress? We should deserve the King's gratitude, it seems to me, were we to present to the King our master a beautiful linen chemise, with insertions, Valenciennes trimmings, and magnificent rose ribbon shoulder-straps, lighter than a breath, and scented with fragrance of iris and of love."

But Saint-Sylvain protested vigorously against this interpretation of Dr. Rodrigue's prescription.

"What are you thinking of, Quatrefeuilles?" he cried. "A woman's chemise would only provide the King with a woman's happiness, which would be a source of shame and misery. I shall not at present consider the question, Quatrefeuilles, as to whether woman is more capable of happiness than man. This is neither the time nor the place; it is time to go to dinner. The physiologists attribute to women a more delicate sensibility than our own: but these are only transcendental generalities, which pass over people's heads, and do not take in anybody. I do not know whether, as you appear to believe, our polished society is better adapted for the happiness of women than for that of men. I notice that, in our world, they neither rear their children nor look after their homes; they know nothing, do nothing, and kill themselves with fatigue. They are consumed by shining; it is the fate of a candle. I do not know that it is an enviable condition. But that is not the question. Some day, perhaps, there will be only one sex; perhaps there may be three, or even more. In that case, sexual morality will be richer, fuller, and more varied. Meanwhile, we have two sexes; there is a good deal of each in the other, a good deal of man in the woman, and of woman in man. Still, they are distinct; they have each their nature, their habits, and their

laws, their pleasures and their pains. If you were to emasculate his idea of happiness, with what a frozen gaze our King would thenceforward regard Madame de la Poule! Perhaps, indeed, owing to hypochondria and weakness, he might go so far as to compromise the honour of our glorious country. Is that what you wish, Quatrefeuilles?

“Cast your eyes, in the gallery of the Royal Palace, upon the history of Hercules, worked in Gobelin tapestry, and see what happened to that hero, who was particularly unfortunate in connection with chemises. For a jest he put on that of Omphale, and afterwards could only spin wool. That is the destiny which your imprudence is preparing for our illustrious monarch.”

“Oh! oh!” said the First Equerry. “We will take it that I never mentioned it, and let us say no more about it.”

CHAPTER IV. JERONIMO

THE Spanish Embassy blazed and twinkled in the night. The clouds were gilded by the reflection of its lights. Garlands of fire, edging the alleys of the park, gave the adjacent foliage the transparency and brilliancy of emeralds. Bengal fire reddened the sky above the lofty black trees. An invisible orchestra cast its voluptuous airs to the light breeze. The elegant crowd of guests covered the lawn; dresses moved restlessly in the shadows; military uniforms shone with crosses and orders; bright figures glided gracefully over the grass, leaving a trail of perfume behind them.

Quatrefeuilles, seeing two illustrious statesmen, the President of the Council and his predecessor, talking together under the statue of Fortune, thought of accosting them. But Saint-Sylvain dissuaded him from his purpose.

“They are both unfortunate,” he told him. “The one cannot console himself for having lost his power, and the other trembles lest he may lose it. And their ambition is yet the more pitiful in that they are both freer and more powerful in a private condition than while in the exercise of power, where they can only maintain themselves by a humble and dishonourable submission to the caprices of the Chambers, the blind passions of the people, and the interests of the financiers. What they are pursuing with such eagerness is nothing but their own pompous abasement. Ah! Quatrefeuilles, rest content with your pricklers, your horses and your dogs, but do not aspire to govern men.”

They passed on. Scarcely had they proceeded a few steps when, attracted by bursts of laughter issuing from a clump of trees, they entered the latter, and found, sitting on four chairs in an arbour, a fat man in disordered dress, who, in a mellow, emotional voice, was telling stories to a numerous company, which was hanging on his lips, that were like those of an ancient Satyr, and bending over his more or less than human face, which looked as if it had been smeared with Dionysiac lees. He was the most celebrated and only popular man in the kingdom, Jeronimo. He was speaking profusely, joyously, and richly; throwing off random remarks, and telling stories, some excellent, and others not so good, but all raising a laugh. He told a story of how one day at Athens, the social revolution took place, when all property was shared, and the women made in common. But the old and ugly ones very soon complained of being neglected, and a law was then passed in their favour, compelling the men to take their turn with them before passing on to the young and pretty ones. He described, with robust gaiety, comic espousals, grotesque embraces, and the failing courage of

the young men at the appearance of their bleary-eyed, snuffling mistresses, who looked capable of cracking nuts between their chins and noses. Then he told lewd tales of German Jews, priests, and peasants, a whole string of diverting stories and merry observations.

Jeronimo was an amazing oratorical instrument. When he spoke his whole person spoke, from his head to his feet: and never in any orator had the play of speech been so absolute. Grave and gay, sublime and ridiculous by turns, he was master of every form of eloquence, and the same man who, under the arbour, was relating, like the consummate comedian that he was, for the diversion of idlers, and his own, every kind of facetious anecdote, had, on the previous day, in the Chamber, raised an outcry and earned applause with his mighty voice, making the ministers tremble and the tribunes quake and stirring the whole country with the echoes of his speech. Dexterous in his violence, calculating in his outbursts of wrath, he had become leader of the Opposition, without falling out with those in power, and, working among the people, he associated with the aristocracy. He was referred to as the man of the period. He was the man of the hour; always his mind accommodated itself to the time and the place. His thoughts were always opportune; his gigantic and commonplace genius was in tune with that of the community; his prodigious mediocrity effaced all the greatness and the pettiness that surrounded him; he alone was to be seen. His health would of itself have assured him of happiness: it was as massive and robust as his soul. A great drinker, a great lover of flesh, whether roasted or alive, he took life joyously, and appropriated a lion's share of the pleasures of this world. Listening to him as he told his wonderful stories, Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain laughed like the rest, and, nudging the other's elbow, each gazed out the corner of his eye at the shirt over which Jeronimo had liberally scattered the sauces and wines of a mirthful feast.

The ambassador of a proud people, which was offering King Christophe, for a price, its interested friendship, was passing at this moment, magnificent and solitary, across the lawn. He went up to the great man, bowing to him slightly.

Immediately Jeronimo was transformed. A serene and gentle gravity, a sovereign calm spread over his countenance, and the restrained sonority, of his voice flattered the ear of the ambassador, with the noblest and most caressing phrases of the language. His whole attitude expressed an understanding of foreign affairs, an atmosphere of congresses and conferences: his very lace scarf, his bulging shirt, and his elephantine trousers appeared miraculously to partake of the dignity of the diplomat and the atmosphere of embassies.

The guests moved away, and the two illustrious personages chatted for a long time in a friendly tone, appearing to be on a footing of intimacy which was

widely remarked and commented upon by the politicians and the ladies of "the Service."

"Jeronimo," said one, "will be Minister of Foreign Affairs when he wishes."

"When he is," said another, "he will keep the King in his pocket."

The Austrian ambassador, examining him through his eyeglasses said:

"That is an intelligent fellow; he will go far."

The conversation ended, Jeronimo took a turn round the garden with his faithful Jobelin, a sort of long-legged heron with the head of an owl, who never left him.

The private secretary and the First Equerry followed them.

"His is the shirt we want," said Quatrefeuilles in a low voice. But will he give it to us? He is a Socialist, and against the King's Government."

"Bah!" said Saint-Sylvain. "He is not an ill-natured man, and he is witty. He cannot wish for any change, seeing that he is in opposition. He has no responsibility; his position is excellent; he must wish to retain it. A good member of the Opposition is always a Conservative. Unless I am very much mistaken, this demagogue would be very sorry to harm his King. If we negotiate skilfully we shall get his shirt. Like Mirabeau, he will treat with the Court. But he will have to be assured of secrecy."

As they were thus talking, Jeronimo was walking to and fro, with his hat over his ear, twirling his cane, diffusing his hilarious humour, jesting, bantering, laughing, exclaiming, playing on words, making obscene and filthy puns, and humming airs. Meanwhile, some fifteen paces ahead of him, the Duc des Aulnes, the arbiter of fashion and the prince of youth, meeting a lady of his acquaintance, saluted her very simply with a brief, slight, but not ungraceful gesture. The tribune observed him with an attentive gaze, and then becoming gloomy and thoughtful, he laid his heavy hand upon the shoulder of his water-fowl.

"Jobelin," he said, "I would give all my popularity and ten years of my life to wear a coat and speak to women as that young puppy does."

All his gaiety was gone. He now moved sadly with lowered head, regarding without pleasure the shadow which the ironic moon cast between his legs like a grotesque bluish figure.

"What did he say? Is he joking?" asked Quatrefeuilles uneasily.

"Never in his life was he more serious, more sincere," replied Saint-Sylvain. "He has shown us the secret sore which devours him. Jeronimo cannot console himself for his lack of birth and elegance. He is not happy, and I would not give twopence for his shirt."

Time was slipping by, and the search was becoming burdensome. The private secretary and the First Equerry agreed to pursue their quest independently, and

arranged to meet at supper in the small yellow salon in order to compare notes as to the result of their search. Quatrefeuilles, for choice, interrogated army officers, the great nobles, and the great landowners, but he did not forget to make inquiry among the women. Saint-Sylvain, of a more penetrating mind, read the eyes of financiers, and patted the backs of diplomatists.

They met at the hour agreed, both weary and with long faces.

"I saw nothing but happy people," said Quatrefeuilles, "but in every case their happiness was spoilt. The soldiers were consumed with a longing for a decoration, a step in rank or a gratuity. The benefits and honours gained by their rivals were like to give them jaundice. At the news that General de Tintille had been created Duc des Comores they were all as yellow as liquorice-water and as green as lizards. One became positively purple; it was a case of apoplexy. The nobility are dying of boredom and disturbances on their estates: always in litigation with their neighbours, eaten up by the lawyers, and their life of burdensome idleness is full of cares."

"I have found things no better than you have," said Saint-Sylvain. "And what strikes me is to find that people suffer from contrary causes, and for opposite reasons. I found the Prince des Estelles wretched because his wife is deceiving him; not that he loves her, but he has some self-respect; the Duc de Mauvert is miserable because his wife is not deceiving him, and is therefore depriving him of the means of restoring his ruined house. One man is worn out by his children, another is in despair because he has none. I met townsfolk who dream of nothing but living in the country, and country-folk who think of nothing but setting up in town. I received the confidences of two men of honour; one was inconsolable because he had killed in a duel the man who had stolen his mistress, and the other was in despair because he had missed his rival."

"I would never have believed," sighed Quatrefeuilles, "that it was so difficult to find a happy man."

"Perhaps we set about it the wrong way," objected Saint-Sylvain. "We are searching at random, without method; we do not precisely know what we are looking for. We have not defined Happiness. It must be defined."

"It would be waste of time," replied Quatrefeuilles.

"I beg your pardon," answered Saint-Sylvain. "When we shall have defined it, that is to say, limited, determined, and fixed it in its time and place, we shall have better means of finding it."

"I don't believe it," said Quatrefeuilles.

Still, they agreed to consult the wisest man in the kingdom on the subject. This was Monsieur Chaudesaigues, the Keeper of the King's Library.

When they re-entered the Palace the sun had already risen. Christophe V had passed a bad night, and was impatiently demanding the medicinal shirt. They apologized for the delay, and climbed to the third story, where Monsieur Chaudesaigues received them in a vast hall which contained eight hundred thousand printed volumes and manuscripts.

CHAPTER V. THE ROYAL LIBRARY

AFTER requesting them to be seated, the librarian showed the visitors, with a gesture, the multitude of books arranged along the four walls from floor to ceiling.

“Can’t you hear? Can’t you hear the uproar they make? My ears are bursting from it, They all talk at the same time, and in every language. They argue about everything: God, Nature, Man, Time, Space and Numbers, the Knowable and the Unknowable, Good and Evil; they examine and object to everything, affirm and deny everything. They reason; they contradict. There are light books and heavy books; cheerful books and melancholy books; diffuse books and concise books; many speak for the pleasure of saying nothing, counting syllables, arranging sounds in accordance with laws, whose meaning and origin they themselves ignore; they are the most self-satisfied. There are books of another kind, dismal and austere, which speculate only upon subjects which are devoid of any tangible quality, and are carefully divorced from natural contingencies; they argue in the void, restlessly moving through the invisible categories of space: there are rabid disputants, who maintain their entities and their symbols with a sanguinary fury. I will not linger over those that tell the history of their own times, or of former times, for no one believes them. In all, there are eight hundred thousand in this room, and there are not two that think precisely the same on any subject, and those that repeat each other do not agree among themselves. As a rule, they neither know what they themselves are saying nor what others have said.

“Gentlemen, as a result of listening to this universal clatter I shall go mad, as all those have done who dwelt before me in this hall of innumerable voices, unless they were naturally idiots when they came, like my venerable colleague, Monsieur Froidefond, whom you see sitting opposite me, cataloguing with peaceful ardour. Simple he was born, and simple he remains. He was a complete unity, and has not become various. For unity cannot produce diversity, and it is there, I would remind you in passing, gentlemen, that the first difficulty is encountered, when we seek for the origin of things: it being impossible that the cause should be unique, it must be double triple, or multiple, which is difficult to admit. Monsieur Froidefond has a simple mind, and a pure soul. He lives catalogically. He knows the title and the *format* of every book which adorns these walls, and thus possesses the only exact knowledge which it is possible to acquire in a library. Having never investigated the contents of a single book, he

has been saved from the nerveless uncertainty, hydraheaded error, hideous doubt, and horrible uneasiness, monsters which reading engenders in a fertile brain. He is calm, peaceful, and happy."

"Happy!" simultaneously exclaimed the two seekers after the shirt.

"He is happy," replied Monsieur Chaudesaigues, "but he does not know it. And it may be that one can be happy only on that condition."

"Alas," said Saint-Sylvain, "it is not life to be unaware that one lives; one is not happy if one does not know it."

But Quatrefeuilles, who mistrusted argument, and believed only in experience in all things, went up to the table where Froidefond was busy cataloguing. He was surrounded by a heap of volumes, bound in calf, sheepskin, morocco, vellum, parchment, pigskin and boards; they smelt of dust and mildew, rats and mice.

"Worthy librarian," he said, "kindly answer me this question, Are you happy?"

"I know of no book under that title," replied the old cataloguer.

Quatrefeuilles raised his hands as a token of discouragement, and resumed his place.

"Reflect, gentlemen," said Chaudesaigues, "that the antique Cybele, bearing Monsieur Froidefond upon her blooming bosom, is causing him to describe an immense curve round the sun, and that the sun is drawing Monsieur Froidefond with the earth, and all its retinue of planets, across the voids of space, toward the constellation of Hercules. Why? Of the eight hundred thousand volumes assembled around us not one can tell us why. We are ignorant of that, and of everything else. Gentlemen, we know nothing. The causes of our ignorance are many, but I am convinced that the most important is the imperfection of language. The torrent of words produces confusion among our ideas. If we took more care to define the terms by means of which we reason our ideas would be clearer and more certain."

"What did I tell you, Quatrefeuilles?" cried the triumphant Saint-Sylvain. And, turning to the librarian, he said: "Monsieur Chaudesaigues, what you have just said fills me with joy. And I see that in coming to you we have been well advised. We have come to ask you for a definition of Happiness. It is on His Majesty's service — —"

"I will do the best I can. The definition of a word should be radical and etymological. You ask me what is understood by 'bonheur'? 'Bonheur' or *heur bon*, is good augury, the favourable omen derived from the flight and the song of birds, in opposition to '*malheur*,' or '*mauvais heur*,' which signifies an unfavourable consultation; the word indicates as much."

“But how,” asked Quatrefeuilles, “can one find out if a man is happy?”

“By the examination of chickens!” answered the librarian. “The word implies it. ‘Heur’ is derived from *augurium*, which is a corruption of *avigurium* .”

“The examination of sacred chickens has ceased since the time of the Romans,” objected the First Equerry.

“But,” asked Saint-Sylvain, “is not a happy man one to whom fortune is favourable, and do not certain outward and visible signs of good fortune exist?”

“Fortune,” answered Chaudesaigues, “is that which befalls of good or ill; it is a throw of the dice. If I understand you rightly, gentlemen, you are looking for a happy man, a lucky man, that is to say a man for whom the birds have none but favourable auguries, and whom the dice always befriend. You must search for this rare mortal among men whose life is drawing to a close, and for preference among those already stretched upon their death-bed, who will have no further need to consult the sacred chickens, nor to throw dice. For they alone are in a position to congratulate themselves upon a constant good fortune, and unvarying happiness.

“Did not Sophocles say in his *Ædipus Rex*, ‘Call no man happy till his hour of death?’”

This advice ill-suited Quatrefeuilles, to whom the idea did not appeal of pursuing happiness in the train of the Holy Sacrament. Neither did the plan of dragging a shirt off a dying man commend itself to Saint-Sylvain; but as he was possessed of some philosophy and curiosity he asked the librarian if he knew of one of these grand old men who have for the last time cast their splendidly clogged dice.

Chaudesaigues nodded his head and rose, went to the window, and drummed on the panes. It was raining; the parade-ground was deserted. At the far end there rose a magnificent palace, whose attics were surmounted by a trophy of arms, and which bore upon its pediment a Bellona, a hydra upon her helmet, clad in a cuirass of scales, and brandishing a Roman sword.

“Go into that palace,” he said at length.

“What?” said Saint-Sylvain, surprised, “to the Marshal de Volmar’s?”

“To be sure. What mortal under the sky is more fortunate than the conqueror of Elbruz and Baskir? Volmar is one of the greatest fighting men that ever lived, and, of all, the most uniformly lucky.”

“The whole world knows that,” said Quatrefeuilles.

“And will never forget it,” resumed the librarian.

Marshal Pilon, Duc de Volmar, coming into the world at a period when popular conflagrations were no longer consuming the whole face of the world simultaneously, was able to correct this ingratitude of fortune by throwing

himself with all his energy and genius into any point of the globe where a war was on the point of blazing forth. At the age of twelve he served in Turkey, and went through the Kurdistan campaign. From that time forth he had borne his victorious arms into every portion of the known world; four times he had crossed the Rhine, with such insolent ease that the old reed-crowned river, the divider of peoples, seemed flouted and abashed: he had defended the line of the Lys even more skilfully than Marshal Saxe; he had crossed the Pyrenees, forced the entrance of the Tagus, opened the gates of the Caucasus, and ascended the Dnieper. He had, in turn, faced and fought every nation of Europe, and had three times saved his country.

CHAPTER VI. MARSHAL THE DUC DE VOLMAR

CHAUDESAIGUES sent for the campaigns of the Duc de Volmar. Three library attendants bowed beneath the burden. The tables were lost to sight under the opened atlases.

“Here, gentlemen, are the campaigns of Styria, the Palatinate, Karamania, the Caucasus, and the Vistula. The marches and positions of the armies are exactly indicated on the maps by lozenges and pretty little flags; the order of battle is perfectly shown. This order is generally determined after a battle, and it is the genius of great captains to erect into a system, to their own glory, the whims of hazard. But the Duc de Volmar has always foreseen everything.

“Cast your eyes on this plan, on a scale of one ten-thousandth, of the famous battle of Baskir, won by Volmar against the Turks. He there displayed the most amazing tactical genius. The action commenced at 5 a m.; at 4 p m. Volmar’s troops, overwhelmed by fatigue, their ammunition exhausted, were falling back in disorder. The intrepid

Marshal, alone at the bridgehead of the Aluta, with a pistol in either hand, was blowing out the brains of the runaways. He was planning his retreat when he learned that the enemy, in full flight, was throwing itself desperately into the Danube. Immediately he faced about, flung himself in pursuit of them, and achieved their destruction. That victory earned him a pension of five hundred thousand francs, and opened for him the doors of the Institute.

“Gentlemen, do you think you can find a man happier than the victor of Elbruz and Baskir? With unvarying good fortune he has fought fourteen campaigns, won sixty pitched battles, and three times saved his grateful country from total ruin. Loaded with glory and honours, he is prolonging beyond the ordinary term of life, in wealth and peace, an august old age.”

“It is true; he is fortunate,” said Quatrefeuilles. “What do you think about it, Saint-Sylvain?”

“Let us ask for an interview,” said the private secretary.

Admitted to the Palace, they crossed the hall where stood the Marshal’s equestrian statue.

On the pedestal were inscribed these proud words: “I bequeath my two daughters, Elbruz and Baskir, to the gratitude of my country, and the admiration of the world.”

The state staircase raised its double curve of marble steps between walls decorated with trophies and flags. Its wide landing led to a door whose two

leaves were adorned with trophies of arms and smoking grenades, surmounted by the three golden crowns bestowed by King, Parliament, and Nation on the Duc de Volmar, saviour of his country.

Saint-Sylvain and Quatrefeuilles halted, frozen by a sense of awe, before the closed door; at the thought of the hero from whom it divided them emotion nailed them to the threshold, and they dared not venture to face so much glory.

Saint-Sylvain recalled the medal struck in commemoration of the battle of Elbruz, which showed on the obverse the Marshal placing a crown on the brows of a winged victory, with the following magnificent inscription:— “*Victoria Caesarem et Napoleonem coronavit; major autem Volmarus coronat Victoriam* .”

And he murmured:

“This man is a hundred cubits high.” Quatrefeuilles pressed both hands to his heart, which was beating as though it would burst.

Hardly had they collected their thoughts when they heard sharp cries, which seemed to issue from the far end of the apartments, and to be gradually approaching. They were the screams of a woman, mingled with the sound of blows, and followed by feeble moans. The doors suddenly flew open, and a very little old man, kicked forward by a powerful serving wench, collapsed on the stairs like a marionette, rolled down the staircase head first, and fell, bruised, broken, and dislocated into the hall, before the solemn footmen. It was the Duc de Volmar. They picked him up. The maid servant with dishevelled hair and uncovered bosom, shouted from above:

“Leave him alone! He’s only fit to be touched with a broom.” Brandishing a bottle, she continued: “He wanted to take away my brandy! By what right? Get out, you old ruin! It wasn’t me that was wanting you, that’s very certain, you old carrion!”

Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain fled hastily from the Palace. When they reached the parade-ground Saint-Sylvain made the remark that the hero’s latest throw of the dice had not been a lucky one.

“Quatrefeuilles,” he added, “I see that I have been mistaken. I wished to proceed by an exact and rigorous method — I was wrong. Science leads us astray. Let us return to common sense. For satisfactory guidance one must rely on the crudest empiricism. Let us search for happiness without trying to define it.”

Quatrefeuilles launched into lengthy recriminations and abuse of the librarian, whom he regarded as a malicious jester. What annoyed him most was to feel that his faith was destroyed, that the worship which he had paid in his heart to the national hero was debased and soiled. This pained him. His was a generous grief,

and doubtless generous griefs contain their own consolation, and, so to speak, their recompense: — they are better and more easily endured and with a readier courage than egotistical and selfish sorrows. It would be unjust to wish that it should be otherwise. So that Quatrefeuilles' heart was very soon sufficiently at leisure, and his mind sufficiently clear, to perceive that the rain was falling on his silk hat, and damaging its lustre, and he sighed:

“Another hat ruined.”

He had been a soldier, and had formerly served his King as a lieutenant of dragoons. Thus it was that an idea occurred to him. He proceeded to buy, at the library of the General Staff, on the parade-ground, at the corner road leading to the great stables, a map of the kingdom and a plan of the capital.

“One should never start on a campaign without maps,” he said. “But the devil of it is to read them. Here is the city with its suburbs. Where shall we begin? In the north, south, east, or west? It has been remarked that all cities spread westwards. Perhaps this affords us a hint which we should not neglect. It is possible that the dwellers in the western area, sheltered from the keen east wind, enjoy better health, have a more even temper, and are happier. Or rather, let us begin with the charming slopes rising from the bank of the river some thirty miles south of the city. The wealthiest families in the country live there at this time of the year. And whatever anyone may say, it is among the fortunate that we must look for a happy man.”

“Quatrefeuilles,” answered the private secretary, “I am not an enemy of society, neither am I opposed to public happiness. I will speak of the rich as an honest man, and a good citizen. The rich are worthy of love and veneration. While making further additions to their wealth, they support the State, and are benefactors even without intending it, for they feed a multitude of people who are occupied in the preservation and increase of their property. Oh! what a beautiful, worthy, and excellent thing is private wealth! How it should be considered, disburdened, and privileged by the wise legislator, and what an iniquitous, perfidious, disloyal thing it is, how contrary to the most sacred rights and the worthiest of interests, and disastrous and fatal to public finance to injure opulence! It is a social duty to believe in the virtue of the wealthy: it is also pleasant to believe in their happiness. Quatrefeuilles, let us proceed!”

CHAPTER VII. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WEALTH AND HAPPINESS

BEING resolved to apply first of all to the best and richest, Jacques Felgine-Cobur, who owned mountains of gold, mines of diamonds, and seas of petroleum, they followed for a long time the walls of his park, which enclosed immense meadows, forests, farms, and villages; at every gate of the demesne at which they presented themselves they were sent on to another, Tired of continually going backwards and forwards, and incessantly winding about, they saw, in the road, a road-mender breaking stones in front of a grille with armorial bearings, and asked him if that was the gate through which they would reach the residence of Monsieur Jacques Felgine-Cobur, whom they wished to see.

The man painfully straightened out his bony back, and turned towards them his sunken face, protected by wire goggles.

“I am Monsieur Jacques Felgine-Cobur,” he said.

Noticing their surprise, he continued:

“I break stones; it is my only amusement.” Then bending down again he struck a pebble with his hammer. It broke with a sharp crack.

As they moved off Saint-Sylvain said:

“He is too rich. His fortune is crushing him; he is unhappy.”

Quatrefeuilles was of opinion they might next call upon Jacques Felgine-Cobur’s rival, Joseph Machero, the iron king, whose brand-new chateau stood abhorrent upon a neighbouring hill, with its crenelated towers, and its walls pierced with machicolations bristling with watch-towers. Saint-Sylvain dissuaded him.

“You have seen his portrait; he looks pitiable; we know from the papers that he is full of piety, lives like a pauper, preaches to little boys, and sings psalms in church. Rather let us go and see the Prince de Lusance. He is a true aristocrat, who knows how to enjoy his money. He shuns the turmoil of business, and does not go to Court. He is a lover of gardens, and has the finest picture-gallery in the kingdom.”

They were announced. The Prince de Lusance received them in his cabinet of antiquities, where was to be seen the finest known Greek copy of the Cnidian Aphrodite, the work of a chisel worthy of Praxiteles, and full of beauty. The goddess appeared still wet from the waves of the sea. A rosewood cabinet, which had belonged to Madame de Pompadour, contained the finest gold and silver coins of Greece and Sicily. The Prince, a fine judge, was himself drawing up a

catalogue of his medals. His magnifying glass was still lingering over the glass case containing the engraved stones, jasper, onyx, sardonyx, and chalcedony, containing within the area of a finger-nail figures modelled in a large style, and groups composed with a magnificent breadth of feeling. With a loving hand, he took from his table a little bronze faun that his visitors might admire its contours and its patina. His language was worthy of the masterpiece which he was describing.

"I am awaiting," he said, "a consignment of antique silver, of cups and bowls, which are said to be more beautiful than those of Hildesheim and Bosco-reale! I am impatient to see them. Monsieur de Caylus knew no greater pleasure than that of opening cases. I am of his opinion."

Saint-Sylvain smiled.

"Nevertheless, my dear Prince, you are said to be an expert in all the pleasures."

"You flatter me, Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain. But I believe that the art of pleasure is the first of all arts, and that the rest are valueless except in so far as they minister to it."

He conducted his guests to the picture gallery, where were mingled the silvery tones of Veronese, the ambers of Titian, the reds of Rubens and Rembrandt, and the greys and roses of Velasquez; where the chorus of palettes formed a glorious harmony. A violin, lay forgotten on a chair before the portrait of a dark lady, with smooth-tressed hair and an olive complexion; her great chestnut eyes were the notable feature of her face. It was some unknown woman whose lines Ingres had caressed with a sure and loving hand.

"I will confess my ruling folly," said the Prince de Lusance. "Sometimes, when alone, I play before these pictures, and enjoy the illusion of translating into sound the harmony of line and colour. Before this portrait I try to convey the firm caress of the drawing, and, full of discouragement, I abandon my violin."

A window opened on to the park. The Prince and his guests leant upon the balcony.

"What a beautiful view!" said Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain.

Terraces, covered with statues, orange trees and flowers, led down by easy, gradual steps to the lawn edged with yoke-elms, and the fountains whence the water leaped up in white spouts from the conch-shells of Tritons and the urns of nymphs. Right and left spread a sea of verdure stretched in peaceful undulations to the distant river, whose silver thread could be followed among the poplars, under hills enveloped in rosy mists.

But lately smiling, the Prince directed a worried look toward a point in the vast and beautiful landscape.

“That chimney!” he murmured in a pained voice, pointing with his finger to a smoking factory chimney, more than half a league from the park.

“That chimney? One can hardly see it,” said Quatrefeuilles.

“I see nothing else,” replied the Prince. “For me, it spoils the whole view, the whole of nature, the whole of my life. The evil is beyond remedy. It belongs to a company which will not abandon its factory at any price. I have tried every means of hiding it, and have failed. It is making me ill.”

And, leaving the window, he threw himself into an arm-chair.

“We should have foreseen it,” said Quatrefeuilles, as they got in their carriage. “He is fastidious and unhappy.”

Before resuming their search they sat for a moment in the little garden of an inn which stood on the summit of the hill, whence they could see the beautiful valley and the clear winding river, with its oval islets. In spite of two desperate failures they still hoped to find a happy millionaire.

There yet remained a dozen in the country; amongst others, Monsieur Bloch, Monsieur Potiquet, Baron Nichol, the greatest manufacturer in the kingdom, and the Marquis de Granthosme, perhaps the richest of all, a member of an illustrious family, and as heavily loaded with honours as with wealth.

Near them a tall, thin man, bent double, and as limp as a bolster, was drinking a cup of milk; his great pale eyes were sunk deep in his cheeks; and his nose hung over his mouth. He appeared to be in the very depths of woe, and stared with distress at Quatrefeuilles’ boots.

After gazing at them for twenty minutes he rose, dismal and resolute, approached the First Equerry, and, apologizing for his importunity, said:

“Sir, allow me to ask a question which to me is of the greatest importance. How much do you pay for your boots?”

“Despite the peculiarity of your request,” answered Quatrefeuilles, “I see no objection to answering it. I paid sixty-five francs for this pair.”

For a long time the stranger alternately examined his own foot and that of his interlocutor, comparing the two boots with minute attention.

Then, pale, and with a voice full of emotion, he said:

“You say you paid sixty-five francs for those boots. Are you perfectly sure?”

“Why, certainly.”

“Sir, I beg you to be careful what you say.”

“Come, come,” muttered Quatrefeuilles, who was beginning to get annoyed, “you are a curious sort of bootmaker, sir!”

“I am not a bootmaker,” replied the stranger, with gentle humility. “I am the Marquis de Granthosme.”

Quatrefeuilles saluted him.

“Sir,” continued the Marquis, “I felt it: alas, I am still being robbed! You pay for your boots sixty-five francs; I pay for mine, precisely like yours, eighty-five francs. It is not the money that I consider; the price is no object to me, but I cannot endure being robbed. I see and breathe nothing around me but fraud, dishonesty, theft, and falsehood. I have a horror of my wealth, which corrupts all who comes near me — servants, stewards, contractors, neighbours, friends, wife and children. It makes me odious and contemptible to them. Mine is a cruel situation. I am never certain that the man before me is not dishonest. I feel ready to die of disgust and shame at being a member of the human species.”

And the Marquis seized his glass of milk, gasping: “Sixty-five francs! Sixty-five francs!”

At this moment groans and lamentations burst forth on the road, and the King’s two emissaries saw an old man, who was whining, followed by two gold-laced lackeys.

They were perturbed by the sight; but the innkeeper was quite indifferent.

“It is nothing,” he told them. “It’s only the rich Baron Nichol! He has gone mad, believes himself ruined, and goes lamenting day and night.”

“Baron Nichol!” cried Saint-Sylvain. “Yet another of those whose shirt you wished to ask for, Quatrefeuilles.”

After this last encounter, they abandoned any further quest of the health-giving shirt among the very rich of the kingdom.

As they were disappointed with their day’s work, and feared to be ill received at the Palace, they laid the blame on each other for their mistakes.

“What was your idea, Quatrefeuilles, in going among those people with any other object than the observation of abnormalities? There is nothing sane, nothing normal about them, whether their morals, ideas or sensations. They are all monsters.”

“What! Did you not say, Saint-Sylvain, that wealth was a virtue, that it was right to believe in the excellence of the wealthy, and delightful to believe in their happiness? But have a care: there is wealth and wealth. When the nobility is poor and the commonalty rich the State is overturned, and it is the end of everything.”

“Quatrefeuilles, I am sorry to have to say it, but you have no notion of the constitution of modern states. You do not understand the period in which you live. However, that does not matter. Suppose we were now to try gilded mediocrity? What do you think of that? I think we should be wise in attending to-morrow the receptions of the ladies of the city, both middle-class and titled. We shall have an opportunity of observing people of every condition, and, if you agree with me, we will first of all visit middle-class folks in a modest position.”

CHAPTER VIII. THE SALONS OF THE CAPITAL

THEY did so. To begin with, they called on Madame Souppe, whose husband was a manufacturer of food products in the north. They found that both Monsieur and Madame Souppe were miserable because they were not received by Madame Esterlin, whose husband was an ironmaster, and a Member of Parliament.

They went to Madame Esterlin's, and found her in great distress, and Monsieur Esterlin as well, because they were not received by Madame du Colombier, whose husband was a peer of the realm, and late Minister of Justice. When they came to Madame Colombier's house they found both the peer and his lady furious because they were not intimate with the Queen.

The visitors whom they met in these several houses were no less unhappy, disappointed or angry. Sickness, or wounded affection, or money troubles were consuming them. Those who possessed, and feared to lose, were even more unfortunate than those who had nothing. The obscure wished to shine, and the celebrities to shine yet more. The greater number were overwhelmed with work; and those who had nothing to do suffered a boredom more merciless than toil. Many of them pitied and felt the pains of others; they suffered with the sufferings of a wife or a beloved child. Many were declining under an illness from which they were not suffering, but which they believed they had contracted, or feared they might contract. —

A cholera epidemic had just been raging in the capital, and a financier was mentioned who, fearing to be attacked by the contagion, and knowing of no sufficiently safe refuge, committed suicide.

"The worst of it is," said Quatrefeuilles, "that all these people, not content with the real evils which are pelting them like hailstones, plunge into a bog of imaginary misfortunes."

"There are no imaginary misfortunes," answered Saint-Sylvain. "All evils are real as soon as one feels them, and the dream of sorrow is a genuine sorrow."

"Well," replied Quatrefeuilles, "when I pass a stone as big as a duck's egg, I could wish it were only a dream."

Once more Saint-Sylvain observed that men often plague themselves for opposite and contrary reasons.

In Madame du Colombier's drawing-room he conversed in succession with two men of great intelligence, enlightened and cultivated, who by the twists and turns which they unconsciously gave to their thoughts, revealed to him the moral

evil by which they were deeply attacked. It was from the state of public affairs that both derived the cause of their anxiety, but they derived it in diametrically opposite ways. Monsieur Brome lived in perpetual fear of a change. In the present stability, and in the midst of the peace and prosperity which the country was now enjoying, he dreaded disorders and feared a complete upheaval. He opened the papers with trembling hands: every morning he expected to find in them the news of riots and disturbances. Suffering under this impression, he magnified the most ordinary and insignificant incidents into preludes of revolution and forerunners of cataclysms. Believing himself always on the eve of a universal catastrophe he lived in perpetual terror.

Monsieur Sandrique, on the other hand, was eaten up by a stranger and more uncommon malady. Tranquillity bored him, public order annoyed him; peace was odious to him, and the sublime monotony of human and divine laws overwhelmed him. He called secretly for change, and feigning to fear them, he sighed for catastrophes. This good, kindly, pleasant creature could conceive no other amusement than the violent subversion of his country, of the world, of the universe; watching even the stars for collisions and conflagrations. Disappointed, despondent, melancholy, morose, when the tone of the papers and the aspect of the streets showed him the unchanging peaceableness of the nation, he suffered all the more thereby, because, owing to his knowledge of men and his experience of public business, he knew how firmly entrenched in the peoples are the spirit of conservation and the tradition of imitation and obedience, and how slowly and with how equal a pace the social system progressed.

At Madame du Colombier's reception Saint-Sylvain noted another contradiction, even greater and more important.

In a corner of the little drawing-room, Monsieur de La Galissoniere, President of the Civil Court, was conversing peacefully, and in a low voice, with Monsieur Larive-du-Mont, administrator of the Zoological Gardens.

"I will confess, my friend," said Monsieur de La Galissoniere, "that the idea of death is simply killing me. I never stop thinking of it, and am dying of it. Death terrifies me not of itself, for it is nothing, but because of what follows after, the future life. I am a believer; I have faith in the certainty of my immortality. Reason, instinct, science, and revelation all demonstrate the existence of an imperishable soul; all prove to me that the nature, the origin and the ends of man are as they are taught by the Church. I am a Christian, and believe in eternal punishment; and the terrible idea of this punishment incessantly pursues me. I fear hell, and this fear, stronger than any other feeling, destroys my hope and all the virtues necessary to salvation, throws me into despair, and exposes me to the reprobation which I dread. I am damned by the

fear of damnation, I am cast into hell by the dread of it, and, still living, I suffer eternal torments in advance. There is no punishment comparable to that which I am enduring, and which becomes acuter from year to year, from day to day, from hour to hour, since every day and every minute brings me nearer to that which I dread. My life is one agony full of fears and horrors.”

As he spoke the magistrate beat the air with his hands, as if to ward off the undying flames by which he felt surrounded.

“My dear friend, I envy you,” sighed Monsieur Larive-du-Mont. “Compared with me, you are a happy man. The idea of death rends me also; but how that idea differs from yours, and how far it surpasses it in horror! I am only too firmly persuaded by my studies and observations, by the continuous practice of comparative anatomy, and by deep research into the constitution of matter, that the words soul, spirit, immortality, spirituality, represent merely physical phenomena, or their negation, and that, for us, the limit of life is also that of consciousness, seeing that death consummates our complete destruction. There is no word to express what follows life, for the term nothingness which we employ is merely a sign of denial before the whole of nature. Nothingness is an infinite nothing, and by this we are enveloped. Thence we came, and thither we shall return; we are like a shell on the sea, between two voids.

“Nothingness is at once the impossible, and the certain: it cannot be conceived, yet it exists. The misery of man, and his crime, look you, lies in having discovered these things. The other animals do not know them: we should have ignored them for ever. To be, and cease to be! The horror of this idea makes my hair stand on end; it never leaves me. For me that which will not be spoils and corrupts that which is: the void swallows me by anticipation. Wicked absurdity! I feel myself, I see myself there.”

“I am more to be pitied than you,” said Monsieur de La Galissoniere. “Every time you pronounce that false and delicious word, nothingness, its sweetness soothes my soul, and promises me, like a sick man’s pillow, sleep and rest.”

But Larive-du-Mont answered:

“My sufferings are more unbearable than yours, for the vulgar support the idea of eternal hell-fire, while an uncommon strength of mind is required to be an atheist. A religious training and a mystical bent of mind have given you the fear and hatred of human life. Not only are you a Christian and a Catholic; you are also a Jansenist, you carry at your side the abyss which Pascal skirted. For my part, I love life, this earthly life, life as it is, this dirty life. I love it, brutal, base, and coarse; I love it, sordid, filthy, and spoiled; I love it, stupid, imbecile, and cruel; I love it in its obscenity, in its ignominy, in its infamy, with all its stains, its stinks, its deformities, its corruptions and its infections. Feeling that it

is escaping and eluding me, I tremble like a coward, and become mad with despair.

“On Sundays and holidays I wander through the populous parts of the town, mixing with the crowd in the streets, plunging into the groups of men, women, and children round the street singers, or before the showmen’s booths. I rub up against dirty petticoats and greasy blouses; I inspire the heavy, warm odours of breath and sweat and hair. It seems to me that in this swarming life I feel further from death. I hear a voice saying:

“‘I alone shall cure you of the fear which I inspire; I alone shall give you rest from the weariness with which my threats overwhelm you.’

“But I don’t want it, I don’t want it!”

“Alas!” said the magistrate. “If we do not cure in this world the evils by which our souls are ruined, death will bring us no peace.”

“And what infuriates me,” resumed the scientist, “is that when we are both dead, I shall not even have the satisfaction of saying:— ‘You see, La Galissoniere, I was not mistaken; there is nothing.’ I shall not enjoy the pleasure of having been right. And you will never be undeceived. At what a price is thought repaid! You are unhappy, my friend, because your mind is stronger and more capacious than that of the animals, and the majority of men. And I am unhappier than you because I have greater genius.”

Quatrefeuilles, who had caught scraps of this conversation, was not greatly impressed.

“These are mental troubles,” he said. “They may be acute, but they are uncommon. I am more alarmed by the more ordinary woes, sufferings, and deformities of the body, disappointments in love, and lack of money, which make our search so difficult.”

“Besides,” observed Saint-Sylvain, “those two gentlemen are too urgent in forcing their doctrine to make them miserable. If La Galissoniere were to consult a good Jesuit father he would soon be reassured, and Larive-du-Mont ought to know that one can be an atheist, with serenity like Lucretius, or with enjoyment, like Andre Chenier. He should repeat the verse of Homer: ‘Patroclus is dead, who was worth more than you,’ and consent with better grace some day to join his masters, the philosophers of antiquity, the humanists of the Renaissance, the modern scholars, and so many others of greater worth than himself. ‘Paris and Helen are dead,’ said Francois Villon. ‘We are all mortal,’ said Cicero. ‘We all die,’ said that woman whom wisdom the Holy Scripture praised in the Second Book of Kings.”

CHAPTER IX. THE HAPPINESS OF BEING LOVED

THEY went to dine in the Royal Park, a fashionable promenade, which is in the capital of King Christophe what the Bois de Boulogne is in Paris, the Cambre in Brussels, Hyde Park in London, the Thiergarten in Berlin, the Prater in Vienna, the Prado in Madrid, the Cascine in Florence, and the Pinclo in Rome. Seated in the open air, amidst the brilliant crowd of diners, their eyes wandered over the great hats covered with flowers and feathers, roving canopies of pleasure, moving screens of love, dovecotes to which desire winged its way.

“I believe,” said Quatrefeuilles, “that what we are looking for is here. I have been loved, like every one else: that was Happiness, Saint-Sylvain: and once more I ask myself whether this is not man’s only happiness; and although I carry the weight of a bladder more loaded with stones than a waggon coming out of a quarry, there are days when I feel as full of love as when I was twenty.”

“I,” answered Saint-Sylvain, “am a misogynist. I cannot forgive women for being of the same sex as Madame de Saint-Sylvain. They are all, I know, less foolish, less malignant, and less ugly, but it is too much that they should have something in common with her.”

“Never mind that, Saint-Sylvain. I repeat that what we are looking for is here, and that we have only to stretch out our hands to grasp it.”

Pointing to a handsome man sitting alone at a little table, he said:

“You know Jacques de Navicelle. He pleases women, all women. That is happiness, or I don’t know what is.”

Saint-Sylvain was of opinion that they had better make sure.

They invited Jacques de Navicelle to join their table, and as they dined they chatted with him in a familiar fashion. Twenty times, by circuitous approaches, or sharp turns, by frontal or flank attack, by insinuation, or perfectly frankly, they endeavoured to learn whether he was happy, without being able to learn anything about their companion, whose cultivated conversation and charming features expressed neither joy nor sorrow. Jacques de Navicelle talked freely, showing himself open and natural; he even indulged in confidences, but they concealed his secret, and left him all the more impenetrable. There was no doubt but that he was loved; was he happy or unhappy? By the time the fruit was brought the King’s two inquisitors gave up hope of learning. Fatigued by their campaign, they talked idly, and about themselves; Saint-Sylvain about his wife,

and Quatrefeuilles about his stone, in which he resembled Montaigne. They exchanged stories as they drank their liqueurs: the story of Madame Berille, who slipped out of a private room, disguised as a pastrycook's boy, with a basket on her head; the story of General Debonnaire, and the Baroness de Bildermann; the story of Monsieur Vizire and Madame Ceres, who, like Antony and Cleopatra, squandered an empire in kisses, and many others, old and new. Jacques de Navicelle told a story of the East.

"There was a young merchant of Bagdad, who lying one morning on his bed, felt full of love, and, with loud exclamations, prayed that he might be beloved of all women. A djinn who overheard him appeared to him and said:

"Your desire is already accomplished. From this day forth you will be beloved by all women." Immediately the young merchant leapt joyfully from his bed, and, promising himself varied and inexhaustible pleasures, went down into the street. He had hardly gone a few steps when a horrible old woman, who was filtering wine in a cellar, blew him kisses through the grating. He averted his head in disgust, but the old woman caught him by the leg, dragged him into the cellar, and there kept him a prisoner for twenty years."

As Jacques de Navicelle was finishing the story, a waiter came up to tell him that some one was asking for him. He rose, and with dull eye and hanging head strolled off to the gate of the garden, where, sitting back in a coupe, a somewhat forbidding figure was awaiting him.

"He has just been telling us his own story," said Saint-Sylvain. "The young merchant of Bagdad is himself."

Quatrefeuilles struck his forehead.

"Some one told me that he was guarded by a dragon. I had forgotten it."

They returned late to the Palace with no other shirts but their own. They found King Christophe and Madame de la Poule weeping bitterly as they listened to a sonata by Mozart.

Owing to association with the King, Madame de la Poule suffered from melancholia, nursing gloomy ideas and foolish terrors. She believed herself to be persecuted, and the victim of abominable schemes. She lived in perpetual fear of being poisoned, and obliged her maids to taste all her food. She was terrified of death, and the attraction of suicide. The King's condition was aggravated by that of the lady, with whom he passed melancholy days.

"Painters," said Christophe V, "are sad artificers of imposture. They lend a touching beauty to weeping women, and show us an Andromache, an Artemis, a Magdalenes, and an Heloise adorned by their tears. I have a portrait of Adrienne Lecouvreur in the role of Cornelia, watering with her tears the ashes of Pompey;

she is adorable. Directly Madame de la Poule begins to cry, her face screws up, her nose becomes red, and she is ugly enough to frighten you.”

The unhappy Prince, who was living only in expectation of the health-giving shirt, abused Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain for their neglect, incapacity, and bad luck, reckoning that, of these three charges, one at least would be just.

“You will let me die, like my doctors, Saumon and Machellier. But that’s their profession. From you I hoped better things; I relied on your devotion and intelligence. I see that I was mistaken. Are you not ashamed to return empty-handed? Was your mission so difficult to fulfil? Is it then so hard to find the shirt of a happy man? If you are not even capable of that, of what use are you? One is never well served unless by oneself. It is true of private individuals, and still truer of kings.

I shall go at once myself and look for this shirt which you cannot find.”

Throwing off his night-cap and dressing-gown, he asked for his clothes.

Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain endeavoured to restrain him.

“Sire, how rash, in your condition.”

“Sire, it has struck midnight.”

“Do you then think that happy folk go to bed like hens?” asked the King. “Are there no places of amusement in my capital, no night restaurants? My Prefect of Police has closed all the night houses; but are there any the fewer open? However, I shall not need to enter the clubs. I shall find what I want in the streets, and on the benches.”

Barely dressed, Christophe V skipped over Madame de la Poule, who was twisting in convulsions on the floor, dashed down the stairs, and ran across the garden. The dismayed Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain followed him afar off in silence.

CHAPTER X. WHETHER HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN NO LONGER BEING CONSCIOUS OF ONESELF

REACHING the main road, shaded by old elms, which bordered the Royal Park, he perceived a man, young, of wonderful beauty, who, leaning against a tree, was contemplating with an expression of delight the stars, which traced in the pure sky their sparkling and mysterious signs. His curly locks were shaken by the breeze; In his eyes there shone a reflection of the heavenly brilliance.

“I have found it!” thought the King.

He approached this handsome, smiling young man, who started slightly at the sight of him.

“I must apologize, sir,” said the sovereign, “for disturbing your meditation. But the question which I am about to put to you has, for me, a vital interest. Do not refuse to reply to a man who is perhaps in a position to oblige you, and who will not be ungrateful. Sir, are you happy?”

“I am.”

“Is there nothing lacking to your happiness?”

“Nothing. To be sure, it has not always been so. Like all other men, I have felt the evils of life; perhaps I have felt them more grievously than most. They befell me owing neither to my private condition nor to fortuitous circumstances, but to the essential basis, common to all men, and everything that breathes. I did know a great uneasiness; it has entirely disappeared. I enjoy perfect calm, and sweet cheerfulness: all within me is contentment, serenity, and a deep satisfaction: I am penetrated throughout by a subtle joy. You meet me, sir, at the most beautiful moment of my life, and since fortune has caused me to meet you, I will take you as witness to my happiness.

“At last I am free, exempt from all the fears and terrors by which men are assailed, from the ambitions which eat them up, and the crazy hopes which devour them. I am above Fate: I am escaping from man’s two invincible enemies, Space and Time. I am able to defy Destiny. I possess absolute Happiness, and merge myself in the Divine. This happy condition is my own work: it is due to a resolution I have taken, so wise, good, beautiful, virtuous, and efficacious, that in grasping it one is deified.

“I swim in joy, I am magnificently intoxicated. With full consciousness, and in the sublime plenitude of its meaning, I pronounce this phrase of all frenzies, raptures, and enthusiasms: ‘I no longer know myself!’”

He pulled out his watch and said:

“The hour is come. Good-bye.”

“One word more, sir. You can save me. I”

“One can only be saved by following my example. You must leave me here. Good-bye!”

And the unknown, with an heroic step and a youthful gait, darted into the wood bordering on the road. Christophe, regardless of his words, followed him. As he was entering the undergrowth he heard a report, stepped forward, brushed aside the branches, and saw the happy young man lying on the grass, his temple pierced by a bullet, still grasping a revolver in his right hand.

The King fainted at the sight. Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain, hastening up, helped him to recover his senses, and conveyed him to the Palace. Christophe made inquiries about the young man who had found such a desperate happiness under his eyes. He learned that he was the heir of a rich and noble family, as intelligent as he was handsome, and always a favourite of Fortune.

CHAPTER XI. SIGISMOND DUX

ON the following day, Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain, still in search of the medicinal shirt, as they were walking down the Rue de la Constitution, met the Comtesse de Cecile, coming out of a music shop. They escorted her to her carriage.

“Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles,” she said, “you were not visible yesterday at Professor Quilleboeuf’s clinic; nor you either, Monsieur de Saint-Sylvain. You were wrong not to come; it was very interesting. Professor Quilleboeuf had invited all the fashionable world to his operation at five o’clock, a delightful ovariectomy. It was both crowded and select. There were flowers, smart dresses, and music; ices were served. The Professor exhibited wonderful grace and elegance. He had films taken for the cinematograph.”

This description did not greatly surprise Quatrefeuilles. He knew that Professor Quilleboeuf operated to an accompaniment of luxury and pleasure: he would have asked him for his shirt if a few days previously he had not seen the famous surgeon inconsolable because he had not operated on the two greatest celebrities of the day, the German Emperor, who had just had a cyst removed by Professor Hilmacher, and the dwarf at the Folies-Bergeres, who, having swallowed a hundred nails, objected to having her stomach opened, and treated herself with castor oil.

Saint-Sylvain stopping in front of the music shop, contemplated the bust of Sigismond Dux, and uttered a loud cry:

“That’s the man we’re looking for. There’s the happy man!”

The bust, a very good likeness, represented a noble and regular set of features; one of those full, harmonious faces which have a look of a globe of the world. Although very bald, and already old, the great composer appeared no less charming than magnificent. His cranium was as round as the dome of a church, but a rather thick nose was planted beneath it with a loving and profane robustness; a close-clipped beard failed to conceal the fleshy lips, an erotic and a Bacchic mouth. It was the very likeness of the genius who composed the most pious oratorios and the most passionate and sensual opera-music.

“Why,” continued Saint-Sylvain, “did we never think of Sigismond Dux, who so thoroughly enjoys his stupendous glory, is clever enough to seize all its advantages, and just madcap enough to spare himself the constraint and the boredom of high position: the most spiritual and most sensual of geniuses, happy

as a god, serene as a beast, combining in his countless love-affairs the most brutal cynicism with the most exquisite delicacy?"

"He has a rich and varied temperament," said Quatrefeuilles. "His shirt can do His Majesty nothing but good. Let us go and seek him out." They were introduced into a vast, sonorous chamber like a cafe concert hall. An organ, raised on three steps, covered one section of the wall with its case of innumerable pipes. Wearing a doge's cap, and a dalmatic of brocade, Sigismond Dux was improvising melodies, and under his fingers were born sounds which troubled the soul, and melted the heart. On the three steps, covered with purple, a group of seated women, magnificent or charming, long, thin and serpentine, or plump, compact, and of a splendid massiveness, all equally beautified by desire and love, burning and swooning, writhed at his feet. The whole hall was filled with a quivering crowd of young American women, Jewish financiers, diplomatists, dancers, singers, Catholic, Anglican and Buddhist priests, black princes, piano-tuners, reporters, lyric poets, photographers, men dressed as women, and women dressed as men. They were pressed together, mingled and amalgamated, and formed a single adoring mass. Above them, climbing the columns, astride the candelabras, and hanging to the lustres, swayed young and agile devotees. This vast crowd was swimming in a sea of intoxication: it was what is called a private performance.

The organ ceased. A cloud of women surrounded the Master, who half emerged from time to time, like a brilliant star, to dive back into it immediately. He was gentle, coaxing, lascivious, and slippery. Amiable, no more of a coxcomb than need be, big as the world, and pretty as a cherub, as he smiled he showed through his grey beard teeth like a young child's, and uttered, to each in turn, facile and pretty phrases with which they were delighted, and which could not be remembered, so airy were they, so that their charm remained unabated, embellished with mystery. He was equally pleasant and friendly with the men, and seeing Saint-Sylvain, he embraced him three times, and said he loved him dearly; the King's secretary lost not a moment; he asked for a few moments' confidential conversation on behalf of the King, and, having explained briefly the important mission with which he was entrusted, he said:

"Master, give me your sh—"

He stopped, noticing that Sigismond Dux's features had suddenly become distorted.

In the street a barrel-organ had begun to grind out "The Jonquil Polka." And at the very first bars the great man had turned pale.

This "Jonquil Polka," the rage of the season, had been composed by a miserable, obscure violinist, Bouquin by name, employed in a dancing hall, and

the master, crowned with forty years of love and glory, could not bear that some small portion of praise should be diverted to Bouquin: he regarded it as an insupportable insult. God himself is jealous, and afflicted by man's ingratitude. Sigismond Dux could not hear "The Jonquil Polka" without falling ill.

He abruptly deserted Saint-Sylvain, his crowd of adorers, his magnificent flock of swooning women, and rushed to his dressing-room, where he was violently sick.

"He is to be pitied," sighed Saint-Sylvain.

And, dragging Quatrefeuilles by his coat-tails, he crossed the unfortunate musician's threshold.

CHAPTER XII. WHETHER VICE IS A VIRTUE

FOR fourteen months, from morn to eve, from nightfall to daylight, they scoured the city and the suburbs, observing, examining, interrogating in vain. The King, who was losing strength from day to day and who now had some idea of the difficulties of such a quest, gave orders to the Minister of the Interior to institute a special commission, charged, under the direction of Messieurs Quatrefeuilles, Chaudesaigues, Saint-Sylvain, and Froidefond, to proceed, with full powers, to a secret inquiry on the subject of the happy persons in the kingdom. The Prefect of Police, in compliance with the Minister's wishes, placed his most capable subordinates at the disposal of the Commission, and in a very short space of time the happy were sought out, in the capital, with all the zeal and devotion which in other countries is devoted to hunting down wrongdoers and anarchists. Should a citizen be reputed fortunate he was immediately denounced, spied upon and tracked down. Two of the Prefect's officials dragged their heavy iron-soled boots without remission before the windows of anyone suspected of being happy. Did a man of fashion take a box at the opera he was immediately placed under supervision. An eye was kept on any owner of a training-stable whose horse won a race. In all houses of appointment a clerk of the Prefecture, seated in the office, took a note of those entering. On the remark of the Prefect of Police that Virtue was the source of happiness benefactors, founders of charitable institutions, generous givers, deserted but faithful wives, citizens remarkable for acts of devotion, heroes and martyrs were all alike denounced, and submitted to the most minute investigation.

This supervision weighed upon the whole city, but its reason was an absolute mystery. To no one had Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain confided that they were looking for a lucky shirt, for fear, as has been already explained, that ambitious people, or avaricious individuals feigning to enjoy a perfect happiness, should impose on the King, as a happy article, some article of clothing impregnated with misery, care, and disappointments.

The extraordinary measures of the Police scattered uneasiness among the upper classes, and there was a certain ferment noted in the city. Several highly respected ladies found themselves compromised, and there were outbursts of scandal.

The Commission met every morning at the Royal Library, under the presidency of Monsieur de Quatrefeuilles, assisted by Messieurs Trou and Boncassis, on special duty. At every sitting it examined an average of fifteen

hundred reports. After a session of four months it had not yet secured a happy man.

As the President, Quatrefeuilles, was bewailing the situation, Monsieur Boncassis exclaimed:

“Alas, it is vice that causes us to suffer, and all men have vices!”

“I have none,” said Monsieur Chaudesaigues, “and the result is that I am in despair. Life without vice is nothing but weariness, despondency, and sadness. Vice is the only distraction that one can taste in this world: vice is the colour of life, the salt of the soul, and the light of the mind. What do I say? vice is original, man’s only creative power; it is the attempt of a natural organization against nature itself, of the enthronement of human sovereignty over animal sovereignty, of human creation over animal creation, of a conscious world in the midst of the universal unconsciousness: vice is man’s sole personal property, his real patrimony, his true virtue in the correct sense of the word, since virtue is the tact of being man (*virtus* , *vir*).

“I have tried to acquire some; I have been unable to do so; it requires genius, a natural gift — an assumed vice is not a vice.”

“Well,” asked Quatrefeuilles, “what do you call vice?”

“I call vice an habitual predisposition to what the majority regard as evil and abnormal: that is to say, individual morality, individual strength, individual virtue, beauty, power, and genius.”

“That’s all right,” said the Counsellor Trou, “it’s only a matter of understanding one another.” But Saint-Sylvain strongly combated the librarian’s opinion.

“Don’t talk of vices,” he said, “since you have none. You don’t know what they are. I have some; I have several, and I can assure you that I derive thence less pleasure than inconvenience. There is nothing more fatiguing than a vice. One worries, heats oneself, and exhausts oneself in satisfying it, and when it is satisfied one only experiences an Immense disgust.”

“You would not speak thus, sir,” answered Chaudesaigues, “if you had fine vices, noble, proud, imperious, lofty, really virtuous vices. But you have nothing but mean, fearful, ridiculous little vices. You are not, sir, a great affronter of the gods.”

At first Saint-Sylvain felt hurt by this remark, but the librarian explained that there was nothing offensive in it. Saint-Sylvain agreed with a good grace, and with calmness and resolution made the following reflexion:

“Alas, virtue, like vice, and vice, like virtue, consists in effort, constraint, conflict, trouble, toil, and exhaustion! That is why we are all unhappy.”

But the President, Quatrefeuilles, complained that his head would burst.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “please do not let us argue. We are not here for that.”

And he closed the meeting.

The result of this Commission on Happiness was the same as that of all Commissions, Parliamentary, and extra-Parliamentary, In all times and in all countries: it ended in nothing, and, having sat for five years, it was dissolved after producing no useful result.

The King got no better. Neurasthenia, like the Old Man of the Sea, assumed various terrible shapes to bring him low. He complained of feeling that all his organs had become erratic, and were moving incessantly inside his body into unaccustomed positions, his kidneys into his gullet, his heart into his calf, his intestines into his nose, His liver into his throat, and his brain into his stomach.

“You cannot imagine,” he said, “how painful these sensations are, and how they throw one’s ideas into confusion.”

“Sire, I can appreciate it all the better,” said Quatrefeuilles, “because in my youth it often happened that my stomach rose into my brain, and you can imagine how that upset my ideas. My mathematical studies suffered much in consequence.”

The worse Christophe’s sufferings, the more eagerly did he demand the shirt which had been prescribed for him.

CHAPTER XIII. MONSIEUR LE CURE MITON

I AM coming back to the idea," said Saint-Sylvain to Quatrefeuilles, "that the failure of our search is caused by our faulty method. I certainly believe in virtue and I believe in happiness. They are inseparable. They are rare. They conceal themselves. We shall find them under humble roofs in the depth of the country. If you agree, we will, for choice, seek them in that rugged mountain country which is our Savoy, our Tyrol." A fortnight later they had investigated sixty mountain villages without finding a single happy man. In these hamlets they found all the miseries that distressed the towns, accentuated by the uncouthness and ignorance of the people. Love and hunger, those two scourges of nature, struck the miserable inhabitants with even harder and more urgent blows. They saw greedy masters, jealous husbands, lying wives, maid-servants who poisoned their employers, men-servants who murdered them, incestuous fathers, and children who emptied the kneading-trough over their grandfather's head as he sat dozing by the fireside. These peasants had no pleasure save drunkenness; even their joys were brutal, and their games cruel. Their holidays would end with bloody hand-to-hand fights.

The further they observed them, Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain recognized that the morals of these men could not be either better or purer, that the niggard earth made them mean, that a hard life made them callous to others' troubles, as also to their own, and that if they were jealous, covetous, false, liars, and incessantly busy in cheating one another, it was the natural effect of their misery and indigence.

"How could I have ever imagined that happiness dwelt under a thatched roof?" Saint-Sylvain asked himself. "It is probably due to a classical education. Virgil, in his administrative poem, the *Georgics*, says that the countryfolk would be happy did they recognize their good fortune. He thereby admits that they do not know it. As a matter of fact, he was writing by the order of Augustus, an excellent steward of the Empire, who feared that Rome would lack bread, and was seeking to repopulate the country districts. Virgil, like every one else, knew that the life of the peasantry is a laborious one. Hesiod draws a frightful picture of it."

"One thing is certain," said Quatrefeuilles, "and that is, that in all parts of the world the countryboys and girls have only one desire, to get work in a town. On the sea coast the girls dream of employment in a sardine factory. In the coal districts, the country lads long for nothing so much as to go down a mine."

One man, in these mountains, displayed, amid care-worn brows and frowning faces, an ingenuous smile. He could neither work on the land nor drive the beasts; he was ignorant of all that other men knew. His words were wanting in sense, and all day long he sang a little song which he never finished. He was delighted with everything, and lived among the angels. His coat was composed of scraps of every colour fantastically sewn together. The children used to follow him and make fun of him, but as he had the reputation of a luck-bringer nobody harmed him, and the little he needed was given him. He was Hurtepoix, the simpleton. He fed at the cottage doors, with the dogs, and slept in barns.

Seeing that he was happy, and suspecting that it was not without some reason that the countryfolk regarded him as a luck-bringer, after much reflexion Saint-Sylvain sought him out to secure his shirt. He found him lying prostrate, weeping bitterly in the church porch, Hurtepoix had just learned of the death of Jesus Christ, crucified for the salvation of mankind.

Going down to a village where the mayor was an innkeeper, the two King's officers asked him to drink with them, and inquired if, by chance, he knew of a happy man.

"Gentlemen," he answered, "go to the village on the other side of the valley, whose white houses you see hanging to the mountain-side, and call on the Cure Miton; he will be glad to see you, and you will meet a happy man, who deserves his happiness. You will get there in two hours."

The mayor offered to hire them horses, and after lunch they set off.

A young man, travelling the same road, and better mounted, caught them up at the first bend. He had an open countenance, and an air of cheerfulness and health. They entered into conversation with him.

Learning that they were about to call on the Cure Miton, he said:

"Please give him my kind regards. I am going farther up to Sizeraie, where I live, in the midst of beautiful pastures. I am in a hurry to get there."

He told them that he had married the best and most loving of wives, and that she had presented him with two children, a boy and a girl, as beautiful as day.

"I am on my way from the country town," he added in a cheerful tone, "and I am taking back some handsome dresses in the piece, with patterns and plates of the fashions, which show the effect of the costume. Alice — my wife — has no idea of the present I am bringing her. I shall give her the parcels all wrapped up, and I shall have the pleasure of watching her impatient fingers worrying to undo the knots. She will be very pleased: her delighted eyes, full of a cool light, will raise themselves to mine, and she will kiss me. Alice and I are happy. We have been married four years, and love each other more every day. We have the richest meadows in the country-side. Our servants are happy too, they are fine

reapers and dancers. You must come and see us some Sunday, gentlemen; you will drink our white wine, and you will watch at their dancing the most graceful girls in the country, and the strongest lads, who pick up their partners and make them fly round like a feather. Our home is half an hour from here. You turn to the right by those two rocks which you see fifty yards ahead, and which are called the Chamois-feet: then you go over a wooden bridge thrown across a torrent, and through the pine-wood which protects us from the north wind. In less than half an hour I shall be home, and we shall all four be very happy."

"We must ask him for his shirt," said Quatrefeuilles in a low voice to Saint-Sylvain. "I expect it is as good as that of the Cure Miton."

"I expect so," said Saint-Sylvain.

At the moment they were thus speaking a rider came down through the Chamois-feet, and stopped, sad and silent, before the travellers.

Recognizing one of his farm hands, the young master said:

"What's the matter, Ulric?"

Ulric made no reply.

"Has some misfortune happened? Speak!"

"Sir, your wife was anxious to see you again, and came down to meet you. The wooden bridge broke, and she was drowned in the torrent with both children."

Leaving the young mountaineer mad with grief, they went on to Monsieur Miton, and were received at the presbytery, in a room that served the cure both as parlour and as library. There were here a thousand volumes on pine shelves, and against the whitewashed walls hung old engravings of landscapes after Claude Lorrain and Poussin. Everything pointed to a culture and a habit of mind not usually encountered in a village presbytery.

Monsieur Miton, a middle-aged man, had a kind, intelligent air.

To his two visitors, who pretended that they were desirous of settling in the country, he praised the climate, and the fertile beauty of the valley. He offered them white bread, fruit, cheese, and milk. He then led them into his kitchen garden, which was delightfully fresh and tidy. On the wall which received the sun the espaliers extended their branches with geometrical precision. The distaffshaped fruit-trees stood at equal distances from one another, very regular and well laden.

"You are never bored, Monsieur le cure?" asked Quatrefeuilles.

"The time appears short between my garden and my library," answered the priest. "Quiet and peaceful as it is, my life is none the less active and laborious. I celebrate the offices, I visit the poor and sick, and I confess my parishioners. The poor creatures have not many sins to relate; can I complain of that? But they take

a long time telling them. I have to set aside a certain amount of time to prepare my sermons and catechisms; catechisms, in particular, give me a lot of trouble, although I have been doing them for twenty years. Talking to children is such a serious matter; they believe everything they are told. I have also my hours of amusement; I go for walks; they are always the same, and they are infinitely varied. A landscape changes with the seasons, the days, the hours, and the minutes; 'it is always different and always new. In bad weather I pass the long evenings pleasantly with old friends, the chemist, the schoolmaster, and the magistrate. We indulge in music. My servant, Morine, excels in cooking chestnuts: we feast on them. What tastes better than chestnuts, with a glass of white wine?"

"Sir," said Quatrefeuilles to the good priest, "we are on His Majesty's service. We have come to ask you to make a statement, which will be of the greatest consequence to the country, and to the whole world. It is a matter of the King's health, and perhaps of his life. For this reason, we beg of you to excuse our question, strange and indiscreet as it may appear, and to answer without any concealment or reservation whatever. Monsieur le cure, are you happy?"

Monsieur Miton took Quatrefeuilles' hand, pressed it, and said in a voice so low as to be hardly audible:

"My life is a torture. I live a perpetual lie. I do not believe."

Two tears rolled down from his eyes.

CHAPTER XIV AND LAST. A HAPPY MAN

HAVING travelled through the country for a year in vain, Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain returned to the Chateau of Fontblande, whither the King had gone to enjoy the coolness of the woods. They found him in a state of prostration which was alarming the Court.

The guests did not lodge at the Chateau de Fontblande, which was hardly more than a hunting-box. The secretary and the equerry had taken lodgings in the village, and every day they walked through the woods to visit their Sovereign. On the way they often met a little man who lived in a great hollow plane-tree in the forest. His name was Mousque, and he was far from handsome, with his pug face, prominent cheek-bones, and large nose with round nostrils. But his square teeth, which his red lips often uncovered in laughter, gave his wild face an appearance of brightness and cheeriness. How he had taken possession of the great hollow plane-tree no one knew; but he had made himself a very tidy room there, furnished with all that he required. Truth to tell, he needed little. He lived on the forest and the lake, and he lived very well. The irregularity of his condition was overlooked, because he made himself useful, and knew how to please people. When the ladies at the chateau drove in the forest, he would offer them, in baskets of osier plaited by himself, sections of honey, wild strawberries, or the tart, sweet fruit of the wild cherry. He was always ready to put his shoulder to the wheel of a cart foundered in the mire, and would help to fetch in the hay if the weather was threatening. He would do more than others without getting tired. His strength and activity were extraordinary. He could break a wolf's jaw-bone with his hands, run down a hare, and climb trees like a cat. To amuse the children he made reed flutes, little windmills, and Hieron's fountains.

Quatrefeuilles and Saint-Sylvain often heard it said in the village: "Happy as Mousque." This proverb impressed their minds, and one day, passing the hollow plane-tree, they saw Mousque playing with a young puppy, and apparently as happy as the dog. It occurred to them to ask whether he was happy.

Mousque was unable to answer, not having reflected on the subject of happiness. They explained generally and very simply what it meant. After thinking it over for a moment he answered that he possessed it.

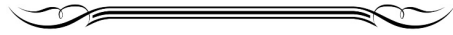
At this reply, Saint-Sylvain called out impetuously:

"Mousque, we will get you everything that you can want, gold, a palace, new shoes, anything that you would like: but give us your shirt."

His kindly face expressed neither regret nor disappointment, which he was quite incapable of feeling, but a great surprise. He made a sign that he could not give what they asked of him. He had not a shirt.

THE END

CHILD LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY



CONTENTS

FANCHON

THE FANCY-DRESS BALL

THE SCHOOL

MARIE

THE PANDEAN PIPES

ROGER'S STUD

COURAGE

CATHERINE'S "AT HOME"

LITTLE SEA-DOGS

GETTING WELL

ACROSS THE MEADOWS

THE MARCH PAST

DEAD LEAVES

SUZANNE

FISHING

THE PENALTIES OF GREATNESS

A CHILD'S DINNER PARTY

FANCHON

FANCHON went early one morning, like Little Red Riding-Hood, to see her grandmother, who lives right at the other end of the village. But Fanchon did not stop like little Red Riding-Hood, to gather nuts in the wood. She went straight on her way and she did not meet the wolf. From a long way off she saw her grandmother sitting on the stone step at her cottage door, a smile on her toothless mouth and her arms, as dry and knotty as an old vine-stock, open to welcome her little granddaughter. It rejoices Fanchon's heart to spend a whole day with her grandmother; and her grandmother, whose trials and troubles are all over and who lives as happy as a cricket in the warm chimney-corner, is rejoiced too to see her son's little girl, the picture of her own childhood.

They have many things to tell each other, for one of them is coming back from the journey of life which the other is setting out on.

"You grow a bigger girl every day," says the old grandmother to Fanchon, "and every day I get smaller; I scarcely need now to stoop at all to touch your forehead. What matters my great age when I can see the roses of my girlhood blooming again in your cheeks, my pretty Fanchon?"

But Fanchon asked to be told again — for the hundredth time — all about the glittering paper flowers under the glass shade, the coloured pictures where our Generals in brilliant uniforms are overthrowing their enemies, the gilt cups, some of which have lost their handles, while others have kept theirs, and grandfather's gun that hangs above the chimney-piece from the nail where he put it up himself for the last time, thirty years ago.

But time flies, and the hour is come to get ready the midday dinner. Fanchon's grandmother stirs up the drowsy fire; then she breaks the eggs on the black earthenware platter. Fanchon is deeply interested in the bacon omelette as she watches it browning and sputtering over the fire. There is no one in the world like her grandmother for making omelettes and telling pretty stories. Fanchon sits on the settle, her chin on a level with the table, to eat the steaming omelette and drink the sparkling cider. But her grandmother eats her dinner, from force of habit, standing at the fireside. She holds her knife in her right hand, and in the other a crust of bread with her toothsome morsel on it. When both have done eating:

"Grandmother," says Fanchon, "tell me the 'Blue Bird.'"

And her grandmother tells Fanchon how, by the spite of a bad fairy, a beautiful Prince was changed into a sky-blue bird, and of the grief the Princess

felt when she heard of the transformation and saw her love fly all bleeding to the window of the Tower where she was shut up.

Fanchon thinks and thinks.

“Grandmother,” she says at last, “is it a great while ago the Blue Bird flew to the Tower where the Princess was shut up?”

Her grandmother tells her it was many a long day since, in the times when the animals used to talk.

“You were young then?” asks Fanchon.

“I was not yet born,” the old woman tells her.

And Fanchon says:

“So, grandmother, there were things in the world even before you were born?”

And when their talk is done, her grandmother gives Fanchon an apple with a hunch of bread and bids her:

“Run away, little one; go and play and eat your apple in the garden.”

And Fanchon goes into the garden, where there are trees and grass and flowers and birds.

//

HER grandmother's garden was full of grass and flowers and trees, and Fanchon thought it was the prettiest garden in all the world. By this time she had pulled out her pocket-knife to cut her bread with, as they do in the village. First she munched her apple, then she began upon her bread. Presently a little bird came fluttering past her. Then a second came, and a third. Soon ten, twenty, thirty were crowding round Fanchon. There were grey birds, and red, there were yellow birds, and green, and blue. And all were pretty and they all sang. At first Fanchon could not think what they wanted. But she soon saw they were asking for bread and that they were little beggars. Yes, they were beggars, but they were singers as well. Fanchon was too kind-hearted to refuse bread to any one who paid for it with songs.

She was a little country girl, and she did not know that once long ago, in a country where white cliffs of marble are washed by the blue sea, a blind old man earned his daily bread by singing the shepherds' songs which the learned still admire to-day. But her heart laughed to hear the little birds, and she tossed them crumbs that never reached the ground, for the birds always caught them in the air.

Fanchon saw that the birds were not all the same in character. Some would stand in a ring round her feet waiting for the crumbs to fall into their beaks. These were philosophers. Others again she could see circling nimbly on the wing all about her. She even noticed one little thief that darted in and pecked shamelessly at her own slice.

She broke the bread and threw crumbs to them all; but all could not get some to eat. Fanchon found that the boldest and cleverest left nothing for the others.

"That is not fair," she told them; "each of you ought to take his proper turn."

But they never heeded; nobody ever does, when you talk of fairness and justice. She tried every way to favour the weak and hearten the timid; but she could make nothing of it, and do what she would, she fed the big fat birds at the expense of the thin ones. This made her sorry; she was such a simple child she did not know it is the way of the world.

Crumb by crumb, the bread all went down the little singers' throats. And Fanchon went back very happy to her grandmother's house.

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WHEN night fell, her grandmother took the basket in which Fanchon had brought her a cake, filled it with apples and grapes, hung it on the child's arm, and said: "Now, Fanchon, go straight back home, without stopping to play with the village ragamuffins. Be a good girl always. Goodbye."

Then she kissed her. But Fanchon stood thinking at the door.

"Grandmother?" she said. "What is it, little Fanchon?" "I should like to know," said Fanchon, "if there are any beautiful Princes among the birds that ate up my bread."

"Now that there are no more fairies," her grandmother told her, "the birds are all birds and nothing else."

"Goodbye, grandmother."

"Goodbye, Fanchon."

And Fanchon set off across the meadows for her home, the chimneys of which she could see smoking a long way off against the red sky of sunset.

On the road she met Antoine, the gardener's little boy. He asked her:

"Will you come and play with me, Fanchon?"

But she answered:

"I won't stop to play with you, because my grandmother told me not to. But I will give you an apple, because I love you very much."

Antoine took the apple and kissed the little girl.

They loved each other fondly.

He called her his little wife, and she called him her little husband.

As she went on her way, stepping soberly along like a staid, grown-up person, she heard behind her a merry twittering of birds, and turning round to look, she saw they were the same little pensioners she had fed when they were hungry. They came flying after her.

"Good night, little friends," she called to them, "good night! It's bedtime now, so good night!"

And the winged songsters answered her with little cries that mean "God keep you!" in bird language.

So Fanchon came back to her mother's to the sound of sweet music in the air.

IV

FANCHON lay down in the dark in her little bed, which a carpenter in the village had made long ago of walnut-wood and carved a light railing alongside. The good old man had been resting years and years now under the shadow of the church, in a grass-grown bed; for Fanchon's cot had been her grandfather's when he was a little lad, and he had slept where she sleeps now. A curtain of pink-sprigged cotton protects her slumbers; she sleeps, and in her dreams she sees the Blue Bird flying to his sweetheart's Castle. She thinks he is as beautiful as a star, but she never expects him to come and light on her shoulder. She knows *she* is not a Princess, and no Prince changed into a blue bird will come to visit her. She tells herself that all birds are not Princes; that the birds of her village are villagers, and that there might be one perhaps found amongst them, a little country lad changed into a sparrow by a bad fairy and wearing in his heart under his brown feathers the love of little Fanchon. Yes, if *he* came and she knew him, she would give him not bread crumbs only, but cake and kisses. She would so like to see him, and lo! she sees him; he comes and perches on her shoulder. He is a jack-sparrow, only a common sparrow. He has nothing rich or rare about him, but he looks alert and lively. To tell the truth, he is a little torn and tattered; he lacks a feather in his tail; he has lost it in battle — unless it was through some bad fairy of the village. Fanchon has her suspicions he is a naughty bird. But she is a girl, and she does not mind her jack-sparrow being a trifle headstrong, if only he has a kind heart. She pets him and calls him pretty names. Suddenly he begins to grow bigger; his body gets longer; his wings turn into two arms; he is a boy, and Fanchon knows who he is — Antoine, the gardener's little lad, who asks her:

“Shall we go and play together, shall we, Fanchon?”

She claps her hands for joy, and away she goes.... But suddenly she wakes and rubs her eyes. Her sparrow is gone, and so is Antoine! She is all alone in her little room. The dawn, peeping in between the flowered curtains, throws a white, innocent light over her cot. She can hear the birds singing in the garden. She jumps out of bed in her little nightgown and opens the window; she looks out into the garden, which is gay with flowers — roses, geraniums, and convolvulus — and spies her little pensioners, her little musicians, of yesterday. There they all sit in a row on the garden-fence, singing her a morning hymn to pay her for their crumbs of bread.

THE FANCY-DRESS BALL

HERE we have little boys who are conquering heroes and little girls who are heroines. Here we have shepherdesses in hoops and wreaths of roses and shepherds in satin coats, who carry crooks tied with knots of riband. Oh! what white, pretty sheep they must be these shepherds tend! Here are Alexander the Great and Zaire, and Pyrrhus and Merope, Mahomet, Harlequin, Pierrot, Scapin, Blaise and Babette. They have come from all parts, from Greece and Rome and the lands of Faëry, to dance together. What a fine thing a fancy ball is, and how delicious to be a great King for an hour or a famous Princess! There is nothing to spoil the pleasure. No need to act up to your costume, nor even to talk in character.

It would be poor fun, mind you, to wear heroes' clothes if you had to have a hero's heart as well. Heroes' hearts are torn with all sorts of sorrows. They are most of them famous for their calamities. If they had lived happy, we should never have heard of them. Merope had no wish to dance. Pyrrhus was cruelly slain by Orestes just when he was going to wed, and the innocent Zaire perished by the hand of her lover the Turk, philosophical Turk though he was. As for Blaise and Babette, the song says they suffer fond regrets that go on forever.

Why speak of Pierrot and Scapin? You know as well as I do they were scamps, and got their ears pulled more than once. No! glory costs too dear, even Harlequin's. On the contrary, it is very agreeable to be little boys and girls, and have the look of being great personages. That is why there is no pleasure to compare with a fancy ball, when the dresses are splendid enough. Only to wear them makes you feel brave. Then think how proud and pretty all your little friends are with their feathers and mantles; how gallant and gay and noble they look, and how like the fine folks of olden times.

In the gallery, where you cannot see them, the musicians, with sad, gentle faces, are tuning up their fiddles. A stately quadrille lies open on their stands. They are going to attack the old-fashioned piece. At the first notes our heroes and masks will lead off the dance.

THE SCHOOL

I PROCLAIM Mademoiselle Genseigne's school the best girls' school in the world. I declare miscreants and slanderers any who shall think or say the contrary. Mademoiselle Genseigne's pupils are all well-behaved and industrious, and there is no pleasanter sight to see than all their small figures sitting so still, and all the heads in a straight row. They look like so many little bottles into which Mademoiselle Genseigne is busy pouring useful knowledge.

Mademoiselle Genseigne sits very upright at her high desk. She has a gentle, serious face; her neatly braided hair and her black tippet inspire respect and sympathy.

Mademoiselle Genseigne, who is very clever, is teaching her little pupils cyphering.

She says to Rose Benoit:

"Rose Benoit, if I take four from twelve, what have I left?"

"Four?" answers Rose Benoit.

Mademoiselle Genseigne is not satisfied with the answer.

"And you, Emmeline Capel, if I take four from twelve, how much have I left?"

"Eight," Emmeline Capel answers.

"You hear, Rose Benoit, I have eight left," insists Mademoiselle Genseigne.

Rose Benoit falls into a brown study. Mademoiselle Genseigne has eight left, she is told, but she has no notion if it is eight hats or eight handkerchiefs, or possibly eight apples or eight feathers. The doubt has long tormented her. She can make nothing of arithmetic.

On the other hand, she is very wise in Scripture History. Mademoiselle Genseigne has not another pupil who can describe the Garden of Eden or Noah's Ark as Rose Benoit can. Rose Benoit knows every flower in the Garden and all the animals in the Ark. She knows as many fairy tales as Mademoiselle Genseigne herself. She knows all the fables of the Fox and the Crow, the Donkey and the Little Dog, the Cock and the Hen, and what they said to each other. She is not at all surprised to hear that the animals used once to talk. The wonder would be if some one told her they don't talk now. She is quite sure she understands what her big dog Tom says and her little canary Chirp. She is quite right; animals have always talked, and they talk still; but they only talk to their friends. Rose Benoit loves them and they love her, and that is why she

understands what they say. To understand each other there is nothing like loving one another.

To-day Rose Benoît has said her lessons without a mistake. She has won a good mark. Emmeline Capel has a good mark, too, for knowing her arithmetic lesson so well.

On coming out of school, she told her mother she had a good mark. Then she asked her: "A good mark, mother, what's the use of it?"

"A good mark is of no use," Emmeline's mother answered; "that is the very reason why we should be proud to get one. You will find out one day, my child, that the rewards most highly esteemed are just those that bring honour without profit."

MARIE

LITTLE girls long to pluck flowers and stars — it is their nature to. But stars will not be plucked, and the lesson they teach little girls is, that in this world there are longings that are never satisfied. Mademoiselle Marie has gone into the park, where she came upon a bed of hydrangeas; she saw how pretty the flowers were and that made her gather one. It was very difficult; she dragged with both hands, and very nearly tumbled over backwards when the stalk broke. She is pleased and proud at what she has done. But nurse has seen her. She runs up, snatches at Mademoiselle Marie's arm, scolds her, and sets her to stand and repent, not in the black closet, but at the foot of a great chestnut, under the shade of a huge Japanese umbrella.

There Mademoiselle Marie sits and thinks, in great surprise and perplexity. Her flower in one hand and the umbrella making a bright halo round her, she looks like a little idol from overseas.

Nurse has told her: "Marie, you must not put that flower in your mouth. If you do it when I tell you not, your little dog Toto will come and eat up your ears." And with these terrible words she walks away.

The young culprit, sitting quite still under her brilliant canopy, looks about her and gazes at earth and sky. It is a big world she sees, big enough and beautiful enough to amuse a little girl for some while. But her hydrangea blossom is more interesting than all the rest put together. She thinks to herself: "It is a flower; it must smell good?" And she puts her nose to the pretty pink and blue ball; she sniffs, but she cannot smell anything. She is not very good at scenting perfume; it is only a short while since she always used to blow at a rose instead of inhaling its odour. You must not laugh at her for that; one cannot learn everything at once.

Besides, if she had as keen a sense of smell as her mother, she would be no better off in this case. A hydrangea *has* no scent; that is why we get tired of it, for all its loveliness. But now Mademoiselle Marie begins to think: "Perhaps it's made of sugar, this flower." Then she opens her mouth very wide and is just going to lift the flower to her lips.

But suddenly, *yap!* goes her little dog. It is Toto, who comes bounding over a geranium bed and comes to a stand right in front of Mademoiselle Marie, with his ears cocked straight up, and stares hard at her out of his sharp little round eyes.

THE PANDEAN PIPES

THREE children of the same village, Pierre, Jacques, and Jean, stand staring, side by side in a row, where they look for all the world like a mouth-organ or Pandean Pipes, only with three pipes instead of seven. Pierre, to the left, is a tall lad; Jean, to the right, is a short child; Jacques, who is betwixt the two, may call himself tall *or* short, according as he looks at his left-hand or his right-hand neighbour. It is a situation I would beg you to ponder, for it is your own, and mine, and everybody else's. Each one of us is just like Jacques, and deems himself great or small according as his neighbours' inches are many or few.

That is the reason why it is true to say that Jacques is neither tall nor short, and why it is also true to say he is tall *and* he is short. He is what God chooses him to be. For us, he is the middle reed of our living Pandean Pipes.

But what is he doing, and what are his two comrades doing? They are staring, staring hard, all three. What at? At something that has disappeared in the distance, something that has vanished out of sight; yet they can see it still, and their eyes are dazzled with its splendours. It makes little Jean clean forget his eel-skin whiplash and the peg-top he has always been so fond of keeping for ever spinning with it in the dusty roads. Pierre and Jacques stand stolidly, their hands behind their backs.

What is the wonderful sight that has bewildered all three? A pedlar's cart, a handcart; they had seen it stop in the village street.

Then the pedlar drew back his oil-cloth covering, and all, men, women, and children, feasted their eyes on knives, scissors, popguns, jumping Jacks, wooden soldiers and lead soldiers, bottles of scent, cakes of soap, coloured pictures, and a thousand other splendid objects. The servant-wenches from the farm and the mill turned pale with longing; Pierre and Jacques flushed red with delight. Little Jean put out his tongue at it all. Everything the barrow held seemed to them rich and rare. But what they coveted most of all were those mysterious articles whose meaning and use they could make nothing of. For instance, there were polished globes like mirrors that reflected their faces with the features ludicrously distorted. There were Epinal wares with figures in impossibly vivid colours; there were little cases and boxes with nobody knows what inside.

The women made purchases of muslins and laces by the yard, and the pedlar rolled the black oil-cloth cover back again over the treasures of his barrow. Then, pulling at the collar, he hauled off his load after him along the highroad. And now barrow and barrow-man have disappeared below the horizon.

ROGER'S STUD

IT is a great anxiety keeping a stud. The horse is a delicate animal and needs a lot of looking after. Just ask Roger if it does n't!

He is busy now grooming his noble chestnut, which would be the pearl of wooden horses, the flower of the Black Forest stud-farms, if only he had not lost half his tail in battle. Roger would so like to know whether wooden horses' tails grow again.

After rubbing them down in fancy, Roger gives his horses an imaginary feed of oats. That is the proper way to feed these elfin creatures of wood on whose backs little boys gallop through the land of dreams.

Now Roger is off for his ride, mounted on his mettled charger. The poor beast has no ears left and his mane is all notched like an old broken comb; but Roger loves him. Why it would be hard to say! This bay was the gift of a poor man; and the presents of the poor are somehow sweeter perhaps than any others.

Roger is off. He has ridden far. The flowers of the carpet are the blossoms of the tropical forest. Good luck to you, little Roger! May your hobby-horse carry you happily through the world! May you never have a more dangerous mount! Small and great, we all ride ours! Which of us has not his hobby?

Men's hobbies gallop like mad things along the roads of life; one is chasing glory, another pleasure; many leap over precipices and break their rider's neck. I wish you luck, little Roger, and I hope, when you are a man, you will bestride two hobbies that will always carry you along the right road; one is spirited, the other gentle-tempered; they are both noble steeds; one is called Courage and the other Kindness.

COURAGE

LOUISON and Frédéric are off to school along the village street. The sun shines gaily and the two children are singing. They sing like the nightingale, because their hearts are light like his. They sing an old song their grandmothers sang when they were little girls, a song their children's children will sing one day; for songs are tender flowers that never die, they fly from lip to lip down the ages. The lips fade and fall silent one after the other, but the song lives on for ever. There are songs come down to us from the days when the men were shepherds and all the women shepherdesses. That is the reason why they speak of nothing but sheep and wolves.

Louison and Frédéric sing; their mouths are as round as a flower and the song rises shrill and thin and clear in the morning air.

But listen! suddenly the notes stick in Frederic's throat.

What unseen power is it has strangled the music on the boy's lips? It is fear. Every day, as sure as fate, he comes upon the butcher's dog at the end of the village street, and every day his heart seems to stop and his legs begin to shake at the sight. Yet the butcher's dog does not fly at him, or even threaten to. He sits peaceably at his master's shop-door. But he is black, and he has a staring bloodshot eye and shows a row of sharp white teeth. He looks frightful. And then he squats there in the middle of bits of meat and offal and all sorts of horrors — which makes him more terrifying still. Of course it is n't his fault, but he is the presiding genius. Yes, a savage brute, the butcher's dog! So, the instant Frédéric catches sight of the beast before the shop, he picks up a big stone, as he sees grown-up men do to keep off bad-tempered curs, and he slinks past close, close under the opposite wall.

That is how he behaved this time; and Louison laughed at him.

She did not make any of those daredevil speeches one generally caps with others more reckless still. No, she never said a word; she never stopped singing. But she altered her voice and began singing on such a mocking note that Frédéric reddened to his very ears. Then his little head began to buzz with many thoughts. He learned that we must dread shame even more than danger. And he was afraid of being afraid.

So, when school was over and he saw the butcher's dog, he marched undauntedly past the astonished animal.

History adds that he kept a corner of his eye on Louison to see if she was looking. It is a true saying that, if there were no dames nor damsels in the world,

men would be less courageous.

CATHERINE'S "AT HOME"

IT is five o'clock. Mademoiselle Catherine is "at home" to her dolls. It is her "day." The dolls do not talk; the little Genie that gave them their smile did not vouchsafe the gift of speech. He refused it for the general good; if dolls could talk, we should hear nobody but them. Still there is no lack of conversation. Mademoiselle Catherine talks for her guests as well as for herself; she asks questions and gives the answers.

"How do you do? — Very well, thank you. I broke my arm yesterday morning going to buy cakes. But it's quite well now. — Ah! so much the better. — And how is your little girl? — She has the whooping-cough. — Ah! what a pity! Does she cough much? — Oh! no, it 's a whooping-cough where there's no cough. You know I had two more children last week. — Really? that makes four doesn't it? — Four or five, I've forgotten which. When you have so many, you get confused. — What a pretty frock you have. — Oh! I 've got far prettier ones still at home. — Do you go to the theatre? — Yes, every evening. I was at the Opera yesterday; but Polichinelle wasn't playing, because the wolf had eaten him. — I go to dances every day, my dear. — It is so amusing. — Yes, I wear a blue gown and dance with the young men, Generals, Princes, Confectioners, all the most distinguished people. — You look as pretty as an angel to-day, my dear. — Oh! it's the spring. — Yes, but what a pity it's snowing. — *I* love the snow, because it's white. — Oh! there's black snow, you know. — Yes, but that's the bad snow." There's fine conversation for you; Mademoiselle Catherine's tongue goes nineteen to the dozen. Still I have one fault to find with her; she talks all the time to the same visitor, who is pretty and wears a fine frock.

There she is wrong. A good hostess is equally gracious to all her guests. She treats them all with affability, and if she shows any particular preference, it is to the more retiring and the less prosperous. We should flatter the unhappy; it is the only flattery allowable. But Catherine has discovered this for herself. She has guessed the secret of true politeness: a kind heart is everything. She pours out tea for the company, and forgets nobody. On the contrary, she presses the dolls that are poor and unhappy and shy to help themselves to invisible cakes and sandwiches made of dominoes.

Some day Catherine will hold a salon where the old French courtesy will live again.

LITTLE SEA-DOGS

THEY are sailor boys, regular little sea-dogs. Look at them; they have their caps pulled down over their ears so that the gale blowing in from the sea and bringing the spindrift with it may not deafen them with its dreadful howling. They wear heavy woollen clothes to keep out the cold and wet. Their patched pea-jacket and breeches have been their elders' before them. Most of their garments have been contrived out of old things of their father's. Their soul is likewise of the same stuff as their father's; it is simple, brave, and long-suffering. At birth they inherited a single-hearted, noble temper. Who and what gave it them? After God and their parents, the Sea. The Sea teaches sailors courage by teaching them to face danger. It is a rough but kindly instructor.

That is why our little sailor-boys, though their hearts are childlike still, have the spirit of gallant veterans. Elbows on the parapet of the sea-wall, they gaze out into the offing. It is more than the blue line marking the faint division between sea and sky that they see. Their eyes care little for the soft, changing colours of the ocean or the vast, contorted masses of the clouds. What they see, as they look seawards, is something more moving than the hue of the waves or the shape of the clouds; it is a suggestion of human love. They are spying for the boats that sailed away for the fishing; presently they will loom again on the horizon, laden with shrimp to the gunwales, and bringing home uncles and big brothers and fathers. The little fleet will soon appear yonder betwixt the ocean and God's sky with its white or brown sails. To-day the sky is unclouded, the sea calm; the flood tide floats the fishers gently to the shore. But the Ocean is a capricious old fellow, who takes all shapes and sings in many voices. To-day he laughs; to-morrow he will be growling in the night under his beard of foam. He shipwrecks the most handy boats, though they have been blessed by the Priest to the chanting of the *Te Deum* ; he drowns the most skilful master mariners, and it is all his fault you see in the village, before the cottage doors where the nets hang to dry beside the fish-creels, so many women wearing black widow's weeds.

GETTING WELL

GERMAINE is ill. Nobody knows how it began. The arm which sows fever is invisible like the dustman's hand, the old fellow who comes every night and makes the little ones so sleepy. But Germaine was not ill very long and she was not very bad, and now she is getting well again. This getting well is even pleasanter than being quite well, which comes next. In the same way hoping and wishing are better, very often, than anything we wish for or hope for. Germaine lies in bed in her pretty, bright room, and her dreams are as bright-coloured as her room.

She looks, a little languidly still, at her doll, which sleeps beside her own bed. There are sympathies that go deep between little girls and their dolls. Germaine's doll fell ill at the same time as her little mamma, and now she is getting well with her. She will take her first carriage outing sitting by Germaine's side.

She has seen the doctor too. Alfred came to feel the doll's pulse. He is Doctor "As-bad-as-can-be." He talks of nothing but cutting off arms and legs. But Germaine asked him so earnestly that he agreed to cure her dolly without slashing it to pieces. But he prescribed the nastiest medicines.

Illness has one advantage at any rate; it makes us know our friends. Germaine is sure now she can count on Alfred's goodness; she is certain Lucie is the best of sisters. All the nine days her illness lasted, Lucie came to learn her lessons and do her sewing in the sick room. She insists on bringing the little patient her herb-tea herself. And it is not a bitter potion, such as Alfred ordered; no, it is balmy with the scent of wild flowers.

When she smells its perfume, Germaine's thoughts fly to the flowery mountain paths, the haunt of children and bees, where she played so often last year. Alfred too remembers the beautiful ways, and the woods, and the springs, and the mules that climbed up and up on the brink of precipices with a sound of tinkling bells.

ACROSS THE MEADOWS

AFTER breakfast Catherine! started off to the meadows with her little brother Jean. When they set out, the day seemed as young and fresh as they were. The sky was not altogether blue; it was grey rather, but of a tenderer grey than any blue. Catherine's eyes are just the same grey, as if made out of a bit of morning sky.

Catherine and Jean wander all by themselves through the fields. Their mother is a farmer's wife and is at work at home. They have no nurse-maid to take them, and they don't need one. They know their way, and all the woods and fields and hills. Catherine can tell the time by looking at the sun, and she has guessed all sorts of pretty secrets of Nature that town-bred children have no suspicion of. Little Jean himself understands a great many things about the woods, the pools, and the mountains, for his little soul is a country soul.

Catherine and Jean go roaming through the flowery meadows. As they go, Catherine gathers a nosegay. She picks blue centauries, scarlet poppies, cuckoo-flowers, and buttercups, which she also knows as *little chicks*. She picks those pretty purple blossoms that grow in hedgerows and are called Venus' looking-glasses. She picks the dark ears of the milkwort, and crane's-bill and lily of the valley, whose tiny white bells shed a delicious perfume at the least puff of wind. Catherine loves flowers because they are beautiful; and she loves them too because they make such pretty ornaments. She is very simply dressed, and her pretty hair is hid under a brown linen cap. She wears a cotton check pinafore over her plain frock, and goes in wooden shoes. She has never seen rich dresses except on the Virgin Mary and the St. Catherine in the parish church. But there are some things little girls know directly they are born. Catherine knows that flowers are becoming to wear, and that pretty ladies who pin nosegays in their bosoms look lovelier than ever. So she has a notion she must be very fine indeed now, carrying a nosegay bigger than her own head. Her thoughts are as bright and fragrant as her flowers. They are thoughts that cannot be put into words; there are no words pretty enough. It wants song tunes for that, the liveliest and softest airs, the sweetest songs. So Catherine sings, as she gathers her nosegay: "Away to the woods alone" and "My heart is for him, my heart is for him."

Little Jean is of another temper. He follows another line of ideas. He is a broth of a boy, he is; Jean is not breeched yet, but his spirit is beyond his years and there's no more rollicking blade than he. While he grips his sister's pinafore with one hand, for fear of tumbling, he shakes his whip in the other like a sturdy

lad. His father's head stableman can hardly crack his any better when he meets his sweetheart, bringing home the horses from watering at the river. Little Jean is lulled by no soft reveries. He never heeds the field flowers. The games he dreams of are stiff jobs of work. His thoughts dwell on wagons stogged in the mire and big carthorses hauling at the collar at his voice and under his lash.

Catherine and Jean have climbed above the meadows, up the hill, to a high ground from which you can make out all the chimneys of the village dotted among the trees and in the far distance the steeples of six parishes. Then you see what a big place the world is. Then Catherine can better understand the stories she has been taught, — the dove from the Ark, the Israelites in the Promised Land, and Jesus going from city to city.

"Let's sit down there," she says.

Down she sits, and, opening her hands, she sheds her flowery harvest all over her. She is all fragrant with blossoms, and in a moment the butterflies come fluttering round her. She picks and chooses and matches her flowers; she weaves them into garlands and wreaths, and hangs flower-bells in her ears; she is decked out now like the rustic image of a Holy Virgin the shepherds venerate. Her little brother Jean, who has been busy all this while driving a team of imaginary horses, sees her in all this bravery. Instantly he is filled with admiration. A religious awe penetrates all his childish soul. He stops, and the whip falls from his fingers. He feels that she is beautiful and all smothered in lovely flowers. He tries in vain to say all this in his soft, indistinct speech. But she has guessed. Little Catherine is his big sister, and a big sister is a little mother; she foresees, she guesses; she has the sacred instinct.

"Yes, darling," cries Catherine, "I am going to make you a beautiful wreath, and you will look like a little king."

And so she twines together the white flowers, the yellow flowers, and the red flowers, into a chaplet. She puts it on little Jean's head, and he flushes with pride and pleasure. She kisses her little brother, lifts him in her arms and plants him, all garlanded with blossoms, on a big stone. Then she looks at him admiringly, because he is beautiful and *she* has made him so.

And standing there on his rustic pedestal, little Jean knows he is beautiful, and the thought fills him with a deep respect for himself. He feels he is something holy. Very upright and still, with round eyes and tight-drawn lips, arms by his side with the palms open and the fingers parted like the spokes of a wheel, he tastes a pious joy to be an idol — he is sure he is an idol now. The sky is overhead, the woods and fields lie at his feet. He is the hub of the universe. He alone is great, he alone is beautiful.

But suddenly Catherine breaks into a laugh. She shouts:

“Oh! how funny you look, little Jean! how funny you do look!”

She runs up and throws her arms round him, she kisses him and shakes him; the heavy wreath of flowers slips down over his nose. And she laughs again:

“Oh! how funny he looks! how very funny!”

But it is no laughing matter for little Jean. He is sad and sorry, wondering why it is all over and he has left off being beautiful. It hurts to come down to earth again!

Now the wreath is unwound and tossed on the grass, and little Jean is like anybody else once more. Yes, he has left off being beautiful. But he is still a sturdy young scamp. He soon has his whip in hand again and now he is hauling his team of six, the six big carthorses of his dreams, out of that rut. Catherine is still playing with her flowers. But some of them are dying. Others are closing in sleep. For the flowers go to sleep like the animals, and look! the campanulas, plucked a few hours ago, are shutting their purple bells and sinking asleep in the little hands that have parted them from life.

A light breeze blows by, and Catherine shivers. It is night coming.

“I am hungry,” says little Jean.

But Catherine has not a bit of bread to give her little brother. She says:

“Little brother, let ‘s go back to the house.”

And they both think of the cabbage soup steaming in the pot that hangs from the hook right under the great chimney. Catherine gathers her flowers in her arm and taking her little brother by the hand, she leads him homewards.

The sun sank slowly down to the ruddy West. The swallows swooped past the two children, almost touching them with their wings, that hardly seemed to move. It was getting dark. Catherine and Jean pressed closer together.

Catherine dropped her flowers one after the other by the way. They could hear, in the wide silence, the untiring chirp-chirp of the crickets. They were afraid, both of them, and they were sad; the melancholy of nightfall had entered into their little hearts. All round them was familiar ground, but the things they knew the best looked strange and uncanny. The earth seemed suddenly to have grown too big and too old for them. They were tired, and they began to think they would never reach the house, where mother was making the soup for all the family. Jean’s whip hung limp and still, and Catherine let the last of her flowers slip from her tired fingers. She was dragging Jean along by the arm, and neither said a word.

At last they saw a long way off the roof of their house and smoke rising in the darkening sky. Then they stopped running, and clapping their hands together, shouted for joy. Catherine kissed her little brother; then they set off running again as fast as ever their weary legs would carry them. When they reached the

village, there were women coming back from the fields who gave them good evening. They breathed again. Their mother was on the door-step, in a white cap, soup-ladle in hand.

“Come along, little ones, come along!” she called to them. And they threw themselves into her arms. When she reached the parlour where the cabbage soup was smoking on the table, Catherine shivered again. She had seen night come down over the earth. Jean, seated on the settle, his chin on a level with the table, was already eating his soup.

THE MARCH PAST

RENÉ, Bernard, Roger, Jacques, and Etienne feel sure there is nothing finer in the world than to be a soldier. Francine agrees with them and she would love to be a boy to join the army. They think so because soldiers wear fine uniforms, epaulettes and gold lace, and glittering swords. There is yet another reason for putting the soldier in the front rank of citizens — because he gives his life for his Country. There is no true greatness in this world but that of sacrifice, and to offer one's life is the greatest of all sacrifices, because it includes all others. That is why the hearts of the crowd beat high when a regiment goes by.

René is the General. He wears a cocked hat and rides a war-horse. The hat is made of paper and the horse is a chair. His army consists of a drummer and four men — of whom one is a girl! "Shoulder arms! Forward, march!" and the march past begins. Francine and Roger look quite imposing under arms. True, Jacques does not hold his gun very valiantly. He is a melancholy lad. But we must not blame him for that; dreamers can be just as brave as those who never dream at all. His little brother Etienne, the tiniest mite in the regiment, looks pensive. He is ambitious; he would like to be a general officer right away, and that makes him sad.

"Forward! forward!" René shouts the order. "We are to fall on the Chinese, who are in the dining-room." The Chinese are chairs. When you play at fighting, chairs make first-rate Chinese. They fall — and what better can the Chinese do? When all the chairs are feet in air, René announces: "Soldiers, now we have beaten the Chinese, we will have our rations." The idea is well received on all hands. Yes, soldiers must eat. This time the Commissariat has furnished the best of victuals — buns, maids of honour, coffee cakes and chocolate cakes, red-currant syrup. The army falls to with a will. Only Etienne will eat nothing. He frowns and looks enviously at the sword and cocked hat which the General has left on a chair. He creeps up, snatches them, and slips into the next room. There he stands alone before the glass; he puts on the cocked hat and waves the sword; he is a general, a general without an army, a general all to himself. He tastes the pleasures of ambition — pleasures full of vague forecastings and long, long hopes.

DEAD LEAVES

AUTUMN is here. The wind blowing through the woods whirls about the dead leaves. The chestnuts are stripped bare already and lift their black skeleton arms in the air. And now the beeches and hornbeams are shedding *their* leaves. The birches and aspens are turned to trees of gold, and only the great oak keeps his coronal of green.

The morning is fresh; a keen wind is chasing the clouds across a grey sky and reddening the youngsters' fingers. Pierre, Babet, and Jeannot are off to collect the dead leaves, the leaves that once, when they were still alive, were full of dew and songs of birds, and which now strew the ground in thousands and thousands with their little shrivelled corpses. They are dead, but they smell good. They will make a fine litter for Riquette, the goat, and Roussette, the cow. Pierre has taken his big basket; he is quite a little man. Babet has her sack; she is quite a little woman. Jeannot comes last trundling the wheelbarrow.

Down the hill they go at a run. At the edge of the wood they find the other village children, who are come too to lay in a store of dead leaves for the winter. It is not play, this; it is work.

But never think the children are sad, because they are at work. Work is serious, yes; it is not sad. Very often the little ones mimic it in fun, and children's games, most times, are copies of their elders' workaday doings.

Now they are hard at it. The boys do their part in silence. They are peasant lads, and will soon be men, and peasants do not talk much. But it is different with the little peasant girls; *their* tongues go at a fine pace, as they fill the baskets and bags.

But now the sun is climbing higher and warming the country pleasantly. From the cottage roofs rise light puffs of smoke. The children know what that means. The smoke tells them the pease-soup is cooking in the pot. One more armful of dead leaves, and the little workers will take the road home. It is a stiff climb. Bending under sacks or toiling behind barrows, they soon get hot, and the sweat comes out in beads. Pierre, Babet and Jeannot stop to take breath.

But the thought of the pease-soup keeps up their courage. Puffing and blowing, they reach home at last. Their mother is waiting for them on the doorstep and calls out: "Come along, children, the soup is ready."

Our little friends find this capital. There's no soup so good as what you have worked for.

SUZANNE

THE Louvre, as you know, is a museum where beautiful things and ancient things are kept safe — and this is wisely done, for old age and beauty are both alike venerable. Among the most touching of the antiquities treasured in the Louvre Museum is a fragment of marble, worn and cracked in many places, but on which can still be clearly made out two maidens holding each a flower in her hand. Both are beautiful figures; they were young when Greece was young. They say it was the age of perfect beauty. The sculptor who has left us their image represents them in profile, offering each other one of those lotus flowers that were deemed sacred. In the blue cups of their blossoms the world quaffed oblivion of the ills of life. Our men of learning have given much thought to these two maidens. They have turned over many books to find out about them, big books, bound some in parchment, others in vellum, and many in pig-skin; but they have never fathomed the reason why the two beautiful maidens hold up a flower in their hands.

What they could not discover after so much labour and thought, so many arduous days and sleepless nights, Mademoiselle Suzanne knew in a moment.

Her papa had taken her to the Louvre, where he had business. Mademoiselle Suzanne looked wonderingly at the antiques, and seeing gods with missing arms and legs and heads, she said to herself: “Ah! yes, these are the grown-up gentlemen’s dolls; I see now gentlemen break their dollies the same as little girls do.” But when she came to the two maidens who, each of them, hold a flower, she threw them a kiss, because they looked so charming. Then her father asked her: “Why do they give each other a flower?” And Suzanne answered at once: “To wish each other a happy birthday.” Then, after thinking a moment, she added: “They have the same birthday; they are both alike and they are offering each other the same flower. Girl friends should always have the same birthday.”

Now Suzanne is far away from the Louvre and the old Greek marbles; she is in the kingdom of the birds and the flowers. She is spending the bright spring days in the meadows under shelter of the woods. She plays in the grass, and that is the sweetest sort of play. She remembers to-day is her little friend Jacqueline’s birthday; and so she is going to pick flowers which she will give Jacqueline, and kiss her.

FISHING

JEAN set out betimes in the morning with his sister Jeanne, a fishing-pole over his shoulder and a basket on his arm. It is holiday time and the school is shut; that is why Jean goes off every day with his sister Jeanne, a rod over his shoulder and a basket on his arm, along the river bank. Jean is a Tourainer, and Jeanne a lass of Touraine. The river is Tourainer too. It runs crystal-clear between silvery salallows under a moist, mild sky. Morning and evening white mists trail over the grass of the water-meadows.' But Jean and Jeanne love the river neither for the greenery of its banks nor its clear waters that mirror the heavens. They love it for the fish in it. They stop presently at the most likely place, and Jeanne sits down under a pollard willow. Laying down his baskets, Jean unwinds his tackle. This is very primitive — a switch, with a piece of thread and a bent pin at the end of it. Jean supplied the rod, Jeanne gave the line and the hook; so the tackle is the common property of brother and sister. Both want it all to themselves, and this simple contrivance, only meant to do mischief to the fishes, becomes the cause of domestic broils and a rain of blows by the peaceful riverside. Brother and sister fight for the free use of the rod and line. Jean's arm is black and blue with pinches and Jeanne's cheek scarlet from her brother's slaps. At last, when they were tired of pinching and hitting, Jean and Jeanne consented to share amicably what neither could appropriate by force. They agreed that the rod should pass alternately from the brother's hands to the sister's after each fish they caught.

Jean begins. But there's no knowing when he will end. He does not break the treaty openly, but he shirks its consequences by a mean trick. Rather than have to hand over the tackle to his sister, he refuses to catch the fish that come, when they nibble the bait and set his float bobbing.

Jean is artful; Jeanne is patient. She has been waiting six hours. But at last she seems tired of doing nothing. She yawns, stretches, lies down in the shade of the willow, and shuts her eyes. Jean spies her out of one corner of his, and he thinks she is asleep. The float dives. He whips out the line, at the end of which gleams a flash of silver. A gudgeon has taken the pin.

"Ah! it's my turn now," cries a voice behind him.

And Jeanne snatches the rod.

THE PENALTIES OF GREATNESS

IT was to go and see their friend Jean that Roger, Marcel, Bernard, Jacques, and Etienne set out along the broad highroad that winds like a handsome yellow riband through the fields and meadows. Now they are off. They start all abreast; it is the best way. Only there is one defect in the arrangement this time; Etienne is too little to keep up.

He tries hard and puts his best foot foremost. His short legs stretch their widest. He swings his arms into the bargain. But he is too little; he cannot go as fast as his companions. He falls behind because he is too small; it is no use.

The big boys, who are older, should surely wait for him, you say, and suit their pace to his. So they should, but they don't. Forward! cry the strong ones of this world, and they leave the weaklings in the lurch. But hear the end of the story. All of a sudden our four tall, strong, sturdy friends see something jumping on the ground. It jumps because it is a frog, and it wants to reach the meadow along the roadside. The meadow is froggy's home, and he loves it; he has his residence there beside a brook. He jumps, and jumps.

He is a green frog, and he looks like a leaf that is alive. Now the lads are in the meadow; very soon they feel their feet sinking in the soft ground where the rank grass grows. A few steps more, and they are up to their knees in mud. The grass hid a swamp underneath.

They just manage to struggle out. Shoes, socks, calves are all as black as ink. The fairy of the green field has put gaiters of mire on the four bad boys.

Etienne comes up panting for breath. He hardly knows, when he sees them in this pickle, if he should be glad or sorry. His simple little heart is filled with a sense of the catastrophes that befall the great and strong. As for the four muddy urchins, they turn back piteously the way they came, for how can they, I should like to know, how can they go and see their friend Jean with their shoes and stockings in this state? When they get home again, their mothers will know how naughty they have been by the evidence of their legs, while little Etienne's innocence will be legible on his sturdy little stumps.

A CHILD'S DINNER PARTY

WHAT fun it is playing at dinner parties! You can have a very plain dinner or a very elaborate one, just as you like. You can manage it with nothing at all. Only you have to pretend a great deal then.

Thérèse and her little sister Pauline have asked Pierre and Marthe to a dinner in the country. Proper invitations have been issued, and they have been talking about it for days. Mamma has given her two little girls good advice — and good things to eat, too. There will be nougat and sweet cakes, and a chocolate cream. The table will be laid in the arbour.

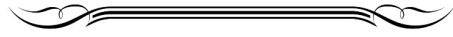
“If only it will be fine!” cries Thérèse, who is nine now. At her age one knows the fondest hopes are often disappointed in this world and you cannot always do what you propose. But little Pauline has none of these worries. She cannot think it will be wet. It will be fine, because she wants it to.

And lo! the great day has broken clear and sunny. Not a cloud in the sky. The two guests have come. How fortunate! For this was another subject of anxiety for Thérèse. Marthe had caught a cold, and perhaps she would not be better in time. As for little Pierre, everybody knows he always misses the train. You cannot blame him for it. It is his misfortune, not his fault. His mother is unpunctual by nature. Everywhere and always little Pierre arrives after everybody else; he has never in his life seen the beginning of anything. This has given him a dull, resigned look.

The dinner is served; ladies and gentlemen, take your places! Thérèse presides. She is thoughtful and serious; the housewifely instinct is awaking in her bosom. Pierre carves valiantly. Nose in the dish and elbows above his head, he struggles to divide the leg of a chicken. Why, his feet even take their part in the tremendous effort. Mademoiselle Marthe eats elegantly, without any ado or any noise, just like a grown-up lady. Pauline is not so particular; she eats how she can and as much as she can.

Thérèse, now serving her guests, now one of them herself, is content; and contentment is better than joy. The little dog Gyp has come to eat up the scraps, and Thérèse thinks, as she watches him crunching the bones, that dogs know nothing of all the dainty ways that make grown-up dinners, and children's too, so refined and delightful.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES



CONTENTS

MARGUERITE

THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

MARGUERITE

Translated by J. Lewis May

PREFATORY LETTER

Publish Marguerite, dear Monsieur André Coq, if you so desire, but pray relieve me from all responsibility in the matter.

It would argue too much literary conceit on my part were I anxious to restore it to the light of day. It would argue, perhaps, still more did I endeavour to keep it in obscurity. You will not succeed in wresting it for long from the eternal oblivion where-unto it is destined. Ay me, how old it is! I had lost all recollection of it. I have just read it over, without fear or favour, as I should a work unknown to me, and it does not seem to me that I have lighted upon a masterpiece. It would ill beseem me to say more about it than that. My only pleasure as I read it was derived from the proof it afforded that, even in those far-off days, when I was writing this little trifle, I was no great lover of the Third Republic with its pinchbeck virtues, its militarist imperialism, its ideas of conquest, its love of money, its contempt for the handicrafts, its unswerving predilection for the unlovely. Its leaders caused me terrible misgivings. And the event has surpassed my apprehensions.

But it was not in my calculations to make myself a laughing-stock, by taking Marguerite as a text for generalizations on French politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The specimens of type and the woodcuts you have shown me promise a very comely little book.

Believe me, dear Monsieur Coq,

Yours sincerely,

Anatole France.

La Béchellerie, 16th April, 1920.

5th July

As I left the Palais-Bourbon at five o'clock that afternoon, it rejoiced my heart to breathe in the sunny air. The sky was bland, the river gleamed, the foliage was fresh and green. Everything seemed to whisper an invitation to idleness. Along the Pont de la Concorde, in the direction of the Champs-Élysées, victorias and landaus kept rolling by. In the shadow of the lowered carriage-hoods, women's faces gleamed clear and radiant and I felt a thrill of pleasure as I watched them flash by like hopes vanishing and reappearing in endless succession. Every woman as she passed by left me with an impression of light and perfume. I think a man, if he is wise, will not ask much more than that of a beautiful woman. A gleam and a perfume! Many a love-affair leaves even less behind it. Moreover, that day, if Fortune herself had run with her wheel a-spinning before my very nose along the pavement of the Pont de la Concorde, I should not have so much as stretched forth an arm to pluck her by her golden hair. I lacked nothing that day; all was mine. It was five o'clock and I was free till dinner-time. Yes, free! Free to saunter at will, to breathe at my ease for two hours, to look on at things and not have to talk, to let my thoughts wander as I listed. All was mine, I say again. My happiness was making me a selfish man. I gazed at everything about me as though it were all a picture, a splendid moving pageant, arranged for my own particular delectation. It seemed to me as though the sun were shining for me alone, as though it were pouring down its torrents of flame upon the river for my special gratification. I somehow thought that all this motley throng was swarming gaily around me for the sole purpose of animating, without destroying, my solitude. And so I almost got the notion that the people about me were quite small, that their apparent size was only an illusion, that they were but puppets; the sort of thoughts a man has when he has nothing to think about. But you must not be angry on that score with a poor man who has had his head crammed chock-full for ten years on end with politics and law making and is wearing away his life with those trivial preoccupations men call affairs of state.

In the popular imagination, a law is something abstract, without form or colour. For me a law is a green baize table, sealing-wax, paper, pens, ink-stains, green-shaded candles, books bound in calf, papers yet damp from the printer's and all smelling of printer's ink, conversations in green papered offices, files, bundles of documents, a stuffy smell, speeches, newspapers; a law, in short, is all the hundred and one things, the hundred and one tasks you have to fulfil at all hours, the grey and gentle hours of the morning, the white hours of middle day, the purple hours of evening, the silent, meditative hours of night; tasks which

leave you no soul to call your own and rob you of the consciousness of your own identity.

Yes, it is so. I have left my own *ego* behind me there. It is scattered up and down among all sorts of memoranda and reports. Industrious junior clerks have put away a parcel of it in each one of their beautiful green filing cases. And so I have had to go on living without my *ego*, which, moreover, is how all politicians have to live. But an *ego* is a strangely subtle thing. And wonder of wonders! mine came back to me just now on the Pont de la Concorde. 'Twas he without a doubt and, would you believe it, he had not suffered so very much from his sojourn among those musty papers. The very moment he arrived I found myself again, I recognized my own existence, whereof I had not been conscious these ten years. "Ha ha!" said I to myself, "since I exist, I am just as well pleased to know it. Behold I will set forth here and now to improve this new acquaintance by strolling, with a lover's thoughts in my heart, down the Champs-Élysées."

And this is why I am here, at this hour, beneath the sculptured steeds of Marly, more high-spirited than those aristocratic quadrupeds themselves; this is why I am setting foot in the avenue whose entrance is marked by their hoofs of stone perpetually poised in air. The carriages flow past endlessly, like a sombre scintillating stream of lava or molten asphalt, whereon the hats of the women seem borne along like so many flowers, and like everything else one sees in Paris, at once extravagant and pretty. I light up a cigar and looking at nothing, behold everything. So intense is my joy that it scares me. It is the first cigar I have smoked for ten years. Oh yes, I grant I have begun as many as ten a day in my room; but those I scorched, bit, chewed and threw away; I never smoked them. This one I am really and truly smoking and the smoke it exhales is a cloud of poesy spreading grace and charm about it. What an interest I take in all I see. These little shops, which display at regular intervals their motley assortment of wares, fill me with delight. Here especially is one which I cannot forbear stopping to look at. What I chiefly delight to contemplate there is a decanter with lemonade in it. The decanter reflects in miniature on its polished sides the trees around it and the women that pass by and the skies. It has a lemon on the top of it which gives it a sort of oriental air. However, it is not its shape nor its colour that is the attraction in my eyes; I cannot keep my gaze from it because it reminds me of my childhood. At the sight of it, innumerable delightful scenes come thronging into my memory. Once again do I behold those shining hours, those hours divine of early childhood. Ah, what would I not give to be again the little boy of those days and to drink once more a glass of that precious liquid!



In that little shop, I find once more, besides the lemonade and the gooseberry syrup, all those divers things wherein my childhood took delight. Here be whips, trumpets, swords, guns, cartridge-pouches, belts, scabbards, sabretaches, all those magic toys which, from five to nine years old, made me feel that I was fulfilling the destiny of a Napoleon. I played that mighty rôle, in my tenpenny soldier's kit, I played it from start to finish, bating only Waterloo and the years of exile. For, mark you, I was always the victor. Here, too, are coloured prints from Épinal. It was on them that I began to spell out those signs which to the learned reveal a few faint traces of the Mighty Riddle. Yes, the sorriest little coloured daub that ever came out of a village in the Vosges consists of print and pictures, and what is the sum and substance of Science after all but just pictures and print?

From those Épinal prints I learned things far finer and more useful than anything I ever got from the little grammar and history books my schoolmasters gave me to pore over. Épinal prints, you see, are stories, and stories are mirrors of destiny. Blessed is the child that is brought up on fairy-tales. His riper years

should prove rich in wisdom and imagination. And see! here is my own favourite story *The Blue Bird*. I know him by his outspread tail. 'Tis he right enough. It is as much as I can do to prevent myself flinging my arms round the old shop-woman's neck and kissing her flabby cheeks. The Blue Bird, ah me, what a debt I owe him! If I have ever wrought any good in my life, it is all due to him. Whenever we were drafting a Bill with our Chief, the memory of the Blue Bird would steal into my mind amid the heaps of legal and parliamentary documents by which I was hemmed in. I used to reflect then that the human soul contained infinite desires, unimaginable metamorphoses and hallowed sorrows, and if, under the spell of such thoughts, I gave to the clause I chanced to be engaged upon an ampler, a humaner sense, an added respect for the soul and its rights, and for the universal order of things, that clause would never fail to encounter vigorous opposition in the Chamber. The counsels of the Blue Bird seldom prevailed in the committee stage. Howbeit some did manage to get through Parliament.

I now perceive that I am not the only one inspecting the little stall: a little girl has come to a halt in front of the brilliant display. I am looking at her from behind. Her long, bright hair comes tumbling in cascades from under her red velvet hood and spreads out on her broad lace collar and on her dress, which is the same colour as her hood. Impossible to say what is the colour of her hair (there is no colour so beautiful) but one can describe the lights in it; they are bright and pure and changing, fair as the sun's rays, pale as a beam of starlight. Nay, more than that, they shine, yes; but they flow also. They possess the splendour of light, and the charm of pleasant waters. Methinks that, were I a poet, I should write as many sonnets on those tresses as M. José Maria de Heredia composed concerning the Conquerors of Castille d'Or. They would not be so fine, but they would be sweeter. The child, so far as I can judge, is between four and five years old. All I can see of her face is the tip of her ear, daintier than the daintiest jewel, and the innocent curve of her cheek. She does not stir; she is holding her hoop in her left hand; her right is at her lips as though she were biting her nails in her eager contemplation. What is it she is gazing at so longingly? The shop contains other things besides the arms and the gear of fighting men. Balls and skipping ropes are suspended from the awning. On the stall are baby dolls with bodies made of grey cardboard, smiling after the manner of idols, monstrous and serene as they. Little six-penny dolls, dressed like servant girls, stretch out their arms, little stumpy arms so flimsy that the least breath of air sets them a-tremble. But the little maid whose hair is made of liquid light, has no eyes for these dolls and puppets. Her whole soul hangs upon the lips of a beautiful baby doll that seems to be calling her his mummy. He is

hitched on to one of the poles of the booth all by himself. He dominates, he effaces everything else. Once you have beheld him, you see naught else save him.

Bolt upright in his warm wraps, a little swansdown tucker under his chin, he is stretching out his little chubby arms for some one to take him. He speaks straight to the little maid's heart. He appeals to her by every maternal instinct she possesses. He is enchanting. His face has three little dots, two black ones for the eyes, and one red one for the mouth. But his eyes speak, his mouth invites you. He is alive.

Philosophers are a heedless race. They pass by dolls with never a thought. Nevertheless the doll is more than the statue, more than the idol. It finds its way to the heart of woman, long ere she be a woman. It gives her the first thrill of maternity. The doll is a thing august. Wherefore cannot one of our great sculptors be so very kind as to take the trouble to model dolls whose lineaments, coming to life beneath his fingers, would tell of wisdom and of beauty?

At last the little girl awakens from her silent day-dream. She turns round and shows her violet eyes made bigger still with wonder, her nose which makes you smile to look at it, her tiny nose, quite white, that reminds you of a little pug dog's black one, her solemn mouth, her shapely but too delicate chin, her cheeks a shade too pale. I recognize her. Oh yes! I recognize her with that instinctive certainty that is stronger than all convictions supported by all the proofs imaginable. Oh yes, 'tis she, 'tis indeed she and all that remains of the most charming of women. I try to hasten away but I cannot leave her. That hair of living gold, it is her mother's hair; those violet eyes, they are her mother's own; Oh, child of my dreams, child of my despair! I long to gather you to my arms, to steal you, to bear you away.

But a governess draws near, calls the child and leads her away: "Come, Marguerite, come along, it's time to go home."

And Marguerite, casting a look of sad farewell at the baby with its outstretched arms, reluctantly follows in the footsteps of a tall woman clad in black with ostrich feathers in her hat.

10th July

“Jean, bring me file 117.... Now then, M. Boscheron, let’s get this circular done. Take this down: *I draw your special attention, M. le Préfet, to the following point. An end must be put at the earliest possible moment to an abuse which, if suffered to continue, would tend to — tend to — I draw your special attention to the following point, M. le Préfet. An end must be put as soon as possible to an abuse .* Take that down, M. Boscheron.”

But M. Boscheron, my secretary, respectfully remarks that I keep on dictating the same sentence. Jean deferentially places a file on my table.

“What’s that, Jean?”

“File number 117. You asked me to fetch it, sir.”

“I asked you for file number 117?”

“Yes, sir.”

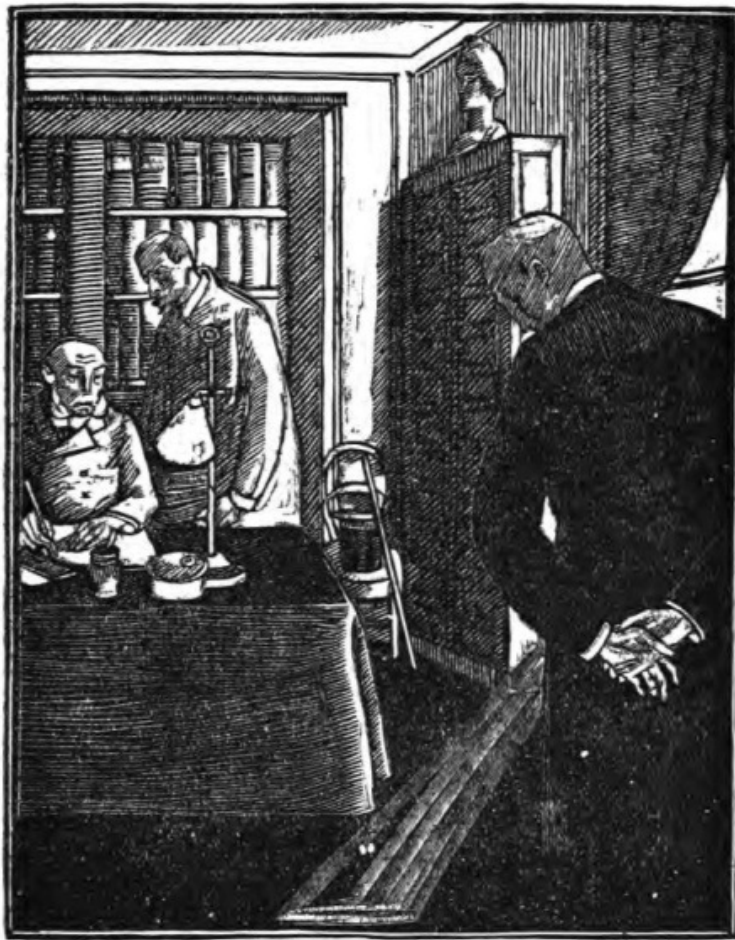
Jean gives me an anxious glance and retires.

“Where were we, M. Boscheron?”

“An end must be put as soon as possible to an abuse”

“That’s right... *an abuse which would tend to diminish popular respect for government servants and to transform ...* transform, what a wealth of hidden things that word conceals. I cannot so much as pronounce it but a world of ideas and sentiments come thronging pell-mell to invade the secret recesses of my being.” “I beg pardon, monsieur?” “What did you say, M. Boscheron?” “Please repeat, monsieur; I didn’t quite follow you.”

“Really, Monsieur Boscheron? Possibly I was not very clear. Well, well! we will stop there if you like. Give me what I have dictated, I will finish it myself.”



M. Boscheron gives me his notes, gathers up his papers, bows and retires. Left alone in my office, I fall to examining the wallpaper with a sort of idiotic minuteness. It has the appearance of green felt with here and there a yellow stain; I begin to draw little men on my paper; I make an effort to write; for the fact is my Chief has asked for the circular three times and has promised the government deputies that it shall go to the prefects forthwith. I am bound to let him have it. I begin reading it through: *to diminish popular respect for government servants and to transform them* . I make a blot; then with my pen I adorn it with hair. I transform it into a comet. I dream of Marguerite's tresses. The other day, in the Champs-Élysées, little filaments of gold, little delicate spirals stood out from the rest of her graceful tresses, with a singular brightness. You can see their like in fifteenth century miniatures, also in some of an earlier date. Dante says in his *Vita Nuova* : "One day when I was busy drawing angel's heads . . ." And now here am I trying to draw angels' heads on a government circular. Come now, we must get on with it: *government servants and to transform them — transform them* . . . How is it I simply cannot write a single

word after that? How is it I am here dreaming still, as I have been ever since I rediscovered my *ego* on the Pont de la Concorde that evening of the lovely sunset? Transform, did I say? O God of mystery, nature, truth, if she whose name even now after four years I dare not utter, if she died in giving life to Marguerite, I should believe, I should know with the certainty of instinct, that the soul of the mother had passed into the daughter and that they are one and the same being.

1st November

All's well. I have lost my *ego* again. It has gone back into the green filing cases. Number 117 contains a good part of it. I have finished my circular. It is drawn up in good official style. We have a fine piece of legislation to get off before the holidays. My Chief speaks every day in the House. Every night I correct the proofs of his speeches. If the Blue Bird comes to see me now and again in the small hall of the Palais Bourbon, it is merely to advise me to tone down some rather too forcible expression and he never addresses himself to my imagination. I don't know whether I am living happily or unhappily since I don't know that I am living at all. I do not even recognize my own clothes. I picked up the hat of the Comte de Mérodac a little while ago and wore it for three days without knowing it, yet it is a romantic sombrero-like sort of thing worn nowadays by no one save this elderly nobleman. I cut an astounding figure they told me, but I never noticed myself, and, if by chance I had, I should not have heeded what I saw since it had nothing to do with politics. I am no longer a person; I am a piece of the official machine. To-night I have neither proofs to correct nor official reception to attend. I have put on my slippers. There is always a tiny bit of my *ego* hidden away in these slippers. I am in my room seated by the fire and I am conscious of being there. By heaven I wonder whether I should know myself in the glass. Let's have a look. Hum! not so very ... I didn't think I was so grave and respectable looking. I quite see that I shall have to take myself seriously. I have been a long time about it, but then it wasn't for me to begin.

I am a man of weight and I account myself such. But, alas, I do not know myself. And I am not anxious to acquire the knowledge; it would be a tedious business. No, I haven't the smallest desire to hold converse with the grave and frigid gentleman who mimics all my movements. On the other hand, did I but dare, what a happy time I should have with that little fellow whose miniature I see there in that locket hanging against the frame of the mirror. He is building a house with dominoes. What a nice little chap. I feel like calling him and saying "Let's go and have a game together shall we?" But, alas, he is far away, very far away. That little boy is myself as I was forty years ago. He is dead, just as dead as if I were lying beneath the sod, sealed up in a leaden coffin. For what have we in common, he and I? In what respect does he survive in me to-day? In what do my castles of cards resemble his tower of dominoes?

We say that we live, we miserable beings, because we keep dying over and over again.



I remember, it is true, how I used to play my games of an evening what time my mother sat sewing at the table and gazed at me, now and again, with a look full of that beautiful and simple tenderness that makes one adore life, bless God and gives one courage enough to fight a score of battles. Ah yes, hallowed memories, I shall treasure you in my heart like a precious balm which, till my days are done, will have power to soothe all bitterness and soften the very agony of death. But does the child that I then was survive in me today? No. He is a stranger to me; I feel that I can love him without selfishness and weep for him without unmanliness. He is dead and gone, and has taken away with him my innocent simplicities and my boundless hopes. We all of us die in swaddling clothes. Little Marguerite, that delightful image of unfolding life, how many times has she not died and what profound depths of irrevocable memories, what a grave of dead thoughts and emotions has not already been delved within her, though she is but five years old. I, a stranger, a passer-by, know more of her life than she does and, in consequence, I am more truly she than she herself. After

that let him who will prate of the feeling of identity and the consciousness of self.

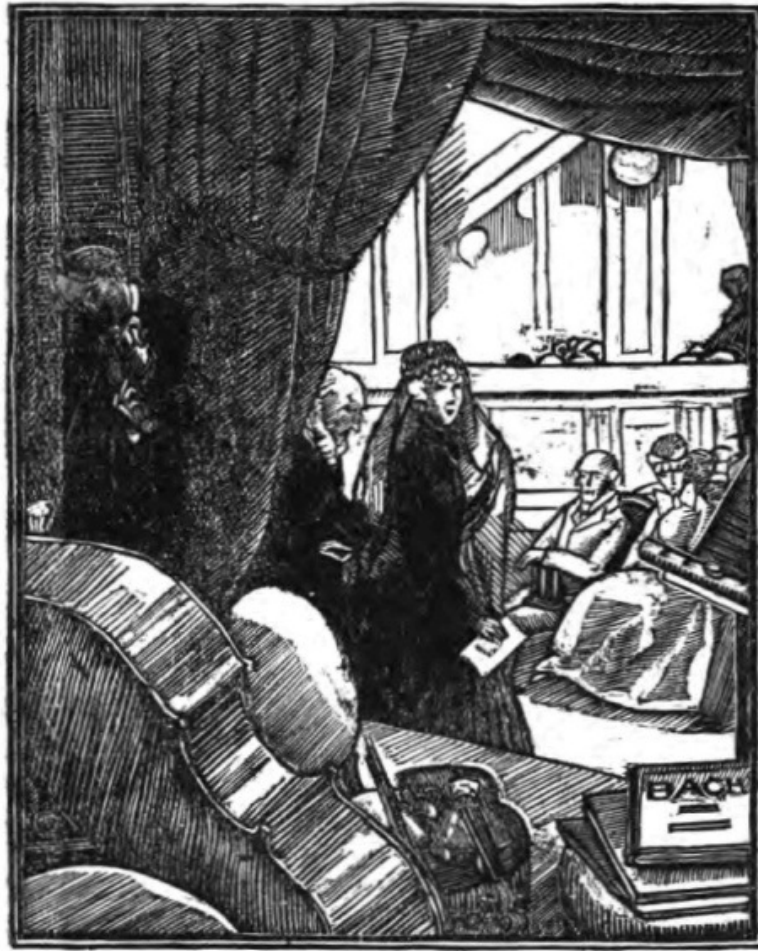
Oh, gracious Heaven, what things we mortals be and into what an abyss of terrors we should be for ever plunging if we had but time to think, instead of making laws or planting cabbages. I feel like pulling my slippers off my feet and pitching them out of the window, since they have called me back to the consciousness of my existence. Our lives are only bearable provided we do not think about them.



5th July

It is a year ago to-day since I fell in with that little girl in front of a toyshop in the Champs-Élysées, the child of her who first awakened in me the sense of beauty.

I was happy before I saw her; but the poetry of the wide world was unknown to me, nor had I had experience of the dolorous joys of love. The first time I saw Marie was one Good Friday at a classical concert to which her father, an old diplomat with a passion for music, who had heard the finest orchestras of every Court in Europe, had conducted her attired in stately weeds of solemn black. Her mourning garb only served to accentuate her radiant beauty. The sight of her aroused in me feelings which bore, I think, a close resemblance to religious exaltation. I was no longer very young. The uncertainty of my worldly position, dependent as it then was upon the vicissitudes of a political party, combined with my natural timidity to deprive me of all hope of figuring as a successful suitor. I often saw her at her father's and she treated me with an air of open friendliness that did not encourage me to foster higher ambitions. It was clear I did not impress her as the sort of man with whom she could fall in love. As for me, the sight of her and the sound of her voice produced in me such a state of delicious agitation that the mere memory of it, mingled though it be with grief, still avails to make me in love with life.



Nevertheless, shall I avow it? I longed to hear her and to see her always; I would have died in rapture at her side, but I was never fain to wed her. No, some instinct of harmony held desire remote from my heart. "It was not love then," some one will say. I know not what it was, but I know that it filled my soul.

Clearly, however, the feelings I experienced cannot have been strange to the heart of man, since I have found them expressed with power and sweetness in the works of the poets, in Virgil, in Racine and Lamartine. They have given utterance to the emotions which I but felt. I could not break silence. The miracles wrought in my soul by this young girl will remain for ever unrevealed. For two years I lived an enchanted life; then, one day, she told me she was going to be married. My feelings, as I have said, bear a strong resemblance to religious emotion. They are sad, but in their sadness they still preserve their charm. Grief corrupts them not. From suffering they derive a wholesome bitterness that lends them strength. I listened to her with that gentle courage which comes with renunciation. She was marrying a man senior to myself, a widower, almost an old man, whose birth and fortune had marked him out for the public career in

which he had displayed a haughtiness of disposition and much misplaced courage. Although I moved in a lower sphere, I came in contact with him on several important occasions. I belonged to a political group with views very similar to his own, but we had never been able to meet without considerable friction and, although the newspapers treated us with the same approval or, as was more often the case, with the same hostility, we were not friends, far from it, and we avoided each other with sedulous care.

I was present at the wedding. I saw, and I shall ever see Marie, wearing her white dress and lace veil. She was a little pale and very lovely. I was struck, without apparent reason, by the impression of fragility with which this girl who was animated by so poetic a soul seemed to give one. This impression, which I think occurred to no one but myself, was only too well founded. I never saw Marie again.

She died after three years of married life, leaving a little girl ten months old. An indescribable feeling of tender affection has always drawn me to this child, to Marie's Marguerite. An unconquerable desire to see her took possession of me.

She was being brought up at ——— — near Melun, where her father had a château standing in the midst of a magnificent park. One day I went to ——— — and wandered for hours, like a thief, about the park boundaries. At last, through a gap in the trees, I caught sight of Marguerite in the arms of her nurse, who was dressed in black. She was wearing a hat with white plumes and an embroidered pelisse. I cannot say in what respect she differed from any other child, but I thought she was the fairest in the world. It was autumn. The wind that was sighing in the trees was whirling the dead leaves about in little eddies as they floated to earth. Dead leaves covered all the long avenue in which the little white-robed child was being carried up and down. An immense sadness took possession of me. At the edge of a bed of flowers as white as the raiment of Marguerite, an old gardener who was gathering up the fallen leaves saluted his little mistress with a smile and, with his hand on his rake and hat in hand, spoke to her with the gentle gaiety of old men who are not overburdened with their thoughts. But she paid no heed to him. With her little hand like to a star she sought her nurse's breast. As I hurried away with grief in my heart, the nurse resumed her walk and I heard the sound of the dead leaves sighing sorrowfully beneath her steps.



10th July

The President of the Chamber rises and says: "The motion proposed by Messrs. — — and — — is now put."

The Prime Minister, without quitting his seat says: "The Government does not assent to the motion."

The President rings his bell and says: "A ballot has been demanded. A ballot will therefore be taken. Those in favour of Messrs. — — and — — 's motion must place a white paper in the urn; those who are against it, a blue paper."

There was a great movement in the hall. The deputies poured out in a disorderly mob into the corridors, while the ushers passed the white metal urn along the tiers of seats. The corridors were full of the sound of shuffling feet, and of shouting and gesticulating people. Grave looking young men and excited old ones went passing by. The air was pierced with the sound of voices calling out figures:

"Eleven votes."

"No, nine."

"They are being checked."

"Eight against."

"No, not at all; eight for."

"What, the amendment is carried?"

"Yes."

"The Government is beaten?"

"Yes."

"Ah!"

The President's bell is heard in the corridors.

Slowly the hall fills again.

The President standing up with a paper in his hand rings his bell for the last time and says:

"The following is the result of the ballot on the motion proposed by Messrs. — — and — — . Number of votes 470; for the motion 239 ; against 231. The motion is carried."

There is an immense sensation. The Ministers get up and leave their seats. Two or three friends shake them timidly by the hand. It's all over, they are beaten. They go under and I with them. I no longer count. I make up my mind to it. To say that I am happy would be to go too far. But it spells the end of my worries and bothers and toils. I have regained my freedom, but not voluntarily.

Repose and liberty, I've got them back again, but it is to my defeat that I owe them. An honourable defeat it is true, but painful all the same because our ideas suffer with ourselves. How many things are involved in our fall, alas. Economy, public security, tranquillity of conscience and that spirit of prudence, that continuity of policy, which gives a nation its strength. I hurried away to shake hands with the Chief of my department, proud of having rendered faithful service to so upright a leader. Then, pushing my way through the crowd that had gathered about the precincts of the Palais Bourbon, I crossed the Seine and made my way slowly towards the Madeleine. At the top of the boulevard there was a barrow of flowers drawn up alongside the kerb. Between the two shafts was a young girl making up bunches of violets. I went up to her and asked her for a bunch. I then saw a little girl of four sitting on the barrow amid the flowers. With her baby fingers she was trying to make bunches like her mother. She raised her head at my approach and, with a smile, held out all the flowers she had in her hands. When she had given them all to me, she blew kisses.



I was extremely flattered. "I must have a kindly look about me," I said to myself, "for a child to smile a welcome at me like that. What is your name?" I asked her.

"Marguerite," replied her mother.

It was half-past six. There was a news-vendor's hard by. I bought a paper. As soon as I glanced at it I saw that I was in for a wiggling. The political editor, having referred to my Chief as an individual of ill omen, spoke of me too, on the first page, as a sinister creature. But, after Marguerite's kisses, I could not believe it. I felt at once a lightness and a sort of emptiness at heart; both glad and sorrowful.

A week later found me on my way, to ——— — near Melun, where I had taken a little house hard by the Château of Marguerite's upbringing. In my eyes it was the fairest region in the world.

As we approached the station I looked out of the carriage window. The silver river flowed in graceful curves between willows, until it vanished from the sight. But long after it was lost to view one could divine its course by the rows of poplars which lined its banks. A weathercock and two towers visible amid the trees marked the site of the town. Then I exclaimed, "Here is the resting place for me, here will I lay my head."



25th July

The walk I love best is the walk to Saint-Jean, for there, about a hundred yards from the town is a little wood, or rather a little half-wild cluster of hornbeams, maples, limes and lilac bushes, a bouquet that murmurs in the breeze. The very first day I discovered it, I felt its charm. I determined to make love to it; I made up my mind to know it tree by tree, to search out its humblest plants, its vetches, its saxifrages, and to see whether there was no Solomon's seal to be found growing beneath the shade of the big trees. I kept my word and now I am beginning to make acquaintance with the flora and fauna of my little wood. I had been reclining on the grass to-day for the space of an hour, book in hand, when I heard some one crying in a faint voice. I looked up and beheld a little girl standing beside an elderly man and weeping. The man was undeniably old. His face was long and pallid. There was an expression of sadness in his eyes and his mouth drooped mournfully. He had a skipping-rope in his hand and was looking fixedly at the child. Then he turned aside to brush away a tear from his cheek. It was then that I beheld him full face and saw that he was Marguerite's father. I was shocked at the great change that illness and sorrow had wrought in his haughty mien. Despair was graven on his countenance and he seemed to be calling for help.



I went up to him and, in response to my offer to assist him in any way possible, he explained with some embarrassment that a ball with which his little girl had been playing had got caught in a tree and that his stick, which he had thrown up in order to dislodge it, had become entangled in the branches. He was at his wit's end.

Only a few years before, this same man had circumvented the policy of England and imparted a vigorous stimulus to French diplomacy in Europe. Then he fell with honour, and was followed in his retirement by a profound but honourable unpopularity. And now, behold his powers are unequal to the task of dislodging a ball from a tree. Such is the frailty of man. As for his daughter, Marie's daughter, a sort of presentiment forbade me to look in her face. And then when at length I did look at her, I could not tear myself away from such a sorrowful object of contemplation. She was no longer the little pink and white child I had seen in the Champs-Élysées; she had grown taller and thinner, and her face was wan as a waxen taper. Her languid eyes were encircled with blue

rings. And her temples . . . what invisible hand had laid those two sad violets upon her temples?

“There! there! there!” cried the old man as he stretched forth a trembling arm which pointed aimlessly in all directions.

The first thing to be done was to help him. By means of a stone which I threw up into the tree, I soon managed to bring the ball down. X . . . witnessed its fall with childish delight. He had not recognized me. I hurriedly escaped to spare him the trouble of thanking me and myself the agony of seeing the change that had taken place in Marie’s daughter.



10th August

I seldom go out. I am no longer moved by the beauty of things. Or to speak more truly, the more pleasurable and splendid aspects of nature give me pain. All day long I sully sheet after sheet of paper and beguile the tedious hours with the half-faded recollections of my childhood. What I am writing will be burned. I should be ashamed that pages, tear-stained and dream-haunted, should fall beneath the eyes of grave, sober-minded folk. What would they see in them? Naught but childish faces.

20th August

To-day I went for a stroll by the river in whose blue waters are mirrored the willows and the houses that befringe its banks. There is a seductive charm about running waters. They bear along with them as they flow all those idlers who love to dream their time away.

The river lured me as far as the château de- ——— — which had witnessed the betrothal and the death of Marie, and the birth of Marguerite. My heart tolled a knell within me when I saw once more that peaceful abode, which, despite the scenes of sorrow enacted within its walls, speaks, with its white pillared façade, of naught save elegant opulence and luxurious repose. I was so overcome that, to save myself from falling, I clung to the bars of the park gate and gazed at the wide lawns which stretched away as far as the flight of steps which the hem of Marie's robe had kissed so often. I had been there some minutes when the gate was opened and X ... came out.

On this occasion, also, he was accompanied by his child: but this time she was not walking. She was lying in a perambulator which was being pushed by a governess. With her head resting on an embroidered pillow in the shadow of the lowered hood, she resembled one of those little waxen images of saint or martyr, embellished with silver filigree, on whose wounds and gems the nuns of Spain are wont to pore in the solitude of their cells.



Her father, elegantly dressed, presented a faded, tear-stained countenance. He advanced towards me with little faltering steps, took me by the hand and led me to his little girl.

“Tell me,” he said in the tone of a child asking a favour, “you don’t think she has changed since you last saw her, do you? It was the day she threw her ball up into the tree.”

The perambulator which we were following in silence came to a halt in the Bois Saint-Jean. The governess lowered the hood. Marguerite lay with her head thrown back, her eyes big with terror, and she was stretching out her arms to push aside something that we could not see. Oh, I guessed well enough what invisible hand it was. The same hand that had touched the mother was now laid upon the child. I fell on my knees. But the phantom departed and Marguerite, raising her head, lay resting peacefully. I gathered some flowers and laid them reverently beside her. She smiled. Seeing her come back to life I gave her more flowers and sang to her, endeavouring to beguile her. The air and the feeling of happiness she now experienced brought back to her that desire to live which had

forsaken her. At the end of an hour her cheeks were almost rosy. When it grew cool and we had to take the little suffering child back to the château again, her father took my hand as we parted and, pressing it, said in suppliant tones:

“Come again to-morrow.”



21st August

I returned next day. On the steps of the Empire château I encountered the family doctor. He is a spare, elderly man whom you meet wherever there is good music to be heard. He seems like a man perpetually listening to the harmonies of some inward concert. He is for ever under the spell of sounds and lives by his ear alone. He is specially noted for his treatment of nervous complaints. Some say he is a genius; others that he is mad. Certainly there is something peculiar about him. When I saw him he was coming down the steps; his feet, his finger and his lips moving in time to some intricate measure.

“Well, doctor,” I said with an involuntary quaver in my voice, “and how is your little patient?”

“She means to live,” he answered.

“You will pull her through for us, won’t you?” I said eagerly.

“I tell you she means to live.”

“And you think, doctor, that people live just as long as they really want to and that we do not die save with our own consent?”

“Certainly.”

I walked with him along the gravel path. He stopped for a moment at the gate, his head bowed as if in thought.

“Certainly,” he said again, “but they must really want to and not merely think they want to. Conscious will is an illusion that can deceive none save the vulgar. People who believe they will a thing because they say they will it, are fools. The only genuine act of volition is that in which all the obscure forces of our nature take part. That will is unconscious, it is divine. It moulds the world. By it we exist, and when it fails we cease to be. The world *wills*, otherwise it would not exist.”

We walked on a few steps farther.

“Look here,” he exclaimed, tapping his stick against the bark of an oak tree that spread out its broad canopy of grey branches above our heads, “if that fellow there had not *willed* to grow, I should like to know what power could have made him do so.”

But I had ceased to listen.

“So you have hopes,” I said at length, “that Marguerite . . .”

But he was a stubborn little old fellow.

He murmured as he walked away: “The Will’s crowning Victory is Love.”

And I stood and watched him as he departed with little quick steps, beating time to a tune that was running in his head.

I went quickly back to the château and found little Marguerite. The moment I saw her, I realized that she had the will to live. She was still very pale and very thin, but her eyes had more colour in them and were not so big, and her lips, lately so dead-looking and so silent, were gay with prattling talk.

“You are late,” she said. “Come here, see! I have a theatre and actors. Play me a beautiful piece. They say that ‘Hop o’ my Thumb’ is nice. Play ‘Hop o’ my Thumb’ for me.”



You may be sure I did not refuse. However, I encountered great difficulties at the very outset of my undertaking. I pointed out to Marguerite that the only actors she had were princes and princesses, and that we wanted woodmen, cooks and a certain number of folks of all sorts.

She thought for a moment and then said:

“A prince dressed like a cook; that one there looks like a cook, don’t you think?”

“Yes, I think so too.”

“Well, then, we’ll make woodmen and cooks out of all the princes we have over.”

And that’s what we did. O Wisdom, what a day we spent together!

Many others like it followed in its train. I watched Marguerite taking an ever firmer hold on life. Now she is quite well again. I had a share in this miracle. I discovered a tiny portion of that gift wherein the apostles so richly abounded when they healed the sick by the laying on of hands.

Editor’s Note . — I found this manuscript in a train on the Northern Railway. I give it to the public without alteration of any sort, save that, as the names were those of well-known persons, I have thought it well to suppress them.

Anatole France.



THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

Translated by Henri Pène du Bois

I.

THERE lived in France, in the time of King Louis, a poor juggler, native of Compiègne, named Barnabas, who went through the cities making tricks of strength and skill. On market days he extended on the public square an old carpet, all worn out, and, after having attracted the children and idlers by pleasing phrases, which he had learned from an old juggler and of which he never changed anything, he assumed attitudes which were not natural, and he placed a pewter plate on his nose and balanced it there. The crowd looked at him at first with indifference.

But when, with hands and head on the ground, he threw in the air and caught with his feet six copper balls which shone in the sun, or when, throwing himself backward till his neck touched his heels, he gave to his body the form of a perfect wheel, and juggled, in that posture, with twelve knives, a murmur of admiration rose from the spectators, and pieces of money rained on the carpet.

Nevertheless, like most of those who live off their talents. Barnabas of Compiègne had a great deal of trouble to live.

Earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, he carried more than his share of the miseries attached to the sin of Adam, our father.

Moreover, he could not work as much as he wished. To display his fine learning, as for the trees to give flowers and fruits, he needed the warmth of the sun and the light of day. In winter he was only a tree despoiled of its leaves and almost dead. The congealed earth was hard for the juggler. And, like the cicada whereof Marie of France writes, he suffered from cold and hunger in the bad season. But, as his heart was simple, he suffered his ills in patience.

He had never reflected on the origin of riches nor on the inequality of human conditions. He believed firmly that, if this world is bad, the other world cannot fail to be good, and this hope supported him. He did not imitate the miscreants who have sold their souls to the devil. He never took the name of God in vain; he lived honestly, and, although he had no wife, he did not covet his neighbor's, for woman is the enemy of strong men, as appears by the history of Samson which is related in the Scriptures.

In truth, his mind was not inclined toward material desires, and it would have cost him more to renounce mugs than women. For, although he never failed in

sobriety, he liked to drink when it was warm. He was a good man, fearing God and very devout to the Holy Virgin.

He never failed, when he went into a church, to kneel before the image of the Mother of God and to address to her this prayer:

“Madame, take care of my life until it may please God that I shall die, and when I die let me have the joys of paradise.”

II.

One night, after a day of rain, while he was walking, sad and bent, carrying under his arm his balls and his knives hidden in his old carpet, and seeking for a barn where he might go to bed, without supper, he saw on the road a monk who was going the same way, and bowed to him courteously. As they were walking together they exchanged ideas.

“Friend,” said the monk, “how is it that you are dressed in green? Is it to play the personage of a clown in some mystery-play?”

“No, father,” replied Barnabas, “such as I am, I am Barnabas, and my trade is that of a juggler. It would be the most beautiful trade in the world if one in it could eat every day.”

“Friend Barnabas,” said the monk, “be careful of what you are saying. There is no more beautiful trade than the monastic one. In it are celebrated the praise of God, of the Virgin, and the saints, and the life of the monk is a perpetual canticle to the Lord.”

Barnabas replied:

“Father, I confess that I have talked like an ignorant man. Your trade may not be compared with mine, and, although there is some merit in dancing while holding a coin balanced on a stick on one’s nose, this merit does not reach the height of yours. I would like to sing every day like you, father, the office of the Holy Virgin, to whom I have devoted a special piety, I would willingly abandon the art in which I am known from Soissons to Beauvais, in more than six hundred cities and villages, in order to embrace the monastic life.”

The monk was moved by the juggler’s simplicity, and, as the monk was not lacking in discernment, he recognized in Barnabas one of the men of good-will whereof our Lord has said: “Let peace be with them on earth.” That is why he replied;

“Friend Barnabas, come with me, and I will make you enter the convent whereof I am the prior. The one who led Mary the Egyptian in the desert placed me on your path to lead you in the way of salvation.”

It is thus that Barnabas became a monk. In the convent where he was received, the religious celebrated the cult of the Holy Virgin, and each one used in her service all the learning and all the skill that God had given to him.

The prior, for his part, composed books which treated, in accordance with the rules of scholasticism, of the virtues of the Mother of God.

Friar Maurice copied with a learned hand these treatises on leaves of vellum.

Friar Alexander painted fine miniatures. One could see in them the Queen of Heaven, seated on the throne of Solomon, at the foot of which four lions watch. Around her head, which has a halo, are seven doves, which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: gifts of fear, of piety, of science, of force, of advice, of intelligence, and of wisdom. She had as companions six virgins with golden hair: Humility, Prudence, Retirement, Respect, Virginity, and Obedience.

At her feet two small nude and white figures stood in respectful attitude. They were souls that implored for their salvation, and certainly not in vain, her all-powerful intercession.

Friar Alexander represented on another page Eve with eyes toward Mary, so that one might see at the same time the sin and the redemption, the humiliated woman and the exalted Virgin. One could admire, moreover, in this book the Well of Living Waters, the Fountain, the Lily, the Moon, the Sun, and the Garden sung in the canticle, the Door of Heaven and the City of God, and these were images of the Virgin.

Friar Marbode was, similarly, one of the most tender children of Mary.

He carved stone images incessantly, so that his beard, his eyebrows, and his hair were white with dust, and his eyes were perpetually swollen and tearful; but he was full of strength and of joy in his old age, and, visibly, the Queen of Paradise protected the declining years of her child. Marbode represented her seated in a pulpit, with a nimbus around her forehead, the orb of which was in pearls. And he was careful that the folds of her gown should cover the feet of the one whereof the prophet has said, "My beloved is like a closed garden."

At times, also, he represented her with the features of a child full of grace, and she seemed to say, "Lord, you are my Lord!"

There were also in the convent poets who composed Latin hymns in honor of the Virgin Mary, and there was even a Picardian who related the miracles of Notre Dame in ordinary terms and in rhyming verses.

III.

Seeing such a competition in praises and such a beautiful harvest of work, Barnabas lamented his ignorance and his simplicity.

“Alas!” he sighed, while he walked alone in the small garden of the convent, “I am very unfortunate not to be able, like my brothers, to praise worthily the Holy Mother of God, to whom I have devoted the tenderness of my heart. Alas! alas! I am a rough and artless man, and I have at my service, Madame the Virgin, neither edifying sermons nor treatises well divided according to the rules, nor fine paintings, nor statues correctly sculptured, nor verses walking in measure. I have nothing, alas!”

He moaned in this manner and yielded to sadness. One night that the monks were conversing, he heard one of them relate the history of a religious who knew how to recite only the Ave Maria. This monk was disdained for his ignorance: but when he died five roses came out of his mouth in honor of the five letters of the name of Maria, and thus his sanctity was manifested.

While he listened to this tale, Barnabas admired once more the kindness of the Virgin; but he was not consoled by the example of that death, for his heart was full of zeal, and he wished to serve the glory of his lady who is in heaven.

He sought for the means of doing this without being able to find them, and his affliction increased day by day; but one morning he awoke joyfully, ran to the chapel, and stayed there alone for more than an hour. He returned after dinner.

And from this moment he went every day to that chapel, at the hour when it was deserted, and passed there a great part of the time that the other monks consecrated to the liberal and mechanical arts. He was no longer sad and he no longer complained.

A behavior so singular excited the curiosity of the monks.

They asked themselves in the community why Friar Barnabas made retreats so frequently.

The prior, whose duty it is to ignore nothing of the behavior of the religious, decided to watch Barnabas in his solitude. One day that he was closeted in the chapel, Dom Prior came, accompanied by two elders of the convent; and observed through cracks in the door the things that were happening in the interior.

They saw Barnabas, who, before the altar of the Holy Virgin, head downward, his feet in the air, was juggling with six copper balls and twelve knives. He was doing, in honor of the Holy Mother of God, the feats of his trade which had provoked the most applause. Not comprehending that this simple man, thus placed his talent and his learning at the service of the Holy Virgin, the two elders cried that it was a sacrilege.

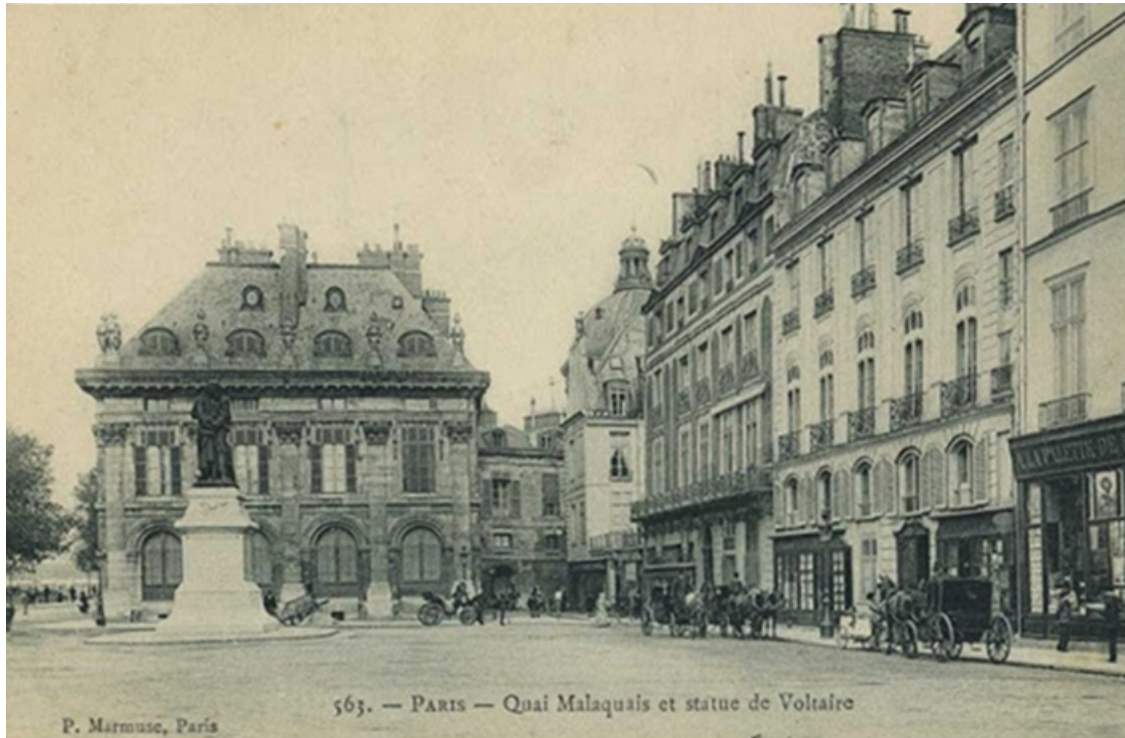
The prior knew that Barnabas's mind was innocent, but thought that he had fallen into insanity. They were preparing to drag him out of the chapel as quickly as they could, when they saw the Holy Virgin descend the stairs of the altar in order to wipe with a fold of her blue mantle the perspiration which fell from the juggler's forehead.

Then the prior, kneeling with his face against the marble slabs, recited these words:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

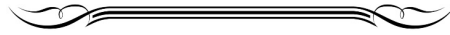
“Amen,” replied the elders, kissing the earth.

The Short Stories



France lived at No. 15 Quai Malaquais, Paris 6th, during his childhood years, from 1844 to 1853. His father's bookstore, called the Librairie France, specialised in books and papers on the French Revolution and was frequented by many notable writers and scholars of the day.

LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER



[JOCASTA](#)

[THE FAMISHED CAT](#)

[BALTHASAR](#)

[THE CURÉ'S MIGNONETTE](#)

[M. PIGEONNEAU](#)

[THE DAUGHTER OF LILITH](#)

[LAETA ACILIA](#)

[THE RED EGG](#)

[THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA](#)

[AMYCUS AND CELESTINE](#)

[THE LEGEND OF SAINTS OLIVERIA AND LIBERETTA](#)

[ST. EUPHROSINE](#)

[SCHOLASTICA](#)

[OUR LADY'S JUGGLER](#)

[THE MASS OF SHADOWS](#)

[LESLIE WOOD](#)

[GESTAS](#)

[THE MANUSCRIPT OF A VILLAGE DOCTOR](#)

[MEMOIRS OF A VOLUNTEER](#)

[DAWN](#)

[MADAME DE LUZY](#)

[THE BOON OF DEATH BESTOWED](#)

[A TALE OF THE MONTH OF FLORÉAL IN THE YEAR II](#)

[THE LITTLE LEADEN SOLDIER](#)

[PROLOGUE](#)

[SAN SATIRO](#)

[MESSER GUIDO CAVALCANTI](#)

[LUCIFER](#)

[THE LOAVES OF BLACK BREAD](#)

[THE MERRY-HEARTED BUFFALMACCO](#)

[THE LADY OF VERONA](#)

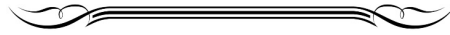
[THE HUMAN TRAGEDY](#)

[THE MYSTIC BLOOD](#)

A SOUND SECURITY
HISTORY OF DOÑA MARIA D'AVALOS AND DON FABRICIO, DUKE
D'ANDRIA
BONAPARTE AT SAN MINIATO
THE BARD OF KYME
KOMM OF THE ATREBATES
FARINATA DEGLI UBERTI; OR, CIVIL WAR
THE KING DRINKS
LA MUIRON
THE CHATEAU DE VAUX-LE-VICOMTE
CRAINQUEBILLE
PUTOIS
RIQUET
THE MEDITATIONS OF RIQUET
THE NECKTIE
THE MONTIL MANŒUVRES
ÉMILE
ADRIENNE BUQUET
THE INTAGLIO
LA SIGNORA CHIARA
UPRIGHT JUDGES
THE OCEAN CHRIST
JEAN MARTEAU
MONSIEUR THOMAS
A SERVANT'S THEFT
EDMÉE, OR CHARITY WELL BESTOWED
OLIVIER'S BRAG
THE MIRACLE OF THE MAGPIE
BROTHER JOCONDE
FIVE FAIR LADIES OF PICARDY, OF POITOU, OF TOURAINE, OF
LYONS, AND OF PARIS
A GOOD LESSON WELL LEARNT
SATAN'S TONGUE-PIE
CONCERNING AN HORRIBLE PICTURE
MADemoiselle DE DOUCINE'S NEW YEAR'S PRESENT
MADemoiselle ROXANE
THE SEVEN WIVES OF BLUEBEARD

THE MIRACLE OF THE GREAT ST. NICOLAS
THE STORY OF THE DUCHESS OF CICOONE AND OF MONSIEUR DE
BOULINGRIN
THE SHIRT
FANCHON
THE FANCY-DRESS BALL
THE SCHOOL
MARIE
THE PANDEAN PIPES
ROGER'S STUD
COURAGE
CATHERINE'S "AT HOME"
LITTLE SEA-DOGS
GETTING WELL
ACROSS THE MEADOWS
THE MARCH PAST
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[JOCASTA](#)

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[BALTHASAR](#)

[THE CURÉ'S MIGNONETTE](#)

[M. PIGEONNEAU](#)

[THE DAUGHTER OF LILITH](#)

[LAETA ACILIA](#)

[THE RED EGG](#)

[THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA](#)

[AMYCUS AND CELESTINE](#)

[THE LEGEND OF SAINTS OLIVERIA AND LIBERETTA](#)

[ST. EUPHROSINE](#)

[SCHOLASTICA](#)

[OUR LADY'S JUGGLER](#)

[THE MASS OF SHADOWS](#)

[LESLIE WOOD](#)

[GESTAS](#)

[THE MANUSCRIPT OF A VILLAGE DOCTOR](#)

[MEMOIRS OF A VOLUNTEER](#)

[DAWN](#)

[MADAME DE LUZY](#)

[THE BOON OF DEATH BESTOWED](#)

[A TALE OF THE MONTH OF FLORÉAL IN THE YEAR II](#)

[THE LITTLE LEADEN SOLDIER](#)

[PROLOGUE](#)

[SAN SATIRO](#)

[MESSER GUIDO CAVALCANTI](#)

[LUCIFER](#)

[THE LOAVES OF BLACK BREAD](#)

[THE MERRY-HEARTED BUFFALMACCO](#)

[THE LADY OF VERONA](#)

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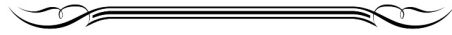
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The Plays



5 Villa Saïd, Paris — France's home from 1894 until his death in 1924

CRAINQUEBILLE



A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

Translated by Wilfrid Jackson and Emilie Jackson

CONTENTS

CHARACTERS

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

To LUCIEN GUITRY

My dear Friend , I make no offering of this little play to you. It is yours already. It is yours , not only because you gave it the hospitality of your theatre and staged it marvellously , it with a picked caste; not merely because you yourself brought out the character of Crainquebille with astonishing power and masterly truth. It is yours because I should never have done it without your help , and because every scene that was received with favour was written entirely under your inspiration.

I inscribe your name on the front page of our Crainquebille in testimony of my friendship.

ANATOLE FRANCE

CHARACTERS

CRAINQUEBILLE Mm. GUITRY.
A CHESTNUT-VENDOR THE MAGISTRATE, “ FRANCES.
BOURRICHE “ NERTANN.
MAITRE LEMERLE “ ARQUILLIERE.
DOCTOR DAVID MATHIEU “ NOIZEUX.
AUBARREE “ FREDAL.
POLICE-CONSTABLE 64 “ TALRICK.
LERMITE “ LARMANDIE.
A STREET-HAWKER “ FAVART.
A GROCER “ LAFOREST.
POLICE-CONSTABLE 121 “ ADAM.
USHER “ THOULOUSE.
A WINE-MERCHANT “ LARRY.
A PORK-BUTCHER “ MALLET.
MADAME BAYARD Mmes. MARIE SAMARY.
MADAME LAURA “ IRMA PERROT.
THE MOUSE “ JULIETTE MARGEL.
A WORK-GIRL “ JANE BERYL.
A WORK-GIRL “ JEANNE SCHMITT.

ACT I.

Rue de Beaujolais.

SCENE I.

THE STREET-HAWKER.

(Dressed like a shopwalker at the Magasins du Louvre , and standing on a stool , a box as big as a small trunk in front of him on a trestle, from which he keeps extracting articles that he as quickly replaces , he is just finishing his patter to the audience that crowds round him. Each time he mentions his firm 's name he raises his tall hat.) If the firm of Gameron, Cormandel & Co., which I have the honour to represent in this marketplace, has at length decided to make the enormous sacrifices which I have just enumerated to you, it is not for purely humanitarian motives, gentlemen; don't you believe it. It is not the case, and I don't mind telling you so, that the firm of Gameron, Cormandel & Co has undertaken to ruin the large shops or even the small tradesmen, as some malicious people would vainly make you believe, by disseminating broadcast slanders that we only have to look full in the face to see sink beneath the ground. No, gentlemen, the firm of Gameron, Cormandel &c Co has kept its eye on one thing, one thing alone. It is rather an important thing, and I will tell you about it presently. I count on your well-known forbearance, and merely ask a moment's patience. I will profit by it to recapitulate: these six articles may be had by anyone who cares to ask for them; he only has to say the word — a movement, a gesture, a mere wave of the hand, and they are his. These six articles, briefly enumerated, are as follows: First, a pneumatic cane which may be folded up by a mere pressure of the fingers, thus forming an object of small dimensions that will easily slip into an ordinary pocket. This article, in untarnishable metal, has a sale value of three shillings. I don't believe, gentlemen, you can accuse me of exaggeration. Think for one moment of the exorbitant price of labour nowadays. To continue: Secondly, a superb set of imitation shirt-studs. Three studs for the front, a pair of links for the cuffs, with detachable base, in burnished aluminium capable of resisting the action of fire for more than four hours.... Then the collar-stud, ornamented with a ravishingly beautiful blue stone, half a turquoise. I ask you all, gentlemen, and more particularly those who are in this line of business, Do you think a jeweller? — and I am not referring to a Boucheron or a Vevers. I talk as one...

SCENE II.

A BUTCHER'S BOY

(leaving the crowd , to the STREET-HAWKER).

You talk enough for two, guv'nor!

STREET-HAWKER *(with a savage grin).*

Just you wait a bit, my young fellow.... Just half a minute... I shall have finished in a tick, I then shall be able to attend to you....

THE BUTCHER'S BOY *(making a sign).*

Get up there, you will see Montmartre.

[He goes out.]

SCENE III.

THE STREET-HAWKER (*continuing*).

You prefer to retire, young man; permission is given you. To continue: — Is it likely, as I was saying, that a small jeweller, satisfied with a ridiculously small profit, could actually make this article under one-and-six? No. You agree? Well, I reckon one shilling, so far. Thirdly, a box of marvellous soap, the “Ocean Soap,” of whose wonderful qualities I gave you a conspicuous demonstration a few moments ago; it removes the most obstinate stains, and makes any material look as good as new. Gentlemen, I will not exhaust your powers of appreciation, and without saying any more about it, I offer it to you at the ridiculous figure of twopence-halfpenny. Fourthly, a box in Norwegian fire-bronzed celluloid, containing fifty pastilles, a certain remedy for all bronchial affections. Worth? What is it worth? A penny halfpenny.... Could anything be cheaper? Yes, and I will tell you what. This is the climax. The two remaining articles, the skirt-fastener, napkin-holder, automatic binder-clip, and, finally, the watch-chain, or a lady’s necklace, very similar to gold.... The price? Nothing... chucked in. No shillings and no pence, which, added to the articles mentioned above, gives us a total of... (*rapidly*) Three shillings for the pneumatic cane, one for the imitation set, twopence halfpenny for the “Ocean Soap,” three-ha’pence for the health-giving pastilles; four shillings and four pence, which the firm of Gameron, Cormandel & Co., whom I have the honour to represent here, have authorized me to make you a present of. Yes, I say a present; for I’m not asking four shillings and fourpence, nor three, two, or even one shilling — not even of sixpence. I’m merely asking, gentlemen, the nonsensical, the ridiculous, the amazing, the positively absurd sum of... twopence the lot (*they search their pockets*), and if, on your return to your homes, as you sit round the table in the light of the lamp when the evening meal is smoking on the board... if, prompted by a feeling of curiosity, and a quite excusable curiosity, gentlemen, you ask yourselves what has led the firm of Gameron, Cormandel & Co to do this, stop right there in your investigations... give up trying to understand.... You will never succeed.... It is an advertisement!

[He gives the articles to everyone who holds out his twopence , and the buyers examine them as they leave the stage.]

A TRADESMAN'S WIFE (*speaking to a workman*).
Is it any good, this stuff, for removing stains?

THE WORKMAN.
My good woman, I have been a cleaner and dyer for twenty-five years, haven't I? If it was any good I should use it... it's muck!

THE TRADESMAN'S WIFE.
Anyway, it isn't dear at twopence, all this lot.

CRAINQUEBILLE.
Cabbages! Carrots! Turnips!

CHILDREN (*returning from school*).
What ho, old daddy Crainquebille!

CRAINQUEBILLE.
Be off to school with you! instead of picking up bad ways in the streets.... But what else can they learn in the gutter? Nothing but bad... Any sparrowgrass!

A WOMAN.
Show us your asparagus.

LA SOURIS.
You ain't very bright. They're leeks, they are. Leeks is the poor man's 'sparagus... Everyone knows that. (*One of the little hoys pulls about the bundles of leeks on the barrow,*) Just you leave that alone, he's got his living to earn. If you earned your bread as I do... you parcel of brats, you...

CRAINQUEBILLE.
Do you earn your living?

LA SOURIS.
I have to.

A CHILD.
'E ain't anybody. He sleeps out-of-doors. He's got no father or mother — they've left him.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

If 'e ain't got no parents, that's their fault, not his.

A CHILD.

He has nothing to eat and he keeps a dog! Why don't you eat your dog?

LA SOURIS.

Who said I slept out-of-doors? Who said so? Say it again, that's all. I don't sleep out-of-doors — there's my bedroom window....

A CHILD.

Your window hasn't got any glass in it. They are pulling down your house.

LA SOURIS.

At night I mind that shop they are repairing. That shows that I am honest. And, anyway, you leave me alone!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What is your job?

LA SOURIS.

I pick up fags, sell papers, run errands. Anything you like.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What's your name?

LA SOURIS.

La Souris.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You are called La Souris? Well, you have more sense than the rest of 'em. You know more about life.

LA SOURIS.

Because I have known what it is to be hungry. They — they don't know nothing. When you haven't been down on your luck your eyes aren't opened.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You have known what it is to be without grub? LA SOURIS.

Rather, and I know it still. That sort of thing sticks.

CRAINQUEBILLE. —

Yes, you don't look very grand. Here, take this pear, it's a bit sleepy, but it's a good 'un — a William.

LA SOURIS.

It's quite soft. If your wife's heart is as tender! Thanks all the same, Crainquebille, old dad.

A LITTLE GIRL

(carrying a loaf bigger than herself asks in a sing-song voice:)

Are your cabbages good?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Couldn't be better. They are all heart.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

How much are they? Mother's ill, and can't do her shopping herself.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What is the matter with your mother? What's she got?

THE LITTLE GIRL.

I don't know. It's her inside.... She told me to buy a cabbage off you.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Right 'o, don't be afraid, my little girl, I will serve you as well as if I'd been serving your mother. And better, for if I'd got to do anyone it would be a woman old enough to take care of herself. Oughtn't to do anyone, of course... everyone ought to get his money's worth. But if you couldn't help it I'd rather do someone who was trying to do the same to me. As to doing the dirty on a cherub like you, I should be sorry, and that's the truth. *(He gives her a cabbage.)* There, that's the finest I have. It's got a head like a Member of Parliament. *(The little girl gives him fourpence-half penny.)* Fivepence! Another halfpenny, please. You ain't going to do me ?

THE LITTLE GIRL.

But mother only gave me fourpence-halfpenny.

CRAINQUEBILLE. —

You mustn't tell stories, my dear. Look and see if you haven't got another

halfpenny in your pocket.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

No, I only had fourpence-halfpenny.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Well, my dear, give me a kiss, that will make it square, and you can ask your mother if the cabbage she found you in had as good a heart as this one. Run along, my dear, and mind you don't tumble. Good morning, Madame Laure, and how is the world treating you? —

MADAME LAURE (*yellow chignon , very juvenile*).

You've got nothing worth having, to-day.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

How can you say so?

MADAME LAURE (*tasting the radishes*).

Your radishes are all woolly.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You must have woke up in a bad temper. This is your grumbling day.

MADAME LAURE.

They've got no taste in them. You might as well be eating water.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I tell you what it is: your taste is out of order — you don't know what you are eating. It's all through living in Paris. Your stomach gets burnt up. What would become of you all if old Crainquebille did not bring you fresh, cool vegetables. You would be on fire.

MADAME LAURE.

It isn't what I eat does me harm. I can only eat salad and radishes nowadays. Nevertheless, it's true you do get burnt up in Paris. (*Dreamily.*) Listen, Crainquebille, I should like to see the day when I could do without your cabbages and turnips, and grow them myself in a small garden eighty miles from Paris, at our home. It would be so peaceful in the country, rearing one's own pigs and poultry.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

The day will come, Madame Laure, it will come: don't get downhearted. You're neat and thrifty, you're a sensible woman; I do not busy myself about my customers' affairs. There are no bad trades, and there are good folk in all classes. But you are a sensible person. You will be rich when you get on in years, and you'll have a house of your own, a place of your own choosing, the place of your birth.... And you will be looked up to. Good-bye, Madame Laure.

MADAME LAURE.

Good-bye, daddy Crainquebille.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What good folk there are in all walks of life! (*Shouting .*) Cabbages! Carrots! Turnips!

MADAME BAYARD (*issuing from her shop*).

I don't think much of your leeks. How much a bundle?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Sevenpence-ha'penny, my good woman — best leeks going.

MADAME BAYARD.

Sevenpence-ha'penny for three bad leeks?

POLICE-CONSTABLE 64.

Move on, there!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Yes — yes. They are yours. Hurry up, you heard the policeman.

MADAME BAYARD.

Well, but I must choose my stuff. Sevenpence-ha'penny! No fear! Will you take sixpence?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

They cost me more than that, my little lady. And then I have to be at the market at five o'clock and even earlier if I want anything good.

CONSTABLE 64.

Move on, there!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Yes, yes, in a minute. Here, hurry up, Madame Bayard.

MADAME BAYARD.

Sixpence.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

And ever since seven o'clock this morning I've been blistering my hands on these shafts shouting "Cabbages! Turnips! Carrots!" and all so much waste of time and money. At past sixty, you will understand, I don't do it for fun. Oh, no, it's not good enough. Why, I shouldn't make a penny on it.

MADAME BAYARD.

I will give you sevenpence. And I must go in and get it from the shop, for I haven't got it on me. — *[She goes in.]*

CONSTABLE 64.

Move on!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I am waiting for my money.

CONSTABLE 64.

I didn't tell you to wait for your money. I told you to move on.... Well? What, don't you know what "move on" means?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

For fifty years I have known it, and pushed my cart.... But they owe me money there at "The Guardian Angel," Madame Bayard's boot-shop. She's gone to look for sevenpence for me, and I am waiting.

CONSTABLE 64.

Do you want me to summons you? Do you? Get along. Clear the road. D'you hear?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Good God! for fifty years I have earned my bread selling cabbages, leeks, and turnips, and because I do not want to lose sevenpence owing me...

[A butcher's boy stops.]

CONSTABLE 64

(pulling out his pencil and notebook).

Show me your licence.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

My licence?

CONSTABLE 64.

Yes, your hawker's licence.

[Enter a pastrycook 's boy.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Look here, old pal, if you want to see my licence you must come home with me.

CONSTABLE 64.

You haven't got a licence?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Yes, I've got one, but it's at home. I've lost three by carrying 'em about with me. That cost me three shillings each time, so I gave it up.

CONSTABLE 64.

Your name?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Oh, rot! I suppose I've got to lose my sevenpence, that's all.

[He takes hold of his cart and pushes on. CONSTABLE 64.

Stop, will you?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I am off...

CONSTABLE 64.

No, you're not, it's too late.

[He advances on CRAINQUEBILLE, and takes him by the arm;

CRAINQUEBILLE turns round just in time to receive a whole load of rubbish on his barrow from the house-breakers , who curse and swear at him .

THE HOUSE-BREAKERS.

God love us! Look at that barrow!

CONSTABLE 64.

Look what you've done.

[A news vendor on a bicycle runs full tilt into the off side of CRAINQUEBILLE'S barrow. He yells.

THE NEWSVENDOR

(with a hundred and fifty copies of "La Patrie" on his head).

Look where you're going, you stupid old turnip-head!

CONSTABLE 64.

You see? You see?

[He goes to the right of CRAINQUEBILLE who, turning completely round, manages to jamb his left wheel into the left wheel of a cart bearing a copper bath, and drawn by a man who starts cursing and swearing.

Oh, you've done it this time!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Hallo! Now, how are you going to move on?

CONSTABLE 64.

This is all your fault.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

The whole fault is Madame Bayard's. If she was here she'd say so. Funny she isn't here. Where has she hidden herself? Looking for her coppers.

[Meanwhile, street-urchins, workmen, shop-people, idlers, all sorts of people appear; from the background, in — of the house-breaker's cart, A with boxes filled with syphons comes on the scene; a dog jumps about on the top of the boxes, barking furiously. Slowly the van merges into the heap of conveyances, — contributes its share to the conglomeration of vehicles. Sixty people cover the footpath, the road, the steps, the carriages, thirty lean out of the windows. All these folk move about and gesticulate. The constable loses his head, claps CRAINQUEBILLE on the shoulder and says:

CONSTABLE 64.

Oh, so you said "Bloody copper!" did you? All right. You come with me.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I said that — I? I never!

CONSTABLE 64.
Yes, you said it.

CRAINQUEBILLE.
“Bloody copper”?
[Laughter.

CONSTABLE 64.
Ah, and what about that then?

CRAINQUEBILLE.
What?

CONSTABLE 64.
You didn’t say “bloody copper”? — *[Laughter .*

CRAINQUEBILLE.
Yes.

CONSTABLE 64.
Ah!

CRAINQUEBILLE.
But I did not say it to you. — *[Laughter.*

CONSTABLE 64.
You did not say it?

CRAINQUEBILLE.
But, Gor blimey!

A MAN.
What is the matter?

CRAINQUEBILLE.
The matter is, he says I turned and called him a *(he turns again to the constable and calls out to demonstrate)* “bloody copper!”

CONSTABLE 64
(who is taking notes in his book , gets this full in the face , and observes quite

calmly) :

Oh, now you may say it a hundred times; there's no extra charge.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

But I am explaining to them.

A MAN *(to another , smiling)*.

It doesn't matter a blow to me, but he said it at least three times.

ANOTHER MAN.

No, it was the policeman who made him say it. THE MAN.

Oh, no, I am certain the policeman would not have done that.

ANOTHER BYSTANDER.

He saw everyone laughing, and he was annoyed, and he lost his head.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Nevertheless, it is all very simple....

CONSTABLE 64.

Here, that'll do!

[He seizes CRAINQUEBILLE. A white-haired old man , DR. DAVID MATHIEU, comes up; he is in black , wears a tall hat , and is decorated with the rosette of the Legion of Honour.

DR. MATHIEU

(gently pulling the policeman by his sleeve). Allow me, allow me. You have made a mistake.

CONSTABLE 64.

Mistake, eh! What's that?

DR. MATHIEU *(firmly and gently)*.

You misunderstood. This man did not insult you.

CONSTABLE 64.

Misunderstood?

DR. MATHIEU.

I witnessed the whole scene, and I heard all that was said perfectly well.

CONSTABLE 64.
Well?

DR. MATHIEU.
And I assure you this man said nothing to cause...

CONSTABLE 64.
Mind your own business.

DR. MATHIEU.
I ask your pardon. It is my right, my duty, to warn you of an error that might have grievous consequences for this good man, and it is my right and duty to bear witness...

CONSTABLE 64.
You keep a civil tongue in your head.

A WORKMAN.
The gentleman is right — the costermonger did not say “bloody copper.”

THE CROWD.
Yes! Yes, he did say it. No! Yes! Oh! Come! I say, look here!

CONSTABLE 64 (*to the workman*).
You want to be run in, I suppose?
[The workman disappears.]

DR. MATHIEU (*to CONSTABLE 64*).
You have not been insulted. The words you thought you heard were never uttered. When you are calmer you will acknowledge it yourself.

CONSTABLE 64.
To begin with, who are you? I do not know you.

DR. MATHIEU.
Here is my card. Dr. Mathieu, senior surgeon at the Ambroise Paré Hospital.

CONSTABLE 64.
I don't care for that.

DR. MATHIEU.

But you must care. I shall be obliged if you will take my name and address, and make a note of what I say.

CONSTABLE 64.

Oh, so you insist! Well then, come with me. You can explain the matter to the inspector.

DR. MATHIEU.

That is just my intention.

A WORKING-WOMAN

(to her husband , pointing to the DOCTOR).

It's queer — a well-dressed man, well educated — and he mixes himself up with this affair.... If it proves disagreeable for him it is his own fault. Never mix yourself up in other folk's affairs. Come, let's be off, my dear. I quite saw how it all happened: he was calling Madame Bayard, saying, "Where is she with her coppers," and the policeman thought he heard "bloody coppers." Come on, come on, or you will be called as a witness.

MADAME BAYARD (coming out of her shop).

Here's your money.... Why, he's been arrested. I can't give money to a man who has been taken up. One can't do that. I am not sure that it would be allowed.

[The crowd has played a great part in all this in a series of considerable movements of uncertain tendency. The rabble now press close on the heels of the little group formed by POLICE-CONSTABLE 64, CRAINQUEBILLE, and the elderly gentleman . There is a frightful uproar; oaths , laughter , of street-boys , bicycle-horns , barking dogs, and the yells of a child that is being spanked by its mother , — countless other noises are heard , — singly , now; together .

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in the *Police Court*.

THE MAGISTRATE, BOURRICHE (*reading his judgment*).

The Court, after due deliberation, according to law, holds that, whereas...

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE.

... it sufficiently appears from the documents put in evidence and from the depositions heard at the last hearing, that on October 3 Fromage (Alexandre) was found guilty of the offence of mendicity, an offence provided for and punished by Article 274 of the Penal Code. The said Article condemns Fromage (Alexandre) to six days' imprisonment. (FROMAGE, *who had been seated by CRAINQUEBILLE'S side, is led away by two warders. An interval. ... Some noise.... The magistrate turns over his papers.*) Your name is Crainquebille. Stand up. Your name is Crainquebille (Jérôme), born at Poissy (Seine) on July 14, 1843. You have never been previously convicted.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Ask me what you like. I owe nothing to anyone. That I can say. A halfpenny is a halfpenny to me. I am never out in my dealings.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Keep silence. At midday, on July 25 last, in the Rue de Beaujolais, you insulted and abused a constable in the exercise of his duty. You applied to him the words "b — copper" (*he only pronounces the first letter*). You acknowledge the facts?

CRAINQUEBILLE (*turning towards his lawyer*).

What does he say? Is he speaking to me?

THE MAGISTRATE.

You used threats; you called out "b — copper" (*he only pronounces the first letter*).

CRAINQUEBILLE.

“Bloody copper,” you mean.

THE MAGISTRATE.

You do not deny it?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

On all that I hold most sacred — on my daughter’s head if I had one — I did not insult the policeman. To that I take my Bible oath.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Let us have your version of the affair. Reconstitute the scene.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Your worship, I am an honest man; I owe nobody anything. I know the value of a halfpenny. I deal squarely with all, I can say that. For forty years I’ve been known in the market in Montmartre and everywhere. I used to earn my living when I was only fourteen...

THE MAGISTRATE.

I did not ask for your biography. [*Stir in Court* .

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE.

I ask you to give your version of what occurred during the scene preceding your arrest.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

All I can tell you is that for forty years, ever since I have pushed my barrow, I have known what the police are. As soon as I see one coming, off I slope. And so I have never had any difficulty with them. But as to insulting them, by word, or in any other way, never! that has never been my way. Why should I be supposed to change at my age?

THE MAGISTRATE.

You resisted the constable’s orders, when he told you to move on.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Oh, come! Move on, indeed! If you could have seen. Why, the carts were all jammed into one another so, it was not even possible to move a wheel.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Well, do you acknowledge having said “b — copper”?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I said “bloody copper” because the officer said “bloody copper.” So I said “bloody copper.” You see?

THE MAGISTRATE.

Do you ask me to believe that the constable used this expression first?

CRAINQUEBILLE

(in despair of making himself understood).

I don’t ask you to believe anything. I...

THE MAGISTRATE.

You do not persist. Quite right. You may sit down. — *[An interval. Stir in Court.*

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE.

We will hear the evidence. Usher, call the first witness.

THE USHER

(leaving the Court , makes his way through the crowd , calling out).

Police-constable Bastien Matra.

[Enter MATRA, wearing his belt.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Your name, age, and occupation.

MATRA.

Matra (Bastien), born August 15, 1870, in Bastia (Corsica). Police-constable No. 64.

THE MAGISTRATE.

You swear to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Say, “I swear.”

MATRA.

I swear.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Give your evidence.

MATRA (*unfastening his belt*).

While on duty on October 20 at midday I noticed a person in the Rue Beaujolais who seemed to be a street-hawker, and who had drawn up his barrow for an undue length of time opposite No. 28, causing a block in the traffic. I told him three times to move on, which he refused to do. And on my warning him that I should report him, he answered me by exclaiming “bloody copper,” which seemed to me to be insulting language.

THE MAGISTRATE

(*in a fatherly tone to CRAINQUEBILLE*).

You hear what the constable says.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I said “bloody copper” because he said “bloody copper.” So then I said “bloody copper.” It is quite easy to see that.

THE MAGISTRATE

(*who has not been listening , and who is preparing to pass judgment*).

There are no other witnesses?

THE USHER.

Yes, your worship, there are two more.

THE MAGISTRATE.

What? Two more?

LEMERLE.

We have subpoenaed two witnesses for the defence. THE MAGISTRATE.
Do you wish them to be heard, Monsieur Lemerle?

LEMERLE.

Yes, certainly, your worship.

THE MAGISTRATE

(sighing, to the constable , who is buckling on his belt again).

Let the constable remain.

THE USHER *(calling)*.

Madame Bayard.

[Enter MADAME BAYARD in her best clothes.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Your name, age, and occupation.

MADAME BAYARD.

Pauline Félicité Bayard, keeper of a boot shop at No. 28 Rue Beaujolais.

THE MAGISTRATE.

What age are you?

MADAME BAYARD.

Thirty. — *[Stir in Court .*

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE.

Swear to speak the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. Raise your hand and say, “I swear.” (MADAME BAYARD *raises her hand.*) Take the glove off your right hand.... Usher, make her withdraw her glove.... *(She takes off her glove.)* Say, “I swear.”

MADAME BAYARD.

I swear.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

She does not seem to recognize me. She is too stuck up.

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE (*to MADAME BAYARD*).

Tell us what you have to say. (*MADAME BAYARD is silent .*) Tell us what you know of the scene which took place before Crainquebille's arrest.

MADAME BAYARD (*in a low voice*), I was buying a bundle of leeks, and the dealer said to me, "Hurry up." I replied...

THE MAGISTRATE.

Speak distinctly.

MADAME BAYARD.

I answered that, all the same, I must pick and choose. At that moment a customer entered the shop, and I went to serve her. It was a lady with a child.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Is that all you have to say?

MADAME BAYARD.

While the coster was having words with the policeman I was trying some blue shoes on a child of eighteen months; I was trying him on blue shoes...

THE MAGISTRATE (*to LEMERLE*).

Counsel, have you any questions to put to this witness? (*LEMERLE makes a sign in the negative .*) And you, Crainquebille? Have you any question to put to the witness?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Yes. I have a question to put.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Put it.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I have to ask Madame Bayard whether she heard me say "bloody copper." She knows me. She is one of my customers. She can tell you if it is like me to use words like that. (*MADAME BAYARD remains silent.*) You can speak for me, Madame Bayard; you are an old customer of mine.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Do not address the witness. Address yourself to the Court.

CRAINQUEBILLE

(who does not understand these subtleties).

Come, Madame Bayard, we know one another. Proof of it is that you still owe me sevenpence. I don't ask you for it now. I am above caring about sevenpence, thank God. — [*Laughter and noise* .

THE USHER.

Silence!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

But I want them to know that you are a customer.

MADAME BAYARD

(to CRAINQUEBILLE as she leaves the Court).

I do not know you.

THE MAGISTRATE *(to the witness).*

You may retire. *(To LEMERLE.)* This evidence does not in any way contradict the constable's. Is there still another witness?

LEMERLE.

One only.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Do you insist on his being heard by the Court?

LEMERLE.

Your worship, I consider that the evidence you are about to hear is necessary for the demonstration of the truth. It is that of an eminent man, whose deposition is, to my thinking, important, essential, and decisive.

THE MAGISTRATE *(with an air of resignation).*

Call the last witness.

THE USHER.

Dr. Mathieu. — [*Enter DR. MATHIEU.*

THE MAGISTRATE.

Your name, age, and profession.

DR. MATHIEU.

Mathieu (Pierre Philippe David), sixty-two years of age, senior surgeon at the Ambroise Paré Hospital, officer of the Legion of Honour.

THE MAGISTRATE.

Swear to speak the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. Raise your hand and say, "I swear."

DR. MATHIEU.

I swear.

THE MAGISTRATE (*to LEMERLE*).

Counsel, what question do you wish put to the witness?

LEMERLE.

Dr. Mathieu was present at the time of Crainquebille's arrest. I beg of your worship, that he be asked what he saw and what he heard.

THE MAGISTRATE.

You have heard the question?

DR. MATHIEU.

I found myself in the crowd that had collected round the police-constable who was ordering this costermonger to move on. The crush was such that it was impossible to move. So I became a witness of the scene which took place, and I can affirm that I did not lose a word of it. It was perfectly plain to me that the constable was mistaken; he was never insulted. The costermonger did not say what the constable thought he heard. My observation was corroborated by the people round me, who were unanimous in confirming the error. I went up to the constable, and warned him of his mistake. I drew his attention to the fact that this man had never insulted him, that, on the contrary, he had been very restrained in his language. The constable had him under arrest, and invited me somewhat roughly to follow him to the Court of Inquiry, which I did. I repeated my statement before the inspector.

THE MAGISTRATE (*icily*).

Good. You may sit down. Matra... (MATRA, *having put down his belt , the object of his solicitude , enters the box.*) Matra, when you proceeded to arrest the accused, did not Dr. Mathieu call your attention to the fact that you were

mistaken? — (*Silence on the part of MATRA.*) YOU have just heard Dr. Mathieu's evidence. I ask you, if, when you proceeded to arrest Crainquebille, did not Dr. Mathieu give you to understand that he believed you to be mistaken?

MATRA.

Mistaken? Mistaken? That is to say, your worship, he insulted me.

THE MAGISTRATE.

What did he say to you?

MATRA.

Why, he said, "bloody copper" — just like that.

THE MAGISTRATE (*hurriedly*).

You may retire.

[*While MATRA refastens his belt there is a buzz of talk , and uproar , and a look of pained astonishment on DR. MATHIEU'S pale face .*

LEMERLE

(*waving his sleeves amid the din*).

I leave the witness's evidence with confidence to the judgment of the Court.

[*The din continues .*

A VOICE IN THE COURT (*heard amid the hubbub.*)

He has got a smack in the eye, the bobby. You will get off, Crainquebille, old boy!

THE USHER.

Silence! — [*Order is gradually restored.*

THE MAGISTRATE.

These demonstrations are grossly improper. If they occur again I shall have the Court cleared immediately. Monsieur Lemerle, I will hear you now. (*Counsel unfolds his brief.*) Shall you be long?

LEMERLE.

No; it seems to me that the evidence given by the constable has singularly shortened my speech for the defence, and if this feeling is shared by the Court, I...

THE MAGISTRATE (*very sharply*), I asked you if you would be long.

LEMERLE.

Twenty minutes at most.

THE MAGISTRATE (*resigned*), I will hear you.

LEMERLE.

Gentlemen, I appreciate, I esteem, and I respect the executive of the law. An incident in Court, however characteristic it may be, cannot make me swerve from the favourable opinion I have of these modest servants of society, who, gaining but a mere pittance in the way of salary, endure fatigue and risk unceasing danger, and practise that daily heroism which is, perhaps, the most difficult of all. They are old soldiers, they remain soldiers...

VOICE (*from amid the crowd*).

There he goes, pleading for the coppers. Why don't you defend Crainquebille? Coward!

[*An officer turns one of the public out of Court*, THE VICTIM.

I tell you I said nothing. I tell you I never said a word!

LEMERLE (*continuing*).

No, I do not fail to acknowledge the valuable and unvaunted services rendered daily by the guardians of the law to the good citizens of Paris. And I should not have consented, gentlemen, to address you in defence of Crainquebille had I seen in him a man capable of insulting an old soldier. Let us look at the facts. My client is accused of having spoken the words "bloody copper." What have we here — the national adjective, as it has been called, and a noun derived from the verb "cop," meaning to catch or take. We have here, gentlemen, quite a curious little study in popular philology. If you open a slang dictionary you will read (*he reads*) : "Bloody, a corruption of ' By our Lady'"; "Copper, a slang word for policeman, from 'cop,' to catch or take." "Bloody copper" is an expression used by a certain class of people. But the whole question is this: — In what spirit did Crainquebille say it, or rather, did he say it at all? Allow me, gentlemen, to have my doubts. I do not suspect Constable Matra of any ill-intention. But his, as we have said, is a wearisome task. Sometimes he is tired, overworked, overstrained. In these conditions he may well be the victim of a kind of hallucination of the mind. And when it comes to his telling us that Dr. Mathieu, officer of the Legion of Honour, senior surgeon at the Ambroise Paré

Hospital, a light of science and a man of the world, called out “bloody copper,” we are, indeed, forced to the conclusion that Matra is a prey to the malady of obsession, and, if the term is not too strong, to a frenzied delusion of persecution.

VOICES FROM THE COURT

(manifold and exuberant expressions of approbation).

Yes! Indeed! Yes! Say no more! it is plain enough! Good! Good!

THE USHER.

Silence!

THE MAGISTRATE.

All marks of approval or disapproval being strictly forbidden, I shall order the officers to clear the Court of all disturbers.

[Silence as of the grave .

LEMERLE.

Gentlemen, I have here before me a book that is an authority on the subject, “A Treatise on Hallucinations,” by Brierre de Boismont, Doctor of Medicine of Paris, Knight of the Legion of Honour, of the Military Order of Poland, *etc.* One learns therein that hallucinations of the auditory sense are frequent, very frequent, and that people quite sound mentally may suffer from them under the influence of violent emotion, of excessive fatigue, of mental or physical overstrain. And what is the usual, the most common form of these hallucinations of the auditory sense? What words did Constable Matra think he heard in this unusual condition, caused by mistaken aural perceptions? Dr. Brierre de Boismont will tell us. *(He reads)* “For the most part, these delusions are connected with the preoccupations, habits, and passions of the patient.” Take note, gentlemen, with the preoccupations, habits. Thus, during this period of hallucination, the surgeon hears the cries of his patients; the broker, the quotations on the Stock Exchange; the politician, the angry questions of his fellow-legislators; the police-officer, the cry of “bloody copper.” Is it necessary to dwell upon it, gentlemen? *(A sign in the negative from the magistrate .)* And even if Crainquebille did call out “bloody copper,” it remains to be seen whether the words on his lips bear a criminal interpretation. Gentlemen, on the question of breaking the law, it suffices that the infraction should be proved, the good or bad faith of the offender matters little. *(Buzz of talk)* But here we are before the Penal Code. It is a question of equity. What the Court proceeds against, what

you punish, gentlemen, is the wrongful intention. Before a criminal Court the intention becomes the essential element of the crime. Well, in this matter did the intention exist? No, gentlemen. — [*Noise grows louder* .

THE USHER. —
Silence!

LEMERLE.
Crainquebille is the illegitimate child of an itinerant market-woman, brought very low by drink and evil living. He...

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.
He is insulting his mother now.

LEMERLE.
... was born an alcoholic, of a naturally limited intelligence; uneducated, he has merely instincts. And if you will allow me to say so, those instincts are not fundamentally evil, but they are brutish. His soul is embedded in a thick matrix. He has no exact understanding of what is said to him, nor of what he himself says. Words have but a rudimentary and confused meaning for him. He is one of those miserable beings whom La Bruyère depicts in such sombre colours, men one might take for brute beasts, they so grovel on the earth. You see him before you, brutalized by sixty years of grinding poverty. Gentlemen, you may well say that he is irresponsible.

THE MAGISTRATE.
The Court will now consider its judgment.
[*Noise. The two coadjutors lean over the magistrate , who whispers.*

CRAINQUEBILLE (*to his counsel*).
You must have some book-learning to talk like that, right off the reel, too. You speak well, but you speak too quickly. People cannot understand anything you say. Me, for instance, I don't know what you have been talking about, but I am grateful all the same; only...

THE USHER.
Silence!

CRAINQUEBILLE.
It gives me a pain in my belly to hear him call out, that chap.... Only you ought

to have mentioned that I owe no one anything. Because it's true. I am an honest man. I owe no one a farthing. After all, perhaps you did... perhaps you did mention it, and I did not hear.... And then, you ought to have asked them what they did with my barrow...

LEMERLE.

In your own interest, be quiet.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Are they cackling over my sentence all this time? Well, they are a long time about it, God knows...

THE USHER.

Silence! — [*Silence reigns* .

THE MAGISTRATE

(*reading from a pile of papers — notices of deaths , marriages , prospectuses , etc*).

The Court...

A VOICE

(*from the crowd, bursting upon the silence*).

Acquits!...

THE MAGISTRATE (*with a look of thunder*).

. . . after deliberation, according to the law, taking into consideration the result of the documents in the case, and of the evidence heard in this Court, finds that on July 25, the day of his arrest, Crainquebille (Jérôme) committed the offence... (*a dull and formidable murmur rises from the back of the Court; the magistrate greets this murmur with a glance like a sword-edge, and continues to read amid sudden silence*) ... of outrage against a member of the public force, in the exercise of his duty, an offence provided for and punishable under Article 224 of the Penal Code. In terms of the aforesaid Article he is therefore condemned to fourteen days' imprisonment and a fine of *forty shillings*. The sitting is suspended. — [*Uproar*.

SEVERAL VOICES.

It is a bit stiff, all the same.... I should not have expected that.... It's a bit thick, that.

CRAINQUEBILLE *(to the warder)*.

So I am found guilty?

[The Court retires. When the warders are about to remove CRAINQUEBILLE, LEMERLE indicates that he has something to say, and sorting his papers, he talks, etc.]

SCENE II.

CRAINQUEBILLE (*to the warder*).

I say! You! I say! Who'd have thought a fortnight ago this would happen to me. They are very polite, these gentlemen. They don't use bad language, to give them their due, but you can't explain things to them. There isn't time. It isn't their fault, but you don't get time, do you? Why don't you answer? (*Silence* .) Can't you throw a word to a dog? Why don't you speak? Can't you open your mouth? Does your breath stink?

LEMERLE (*to CRAINQUEBILLE*).

Well, my friend, we have not much to complain about. We might have come off worse.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

That's true, too.

LEMERLE.

What do you expect? You would not take my advice. Your reticent method was unfortunate to a degree. You would have done better to confess.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I would have done so right enough, my lad. But what should I have confessed? — (*Pensively* .) Any how, it's an odd thing to happen to me.

LEMERLE.

We must not make too much of it. Your case is not unusual — far from it.... Come, cheer up!

CRAINQUEBILLE

(*as the warders take him away , turns hack and says*).

You can't tell me what they have done with my barrow?

AUBARREE.

What are you doing there?

LERMITE.

I am finishing my sketch. During the sitting I am forced to draw inside my hat. It

is most inconvenient. So now I am adding a touch or two.

AUBARREE.

Is that Bourriche, the magistrate, you have got there?

LERMITE.

Was it he who just sentenced the costermonger? AUBARREE.

Yes, Bourriche!

LERMITE.

Queer that that should be the case.

LEMERLE (*to the USHER*).

Lamperière, do you know if the Goupy case in the Third Court has been adjourned?

THE USHER.

It is on now.

LEMERLE.

Blazes! I must fly! I will return shortly, when the Court sits again. I have to ask Bourriche to postpone a case.

LERMITE

(*shyly, and feeling awkwardly in his pocket, calls to LEMERLE, who does not hear : him, but goes out*).

Monsieur Lemerle, I should like to have a word with you. There, he has gone!

AUBARREE.

He will be here again when the Court resumes the sitting. What do you want to say to him?

LERMITE.

Nothing... I... Nothing. I say, old boy, that poor costermonger's sentence was a bit hard, all the same.

AUBARREE.

Crainquebille's? It is hard, I dare say. Yet it is not exceptionally hard. (*Looking over his shoulder,*) Are you going to make a picture out of that sketch?

LERMITE.

Yes. Scenes in Court are in fairly good demand. This morning I sold two barristers for a fiver. I have the note in my pocket.

AUBARREE.

You need not flourish it like that.

LERMITE.

Say what you like, Aubarrêe, the magistrate sentenced that poor man without proof...

AUBARREE.

Without proof?

LERMITE.

Treating Dr. David Mathieu's declaration with contempt... on the constable's evidence alone; it is beyond me, quite beyond my understanding.

AUBARREE.

Nevertheless, it is quite easy to understand.

LERMITE.

What, to lend ear to the braying of that ignoble, dull, obstinate creature, rather than to the disinterested evidence of a man of outstanding merit and the highest intelligence. To believe the ass before the wise man — you think that natural? Do you? Why, it is monstrous! This magistrate Bourriche is a sinister kind of joker.

AUBARREE.

Don't say that, Lermite, don't say that. Bourriche is a respected magistrate who has just given us fresh proof of his judicial mind.

LERMITE.

In the Crainquebille affair?

AUBARREE.

Certainly. By weighing one against the other the contradictory attestations of Police-constable 64 and of Professor David Mathieu, the judge would have committed himself to a line of conduct where only uncertainty and doubt are to

be met with. Bourriche has too judicial a mind to base his sentences on science and reason, whose conclusions are subject to never-ending dispute.

LERMITE.

So a judge must renounce knowledge?

AUBARREE.

Yes, but he must not renounce giving judgment. The fact of the matter is, Bourriche does not take Bastien Matra into consideration. He considers Police-constable 64. Man is fallible, he reflects. Descartes and Gassendi, Leibnitz and Newton, Claude Bernard and Pasteur, were all liable to mistake. But Police-constable 64 makes no mistake. He is merely a number. A number is not subject to error.

LERMITE.

Well, we'll call that an argument.

AUBARREE.

An irrefutable one. And then there is something else. Police-constable 64 is the strong arm of the State. All the weapons of a State should point the same way. By opposing them, one against the other...

LERMITE.

Public peace is disturbed. I understand.

AUBARREE.

And, finally, if the Court decides against the executive, who would carry out its judgments? Without the police the judge would be but a sorry dreamer of dreams. — [*Enter LEMERLE.*

LEMERLE.

Aubarrée, you are wanted in Court Four. Why! hasn't the Court resumed yet?

AUBARREE.

No.

LEMERLE.

Isn't the usher here?

LERMITE.

Excuse me, sir.... Does the infliction of a fine entail in case of non-payment a prolongation of imprisonment?

LEMERLE.

Yes.

LERMITE.

Then would you be kind enough to give these two sovereigns to your costermonger?

LEMERLE.

Crainquebille?

LERMITE.

Yes, without telling him whom the money comes from.

LEMERLE.

Willingly, monsieur.

LERMITE.

But I must ask change for a fiver.

LEMERLE (*searching his pocket*).

Let me see... perhaps I... no, three pounds; oh, yes, here are ten shillings, fifty and ten, sixty. There, monsieur.

LERMITE.

Thank you.

LEMERLE.

It is I who thank you in his name.

DR. MATHIEU (*to LEMERLE*).

You were Crainquebille's counsel, were you not, sir? I have been looking for you.

LEMERLE.

Oh, yes! You are Dr. David Mathieu. You gave evidence for us.

DR. MATHIEU.

Could you give these two sovereigns to your client to pay his fine?

LEMERLE.

With the greatest pleasure. But I have already received two pounds from this gentleman (*pointing to LERMITE*) for the same object.

DR. MATHIEU.

Ah... — [*Bows . Silence.*]

LEMERLE

(*holding in each hand two pounds — two from LERMITE and two from the doctor*).

What do you propose, gentlemen?

DR. MATHIEU.

Well... two pounds for the fine.

LERMITE.

Yes, and two when he comes out.

LEMERLE.

Very good. You may count on me, gentlemen. [*He bows and goes out. Short silence.*]

MATHIEU and LERMITE bow in a friendly way . MATHIEU turns to go, followed, a few steps behind, by LERMITE. MATHIEU stops almost on the threshold, and turns back to LERMITE, who is close to him . The two men, with hands outstretched, say in unison: “Will you allow me? ”... They smile and shake each other warmly by the hand, not without a touch of melancholy . MATHIEU goes out .

THE USHER announces the Court .

LERMITE.

Here goes again.

ACT III.

Night .

SCENE I.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Chestnuts all hot!

[He wraps up a ha 'porth for a small boy.]

CRAINQUEBILLE

(coming out of a wineshop where he has been having words).

Well, what of it? Because I ask for a glass on tick. Is that any reason to treat me like a pickpocket?

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Credit is dead, the debtors have killed it.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I ask anyone, couldn't he have trusted me for a glass? He got plenty out of me while I had anything. You are a thief, and I tell you so straight.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Here is a fellow who comes out of quod, and calls other people thieves.

ALPHONSE

(a twelve-year-old , comes out of the wineshop and says to CRAINQUEBILLE in a tone of the sweetest politeness;)

I say, guv'nor, is it true that it's quite comfortable in jail?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Dirty young cub! *(He gives him a kick. ALPHONSE goes in whimpering.)* It is your father who ought to be in jail, instead of growing rich by selling poison.

THE WINESHOP-KEEPER *(followed by his son).*

If it were not for your white hairs I would teach you to hit my son. *(To his son.)* Go in, you little varmint! — *[They go in.]*

CRAINQUEBILLE *(to the CHESTNUT-VENDOR)*

Well, would you believe it?

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

What can you expect? He is right: — you oughtn't to hit other folks' children, nor reproach them for having a father they never chose. My poor Crainquebille, for the last two months, since you came out, you are not the same man; you are hard to live with, and everything seems to taste sour to you. That wouldn't matter, but all you are good for nowadays is to raise your elbow.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I have never been a waster, but now and again I must have a glass for refreshment's sake and to put me on my legs. My inside burns me. And nothing picks you up like a drink.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

That wouldn't matter so much either, but you are flabby and work-shy. A man in that condition is a man who is down and can't get up again. Everyone who passes tramples on him.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

True enough. I haven't the courage I used to have. I am done for. The pitcher goes so often to the well that at last it breaks. And then, since that affair of mine in Court I have lost my character. I am no longer the same man. What can you expect? They took me up for shouting "bloody copper." It wasn't true. There was a doctor there with a ribbon in his coat who told them it wasn't true. They wouldn't hear anything. I allow you, the magistrates are very civil; they don't swear at one, but one can't explain things to them. They gave me two quid, and they hid my barrow away so that it took me a fortnight before I could lay my hands on it. And the whole thing is most extraordinary. On my soul, it is as if I had been acting in a play.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

They gave you two quid? That is something new. They used not to do that.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

To be just, they gave me two quid in the hand. And then a prison is quite decent. One cannot deny it. It is well kept and clean. You could eat off the floor. But when you come out there is no work, no way of earning a halfpenny. Everyone turns his back on you.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

I will tell you what: change your neighbourhood.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Madame Bayard, at the boot-shop, she makes a face when I pass. She insults me, and it was her fault I was taken up. The beauty of it is, she still owes me that sevenpence. I should have claimed it just now, but she had a customer. Let her wait a little. She shall lose nothing by waiting.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Where are you going?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I am going to talk to Madame Bayard.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

You keep quiet.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Why, I have the right to claim my sevenpence. I want it; perhaps you will give it me? If you will, say so.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Not to be done; my old woman would tear my eyes out. I have given you enough — a shilling here, and two shillings there — these last two months.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Am I to die like a dog? I haven't got a farthing left.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR (*calling him back*). Crainquebille... do you know what you ought to do?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What?

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

You ought to change your neighbourhood.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

That is impossible. I am like a goat that browses where she is tied up. She must

browse even though there are only stones.

[MADAME BAYARD *is seeing her customer out; when the latter has turned the corner of the street* , MADAME BAYARD comes straight to CRAINQUEBILLE and addresses him loudly .

MADAME BAYARD.

What do you want with me?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

It is no good glaring at me like that. I want my sevenpence.

MADAME BAYARD (*Coming down from her altitude*).

Your sevenpence?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Yes, my sevenpence.

MADAME BAYARD.

To begin with, I forbid you to enter my shop as you did a moment ago. It is no way to behave.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Maybe — but my sevenpence...

MADAME BAYARD.

I don't know what you mean. Moreover, understand this, one can owe nothing to people who have been in prison.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You baggage!

MADAME BAYARD.

Ruffian! Oh! if only my husband were still alive!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

If I had your husband here, you old croaker, I would give him a sound kick to teach him to rob people and insult them afterwards.

MADAME BAYARD.

Where are the police?

[She goes in and fastens the shop-door .

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Keep it then! Keep it, thief that you are!

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Thief, thieves, the word is never out of your mouth! All the world's a thief, according to you. It is true and, on the other hand, it isn't true. I'll tell you. We all have to live, and you can't live without injuring others — it is impossible — so...

LA SOURIS.

Good evening, everyone.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Good evening, La Souris.

LA SOURIS.

Feeling better, old Crainquebille? You don't remember me? La Souris. You know me well, all the same. You gave me a pear, tho' it was a bit over-ripe.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Possibly.

LA SOURIS.

I am going to take a rest. I am living here. I am tired. Love us! when one has sweated all day long! I have been calling *La Patrie* , *La Presse* , *Le Soir*, till my throat is sore. When I have had a bite I shall get under the bed-clothes. Good night all.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

You have no bed-clothes.

LA SOURIS.

No bed-clothes? Come and look. I have made myself some out of newspapers and sacks.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You are in luck, old chap. It is two months since I slept on anything soft. (LA SOURIS *goes indoors* .) And that's true. They turned me out of my attic. For

thirty nights I have been sleeping in a stable on my barrow. It has never stopped raining, and the stable is flooded. To avoid drowning one must sit up and crouch over the stinking water, with the cats, and rats, and great spiders as big as pumpkins. And then, last night, the drain-pipe burst, the carts were all swimming in the sewage, bah! Why, they even put a guard at the door to prevent people from entering because the walls are shaky. They are like me, the walls, they won't stand up much longer. (*Seeing MADAME LAURE enter the wineshop.*) Hallo! there is Madame Laure.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

Madame Laure is a steady woman, and doing well; and considering what she is, she knows her position. She does not drink at the bar. I bet you she will come out with a quart of something to drink at home with her friends.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Madame Laure! I know her as if I were her Maker. She is a customer. A fine lady, sure enough.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR. —

And a fine woman. (*MADAME LAURE comes out of the wineshop .*) There, what did I tell you?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Good day, Madame Laure.

MADAME LAURE (*to THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR*). Two penn'orth of chestnuts. And mind they are hot.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You do not remember me, Madame Laure? The costermonger.

MADAME LAURE.

Yes, I know. (*to THE CHESTNUT VENDOR.*) Don't give me those out of your bag. There's no knowing how long they have been cooling there.

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

They are piping hot; they are burning my fingers.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You don't remember me so easily because I have not got my barrow. People

look at things differently sometimes.... And are you getting on all right, Madame Laure? (*He touches her on the arm.*) I am asking you — are you getting on all right?

MADAME LAURE.

Now then, Auverpin, hurry up with those chestnuts. I have people waiting for me. I have a party to-day. Only people whom I know.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Don't take your custom away from me, Madame Laure. You always did look at both sides of a sixpence, but you are a good customer, all the same.

MADAME LAURE (*to THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR*).

Do them up quick. It is not pleasant to have a man talking to you who has been in trouble.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What did you say?

MADAME LAURE.

I was not talking to you.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

You said I had been in trouble. Well, what about you? You have seen the inside of a Black Maria. If I had as many dollar pieces as you have been times in the police-van...

THE CHESTNUT-VENDOR.

There you go, cursing at my customers now. Shut up, or I'll put it across you.

MADAME LAURE.

Go along with you, you old Ticket-of-leave. CRAINQUEBILLE.

You know all about it, you do....

[The apparition of a policeman, silent and watchful, ends the dispute.]

MADAME LAURE *goes off majestically.*

LA SOURIS (*at the window*).

Shut your mouths. One can't sleep!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

B — h that she is... there is no greater b — h than that woman.

SCENE II.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Hi! there, Auverpin! Auverpin! Listen! He hooks off. He won't listen to anything. What I have against that old hag is that they are all like her, all of them. They pretend not to know me; Madame Cointreau, Madame Lessenne, Madame Bayard. All of them. So, because one has been put away for a fortnight one isn't even good enough to sell leeks. Is it fair? Is there any sense in letting a decent fellow die of hunger because he has had trouble with the 'tecs? If I can't sell my vegetables I can do nothing but starve. Why, I might have stolen, or murdered, or had the plague, it would not have been worse. And the cold and hunger. I have had nothing to eat. It's down and out with you, old Crainquebille. You're done. At times I am sorry I ever came out.... — (*There is a policeman standing still in the background. CRAINQUEBILLE sees him and says:)* What a fool I am! I know the trick. Why shouldn't I make use of it? (*He goes quietly up to the policeman and in a weak and hesitating voice says:)* You bloody copper! {*The constable looks at CRAINQUEBILLE, not without sadness , but keenly and contemptuously. An interval . CRAINQUEBILLE, astonished , stammers:)* You bloody copper! that's what I say.

THE POLICE-CONSTABLE.

Well, you ought not to say it. You — ought — not — to say it. At your age you should know better. Move on!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Why don't you run me in?

THE POLICE-CONSTABLE (*shaking his head*).

If I had to take up every sot who said what he oughtn't to, I should have my work cut out. And what good would it CRAINQUEBILLE

(*overcome , remains a long time silent and stupefied; then says very gently:)*

I did not mean you when I said "bloody copper." It was not meant for anyone in particular. It was just a... a... notion.

THE CONSTABLE (*with gentle austerity*).

If it was just a notion or anything else, you ought not to have said it. Because when a man does his duty, and has much to put up with, you ought not to insult him with foolish words.... I tell you again, move on.

SCENE III.

LA SOURIS (*out of the window*).

Old Crainquebille! Old Crainquebille! Old Crainquebille!

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Hallo, who is that up there? Is it a miracle? It don't seem possible...

LA SOURIS.

Old Crainquebille...

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Oh, it's you!

LA SOURIS.

Where are you off to, like that, with no umbrella?

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Where am I off to?

LA SOURIS.

Yes.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

I am going to throw myself in the Seine.

LA SOURIS.

Don't do that. It is too cold and too wet.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

What do you want me to do?

LA SOURIS.

You must get a move on — you must do something for your living.

CRAINQUEBILLE.

Why?

LA SOURIS.

I dunno, but one must pull oneself out of it, somehow. You are up against it, but it won't last for ever. You'll sell your cabbages and carrots again soon, *I* tell you. Come up here. I've a loaf and some sausage, and a bottle. We'll have supper like a pair of toffs, and I'll make you a bed like mine, with sacks and papers, and we'll see if things aren't better to-morrow. So come on up, my ancient.

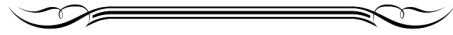
CRAINQUEBILLE.

You are young — you still have some good in you. It's a bad world, but you are no part of it, yet. Kid though you are, you can say that you have been the saving of a man. No great matter, perhaps. Nothing to boast of — it won't stop the moon going round, it won't make the state any handsomer — but you have saved a man.

[CRAINQUEBILLE, *with bowed head and arms drooped by his sides* , goes up *without more words* .

[In this translation of *Crainquebille* in its dramatic form, an attempt has been made to provide an English stage version. Consequently, it has been freely adapted in places. — ED.]

THE COMEDY OF A MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE



Translated by Wilfrid Jackson and Emilie Jackson

CONTENTS

[ACT I.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[ACT II.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[SCENE IV.](#)

[SCENE V.](#)

THE COMEDY OF A MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE

A room on the ground floor in the house of M. LEONARD BOTAL. On the left the door gives on the Rue Dauphine in Paris; when the door opens the Pont Neuf is visible. On the right a door opens into the kitchen; at the back a wooden staircase leads to the upper rooms. Against the walls hang portraits of magistrates in their robes , and immense cupboards are ranged , crammed and overflowing with bags , books , papers , and parchments. A pair of steps on wheels gives access to the top of the cupboards. A writing-table, chairs , and stuffed arm-chairs , and a spinning-wheel.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

GILLES BOISCOURTIER, ALIZON, *then* MAITRE ADAM FUMEE, *and* M. LEONARD BOTAL. [GILLES BOISCOURTIER *is scribbling and yawning when ALIZON the servant enters with a large basket on each arm. As soon as he sees her , GILLES BOISCOURTIER Pounces on her .*

ALIZON.

Holy Virgin! How long has it been the fashion to swoop on a body like a wild thing, in a room open to all comers, too?

GILLES

(drawing a bottle of wine from one of the baskets).

Don't squawk, you little goose. No one is going to pluck you. You're not worth it.

ALIZON.

Will you be so good as to leave the Judge's wine alone, you thief!

[She puts her baskets on the ground , snatches the bottle back , boxes the secretary 's ears , picks up her baskets again , and flies to the kitchen , of which the fireplace can be seen through the half-open door .

MAITRE ADAM FUMEE *enters .*

ADAM.

Isn't this the house of M. Léonard Boitai, Judge of the civil and criminal courts?

GILLES.

It is, monsieur, and at this moment you are speaking to his secretary, Gilles Boiscourtier, at your service.

ADAM.

Well, my lad, go and tell him that his old fellow-student, Maître Adam Fumée, advocate, is come to discuss some business. —

[From outside comes the voice of a hawker calling: "Chickweed for your cage-birds ."

GILLES.

Monsieur, here he is himself.

[LEONARD BOTAL *comes down the staircase* . GILLES *retires into the kitchen* .

ADAM.

Welcome, M. Léonard Botal, I am delighted to see you once again.

LEONARD.

Good day, Maître Adam Fumée, and how have you been all the long time since I last had the pleasure of seeing you?

ADAM.

Very well; and I hope you can say the same, sir?

LEONARD.

What good wind blows you here, Maître Adam Fumée?

ADAM.

I come from Chartres on purpose to lodge a memorial in favour of a young lady, an orphan, whose...

LEONARD.

Do you remember the days, Maître Adam Fumée, when we studied law at the University of Orleans?

ADAM.

Yes — we used to play the flute, sup with the ladies, and dance from morning till night.... I am come, my dear sir and comrade, to lodge a memorial in favour of a young lady, an orphan, whose case is pending in your court.

LEONARD.

Can she pay?

ADAM.

She is a young orphan....

LEONARD.

I quite understand, but can she pay?

ADAM.

She is a young orphan who has been plundered by her guardian, who has left her nothing but her eyes to cry with. If she wins her case she will be rich again, and will bestow substantial tokens of her gratitude.

LEONARD.

(taking the paper that MAITRE ADAM holds out).

We will look into the matter.

ADAM.

Thank you, my dear sir and comrade.

LEONARD.

We will investigate her case without fear or favour.

ADAM.

There is no need to tell me so. But — come now — are things going as well with you as you could wish? You seem careworn. And yet you have dropped in for a good thing.

LEONARD.

I paid a good price for it, and I was not taken in.

ADAM. —

Perhaps you are weary of living alone? Have you no thought of marrying?

LEONARD.

What? you do not know, Maître Adam, that I am newly wed? I married last month, a young lady from the provinces, of good family and appearance — Catherine Momichel, the seventh daughter of the Judge of the Criminal Court at Salency. Unhappily, she is dumb, and that is my trouble.

ADAM.

Your wife dumb?

LEONARD.

Alas!

ADAM.

Quite dumb?

LEONARD.

Dumb as a fish.

ADAM.

Did you not notice it before you married her?

LEONARD.

It would have been scarcely possible not to remark it. But it did not affect me as it does to-day. I reflected that she was good-looking, and had means, and I only thought of the blessings she was bringing me and of the pleasure I should have in her. But now these considerations appeal to me less, and I heartily wish that she could speak. It would be gratifying to my mental faculties and advantageous for my household. The residence of a judge needs — what? A woman of charm, who receives litigants pleasantly, and leads them gently by tactful observations to proffer gifts in order that their cases may receive closer attention. People only give when they are encouraged to give. A wife with a well-turned phrase and a timely gesture will extract a ham from this one, a piece of cloth from that — from a third wine or poultry. But this poor dumb thing of a Catherine never gets anything. Whereas the kitchen, the cellar, the stable, and barns of my learned brothers are bursting with good things, thanks to their wives, I get hardly enough to keep the pot boiling. So you may see, Maître Adam Fumée, what harm it does me to have a dumb wife. I am worth the half of what I should be... and the worst of it is that it is making me melancholy and distraught.

ADAM.

There is no cause, sir. On close consideration your lot would disclose advantages which are not to be despised.

LEONARD.

You don't know what it is like, Maître Adam. When I take my wife in my arms — and she is as shapely as the finest of statues, at least, so she seems to me, and, i'faith, she has no more to say for herself — I am oddly troubled and feel curiously ill at ease. I even ask myself if I have not to do with an image, an automaton, a magic doll, some contrivance due to the sorcerer's arts, rather than with one of God's creatures; and sometimes, of a morning, I am tempted to leap out of my bed to escape from spells.

ADAM.

What strange fancies!

LEONARD.

And that is not all. Living with the dumb, I am becoming dumb myself. From time to time I catch myself expressing myself in signs, as she does. The other day, on the bench, I actually passed sentence in dumb-show, and condemned a man to the galleys simply by gesture and pantomime.

ADAM.

There is no need to say more. One can understand that a dumb wife is poor at response. And one does not care about talking when one never gets a reply.

LEONARD.

Now you know the reason of my depression.

ADAM.

I have no wish to vex you, and I think you have just and sufficient cause. But there may be a way to put a stop to this. Tell me: is your wife deaf as well as dumb?

LEONARD.

Catherine is no more deaf than you or I. Even less, if I may say so. She can hear the grass growing.

ADAM.

If that is the case, you may take hope. When doctors, apothecaries, and surgeons succeed in giving speech to a deaf-mute the utterance is as lifeless as his own hearing. He hears neither what is said to him nor what he says himself. It is otherwise with mutes who can hear. It is a mere trifle for the doctor to loosen the tongue of such a one. The operation is so slight that it is daily performed on puppies who are backward in barking. Does it require a countryman such as I am to inform you that a famous doctor, who lives but a few steps from your dwelling in the Carrefour Buci, at the sign of the Dragon, Master Simon Colline, is renowned for loosing the tongues of the ladies of Paris. With a turn of the wrist he will set flowing from the mouth of your good lady a flood of well-articulated words, even as on turning a tap the imprisoned water flows forth with a gentle gurgle.

LEONARD.

Is this true, Maître Adam? You are not deceiving me? You are not speaking for a client?

ADAM.

I speak as your friend, and tell you the simple truth.

LEONARD.

Then I will send for this celebrated doctor; and that without an instant's delay.

ADAM.

As you like. But before calling him in, reflect soberly on what is the wisest course. For, all things considered, if a dumb wife has her drawbacks, she also has her advantages. Good evening, my dear sir and comrade. Believe me your friend, and read my memorial, I beg of you. If you exercise your justice in favour of a young orphan plundered by her greedy guardian, you shall have no cause to repent.

LEONARD.

Return ere long, Maître Adam. I shall have prepared my judgment. [MAITRE ADAM *leaves* .

SCENE II.

LEONARD, *then* GILLES, *then* CATHERINE.

LEONARD (*calling*).

Gilles! Gilles! He does not hear me, the young rip! He is in the kitchen as usual, upsetting the pots and the maids. Glutton and rake that he is! Gilles! Gilles! you scamp! you rascal!

GILLES.

Here I am, your worship.

LEONARD.

Well, young man, go as fast as you can to the famous doctor who lives in the Carrefour Buci, at the sign of the Dragon — Master Simon Colline — and tell him to come at once to this house to treat a dumb woman.

GILLES.

Yes, sir.

LEONARD.

Go straight there, mind, and don't linger on the Pont Neuf watching the boatmen. I know you, you vagabond. You haven't your equal when it comes to cheating.

GILLES.

You judge me wrongly, sir —

LEONARD.

Off with you — and bring the famous doctor.

GILLES.

Yes, sir. — [*He goes* .

LEONARD

(*seated before his table , covered with legal documents*).

I have fourteen judgments to deliver to-day, without counting the decree relating to the ward of Maître Adam Fumée. And it's hard work, for a judgment does no

credit to the judge unless it be well turned, subtle, elegant, and adorned with every ornament of style and thought. It must sparkle with ideas, and juggle with words. Where should one embody wit if not in a judgment?

[CATHERINE, *who has come down the staircase , takes her place at the spinning-wheel , near the table . She smiles at her husband and prepares to spin.*

LEONARD (*stops writing*).

Good morning, my love. I did not even hear you. You are like one of those creatures of fable who seem to float in the air, or like a dream sent by the gods to happy mortals, as the poets tell.

\A countryman is heard passing in the street , crying: “Fine watercress , good for the blood , three-farthings a bundle. ”

LEONARD. —

My love, you are one of Nature’s marvels, a person accomplished in every way: only speech is lacking in you. Would you not be very pleased to acquire it? Would you not be happy if all the pretty thoughts one guesses from your eyes could pass your lips? Would it not be a satisfaction to you to exhibit your wit? Would it not please you to tell your husband that you love him? Would it not seem sweet to you to call him your treasure and sweetheart? No doubt it would...

(A street-hawker is heard crying as he passes: “Dips — cotton dips! Burn brighter than any star !”) Well, I have good news for you, my love. A clever doctor will be here presently who will make you speak. (CATHERINE gives signs of satisfaction .) He will loose your tongue without hurting you.

[CATHERINE displays her joy by graceful gesturing and posturing. A blind man is heard passing along the street , singing a bourrée to the bagpipes:

Fish, gaily sporting,
One comes to catch you,
Tra-la-lal-la.
Youth, idly courting,
Mill-maiden frail!
Schemes to attach you
Past all avail.

[The blind man in a lugubrious voice: “Charity , for the love of God , good ladies and gentlemen .” He appears on the doorstep and continues to sing:

Riverward wend you,
Arm clipped in arm,
Tra-la-lal-la.
Mill-maiden, send you
Take no alarm!
Trip you and bend you,
Flaunting each charm,
Tra-la-lal-la.

[CATHERINE starts dancing the bourrée with the blind man; he takes up his song again:

Mill-maiden, send you
Come not to harm!
Tra-la-lal-la.

[The blind man stops his playing and dancing to drone out in a formidable and cavernous voice: “Charity , for the love of God , good ladies and gentlemen. ”

LEONARD

(who, immersed in his papers , has seen nothing , chases him out , calling him) Rogue, money-grubber, vagabond! — (Throwing brief-bags at his head. — To CATHERINE, who has gone back to her spinning-wheel.) My love, since you came down I have not wasted my time. I have sent fourteen men and six women to the stocks; distributed between seventeen individuals... (he reckons up) ... Six, twenty-four... thirty-two... forty-four... forty-seven and nine... fifty-six, and eleven, sixty-seven, and ten, seventy-seven, and eight, eighty-five, and twenty, one hundred and five. A hundred and five years at the galleys. Does that not give you a high notion of a judge’s powers, and can I help feeling a little proud? (CATHERINE, who has stopped spinning , leans against the table and looks smilingly at her husband. Then she seats herself on the table all covered with bags full of legal documents. LEONARD, pretending to pull the bags from under her.) My love, you are hiding some arch criminals from justice. Thieves and murderers.... I will not pursue them, however... their place of refuge is sacred.

SCENE III.

LEONARD, GILLES, MASTER SIMON COLLINE, MASTER SERAPHIN DULAURIER, *then* MASTER JEAN MAUGIER, *then* ALIZON.

GILLES.

Your worship, here is the great doctor you have summoned.

MASTER SIMON.

Yes, I am Master Simon Colline, in person. And here is Master Jean Maugier, the surgeon. You have asked for our attendance?

LEONARD.

Yes, sir, to give a dumb woman speech.

SIMON.

It is well. We wait the arrival of Master Séraphin Dulaurier, the apothecary. As soon as he comes we will operate according to our knowledge and understanding.

LEONARD.

Ah, does it need an apothecary, then, to make the dumb speak?

SIMON.

Yes, sir, and whoever doubts it totally ignores the inter-relation of organs and their mutual dependence. Master Séraphin Dulaurier will not be long in coming.

JEAN MAUGIER

(suddenly bawling with the voice of a Stentor).

Oh! how grateful we should be to learned doctors such as Master Simon Colline, who labour to keep us in health, and tend us in sickness. Oh! how worthy of all praise and blessing are these good doctors who practise their profession in accordance with the laws of instructed knowledge and long experience.

SIMON *(bowing slightly)*.

You are too kind, Master Jean Maugier.

LEONARD.

Will you take some refreshment, gentlemen, while we are waiting for the good

apothecary?

SIMON.
Willingly.

JEAN.
With pleasure.

LEONARD.
So, Master Simon Colline, you can perform a little operation which will enable my wife to speak?

SIMON.
I will order the operation, that is to say. I give the orders, Master Jean Maugier executes them... Have you your instruments, Master Jean?

JEAN.
Yes, Master.... *(He exhibits a saw three feet long with two-inch teeth , knives , pincers , shears , a centre-bit , a gigantic auger , a probe , etc)*
Enter ALIZON, with wine.

LEONARD.
I trust, gentlemen, that you are not going to make use of all those?

SIMON.
It doesn't answer to be short of an instrument when operating.

LEONARD.
Drink, gentlemen.

SIMON.
This light wine is not bad.

LEONARD.
You are too good. It is of my own growing.

SIMON.
You may send me a hogshead of it.

LEONARD

(to GILLES, who pours himself a bumper).

I didn't ask you to drink, you scamp.

JEAN

(looking out of the window into the street).

Here is Master Séraphin Dulaurier, the apothecary.

MASTER SERAPHIN *enters.*

SIMON.

And here is his mule... no, it is Master Séraphin himself. One never knows which. Drink, Master Séraphin. It is only just drawn.

SERAPHIN.

Your health, my masters!

SIMON *(to ALIZON).*

Pour, my beauty. Pour right and left, pour here and there. Whatever way she turns she shows abundant charms. Are you not uplifted, my child, by your comeliness?

ALIZON.

There is not much reason to be proud for all the profit I get by it. Charms bring in little enough unless they are decked out in silk and satin.

SERAPHIN.

Your health, my masters!

ALIZON.

They like to have their jest with one. But not if it costs them anything.

[They all drink , and make ALIZON do so.]

SIMON.

Now we are all ready we may as well go up to see the patient.

LEONARD.

I will show you the way, gentlemen.

[He goes up the stairs.]

SIMON.

After you, Master Maugier, after you.

JEAN (*glass in hand*).

I yield to you, for it's well known that the place of honour is at the rear.

SIMON.

After you, Master Séraphin.

[MASTER SERAPHIN *follows* LEONARD, *carrying a bottle*.

SIMON

(*having stuck a bottle in each pocket of his gown and kissed the serving-maid, climbs the stairs , singing*).

A bowl! A bowl! A bowl!

What never a parting bowl?

Good friends were verily dull of soul To part with never a bowl!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

LEONARD, MAITRE ADAM.

ADAM.

Good evening, worshipful sir, how do I find you? LEONARD.
Well enough — and you?

ADAM.

Never better. Forgive my importunity, dear sir and comrade. Have you looked into this affair of ray young ward plundered by her guardian?

LEONARD.

Not yet, Maître Adam. But what's that you say? You have plundered your ward?

ADAM.

Do not imagine such a thing! I say "my ward" from pure friendship. I am not her guardian, thank God! I am her counsel. And if she recover her property, which is large, I shall marry her. I have already taken the precaution to inspire her with love for me. That is why I shall be grateful if you will look into her case as promptly as possible. You have only to read my memorial. It contains everything that is pertinent.

LEONARD.

Your memorial, Maître Adam, is there on my table. I should have acquainted myself with it ere now had I not been busy. I have had the élite of the medical Faculty here, and it was on your advice that I had all this to-do.

ADAM.

What do you mean?

LEONARD.

I called in the celebrated doctor you spoke of — Master Simon Colline; he came with a surgeon and an apothecary; he examined my wife from head to foot to see if she was dumb. Then the surgeon cut the string of my dear Catherine's tongue, the apothecary gave her a dose, and she spoke.

ADAM.

She spoke! Was a dose necessary for that?

LEONARD.

Yes — by reason of the sympathy of the organs.

ADAM.

Ah!... At any rate, the essential thing is that she has spoken. What did she say?

LEONARD.

She said: “Bring me the mirror.” And then, seeing me much moved, she said:—
“My ownest, you must give me a satin gown and a hood with a velvet binding
for my birthday.”

ADAM.

And she continues to speak?

LEONARD.

She hasn’t stopped since.

ADAM.

And you don’t thank me for the advice I gave you? You don’t thank me for
making this great doctor known to you? Are you not well pleased to hear your
wife speak?

LEONARD.

Yes, yes. I thank you with all my heart, Maître Adam Fumée, and it is with
pleasure that I hear my wife speak. —

ADAM.

No, you don’t show as much satisfaction as you should. There is something that
vexes you and that you don’t tell me.

LEONARD.

Whence do you get that notion?

ADAM.

From your face. What is it that annoys you? Does not your good lady speak
well?

LEONARD.

She speaks well and speaks much. I confess to you that the abundance of her
speech would inconvenience me if she kept it up at the force of the first rush.

ADAM.

I foresaw it to some extent. But one must not despair about it all at once. The flow of words will diminish, perhaps. It is the first bubbling over of a spring opened over-suddenly.... My congratulations to you, worshipful sir. My ward's name is Ermeline de la Garandière. Do not forget her name. Deal favourably with her and you shall not have ingratitude to face. I will come back this evening.

LEONARD.

Maître Adam Fumée, I will go and consider your case at once. — [MAITRE ADAM FUMEE *leaves*.]

SCENE II.

LEONARD, *then* CATHERINE.

LEONARD (*reading*).

Memorial on behalf of Ermeline - Jacinthe - Marthe de la Garandière.

CATHERINE

(*who has set herself down by her spinning-wheel , beside the table — with volubility*).

What are you at, my friend? You seem engrossed. You do a great deal of work. Are you not afraid of some ill result? One should rest at times. But you don't tell me what you are busied with, my friend?

LEONARD.

My love!...

CATHERINE.

Is it such a great secret, then? Mustn't I know it?...

LEONARD.

My love, I...

CATHERINE.

If it's a secret, don't tell me.

LEONARD.

Give me time to reply. I am getting up a case, and preparing my judgment on it.

CATHERINE.

Passing judgment is an important matter.

LEONARD.

No doubt of that. Not only does the honour, the liberty, and sometimes the life of people depend on it, but beyond that the judge must show the profundity of his intelligence and the polish of his language.

CATHERINE.

Get along with your case, then, and prepare your judgment, my friend. I will say

nothing.

LEONARD.

Good.... The demoiselle Ermeline-Jac in the Marthe de la Garandière...

CATHERINE.

Which do you think would suit me best, a damask gown or simply a coat all velvet — cut Turkish fashion?

LEONARD.

I don't know, I...

CATHERINE.

It seems to me that a flowered satin would be most suitable to my age, more especially if it were light-coloured and the flowers small...

LEONARD.

I dare say, but...

CATHERINE.

And don't you think, my friend, that it would be unbecoming to exaggerate the fullness of the hoops? Of course, a skirt should stand out; without that one would not look dressed — one must not skimp the skirt. But you don't want me to be able to hide two gallants under my hoops, do you, my friend? The fashion will not last. One of these days ladies of quality will abandon it, and the middle-class will follow their example. Do you not think so? —

LEONARD.

I agree, but...

CATHERINE.

And then one must pay heed to the style of shoe. A woman is judged by her foot, and you can tell a really elegant woman by her shoes. You think so, too, do you not?

LEONARD.

Yes, but...

CATHERINE.

Go on with your judgment — I will say no more.

LEONARD.

That's right. (*Reading and taking notes.*) Whereas the guardian of the said demoiselle, Hugues Thomassin, lord of the manor of Piédeloup, has robbed the said demoiselle of her...

CATHERINE.

My dear, if one may believe the wife of the president of Montbadon, society is very corrupt; it is on the road to ruin; young people of to-day prefer to traffic with rich old ladies rather than make an honest marriage; and meanwhile well-conducted girls waste their sweetness. Can such things be? Tell me, my dear.

LEONARD.

My dear, either keep silent a moment, or be good enough to carry your conversation elsewhere. I don't know where I am.

CATHERINE.

Don't be put out, my dear. I will not say another word.

LEONARD.

Thank goodness.... (*Writing*) The said Seigneur de Piédeloup, both by peculations at haytime and the cider season...

CATHERINE.

My dear, for to-night's supper we have minced mutton and the remains of a goose, the gift of a client. Tell me if it is enough? Will it satisfy you? I detest meanness and like an abundant table; but what is the use of dishing up good things that are carried untouched back to the kitchen? Living is become so expensive. At the poulterer's, the greengrocer's, the butcher's, the fruiterer's, everything has gone up so in price that soon we shall do better to order our meals in from outside.

LEONARD.

I beg of you... (*Writing*) Orphan from her birth...

CATHERINE.

That's what we shall come to, you will see. For a chicken, a partridge, a hare, cost less roasted and larded than bought fresh killed at the market. And that because the cook-shop people who buy on a large scale get them cheap, and that enables them to sell again at a moderate price. I don't say that we should order in

our meals every day from the restaurant. Simple cooking at home is nicer; but when one wants to entertain friends, to give a dinner, it is easier done and less expensive to order it in. The restaurant people and the confectioners will, in less than an hour, send you round a dinner for a dozen, for twenty, for fifty people; from the restaurant you get your meat and poultry, and a man to superintend them, your jellies, sauces, and stews; from the confectioner your pies and tarts, entrées, and dessert. It is most convenient. You agree with me, Léonard?

LEONARD.

For pity's sake...!

CATHERINE.

It is not surprising that everything gets dearer. The luxury of the table becomes daily more pronounced. Let a relative or a friend dine with you and it is no longer a matter of three courses, roast, boiled, and sweet. One must have meat dishes done in five or six different ways, with so many sauces, and minces, and kinds of pastry that it is a perfect *omnium gatherum*. Don't you find it excessive, my dear? I, for one, cannot understand the pleasure they find in stuffing themselves with so much food. Not that I disdain good things, I enjoy them. I like a little, but that good. I am particularly fond of cocks' combs and the chokes of artichokes. And you, Léonard, haven't you a weakness for tripe and chitterlings? Fie! how can anyone like such things?

LEONARD (*clutching his head with his hands*).

I shall go mad. I feel that I shall go mad.

CATHERINE.

My dear, I won't say another word, for by speaking I may distract you from your work.

LEONARD.

If you would only do what you say.

CATHERINE.

I won't open my mouth.

LEONARD.

Wonderful!

CATHERINE.

You see — I am not saying a word.

LEONARD.

Yes.

CATHERINE.

I will let you work in quiet.

LEONARD.

Yes.

CATHERINE.

And formulate your judgment in peace. Will it soon be done?

LEONARD.

Never, unless you hold your tongue. (*Writing.*) Item. A hundred and twenty livres of income which this unworthy guardian has embezzled from this poor orphan...

CATHERINE.

Listen! Hush! Listen! Is not someone calling "Fire"? I thought I heard it. But perhaps I was mistaken. Is there anything more alarming than a fire? It is even more terrible than water. Last year I saw the burning of the houses on the Pont-au-Change. The turmoil! The havoc! The inhabitants threw their furniture into the river. Threw themselves out of the windows. They did not know what they were doing. Fear had deprived them of their senses.

LEONARD.

Lord have mercy on me!

CATHERINE.

Why do you groan, my friend? Tell me what troubles you?

LEONARD.

I can bear no more.

CATHERINE.

Rest, Léonard — you must not tire yourself so. It is not reasonable, and it would be wrong of you to...

LEONARD.

Will you never hold your tongue?

CATHERINE.

Don't get angry, my friend. I won't say another word.

LEONARD.

Heaven grant it!

CATHERINE (*looking out of the window*).

Ah! there is Madame de la Bruine coming, the Procureur's wife; she is wearing a hood bound with silk and a great puce-coloured mantle over a brocade dress. She is followed by a lackey as withered as a smoked herring. Léonard, she is looking this way: she looks as if she were coming to call. Make haste and put the chairs forward ready for her — people must be received according to their rank and station. She is just stopping at the door. No, she is passing. She is gone on. Perhaps I was mistaken. Perhaps it was not she. One isn't always sure of people. But if it was not she, it was someone very like her, someone very like her, indeed. Now I think of it I am sure that it was she, there could not be a woman in Paris so like Madame de la Bruine. My dear, my dear — wouldn't you have been glad if Madame de la Bruine had called on us? (*She sits on the table.*) You who don't like talkative women, it is well for you that you didn't marry her. She chatters like a magpie, she does nothing but gabble from morning till night. What a jabberer! And she retails stories sometimes that are very little to her credit.

[LEONARD, *beside himself*, mounts the step-ladder with his writing materials, and sits on one of the steps, where he tries to write.

CATHERINE.

She will start enumerating all the presents her husband receives. The account is precise. (*She ascends the other side of the steps and sits down facing*

LEONARD.) Now does it interest us that the Monsieur de la Bruine gets game, flour, fish, or loaves of sugar sent him? But Madame de la Bruine takes good care not to tell that one day her husband received a big pie from Amiens, and that when he opened it he only found a big pair of horns.

LEONARD.

My head will burst!

[He takes refuge on the top of the cupboard with his papers and writing materials.

CATHERINE (*at the very top of the ladder*).

Did you see the procuress? for, after all, since she is the wife of a procureur she must be a procuress. She wears an embroidered hood like a princess. Don't you think it absurd? but nowadays everybody must be above his station, men and women alike. Young lawyers' clerks want to pass for gentlemen; they wear gold chains and clasps and plumed hats.... In spite of that one can easily see what they are.

LEONARD (*on the cupboard*).

I have got to that pitch that I am no longer answerable for myself, and I feel capable of any crime. (*Calls*) Gilles! Gilles! Gilles! you scoundrel! Gilles! Alizon! Gilles! Gilles! (*Enter GILLES.*) Go quickly and find the celebrated doctor in the Carrefour Buci, Master Simon Colline, and tell him to come back at once to a case of quite another kind from the former one, but just as pressing.

GILLES.

Yes, your worship. — *[He goes.*

CATHERINE.

What is the matter, my friend? You seem heated. Perhaps because the weather is oppressive.... No? It is the east wind, don't you think? or the fish you had for dinner?

LEONARD

(exhibiting signs of frenzy on his cupboard-top). Non omnia possumus omnes .

The Swiss are toss-pots, the draper measures ribbon, monks beg, little birds mess everywhere, and women cackle like all possessed! Oh! how I repent, you jade, that I had your tongue loosed! But wait a little. The great doctor will shortly make you more dumb than you were before.

[He picks up armfuls of the bags of papers piled on the cupboard , where he has taken refuge , and throws them at CATHERINE'S head , who descends with agility from the ladder and flies in fright up the stairs , crying out:

CATHERINE.

Help! Help! Murder! My husband's gone mad! Help!

LEONARD.

Alizon! Alizon — [ALIZON *enters*.

ALIZON.

What a life! Monsieur, are you going to turn murderer?

LEONARD.

Alizon, follow her — keep your eye on her — don't let her come down. As you value your life, Alizon, don't let her come down. If I listen to her any more I shall become mad, and God knows to what extremities I may be provoked against her and against you. Begone!

[ALIZON *goes up the stairs* .

SCENE III.

LEONARD, MAITRE ADAM, MADEMOISELLE DE LE GARANDIERE,
followed by a lackey carrying a basket .

ADAM.

Suffer me, worshipful sir, to touch your heart and move your bowels of compassion, by presenting to you the young orphaned lady who, plundered by a grasping guardian, implores your justice. Her eyes will speak to you better than my voice. Mademoiselle de la Garandière comes to you with prayers and tears; thereto she joins a ham, two game pies, a goose, and two ducklings. She dares to hope a favourable judgment in exchange.

LEONARD.

Mademoiselle, you awaken my interest. Have you anything to add in support of your cause?

MLLE DE LA G.

You are too good, sir. I abide by what my counsel has just said.

LEONARD.

Is that all?

MLLE DE LA G.

Yes, sir.

LEONARD.

She speaks well — and briefly. This orphan moves me. (*To the footman.*) Take your bundle into the kitchen. (*The footman goes. — To MAITRE ADAM.*)

Maître Adam, when you came in I was formulating the judgment I shall presently enter in the matter of this young lady.

[He comes down from the cupboard.]

ADAM.

What! on top of that cupboard?

LEONARD.

I don't know what's come over me. My head is very bad. Would you like to hear

the judgment? I want to read it over for my own sake. (*Reads.*) Whereas the demoiselle de le Garandière, orphan from her birth, has fraudulently and by deceit conveyed away from the said Piédeloup her guardian ten crops of hay, twenty-four pounds of fish from private waters, and whereas there is nothing so terrifying as a fire, and whereas the Procureur has received a pie from Amiens in which was a pair of horns...

ADAM.

What, in Heaven's name, are you reading?

LEONARD.

DO not ask me. I don't know myself. I feel as if some demon had been braying my brains in a mortar for two hours past. And it is your fault, Maître Adam Fumée. If the worthy doctor had not restored my wife's speech...

ADAM.

Do not blame me, Monsieur Léonard. I warned you. I told you plainly that you should think twice before you loosened a woman's tongue.

LEONARD.

Ah, Maître Adam Fumée, how I regret the time when Catherine was dumb. No. Nature has no more terrible scourge than a talkative woman.... But I count on the doctors annulling their cruel gift. I have sent for them, and here is the surgeon even

SCENE IV.

The same. MASTER JEAN MAUGIER, then MASTER SIMON COLLINE, and MASTER SERAPHIN DULAURIER, followed by two little boys from the apothecary's.

MAUGIER.

Worshipful sir, I have the honour to greet you. Here is Master Simon Colline approaching on his mule, followed by Master Séraphin Dulaurier, the apothecary. Round him surges an adoring crowd; serving-maids holding up their skirts, pastrycook's boys with baskets on their heads, form his escort. (*Enter MASTER SIMON COLLINE and his following.*) Oh, how rightly is Master Simon Colline the cynosure of every eye when he passes through the city in gown and cap, hood and bands. Oh, how grateful we should be to these good doctors who labour to keep us in health and who tend us when...

SIMON (*to MASTER JEAN MAUGIER*).

Enough! that will do.

LEONARD.

Master Simon Colline, I was impatient to see you. I want your services at once.

SIMON.

For yourself, sir? What is your trouble? Where do you suffer?

LEONARD.

No. For my wife — for her who was dumb.

SIMON.

Does she experience any inconvenience?

LEONARD.

None. It is I who am inconvenienced.

SIMON.

How is this? It is you who are inconvenienced, and it is your wife you would have healed?

LEONARD. —

Master Simon Colline, she talks too much. She was to be made to speak, but not to this extent. Since you cured her dumbness she is driving me mad. I can endure her talk no longer. I have called you in to make her dumb once more.

SIMON.

It is impossible.

LEONARD.

What do you say? You cannot take away the speech that you gave?

SIMON.

No. I cannot. My art is great, but it cannot do that.

MAUGIER.

It is an impossibility for us.

SERAPHIN.

All our ministrations can do nothing here.

SIMON.

We have remedies to make women speak — we have none to make them silent.

LEONARD.

You have none? What is this you tell me? You drive me to despair.

SIMON.

Alas, worshipful sir, there is no elixir, balm, sovran recipe, opiate, unguent, plaster, local application, electuary, or panacea to heal intemperance of the glottis in woman. Theriac and orviétan are without virtue here, and all the herbs prescribed by Dioscorides would work nothing.

LEONARD.

Do you speak truth?

SIMON.

You insult me if you doubt it.

LEONARD.

In that case I am a lost man. There is nothing left for me but to throw myself into

the Seine with a stone round my neck. I cannot live in this uproar. If you do not want me to drown myself out of hand, you must find me a remedy, gentlemen.

SIMON.

There is none, as I have told you, for your wife. But there is one for you, if you consent to make use of it.

LEONARD.

You restore me some hope. Explain yourself, I beg.

SIMON.

Against a woman's chatter there is one single remedy. It is the husband's deafness.

LEONARD.

What do you mean?

SIMON.

I mean what I say.

ADAM.

Do you not understand? It is the finest invention there is. Being unable to make your wife dumb, this great doctor offers to make you deaf.

LEONARD.

Make me deaf once and for all?

SIMON.

Without a doubt. I will heal you instantly and radically of your honoured wife's verbal incontinence, by cophosis.

LEONARD.

Cophosis? What is cophosis?

SIMON.

It is what is vulgarly called deafness. Do you see any drawbacks to being deaf?

LEONARD.

Yes, I do. For, indeed, there are drawbacks. MAUGIER.

Do you think so?

SERAPHIN.
What are they?

SIMON.
You are a judge. What drawback is there in a judge being deaf?

ADAM.
None. You may believe me. I frequent the Courts. There is none.

SIMON.
Would justice come to any harm?

ADAM.
No harm would come of it. On the contrary, Monsieur Léonard Botal would hear neither advocates nor their clients, and would no longer run the risk of being taken in by falsehoods.

LEONARD.
That is true. —

ADAM.
He would be all the better judge.

LEONARD.
Maybe...

ADAM.
You need have no doubt.

LEONARD.
But how do you work this — this —

MAUGIER.
Cure —

SIMON.
Cophosis or deafness may be procured in several ways. It is produced by otorrhœa, by inflammation of the parotid, by sclerosis of the ear, by otitis, or by ankylosis of the small bones. But these various methods are long and painful.

LEONARD.

I reject them. I reject them all emphatically.

SIMON.

You are wise. It is much better to induce cophosis by means of a certain white powder which I have in my pouch, a pinch of which introduced into the ear is enough to make you deaf as a post, or as unhearing as Heaven in an angry mood.

LEONARD.

Thank you for nothing, Master Simon Colline; keep your powder.... I do not wish to be deaf.

SIMON.

What, you won't be deaf? You reject cophosis? You flee from the cure you but lately implored? It is all too common a spectacle and one well calculated to grieve the soul of a good doctor, to see a refractory patient reject salutary remedies...

MAUGIER.

... Avoid the ministrations which could comfort his sufferings....

SERAPHIN.

... And refuse to be healed.

ADAM.

Do not decide so hurriedly, Monsieur Léonard Botal, nor deliberately reject an evil which would shield you from a greater one.

LEONARD.

No. I don't want to be deaf. I will have none of this powder.

SCENE V.

The same. ALIZON, then CATHERINE.

ALIZON (*rushing downstairs , holding her ears*).

I can stand it no more. My head is bursting. It is not humanly possible to listen to such a buzzing. She never stops. I feel as if I had been two hours in a mill-wheel.

LEONARD.

Miserable woman! Don't let her come down. Alizon! Gilles! Shut her up!

ADAM.

My good sir!

MLLE DE LA G.

Oh, sir, can you be so hard-hearted as to keep the poor lady shut up?

CATHERINE.

What a numerous and delightful company. Your servant, gentlemen. — [*She curtseys* .

SIMON.

And now, tell me, Madame, are you not satisfied with us? and have we not thoroughly loosed your tongue?

CATHERINE.

You did it very well, gentlemen, and I am much obliged to you. Just at first I could not articulate a good many words. But now I have considerable facility of speech. I use it with moderation, for a talkative woman is a domestic scourge. Gentlemen, I should be inconsolable if you had reason to suspect me of loquacity or if you thought an itch for speaking had hold of me. Therefore, I ask your leave to put myself right at once in my husband's sight, for he, prejudiced on I know not what grounds against me, has conceived that my conversation distracted him in a vexatious manner when he was propounding a judgment... a judgment in favour of a young orphan girl? whose father and mother were cut off in the flower of her youth. But no matter. I was sitting by him and hardly addressed a word to him, so to say. All I did was to sit there. Can a husband complain of that? Can he complain of a wife's sitting near him and seeking his

company, as she ought to? (*To her husband .*) The more I think about it the less I understand your impatience. What was the cause of it? Don't say again that it was my chatter. The excuse cannot be sustained. My friend, you must have some grievance against me that I am ignorant of, and I beg you to tell me it. You owe me an explanation, and when I know what has vexed you I will see to it that you are spared in future the annoyance you have brought to my knowledge. For I am anxious to shield you from every occasion of discontent. My mother used to say: "Between husband and wife there should be no secrets." And she was right. A husband or a wife has, at times, as a result of not confiding the one in the other, drawn down on the household or on themselves the most terrible calamities. That is what happened to the wife of the President of Beaupréau. To give her husband an agreeable surprise she shut up a little sucking-pig in a box in her room. The husband heard it squeal, and thinking it was a lover, drew his sword and thrust it through his wife's heart before he heard the unhappy woman's explanations. When he opened the box, judge of his surprise and his despair. That is why there should never be anything hole and corner, even when well meant. You can say what you like before these gentlemen. I have done no wrong, and whatever you may say my innocence will only show the more clearly.

LEONARD

(*who, for some moments , has been vainly trying , by his signs and exclamations , to stop CATHERINE'S flow of words , and who has already given signs of extreme impatience*).

The powder! The powder! Master Simon Colline, your powder — your white powder, for pity's sake!

SIMON.

Never, indeed, was deafening powder more necessary. Be good enough to sit down, worshipful sir. Master Séraphin Dulaurier will blow the deafening powder into your ears.

SERAPHIN.

With pleasure, sir.

SIMON.

There — it is done.

CATHERINE (*to MAITRE ADAM FUMEE*).

Make my husband listen to reason, Master Lawyer. Tell him he must hear what I have to say — that a wife must not be condemned unheard — tell him that one does not throw bags at a woman's head — for he threw bags at my head — without being driven to do it by some violent impulse, mental or emotional. But no! I will speak to him myself. (*To LEONARD.*) Answer me, my friend, have I failed you in any way? Am I a wicked woman? Am I a bad wife? I have done my duty faithfully. I will go so far as to say that I have loved...

LEONARD

(*his countenance expresses beatitude , and he twiddles his thumbs tranquilly*).
How delicious! I hear nothing now.

CATHERINE.

Listen to me, Léonard. I love you tenderly. I will open my heart to you. I am not one of these light and frivolous women a mere nothing can cast down and a mere nothing console, and who are amused with trifles. I feel the need of friendship. I was born so. When I was no more than seven I had a little dog, a little yellow dog... You are not listening to me...

SIMON.

Madame, he cannot listen to you or to anyone else. He no longer hears.

CATHERINE.

What do you mean, he no longer hears?

SIMON.

He can no longer hear because of a drug he has taken...

SERAPHIN.

... Which has resulted for him in a calm and cheerful deafness.

CATHERINE.

I will make him hear me.

SIMON.

You can do nothing of the sort, Madame, it is impossible.

CATHERINE.

You shall see. (*To her husband.*) My friend, my dearest, my love, my heart, my

better half... you don't hear. *(She shakes him.)* Olibrius, Herod, Bluebeard, cuckold...

LEONARD.

I hear her no longer through my ears. But I hear her only too plainly in my arms, shoulders, and backbone.

SIMON.

She is going mad.

LEONARD.

Whither can I flee? She has bitten me! I feel that I am becoming as mad as she!
[The blind man is heard without . He enters the hall singing: —

Riverward wend you,
Arm clipped in arm,
Tra-la-lal-la,
Mill-maiden, send you
Take no alarm!
Trip you and bend you,
Flaunting each charm,
Tra-la-lal-la,
Mill-maiden, send you
Come not to harm!

[CATHERINE and LEONARD, dancing and singing , proceed to bite all the company who , in turn , become mad , dance and sing furiously , and only halt at length to allow MONSIEUR LEONARD BOTAL to say:

Ladies and gentlemen, be lenient to the author's shortcomings.

FINIS.

COME WHAT MAY



A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

Translated by Wilfrid Jackson and Emilie Jackson

CONTENTS

[CHARACTERS.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[SCENE IV.](#)

[SCENE V.](#)

[SCENE VI.](#)

[SCENE VII.](#)

[SCENE VIII.](#)

[SCENE IX.](#)

[SCENE X.](#)

[SCENE XI.](#)

[SCENE XII.](#)

CHARACTERS.

MADAME DE SESCOURT (GERMAINE)

MADAME LAVERNE (CECILE)

NALEGE

JACQUES CHAMBRY FRANÇOIS

A drawing-room in Paris , 1895.

SCENE I.

GERMAINE, *then* CECILE.

GERMAINE (*alone , writing*).

Acroclinium, rose, twelve packets; double acroclinium, white, twenty-four packets. Alpine plants are all small. And if I am to choose the species you must tell me whether they will have a north or south aspect...

CECILE (*coming in*).

Good morning, Germaine. I am fortunate. You are not yet flown.

GERMAINE.

Good morning, Cécile. You have something to tell me?

CECILE.

No, nothing... everything.... Never mind Finish your letter.

GERMAINE.

I have but a couple more lines to write. (*Writes.*) Californian Eschscholtzia, mandarin, rose...

CECILE.

Good heavens! whatever is that?

GERMAINE (*writing*).

A flower, my dear girl, a pretty little white flower touched with rose. (*Writing*) Heliotropium, Browalle Czerwiakowskii.

CECILE.

Goodness! In what language do you conduct your correspondence?

GERMAINE.

In the language of seedsmen. I am replying to Adalbert who wants me to choose him flowers for his garden. Each spring, for five years past, comes the same touching letter: "Dear Germaine, when my poor brother was alive you chose flowers for the parterres at Seully. Do so now that Seully is mine. You have so

much taste." I cannot refuse him. And whatever I do, the parterres at Seuilly will be none the fairer for it.

CECILE.
Why?

GERMAINE (*closing her letter*).
I don't know. It is a gift. The Sescourts are unfortunate in all their undertakings. My husband had but a single passion — horses. His stable was always unlucky. Adalbert loves flowers. Flowers will not grow for him.

CECILE.
Do you think it is so?

GERMAINE.
I am sure of it.

CECILE.
But your husband was a much cleverer man than Adalbert.

GERMAINE.
Do you say that to flatter me, or because you think it? —

CECILE.
Oh, I know that he was not the last word in husbands. He was not incomparable. You deserved a better. But I have ideas on the subject. A woman should not be so well married. On the contrary, a good marriage becomes an inconvenience in the end. Yes, I assure you... it prevents things. I, for instance, have a husband...

GERMAINE.
A charming one! Your husband is charming.

CECILE.
Charming! Well, it has put a stop to everything. I tell myself at times that there is some good in a bad match. It leaves an opening, it leaves possibilities, and one can hope at large. A delicious state!...

GERMAINE.
You have some very unruly notions to-day, my dearest. Say at once, with Paul Chambry, that a woman marries only to get into circulation [*Enter NALEGE*.

SCENE II.

The same and NALEGE.

NALEGE (*to MADAME DE SESCOURT*).

Madame!

(*to MADAME LAVERNE*).

Dear Madame! — [*He bozos.*

CECILE.

Monsieur de Nalége!... I thought you were at home, in your woods. —

NALEGE.

I come from them, Madame. I came but yesterday.

CECILE.

Your first visit is for Madame de Sescourt. I claim the second for myself. Come and see me when you leave here. You will find my husband, who grows every day more devoted to you, and soon will be unable to get on without you. Which, for once in a way, does not mean... I will leave you. I have visits to pay from which I may not dispense myself, for they are to people I do not know. Good-bye. Exchange confidences of the fairest, and, if you speak of me, say: "She is lovable." — [*She goes out.*

SCENE III.

GERMAINE *and* NALEGE.

GERMAINE.

True enough, she is lovable.

NALEGE.

Very.

GERMAINE.

Isn't she? And men don't seem to see it. She says to me time and again:— "I am not plainer than others, nor sillier. And yet — you may not believe it — no one makes love to me."

NALEGE.

And to you they do it all day long?

GERMAINE. —

Pooh!

NALEGE.

All day long.

GERMAINE.

No. From five to seven.

NALEGE.

And it amuses you to hear all their insipidities, their nonsense. It flatters you to receive the compliments of imbeciles who do not mean a single word they say.

GERMAINE.

Monsieur de Nalège, what have you been doing with yourself this winter?

NALEGE.

I, Madame? I have lived alone in my woods, with my dog, my pipe, and my gun. I have passed whole days without seeing a human countenance. Two days ago I slept in a charcoal-burner's empty hut. I had lost myself in my own forests on a grand stormy night.

GERMAINE.

Just so! Such existence has left on you a trace of the wilds.

NALEGE.

Ah! You find me rough because I tell you that you are fond of empty compliments.

GERMAINE.

Not at all.

NALEGE.

... and because I suspect you of being entertained by fine words which hold but little meaning. Do you believe, Madame, that you are not to be caught as others are by phrases and grimaces? Do you believe that it is so easy to detect true feeling, and to see to the depths of the heart?

GERMAINE.

I believe that men can see nothing in that regard, even the cleverest. A silly woman can make them believe anything she wishes. Vanity blinds them. And women are not taken in by grimaces. They can very well distinguish under compliments the feelings that inspire them.

NALEGE.

You are sure of that?

GERMAINE.

Certainly I am. We see at once with whom we have to do.

NALEGE.

Yes, you think, you women, that you have a mysterious gift, that you hold the divining-rod which strains towards the hidden point of love. You believe that you can tell, among all others, the one who loves you the most and the best. Women are never mistaken. They say so, and they believe it until long experience has disabused them. I knew in her old age an Italian princess, a former beauty in Milan — and in Paris, too — in the days when Frenchmen wore nankeen trousers and sang Béranger's songs. In her declining days she would tell her tales to a grand-nephew of hers. And one day she began in these words:— "At that time I was perfectly beautiful." The young man clicked his tongue and looked at his grand-aunt, as much as to say: "and you profited by it!" Thereupon the princess replied, with a sigh: "Well, then, if you will have it,

nephew mine, I have been abominably robbed in my time.” The fact is that in these matters the women and the men proceed... I do not say by touch, for that obviously would not be such a bad way of going about it — I will not say as at blind-man’s buff, for at that people scream danger at you, but crossways through all sorts of phantasmagoria and devilments, like Don Quixote when he bestrode the good steed Chevillard to pursue the Infanta.

GERMAINE.

Extraordinary person that you are! You issue from your charcoal-burner’s hut to persuade me, by means of an Italian princess and Don Quixote, that a woman cannot see when someone has a feeling — a liking — for her.

NALEGE.

Even so. Sincere feeling, profound passion — a woman can pass them by without seeing them.

GERMAINE.

Oh, do not let us talk of passion. We have no notion on the subject. One does not know passion by sight — one has never seen it —

NALEGE.

Never?

GERMAINE.

Never. Passion is like a thunderstorm — it never hits the mark. Once at Grand’ Combe I was caught in a thunderstorm. I took refuge from it. The sky seemed on fire, the thunder never ceased its rumbling. The lightning split a poplar from crown to base a hundred yards from me. I was none the worse. Passion is like the thunderbolt — it is terrible, but it falls wide. A sentiment, on the other hand... a liking... a woman may inspire them — well and good — and she is aware of it.

NALEGE.

Madame, I will give you methodical proof to the contrary. I am a man of method. I have a scientific mind. I have applied these faculties to agriculture. The results were disastrous. But a rational method must be judged in itself and not by effects for which it is not altogether responsible. I am going to prove to you, in the most rigorous manner, that, generally, if a woman perceives that one has a liking for her, it is because that sentiment is not very pronounced, and that the stronger it is the less she will recognize it.

GERMAINE.

Proceed with your demonstration.

NALEGE.

Must we first define this... liking... of which we speak?

GERMAINE.

That would not help us.

NALEGE.

No, Madame, it would not be without use. But it would, perhaps, border on impropriety.

GERMAINE.

Impropriety? Why, what do you mean?

NALEGE.

I think a precise definition might offend your delicacy. And what I say should not cause you surprise for, in fact, when a man is sitting thus near a lady, as I am near you, and says to himself in his heart as he looks at her — thus, as I am looking at you: “Madame So-and-so is delightful,” this reflection holds... I hope it may not shock you?

GERMAINE.

Not at all.

NALEGE.

The reflection has in it the germ of an idea at the same time natural, physical, psychological, the presentation of which in all its strength and simplicity is utterly opposed to established manners. The mere reflection that “Madame So-and-so is delightful” denotes when it crosses the mind the birth of a sequence of vivid pictures, of curious feelings, and violent desires which succeed one another, multiply themselves, rush to the front, and know no pause till — which know no pause, Madame...

GERMAINE.

You trifle!

NALEGE.

No, Madame, I do not trifle. I am but establishing the groundwork of my

argument. It follows from what I have just set forth that the ordinary, average, everyday man who thinks, as he sees you, “She is charming,” and who entertains the thought without ardour of sentiment, without power of reflection, without strength of soul or body, without even knowing what he thinks or whether he thinks at all, such an one may stay near you and be pleasing, endearing, ingratiating. He talks, smiles, has the will to please. He pleases. Whereas the unhappy man who, above all others, thinks that she is charming, but also feels the full force of that thought, he contains himself, conceals it, shuts it away. He is fearful lest it escape, in spite of him, in untimely turbulence, and he is uneasy. He is mute and depressed. You think he is bored, and he bores you. You say: “Poor man, he becomes rather wearisome.” And that because he is only too well aware of your grace and beauty, because he has received a mortal thrust, because he has conceived a strong and generous inclination towards you. Because, in a word, he is — as people used to say — very hard hit.

GERMAINE.

He is somewhat absurd, your good man.

NALEGE.

Certainly. He is conscious of the disproportion existing between the ideas he entertains and those he must express. He feels himself ridiculous. He becomes so. It is an absurd incongruity, a burlesque breach of manners, to think of a lady too clearly in terms of a woman. The thought may border on the tragi-comic.

GERMAINE.

And then —

NALEGE.

Then, instead of making pretty speeches and venturing oneself adroitly, one shows oneself downcast and timid. Even if one is not so by nature, one becomes so. One gives up all attempt at saying what may only be said by overweakening its expression. One falls into a dull despondency, into a stupidity that weighs one down... [*A silence.*]

GERMAINE.

... from which one issues no more?

NALEGE.

From which one issues at the first charming note of the beloved voice. One

gathers oneself together, one starts again... and if one happens to be a rustic and a ruminant, a solitary who has wandered dreaming in the woods with his gun, his book, and his dog, one spins wide theories, lays down systems, holds forth on the subject of love. One takes up again the thread of long demonstrations. One argues. It is a foolish business to argue in the presence of a pretty woman, but one argues. One grows dogged, and follows one line of argument with obstinacy and contentiousness... or perhaps...

GERMAINE.
Or perhaps...?

NALEGE.
Or perhaps one has a brusque change of mood. One becomes gay, trifling, flippant, indulges in pleasantries. One springs up and sits down again, looks about, interests oneself in odds and ends, says: "Here's a pretty miniature on this box." (*He picks up a box from the table,*) Who is this lady in powder — do you know?

GERMAINE.
It is Mademoiselle Fel.

NALEGE (*dryly*).
Ah... Mademoiselle Fel.

GERMAINE.
At least, I believe so. You may compare it with the pastel by Latour at St.-Quentin.

NALEGE.
I will not fail to do so, Madame. Thank you for having given me an interesting occupation. I will give my leisure time to it.

GERMAINE.
Why do you employ that tone? What is the matter?

NALEGE.
Nothing whatever. I proceed with my demonstration. I say, you look round, you make yourself pleasant — lumberingly pleasant — you gambol like an elephant, or perhaps... do you follow me?

GERMAINE.

I am with you... go on.

NALEGE.

You take an inward revenge. You decry with sincerity — oh, yes, sincerely... the too precious object. You look at it with the eye of a disdainful connoisseur. You say to yourself: “I see well enough... clear and pure colouring, light golden hair, pretty skin, neck and shoulders of harmonious line, rounded and supple figure.” Well, after all — is it unique? Is it rare? One knows what it is. What folly to hanker after it, what folly to suffer for it!

GERMAINE.

Ah! does one indeed?

NALEGE.

Yes, you say that, and you try to believe it. And then you pity your very self. You long for some happiness, some rest and tranquillity. You say to yourself: “Go — go and smoke your pipe in the woods, seek your horse and your dog, seek the open sky, idiot that you are. And you pick up your hat (*he takes his hat*) and say:— “Good day, Madame.” — [*He leaves* .

SCENE IV.

GERMAINE *alone* . *Later* , FRANÇOIS.

GERMAINE.

He has gone.... Pleasant journey, Monsieur de Nalege. Au revoir... good-bye... good-bye... au revoir. Who knows? A little brusque, a little queer, Monsieur de Nalege. What can one expect?... A man who sleeps out in the woods in a storm, in a charcoal-burner's hut! Five o'clock.... A savage who, nevertheless... Ah! my letter to poor Adalbert!... (*She rings*) Perhaps what Cécile says is true, that Adalbert is more stupid than... his brother. But that is of no importance... oh!... none... (*Enter FRANÇOIS*). That is for the post.... If anyone calls, I am not at home. (*FRANÇOIS gives her a card , which she reads.*) Jacques Chambry... Show him in.

SCENE V.

GERMAINE, JACQUES CHAMBRY. GERMAINE.

It is quite by chance that you find me at home. Usually I do not return home so early.

CHAMBRY.

By chance? Rather by good luck... such a pleasure.

GERMAINE.

And a somewhat rare pleasure, for you do not often indulge in it. For instance, yesterday, at the play, you did not come to see me in my box. You denied yourself that pleasure.

CHAMBRY.

I did not dare.... Positively did not dare.

In your box I perceived dragons, ogres, ogresses, dwarfs — it was terrifying.

GERMAINE.

What do you mean, dragons and ogres? CHAMBRY.

A fairy's bodyguard; quite as it should be. But I shuddered. Behind you was counsel in the person of Billaine, rolling his great eyes; Colonel Herpin, weeping behind your back; and Baron Michiels, sleeping. He was the dwarf. He was quite appalling. —

GERMAINE.

The play was charming. Did you not think so? CHAMBRY.

Oh, yes. Boring — yes, very boring.

GERMAINE.

But no, I assure you — delightful, charming. CHAMBRY.

Charming? Possibly. I only saw one act... GERMAINE.

Come, come — you stayed in the beautiful Madame Desenne's box all the time. There were no dwarfs, or ogres, or dragons in her box. There was only Desenne, who is deaf, and little Malcy, who is dumb. You were quite happy there.

CHAMBRY.

Very, Madame. I could see you all the time.

GERMAINE.

From afar.

CHAMBRY.

From afar, but in duplicate. I saw you full face and in profile at the same time. You were reflected in profile in the mirror of the stage-box — showing the nape of your neck. And it is not always that the nape of the neck is pretty. Nay, it is very rare. I have seen but five so far...

GERMAINE.

You are a collector?

CAMBRY.

In so far as I have a correct eye and know how to use it. Do not laugh. It isn't everyone who has the faculty. I know people who have loved a woman for months, years... three years... four years...

GERMAINE.

Four years — ?

CHAMBRY.

If that frightens you, say eighteen months — two years... men who have adored a woman for years, who have loved her... in every way... and who do not even know if she is well made, or what are her good and what her second-rate points. They are not aware of these things, and they never will be. They lack the trained eye, and that is irreparable. On people like that exquisite things are lost. People whose eyes are unable to read a woman constitute the great majority. I can give you an example. You know Thouvenin, old Thouvenin of the Congo Railway. You know that he has lived for years with Mercédès, the dancer...

GERMAINE.

No — I know nothing whatever about it.

CHAMBRY.

Anyhow, it is so. Well, one day last week I came across Thouvenin in a very well-known house. But not of your world. He was in the drawingroom, turning over an album filled with portraits of young ladies, whose only costumes were their ear-rings and their rings. I was looking over his shoulder. All at once I caught sight of a slight, slender brunette, who possessing no veil but her fan was, with very proper feeling, hiding her eyes with it. I said to Thouvenin: "There is

Mercédès.” Staggered, he exclaimed:— “Where?”

“There, Monsieur Thouvenin, there in the book of specimens. “Impossible — what makes you think so?”— “Everything.”

“Nothing that I can see.

How do you expect one to recognize her?” And pray observe that Thouvenin is parting with 15,000 francs a month for the possession of charms that he fails to recognize when he can’t see the tip of her nose. The moral of this story...

GERMAINE.

Oh — there is a moral?

CHAMBRY.

And you shall unravel it yourself.

GERMAINE.

I? I do not even know what you have been saying. I was not listening.

CHAMBRY.

Listen, at least, to the moral.... It is melancholy to have to tell oneself one is pretty; but there are few connoisseurs, very few.

GERMAINE.

So you have merely a vague idea of this play we saw... together. That is a pity. It was interesting.

CHAMBRY.

But I have already told you, I only looked at you. You will never know how charming you looked last night.

GERMAINE.

Describe me, then, describe me. I am certain that you do not even know the colour of my gown.

CHAMBRY.

Your gown... the colour...? (*After a while*) Blue.

GERMAINE.

What a pity that you were unable to see yourself as you replied “Blue”! You were like this: (*she imitates him*). Wandering eyes, puckered brow, arm

outstretched, with fingers feeling in the air like a small boy drawing a number out of a bag.

CHAMBRY.
Well?

GERMAINE.
Well, you have won.

CHAMBRY.
And that blue gown suited you to perfection.

GERMAINE.
Oh, you thought so? As it happened, an old friend who was in my box said to me: "That dress does not suit you at all. You are a hundredfold prettier in pink than in blue." And I confess, Monsieur Chambry, I was touched and flattered by this remark because I believed it to be the truth, because I felt its sincerity and that it betokened a real desire to see me to my advantage.

CHAMBRY.
It was the dwarf who told you that?

GERMAINE.
The dwarf?

CHAMBRY.
Yes, Baron Michiels. He affects a rough outspokenness with you. He subjugates you by his calm assurance in judging your frocks. Well, he is colour-blind. He cannot tell red from green. One day in a sale room I found him in ecstasy over some cherries by Madeleine Lemaire. He thought they were plums. Just imagine, then, how this gnome must appreciate the rose of your cheek, which melts so imperceptibly into the soft white of your throat...

GERMAINE.
Poor Monsieur Michiels! He is such a good friend. So devoted.

CHAMBRY.
Do not believe it. He is sulky, and evilly disposed, that is all. What advantage can you see in surrounding yourself with a bodyguard borrowed from the Law

Courts, the Stock Exchange, and the Army, which watches over you with a vigilance at once fierce and grotesque? You are never to be found alone.

GERMAINE.

It appears to me that at this moment...

CHAMBRY.

Ah, once in a way — in your drawingroom, with doors. It is all doors, this room.

GERMAINE.

There are four. It is like every other drawingroom. Surely you do not imagine...

CHAMBRY.

Lord! yes — I do imagine...

GERMAINE.

I am ignorant of your ideas on furnishing. I like airy rooms, bright, and with simple lines and plenty of space.

CHAMBRY

(rises, and examines first the things on a table , next in a glass-fronted cupboard , then on a side table). You have taste, you have a feeling for art, it is true. You may believe me. I understand the matter.

GERMAINE.

I do believe you.

CHAMBRY.

You have some nice things. Those perfume burners are very pretty in their old setting... old china... old Sèvres, celadon... soft paste... *(He takes up a box from the table.)* This box, with a miniature on a ground of vernis Martin, striped like one's great-grandmother's frock, is pleasing to the eye and to the touch. I love knick-knacks that one may handle with pleasure, which love, themselves, to be caressed. This miniature is a portrait of a well-known woman. It is... wait a moment... I will tell you...

GERMAINE.

It is said to be Mademoiselle Fel.

CHAMBRY.

And it is. She resembles Latour's pastel.

GERMAINE.

Oh, so you know Latour's pastel? Good!

CHAMBRY.

That surprises you because you only consort with savages. Do you like miniatures? Because if you like them I could show you some rather pretty ones at my house.

GERMAINE.

Yes, I like miniatures very much, but not to excess.

CHAMBRY.

And would one have to love them to excess to come and see some to-morrow between five and six at No. 18 Place Vendôme, ground floor, left-hand side, no stairs, just three steps?

[He picks up a book from the table .

GERMAINE.

Look what you are holding in your hand.

CHAMBRY.

I see... morocco binding... delicate tooling. Superb!

GERMAINE.

You will not be able to lay the blame upon me for having given it you. You have found it for yourself. Who is it says, "One cannot avoid one's fate"? You have gone to meet yours. What you hold in your hand is the Album. Yes, monsieur, that morocco binding is its cover. I, like all the rest, have one. — *[She offers him a pen.*

CHAMBRY *(turning over the leaves).*

I see, it is an autograph album. And, as such things go, it is not too bad.... Falguière, Paul Hervieu, Massenet... Henri Lavedan, Paul Bourget, Deschanel, Ludovic Halévy.... All the elect. Distinguished names crowd its vellum. Ah, — here and there one finds others less illustrious. I do not know whether I am mistaken, but it seems to me that names such as Janvier Dupont, Colonel Herpin,

and Paul Floche, do not shine with dazzling effulgence. You mingle the illustrious and the obscure in your album.

GERMAINE.

That is all as it should be. And I will tell you why. Sometimes — oh, not often — a man of the world will write a pretty thing in this album — a celebrity, never! Oh, you may judge yourself, for look what Jules Lemaître, Pailleron, Sardou, Vanderem have written.

CHAMBRY

(turning over the leaves and reading in an undertone).

Yes. You are quite right.... Insignificant... feeble... nothing at all.

GERMAINE.

And what about Dumas? Read what Dumas has written. At the beginning... at the top of a page... there —

CHAMBRY *(reading aloud)*.

“At the beginning of winter we have the chimneys swept. ” — ALEXANDRE DUMAS fils.

CHAMBRY *(reading aloud)*.

“Love blossoms in our tears. ” PAUL FLOCHE.

GERMAINE.

Now, that is pretty.

CHAMBRY.

Yes, it is pretty. And it recalls an impression one has experienced sometimes, something one has felt before. What is he, this Monsieur Paul Floche?

GERMAINE.

I do not quite know. I think he has something to do with wood pavements. *(Seeing CHAMBRY is about to close the album)* Oh, your turn has come. You are not going to get off. Write...

CHAMBRY *(opening the album)*.

What depresses me is not so much what is written here, it is this white — all this blank space. The sight of it makes one think of all the inanities to come, of all

the feeble, halting, abortive thoughts that the future may have in store (*he writes*), and which will find a home here.

GERMAINE.
Write!

CHAMBRY.
It is done, Madame. It is done.

GERMAINE.
What have you put? (*He holds out the album, and GERMAINE reads aloud.*)
“*Love is a stream that mirrors Heaven.*” It is charming.

CHAMBRY.
And I believe it. Yes, I believe that did love not add colour to our life we should perish from despair and boredom. I am a dreamer, at heart a sentimentalist.

GERMAINE.
“*Love is a stream that mirrors Heaven,*” It is delicious. But water flows if the heavens remain. You are pledged to nothing.

CHAMBRY.
The stream unceasingly gives back the sky and murmurs and flows unceasingly. The stars of heaven tremble in its waves.

GERMAINE.
But, tell me, does this stream flow from a spring?

CHAMBRY.
But...

GERMAINE.
Or does it not rather issue from a reservoir, from a very small reservoir whose key you hold, and which you lock up on a fine evening before going out walking?

CHAMBRY.
You are rash. You are to be blamed if you mock at love.

GERMAINE.

I am not mocking at love. At the worst, I am only mocking at your little stream.

CHAMBRY.

It is wrong of you. And more unfair than you imagine. If you only knew...

GERMAINE.

Ah, but you see, I don't know.

CHAMBRY.

You believe me incapable of feeling — of tenderness?

GERMAINE.

I confess that I have no views on the subject.

CHAMBRY.

Yes, yes. Madame, because I do not affect a blunt outspokenness, like Baron Michiels, because I do not roll great eyes, like old Billaine, because I do not weep on your shoulder silently during a whole evening, like the gallant Colonel Herpin — you imagine I am indifferent, that I am unable to appreciate you, that I fail to see that you are charming, exquisite, adorable.

GERMAINE.

I do not imagine anything, believe me, I beg of you.

CHAMBRY.

You misjudge me: you do not believe in me. Shall I tell you why? Because in love you are all for the classic tradition, for the established forms, for the protocols. You would be made love to by method, you lean to lovers grave and correct. That is a perversity. They ruin a woman when they get her, people of that kind. Do not put yourself in their hands — it would be a crime.

GERMAINE.

Have you been to the Exhibition of Water Colours yet? It is a very good show this year.

CHAMBRY.

Why do you not believe that I love you? Because I have not told you so? Well, sometimes the more one thinks the less one says.

GERMAINE.

Frankly, Monsieur Chambry, had you told me so I should believe it none the more.

CHAMBRY.

Why?

GERMAINE.

Because as soon as you get to know a woman you say that sort of thing as naturally as another man tells you that it's raining or that it's a fine day. The thought has no importance for you. You have not given it a thought — you say it and you think no more about it. It is a mere civility.

CHAMBRY.

No — oh, no!

GERMAINE.

An incivility then, if you like.

CHAMBRY.

Nevertheless, it is true that I love you. And if I tell you so after the fashion you describe, it is certainly not to appear civil, not even to appear uncivil, however much I might wish to be so. It is quite simply because I am sincere, and because I *do* love you.

GERMAINE.

It is odd.... Yet one is bound to believe that there are women who are taken in by what you say — because if it did not come off now and then, you would probably have given it up. True enough, women are foolish at times.

CHAMBRY.

It is I who am foolish. Let us be foolish together. It is the best thing in the world. You have never been happy. You have never been loved. You do not know what it is. Do not waste your youth, your beauty. (*He kneels down and kisses her hand*) Unbend, forgive, soften your heart. Do not become your own heart's enemy. Germaine, I beseech you... for my sake... for your own...

GERMAINE.

Get up. There is a ring at the bell. I hear someone coming.

CHAMBRY.

No, I will not get up. There is no one coming. No one must come. It would be ridiculous. Just like a theatrical scene. I shall remain at your feet.

I shall keep your hand pressed to my lips until you believe me.

GERMAINE.

Oh, I believe — that I am not utterly distasteful to you. There! Get up.

SCENE VI.

The same. CECILE.

CECILE.

It is I once more, darling. How do you do, Monsieur Chambry?

CHAMBRY.

Madame, I am really enchanted...

CECILE.

I am sure you are. (To GERMAINE.) Is not Nalège here? —

GERMAINE.

He left more than an hour ago — he went, indeed, in some haste.

CECILE.

It was to see me. But he will return, I told him to meet me here. He went off with my husband, who was to show him a horse on the way and drop him at your door. Why isn't he here by this time?

CHAMBRY.

Oh, you will have to wait. When lovers of horses get their feet in the straw and their noses on a crupper, hours seem to them like seconds.

CECILE.

You do not know Monsieur de Nalège, his greatest delight is to be out with his gun and his book. But do not misjudge him, although very serious, he has a very pleasant side.

CHAMBRY.

And plenty of wit. Unfortunately, it is like my Aunt Clemence's furniture. They say it is upholstered in admirable Beauvais, but no one has seen anything but the holland covers. Oh, were Nalège to take off his cover! What splendour would be revealed! But he will not take it off.

CECILE.

That is to say, he will not take it off for everyone. He is not commonplace.

CHAMBRY.

Anyway, he has an advantage for which I envy him. He pleases you. (*Then to*
GERMAINE.) Dear lady...

GERMAINE.

Must you go?

CHAMBRY (*in an undertone*).

I shall return. I must speak to you.

SCENE VII.

GERMAINE, CECILE.

CECILE.

Was he making love to you?

GERMAINE.

A little. Does it show?

CECILE.

A declaration of love shows when it “takes,” like vaccination. It lends a slight rosiness to the skin.

GERMAINE.

How fond you are of talking nonsense.

CECILE.

But, dearest, it was easy to guess. He makes love to every woman. He has even made love to me. To me — whom men do not even look at! It is quite true, I have no success. And I am blessed if I know why... I am neither uglier, nor more stupid than others.

GERMAINE.

You are very nice to look at.

CECILE.

No, I am not nice looking. I am merely comfortable looking and normal — oh, normal. Do you remember when we attended Monsieur Blanchard’s classes together? In one geographical atlas there were heads representing types of the human race: the black, the yellow race, and the white race. Well, the white race was a striking likeness of me. You wrote my name underneath.

GERMAINE.

And you complain! It was Venus!

CECILE.

Do you think so?

GERMAINE.

I am certain. The Medici Venus. Apollo was on her left — underneath a Red Skin. I can see them now.

CECILE.

Well then, you must believe that the Medici Venus is no longer in demand, save by Chambry. And the worst of it is that I am normal morally, as well as physically — normal to my very soul. Yes, indeed... You know underneath the white race was written in our atlas, “The women of this race are active, intelligent, courageous, and faithful.” That is just what I am. I conform to type, neither more nor less. I am normal to absolute commonplace.

GERMAINE.

But you do not think me an exception — a monstrosity?

CECILE.

You, you possess charm, and I believe you are straight.

GERMAINE, Thank you, Cécile.

CECILE.

Yes, I believe you are straight. I think so to begin with because it is pleasanter between friends — I must say it, and why shouldn't I believe it? Then, perhaps, it is true. I have no proof to the contrary.

GERMAINE.

Really?

CECILE.

And then, you are a widow, you are free. Liberty holds you back, perhaps.... I know quite well that you are not very sensible. But it is the sensible women who commit the greatest follies. For instance, Madame de Saint-Vincent, she was sensible, austere, classically beautiful, and with lofty sentiments. Well, no sooner did Chambry deign to insult her virtue than she fell swooning into his arms. Ever since she pursues him like a mad woman. Her children, her reputation, her husband's diplomatic career — she has sacrificed them all to this good-looking young scamp who laughs at her, as you may imagine.

GERMAINE.

It makes me nervous.

CECILE.

Oh, you know Chambry is a terrible undertaking for a woman. He is vain, he is a liar. I never give advice, even unasked — which, after all, is not quite as silly as to give it when one is asked! But were I to do so, how good my advice would be! I, dearest, hold no cards, so I see the game very well; while the most subtle players...

GERMAINE. —

Do not give it, Cécile, do not give it. I should do the opposite, as people always do, and you would have a fearful responsibility. But do not be afraid. I shall commit no follies. There is one thing positive, though, and that is that I am bored with life. Well, seeing that I succeed in that so admirably by myself, it is superfluous to seek assistance. It is better to bore myself than to be bored, just as it is less irritating to do one's hair badly than to have it ill done by a lady's maid. I have no more illusions, my dear. Marriage made me quarrel with love. The men whom I meet have not yet induced me to patch it up. The sincere ones are deadly and the others — those who perchance afford us a little pleasure — make fun of us. Under these conditions it is hardly worth while complicating one's existence. I am neither tender-hearted nor generous, Cécile — give me your esteem — I have not enough heart to behave badly.

CECILE.

Agreed that you have not enough heart; but do not put too much trust in that. It is not absolutely necessary to be a saint to behave badly. Now, let us talk seriously. You are dining with me and we will go to the play. Nalège and my husband will come with us. Go and put on your hat. — [FRANÇOIS *hands her a card* .

GERMAINE (*reading*).

Monsieur de Nalège .

CECILE.

Go and put on your hat, quickly. I will receive him.

SCENE VIII.

CECILE, NALEGE.

CECILE.

Madame de Sescourt begs you to wait for her a moment. She is just coming. Well — did you buy the horse that my husband took you to inspect?

NALEGE.

Yes. Has Madame de Sescourt gone out to shed the light of her presence elsewhere? For in that case she will doubtless be long detained.

CECILE.

No, she is in her room, putting on her hat. NALEGE.
That will also take some time. But as it is one of the most important things she can very well do...

CECILE.

I fail to see the importance of it.

NALEGE.

I see it very well. What stamps a woman, what gives her her rightful value, what makes her a power in the world which is only equalled by the possession of money, is her dress and her hat.

CECILE.

And her fine linen, Monsieur.

NALEGE.

And her fine linen. You are quite right.

CECLIE.

Monsieur de Nalège, you think women inferior beings. Maybe you are not wrong in thinking so. But you are surely wrong to let them see it. It is not tactful.

NALEGE.

Then you, Madame, want us to admire your sentiments as much as your hats?

CECILE.

It is not a question of myself. Moreover, Monsieur de Nalège, do not be disagreeable to me. You have no excuse. You are not in love with me. And what's more, it would be unjust: I have just been praising you and defending you against Monsieur Chambry, who will have it that you keep on your cover.

NALEGE.

My cover?

CECILE.

Do not seek to understand... I said that you had a very cultured, exceedingly attractive, and not at all commonplace mind, and that you always had a book in your pocket. Is it so?

NALEGE.

It is true enough about the book.

[He pulls a little book out of his pocket .

CECILE.

A serious author... a philosopher... NALEGE.

Or a poet.... This one is Ronsard.

CECILE *(taking the book from him)*.

Show me.... Oh! how ancient he looks...

NALEGE.

And I find him adorably young.

SCENE IX.

GERMAINE, NALEGE, CECILE.

CECILE.

Here is Monsieur de Nalège, accompanied by Ronsard — a gentleman from Vendôme.

GERMAINE.

Ah, so you have returned, Monsieur de Nalège? NALEGE.
How could I help myself?

GERMAINE.

You are polite.

NALEGE.

No, Madame, not polite enough. I was wrong. Forgive me.

CECILE (*turning over the pages of Ronsard*).

Monsieur de Nalège, you press flowers in the leaves of your books.

NALEGE.

Yes, Madame. A bibliophile would find fault with me. But I read in the woods and I put in a flower to mark the pages I love.

GERMAINE.

Meanwhile, what happens to your dog and your gun?

NALEGE.

They go to sleep.

CECILE.

There is a periwinkle at “*When you are old , at dusk , by candlelight* ” Those lines are pretty, then?

NALEGE.

The form is unpolished and the style old-fashioned. But I think them the most beautiful in the world. (*To GERMAINE.*) DO you not know them?

GERMAINE.
No.

NALEGE.
What a pity.

CECILE.
And neither do I. I do not know them, and it is as great a pity. Even more so. For I have a great love for verse and understand it. But it is not a quality that shows. Whereas Germaine, because she inspires it, is thought to love it.... Oh, yes, she inspires it. Her album is full of poems dedicated to her. (*Turning over the leaves of the album*) Listen:
“*Pourquoi l ’azur à vos prunelles Est-il soudain plein d? étincelles? ”*
And that is to be sung. There is music to the words. (*Turning the leaves*)
“*À Madame de Sescourt.*
Quand l ’aubepine fleurie de tes bras Etend ses rameaux las de blancheurs et de parfums .”

NALEGE.
Those are bold lines...

CECILE.
And a thought quite lately flowered.
“*L ’amour est un ruisseau qui reflète le ciel. ”* And this flower appears to-day, Germaine?

NALEGE.
That is by Renan.

CECILE.
No, it is by Paul Chambry.

NALEGE.
It is by Ernest Renan. He wrote those lines in every album indifferently.

CECILE.
Well, Paul Chambry has signed his name to them.

NALEGE.

He is an impudent plagiarist, that's all! GERMAINE.

No, if he had the thought he had the right to sign it.

CECILE.

Are you coming, Nalège? He did not want to come, and now he does not want to go. I have no time to wait for you. I must go and dress.... Germaine, dear, do not make us dine too late. The play begins at eight o'clock — try to get there not later than nine.

GERMAINE.

I do not remember ever having seen the opening of a play.

CECILE.

Neither do I! — *[She goes out .*

SCENE X.

NALEGE, GERMAINE.

GERMAINE.

What Monsieur de Nalège, you let her go alone?

NALEGE.

Only one word, Madame. A moment ago you thought me brusque, odd, and unbearable...

GERMAINE.

No, I failed to find such a quantity of attributes in you — I merely thought you a little put out. That was owing, no doubt, to what we were talking about. You chose an unfortunate subject. Next time you must try another, that's all. There is no lack of others.

NALEGE.

No lack of subjects of conversation between a French woman and a French man? No, Madame, there is but one, but there can be infinite variations on it. In future, if you will allow me, I will treat it in an entirely different manner, and I shall be pleasing, amiable, and almost attractive.

GERMAINE.

I was going to suggest it.

NALEGE.

Would you like it at once?

GERMAINE.

Be quick, then. I can give you three minutes. My maid is waiting for me.

NALEGE.

That is very little, so it must be an abridged edition, a summary. But the essentials shall be there, and I believe that you will be satisfied.

(With a fictitious ardour and a pretence of gallantry,) So, Madame, I love but you. You alone fill my thoughts and trouble my mind. When I appear to linger near another, it is an excuse to look at you from afar, discreetly, without

annoying you. I wait until the swarm which buzzes around you disperses. I want you to myself, to myself alone. I despair at having to dispute my right to you with so many others. Yet, nevertheless, you ought to know that I am the only one who admires you and understands you. You are the most beautiful, you alone are really beautiful. You embody the ideal formed in my dreams. You believe me to be frivolous, light, in love with every woman. I love only you. I love and admire you.

[He makes a pretence of putting his arm round her waist, GERMAINE.

Monsieur de Nalège, the three minutes are over.

NALEGE.

Yes, but I have had time to give you pleasure.

GERMAINE.

To give me pleasure is saying a great deal. But I confess I find you far more agreeable than you were recently.

NALEGE.

Quite so. You find me agreeable because I talked to you as do those who delight in your prettiness. I pleased you because round my words hung the scent of untruth. Madame, whatever you may say, women are only captivated by make-believe.

GERMAINE (*at the door*).

Julie, put out my white frock. (*To NALEGE.*) Monsieur de Nalège, you no longer please me in the very least. You make me regret your former natural manner, your transparency, as painters say. Go, and allow me to dress — we are to dine together and spend the evening together — you ought to be satisfied.

NALEGE.

No, Madame. — *[He goes out .*

SCENE XI.

GERMAINE *alone* .

GERMAINE.

He has forgotten his book... "*Les Amours de Pierre de Ronsard* ." Chambry certainly does not tell me anything absolutely fresh — nothing that has not been said before, and that will not be said again. But he brought a certain charm of manner to it and a certain note which is his own. As regards Nalège... neither are his rough ways particularly novel. And they are irritating.... "*Les Amours de Pierre de Ronsard* "... True, he presses flowers between the pages of his poet. This pretty custom is quite touching. He is a good fellow, after all — Nalège. Here is the periwinkle marking the tenderest verses. (*Reads.*)

"*Live on , believe me , do not wait the morrow , Gather the roses of your life to-day.* "

Perhaps he is right — Monsieur de Nalège's poet.

"*Gather the roses of your life to-day.* "

SCENE XII.

GERMAINE, CHAMBRY.

GERMAINE.

You!

CHAMBRY.

I was on the look-out. I climbed upstairs again. How he must bore you, your rustic!... At last we are alone. I have so much to tell you.

GERMAINE.

You were watching?... You climbed... Monsieur Chambry, do me the kindness to go at once. You enter like a thief. You look as if you had come out of a cupboard. It is ridiculous.

CHAMBRY.

No, it is not ridiculous. You mean to say it is unusual. You are right, it is not conventional. I am fully aware of it.

GERMAINE.

Merely ridiculous.

CHAMBRY.

Let us say, inadmissible. It is the drawback to our position.

GERMAINE.

What do you mean?

CHAMBRY.

It is the drawback to our position. It is full of drawbacks. It cannot go on. It would be most imprudent. It is *beforehand* that one runs the risk of compromising a woman. It is *beforehand* that the tactless thing occurs. Yes. Afterwards there is an understanding, agreement, mutual warning. One acts with prudence, and one avoids danger.

To compromise a woman *afterwards* one must be a cad or the greatest fool... or else a savage, like Nalège. There is the kind of man who, were some luckless

woman to grant him favours, would bear it writ large in his eyes like the numbers on loto cards.

GERMAINE.

Monsieur Chambry, my maid is waiting for me. Go away.

CHAMBRY.

To be imprudent *afterwards* is unforgivable. It ought not to happen. But *beforehand* the most gallant gentleman in the world cannot be sure of himself. I would not guarantee that we are not being talked about. It has to be gone through.

GERMAINE.

It is strange that I am not angrier. Confess that you yourself find it strange.

CHAMBRY.

On the contrary, it is very natural, since you know that I love you.

GERMAINE.

I wish you good night, Monsieur Chambry.

CHAMBRY.

Where are we going?

GERMAINE.

I?... I am dining at Madame Laverne's.

CHAMBRY.

No, you are not going to dine at Madame Laverne's.

GERMAINE.

I am not going to dine at...? You are mad! Eight o'clock... Cécile... and Monsieur de Nalège, who are waiting for me...

CHAMBRY.

Ah, no — not that of all things.... You will not dine with Nalège. You will dine with me somewhere in an arbour in the country.

GERMAINE.

You grow very ridiculous CHAMBRY (*handing her a pen*).

Write... “My dear Cécile, an awful headache...”

GERMAINE.

Monsieur Chambry, I am speaking seriously now. Go away!

CHAMBRY.

No — I shall not go. I shall not allow you to meet Nalège again. Germaine... stay... I love you.

GERMAINE.

Go away, I beseech you.

CHAMBRY.

I cannot leave you. It is true, I cannot. It is stronger than I am... Germaine, you will make me very unhappy. I am speaking sincerely. Really, you will make me very unhappy.

GERMAINE.

Unhappy? Why? Because of Nalège?

CHAMBRY.

Yes.

GERMAINE.

Oh, well, if it is because of Nalège, don't be unhappy. There is no need to be, I assure you.

CHAMBRY.

Quite true? You prefer me?

GERMAINE.

I prefer you. Are you pleased?

CHAMBRY.

Very pleased.

GERMAINE.

Well then... now — go.

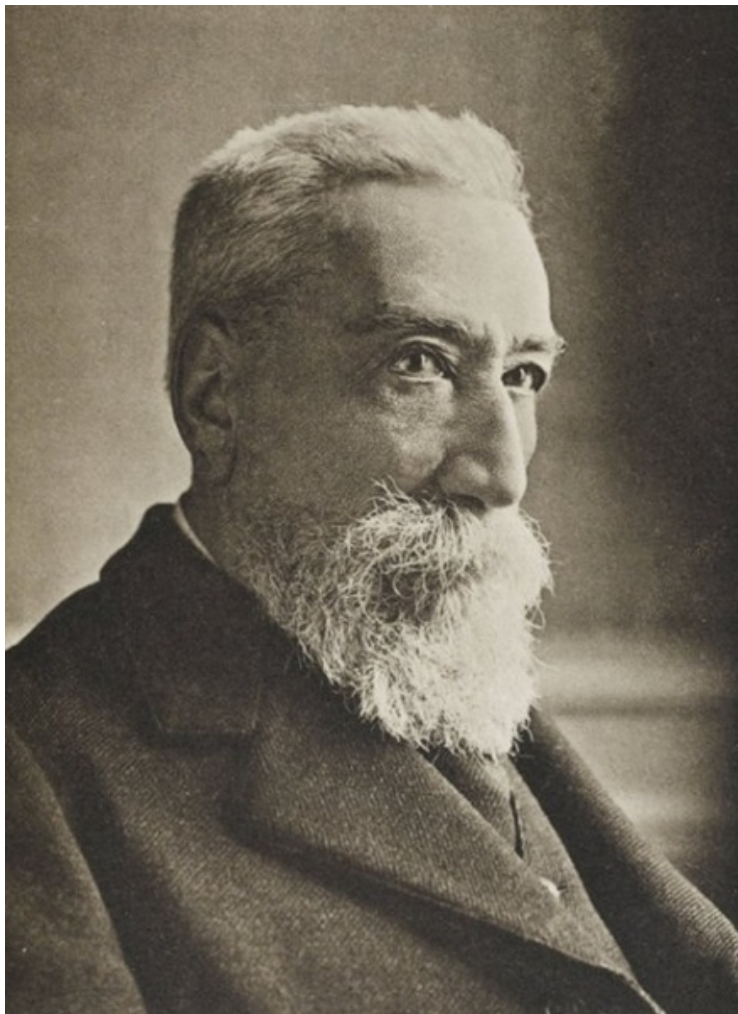
CHAMBRY.

To-morrow — five o'clock. You will come for certain? Three steps.... I will change the carpet in your honour. — [*He goes out.*]

GERMAINE (*alone*).

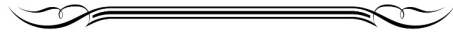
Come what may!

The Poetry



France, 1921

LIST OF POETICAL WORKS



Translated by Wilfrid Jackson and Emilie Jackson **CONTENTS**

[THE BRIDE OF CORINTH. A POETIC DRAMA](#)

[PREFACE](#)

[PERSONAGES](#)

[PART I.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[SCENE IV.](#)

[SCENE V.](#)

[PART II.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[SCENE IV.](#)

[SCENE V.](#)

[SCENE VI.](#)

[SCENE VII.](#)

[SCENE VIII.](#)

[SCENE IX.](#)

[SCENE X.](#)

[SCENE XI.](#)

[SCENE XII.](#)

[PART III.](#)

[SCENE I.](#)

[SCENE II.](#)

[SCENE III.](#)

[SCENE IV.](#)

[SCENE V.](#)

[SCENE VI.](#)

[SCENE VII.](#)

[SCENE VIII.](#)

NOTE

THE CHILD SOUL

LIGHT

THE DANCE OF DEATH

THY DEEP PROFOUND OF SOUL

GOOD-BYE

THE BRIDE OF CORINTH. A POETIC DRAMA

TO FREDERIC PLESSIS

PREFACE

IN this book I touch on high matters, and delicate to handle; on religious matters. I have dreamed again the dream of the ages of faith; I have illuded myself with lively belief. To have treated what is pious with impiety would have been to lack the sense of harmony. I bring a sincere respect to bear on matters sacred.

I know that there is no certainty outside science. But I know also that the worth of scientific truth lies in the methods of its discovery, and that these methods are not to be arrived at by the common run of mankind. It is hardly scientific to hold that science may one day replace religion. So long as man sucks milk of woman, so long will he be consecrated in the temple, and initiated in some sort in divine mystery. He will dream. And what matter if the dream be false, so it be beautiful? Is it not man's destiny to be steeped in perpetual illusion? Indeed, is not such illusion the very condition of Life?

A. F.

O MAIDEN HELLAS, young, with lyre in hand,
Innocent child with kissed and honeyed mouth,
Whose smile gave back the greeting of thy land,
The sparkle of the sea and sky and south,
Thy days and hours sped by on even feet,
And when dark night had silvered all the ways,
Thou, well content, cicalas shrilling sweet,
Wouldst brood upon mankind its works and days.

Child of the sea, on tawny beaches prone,
Thy breast voluptuous in beauty swelled,
What waves of harmony, of sacred tone,
Filled thee, and through thy song in fountain welled!

I, child of Latin race, who found thee fair,
And fed mine eyes, to do thy beauty praise
And paint thy goddess shape with faithful care,
Have done what time shall but in part erase.

Others have limned thee in thy tranquil mom
When, from the fountain whence thy gods would start,
Thou earnest, bearing high the earthen urn.
Such peace may find no place in my sad heart.

Thy breast bear these pale violets for the dead.
I paint thee, Hellas, when a jealous god,
Tearing the sacred fillets from thine head,
Thee, in thy broken temple, bruised and trod.

Then the smile faded and the heavens frowned;
And grace and beauty perished with thy fall;
None raised thy lyre from off the stony ground,
And earth rolled on its course in gloom and thrall.

O daughter of the Graces, thee I sing!
Loved to the last, and fair all things above, —
That they who read my verses' offering,
May hold life dearer and be kind to Love.

PERSONAGES

A FISHERMAN.

HIPPIAS.

DAPHNE.

KALLISTA.

PHRYGIA, *the slave* .

THEOGNIS.

HERMAS.

DAPHNE'S NURSE.

A WISE WOMAN.

ARTEMIS.

APHRODITE.

CHORUS OF YOUTHS.

CHORUS OF VINE-DRESSERS.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS.

PART I.

A road between Corinth and the sea. Looking eastward and ringed with myrtles , a little temple , bearing on its entablature among fair mutilated shapes the monogram of Jesus , roughly cut. A fountain. Beyond , on the hillside , the coloured walls of a house , and an orchard. Vines. The Acropolis of Corinth shows white on the horizon . It is evening: the sun is low in a quiet sky. OLPIS, the old fisherman , sets down his baskets , and seats himself on a mound.

SCENE I.

FISHERMAN.

FROM town to sea the road is long to tread,
Fatigue soon met. And bitter is his bread
Whose want town-hucksters to their greed subdue.
Fish in these days run smaller and are few.
No more they weight my basket and my net

Whence the sea-harvest, now but seldom met,
Poured in my favoured bark abundant spoil.
No more the gods assist a life of toil.
Behold, this very day, is all my catch
To wives of Corinth, and their cooks to match,
For thirteen wretched obols all transferred.
Grasping is woman, yet prodigal of word,
Bad are the times and men; the gods retrace
Their steps from earth and an unworthy race.

SCENE II.

THE FISHERMAN, HIPPIAS.

HIPPIAS (*he wears the Thessalian head-dress; his grey tunic is girdled round his loins; his high sandals are knotted about the ankles with leathern thongs . He has a white staff in his hand; and walks quickly*).

Hail, House and Grove, and maid beside the hearth
Spinning, who draw'st for me a sainted breath!
Say, Fisher (for thy baskets show wet sheen
Of sea-spume on their reeds, and sea-weed green)
Sure thou dost know it — this was Hernias' door,
Old Hermas — Say —

FISHERMAN.

He lives, my son, to store
In jars of ancient mould a this-year's wine —

HIPPIAS.

The gods shed peace upon his fruitful vine!
Hast seen his daughter, Daphne, in her ways?
Is her life sweet, and do her youthful days
Pass on light wing nor touch her candid brow?

FISHERMAN.

The gods, who made her fair, love her, I trow.
She walks with modesty for crown and veil,
And she is happy —

HIPPIAS.

Friend, your news I hail.
Kallista then, to speak of her remains —

FISHERMAN.

She has stirred gods to wrath and now complains.
Unwise it were for one of lowly sort
To tell the curious news of grave import.

Certain it is, Apollo, as of old,
Against the wicked shoots his darts of gold.
[He departs.]

HIPPIAS.

Yes, it is Daphne there, dazzling as snow,
Bending to gather herbs the path below!
Her neck, her bosom, more wonderful to sight
Than their importunate vision in the night.
I see her, long desired, and at her view
Falters my gaze with shock of something new.
The gods, who set her on my path to find,
Have touched her with a charm beyond our kind.

SCENE III.

HIPPIAS *and* DAPHNE.

DAPHNE (*before the temple*).

I gather dittany, of sovereign power,
And many a soothing herb in stalk and flower.
May I distil for her who gave me breath
A potent draught against the threatened death.
Christ, heavenly bearer of the healing word,
If other gods disperse when thou art heard,
And if Apollo man no longer hears,
Jesus, soft King, whose eyes are filled with tears,
God who hast suffered — surely Thy reign brings
Hope of a God to end our sufferings!
O Master, save! — My mother, too, is thine —
And bring to me the spouse they me assign.

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, dear wonder, all delight that is,
One is now come to fold thy life in his.
The promised spouse by custom of the race —
Behold, arise, and meet his wide embrace!

DAPHNE.

Yes, it is thou — no wraith that walks by day
To tell loved Hippias is cast away.
I knew, O wandering keeper of my heart,
The days must end which kept us twain apart.
The hope was constant in my breast, nor fled.
Come, I will lead thee in where, with bowed head,
My mother weaves her wool: there, at her knees,
Recount, dear guest, the perils of the seas.
A sickness bows her, and consumes her veins.

HIPPIAS.

Our days are mixed of pleasures and of pains.
Thy griefs are mine. But spite thy welcome sweet

I may not cross the steps of thy retreat.
See, from my head-gear bound against the wind,
The belt that I about my tunic bind,
The sandals on my feet, my staff in hand,
A man in haste to leave the routes of land.
My ship, and I to do my sire's behest,
Leave port and seek the waters of the West.
Below, even now, she scents the harbour bars,
Her master runs sweet water in his jars.
I came. But I must go: our wingèd sail
Gains the high seas ere yet the stars prevail.
To Paestum, guided by their heavenly host,
We bear dark wines of Thera from this coast.

DAPHNE.

Leave me not yet! So sweet the hour's mood!
Vast is the sea, cruel my solitude.

HIPPIAS.

Hopeful I took this path at evenfall
To see thy door, thy shadow on the wall.
Ere long, retracing this my prospered road,
Thy father I will seek in thine abode,
To win thee hence, flatter his smiling age,
Drink from his cup, and thus his word engage
To make thee mine, thee, crowned with myrtle borne
Across the sea where smiles the bridal morn.
O wine, O song, O flowers! Festal day!
Well do I see that Love will not have nay!
Through thee I know a maiden's hand is strong
To pierce man's heart — nor let it bleed for long.
Love is an ill, they say, but sweet to me
The love I bear, the pains I have of thee.
Woman thou art and bringest pain and weal,
Sweet as the rue, as powerful to heal.
For love is not for ay a troublous thing.
Under one roof our married joy shall bring
Peace and prosperity to the sacred hearth.
Children, and friends, and prudence against dearth.

There will we live like rooted trees and twin,
Kindly to all, and growing more than kin.
But at my father's word I go my ways;
Honour thy parent and see length of days.
Call upon Hesperus my path to keep —

DAPHNE.

Jesus I pray, who walked upon the deep.

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, thy words are heedless and to blame,
Call not on any god of alien name.
That gods are here in field and wood and skies
The breath that stirs them plainly testifies.
The breeze of Heaven breathes their word and sign,
I may not else than serve their ancient line.
Men of old time whose worth was more than ours
Rendered the homage due their jealous powers.
Pious as they from them receive the torch,
And pray, as they, erect within the porch.
Daphne, our gods are kind, and smiling, mate
The blushing maiden with the man elate.

DAPHNE.

On that dear day my hand in thine was laid
Thy golden ring enslaved a Christian maid.
A priest, who chased the naiads from a spring,
By salt and water gave me christening.
His I became, and His myself I count,
Sister to Him who died upon the mount.

HIPPIAS.

What God may be, a man may not divine.
Let us abstain from slighting any sign.
For gods ambrosial-lipped we yet adore
Who came to us of old from Asian shore.
I, who am neither feather-brain nor clod,
Can well believe your Jesus may be god,
But since he died while yet the shadows kept,

Adonis he, whom Cytherea wept,
And Hermes he, because he showed a way
Out from the fields of Night into the Day,
Love and rejoice, O cherished head and fair!
The anchor strains, the sail lifts to the air.
Let my lips, parting, brush one golden tress —

DAPHNE.
Another day, the kiss thou wouldst impress —

HIPPIAS.
The blossom offers —

DAPHNE.
Wait until it ope.

HIPPIAS.
Grant me remembrance.

DAPHNE.
Sweeter still is hope.

HIPPIAS.
Thine eyes, these myrtles, all, enchain my heart.

DAPHNE.
Go, fare thee well. Be sure the better part
Is ours.

HIPPIAS.
Alas, O maid! a livid dread
Upon thy smiling lips is to be read;
That pale smile bodes a future unbenign.

DAPHNE.
The sea is in my thoughts, thy risk and mine,
The days of absence, the long nights, the dreams —
Thine image drifting, pale, in cold sea-streams.

HIPPIAS.

Thy tears have flowed, my lips have drunk thy tears.
Who fears the gods is freed from other fears.
Watch the four seasons bring their loss and gain,
Crowned with good fortune I will come again.

DAPHNE.

Friend, I will wait, and watch the changing year
As woman may, in her unchanging sphere.
I vow to thee that Death, and Death alone,
Shall, grudging, take what thou hast made thine own.

HIPPIAS.

Farewell, O Daphne!

DAPHNE.

Hippias, part in peace!

[He goes .

Hippias... mine eyes are dark, the clouds increase —
O misery! O dread, unknown before!

SCENE IV.

DAPHNE, KALLISTA *borne on a litter* . Her slave , PHRYGIA, *accompanies her* .

KALLISTA.

Phrygia, support me to the temple-door.
I sought thee, child. Oh, surely, God the guide
Who for His purpose brings thee to my side.

DAPHNE.

I gather herbs that may thy pains abate.

KALLISTA.

Child, to the heavenly mysteries dedicate,
Let be this vanity of earthly aid.
By other means my sickness must be stayed.
Hear me, my child. Thy mother, thou shouldst know,
Hath not her hope in this the life below.
Her bosom yearns for joys of Paradise,
And Death would come to her in joyful guise.
Not yet, alas, the hour of her release!
For who should guard the home, when I should cease,
From heathen speech and from the Demon's snare?
And who should, then, snatch him who is our care,
Thine aged sire, from out the yawning pit
His blindness opens 'neath his erring feet?
Thee, in the hour of thy soul's distress,
Weakened by milk of human tenderness,
What hand should pour thee spiritual mead?
The many and submissive slaves I lead,
Lord, in Thy paths with sternness, then as now
Their feet must keep the furrow that I plough.
Whose voice, where gods of clay abound, O Lord,
Should keep Thy vineyards, spread Thy holy word?
Who with just alms further Thy sacred cause
Among the pious poor who keep Thy laws?
Thy will be done, O God, Thy will, not mine!

But ere Thou tak'st me hence, who am thy sign,
Forget not, Lord, these souls in grievous plight!
I am thy handmaid: grant me until night,
Mysterious Lord, to cultivate Thy vine,
That men may see the signal yield of wine.

DAPHNE.

Sweet mother, thou shalt live, and thy white hair
See length of days, and days secure from care.

KALLISTA.

I know thy love, my child; the tender fear
That dares not hope and yet would keep me here.
God only can retard the hour for me,
Yet for my healing do I look to thee.
To keep me here some while if God consent,
I for His use must keep thee innocent,
Maiden, pure dove, lamb offered up to Heaven,
O chosen fruit, which God to me has given,
Plant which hast sprung beneath a love austere,
Not with the hope to put forth blossom here,
But to diffuse above a scent to please
The virgin God a vestal may appease;
Thy soul exalted by a boundless hope
No more may stoop within this narrow scope;
Thy lips now fevered with immortal lust
Thirst for the springs which never run to dust.
Life but a sojourn under veil of night
Thou keepest vigil, with joined hands, till light.
Child, though some earthly longing scarce expressed
At times has stirred the peace of thy young breast,
Thou couldst not sink to make a husband's bliss,
Nor meet the dust and ashes of his kiss.
Thou canst not wish, with pain and troubled breath,
To swell the harvest of man's sin and death.
Happy the widow, but happier the maid!
Happy is she who waited Him and prayed,
Turned with closed eyes from trust in carnal things.

DAPHNE.

To me a well-loved spouse my father brings.
Mother thou knowest he is dear to me,
Hippias of Thera, also loved of thee.
Wait a propitious day and better sped,
When thou art whole, to speak of him I wed.

KALLISTA.

My child, our earthly love is slight, and they
Who love are coupled but by bonds of clay.
Christ's virgin, in the shadow of His house,
Shall find in ecstasy Immortal Spouse.
She then, His chosen, robed in bridal white,
Her heart transpierced, her forehead clad in light,
Hears to the harp and to the psaltery
The angels sing her bridal mystery,
Drains at the feast the chalice of God's grace
And, joyful, meets the ineffable embrace
That drowns her gaze, that, shining, waits the bride,
The Spouse whose bleeding Heart now opens wide.
Glory is hers if such a Master sue!
Hear what my soul is resolute to do.
The sacred portal's brazen folds afford
Me entrance! I address my sovereign Lord!
[She kneels upon the temple threshold.]
Here in Thy presence and Thy sanctuary
The just may seek the true electuary.
Under Thy porch and seven lamps of gold
Here on my knees I pray I may die old.
That I achieve my salutary task
In fast and exile here is all I ask.
Jephtha of old, if Thou didst hear his vow,
Mine Thy dear Son will surely hearken now!
I bring no blood-stained victim as the price,
Receive, O Christ, a heartfelt sacrifice!
I swear upon the word Thy Spirit sent,
I swear upon the fourfold Testament
Signed of the Angel, Eagle, Lion, Bull,
To offer in this bride exchange in full

For strength restored, health, and accepted vows —
Christ! I provide a maiden of mine house!
Let me but live! The child which blessed my bed,
Daphne, my daughter, to the altar led
That all may be accomplished as I swear,
Taking Thy ring and cutting her long hair,
Shall give herself to Thee, nor son of Eve
Sing epithalamy, nor she conceive.

DAPHNE.
Mother!

KALLISTA.
For she shall go, take Thee to spouse,
With girdle consecrate by jealous vows.

DAPHNE.
Mother!

KALLISTA.
And swear with faithful lips austere
No son of Adam ever shall draw near.

DAPHNE.
O Mother!

KALLISTA.
Yea, 'tis said, the oath shall stand!
King of the East, seated at God's right hand,
Christ! Oh; refuse not what I make Thine own!
Place on her stainless brow the veil and crown
That I may leave this world with length of days
Full of good works, my footsteps in Thy ways,
And see before me in God's sight, His train
Of angels harvesting my golden grain.
Behold her, this mine offering, of my breast!
For Thee I bore her, soon by Thee possessed!
When four-score days are passed and I yet live,
Strong for such service as Thy slaves should give,

It shall be sign, O King, that meet is she,
This maiden suckled in the fear of Thee!
A twelvemonth hence, at harvest-time on earth,
And she shall come to make Thine angels mirth.
Thy promised, pledged with ring of purest gold,
Fair, with veiled brow, to spousal joys untold.

DAPHNE.

Nay, mother, break this sacrilegious oath!
Release thy child whose tears should make thee loath
To bind her thus for ay, who prays thee now
To loose the toils of this so barren vow.
Oh, quickly, break this vow lest ruin swift
O'ertake us both for this thine impious gift.
Mind thee, oh, mind thee, of our former oath,
My father's word, the man I gave my troth!
My tender life deliver from the wraith
Of dread remorse which waits on broken faith.
Mother, the ring upon my finger set
To man derived from Adam binds me yet
To Hippias I yield my maidenhood.

KALLISTA.

Man's claim is naught — render all things to God.

DAPHNE.

Thy love —

KALLISTA.

In God I love thee.

DAPHNE.

Mother, hear!
Withdraw this network of remorse and fear
That I am taken in. Oh, set me free!
I ask for liberty to breathe, to be!
Listen! I saw but now my promised love
And promised here, with this blue sky above,
To follow faithful to the bridal room

Or pass with Charon in the bark of doom.
Have pity on me, nor forget the hour
Thy virgin heart first knew love's perfumed flower.

KALLISTA.

No visions fond my memory enslave.
But Love divine comes like a splendid wave
Wherein the heart in bliss and ravishment
Is rolled for ay in infinite content.
Love's longings burn thee, thee his thongs control;
Plunge in the flood of love thine ardent soul.
What I have done is done, nor lawfully
May any stand between my Christ and me.

DAPHNE.

It is accomplished. I am in thy snare.

KALLISTA.

Even so. And if an impious daughter dare
To violate the inviolable vow,
The debt I owe to God to disallow,
Spare, O great Judge, her consecrated head.
Visit on me Thy certain vengeance dread!
Unchain on me alone the shadowy fray
Of demons who unsleeping watch their prey.
May I lose grace nor at Thy table blest
Approach with cursèd mouth the sacred feast.
An alien to Christian work and deed,
Numbered no more, O Jesus, of Thy creed,
Mine eyelids shall be parched, and black despair
Burn like a flame the lips that know not prayer.
When like a ghost I haunt in my black night
The martyrs' tombs who shudder at my sight,
May the dark Seraphim and the Powers profane
Launch, under shock of broad funereal vane,
The sulphurous imprecation of their breath.
Without the sacred unction be my death.
No cross to kiss, no expiation be,
But Hell to shut for all eternity

Black on me, body and soul, plunged sixty-fold
In burning flame, in pitch and sulphur rolled.
They come! I see the angels of the abyss!
My sin to thee now meets its Nemesis!
Daughter! I feel their hairy grasp and stark.
I die — my soul is damned — and all is dark.
[She falls senseless .

PHRYGIA.

She is all cold and still and like the dead.
Wake thee, O mistress! Women, raise her head!
Her litter bring! Alas, how pale is she!
This wicked child has killed her, woe is me!

DAPHNE.

Enough! Bring ye the ring, the veil, the crown!
O Jesus, jealous prince — take then Thine own!
Mother, have hope, thy life is not yet stilled.
Oh, comfort thee, thy vow shall be fulfilled.
[Female slaves carry KALLISTA forth .

SCENE V.

DAPHNE.

Dear Hippias, this vow thy clasp must sever,
Our union imperfect be for ever.
O thrice unfortunate, who found'st me fair,
Return no more, return but to despair.
Light not his way, O stars, to any port!
Breezes who swell his sails in gentle sport,
Night's mystic breath, if in you I may find
A soul and understanding dear and kind,
Visit his sacred bark who comes to claim
Me, who alas! may no more speak his name.
And if he sleep and dream of love and me
Let him not wake to bitter memory,
But sigh away my image from his eyes.
Let him forget! One day 'neath sunset skies
Some tranquil hearth may smile when he shall come,
Some maiden he shall find and lead her home.
Happier than I, if holding him less dear,
Ah, that 'twere possible....

A distant chorus of youths , singing a bridal song .

Hymen, Hymen, fair and fleet,
Hesperus is high.
Come, the darkened hours fly,
Haste on shining feet.

DAPHNE.

... but I seem to hear
A choir invisible and far-off cries
Which hail a virgin to new-risen skies.
The chorus draws near .

Come, for night is short withal,
Fit for lovers' vows.
Hasten, bearing on thy brows
The sacred flame!

my green coronal.

DAPHNE.

With festal flowers, see, their locks are crowned,
For she has promised and is faithful found.

Chorus nearer .

Come, O ruler shod with gold,
Hymenaios hail!
See, the virgin yet is pale
At thy greeting bold.

DAPHNE.

Friends come not near, oh, draw not nigh, dear friends.
Yet unadorned, though one on me depends,
On my sad brow no sweet amaracus
Entwines its heavy blossoms odorous.

“The chorus goes its way , and — more distant ...

Beauty shines from out her form
Meet for thine intent;
Hymen, ever draw content
From her bosom warm.

DAPHNE.

Where fades their song, where leads their festal rout?
My lover’s friends will never seek me out!
Would I not, I, within the chamber brought,
Have spread a fragrance with ambrosia fraught?
Thine alien bride, O Hippias, will she prove
Of heart more faithful, better worth thy love?
O silent night, O lonely hour and cold!
On earth and on mankind I loose my hold.
[She detaches her gold ring from her finger.
O fountain, where, men say, in days of yore
The nymphs knew depths of love beyond our lore,
O childhood’s fount, O dear and sacred spring,
Receive a Christian maid’s last offering.
O spring be faithful — in thy bosom cold
Hide for all time my loosened ring of gold.

With other hopes did I receive this ring.
[She throws her ring into the fountain.]
Rejoice, O God, who lovest suffering!

PART II.

The portico of the house of HERMAS. The columns are covered with red stucco to within reach, The entablature is of white marble. Outside can be seen among climbing plants a Hermes in wood. Under a veil which screens the hot sunlight , women slaves are seated. Some are spinning wool , others weave stuff or broider hangings, THEOGNIS the bishop enters. He wears a low mitre and carries a crozier of white wood.

SCENE I.

Female slaves, the bishop THEOGNIS.

THEOGNIS.

May peace be with you, daughters. At your sight
I know your hearts incline to do the right;
Busied about your tasks you clearly strive
Like honey-bees in a well-ordered hive.
Pleasing it is to see the shuttle speed
In hands that spin for those who are in need.
Praise to Kallista, mistress whose wise will
Orders such work and thus employs your skill.
Say, Phrygia, thou on whom her love is spent,
Is it, then, past, the malady which bent
The head and knees of one so strong in good,
Even as sleep dispels a troublous mood?
[Enter KALLISTA — the women slaves go away .

SCENE II.

KALLISTA *and* THEOGNIS.

KALLISTA.

Bishop Theognis, peace be thine till death.
How doth this household, founded in the faith,
After the twelvemonth it must wait and yearn,
With all rejoicing welcome thy return!
O Pastor, let my hands embrace thy knees!
What kept thee, were it not the faithless seas?

THEOGNIS.

A Tyrian vessel swift on agile oars
Took me unerringly to distant shores.
My dazzled eyes have seen that sight untold
Egyptian Alexandria, built of gold;
Its citizens, its statued palaces;
Its writings of the Gentiles and the wise
In cedar stored, a city of the dead;
And, praised be God, have six times witnessed
His Holy Word in contest overcome
The long-lived lie, tradition's foolish hum.
But to his flock the shepherd comes afresh.
The illness, then, that hath consumed thy flesh
Hath left thee, woman, and no longer grieves?
God, at His will, afflicts us and relieves.
Restored to health thou think'st to pay thy vows
With tender gift, the daughter of thy house.
Thy welcome letter thus acquainted me.

KALLISTA.

What comes to pass I may not keep from thee.
Great things hath God accomplished for my good.
To thee I trust this child in whom my blood
Stirs, O Theognis, that thy saving hand
Ordain her lectrice in the novice band.

THEOGNIS.

Yea, I will lead her to the sacred house
As bride-elect of the Immortal Spouse.
But, thou art prudent, ere thou canst afford
An offering agreeable to the Lord
There needs a victim glad to pay the price,
A joyful heart, and prompt to sacrifice.
The virgin in the Canticles they bring
Perfumed with myrrh and sweet oils to the King:
In such wise should the bride of Him above
Exhale like precious nard her proffered love.
Say then, O woman, does thy Daphne grieve?
Her family, her home, these can she leave;
Her occupations, joys, and friends renounce,
All lingering hopes and loves permitted once?
Even as the traveller parts at break of day,
Girded her vestal robe, to take her way
Leaning upon the staff of Faith, where He
Awaits and calleth to her, "Come to Me!"

KALLISTA.

Know, then, my daughter, who abounds in grace,
No longer thinks or moves in this world's ways.
From mirth and tears withdrawn she long hath ceased
To share the pagan festival and feast,
Her father's joys. Sequestered all the year
She knows interior peace and silent prayer.
This vain and empty world she doth reject.

THEOGNIS.

Praise be to God! The mark of the elect!
The Master saith, "Who loves Me and would see
My Kingdom must leave all and follow Me."
To-morrow when the Lord His heavens shall fill
With stars, and night descend, and all be still,
When I have offered Divine Sacrifice
At martyrs' tombs who sing in Paradise,
My pastoral staff shall knock upon thy door;
At the third hour, then, welcome me once more,

Give me the child close-veiled and girdled well
That I may lead her whither God doth dwell,
And there her sacred hopes shall be attained
By imposition of hands and rites ordained.
O woman, thou shalt see her years increase,
Virgin and deaconess, and wax in peace,
Carrying folded in the linen stole
The bread of orphans and the widow's dole,
And offering each day the altar wine
The solemnizing priest shall make divine.
Glad tree, transplanted to the sacred sward,
To blossom and bear fruit before the Lord!
O woman, blessèd be thy womb, and blessed
The Holy Trinity thou hast confessed!

KALLISTA.

So may it be. — [THEOGNIS *goes* .

SCENE III.

KALLISTA.

Chorus of vine-dressers singing in the road .

The god ferments, and, floating on the brink
Of the deep vat, our wooden cups are swirled.
O friends, I seem to be, the while I drink,
One with the gods, the masters of the world.

KALLISTA.

They chant their songs obscene.
Our song shall rise upon another scene
When to the heavenly vintage, child, we bear
Our purple grapes, where angel feet and fair
The fragrant must shall tread, and mystic wine
Flow thence, a liquor for the use divine.

Chorus.

If Myrrhina in mockery unbenign
Approach and laugh, and flee as flees the kid,
A naiad mingles with the blessed wine
Who loves me true, nor doth my kiss forbid.

SCENE IV.

HERMAS.

Crushed in the vat, the grapes spurt forth their blood!
Woman, thy thought is clouded by thy mood,
Though wits to thee the gods have not denied.
Surely the wife whose home is yet her pride,
Rejoiceth when the master's stores increase.
Be glad to-day and take thy proper ease.
A heavy vintage. Io! the black grapes
Brim o'er the press — the heady flow escapes;
Iacchus smiles. The household he befriends,
And the strong back of youthful manhood bends
Under the basket filled by smiling maids,
Maidens whose locks the leafy tendril braids.
They, too, sustain the heavy loads of fruit,
But in the winepress with light rosy foot
Tread not the grapes, where youths, and they alone,
Crush out the wine to song of measured tone.
For with firm foot the winepress must be trod
Ere the rich hidden juices will exude.
The elders, whose dry lips the wine anoints,
Feel a sly warmth unlock their stiffened joints;
They dance and shake abroad their hoary hair,
In shade of woods the maiden sleepeth, fair.
The young man goes in quest. Iacchus bids,
Inciting him to do unlawful deeds.
Let us enjoy the good the gods provide!
And Daphne, she my glory and my pride,
Daphne, my daughter, crown of mine old age,
Should smiling come and in our joys engage.

KALLISTA.

Hermas, our real joy in suffering lies,
It but seems sadness to your human eyes;
Holy it is and hidden. "Watch and pray."
And "Woe to the scoffer," so the Scriptures say.
Not as the widow, thou, who, comforted,

Goes to the feast, singing, with unveiled head.
Daphne with flowers for the banquet crowned
Drinks not with Gentiles when the cup goes round.
Hermas! with mirth and song time goes apace,
The hour is nigh... none saved except by grace!

HERMAS.

I am no augur, and thy words remain
Unread — a mortal man must guess in vain.
The very Sphinx, fertile in riddled lure,
Enwrapped her rhymes in darkness less obscure.
Thy wits are troubled by some god, maybe;
Maybe a charm or poison works in thee.
[KALLISTA *goes forth.*

SCENE V.

HERMAS.

Woman is often ailing and distraught,
And evil humours work upon her thought,
And, if at times she hath the gift to see
Things that the gods veil in obscurity,
Yet fury and raving speech and wantonness
Work in her blood and spoil her graciousness.
Such ill is held inspired; but all things ill
Mean that some god possesses us at will.
A god lends woman charm us men to tame,
A god, again, acquaints her youth with shame;
Yet in her spring a virgin's fancies roam,
For some old nurse, at nightfall, in the home,
Lets drop the distaff; her lips pendulous
Moisten no more the thread, but garrulous,
Tell of a fair god dying in his youth.
The wound smiles red upon the pallor smooth
Of his so comely side, fragrant as myrrh.
The maiden lists; she sees, the words so stir.
Of Dionea hears the old belief,
How with dishevelled hair unbound, in grief,
She calls and weeps; how by her sweet mouth touched
Awakes to life the dear god rosy-couched.
Women each year, though husbands look askance,
Thus weep Adonis with loud utterance,
And to the sounding cymbal, sad and slow,
Go fill the shady groves with sounds of woe.
Others seek Krestos in sepulchral night.
Yet are these gods not fair in name or sight
Whom death hath spoiled, and who demand our tears.
The gods I serve are joyous. Hence these cares.
Give me dark wine, and spiced food to eat.

A slave approaches .

Child, deck my brow with hyacinth, and set
All Syrian perfumes on the maple board.

Zeus, and Lyaeos, thou his son, our lord,
Of this, your wine, I first libation pour
To you, then fill the flower-wreathed cup once more.
Wine wakens godlike thought in aged men,
And makes them live their happy past again.
Memory is sweet to one whose life was full,
Dead men drink not, their days are dark and null.
Mussels are good when eaten in the shell,
Shell-fish, moreover, child, grow plump and swell
When the new moon above their ocean bed
Lifteth her thin white horn far overhead.
Artemis walks with those who rule our sphere;
Her pale untainted face makes dark things clear.
Endeavour, child, to learn from such as I
Our gathered knowledge of the woods, the sky,
The clouds, the mountains, and the great grey sea;
Thou, when these mighty things inhabit thee,
Do thou thy task with swiftness and with skill
Like a good servant, none shall use thee ill.
I see a stranger nearing my abode
Welcome and salutation be bestowed!
The gods his guide. Run, child, whoe'er he be
Tell him his coming hither honours me,
And that my prosperous house shall pour him wine.

SCENE VI.

HERMAS *and* HIPPIAS.

HIPPIAS.

Greeting threefold, old Hermas, father mine! —

HERMAS.

Hippias of Thera, Lakon's son, well met!

Greeting! To kindly gods I am in debt

Who to my house restore thy cherished head!

And that these eyes, whence light has all but fled,

A happy dream should see, thee disembarked!

With a white stone this happy day be marked!

O son of Lakon, wreath of ivy green,

Ancestral vessels, cups of silver sheen,

Meat, and all fruits, and dark wine shall be laid

For thee, that, thy just hunger being stayed,

Thou mayst acquaint me, dear and honoured guest,

How fares thy father, first of men and best.

HIPPIAS.

He tends his vine and oft he speaks of thee,

But years have sapped his vigour.

HERMAS.

It must be.

What thou art now so was he once. There rise

Old days, our early youth, before mine eyes.

Tall was he, of thy stature at thine age;

Of equal brow. The elders held him sage

Ere yet the virgin beard showed on his lip.

Firmly he bore the wine-skin on his hip.

For men in those days were more vigorous far,

And better men, than their descendants are.

He is a happy man, thy father! Good is life!

For from a mighty spirit we derive.

The boy will throw the knuckle-bones and jest.

The youth, the ardent blood within his breast
Unquiet, by dusk willows seeks the maid.
White-haired, with load of many years o'erweighed,
Within the porch, under the starlit night,
In wise discourse the old man takes delight.
Whether thy days bring honey or black gall
Accept the thread of life Fate spins for all.
He whose disordered passions end his breath
Hath wished to live, and known not life but death.
Beware of vain desire and keen regret.

HIPPIAS.

Great longing fills my heart, for it is set
On her who is thy daughter, honoured friend,
On her I love and on the wished-for end.
My heart is hers, in her my sole delight.
Far have I roamed, seen the Ausonian might,
Tibur, Neapolis, Paestum, and the coast
Of far Anconia, lands the Caesars boast,
Gardens, arbutus groves, and mulberries,
And orchards rosy with all fruitful trees,
The bounteous corn-lands and the clustered vine
Turning the sunlight on the hills to wine.
The grape grows kindly in a loosened earth
Where rainy skies bring growth of barren worth.
I lent attentive ear to native speech,
But long the days and empty, out of reach
Was she I loved. The subtle fever waked
Me through long nights, my dry lips went unslaked.
Daphne my vision, her white arms, her hair.
Fair image, fevered dream! Our vows, our care,
Love's sighs! O Eros! winged prince whose grace
Touches the virgin's breast and her soft face,
Man's torment, and the smile on heaven's vault!
Hermas, forget not, when I ate thy salt
By the ancestral hearth that summer's day,
Thy promise I should bear thy maid away.
Her young affection she hath not denied.
I claim thy promise, and I claim my bride.

There waits for Daphne, more to me than gold,
An ivoried chamber in my vessel's hold,
Glittering gear and Orient tissues fine,
Goblets, and perfumes shut in onyx, shine
Of brazen vessels great, all he bestows
Whom the gods bless, on his expected spouse.
My hope it is, when we two leave your shores
To bend green boughs about the bending oars,
Decked with bright flowers thickstrewn as are the stars
To cleave the happy air with blossomed spars.

HERMAS.

No, verily, my instinct hath not erred.
Rightly I gave her thee, my friend preferred!
For thou art just of deed and wise of word,
And with our ancient law thy ways accord.
Where counsel shall be sought, or deeds be done,
Thou yet shalt prove to be thy father's son.
Daphne, my child, is fair, and skilled, in sooth,
In all that may employ the timid youth
Of maids who keep the shadow of the house
And save their flower for their proper spouse.
The best to the most worthy should incline,
The straight young elm support the clinging vine,
And honey lend its sweetness to the strength
Of wine. But human hopes prove vain at length,
And fickle minds are caught unendingly
In the strong toils of our harsh Destiny.
Friend, it would grieve me were thy soul distressed
With heavy words, and fears but half-confessed.
Some breath of ill, some humours sprung of naught,
Weigh on my child and sombre all her thought.
She shuns mine eyes which in her beauty took
Refreshment, and drew pleasure from her look.
She speaks not, hides, and weeps. One well may know
She suffers not from any earthly woe.
She is possessed, some demon holds her heart.
The Galilean god hath played his part;
And this dead god, whose ghost my Daphne haunts,

Loveth not lovers, nor their bridal chants.
He loves not life and ever finds his good
In want and thirst and barren womanhood.
There is one leads my daughter, leads her blind,
Helpless, to him who hates our human kind.
The gods thy mother took; we mourn her still,
Good Pythias; another, by their will,
Old as the many-wintered crow, is left
To gather years and be of sense bereft.
But this late hour ill suits my train of years
I will go close mine eyes and lose my cares.
Hesperus, the lovers' star, now shows, benign,
Low in the western sky, his torch divine.
Sleep in security beneath my roof,
O son of Lakon! On thy couch, though proof
The narrow door against the midnight dew,
Spread this great lion skin of tawny hue.
Libykos of Cirta gave it me of yore
When in the year of Daphne's birth he bore
Coral, ivory, and copper to Hellenic strands
And took hence corn and wool to foreign lands.

HIPPIAS.

Serenely I shall sleep on this fair couch
For Daphne's faith her plighted word may vouch.

HERMAS.

May the gods watch thee, and thy sleep adorn
With happy dreams from out the gate of horn.
[He leaves by an inner door .

SCENE VII.

HIPPIAS.

Stretched on the welcome couch with closed eyes
I feel the billows' gentle fall and rise.
Still hear the thresh of oars against the gale
And the wind moaning in the bellying sail.
The gleaming sea, blue capes and skies of blue
And fabled monsters, dance before my view.
A goddess shape my swimming eyes see now,
She floats mid heavenly airs before the prow,
Sports with the dolphins, ambient as air,
Touches the silver sands, a blossom rare,
Flees like a sunbeam; and the colours fade;
For, by the will of Love, I love a maid.
Doth this old man speak sooth? And wherefore should
This Galilean god in adverse mood
Now, when at length the golden hours atone,
Dispute with me the bride so hardly won?
I wrong not this young god of recent fame,
I have not spurned his altar or his name,
Have not affronted his ascetic priests,
Nor wantonly surprised their midnight feasts,
Their mysteries amid the tombs begot.
He cannot hate me; for I know him not.
Yet Daphne, silent, weeps and languishes.
Unholy is the grief whose sombre stress
Bows the white neck of one of Venus' doves.
But grief still more endears the friend one loves.
Perhaps the fault is mine her heart is sore;
Perhaps she fears I may return no more,
Forgetting that the virtuous gods assure
Safe conduct to the man whose heart is pure,
Who purified by every solemn rite
Hath made his vow and kept it in their sight.
To-morrow's dawn will bring her love again
And her fair brow relax its anxious strain,

And her eyes smile. O Zeus, thy sacred day
Lighten the form I love with earliest ray!
Artemis, hear me, have me in thy hold!
And thou, O goddess fairest, crowned with gold —
[He sleeps.]

SCENE VIII.

The dream OF HIPPIAS.

ARTEMIS *and* APHRODITE.

ARTEMIS.

Oh, never more the darkling hours
Under the shifting moonlight sweet
Shall see amid the hawthorn flowers
The shining of my silver feet.

APHRODITE.

The sea, less supple than my thighs.
Than mine eyes' lucid depths less deep,
No more shall see my white shape rise
Bright upon memoried shores asleep.

ARTEMIS.

No more be mine the gift of grace,
Of strength, of beauty, as of old,
To youth the flower of the race,
Upright and chaste within the fold.

APHRODITE.

Lovers, all they who hailed me queen,
Now must they lose, nor re-acquire
The primal gift: the peace serene
In the inevitable desire.

ARTEMIS.

The maiden in the untrodden ways
A tender growth beneath God's doom,
Shall learn, in innocent amaze,
That she came sullied from the womb.

APHRODITE.

Woman shall dread her beauty's snare;

And find sweet love a bitter thing,
The sons of this new race, in fear,
Flee her, in deserts cowering.

ARTEMIS.

O youth whose dreaming head and chaste,
Is pure as flower of the grass,
Come, that thy shining brows embraced,
Lighten the shades whereto we pass!

APHRODITE.

Oh, follow me — my gifts enjoyed
Have filled thy heart an hundredfold.
What dost thou here? the gods avoid
A world that weeps in languor cold.

ARTEMIS.

Oh, follow me to crystal skies
And live immortal there, as we!
Away! My chlamys, lover-wise,
Soft touches on thy yielding knee.

APHRODITE.

Let us away, lo! even now
My veil and girdle kiss thy side.
Eternal beauty shall endow
Thy purer essence sanctified.

[They kiss him , make sign that he shall follow them , and vanish in the air.]

SCENE IX.

HIPPIAS *asleep*. DAPHNE.

DAPHNE (*she comes from an inner door*).
Since I at dawn, close-veiled, and habited,
Follow this aged man whose cross shall lead
My steps within the sacred shade, alone,
And Christ's peace fall upon this heart of stone;
Since I must leave this world and, living, die,
Torn from its clasp, I yet would say good-bye.
When all yet lay beneath the spell of sleep,
I drew the wooden bolt, my chamber's keep,
With trembling hand, ere yet the night was sped,
And, fearful, stole from out my maiden bed.
Now hail thee, earth! and heaven, and wood, and sky,
And thee, old house, dear home, in days gone by
Given to mirth and song, and joy benign.
O door, O lowly porch, where leaves entwine
Old Hermes watching, carved of lemon wood,
Favour this visit — not to be renewed.
Abode so filled with mirth my natal year,
And thou, the roof-tree's stay, the column where
My father yearly marked my growth, and read
With joy the increase of my springing head!
White stones, on feast days fragrant, and in days
When I was small so close beneath my gaze,
Where my blue-armoured scarab, held in thrall
At a thread's end, would climb along the wall,
Or where small pliant twigs I would engage,
And hold my brown cicada in a cage!
And thou, O watchful lamp, farewell for ay!
[She opens the outer door .
O you I loved, sleep on, sleep silently;
Dear hounds to whom I gave sweet cakes to eat,
Oh, bark not, springing up on hasty feet;
Shake not your collars, watch-dogs, nor resent

The footfall soft you know so innocent.
I wish to run afield, to hear again
The leafage sound above the fountain-rain.
Yes, for the night is kind to innocence,
Out by the road, now fragrant to the sense,
With floating hair brushing the myrtles low,
To the nymphs' sacred fountain will I go,
To hear once more beside the waters cool
The slender reed-flutes, singing, pitiful.
I know a seat, a mound beneath the yews,
Whose turf mysterious night with love bedews...
Oh! I speak wildly! — nevermore for me
The fountain cool, the shade of friendly tree.

HIPPIAS (*waking*).

Artemis, and thee, O crownèd Queen, I hear,
But what this sad sweet voice all thrilled with fear,
Your singing softly echoed in a sigh?
I wake, and on the moonlit threshold nigh,
Vague and white-veiled, I see a shadow move,
I see — O night! I see the one I love!
No shade intangible, no spirit form,
'Tis she! Love's very self, her presence warm!
[He rises and stretches forth his arms .
Daphne, O Daphne! Sweet hour come at last!
My Daphne, come, O friend, a friend thou hast!
The kindly gods rejoin our destinies.
I thirst and hunger for thy love-lit eyes.
Under the choired stars God guides thy feet!
Daphne, I bring thee joyful news and sweet.
Thy vigil and my labours are at end.
We shall be one, thy father is my friend.
But what is this? Dost thou not hear, nor see?
What fear can chill thee, hold thee thus from me?
Speak. Do not flee me; fear not, but rejoice;
I am thy Hippias; know'st thou not my voice?

DAPHNE (*speaking to herself*).

Angels! Oh, have me in your garments' fold!

Wherefore this cruel trial, grief untold,
To show me him whose vision is forbid?
I would regain the darkness where I hid.
But how, despite him, reach my maiden room?

HIPPIAS.

Listen! O virgin, breathing sweet perfume!
I will speak softly, wait for thy replies,
Come to mine arms and speak, give me thine eyes!

DAPHNE.

O guest, respect my passage, leave me free!

HIPPIAS.

My face is browned with sunlight and the sea,
But friends long severed by an adverse star
May know each other still for that they are.
O trust thine eyes, the light of those twin stars
Bright as when early dawn the east unbars.
Dear child! Oh, trust what to thine ears is told,
Whereto I hang my vows as pendant gold.
Believe the spirit in thy gracious breast,
Whose grace divine thy fairest thoughts attest;
I am thy Hippias; I offer my embrace.

DAPHNE.

Stranger, withdraw; I do not know thy face.

HIPPIAS.

Why speak'st thou thus, O girl? Oh, can it be
Some god, in blinding cloud enwrapping thee,
Hath wished, in wrath, to bring bewilderment?
Certes, some god must blind thee, ill-content
From lack of wine and honey-cakes and meal,
Hermes, or she to whom the Cypriotes kneel,
Or the dark Hecate. Their power, allowed,
May strike with madness him whose heart is proud.
Yet time restores our reason to its seat.
Listen, and I will speak in words more meet.

DAPHNE.

I may not hear thee, stranger, let us part.

HIPPIAS.

Daughter of Hermas! Light is the maiden heart;

Woman has moods, it is a woman's due.

My words shall breathe the sweetness of the rue.

I will recall our love to thee, and how

I first beheld thee; precious memory now! —

Beside the porch where golden sunflowers rise,

Needle in hand, with looks of sweet surprise.

Irresolute I stood. "Go, nurse," thou saidst,

"And give the stranger welcome to our midst."

Thy gentle words my inmost being thrilled,

I then knew love, O maid in beauty veiled!

But with my coming came the glowing swarm

Of playful loves to stir thy bosom warm.

Often a blush the lowered lids would own;

Often, O Daphne, the old bench of stone

Saw thine industrious hands forget the thread

At waning hours when all the west was red,

And the birds sought their nests under the beam.

For I, dear maid, would tell thee tales, their theme

My distant voyages, my dangers run,

Prodigies seen and men and cities known.

Then came desire and fret, and love's pursuit,

Thy pledge more sweet than honey is, or fruit;

Thy father's smile indulgent, thy lament,

My going — my return; the flowers' scent

When the hid naiad, the myrtles, and dark yew,

Heard thy sweet speech and took thy vows anew.

DAPHNE.

I may not. Peace!

HIPPIAS.

Why speak such words, my terror to increase?

Thy speech is touched with some inspired fear.

It holds thee cloaked. What mystery is here?

Reply, reply! Oh, tell me, what dread Fate,
What troubles dire thy heart so agitate?
Under the stars, before their Queen, the moon,
I pray and I beseech, O maid! This boon
With outstretched arms here at thy feet I sue,
Thou canst but grant the grace that is my due.
None but the wicked, in their madness set,
Reject the hand which supplicates its debt.
Let me embrace thy feet, thy hands, thy hair,
Tell me: thy wish is mine, thy joy I share.

DAPHNE.

Oh! Touch me not, or I shall be undone.

HIPPIAS.

No! The assent I hoped is not yet won.

DAPHNE.

Away! Oh, flee me!

HIPPIAS.

Take but my embrace.

DAPHNE.

Oh, woe is me! And woe to thee! Disgrace —

HIPPIAS.

Oh, say what bodes this cry instinct with dread?
How pale thy face, whose sorrow may be read;
Thy startled eyes are wide with terror fell.
Oh, hateful silence! Speak! Oh, tell me, tell
The Iolchian magic, and the deadly brew,
What charnel compost, draught of livid hue,
What spells have touched the flower of thy face
And left this deadly pallor in its place.
What drug has frozen thus thy flesh and blood,
Charmed thee and left but thy similitude?

DAPHNE.

Loose my hands.

HIPPIAS.

No. Thine ill is from above:
Earth doth not bruise the gentle flower of love.
Thee I adjure, O Daphne! In these arms
Reply: what jealous god would steal thy charms?

DAPHNE.

Enough. I love thee. Hence!

HIPPIAS.

I knew it so!
Necessity still leads, where'er we go.
Dost thou not feel her iron arm divine
Compel thine ardent breast to fall on mine?

DAPHNE.

I fail!

HIPPIAS.

Be docile, and submit to Fate,
Daphne, therein all beauty is innate.
Thy softness is thy beauty in love's eyes.
Yield thee, O child, for Love demands the price.

DAPHNE.

Leave me.

HIPPIAS. —

I will not leave thee, but will rest
Till thy lips tell the trouble of thy breast.

DAPHNE.

O mitred priest, whose blameless hand must slay!
Mother! Thy healing at what price I pay!

HIPPIAS.

Shrink not from telling me this mystery.

DAPHNE.

O sealed vow, O snare wherein I die!

HIPPIAS.

What is this vow? I wait in anguish sore.

DAPHNE.

Hippias! Live! Farewell. I am no more.

HIPPIAS.

Oh, peace! Call not on Hermes, god forsworn.

DAPHNE.

Jesus, O sacred ram, of brazen horn,
Who lead'st thy lambs where living waters flow.
Through what hard deserts must my footsteps go!
Eternal dolphin of the eternal sea
Behold my storm-tossed bark and pity me!

HIPPIAS.

What speakest thou of Christ, what is thy thought?

DAPHNE.

Thy bride is His, though Him I have not sought.

HIPPIAS.

'Tis Christ would snatch thee from my jealous hold?

DAPHNE.

His I become, He is the spouse foretold.

HIPPIAS.

But what thy fate if such a Lover claim?

DAPHNE.

Live like a little child, and die the same.

HIPPIAS.

O God of Galilee, unsought thy wrath!
Phantom unbidden risen on my path,
Whose threat'ning hand shows its ensanguined trace!
Hear me, dark Ruler of a sullied race:
Thy name I honoured, though unreconciled,

I marked not, Christ, because of this dear child,
What, of Thy story, age and wisdom said.
Heeded not reason nor the omens dread;
I thought thee good, a god withdrawn apart,
Of lofty mind, man's welfare at Thy heart.
I know Thee now, fierce spirit un appeased,
Envious spectre, who troublest thus the feast,
Power malign, striking at human kind
Who groaning walk Thy path, to tears resigned;
Unlawful overlord of magic might,
O Prince of death, whose cold strength serves to blight
Warm love, and chill the virgin at man's breast!
Thou art divine! Then hear my mind confessed,
And take Thy joy in what I have to say:
Here I await Thee, come, and seize Thy prey!
Take if Thou wilt, but in Thy hand bring Death,
Thou shalt not take her while I draw my breath.

DAPHNE.

Dear Hippias, peace! Most sinful is thine ire.
Blaspheme not! Dread its expiation dire.
Jesus of Nazareth thou hast belied,
That we might live, upon the cross He died.
He has not asked this sacrifice I make,
And she who gives me does so for my sake.
My mother sought my glory and my good
When she made vow to offer me to God.
Her honeyed hope proves wormwood of despair.

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, the gods are good, nor hear the prayer
Of one who would forbid her daughter bring
The man she loves her virgin offering.
Begetters of the world! You do not heed
The mother who denies her daughter seed,
Would see her childless, loveless, and forlorn,
By alien hearths, and pointed at in scorn,
A useless burden on the teeming earth.
This earth where all things love, and bring to birth;

Stretching her sapless arms denied embrace,
Wandering, aimless, like a shade in space.
And shall that maiden beyond others dowered,
With Aphrodite's gifts divinely flowered,
One who already heard the amorous lure,
The words that fired to love her bosom pure,
Daughter of Hermas, glory of earth and crown,
Be left to wither sterile and alone?
They would not if they could, forbid our bliss!
Trust in the gods, O maid, and trust my kiss!

DAPHNE.

Alas! O trouble, madness, failing will!
Herbs of Iolchos, whose dark roots distil
The livid poison's dread paralysis,
Would work my ruin less than such a kiss.

HIPPIAS.

It comes from me, thy spouse predestinate.

DAPHNE.

Oh, fear to touch me, I am consecrate.
I fear myself, I fear God's part in me.
For the last time, farewell! I love but thee!

HIPPIAS.

What love immortal equals love like mine?
I suffer and my sorrow is as thine.
No god can suffer, or can die for thee,
Unhappy child! Such kiss thy death must be.
O soul of mine, there is no such caress
As that of mortals clinging in distress.
No joy ethereal worth my kiss impressed,
Thy beauty, yielding, conquered, on my breast,
Thy tears! —

DAPHNE.

O spirit, spread thy dove-like wings.
I fail! Oh, lend the strength Thy presence brings

HIPPIAS.

How sweet is love.

DAPHNE.

My love will not be stayed.

HIPPIAS.

It is Love's wish: his law will be obeyed.

DAPHNE.

Dear Hippias, thou hast conquered. I avow
I love thee and am thine. Take me then, now.
Possess me. Let us flee, but hold me hid,
I follow thee and do what thou shalt bid.
Oh, that I rode through rushing air the plain,
Drank with closed eyes thy breath without restrain,
Would that I had a swift steed to my hand —
Oh, tarry not, but come. Leaving the land,
Flee to the gulf where thy bark rocks her spars.
I fear nor winds nor waves 'neath other stars.
Our bridal song, O friend, towards other shores
The chant of sailors and the sounding oars.
Ploughing the starlit waves thy vessel fleet
Carries me couched in shadow at thy feet.
Thou my salvation, thou my hope and faith,
My soul and being thine envelopeth.
Come! But alas for me! What have I said?
My speech is shameful — and my madness sped.

HIPPIAS.

Maiden, thy love is virtuous and good,
I am thy promised; show thy friends like mood.
Yes, we will tempt the deep sea; and its wave,
Fair as love's self, and fruitful to the brave,
Shall gently bear our blameless destinies
To sheltering roof, where incense-smoke shall rise
Daphne, thy father's word shall stand in proof.

DAPHNE.

Master in whom I hope, beneath thy roof,
Father august, ageing in honoured ease,
We twain will seek thee and embrace thy knees...
No, we but dream, imprudent our belief
And hope deceived but aggravates man's grief.
My mother cannot loose her daughter's ties,
She will not ask for aught that Law denies.

HIPPIAS.

Thy mother is no heartless savage wild,
A woman's milk has fed her when a child,
Only the cruel gods impassive see
Our human misery: but, mortal, we
Know pity, for our suffering makes us heed.
What mother hears, except her heart must bleed,
That child on whom her pains did life confer
A second time demanding Life of her?
A mother yields to tears; yet mortal she.
We will go to her, humbly bow the knee,
Our prayers, our raised hands, our tears shall speak,
And pity at the last shall smooth her cheek.

SCENE X.

HIPPIAS, DAPHNE, KALLISTA.

KALLISTA *enters* , a lamp in her hand. DAPHNE *hides her head on HIPPIAS' breast* .

KALLISTA.

What are these cries? Who, in this chaste abode,
Moveth when unclean spirits are abroad?
What suspirations shame, what kisses taint
This house and through the solid walls acquaint
The air with vapours of disease and death?
Man, wouldst thou violate, with drunken breath,
One of my household whom I guide aright
Through the day's heat and shadows of the night
To the celestial city's living walls?
Wouldst thou, then, shameless, force my female thralls?
But no — I plainly heard your spoken word,
Your voices mix in hideous accord.
God! That beneath these eaves the Demon lust
Should set his red imprint, and straightway must
A Christian woman, stung to appetite
At one bound, seek a stranger's bed at night!
On thy knees, woman, whoever thou mayest be,
Thou whom an unclean spirit, inhabiting thee,
Hunts thus by night, maddened, on heat, a-gog;
Bitch, whose throat howls for every wandering dog,
The leathern thongs, the salutary whip
Shall dominate thy flesh, and hush thy lip!

HIPPIAS.

The majesty of years adorns thy brow,
O woman, but too swift to wrath art thou.
Beneath this roof my brows were ivy-crowned,
I leave unsoiled the welcome bed I found.
No slave has mounted sly and stealthy-stepped
Like a foul nightmare where the stranger slept.

Within my heart an honest purpose bred.
Calm thyself, woman; see thy child's chaste head
Her whom I love, who loves me —

KALLISTA.

O amaze!

A poisonous vapour must becloud my gaze.
'Tis she, I see her! Thou, a Christian maid!
A Gentile, and his hand on thine is laid!
Abomination! Christ, where art Thou, then?
Where sleeps Thy sword, Thy virtue, far from men?
O Christ, but see him! See, O King, and smite!
Thy portion feels his touch, Thy fruit his bite.

DAPHNE.

I will not live without him. I die first.

KALLISTA. —

Man sacrilegious, vile, of God accurst,
I drive thee forth — go from this pious house.
Flee, nor breathe poison on her youthful brows.
Flee, in all shame, thy head within thy hands,
Seek in the shades where any path expands
Thy shelter fit, in any sink of night.
Bestir thee, or the rods shall speed thy flight.

HIPPIAS.

A furious demon agitates thy frame
And froths thy lips. I go, as erst I came,
O woman, bearing high an unbowed head.
But with thy guest thine honour thou hast sped.
Thy roof whence now the ill-omened bird shall cry
Sees the insulted guest depart, and with him fly
Innocence, Faith, and Peace, triad august.
And holy Piety, and Laws held just.
Mine is her soul which thou canst not constrain.
Zeus grant me triumph when I come again.

DAPHNE.
Hippias!

HIPPIAS.
O Daphne!

SCENE XI.

DAPHNE, KALLISTA.

KALLISTA.

I will wash each stone,
His scandalous feet have touched, and make atone.
I know, my child, that God upheld thy faith
Already trembling at his unclean breath.
Against the tempter fasting is thy shield,
And Jesus' name the spear that thou must wield.
To rule the flesh so prompt to disobey
Let us prostrate ourselves and groan and pray.
Humbled in dust and ashes let us bend
Until the grace and blood of Christ descend.
My daughter, one more day, and then the Ark
Shall open and the bride of God embark,
Thy soul be sheltered, and thy robe made sure
From stain of sin in this dark age impure.
I see, I hear. The Son of Man is come;
And Adam's seed is rising from the tomb
And knows Him. Lo, the hour! The Angel's flail
Beats out the grain and chaff to meet the scale.
The heavenly trumpets rend the firmament.
Child, let us flee this world indifferent.
See, the Judge cometh in a reddening light!

DAPHNE.

Mine eyes already see the dark increase.
I sink upon the hearth to die in peace.

KALLISTA.

My prayer and torment shall avert the curse.

SCENE XII.

DAPHNE, *later* , *the* NURSE.

DAPHNE.

Kharito! Kharito! Come, mine ancient nurse,
List! Hippias of Thera thou dost know
Thy Daphne dies unless thou hear'st her woe.
Thou canst not wish, good nurse, to see me dead.
Chased from the house my Hippias is fled.
His love for me will make him slow of flight,
Regret will weight his sandalled footsteps light.
Excellent Kharito, nurse who cradled me,
Quicken thy heavy limbs, and hasten thee.
Follow his footprints on the sandy ground,
Run to the spring, and seek him, and when found,
Tell him to wait me when the stars once more
Throw the pine shadows on the forest floor
By the great tomb which iron gates enfold.
Thou tarriest: hasten, run: for time is gold.

NURSE.

My child! I go. Though truly it were best
If I abstained from such inglorious quest. —
Thou hast my love, and sometimes for our friends,
We must pursue and seek unlawful ends.

DAPHNE.

Run and return. By adverse fates misled,
My funeral couch shall be my marriage-bed.

PART III.

Night. A wide and shady road. At the side of this road a tomb half hidden among pines. One sees the interior of the monument , the funeral chamber. Niches hollowed in the walls holds urns with ashes. Round the interior runs a marble bench; in the middle is an altar.

SCENE I.

A WISE WOMAN.

No farther! Standing in a moonlit space
A tomb among dark pines, the appointed place.
The iron gate is mute, heavy and dark;
No voice as yet, no step, no light to mark.
The maid is not far off, and come she will,
For I am sought and summoned for my skill.
Many the tears my withered hands have felt,
Many the kiss my furrowed brow would melt.
For I am dear to lovers, see them prone
Pressing the knees of this so aged crone.
In town and village every servant tells
The children of my knowledge and my spells.
Aye, I know more than all, and slowly starve.
Within my bones I feel the hunger carve.
Rest to the needy is a fruitless boon,
I must bestir me 'neath the friendly moon,
Tear from the tombs the roots whose virtue dread
Is nourished on the bodies of the dead.

SCENE II.

THE WISE WOMAN, *the bishop* THEOGNIS, *followed by deacons and other faithful singing in*
Chorus .

The Chorus of the Faithful.

Glory and praise in Thee, O Lord,
To those of loyal blood,
Who by the lance, and blade, and cord,
Witness Thy Name and Rood.

An age perverse has set them free,
We, groaning, pray and wait.
Grant us to wear, who yearn for Thee,
Thy purple robe of state.

THEOGNIS (*to THE WISE WOMAN*).
Thou, whom I meet upon this road we tread,
Com'st thou to pray beside the martyr'd dead
With us, O woman, where lamps of life shine clear?

THE WISE WOMAN.
Man, I reply without deceit or fear.
I am a woman most miserable and weak.
Beneath these pines and maples tall I seek
Dead wood, to warm my poor old bones, and dry.

THEOGNIS.
Woman an-hungered and a-thirst, draw nigh!
"Blest are the suffering," Christ hath said. "The rich
For ay shall burn in sulphur and in pitch."
The hand that gives thee alms, this gold hath crost
In name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Chorus of the Faithful.
Grant, Lord, the glory we desire

For which our life-blood flows —
To wear upon our white attire

The martyr's blood-red rose.
The Bishop and the chorus move away.

SCENE III.

THE WISE WOMAN.

Hate makes us twain. Presents are nothing worth
I hate both easy men and grudging earth.
I hate whatever nourisheth a life within,
Both flesh and grass. I cleave to Death and Sin.
My nails have dug the rooted plant away.
Hurry thy steps, my pretty child a-stray,
A rich old man is urgent for a charm
To bring him back his youth and nerve his arm.
He calls, and I, beneath my robe I hang
Whisker of wolf and serpent's poisonous fang...
Here is the child! I shall have gold again.

SCENE IV.

THE WISE WOMAN, DAPHNE, THE NURSE.

DAPHNE.

Nurse, take this key.

NURSE.

There is still time — refrain.

My child, my blossom, hearken what I say,

We two are following an evil way.

DAPHNE (*to the woman*).

Woman, I seek the aid you swore to lend.

WISE WOMAN.

The aged wife is prompt to serve a friend.

DAPHNE.

Take, give — and leave me.

THE WISE WOMAN

(*gives the phial and receives a piece of gold*).

Here is weight and shine!

O tender maid, thy locks are fair and fine!

If so be that some youth is all thy care

Bring me, my dear, from him a single hair

And you shall see him, spellbound by my charms,

Woo thee with flowers, tearful — in thine arms!

NURSE.

Daphne, what saith this toothless wife to thee?

Most harmful to the young such hags may be.

DAPHNE.

Open the door, my nurse — how slow thy hands!

Haste with the light, the lamp expectant stands.

Be silent and obey.

NURSE.

It is not right
Nor nice, my child, to enter tombs at night.
His counsel just, the slave is rightly bold.

DAPHNE.

Set down the viands and the cups of gold
Upon our altar where of yore we made
Libation to the gods when passed a shade.

NURSE.

Childlike I act although I am a crone.

DAPHNE.

The bread and salt— 'tis well. Leave me. Alone,
With mine own hands I mix the wine I need.

NURSE.

It is my duty, Daphne, and I heed,
But leave these tombs where the dogs howl and roam,
Seek the warm shelter of thy couch and home.

SCENE V.

DAPHNE.

No, neither god nor friend shall be betrayed
By me, weak as I am, and sore afraid.
Even now I seemed to see, amid the gloom
In the dark dovecote, float on dusky plume
The shades of those who loved and went their ways
Under a happy sky in happier days.
They lived their lives, their ashes are at peace.
The terrors of this vigil now increase!
The air is thick with shades, their pressure nigh.
Oh, give me life, and breath, and sight of sky!
Vain wish! The time is now at hand — and he.
I must prepare the cup for him — and me.
I from this vase will drink where, graven, show
A virgin sleeping and winged babes who go
And come lightly o'erhead, and fly in aery troop.
[She opens the witch's phial,
I pour what I must pour into this cup.

SCENE VI.

HIPPIAS (*on the road*).

Hail, all ye stars! In the dead tree's dark cleft
The hoarse crow spoke from the ill-omened left.
Just gods, avert this presage of ill-fate.
Shadowed by pines I see the dead men's gate.

DAPHNE (*without seeing hint*).

Dear Hippias! the midnight skies are dark.
The time is precious, but thou dost not mark,
Thou lingerest yet. Oh, come, I am prepared;
For thee my breast breathes perfume.

HIPPIAS (*at the gate of the tomb*).

Most endeared,
My Daphne, O my fate, Daphne my sweet,
Fugitive saint on fair and furtive feet!
The gods yet load with years the aged nurse
Who brought thy message to the flower-set source.
Thou art no child whom childish things control,
Thy heart courageous clothes a faithful soul.
Follow me, Daphne; rest thee, and confide:
I will be thine, thy refuge and thy pride.

DAPHNE.

Come, let us sit upon this marble seat.
Whatever chance the future may secrete,
Friend (for we know not what our fate may give),
We will no more be parted while I live.
In human lives bright hope may briefly shine.
Oh, lean thy shoulder, take my hands in thine!
One roof, one bed shall give us ample room,
My soul from out my lips thou shalt resume,
Shalt close mine eyes, receive my latest breath!

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, the gods conceal the hour of death.

Think of the present, gird thee, nor delay.
Hasten, they seek thee, they are near... away.

SCENE VII.

DAPHNE, HIPPIAS, *in the tomb*. THEOGNIS *and the Chorus of the Faithful repassing on the road*.

Chorus.

An age perverse has set them free,
We groaning, pray and wait.
Grant us to wear, who wait for Thee,
Thy purple robe of State.

THEOGNIS (*to one of the deacons*).

Lo, now, when sleep bows every head, there shines
Light from their tombs who toiled in the vines.
The anxious vigil of the ruddy spark
Betokens theft, or rape, or workings dark.
Go, Dionysos, with light step and view
What deed is doing 'neath the pine and yew.
Go, for the guardian must supervise
Bad men whose crimes the dark hides from our eyes.

[He passes on. The deacon DIONYSOS steals to the vine-grower's tomb, and sees, without being seen, HIPPIAS and DAPHNE. He runs to rejoin the bishop, who has gone his way with the choir. One still hears the Chorus of the Faithful.]

CHORUS.

Grant, Lord, the glory we desire,
For which our life-blood flows,
To wear upon our white attire
The martyr's blood-red rose.

DAPHNE.

It is a Christian chant, the song whose flood
Mounts towards the saints baptized in their own blood.
Whither, O martyrs, floats your bright array?

HIPPIAS.

My mantle cloaks thy tender breast — away!

DAPHNE.

Hippias, believe this shelter sure — nor fear.
I wish, as it beseems, to make thee cheer.
Wine will we drink where sleep the blessed dead.
Seat thee, my Hippias, the feast is spread.
We celebrate our spousals, friend, here are
The chalice and the thin-necked water-jar,
The cups, the perfumes, salt, and wreaths of green,
Lilies, and frail anemones between.
As it is fit, before this honoured dust,
We feast our marriage in this banquet just,
Pale violets and hyacinths soft-spread
A perfume on thy triply-banded head;
From odorous vase the scented contents shake,
Wreath these fair flowers on thy brow and take
This cup where mix dark wine and water bright.

HIPPIAS.

In the lone tomb under the veil of night
With festal roses I adorn my head.
Daphne, I bow to all that thou hast said,
And my heart holds, with thine, that it is just
Piously to feast this union so august.
This wine to Hera, kind to wedded bliss,
This to thee, Cyprian, and to thee, Huntress, this,
And all you Loves who spread light wings at night,
Aid me to keep this spouse, fair-limbed and bright,
If ye would favour modesty and love.

DAPHNE.

I raise my cup in turn to Heaven above.
Thou, who, midst olives, from the cup didst shrink,
See me! I cannot, so my heart doth sink,
Alas! I cannot taste this bitter sup —
My lips dare not approach the golden cup.

HIPPIAS.

Drink, reach the cup that half thy draught be mine,
That I may taste thy sweet breath in the wine.

DAPHNE.

Hippias, I drink this wine — I must, I will.
See, in my hands I take this cup I fill.

HIPPIAS.

Drink to our union, friend.

DAPHNE.

O destiny!

'Tis done! I drain the bridal cup to thee.
Henceforth, O friend, its service be forgot.
'Tis consecrate to Him thou knowest not.
I am not woo'd in delicate repose
'Mid sun and smiles and petals of the rose;
My love in nerves and blood and passion lost
Gives without stint, with death in the accost.
Thy shining eyes now bathe me in delight,
Thy locks resplendent and thy temples bright.
Hippias, the soft down my eyes close seek
Lies like a mist of morning on thy cheek.

HIPPIAS.

About the flower of thy mouth I hear
Bees make sweet murmur, Daphne, to mine ear;
And sacred love fanning, with gentle gale,
Thy budding bosom flowers 'neath its veil.

DAPHNE.

Hippias, thy stature and thy noble brow
Make live the dream of heroes long ago.

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, thy rounded arms, swift to enlace,
Bare themselves proudly from the robe's embrace.

DAPHNE.

Hippias, what courage decks thy bosom warm!

HIPPIAS.

Daphne — of candid soul and goddess form!

DAPHNE.
I cling to thee!

HIPPIAS.
I hold thee to my heart!

DAPHNE.
Sweet!

HIPPIAS.
Flame of love!

DAPHNE.
I feel my life depart...
Oh, fold me close lest jealous Death divide
And unresisted snatch away thy bride.
Of nights old boatman Charon quits his bark
And rides the roads on a great courser dark.
When I shall wander where all bright things fade
Thy hands shall heap no offerings to my shade.
Where walk the Christian band their way is mine.
My spirit there may never welcome thine.

HIPPIAS.
Leave, then, this god who loveth not out feasts.
Love is the lord even of the savage beasts.

DAPHNE.
Christ Jesus will one day restore his own.
This is the doctrine to our sages known.
Thou, who art man, mayst ask and seek to know;
I, woman, must believe, and, silent, bow.
Christ, King of death — Blessed all names above!
This life is short, but infinite is love.

HIPPIAS.
O dear one, smile, nor speak these names of fear
To soil thy lips and shame thy sunny hair.
Tempt not thy fate thus, life is yet divine,
Love then, and live — the empty rest resign.

DAPHNE.

Live long, my Hippias, drink of the sun —
But dwell at times in memory, on the one
Who showed thee first — for love hath clearest eyes —
How fair is life beneath the clear blue skies.
O spouse of mine, treasure my solemn words!
When the dark couch where haunt the ill-omened birds
Receives — alas! this body once so dear,
When I am but a phantom thin and drear,
Cherish the memory of the Christian maid
Who once was fair, whose hand in thine was laid,
Who loved thee with no fickle heart nor light.
Sometimes, at home, one gives the fancies flight.
(Another, another, then, will fill the dearth,
And take thy dead love's place beside the hearth!)

A little space thy laughing darling leave
For the green garden's mossy seat, at eve,
And thou shalt see my shade above thee bow,
And feel, no kiss adulterous on thy brow,
But the wind's breath bringing my soft caress.
Thus may the dead the living yet address.
Borne on the breeze, heard in the rustling leaf,
Always shall I return though thou be deaf.

HIPPIAS.

Virgin, the gift of words is on thy lips;
Inspired by the Muse thy soft speech slips
Between thy white teeth where the graces play.
But wherefore dwell on things unfit to say?
Why is the bridal robe with tear-drops pearled?
Youth, pleasure, and the brightly coloured world,
Love, all things, smile on us — and thou must weep!
Follow the light-foot hours so airy sweep!
Welcome our sacred joy in spirit light,
The world that gave thee birth, dear child, is bright!
Now thou art mine all things are sweet and dear,
Life will run gently for us, year by year,
Tasting each joy our destiny may bring,
Nor heeding future Fate's dark offering.

DAPHNE.

How sweet to seek the spring at heat of day!

HIPPIAS.

Companion mine, we must pursue our way.

See, the stars slide from Heaven. Thy mantle gird,

Gain my sure bark, my sailors wait the word,

And ancient Glaucos on the oar-swept seas

Shall see thee fly before the morning breeze.

Come, for the night fades: hasten us, and flee.

[DAPHNE, *pale* , *rises and totters* .

Daphne, thy fair form droops across my knee.

Ye gods! What Lamia hath, with hands unseen,

Laid these pale violets on thy brow serene?

A scent of death exhales within this lair,

Let us go forth and breathe the soft pure air.

SCENE VIII.

DAPHNE, HIPPIAS, THEOGNIS, KALLISTA, HERMAS, *and slaves bearing torches.*

THEOGNIS (*to HIPPIAS and DAPHNE, who issue from the tomb*).

Stay, children, learn by whom you are addrest:

I, in Christ's name, am shepherd of souls and priest

Of King Melchisedech's eternal line.

Without concern or fear your hearts incline.

I come not, child, to consecrate, in sooth

Christ will forgo this flower of thy youth;

In a man's hold it shall its scent emit,

God, who is pure, hath no more joy in it.

The power to bind and loose is in this hand.

Hear me, O daughter, and all men understand,

Thy mother's vow I loose which else did bind,

Lawfully thou mayst unite thee with thy kind.

Since for the Mystic Spouse thou art unworth,

Fear not, but follow, then, this son of earth.

For our dear Master took his place and blest

Miraculous wine at Cana's marriage-feast.

Thou, come of Gentiles, whom, the truth refused,

Falsehood makes wander like a man bemused,

Listen, that God may deign to bless thy bed:

Leave thine old ways, believe; the Apostle said,

"The man who weds shall sanctify his bride

And the New Church this sacrament provide."

Ye would be wed? It may be done, and can.

Man, take this woman. Woman, take this man.

In name of the Eternal and the Son

And of the Paraclete, in glory one,

I join you. Be one flesh in this your life,

Follow him, woman; man, cherish this thy wife.

Render one day this child thou tak'st unspoiled

Back to her God, yet joyful and unsoiled.

Now ye are one exchange your rings in troth.
By laying on of hands I bless you both.

HIPPIAS.

O holy man! Some god must walk with thee!
Nay more, thou seem'st a God. O prodigy!

HERMAS.

Certes, 'twas time these children were made one.
What thou hast done, O priest, was wisely done.
The great ox will I slay, my stable's pride,
And the red wine shall flow on every side.
All from the vines, all shepherds from the hill,
Shall throng your nuptials, children, in good will.

DAPHNE.

Prepare the feast, prepare the funeral feast.
God's snare has shut, my breath has nearly ceased.
Cruel, alas! The hand would liberate
To life and love now, when it is too late.

HIPPIAS.

Daphne, what evil threatens, yet untold?
I hold thy hand and yet thy hand is cold.

DAPHNE.

Farewell! For me the myrrh and winding-sheet.
Faithful to thee, O friend, could I yet cheat
God and my mother, and follow thee alone?
Think'st thou that love and life could all atone?
I came to thee because I might not live.
Hippias, my death is all I have to give.
Thou know'st the poison that the witches brew
From flowers Thessalian wet with midnight dew?
Its livid fumes I drained, my cup is dry.
Cold is my body, my arms droop — I die.

HIPPIAS.

Despair and woe! Flowers and coronals, fall!

DAPHNE.

What I have done is done, nor asks recall.
Know by my act how great the power of love.
Grave in your minds what I so sadly prove,
And tell my tale, that never child be sped
By mother's hands to such dark bridal bed.
God knows I would have lived had He seen fit,
Earth smiled so bright. I would have joyed in it,
Known hearth and husband's care, and, fond and proud,
Nourished a child, and heaven had seen no cloud.
Love breathing soft, life waking to its play...
Innocent dawn is come. Friends, it is day.
Bear me, oh, bear me to the rosy hills
Where o'er the tamarisk the fountain spills...
The night returns, night wraps me, darkness shed.
Dear husband, take me, bear me to the bed
Where I may rest me in my robe of grace.
Hippias, thy hand must cover up my face. Father, farewell.
Thou whom I loved live on!

HERMAS.

Dead, O my daughter! For ever is she gone!
Woman, thou hast slain her! Say, what barbarous God
Has foamed thy mouth, ridden thee thus roughshod;
Driven thee senseless, pitiless, to destroy
Thy daughter and myself and all our joy?
Cruel are men when the gods stir to wrath,
Widowed and childless I will flee this hearth.
Thy face accursed, my vine, my land that was!
Alas, my child, my flower! Alas, alas!

KALLISTA.

The mother's heart is piercèd with a sword.
God, grant me light, if I mistook Thy word.
Punish me, Lord, if I have sinned. But no,
This that I did worked for Thy fame below,
Thy glory upon earth, the good of souls,
Thy love, whose flame my every act controls.
For a rich jewel I offer Thee each tear

I cry to Thee from out this sorrow drear
And my lips praise Thy wisdom infinite.
Thou tak'st my child — I bless Thee though Thou smite.

THEOGNIS.

Thy vow was rash, thy zeal had made thee blind.
But thou hast faith, and shalt salvation find.
To the East turn we the dead woman's face.

HIPPIAS.

Hold! she is mine. I bear her from this place.
With her I fly before this ruin hurled;
Beauty and love have perished from the world.
Since all the earth is subject to strong Death,
I will seek light and life where none draws breath;
Fell the great pines and lay the woodland oak
That on one pyre our souls go up in smoke.
That we whom, while we meet the bright flame's face,
The steadfast earth-flax nets in one embrace,
May flee on fiery wings these drear abodes,
And seek the bosom of the distant gods.

HIPPIAS *of Thera*,

Son of LAKON.

Passer, be glad. Sacred this earth laid even
On one who served the gods his twenty years.
Two Loves are on this rough-hewn column graven:
One takes from men the light the one has given,
But both are fair and both smile on our tears.

DAPHNE,

Daughter of HERMAS.

The Christian Daphne, by the times undone
Tastes in eternity, for her begun,
The joys of Jesus in the heavenly dawn.
Honey from bitter wormwood hath she drawn.
Her mortal part, to be reborn all pure,
Was laid by Christian kinsmen in this place.

If one profane disturb her sepulture,
May he perish, last of his race.

NOTE

IN the days of the first Cæsars a kind of delirium troubled all minds. Through the confused union of a tripartite world at once Roman, Hellenic, and Barbarian, the great roads opened by the legionaries gave passage to every sort of folly. There was free exchange of superstitions. Rome had long since picked up the morbid cults of the East. Prodigies from India, Thessalian enchantments, marvels of Africa, that fecund mother of monsters, and the Italiote practices of neo-pythagorism, were merged and confounded. From this was thrown off a curious haze which, spreading over the world, hid or mis-shaped all nature. The better minds were still ruled by a measure of education and knowledge. But a varied acquaintance and a subtle intelligence served them but to imagine wonders and multiply superstitions. Long voyages were willingly undertaken by the curious-minded. The roads were safe. A Roman citizen found sheltering institutions and well-disposed authorities in every town. Hosts to whom he had recommendation provided shelter and hearth according to ancient custom, whose exercise he facilitated by providing food for himself. On his way he visited ancient temples and sacred places, and let himself be initiated in the mysteries. Nothing less secret than such mysteries, nothing more fashionable than such initiation. And on every side rose wonders, oracles, and magic doings for willing ears and staring eyes. Sophists and rhetoricians, heard with avidity, contributed to the frenzy of men's minds. Their every discourse, as was said of those of Dion, spread abroad a perfume as from a temple. Phlegon the Trallian was a child of his age. Born in Lydia, that home of mixed races and diverse customs, an educated slave and freed man of the Emperor, the Empire, in its entirety, was his fatherland. He wrote, as it happened, a description of Sicily. He was made historiographer to the Emperor Hadrian, and certainly was annalist to a Cæsar of inquiring mind. He compiled for a society mad on marvels and for a prince who was an astrologer, a *book of marvellous things*. These things were believed all the more willingly since they were utterly absurd. We have some remains of it, and notably a letter from a procurator to some official of the imperial *aula*. It is not hard to see that this letter is apocryphal. The first centuries of the Christian era abounded in pretended accounts. Forgers made Enoch speak, or Hermes. There was no criticism, and no suspicion. People wished to believe, and they believed.

Here is the letter which, so far as I know, has not before been translated into French. The beginning is lacking. One may, with Xylander, restore its substance

in some manner.

Philinnion, daughter of Demonstratos and of Kharito, though dead, secretly joins a guest of the family, Makhates. The nurse surprises them.

... She opens the door, enters the guest-room, and sees, by the light of her lamp, the young girl seated by Makhates. Unable to contain herself at this prodigious apparition, she runs to the mother, calls her with loud cries and presses Kharito and Demonstratos to rise and follow her and see their daughter. She has seen her, alive, and, at the will of some god, seated with the guest in the entertainment room. Kharito, when she heard this incredible account, was at first overcome by the gravity of the news and by the nurse's agitation, and was on the point of swooning. Then, the memory of her daughter supervening, she wept. Anyhow, she said that the nurse must be out of her mind, and bade her go away. But the nurse reproached her with losing, through such heedlessness, the chance of seeing her child. "For," said the old servant, "I am not mad nor have I lost my wits." At length Kharito, in spite of herself, half influenced by the nurse's insistence, half by curiosity to know what truth there was in all this, came to the door of the guest-chamber. But some time had elapsed since the nurse had given warning, and those two who had been overseen were sleeping in the shadow. The mother, gazing earnestly, thought to recognize the dress and the outline of the face. As she had no means of verifying what she saw she went back to bed: she counted on rising early and surprising her daughter, or, if too late, on learning all from Makhates, who could never lie when asked about such a matter. She retired, then, without saying anything. At the first light of day the young girl, whether at the beckoning of some god, or by chance, withdrew, and disappointed her mother. The latter came and was chagrined not to find her. Thereupon she told all she knew to the young man, her guest. She embraced the knees of Makhates, she adjured him to conceal nothing and not to distort the truth. He, touched, and anxious of heart, could scarcely speak.

"'Tis she, 'tis Philinnion," he said. And recounted how the union came about and the desires of the young girl who had said to him:— "I hide from my parents in order to come to you." And that they might not doubt his words he opened a coffer and drew from it what she had left behind: a gold ring which he had had of her, and a strip of stuff that she had forgotten to knot round her bosom on the preceding night. Kharito, seeing these manifest signs, gave a loud cry, tore her garments, snatched the bands from her head, flung herself on the ground, and for the second time fell into great lamentation. Seeing everyone in the house in great grief and weeping, as though they must shortly bury Kharito, the guest, disturbed, set himself to console the mother, begged her to cease her laments, and promised to show her her daughter did she return. Kharito, moved by these

words, was instant with him to be prompt in his promise, and returned to her dwelling. When night fell and the hour approached when Philinnion was used to come to the man she loved, all awaited her advent. She came. When she entered the chamber at the accustomed hour and when she was seated on the couch Makhates showed no surprise. He had no thought that he was consorting with a dead woman. The child had care to come to him at the time fixed; she ate and drank with him. He put no faith in what had been told to him. He supposed that someone among those whose business it was to bury the dead had taken from the sepulchre of Philinnion her garments and gold ornaments and had sold them to the father of the unknown girl who visited him. He sent a slave to summon Demostratos and Kharito. They came; they saw Philinnion. For the moment they stood dumb, overwhelmed, thunderstruck by such a prodigious sight. Then with loud outcry they embraced their daughter. Whereupon Philinnion said to them: "O father and mother mine, how unjustly do you grudge me the three days I may pass with this guest under the paternal roof, without undoing! Ye will weep afresh on account of your curiosity. As for me, I return to the habitation assigned me.

It was not without the divine will that I came hither." She spoke and fell dead. Her body reposed visibly on the bed. The father and mother embraced her. There was great tumult and lamentation throughout the household at a spectacle so terrible and irreparable, at so incredible a happening. The rumour of it spread quickly through the town and reached me. The same night I held back the crowd which flocked to the house, for I feared lest something extraordinary might be attempted on the making public of such tidings. That day the scene of events was crowded with the curious. When individual evidence had been taken of all the circumstances we agreed to go first of all to the tomb to satisfy ourselves if the corpse were in the coffin or whether it stood empty. When we had opened the vault where lay all the dead of this family we saw the other bodies stretched on their couch and the bones of those who had died long since. On the bed where Philinnion had been laid in her winding-sheet we found the guest's iron ring and the golden cup she had received on the first day from Makhates.

Surprised, surprised even to stupor, we went straightway to Demostratos and into the guest-chamber to see whether the body of the young girl were really there. Having seen it, stretched on the ground, we returned to the Assembly, for what had come about was a great and incredible thing. The Assembly being in a tumult, and as it was almost impossible to get anything done, Hyttos, who passes with us not only for an excellent divinator but also for a great augur, and who has deeply studied everything concerning the art of divination, rose and ordered that the corpse of the young girl should be inhumed outside the precincts (far

from burying her a second time in the midst of us). He ordered that Hermes of the underworld and the Erinnys be appeased. He prescribed purification for each and all, that the sacred vessels be laved with lustral water and sacrifice offered to the gods of the dead. He particularly laid upon me that I sacrificed to the Emperor, to the Republic, to Hermes, to Zeus the Harbourn, and to Ares, and to do all with rigour. Thus he said, and we did what he ordained. Makhates, the guest whom the spectre had visited, killed himself in grief. In addition to this, if you decide that the Emperor must be made acquainted with this affair, let me know by letter. I could even send some witnesses who were spectators of all this. Farewell.

The author of this recital wished it to be believed to the letter, and he omits no circumstance which could give authenticity to the character of his tale. To be beforehand with the suspicious, he shows that he was himself of their number. And, in spite of the minute exactitude of the narrator, we are touched by something vague and deep-reaching in his tale. There is a beauty which escapes him in what he recounts. He sets out to describe a fact: he lets us perceive a symbol. The young girl, dead but amorous, somehow betrays her Christianity. The Nazarene has touched her youth. Goethe, whose genius lighted everything he looked into, illuminated the dark places of the Trallian. He made us see in these lovers, separated by their parents and re-united by some mysterious force, victims of the battle of the gods which shook the world from Nero's day to Constantine. He wrote *Die Braut von Korinth* .

I, in my turn, have taken up again and developed this old tale, for I have met nothing which better paints the decline of the gods of antiquity and the dawn of Christianity in a corner of Greece.

THE CHILD SOUL

(Ames obscures)

UNCHANGING Nature's every trait
Is marvel to the children, and
Their dim souls' unbidden way
Breaks into wonderland.

The shining of its magic dawn
Is caught and given in their glance;
Their every sense, by beauty drawn,
Trembles to utterance.

The Unknown assumes them, the Unknown,
Deep waters of the abyss!
In vain you ask, insist — they own
Another world than this.

Their limpid eyes, those grave wide eyes,
Fill with the dreams they hold.
O children, out of Paradise,
Lost in this world so old!

The lightly carried head and rapt
Knows, not our mental strife,
But, thrill on thrill, and overlap,
The freshening waves of Life.

LIGHT

(A La Lumière)

FROM out the starry swarm's uncertain sheen
Thou, the first-born, as of right,
Nurse of the flowers and of all fruits, O Light,
White Mother of things seen

Down comest from the sun, 'cross softest bars
Of aery vapour floating, still;
Life stirs and wakes, and smiles to thy clear thrill,
O daughter of the stars!

Hail! For ere Thee were neither things nor days.
Hail! Sweetness and all might!
Hail! Candid guide and giver of my sight,
And keeper of my ways!

From Thee is colour, and all form divine,
Thou shapest all we love;
From Thee the glint on snow-peaks far above, —
The valley's flushed decline.

Under blue skies thy jewelled birds rejoice
In perfumes and in dews,
A grace on all things falls where fall thy hues,
On all things of thy choice.

Joyous is morning for thy dear caress,
The night thou leavest sweet
To woodland shadows, where in soft retreat
Our lovers meet and press.

The deep sea's living blooms look up to heaven,
Her sirens break in gold.
Thy rays entangled in the rain-drop's hold,
Lend it the colours seven.

Thou lendest Woman all thy glorious guise,
Light, 'tis Thou mak'st her fair!
And ever new the joy thy bounties spare
From out her radiant eyes.

Her very ear shall make Thee throne to climb,
And dazzle in a gem.
Where'er Thou shinest Thee will I acclaim,
Virgin as at the prime.

Be Thou my strength, O Light, may my thought be
Lucid and fair as Thou.
Thy grace and peace direct its forward flow,
Still rhythmical with Thee.

Grant me to see until my days be told,
Steeped in all joy and calm,
Beauty move queen-like over scattered palm,
Crowned with Thy virgin gold.

When Nature to her breast resume what is,
And shape her future dream,
Suffuse again, oh, lave with torrent stream,
My metamorphosis!

THE DANCE OF DEATH

(La Danse des Morts)

IN days of faith — when faith began to age —
The Dance of Death was oftentimes set out
Upon the charnel wall, or missal-page.

I think its edifying tale devout
Let in a little hope on deep despair;
That poor folk had as little fear as doubt.

Not that they looked to death to ease their care —
The devil grabs them once beneath the soil;
Hence from grey grief to utter dark they fare —

But that the master-painter, whose grave toil
Limned them this image, praying, on his knees,
Was monk, and breathed his peace on earthly broil.

Beneath the dancers' feet Hell's-mouth one sees,
Rattle of bones and live souls o'er the pit:
Grim: — but our Nothing did not menace these.

Sulphur enough — one gets the smell of it: —
And piteous to see abysmal darkness ope
For the poor suffering soul whose flesh is lit.

Yet in this pictured story's ample scope
Speaks God's communion with each human soul;
One is aware of faith, and love, and hope.

Here is the mourning love that can console;
Sad are these dying, but make no complaint;
Death leads the flock nor uses hard control.

None breaks the ranks, they go with self-constraint,
They catch a wail of music, coaxing, thin,
Marking their step, moving with dolour faint.

Death goes before and plucks a mandolin,
And, wooer-like, that no man may him heed,
Hides his bowed ivory scone his hat within.

Or, of his tribe, one holds a rustic reed
Against his white teeth grinning to the gaze,
Or strikes with bony hand the tabor's brede.

A female death of unaffected traits
Wakens the keyboard to her bony touch,
Even as St. Cecily, throned in a haze.

Their low-toned orchestra is scarcely such
As plays live men to church: it's quick'ning sound
Satan were wrong to envy overmuch.

For here, mark you, God's world may still be found,
Here Pope and Emperor still hold their sway,
And all the people led in peace profound.

Great lords believe even as labourers may,
In all that David or the Sibyl sung;
Their way is straight: — and horror lights the way.

But the Maid starts, and when, with arm loose-hung,
Her waist the Spectre circles, lover-wise,
Wakes to the touch her body fair and young.

Drooping her gaze before those hollow eyes,
Her wedding hymn she murmurs, closely prest,
For she is vowed to Bridegroom of the skies.

A marvellous dame rewards the Knightly quest.
Hangs on her open ribs, as on a grill,
A scrap of skin that once was woman's breast.

But he has vision of a woodland still,
His duchess riding in the month of May,
Whom he will see again: — God grant he will!

The Page, his youth's fair flower sere and grey,
Dances his road to Hell with steadfast mien.
Full well he knows his soul is damned alway.

The sightless Pedlar's steps had clumsy been,
But that Death, stepping soft with sober face,
Cuts the dog's cord with gentle hand unseen.

So groping towards the tinkle out of place
The blind man hies him to another night,
Not without many oaths: — God grant him grace!

Thus ends the dance and all are led aright.
Rufflers drop swords, the sceptred leave their throne;
Without complaint or noise so sleeps each wight

Expectant of the day his hound in stone,
At the stiff feet still couched in rigid care,
Wakes with wet tongue his master lying prone;

And judgment clarions through the dark shall blare,
Whose sound shall wake the echoes of his tomb
With tumult, and his bones shall be aware,
And dull cold Death, and Nature sick with gloom,
Shall see arise from every grave the form
Of every creature born of woman's womb.

All flesh of Adam won back from the worm;
And Death shall die: and void consume desire,
And worlds diverse Eternity inform.

Clad in the martyrs' white and shining guise,
Each spouse shall see, in nimbus of bright gold,
The well-beloved pass in white attire.

But they whose broken wings may ne'er unfold,
These, on the verge of burning sulphur-flood,
Shall suffer, yes: but still to life they hold.

All tragic loves and widowed, marked with blood,
Drifting enlaced about their circle fell,
Shall sigh unceasing words now understood.

O happy they who yet believed in Hell!

THY DEEP PROFOUND OF SOUL

THY deep profound of soul, Thy gentle tone,
Gathered the women by the well-side way;
They poured their perfume on Thine hair; to-day
They light an aureole about Thine eyes,
God of the foolish virgin and the wise!
For ever shall be perfected in Thee
The fairest loves of men; 'tis Thy decree!
Each woman who weeps is Thine, in her distress;
Loosed from our jealous hold, each matted tress
Shall serve in turn to wipe Thy naked feet;
Slipped from our arms, from our relaxed entreat,
Till time be done, each Magdalen in turn
Pour at Thy waiting feet the plenished urn.
Christ! For Thy throne she leaves my soul to drouth,
To praise Thee with the honey of her mouth.

God's chalice, thou! My lips shall know the loss.
His mystic Rose, the Flower of the Cross!

GOOD-BYE

(Adieu)

I ENTERED in a church where depth of shade
Closed the drear day when veils of black are laid
O'er the gilt symbols of the saving rood
Whereon earth's debt to Heaven was made good.
A deacon, bowed, white-surpliced, and alone,
Watched at God's tomb, the shrouded altar-stone
Friday in Holy Week, when women come
To glide like shadows in the recessèd gloom;
On rustle of silk and jewels' silvern sound,
Roll Latin chant and organ-voice profound.
There I saw her to whom my life is lent
Kneel on her knees in soft abandonment,
Her head borne back with heavy weight of hair
And long hands on the velvet drooped, in prayer.
From out the darkling roof the lamps' spent light
Lit the cheek's inward curve of amorous white.
I was surprised to know her in that place
For her life's way was not God's path of grace.
I was beside her, touched her garments dark,
My shadow fell in hers, she did not mark.
What struck me was that, from her big eyes bright,
I ne'er had seen such brilliance of clear light.
I had not known such burning tears to lie

On looks so lovely, such long ecstasy;
So sweet a tie, such thrill of fearful love,
Drew her to God, pale on the cross above.
So drank her sense the heavenly breath distilled,
The incense-fume wherewith the church was filled.

How prompt the woman-soul to spring on fire!
Her lips' red flower stood open in desire,
Her being throbbèd to an unseen embrace;
So fear and sorrow took me for a space;
I saw henceforth her heart a citadel,

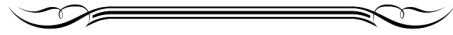
That she repented having loved too well;
That since God's fruitful grace had watered dearth
Rose the disgust against the things of earth.
Then did I mourn myself, and was aware
That she had passed to Thee, O Jew too fair,
King with locks reddened by the thorny crown!

The Non-Fiction



France at work in his later years

THE LIFE OF JOAN OF ARC



Translated by Winifred Stephens **CONTENTS**

VOLUME I.

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[CHAPTER XI](#)

[CHAPTER XII](#)

[CHAPTER XIII](#)

[CHAPTER XIV](#)

[CHAPTER XV](#)

[CHAPTER XVI](#)

[APPENDICES](#)

VOLUME I.

PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

SCHOLARS have been good enough to notice this book; and the majority have treated it very kindly, doubtless because they have perceived that the author has observed all the established rules of historical research and accuracy. Their kindness has touched me. I am especially grateful to MM. Gabriel Monod, Solomon Reinach and Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis, who have discovered in this work certain errors, which will not be found in the present edition.

My English critics have a special claim to my gratitude. To the memory of Joan of Arc they consecrate a pious zeal which is almost an expiatory worship. Mr. Andrew Lang's praiseworthy scruples with regard to my references have caused me to correct some and to add several.

The hagiographers alone are openly hostile. They reproach me, not with my manner of explaining the facts, but with having explained them at all. And the more my explanations are clear, natural, rational and derived from the most authoritative sources, the more these explanations displease them. They would wish the history of Joan of Arc to remain mysterious and entirely supernatural. I have restored the Maid to life and to humanity. That is my crime. And these zealous inquisitors, so intent on condemning my work, have failed to discover therein any grave fault, any flagrant inexactness. Their severity has had to content itself with a few inadvertences and with a few printer's errors. What flatterers could better have gratified "the proud weakness of my heart?"

Paris, *January, 1909* .

INTRODUCTION

MY first duty should be to make known the authorities for this history. But L'Averdy, Buchon, J. Quicherat, Vallet de Viriville, Siméon Luce, Boucher de Molandon, MM. Robillard de Beaurepaire, Lanéry d'Arc, Henri Jadart, Alexandre Sorel, Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis, L. Jarry, and many other scholars have published and expounded various documents for the life of Joan of Arc. I refer my readers to their works which in themselves constitute a voluminous literature, and without entering on any new examination of these documents, I will merely indicate rapidly and generally the reasons for the use I have chosen to make of them. They are: first, the trial which resulted in her condemnation; second, the chronicles; third, the trial for her rehabilitation; fourth, letters, deeds, and other papers.

First, in the trial which resulted in her condemnation the historian has a mine of rich treasure. Her cross-examination cannot be too minutely studied. It is based on information, not preserved elsewhere, gathered from Domremy and the various parts of France through which she passed. It is hardly necessary to say that all the judges of 1431 sought to discover in Jeanne was idolatry, heresy, sorcery and other crimes against the Church. Inclined as they were, however, to discern evil in every one of the acts and in each of the words of one whom they desired to ruin, so that they might dishonour her king, they examined all available information concerning her life. The high value to be set upon the Maid's replies is well known; they are heroically sincere, and for the most part perfectly lucid. Nevertheless they must not all be interpreted literally. Jeanne, who never regarded either the bishop or the promoter as her judge, was not so simple as to tell them the whole truth. It was very frank of her to warn them that they would not know all. That her memory was curiously defective must also be admitted. I am aware that the clerk of the court was astonished that after a fortnight she should remember exactly the answers she had given in her cross-examination. That may be possible, although she did not always say the same thing. It is none the less certain that after the lapse of a year she retained but an indistinct recollection of some of the important acts of her life. Finally, her constant hallucinations generally rendered her incapable of distinguishing between the true and the false.

The record of the trial is followed by an examination of Jeanne's sayings in *articulo mortis*. This examination is not signed by the clerks of the court. Hence

from a legal point of view the record is out of order; nevertheless, regarded as a historical document, its authenticity cannot be doubted. In my opinion the actual occurrences cannot have widely differed from what is related in this unofficial report. It tells of Jeanne's second recantation, and of this recantation there can be no question, for Jeanne received the communion before her death. The veracity of this document was never assailed, even by those who during the rehabilitation trial pointed out its irregularity.

Secondly, the chroniclers of the period, both French and Burgundian, were paid chroniclers, one of whom was attached to every great baron. Tringant says that his master did not expend any money in order to obtain mention in the chronicles, and that therefore he is omitted from them. The earliest chronicle in which the Maid occurs is that of Perceval de Cagny, who was in the service of the house of Alençon and Duke John's master of the house. It was drawn up in the year 1436, that is, only six years after Jeanne's death. But it was not written by him. According to his own confession he had "not half the sense, memory, or ability necessary for putting this, or even a matter of less than half its importance, down in writing." This chronicle is the work of a painstaking clerk. One is not surprised to find a chronicler in the pay of the house of Alençon representing the differences concerning the Maid, which arose between the Sire de la Trémouille and the Duke of Alençon, in a light most unfavourable to the King. But from a scribe, supposed to be writing at the dictation of a retainer of Duke John, one would have expected a less inaccurate and a less vague account of the feats of arms accomplished by the Maid in company with him whom she called her fair duke. Although this chronicle was written at a time when no one dreamed that the sentence of 1431 would ever be revoked, the Maid is regarded as employing supernatural means, and her acts are stripped of all verisimilitude by being recorded in the manner of a hagiography. Further, that portion of the chronicle attributed to Perceval de Cagny, which deals with the Maid, is brief, consisting of twenty-seven chapters of a few lines each. Quicherat is of opinion that it is the best chronicle of Jeanne d'Arc existing, and the others may indeed be even more worthless.

Gilles le Bouvier, king at arms of the province of Berry, who was forty-three in 1429, is somewhat more judicious than Perceval de Cagny; and, in spite of some confusion of dates, he is better informed of military proceedings. But his story is of too summary a nature to tell us much.

Jean Chartier, precentor of Saint-Denys, held the office of chronicler of France in 1449. Two hundred years later he would have been described as historiographer royal. His office may be divined from the manner in which he relates Jeanne's death. After having said that she had been long imprisoned by

the order of John of Luxembourg, he adds: "The said Luxembourg sold her to the English, who took her to Rouen, where she was harshly treated; in so much that after long delay, they had her publicly burnt in that town of Rouen, without a trial, of their own tyrannical will, which was cruelly done, seeing the life and the rule she lived, for every week she confessed and received the body of Our Lord, as beseemeth a good catholic." When Jean Chartier says that the English burned her without trial, he means apparently that the Bailie of Rouen did not pronounce sentence. Concerning the ecclesiastical trial and the two accusations of lapse and relapse he says not a word; and it is the English whom he accuses of having burnt a good Catholic without a trial. This example proves how seriously the condemnation of 1431 embarrassed the government of King Charles. But what can be thought of a historian who suppresses Jeanne's trial because he finds it inconvenient? Jean Chartier was extremely weak-minded and trivial; he seems to believe in the magic of Catherine's sword and in Jeanne's loss of power when she broke it; he records the most puerile of fables. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that the official chronicler of the Kings of France, writing about 1450, ascribes to the Maid an important share in the delivery of Orléans, in the conquest of fortresses on the Loire and in the victory of Patay, that he relates how the King formed the army at Gien "by the counsel of the said maid," and that he expressly states that Jeanne caused the coronation and consecration. Such was certainly the opinion which prevailed at the Court of Charles VII. All that we have to discover is whether that opinion was sincere and reasonable or whether the King of France may not have deemed it to his advantage to owe his kingdom to the Maid. She was held a heretic by the heads of the Church Universal, but in France her memory was honoured, rather, however, by the lower orders than by the princes of the blood and the leaders of the army. The services of the latter the King was not desirous to extol after the revolt of 1440. During this *Praguerie*, the Duke of Bourbon, the Count of Vendôme, the Duke of Alençon, whom the Maid called her fair duke, and even the cautious Count Dunois had been seen joining hands with the plunderers and making war on the sovereign with an ardour they had never shown in fighting against the English.

"Le Journal du Siège" was doubtless kept in 1428 and 1429; but the edition that has come down to us dates from 1467. What relates to Jeanne before her coming to Orléans is interpolated; and the interpolator was so unskilful as to date Jeanne's arrival at Chinon in the month of February, while it took place on March 6, and to assign Thursday, March 10, as the date of the departure from Blois, which did not occur until the end of April. The diary from April 28 to May 7 is less inaccurate in its chronology, and the errors in dates which do occur may be attributed to the copyist. But the facts to which these dates are assigned,

occasionally in disagreement with financial records and often tinged with the miraculous, testify to an advanced stage of Jeanne's legend. For example, one cannot possibly attribute to a witness of the siege the error made by the scribe concerning the fall of the Bridge of Les Tourelles. What is said on page 97 of P. Charpentier's and C. Cuissart's edition concerning the relations of the inhabitants and the men-at-arms seems out of place, and may very likely have been inserted there to efface the memory of the grave dissensions which had occurred during the last week. From the 8th of May the diary ceases to be a diary; it becomes a series of extracts borrowed from Chartier, from Berry, and from the rehabilitation trial. The episode of the big fat Englishman slain by Messire Jean de Montesclère at the Siege of Jargeau is obviously taken from the evidence of Jean d'Aulon in 1446; and even this plagiarism is inaccurate, since Jean d'Aulon expressly says he was slain at the Battle of Les Augustins.

The chronicle entitled *La Chronique de la Pucelle*, as if it were the chief chronicle of the heroine, is taken from a history entitled *Geste des nobles François*, going back as far as Priam of Troy. But the extract was not made until the original had been changed and added to. This was done after 1467. Even if it were proved that *La Chronique de la Pucelle* is the work of Cousinot, shut up in Orléans during the siege, or even of two Cousinots, uncle and nephew according to some, father and son according to others, it would remain none the less true that this chronicle is largely copied from Jean Chartier, the *Journal du Siège* and the rehabilitation trial. Whoever the author may have been, this work reflects no great credit upon him: no very high praise can be given to a fabricator of tales, who, without appearing in the slightest degree aware of the fact, tells the same stories twice over, introducing each time different and contradictory circumstances. *La Chronique de la Pucelle* ends abruptly with the King's return to Berry after his defeat before Paris.

Le Mystère du siège must be classed with the chronicles. It is in fact a rhymed chronicle in dialogue, and it would be extremely interesting for its antiquity alone were it possible to do what some have attempted and to assign to it the date 1435. The editors, and following them several scholars, have believed it possible to identify this poem of 20,529 lines with a *certain mistaire* played on the sixth anniversary of the delivery of the city. They have drawn their conclusions from the following circumstances: the Maréchal de Rais, who delighted to organise magnificent farces and mysteries, was in Duke Charles's city expending vast sums there from September, 1434, till August, 1435; in 1439 the city purchased out of its municipal funds "a standard and a banner, which had belonged to Monseigneur de Reys and had been used by him to represent the

manner of the storming of Les Tourelles and their capture from the English.” From such a statement it is impossible to prove that in 1435 or in 1439, on May 8, there was acted a play having the Siege for its subject and the Maid for its heroine. If, however, we take “the manner of the storming of Les Tourelles” to mean a mystery rather than a pageant or some other form of entertainment, and if we consider the *certain mistaire* of 1435 as indicating a representation of that siege which had been laid and raised by the English, we shall thus arrive at a mystery of the siege. But even then we must examine whether it be that mystery the text of which has come down to us.

Among the one hundred and forty speaking personages in this work is the Maréchal de Rais. Hence it has been concluded that the mystery was written and acted before the lawsuit ended by that sentence to which effect was given above the Nantes Bridge, on October 20, 1440. How, indeed, it has been asked, after so ignominious a death could the vampire of Machecoul have been represented to the people of Orléans as fighting for their deliverance? How could the Maid and Blue Beard be associated in a heroic action? It is hard to answer such a question, because we cannot possibly tell how much of that kind of thing could be tolerated by the barbarism of those rude old times. Perhaps our text itself, if properly examined, will be found to contain internal evidence as to whether it is of an earlier or later date than 1440.

The bastard of Orléans was created Count of Dunois on July 14, 1439. The lines of the mystery, in which he is called by this title, cannot therefore be anterior to that date. They are numerous, and, by a singularity which has never been explained, are all in the first third of the book. When Dunois reappears later he is the Bastard again. From this fact the editors of 1862 concluded that five thousand lines were prefixed to the primitive text subsequently, although they in no way differ from the rest, either in language, style, or prosody. But may the rest of the poem be assigned to 1435 or 1439?

That is not my opinion. In the lines 12093 and 12094 the Maid tells Talbot he will die by the hand of the King’s men. This prophecy must have been made after the event: it is an obvious allusion to the noble captain’s end, and these lines must have been written after 1453.

Six years after the siege no clerk of Orléans would have thought of travestying Jeanne as a lady of noble birth.

In line 10199 and the following of the “*Mistère du Siège*” the Maid replies to the first President of the Parlement of Poitiers when he questions her concerning her family:

“As for my father’s mansion, it is in the Bar country; and he is of gentle birth and rank right noble, a good Frenchman and a loyal.”

Before a clerk would write thus, Jeanne's family must have been long ennobled and the first generation must have died out, which happened in 1469; there must have come into existence that numerous family of the Du Lys, whose ridiculous pretensions had to be humoured. Not content with deriving their descent from their aunt, the Du Lys insisted on connecting the good peasant Jacquot d'Arc with the old nobility of Bar.

Notwithstanding that Jeanne's reference to "her father's mansion" conflicts with other scenes in the same mystery, this lengthy work would appear to be all of a piece.

It was apparently compiled during the reign of Louis XI, by a citizen of Orléans who was a fair master of his subject. It would be interesting to make a more detailed study of his authorities than has been done hitherto. This poet seems to have known a *Journal du siège* very different from the one we possess.

Was his mystery acted during the last thirty years of the century at the festival instituted to commemorate the taking of Les Tourelles? The subject, the style, and the spirit are all in harmony with such an occasion. But it is curious that a poem composed to celebrate the deliverance of Orléans on May 8 should assign that deliverance to May 9. And yet this is what the author of the mystery does when he puts the following lines into the mouth of the Maid:

"Remember how Orléans was delivered in the year one thousand four hundred and twenty-nine, and forget not also that of May it was the ninth day."

Such are the chief chroniclers on the French side who have written of the Maid. Others who came later or who have only dealt with certain episodes in her life, need not be quoted here; their testimony will be best examined when we come to that of the facts in detail. Placing on one side any information to be obtained from *La Chronique de l'établissement de la fête*, from *La Relation* of the Clerk of La Rochelle and other contemporary documents, we are now in a position to realise that if we depended on the French chroniclers for our knowledge of Jeanne d'Arc we should know just as much about her as we know of Sakya Muni.

We shall certainly not find her explained by the Burgundian chroniclers. They, however, furnish certain useful information. The earliest of these Burgundian chroniclers is a clerk of Picardy, the author of an anonymous chronicle, called *La Chronique des Cordeliers*, because the only copy of it comes from a house of the Cordeliers at Paris. It is a history of the world from the creation to the year 1431. M. Pierre Champion has proved that Monstrelet made use of it. This clerk of Picardy knew divers matters, and was acquainted with sundry state documents. But facts and dates he curiously confuses. His knowledge of the Maid's military career is derived from a French and a popular

source. A certain credence has been attached to his story of the leap from Beaurevoir; but his account if accurate destroys the idea that Jeanne threw herself from the top of the keep in a fit of frenzy or despair. And it does not agree with what Jeanne said herself.

Monstrelet, “more drivelling at the mouth than a mustard-pot,” is a fountain of wisdom in comparison with Jean Chartier. When he makes use of *La Chronique des Cordeliers* he rearranges it and presents its facts in order. What he knew of Jeanne amounts to very little. He believed that she was an inn servant. He has but a word to say of her indecision at Montépilloy, but that word, to be found nowhere else, is extremely significant. He saw her in the camp at Compiègne; but unfortunately he either did not realise or did not wish to say what impression she made upon him.

Wavrin du Forestel, who edited additions to Froissart, Monstrelet, and Mathieu d’Escouchy, was at Patay; he never saw Jeanne there. He knows her only by hearsay and that but vaguely. We do not therefore attach great importance to what he relates concerning Robert de Baudricourt, who, according to him, indoctrinated the Maid and taught her how to appear “inspired by Divine Providence.” On the other hand, he gives valuable information concerning the war immediately after the deliverance of Orléans.

Le Fèvre de Saint-Rémy, Counsellor to the Duke of Burgundy and King-at-arms of the Golden Fleece, was possibly at Compiègne when Jeanne was taken; and he speaks of her as a brave girl.

Georges Chastellain copies Le Fèvre de Saint Remy.

The author of *Le Journal* ascribed to *un Bourgeois de Paris*, whom we identify as a Cabochien clerk, had only heard Jeanne spoken of by the doctors and masters of the University of Paris. Moreover he was very ill-informed, which is regrettable. For the man stands alone in his day for energy of feeling and language, for passion of wrath and of pity, and for intense sympathy with the people.

I must mention a document which is neither French nor Burgundian, but Italian. I refer to the *Chronique d’Antonio Morosini*, published and annotated with admirable erudition by M. Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis. This chronicle, or to be more precise, the letters it contains, are very valuable to the historian, but not on account of the veracity of the deeds here attributed to the Maid, which on the contrary are all imaginary and fabulous. In the *Chronique de Morosini*, every single fact concerning Jeanne is presented in a wrong character and in a false light. And yet Morosini’s correspondents are men of business, thoughtful, subtle

Venetians. These letters reveal how there were being circulated throughout Christendom a whole multitude of fictitious stories, imitated some from the Romances of Chivalry, others from the Golden Legend, concerning that *Demoiselle* as she is called, at once famous and unknown.

Another document, the diary of a German merchant, one Eberhard de Windecke, a conscientious and clever edition of which has also been published by M. Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis, presents the same phenomenon. Nothing here related of the Maid is even probable. As soon as she appears a whole cycle of popular stories grow up round her name. Eberhard obviously delights to relate them. Thus we learn from these good foreign merchants that at no period of her existence was Jeanne known otherwise than by fables, and that if she moved multitudes it was by the spreading abroad of countless legends which sprang up wherever she passed and made way before her. And indeed, there is much food for thought in that dazzling obscurity, which from the very first enwrapped the Maid, in those radiant clouds of myth, which, while concealing her, rendered her all the more imposing.

Thirdly, with its memoranda, its consultations, and its one hundred and forty depositions, furnished by one hundred and twenty-three deponents, the rehabilitation trial forms a very valuable collection of documents. M. Lanéry d'Arc has done well to publish in their entirety the memoranda of the doctors as well as the treatise of the Archbishop of Embrun, the propositions of Master Heinrich von Gorcum and the *Sibylla Francica*. From the trial of 1431 we learn what theologians on the English side thought of the Maid. But were it not for the consultations of Théodore de Leliis and of Paul Pontanus and the opinions included in the later trial we should not know how she was regarded by the doctors of Italy and France. It is important to ascertain what were the views held by the whole Church concerning a damsel condemned during her lifetime, when the English were in power, and rehabilitated after her death when the French were victorious.

Doubtless many matters were elucidated by the one hundred and twenty-three witnesses heard at Domremy, at Vaucouleurs, at Toul, at Orléans, at Paris, at Rouen, at Lyon, witnesses drawn from all ranks of life — churchmen, princes, captains, burghers, peasants, artisans. But we are bound to admit that they come far short of satisfying our curiosity, and for several reasons. First, because they replied to a list of questions drawn up with the object of establishing a certain number of facts within the scope of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Holy Inquisitor who conducted the trial was curious, but his curiosity was not ours. This is the first reason for the insufficiency of the evidence from our point of view.

But there are other reasons. Most of the witnesses appear excessively simple and lacking in discernment. In so large a number of men of all ages and of all ranks it is sad to find how few were equipped with lucid and judicial minds. It would seem as if the human intellect of those days was enwrapped in twilight and incapable of seeing anything distinctly. Thought as well as speech was curiously puerile. Only a slight acquaintance with this dark age is enough to make one feel as if among children. Want and ignorance and wars interminable had impoverished the mind of man and starved his moral nature. The scanty, slashed, ridiculous garments of the nobles and the wealthy betray an absurd poverty of taste and weakness of intellect. One of the most striking characteristics of these small minds is their triviality; they are incapable of attention; they retain nothing. No one who reads the writings of the period can fail to be struck by this almost universal weakness.

By no means all the evidence given in these one hundred and forty depositions can be treated seriously. The daughter of Jacques Boucher, steward to the Duke of Orléans, deposes in the following terms: "At night I slept alone with Jeanne. Neither in her words or her acts did I ever observe anything wrong. She was perfectly simple, humble, and chaste."

This young lady was nine years old when she perceived with a discernment somewhat precocious that her sleeping companion was simple, humble, and chaste.

That is unimportant. But to show how one may sometimes be deceived by the witnesses whom one would expect to be the most reliable, I will quote Brother Pasquerel. Brother Pasquerel is Jeanne's chaplain. He may be expected to speak as one who has seen and as one who knows. Brother Pasquerel places the examination at Poitiers before the audience granted by the King to the Maid in the château of Chinon.

Forgetting that the whole relieving army had been in Orléans since May 4, he supposes that, on the evening of Friday the 6th, it was still expected. From such blunders we may judge of the muddled condition of this poor priest's brain. His most serious shortcoming, however, is the invention of miracles. He tries to make out that when the convoy of victuals reached Orléans, there occurred, by the Maid's special intervention, and in order to carry the barges up the river, a sudden flood of the Loire which no one but himself saw.

The evidence of Dunois is also somewhat deceptive. We know that Dunois was one of the most intelligent and prudent men of his day, and that he was considered a good speaker. In the defence of Orléans and in the coronation campaign he had displayed considerable ability. Either his evidence must have seriously suffered at the hands of the translator and the scribes, or he must have

caused it to be given by his chaplain. He speaks of the “great number of the enemy” in terms more appropriate to a canon of a cathedral or a woollen draper than to a captain entrusted with the defence of a city and expected to know the actual force of the besiegers. All his evidence dealing with the transport of victuals on April 28 is well-nigh unintelligible. And Dunois is unable to state that Troyes was the first stage in the army’s march from Gien. Relating a conversation he held with the Maid after the coronation, he makes her speak as if her brothers were awaiting her at Domremy, whereas they were with her in France. Curiously blundering, he attempts to prove that Jeanne had visions by relating a story much more calculated to give the impression that the young peasant girl was an apt feigner and that at the request of the nobles she reproduced one of her ecstasies, like the Esther of the lamented Doctor Luys.

In that portion of this work which deals with the rehabilitation trial I have given my opinion of the evidence of the clerks of the court, of the usher Massieu, of the Brothers Isambard de la Pierre and Martin Ladvenu. All these burners of witches and avengers of God worked as heartily at Jeanne’s rehabilitation as they had at her condemnation.

In many cases and often on events of importance, the evidence of witnesses is in direct conflict with the truth. A woollen draper of Orléans, one Jean Luillier, comes before the commissioners and as bold as brass maintains that the garrison could not hold out against so great a besieging force. Now this statement is proved to be false by the most authentic documents, which show that the English round Orléans were very weak and that their resources were greatly reduced.

When the evidence given at the second trial has obviously been dressed up to suit the occasion, or even when it is absolutely contrary to the truth, we must blame not only those who gave it, but those who received it. In its elicitation the latter were too artful. This evidence has about as much value as the evidence in a trial by the Inquisition. In certain matters it may represent the ideas of the judges as much as those of the witnesses.

What the judges in this instance were most desirous to establish was that Jeanne had not understood when she was spoken to of the Church and the Pope, that she had refused to obey the Church Militant because she believed the Church Militant to be Messire Cauchon and his assessors. In short, it was necessary to represent her as almost an imbecile. In ecclesiastical procedure this expedient was frequently adopted. And there was yet another reason, a very strong one, for passing her off as an innocent, a damsel devoid of intelligence. This second trial, like the first, had been instituted with a political motive; its object was to make known that Jeanne had come to the aid of the King of France

not by devilish incitement, but by celestial inspiration. Consequently in order that divine wisdom might be made manifest in her she must be shown to have had no wisdom of her own. On this string the examiners were constantly harping. On every occasion they drew from the witnesses the statement that she was simple, very simple. *Una simplex bergereta* , says one. *Erat multum simplex et ignorans* , says another.

But since, despite her ignorance, this innocent damsel had been sent of God to deliver or to capture towns and to lead men at arms, there must needs be innate in her a knowledge of the art of war, and in battle she must needs manifest the strength and the counsel she had received from above. Wherefore it was necessary to obtain evidence to establish that she was more skilled in warfare than any man.

Damoiselle Marguerite la Touroulde makes this affirmation. The Duke of Alençon declares that the Maid was apt alike at wielding the lance, ranging an army, ordering a battle, preparing artillery, and that old captains marvelled at her skill in placing cannon. The Duke quite understands that all these gifts were miraculous and that to God alone was the glory. For if the merit of the victories had been Jeanne's he would not have said so much about them.

And if God had chosen the Maid to perform so great a task, it must have been because in her he beheld the virtue which he preferred above all others in his virgins. Henceforth it sufficed not for her to have been chaste; her chastity must become miraculous, her chastity and her moderation in eating and drinking must be exalted into sanctity. Wherefore the witnesses are never tired of stating: *Erat casta, erat castissima. Ille loquens non credit aliquam mulierem plus esse castam quam ista Puella erat. Erat sobria in potu et cibo. Erat sobria in cibo et potu.*

The heavenly source of such purity must needs have been made manifest by Jeanne's possessing singular immunities. And on this point there is a mass of evidence. Rough men at arms, Jean de Novelompont, Bertrand de Poulengy, Jean d'Aulon; great nobles, the Count of Dunois and the Duke of Alençon, come forward and affirm on oath that in them Jeanne never provoked any carnal desires. Such a circumstance fills these old captains with astonishment; they boast of their past vigour and wonder that for once their youthful ardour should have been damped by a maid. It seems to them most unnatural and humanly impossible. Their description of the effect Jeanne produced upon them recalls Saint Martha's binding of the Tarascon beast. Dunois in his evidence is very much occupied with miracles. He points to this one as, to human reason, the

most incomprehensible of all. If he neither desired nor solicited this damsel, of this unique fact he can find but one explanation, it is that Jeanne was holy, *res divina*. When Jean de Novelompont and Bertrand de Poulengy describe their sudden continence, they employ identical forms of speech, affected and involved. And then there comes a king's equerry, Gobert Thibaut, who declares that in the army there was much talk of this divine grace, vouchsafed to the Armagnacs and denied to English and Burgundians, at least, so the behaviour of a certain knight of Picardy, and of one Jeannotin, a tailor of Rouen, would lead us to believe.

Such evidence obviously answers to the ideas of the judges, and turns, so to speak, on theological rather than on natural facts.

In inquisitorial inquiries there abound such depositions as those of Jean de Novelompont and of Bertrand de Poulengy, containing passages drawn up in identical terms. But I must admit that in the rehabilitation trial they are rare, partly because the witnesses were heard at long intervals of time and in different countries, and partly because in the Maid's case no elaborate proceedings were necessary owing to her adversaries not being represented.

It is to be regretted that all the evidence given at this trial, with the exception of that of Jean d'Aulon, should have been translated into Latin. This process has obscured fine shades of thought and deprived the evidence of its original flavour.

Sometimes the clerk contents himself with saying that the depositions of a witness were like those of his predecessor. Thus on the raising of the siege of Orléans all the burgesses depone like the woollen draper, who himself was not thoroughly conversant with the circumstances in which his town had been delivered. Thus the Sire de Gaucourt, after a brief declaration, gives the same evidence as Dunois, although the Count had related matters so strikingly individual that it seems strange they should have been common to two witnesses.

Certain evidence would appear to have been cut short. Brother Pasquerel's abruptly comes to an end at Paris. This circumstance, if we did not possess his signature at the conclusion of the Latin letter to the Hussites, would lead us to believe that the good Brother left the Maid immediately after the attack on La Porte Saint-Honoré. It surely cannot have chanced that in so long a series of questions and answers not one word was said of the departure from Sully or of the campaign which began at Lagny and ended at Compiègne.

We conclude, therefore, that in the study of this voluminous evidence we must exercise great judgment and that we must not expect it to enlighten us on all the circumstances of Jeanne's life.

Fourthly. On certain points of the Maid's history the only exact information is to be obtained from account-books, letters, deeds, and other authentic documents

of the period. The records published by Siméon Luce and the lease of the Château de l'Île inform us of the circumstances among which Jeanne grew up. Neither the two trials nor the chronicles had revealed the terrible conditions prevailing in the village of Domremy from 1412 to 1425.

The fortress accounts kept at Orléans and the documents of the English administration enable us to estimate approximately the respective forces of defenders and besiegers of the city. On this point also they enable us to correct the statements of chroniclers and witnesses in the rehabilitation trial.

From the letters in the archives at Reims, copied by Rogier in the seventeenth century, we learn how Troyes, Châlons, and Reims surrendered to the King. From these letters also we see how very far from accurate is Jean Chartier's account of the capitulation of the city and how insufficient, especially considering the character of the witness, is the evidence of Dunois on this subject.

Four or five records throw a faint light here and there on the obscurity which shrouds the unfortunate campaign on the Aisne and the Oise.

The registers of the chapter of Rouen, the wills of canons and sundry other documents, discovered by M. Robillard de Beaurepaire in the archives of Seine-Inférieure, serve to correct certain errors in the two trials.

How many other detached papers, all valuable to the historian, might I not enumerate! Surely this is another reason for mistrusting records false or falsified, as, for example, the patent of nobility of Guy de Cailly.

Rapid as this examination of authorities has been, I think nothing essential has been omitted. To sum up, even in her lifetime the Maid was scarce known save by fables. Her oldest chroniclers were devoid of any critical sense, for the early legends concerning her they relate as facts.

The Rouen trial, certain accounts, a few letters, sundry deeds, public and private, are the most trustworthy documents. The rehabilitation trial is also useful to the historian, provided always that we remember how and why that trial was conducted.

By means of such records we may attain to a pretty accurate knowledge of Jeanne d'Arc's life and character.

The salient fact which results from a study of all these authorities is that she was a saint. She was a saint with all the attributes of fifteenth-century sanctity. She had visions, and these visions were neither feigned nor counterfeited. She really believed that she heard the voices which spoke to her and came from no human lips. These voices generally addressed her clearly and in words she could understand. She heard them best in the woods and when the bells were ringing. She saw forms, she said, like myriads of tiny shapes, like sparks on a dazzling

background. There is no doubt she had visions of another nature, since she tells us how she beheld Saint Michael in the guise of a *prud'homme*, that is as a good knight, and Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, wearing crowns. She saw them saluting her; she kissed their feet and inhaled their sweet perfume.

What does this mean if not that she was subject to hallucinations of hearing, sight, touch, and smell? But the most strongly affected of her senses was her hearing. She says that her voices appear to her; she sometimes calls them her council. She hears them very plainly unless there is a noise around her. Generally she obeys them; but sometimes she resists. We may doubt whether her visions were really so distinct as she makes out. Because she either could not, or would not, she never gave her judges at Rouen any very clear or precise description of them. The angel she described most in detail was the one which brought the crown, and which she afterwards confessed to have seen only in imagination.

At what age did she become subject to these trances? We cannot say exactly. But it was probably towards the end of her childhood, notwithstanding that according to Jean d'Aulon, childhood was a state out of which she never completely developed.

Although it is always hazardous to found a medical diagnosis on documents purely historical, several men of science have attempted to define the pathological conditions which rendered the young girl subject to false perceptions of sight and hearing. Owing to the rapid strides made by psychiatry during recent years, I have consulted an eminent man of science, who is thoroughly conversant with the present stage attained by this branch of pathology, to which he has himself rendered important service. I asked Doctor Georges Dumas, Professor at the Sorbonne, whether sufficient material exists for science to make a retrospective diagnosis of Jeanne's case. He replied to my inquiry in a letter which appears as the first Appendix to this work.

With such a subject I am not qualified to deal. But it does lie within my province to make an observation concerning the hallucinations of Jeanne d'Arc, which has been suggested to me by a study of the documents. This observation is of infinite significance. I shall be careful to restrict it to the limits prescribed by the object and the nature of this work.

Those visionaries, who believe they are entrusted with a divine mission, are distinguished by certain characteristics from other inspired persons. When mystics of this class are studied and compared with one another, resemblances are found to exist which may extend to very slight details: certain of their words and acts are identical. Indeed as we come to recognise how vigorous is the

determinism controlling the actions of these visionaries, we are astonished to find the human machine, when impelled by the same mysterious agent, performing its functions with inevitable uniformity. To this group of the religious Jeanne belongs. In this connection it is interesting to compare her with Saint Catherine of Sienna, Saint Colette of Corbie, Yves Nicolazic, the peasant of Kernanna, Suzette Labrousse, the inspired woman of the Revolution Church, and with many other seers and seeresses of this order, who all bear a family likeness to one another.

Three visionaries especially are closely related to Jeanne. The earliest in date is a vavasour of Champagne, who had a mission to speak to King John; of this holy man I have written sufficiently in the present work. The second is a farrier of Salon, who had a mission to speak to Louis XIV; the third, a peasant of Gallardon, named Martin, who had a mission to speak to Louis XVIII. Articles on the farrier and the farmer, who both saw apparitions and showed signs to their respective kings, will be found in the appendices at the end of this work. In spite of difference in sex, the points of similarity between Jeanne d'Arc and these three men are very close and very significant; they are inherent in the very nature of Jeanne and her fellow visionaries; and the variations, which at a first glance might seem to separate widely the latter from Jeanne, are æsthetic, social, historical, and consequently external and contingent. Between them and her there are of course striking contrasts in appearance and in fortune. They were entirely wanting in that charm which she never failed to exercise; and it is a fact that while they failed miserably she grew in strength and flowered in legend. But it is the duty of the scientific mind to recognise common characteristics, proving identity of origin alike in the noblest individual and in the most wretched abortion of the same species.

The free-thinkers of our day, imbued as they are, for the most part, with transcendentalism, refuse to recognise in Jeanne not merely that automatism which determines the acts of such a seeress, not only the influence of constant hallucination, but even the suggestions of the religious spirit. What she achieved through saintliness and devoutness, they make her out to have accomplished by intelligent enthusiasm. Such a disposition is manifest in the excellent and erudite Quicherat, who all unconsciously introduces into the piety of the Maid a great deal of eclectic philosophy. This point was not without its drawbacks. It led free-thinking historians to a ridiculous exaggeration of Jeanne's intellectual faculties, to the absurdity of attributing military talent to her and to the substitution of a kind of polytechnic phenomenon for the fifteenth century's artless marvel. The Catholic historians of the present day when they make a saint of the Maid are much nearer to nature and to truth. Unfortunately the Church's idea of

saintliness has grown insipid since the Council of Trent, and orthodox historians are disinclined to study the variations of the Catholic Church down the ages. In their hands therefore she becomes sanctimonious and bigoted. So much so that in a search for the most curiously travestied of all the Jeannes d'Arc we should have been driven to choose between their miraculous protectress of Christian France, the patroness of officers, the inimitable model of the pupils of Saint-Cyr, and the romantic Druidess, the inspired woman-soldier of the national guard, the patriot gunneress of the Republicans, had there not arisen a Jesuit Father to create an ultramontane Jeanne d'Arc.

On the subject of Jeanne's sincerity I have raised no doubts. It is impossible to suspect her of lying; she firmly believed that she received her mission from her voices. But whether she were not unconsciously directed is more difficult to ascertain. What we know of her before her arrival at Chinon comes to very little. One is inclined to believe that she had been subject to certain influences; it is so with all visionaries: some unseen director leads them. Thus it must have been with Jeanne. At Vaucouleurs she was heard to say that the Dauphin held the kingdom in fief (*en commende*). Such a term she had not learnt from the folk of her village. She uttered a prophecy which she had not invented and which had obviously been fabricated for her.

She must have associated with priests who were faithful to the cause of the Dauphin Charles, and who desired above all things the end of the war. Abbeys were being burned, churches pillaged, divine service discontinued. Those pious persons who sighed for peace, now that they saw the Treaty of Troyes failing to establish it, looked for the realisation of their hopes to the expulsion of the English. And the wonderful, the unique point about this young peasant girl — a point suggesting the ecclesiastic and the monk — is not that she felt herself called to ride forth and fight, but that in "her great pity" she announced the approaching end of the war, by the victory and coronation of the King, at a time when the nobles of the two countries, and the men-at-arms of the two parties, neither expected nor desired the war ever to come to an end.

The mission, with which she believed the angel had entrusted her and to which she consecrated her life, was doubtless extraordinary, marvellous; and yet it was not unprecedented: it was no more than saints, both men and women, had already endeavoured to accomplish in human affairs. Jeanne d'Arc arose in the decline of the great Catholic age, when sainthood, usually accompanied by all manner of oddities, manias, and illusions, still wielded sovereign power over the minds of men. And of what miracles was she not capable when acting according to the impulses of her own heart, and the grace of her own mind? From the

thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries God's servants perform wondrous works. Saint Dominic, possessed by holy wrath, exterminates heresy with fire and sword; Saint Francis of Assisi for the nonce founds poverty as an institution of society; Saint Antony of Padua defends merchants and artisans against the avarice and cruelty of nobles and bishops; Saint Catherine brings the Pope back to Rome. Was it impossible, therefore, for a saintly damsel, with God's aid, to re-establish within the hapless realm of France that royal power instituted by our Lord Himself and to bring to his coronation a new Joash snatched from death for the salvation of the holy people?

Thus did pious French folk, in the year 1428, regard the mission of the Maid. She represented herself as a devout damsel inspired by God. There was nothing incredible in that. When she announced that she had received revelations touching the war from my Lord Saint Michael, she inspired the men-at-arms of the Armagnac party and the burghers of the city of Orléans with a confidence as great as could have been communicated to the troops, marching along the Loire in the winter of 1871, by a republican engineer who had invented a smokeless powder or an improved form of cannon. What was expected from science in 1871 was expected from religion in 1428, so that the Bastard of Orléans would as naturally employ Jeanne as Gambetta would resort to the technical knowledge of M. de Freycinet.

What has not been sufficiently remarked upon is that the French party made a very adroit use of her. The clerks at Poitiers, while inquiring at great length into her religion and her morals, brought her into evidence. These Poitiers clerks were no monks ignorant of the world; they constituted the Parliament of the lawful King; they were the banished members of the University, men deeply involved in political affairs, compromised by revolutions, despoiled and ruined, and very impatient to regain possession of their property. They were directed by the cleverest man in the King's Council, the Duke Archbishop of Reims, the Chancellor of the kingdom. By the ceremoniousness and the deliberation of their inquiries, they drew upon Jeanne the curiosity, the interest, and the hopes of minds lost in amazement.

The defences of the city of Orléans consisted in its walls, its trenches, its cannon, its men-at-arms, and its money. The English had failed both to surround it and to take it by assault. Convoys and companies passed between their bastions. Jeanne was introduced into the town with a strong relieving army. She brought flocks of oxen, sheep, and pigs. The townsfolk believed her to be an angel of the Lord. Meanwhile the men and the money of the besiegers were waxing scant. They had lost all their horses. Far from being in a position to attempt a new attack, they were not likely to be able to hold out long in their

bastions. At the end of April there were four thousand English before Orléans and perhaps less, for, as it was said, soldiers were deserting every day; and companies of these deserters went plundering through the villages. At the same time the city was defended by six thousand men-at-arms and archers, and by more than three thousand men of the town bands. At Saint Loup, there were fifteen hundred French against four hundred English; at Les Tourelles, there were five thousand French against four or five hundred English. By their retreat from Orléans the *Godons* abandoned to their fate the small garrisons of Jargeau, Meung, and Beaugency. The Battle of Patay gives us some idea of the condition of the English army. It was no battle but a massacre, and one which Jeanne only reached in time to mourn over the cruelty of the conquerors. And yet the King, in his letters to his good towns, attributed to her a share in the victory. Evidently the Royal Council made a point of glorifying its Holy Maid.

But at heart what did they really think, those who employed her, those Regnaults de Chartres, those Roberts le Maçon, those Gérards Machet? They were certainly in no position to discuss the origin of the illusions which enveloped her. And, albeit there were atheists even among churchmen, to the majority there would be nothing to cause astonishment in the appearance of Saint Michael, the Archangel. In those days nothing appeared more natural than a miracle. But a miracle vanishes when closely observed. And they had the damsel before their very eyes. They perceived that good and saintly as she was, she wielded no supernatural power.

While the men-at-arms and all the common folk welcomed her as the maid of God and an angel sent from heaven for the salvation of the realm, these good lords thought only of profiting from the sentiments of confidence which she inspired and in which they had little share. Finding her as ignorant as possible, and doubtless deeming her less intelligent than she really was, they intended to do as they liked with her. They must soon have discovered that it was not always easy. She was a saint, saints are intractable. What were the true relations between the Royal Council and the Maid? We do not know; and it is a mystery which will never be solved. The judges at Rouen thought they knew that she received letters from Saint Michael. It is possible that her simplicity was sometimes taken advantage of. We have reason for believing that the march to Reims was not suggested to her in France; but there is no doubt that the Chancellor of the kingdom, Messire Regnault de Chartres, Archbishop of Reims, eagerly desired his restoration to the see of the Blessed Saint Remi and the enjoyment of his benefices.

The coronation campaign was really nothing but a series of negotiations, backed by an army. Its object was to show the good towns a king saintly and

pacific. Had there been any idea of fighting, the campaign would have been directed against Paris or against Normandy.

At the inquiry of 1456, five or six witnesses, captains, magistrates, ecclesiastics, and an honest widow, gave evidence that Jeanne was well versed in the art of war. They agreed in saying that she rode a horse and wielded a lance better than any one. A master of requests stated that she amazed the army by the length of time she could remain in the saddle. Such qualities we are not entitled to deny her, neither can we dispute the diligence and the ardour which Dunois praised in her, on the occasion of a demonstration by night before Troyes. As to the opinion that this damsel was clever in arraying and leading an army and especially skilled in the management of artillery, that is more difficult to credit and would require to be vouched for by some one more trustworthy than the poor Duke of Alençon, who was never considered a very rational person. What we have said about the rehabilitation trial sufficiently explains this curious glorification of the Maid. It was understood that Jeanne's military inspiration came from God. Henceforth there was no danger of its being too much admired and it came to be praised somewhat at random.

After all the Duke of Alençon was quite moderate when he represented her as a distinguished artillery-woman. As early as 1429, a humanist on the side of Charles VII asserted in Ciceronian language that in military glory she equalled and surpassed Hector, Alexander, Hannibal and Cæsar: "*Non Hectore reminiscat et gaudeat Troja, exultet Græcia Alexandro, Annibale Africa, Italia Cæsare et Romanis ducibus omnibus gloriatur, Gallia etsi ex pristinis multos habeat, hac tamen una Puella contenta, audebit se gloriari et laude bellica caeteris nationibus se comparare, verum quoque, si expediet, se antepone.*"

For ever praying and for ever wrapped in ecstasy, Jeanne never observed the enemy; she did not know the roads; she paid no heed to the number of troops engaged; she did not take into account either the height of walls or the breadth of trenches. Even to-day officers are to be heard discussing the Maid's military tactics. Those tactics were simple; they consisted in preventing men from blaspheming against God and consorting with light women. She believed that for their sins they would be destroyed, but that if they fought in a state of grace they would win the victory. Therein lay all her military science, save that she never feared danger. She displayed a courage which was at once proud and gentle; she was more valiant, more constant, more noble than the men and in that worthy to lead them. And is it not admirable and rare to find such heroism united to such innocence?

Certain of the leaders indeed, and notably the princes of the blood royal, knew no more than she. The art of war in those days resolved itself into the art of

riding. Any idea of marching along converging lines, of concentrated movements, of a campaign methodically planned, of a prolonged effort with a view to some great result was unknown. Military tactics were nothing more than a collection of peasants' stratagems and a few rules of chivalry. The freebooters, captains, and soldiers of fortune were all acquainted with the tricks of the trade, but they recognised neither friend nor foe; and their one desire was pillage. The nobles affected great concern for honour and praise; in reality they thought of nothing but gain. Alain Chartier said of them: "They cry 'to arms,' but they fight for money."

Seeing that war was to last as long as life, it was waged with deliberation. Men-at-arms, horse-soldiers and foot, archers, cross-bowmen, Armagnacs as well as English and Burgundians, fought with no great ardour. Of course they were brave: but they were cautious too and were not ashamed to confess it. Jean Chartier, precentor of Saint-Denys, chronicler of the Kings of France, relating how on a day the French met the English near Lagny, adds: "And there the battle was hard and fierce, for the French were barely more than the English." These simple folk, seeing that one man is as good as another, admitted the risk of fighting one to one. Their minds had not fed on Plutarch as had those of the Revolution and the Empire. And for their encouragement they had neither the *carmagnoles* of Barrère, nor the songs of Marie-Joseph Chénier, nor the bulletins of *la grande armée*. Why did these captains, these men-at-arms go and fight in one place rather than in another seems to be a natural question.... Because they wanted goods.

This perpetual warfare was not sanguinary. During what was described as Jeanne d'Arc's mission, that is from Orléans to Compiègne, the French lost barely a few hundred men. The English suffered much more heavily, because they were the fugitives, and in a rout it was the custom for the conquerors to kill all those who were not worth holding to ransom. But battles were rare, and so consequently were defeats, and the number of the combatants was small. There were but a handful of English in France. And they may be said to have fought only for plunder. Those who suffered from the war were those who did not fight, burghers, priests, and peasants. The peasants endured terrible hardships, and it is quite conceivable that a peasant girl should have displayed a firmness in war, a persistence and an ardour unknown throughout the whole of chivalry.

It was not Jeanne who drove the English from France. If she contributed to the deliverance of Orléans, she retarded the ultimate salvation of France by causing the opportunity of conquering Normandy to be lost through the coronation campaign. The misfortunes of the English after 1428 are easily explained. While in peaceful Guyenne they engaged in agriculture, in commerce,

in navigation, and set the finances in good order, the country which they had rendered prosperous was strongly attached to them. On the banks of the Seine and the Loire it was very different; there they had never taken root; in numbers they were always too few, and they had never obtained any hold on the country. Shut up in fortresses and châteaux, they did not cultivate the country enough to conquer it, for one must work on the land if one would take possession of it. They left it waste and abandoned it to the soldiers of fortune by whom it was ravaged and exhausted. Their garrisons, absurdly small, were prisoners in the country they had conquered. The English had long teeth, but a pike cannot swallow an ox. That they were too few and that France was too big had been plainly seen after Crécy and after Poitiers. Then, after Verneuil, during the troubled reign of a child, weakened by civil discord, lacking men and money, and bound to keep in subjection the countries of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, were they likely to succeed better? In 1428, they were but a handful in France, and to maintain themselves there they depended on the help of the Duke of Burgundy, who henceforth deserted them and wished them every possible harm.

They lacked means alike for the capture of new provinces and the pacification of those they had already conquered. The very character of the sovereignty their princes claimed, the nature of the rights they asserted, which were founded on institutions common to the two countries, rendered the organisation of their conquest difficult without the consent and even, one may say, without the loyal concurrence and friendship of the conquered. The Treaty of Troyes did not subject France to England, it united one country to the other. Such a union occasioned much anxiety in London. The Commons did not conceal their fear that Old England might become a mere isolated province of the new kingdom. France for her part did not concur in the union. It was too late. During all the time that they had been making war on these *Coués* they had grown to hate them. And possibly there already existed an English character and a French character which were irreconcilable. Even in Paris, where the Armagnacs were as much feared as the Saracens, the *Godons* met with very unwilling support. What surprises us is not that the English should have been driven from France, but that it should have happened so slowly. Does this amount to saying that the young saint had no part whatever in the work of deliverance? By no means. Hers was the nobler, the better part; the part of sacrifice; she set the example of the highest courage and displayed heroism in a form unexpected and charming. The King's cause, which was indeed the national cause, she served in two ways: by giving confidence to the men-at-arms of her party, who believed her to be a bringer of good fortune, and by striking fear into the English, who imagined her to be the devil.

Our best historians cannot forgive the ministers and captains of 1428 for not having blindly obeyed the Maid. But that was not at all the advice given at the time by the Archbishop of Embrun to King Charles; he, on the contrary, recommended him not to abandon the means inspired by human reason.

It has frequently been repeated that the lords and captains were jealous of her, especially old Gaucourt. But such a statement shows an absolute ignorance of human nature. They were envious one of another; this and no other sentiment was the jealousy that made them tolerate the Maid's assuming the title of commander in war.

Those secret intrigues on the part of the King and his captains, who are said to have plotted together the destruction of the saint, I admit having found it impossible to discover. To certain historians they appear very obvious: for my part, do what I may, I cannot discern them. The Chamberlain, the Sire de la Trémouille, had no pretensions to nobility of character; and the Chancellor Regnault de Chartres was hard-hearted, but what strikes me is that the Sire de la Trémouille refused to give up this valuable damsel to the Duke of Alençon when he asked for her, and that the Chancellor retained her in order to make use of her. I am not of the opinion that Jeanne was a prisoner at Sully. I believe that when she went to join the Chancellor, who employed her until her capture by the Burgundians, she quitted the castle in estate, with trumpeters, and banners flying. After the girl saint he employed a boy saint, a shepherd who had stigmata; which proves that he did not regret having made use of a devout person to fight against the King's enemies and to recover his own archbishopric.

The excellent Quicherat and the magnanimous Henri Martin are very hard on the Government of 1428. According to them it was a treacherous Government. Yet the only reproach they bring against Charles VII and his councillors is that they did not understand the Maid as they themselves understood her. But such an understanding has required the lapse of four hundred years. To arrive at the illuminated ideas of a Quicherat and a Henri Martin concerning Jeanne d'Arc, three centuries of absolute monarchy, the Reformation, the Revolution, the wars of the Republic and of the Empire, and the sentimental Neo-Catholicism of '48, have all been necessary. Through all these brilliant prisms, through all these succeeding lights do romantic historians and broad-minded paleographers view the figure of Jeanne d'Arc; and we ask too much from the poor Dauphin Charles, from La Trémouille, from Regnault de Chartres, from the Lord of Trèves, from old Gaucourt, when we require them to have seen Jeanne as centuries have made and moulded her.

This, however, remains: after having made so much use of her, the Royal Council did nothing to save her.

Must the disgrace of such neglect fall upon the whole Council and upon the Council alone? Who ought really to have interfered? And how? What ought King Charles to have done? Should he have offered to ransom the Maid? She would not have been surrendered to him at any price. As for capturing her by force, that is a mere child's dream. Had they entered Rouen, the French would not have found her there; Warwick would always have had time to put her in a place of safety, or to drown her in the river. Neither money nor arms would have availed to recapture her.

But this was no reason for standing with folded arms. Influence could have been brought to bear on those who were conducting the trial. Doubtless they were all on the side of the *Godons*; that old *Cabochien* of a Pierre Cauchon was very much committed to them; he detested the French; the clerks, who owed allegiance to Henry VI, were naturally inclined to please the Great Council of England which disposed of patronage; the doctors and masters of the University of France greatly hated and feared the Armagnacs. And yet the judges of the trial were not all infamous prevaricators; the chapter of Rouen lacked neither courage nor independence. Among those members of the University who were so bitter against Jeanne, there were men highly esteemed for doctrine and character. They for the most part believed this trial to be a purely religious one. By dint of seeking for witches, they had come to find them everywhere. These females, as they called them, they were sending to the stake every day, and receiving nothing but thanks for it. They believed as firmly as Jeanne in the possibility of the apparitions which she said had been vouchsafed to her, only they were persuaded either that she lied or that she saw devils. The Bishop, the Vice-Inquisitor and the assessors, to the number of forty and upwards, were unanimous in declaring her heretical and devilish. There were doubtless many who imagined that by passing sentence against her they were maintaining Catholic orthodoxy and unity of obedience against the abettors of schism and heresy; they wished to judge wisely. And even the boldest and the most unscrupulous, the Bishop and the Promoter, would not have dared too openly to infringe the rules of ecclesiastical justice in order to please the English. They were priests, and they preserved priestly pride and respect for formality. Here was their weak point; in this respect for formality they might have been struck. Had the other side instituted vigorous legal proceedings, theirs might possibly have been thwarted, arrested, and the fatal sentence prevented. If the metropolitan of the Bishop of Beauvais, the Archbishop of Reims, had intervened in the trial, if he had suspended his suffragan for abuse of authority,

or some other reason, Pierre Cauchon would have been greatly embarrassed; if, as he decided to do later, King Charles VII had brought about the intervention of the mother and brothers of the Maid; if Jacques d'Arc and la Romée had protested in due form against an action so manifestly one-sided; if the register of Poitiers had been sent for inclusion among the documents of the trial; if the high prelates subject to King Charles VII had asked for a safe conduct in order to come and give evidence in Jeanne's favour at Rouen; finally, if the King, his Council, and the whole Church of France had demanded an appeal to the Pope, as they were legally entitled to do, then the trial might have had a different issue.

But they were afraid of the University of Paris. They feared lest Jeanne might be after all what so many learned doctors maintained her to be, a heretic, a miscreant seduced by the prince of darkness. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and it is difficult to distinguish the true prophets from the false. The hapless Maid was deserted by the very clergy whose croziers had so recently been carried before her; of all the Poitiers masters not one was found to testify in the château of Rouen to that innocence which they had officially recognised eighteen months before.

It would be very interesting to trace the reputation of the Maid down the ages. But to do so would require a whole book. I shall merely indicate the most striking revolutions of public opinion concerning her. The humanists of the Renaissance display no great interest in her: she was too Gothic for them. The Reformers, for whom she was tainted with idolatry, could not tolerate her picture. It seems strange to us to-day, but it is none the less certain, and in conformity with all we know of French feeling for royalty, that whilst the monarchy endured it was the memory of Charles VII that kept alive the memory of Jeanne d'Arc and saved her from oblivion. Respect due to the Prince generally hindered his faithful subjects from too closely inquiring into the legends of Jeanne as well as into those of the Holy Ampulla, the cures for King's evil, the *oriflamme* and all other popular traditions relating to the antiquity and celebrity of the royal throne of France. In 1609, when in a college of Paris, the Maid was the subject of sundry literary themes in which she was unfavourably treated, a certain lawyer, Jean Hordal, who boasted that he came of the same race as the heroine, complained of these academic disputes as being derogatory to royal majesty— "I am greatly astonished," he said, "that ... public declamations against the honour of France, of King Charles VII and his Council, should be suffered in France." Had Jeanne not been so closely associated with royalty, her memory would have been very much neglected by the wits of the seventeenth century. In the minds of scholars, Catholics and Protestants alike, who considered the life of St. Margaret as mere superstition, her apparitions did

her harm. In those days even the *Sorbonagres* themselves were expurgating the martyrology and the legends of saints. One of them, Edmond Richer, like Jeanne a native of Champagne, the censor of the university in 1600, and a zealous Gallican, wrote an apology for the Maid who had defended the Crown of Charles VII. with her sword. Albeit a firm upholder of the liberties of the French Church, Edmond Richer was a good Catholic. He was pious and of sound doctrine; he firmly believed in angels, but he did not believe either in Saint Catherine or Saint Margaret, and their appearing to the Maid greatly embarrassed him. He solved the difficulty by supposing that the angels had represented themselves to the Maid as the two saints, whom in her ignorance she devoutly worshipped. The hypothesis seemed to him satisfactory, "all the more so," he said, "because the Spirit of God, which governs the Church, accommodates himself to our infirmity." Thirty or forty years later, another doctor of the Sorbonne, Jean de Launoy, who was always ferreting after saints, completed the discrediting of Saint Catherine's legend. The voices of Domremy were falling into disrepute.

Take Chapelain, for example, whose poem was first published in 1656. Chapelain is unconsciously burlesque; he is a Scarron without knowing it. It is none the less interesting to learn from him that he merely treated his subject as an occasion for glorifying the Bastard of Orléans. He expressly says in his preface: "I did not so much regard her (the Maid) as the chief character of the poem, who, strictly speaking, is the Comte de Dunois." Chapelain was in the pay of the Duc de Longueville, a descendant of Dunois. It is of Dunois that he sings; "the illustrious shepherdess" contributes the marvellous element to his poem, and, according to the good man's own expression, furnishes *les machines nécessaires* for an epic. Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret are too commonplace to be included among *ces machines*. Chapelain tells us that he took particular care so to arrange his poem that "everything which happens in it by divine favour might be believed to have taken place through human agency carried to the highest degree to which nature is capable of ascending." Herein we discern the dawn of the modern spirit.

Bossuet also is careful not to mention Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. The four or five quarto pages which he devotes to Jeanne d'Arc in his "Abrégé de l'Histoire de France pour l'instruction du Dauphin" are very interesting, not for his statement of facts, which is confused and inexact, but for the care the author takes to represent the miraculous deeds attributed to Jeanne in an incidental and dubious manner. In Bossuet's opinion, as in Gerson's, these things are matters of edification, not of faith. Writing for the instruction of a prince, Bossuet was bound to abridge; but his abridgment goes too far when,

representing Jeanne's condemnation to be the work of the Bishop of Beauvais, he omits to say that the Bishop of Beauvais pronounced this sentence with the unanimous concurrence of the University of Paris, and in conjunction with the Vice-Inquisitor.

The eighteenth-century philosophers did not descend on France like a cloud of locusts; they were the result of two centuries of the critical spirit. If the story of Jeanne d'Arc contained too much monkish superstition for their taste, it was because they had learned their ecclesiastical history from the Baillets and the Tillemonts, who were pious indeed, but very critical of legends. Voltaire, writing of Jeanne, jeered at the rascally monks and their dupes. But if we quote the lines of *La Pucelle*, why not also the article in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, which contains three pages of profounder truth and nobler thought than certain voluminous modern works in which Voltaire is insulted in clerical jargon?

It was precisely at the end of the eighteenth century that Jeanne began to be better known and more justly appreciated, first through a little book, which the Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy derived almost wholly from the unpublished history of old Richer, then by l'Averdy's erudite researches into the two trials.

Nevertheless humanism, and after humanism the Reformation, and after the Reformation Cartesianism, and after Cartesianism experimental philosophy had banished the old credulity from thoughtful minds. When the Revolution came, the bloom had already long faded from the flower of Gothic legend. It seemed as if the glory of Jeanne d'Arc, so intimately related to the traditions of the royal house of France, could not survive the monarchy, and as if the tempest which scattered the royal ashes of Saint Denys and the treasure of Reims, would also bear away the frail relics and the venerated images of the saint of the Valois. The new *régime* did indeed refuse to honour a memory so inseparable from royalty and from religion. The festival of Jeanne d'Arc at Orléans, shorn of ecclesiastical pomp in 1791, was discontinued in 1793. Later the Maid's history appeared somewhat too Gothic even to the *émigrés*; Chateaubriand did not dare to introduce her into his "Génie du Christianisme."

But in the year XI the First Consul, who had just concluded the Concordat and was meditating the restoration of all the pageantry of the coronation, reinstituted the festival of the Maid with its incense and its crosses. Glorified of old in Charles VII's letters to his good towns, Jeanne was now exalted in *Le Moniteur* by Bonaparte.

Only by constant transformation do the figures of poetry and history live in the minds of nations. Humanity cannot be interested in a personage of old time unless it clothe it in its own sentiments and in its own passions. After having

been associated with the monarchy of divine right, the memory of Jeanne d'Arc came to be connected with the national unity which that monarchy had rendered possible; in Imperial and Republican France she became the symbol of *la patrie*. Certainly the daughter of Isabelle Romée had no more idea of *la patrie* as it is conceived to-day than she had of the idea of landed property which lies at its base. She never imagined anything like what we call the nation. That is something quite modern; but she did conceive of the heritage of kings and of the domain of the House of France. And it was there, in that domain and in that heritage, that the French gathered together before forming themselves into *la patrie*.

Under influences which it is impossible for us exactly to discover, the idea came to her of re-establishing the Dauphin in his inheritance; and this idea appeared to her so grand and so beautiful that in the fulness of her very ingenuous pride, she believed it to have been suggested to her by angels and saints from Paradise. For this idea she gave her life. That is why she has survived the cause for which she suffered. The very highest enterprises perish in their defeat and even more surely in their victory. The devotion, which inspired them, remains as an immortal example. And if the illusion, under which her senses laboured, helped her to this act of self-consecration, was not that illusion the unconscious outcome of her own heart? Her foolishness was wiser than wisdom, for it was that foolishness of martyrdom, without which men have never yet founded anything great or useful. Cities, empires, republics rest on sacrifice. It is not without reason therefore, not without justice that, transformed by enthusiastic imagination, she became the symbol of *la patrie* in arms.

In 1817, Le Brun de Charmettes, a royalist jealous of imperial glory, wrote the first patriotic history of Jeanne d'Arc. The history is an able work. It has been followed by many others, conceived in the same spirit, composed on the same plan, written in the same style. From 1841 to 1849, Jules Quicherat, by his publication of the two trials and the evidence, worthily opened an incomparable period of research and discovery. At the same time, Michelet in the fifth volume of his "Histoire de France," wrote pages of high colour and rapid movement, which will doubtless remain the highest expression of the romantic art as applied to the Maid.

But of all the histories written between 1817 and 1870, or at least of all those with which I have made acquaintance, for I have not attempted to read them all, the most discerning in my opinion is the fourth book of Vallet de Viriville's "Histoire de Charles VII" in which his chief preoccupation is to place the Maid in that group of visionaries to which she really belongs.

Wallon's book has been widely circulated if not widely read. A monotonous, conscientious work moderately enthusiastic, it owes its success to its unimpeachable exactitude. If there must be an orthodox Jeanne d'Arc to suit fashionable persons, then for such a purpose, M. Marius Sepet's representation of the Maid would be equally exact and more graceful.

After the war of 1871, the twofold influence of the patriotic spirit, exalted by defeat, and the revival of Catholicism among the middle class gave a new impetus to admiration of the Maid. Arts and letters completed the transfiguration of Jeanne.

Catholics, like the learned Canon Dunand, vie in zeal and enthusiasm with free-thinking idealists like M. Joseph Fabre. By reproducing the two trials in a very artistic manner, in modern French and in a direct form of speech, M. Fabre has popularised the most ancient and the most touching impression of the Maid.

From this period date almost innumerable works of erudition, among which must be noted those of Siméon Luce, which henceforth no one who would treat of Jeanne's early years can afford to neglect.

We are equally indebted to M. Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis for his fine editions and his discerning studies so eruditely graceful and exact.

Throughout this period of romantic and Neo-Catholic enthusiasm the arts of painting and sculpture produced numerous representations of Jeanne, which had hitherto been very rare. Now everywhere were to be found Jeanne in armour and on horseback, Jeanne in prayer, Jeanne in captivity, Jeanne suffering martyrdom. Of all these images expressing in different manners and with varying merit the taste and the sentiment of the period, one work only appears great and true, and of striking beauty: Rude's Jeanne d'Arc beholding a vision.

The word *patrie* did not exist in the days of the Maid. People spoke of the kingdom of France. No one, not even jurists, knew exactly what were its limits, which were constantly changing. The diversity of laws and customs was infinite, and quarrels between nobles were constantly arising. Nevertheless, men felt in their hearts that they loved their native land and hated the foreigner. If the Hundred Years' War did not create the sentiment of nationality in France, it fostered it. In his "Quadrilogue Invectif" Alain Chartier represents France, indicated by her robe sumptuously adorned with the emblems of the nobility, of the clergy and of the *tiers état*, but lamentably soiled and torn, adjuring the three orders not to permit her to perish. "After the bond of the Catholic faith," she says to them, "Nature has called you before all things to unite for the salvation of your native land, and for the defence of that lordship under which God has caused you to be born and to live." And these are not the mere maxims of a

humourist versed in the virtues of antiquity. On the hearts of humble Frenchmen it was laid to serve the country of their birth. “Must the King be driven from his kingdom, and must we become English?” cried a man-at-arms of Lorraine in 1428. The subjects of the Lilies, as well as those of the Leopard, felt it incumbent upon them to be loyal to their liege lord. But if any change for the worse occurred in the lordships to which they belonged, they were quite ready to make the best of it, because a lordship must increase or decrease, according to power and fortune, according to the good right or the good pleasure of the holder; it may be dismembered by marriages, or gifts, or inheritance, or alienated by various contracts. On the occasion of the Treaty of Bretigny, which seriously narrowed the dominions of King John, the folk of Paris strewed the streets with grass and flowers as a sign of rejoicing. As a matter of fact, nobles changed their allegiance as often as it was necessary. Juvénal des Ursins relates in his Journal how at the time of the English conquest of Normandy, a young widow was known to quit her domain with her three children in order to escape doing homage to the King from beyond the seas. But how many Norman nobles were like her in refusing to swear fealty to the former enemies of the kingdom? The example of fidelity to the king was not always set by those of his own family. The Duke of Bourbon, in the name of all the princes of the blood royal, prisoners with him in the hands of the English, proposed to Henry V that they should go and negotiate in France for the cession of Harfleur, promising that if the Royal Council met them with refusal they would acknowledge Henry V to be King of France.

Every one thought first of himself. Whoever possessed land owed himself to his land; his neighbour was his enemy. The burgher thought only of his town. The peasant changed his master without knowing it. The three orders were not yet united closely enough to form, in the modern sense of the word, a state.

Little by little the royal power united the French. This union became stronger in proportion as royalty grew more powerful. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that desire to think and act in common, which creates great nations, became very strong among us — at least in those families which furnished officers to the Crown — and it even spread among the lower orders of society. Rabelais introduces François Villon and the King of England into a tale so inflamed with military bravado that it might have been told over the camp fire in an almost identical manner by one of Napoleon’s grenadiers. In his preface to the poem we have just quoted, Chapelain writes of the occasions when “*la patrie* who is our common mother, has need of all her children.” Already the old poet expresses himself like the author of the *Marseillaise* .

It cannot be denied that the feeling for *la patrie* did exist under the old *régime*

. The impulse imparted to this sentiment by the Revolution was none the less immense. It added to it the idea of national unity and national territorial integrity. It extended to all the right of property hitherto reserved to a small number, and thus, so to speak, divided *la patrie* among the citizens. While rendering the peasant capable of possessing, the new *régime* imposed upon him the obligations of defending his actual or potential possessions. Recourse to arms is a necessity alike for whomsoever acquires or wishes to acquire territory. Hardly had the Frenchman come to enjoy the rights of a man and of a citizen, hardly had he entered into possession or thought he might enter into possession of a home and lands of his own, when the armies of the Coalition arrived “to drive him back to ancient slavery.” Then the patriot became a soldier. Twenty-three years of warfare, with the inevitable alternations of victories and defeats, built up our fathers in their love of *la patrie* and their hatred of the foreigner.

Since then, as the result of industrial progress, there have arisen in one country and another, rivalries which are every day growing more bitter. The present methods of production by multiplying antagonism among nations, have given rise to imperialism, to colonial expansion and to armed peace.

But how many contrary forces are at work in this formidable creation of a new order of things! In all countries the great development of trade and manufactures has given birth to a new class. This class, possessing nothing, having no hope of ever possessing anything, enjoying none of the good things of life, not even the light of day, does not share the fear which haunted the peasant and burgher of the Revolution, of being despoiled by an enemy coming from abroad; the members of this new class, having no wealth to defend, regard foreign nations with neither terror nor hatred. At the same time over all the markets of the world there have arisen financial powers, which, although they often affect respect for old traditions, are by their very functions essentially destructive of the national and patriotic spirit. The universal capitalist system has created in France, as everywhere else, the internationalism of the workers and the cosmopolitanism of the financiers.

To-day, just as two thousand years ago, in order to discern the future, we must regard not the enterprises of the great but the confused movements of the working classes. The nations will not indefinitely endure this armed peace which weighs so heavily upon them. Every day we behold the organising of an universal community of workers.

I believe in the future union of nations, and I long for it with that ardent charity for the human race, which, formed in the Latin conscience in the days of Epictetus and Seneca, and through so many centuries extinguished by European barbarism, has been revived in the noblest breasts of modern times. And in vain

will it be argued against me that these are the mere dream-illusions of desire: it is desire that creates life and the future is careful to realise the dreams of philosophers. Nevertheless, that we to-day are assured of a peace that nothing will disturb, none but a madman would maintain. On the contrary, the terrible industrial and commercial rivalries growing up around us indicate future conflicts, and there is nothing to assure us that France will not one day find herself involved in a great European or world conflagration. Her obligation to provide for her defence increases not a little those difficulties which arise from a social order profoundly agitated by competition in production and antagonism between classes.

An absolute empire obtains its defenders by inspiring fear; democracy only by bestowing benefits. Fear or interest lies at the root of all devotion. If the French proletariat is to defend the Republic heroically in the hour of peril, then it must either be happy or have the hope of becoming so. And what use is it to deceive ourselves? The lot of the workman to-day is no better in France than in Germany, and not so good as in England or America.

On these important subjects I have not been able to forbear expressing the truth as it appears to me; there is a great satisfaction in saying what one believes useful and just.

It now only remains for me to submit to my readers a few reflections on the difficult art of writing history, and to explain certain peculiarities of form and language which will be found in this work.

To enter into the spirit of a period that has passed away, to make oneself the contemporary of men of former days, deliberate study and loving care are necessary. The difficulty lies not so much in what one must know as in what one must not know. If we would really live in the fifteenth century, how many things we must forget: knowledge, methods, all those acquisitions which make moderns of us. We must forget that the earth is round, and that the stars are suns, and not lamps suspended from a crystal vault; we must forget the cosmogony of Laplace, and believe in the science of Saint Thomas, of Dante, and of those cosmographers of the Middle Age who teach the Creation in seven days and the foundation of kingdoms by the sons of Priam, after the destruction of Great Troy. Such and such a historian or paleographer is powerless to make us understand the contemporaries of the Maid. It is not knowledge he lacks, but ignorance — ignorance of modern warfare, of modern politics, of modern religion.

But when we have forgotten, as far as possible, all that has happened since the youth of Charles VII, in order to think like a clerk in exile at Poitiers, or a burgher at Orléans serving on the ramparts of his city, we must recover all our

intellectual resources in order to embrace the entirety of events, and discover that sequence between cause and effect which escape the clerk or the burgher. “I have contracted my horizon,” says the Chatterton of Alfred de Vigny, when he explains how he is conscious of nothing that has happened since the days of the old Saxons. But Chatterton wrote poems, pseudo chronicles, and not history. The historian must alternately contract his horizon and widen it. If he undertake to tell an old story, he must needs successively — or sometimes at one and the same moment — assume the credulity of the folk he restores to life, and the discernment of the most accomplished critic. By a strange process, he must divide his personality. He must be at once the ancient man and the modern man; he must live on two different planes, like that curious character in a story by Mr. H.G. Wells, who lives and moves in a little English town, and all the time sees herself at the bottom of the ocean.

I have carefully visited cities and countries in which the events I propose to relate took place. I have seen the valley of the Meuse amidst the flowers and perfumes of spring, and I have seen it again beneath a mass of mist and cloud. I have travelled along the smiling banks of the Loire, so full of renown; through La Beauce, with its vast horizons bordered with snow-topped mountains; through l’Île-de-France, where the sky is serene; through La Champagne, with its stony hills covered with those low vines which, trampled upon by the coronation army, bloomed again into leaves and fruit, says the legend, and by St. Martin’s Day yielded a late but rich vintage. I have lingered in barren Picardy, along the Bay of the Somme so sad and bare beneath the flight of its birds of passage. I have wandered through the fat meadows of Normandy to Rouen with its steeples and towers, its ancient charnel houses, its damp streets, its last remaining timbered houses with high gables. I have imagined these rivers, these lands, these châteaux and these towns as they were five hundred years ago.

I have accustomed my gaze to the forms assumed by the beings and the objects of those days. I have examined all that remains of stone, of iron, or of wood worked by the hands of those old artisans, who were freer and consequently more ingenious than ours, and whose handicraft reveals a desire to animate and adorn everything. To the best of my ability I have studied figures carved and painted, not exactly in France — for there, in those days of misery and death, art was little practised — but in Flanders, in Burgundy, in Provence, where the workmanship is often in a style at once affected and *naïf*, and frequently beautiful. As I gazed at the old miniatures, they seemed to live before me, and I saw the nobles in the absurd magnificence of their *étoffes à tripes*, the dames and the damoiselles somewhat devilish with their horned caps and their pointed shoes; clerks seated at the desk, men-at-arms riding their chargers and

merchants their mules, husbandmen performing from April till March all the tasks of the rural calendar; peasant women, whose broad coifs are still worn by nuns. I drew near to these folk, who were our fellows, and who yet differed from us by a thousand shades of sentiment and of thought; I lived their lives; I read their hearts.

It is hardly necessary to say that there exists no authentic representation of Jeanne. In the art of the fifteenth century all that relates to her amounts to very little: hardly anything remains — a small piece of *bestion* tapestry, a slight pen-and-ink figure on a register, a few illuminations in manuscripts of the reigns of Charles VII, Louis XI, and Charles VIII, that is all. I have found it necessary to contribute to this very meagre iconography of Jeanne d'Arc, not because I had anything to add to it, but in order to expunge the contributions of the forgers of that period. In Appendix IV, at the end of this work, will be found the short article in which I point out the forgeries which, for the most part, are already old, but had not been previously denounced. I have limited my researches to the fifteenth century, leaving to others the task of studying those pictures of the Renaissance in which the Maid appears decked out in the German fashion, with the plumed hat and slashed doublet of a Saxon ritter or a Swiss mercenary. I cannot say who served as a prototype for these portraits, but they closely resemble the woman accompanying the mercenaries in *La Danse des morts*, which Nicholas Manuel painted at Berne, on the wall of the Dominican Monastery, between 1515 and 1521. In *le Grand Siècle* Jeanne d'Arc becomes Clorinda, Minerva, Bellona in ballet costume.

To my mind a continuous story is more likely than any controversy or discussion to make my subject live, and bring home its verities to my readers. It is true that the documents relating to the Maid do not lend themselves very easily to this kind of treatment. As I have just shown, they may nearly all be regarded as doubtful from several points of view, and objections to them arise at every moment. Nevertheless, I think that by making a cautious and judicious use of these documents one may obtain material sufficient for a truthful history of considerable extent. Besides, I have always indicated the sources of my facts, so that every one may judge for himself of the trustworthiness of my authorities.

In the course of my story I have related many incidents which, without having a direct relation to Jeanne, reveal the spirit, the morals, and the beliefs of her time. These incidents are usually of a religious order. They must necessarily be so, for Jeanne's story — and I cannot repeat it too often — is the story of a saint, just like that of Colette of Corbie, or of Catherine of Sienna.

I have yielded frequently, perhaps too frequently, to the desire to make the reader live among the men and things of the fifteenth century. And in order not

to distract him suddenly from them, I have avoided suggesting any comparison with other periods, although many such occurred to me.

My history is founded on the form and substance of ancient documents; but I have hardly ever introduced into it literal quotations; I believe that unless it possesses a certain unity of language a book is unreadable, and I want to be read.

It is neither affectation of style nor artistic taste that has led me to adhere as far as possible to the tone of the period and to prefer archaic forms of language whenever I thought they would be intelligible, it is because ideas are changed when words are changed and because one cannot substitute modern for ancient expressions without altering sentiments and characters.

I have endeavoured to make my style simple and familiar. History is too often written in a high-flown manner that renders it wearisome and false. Why should we imagine historical facts to be out of the ordinary run of things and on a scale different from every-day humanity?

The writer of a history such as this is terribly tempted to throw himself into the battle. There is hardly a modern account of these old contests, in which the author, be he ecclesiastic or professor, does not with pen behind ear, rush into the *mêlée* by the side of the Maid. Even at the risk of missing the revelation of some of the beauties of her nature, I deem it better to keep one's own personality out of the action.

I have written this history with a zeal ardent and tranquil; I have sought truth strenuously, I have met her fearlessly. Even when she assumed an unexpected aspect, I have not turned from her. I shall be reproached for audacity, until I am reproached for timidity.

I have pleasure in expressing my gratitude to my illustrious *confrères*, MM. Paul Meyer and Ernest Lavisse, who have given me valuable advice. I owe much to M. Petit Dutailis for certain kindly observations which I have taken into consideration. I am also greatly indebted to M. Henri Jadart, Secretary of the Reims Academy; M. E. Langlois, Professor at the Faculté des Lettres of Lille; M. Camille Bloch, some time archivist of Loiret, M. Noël Charavay, autographic expert, and M. Raoul Bonnet.

M. Pierre Champion, who albeit still young is already known as the author of valuable historical works, has placed the result of his researches at my disposal with a disinterestedness I shall never be able adequately to acknowledge. He has also carefully read the whole of my work. M. Jean Brousseau has given me the advantage of his perspicacity which far surpasses what one is entitled to expect from one's secretary.

In the century which I have endeavoured to represent in this work, there was a fiend, by name Titivillus. Every evening this fiend put into a sack all the letters

omitted or altered by the copyists during the day. He carried them to hell, in order that, when Saint Michael weighed the souls of these negligent scribes, the share of each one might be put in the scale of his iniquities. Should he have survived the invention of printing, surely this most properly meticulous fiend must to-day be assuming the heavy task of collecting the misprints scattered throughout the books which aspire to exactitude; it would be very foolish of him to trouble about others. As occasion requires he will place those misprints to the account of reader or author. I am infinitely indebted to my publishers and friends MM. Calmann, Lévy and to their excellent collaborators for the care and experience they have employed in lightening the burden, which Titivillus will place on my back on the Day of Judgment.

Paris, February, 1908.

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

FROM Neufchâteau to Vaucouleurs the clear waters of the Meuse flow freely between banks covered with rows of poplar trees and low bushes of alder and willow. Now they wind in sudden bends, now in gradual curves, for ever breaking up into narrow streams, and then the threads of greenish waters gather together again, or here and there are suddenly lost to sight underground. In the summer the river is a lazy stream, barely bending in its course the reeds which grow upon its shallow bed; and from the bank one may watch its lapping waters kept back by clumps of rushes scarcely covering a little sand and moss. But in the season of heavy rains, swollen by sudden torrents, deeper and more rapid, as it rushes along, it leaves behind it on the banks a kind of dew, which rises in pools of clear water on a level with the grass of the valley.

This valley, two or three miles broad, stretches unbroken between low hills, softly undulating, crowned with oaks, maples, and birches. Although strewn with wild-flowers in the spring, it looks severe, grave, and sometimes even sad. The green grass imparts to it a monotony like that of stagnant water. Even on fine days one is conscious of a hard, cold climate. The sky seems more genial than the earth. It beams upon it with a tearful smile; it constitutes all the movement, the grace, the exquisite charm of this delicate tranquil landscape. Then when winter comes the sky merges with the earth in a kind of chaos. Fogs come down thick and clinging. The white light mists, which in summer veil the bottom of the valley, give place to thick clouds and dark moving mountains, but slowly scattered by a red, cold sun. Wanderers ranging the uplands in the early morning might dream with the mystics in their ecstasy that they are walking on clouds.

Thus, after having passed on the left the wooded plateau, from the height of which the château of Bourlémont dominates the valley of the Saonelle, and on the right Coussey with its old church, the winding river flows between le Bois Chesnu on the west and the hill of Julien on the east. Then on it goes, passing the adjacent villages of Domremy and Greux on the west bank and separating Greux from Maxey-sur-Meuse. Among other hamlets nestling in the hollows of the hills or rising on the high ground, it passes Burey-la-Côte, Maxey-sur-Vaise, and Burey-en-Vaux, and flows on to water the beautiful meadows of Vaucouleurs.

In this little village of Domremy, situated at least seven and a half miles further down the river than Neufchâteau and twelve and a half above Vaucouleurs, there was born, about the year 1410 or 1412, a girl who was destined to live a remarkable life. She was born poor. Her father, Jacques or Jacquot d'Arc, a native of the village of Ceffonds in Champagne, was a small

farmer and himself drove his horses at the plough. His neighbours, men and women alike, held him to be a good Christian and an industrious workman. His wife came from Vouthon, a village nearly four miles northwest of Domremy, beyond the woods of Greux. Her name being Isabelle or Zabillet, she received at some time, exactly when is uncertain, the surname of Romée. That name was given to those who had been to Rome or on some other important pilgrimage; and it is possible that Isabelle may have acquired her name of Romée by assuming the pilgrim's shell and staff. One of her brothers was a parish priest, another a tiler; she had a nephew who was a carpenter. She had already borne her husband three children: Jacques or Jacquemin, Catherine, and Jean.

Jacques d'Arc's house was on the verge of the precincts of the parish church, dedicated to Saint Remi, the apostle of Gaul. There was only the graveyard to cross when the child was carried to the font. It is said that in those days and in that country the form of exorcism pronounced by the priest during the baptismal ceremony was much longer for girls than for boys. We do not know whether Messire Jean Minet, the parish priest, pronounced it over the child in all its literal fulness, but we notice the custom as one of the numerous signs of the Church's invincible mistrust of woman.

According to the custom then prevailing the child had several godfathers and godmothers. The men-gossips were Jean Morel, of Greux, husbandman; Jean Barrey, of Neufchâteau; Jean Le Langart or Lingui, and Jean Rainguesson; the women, Jeannette, wife of Thévenin le Royer, called Roze, of Domremy; Béatrix, wife of Estellin, husbandman in the same village; Edite, wife of Jean Barrey; Jeanne, wife of Aubrit, called Jannet and described as Maire Aubrit when he was appointed secretary to the lords of Bourlémont; Jeannette, wife of Thiesselin de Vittel, a scholar of Neufchâteau. She was the most learned of all, for she had heard stories read out of books. Among the godmothers there are mentioned also the wife of Nicolas d'Arc, Jacques' brother, and two obscure Christians, one called Agnes, the other Sibylle. Here, as in every group of good Catholics, we have a number of Jeans, Jeannes, and Jeannettes. St. John the Baptist was a saint of high repute; his festival, kept on the 24th of June, was a red-letter day in the calendar, both civil and religious; it marked the customary date for leases, hirings, and contracts of all kinds. In the opinion of certain ecclesiastics, especially of the mendicant orders, St. John the Evangelist, whose head had rested on the Saviour's breast and who was to return to earth when the ages should have run their course, was the greatest saint in Paradise. Wherefore, in honour of the Precursor of the Saviour or of his best beloved disciple, when babes were baptised the name Jean or Jeanne was frequently preferred to all others. To render these holy names more in keeping with the helplessness of

childhood and the humble destiny awaiting most of us, they were given the diminutive forms of Jeannot and Jeannette. On the banks of the Meuse the peasants had a particular liking for these diminutives at once unpretentious and affectionate: Jacquot, Pierrolot, Zabillet, Mengette, Guillemette. After the wife of the scholar, Thiesselin, the child was named Jeannette. That was the name by which she was known in the village. Later, in France, she was called Jeanne.

She was brought up in her father's house, in Jacques' poor dwelling. In the front there were two windows admitting but a scanty light. The stone roof forming one side of a gable on the garden side sloped almost to the ground. Close by the door, as was usual in that country, were the dung-heap, a pile of firewood, and the farm tools covered with rust and mud. But the humble enclosure, which served as orchard and kitchen-garden, in the spring bloomed in a wealth of pink and white flowers.

These good Christians had one more child, the youngest, Pierre, who was called Pierrelot.

Fed on light wine and brown bread, hardened by a hard life, Jeanne grew up in an unfruitful land, among people who were rough and sober. She lived in perfect liberty. Among hard-working peasants the children are left to themselves. Isabelle's daughter seems to have got on well with the village children.

A little neighbour, Hauviette, three or four years younger than she, was her daily companion. They liked to sleep together in the same bed. Mengette, whose parents lived close by, used to come and spin at Jacques d'Arc's house. She helped Jeanne with her household duties. Taking her distaff with her, Jeanne used often to go and pass the evening at Saint-Amance, at the house of a husbandman Jacquier, who had a young daughter. Boys and girls grew up as a matter of course side by side. Being neighbours, Jeanne and Simonin Musnier's son were brought up together. When Musnier's son was still a child he fell ill, and Jeanne nursed him.

In those days it was not unprecedented for village maidens to know their letters. A few years earlier Maître Jean Gerson had counselled his sisters, peasants of Champagne, to learn to read, and had promised, if they succeeded, to give them edifying books. Albeit the niece of a parish priest, Jeanne did not learn her horn-book, thus resembling most of the village children, but not all, for at Maxey there was a school attended by boys from Domremy.

From her mother she learnt the Paternoster, Ave Maria, and the credo. She heard a few beautiful stories of the saints. That was her whole education. On holy days, in the nave of the church, beneath the pulpit, while the men stood round the wall, she, in the manner of the peasant women, squatted on her toes, listening to the priest's sermon.

As soon as she was old enough she laboured in the fields, weeding, digging, and, like the Lorraine maidens of to-day, doing the work of a man.

The river meadows were the chief source of wealth to the dwellers on the banks of the Meuse. When the hay harvest was over, according to his share of the arable land, each villager in Domremy had the right to turn so many head of cattle into the meadows of the village. Each family took its turn at watching the flocks and herds in the meadows. Jacques d'Arc, who had a little grazing land of his own, turned out his oxen and his horses with the others. When his turn came to watch them, he delegated the task to his daughter Jeanne, who went off into the meadow, distaff in hand.

But she would rather do housework or sew or spin. She was pious. She swore neither by God nor his saints; and to assert the truth of anything she was content to say: "There's no mistake." When the bells rang for the *Angelus*, she crossed herself and knelt. On Saturday, the Holy Virgin's day, she climbed the hill overgrown with grass, vines, and fruit-trees, with the village of Greux nestling at its foot, and gained the wooded plateau, whence she could see on the east the green valley and the blue hills. On the brow of the hill, barely two and a half miles from the village, in a shaded dale full of murmuring sounds, from beneath beeches, ash-trees, and oaks gush forth the clear waters of the Saint-Thiébault spring, which cure fevers and heal wounds. Above the spring rises the chapel of Notre-Dame de Bermont. In fine weather it is pervaded by the scent of fields and woods, and winter wraps this high ground in a mantle of sadness and silence. In those days, clothed in a royal cloak and wearing a crown, with her divine child in her arms, Notre-Dame de Bermont received the prayers and the offerings of young men and maidens. She worked miracles. Jeanne used to visit her with her sister Catherine and the boys and girls of the neighbourhood, or quite alone. And as often as she could she lit a candle in honour of the heavenly lady.

A mile and a quarter west of Domremy was a hill covered with a dense wood, which few dared enter for fear of boars and wolves. Wolves were the terror of the countryside. The village mayors gave rewards for every head of a wolf or wolf-cub brought them. This wood, which Jeanne could see from her threshold, was the Bois Chesnu, the wood of oaks, or possibly the hoary [*chenu*] wood, the old forest. We shall see later how this Bois Chesnu was the subject of a prophecy of Merlin the Magician.

At the foot of the hill, towards the village, was a spring on the margin of which gooseberry bushes intertwined their branches of greyish green. It was called the Gooseberry Spring or the Blackthorn Spring. If, as was thought by a graduate of the University of Paris, Jeanne described it as *La Fontaine-aux-*

Bonnes-Fées-Notre-Seigneur , it must have been because the village people called it by that name. By making use of such a term it would seem as if those rustic souls were trying to Christianise the nymphs of the woods and waters, in whom certain teachers discerned the demons which the heathen once worshipped as goddesses. It was quite true. Goddesses as much feared and venerated as the *Parcæ* had come to be called Fates, and to them had been attributed power over the destinies of men. But, fallen long since from their powerful and high estate, these village fairies had grown as simple as the people among whom they lived. They were invited to baptisms, and a place at table was laid for them in the room next the mother's. At these festivals they ate alone and came and went without any one's knowing; people avoided spying upon their movements for fear of displeasing them. It is the custom of divine personages to go and come in secret. They gave gifts to new-born infants. Some were very kind, but most of them, without being malicious, appeared irritable, capricious, jealous; and if they were offended even unintentionally, they cast evil spells. Sometimes they betrayed their feminine nature by unaccountable likes and dislikes. More than one found a lover in a knight or a churl; but generally such loves came to a bad end. And, when all is said, gentle or terrible, they remained the Fates, they were always the Destinies.

Near by, on the border of the wood, was an ancient beech, overhanging the highroad to Neufchâteau and casting a grateful shade. The beech was venerated almost as piously as had been those trees which were held sacred in the days before apostolic missionaries evangelised Gaul. No hand dared touch its branches, which swept the ground. "Even the lilies are not more beautiful," said a rustic. Like the spring the tree had many names. It was called *l'Arbre-des-Dames* , *l'Arbre-aux-Loges-les-Dames* , *l'Arbre-des-Fées* , *l'Arbre-Charmine-Fée-de-Bourlémont* , *le Beau-Mai* .

Every one at Domremy knew that fairies existed and that they had been seen under *l'Arbre-aux-Loges-les-Dames* . In the old days, when Berthe was spinning, a lord of Bourlémont, called Pierre Granier, became a fairy's knight, and kept his tryst with her at eve under the beech-tree. A romance told of their loves. One of Jeanne's godmothers, who was a scholar at Neufchâteau, had heard this story, which closely resembled that tale of Melusina so well known in Lorraine. But a doubt remained as to whether fairies still frequented the beech-tree. Some believed they did, others thought they did not. Béatrix, another of Jeanne's godmothers, used to say: "I have heard tell that fairies came to the tree in the old days. But for their sins they come there no longer."

This simple-minded woman meant that the fairies were the enemies of God and that the priest had driven them away. Jean Morel, Jeanne's godfather, believed the same.



THE HOUSE OF JOAN OF ARC AT DOMREMY IN 1419

Indeed on Ascension Eve, on Rogation days and Ember days, crosses were carried through the fields and the priest went to *l'Arbre-des-Fées* and chanted the Gospel of St. John. He chanted it also at the Gooseberry Spring and at the other springs in the parish. For the exorcising of evil spirits there was nothing like the Gospel of St. John.

My Lord Aubert d'Ourches held that there had been no fairies at Domremy for twenty or thirty years. On the other hand there were those in the village who believed that Christians still held converse with them and that Thursday was the trysting day.

Yet another of Jeanne's godmothers, the wife of the mayor Aubrit, had with her own eyes seen fairies under the tree. She had told her goddaughter. And Aubrit's wife was known to be no witch or soothsayer but a good woman and a circumspect.

In all this Jeanne suspected witchcraft. For her own part she had never met the fairies under the tree. But she would not have said that she had not seen

fairies elsewhere. Fairies are not like angels; they do not always appear what they really are.

Every year, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, — called by the Church “*Lætare Sunday*,” because during the mass of the day was chanted the passage beginning *Lætare Jerusalem* , — the peasants of Bar held a rustic festival. This was their well-dressing when they went together to drink from some spring and to dance on the grass. The peasants of Greux kept their festival at the Chapel of Notre-Dame de Bermont; those of Domremy at the Gooseberry Spring and at *l’Arbre-des-Fées* . They used to recall the days when the lord and lady of Bourlémont themselves led the young people of the village. But Jeanne was still a babe in arms when Pierre de Bourlémont, lord of Domremy and Greux, died childless, leaving his lands to his niece Jeanne de Joinville, who lived at Nancy, having married the chamberlain of the Duke of Lorraine.

At the well-dressing the young men and maidens of Domremy went to the old beech-tree together. After they had hung it with garlands of flowers, they spread a cloth on the grass and supped off nuts, hard-boiled eggs, and little rolls of a curious form, which the housewives had kneaded on purpose. Then they drank from the Gooseberry Spring, danced in a ring, and returned to their own homes at nightfall.

Jeanne, like all the other damsels of the countryside, took her part in the well-dressing. Although she came from the quarter of Domremy nearest Greux, she kept her feast, not at Notre-Dame de Bermont, but at the Gooseberry Spring and *l’Arbre-des-Fées* .

In her early childhood she danced round the tree with her companions. She wove garlands for the image of Notre-Dame de Domremy, whose chapel crowned a neighbouring hill. The maidens were wont to hang garlands on the branches of *l’Arbre-des-Fées* . Jeanne, like the others, bewreathed the tree’s branches; and, like the others, sometimes she left her wreaths behind and sometimes she carried them away. No one knew what became of them; and it seems their disappearance was such as to cause wise and learned persons to wonder. One thing, however, is sure: that the sick who drank from the spring were healed and straightway walked beneath the tree.

To hail the coming of spring they made a figure of May, a mannikin of flowers and foliage.

Close by *l’Arbre-des-Dames* , beneath a hazel-tree, there was a mandrake. He promised wealth to whomsoever should dare by night, and according to the prescribed rites, to tear him from the ground, not fearing to hear him cry or to see blood flow from his little human body and his forked feet.

The tree, the spring, and the mandrake caused the inhabitants of Domremy to be suspected of holding converse with evil spirits. A learned doctor said plainly that the country was famous for the number of persons who practised witchcraft.

When quite a little girl, Jeanne journeyed several times to Sermaize in Champagne, where dwelt certain of her kinsfolk. The village priest, Messire Henri de Vouthon, was her uncle on her mother's side. She had a cousin there, Perrinet de Vouthon, by calling a tiler, and his son Henri.

Full thirty-seven and a half miles of forest and heath lie between Domremy and Sermaize. Jeanne, we may believe, travelled on horseback, riding behind her brother on the little mare which worked on the farm.

At each visit the child spent several days at her cousin Perrinet's house.

With regard to feudal overlordship the village of Domremy was divided into two distinct parts. The southern part, with the château on the Meuse and some thirty homesteads, belonged to the lords of Boulémont and was in the domain of the castellany of Grondrecourt, held in fief from the crown of France. It was a part of Lorraine and of Bar. The northern half of the village, in which the monastery was situated, was subject to the provost of Montéclaire and Andelot and was in the bailiwick of Chaumont in Champagne. It was sometimes called Domremy de Greux because it seemed to form a part of the village of Greux adjoining it on the highroad in the direction of Vaucouleurs. The serfs of Boulémont were separated from the king's men by a brook, close by towards the west, flowing from a threefold source and hence called, so it is said, the Brook of the Three Springs. Modestly the stream flowed beneath a flat stone in front of the church, and then rushed down a rapid incline into the Meuse, opposite Jacques d'Arc's house, which it passed on the left, leaving it in the land of Champagne and of France. So far we may be fairly certain; but we must beware of knowing more than was known in that day. In 1429 King Charles' council was uncertain as to whether Jacques d'Arc was a freeman or a serf. And Jacques d'Arc himself doubtless was no better informed. On both banks of the brook, the men of Lorraine and Champagne were alike peasants leading a life of toil and hardship. Although they were subject to different masters they formed none the less one community closely united, one single rural family. They shared interests, necessities, feelings — everything. Threatened by the same dangers, they had the same anxieties.

Lying at the extreme south of the castellany of Vaucouleurs, the village of Domremy was between Bar and Champagne on the east, and Lorraine on the west. They were terrible neighbours, always warring against each other, those dukes of Lorraine and Bar, that Count of Vaudémont, that Damoiseau of Commercy, those Lord Bishops of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. But theirs were the

quarrels of princes. The villagers observed them just as the frog in the old fable looked on at the bulls fighting in the meadow. Pale and trembling, poor Jacques saw himself trodden underfoot by these fierce warriors. At a time when the whole of Christendom was given up to pillage, the men-at-arms of the Lorraine Marches were renowned as the greatest plunderers in the world. Unfortunately for the labourers of the castellany of Vaucouleurs, close to this domain, towards the north, there lived Robert de Saarbruck, Damoiseau of Commercy, who, subsisting on plunder, was especially given to the Lorraine custom of marauding. He was of the same way of thinking as that English king who said that warfare without burnings was no good, any more than chitterlings without mustard. One day, when he was besieging a little stronghold in which the peasants had taken refuge, the Damoiseau set fire to the crops of the neighbourhood and let them burn all night long, so that he might see more clearly how to place his men.

In 1419 this baron was making war on the brothers Didier and Durand of Saint-Dié. It matters not for what reason. For this war as for every war the villagers had to pay. As the men-at-arms were fighting throughout the whole castellany of Vaucouleurs, the inhabitants of Domremy began to devise means of safety, and in this wise. At Domremy there was a castle built in the meadow at the angle of an island formed by two arms of the river, one of which, the eastern arm, has long since been filled up. Belonging to this castle was a chapel of Our Lady, a courtyard provided with means of defence, and a large garden surrounded by a moat wide and deep. This castle, once the dwelling of the Lords of Bourlémont, was commonly called the Fortress of the Island. The last of the lords having died without children, his property had been inherited by his niece Jeanne de Joinville. But soon after Jeanne d'Arc's birth she married a Lorraine baron, Henri d'Ogiviller, with whom she went to reside at the castle of Ogiviller and at the ducal court of Nancy. Since her departure the fortress of the island had remained uninhabited. The village folk decided to rent it and to put their tools and their cattle therein out of reach of the plunderers. The renting was put up to auction. A certain Jean Biget of Domremy and Jacques d'Arc, Jeanne's father, being the highest bidders, and having furnished sufficient security, a lease was drawn up between them and the representatives of Dame d'Ogiviller. The fortress, the garden, the courtyard, as well as the meadows belonging to the domain, were let to Jean Biget and Jacques d'Arc for a term of nine years beginning on St. John the Baptist's Day, 1419, and in consideration of a yearly rent of fourteen *livres tournois* and three *imaux* of wheat. Besides the two tenants in chief there were five sub-tenants, of whom the first mentioned was Jacquemin, the eldest of Jacques d'Arc's sons.

The precaution proved to be useful. In that very year, 1419, Robert de Saarbruck and his company met the men of the brothers Didier and Durand at the village of Maxey, the thatched roofs of which were to be seen opposite Greux, on the other bank of the Meuse, along the foot of wooded hills. The two sides here engaged in a battle, in which the victorious Damoiseau took thirty-five prisoners, whom he afterwards liberated after having exacted a high ransom, as was his wont. Among these prisoners was the Squire Thiesselin de Vittel, whose wife had held Jacques d'Arc's second daughter over the baptismal font. From one of the hills of her village, Jeanne, who was then seven or a little older, could see the battle in which her godmother's husband was taken prisoner.

Meanwhile matters grew worse and worse in the kingdom of France. This was well known at Domremy, situated as it was on the highroad, and hearing the news brought by wayfarers. Thus it was that the villagers heard of the murder of Duke John of Burgundy on the Bridge at Montereau, when the Dauphin's Councillors made him pay the price of the blood he had shed in the Rue Barbette. These Councillors, however, struck a bad bargain; for the murder on the Bridge brought their young Prince very low. There followed the war between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. From this war the English, the obstinate enemies of the kingdom, who for two hundred years had held Guyenne and carried on a prosperous trade there, sucked no small advantage. But Guyenne was far away, and perhaps no one at Domremy knew that it had once been a part of the domain of the kings of France. On the other hand every one was aware that during the recent trouble the English had recrossed the sea and had been welcomed by my Lord Philip, son of the late Duke John. They occupied Normandy, Maine, Picardy, l'Île-de-France, and Paris the great city. Now in France the English were bitterly hated and greatly feared on account of their reputation for cruelty. Not that they were really more wicked than other nations. In Normandy, their king, Henry, had caused women and property to be respected in all places under his dominion. But war is in itself cruel, and whosoever wages war in a country is rightly hated by the people of that country. The English were accused of treachery, and not always wrongly accused, for good faith is rare among men. They were ridiculed in various ways. Playing upon their name in Latin and in French, they were called angels. Now if they were angels they were assuredly bad angels. They denied God, and their favorite oath *Goddam* was so often on their lips that they were called *Godons*. They were devils. They were said to be *coués*, that is, to have tails behind. There was mourning in many a French household when Queen Ysabeau delivered the kingdom of France to the *coués*, making of the noble French lilies a litter for the leopard. Since then, only

a few days apart, King Henry V of Lancaster and King Charles VI of Valois, the victorious king and the mad king, had departed to present themselves before God, the Judge of the good and the evil, the just and the unjust, the weak and the powerful. The castellany of Vaucouleurs was French. Dwelling there were clerks and nobles who pitied that later Joash, torn from his enemies in childhood, an orphan spoiled of his heritage, in whom centred the hope of the kingdom. But how can we imagine that poor husbandmen had leisure to ponder on these things? How can we really believe that the peasants of Domremy were loyal to the Dauphin Charles, their lawful lord, while the Lorrainers of Maxey, following their Duke, were on the side of the Burgundians?

Only the river divided Maxey on the right bank from Domremy. The Domremy and Greux children went there to school. There were quarrels between them; the little Burgundians of Maxey fought pitched battles with the little Armagnacs of Domremy. More than once Joan, at the Bridge end in the evening, saw the lads of her village returning covered with blood. It is quite possible that, passionate as she was, she may have gravely espoused these quarrels and conceived therefrom a bitter hatred of the Burgundians. Nevertheless, we must beware of finding an indication of public opinion in these boyish games played by the sons of villeins. For centuries the brats of these two parishes were to fight and to insult each other. Insults and stones fly whenever and wherever children gather in bands, and those of one village meet those of another. The peasants of Domremy, Greux, and Maxey, we may be sure, vexed themselves little about the affairs of dukes and kings. They had learnt to be as much afraid of the captains of their own side as of the captains of the opposite party, and not to draw any distinction between the men-at-arms who were their friends and those who were their enemies.

In 1429 the English occupied the bailiwick of Chaumont and garrisoned several fortresses in Bassigny. Messire Robert, Lord of Baudricourt and Blaise, son of the late Messire Liébault de Baudricourt, was then captain of Vaucouleurs and bailie of Chaumont for the Dauphin Charles. He might be reckoned a great plunderer, even in Lorraine. In the spring of this year, 1420, the Duke of Burgundy having sent an embassy to the Lord Bishop of Verdun, as the ambassadors were returning they were taken prisoners by Sire Robert in league with the Damoiseau of Commercy. To avenge this offence the Duke of Burgundy declared war on the Captain of Vaucouleurs, and the castellany was ravaged by bands of English and Burgundians.

In 1423 the Duke of Lorraine was waging war with a terrible man, one Étienne de Vignolles, a Gascon soldier of fortune already famous under the dreaded name of La Hire, which he was to leave after his death to the knave of

hearts in those packs of cards marked by the greasy fingers of many a mercenary. La Hire was nominally on the side of the Dauphin Charles, but in reality he only made war on his own account. At this time he was ravaging Bar west and south, burning churches and laying waste villages.

While he was occupying Sermaize, the church of which was fortified, Jean, Count of Salm, who was governing the Duchy of Bar for the Duke of Lorraine, laid siege to it with two hundred horse. Collot Turlaut, who two years before had married Mengette, daughter of Jean de Vouthon and Jeanne's cousin-german, was killed there by a bomb fired from a Lorraine mortar.

Jacques d'Arc was then the elder (*doyen*) of the community. Many duties fell to the lot of the village elder, especially in troubled times. It was for him to summon the mayor and the aldermen to the council meetings, to cry the decrees, to command the watch day and night, to guard the prisoners. It was for him also to collect taxes, rents, and feudal dues, an ungrateful office in a ruined country.

Under pretence of safeguarding and protecting them, Robert de Saarbruck, Damoiseau of Commercy, who for the moment was Armagnac, was plundering and ransoming the villages belonging to Bar, on the left bank of the Meuse. On the 7th of October, 1423, Jacques d'Arc, as elder, signed below the mayor and sheriff the act by which the Squire extorted from these poor people the annual payment of two *gros* from each complete household and one from each widow's household, a tax which amounted to no less than two hundred and twenty golden crowns, which the elder was charged to collect before the winter feast of Saint-Martin.

The following year was bad for the Dauphin Charles, for the French and Scottish horsemen of his party met with the worst possible treatment at Verneuil. This year the Damoiseau of Commercy turned Burgundian and was none the better or the worse for it. Captain La Hire was still fighting in Bar, but now it was against the young son of Madame Yolande, the Dauphin Charles's brother-in-law, René d'Anjou, who had lately come of age and was now invested with the Duchy of Bar. At the point of the lance Captain La Hire was demanding certain sums of money that the Cardinal Duke of Bar owed him.

At the same time Robert, Sire de Baudricourt, was fighting with Jean de Vergy, lord of Saint-Dizier, Seneschal of Burgundy. It was a fine war. On both sides the combatants laid hands on bread, wine, money, silver-plate, clothes, cattle big and little, and what could not be carried off was burnt. Men, women, and children were put to ransom. In most of the villages of Bassigny agriculture was suspended, nearly all the mills were destroyed.

Ten, twenty, thirty bands of Burgundians were ravaging the castellany of Vaucouleurs, laying it waste with fire and sword. The peasants hid their horses

by day, and by night got up to take them to graze. At Domremy life was one perpetual alarm. All day and all night there was a watchman stationed on the square tower of the monastery. Every villager, and, if the prevailing custom were observed, even the priest, took his turn as watchman, peering for the glint of lances through the dust and sunlight down the white ribbon of the road, searching the horrid depths of the wood, and by night trembling to see the villages on the horizon bursting into flame. At the approach of men-at-arms the watchman would ring a noisy peal of those bells, which in turn celebrated births, mourned for the dead, summoned the people to prayer, dispelled storms of thunder and lightning, and warned of danger. Half clothed the awakened villagers would rush to stable, to cattle-shed, and pell-mell drive their flocks and herds to the castle between the two arms of the River Meuse.

One day in the summer of 1425, there fell upon the villages of Greux and Domremy a certain chief of these marauding bands, who was murdering and plundering throughout the land, by name Henri d'Orly, known as Henri de Savoie. This time the island fortress was of no use to the villagers. Lord Henri took all the cattle from the two villages and drove them fifteen or twenty leagues away to his *château* of Doulevant. He had also captured much furniture and other property; and the quantity of it was so great that he could not store it all in one place; wherefore he had part of it carried to Dommartin-le-Franc, a neighbouring village, where there was a *château* with so large a court in front that the place was called Dommartin-la-Cour. The peasants cruelly despoiled were dying of hunger. Happily for them, at the news of this pillage, Dame d'Ogiviller sent to the Count of Vaudémont in his *château* of Joinville, complaining to him, as her kinsman, of the wrong done her, since she was lady of Greux and Domremy. The *château* of Doulevant was under the immediate suzerainty of the Count of Vaudémont. As soon as he received his kinswoman's message he sent a man-at-arms with seven or eight soldiers to recapture the cattle. This man-at-arms, by name Barthélemy de Clefmont, barely twenty years of age, was well skilled in deeds of war. He found the stolen beasts in the *château* of Dommartin-le-Franc, took them and drove them to Joinville. On the way he was pursued and attacked by Lord d'Orly's men and stood in great danger of death. But so valiantly did he defend himself that he arrived safe and sound at Joinville, bringing the cattle, which the Count of Vaudémont caused to be driven back to the pastures of Greux and Domremy.

Unexpected good fortune! With tears the husbandman welcomed his restored flocks and herds. But was he not likely to lose them for ever on the morrow?

At that time Jeanne was thirteen or fourteen. War everywhere around her, even in the children's play; the husband of one of her godmothers taken and ransomed by men-at-arms; the husband of her cousin-german Mengette killed by a mortar; her native land overrun by marauders, burnt, pillaged, laid waste, all the cattle carried off; nights of terror, dreams of horror, — such were the surroundings of her childhood.

CHAPTER II

JEANNE'S VOICES

NOW, when she was about thirteen, it befell one summer day, at noon, that while she was in her father's garden she heard a voice that filled her with a great fear. It came from the right, from towards the church, and at the same time in the same direction there appeared a light. The voice said: "I come from God to help thee to live a good and holy life. Be good, Jeannette, and God will aid thee."

It is well known that fasting conduces to the seeing of visions. Jeanne was accustomed to fast. Had she abstained from food that morning and if so when had she last partaken of it? We cannot say.

On another day the voice spoke again and repeated, "Jeannette, be good."

The child did not know whence the voice came. But the third time, as she listened, she knew it was an angel's voice and she even recognised the angel to be St. Michael. She could not be mistaken, for she knew him well. He was the patron saint of the duchy of Bar. She sometimes saw him on the pillar of church or chapel, in the guise of a handsome knight, with a crown on his helmet, wearing a coat of mail, bearing a shield, and transfixing the devil with his lance. Sometimes he was represented holding the scales in which he weighed souls, for he was provost of heaven and warden of paradise; at once the leader of the heavenly hosts and the angel of judgment. He loved high lands. That is why in Lorraine a chapel had been dedicated to him on Mount Sombar, north of the town of Toul. In very remote times he had appeared to the Bishop of Avranches and commanded him to build a church on Mount Tombe, in such a place as he should find a bull hidden by thieves; and the site of the building was to include the whole area overtrodden by the bull. The Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel-au-Péril-de-la-Mer was erected in obedience to this command.

About the time when the child was having these visions, the defenders of Mont-Saint-Michel discomfited the English who were attacking the fortress by land and sea. The French attributed this victory to the all-powerful intercession of the archangel. And why should he not have favoured the French who worshipped him with peculiar devoutness? Since my Lord St. Denys had permitted his abbey to be taken by the English, my Lord St. Michael, who carefully guarded his, was in a fair way to become the true patron saint of the kingdom. In the year 1419 the Dauphin Charles had had escutcheons painted, representing St. Michael fully armed, holding a naked sword and in the act of slaying a serpent. The maid of Domremy, however, knew but little of the

miracles worked by my Lord St. Michael in Normandy. She recognised the angel by his weapons, his courtesy, and the noble words that fell from his lips.

One day he said to her: "Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret will come to thee. Act according to their advice; for they are appointed to guide thee and counsel thee in all thou hast to do, and thou mayest believe what they shall say unto thee." And these things came to pass as the Lord had ordained.

This promise filled her with great joy, for she loved them both. Madame Sainte Marguerite was highly honoured in the kingdom of France, where she was a great benefactress. She helped women in labour, and protected the peasant at work in the fields. She was the patron saint of flax-spinners, of procurers of wet-nurses, of vellum-dressers, and of bleachers of wool. Her precious relics in a reliquary, carried on a mule's back, were paraded by ecclesiastics through towns and villages. Plenteous alms were showered upon the exhibitors in return for permission to touch the relics. Many times had Jeanne seen Madame Sainte Marguerite at church, painted life-size, a holy-water sprinkler in her hand, her foot on a dragon's head. She was acquainted with her history as it was related in those days, somewhat on the lines of the following narrative.

The blessed Margaret was born at Antioch. Her father, Theodosius, was a priest of the Gentiles. She was put out to nurse and secretly baptised. One day when she was in her fifteenth year, as she was watching the flock belonging to her nurse, the governor Olibrius saw her, and, struck by her great beauty, conceived a great passion for her. Wherefore he said to his servants: "Go, bring me that girl, in order that if she be free I may marry her, or if she be a slave I may take her into my service."

And when she was brought he inquired of her her country, her name, and her religion. She replied that she was called Margaret and that she was a Christian.

And Olibrius said unto her: "How comes it that so noble and beautiful a girl as you can worship Jesus the Crucified?"

And because she replied that Jesus Christ was alive for ever, the governor in wrath had her thrown into prison.

The next day he summoned her to appear before him and said: "Unhappy girl, have pity on your own beauty and for your own sake worship our gods. If you persist in your blindness I will have your body rent in pieces."

And Margaret made answer: "Jesus suffered death for me, and I would fain die for him."

Then the governor commanded her to be hung from the wooden horse, to be beaten with rods, and her flesh to be torn with iron claws. And the blood flowed from the virgin's body as from a pure spring of fresh water.

Those who stood by wept, and the governor covered his face with his cloak that he might not see the blood. And he commanded to unloose her and take her back to prison.

There she was tempted by the Spirit, and she prayed the Lord to reveal to her the enemy whom she had to withstand. Thereupon a huge dragon, appearing before her, rushed forward to devour her, but she made the sign of the cross and he disappeared. Then, in order to seduce her, the devil assumed the form of a man. He came to her gently, took her hands in his and said: "Margaret, what you have done sufficeth." But she seized him by the hair, threw him to the ground, placed her right foot upon his head and cried: "Tremble, proud enemy, thou liest beneath a woman's foot."

The next day, in the presence of the assembled people, she was brought before the judge, who commanded her to sacrifice to idols. And when she refused he had her body burned with flaming pine-wood, but she seemed to suffer no pain. And fearing lest, amazed at this miracle, all the people should be converted, Olibrius commanded that the blessed Margaret should be beheaded. She spoke unto the executioner and said: "Brother, take your axe and strike me." With one blow he struck off her head. Her soul took flight to heaven in the form of a dove.

This story had been told in songs and mysteries. It was so well known that the name of the governor, jestingly vilified and fallen into ridicule, was in common parlance bestowed on braggarts and blusterers. A fool who posed as a wicked person was called *an olibrius*.

Madame Sainte Catherine, whose coming the angel had announced to Jeanne at the same time as that of Madame Sainte Marguerite, was the protectress of young girls and especially of servants and spinsters.

Orators and philosophers too had chosen as their patron saint the virgin who had confounded the fifty doctors and triumphed over the magi of the east. In the Meuse valley rhymed prayers like the following were addressed to her:

Ave, très sainte Catherine,
Vierge pucelle nette et fine.

This fine lady was no stranger to Jeanne; she had her church at Maxey, on the opposite bank of the river; and her name was borne by Isabelle Romée's eldest daughter.

Jeanne certainly did not know the story of Saint Catherine as it was known to illustrious clerks; as, for example, about this time it was committed to writing by

Messire Jean Miélot, the secretary of the Duke of Burgundy. Jean Miélot told how the virgin of Alexandria controverted the subtle arguments of Homer, the syllogisms of Aristotle, the very learned reasonings of the famous physicians Æsculapius and Galen, practised the seven liberal arts, and disputed according to the rules of dialectics. Jacques d'Arc's daughter had heard nothing of all that; she knew Saint Catherine from stories out of some history written in the vulgar tongue, in verse or in prose, so many of which were in circulation at that time.

Catherine, daughter of King Costus and Queen Sabinella, as she grew in years, became proficient in the arts, and a skilful embroiderer in silk. While her body was resplendent with beauty, her soul was clouded by the darkness of idolatry. Many barons of the empire sought her in marriage; she scorned them and said: "Find me a husband wise, handsome, noble, and rich." Now in her sleep she had a vision. Holding the Child Jesus in her arms, the Virgin Mary appeared unto her and said: "Catherine, will you take him for your husband? And you, my sweet son, will you have this virgin for your bride?"

The Child Jesus made answer: "Mother, I will not have her; bid her depart from you, for she is a worshipper of idols. But if she will be baptised I will consent to put the nuptial ring on her finger."

Desiring to marry the King of Heaven, Catherine went to ask for baptism at the hands of the hermit Ananias, who lived in Armenia on Mount Negra. A few days afterwards, when she was praying in her room, she saw Jesus Christ appear in the midst of a numerous choir of angels and of saints. He drew near unto her and placed his ring upon her finger. Then only did Catherine know that her bridal was a spiritual bridal.

In those days Maxentius was Emperor of the Romans. He commanded the people of Alexandria to offer great sacrifices to the idols. Catherine, as she was at prayer in her oratory, heard the chanting of the priests and the bellowing of the victims. Straightway she went to the public square, and beholding Maxentius at the gate of the temple, she said unto him: "How comes it that thou art so foolish as to command this people to offer incense to idols? Thou admirest this temple built by the hands of thy workmen. Thou admirest these ornaments which are but dust blown away by the wind. Thou shouldest rather admire the sky, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein. Thou shouldest rather admire the ornaments of the heavens: the sun, the moon, and the stars, and those circling planets, which from the beginning of the world move from the west and return to the east and never grow weary. And when thou hast observed all these things, ask and learn who is their Creator. It is our God, the Lord of Hosts, and the God of gods."

“Woman,” replied the emperor, “leave us to finish our sacrifice; afterwards we will make answer unto thee.”

And he commanded Catherine to be taken into the palace and strictly guarded, because he marvelled at the great wisdom and the wonderful beauty of this virgin. He summoned fifty doctors well versed in the knowledge of the Egyptians and the liberal arts; and, when they were gathered together, he said unto them: “A maiden of subtle mind maintains that our gods are but demons. I could have forced her to sacrifice or have made her pay the penalty of her disobedience; I judged it better that she should be confounded by the power of your reasoning. If you triumph over her, you will return to your homes laden with honours.”

And the wise men made answer: “Let her be brought, that her rashness may be made manifest, that she may confess that never until now has she met men of wisdom.”

And when she learned that she was to dispute with wise men, Catherine feared lest she should not worthily defend the gospel of Jesus Christ. But an angel appeared to her and said: “I am the Archangel Saint Michael, sent by God to make known unto thee that from this strife thou shalt come forth victorious and worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the hope and crown of those who strive for him.”

And the virgin disputed with the doctors. When they maintained that it was impossible for God to become man, and be acquainted with grief, Catherine showed how the birth and passion of Jesus Christ had been announced by the Gentiles themselves, and prophesied by Plato and the Sibyl.

The doctors had nothing to oppose to arguments so convincing. Therefore the chief among them said to the emperor: “Thou knowest that up till now no one has disputed with us without being straightway confounded. But this maid, through whom the Spirit of God speaks, fills us with wonder, and we know nothing nor dare we say anything against Christ. And we boldly confess that if thou hast no stronger arguments to bring forth in favour of the gods, whom hitherto we have worshipped, we will all of us embrace the Christian religion.”

On hearing these words, the tyrant was so transported with wrath that he had the fifty doctors burned in the middle of the town. But as a sign that they suffered for the truth, neither their garments nor the hairs of their heads were touched by the fire.

Afterwards Maxentius said unto Catherine: “O virgin, issue of a noble line, and worthy of the imperial purple, take counsel with thy youth, and sacrifice to our gods. If thou dost consent, thou shalt take rank in my palace after the

empress, and thy image, placed in the middle of the town, shall be worshipped by all the people like that of a goddess.”

But Catherine answered: “Speak not of such things. The very thought of them is sin. Jesus Christ hath chosen me for his bride. He is my love, my glory, and all my delight.”

Finding it impossible to flatter her with soft words, the tyrant hoped to reduce her to obedience through fear; therefore he threatened her with death.

Catherine’s courage did not waver. “Jesus Christ,” she said, “offered himself to his Father as a sacrifice for me; it is my great joy to offer myself as an agreeable sacrifice to the glory of his name.”

Straightway Maxentius commanded that she should be scourged with rods, and then cast into a dark dungeon and left there without food. Thereupon, at the call of urgent affairs, Maxentius set out for a distant province.

Now the empress, who was a heathen, had a vision, in which Saint Catherine appeared to her surrounded by a marvellous light. Angels clad in white were with her, and their faces could not be looked upon by reason of the brightness that proceeded from them. And Catherine told the empress to draw near. Taking a crown from the hand of one of the angels who attended her, she placed it upon the head of the empress, saying: “Behold a crown sent down to thee from heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, my God, and my Lord.”

The heart of the empress was troubled by this wonderful dream. Wherefore, attended by Porphyrius, a knight who was commander-in-chief of the army, in the early hours of night she repaired to the prison in which Catherine was confined. Here in her cell a dove brought her heavenly food, and angels dressed the virgin’s wounds. The empress and Porphyrius found the dungeon bathed in a light so bright that it filled them with a great fear, and they fell prostrate on the ground. But there straightway filled the dungeon an odour marvellously sweet, which comforted them and gave them courage.

“Arise,” said Catherine, “and be not afraid, for Jesus Christ calleth you.”

They arose, and beheld Catherine in the midst of a choir of angels. The saint took from the hands of one among them a crown, very beautiful and shining like gold, and she put it upon the empress’s head. This crown was the sign of martyrdom. For indeed the names of this queen and of the knight Porphyrius were already written in the book of eternal rewards.

On his return Maxentius commanded Catherine to be brought before him, and said unto her: “Choose between two things: to sacrifice and live, or to die in torment.”

Catherine made answer: “It is my desire to offer to Jesus Christ my flesh and my blood. He is my lover, my shepherd, and my husband.”

Then the provost of the city of Alexandria, whose name was Chursates, commanded to be made four wheels furnished with very sharp iron spikes, in order that upon these wheels the blessed Catherine should die a miserable and a cruel death. But an angel broke the machine, and with such violence that the parts of it flying asunder killed a great number of the Gentiles. And the empress, who beheld these things from the top of her tower, came down and reproached the emperor for his cruelty. Full of wrath, Maxentius commanded the empress to sacrifice; and when she refused, he commanded her breasts to be torn out and her head to be cut off. And while she was being taken to the torturer, Catherine exhorted her, saying: "Go, rejoice, queen beloved of God, for to-day thou shalt exchange for a perishable kingdom an everlasting empire, and a mortal husband for an immortal lover."

And the empress was taken to suffer death outside the walls. Porphyrius carried away the body and had it buried reverently as that of a servant of Jesus Christ. Wherefore Maxentius had Porphyrius put to death, and his body cast to the dogs. Then, summoning Catherine before him, he said unto her: "Since, by thy magic arts thou hast caused the empress to perish, now if thou repent thou shalt be first in my palace. To-day, therefore, sacrifice to the gods, or thy head shall be struck off."

She made answer: "Do as thou hast resolved that I may take my place in the band of maidens who are around the Lamb of God."

The emperor sentenced her to be beheaded. And when they had led her outside the city of Alexandria, to the place of death, she raised her eyes to heaven and said: "Jesus, hope and salvation of the faithful, glory and beauty of virgins, I pray thee to listen and to answer the prayer of whomsoever, in memory of my martyrdom, shall invoke me in death or in peril whatsoever."

And a voice from heaven made answer: "Come, my beloved bride; the gate of heaven is open to thee. And to those who shall invoke me through thy intercession, I promise help from on high." From the riven neck of the virgin flowed forth milk instead of blood.

Thus Madame Sainte Catherine passed from this world to celestial happiness, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of November, which was a Friday.

My Lord Saint Michael, the Archangel, did not forget his promise. The ladies Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret came as he had said. On their very first visit the young peasant maid vowed to them to preserve her virginity as long as it should please God. If there were any meaning in such a promise, Jeanne, however old she may then have been, could not have been quite a child. And it

seems probable that the angel and the saints appeared to her first when she was on the threshold of womanhood, that is, if she ever became a woman.

The saints soon entered into familiar relations with her. They came to the village every day, and often several times a day. When she saw them appear in a ray of light coming down from heaven, shining and clad like queens, with golden crowns on their heads, wearing rich and precious jewels, the village maiden crossed herself devoutly and curtsied low. And because they were ladies of good breeding, they returned her salutation. Each one had her own particular manner of greeting, and it was by this manner that Jeanne distinguished one from the other, for the dazzling light of their countenances rendered it impossible for her to look them in the face. They graciously permitted their earth-born friend to touch their feet, to kiss the hems of their garments, and to inhale rapturously the sweet perfume they emitted. They addressed her courteously, as it seemed to Jeanne. They called the lowly damsel daughter of God. They taught her to live well and go to church. Without always having anything very new to say to her, since they came so constantly, they spoke to her of things which filled her with joy, and, after they had disappeared, Jeanne ardently pressed her lips to the ground their feet had trodden.

Oftentimes she received the heavenly ladies in her little garden, close to the precincts of the church. She used to meet them near the spring; often they even appeared to their little friend surrounded by heavenly companies. "For," Isabelle's daughter used to say, "angels are wont to come down to Christians without being seen, but I see them." It was in the woods, amid the light rustling of the leaves, and especially when the bells rang for matins or compline, that she heard the sweet words most distinctly. And so she loved the sound of the bells, with which her Voices mingled. So, when at nine o'clock in the evening, Perrin le Drapier, sexton of the parish, forgot to ring for compline, she reproached him with his negligence, and scolded him for not doing his duty. She promised him cakes if in the future he would not forget to ring the bells.

She told none of these things to her priest; for this, according to some good doctors, she must be censured, but, according to others equally excellent, she must be commended. For if on the one hand we are to consult our ecclesiastical superiors in matters of faith, on the other, where the gift of the Holy Ghost is poured out, there reigns perfect liberty.

Since the two saints had been visiting Jeanne, my Lord Saint Michael had come less often; but he had not forsaken her. There came a time when he talked to her of love for the kingdom of France, of that love which she felt in her heart.

And the holy visitants, whose voices grew stronger and more ardent as the maiden's soul grew holier and more heroic, revealed to her her mission.

“Daughter of God,” they said, “thou must leave thy village, and go to France.”

Had this idea of a holy militant mission, conceived by Jeanne through the intermediary of her Voices, come into her mind spontaneously without the intervention of any outside will, or had it been suggested to her by some one who was influencing her? It would be impossible to solve this problem were there not a slight indication to direct us. Jeanne at Domremy was acquainted with a prophecy foretelling that France would be ruined by a woman and saved by a maiden. It made an extraordinary impression upon her; and later she came to speak in a manner which proved that she not only believed it, but was persuaded that she herself was the maiden designated by the prophecy. Who taught her this? Some peasant? We have reason to believe that the peasants did not know it, and that it was current among ecclesiastics. Besides, it is important to notice in this connection that Jeanne was acquainted with a particular form of this prophecy, obviously arranged for her benefit, since it specified that the Maiden Redemptrix should come from the borders of Lorraine. This local addition is not the work of a cowherd; it suggests rather a mind apt to direct souls and to inspire deeds. It is no longer possible to doubt that the prophecy thus revised is the work of an ecclesiastic whose intentions may be easily divined. Henceforth one is conscious of an idea agitating and possessing the young seer of visions.

On the banks of the Meuse, among the humble folk of the countryside, some churchman, preoccupied with the lot of the poor people of France, directed Jeanne’s visions to the welfare of the kingdom and to the conclusion of peace. He carried the ardour of his pious zeal so far as to collect prophecies concerning the salvation of the French crown, and to add to them with an eye to the accomplishment of his design. For such an ecclesiastic we must seek among the priests of Lorraine or Champagne upon whom the national misfortunes imposed cruel sufferings. Merchants and artisans, crushed under the burden of taxes and subsidies, and ruined by changes in the coinage, peasants, whose houses, barns, and mills had been destroyed, and whose fields had been laid waste, no longer contributed to the expenses of public worship. Canons and ecclesiastics, deprived both of their feudal dues and of the contributions of the faithful, quitted the religious houses and set out to beg their bread from door to door, leaving behind in the monasteries only two or three old monks, and a few children. The fortified abbeys attracted captains and soldiers of both sides. They entrenched themselves within the walls; they plundered and burnt. When one of those holy houses succeeded in remaining standing, the wandering village folk made it their place of refuge, and it was impossible to prevent the refectories and dormitories from being invaded by women. In the midst of this obscure throng of souls

afflicted by the sufferings and the scandals of the Church may be divined the prophet and the director of the Maid.

We shall not be tempted to recognise him in Messire Guillaume Frontey, priest of Domremy. The successor of Messire Jean Minet, if we may judge from his conversation which has been preserved, was as simple as his flock. Jeanne saw many priests and monks. She was in the habit of visiting her uncle, the priest of Sermaize, and of seeing in the Abbey of Cheminon, her cousin, a young ecclesiastic in minor orders, who was soon to follow her into France. She was in touch with a number of priests who would be very quick to recognise her exceptional piety, and her gift of beholding things invisible to the majority of Christians. They engaged her in conversations, which, had they been preserved, would doubtless present to us one of the sources whence she derived inspiration for her marvellous vocation. One among them, whose name will never be known, raised up an angelic deliverer for the king and the kingdom of France.

Meanwhile Jeanne was living a life of illusion. Knowing nothing of the influences she was under, incapable of recognising in her Voices the echo of a human voice or the promptings of her own heart, she responded timidly to the saints when they bade her fare forth into France: "I am a poor girl, and know not how to ride a horse or how to make war."

As soon as she began to receive these revelations she gave up her games and her excursions. Henceforth she seldom danced round the fairies' tree, and then only in play with the children. It would seem that she also took a dislike to working in the fields, and especially to herding the flocks. From early childhood she had shown signs of piety. Now she gave herself up to extreme devoutness; she confessed frequently, and communicated with ecstatic fervour; she heard mass in her parish church every day. At all hours she was to be found in church, sometimes prostrate on the ground, sometimes with her hands clasped, and her face turned towards the image of Our Lord or of Our Lady. She did not always wait for Saturday to visit the chapel at Bermont. Sometimes, when her parents thought she was tending the herds, she was kneeling at the feet of the miracle-working Virgin. The village priest, Messire Guillaume Frontey, could do nothing but praise the most guileless of his parishioners. One day he happened to say with a sigh: "If Jeannette had money she would give it to me for the saying of masses."

As for the good man, Jacques d'Arc, it is possible that he may have occasionally complained of those pilgrimages, those meditations, and those other practices which ill accorded with the ordinary tenor of country life. Every one thought Jeanne odd and erratic. Mengette and her friends, when they found her so devout, said she was too pious. They scolded her for not dancing with them.

Among others, Isabellette, the young wife of Gérardin d'Epinal, the mother of little Nicholas, Jeanne's godson, roundly condemned a girl who cared so little for dancing. Colin, son of Jean Colin, and all the village lads made fun of her piety. Her fits of religious ecstasy raised a smile. She was regarded as a little mad. She suffered from this persistent raillery. But with her own eyes she beheld the dwellers in Paradise. And when they left her she would cry and wish that they had taken her with them.

"Daughter of God, thou must leave thy village and go forth into France."

And the ladies Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret spoke again and said: "Take the standard sent down to thee by the King of Heaven, take it boldly and God will help thee." As she listened to these words of the ladies with the beautiful crowns, Jeanne was consumed with a desire for long expeditions on horseback, and for those battles in which angels hover over the heads of the warriors. But how was she to go to France? How was she to associate with men-at-arms? Ignorant and generously impulsive like herself, the Voices she heard merely revealed to her her own heart, and left her in sad agitation of mind: "I am a poor girl, knowing neither how to bestride a horse nor how to make war."

Jeanne's native village was named after the blessed Remi; the parish church bore the name of the great apostle of the Gauls, who, in baptising King Clovis, had anointed with holy oil the first Christian prince of the noble House of France, descended from the noble King Priam of Troy.

Thus runs the legend of Saint Remi as it was told by churchmen. In those days the pious hermit Montan, who lived in the country of Laon, beheld a choir of angels and an assembly of saints; and he heard a voice full and sweet saying: "The Lord hath looked down upon the earth. That he might hear the groans of them that are in fetters: that he might release the children of the slain: that they may declare the name of the Lord in Sion: and his praise in Jerusalem. When the people assemble together, and kings to serve the Lord. And Cilinia shall bring forth a son for the saving of the people."

Now Cilinia was old, and her husband Emilius was blind. Yet Cilinia, having conceived, brought forth a son; and with the milk with which she nourished her babe she rubbed the eyes of the father, and straightway his eyes were opened, and he saw.

This child, whose birth had been foretold by angels, was called Remi, which, being interpreted, means oar; for by his teaching, as with a well-cut oar, he was to guide the Church of God, and especially the church of Reims, over the stormy sea of life, and by his merits and his prayers bring it into the heaven of eternal salvation.

In retirement and in the practice of holy and Christian observances, Cilinia's son passed his pious youth at Laon. Hardly had he entered his twenty-second year, when the episcopal seat of Reims fell vacant on the death of the blessed Bishop Bennade. An immense concourse of people nominated Remi the shepherd of the flock. He refused a burden which he said was too heavy for the weakness of his youth. But suddenly there fell upon his forehead a ray of celestial light, and a divine liquid was shed upon his hair, and scented it with a strange perfume. Wherefore, without further delay, the bishops of the province of Reims, with one consent, consecrated him their bishop. Established in the seat of Saint Sixtus, the blessed Remi revealed himself liberal in almsgiving, assiduous in vigilance, fervent in prayer, perfect in charity, marvellous in doctrine, and holy in all his conversation. Like a city built on the top of a mountain, he was admired of all men.

In those days, Clovis, King of France, was a heathen, with all his knights. But he had won a great victory over the Germans by invoking the name of Christ. Wherefore, at the entreaty of the saintly Queen Clotilde, his wife, he resolved to ask baptism at the hands of the blessed Bishop of Reims. When this pious desire had been made known to him, Saint Remi taught the King and his subjects that, renouncing Satan and his pomps and his works, they must believe in God and in Jesus Christ his Son. And as the solemn festival of Easter was approaching, he commanded them to fast according to the custom of the faithful. On the day of the Passion of Our Lord, the eve of the day on which Clovis was to be baptised, early in the morning the Bishop went to the King and Queen and led them to an oratory dedicated to the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles. Suddenly the chapel was filled with a light so brilliant that the sunshine became as shadow, and from the midst of this light there came a voice saying: "Peace be with you, it is I, fear not and abide in my love." After these words the light faded, but there remained in the chapel an odour of ineffable sweetness. Then, with his face shining like the countenance of Moses, and illuminated within by a divine brightness, the holy Bishop prophesied and said: "Clovis and Clotilde, your descendants shall set back the boundaries of the kingdom. They shall raise the church of Jesus Christ and triumph over foreign nations provided they fall not from virtue and depart not from the way of salvation, neither enter upon the sinful road leading to destruction and to those snares of deadly vices which overthrow empires and cause dominion to pass from one nation to another."

Meanwhile the way is being prepared from the King's palace to the baptistry; curtains and costly draperies are hung up: the houses on each side of the street are covered with hangings; the church is decorated, and the baptistry is strewn with balsam and all manner of sweet-smelling herbs. Overwhelmed with the

Lord's favour the people seem already to taste the delights of Paradise. The procession sets out from the palace; the clergy lead with crosses and banners, singing hymns and sacred canticles; then comes the Bishop leading the King by the hand; and lastly the Queen follows with the people. By the way the King asked the Bishop if yonder was the kingdom of God he had promised him. "No," answered the blessed Remi, "but it is the beginning of the road that leads to it." When they had reached the baptistry, the priest who bore the holy chrism was hindered by the crowd from reaching the sacred font; so that, as God had ordained, there was no holy oil for the benediction at the font. Then the Pontiff raises his eyes to heaven, and prays in silence and in tears. Straightway there descends a dove white as snow, bearing in its beak an ampulla full of chrism sent from heaven. The heavenly oil emits a delicious perfume, which intoxicates the multitude with a delight such as they had never experienced before that hour. The holy Bishop takes the ampulla, sprinkles the baptismal water with chrism, and straightway the dove vanishes.

At the sight of so great a miracle of grace, the King, transported with joy, renounces Satan and his pomps and his works. He demands instant baptism, and bends over the fountain of life.

Ever since then the kings of France have been anointed with the divine oil which the dove brought down from heaven. The holy ampulla containing it is kept in the church of Saint Remi at Reims. And by God's grace on the day of the King's anointing this ampulla is always found full.

Such was the clerks' story; and doubtless the peasants of Domremy on a humbler note might have said as much or even more. We may believe that they used to sing the complaint of Saint Remi. Every year, when on the 1st of October the festival of the patron saint came round, the priest was wont to pronounce an eulogium on the saint.

About this time a mystery was performed at Reims in which the miracles of the apostle of Gaul were fully represented.

And among them were some which would appeal strongly to rustic souls. In his mortal life my Lord Saint Remi had healed a blind man possessed of devils. A man bestowed his goods on the chapter of Reims for the salvation of his soul and died; ten years after his death Saint Remi restored him to life, and made him declare his gift. Being entertained by persons who had nothing to drink, the saint filled their cask with miraculous wine. He received from King Clovis the gift of a mill; but when the miller refused to yield it up to him, my Lord Saint Remi, by the power of God, threw down the mill, and cast it into the centre of the earth. One night when the Saint was alone in his chapel, while all his clerks were

asleep, the glorious apostles Peter and Paul came down from Paradise to sing matins with him.

Who better than the folk of Domremy should know of the baptism of King Clovis of France, and of the descent of the Holy Ghost, at the singing of *Veni Creator Spiritus*, bearing in its beak the holy ampulla, full of chrism blessed by Our Lord?

Who better than they should understand the words addressed to the very Christian King, by my Lord Saint Remi, not doubtless in the Church's Latin, but in the good tongue of the people and very much like the following: "Now, Sire, take knowledge and serve God faithfully and judge justly, that thy kingdom may prosper. For if justice depart from it then shall this kingdom be in danger of perdition."

In short, in one way or another, whether through the clerks who directed her or through the peasants among whom she dwelt, Jeanne had knowledge of the good Archbishop Remi, who so dearly cherished the royal blood in the holy ampulla at Reims, and of the anointing of the very Christian kings.

And the Angel appeared unto her and said: "Daughter of God, thou shalt lead the Dauphin to Reims that he may there receive worthily his anointing."

The maid understood. The scales fell from her eyes; a bright light was shed abroad in her mind. Behold wherefore God had chosen her. Through her the Dauphin Charles was to be anointed at Reims. The white dove, which of old was sent to the blessed Remi, was to come down again at the Virgin's call. God, who loves the French, marks their king with a sign, and when there is no sign the royal power has departed. The anointing alone makes the king, and Messire Charles de Valois had not been anointed. Notwithstanding the father lies becrowned and besceptred in the basilica of Saint-Denys in France, the son is but the dauphin and will not enter into his inheritance till the day when the oil of the inexhaustible ampulla shall flow over his forehead. And God has chosen her, a young, ignorant peasant maid, to lead him, through the ranks of his enemies, to Reims, where he shall receive the unction poured upon Saint Louis. Unfathomable ways of God! The humble maid, knowing not how to ride a horse, unskilled in the arts of war, is chosen to bring to Our Lord his temporal vicar of Christian France.

Henceforth Jeanne knew what great deeds she was to bring to pass. But as yet she discerned not the means by which she was to accomplish them.

"Thou must fare forth into France," Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret said to her.

"Daughter of God, thou shalt lead the Dauphin to Reims that he may there receive worthily his anointing," the Archangel Michael said to her.

She must obey them — but how? If at that time there were not just at hand some devout adviser to direct her, one incident quite personal and unimportant, which then occurred in her father's house, may have sufficed to point out the way to the young saint.

Tenant-in-chief of the Castle on the island in 1419, and in 1423 elder of the community, Jacques d'Arc was one of the notables of Domremy. The village folk held him in high esteem and readily entrusted him with difficult tasks. Towards the end of March, 1427, they sent him to Vaucouleurs as their authorised proxy in a lawsuit they were conducting before Robert de Baudricourt. It was a question of the payment of damages required at once from the lord and the inhabitants of Greux and Domremy by a certain Guyot Poignant, of Montigny-le-Roi. These damages went back four years to when, as a return for his protection, the Damoiseau of Commercy had extorted from Greux and Domremy a sum amounting to two hundred and twenty golden crowns.

Guyot Poignant had become security for this sum which had not been paid by the time fixed. The Damoiseau seized Poignant's wood, hay, and horses to the value of one hundred and twenty golden crowns, which amount the said Poignant reclaimed from the nobles and villeins of Greux and Domremy. The suit was still pending in 1427, when the community nominated Jacques d'Arc its authorised proxy, and sent him to Vaucouleurs. The result of the dispute is not known; but it is sufficient to note that Jeanne's father saw Sire Robert and had speech with him.

On his return home he must have more than once related these interviews, and told of the manners and words of so great a personage. And doubtless Jeanne heard many of these things. Assuredly she must have pricked up her ears at the name of Baudricourt. Then it was that her dazzling friend, the Archangel Knight, came once more to awaken the obscure thought slumbering within her: "Daughter of God," he said, "go thou to the Captain Robert de Baudricourt, in the town of Vaucouleurs, that he may grant unto thee men who shall take thee to the gentle Dauphin."

Resolved to obey faithfully the behest of the Archangel which accorded with her own desire, Jeanne foresaw that her mother, albeit pious, would grant her no aid in her design and that her father would strongly oppose it. Therefore she refrained from confiding it to them.

She thought that Durand Lassois would be the man to give her the succour of which she had need. In consideration of his age she called him uncle, — he was her elder by sixteen years.

Their kinship was by marriage: Lassois had married one Jeanne, daughter of one Le Vauseul, husbandman, and of Aveline, sister of Isabelle de Vouthon, and

consequently cousin-german of Isabelle's daughter.

With his wife, his father-in-law, and his mother-in-law, Lassois dwelt at Burey-en-Vaulx, a hamlet of a few homesteads, lying on the left bank of the Meuse, in the green valley, five miles from Domremy, and less than two and a half miles from Vaucouleurs.

Jeanne went to see him, told him of her design, and showed him that she must needs see Sire Robert de Baudricourt. That her kind kinsman might the more readily believe in her, she repeated to him the strange prophecy, of which we have already made mention: "Was it not known of old," she said, "that a woman should ruin the kingdom of France and that a woman should re-establish it?"

This prognostication, it appears, caused Durand Lassois to reflect. Of the two facts foretold therein, the first, the evil one, had come to pass in the town of Troyes, when Madame Ysabeau had given the Kingdom of the Lilies and Madame Catherine of France to the King of England. It only remained to hope that the second, the good, would likewise come to pass. If in the heart of Durand Lassois there were any love for the Dauphin Charles, such must have been his desire; but on this point history is silent.

During this visit to her cousin, Jeanne met with others besides her kinsfolk, the Vouthons and their children. She visited a young nobleman, by name Geoffroy de Foug, who dwelt in the parish of Maxey-sur-Vayse, of which the hamlet of Burey formed part. She confided to him that she wanted to go to France. My Lord Geoffroy did not know much of Jeanne's parents; he was ignorant even of their names. But the damsel seemed to him good, simple, pious, and he encouraged her in her marvellous undertaking. A week after her arrival at Burey she attained her object: Durand Lassois consented to take her to Vaucouleurs.

Before starting she asked a favour from her aunt Aveline who was with child; she said to her: "If the babe you bear is a daughter, call her Catherine in memory of my dead sister."

Catherine, who had married Colin de Greux, had just died.

CHAPTER III

FIRST VISIT TO VAUCOULEURS — FLIGHT TO NEUFCHÂTEAU — JOURNEY TO TOUL — SECOND VISIT TO VAUCOULEURS

ROBERT de Baudricourt, who in those days commanded the town of Vaucouleurs for the Dauphin Charles, was the son of Liébault de Baudricourt deceased, once chamberlain of Robert, Duke of Bar, governor of Pont-à-Mousson, and of Marguerite d'Aunoy, Lady of Blaise in Bassigny. Fourteen or fifteen years earlier he had succeeded his two uncles, Guillaume, the Bastard of Poitiers, and Jean d'Aunoy as Bailie of Chaumont and Commander of Vaucouleurs. His first wife had been a rich widow; after her death he had married, in 1425, another widow, as rich as the first, Madame Alarde de Chambley. And it is a fact that the peasants of Uruffe and of Gibeauxmex stole the cart carrying the cakes ordered for the wedding feast. Sire Robert was like all the warriors of his time and country; he was greedy and cunning; he had many friends among his enemies and many enemies among his friends; he fought now for his own side, now against it, but always for his own advantage. For the rest he was no worse than his fellows, and one of the least stupid.

Clad in a poor red gown, but her heart bright with mystic love, Jeanne climbed the hill dominating the town and the valley. Without any difficulty she entered the castle, for its gates were opened as freely as if it had been a fair; and she was led into the hall where was Sire Robert among his men-at-arms. She heard the Voice saying to her: "That is he!" And immediately she went straight to him, and spoke to him fearlessly, beginning, doubtless, by saying what she deemed to be most urgent: "I am come to you, sent by Messire," she said, "that you may send to the Dauphin and tell him to hold himself in readiness, but not to give battle to his enemies."

Assuredly she must thus have spoken, prompted by a new revelation from her Voices. And it is important to notice that she repeated word for word what had been said seventy-five years earlier, not far from Vaucouleurs, by a peasant of Champagne who was a vavasour, that is, a freeman. This peasant's career had begun like Jeanne's, but had come to a much more abrupt conclusion. Jacques d'Arc's daughter had not been the first to say that revelations had been made to her concerning the war. Periods of great distress are the times when inspired persons most commonly appear. Thus it came to pass that in the days of the

Plague and of the Black Prince the vavasour of Champagne heard a voice coming forth from a beam of light.

While he was at work in the fields the voice had said to him: "Go thou, and warn John, King of France, that he fight not against any of his enemies." It was a few days before the Battle of Poitiers.

Then the counsel was wise; but in the month of May, 1428, it seemed less wise, and appeared to have little bearing on the state of affairs at that time. Since the disaster of Verneuil, the French had not felt equal to giving battle to their enemies; and they were not thinking of it. Towns were taken and lost, skirmishes were fought, sallies were attempted, but the enemy was not engaged in pitched battles. There was no need to restrain the Dauphin Charles, whom in those days nature and fortune rendered unadventurous. About the time that Jeanne was uttering these words before Sire Robert, the English in France were preparing an expedition, and were hesitating, unable to decide whether to march on Angers or on Orléans.

Jeanne gave utterance according to the promptings of her Archangel and her Saints, and touching warfare and the condition of the kingdom they knew neither more nor less than she. But it is not surprising that those who believe themselves sent by God should ask to be waited for. And again in the damsel's fear lest the French knights should once more give battle after their own guise there was much of the sound common sense of the people. They were only too well acquainted with knightly warfare.

Perfectly calm and self-possessed, Jeanne went on and uttered a prophecy concerning the Dauphin: "Before mid Lent my Lord will grant him aid." Then straightway she added: "But in very deed the realm belongs not to the Dauphin. Nathless it is Messire's will that the Dauphin should be king and receive the kingdom in trust — *en commande* . Notwithstanding his enemies, the Dauphin shall be king; and it is I who shall lead him to his anointing."

Doubtless the title Messire, in the sense in which she employed it, sounded strange and obscure, since Sire Robert, failing to understand it, asked: "Who is Messire?"

"The King of Heaven," the damsel answered.

She had made use of another term, concerning which, as far as we know, Sire Robert made no remark; and yet it is suggestive.

That word *commande* employed in matters connected with inheritance signified something given in trust. If the King received the kingdom *en commande* he would merely hold it in trust. Thus the maid's utterance agreed with the views of the most pious concerning Our Lord's government of

kingdoms. By herself she could not have happened on the word or the idea; she had obviously been instructed by one of those churchmen whose influence we have discerned already in the Lorraine prophecy, but the trace of whom has completely vanished.

Touching things spiritual Jeanne held converse with several priests; among others with Messire Arnolin, of Gondrecourt-le-Château, and Messire Dominique Jacob, priest of Moutier-sur-Saulx, who was her confessor. It is a pity we do not know what these ecclesiastics thought of the insatiable cruelty of the English, of the pride of my Lord Duke of Burgundy, of the misfortunes of the Dauphin, and whether they did not hope that one day Our Lord Jesus Christ at the prayer of the common folk would condescend to grant the kingdom *en commande* to Charles, son of Charles. It was possibly from one of these that Jeanne derived her theocratic ideas.

While she was speaking to Sire Robert there was present, and not by chance merely, a certain knight of Lorraine, Bertrand de Poulengy, who possessed lands near Gondrecourt and held an office in the provostship of Vaucouleurs. He was then about thirty-six years of age. He was a man who associated with churchmen; at least he was familiar with the manner of speech of devout persons. Perhaps he now saw Jeanne for the first time; but he must certainly have heard of her; and he knew her to be good and pious. Twelve years before he had frequently visited Domremy; he knew the country well; he had sat beneath *l'Arbre des Dames*, and had been several times to the house of Jacques d'Arc and Romée, whom he held to be good honest farmer folk.

It may be that Bertrand de Poulengy was struck by the damsel's speech and bearing; it is more likely that the knight was in touch with certain ecclesiastics unknown to us, who were instructing the peasant seeress with an eye to rendering her better able to serve the realm of France and the Church. However that may be, in Bertrand she had a friend who was to be her strong support in the future.

For the nonce, however, if our information be correct, he did nothing and spoke not a word. Perhaps he judged it best to wait until the commander of the town should be ready to grant a more favourable hearing to the saint's request. Sire Robert understood nothing of all this; one point only appeared plain to him, that Jeanne would make a fine camp-follower and that she would be a great favourite with the men-at-arms.

In dismissing the villein who had brought her, he gave him a piece of advice quite in keeping with the wisdom of the time concerning the chastising of daughters: "Take her back to her father and box her ears well."

Sire Robert held such discipline to be excellent, for more than once he urged

Uncle Lassois to take Jeanne home well whipped.

After a week's absence she returned to the village. Neither the Captain's contumely nor the garrison's insults had humiliated or discouraged her. Imagining that her Voices had foretold them, she held them to be proofs of the truth of her mission. Like those who walk in their sleep she was calm in the face of obstacles and yet quietly persistent. In the house, in the garden, in the meadow, she continued to sleep that marvellous slumber, in which she dreamed of the Dauphin, of his knights, and of battles with angels hovering above.

She found it impossible to be silent; on all occasions her secret escaped from her. She was always prophesying, but she was never believed. On St. John the Baptist's Eve, about a month after her return, she said sententiously to Michel Lebuin, a husbandman of Burey, who was quite a boy: "Between Coussey and Vaucouleurs is a girl who in less than a year from now will cause the Dauphin to be anointed King of France."

One day meeting Gérardin d'Epinal, the only man at Domremy not of the Dauphin's party, whose head according to her own confession she would willingly have cut off, although she was godmother to his son, she could not refrain from announcing even to him in veiled words her mystic dealing with God: "Gossip, if you were not a Burgundian there is something I would tell you."

The good man thought it must be a question of an approaching betrothal and that Jacques d'Arc's daughter was about to marry one of the lads with whom she had broken bread under *l'Arbre des Fées* and drunk water from the Gooseberry Spring.

Alas! how greatly would Jacques d'Arc have desired the secret to be of that nature. This upright man was very strict; he was careful concerning his children's conduct; and Jeanne's behaviour caused him anxiety. He knew not that she heard Voices. He had no idea that all day Paradise came down into his garden, that from Heaven to his house a ladder was let down, on which there came and went without ceasing more angels than had ever trodden the ladder of the Patriarch Jacob; neither did he imagine that for Jeannette alone, without any one else perceiving it, a mystery was being played, a thousand times richer and finer than those which on feast days were acted on platforms, in towns like Toul and Nancy. He was miles away from suspecting such incredible marvels. But what he did see was that his daughter was losing her senses, that her mind was wandering, and that she was giving utterance to wild words. He perceived that she could think of nothing but cavalcades and battles. He must have known something of the escapade at Vaucouleurs. He was terribly afraid that one day

the unhappy child would go off for good on her wanderings. This agonising anxiety haunted him even in his sleep. One night he dreamed that he saw her fleeing with men-at-arms; and this dream was so vivid that he remembered it when he awoke. For several days he said over and over again to his sons, Jean and Pierre: "If I really believed that what I dreamed of my daughter would ever come true, I would rather see her drowned by you; and if you would not do it I would drown her myself."

Isabelle repeated these words to her daughter hoping that they might alarm her and cause her to correct her ways. Devout as she was, Jeanne's mother shared her father's fears. The idea that their daughter was in danger of becoming a worthless creature was a cruel thought to these good people. In those troubled times there was a whole multitude of these wild women whom the men-at-arms carried with them on horseback. Each soldier had his own.

It is not uncommon for saints in their youth by the strangeness of their behaviour to give rise to such suspicions. And Jeanne displayed those signs of sainthood. She was the talk of the village. Folk pointed at her mockingly, saying: "There goes she who is to restore France and the royal house."

The neighbours had no difficulty in finding a cause for the strangeness which possessed the damsel. They attributed it to some magic spell. She had been seen beneath the *Beau Mai* bewreathing it with garlands. The old beech was known to be haunted as well as the spring near by. It was well known, too, that the fairies cast spells. There were those who discovered that Jeanne had met a wicked fairy there. "Jeannette has met her fate beneath *l'Arbre des Fées*," they said. Would that none but peasants had believed that story!

On the 22nd of June, from the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France for Henry VI, Antoine de Vergy, Governor of Champagne, received a commission to furnish forth a thousand men-at-arms for the purpose of bringing the castellany of Vaucouleurs into subjection to the English. Three weeks later, commanded by the two Vergy, Antoine and Jean, the little company set forth. It consisted of four knights-banneret, fourteen knights-bachelor, and three hundred and sixty-three men-at-arms. Pierre de Trie, commander of Beauvais, Jean, Count of Neufchâtel and Fribourg, were ordered to join the main body.

On the march, as was his custom, Antoine de Vergy laid waste all the villages of the castellany with fire and sword. Threatened once again with a disaster with which they were only too well acquainted, the folk of Domremy and Greux already beheld their cattle captured, their barns set on fire, their wives and daughters ravished. Having experienced before that the Castle on the Island was not secure enough, they determined to flee and seek refuge in their market town of Neufchâteau, only five miles away from Domremy. Thus they set out towards

the middle of July. Abandoning their houses and fields and driving their cattle before them, they followed the road, through the fields of wheat and rye and up the vine-clad hills to the town, wherein they lodged as best they could.

The d'Arc family was taken in by the wife of Jean Waldaires, who was called La Rousse. She kept an inn, where lodged soldiers, monks, merchants, and pilgrims. There were some who suspected her of harbouring bad women. And there is reason to believe that certain of her women customers were of doubtful reputation. Albeit she herself was of good standing, that is to say, she was rich. She had money enough to lend sometimes to her fellow-citizens. Although Neufchâteau belonged to the Duke of Lorraine, who was of the Burgundian party, it has been thought that the hostess of this inn inclined towards the Armagnacs; but it is vain to attempt to discover the sentiments of La Rousse concerning the troubles of the kingdom of France.

At Neufchâteau as at Domremy Jeanne drove her father's beasts to the field and kept his flocks. Handy and robust she used also to help La Rousse in her household duties. This circumstance gave rise to the malicious report set on foot by the Burgundians that she had been serving maid in an inn frequented by drunkards and bad women. The truth is that Jeanne, when she was not tending the cattle, and helping her hostess, passed all her time in church.

There were two fine religious houses in the town, one belonging to the Grey Friars, the other to the Sisters of St. Claire, the sons and daughters of good St. Francis. The monastery of the Grey Friars had been built two hundred years earlier by Mathieu II of Lorraine. The reigning duke had recently added richly to its endowments. Noble ladies, great lords, and among others a Bourlémont lord of Domremy and Greux lay there beneath brasses.

In the flower of their history these mendicant monks of old had welcomed to their third order crowds of citizens and peasants as well as multitudes of princes and kings. Now they languished corrupt and decadent among the French friars. Quarrels and schisms were frequent. Notwithstanding Colette of Corbie's attempted restoration of the rule, the old discipline was nowhere observed. These mendicants distributed leaden medals, taught short prayers to serve as charms, and vowed special devotion to the holy name of Jesus.

During the fortnight Jeanne spent in the town of Neufchâteau, she frequented the church of the Grey Friars monastery, and two or three times confessed to brethren of the order. It has been stated that she belonged to the third order of St. Francis, and the inference has been drawn that her affiliation dated from her stay at Neufchâteau.

Such an inference is very doubtful; and in any case the affiliation cannot have been very ceremonious. It is difficult to see how in so short a time the friars

could have instructed her in the practices of Franciscan piety. She was far too imbued with ecclesiastical notions concerning the spiritual and the temporal power, she was too full of mysteries and revelations to imbibe their spirit. Besides, her sojourn at Neufchâteau was troubled by anxiety and broken by absences.

In this town she received a summons to appear before the official of Toul, in whose jurisdiction she was, as a native of Domremy-de-Greux. A young bachelor of Domremy alleged that a promise of marriage had been given him by Jacques d'Arc's daughter. Jeanne denied it. He persisted in his statement, and summoned her to appear before the official. To this ecclesiastical tribunal such cases belonged; it pronounced judgment on questions of nullity of marriage or validity of betrothal.

The curious part of Jeanne's case is that her parents were against her, and on the side of the young man. It was in defiance of their wishes that she defended the suit and appeared before the official. Later she declared that in this matter she had disobeyed them, and that it was the only time she had failed in the submission she owed her parents.

The journey from Neufchâteau to Toul and back involved travelling more than twenty leagues on foot, over roads infested with bands of armed men, through a country desolated by fire and sword, from which the peasants of Domremy had recently fled in a panic. To such a journey, however, she made up her mind against the will of her parents.

Possibly she may have appeared before the judge at Toul, not once but two or three times. And there was a great chance of her having to journey day and night with her so-called betrothed, for he was passing over the same road at the same time. Her Voices bade her fear nothing. Before the judge she swore to speak the truth, and denied having made any promise of marriage.

She had done nothing wrong. But an evil interpretation was set upon conduct which proceeded alone from an innocence both singular and heroic. At Neufchâteau it was said that on those journeys she had consumed all her substance. But what was her substance? Alas! she had set out with nothing. She may have been driven to beg her bread from door to door. Saints receive alms as they give them: for the love of God. There was a story that her betrothed seeing her living during the trial in company with bad women, had abandoned his demand for justice, renouncing a bride of such bad repute. Such calumnies were only too readily believed.

After a fortnight's sojourn at Neufchâteau, Jacques d'Arc and his family returned to Domremy. The orchard, the house, the monastery, the village, the fields, — in what a state of desolation did they behold them! The soldiers had

plundered, ravaged, burnt everything. Unable to exact ransom from the villeins who had taken flight, the men-at-arms had destroyed all their goods. The monastery once as proud as a fortress, with its watchman's tower, was now nothing but a heap of blackened ruins. And now on holy days the folk of Domremy must needs go to hear mass in the church of Greux.

So full of danger were the times that the villagers were ordered to keep in fortified houses and castles.

Meanwhile the English were laying siege to the town of Orléans, which belonged to their prisoner Duke Charles. By so doing they acted badly, for, having possession of his body, they ought to have respected his property. They built fortified towers round the city of Orléans, the very heart of France; and it was said that they had entrenched themselves there in great strength. Now Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret loved the Land of the Lilies; they were the sworn friends and gentle cousins of the Dauphin Charles. They talked to the shepherd maid of the misfortunes of the kingdom and continued to say: "Leave thy village and go into France."

Jeanne was all the more impatient to set forth because she had herself announced the time of her arrival in France, and that time was drawing near. She had told the Commander of Vaucouleurs that succour should come to the Dauphin before mid Lent. She did not want to make her Voices lie.

Towards the middle of January occurred the opportunity she was looking for of returning to Burey. At this time Durand Lassois' wife, Jeanne le Vauseul, was brought to bed. It was the custom in the country for the young kinswomen and friends of the mother to attend and wait upon her and her babe. A good and kindly custom, followed all the more readily because of the opportunity it gave of pleasant meetings and cheerful gossip. Jeanne urged her uncle to ask her father that she might be sent to tend the sick woman, and Lassois consented: he was always ready to do what his niece asked him, and perhaps his complaisance was encouraged by pious persons of some importance. But how this father, who shortly before had said that he would throw his daughter into the Meuse rather than that she should go off with men-at-arms, should have allowed her to go to the gates of the town, protected by a kinsman of whose weakness he was well aware, is hard to understand. However so he did.

Leaving the home of her childhood, which she was never to see again, Jeanne, in company with Durand Lassois, passed down her native valley in its winter bareness. As she went by the house of the husbandman Gérard Guillemette of Greux, whose children and Jacques d'Arc's were great friends, she cried: "Good-bye! I am going to Vaucouleurs."

A few paces further she saw her friend Mengette: "Good-bye, Mengette," she said. "God bless thee."

And by the way, on the doorsteps of the houses, whenever she saw faces she knew, she bade them farewell. But she avoided Hauviette with whom she had played and slept in childhood and whom she dearly loved. If she were to bid her good-bye she feared that her heart would fail her. It was not till later that Hauviette heard of her friend's departure and then she wept bitterly.

On her second arrival at Vaucouleurs, Jeanne imagined that she was setting foot in a town belonging to the Dauphin, and, in the language of the day, entering the royal antechamber. She was mistaken. Since the beginning of August, 1428, the Commander of Vaucouleurs had yielded the fortress to Antoine de Vergy, but had not yet surrendered it to him.

It was one of those promises to capitulate at the end of a given time. They were not uncommon in those days, and they ceased to be valid if the fortress were relieved before the day fixed for its surrender.

Jeanne went to Sire Robert in his castle just as she had done nine months before; and this was the revelation she made to him: "My Lord Captain," she said, "know that God has again given me to wit, and commanded me many times to go to the gentle Dauphin, who must be and who is the true King of France, and that he shall grant me men-at-arms with whom I shall raise the siege of Orléans and take him to his anointing at Reims."

This time she announces that it is her mission to deliver Orléans. And the anointing is not to come to pass until this the first part of her task shall have been accomplished. We cannot fail to recognise the readiness and the tact with which the Voices altered their commands previously given, according to the necessities of the moment. Robert's manner towards Jeanne had completely changed. He said nothing about boxing her ears and sending her back to her parents. He no longer treated her roughly; and if he did not believe her announcement at least he listened to it readily.

In one of her conversations with him she spoke of strange matters: "Once I have accomplished the behest Messire has given me, I shall marry and I shall bear three sons, the eldest of whom shall be pope, the second emperor, and the third king."

Sire Robert answered gayly: "Since thy sons are to be such great personages, I should like to give thee one. Thereby should I myself have honour."

Jeanne replied: "Nay, gentle Robert, nay. It is not yet time. The Holy Ghost shall appoint the time."

To judge from the few of her words handed down to us, in the early days of her mission the young prophetess spoke alternately two different languages. Her speech seemed to flow from two distinct sources. The one ingenuous, candid, naïve, concise, rustically simple, unconsciously arch, sometimes rough, alike chivalrous and holy, generally bearing on the inheritance and the anointing of the Dauphin and the confounding of the English. This was the language of her Voices, her own, her soul's language. The other, more subtle, flavoured with allegory and flowers of speech, critical with scholastic grace, bearing on the Church, suggesting the clerk and betraying some outside influence. The words she uttered to Sire Robert touching the children she should bear are of the second sort. They are an allegory. Her triple birth signifies that the peace of Christendom shall be born of her work, that after she shall have fulfilled her divine mission, the Pope, the Emperor, and the King — all three sons of God — shall cause concord and love to reign in the Church of Jesus Christ. The apologue is quite clear; and yet a certain amount of intelligence is necessary for its comprehension. The Captain failed to understand it; he interpreted it literally and answered accordingly, for he was a simple fellow and a merry.

Jeanne lodged in the town with humble folk, Henri Leroyer and his wife Catherine, friends of her cousin Lassois. She used to occupy her time in spinning, being a good spinster; and the little she had she gave to the poor. With Catherine she went to the parish church. In the morning, in her most devout moods, she would climb the hill, round the foot of which cluster the roofs of the town, and enter the chapel of Sainte Marie-de-Vaucouleurs. This collegiate church, built in the reign of Philippe VI, adjoined the *château* wherein dwelt the Commander of Vaucouleurs. The venerable stone nave rose up boldly towards the east, overlooking the vast extent of hills and meadows, and dominating the valley where Jeanne had been born and bred. She used to hear mass and remain long in prayer.

Under the chapel, in the crypt, there was an image of the Virgin, ancient and deeply venerated, called Notre-Dame-de-la-Voûte. It worked miracles, but especially on behalf of the poor and needy. Jeanne delighted to remain in this dark and lonely crypt, where the saints preferred to visit her.

One day a young clerk, barely more than a child, who waited in the chapel, saw the damsel motionless, with hands clasped, head thrown back, eyes full of tears raised to heaven; and as long as he lived the vision of that rapture remained imprinted on his mind.

She confessed often, usually to Jean Fournier, priest of Vaucouleurs.

Her hostess was touched by the goodness and gentleness of her manner of life; but she was profoundly agitated when one day the damsel said to her: "Dost

thou not know it hath been prophesied that France ruined by a woman shall be saved by a maiden from the Lorraine Marches?"

Leroyer's wife knew as well as Durand Lassois that Madame Ysabeau, as full of wickedness as Herodias, had delivered up Madame Catherine of France and the Kingdom of the Lilies to the King of England. And henceforth she was almost persuaded to believe that Jeanne was the maid announced by the prophecy.

This pious damsel held converse with devout persons and also with men of noble rank. To all alike she said: "I must to the gentle Dauphin. It is the will of Messire, the King of Heaven, that I wend to the gentle Dauphin. I am sent by the King of Heaven. I must go even if I go on my knees."

Revelations of this nature she made to Messire Aubert, Lord of Ourches. He was a good Frenchman and of the Armagnac party, since four years earlier he had made war against the English and Burgundians. She told him that she must go to the Dauphin, that she demanded to be taken to him, and that to him should redound profit and honour incomparable.

At length through her illuminations and her prophecies, her fame was spread abroad in the town; and her words were found to be good.

In the garrison there was a man-at-arms of about twenty-eight years of age, Jean de Novelompont or Nouillompont, who was commonly called Jean de Metz. By rank a freeman, albeit not of noble estate, he had acquired or inherited the lordship of Nouillompont and Hovecourt, situate in that part of Barrois which was outside the Duke's domain; and he bore its name. Formerly in the pay of Jean de Wals, Captain and Provost of Stenay, he was now, in 1428, in the service of the Commander of Vaucouleurs.

Of his morals and manner of life we know nothing, except that three years before he had sworn a vile oath and been condemned to pay a fine of two *sols*. Apparently when he took the oath he was in great wrath. He was more or less intimate with Bertrand de Poulengy, who had certainly spoken to him of Jeanne.

One day he met the damsel and said to her: "Well, *ma mie*, what are you doing here? Must the King be driven from his kingdom and we all turn English?"

Such words from a young Lorraine warrior are worthy of notice. The Treaty of Troyes did not subject France to England; it united the two kingdoms. If war continued after as before, it was merely to decide between the two claimants, Charles de Valois and Henry of Lancaster. Whoever gained the victory, nothing would be changed in the laws and customs of France. Yet this poor freebooter of the German Marches imagined none the less that under an English king he

would be an Englishman. Many French of all ranks believed the same and could not suffer the thought of being Anglicised; in their minds their own fates depended on the fate of the kingdom and of the Dauphin Charles.

Jeanne answered Jean de Metz: "I came hither to the King's territory to speak with Sire Robert, that he may take me or command me to be taken to the Dauphin; but he heeds neither me nor my words."

Then, with the fixed idea welling up in her heart that her mission must be begun before the middle of Lent: "Notwithstanding, ere mid Lent, I must be before the Dauphin, were I in going to wear my legs to the knees."

A report ran through the towns and villages. It was said that the son of the King of France, the Dauphin Louis, who had just entered his fifth year, had been recently betrothed to the daughter of the King of Scotland, the three-year-old Madame Margaret, and the common people celebrated this royal union with such rejoicings as were possible in a desolated country. Jeanne, when she heard these tidings, said to the man-at-arms: "I must go to the Dauphin, for no one in the world, no king or duke or daughter of the King of Scotland, can restore the realm of France."

Then straightway she added: "In me alone is help, albeit for my part, I would far rather be spinning by my poor mother's side, for this life is not to my liking. But I must go; and so I will, for it is Messire's command that I should go."

She said what she thought. But she did not know herself; she did not know that her Voices were the cries of her own heart, and that she longed to quit the distaff for the sword.

Jean de Metz asked, as Sire Robert had done: "Who is Messire?"

"He is God," she replied.

Then straightway, as if he believed in her, he said with a sudden impulse: "I promise you, and I give you my word of honour, that God helping me I will take you to the King."

He gave her his hand as a sign that he pledged his word and asked: "When will you set forth?"

"This hour," she answered, "is better than to-morrow; to-morrow is better than after to-morrow."

Jean de Metz himself, twenty-seven years later, reported this conversation. If we are to believe him, he asked the damsel in conclusion whether she would travel in her woman's garb. It is easy to imagine what difficulties he would foresee in journeying with a peasant girl clad in a red frock over French roads infested with lecherous fellows, and that he would deem it wiser for her to disguise herself as a boy. She promptly divined his thought and replied: "I will willingly dress as a man."

There is no reason why these things should not have occurred. Only if they did, then a Lorraine freebooter suggested to the saint that idea concerning her dress which later she will think to have received from God.

Of his own accord, or rather, acting by the advice of some wise person, Sire Robert desired to know whether Jeanne was not being inspired by an evil spirit. For the devil is cunning and sometimes assumes the mark of innocence. And as Sire Robert was not learned in such matters, he determined to take counsel with his priest.

Now one day when Catherine and Jeanne were at home spinning, they beheld the Commander coming accompanied by the priest, Messire Jean Fournier. They asked the mistress of the house to withdraw; and when they were left alone with the damsel, Messire Jean Fournier put on his stole and pronounced some Latin words which amounted to saying: "If thou be evil, away with thee; if thou be good, draw nigh."

It was the ordinary formula of exorcism or, to be more exact, of conjuration. In the opinion of Messire Jean Fournier these words, accompanied by a few drops of holy water, would drive away devils, if there should unhappily be any in the body of this village maiden.

Messire Jean Fournier was convinced that devils were possessed by an uncontrollable desire to enter the bodies of men, and especially of maidens, who sometimes swallowed them with their bread. They dwelt in the mouth under the tongue, in the nostrils, or penetrated down the throat into the stomach. In these various abodes their action was violent; and their presence was discerned by the contortions and howlings of the miserable victims who were possessed.

Pope St. Gregory, in his Dialogues, gives a striking example of the facility with which devils insinuate themselves into women. He tells how a nun, being in the garden, saw a lettuce which she thought looked tender. She plucked it, and, neglecting to bless it by making the sign of the cross, she ate of it and straightway fell possessed. A man of God having drawn near unto her, the demon began to cry out: "It is I! It is I who have done it! I was seated upon that lettuce. This woman came and she swallowed me." But the prayers of the man of God drove him out.

The caution required in such a matter was therefore not exaggerated by Messire Jean Fournier. Possessed by the idea that the devil is subtle and woman corrupt, carefully and according to prescribed rules he proceeded to solve a difficult problem. It was generally no easy matter to recognise one possessed by the devil and to distinguish between a demoniac and a good Christian. Very great saints had not been spared the trial to which Jeanne was to be subjected.

Having recited the formula and sprinkled the holy water, Messire Jean Fournier expected, if the damsel were possessed, to see her struggle, writhe, and endeavour to take flight. In such a case he must needs have made use of more powerful formulæ, have sprinkled more holy water, and made more signs of the cross, and by such means have driven out the devils until they were seen to depart with a terrible noise and a noxious odour, in the shape of dragons, camels, or fish.

There was nothing suspicious in Jeanne's attitude. No wild agitation, no frenzy. Merely anxious and intreating, she dragged herself on her knees towards the priest. She did not flee before God's holy name. Messire Jean Fournier concluded that no devil was within her.

Left alone in the house with Catherine, Jeanne, who now understood the meaning of the ceremony, showed strong resentment towards Messire Jean Fournier. She reproached him with having suspected her: "It was wrong of him," she said to her hostess, "for, having heard my confession, he ought to have known me."

She would have thanked the priest of Vaucouleurs had she known how he was furthering the fulfilment of her mission by subjecting her to this ordeal. Convinced that this maiden was not inspired by the devil, Sire Robert must have been driven to conclude that she might be inspired by God; for apparently he was a man of simple reasoning. He wrote to the Dauphin Charles concerning the young saint; and doubtless he bore witness to the innocence and goodness he beheld in her.

Although it looked as if the Captain would have to resign his command to my Lord de Vergy, Sire Robert did not intend to quit his country where he had dealings with all parties. Indeed he cared little enough about the Dauphin Charles, and it is difficult to see what personal interest he can have had in recommending him a prophetess. Without pretending to discover what was passing in his mind, one may believe that he wrote to the Dauphin on Jeanne's behalf at the request of some of those persons who thought well of her, probably of Bertrand de Poulengy and of Jean de Metz. These two men-at-arms, seeing that the Dauphin's cause was lost in the Lorraine Marches, had every reason for proceeding to the banks of the Loire, where they might still fight with the hope of advantage.

On the eve of setting out, they appeared disposed to take the seeress with them, and even to defray all her expenses, reckoning on repaying themselves from the royal coffers at Chinon, and deriving honour and advantage from so rare a marvel. But they waited to be assured of the Dauphin's consent.

Meanwhile Jeanne could not rest. She came and went from Vaucouleurs to Burey and from Burey to Vaucouleurs. She counted the days; time dragged for her as for a woman with child.

At the end of January, feeling she could wait no longer, she resolved to go to the Dauphin Charles alone. She clad herself in garments belonging to Durand Lassois, and with this kind cousin set forth on the road to France. A man of Vaucouleurs, one Jacques Alain, accompanied them. Probably these two men expected that the damsel would herself realise the impossibility of such a journey and that they would not go very far. That is what happened. The three travellers had barely journeyed a league from Vaucouleurs, when, near the Chapel of Saint Nicholas, which rises in the valley of Septfonds, in the middle of the great wood of Saulcy, Jeanne changed her mind and said to her comrades that it was not right of her to set out thus. Then they all three returned to the town.

At length a royal messenger brought King Charles's reply to the Commander of Vaucouleurs. The messenger was called Colet de Vienne. His name indicates that he came from the province which the Dauphin had governed before the death of the late King, and which had remained unswervingly faithful to the unfortunate prince. The reply was that Sire Robert should send the young saint to Chinon.

That which Jeanne had demanded and which it had seemed impossible to obtain was granted. She was to be taken to the King as she had desired and within the time fixed by herself. But this departure, for which she had so ardently longed, was delayed several days by a remarkable incident. The incident shows that the fame of the young prophetess had gone out through Lorraine; and it proves that in those days the great of the land had recourse to saints in their hour of need.

Jeanne was summoned to Nancy by my Lord the Duke of Lorraine. Furnished with a safe-conduct that the Duke had sent her, she set forth in rustic jerkin and hose on a nag given her by Durand Lassois and Jacques Alain. It had cost them twelve francs which Sire Robert repaid them later out of the royal revenue. From Vaucouleurs to Nancy is twenty-four leagues. Jean de Metz accompanied her as far as Toul; Durand Lassois went with her the whole way.

Before going to the Duke of Lorraine's palace, Jeanne ascended the valley of the Meurthe and went to worship at the shrine of the great Saint Nicholas, whose relics were preserved in the Benedictine chapel of Saint-Nicholas-du-Port. She did well; for Saint Nicholas was the patron saint of travellers.

CHAPTER IV

THE JOURNEY TO NANCY — THE ITINERARY OF VAUCOULEURS — TO SAINTE-CATHERINE-DE-FIERBOIS



Y giving his eldest daughter, Isabelle, the heiress of Lorraine, in marriage to René, the second son of Madame Yolande, Queen of Sicily and of Jerusalem, and Duchess of Anjou, Duke Charles II of Lorraine, who was in alliance with the English, had recently done his cousin and friend, the Duke of Burgundy, a bad turn. René of Anjou, now in his twentieth year, was a man of culture as much in love with sound learning as with chivalry, and withal kind, affable, and gracious. When not engaged in some military expedition and in wielding the lance he delighted to illuminate manuscripts. He had a taste for flower-decked gardens and stories in tapestry; and like his fair cousin the Duke of Orléans he wrote poems in French. Invested with the duchy of Bar by the Cardinal Duke of Bar, his great-uncle, he would inherit the duchy of Lorraine after the death of Duke Charles which could not be far off. This marriage was rightly regarded as a clever stroke on the part of Madame Yolande. But he who reigns must fight. The Duke of Burgundy, ill content to see a prince of the house of Anjou, the brother-in-law of Charles of Valois, established between Burgundy and Flanders, stirred up against René the Count of Vaudémont, who was a claimant of the inheritance of Lorraine. The Angevin policy rendered a reconciliation between the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France difficult.

Thus was René of Anjou involved in the quarrels of his father-in-law of Lorraine. It befell that in this year, 1429, he was waging war against the citizens of Metz, the War of the Basketful of Apples. It was so called because the cause of war was a basketful of apples which had been brought into the town of Metz without paying duty to the officers of the Duke of Lorraine.

Meanwhile René's mother was sending convoys of victuals from Blois to the citizens of Orléans, besieged by the English. Although she was not then on good terms with the counsellors of her son-in-law, King Charles, she was vigilant in opposing the enemies of the kingdom when they threatened her own duchy of Anjou. René, Duke of Bar, had therefore ties of kindred, friendship, and interest

binding him at the same time to the English and Burgundian party as well as to the party of France. Such was the situation of most of the French nobles. René's communications with the Commander of Vaucouleurs were friendly and constant. It is possible that Sire Robert may have told him that he had a damsel at Vaucouleurs who was prophesying concerning the realm of France. It is possible that the Duke of Bar, curious to see her, may have had her sent to Nancy, where he was to be towards the 20th of February. But it is much more likely that René of Anjou thought less about the Maid of Vaucouleurs, whom he had never seen, than about the little Moor and the jester who enlivened the ducal palace. In this month of February, 1429, he was neither desirous nor able to concern himself greatly with the affairs of France; and although brother-in-law to King Charles, he was preparing not to succour the town of Orléans, but to besiege the town of Metz.

Old and ill, Duke Charles dwelt in his palace with his paramour Alison du Mai, a bastard and a priest's daughter, who had driven out the lawful wife, Dame Marguerite of Bavaria. Dame Marguerite was pious and high-born, but old and ugly, while Madame Alison was pretty. She had borne Duke Charles several children.

The following story appears the most authentic. There were certain worthy persons at Nancy who wanted Duke Charles to take back his good wife. To persuade him to do so they had recourse to the exhortations of a saint, who had revelations from Heaven, and who called herself the Daughter of God. By these persons the damsel of Domremy was represented to the enfeebled old Duke as being a saint who worked miracles of healing. By their advice he had her summoned in the hope that she possessed secrets which should alleviate his sufferings and keep him alive.

As soon as he saw her he asked whether she could not restore him to his former health and strength.

She replied that "of such things" she knew nothing. But she warned him that his ways were evil, and that he would not be cured until he had amended them. She enjoined upon him to send away Alison, his concubine, and to take back his good wife.

No doubt she had been told to say something of this kind; but it also came from her own heart, for she loathed bad women.

Jeanne had come to the Duke because it was his due, because a little saint must not refuse when a great lord wishes to consult her, and because in short she had been brought to Nancy. But her mind was elsewhere; of nought could she think but of saving the realm of France.

Reflecting that Madame Yolande's son with a goodly company of men-at-arms would be of great aid to the Dauphin, she asked the Duke of Lorraine, as she took her leave, to send this young knight with her into France.

"Give me your son," she said, "with men-at-arms as my escort. In return I will pray to God for your restoration to health."

The Duke did not give her men-at-arms; neither did he give her the Duke of Bar, the heir of Lorraine, the ally of the English, who was nevertheless to join her soon beneath the standard of King Charles. But he gave her four francs and a black horse.

Perhaps it was on her return from Nancy that she wrote to her parents asking their pardon for having left them. The fact that they received a letter and forgave is all that is known. One cannot forbear surprise that Jacques d'Arc, all through the month that his daughter was at Vaucouleurs, should have remained quietly at home, when previously, after having merely dreamed of her being with men-at-arms, he had threatened that if his sons did not drown her he would with his own hands. For he must have been aware that at Vaucouleurs she was living with men-at-arms. Knowing her temperament, he had displayed great simplicity in letting her go. One cannot help supposing that those pious persons who believed in Jeanne's goodness, and desired her to be taken into France for the saving of the kingdom, must have undertaken to reassure her father and mother concerning their daughter's manner of life; perhaps they even gave the simple folk to understand that if Jeanne did go to the King her family would derive therefrom honour and advantage.

Before or after her journey to Nancy (which is not known), certain of the townsfolk of Vaucouleurs who believed in the young prophetess either had made, or purchased for her ready made, a suit of masculine clothing, a jerkin, cloth doublet, hose laced on to the coat, gaiters, spurs, a whole equipment of war. Sire Robert gave her a sword.

She had her hair cut round like a boy. Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy, with their servants Jean de Honecourt and Julien, were to accompany her as well as the King's messenger, Colet de Vienne, and the bowman Richard. There was still some delay and councils were held, for the soldiers of Antoine de Lorraine, Lord of Joinville, infested the country. Throughout the land there was nothing but pillage, robbery, murder, cruel tyranny, the ravishing of women, the burning of churches and abbeys, and the perpetration of horrible crimes. Those were the hardest times ever known to man. But the damsel was not afraid, and said: "In God's name! take me to the gentle Dauphin, and fear not any trouble or hindrance we may meet."

At length, on a day in February, so it is said, the little company issued forth from Vaucouleurs by La Porte de France.

A few friends who had followed her so far watched her go. Among them were her hosts, Henri Leroyer and Catherine, and Messire Jean Colin, canon of Saint-Nicolas, near Vaucouleurs, to whom Jeanne had confessed several times. They trembled for their saint as they thought of the perils of the way and the length of the journey.

“How can you,” they asked her, “set forth on such a journey when there are men-at-arms on every hand?” But out of the serene peace of her heart she answered them:

“I do not fear men-at-arms; my way has been made plain before me. If there be men-at-arms my Lord God will make a way for me to go to my Lord Dauphin. For that am I come.”

Sire Robert was present at her departure. According to the customary formula he took an oath from each of the men-at-arms that they would surely and safely conduct her whom he confided to them. Then, being a man of little faith, he said to Jeanne in lieu of farewell: “Go! and come what may.” And the little company went off into the mist, which at that season envelops the meadows of the Meuse.

They were obliged to avoid frequented roads and to beware especially of passing by Joinville, Montiers-en-Saulx and Sailly, where there were soldiers of the hostile party. Sire Bertrand and Jean de Metz were accustomed to such stealthy expeditions; they knew the byways and were acquainted with useful precautions, such as binding up the horses’ feet in linen so as to deaden the sound of hoofs on the ground.

At nightfall, having escaped all danger, the company approached the right bank of the Marne and reached the Abbey of Saint-Urbain. From time immemorial it had been a place of refuge, and in those days its abbot was Arnoult of Aulnoy, a kinsman of Robert of Baudricourt. The gate of the plain edifice opened for the travellers who passed beneath the groined vaulting of its roof. The abbey included a building set apart for strangers. There they found the resting-place of the first stage of their journey.

On the right of the outer door was the abbey church wherein were preserved the relics of Pope Saint Urbain. On the 24th of February, in the morning, Jeanne attended conventual mass there. Then she and her companions took horse again. Crossing the Marne by the bridge opposite Saint-Urbain, they pressed on towards France.

They had still one hundred and twenty-five leagues to cover and three rivers to cross, in a country infested with brigands. Through fear of the enemy they

journeyed by night. When they lay down on the straw the damsel, keeping her hose laced to her coat, slept in her clothes, under a covering, between Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy in whom she felt confidence. They said afterwards that they never desired the damsel because of the holiness they beheld in her; that may or may not be believed.

Jean de Metz was filled with no such ardent faith in the prophetess, since he inquired of her: "Will you really do what you say?"

To which she replied: "Have no fear. I do what I am commanded to do. My brethren in Paradise tell me what I have to do. It is now four or five years since my brethren in Paradise and Messire told me that I must go forth to war to deliver the realm of France."

These rude comrades did not all preserve an attitude of religious respect in her presence. Certain mocked her and diverted themselves by talking before her as if they belonged to the English party. Sometimes, as a joke, they got up a false alarm and pretended to turn back. Their jests were wasted. She believed them, but she was not afraid, and would say gravely to those who thought to frighten her with the English: "Be sure not to flee. I tell you in God's name, they will not harm you."

Ever at the approach of danger whether real or feigned, there came to her lips the words of encouragement: "Do not be afraid. You will see how graciously the fair Dauphin will look upon us when we come to Chinon."

Her greatest grief was that she could not pray in church as often as she would like. Every day she repeated: "If we could, we should do well to hear mass."

As they avoided high roads they were not often in the way of bridges; and they were frequently forced to ford rivers in flood. They crossed the Aube, near Bar-sur-Aube, the Seine near Bar-sur-Seine, the Yonne opposite Auxerre, where Jeanne heard mass in the church of Saint-Etienne; then they reached the town of Gien, on the right bank of the Loire.

At length these Lorrainers beheld a French town loyal to the King of France. They had travelled seventy-five leagues through the enemy's country without being attacked or molested. Afterwards this was considered miraculous. But was it impossible for seven or eight Armagnac horsemen to traverse English and Burgundian lands without misadventure? The Commander of Vaucouleurs frequently sent letters to the Dauphin which reached him, and the Dauphin was in the habit of despatching messengers to the Commander; Colet de Vienne had just borne his message.

In point of fact the followers of the Dauphin ran risks well nigh as great in the provinces under his sway as in lands subject to other masters.

Freebooters in the pay of King Charles, when they pillaged travellers and held them to ransom, did not stay to ask whether they were Armagnacs or Burgundians. Indeed, it was after their passage of the Loire that Bertrand de Poulengy and his companions found themselves exposed to the greatest danger.

Informed of their approach, certain men-at-arms of the French party went before and lay in ambush, waiting to surprise them. They intended to capture the damsel, cast her into a pit, and keep her there beneath a great stone, in the hope that the King who had sent for her would give a large sum for her rescue. It was the custom for freebooters and mercenaries thus to cast travellers into pits delivering them on payment of ransom. Eighteen years before, at Corbeil, five men had been kept in a pit on bread and water by Burgundians. Three of them died, being unable to pay the ransom. Such a fate very nearly befell Jeanne. But the wretches who were lying in wait for her, at the moment when they should have struck did nothing, wherefore is unknown, perhaps because they were afraid of not being the stronger.

From Gien, the little company followed the northern boundary of the duchy of Berry, crossed into Blésois, possibly passed through Selles-sur-Cher and Saint-Aignan, then, having entered Touraine, reached the green slopes of Fierbois. There one of the two heavenly ladies, who daily discoursed familiarly with the peasant girl, had her most famous sanctuary; there it was that Saint Catherine received multitudes of pilgrims and worked great miracles. According to popular belief the origin of her worship in this place was warlike and national and dated back to the beginning of French history. It was known that after his victory over the Saracens at Poitiers Charles Martel had placed his sword in the oratory of the Blessed Catherine. But it must be admitted that since then the sanctuary had long suffered from desertion and neglect. Rather more than forty years before the coming of the damsel from Domremy, its walls in the depths of a wood were overrun by briars and brambles.

In those days it was not uncommon for saints of both sexes, if they had suffered from some unjust neglect, to come and complain to some pious person of the wrong being done them on earth. They appeared possibly to a monk, to a peasant or a citizen, denounced the impiety of the faithful in terms urgent and sometimes violent, and commanded him to reinstate their worship and restore their sanctuary. And this is what Madame Saint Catherine did. In the year 1375 she entrusted a knight of the neighbourhood of Fierbois, one Jean Godefroy, who was blind and paralysed, with the restoration of her oratory to its old brilliance and fame, promising to cure him if he would pray for nine days in the place where Charles Martel had put his sword. Jean Godefroy had himself carried to the deserted chapel, but beforehand his servants must perforce hew a way

through the thicket with their axes. Madame Saint Catherine restored to Jean Godefroy the use of his eyes and his limbs, and it was by this benefit that she recalled to the people of Touraine the glory they had slighted. The oratory was repaired; the faithful again wended their way thither, and miracles abounded. At first the saint healed the sick; then, when the land was ravaged by war, it was her office more especially to deliver from the hands of the English such prisoners as had recourse to her. Sometimes she rendered captives invisible to their guards; sometimes she broke bonds, chains, and locks; to wit, those of a nobleman by name Cazin du Boys, who in 1418 was taken with the garrison of Beaumont-sur-Oise. Locked in an iron cage, bound with a strong rope on which slept a Burgundian, he thought on Madame Saint Catherine, and dedicated himself to this glorious virgin. Immediately the cage was opened. Sometimes she even constrained the English to unchain their prisoners themselves and set them free without ransom. That was a great miracle. One no less great was worked by her on Perrot Chapon, of Saint-Sauveur, near Luzarches. For a month Perrot had been in bonds in an English prison, when he dedicated himself to Saint Catherine and fell asleep. He awoke, still bound, in his own house.

Generally she helped those who helped themselves. Such was the case of Jean Ducoudray, citizen of Saumur, a prisoner in the castle of Bellême in 1429. He commended his soul devoutly to Saint Catherine, then leapt forth, throttled the guard, climbed the ramparts, dropped the height of two lances, and went out a free man into the country.

Perhaps these miracles would have been less frequent had the English been in greater force in France; but their men were few: in Normandy they intrenched themselves in towns, abandoning the open country to soldiers of fortune who ranged the district and captured convoys, thus greatly promoting the intervention of Madame Saint Catherine.

The prisoners, who had become her votaries and whom she had delivered, discharged their vows by making the pilgrimage to Fierbois. In her chapel there, they hung the cords and chains with which they had been bound, their armour, and sometimes, in special cases, the armour of the enemy.

This had been done nine months before Jeanne's coming to Fierbois by a certain knight, Jean du Chastel. He had escaped from the hands of a captain, who accused him of having committed treason thereby, alleging that du Chastel had given him his word of honour. Du Chastel on the other hand maintained that he had not sworn, and he challenged the captain to meet him in single combat. The issue of the combat proved right to be on the side of the French knight; for with the aid of Madame Saint Catherine he was victorious. In return he came to Fierbois to offer to his holy protectress the armour of the vanquished

Englishman, in the presence of my Lord, the Bastard of Orléans, of Captain La Hire and several other nobles.

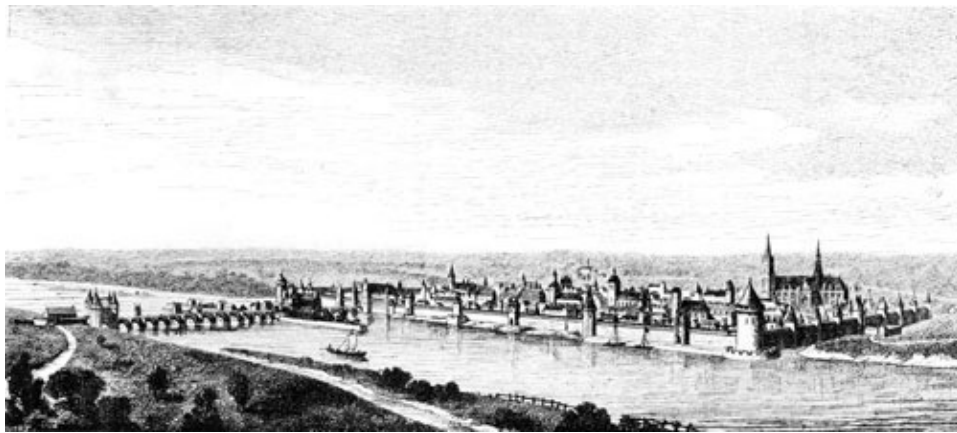
Jeanne must have delighted to hear tell of such miracles, or others like them, and to see so many weapons hanging from the chapel walls. She must have been well pleased that the saint who visited her at all hours and gave her counsel should so manifestly appear the friend of poor soldiers and peasants cast into bonds, cages and pits, or hanged on trees by the *Godons* .

She prayed in the chapel and heard two masses.

CHAPTER V

THE SIEGE OF ORLÉANS FROM THE 12TH OF OCTOBER, 1428, TILL THE 6TH OF MARCH, 1429

SINCE the victory of Verneuil and the conquest of Maine, the English had advanced but little in France and their actual possessions there were becoming less and less secure. If they spared the lands of the Duke of Orléans it was not on account of any scruple. Albeit on the banks of the Loire it was held dishonourable to seize the domains of a noble when he was a prisoner, everything is fair in war. The Regent had not scrupled to seize the duchy of Alençon when its duke was a prisoner. The truth is that by bribes and entreaties the good Duke Charles dissuaded the English from attacking his duchy. From 1424 until 1426 the citizens of Orléans purchased peace by money payments. The *Godons*, not being in a position to take the field, were all the more ready to enter into such agreements. During the minority of their half English and half French King, the Duke of Gloucester, the brother and deputy of the Regent, and his uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, Chancellor of the Kingdom, were tearing out each other's hair, and their disputes were the occasion of bloodshed in the London streets. Towards the end of the year 1425 the Regent returned to England, where he spent seventeen months reconciling uncle and nephew and restoring public peace. By dint of craft and vigour he succeeded so far as to render his fellow countrymen desirous and hopeful of completing the conquest of France. With that object, in 1428, the English Parliament voted subsidies.



VIEW OF ORLÉANS, 1428-1429

Now the most cunning, the most expert, the most fortunate in arms of all the English captains and princes was Thomas Montacute, Earl of Salisbury and of Perche. He had long waged war in Normandy, in Champagne, and in Maine. At present he was gathering an army in England, intended for the banks of the Loire. He got as many bowmen as he wanted; but of horse and men-at-arms he was disappointed. Only those of low estate were willing to go and fight in a land ravaged by famine. At length the noble earl, the fair cousin of King Henry, crossed the sea with four hundred and forty-nine men-at-arms and two thousand two hundred and fifty archers. In France he found troops recruited by the Regent, four hundred horse of whom two hundred were Norman, with three bowmen to each horseman, according to the English custom. He led his men to Paris where irrevocable resolutions were taken. Hitherto the plan had been to attack Angers; at the last moment it was decided to lay siege to Orléans.

Between la Beauce and la Sologne, at the entrance to the loyal provinces Touraine, Blésois, and Berry, the ducal city confronted the enemy, lying on a bend of the Loire, just as the arrow's point is lodged on the taut bow. Bishopric, university, market of the country far and wide, on its belfries, towers, and steeples it raised proudly towards heaven the cross of Our Lord, the three *cœurs de lis* of the city and the three *fleurs de lis* of the dukes. Beneath the high slate roofs of its houses of stone or wood, built along winding streets or dark alleys, Orléans sheltered fifteen thousand souls. There were to be found officers of justice and of the treasury, goldsmiths, druggists, grocers, tanners, butchers, fishmongers, rich citizens as delicate as amber, who loved fine clothes, fine houses, music and dancing; priests, canons, wardens, and fellows of the university; booksellers, scribes, illuminators, painters, scholars who were not all founts of learning, but who played prettily on the flute; monks of every habit, Black-friars, Grey-friars, Mathurins, Carmelites, Augustinians, and artisans and labourers to boot, smiths, coopers, carpenters, boatmen, fishermen.

Of Roman origin, the form of the town was still the same as in the days of the Emperor Aurelian. The southern side along the Loire and the northern side extended to some three thousand feet. The eastern and western boundaries were only one hundred and fifty feet long. The city was surrounded by walls six feet thick and from eighteen to thirty-three feet high above the moat. These walls were flanked by thirty-four towers, pierced with five gates and two posterns. The following is the description of the situation of these gates, posterns, and towers, with the names of those which became famous during the siege.

Passing from the south east to the south west angle of the wall, were: La Tour Neuve, round and huge, washed by the Loire; three other towers on the river bank; the postern Chesneau, the only one opening on to the water and defended

by a portcullis; the tower of La Croiche-Meuffroy, so called from the crook or spur which protruded from the foot of the tower into the river; two other towers washed by the Loire; La Port du Pont, with drawbridge and flanked by two towers; La Tour de l'Abreuvoir; la Tour de Notre-Dame, deriving its name from a chapel built against the city walls; la Tour de la Barre-Flambert, the last on this side, at the south west angle of the ramparts and commanding the river. All along the Loire the walls had a stone parapet with machicolated battlements, whence pavingstones could be thrown, and whence, when attempts were made to scale the walls, the enemy's ladders could be hurled down. The distance between the towers was about a bow-shot.

On the western side were first three towers, then two gate towers called Regnard or Renard from the name of citizens to whom had once belonged the adjoining palace, where in 1428 dwelt Jacques Boucher, Treasurer of the Duke of Orléans. Then came another tower and lastly La Porte Bernier or Bannier, at the north west angle of the ramparts. On this side the walls had been constructed in the days of the cross-bow, which shot a greater distance than the bow. The towers here, therefore, were farther apart at the distance of a cross-bow shot one from the other, and the walls were lower than elsewhere. On the northern side, looking towards the forest, were ten towers at a bow-shot's interval. The second, that of Saint-Samson, was used as an arsenal. The sixth and seventh flanked the Paris Gate.

On the eastern side were likewise ten towers at the same distance one from the other as those on the north. The fifth and sixth were those of the Burgundian Gate, also called the Gate of Saint-Aignan, because it was close to the church of Saint-Aignan without the walls; the last was the great corner tower, called La Tour Neuve, which thus comes to have been twice counted.

The stone bridge lined with houses which led from the town to the left bank of the Loire was famous all over the world. It had nineteen arches of varying breadth. The first, on leaving the town by La Porte du Pont, was called l'Allouée or Pont Jacquemin-Rousselet; here was a drawbridge. The fifth arch abutted on an island which was long, narrow, and in the form of a boat, like all river islands. Above the bridge it was called Motte-Saint-Antoine, from a chapel built upon it dedicated to that saint; and below, Motte-des-Poissonniers, because in order to keep captured fish alive boats with holes in them were moored to it. In 1447, to provide against the occupation of this island by the enemy, the people of Orléans had constructed a tower, the tower or fortress of Saint-Antoine, beyond the sixth arch and occupying the whole breadth of the bridge. On the buttress between the eleventh and twelfth arch was a cross of gilded bronze, supported by a pedestal of stone. It was indeed what it was called, the Cross Beautiful, — La Belle-

Croix. The buttresses of the eighteenth arch were extended, and on the abutment there rose a little castle formed of two towers joined by a vaulted porch. This little castle was called Les Tourelles. Between the nineteenth and the twentieth arch as in the first was a drawbridge. Outside it was Le Portereau; and thence ran the road to Toulouse, which beyond the Loiret on the heights of Olivet joined the road to Blois.

In those days the lazy waters of the Loire flowed midst osier-beds and birchen thickets, since removed for purposes of navigation. Two and a half miles east of Orléans, on the height of Chécy, l'Île aux Bourdons was separated from the Sologne bank by a thin arm of the river and by a narrow channel from l'Île Charlemagne and l'Île-aux-Bœufs, with their green grass and underwood facing Combleux on the La Beauce bank. A boat dropping down the river would next come to the two islands Saint-Loup, and, doubling La Tour Neuve, would glide between the two Martinet Islets on the right and l'Île-aux-Toiles on the left. Thence it would pass under the bridge which overspanned, as we have seen, an island called above bridge Motte-Saint-Antoine and below, Motte-des-Poissonniers. At length, below the ramparts, opposite Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils, it would come to two islets Biche-d'Orge and another, the name of which is unknown, possibly it was nameless.

The suburbs of Orléans were the finest in the kingdom. On the south the fishermen's suburb of Le Portereau, with its Augustinian church and monastery, extended along the river at the foot of the vineyards of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc, which produced the best wine in the country. Above, on the gentle slopes ascending to the bleak plateau of Sologne, the Loiret, with its torrential springs, its limpid waters, its shady banks, the gardens and the brooks of Olivet, smiled beneath a mild and showery sky.

The *faubourg* of the Burgundian gate stretching eastwards was the best built and the most populous. There were the wonderful churches of Saint-Michel and of Saint-Aignan. The cloister of the latter was held to be marvellous. Leaving this suburb and passing by the vineyards along the sandy branch of the Loire extending between the bank of the river and l'Île-aux-Bœufs about a quarter of a league further on, one comes to the steep slope of Saint-Loup; and, advancing still further towards the east, the belfries of Saint-Jean-de-Bray, Combleux and Chécy may be seen rising one beyond the other between the river and the Roman road from Autun to Paris. On the north of the city were fine monasteries and beautiful churches, the chapel of Saint-Ladre, in the cemetery; the Jacobins, the Cordeliers, the church of Saint-Pierre-Ensentelée. Directly north, the *faubourg* of La Porte Bernier lay along the Paris road, and close by there stretched the

sombre city of the wolves, the deep forest of oaks, horn-beams, beeches, and willows, wherein were hidden, like wood-cutters and charcoal-burners, the villages of Fleury and Samoy.

Towards the west the *faubourg* of La Porte Renard stretched out into the fields along the road to Châteaudun, and the hamlet of Saint-Laurent along the road to Blois.

These *faubourgs* were so populous and so extensive that when, on the approach of the English, the people from the suburbs took refuge within the city the number of its inhabitants was doubled.

The inhabitants of Orléans were resolved to fight, not for their honour indeed; in those days no honour redounded to a citizen from the defence of his own city; his only reward was the risk of terrible danger. When the town was captured the great and wealthy had but to pay ransom and the conqueror entertained them well; the lesser and poorer nobility ran greater risks. In this year, 1428, the knights, who defended Melun and surrendered after having eaten their horses and their dogs, were drowned in the Seine. "Nobility was worth nothing," ran a Burgundian song.

But generally being of noble birth saved one's life. As for those burghers brave enough to defend themselves, they were likely to perish. There were no fixed rules with regard to them; sometimes several were hanged; sometimes only one, sometimes all. It was also lawful to cut off their heads or to throw them into the water, sewn in a sack. In that same year, 1428, Captains La Hire and Poton had failed in their assault on Le Mans and decamped just in time. The citizens who had aided them were beheaded in the square du Cloître-Saint-Julien, on the Olet stone, by order of William Pole, Earl of Suffolk, who had already arrived at Olivet, and of John Talbot, the most courteous of English knights, who was shortly to come there too. Such an example was sufficient to warn the people of Orléans.

Notwithstanding that it was under the control of the Governor, the town administered its own affairs by means of twelve magistrates elected for two years by the citizens, subject to the governor's approbation. These magistrates risked more than the other citizens. One of them, as he passed the monastery of Saint-Sulpice, where was the place of execution, might well reflect that before the year was out he might have justice executed on him there for having defended his lord's inheritance. Yet the twelve were resolved to defend this inheritance; and they acted for the common weal with promptness and with wisdom.

The people of Orléans were not taken by surprise. Their fathers had watched the English closely, and put their city in a state of defence. They themselves, in

the year 1425, had so firmly expected a siege that they had collected arms in the Tower of Saint-Samson, while all, rich and poor alike, had been required to dig dykes and build ramparts. War has always been costly. They devoted three quarters of the yearly revenue of the town to keeping up the ramparts and other preparations for war. Hearing of the approach of the Earl of Salisbury, with marvellous energy they prepared to receive him.

The walls, except those along the river, were devoid of breastwork; but in the shops were stakes and cross-beams intended for the manufacture of balustrades. These were put up on the fortifications to form parapets, with barbicans of a pent-house shape so as to provide with cover the defenders firing from the walls. At the entrance to each suburb wooden barriers were erected, with a lodge for the porter whose duty it was to open and shut them. On the tops of the ramparts and in the towers were seventy-one pieces of artillery, including cannons and mortars, without counting culverins. The quarry of Montmaillard, three leagues from the town, produced stones which were made into cannon balls. At great expense there were brought into the city lead, powder, and sulphur which the women prepared for use in the cannons and culverins. Every day there were manufactured in thousands, arrows, darts, stacks of bolts, armed with iron points and feathered with parchment, numbers of *pavas*, great shields made of pieces of wood mortised one into the other and covered with leather. Corn, wine, and cattle were purchased in great quantities both for the inhabitants and the men-at-arms, the King's men, and adventurers who were expected.

By a jealously guarded privilege the inhabitants had the right of defending the ramparts. According to their trades they were divided into as many companies as there were towers. Thus defending themselves they had the right to refuse to admit any garrison within the walls. They held to this right because it delivered them from the pillage, the rapine, the burnings and constant molestations inflicted by the King's men. But now they were eager to renounce it; for they realised that alone with only the town bands and those from the neighbouring villages, mere peasants, they could not sustain the siege; to resist the enemy they must have horsemen, skilled in wielding the lance, and foot, skilled in the use of the cross-bow. While their Governor the Sire de Gaucourt and my Lord, the Bastard of Orléans, the King's Lieutenant General, went to Chinon and Poitiers to obtain supplies of men and money from the King, the citizens in commissions of two and two went forth asking help of the towns, travelling as far as Bourbonnais and Languedoc. The magistrates appealed to those soldiers of fortune who held the neighbouring country for the King of France. By the mouths of the two heralds of the city, Orléans and Cœur-de-Lis, they proclaimed that within the city walls were gold and silver in abundance and such good

provision of victuals and arms as would nourish and accoutre two thousand combatants for two years, and that every gentle, honest knight who would might share in the defence of the city and wage battle to the death.

The inhabitants of Orléans feared God. In those days God was greatly to be feared; he was almost as terrible as in the days of the Philistines. The poor fisher folk were afraid of being repulsed if they addressed him in their affliction; they thought it better to take a roundabout road and to seek the intercession of Our Lady and the saints. God respected his Mother and sought to please her on every occasion. Likewise he deferred to the wishes of the Blessed, seated on his right hand and on his left in Paradise, and he inclined his ear to listen to the petitions they presented to him. Thus in cases of dire necessity it was customary to solicit the favour of the saints by presenting prayers and offerings. Then also did the citizens of Orléans remember Saint Euverte and Saint-Aignan, the patrons of their town. In very ancient days Saint Euverte had sat upon that episcopal seat, now, in 1428, occupied by a Scot. Messire Jean de Saint Michel, and Saint Euverte had shone with all the glory of apostolic virtue. His successor, Saint-Aignan had prayed to God. He had regarded the city in a peril like unto that of which it was now in danger.

The following is his story as it was known to the people of Orléans. When still young, Saint-Aignan had withdrawn to a solitary place near Orléans. There Saint Euverte, at that time bishop of the city, discovered him. He ordained him priest, appointed him Abbot of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils, and elected him to succeed him in the government of the faithful. And when Saint Euverte had passed from this life to the other, the blessed Aignan, with the consent of the people of Orléans, was proclaimed bishop by the voice of a little child. For God, who is praised out of the mouths of babes, permitted one of them, borne in his swaddling clothes to the altar, to speak and say: "Aignan, Aignan is chosen of God to be bishop of this town." Now in the sixtieth year of his pontificate, the Huns invaded Gaul, led by their King Attila, who boasted that wherever he went the stars fell and the earth trembled beneath him, that he was the hammer of the world, *stellas pre se cadere, terram tremere, se malleum esse universi orbis*. Every town on his march had been destroyed by him, and now he was advancing against Orléans. Then the blessed Aignan went forth into the city of Arles, to the Patrician Aëtius, who commanded the Roman army, and implored his aid in so great a peril. Having obtained of the Patrician promise of succour, Aignan returned to his episcopal see, which he found surrounded by barbarian warriors. The Huns, having made breaches in the walls, were preparing an assault. The blessed saint went up on to the ramparts, knelt and prayed, and then, having prayed, spat upon the enemy. By God's will that drop of his saliva was followed

by all the raindrops in the sky. A tempest arose: the rain fell in such torrents on the barbarians that their camp was flooded; their tents were overturned by the power of the winds, and many among them perished by lightning. The rain lasted for three days, after which time Attila assailed the ramparts with powerful engines of war. When they saw the walls fall down the inhabitants were terrified. All hope of resistance being at an end, the holy bishop, clad in his episcopal robes, went to the King of the Huns and adjured him to take pity on the people of Orléans, threatening him with the wrath of God if he dealt hardly with the conquered. These prayers and these threats did not soften Attila's heart. On his return to the faithful, the bishop warned them that henceforth nothing remained to them but trust in God; divine succour, however, would not fail them. And soon, according to the promise he had given them, God delivered the town by means of the Romans and the Franks, who defied the Huns in a great battle. Not long after the miraculous deliverance of his beloved city, Saint Aignan fell asleep in the Lord.

Wherefore, in this great peril of the English, the citizens of Orléans resorted to Saint Euverte and Saint-Aignan for succour and relief. According to the marvels accomplished by Saint-Aignan in this mortal life they measured his power of working miracles now that he was in Paradise. These two confessors had each his church in the faubourg de Bourgogne, wherein their bodies were jealously guarded. In those days the bones of martyrs and confessors were devoutly worshipped. It was said that sometimes they shed abroad a healing odour which represented the virtues proceeding from them. They were enclosed in gilded reliquaries adorned with precious stones, and no miracle was thought too great to be accomplished by these holy relics. On the 6th of August, 1428, the clergy of the city went to the church wherein was the reliquary of Saint Euverte and bore it round the walls, that they might be strengthened. And the holy reliquary made the round of the whole city, followed by all the people. On the 8th of September a *tortis* weighing one hundred and ten livres was offered to Saint-Aignan. In time of need the favour of the saints was solicited by all kinds of gifts, garments, jewels, coins, houses, lands, woods, ponds; but natural wax was thought to be especially grateful to them. A *tortis* was a wheel of wax on which candles were placed and two escutcheons bearing the arms of the city.

Thus did the people of Orléans strive to provision and protect their town.

Adventurers from all parts responded to the magistrates' appeal. The first to hasten to the city were: Messire Archambaud de Villars, Governor of Montargis; Guillaume de Chaumont, Lord of Guitry; Messire Pierre de la Chapelle, a baron of La Beauce; Raimond Arnaud de Corraze, knight of Béarn; Don Matthias of Aragon; Jean de Saintrailles and Poton de Saintrailles. The Abbot of

Cerquenceaux, sometime student at the University of Orléans, arrived at the head of a band of followers. Thus the number of friends who entered the city was well-nigh as great as that of the expected foe. The defenders were paid; they were furnished with bread, meat, fish, forage in plenty, and casks of wine were broached for them. In the beginning the inhabitants treated them like their own children. The citizens all contributed to the entertainment of the strangers, and gave them what they had. But this concord did not long endure. Whatever tradition alleges as to the friendly relations subsisting between the citizens and their military guests, affairs in Orléans were in truth not different from what they were in other besieged towns; before long the inhabitants began to complain of the garrison.

On the 5th of September the Earl of Salisbury reached Janville, having taken with ease towns, fortified churches or castles to the number of forty. But that was not his greatest achievement; for, although he had left but few men in each place, he had by that means rid himself on the march of that portion of his army which had already shown itself ready to drop away.

From Janville he sent two heralds to Orléans to summon the inhabitants to surrender. The magistrates lodged these heralds honourably in the faubourg Bannier, at the Hôtel de la Pomme and confided to them a present of wine for the Earl of Salisbury; they knew their duty to so great a prince. But they refused to open their gates to the English garrison, alleging, doubtless, as was the custom of citizens in those days, that they were not able to open them, having those within who were stronger than they.

Now that the danger was drawing near, on the 6th of October, priests, burgesses, notables, merchants, mechanics, women and children walked in solemn procession with crosses and banners, singing psalms and invoking the heavenly guardians of the city.

On Tuesday, the 12th of this month, at the news that the enemy was coming through Sologne, the magistrates sent soldiers to pull down the houses of Le Portereau, the suburb on the left bank, also the Augustinian church and monastery of that suburb, as well as all other buildings in which the enemy might lodge or entrench himself. But the soldiers were taken by surprise. That very day the English occupied Olivet and appeared in Le Portereau. With them were the victors of Verneuil, the flower of English knighthood: Thomas, Lord of Scales and of Nuelles, Governor of Pontorson, whom the King of England called cousin; William Neville; Baron Falconbridge; William Gethyn, a Welsh knight, Bailie of Évreux; Lord Richard Gray, nephew of the Earl of Salisbury; Gilbert Halsall, Richard Panyngel, Thomas Guérard, knights, and many others of great renown.

Over the two hundred lances from Normandy there floated the standards of William Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and of John Pole, two brothers descended from a comrade-in-arms of Duke William; of Thomas Rampston, knight banneret, the Regent's chamberlain; of Richard Walter, squire, Governor of Conches, Bailie and Captain of Évreux; of William Mollins, knight; of William Glasdale, whom the French called Glacidas, squire, Bailie of Alençon, a man of humble birth.

The archers were all on horseback. There were practically no foot-soldiers. In carts drawn by oxen were barrels of powder, cross-bows, arrows, cannon-balls, and guns of all kinds, muskets, fowling-pieces, and large cannon. The two English master-gunners, Philibert de Moslant and William Appleby, accompanied the troops. There were also two masters of mining with thirty-eight workmen. Of women there were not a few, some of them acting as spies.

When the army arrived it was greatly diminished by desertions, having shed runaways at each victory. Some returned to England, others roamed through the realm of France robbing and plundering. That very 12th of October orders had been despatched from Rouen to the Bailies and Governors of Normandy to arrest those English who had departed from the company of my Lord, the Earl of Salisbury.

The fort of Les Tourelles and its outworks barred the entrance to the bridge. The English established themselves in Le Portereau, placed their cannon and their mortars on the rising ground of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc, and, on the following Sunday, they hurled down upon the city a shower of stone cannon-balls, which did great damage to the houses, but killed no one save a woman of Orléans, named Belles, who dwelt near the Chesneau postern on the river bank. Thus the siege, which was to be ended by a woman's victory, began with a woman's death.

That same week the English cannon destroyed twelve water mills near La Tour Neuve. Whereupon the people of Orléans constructed within the city eleven mills worked by horses, in order that there might be no lack of flour. There were a few skirmishes at the bridge. Then on Thursday, the 21st of October, the English attempted to storm the outworks of Les Tourelles. The little band of adventurers in the service of the town and the city troops made a gallant defence. The women helped; throughout the four hours that the assault lasted long lines of gossips might be seen hurrying to the bridge, bearing their pots and pans filled with burning coals and boiling oil and fat, frantic with joy at the idea of scalding the *Godons*. The attack was repulsed; but two days later the French perceived that the outworks were undermined; the English had dug subterranean passages, to the props of which they had afterwards set fire. The outworks having become untenable in the opinion of the soldiers, they were destroyed and

abandoned. It was deemed impossible to defend Les Tourelles thus dismantled. Those towers which would once have arrested an army's progress for a whole month were now useless against cannon. In front of La Belle Croix the townsfolk erected a rampart of earth and wood. Beyond this outwork two arches of the bridge were cut and replaced by a movable platform. And when this was done, the fort of Les Tourelles was abandoned to the English with no great regret. The latter set up a rampart of earth and faggots on the bridge, breaking two of its arches, one in front, the other behind their earthwork.

On the Sunday, towards evening, a few hours after the flag of St. George had been planted on the fort, the Earl of Salisbury, with William Glasdale and several captains, went up one of the towers to observe the lie of the city. Looking from a window he beheld the walls armed with cannon; the towers vanishing into pinnacles or with terraces on their flat roofs; the battlements dry and grey; the suburbs adorned for a few days longer with the fine stone-work of their churches and monasteries; the vineyards and the woods yellow with autumn tints; the Loire and its oval-shaped islands, — all slumbering in the evening calm. He was looking for the weak point in the ramparts, the place where he might make a breach and put up his scaling ladders. For his plan was to take Orléans by assault. William Glasdale said to him, "My Lord, look well at your city. You have a good bird's-eye view of it from here."

At this moment a cannon-ball breaks off a corner of the window recess, a stone from the wall strikes Salisbury, carrying away one eye and one side of his face. The shot had been fired from La Tour Notre-Dame. That at least was generally believed. It was never known who had fired it. A townsman, alarmed by the noise, hastened to the spot, saw a child coming out of the tower and the cannon deserted. It was thought that the hand of an innocent child had fired the bullet by the permission of the Mother of God, who had been irritated by the Earl of Salisbury's despoiling monks and pillaging the Church of Notre Dame de Cléry. It was said also that he was punished for having broken his oath, for he had promised the Duke of Orléans to respect his lands and his towns. Borne secretly to Meung-sur-Loire, he died there on Wednesday the 27th of October; and the English were very sorrowful. Most of them felt that loss to be irreparable which had deprived them of a chief who was conducting the siege vigorously, and who in less than twelve days had captured Les Tourelles, the very cornerstone of the city's defence. But there were others who reflected that he must have been very simple to imagine that thick ramparts could be overthrown by stone balls, the force of which had already been spent in crossing the wide stretches of the river, and that he must have been mad to attempt to storm a city

which could only be reduced by famine. Then they thought: "He is dead. God receive his soul! But he has brought us into a sorry plight."

Men told how Maître Jean de Builhons, a famous astrologer, had prophesied this death, and how in the night before the fatal day, the Earl of Salisbury himself had dreamed that he was being clawed by a wolf. A Norman clerk composed two songs on this sad death, one against the English, the other for them. The first, which is the better, closes with a couplet, worthy in its profound wisdom of King Solomon himself:

Certes le duc de Bedefort
Se sage est, il se tendra
Avec sa femme en ung fort,
Chaudement le mieulx que il porra,
De bon ypocras finera,
Garde son corps, lesse la guerre:
Povre et riche porrist en terre.

The day after the taking of Les Tourelles and when its loss had been remedied as best might be, the King's lieutenant-general entered the town. He was le Seigneur Jean, Count of Porcien and of Montaig, Grand Chamberlain of France, son of Duke Louis of Orléans, who had been assassinated in 1407 by order of Jean-Sans-Peur, and whose death had armed the Armagnacs against the Burgundians. Dame de Cany was his mother, but he ought to have been the son of the Duchess of Orléans since the Duke was his father. Not only was it no drawback to children to be born outside wedlock and of an adulterous union, but it was a great honor to be called the bastard of a prince. There have never been so many bastards as during these wars, and the saying ran: "Children are like corn: sow stolen wheat and it will sprout as well as any other." The Bastard of Orléans was then twenty-six at the most. The year before, with a small company, he had hastened to revictual the inhabitants of Montargis, who were besieged by the Earl of Warwick. He had not only revictualled the town; but with the help of Captain La Hire had driven away the besiegers. This augured well for Orléans. The Bastard was the cleverest baron of his day. He knew grammar and astrology, and spoke more correctly than any one. In his affability and intelligence he resembled his father, but he was more cautious and more temperate. His amiability, his courtesy and his discretion caused it to be said that he was in favour with all the ladies, even with the Queen. In everything he was

apt, in war as well as in diplomacy, marvellously adroit, and a consummate dissembler.

My Lord the Bastard brought in his train several knights, captains, and squires of renown, that is to say, of high birth or of great valour: the Marshal de Boussac, Messire Jacques de Chabannes, Seneschal of Bourbonnais, the Lord of Chaumont, Messire Théaulde of Valpergue, a Lombard knight, Captain La Hire, wondrous in war and in pillage, who had lately done so well in the relief of Montargis, and Jean, Sire de Bueil, one of those youths who had come to the King on a lame horse and who had taken lessons from two wise women, Suffering and Poverty. These knights came with a company of eight hundred men, archers, arbalesters, and Italian foot, bearing broad shields like those of St. George in the churches of Venice and Florence. They represented all the nobles and free-lances who for the moment could be gathered together.

After the death of its chief, Salisbury's army was paralysed by disunion and diminished by desertions. Winter was coming: the captains, seeing there was nothing to be done for the present, broke up their camp, and, with such men as remained to them, went off to shelter behind the walls of Meung and Jargeau. On the evening of the 8th of November all that remained before the city was the garrison of Les Tourelles, consisting of five hundred Norman horse, commanded by William Molyns and William Glasdale. The French might besiege and take them: they would not budge. The Governor, the old Sire de Gaucourt, had just fallen on the pavement in La Rue des Hôtelleries and broken his arm; he couldn't move. But what about the rest of the defenders?

The truth is, no one knew what to do. These warriors were doubtless acquainted with many measures for the succour of a besieged town, but they were all measures of surprise. Their only devices were sallies, ambushades, skirmishes, and other such valiant feats of arms. Should they fail in raising a siege by surprise, then they remained inactive, — at the end of their ideas and of their resources. Their most experienced captains were incapable of any common effort, — of any concerted action, of any enterprise in short, requiring a continuous mental effort and the subordination of all to one. Each was for his own hand and thought of nothing but booty. The defence of Orléans was altogether beyond their intelligence.

For twenty-one days Captain Glasdale remained entrenched, with his five hundred Norman horse, under the battered walls of Les Tourelles, between his earthworks on Le Portereau side, which couldn't have become very formidable as yet, and his barrier on the bridge, which being but wood, a spark could easily have set on fire.

Meanwhile the citizens were at work. After the departure of the English they performed a huge and arduous task. Concluding, and rightly, that the enemy would return not through La Sologne this time, but through La Beauce, they destroyed all their suburbs on the west, north, and east, as they had already destroyed or begun to destroy Le Portereau. They burned and pulled down twenty-two churches and monasteries, among others the church of Saint-Aignan and its monastery, so beautiful that it was a pity to see it spoiled, the church of Saint Euverte, the church of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils, not without promising the blessed patrons of the town that when they should have delivered the city from the English, the citizens would build them new and more beautiful churches.

On the 30th of November Captain Glasdale beheld Sir John Talbot approaching Les Tourelles. He brought three hundred men furnished with cannon, mortars, and other engines of war. Thenceforward the bombardment was resumed more violently than before: roofs were broken through, walls were battered, but there was more noise than work. In La Rue Aux-Petits-Souliers a cannon-ball fell on to a table, round which five persons were dining, and no one was hurt. It was thought to have been a miracle of Our Lord worked at the intercession of Saint Aignan, the patron saint of the city. The people of Orléans had wherewith to answer the besiegers. For the seventy cannon and mortars, of which the city artillery consisted, there were twelve professional gunners with servants to wait on them. A very clever founder named Guillaume Duisy had cast a mortar which from its position at the crook or spur by the Chesneau postern, hurled stone bullets of one hundred and twenty *livres* on to Les Tourelles. Near this mortar were two cannon, one called Montargis because the town of Montargis had lent it, the other named *Rifflart* after a very popular demon. A culverin firer, a Lorrainer living at Angers, had been sent by the King to Orléans, where he was paid twelve *livres* a month. His name was Jean de Montesclère. He was held to be the best master of his trade. He had in his charge a huge culverin which inflicted great damage on the English.

A jovial fellow was Maître Jean. When a cannon-ball happened to fall near him he would tumble to the ground and be carried into the town to the great joy of the English who believed him dead. But their joy was short-lived, for Maître Jean soon returned to his post and bombarded them as before. These culverins were loaded with leaden bullets by means of an iron ramrod. They were tiny cannon or rather large guns on gun-carriages. They could be moved easily. And so Maître Jean's culverin was brought wherever it was needed.

On the 25th of December a truce was proclaimed for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. Of one faith and one religion, on feast days the hostility of the combatants ceased, and courtesy reconciled the knights of the two camps whenever the calendar reminded them that they were Christians. Noël is a gay feast. Captain Glasdale wanted to celebrate it with carol singing according to the English custom. He asked my Lord Jean, the Bastard of Orléans, and Marshal de Boussac to send him a band of musicians, which they graciously did. The Orléans players went forth to Les Tourelles with their clarions and their trumpets; and they played the English such carols as rejoiced their hearts. To the folk of Orléans, who came on to the bridge to listen to the music, it sounded very melodious; but no sooner had the truce expired than every man looked to himself. For from one bank to the other the cannon burst from their slumber, hurling balls of stone and copper with renewed vigour.

That which the people of Orléans had foreseen happened on the 30th of December. On that day the English came in great force through La Beauce to Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. All the French knights went out to meet them and performed great feats of arms; but the English occupied Saint-Laurent, and then the siege really began. They erected a bastion on the left bank of the Loire, west of Le Portereau, in a place called the Field of Saint-Privé. Another they erected in the little island to the right of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. On the right bank, at Saint-Laurent, they constructed an entrenched camp. At a bow-shot's distance on the road to Blois, in a place called la Croix-Boissée, they built another bastion. Two bow-shots away, towards the north on the road to Mans, at a spot called Les Douze-Pierres, they raised a fort which they called London.

By these works half of Orléans was invested, which was as good as saying that it was not invested at all. People went in and out as they pleased. Small relieving companies despatched by the King arrived without let or hindrance. On the 5th of January, 1429, Admiral de Culant with five hundred men-at-arms crosses the Loire opposite Saint-Loup and enters the city by the Burgundian Gate. On the 8th of February there enters William Stuart, brother of the Constable of Scotland, at the head of a thousand combatants well accoutred, and accompanied by several knights and squires. On the morrow they are followed by three hundred and twenty soldiers. Victuals and ammunition are constantly arriving; on the 3rd of January, nine hundred and fifty-four pigs and four hundred sheep; on the 10th, powder and victuals; on the 12th, six hundred pigs; on the 24th, six hundred head of fat cattle and two hundred pigs; on the 31st, eight horses loaded with oil and fat.

It became evident to Lord Scales, William Pole, and Sir John Talbot, who since Salisbury's death had been conducting the siege, that months and months

must elapse ere the investment could be completed and the city surrounded by a ring of forts connected by a moat. Meanwhile the miserable *Godons*, up to the ears in mud and snow, were freezing in their wretched hovels, — mere shelters of wood and earth. If things went on thus they were in danger of being worse off and more starved than the besieged. Therefore, following the example of the late Earl, from time to time they tried to bring matters to a crisis; without great hope of success they endeavoured to take the town by assault.

On the side of the Renard Gate the wall was lower than elsewhere; and, as their strongest force lay in this direction, they preferred to attack this part of the ramparts. They stormed the Renard Gate, rushing against the barriers with loud cries of Saint George; but the king's men and the city bands drove them back to their bastions. Each of these ill planned and useless assaults cost them many men. And they already lacked both soldiers and horses.

Neither had they succeeded in alarming the people of Orléans by their double bombardment on the south and on the west. There was a joke in the town that a great cannon-ball had fallen near La Porte Bannière into the midst of a crowd of a hundred people without touching one, except a fellow who had his shoe taken off by it, but suffered no further hurt than having to put it on again.

Meanwhile the French, English, and Burgundian knights took delight in performing valiant deeds of prowess. Whenever the whim took them, and under the slightest protest, they sallied forth into the country, but always with the object of capturing some booty, for they thought of little else. One day, for instance, towards the end of January, when it was bitterly cold, a little band of English marauders entered the vineyards of Saint-Ladre and Saint-Jean-de-la-Ruelle to gather sticks for firewood. The watchman no sooner announces them than behold all the banners flying to the wind. Marshal de Boussac, Messire Jacques de Chabannes, Seneschal of Bourbonnais, Messire Denis de Chaîlly, and many another baron, and with them captains and free-lances, make forth into the fields. Not one of them can have commanded as many as twenty men.

The King's council was making every effort to succour Orléans. The King summoned the nobles of Auvergne. They had been true to the Lilies ever since the day when the Dauphin, Canon of Notre-Dame-d'Ancis, and barely more than a child, had travelled over wild peaks to subdue two or three rebellious barons. At the royal call the nobles of Auvergne came forth from their mountains. Beneath the standard of the Count of Clermont, in the early days of February, they reached Blois, where they joined the Scottish force of John Stuart of Darnley, the Constable of Scotland, and a company from Bourbonnais, under the command of the barons La Tour-d'Auvergne and De Thouars.

Just at this time tidings were received of a convoy of victuals and ammunition which Sir John Fastolf was bringing from Paris to the English at Orléans. With two hundred men-at-arms the Bastard started from Orléans to concert measures with the Count of Clermont. It was decided to attack the convoy. Commanded by the Count of Clermont and the Bastard the whole army from Blois marched towards Étampes with the object of encountering Sir John Fastolf.

On the 11th of February there sallied forth from Orléans fifteen hundred fighting men commanded by Messire Guillaume d'Albret, Sir William Stuart, brother of the Constable of Scotland, the Marshal de Boussac, the Lord of Gravelle, the two Captains Saintrailles, Captain La Hire, the Lord of Verduzan, and sundry other knights and squires. They were summoned by the Bastard and ordered to join the Count of Clermont's army on the road to Étampes, at the village of Rouvray-Saint-Denis, near Angerville.

The next day, Saturday, the eve of the first Sunday in Lent, when the Count of Clermont's army was still some distance away, they reached Rouvray. There, early in the morning, the Gascons of Poton and La Hire perceived the head of the convoy advancing into the plain, along the Étampes road.

There they were, a line of three hundred carts and wagons full of arms and victuals conducted by English soldiers and merchants and peasants from Normandy, Picardy, and Paris, fifteen hundred men at the most, all tranquil and unsuspecting. There naturally occurred to the Gascons the idea of falling upon these people and making short work with them at the moment when they least expected it. In great haste they sent to the Count of Clermont for permission to attack. As handsome as Absalom and Paris of Troy, full of words and eaten up of vanity, the Count of Clermont, who was but a lad and none of the wisest, had that very day received his spurs and was at his first engagement. He foolishly sent word to the Gascons not to attack before his arrival. The Gascons obeyed greatly disappointed; they saw what was being lost by waiting. And at length, perceiving that they have walked into the lion's mouth, the English leaders, Sir John Fastolf, Sir Richard Gethyn, Bailie of Évreux, Sir Simon Morhier, Provost of Paris, place themselves in good battle array. With their wagons they make a long narrow enclosure in the plain. There they entrench their horsemen, posting the archers in front, behind stakes planted in the ground with their points inclined towards the enemy. Seeing these preparations, the Constable of Scotland loses patience and leads his four hundred horsemen in a rush upon the stakes, where the horses' legs are broken. The English, discovering that it is only a small company they have to deal with, bring out their cavalry and charge with such force that they overthrow the French and slay three hundred. Meanwhile the men of Auvergne had reached Rouvray and were scouring the village,

draining the cellars. The Bastard left them and came to the help of the Scots with four hundred fighting men. But he was wounded in the foot, and in great danger of being taken.

There fell in this combat Lord William Stuart and his brother, the Lords of Verduzan, of Châteaubrun, of Rochechouart, Jean Chabot with many others of high nobility and great valour. The English, not yet satiated with slaughter, scattered in pursuit of the fugitives. La Hire and Poton, beholding the enemy's standards dispersed over the plain, gathered together as many men as they could, between sixty and eighty, and threw themselves on a small part of the English force, which they overcame. If at this juncture the rest of the French had rallied they might have saved the honour and advantage of the day. But the Count of Clermont, who had not attempted to come to the aid of the Bastard and the Constable of Scotland, displayed his unfailing cowardice to the end. Having seen them all slain, he returned with his army to Orléans, where he arrived well on into the night of the 12th of February. There followed him with their troops in disorder, the Baron La Tour-d'Auvergne, the Viscount of Thouars, the Marshal de Boussac, the Lord of Gravelle and the Bastard, who with the greatest difficulty kept in the saddle. Jamet du Tillay, La Hire, and Poton came last, watching to see that the English did not complete their discomfiture by falling upon them from the forts.

Because the Lenten fast was beginning, the victuals which Sir John Fastolf was bringing from Paris to the English round Orléans, consisted largely of red herrings, which had suffered during the battle from the casks containing them having been broken in. To honour the French for having discomfited so many natives of Dieppe the delighted English merrily named the combat the Battle of the Herrings.

Albeit the Count of Clermont was the King's cousin, the people of Orléans received him but coldly. He was held to have acted shamefully and treacherously; and there were those who let him know what they thought. On the morrow he made off with his men of Auvergne and Bourbonnais amidst the rejoicings of the townsfolk who did not want to support those who would not fight. At the same time there left the city Sire Louis de Culant, High Admiral of France and Captain La Hire, with two thousand men-at-arms. At their departure there arose from the citizens such howls of displeasure, that to appease them it was necessary to explain that the captains were going to fetch fresh supplies of men and victuals, which was the actual truth. My Lord Regnault de Chartres, the date of whose arrival at Orléans is uncertain, departed with them; but he could not be reproached for going, since as Chancellor of France his place was in the King's Council. But what must indeed have appeared strange was that my Lord

Saint-Michel, the successor of Saint-Euverte and Saint-Aignan, should quit his episcopal see and desert his afflicted spouse. When the rats go the vessel is on the point of sinking. Only the Lord Bastard and the Marshal de Boussac were left in the city. And even the Marshal was not to stay long. A month later he went, saying that the King had need of him and that he must go and take possession of broad lands fallen to him through his wife, by the death of his brother-in-law, the Lord of Châteaubrun, at the Battle of the Herrings. The townsfolk deemed the reason a good one. He promised to return before long, and they were content. Now the Marshal de Boussac was one of the barons who had the welfare of the kingdom most at heart. But he who has lands must needs do his duty by them.

Believing that they were betrayed and abandoned, the citizens bethought them of securing their own safety. Since the King was not able to protect them, they resolved that in order to escape from the English, they would give themselves to one more powerful than he. Therefore, to Lord Philip, Duke of Burgundy, they despatched Captain Poton of Saintrilles, who was known to him because he had been his prisoner, and two magistrates of the city, Jean de Saint-Avy and Guion du Fossé. Their mission was to pray and entreat the Duke to look favourably on the town, and for the sake of his good kinsman, their Lord, Charles, Duke of Orléans, a prisoner in England, and thus prevented from defending his own domain, to induce the English to raise the siege until such time as the troubles of the realm should be set at rest. Thus they were offering to place their town as a pledge in the hands of the Duke of Burgundy. Such an offer was in accordance with the secret desire of the Duke, who, having sent a few hundred Burgundian horse to the walls of Orléans, was helping the English, and did not intend to do it for nothing.

Pending the uncertain and distant day when they might be thus protected, the people of Orléans continued to protect themselves as best they could. But they were anxious and not without reason. For although they might prevent the enemy from entering within the city, they could devise no means for speedily driving him away. In the early days of March they observed with concern that the English were digging a ditch to serve them as cover in passing from one bastion to another, from la Croix-Boissée to Saint-Ladre. This work they attempted to destroy. They vigorously attacked the *Godons* and took a few prisoners. With two shots from his culverin Maître Jean killed five persons, including Lord Gray, the nephew of the late Earl of Salisbury. But they could not hinder the English from completing their work. The siege continued with terrible vigour. Agitated by doubts and fears, consumed with anxiety, without sleep,

without rest, and succeeding in nothing, they began to despair. Suddenly a strange rumour arises, spreads, and gains credence.

It is told that there had lately passed through the town of Gien a maid (*une pucelle*), who proclaimed that she was on her way to Chinon to the gentle Dauphin, and said that she had been sent by God to raise the siege of Orléans and take the King to his anointing at Reims.

In colloquial language, a maid (*une pucelle*) was a girl of humble birth, who earned her livelihood by manual work and was generally a servant. Thus the leaden pumps used in kitchens were usually called *pucelles* . The term was doubtless vulgar, but it had no evil meaning. In spite of Clopinel's naughty saying: "*Je lègue ma pucelle à mon curé* ," it was used to describe a respectable girl of good morals.

The tidings that a little saint of lowly origin, one of Our Lord's poor, was bringing divine help to Orléans made a great impression on minds excited by the fevers of the siege and rendered religious through fear. The Maid inspired them with a burning curiosity, which the Lord Bastard, like a wise man, deemed it prudent to encourage. He despatched to Chinon two knights charged to inquire concerning the damsel. One was Sire Archambaud of Villars, Governor of Montargis, whom the Bastard had already sent to the King during the siege; he was an aged knight, once the intimate friend of Duke Louis of Orléans, and one of the seven Frenchmen who fought against the seven Englishmen at Montendre, in 1402: an Orléans citizen of the early days, notwithstanding his great age he had vigourously defended Les Tourelles on the 21st of October. The other, Messire Jamet du Tillay, a Breton squire, had recently won great honour by covering the retreat of Rouvray with his men. They set forth and the whole town anxiously awaited their return.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAID AT CHINON — PROPHECIES

FROM the village of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois, Jeanne dictated a letter to the King, for she did not know how to write. In this letter she asked permission to come to him, and told him that to bring him aid she had travelled over one hundred and fifty leagues, and that she knew of many things for his good. She was said to have added that were he hidden amidst many others she would recognise him; but later, when she was questioned on this matter, she replied that she had no recollection of it.

Towards noon, when the letter had been sealed, Jeanne and her escort set out for Chinon. She went to the King, just as in those days there went to him the sons of poor widows of Azincourt and Verneuil riding lame horses found in some meadow, — fifteen-year-old lads coming forth from their ruined towers to mend their own fortunes and those of France; just as Loyalty, Desire, and Famine went to him. Charles VII was France, the image and symbol of France. Yet he was but a poor creature withal, the eleventh of the miserable children born to the mad Charles VI and his prolific Bavarian Queen. He had grown up among disasters, and had survived his four elder brethren. But he himself was badly bred, knock-kneed, and bandy-legged; a veritable king's son, if his looks only were considered, and yet it was impossible to swear to his descent. Through his presence on the bridge at Montereau on that day, when, according to a wise man, it were better to have died than to have been there, he had grown pale and trembling, looking dully at everything going to wrack and ruin around him. After their victory of Verneuil and their partial conquest of Maine, the English had left him four years' respite. But his friends, his defenders, his deliverers had alike been terrible. Pious and humble, well content with his plain wife, he led a sad, anxious life in his châteaux on the Loire. He was timid. And well might he be so, for no sooner did he show friendship towards or confidence in one of the nobility than that noble was killed. The Constable de Richemont and the Sire de la Trémouille had drowned the Lord de Giac after a mock trial. The Marshal de Boussac, by order of the Constable, had slain Lecamus de Beaulieu with even less ceremony. Lecamus was riding his mule in a meadow on the bank of the Clain, when he was set upon, thrown down, his head split open, and his hand cut off. The favourite's mule was taken back to the King. The Constable de Richemont had given Charles in his stead La Trémouille, a very barrel of a man, a toper, a kind of Gargantua who devoured the country. La Trémouille having

driven away Richemont, the King kept La Trémouille until the Constable, of whom he was greatly in dread, should return. And indeed so meek and fearful a prince had reason to dread this Breton, always defeated, always furious, bitter, ferocious, whose awkwardness and violence created an impression of rude frankness.

In 1428 Richemont wanted to resume his influence over the King. The Counts of Clermont and of Pardiac united to aid him. The King's mother-in-law, Yolande of Aragon, the kingdomless Queen of Sicily and Jerusalem, and the Duchess of Anjou, took the part of the discontented barons. The Count of Clermont took prisoner the Chancellor of France, the first minister of the crown, and held him to ransom. The King had to pay for the restoration of his Chancellor. In Poitou the Constable was warring against the King's men, while the provinces which remained loyal were being wasted by free lances in the King's pay, while the English were advancing towards the Loire.

In the midst of such miseries, King Charles, thin, dwarfed in mind and body, cowering, timorous, suspicious, cut a sorry figure. Yet he was as good as another; and perhaps at that time he was just the king that was needed. A Philippe of Valois or a Jean le Bon would have amused himself by losing his provinces at the point of the sword. Poor King Charles had neither their means nor their desire to perform deeds of prowess, or to press to the front of the battle by riding down the common herd. He had one good point: he did not love feats of prowess and it was impossible for him to be one of those chivalrous knights who make war for the love of it. His grandfather before him, who had been equally lacking in chivalrous graces, had greatly damaged the English. The grandson had not Charles V's wisdom, but he also was not free from guile and was inclined to believe that more may be gained by the signing of a treaty than at the point of the lance.

Concerning his poverty ridiculous stories were in circulation. It was said that a shoemaker, to whom he could not pay ready money, had torn from his leg the new gaiter he had just put on, and gone off, leaving the King with his old ones. It was related how one day La Hire and Saintrailles, coming to see him, had found him dining with the Queen, with two chickens and a sheep's tail as their only entertainment. But these were merely good stories. The King still possessed domains wide and rich; Auvergne, Lyonnais, Dauphiné, Touraine, Anjou, all the provinces south of the Loire, except Guyenne and Gascony.

His great resource was to convoke the States General. The nobility gave nothing, alleging that it was beneath their dignity to pay money. When, notwithstanding their poverty, the clergy did contribute something, it was still, always the third estate that bore more than its share of the financial burden. That

extraordinary tax, the *taille* , became annual. The King summoned the Estates every year, sometimes twice a year. They met not without difficulty. The roads were dangerous. At every corner travellers might be robbed or murdered. The officers, who journeyed from town to town collecting the taxes, had an armed escort for fear of the Scots and other men-at-arms in the King's service.

In 1427 a free lance, Sabbat by name, in garrison at Langeais, was the terror of Touraine and Anjou. Thus the representatives of the towns were in no hurry to present themselves at the meeting of the Estates. It might have been different had they believed that their money would be employed for the good of the realm. But they knew that the King would first use it to make gifts to his barons. The deputies were invited to come and devise means for the repression of the pillage and plunder from which they were suffering; and, when at the risk of their lives they did come to the royal presence, they were forced to consent to the *taille* in silence. The King's officers threatened to have them drowned if they opened their mouths. At the meeting of the Estates held at Mehun-sur-Yèvre in 1425 the men from the good towns said they would be glad to help the King, but first they desired that an end be put to pillage, and my Lord Bishop of Poitiers, Hugues de Comberel, said likewise. On hearing his words the Sire de Giac said to the King: "If my advice were taken, Comberel would be thrown into the river with the others of his opinion." Whereupon the men from the good towns voted two hundred and sixty thousand livres. In September, 1427, assembled at Chinon, they granted five hundred thousand livres for the war. By writs issued on the 8th of January, 1428, the King summoned the States General to meet six months hence, on the following 18th of July, at Tours. On the 18th of July no one attended. On the 22nd of July came a new summons from the King, commanding the Estates to meet at Tours on the 10th of September. But the meeting did not take place until October, at Chinon, just when the Earl of Salisbury was marching on the Loire. The States granted five hundred thousand livres.

But the time could not be far off when the good people would be unable to pay any longer. In those days of war and pillage many a field was lying fallow, many a shop was closed, and few were the merchants ambling on their nags from town to town.

The tax came in badly, and the King was actually suffering from want of money. To extricate himself from this embarrassment he employed three devices, of which the best was useless. First, as he owed every one money, — the Queen of Sicily, La Trémouille, his Chancellor, his butcher, the chapter of Bourges, which provided him with fresh fish, his cooks, his footmen, — he made over the proceeds of the tax to his creditors. Secondly, he alienated the

royal domain: his towns and his lands belonged to every one save himself. Thirdly, he coined false money. It was not with evil intent, but through necessity, and the practice was quite usual.

The only title borne by La Trémouille was that of Conseiller-Chambellan, but he was also the Grand Usurer of the kingdom. His debtors were the King and a multitude of nobles high and low. He was therefore a powerful personage. In those difficult days he rendered the crown services self-interested, but none the less valuable. From January to August, 1428, he advanced sums amounting to about twenty-seven thousand livres for which he received lands and castles as security. Fortunately the Royal Council included a number of Jurists and Churchmen who were good business men. One of them, an Angevin, Robert Le Maçon, Lord of Trèves, of plebeian birth, had entered the Council during the Regency. He was the first among those of lowly origin who served Charles VII so ably that he came to be called The Well Served (*Le Bien Servi*). Another, the Sire de Gaucourt, had aided his King in war.

There is yet a third whom we must learn to know as well as possible. For he will play an important part in this story; and his part would appear greater still if it were laid bare in its entirety. This is Regnault de Chartres, whom we have already seen promoted to be minister of finance. Son of Hector de Chartres, master of Woods and Waters in Normandy, he took orders, became archdeacon of Beauvais, then chamberlain of Pope John XXIII, and in 1414, at about thirty-four, was raised to the archiepiscopal see of Reims. The following year three of his brothers fell on the gory field of Azincourt. In 1418 Hector de Chartres perished at Paris, assassinated by the Butchers. Regnault himself, cast into prison by the Cabochiens, expected to be put to death. He vowed that if he escaped he would fast every Wednesday, and drink water for breakfast every Friday and Saturday, for the rest of his life. One must not judge a man by an act prompted by fear. Nevertheless we may well hesitate to rank the author of this vow with those Epicureans who did not believe in God, of whom there were said to be many among the clerks. We may conclude rather that his intelligence submitted to the common beliefs.

A tragic fidelity, an inherited loyalty to the Armagnacs recommended my Lord Regnault to the Dauphin, who entrusted him with important missions to various parts of Christendom, Languedoc, Scotland, Brittany, and Burgundy. The Archbishop of Reims acquitted himself with rare skill and indefatigable zeal. In December he prayed the Holy Father to dispense him from the fulfilment of the vow taken in the Butchers' prison, on the grounds of his feeble health and his services rendered to the Dauphin, who required him to undertake frequent journeys and arduous embassies.

In 1425, when the King and the kingdom were governed by President Louvet, a learned lawyer, who may well have been a rogue, my Lord Regnault was appointed Chancellor of France in the place of my Lord Martin Gouges of Charpaigne, Bishop of Clermont. But shortly afterwards, when the Constable of France, Arthur of Brittany, had dismissed Louvet, Regnault sold his appointment to Martin Gouges for a pension of two thousand five hundred *livres tournois* .

The Reverend Father in God, my Lord the Archbishop of Reims, was not as rich, far from it, as my Lord de la Trémouille; but he made the best of what he had. Like the Sire de la Trémouille he lent money to the King. But in those days who did not lend the King money? Charles VII gave him the town and castle of Vierzon in payment of a debt of sixteen thousand *livres tournois* . When La Trémouille had treated the Constable as the Constable had treated Louvet, Regnault de Chartres became Chancellor again. He entered into his office on the 8th of November, 1428. By this time the Council had sent men-at-arms and cannon to Orléans. No sooner was my Lord of Reims appointed than he threw himself into the city and spared no trouble. He was keenly attached to the goods of this world and might pass for a miser. But there can be no doubt of his devotion to the royal cause, nor of his hatred of those who fought under the Leopard and the Red Cross.

After eleven days' journey, Jeanne reached Chinon on the 6th of March. It was the fourth Sunday in Lent, that very Sunday on which the lads and lasses of Domremy went forth in bands, into the country still grey and leafless, to eat their nuts and hard-boiled eggs, with the rolls their mothers had kneaded. That was what they called their well-dressing. But Jeanne was not to recollect past well-dressings nor the home she had left without a word of farewell. Ignoring those rustic, well-nigh pagan festivals which poor Christians introduced into the penance of the holy forty days, the Church had named this Sunday *Lætare* Sunday, from the first word in the introit for the day: *Lætare, Jerusalem* . On that Sunday the priest, ascending the altar steps, says low mass; and at high mass the choir sings the following words from Scripture: "*Lætare, Jerusalem; et conventum facite, omnes qui diligitis eam ...* : Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; ..." That day priests, monks, and clerks versed in holy Scripture, as in the churches with the people assembled they sang *Lætare, Jerusalem* , had present before their minds the virgin announced by prophecy, raised up for the deliverance of the kingdom, marked with a sign, who was then making her humble entrance into the town. Perhaps more than one applied what that passage of Scripture says

of the Holy Nation to the realm of France, and in the coincidence of that liturgical text and the happy coming of the Maid found occasion for hope. *Lætare, Jerusalem!* Rejoice ye, O people, in your true King and your rightful sovereign. *Et conventum facite* : and come together. Unite all your strength against the enemy. *Gaudete cum laetitia, qui in tristitia fuistis* : after your long mourning, rejoice. The Lord sends you succour and consolation.

By the intercession of Saint Julien, and probably with the aid of Collet de Vienne, the King's messenger, Jeanne found a lodging in the town, near the castle, in an inn kept by a woman of good repute. The spits were idle. And the guests, deep in the chimney-corner, were watching the grilling of Saint Herring, who was suffering worse torments than Saint Lawrence. In those times no one in Christendom neglected the Church's injunctions concerning the fasts and abstinences of Holy Lent. Following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ who fasted forty days in the desert, the faithful observed the fast from Quadragesima Sunday until Easter Sunday, making forty days after abstracting the Sundays when the fast was broken but not the abstinence. Thus fasting and with her soul comforted, Jeanne listened to the soft whisper of her Voices. The two days she spent in the inn were passed in retirement, on her knees. The banks of the Vienne and the broad meadows, still in their black wintry garb, the hill-slopes over which light mists floated, did not tempt her. But when, on her way to church, climbing up a steep street, or merely grooming her horse in the inn yard, she raised her eyes to the north, there on a mountain close at hand, just about the distance that would be traversed by one of those stone cannon-balls which had been in use for the last fifty or sixty years, she saw the towers of the finest castle of the realm. Behind its proud walls there breathed that King to whom she had journeyed, impelled by a miraculous love.

There were three castles merging before her into one long mass of embattled walls, of keeps, towers, turrets, curtains, barbicans, ramparts, and watch-towers; three castles separated one from the other by dykes, barriers, posterns, and portcullis. On her left, towards sunset, crowded, one behind the other, the eight towers of Coudray, one of which had been built for a king of England, while the newest were more than two hundred years old. On the right could be plainly seen the middle castle, with its ancient walls and its towers crowned with machicolated battlements. There was the chamber of Saint Louis, the King's chamber, the apartment of him whom Jeanne called the Gentle Dauphin. And there also, close to the rush-strewn room, was the great hall in which she was to be received. Towards the town the site of the hall was indicated by an adjoining tower, square and very old. On the right extended a vast bailey or stronghold, intended as a lodging for the garrison, and a defence of the middle part of the

castle. Near by a large chapel raised its roof, in the form of an inverted keel, above the ramparts. This chapel, built by Henry II of England, was under the patronage of Saint George, and from it the bailey received its name of Fort Saint George. In those days every one knew the story of Saint George the valiant knight, who with his lance transfixed a dragon and delivered a King's daughter, and then suffered martyrdom confessing his faith. Like Saint Catherine he had been bound to a wheel with sharp spikes, and the wheel had been miraculously broken like that on which the executioners had bound the Virgin of Alexandria. And like her Saint George had suffered death by means of an axe, thus proving that he was a great saint. In one thing, however, he was wrong; he was of the party of the *Godons*, who for more than three hundred years had kept his feast as that of all the English. They held him to be their patron saint and invoked him before all other saints. Thus his name was pronounced as constantly by the vilest Welsh archer as by a knight of the Garter. In truth no one knew what he thought and whether he did not condemn all these marauders who were fighting for a bad cause; but there was reason to fear that such great honours would affect him. The saints of Paradise are generally ready to take the side of those who invoke them most devoutly. And Saint George, after all, was just as English as Saint Michael was French. That glorious archangel had appeared as the most vigilant protector of the Lilies ever since my Lord Saint Denys, the patron saint of the kingdom, had permitted his abbey to be taken. And Jeanne knew it.

Meanwhile the despatches brought from the Commander of Vaucouleurs by Colet de Vienne were presented to the King. These despatches instructed him concerning the deeds and sayings of the damsel. This was one of those countless matters to be examined by the Council, one which, it appears, the King must himself investigate, as pertaining to his royal office and as interesting him especially, since it might be a question of a damsel of remarkable piety, and he was himself the highest ecclesiastical personage in France. His grandfather, wise prince that he was, would have been far from scorning the counsel of devout women in whom was the voice of God. About the year 1380 he had summoned to Paris Guillemette de la Rochelle, who led a solitary and contemplative life, and acquired such great power therefrom, so it was said, that during her transports she raised herself more than two feet from the ground. In many a church King Charles V had beautiful oratories built, where she might pray for him. The grandson should do no less, for his need was still greater. There were still more recent examples in his family of dealings between kings and saints. His father, the poor King Charles VI, when he was passing through Tours, had caused Louis, Duke of Orléans, to present to him Dame Marie de Maillé. She had taken a vow of virginity and had transformed the spouse, who approached

her like a devouring lion, into a timorous lamb. She revealed secrets to the King, and he was pleased with her, for three years later he wanted to see her again at Paris. This time they talked long together in private, and she revealed more secrets to the King, so that he sent her away with gifts. This same Prince had granted an audience to a poor knight of Caux, one Robert le Mennot, to whom, when he was in danger of shipwreck near the coast of Syria, had been vouchsafed a vision. He proclaimed that God had sent him to restore peace. Still more favourably had the King received a woman, Marie Robine, who was commonly called la Gasque of Avignon. In 1429, there were those at court who remembered the prophetess sent to Charles VI to confirm him in his subjection to Pope Benedict XIII. This pope was held to be an antipope; nevertheless, La Gasque was regarded as a prophetess. Like Jeanne she had had many visions concerning the desolation of the realm of France; and she had seen weapons in the sky. The kings of England were no less ready than the kings of France to heed the words of those saintly men and women, multitudes of whom were at that time uttering prophecies. Henry V consulted the hermit of Sainte-Claude, Jean de Gand, who foretold the King's approaching death; and on his death-bed he again had the stern prophet summoned. It was the custom of saints to speak to kings and of kings to listen to them. How could a pious prince disdain so miraculous a source of counsel? Had he done so he would have incurred the censure of the wisest.

King Charles read the Commander of Vaucouleur's letters, and had the damsel's escort examined before him. Of her mission and her miracles they could say nothing. But they spoke of the good they had seen in her during the journey, and affirmed that there was no evil in her.

Of a truth, God speaketh through the mouths of virgins. But in such matters it is necessary to act with extreme caution, to distinguish carefully between the true prophetesses and the false, not to take for messengers from heaven the heralds of the devil. The latter sometimes create illusions. Following the example of Simon the Magician, who worked wonders vying with the miracles of St. Peter, these creatures have recourse to diabolical arts for the seduction of men. Twelve years before, there had prophesied a woman, likewise from the Lorraine Marches, Catherine Suave, a native of Thons near Neufchâteau, who lived as a recluse at Port de Lates, yet most certainly did the Bishop of Maguelonne know her to be a liar and a sorceress, wherefore she was burned alive at Montpellier in 1417. Multitudes of women, or rather of females, *mulierculæ*, lived like this Catherine and ended like her.

Certain ecclesiastics briefly interrogated Jeanne and asked her wherefore she had come. At first she replied that she would say nothing save to the King. But

when the clerks represented to her that they were questioning her in the King's name, she told them that the King of Heaven had bidden her do two things: one was to raise the siege of Orléans, the other to lead the King to Reims for his anointing and his coronation. Just as at Vaucouleurs before Sire Robert, so before these Churchmen she repeated very much what the vavasour of Champagne had said formerly, when he had been sent to Jean le Bon, as she was now sent to the Dauphin Charles.

Having journeyed as far as the Plain of Beauce, where King John, impatient for battle, was encamped with his army, the vavasour of Champagne entered the camp and asked to see the wisest and best of the King's liegemen at court. The nobles, to whom this request was carried, began to laugh. But one among them, who had with his own eyes seen the vavasour, recognised at once that he was a good, simple man and without guile. He said to him: "If thou hast any advice to give, go to the King's chaplain." The vavasour therefore went to King John's chaplain and said to him: "Obtain for me an audience of the King; I have something to tell that I will say to no one but to him." "What is it?" asked the chaplain. "Tell me what is in your heart." But the good man would not reveal his secret. The chaplain went to King John and said to him: "Sire, there is a worthy man here who seems to me wise in his way. He desires to say to you something that he will tell to you alone." King John refused to see the good man. He summoned his confessor, and, accompanied by the chaplain, sent him to learn the vavasour's secret. The two priests went to the man and told him that the King had appointed them to hear him. At this announcement, despairing of ever seeing King John, and trusting to the Confessor and the chaplain not to reveal his secret to any but the King, he uttered these words: "While I was alone in the fields, a voice spake unto me three times, saying: 'Go unto King John of France and warn him that he fight not with any of his enemies.' Obedient to that voice am I come to bring the tidings to King John." Having heard the vavasour's secret the confessor and the chaplain took him to the King, who laughed at him. With his comrades-in-arms he advanced to Poitiers, where he met the Black Prince. He lost his whole army in battle, and, twice wounded in the face, was taken prisoner by the English.

The ecclesiastics, who had examined Jeanne, held various opinions concerning her. Some declared that her mission was a hoax, and that the King ought to beware of her. Others on the contrary held that, since she said she was sent of God, and that she had something to tell the King, the King should at least hear her.

Two priests who were then with the King, Jean Girard, President of the Parlement of Grenoble, and Pierre l'Hermite, later subdean of Saint-Martin-de-Tours, judged the case difficult and interesting enough to be submitted to Messire Jacques Gélú, that Armagnac prelate who had long served the house of Orléans and the Dauphin of France both in council and in diplomacy. When he was nearly sixty, Gélú had withdrawn from the Council, and exchanged the archiepiscopal see of Tours for the bishopric of Embrun, which was less exalted and more retired. He was illustrious and venerable. Jean Girard and Pierre l'Hermite informed him of the coming of the damsel in a letter, wherein they told him also that, having been questioned in turn by three professors of theology, she had been found devout, sober, temperate, and in the habit of participating once a week in the sacraments of confession and communion. Jean Girard thought she might have been sent by the God who raised up Judith and Deborah, and who spoke through the mouths of the Sibyls.

Charles was pious, and on his knees devoutly heard three masses a day. Regularly at the canonical hours he repeated the customary prayers in addition to prayers for the dead and other orisons. Daily he confessed, and communicated on every feast day. But he believed in foretelling events by means of the stars, in which he did not differ from other princes of his time. Each one of them had an astrologer in his service.

The late Duke of Burgundy had been constantly accompanied by a Jewish soothsayer, Maître Mousque. On that day, the end of which he was never to see, as he was going to the Bridge of Montereau, Maître Mousque counselled him not to advance any further, prophesying that he would not return. The Duke continued on his way and was killed. The Dauphin Charles confided in Jean des Builhons, in Germain de Thibonville and in all others of the peaked cap.

He always had two or three astrologers at court. These almanac makers drew up schemes of nativity, cast horoscopes and read in the sky the approach of wars and revolutions. One of them, Maître Rolland the Scrivener, a fellow of the University of Paris, was one night, at a certain hour, observing the heavens from his roof, when he saw the apex of Virgo in the ascendant, Venus, Mercury, and the sun half way up the sky. This his colleague, Guillaume Barbin of Geneva, interpreted to mean that the English would be driven from France and the King restored by the hand of a mere maid. If we may believe the Inquisitor Bréhal, some time before Jeanne's coming into France, a clever astronomer of Seville, Jean de Montalcin by name, had written to the King among other things the following words: "By a virgin's counsel thou shalt be victorious. Continue in triumph to the gates of Paris."

At that very time the Dauphin Charles had with him at Chinon an old Norman astrologer, one Pierre, who may have been Pierre de Saint-Valerien, canon of Paris. The latter had recently returned from Scotland, whither, accompanied by certain nobles, he had gone to fetch the Lady Margaret, betrothed to the Dauphin Louis. Not long afterwards this Maître Pierre was, rightly or wrongly, believed to have read in the sky that the shepherdess from the Meuse valley was appointed to drive out the English.

Jeanne had not long to wait in her inn. Two days after her arrival, what she had so ardently desired came to pass: she was taken to the King. In the last century near the Grand-Carroy, opposite a wooden-fronted house, there was shown a well on the edge of which, according to tradition, Jeanne set foot when she alighted from her horse, before climbing the steep ascent leading to the Castle. Through La Vieille Porte, she was already crossing the moat when the King was still hesitating as to whether he would receive her. Many of his familiar advisers, and those not the least important, counselled him to beware of a strange woman whose designs might be evil. There were others who put it before him that this shepherdess was introduced by letters from Robert de Baudricourt carried through hostile provinces; that in journeying to the King she had forded many rivers in a manner almost miraculous. On these considerations the King consented to receive her.

The great hall was crowded. As at every audience given by the King the room was close with the breath of the assembled multitude. The vast chamber presented that aspect of a market-house or of a rout which was so familiar to courtiers. It was evening; fifty torches flamed beneath the painted beams of the roof. Men of middle age in robes and furs, young, smooth-faced nobles, thin and narrow shouldered, of slender build, their lean legs in tight hose, their feet in long, pointed shoes; barons fully armed to the number of three hundred, according to Aulic custom, pushed, crowded and elbowed each other while the usher was here and there striking the courtiers on the head with his rod.

Besides the two ambassadors from Orléans, Messire Jamet du Tillay and the old baron Archambaud de Villars, governor of Montargis, there were present Simon Charles, Master of Requests, as well as certain great nobles, the Count of Clermont, the Sire de Gaucourt, and probably the Sire de La Trémouille and my Lord the Archbishop of Reims, Chancellor of the kingdom. On hearing of Jeanne's approach, King Charles buried himself among his retainers, either because he was still mistrustful and hesitating, or because he had other persons to speak to, or for some other reason. Jeanne was presented by the Count of Vendôme. Robust, with a firm, short neck, her figure appeared full, although

confined by her man's jerkin. She wore breeches like a man, but still more surprising than her hose was her head-gear and the cut of her hair. Beneath a woollen hood, her dark hair hung cut round in soup-plate fashion like a page's. Women of all ranks and all ages were careful to hide their hair so that not one lock of it should escape from beneath the coif, the veil, or the high head-dress which was then the mode. Jeanne's flowing locks looked strange to the folk of those days. She went straight to the King, took off her cap, curtsied, and said: "God send you long life, gentle Dauphin."

Afterwards there were those who marvelled that she should have recognised him in the midst of nobles more magnificently dressed than he. It is possible that on that day he may have been poorly attired. We know that it was his custom to have new sleeves put to his old doublets. And in any case he did not show off his clothes. Very ugly, knock-kneed, with emaciated thighs, small, odd, blinking eyes, and a large bulbous nose, on his bony, bandy legs tottered and trembled this prince of twenty-six.

That Jeanne should have seen his picture already and recognised him by it is hardly likely. Portraits of princes were rare in those days. Jeanne had never handled one of those precious books in which King Charles may have been painted in miniature as one of the Magi offering gifts to the Child Jesus. It was not likely that she had ever seen one of those figures painted on wood in the semblance of her King, with hands clasped, beneath the curtains of his oratory. And if by chance some one had shown her one of these portraits her untrained eyes could have discerned but little therein. Neither need we inquire whether the people of Chinon had described to her the costume the King usually wore and the shape of his hat: for like every one else he kept his hat on indoors even at dinner. What is most probable is that those who were kindly disposed towards her pointed out the King. At any rate he was not difficult to distinguish, since those who saw her go up to him were in no wise astonished.

When she had made her rustic curtesy, the King asked her name and what she wanted. She replied: "Fair Dauphin, my name is Jeanne the Maid; and the King of Heaven speaks unto you by me and says that you shall be anointed and crowned at Reims, and be lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is King of France." She asked to be set about her work, promising to raise the siege of Orléans.

The King took her apart and questioned her for some time. By nature he was gentle, kind to the poor and lowly, but not devoid of mistrust and suspicion.

It is said that during this private conversation, addressing him with the familiarity of an angel, she made him this strange announcement: "My Lord bids me say unto thee that thou art indeed the heir of France and the son of a King; he

has sent me to thee to lead thee to Reims to be crowned there and anointed if thou wilt." Afterwards the Maid's chaplain reported these words, saying he had received them from the Maid herself. All that is certain is that the Armagnacs were not slow to turn them into a miracle in favour of the Line of the Lilies. It was asserted that these words spoken by God himself, by the mouth of an innocent girl, were a reply to the carking, secret anxiety of the King. Madame Ysabeau's son, it was said, distracted and saddened by the thought that perhaps the royal blood did not flow in his veins, was ready to renounce his kingdom and declare himself a usurper, unless by some heavenly light his doubts concerning his birth should be dispelled. Men told how his face shone with joy when it was revealed to him that he was the true heir of France.

Doubtless the Armagnac preachers were in the habit of speaking of Queen Ysabeau as "*une grande gorre*" and a Herodias of licentiousness; but one would like to know whence her son derived his curious misgiving. He had not manifested it on entering into his inheritance; and, had occasion required, the jurists of his party would have proved to him by reasons derived from laws and customs that he was by birth the true heir and the lawful successor of the late King; for filiation must be proved not by what is hidden, but by what is manifest, otherwise it would be impossible to assign the legal heir to a kingdom or to an acre of land. Nevertheless it must be borne in mind that the King was very unfortunate at this time. Now misfortune agitates the conscience and raises scruples; and he might well doubt the justice of his cause since God was forsaking him. But if he were indeed assailed by painful doubts, how can he have been relieved from them by the words of a damsel who, as far as he then knew, might be mad or sent to him by his enemies? It is hard to reconcile such credulity with what we know of his suspicious nature. The first thought that occurred to him must have been that ecclesiastics had instructed the damsel.

A few moments after he had dismissed her, he assembled the Sire de Gaucourt and certain other members of his Council and repeated to them what he had just heard: "She told me that God had sent her to aid me to recover my kingdom." He did not add that she had revealed to him a secret known to himself alone.

The King's Counsellors, knowing little of the damsel, decided that they must have her before them to examine her concerning her life and her belief.

The Sire de Gaucourt took her from the inn and lodged her in a tower of that Castle of Coudray, which for the last three days she had seen dominating the town. One of the three castles, Le Coudray was only separated from the middle château in which the King dwelt by a moat and fortifications. The Sire de Gaucourt confided her to the care of the lieutenant of the Town of Chinon,

Guillaume Bellier, the King's Major Domo. He gave her for her servant one of his own pages, a child of fifteen, Immerguet, sometimes called Minguet, and sometimes Mugot. His real name was Louis de Coutes, and he came of an old warrior family which had been in the service of the house of Orléans for a century. His father, Jean, called Minguet, Lord of Fresnay-le-Gelmert, of la Gadelière and of Mitry, Chamberlain to the Duke of Orléans, had died in great poverty the year before. He had left a widow and five children, three boys and two girls, one of whom, Jeanne by name, had since 1421 been the wife of Messire Florentin d'Illiers, Governor of Châteaudun. Thus the little page, Louis de Coutes, and his mother, Catherine le Mercier, Dame de Noviant, who came of a noble Scottish family, were both in a state of penury, albeit the Duke of Orléans in acknowledgment of his Chamberlain's faithful services had from his purse granted aid to the Lady of Noviant. Jeanne kept Minguet with her all day, but at night she slept with the women.

The wife of Guillaume Bellier, who was good and pious, at least so it was said, watched over her. At Coudray the page saw her many a time on her knees. She prayed and often wept many tears. For several days persons of high estate came to speak with her. They found her dressed as a boy.

Since she had been with the King, divers persons asked her whether there were not in her country a wood called "Le Bois-Chenu." This question was put to her because a prophecy of Merlin concerning a maid who should come from "Le Bois-Chenu" was then in circulation. And folk were impressed by it; for in those days every one gave heed to prophecies and especially to those of Merlin the Magician.

Begotten of a woman by the Devil, it was from him that Merlin derived his profound wisdom. To the science of numbers, which is the key to the future, he added a knowledge of physics, by means of which he worked his enchantments. Thus it was easy for him to transform rocks into giants. And yet he was conquered by a woman; the fairy Vivien enchanted the enchanter and kept him in a hawthorn bush under a spell. This is only one of many examples of the power of women.

Famous doctors and illustrious masters held that Merlin had laid bare many future events and prophesied many things which had not yet happened. To such as were amazed that the son of the Devil should have received the gift of prophecy they replied that the Holy Ghost is able to reveal his secrets to whomsoever he pleases, for had he not caused the Sibyls to speak, and opened the mouth of Balaam's ass?

Merlin had seen in a vision Sire Bertrand du Guesclin in the guise of a warrior bearing an eagle on his shield. This was remembered after the Constable had wrought his great deeds.

In the prophecies of this Wise Man the English believed no less firmly than the French. When Arthur of Brittany, Count of Richemont, was taken prisoner, held to ransom, and brought before King Henry, the latter, when he perceived a boar on the arms of the Duke, broke forth into rejoicing; for he called to mind the words of Merlin who had said, “A Prince of Armorica, called Arthur, with a boar for his crest, shall conquer England, and when he shall have made an end of the English folk he shall re-people the land with a Breton race.”

Now during the Lent of 1429 there was circulated among the Armagnacs this prophecy, taken from a book of the prophecies of Merlin: “From the town of the Bois-Chenu there shall come forth a maid for the healing of the nation. When she hath stormed every citadel, with her breath she shall dry up all the springs. Bitter tears shall she shed and fill the Island with a terrible noise. Then shall she be slain by the stag with ten antlers, of which six branches shall bear crowns of gold, and the other six shall be changed into the horns of oxen; and with a horrible sound they shall shake the Isles of Britain. The forest of Denmark shall rise up and with a human voice say: ‘Come, Cambria, and take Cornwall unto thyself.’”

In these mysterious words Merlin dimly foretells that a virgin shall perform great and wonderful deeds before perishing by the hand of the enemy. On one point only is he clear, or so it seems; that is, when he says that this virgin shall come from the town of the Bois-Chenu.

If this prophecy had been traced back to its original source and read in the fourth book of the *Historia Britonum*, where it is to be found under the title of *Guyntonia Vaticinium*, it would have been seen to refer to the English city of Winchester, and it would have appeared that in the version then in circulation in France, the original meaning had been garbled, distorted, and completely metamorphosed. But no one thought of verifying the text. Books were rare and minds uncritical. This deliberately falsified prophecy was accepted as the pure word of Merlin and numerous copies of it were spread abroad.

Whence came these copies? Their origin doubtless will remain a mystery for ever; but one point is certain: they referred to La Romée’s daughter, to the damsel who, from her father’s house, could see the edge of “Le Bois-Chenu.” Thus they came from close at hand and were of recent circulation. If this amended prophecy of Merlin be not the one that reached Jeanne in her village, forecasting that a Maid should come from the Lorraine Marches for the saving of the kingdom, then it was closely related to it. The two prognostications have a

family likeness. They were uttered in the same spirit and with the same intention; and they indicate that the ecclesiastics of the Meuse valley and those of the Loire had agreed to draw attention to the inspired damsel of Domremy.

As Merlin had foretold the works of Jeanne, so Bede must also have predicted them, for Bede and Merlin were always together in matters of prophecy.

The Monk of Wearmouth, the Venerable Bede, who had been dead six centuries, had been a veritable mine of knowledge in his lifetime. He had written on theology and chronology; he had discoursed of night and day, of weeks and months, of the signs of the zodiac, of epacts, of the lunar cycle, and of the movable feasts of the Church. In his book *De temporum ratione* he had treated of the seventh and eighth ages of the world, which were to follow the age in which he lived. He had prophesied. During the siege of Orléans, churchmen were circulating these obscure lines attributed to him, and foretelling the coming of the Maid:

*Bis sex cuculli, bis septem se sociabunt,
Gallorum pulli Tauro nova bella parabunt
Ecce beant bella, tunc fert vexilla Puella.*

The first of these lines is a chronogram, that is, it contains a date. To decipher it you take the numeral letters of the line and add them together; the total gives the date.

bIs seX CVCVLLI, bIs septeM se soCIabVnt.

1 + 10 + 100 + 5 + 100 + 5 + 50 + 50 + 1 + 1 + 1000 + 100 + 1 + 5 = 1429.

Had any one sought these lines in the works of the Venerable Bede they would not have found them, because they are not there; but no one thought of looking for them any more than they thought of looking for the Forêt Chenue in Merlin. And it was understood that both Bede and Merlin had foretold the coming of the Maid. In those days prophecies, chronograms, and charms flew like pigeons from the banks of the Loire and spread abroad throughout the realm. Not later than the May or June of this year the pseudo Bede will reach Burgundy. Earlier still he will be heard of in Paris. The aged Christine de Pisan, living in retirement in a French abbey, before the last day of July, 1429, will write that Bede and Merlin had beheld the Maid in a vision.

The clerks, who were busy forging prophecies for the Maid's benefit, did not stop at a pseudo Bede and a garbled Merlin. They were truly indefatigable, and by a stroke of good luck we possess a piece of their workmanship which has

escaped the ravages of time. It is a short Latin poem written in the obscure prophetic style, of which the following is a translation through the old French.

“A virgin clothed in man’s attire, with the body of a maid, at God’s behest goes forth to raise the downcast King, who bears the lilies, and to drive out his accursed enemies, even those who now beleaguer the city of Orléans and strike terror into the hearts of its inhabitants. And if the people will take heart and go out to battle, the treacherous English shall be struck down by death, at the hand of the God of battles who fights for the Maid, and the French shall cause them to fall, and then shall there be an end of the war; and the old covenants and the old friendship shall return. Pity and righteousness shall be restored. There shall be a treaty of peace, and all men shall of their own accord return to the King, which King shall weigh justice and administer it unto all men and preserve his subjects in beautiful peace. Henceforth no English foe with the sign of the leopard shall dare to call himself King of France [added by the translator] and adopt the arms of France, which arms are borne by the holy Maid.”

These false prophecies give some idea of the means employed for the setting to work of the inspired damsel. Such methods may be somewhat too crafty for our liking. These clerks had but one object, — the peace of the realm and of the church. The miraculous deliverance of the people had to be prepared. We must not be too hasty to condemn those pious frauds without which the Maid could not have worked her miracles. Much art and some guile are necessary to contrive for innocence a hearing.

Meanwhile, on a steep rock, on the bank of the Durance, in the remote see of Saint-Marcellin, Jacques Gélou remained faithful to the King he had served and careful for the interests of the house of Orléans and of France. To the two churchmen, Jean Girard and Pierre l’Hermite, he replied that, for the sake of the orphan and the oppressed, God would doubtless manifest himself, and would frustrate the evil designs of the English; yet one should not easily and lightly believe the words of a peasant girl bred in solitude, for the female sex was frail and easily deceived, and France must not be made ridiculous in the eyes of the foreigner. “The French,” he added, “are already famous for the ease with which they are duped.” He ended by advising Pierre l’Hermite that it would be well for the King to fast and do penance so that Heaven might enlighten him and preserve him from error.

But the mind of the oracle and ex-councillor could not rest. He wrote direct to King Charles and Queen Marie to warn them of the danger. To him it seemed that there could be no good in the damsel. He mistrusted her for three reasons: first, because she came from a country in the possession of the King’s enemies, Burgundians and Lorrainers; secondly, she was a shepherdess and easily

deceived; thirdly, she was a maid. He cited as an example Alexander of Macedon, whom a Queen endeavoured to poison. She had been fed on venom by the King's enemies and then sent to him in the hope that he would fall a victim to the wench's wiles. But Aristotle dismissed the seductress and thus delivered his prince from death. The Archbishop of Embrun, as wise as Aristotle, warned the King against conversing with the damsel in private. He advised that she should be kept at a distance and examined, but not repulsed.

A prudent answer to those letters reassured Gélú. In a new epistle he testified to the King his satisfaction at hearing that the damsel was regarded with suspicion and left in uncertainty as to whether she would or would not be believed. Then, with a return to his former misgivings, he added: "It behoves not that she should have frequent access to the King until such time as certainty be established concerning her manner of life and her morals."

King Charles did indeed keep Jeanne in uncertainty as to what was believed of her. But he did not suspect her of craftiness and he received her willingly. She talked to him with the simplest familiarity. She called him gentle Dauphin, and by that term she implied nobility and royal magnificence. She also called him her *oriflamme*, because he was her *oriflamme*, or, as in modern language she would have expressed it, her standard. The *oriflamme* was the royal banner. No one at Chinon had seen it, but marvellous things were told of it. The *oriflamme* was in the form of a gonfanon with two wings, made of a costly silk, fine and light, called *sandal*, and it was edged with tassels of green silk. It had come down from heaven; it was the banner of Clovis and of Saint Charlemagne. When the King went to war it was carried before him. So great was its virtue that the enemy at its approach became powerless and fled in terror. It was remembered how, when in 1304 Philippe le Bel defeated the Flemings, the knight who bore it was slain. The next day he was found dead, but still clasping the standard in his arms. It had floated in front of King Charles VI before his misfortunes, and since then it had never been unfurled.

One day when the Maid and the King were talking together, the Duke of Alençon entered the hall. When he was a child, the English had taken him prisoner at Verneuil and kept him five years in the Crotoy Tower. Only recently set at liberty, he had been shooting quails near Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur, when a messenger had brought the tidings that God had sent a damsel to the King to turn the English out of France. This news interested him as much as any one because he had married the Duke of Orléans' daughter; and straightway he had come to Chinon to see for himself. In the days of his graceful youth the Duke of Alençon appeared to advantage, but he was never renowned for his wisdom. He was

weak-minded, violent, vain, jealous, and extremely credulous. He believed that ladies find favour by means of a certain herb, the mountain-heath; and later he thought himself bewitched. He had a disagreeable, harsh voice; he knew it, and the knowledge annoyed him. As soon as she saw him approaching, Jeanne asked who this noble was. When the King replied that it was his cousin Alençon, she curtsied to the Duke and said: "Be welcome. The more representatives of the blood royal are here the better." In this she was completely mistaken. The Dauphin smiled bitterly at her words. Not much of the royal blood of France ran in the Duke's veins.

On the next day Jeanne went to the King's mass. When she approached her Dauphin she bowed before him. The King took her into a room and sent every one away except the Sire de la Trémouille and the Duke of Alençon.

Then Jeanne addressed to him several requests. More especially did she ask him to give his kingdom to the King of Heaven. "And afterwards," she added, "the King of Heaven will do for you what he has done for your predecessors and will restore you to the condition of your fathers."

In discoursing thus of things spiritual, in giving utterance to those precepts of reformation and of a new life, she was repeating what the clerks had taught her. Nevertheless she was by no means imbued with this doctrine. It was too subtle for her, and it was shortly to fade from her mind and give place to an ardour less monastic but more chivalrous.

That same day she rode out with the King and threw a lance in the meadow with so fine a grace that the Duke of Alençon, marvelling, made her a present of a horse.

A few days later this young noble took her to the Abbey of Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur, the church of which was so greatly admired that it was called La Belle d'Anjou. Here in this abbey there dwelt at that time his mother and his wife. It is said that they were glad to see Jeanne. But they had no great faith in the issue of the war. The young Dame of Alençon said to her: "Jeannette, I am full of fear for my husband. He has just come out of prison, and we have had to give so much money for his ransom that gladly would I entreat him to stay at home." To which Jeanne replied: "Madame, have no fear. I will bring him back to you in safety, and either such as he is now or better."

She called the Duke of Alençon her fair Duke, and loved him for the sake of the Duke of Orléans, whose daughter he had married. She loved him also because he believed in her when all others doubted or denied, and because the English had done him wrong. She loved him too because she saw he had a good will to fight. It was told how when he was a captive in the hands of the English at Verneuil, and they proposed to give him back his liberty and his goods if he

would join their party, he had rejected their offer. He was young like her; she thought that he like her must be sincere and noble. And perhaps in those days he was, for doubtless he was not then seeking to discover powders with which to dry up the King.

It was decided that Jeanne should be taken to Poitiers to be examined by the doctors there. In this town the Parlement met. Here also were gathered together many famous clerks learned in theology, secular as well as regular, and grave doctors and masters were summoned to join them. Jeanne set out under escort. At first she thought she was being taken to Orléans. Her faith was like that of the ignorant but believing folk, who, having taken the cross, went forth and thought every town they approached was Jerusalem. Half way she inquired of her guides where they were taking her. When she heard that it was to Poitiers: "In God's name!" she said, "much ado will be there, I know. But my Lord will help me. Now let us go on in God's strength!"

CHAPTER VII

THE MAID AT POITIERS

FOR fourteen years the town of Poitiers had been the capital of that part of France which belonged to the French. The Dauphin Charles had transferred his Parlement there, or rather had assembled there those few members who had escaped from the Parlement of Paris. The Parlement of Poitiers consisted of two chambers only. It would have judged as wisely as King Solomon had there been any questions on which to pronounce judgment, but no litigants presented themselves — they were afraid of being captured on the way by freebooters and captains in the King's pay; besides, in the disturbed state of the kingdom justice had little to do with the settlement of disputes. The councillors, who for the most part had lands near Paris, were hard put to it for food and clothing. They were rarely paid and there were no perquisites. In vain they had inscribed their registers with the formula: *Non deliberetur donec solvantur species* ; no payments were forthcoming from the suitors. The Attorney General, Messire Jean Jouvenel des Ursins, who owned rich lands and houses in Île-de-France, Brie, and Champagne, was filled with pity at the sight of that good and honourable lady his wife, his eleven children, and his three sons-in-law going barefoot and poorly clad through the streets of the town. As for the doctors and professors who had followed the King's fortunes, in vain were they wells of knowledge and springs of clerkly learning, since, for lack of a University to teach in, they reaped no advantage from their eloquence and their erudition. The town of Poitiers, having become the first city in the realm, had a Parlement but no University, like a lady highly born but one-eyed withal, for the Parlement and the University are the two eyes of a great city. Thus in their doleful leisure they were consumed with a desire, if it were God's will, to restore the King's fortunes as well as their own. Meanwhile, shivering with cold and emaciated with hunger, they groaned and lamented. Like Israel in the desert they sighed for the day when the Lord, inclining his ear to their supplications, should say: "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." *Vespere comedetis carnes et mane saturabimini panibus: scietisque quod ego sum Dominus deus vester.* (Exodus xvi, 12.) It was from among these poor and faithful servants of a poverty-stricken King that were chosen for the most part the doctors and clerks charged with the examination of the Maid. They were: the Lord Bishop of Poitiers; the Lord Bishop of Maguelonne; Maître Jean Lombard, doctor in theology, sometime professor of theology at the University of Paris; Maître Guillaume le Maire, bachelor of theology, canon of Poitiers; Maître Gérard Machet, the

King's Confessor; Maître Jourdain Morin; Maître Jean Érault, professor of theology; Maître Mathieu Mesnage, bachelor of theology; Maître Jacques Meledon; Maître Jean Maçon, a very famous doctor of civil law and of canon law; Brother Pierre de Versailles, a monk of Saint-Denys in France, of the order of Saint Benedict, professor of theology, Prior of the Priory of Saint-Pierre de Chaumont, Abbot of Talmont in the diocese of Laon, Ambassador of his most Christian Majesty the King of France; Brother Pierre Turelure, of the Order of Saint Dominic, Inquisitor at Toulouse; Maître Simon Bonnet; Brother Guillaume Aimery, of the Order of Saint-Dominic, doctor and professor of theology; Brother Seguin of Seguin of the Order of Saint Dominic, doctor and professor of theology; Brother Pierre Seguin, Carmelite; several of the King's Councillors, licentiates of civil as well as of canon law.

Here was a large assembly of doctors for the cross-examination of one shepherdess. But we must remember that in those days theology subtle and inflexible dominated all human knowledge and forced the secular arm to give effect to its judgment. Therefore, as soon as an ignorant girl caused it to be believed that she had seen God, the Virgin, the saints, and the angels, she must either pass from miracle to miracle, through an edifying death to beatification, or from heresy to heresy through an ecclesiastical prison, to be burnt as a witch. And, as the holy inquisitors were fully persuaded that the Devil easily entered into a woman, the unhappy creature was more likely to be burnt alive than to die in an odour of sanctity. But Jeanne before the doctors at Poitiers was an exception; she ran no risk of being suspected in matters of faith. Even Brother Pierre Turelure himself had no desire to find in her one of those heretics he zealously sought to discover at Toulouse. In her presence the illustrious masters drew in their theological claws. They were churchmen, but they were Armagnacs, for the most part business men, diplomatists, old councillors of the Dauphin. As priests, doubtless they were possessed of a certain body of dogma and morality, and of a code of rules for judging matters of faith. But now it was a question not of curing the disease of heresy, but of driving out the English. Jeanne was in favour with my Lord the Duke of Alençon and with my Lord the Bastard; the inhabitants of Orléans were looking to her for their deliverance. She promised to take the King to Reims; and it happened that the cleverest and the most powerful man in France, the Chancellor of the kingdom, my Lord Regnault de Chartres, was Archbishop and Count of Reims; and that had great weight.

If it should be as she said, if God had verily sent her to the aid of the Lilies, to the mind of whomsoever possessed sense and learning it appeared marvellous but not incredible. No one denied that God could directly intervene in the affairs of kingdoms, for he himself had said: *Per me reges regnant* .

In this Church holy and indivisible, there were the doctors of Poitiers who deliberately pronounced God to be on the side of the Dauphin, while the University of Paris as deliberately pronounced God to be on the side of the Burgundians and the English. His messenger need not necessarily be an angel. He might employ a creature human or not human, like the raven that fed Elijah. And that a woman should engage in war accorded with what was written in books concerning Camilla, the Amazons, and Queen Penthesilea, and with what the Bible says of the strong women, Deborah, Jahel, Judith of Bethulia, raised up by God for the salvation of Israel. For it is written: "The mighty one did not fall by the young men, neither did the sons of Titans smite him, nor high giants set upon him; but Judith the daughter of Merari weakened him with the beauty of her countenance."

Jeanne was taken to the mansion where dwelt Maître Jean Rabateau, not far from the law-courts, in the heart of the town. Maître Jean Rabateau was Lay Attorney General; all criminal cases went to him, while civil cases went to the ecclesiastical Attorney General, Jean Jouvenel. Alike King's advocates, in the King's service, they both represented him in cases wherein he was concerned. The King was an unprofitable client. For representing him in criminal trials Maître Jean Rabateau received four hundred livres a year. He was forbidden to appear in any but crown cases; and no one suspected him of receiving many bribes. If in addition he held the office of Councillor to the Duke of Orléans he gained little by it. Like most Parlement officials he was for the moment very poor. A stranger in Poitiers, he had no house there, but lodged in a mansion, which, because it belonged to a family named Rosier, was called the Hôtel de la Rose. It was a large dwelling. Witnesses whom it was necessary to keep securely and deal with honourably were entertained there. Jeanne was taken there although the Parlement had nothing to do with her cross-examination. Once again she was placed in charge of a man who served both the Duke of Orléans and the King of France.

Jean Rabateau's wife, in common with the wives of all lawyers, was a woman of good reputation. While she was at La Rose, Jeanne would stay long on her knees every day after dinner. At night she would rise from her bed to pray, and pass long hours in the little oratory of the mansion. It was in this house that the doctors conducted her examination. When their coming was announced she was seized with cruel anxiety. The Blessed Saint Catherine was careful to reassure her. She likewise had disputed with doctors and confounded them. True, those doctors were heathen, but they were learned and their minds were subtle; for in the life of the Saint it is written: "The Emperor summoned fifty doctors versed in the lore of the Egyptians and the liberal arts. And when she heard that she was to

dispute with the wise men, Catherine feared lest she should not worthily defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But an angel appeared unto her and said: 'I am the Archangel Saint Michael, and I am come to tell thee that thou shalt come forth from the strife victorious and worthy of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the hope and crown of those who strive for him.' And the Virgin disputed with the doctors."

The grave doctors and masters and the principal clerks of the Parlement of Poitiers, in companies of two and three, repaired to the house of Jean Rabateau, and each one of them in turn questioned Jeanne. The first to come were Jean Lombard, Guillaume le Maire, Guillaume Aimery, Pierre Turelure, and Jacques Meledon. Brother Jean Lombard asked: "Wherefore have you come? The King desires to know what led you to come to him."

Jeanne's reply greatly impressed these clerks: "As I kept my flocks a *Voice appeared to me*. The Voice said: 'God has great pity on the people of France. Jeanne, thou must go into France.' On hearing these words I began to weep. Then the Voice said unto me: 'Go to Vaucouleurs. There shalt thou find a captain, who will take thee safely into France, to the King. Fear not.' I did as I was bidden, and I came to the King without hindrance."

Then the word fell to Brother Guillaume Aimery: "According to what you have said, the Voice told you that God will deliver the people of France from their distress; but if God will deliver them he has no need of men-at-arms."

"In God's name," replied the Maid, "the men-at-arms will fight, and God will give the victory."

Maître Guillaume declared himself satisfied.

On the 22nd of March, Maître Pierre de Versailles and Maître Jean Érault went together to Jean Rabateau's lodging. The squire, Gobert Thibault, whom Jeanne had already seen at Chinon, came with them. He was a young man and very simple, one who believed without asking for a sign. As they came in Jeanne went to meet them, and, striking the squire on the shoulder, in a friendly manner, she said: "I wish I had many men as willing as you."

With men-at-arms she felt at her ease. But the doctors she could not tolerate, and she suffered torture when they came to argue with her. Although these theologians showed her great consideration, their eternal questions wearied her; their slowness and heaviness exasperated her. She bore them a grudge for not believing in her straightway, without proof, and for asking her for a sign, which she could not give them, since neither Saint Michael nor Saint Catherine nor Saint Margaret appeared during the examination. In retirement, in the oratory, and in the lonely fields the heavenly visitants came to her in crowds; angels and saints, descending from heaven, flocked around her. But when the doctors came, immediately the Jacob's ladder was drawn up. Besides, the clerks were

theologians, and she was a saint. Relations are always strained between the heads of the Church Militant and those devout women who communicate directly with the Church Triumphant. She realised that the revelations granted to her so abundantly inspired her most favourable judges with doubts, suspicion, and even mistrust. She dared not confide to them much of the mystery of her Voices, and when the Churchmen were not present she told Alençon, her fair Duke, that she knew more and could do more than she had ever told all those clerks. It was not to them she had been sent; it was not for them that she had come. She felt awkward in their presence, and their manners were the occasion of that irritation which is discernible in more than one of her replies. Sometimes when they questioned her she retreated to the end of her bench and sulked.

“We come to you from the King,” said Maître Pierre de Versailles.

She replied with a bad grace: “I am quite aware that you are come to question me again. I don’t know A from B.” But to the question: “Wherefore do you come?” she made answer eagerly: “I come from the King of Heaven to raise the siege of Orléans, and take the King to be crowned and anointed at Reims. Maître Jean Érault, have you ink and paper? Write what I shall tell you.” And she dictated a brief manifesto to the English captains: “You, Suffort, Clasdas, and La Poule, in the name of the King of Heaven I call upon you to return to England.”

Maître Jean Érault, who wrote at her dictation, was, like most of the clerks, favourably disposed towards her. Further, he had his own ideas. He recollected that Marie of Avignon, surnamed La Gasque, had uttered true and memorable prophecies to King Charles VI. Now La Gasque had told the King that the realm was to suffer many sorrows; and she had seen weapons in the sky. Her story of her vision had concluded with these words: “While I was afeard, believing myself called upon to take these weapons, a voice comforted me, saying: ‘They are not for thee, but for a Virgin, who shall come and with these weapons deliver the realm of France.’” Maître Jean Érault meditated on these marvellous revelations and came to believe that Jeanne was the Virgin announced by Marie of Avignon.

Maître Gérard Machet, the King’s Confessor, had found it written that a Maid should come to the help of the King of France. He remarked on it to Gobert Thibault, the Squire, who was no very great personage; and he certainly spoke of it to several others. Gérard Machet, Doctor of Theology, sometime Vice Chancellor of the University, from which he was now excluded, was regarded as one of the lights of the Church. He loved the court, although he would not admit it, and enjoyed the favour of the King, who had just rewarded his services by giving him money with which to purchase a mule. All doubts concerning the disposition of these doctors are removed by the discovery that the King’s

Confessor himself put into circulation those prophecies which had been distorted in favour of the Maid from the Bois-Chenu.

The damsel was interrogated concerning her Voices, which she called her Council, and her saints, whom she imagined in the semblance of those sculptured or painted figures peopling the churches. The doctors objected to her having cast off woman's clothing and had her hair cut round in the manner of a page. Now it is written: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy xxii, 5). The Council of Gangres, held in the reign of the Emperor Valens, had anathematised women who dressed as men and cut short their hair. Many saintly women, impelled by a strange inspiration of the Holy Ghost, had concealed their sex by masculine garb. At Saint-Jean-des-Bois, near Compiègne, was preserved the reliquary of Saint Euphrosyne of Alexandria, who lived for thirty-eight years in man's attire in the monastery of the Abbot Theodosius. For these reasons, and because of these precedents, the doctors argued: since Jeanne had put on this clothing not to offend another's modesty but to preserve her own, we will put no evil interpretation on an act performed with good intent, and we will forbear to condemn a deed justified by purity of motive.

Certain of her questioners inquired why she called Charles Dauphin instead of giving him his title of King. This title had been his by right since the 30th of October, 1422; for on that day, the ninth since the death of the King his father, at Mehun-sur-Yèvre, in the chapel royal, he had put off his black gown and assumed the purple robe, while the heralds, raising aloft the banner of France, cried: "Long live the King!"

She answered: "I will not call him King until he shall have been anointed and crowned at Reims. To that city I intend to take him."

Without this anointing there was no king of France for her. Of the miracles which had followed that anointing she had heard every year from the mouth of her priest as he recited the glorious deeds of the Blessed Saint Remi, the patron saint of her parish. This reply was such as to satisfy the interrogators because, both for things spiritual and temporal, it was important that the King should be anointed at Reims. And Messire Regnault de Chartres must have ardently desired it.

Contradicted by the clerks, she opposed the Church's doctrine by the inspiration of her own heart, and said to them: "There is more in the Book of Our Lord than in all yours."

This was a bold and biting reply, which would have been dangerous had the theologians been less favourably inclined to her. Otherwise they might have held

it to be trespassing on the rights of the Church, who, as the guardian of the Holy Books, is their jealous interpreter, and does not suffer the authority of Scripture to be set up against the decisions of Councils. What were those books, which without having read she judged to be contrary to those of Our Lord, wherein with mind and spirit she seemed to read plainly? They would seem to be the Sacred Canons and the Sacred Decretals. This child's utterance sapped the very foundations of the Church. Had the doctors of Poitiers been less zealously Armagnac they would henceforth have mistrusted Jeanne and suspected her of heresy. But they were loyal servants of the houses of Orléans and of France. Their cassocks were ragged and their larders empty; their only hope was in God, and they feared lest in rejecting this damsel they might be denying the Holy Ghost. Besides, everything went to prove that these words of Jeanne were uttered without guile and in all ignorance and simplicity. No doubt that is why the doctors were not shocked by them.

Brother Seguin of Seguin in his turn questioned the damsel. He was from Limousin, and his speech betrayed his origin. He spoke with a drawl and used expressions unknown in Lorraine and Champagne. Perhaps he had that dull, heavy air, which rendered the folk of his province somewhat ridiculous in the eyes of dwellers on the Loire, the Seine, and the Meuse. To the question: "What language do your Voices speak?" Jeanne replied: "A better one than yours."

Even saints may lose patience. If Brother Seguin did not know it before, he learnt it that day. And what business had he to doubt that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, who were on the side of the French, spoke French? Such a doubt Jeanne could not bear, and she gave her questioner to understand that when one comes from Limousin one does not inquire concerning the speech of heavenly ladies. Notwithstanding he pursued his interrogation: "Do you believe in God?" "Yes, more than you do," said the Maid, who, knowing nothing of the good Brother, was somewhat hasty in esteeming herself better grounded in the faith than he.

But she was vexed that there should be any question of her belief in God, who had sent her. Her reply, if favourably interpreted, would testify to the ardour of her faith. Did Brother Seguin so understand it? His contemporaries represented him as being of a somewhat bitter disposition. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that he was good-natured.

"But after all," he said, "it cannot be God's will that you should be believed unless some sign appear to make us believe in you. On your word alone we cannot counsel the King to run the risk of granting you men-at-arms."

“In God’s name,” she answered, “it was not to give a sign that I came to Poitiers. But take me to Orléans and I will show you the signs wherefore I am sent. Let me be given men, it matters not how many, and I will go to Orléans.”

And she repeated what she was continually saying: “The English shall all be driven out and destroyed. The siege of Orléans shall be raised and the city delivered from its enemies, after I shall have summoned it to surrender in the name of the King of Heaven. The Dauphin shall be anointed at Reims, the town of Paris shall return to its allegiance to the King, and the Duke of Orléans shall come back from England.”

Long did the doctors and masters, following the example of Brother Seguin of Seguin, urge her to show a sign of her mission. They thought that if God had chosen her to deliver the French nation he would not fail to make his choice manifest by a sign, as he had done for Gideon, the son of Joash. When Israel was sore pressed by the Midianites, and when God’s chosen people hid from their enemies in the caves of the mountains, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon under an oak, and said unto him: “Surely I will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” To which Gideon made answer: “If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.” And Gideon made ready a kid and kneaded unleavened cakes; the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot and brought the pot and the basket beneath the oak. Then the Angel of God said unto him: “Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. When Gideon perceived that he had seen an angel of the Lord, he cried out: “Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.” With three hundred men Gideon subdued the Midianites. This example the doctors had before their minds.

But for the Maid the sign of victory was victory itself. She said without ceasing: “The sign that I will show you shall be Orléans relieved and the siege raised.”

Such persistency made an impression on most of her interrogators. They determined to make of it, not a stone of stumbling, but rather an example of zeal and a subject of edification. Since she promised them a sign it behoved them in all humility to ask God to send it, and, filled with a like hope, joining with the King and all the people, to pray to the God, who delivered Israel, to grant them the banner of victory. Thus were overcome the arguments of Brother Seguin and

of those who, led away by the precepts of human wisdom, desired a sign before they believed.

After an examination which had lasted six weeks, the doctors declared themselves satisfied.

There was one point it was necessary to ascertain; they must know whether Jeanne was, as she said, a virgin. Matrons had indeed already examined her on her arrival at Chinon. Then there was a doubt as to whether she were man or maid; and it was even feared that she might be an illusion in woman's semblance, produced by the art of demons, which scholars considered by no means impossible. It was not long since the death of that canon who held that now and again knights are changed into bears and spirits travel a hundred leagues in one night, then suddenly become sows or wisps of straw. Suitable measures had therefore been taken. But they must be carried out exactly, wisely, and cautiously, for the matter was of great importance.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAID AT POITIERS (*continued*)

ABELIEF, common to learned and ignorant alike, ascribed special virtues to the state of virginity. Such ideas had been handed down from a remote antiquity; their origin was pre-Christian; they were an immemorial inheritance, one part of which came from the Gauls and Germans, the other from the Romans and Greeks. In the land of Gaul there still lingered a memory of the sacred beauty of the white priestesses of the forest; and sometimes in the Island of Sein, along the misty shores of the Ocean, there wandered the shades of those nine sisters at whose bidding, in days of yore, the tempest raged and was stilled.

According to these beliefs, which had dawned in the childhood of races, the gift of prophecy is bestowed on virgins alone. It is the heritage of a Cassandra or a Velleda. It was said that Sibyls had prophesied the coming of Jesus Christ. In the Church they were considered the first witnesses of Christ among the Gentiles, and they were venerated as the august sisters of the prophets of Israel. The *Dies Iræ* mentions one of them in the same breath with King David himself. By what pious frauds their fame for prophecy was established, we cannot tell any more than Jean Gerson or Gérard Machet. With the doctors of the fifteenth century we must look upon these virgins as speaking the word of truth to the nations, who venerated but did not understand them. Such was the ancient tradition of the Christian Church. The most ancient fathers of the Church, Justin, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, frequently made use of the Sibylline oracles; and the heathen were at a loss for a reply when Lactantius confronted them with these prophetesses of the nations. Trusting in the word of Varro, Saint Jerome firmly believed in their existence. Into *The City of God* Saint Augustine introduces the Erythrean Sibyl, who, he says, faithfully foretold the Life of the Saviour. As early as the thirteenth century, these virgins of old had their places in cathedrals by the side of patriarchs and prophets. But it was not until the fifteenth century that multitudes of them were represented; sculptured on church porches, carved on choir stalls, painted on chapel walls or glass windows. Each one has her distinctive attribute. The Persian holds the lantern and the Libyan the torch, which illuminated the darkness of the Gentiles. The Agrippine, the European, and Erythrean are armed with the sword; the Phrygian bears the Paschal cross; the Hellespontine presents a rose tree in flower; the others display the visible signs of the mystery they foretell: the Cumæan a manger; the

Delphian, the Samian, the Tiburtine, the Cimmerian a crown of thorns, a sceptre of reeds, scourges, a cross.

The very economy of the Christian religion — the ordering of its mysteries, wherein humanity is represented as ruined by a woman and saved by a virgin, and all flesh is involved in Eve's curse — led to the triumph of virginity and the exaltation of a condition which, in the words of a Father of the Church, is in the flesh, yet not of the flesh.

"It is because of virginity," says Saint Gregory of Nyssa, "that God vouchsafes to dwell with men. It is virginity which gives men wings to soar towards heaven." Celibacy raises the Apostle John above the Prince of the Apostles himself. At the funeral of the Virgin Mary, Peter gave John a palm branch, saying: "It becometh one who is celibate to bear the Virgin's palm."

Throughout western Christendom the Virgin Mary — the Virgin *par excellence* — had been the object of zealous devout worship ever since the twelfth century. The great cathedrals of northern France, dedicated to Our Lady, celebrated the feast of their patron saint on the day of the Assumption. On the sculptured pillar of the central porch was the Virgin, with her divine Child and the Virgin's lily. Sometimes Eve figured beneath, in order to represent at once sin and its redemption: the second Eve redeeming the first, the Virgin exalted the woman humbled. Marvellous scenes are portrayed on the tympanums of porches. The Virgin is kneeling; at her side is a flowering lily in a vase. The Angel, book in hand, greets her with an AVE, thus transposing the name EVA, *mutans Evæ nomen*. Or again, with her feet resting on the crescent moon, she rises to the highest heaven: *Exaltata est super choros angelorum*. Further, from Jesus Christ she receives the precious crown: *Posuit in capite ejus coronam de lapide pretioso*. In gems of painted glass, church windows portrayed the figures of Mary's virginity; the stone which Daniel saw dug from the mountain by no human hand, Gideon's fleece, Moses' burning bush, and Aaron's budding rod.

In an inexhaustible flow of images, expressed in hymns, sequences, and litanies, she was the Mystic Rose, the Ivory Tower, the Ark of the Covenant, the Gate of Heaven, the Morning Star. She was the Well of Living Water, the Fountain of the Garden, the Walled Orchard, the Bright and Shining Stone, the Flower of Virtue, the Palm of Sweetness, the Myrtle of Temperance, the Sweet Ointment.

In the Golden Legend, images rich and charming clothed the idea that grace and power resided in virginity. The hagiographers burst forth in loving praise of the brides of Jesus Christ; of those especially who put on the white robe of

virginity and the red roses of martyrdom. It was during the passion of virgins that miracles of the most abounding grace were worked. Angels bring down to Dorothea celestial roses, which she scatters over her executioners. Virgin martyrs exercise their power over beasts. The lions of the amphitheatre lick the feet of Saint Thecla. The wild beasts of the circus gather together, and with tails interlaced, prepare a throne for Saint Euphemia; in the pit, aspicks form a pleasing necklace for Saint Christina. It is not the will of the divine Spouse for whom they endure anguish that they should suffer in their modesty. When the executioner tears off Saint Agnes's garments, her hair grows thicker and clothes her in a miraculous garment. When Saint Barbara is to be taken naked through the streets, an angel brings her a white tunic. These Agneses and these Dorotheas, these Catherines and these Margarets, this legion of innocent conquerors prepared men's minds to believe in the miracle of a virgin stronger than armed men. Had not Saint Geneviève turned away Attila and his barbarian warriors from Paris?

The fable of the Maid and the Unicorn, so widely known in those days, is a lively expression of this belief in a special virtue residing in the state of virginity.

The unicorn was half goat and half horse, of immaculate whiteness; it bore a marvellous sword upon its forehead. Hunters, when they saw it pass in the thicket, had never been able to reach it, so rapid was its course. But if a virgin in the forest called the unicorn, the creature obeyed, came and laid its head on her lap, and allowed such feeble hands to take and bind it. If however a damsel corrupt and no longer a maid approached it, the unicorn slew her immediately.

It was even said that a virgin had the power to cure king's evil, by reciting, fasting and naked, certain magic words; but they were not words from the Gospel.

While mystics and visionaries were glorifying virginity, the Church, bent on governing the body as well as the soul, condemned opinions denying the lawfulness of marriage, which she had constituted a sacrament. Those who would anathematise all works of the flesh she held to be abominable and impious. A maid deserved praise for preserving her virginity, provided always that her motives were praiseworthy. Two hundred years before the reign of Charles VII, a young girl of Reims realised that a grave sin may be committed against the Church of God by refusing the solicitations of a clerk in a vineyard. Here is the damsel's story as related by the canon Gervais.

"On a day, Guillaume with the White Hands, Uncle of King Philippe of France, for his pleasure rode forth from his town. A clerk of his following,

Gervais by name, who was in the heat of youth, saw a maiden walking alone in a vineyard. He went to her, greeted her and asked: 'What are you doing in such great haste?' And with fitting words he courteously solicited her.

"Without even looking at him, calmly and gravely she replied: 'God forbid, youth, that I should ever be yours or any man's, for if I were to lose my virginity and my body its purity, I should inevitably fall into eternal damnation.'

"Such words caused the clerk to suspect that the maiden belonged to the impious sect of the Cathari, whom the Church was in those days pursuing relentlessly and punishing severely. One of the errors of these heretics was indeed to condemn all carnal intercourse. Impatient to resolve his doubts, Gervais straightway provoked the damsel to a discussion on the Church's teaching in this matter. Meanwhile, the Archbishop, Guillaume with the White Hands, turned his steed, and, followed by his monks, came to the vineyard where the clerk and the maiden were disputing together. When he learnt the cause of their disagreement he ordered the maiden to be seized and brought into the town. There he exhorted her, and, in charity, endeavoured to convert her to the Catholic Faith.

"She would not submit, however. 'I am not well enough grounded in doctrine to defend myself,' she said to him. 'But in the town I have a mistress, who, with good reasons, will easily refute all your arguments. She it is who lodges in that house.'

"The Archbishop Guillaume straightway sent to inquire after this woman; and, having questioned her, perceived that what the maiden had said concerning her was true. The very next day he convoked an assembly of clerks and nobles to judge the two women. Both of them were condemned to be burnt. The mistress contrived to escape, but promises and persuasions having failed to turn the maiden from the pernicious error of her ways, she was delivered up to the executioner. She died without shedding a tear, without uttering a complaint."

In the year 1416 there was a certain woman, a native of the Duchy of Bar, Catherine Sauve by name. She was then a solitary, living at Montpellier, on the road to Lattes. Having been publicly accused, she was examined by the Inquisitor's Vicar, Maître Raymond Cabasse, and found to be infected with the heresy of the Cathari. Among other errors she maintained that all carnal intercourse is sinful, even in wedlock. Wherefore she was delivered to the secular arm and burned at the stake on the 2nd of November in that year.

It was then commonly believed that such maidens as gave themselves to the devil were straightway stripped of their virginity; and that thus he obtained power over these unhappy creatures. Such ways accorded with what was known of his libidinous disposition. These pleasures were tempered to his woeful state.

And thereby he gained a further advantage, — that of unarming his victim, — for virginity is as a coat of mail against which the darts of hell are but blades of straw. Hence it was all but certain that a soul vowed to the devil could not reside within a maid. Wherefore, there was one infallible way of proving that the peasant girl from Vaucouleurs was not given up to magic or to sorcery, and had made no pact with the Evil One. Recourse was had to it.

Jeanne was seen, visited, privately inspected, and thoroughly examined by wise women, *mulieres doctas* ; by knowing virgins, *peritas virgines* ; by widows and wives, *viduas et conjugates* . First among these matrons were: the Queen of Sicily and of Jerusalem, Duchess of Anjou; Dame Jeanne de Preuilly, wife of the Sire de Gaucourt, Governor of Orléans, who was about fifty-seven years of age; and Dame Jeanne de Mortemer, wife of Messire Robert le Maçon, Lord of Trèves, a man full of years. The last was only eighteen, and one would have expected her to be better acquainted with the *Calendrier des Vieillards* than with the formulary of matrons. It is strange with what assurance the good wives of those days undertook the solution of a problem which had appeared difficult to King Solomon in all his wisdom.

Jeanne of Domremy was found to be a maid pure and intact.

While she herself was being subjected to the interrogatories of doctors and the examination of matrons, certain clerics who had been despatched to her native province were there prosecuting an inquiry concerning her birth, her life, and her morals. The ecclesiastics had been chosen from those mendicant Friars who could pass freely along the highways and byways of the enemy's country without exciting the suspicion of English and Burgundians. And, indeed, they were in no way molested. From Domremy and from Vaucouleurs they brought back sure testimony to the humility, the devotion, the honesty, and the simplicity of Jeanne. But, most important, they had found no difficulty in gleaning certain pious tales, such as commonly adorned the childhood of saints. To these monks we must attribute an important share in the development of those legends of Jeanne's early years, which were so soon to become popular. From this time, apparently, dates the story that when Jeanne was in her seventh year, wolves spared her sheep, and birds of the woods came at her call and ate crumbs from her lap. Such saintly flowers suggest a Franciscan origin; among them are the wolf of Gubbio and the birds preached to by Saint Francis. These mendicants may also have furnished examples of the Maid's prophetic gift. They may have spread abroad the story that, when she was at Vaucouleurs, on the day of the Battle of the Herrings, she knew of the great hurt inflicted on the French at Rouvray. The success of such little stories was immediate and complete.

After this examination and inquiry, the doctors came to the following

conclusions: “The King, beholding his own need and that of his realm, and considering the constant prayers to God of his poor subjects and all others who love peace and justice, ought not to repulse or reject the Maid who says that God has sent her to bring him succour, albeit these promises may be nothing but the works of man; neither ought he lightly or hastily to believe in her. But, according to Holy Scripture he must try her in two ways: to wit, with human wisdom, by inquiring of her life, her morals, and her motive, as saith Saint Paul the Apostle: *Probate spiritus, si ex Deo sunt* ; and by earnest prayer to ask for a sign of her work and her divine hope, by which to tell whether it is by God’s will that she is come. Thus God commanded Ahaz that he should ask for a sign when God promised him victory, saying unto him: *Pete signum a Domino* ; and Gideon did likewise when he asked for a sign and many others, *etc.* Since the coming of the said Maid, the King hath observed her in the two manners aforesaid: to wit, by trial of human wisdom and by prayer, asking God for a sign. As for the first, which is trial by human wisdom, he has tested the said Maid in her life, her origin, her morals, her intention; and has kept her near him for the space of six weeks to show her to all people, whether clerks, ecclesiastics, monks, men-at-arms, wives, widows or others. In public and in private she hath conversed with persons of all conditions. But there hath been found no evil in her, nothing but good, humility, virginity, devoutness, honesty, simplicity. Of her birth, as well as of her life, many marvellous things are related.”

“As for the second ordeal, the King asked her for a sign, to which she replied that before Orléans she would give it, but neither earlier nor elsewhere, for thus it is ordained of God.

“Now, seeing that the King hath made trial of the aforesaid Maid as far as it was in his power to do, that he findeth no evil in her, and that her reply is that she will give a divine sign before Orléans; seeing her persistency, and the consistency of her words, and her urgent request that she be sent to Orléans to show there that the aid she brings is divine, the King should not hinder her from going to Orléans with men-at-arms, but should send her there in due state trusting in God. For to fear her or reject her when there is no appearance of evil in her would be to rebel against the Holy Ghost, and to render oneself unworthy of divine succour, as Gamaliel said of the Apostles in the Council of the Jews.”

In short, the doctors’ conclusion was that as yet nothing divine appeared in the Maid’s promises, but that she had been examined and been found humble, a virgin, devout, honest, simple, and wholly good; and that, since she had promised to give a sign from God before Orléans, she must be taken there, for fear that in her the gift of the Holy Ghost should be rejected.

Of these conclusions a great number of copies were made and sent to the

towns of the realm as well as to the princes of Christendom. The Emperor Sigismond, for example, received a copy.

If the doctors of Poitiers had intended this six weeks inquiry, culminating in a favourable and solemn conclusion, to bring about the glorification of the Maid and the heartening of the French people by the preparation and announcement of the marvel they had before them, then they succeeded perfectly.

That prolonged investigation, that minute examination reassured those doubting minds among the French, who suspected a woman dressed as a man of being a devil; they flattered men's imaginations with the hope of a miracle; they appealed to all hearts to judge favourably of the damsel who came forth radiant from the fire of ordeal and appeared as if glorified with a celestial halo. Her vanquishing the doctors in argument made her seem like another Saint Catherine. But that she should have met difficult questions with wise answers was not enough for a multitude eager for marvels. It was imagined that she had been subjected to a strange probation from which she had come forth by nothing short of a miracle. Thus a few weeks after the inquiry, the following wonderful story was related in Brittany and in Flanders: when at Poitiers she was preparing to receive the communion, the priest had one wafer that was consecrated and another that was not. He wanted to give her the unconsecrated wafer. She took it in her hand and told the priest that it was not the body of Christ her Redeemer, but that the body was in the wafer which the priest had covered with the corporal. After that there could be no doubt that Jeanne was a great saint.

At the termination of the inquiries, a favourable opportunity for introducing the Maid into Orléans arrived in the beginning of April. For her arming and her accoutring she was sent first to Tours.

Sixty-six years later, an inhabitant of Poitiers, almost a hundred years old, told a young fellow-citizen that he had seen the Maid set out for Orléans on horseback, in white armour. He pointed to the very stone from which she had mounted her horse in the corner of the Rue Saint-Etienne. Now, when Jeanne was at Poitiers, she was not in armour. But the people of Poitou had named the stone "the Maid's mounting stone." With what a glad eager step the Saint must have leapt from that stone on to the horse which was to carry her away from those furred cats to the afflicted and oppressed whom she was longing to succour.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAID AT TOURS

AT Tours the Maid lodged in the house of a dame commonly called Lapau. She was Eléonore de Paul, a woman of Anjou, who had been lady-in-waiting to Queen Marie of Anjou. Married to Jean du Puy, Lord of La Roche-Saint-Quentin, Councillor of the Queen of Sicily, she had remained in the service of the Queen of France.

The town of Tours belonged to the Queen of Sicily, who grew richer and richer as her son-in-law grew poorer and poorer. She aided him with money and with lands. In 1424, the duchy of Touraine with all its dependencies, except the castellany of Chinon, had come into her possession. The burgesses and commonalty of Tours earnestly desired peace. Meanwhile they made every effort to escape from pillage at the hands of men-at-arms. Neither King Charles nor Queen Yolande was able to defend them, so they must needs defend themselves. When the town watchmen announced the approach of one of those marauding chiefs who were ravaging Touraine and Anjou, the citizens shut their gates and saw to it that the culverins were in their places. Then there was a parley: the captain from the brink of the moat maintained that he was in the King's service and on his way to fight the English; he asked for a night's rest in the town for himself and his men. From the heights of the ramparts he was politely requested to pass on; and, in case he should be tempted to force an entry, a sum of money was offered him. Thus the citizens fleeced themselves for fear of being robbed. In like manner, only a few days before Jeanne's coming, they had given the Scot, Kennedy, who was ravaging the district, two hundred livres to go on. When they had got rid of their defenders, their next care was to fortify themselves against the English. On the 29th of February of this same year, 1429, these citizens lent one hundred crowns to Captain La Hire, who was then doing his best for Orléans. And even on the approach of the English they consented to receive forty archers belonging to the company of the Sire de Bueil, only on condition that Bueil should lodge in the castle with twenty men, and that the others should be quartered in the inns, where they were to have nothing without paying for it. Thus it was or was not; and the Sire de Bueil went off to defend Orléans.

In Jean du Puy's house, Jeanne was visited by an Augustinian monk, one Jean Pasquerel. He was returning from the town of Puy-en-Velay where he had met Isabelle Romée and certain of those who had conducted Jeanne to the King.

In this town, in the sanctuary of Anis, was preserved an image of the Mother of God, brought from Egypt by Saint Louis. It was of great antiquity and highly venerated, for the prophet Jeremiah had with his own hands carved it out of sycamore wood in the semblance of the virgin yet to be born, whom he had seen in a vision. In holy week, pilgrims flocked from all parts of France and of Europe, — nobles, clerks, men-at-arms, citizens and peasants; and many, for penance or through poverty, came on foot, staff in hand, begging their bread from door to door. Merchants of all kinds betook themselves thither; and it was at once the most popular of pilgrimages and one of the richest fairs in the world. All round the town the stream of travellers overflowed from the road on to vineyards, meadows, and gardens. On the day of the Festival, in the year 1407, two hundred persons perished, crushed to death in the throng.

In certain years the feast of the conception of Our Lord fell on the same day as that of his death; and thus there coincided the promise and the fulfilment of the promise of the greatest of mysteries. Then Holy Friday became still holier. It was called Great Friday, and on that day such as entered the sanctuary of Anis received plenary indulgence. On that day the crowd of pilgrims was greater than usual. Now, in the year 1429, Good Friday fell on the 25th of March, the day of the Annunciation.

There is, therefore, nothing extraordinary in Brother Pasquerel's meeting Jeanne's relatives at Puy during Holy Week. That a peasant woman should travel two hundred and fifty miles on foot, through a country infested with soldiers and other robbers, in a season of snows and mist, to obtain an indulgence, was an every-day matter if we remember the surname which had for long been hers. This was not La Romée's first pilgrimage. As we do not know which members of the Maid's escort the good Brother met, we are at liberty to conjecture that Bertrand de Poulengy was among them. We know little about him, but his speech would suggest that he was a devout person.

Jeanne's comrades, having made friends with Pasquerel, said to him: "You must go with us to Jeanne. We will not leave you until you have taken us to her." They travelled together. Brother Pasquerel went with them to Chinon, which Jeanne had left; then he went on to Tours, where his convent was.

The Augustinians, who claimed to have received their rule from St. Francis himself, wore the grey habit of the Franciscans. It was from their order that in the previous year the King had chosen a chaplain for his young son, the Dauphin Louis. Brother Pasquerel held the office of reader (*lector*) in his monastery. He was in priest's orders. Quite young doubtless and of a wandering disposition,

like many mendicant monks of those days, he had a taste for the miraculous, and was excessively credulous.

Jeanne's comrades said to her: "Jeanne, we have brought you this good father. You will like him well when you know him."

She replied: "The good father pleases me. I have already heard tell of him, and even to-morrow will I confess to him." The next day the good father heard her in confession, and chanted mass before her. He became her chaplain, and never left her.

In the fifteenth century Tours was one of the chief manufacturing towns of the kingdom. The inhabitants excelled in all kinds of trades. They wove tissues of silk, of gold, and of silver. They manufactured coats of mail; and, while not competing with the armourers of Milan, of Nuremberg, and of Augsburg, they were skilled in the forging and hammering of steel. Here it was that, by the King's command, the master armourer made Jeanne a suit of mail. The suit he furnished was of wrought iron; and, according to the custom of that time, consisted of a helmet, a cuirass in four parts, with epaulets, armlets, elbow-pieces, fore-armlets, gauntlets, cuisses, knee-pieces, greaves and shoes. The maker had doubtless no thought of accentuating the feminine figure. But the armour of that period, full in the bust, slight in the waist, with broad skirts beneath the corselet, in its slender grace and curious slimness, always has the air of a woman's armour, and seems made for Queen Penthesilea or for the Roman Camilla. The Maid's armour was white and unadorned, if one may judge from its modest price of one hundred *livres tournois*. The two suits of mail, made at the same time by the same armourer for Jean de Metz and his comrade, were together worth one hundred and twenty-five *livres tournois*. Possibly one of the skilful and renowned drapers of Tours took the Maid's measure for a *houppelande* or loose coat in silk or cloth of gold or silver, such as captains wore over the cuirass. To look well, the coat, which was open in front, must be cut in scallops that would float round the horseman as he rode. Jeanne loved fine clothes but still more fine horses.

The King invited her to choose a horse from his stables. If we may believe a certain Latin poet, she selected an animal of illustrious origin, but very old. It was a war horse, which Pierre de Beauvau, Governor of Maine and Anjou, had given to one of the King's two brothers; who had both been dead, the one thirteen years, the other twelve. This steed, or another, was brought to Lapau's house and the Duke of Alençon went to see it. The horse must likewise be accoutred, it must be furnished with a chanfrin to protect its head and one of those wooden saddles with broad pommels which seemed to encase the rider. A shield was out of the question. Since chain-armour, which was not proof against

blows, had been succeeded by that plate-armour, on which nothing could make an impression, they had ceased to be used save in pageants. As for the sword, — the noblest part of her accoutrement and the bright symbol of strength joined to loyalty, — Jeanne refused to take that from the royal armourer; she was resolved to receive it from the hand of Saint Catherine herself.

We know that on her coming into France she had stopped at Fierbois and heard three masses in Saint Catherine's chapel. Therein the Virgin of Alexandria had many swords, without counting the one Charles Martel was said to have given her, and which it would not have been easy to find again. A good Touranian in Touraine, Saint Catherine was an Armagnac ever on the side of those who fought for the Dauphin Charles. When captains and soldiers of fortune stood in danger of death, or were prisoners in the hands of their enemies, she was the saint they most willingly invoked; for they knew she wished them well. She did not save them all, but she aided many. They came to render her thanks; and as a sign of gratitude they offered her their armour, so that her chapel looked like an armoury. The walls bristled with swords; and, as gifts had been flowing in for half a century, ever since the days of King Charles V, the sacristans were probably in the habit of taking down the old weapons to make room for the new, hoarding the old steel in some store-house until an opportunity arrived for selling it. Saint Catherine could not refuse a sword to the damsel, whom she loved so dearly that every day and every hour she came down from Paradise to see and talk with her on earth, — a maiden who in return had shown her devotion by travelling to Fierbois to do the Saint reverence. For we must not omit to state that Saint Catherine in company with Saint Margaret had never ceased to appear to Jeanne both at Chinon and at Tours. She was present at all those secret assemblies, which the Maid called sometimes her Council but oftener her Voices, doubtless because they appealed more to her ears and her mind than to her eyes, despite the burst of light which sometimes dazzled her, and notwithstanding the crowns she was able to discern on the heads of the saints. The Voices indicated one sword among the multitude of those in the Chapel at Fierbois. Messire Richard Kyrthrizian and Brother Gille Lecourt, both of them priests, were then custodians of the chapel. Such is the title they assumed when they signed the accounts of miracles worked by their saint. Jeanne in a letter caused them to be asked for the sword, which had been revealed to her. In the letter she said that it would be found underground, not very deep down, and behind the altar. At least these were all the directions she was able to give afterwards, and then she could not quite remember whether it was behind the altar or in front. Was she able to give the custodians of the chapel

any signs by which to recognise the sword? She never explained this point, and her letter is lost.

It is certain, however, that she believed the sword had been shown to her in a vision and in no other manner. An armourer of Touraine, whom she did not know (afterwards she maintained that she had never seen him), was appointed to carry the letter to Fierbois. The custodians of the chapel gave him a sword marked with five crosses, or with five little swords on the blade, not far from the hilt. In what part of the chapel had they found it? No one knows. A contemporary says it was in a coffer with some old iron. If it had been buried and hidden it was not very long before, because the rust could easily be removed by rubbing. The priests were careful to offer it to the Maid with great ceremony before giving it to the armourer who had come for it. They enclosed it in a sheath of red velvet, embroidered with the royal flowers de luce. When Jeanne received it she recognised it to be the one revealed to her in a celestial vision and promised her by her Voices, and she failed not to let the little company of monks and soldiers who surrounded her know that it was so. This they took to be a good omen and a sign of victory. To protect Saint Catherine's sword the priests of the town gave her a second sheath; this one was of black cloth. Jeanne had a third made of very tough leather.

The story of the sword spread far and wide and was elaborated by many a curious fable. It was said to be the sword of the great Charles Martel, long buried and forgotten. Many believed it had belonged to Alexander and the knights of those ancient days. Every one thought well of it and esteemed it likely to bring good fortune. When the English and the Burgundians heard tell of the matter, there soon occurred to them the idea that the Maid had discovered what was hidden beneath the earth by taking counsel of demons; or they suspected her of having herself craftily hidden the sword in the place she had indicated in order to deceive princes, clergy, and people. They wondered anxiously whether those five crosses were not signs of the devil. Thus there began to arise conflicting illusions, according to which Jeanne appeared either saint or sorceress.

The King had given her no command. Acting according to the counsel of the doctors, he did not hinder her from going to Orléans with men-at-arms. He even had her taken there in state in order that she might give the promised sign. He granted her men to conduct her, not for her to conduct. How could she have conducted them since she did not know the way? Meanwhile she had a standard made according to the command of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, who had said: "Take the standard in the name of the King of Heaven!" It was of a coarse white cloth, or buckram, edged with silk fringe. At the bidding of her Voices, Jeanne caused a painter of the town to represent on it what she called "the

World,” that is, Our Lord seated upon his throne, blessing with his right hand, and in his left holding the globe of the world. On his right and on his left were angels, both painted as they were in churches, and presenting Our Lord with flowers de luce. Above or on one side were the names Jhesus — Maria, and the background was strewn with the royal lilies in gold. She also had a coat-of-arms painted: on an azure shield a silver dove, holding in its beak a scroll on which was written: “*De par le Roi du Ciel .*” This coat-of-arms she had painted on the reverse of the standard bearing on the front the picture of Our Lord. A servant of the Duke of Alençon, Perceval de Cagny, says that she ordered to be made another and a smaller standard, a banner, on which was the picture of Our Lady receiving the angel’s salutation. The Tours painter Jeanne employed came from Scotland and was called Hamish Power. He provided the material and executed the paintings of the two escutcheons, of the small one as well as of the large. For this he received from the keeper of the war treasury twenty-five *livres tournois* . Hamish Power had a daughter, Héliote by name, who was about to be married and to whom Jeanne afterwards showed kindness.

The standard was the signal for rallying. For long only kings, emperors, and leaders in war had had the right of raising it. The feudal suzerain had it carried before him; vassals ranged themselves beneath their lord’s banners. But in 1429 banners had ceased to be used save in corporations, guilds, and parishes, borne only before the armies of peace. In war they were no longer needed. The meanest captain, the poorest knight had his own standard. When fifty French men-at-arms went forth from Orléans against a handful of English marauders, a crowd of banners like a swarm of butterflies waved over the fields. “To raise one’s standard” came to be a figure of speech for “to be puffed up.” So indeed it was permissible for a freebooter to raise his standard when he commanded scarce a score of men-at-arms and half-naked bowmen. Even if Jeanne, as she may have done, held her standard to be a sign of sovereign command, and if, having received it from the King of Heaven, she thought to raise it above all others, was there a soul in the realm to say her nay? What had become of all those feudal banners which for eighty years had been in the vanguard of defeat; sown over the fields of Crécy; collected beneath bushes and hedges by Welsh and Cornish swordsmen; lost in the vineyards of Maupertuis, trampled underfoot by English archers on the soft earth into which sank the corpses of Azincourt; gathered in handfuls under the walls of Verneuil by Bedford’s marauders? It was because all these banners had miserably fallen, it was because at Rouvray a prince of the blood royal had shamefully trailed his nobles’ banners in flight, that the peasant now raised her banner.

CHAPTER X

THE SIEGE OF ORLÉANS FROM THE 7TH OF MARCH TO THE 28TH OF APRIL, 1429

SINCE the terrible and ridiculous discomfiture of the King's men in the Battle of the Herrings, the citizens of Orléans had lost all faith in their defenders. Their minds agitated, suspicious and credulous were possessed by phantoms of fear and wrath. Suddenly and without reason they believe themselves betrayed. One day it is announced that a hole big enough for a man to pass through has been made in the town wall just where it skirts the outbuildings of the Aumône. A crowd of people hasten to the spot; they see the hole and a piece of the wall which had been restored, with two loop-holes; they fail to understand, and think themselves sold and betrayed into the enemy's hands; they rave and break forth into howls, and seek the priest in charge of the hospital to tear him to pieces. A few days after, on Holy Thursday, a similar rumour is spread abroad: traitors are about to deliver up the town into the hands of the English. The folk seize their weapons; soldiers, burgesses, villeins mount guard on the outworks, on the walls and in the streets. On the morrow, the day after that on which the panic had originated, fear still possesses them.

In the beginning of March the besiegers saw approaching the Norman vassals, summoned by the Regent. But they were only six hundred and twenty-nine lances all told, and they were only bound to serve for twenty-six days. Under the leadership of Scales, Pole, and Talbot, the English continued the investment works as best they could. On the 10th of March, two and a half miles east of the city, they occupied without opposition the steep slope of Saint-Loup and began to erect a bastion there, which should command the upper river and the two roads from Gien and Pithiviers, at the point where they meet near the Burgundian gate. On the 20th of March they completed the bastion named London, on the road to Mans. Between the 9th and 15th of April two new bastions were erected towards the west, Rouen nine hundred feet east of London, Paris nine hundred feet from Rouen. About the 20th they fortified Saint-Jean-le-Blanc across the Loire and established a watch to guard the crossing of the river. This was but little in comparison with what remained to be done, and they were short of men; for they had less than three thousand round the town. Wherefore they fell upon the peasants. Now that the season for tending the vines was drawing near, the country folk went forth into the fields thinking only of the

land; but the English lay in wait for them, and when they had taken them prisoners, set them to work.

In the opinion of those most skilled in the arts of war, these bastions were worthless. They were furnished with no stabling for horses. They could not be built near enough to render assistance to each other; the besieger was in danger of being himself besieged in them. In short, from these vexatious methods of warfare the English reaped nothing but disappointment and disgrace. The Sire de Bueil, one of the defenders, perceived this when he was reconnoitring. In fact it was so easy to pass through the enemy's lines that merchants were willing to run the risk of taking cattle to the besieged. There entered into the town, on the 7th of March, six horses loaded with herrings; on the 15th, six horses with powder; on the 29th, cattle and victuals; on the 2nd of April, nine fat oxen and horses; on the 5th, one hundred and one pigs and six fat oxen; on the 9th, seventeen pigs, horses, sucking-pigs, and corn; on the 13th, coins with which to pay the garrison; on the 16th, cattle and victuals; on the 23rd, powder and victuals. And more than once the besieged had carried off, in the very faces of the English, victuals and ammunition destined for the besiegers and including casks of wine, game, horses, bows, forage, and even twenty-six head of large cattle.

The siege was costing the English dear, — forty thousand *livres tournois* a month. They were short of money; they were obliged to resort to the most irritating expedients. By a decree of the 3rd of March King Henry had recently ordered all his officers in Normandy to lend him one quarter of their pay. In their huts of wood and earth, the men-at-arms, who had endured much from the cold, now began to suffer hunger.

The wasted fields of La Beauce, of l'Île-de-France, and of Normandy could furnish them with no great store of sheep or oxen. Their food was bad, their drink worse. The vintage of 1427 had been bad, that of the following year was poor and weak — more like sour grapes than wine. Now an old English author has written of the soldiers of his country:

“They want their porridge and their fat bull-beeves:
Either they must be dieted like mules
And have their provender tied to their mouths
Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.”

A sudden humiliation still further weakened the English. Captain Poton de Saintrailles and the two magistrates, Guyon du Fossé and Jean de Saint-Avy, who had gone on an embassy to the Duke of Burgundy, returned to Orléans on

the 17th of April. The Duke had granted their request and consented to take the town under his protection. But the Regent, to whom the offer had been made, would not have it thus.

He replied that he would be very sorry if after he had beaten the bush another should go off with the nestlings. Therefore the offer was rejected. Nevertheless the embassy had been by no means useless, and it was something to have raised a new cause of quarrel between the Duke and the Regent. The ambassadors returned accompanied by a Burgundian herald who blew his trumpet in the English camp, and, in the name of his master, commanded all combatants who owed allegiance to the Duke to raise the siege. Some hundreds of archers and men-at-arms, Burgundians, men of Picardy and of Champagne, departed forthwith.

On the next day, at four o'clock in the morning, the citizens emboldened and deeming the opportunity a good one, attacked the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. They slew the watch and entered the camp, where they found piles of money, robes of martin, and a goodly store of weapons. Absorbed in pillage, they paid no heed to defending themselves and were surprised by the enemy, who in great force had hastened to the place. They fled pursued by the English who slew many. On that day the town resounded with the lamentations of women weeping for a father, a husband, a brother, kinsmen.

Within those walls, in a space where there was room for not more than fifteen thousand inhabitants, forty thousand were huddled together, one vast multitude agonised by all manner of suffering; depressed by domestic sorrow; racked with anxiety; maddened by constant danger and perpetual panic. Although the wars of those days were not so sanguinary as they became later, the sallies of the inhabitants of Orléans were the occasion of constant and considerable loss of life. Since the middle of March the English bullets had fallen more into the centre of the town; and they were not always harmless. On the eve of Palm Sunday one stone, fired from a mortar, killed or wounded five persons; another, seven. Many of the inhabitants, like the provost, Alain Du Bey, died of fatigue or of the infected air.

In the Christendom of those days all men were taught to believe that earthquakes, wars, famine, pestilence are punishments for wrong-doing. Charles, the Fair Duke of Orléans, good Christian that he was, held that great sorrows had come upon France as chastisement for her sins, to wit: swelling pride, gluttony, sloth, covetousness, lust, and neglect of justice, which were rife in the realm; and in a ballad he discoursed of the evil and its remedy. The people of Orléans firmly believed that this war was sent to them of God to punish sinners, who had worn out his patience. They were aware both of the cause of their sorrows and of the

means of remedying them. Such was the teaching of the good friars preachers; and, as Duke Charles put it in his ballad, the remedy was to live well, to amend one's life, to have masses said and sung for the souls of those who had suffered death in the service of the realm, to renounce the sinful life, and to ask forgiveness of Our Lady and the saints. This remedy had been adopted by the people of Orléans. They had had masses said in the Church of Sainte-Croix for the souls of nobles, captains, and men-at-arms killed in their service, and especially for those who had died a piteous death in the Battle of the Herrings. They had offered candles to Our Lady and to the patron saints of the town, and had carried the shrine of Saint-Aignan round the walls.

Every time they felt themselves in great danger, they brought it forth from the Church of Sainte-Croix, carried it in grand procession round the town and over the ramparts, then, having brought it back to the cathedral, they listened to a sermon preached in the porch by a good monk chosen by the magistrates. They said prayers in public and resolved to amend their lives. Wherefore they believed that in Paradise Saint Euverte and Saint-Aignan, touched by their piety, must be interceding for them with Our Lord; and they thought they could hear the voices of the two pontiffs. Saint Euverte was saying, "All-powerful Father, I pray and entreat thee to save the city of Orléans. It is mine. I was its bishop. I am its patron saint. Deliver it not up to its enemies."

Then afterwards spoke Saint-Aignan: "Give peace to the people of Orléans. Father, thou who by the mouth of a child didst appoint me their shepherd, grant that they fall not into the hands of the enemy."

The inhabitants of Orléans expected that the Lord would not at once answer the prayers of the two confessors. Knowing the sternness of his judgments they feared lest he would reply: "For their sins are the French people justly chastised. They suffer because of their disobedience to Holy Church. From the least to the greatest in the realm each vies with the other in evil-doing. The husbandmen, citizens, lawyers and priests are hard and avaricious; the princes, dukes and noble lords are proud, vain, cursers, swearers, and traitors. The corruptness of their lives infects the air. It is just that they suffer chastisement."

That the Lord should speak thus must be expected, because he was angry and because the people of Orléans had greatly sinned. But now, behold, Our Lady, she who loves the King of the Lilies, prays for him and for the Duke of Orléans to the Son, whose pleasure it is to do her will in all things: "My Son, with all my heart I entreat thee to drive the English from the land of France; they have no right to it. If they take Orléans, then they will take the rest at their pleasure. Suffer it not, O my Son, I beseech thee." And Our Lord, at the prayer of his holy Mother, forgives the French and consents to save them.

Thus in those days, according to their ideas of the spiritual world, did men represent even the councils of Paradise. There were folk not a few, and those not unlearned, who believed that as the result of these councils Our Lord had sent his Archangel to the shepherdess. And it might even be possible that he would save the kingdom by the hand of a woman. Is it not in the weak things of the world that he maketh his power manifest?

Did he not allow the child David to overthrow the giant Goliath, and did he not deliver into the hands of Judith the head of Holophernes? In Orléans itself was it not by the mouth of a babe that he had caused to be named that shepherd who was to deliver the besieged town from Attila?

The Lord of Villars and Messire Jamet du Tillay, having returned from Chinon, reported that they had with their own eyes seen the Maid; and they told of the marvels of her coming. They related how she had travelled far, fording rivers, passing by many towns and villages held by the English, as well as through those French lands wherein were rife pillage and all manner of evils. Then they went on to tell how, when she was taken to the King, she had spoken fair words to him as she curtsied, saying: "Gentle Dauphin, God sends me to help and succour you. Give me soldiers, for by grace divine and by force of arms, I will raise the siege of Orléans and then lead you to your anointing at Reims, according as God hath commanded me, for it is his will that the English return to their country and leave in peace your kingdom which shall remain unto you. Or, if they do not quit the land, then will God cause them to perish." Further, they told how, interrogated by certain prelates, knights, squires, and doctors in law, her bearing had been found honest and her words wise. They extolled her piety, her candour, that simplicity which testified that God dwelt with her, and that skill in managing a horse and wielding weapons which caused all men to marvel.

At the end of March, tidings came, that, taken to Poitiers, she had there been examined by doctors and famous masters, and had replied to them with an assurance equal to that of Saint Catherine before the doctors at Alexandria. Because her words were good and her promises sure, it was said that the King, trusting in her, had caused her to be armed in order that she might go to Orléans, where she would soon appear, riding on a white horse, wearing at her side the sword of Saint Catherine and holding in her hand the standard she had received from the King of Heaven.

To the ecclesiastics what was told of Jeanne seemed marvellous but not incredible, since parallel instances were to be found in sacred history, which was all the history they knew. To those who were lettered among them their erudition

furnished fewer reasons for denial than for doubt or belief. Those who were simple frankly wondered at these things.

Certain of the captains, and certain even of the people, treated them with derision. But by so doing they ran the risk of ill usage. The inhabitants of the city believed in the Maid as firmly as in Our Lord. From her they expected help and deliverance. They summoned her in a kind of mystic ecstasy and religious frenzy. The fever of the siege had become the fever of the Maid.

Nevertheless, the use made of her by the King's men proved that, following the counsel of the theologians, they were determined to adopt only such methods as were prompted by human prudence. She was to enter the town with a convoy of victuals, then being prepared at Blois by order of the King assisted by the Queen of Sicily. In all the loyal provinces a new effort was being made for the relief and deliverance of the brave city. Gien, Bourges, Blois, Châteaudun, Tours sent men and victuals; Angers, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Albi, Moulins, Montpellier, Clermont sulphur, saltpetre, steel, and arms. And if the citizens of Toulouse gave nothing it was because their city, as the notables consulted by the *capitouls* ingenuously declared, had nothing to give — *non habebat de quibus* .

The King's councillors, notably my Lord Regnault de Chartres, Chancellor of the Realm, were forming a new army. What they had failed to accomplish, by means of the men of Auvergne, they would now attempt with troops from Anjou and Le Mans. The Queen of Sicily, Duchess of Touraine and Anjou, willingly lent her aid. Were Orléans taken she would be in danger of losing lands by which she set great store. Therefore she spared neither men, money, nor victuals. After the middle of April, a citizen of Angers, one Jean Langlois, brought letters informing the magistrates of the imminent arrival of the corn she had contributed. The town gave Jean Langlois a present, and the magistrates entertained him at dinner at the Écu Saint-Georges. This corn was a part of that large convoy which the Maid was to accompany.

Towards the end of the month, by order of my Lord the Bastard, the captains of the French garrisons of La Beauce and Gâtinais, betook themselves to the town to reinforce the army of Blois, the arrival of which was announced. On the 28th, there entered my Lord Florent d'Illiers, Governor of Châteaudun, with four hundred fighting men.

What was to become of Orléans? The siege, badly conducted, was causing the English the most grievous disappointments. Further, their captains perceived they would never succeed in taking the town by means of those bastions, between which anything, either men, victuals, or ammunition, could pass, and with an army miserably quartered in mud hovels, ravaged by disease, and reduced by desertions to three thousand, or at the most to three thousand two

hundred men. They had lost nearly all their horses. Far from being able to continue the attack it was hard for them to maintain the defensive and to hold out in those miserable wooden towers, which, as Le Jouvencel said, were more profitable to the besieged than to the besiegers.

Their only hope, and that an uncertain and distant one, lay in the reinforcements, which the Regent was gathering with great difficulty. Meanwhile, time seemed to drag in the besieged town. The warriors who defended it were brave, but they had come to the end of their resources and knew not what more to do. The citizens were good at keeping guard, but they would not face fire. They did not suspect the miserable condition to which the besiegers had been reduced. Hardship, anxiety, and an infected atmosphere depressed their spirits. Already they seemed to see *Les Coués* taking the town by storm, killing, pillaging, and ravaging. At every moment they believed themselves betrayed. They were not calm and self-possessed enough to recognise the enormous advantages of their situation. The town's means of communication, whereby it could be indefinitely reinforced and revictualled, were still open. Besides, a relieving army, well in advance of that of the English, was on the point of arriving. It was bringing a goodly drove of cattle, as well as men and ammunition enough to capture the English fortresses in a few days.

With this army the King was sending the Maid who had been promised.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAID AT BLOIS — THE LETTER TO THE ENGLISH — THE DEPARTURE FOR ORLÉANS

WITH an escort of soldiers of fortune the Maid reached Blois at the same time as my Lord Regnault de Chartres, Chancellor of France, and the Sire de Gaucourt, Governor of Orléans. She was in the domain of the Prince, whom it was her great desire to deliver: the people of Blois owed allegiance to Duke Charles, a prisoner in the hands of the English. Merchants were bringing cows, rams, ewes, herds of swine, grain, powder and arms into the town. The Admiral, De Culant, and the Lord Ambroise de Loré had come from Orléans to superintend the preparations. The Queen of Sicily herself had gone to Blois. Notwithstanding that at this time the King consulted her but seldom, he now sent to her the Duke of Alençon, commissioned to concert with her measures for the relief of the city of Orléans. There came also the Sire de Rais, of the house of Laval and of the line of the Dukes of Brittany, a noble scarce twenty-four, generous and magnificent, bringing in his train, with a goodly company from Maine and Anjou, organs for his chapel, choristers, and little singing-boys from the choir school. The Marshal de Boussac, the Captains La Hire and Poton came from Orléans. An army of seven thousand men assembled beneath the walls of the town. All that was now waited for was the money necessary to pay the cost of the victuals and the hire of the soldiers. Captains and men-at-arms did not give their services on credit. As for the merchants, if they risked the loss of their victuals and their life, it was only for ready money. No cash, no cattle — and the wagons stayed where they were.

In the month of March, Jeanne had dictated to one of the doctors at Poitiers a brief manifesto intended for the English. She expanded it into a letter, which she showed to certain of her companions and afterwards sent by a Herald from Blois to the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. This letter was addressed to King Henry, to the Regent and to the three chiefs, who, since Salisbury's death, had been conducting the siege, Scales, Suffolk, and Talbot. The following is the text of it:

† Jhesus Maria †

King of England, and you, Duke of Bedford, who call yourself Regent of the realm of France, — you, Guillaume de la Poule, Earl of Sulford; Jehan, Sire de Talebot, and you Thomas, Sire d'Escales, who call yourselves Lieutenants of the said Duke of Bedford, do right in the sight of the King of Heaven. Surrender to the Maid sent hither by God, the King of Heaven, the keys of all the good towns in France that you have taken and ravaged. She is come here in God's name to claim the Blood Royal. She is ready to make peace if so be you will do her satisfaction by giving and paying back to France what you have taken from her. And you, archers, comrades-in-arms, gentle and otherwise, who are before the town of Orléans, go ye hence into your own land, in God's name. And if you will not, then hear the wondrous works of the Maid who will shortly come upon you to your very great hurt. And you, King of England, if you do not thus, I am a Chieftain of war, — and in whatsoever place in France I meet with your men, I will force them to depart willy nilly; and if they will not, then I will have them all slain. I am sent hither by God, the King of Heaven, body for body, to drive them all out of the whole of France. And if they obey, then will I show them mercy. And think not in your heart that you will hold the kingdom of France [from] God, the King of Heaven, Son of the Blessed Mary, for it is King Charles, the true heir, who shall so hold it. God, the King of Heaven, so wills it, and he hath revealed it unto King Charles by the Maid. With a goodly company the King shall enter Paris. If ye will not believe these wondrous works wrought by God and the Maid, then, in whatsoever place ye shall be, there shall we fight. And if ye do me not right, there shall be so great a noise as hath not been in France for a thousand years. And know ye that the King of Heaven will send such great power to the Maid, to her and to her good soldiers, that ye will not be able to overcome her in any battle; and in the end the God of Heaven will reveal who has the better right. You, Duke of Bedford, the Maid prays and beseeches you that you bring not destruction upon yourself. If you do her right, you may come in her company where the French will do the fairest deed ever done for Christendom. And if ye will have peace in the city of Orléans, then make ye answer; and, if not, then remember it will be to your great hurt and that shortly. Written this Tuesday of Holy Week.

Such is the letter. It was written in a new spirit; for it proclaimed the kingship of Jesus Christ and declared a holy war. It is hard to tell whether it proceeded from Jeanne's own inspiration or was dictated to her by the council of ecclesiastics. On first thoughts one might be inclined to attribute to the priests the idea of a summons, which is a literal application of the precepts of Deuteronomy:

“When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

“And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

“And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

“And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

“But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself.” (Deuteronomy xx, 10-14.)

But at least it is certain that on this occasion the Maid is expressing her own sentiments. Afterwards we shall find her saying: “I asked for peace, and when I was refused I was ready to fight.” But, as she dictated the letter and was unable to read it, we may ask whether the clerks who held the pen did not add to it.

Two or three passages suggest the ecclesiastical touch. Afterwards the Maid did not remember having dictated “body for body,” which is quite unimportant. But she declared that she had not said: “I am chief in war” and that she had dictated: “Surrender to the King” and not “Surrender to the Maid.” Possibly her memory failed her; it was not always faithful. Nevertheless she appeared very certain of what she said, and twice she repeated that “chief in war” and “surrender to the Maid” were not in the letter. It may have been that the monks who were with her used these expressions. To these wandering priests a dispute over fiefs mattered little, and it was not their first concern to bring King Charles into the possession of his inheritance. Doubtless they desired the good of the kingdom of France; but certainly they desired much more the good of Christendom; and we shall see that, if those mendicant monks, Brother Pasquerel and later Friar Richard, follow the Maid, it will be in the hope of employing her to the Church’s advantage. Thus it would be but natural that they should declare her at the outset commander in war, and even invest her with a spiritual power superior to the temporal power of the King, and implied in the phrase: “Surrender to the Maid ... the keys of the good towns.”

This very letter indicates one of those hopes which among others she inspired. They expected that after she had fulfilled her mission in France, she would take the cross and go forth to conquer Jerusalem, bringing all the armies of Christian Europe in her train. At this very time a disciple of Bernardino of Siena, Friar Richard, a Franciscan lately come from Syria, and who was shortly to meet the Maid, was preaching at Paris, announcing the approach of the end of the world,

and exhorting the faithful to fight against Antichrist. It must be remembered that the Turks, who had conquered the Christian knights at Nicopolis and at Semendria, were threatening Constantinople and spreading terror throughout Europe. Popes, emperors, kings felt the necessity of making one great effort against them.

In England it was said that between Saint-Denys and Saint-George there had been born to King Henry V and Madame Catherine of France a boy, half English and half French, who would go to Egypt and pluck the Grand Turk's beard. On his death-bed the conqueror Henry V was listening to the priests repeating the penitential psalms. When he heard the verse: *Benigne fac Domine in bona voluntate tua ut ædificentur muri Jerusalem*, he murmured with his dying breath: "I have always intended to go to Syria and deliver the holy city out of the hand of the infidel." These were his last words. Wise men counselled Christian princes to unite against the Crescent. In France, the Archbishop of Embrun, who had sat in the Dauphin's Council, cursed the insatiable cruelty of the English nation and those wars among Christians which were an occasion of rejoicing to the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

To summon the English and French to take the cross together, was to proclaim that after ninety-one years of violence and crime the cycle of secular warfare had come to an end. It was to bid Christendom return to the days when Philippe de Valois and Edward Plantagenet promised the Pope to join together against the infidel.

But when the Maid invited the English to unite with the French in a holy and warlike enterprise, it is not difficult to imagine with what kind of a reception the *Godons* would greet such an angelic summons. And at the time of the siege of Orléans, the French on their side had good reasons for not taking the cross with the *Coués*.

The learned did not greatly appreciate the style of this letter. The Bastard of Orléans thought the words very simple; and a few years later a good French jurist pronounced it coarse, heavy, and badly arranged. We cannot aspire to judge better than the jurist and the Bastard, both men of erudition. Nevertheless, we wonder whether it were not that her manner of expression seemed bad to them, merely because it differed from the style of legal documents. True it is that the letter from Blois indicates the poverty of the French prose of that time when not enriched by an Alain Chartier; but it contains neither term nor expression which is not to be met with in the good authors of the day. The words may not be correctly ordered, but the style is none the less vivacious. There is nothing to

suggest that the writer came from the banks of the Meuse; no trace is there of the speech of Lorraine or Champagne. It is clerkly French.

While Isabelle de Vouthon had gone on a pilgrimage to Puy, her two youngest children, Jean and Pierre, had set out for France to join their sister, with the intention of making their fortunes through her or the King. Likewise, Brother Nicolas of Vouthon, Jeanne's cousin german, a monk in priest's orders in the Abbey of Cheminon, joined the young saint. To have thus attracted her kinsfolk before giving any sign of her power, Jeanne must have had witnesses on the banks of the Meuse; and certain venerable ecclesiastical personages, as well as noble lords of Lorraine, must have answered for her reputation in France. Such guarantors of the truth of her mission were doubtless those who had instructed her in and accredited her by prophecy. Perhaps Brother Nicolas of Vouthon was himself of the number.

In the army she was regarded as a holy maiden. Her company consisted of a chaplain, Brother Jean Pasquerel; two pages, Louis de Coutes and Raymond; her two brethren, Pierre and Jean; two heralds, Ambleville and Guyenne; two squires, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy.

Jean de Metz kept the purse which was filled by the crown. She had also certain valets in her service. A squire, one Jean d'Aulon, whom the King gave her for a steward, joined her at Blois. He was the poorest squire of the realm. He was entirely dependent on the Sire de La Trémouille, who lent him money; but he was well known for his honour and his wisdom. Jeanne attributed the defeats of the French to their riding forth accompanied by bad women and to their taking God's holy name in vain. And this opinion, far from being held by her alone, prevailed among persons of learning and religion; according to whom the disaster of Nicopolis was occasioned by the presence of prostitutes in the army, and by the cruelty and dissoluteness of the knights.

On several occasions, between 1420 and 1425, the Dauphin had forbidden cursing and denying and blaspheming the name of God, of the Virgin Mary and of the saints under penalty of a fine and of corporal punishment in certain cases. The decrees embodying this prohibition asserted that wars, pestilence, and famine were caused by blasphemy and that the blasphemers were in part responsible for the sufferings of the realm. Wherefore the Maid went among the men-at-arms, exhorting them to turn away the women who followed the army, and to cease taking the Lord's name in vain. She besought them to confess their sins and receive divine grace into their souls, maintaining that their God would aid them and give them the victory if their souls were right.

Jeanne took her standard to the Church of Saint-Sauveur and gave it to the priests to bless. The little company formed at Tours was joined at Blois by ecclesiastics and monks, who, on the approach of the English, had fled in crowds from the neighbouring abbeys, and were now suffering from cold and hunger. It was generally thus. Monks were for ever flocking to the armies. Many churches and most abbeys had been reduced to ruin. Those of the mendicants, built outside the towns, had all perished, — plundered and burnt by the English or pulled down by the townsfolk; for, when threatened with siege, the inhabitants always dealt thus with the outlying portions of their town. The homeless monks found no welcome in the cities, which were sparing of their goods; they must needs take the field with the soldiers and follow the army. From such a course their rule suffered and piety gained nothing. Among mercenaries, sumpters and camp followers, these hungry nomad monks lived an edifying life. Those who accompanied the Maid were doubtless neither worse nor better than the rest, and as they were very hungry their first care was to eat.

The men-at-arms were much too accustomed to seeing monks and nuns mingling side by side in the army to feel any surprise at the sight of the holy damsel in the midst of a band so disreputable. It is true that the damsel was said to work wonders. Many believed in them; others mocked and said aloud: “Behold the brave champion and captain who comes to deliver the realm of France.”

The Maid had a banner made for the monks to assemble beneath and summon the men-at-arms to prayer. This banner was white, and on it were represented Jesus on the Cross between Our Lady and Saint John. The Duke of Alençon went back to the King to make known to him the needs of the company at Blois. The King sent the necessary funds; and at length they were ready to set out. At the start there were two roads open, one leading to Orléans along the right bank of the Loire, the other along the left bank. At the end of twelve or fourteen miles the road along the right bank came out on the edge of the Plain of La Beauce, occupied by the English who had garrisons at Marchenoir, Beaugency, Meung, Montpipeau, Saint-Sigismond, and Janville. In that direction lay the risk of meeting the army, which was coming to the aid of the English round Orléans. After the experience of the Battle of the Herrings such a meeting was to be feared. If the road along the left bank were taken, the march would lie through the district of La Sologne, which still belonged to King Charles; and if the river were left well on one side, the army would be out of sight of the English garrisons of Beaugency and of Meung. True, it would involve crossing the Loire, but by going up the river five miles east of the besieged city a crossing could conveniently be effected between Orléans and Jargeau. On due deliberation it

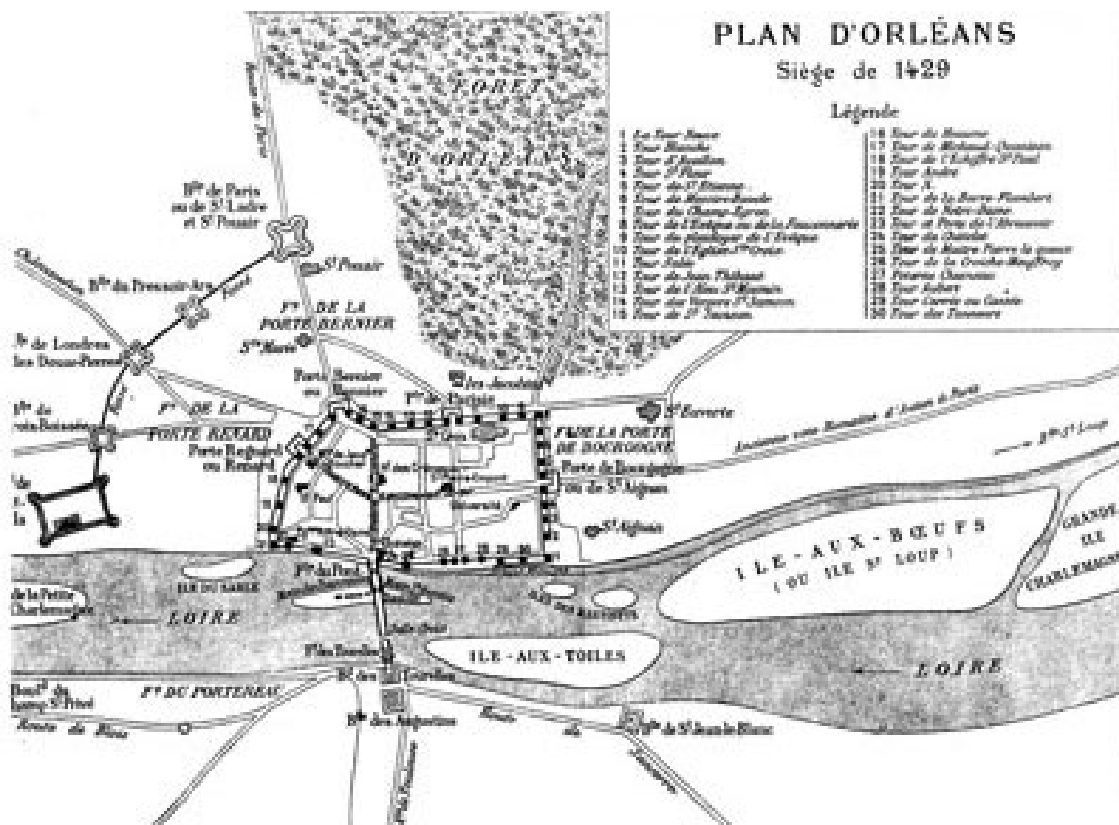
was decided that they should go by the left bank through La Sologne. It was decided to take in the victuals in two separate lots for fear the unloading near the enemy's bastions should take too long. On Wednesday, the 27th of April, they started. The priests in procession, with a banner at their head, led the march, singing the *Veni creator Spiritus* . The Maid rode with them in white armour, bearing her standard. The men-at-arms and the archers followed, escorting six hundred wagons of victuals and ammunition and four hundred head of cattle. The long line of lances, wagons, and herds defiled over the Blois bridge into the vast plain beyond. The first day the army covered twenty miles of rutty road. Then at curfew, when the setting sun, reflected in the Loire, made the river look like a sheet of copper between lines of dark reeds, it halted, and the priests sang *Gabriel angelus* .

That night they encamped in the fields. Jeanne, who had not been willing to take off her armour, awoke aching in every limb. She heard mass and received communion from her chaplain, and exhorted the men-at-arms always to confess their sins. Then the army resumed its march towards Orléans.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAID AT ORLÉANS

ON the evening of Thursday, the 28th of April, Jeanne was able to discern from the heights of Olivet the belfries of the town, the towers of Saint-Paul and Saint-Pierre-Empont, whence the watchmen announced her approach. The army descended the slopes towards the Loire and stopped at the Bouchet wharf, while the carts and the cattle continued their way along the bank as far as l'Île-aux-Bourbons, opposite Chécy, two and a half miles further up the river. There the unloading was to take place. At a signal from the watchmen my Lord the Bastard, accompanied by Thibaut de Termes and certain other captains, left the town by the Burgundian Gate, took a boat at Saint-Jean-de-Braye, and came down to hold counsel with the Lords de Rais and de Loré, who commanded the convoy.



PLAN D'ORLÉANS
Siège de 1429

Enlarge

Meanwhile the Maid had only just perceived that she was on the Sologne bank, and that she had been deceived concerning the line of march. Sorrow and wrath possessed her. She had been misled, that was certain. But had it been done on purpose? Had they really intended to deceive her? It is said that she had expressed a wish to go through La Beauce and not through La Sologne, and that she had received the answer: "Jeanne, be reassured; we will take you through La Beauce." Is it possible? Why should the barons have thus trifled with the holy damsel, whom the King had confided to their care, and who already inspired most of them with respect? Certain of them, it is true, believing her not to be in earnest, would willingly have turned her to ridicule; but if one of them had played her the trick of representing La Beauce as La Sologne, how was it there was no one to undeceive her? How could Brother Pasquerel, her chaplain, her steward, and the honest squire d'Aulon, have become the accomplices of so clumsy a jest? It is all very mysterious, and, when one comes to think of it, what is most mysterious is that Jeanne should have expressly asked to go to Orléans through La Beauce. Since she was so ignorant of the way that when crossing the Blois bridge she never suspected that she was going into La Sologne, there is not much likelihood of her realising so exactly the lie of Orléans as to choose between entering it from the south or the west. A damsel knowing naught beyond the name of the gate through which she is to enter the city, and who is yet persuaded by malicious captains to take one road rather than another, sounds too much like a Mother Goose's tale.

Jeanne knew no more of Orléans than she did of Babylon. We may therefore conjecture that there was a misunderstanding. She had spoken neither of Sologne nor of Beauce. Her Voices had told her that the English would not budge. They had not shown her a picture of the town, they had not given her either maps or plans: soldiers did not use them. Doubtless Jeanne had said to the captains and priests what she was soon to repeat to the Bastard: "I must go to Talbot and the English." And the priests and soldiers had replied quite frankly: "Jeanne, we are going to Talbot and the English." They had thought they were speaking the truth, since Talbot, who was conducting the siege, would be before them, so to speak, from whatever side they approached the town. But apparently they had not thoroughly understood what the Maid said, and the Maid had not understood what they had replied. For now she was angry and sad at finding herself separated from the town by the sands and waters of the river. What was there to vex her in this? Those who were with her then did not discover; and perhaps her reasons were misunderstood because they were spiritual and mystic. She

certainly could not have judged that a military mistake had been made by the bringing of troops and victuals through La Sologne. As she did not know the roads, it was impossible for her to tell which was the best. She was ignorant alike of the enemy's position, of the outworks of the besiegers, and of the defences of the besieged. She had just learnt on what bank of the river the town was situated, yet she must have thought she had good ground for complaint; for she approached the Lord Bastard and inquired sharply: "Are you the Bastard of Orléans?" "I am he. I rejoice at your coming." "Was it through your counsel that I came hither on this side of the river, and that I did not go straight to where Talbot and the English are?" "It was I and those wiser than I who gave this counsel, believing we acted for the best and for the greatest safety." But Jeanne retorted: "In God's name! Messire's counsel is better and wiser than yours. You thought to deceive me, but you deceive yourselves. For I bring you surer aid than ever came yet to knight or city; it is the aid of the King of Heaven and comes from God himself, who not merely for my sake but at the prayer of Saint Louis and Saint Charlemagne has had pity upon the town of Orléans, and will not suffer the enemy to hold at once both the body and the city of the Duke."

One may conclude that what really vexed her was that she had not been taken straight to Talbot and the English. She had just heard that Talbot with his camp was on the right bank. And when she spoke of Talbot and the English she meant only those English who were with Talbot. For, as she came down into the Loire valley, near the ford of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc, she must have seen the bastion of Les Augustins and Les Tourelles at the end of the bridge; and she must have known that there were also English on the left bank. But still, it is not clear why she should have desired to appear first before Talbot and his English, and why she was now so annoyed at being separated from him by the Loire. Did she think that the entrenched camp, Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils, commanded by Scales, Suffolk, and Talbot would be attacked immediately? Such an idea would never of itself have occurred to her, since she did not know the place, and no soldier would ever have put such madness into her head as an attack on an entrenched camp by a convoy of cattle and wagons. Neither, as has so often been asserted, can she have thought of forcing a passage between the bastion Saint-Pouair and the outskirts of the wood, since of the bastions and of the forest she knew as little as of the rest. If such had been her intention she would have announced it plainly to the Bastard; for she knew how to make her meaning clear, and even educated persons considered that she spoke well. Then what was her idea? It is not impossible to discover it if one remembers what must have been in the saint's mind at that time, or if one merely recollects by what words and deeds Jeanne had announced and prepared her mission. She had said to the doctors of

Poitiers: "The siege of Orléans shall be raised and the town delivered from the enemy after I have summoned it to surrender in God's name." In the name of the King of Heaven she had called upon Scales, Suffolk, and Talbot to raise the siege. She had written that she was ready to make peace, and had bidden them return to England. Now she asked Talbot, Suffolk, and Scales for an answer. Since the English had not sent back her herald she herself came to their leaders as the herald of Messire. She came to require them to make peace, and if they would not make peace she was ready to fight. It was not until they had refused that she could be certain of conquering, not for any human reason, but because her Council had so promised her. Perhaps even she may have hoped that by appearing to the English captains, her standard in hand, accompanied by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret and Saint Michael the Archangel, she would persuade them to leave France. She may have believed that Talbot, falling on his knees, would obey not her, but Him who sent her; that thus she would accomplish that for which she came, without shedding one drop of that French blood which was so dear to her; neither would the English whom she pitied lose their bodies or their souls. In any case God must be obeyed and charity shown: it was only at such a price that victory could be gained. A victory so spiritual, a conquest so angelic, she had come to win; but now it was snatched from her by the false wisdom of the leaders of her party. They were hindering her from fulfilling her mission, — perhaps from giving the promised sign, — and they were involving her with themselves in enterprises less certain of success and less noble in spirit. Hence her sorrow and her wrath.

Even after the discomfiture of her arrival, in order that she might please God, she did not consider herself freed from the obligation of offering peace to her enemies. And since she could not go straight to Talbot's camp she wanted to appear before the fort of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc.

There was no one left behind the palisades. But if she had gone and found any of the enemy there she would first have offered them peace. Of this her subsequent behaviour within the city walls is positive proof. Her mission was not to contribute to the defence of Orléans plans of campaign or stratagems of war; her share in the work of deliverance was higher and nobler. To suffering men, weak, unhappy, and selfish, she brought the invincible forces of love and faith, the virtue of sacrifice.

My Lord the Bastard who regarded Jeanne's mission as purely religious, and who would have been greatly astonished had any one told him that he ought to consult this peasant on military matters, appeared as if he did not understand the reproaches she addressed to him. And he went away to see that operations were carried out according to the plans he had made.

Everything had been carefully concerted and prepared, but a slight obstacle occurred. The barges that the people of Orléans were to send for the victuals were not yet unmoored. They were sailing vessels, and, as the wind was blowing from the east, they could not set out. No one knew how long they would be delayed, and time was precious. Jeanne said confidently to those who were growing anxious: "Wait a little, for in God's name everything shall enter the town."

She was right. The wind changed: the sails were unfurled, and the barges were borne up the river by a favourable wind, so strong that one boat was able to tow two or three others. Without hindrance they passed the Saint-Loup bastion. My Lord the Bastard sailed in one of these boats with Nicole de Giresme, Grand Prior of France of the order of Rhodes. And the flotilla came to the port of Chécý, where it remained at anchor all night. It was decided that the relieving army should that night encamp at the port of Bouchet and guard the convoy by watching down the river, while one detachment was stationed near the Islands of Chécý to watch up the river in the direction of Jargeau. In company with certain captains, and with a body of men-at-arms and archers, the Maid followed the bank as far as l'Île-aux-Bourdons.

The lords who had brought the convoy decided that they would set out immediately after the unloading. Having accomplished the first part of its task, the army would return to Blois to fetch the remaining victuals and ammunition, for everything had not been brought at once. Hearing that the soldiers, with whom she had come, were going away, Jeanne wished to go with them; and, after having so urgently asked to be taken to Orléans, now that she was before the gates of the city, her one idea was to go back. Thus is the soul of the mystic blown hither and thither by the breath of the Spirit. Now as always Jeanne was guided by impulses purely spiritual. She would not be parted from these soldiers because she believed they had made their peace with God, and she feared that she might not find others as contrite. For her, victory or defeat depended absolutely on whether the combatants were in a state of grace or of sin. To lead them to confession was her only art of war; no other science did she know, whether for fighting behind ramparts or in the open field.

"As for entering the town," she said, "it would hurt me to leave my men, and I ought not to do it. They have all confessed, and in their company I should not fear the uttermost power of the English."

In reality, as one may well imagine, whether or no they had confessed, whether they were near or far from her, these mercenaries committed all the sins compatible with the simplicity of their minds. But the innocent damsel did not see them. Sensitive to things invisible, her eyes were closed to things material.

She was confirmed in her resolution to return to Blois by the captains who had brought her and who wanted to take her back, alleging the King's command. They wished to keep her because she brought good luck. My Lord the Bastard, however, saw serious obstacles and even dangers in the way of her return. In the state in which he had left the people of Orléans, if their Maid were not straightway brought before them they would rise in fury and despair, with cries, threats, rioting, and violence; everything was to be feared, even massacres. He entreated the captains, in the King's interest, to agree to Jeanne's entering Orléans; and without great difficulty, he induced them to return to Blois without her. But Jeanne did not give in so quickly. He besought her to decide to cross the Loire. She refused and with such insistence that he must have realised how difficult it is to influence a saint. It was necessary for one of the lords who had brought her, the Sire de Rais or the Sire de Loré, to join his entreaties to those of the Bastard, and to say to her: "Assuredly you must go, for we promise to return to you shortly."

At last, when she heard that Brother Pasquerel would go with them to Blois, accompanied by the priests and bearing her standard, believing that her men would have a good spiritual director, she consented to stay. She crossed the Loire with her brothers, her little company, the Bastard, the Marshal de Boussac, the Captain La Hire, and reached Chécy, which was then quite a town, with two churches, an infirmary, and a lepers' hospital. She was received by a rich burgess, one Guy de Cailly, in whose manor of Reuilly she passed the night.

On the morning of the 29th the barges, which had been anchored at Chécy, crossed the Loire, and those who were with the convoy loaded them with victuals, ammunition, and cattle. The river was high. The barges were able to drift down the navigable channel near the left bank. The birches and osiers of l'Île-aux-Bœufs hid them from the English in the Saint-Loup bastion. Besides, at that moment, the enemy was occupied elsewhere. The town garrison was skirmishing with them in order to distract their attention. The fighting was somewhat hard. There were slain and wounded; prisoners were taken on both sides; and the English lost a banner. Beneath the deserted watch of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc the barges passed unprotected. Between l'Île-aux-Bœufs and the Islet of Les Martinets they turned starboard, to go down again, following the right bank, under l'Île-aux-Toiles, as far as La Tour Neuve, the base of which was washed by the Loire, at the south-eastern corner of the town. Then they took shelter in the moat near the Burgundian Gate.

The whole day the manor of Reuilly was besieged by a procession of citizens, who could not forbear coming at the risk of their lives to see the promised Maid. It was six o'clock in the evening before she left Chécy. The captains wanted her

to enter the town at nightfall for fear of disorders and lest the crush around her should be too great. Doubtless they passed along the broad valleys leading from Semoy towards the south, on the borders of the parishes of Saint-Marc and Saint-Jean-de-Braye. On the way she said to those who rode with her: "Fear nothing. No harm shall happen to you." And indeed the only danger was for pedestrians. Horsemen ran little risk of being pursued by the English, who were short of horses in their bastions.

On that Friday, the 29th of April, in the darkness, she entered Orléans, by the Burgundian Gate. She was in full armour and rode a white horse. A white horse was the steed of heralds and archangels. The Bastard had placed her on his right. Before her was borne her standard, on which figured two angels, each holding a flower de luce, and her pennon, painted with the picture of the Annunciation. Then came the Marshal de Boussac, Guy de Cailly, Pierre and Jean d'Arc, Jean de Metz, and Bertrand de Poulengy, the Sire d'Aulon, and those lords, captains, men-of-war, and citizens who had come to meet her at Chécy. Bearing torches and rejoicing as heartily as if they had seen God himself descending among them, the townfolk of Orléans pressed around her. They had suffered great privations, they had feared that help would never come; but now they were heartened and felt as if the siege had been raised already by the divine virtue, which they had been told resided in this Maid. They looked at her with love and veneration; elbowing and pushing each other, men, women, and children rushed forward to touch her and her white horse, as folk touch the relics of saints. In the crush a torch set her pennon on fire. The Maid, beholding it, spurred on her horse and galloped to the flame, which she extinguished with a skill apparently miraculous; for everything in her was marvellous. Men-at-arms and citizens, enraptured, accompanied her in crowds to the Church of Sainte-Croix, whither she went first to give thanks, then to the house of Jacques Boucher, where she was to lodge.

Jacques or Jacquet Boucher, as he was called, had been the Duke of Orléans' treasurer for several years. He was a very rich man and had married the daughter of one of the most influential burgesses of the city. Having stayed in the town throughout the siege, he contributed to the defence by gifts of wheat, oats, and wine, and by advancing funds for the purchase of ammunition and weapons. As the care of the ramparts fell to the burgesses, it was Jacques' duty to keep in repair and ready for defence the Renard Gate, where he dwelt, which was the most exposed to the English attack. His mansion, one of the finest and largest in the town, once inhabited by Regnart or Renard, the family which had given its name to the gate, was in the Rue des Talmeliers, quite near the fortifications.

The captains held their councils of war there, when they did not meet at the house of Chancellor Guillaume Cousinot in the Rue de la Rose. Jacques Boucher's dwelling was doubtless well furnished with silver plate and storied tapestry. It would appear that in one of the rooms there was a picture representing three women and bearing this inscription: *Justice, Peace, Union* .

Into this house the Maid was received with her two brothers, the two comrades who had brought her to the King, and their valets. She had her armour taken off. Jacques Boucher's wife and daughter passed the night with her. Jeanne shared the child's bed. She was nine years old and was called Charlotte after Duke Charles, who was her father's lord. It was the custom in those days for the host to share his bed with his man guest and the hostess with her woman guest. This was the rule of courtesy; kings observed it as well as burgesses. Children were taught how to behave towards a sleeping companion, to keep to their own part of the bed, not to fidget, and to sleep with their mouths shut.

Thus the Duke's treasurer took the Maid into his house and entertained her at the town's expense. Jeanne's horses were stabled by a burgess named Jean Pillas.

As for the D'Arc brothers, they did not stay with their sister, but lodged in the house of Thévenin Villedart. The town paid all their expenses; for example it furnished them with the shoes and gaiters they needed and gave them a few gold crowns. Three of the Maid's comrades, who were very destitute and came to see her at Orléans, received food.

On the next day, the 30th of April, the town bands of Orléans were early afoot. From morn till eve everything in the town was topsy-turvy; the rebellion, which had been repressed so long, now broke forth. As early as February the citizens had begun to mistrust and hate the knights; now at last they shook off their yoke and broke it. Henceforth they would recognise no King's lieutenant, no governor, no lords, no generals; there was but one power and one defence: the Maid. The Maid was the people's captain. This damsel, this shepherdess, this nun did the knights the greatest injury they ever experienced: she reduced them to nothing. On the morning of the 30th they must have been convinced that the popular revolution had taken place. The town bands were waiting for the Maid to put herself at their head, and with her to march immediately against the *Godons* . The captains endeavoured to make them understand that they must wait for the army from Blois and the company of Marshal de Boussac, who that night had set out to meet the army. The citizens in arms would listen to nothing, and with loud cries clamoured for the Maid. She did not appear. My Lord the Bastard, who was honey-tongued, had advised her to keep away. This was the last advantage the leaders gained over her. And now as before, when she appeared to give way to

them, she was merely doing as she liked. As for the citizens, with the Maid or without her, they were determined to fight. The Bastard could not hinder them. They sallied forth, accompanied by the Gascons of Captain La Hire and the men of Messire Florent d'Illiers. They bravely attacked the bastion Saint-Pouair, which the English called Paris, and which was about eight hundred yards from the walls. They overcame the outposts and approached so close to the bastion that they were already clamouring for faggots and straw to be brought from the town to set fire to the palisades. But at the cry "Saint George!" the English gathered themselves together, and after a sore and sanguinary fight repulsed the attack of the citizens and free-lances.

The Maid had known nothing of it. Sent from God, on her white horse, a messenger armed yet peaceful, she held it neither just nor pious to fight the English before they had refused her offers of peace. On that day as before her one wish was to go in true saintly wise straight to Talbot. She asked for tidings of her letter and learnt that the English captains had paid no heed to it, and had detained her herald, Guyenne. This is what had happened:

That letter, which the Bastard deemed couched in vulgar phrase, produced a marvellous impression on the English. It filled them with fear and rage. They kept the herald who had brought it; and, although use and custom insisted on the person of such officers being respected, alleging that a sorceress's messenger must be a heretic, they put him in chains, and after some sort of a trial condemned him to be burnt as the accomplice of the seductress.

They even put up the stake to which he was to be bound. And yet, before executing the sentence, they judged it well to consult the University of Paris, as in like manner the Bishop of Beauvais was to consult it eighteen months later. Their evil disposition arose from fear. These unfortunates, who were treated as devils, were afraid of devils. They suspected the subtle French of being necromancers and sorcerers. They said that by repeating magic lines the Armagnacs had compassed the death of the great King, Henry V. Fearing lest their enemies should make use of sorcery and enchantment against them, in order to protect themselves from all evil influences, they wore bands of parchment inscribed with the formulæ of conjuration and called *periapts*. The most efficacious of these amulets was the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. At this time the stars were unfavourable to them, and astrologers were reading their approaching ruin in the sky. Their late King, Henry V, when he was studying at Oxford, had learnt there the rules of divination by the stars. For his own special use he kept in his coffer two astrolabes, one of silver and one of gold. When his queen, Catherine of France, was about to be confined, he himself cast the horoscope of the expected child. And further, as there was a prophecy in

England which said that Windsor would lose what Monmouth had gained, he determined that the Queen should not be confined at Windsor. But destiny cannot be thwarted. The royal child was born at Windsor. His father was in France when he heard the tidings. He held them to be of ill omen, and summoned Jean Halboud of Troyes, minister general of the Trinitarians or Mathurins, "excellent in astrology," who, having drawn up the scheme of nativity, could only confirm the King in his doleful presentiments. And now the time had come. Windsor reigned; all would be lost. Merlin had predicted that they would be driven out of France and by a Virgin utterly undone. When the Maid appeared they grew pale with fright, and fear fell upon captains and soldiers. Those whom no man could make afraid, trembled before this girl whom they held to be a witch. They could not be expected to regard her as a saint sent of God. The best they could think of her was that she was a very learned sorceress. To those she came to help she appeared a daughter of God, to those she came to destroy she appeared a horrid monster in woman's form. In this double aspect lay all her strength: angelic for the French, devilish for the English, to one and the other she appeared invincible and supernatural.

In the evening of the 30th she sent her herald, Ambleville, to the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils to ask for Guyenne, who had borne the letter from Blois and had not returned. Ambleville was also instructed to tell Sir John Talbot, the Earl of Suffolk, and the Lord Scales that in God's name the Maid required them to depart from France and go to England; otherwise they would suffer hurt. The English sent back Ambleville with an evil message.

"The English," he said to the Maid, "are keeping my comrade to burn him."

She made answer: "In God's name they will do him no harm." And she commanded Ambleville to return.

She was indignant, and, no doubt, greatly disappointed. In truth, she had never anticipated that Talbot and the leaders of the siege would give such a welcome to a letter inspired by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret and Saint Michael; but so broad was her charity that she was still willing to offer peace to the English. In her innocence she may have believed that her proclamations in God's name were misunderstood after all. Besides, whatever happened, she was determined to go through with her duty to the end. At night she sallied forth from the Bridge Gate and went as far as the outwork of La Belle-Croix. It was not unusual for the two sides to address each other. La Belle-Croix was within ear-shot of Les Tourelles. The Maid mounted the rampart and cried to the English: "Surrender in God's name. I will grant you your lives only."

But the garrison and even the Captain, William Glasdale himself, hurled back at her coarse insults and horrible threats.

“Milk-maid! If ever we get you, you shall be burned alive.”

She answered that it was a lie. But they were in earnest and sincere. They firmly believed that this damsel was arming legions of devils against them.

On Sunday, the 1st of May, my Lord the Bastard went to meet the army from Blois. He knew the country; and, being both energetic and cautious, he was desirous to superintend the entrance of this convoy as he had done that of the other. He set out with a small escort. He did not dare to take with him the Saint herself; but, in order, so to speak, to put himself under her protection and tactfully to flatter the piety and affections of the folk of Orléans, he took a member of her suite, her steward, Sire Jean d’Aulon. Thus he grasped the first opportunity of showing his good will to the Maid, feeling that henceforth nothing could be done except with her or under her patronage.

The fervour of the citizens was not abated. That very day, in their passionate desire to see the Saint, they crowded round Jacques Boucher’s house as turbulently as the pilgrims from Puy pressed into the sanctuary of La Vierge Noire. There was a danger of the doors being broken in. The cries of the townsfolk reached her. Then she appeared: good, wise, equal to her mission, one born for the salvation of the people. In the absence of captains and men-at-arms, this wild multitude only awaited a sign from her to throw itself in tumult on the bastions and perish there. Notwithstanding the visions of war that haunted her, that sign she did not give. Child as she was, and as ignorant of war as of life, there was that within her which turned away disaster. She led this crowd of men, not to the English bastions, but to the holy places of the city. Down the streets she rode, accompanied by many knights and squires; men and women pressed to see her and could not gaze upon her enough. They marvelled at the manner of her riding and of her behaviour, in every point like a man-at-arms; and they would have hailed her as a veritable Saint George had they not suspected Saint George of turning Englishman.

That Sunday, for the second time, she went forth to offer peace to the enemies of the kingdom. She passed out by the Renard Gate and went along the Blois Road, through the suburbs that had been burnt down, towards the English bastion. Surrounded by a double moat, it was planted on a slope at the crossroads called La Croix Boissée or Buissée, because the townsfolk of Orléans had erected a cross there, which every Palm Sunday they dressed with a branch of box blessed by the priest. Doubtless she intended to reach this bastion, and perhaps to go on to the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils situated between La Croix Boissée and the Loire, where, as she had said, were Talbot and the English. For she had not yet given up hope of gaining a hearing from the leaders of the siege. But at the foot of the hill, at a place called La Croix-Morin, she met

some *Godons* who were keeping watch. And there, in tones grave, pious, and noble, she summoned them to retreat before the hosts of the Lord. "Surrender, and your lives shall be spared. In God's name go back to England. If ye will not I will make you suffer for it."

These men-at-arms answered her with insults as those of Les Tourelles had done. One of them, the Bastard of Granville, cried out to her: "Would you have us surrender to a woman?"

The French, who were with her, they dubbed pimps and infidels, to shame them for being in the company of a bad woman and a witch. But whether because they thought her magic rendered her invulnerable, or because they held it dishonourable to strike a messenger, now, as on other occasions, they forbore to fire on her.

That Sunday, Jacquet le Prestre, the town varlet, offered the Maid wine. The magistrates and citizens could not have more highly honoured her whom they regarded as their captain. Thus they treated barons, kings and queens when they were entertained in the city. In those days wine was highly valued on account of its beneficent power. Jeanne, when she emphasised a wish, would say: "If I were never to drink wine between now and Easter!..." But in reality she never drank wine except mixed with water, and she ate little.

Throughout this time of waiting the Maid never rested for a moment. On Monday, May 2nd, she mounted her horse and rode out into the country to view the English bastions. The people followed her in crowds; they had no fear and were glad to be near her. And when she had seen all that she wanted, she returned to the city, to the cathedral church, where she heard vespers.

On the morrow, the 3rd of May, the day of the Invention of the Holy Cross, which was the Cathedral Festival, she followed in the procession, with the magistrates and the townsfolk. It was then that Maître Jean de Mâcon, the precentor of the cathedral, greeted her with these words: "My daughter, are you come to raise the siege?"

She replied: "Yea, in God's name."

The people of Orléans all believed that the English round the city were as innumerable as the stars in the sky; the notary, Guillaume Girault, expected nothing short of a miracle. Jean Luillier, woollen draper by trade, thought it impossible for the citizens to hold out longer against an enemy so enormously their superior. Messire Jean de Mâcon was likewise alarmed at the power and the numbers of the *Godons*.

"My daughter," he said to the Maid, "their force is great and they are strongly intrenched. It will be a difficult matter to turn them out."

If notary Guillaume Girault, if draper Jean Luillier, if Messire Jean de Mâcon, instead of fostering these gloomy ideas, had counted the numbers of the besieged and the besieging, they would have found that the former were more numerous than the latter; and that the army of Scales, of Suffolk, of Talbot appeared mean and feeble when compared with the great besieging armies of the reign of King Henry V. Had they looked a little more closely they would have perceived that the bastions, with the formidable names of London and of Paris, were powerless to prevent either corn, cattle, pigs, or men-at-arms being brought into the city; and that these gigantic dolls were being mocked at by the dealers, who, with their beasts, passed by them daily. In short, they would have realised that the people of Orléans were for the moment better off than the English. But they had examined nothing for themselves. They were content to abide by public opinion which is seldom either just or correct. The Maid did not share Messire Jean de Mâcon's illusions. She knew no more of the English than he did; yet because she was a saint, she replied tranquilly: "With God all things are possible." And Maître Jean de Mâcon thought it well that such should be her opinion.

What aggravated the trouble, the danger, and the panic of the situation, was that the citizens believed they were betrayed. They recollected the Count of Clermont at the Battle of the Herrings, and they suspected the King's men of deserting them once again. After having done so much and spent so much they saw themselves given up to the English. This idea made them mad. There was a rumour that the Marshal de Boussac, who had started with my Lord the Bastard to meet the second convoy of supplies, and who was to return on Tuesday the 3rd, would not come back. It was said that the Chancellor of France wanted to disband the army. It was absurd. On the contrary, great efforts for the deliverance of the city were being made by the King's Council and that of the Queen of Sicily. But the people's brains had been turned by their long suffering and their terrible danger. A more reasonable fear was lest any mishap should occur on the road from Blois like that which had overtaken the force at Rouvray. The Maid's comrades were infected with the anxieties of the townsfolk; one of them betrayed his fears to her, but she was not affected by them. With the radiant tranquillity of the illuminated, she said: "The Marshal will come. I am confident that no harm will happen to him."

On that day there entered into the city the little garrisons of Gien, of Château-Regnard, and of Montargis. But the Blois army did not come. On the morrow, at daybreak, it was descried in the plain of La Beauce. And, indeed, the Sire de Rais and his company, escorted by the Marshal de Boussac and my Lord the Bastard, were skirting the Forest of Orléans. At these tidings the citizens must needs exclaim that the Maid had been right in wishing to march straight against

Talbot since the captains now followed the very road she had indicated. But in reality it was not just as they thought. Only one part of the Blois army had risked forcing its way between the western bastions; the convoy, with its escort, like the first convoy, was coming through La Sologne and was to enter the town by water. Those arrangements for the entrance of supplies, which, in the first instance, had proved successful, were naturally now repeated.

Captain La Hire and certain other commanders, who had remained in the city with five hundred fighting men, went out to meet the Sire de Rais, the Marshal de Boussac and the Bastard. The Maid mounted her horse and went with them. They passed through the English lines; and, a little further on, having met the army, they returned to the town together. The priests, and among them Brother Pasquerel bearing the banner, were the first to pass beneath the Paris bastion, singing psalms.

Jeanne dined at Jacques Boucher's house with her steward, Jean d'Aulon. When the table was cleared, the Bastard, who had come to the treasurer's house, talked with her for a moment. He was gracious and polite, but spoke with restraint.

"I have heard on good authority," he remarked, "that Fastolf is soon to join the English who are conducting the siege. He brings them supplies and reinforcements and is already at Janville."

At these tidings Jeanne appeared very glad and said, laughing: "Bastard, Bastard, in God's name, I command thee to let me know as soon as thou shalt hear of Fastolf's arrival. For should he come without my knowledge, I warn thee thou shalt lose thy head."

Far from betraying any annoyance at so rude a jest, he replied that she need have no fear, he would let her know.

The approach of Sir John Fastolf had already been announced on the 26th of April. It was expressly in order to avoid him that the army had come through La Sologne. It is possible that on the 4th of May the tidings of his coming had no surer foundation. But the Bastard knew something else. The corn of the second convoy, like that of the first, was coming down the river. It had been resolved, in a council of war, that in the afternoon the captains should attack the Saint-Loup bastion, and divert the English as had been done on the 29th of April. The attack had already begun. But of this the Bastard breathed not a word to the Maid. He held her to be the one source of strength in the town. But he believed that in war her part was purely spiritual.

After he had withdrawn, Jeanne, worn out by her morning's expedition, lay down on her bed with her hostess for a short sleep. Sire Jean d'Aulon, who was very weary, stretched himself on a couch in the same room, thinking to take the

rest he so greatly needed. But scarce had he fallen asleep when the Maid leapt from her bed and roused him with a great noise. He asked her what she wanted.

“In God’s name,” she answered in great agitation, “my Council have told me to go against the English; but I know not whether I am to go against their bastions or against Fastolf, who is bringing them supplies.”

In her dreams she had been present at her Council, that is to say, she had beheld her saints. She had seen Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. There had happened to her what always happens. The saints had told her no more than she herself knew. They had revealed to her nothing of what she needed to know. They had not informed her how, at that very moment, the French were attacking the Saint-Loup bastion and suffering great hurt. And the Blessed Ones had departed leaving her in error and in ignorance of what was going on, and in uncertainty as to what she was to do. The good Sire d’Aulon was not the one to relieve her from her embarrassment. He, too, was excluded from the Councils of War. Now he answered her nothing, and set to arming himself as quickly as possible. He had already begun when they heard a great noise and cries coming up from the street. From the passers-by, they gleaned that there was fighting near Saint-Loup and that the enemy was inflicting great hurt on the French. Without staying to inquire further, Jean d’Aulon went straightway to his squire to have his armour put on. Almost at the same time Jeanne went down and asked: “Where are my armourers? The blood of our folk is flowing.”

In the street she found Brother Pasquerel, her chaplain, with other priests, and Mugot, her page, to whom she cried: “Ha! cruel boy, you did not tell me that the blood of France was being shed!... In God’s name, our people are hard put to it.”

She bade him bring her horse and leave the wife and daughter of her host to finish arming her. On his return the page found her fully accoutred. She sent him to fetch her standard from her room. He gave it her through the window. She took it and spurred on her horse into the high street, towards the Burgundian Gate, at such a pace that sparks flashed from the pavement.

“Hasten after her!” cried the treasurer’s wife.

Sire d’Aulon had not seen her start. He imagined, why, it is impossible to say, that she had gone out on foot, and, having met a page on horseback in the street, had made him dismount and give her his horse. The Renard Gate and the Burgundian Gate were on opposite sides of the town. Jeanne, who for the last three days had been going up and down the streets of Orléans, took the most direct way. Jean d’Aulon and the page, who were hastily pursuing her, did not come up with her until she had reached the gate. There they met a wounded man being brought into the town. The Maid asked his bearers who the man was. He

was a Frenchman, they replied. Then she said: "I have never seen the blood of a Frenchman flow without feeling my heart stand still."

The Maid and Sire d'Aulon, with a few fighting men of their company, pressed on through the fields to Saint-Loup. On the way they saw certain of their party. The good squire, unaccustomed to great battles, never remembered having seen so many fighting men at once.

For an hour the Sire de Rais' Bretons and the men from Le Mans had been skirmishing before the bastion. As the custom was those who had arrived last were keeping watch. But if these combatants, who had reached the town only that very morning, had attacked without taking time to breathe, they must have been hard pressed. They were doing what had been done on the 29th of April, and for the same reason: namely, occupying the English while the barges corn-laden were coming down the river to the moat. On the top of their high hill, in their strong fortress, the English had easily held out albeit they were but few; and the French King's men can hardly have been able to make head against them, since the Maid and Sire d'Aulon found them scattered through the fields. She gathered them together and led them back to the attack. They were her friends: they had journeyed together: they had sung psalms and hymns together: together they had heard mass in the fields. They knew that she brought good luck: they followed her. As she marched at their head her first idea was a religious one. The bastion was built upon the church and convent of the Ladies of Saint-Loup. With the sound of a trumpet she had it proclaimed that nothing should be taken from the church. She remembered how Salisbury had come to a bad end for having pillaged the Church of Notre Dame de Cléry; and she desired to keep her men from an evil death. This was the first time she had seen fighting; and no sooner had she entered into the battle than she became the leader because she was the best. She did better than others, not because she knew more; she knew less. But her heart was nobler. When every man thought of himself, she alone thought of others: when every man took heed to defend himself, she defended herself not at all, having previously offered up her life. And thus this child, — who feared suffering and death like every human being, who knew by her Voices and her presentiments that she would be wounded, — went straight on and stood beneath showers of arrows and cannon-balls on the edge of the moat, her standard in hand, rallying her men. Through her what had been merely a diversion became a serious attack. The bastion was stormed.

When he heard that the fort of Saint-Loup was being attacked, Sir John Talbot sallied forth from the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. In order to reach the threatened bastion he had some distance to go down his lines and along the border of the forest. He set out, and on his way was reinforced by the

garrisons of the western bastions. The town watchmen observed his movements and sounded the alarm. Marshal Boussac passing through the Parisis Gate, went out to meet Talbot on the north, towards Fleury. The English captain was preparing to break through the French force when he saw a thick cloud of smoke rising over the fort Saint-Loup. He understood that the French had captured and set fire to it; and sadly he returned to the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils.

The attack had lasted three hours. After the burning of the bastion the English climbed into the church belfry. The French had difficulty in dislodging them; but they ran no danger thereby. Of prisoners, they took two score, and the rest they slew. The Maid was very sorrowful when she saw so many of the enemy dead. She pitied these poor folk who had died unconfessed. Certain *Godons*, wearing the ecclesiastical habit and ornaments, came to meet her. She perceived that they were soldiers disguised in stoles and hoods taken from the sacristy of the Abbaye aux Dames. But she pretended to take them for what they represented themselves to be. She received them and had them conducted to her house without allowing any harm to come to them. With a charitable jest she said: "One should never question priests."

Before leaving the fort she confessed to Brother Pasquerel, her chaplain. And she charged him to make the following announcement to all the men-at-arms: "Confess your sins and thank God for the victory. If you do not, the Maid will never help you more and will not remain in your company."

The Saint-Loup bastion, attacked by fifteen hundred French, had been defended by only three hundred English. That they made no vigorous defence is indicated by the fact that only two or three Frenchmen were slain. It was not by any severe mental effort or profound calculation that the French King's men had gained this advantage. It had cost them little, and yet it was immense. It meant the cutting off of the besiegers' communications with Jargeau: it meant the opening of the upper Loire: it was the first step towards the raising of the siege. Better still, it afforded positive proof that these devils who had inspired such fear were miserable creatures, who might be entrapped like mice and smoked out like wasps in their nest. Such unhoped-for good fortune was due to the Maid. She had done everything, for without her nothing would have been done. She it was, who, in ignorance wiser than the knowledge of captains and free-lances, had converted an idle skirmish into a serious attack and had won the victory by inspiring confidence.

That very evening the magistrates sent workmen to Saint-Loup to demolish the captured fortifications.

When at night she returned to her lodging, Jeanne told her chaplain that on the morrow, which was the day of the Ascension of Our Lord, she would keep

the Festival by not wearing armour and by abstaining from fighting. She commanded that no one should think of quitting the town, of attacking or making an assault, until he had first confessed. She added that the men-at-arms must pay heed that no dissolute women followed in their train for fear lest God should cause them to be defeated on account of their sins.

When need was the Maid herself saw that her orders concerning bad women and blasphemers were scrupulously obeyed. More than once she drove away the camp-followers. She rebuked men-at-arms who swore and blasphemed. One day, in the open street, a knight began to swear and take God's name in vain. Jeanne heard him. She seized him by the throat, exclaiming, "Ah, Sir! dare you take in vain the name of Our Lord and Master? In God's name you shall take back those words before I move from this place."

A citizen's wife, passing down the street at that moment, beheld this man, who seemed to her to be a great baron, humbly receiving the Saint's reproaches and testifying his repentance.

On the morrow, which was Ascension Day, the captains held a council-of-war in the house of Chancellor Cousinot in the Rue de la Rose. There were present, as well as the Chancellor, my Lord the Bastard, the Sire de Gaucourt, the Sire de Rais, the Sire de Graville, Captain La Hire, my Lord Ambroise de Loré and several others. It was decided that Les Tourelles, the chief stronghold of the besiegers, should be attacked on the morrow. Meanwhile, it would be necessary to hold in check the English of the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. On the previous day, when Talbot set out from Saint-Laurent, he had not been able to reach Saint-Loup in time because he had been obliged to make a long circuit, going round the town from west to east. But, although, on that previous day, the enemy had lost command of the Loire above the town, they still held the lower river. They could cross it between Saint-Laurent and Saint-Privé as rapidly as the French could cross it by the Île-aux-Toiles; and thus the English might gather in force at Le Portereau. This, the French must prevent and, if possible, draw off the garrisons from Les Augustins and Les Tourelles to Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils. With this object it was decided that the people of Orléans with the folk from the communes, that is, from the villages, should make a feigned attack on the Saint-Laurent camp, with mantelets, faggots, and ladders. Meanwhile, the nobles would cross the Loire by l'Île-aux-Toiles, would land at Le Portereau under the watch of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc which had been abandoned by the English, and attack the bastion of Les Augustins; and when that was taken, the fort of Les Tourelles. Thus there would be one assault made by the citizens, another by the nobles; one real, the other feigned; both useful, but only one glorious and worthy of knights. When the plan was thus drawn up, certain

captains were of opinion that it would be well to send for the Maid and tell her what had been decided. And, indeed, on the previous day, she had done so well that there was no longer need to hold her aloof. Others deemed that it would be imprudent to tell her what was contemplated concerning Les Tourelles. For it was important that the undertaking should be kept secret, and it was feared that the holy damsel might speak of it to her friends among the common people. Finally, it was agreed that she should know those decisions which affected the train-bands of Orléans, since, indeed, she was their captain, but that such matters as could not be safely communicated to the citizens should be concealed from her.

Jeanne was in another room of the house with the Chancellor's wife. Messire Ambroise de Loré went to fetch her; and, when she had come, the Chancellor told her that the camp of Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils was to be attacked on the morrow. She divined that something was being kept back; for she possessed a certain acuteness. Besides, since they had hitherto concealed everything, it was natural she should suspect that something was still being kept from her. This mistrust annoyed her. Did they think her incapable of keeping a secret? She said bitterly: "Tell me what you have concluded and ordained. I could keep a much greater secret than that."

And refusing to sit down she walked to and fro in the room.

My Lord the Bastard deemed it well to avoid exasperating her by telling her the truth. He pacified her without incriminating anybody: "Jeanne, do not rage. It is impossible to tell you everything at once. What the Chancellor has said has been concluded and ordained. But if those on the other side [of the water, the English of La Sologne] should depart to come and succour the great bastion of Saint-Laurent and the English who are encamped near this part of the city, we have determined that some of us shall cross the river to do what we can against those on the other side [those of Les Augustins and Les Tourelles]. And it seems to us that such a decision is good and profitable."

The Maid replied that she was content, that such a decision seemed to her good, and that it should be carried out in the manner determined.

It will be seen that by this proceeding the secrecy of the deliberations had been violated, and that the nobles had not been able to do what they had determined or at least not in the way they had determined. On that Ascension Day the Maid for the last time sent a message of peace to the English, which she dictated to Brother Pasquerel in the following terms: *Ye men of England, who have no right in the realm of France, the King of Heaven enjoins and commands you by me, Jeanne the Maid, to leave your forts and return to your country. If ye*

will not I will make so great a noise as shall remain for ever in the memory of man: This I write to you for the third and last time, and I will write to you no more.

Signed thus: Jhesus — Maria. Jeanne the Maid.

And below: I should have sent to you with more ceremony. But you keep my heralds. You kept my herald Guyenne. If you will send him back to me, I will send you some of your men taken at the bastion Saint-Loup; they are not all dead.

Jeanne went to La Belle Croix, took an arrow, and tied her letter to it with a string, then told an archer to shoot it to the English, crying: “Read! This is the message.”

The English received the arrow, untied the letter, and having read it they cried: “This a message from the Armagnac strumpet.”

When she heard them, tears came into Jeanne’s eyes and she wept. But soon she beheld her saints, who spoke to her of Our Lord, and she was comforted. “I have had a message from my Lord,” she said joyfully.

My Lord the Bastard himself demanded the Maid’s herald, threatening that if he were not sent back he would keep the heralds whom the English had sent to treat for the exchange of prisoners. It is asserted that he even threatened to put those prisoners to death. But Ambleville did not return.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TAKING OF LES TOURELLES AND THE DELIVERANCE OF ORLÉANS

ON the morrow, Friday the 6th of May, the Maid rose at daybreak. She confessed to her chaplain and heard mass sung before the priests and fighting men of her company. The zealous townsfolk were already up and armed. Whether or no she had told them, the citizens, who were strongly determined to cross the Loire and attack Les Tourelles themselves, were pressing in crowds to the Burgundian Gate. They found it shut. The Sire de Gaucourt was guarding it with men-at-arms. The nobles had taken this precaution in case the citizens should discover their enterprise and wish to take part in it. The gate was closed and well defended. Bent on fighting and themselves recovering their precious jewel, Les Tourelles, the citizens had recourse to her before whom gates opened and walls fell; they sent for the Saint. She came, frank and terrible. She went straight to the old Sire de Gaucourt, and, refusing to listen to him, said: "You are a wicked man to try to prevent these people from going out. But whether you will or no, they will go and will do as well as they did the other day."

Excited by Jeanne's voice and encouraged by her presence, the citizens, crying slaughter, threw themselves on Gaucourt and his men-at-arms. When the old baron perceived that he could do nothing with them, and that it was impossible to bring them to his way of thinking, he himself joined them. He had the gates opened wide and cried out to the townsfolk: "Come, I will be your captain."

And with the Lord of Villars and Sire d'Aulon he went out at the head of the soldiers, who had been keeping the gate, and all the train-bands of the town. At the foot of La Tour-Neuve, at the eastern corner of the ramparts, there were boats at anchor. In them l'Île-aux-Toiles was reached, and thence on a bridge formed by two boats they crossed over the narrow arm of the river which separates l'Île-aux-Toiles from the Sologne bank. Those who arrived first entered the abandoned fort of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc, and, while waiting for the others, amused themselves by demolishing it. Then, when all had passed over, the townsfolk gayly marched against Les Augustins. The bastion was situated in front of Les Tourelles, on the ruins of the monastery; and the bastion would have to be taken before the fortifications at the end of the bridge could be attacked.

But the enemy came out of their entrenchments and advanced within two bow-shots of the French, upon whom from their bows and cross-bows they let fly so thick a shower of arrows that the men of Orléans could not stand against them. They gave way and fled to the bridge of boats: then, afraid of being cast into the river, they crossed over to l'Île-aux-Toiles. The fighting men of the Sire de Gaucourt were more accustomed to war. With the Lord of Villars, Sire d'Aulon, and a valiant Spaniard, Don Alonzo de Partada, they took their stand on the slope of Saint-Jean-le-Blanc and resisted the enemy. Although very few in number, they were still holding out when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Captain La Hire and the Maid crossed the river with the free-lances. Seeing the French hard put to it, and the English in battle array, they mounted their horses, which they had brought over with them, and holding their lances in rest spurred on against the enemy. The townsfolk, taking heart, followed them and drove back the English. But at the foot of the bastion they were again repulsed. In great agitation the Maid galloped from the bastion to the bank, and from the bank to the bastion, calling for the knights; but the knights did not come. Their plans had been upset, their order of battle reversed, and they needed time to collect themselves. At last she saw floating over the island the banners of my Lord the Bastard, the Marshal de Boussac, and the Lord de Rais. The artillery came too, and Master Jean de Montesclère with his culverin and his gunners, bringing all the engines needed for the assault. Four thousand men assembled round Les Augustins. But much time had been lost; they were only just beginning, and the sun was going down.

The Sire de Gaucourt's men were ranged behind, to cover the besiegers in case the English from the bridge end should come to the aid of their countrymen in Les Augustins. But a quarrel arose in de Gaucourt's company. Some, like Sire d'Aulon and Don Alonzo, judged it well to stay at their post. Others were ashamed to stand idle. Hence haughty words and bravado. Finally Don Alonzo and a man-at-arms, having challenged each other to see who would do the best, ran towards the bastion hand in hand. At one single volley Maître Jean's culverin overthrew the palisade. Straightway the two champions forced their way in.

"Enter boldly!" cried the Maid. And she planted her standard on the rampart. The Sire de Rais followed her closely.

The numbers of the French were increasing. They made a strong attack on the bastion and soon took it by storm. Then one by one they had to assault the buildings of the monastery in which the *Godons* were entrenched. In the end all the English were slain or taken, except a few, who took refuge in Les Tourelles. In the huts the French found many of their own men imprisoned. After bringing them out, they set fire to the fort, and thus made known to the English their new

disaster. It is said to have been the Maid who ordered the fire in order to put a stop to the pillage in which her men were mercilessly engaging.

A great advantage had been won. But the French were slow to regain confidence. When, in the darkness by the light of the fire, they beheld for the first time close to them the bulwarks of Les Tourelles, the men-at-arms were afraid. Certain said: "It would take us more than a month to capture it."

The lords, captains, and men-at-arms went back to the town to pass a quiet night. The archers and most of the townsfolk stayed at Le Portereau. The Maid would have liked to stay too, so as to be sure of beginning again on the morrow. But, seeing that the captains were leaving their horses and their pages in the fields, she followed them to Orléans. Wounded in the foot by a caltrop, overcome with fatigue, she felt weak, and contrary to her custom she broke her fast, although the day was Friday. According to Brother Pasquerel, who in this matter is not very trustworthy, while she was finishing her supper in her lodging, there came to her a noble whose name is not mentioned and who addressed her thus: "The captains have met in council. They recognise how few we were in comparison with the English, and that it was by God's great favour that we won the victory. Now that the town is plentifully supplied we may well wait for help from the King. Wherefore, the council deems it inexpedient for the men-at-arms to make a sally to-morrow."

Jeanne replied: "You have been at your council; I have been at mine. Now believe me the counsel of Messire shall be followed and shall hold good, whereas your counsel shall come to nought." And turning to Brother Pasquerel who was with her, she said: "To-morrow rise even earlier than to-day, and do the best you can. Stay always at my side, for to-morrow I shall have much ado — more than I have ever had, and to-morrow blood shall flow from my body."

It was not true that the English outnumbered the French. On the contrary they were far less numerous. There were scarce more than three thousand men round Orléans. The succour from the King having arrived, the captains could not have said that they were waiting for it. True it is that they were hesitating to proceed forthwith to attack Les Tourelles on the morrow; but that was because they feared lest the English under Talbot should enter the deserted town during the assault, since the townsfolk, refusing to march against Saint-Laurent, had all gone to Le Portereau. The Maid's Council troubled about none of these difficulties. No fears beset Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. To doubt is to fear; they never doubted. Whatever may be said to the contrary, of military tactics and strategy they knew nothing. They had not read the treatise of Vegetius, *De re militari*. Had they read it the town would have been lost. Jeanne's Vegetius was Saint Catherine.

During the night it was cried in the streets of the city that bread, wine, ammunition and all things necessary must be taken to those who had stayed behind at Le Portereau. There was a constant passing to and fro of boats across the river. Men, women and children were carrying supplies to the outposts.

On the morrow, Saturday the 7th of May, Jeanne heard Brother Pasquerel say mass and piously received the holy sacrament. Jacques Boucher's house was beset with magistrates and notable citizens. After a night of fatigue and anxiety, they had just heard tidings which exasperated them. They had heard tell that the captains wanted to defer the storming of Les Tourelles. With loud cries they appealed to the Maid to help the townsfolk, sold, abandoned, and betrayed. The truth was that my Lord the Bastard and the captains, having observed during the night a great movement among the English on the upper Loire, were confirmed in their fears that Talbot would attack the walls near the Renard Gate while the French were occupied on the left bank. At sunrise they had perceived that during the night the English had demolished their outwork Saint Privé, south of l'Île-Charlemagne. That also caused them to believe firmly that in the evening the English had concentrated in the Saint-Laurent camp and the bastion, London. The townsfolk had long been irritated by the delay of the King's men in raising the siege. And there is no doubt that the captains were not so eager to bring it to an end as they were. The captains lived by war, while the citizens died of it, — that made all the difference. The magistrates besought the Maid to complete without delay the deliverance she had already begun. They said to her: "We have taken counsel and we entreat you to accomplish the mission you have received from God and likewise from the King."

"In God's name, I will," she said. And straightway she mounted her horse, and uttering a very ancient phrase, she cried: "Let who loves me follow me!"

As she was leaving the treasurer's house a shad was brought her. She said to her host, smiling, "In God's name! we will have it for supper. I will bring you back a *Godon* who shall eat his share." She added: "This evening we shall return by the bridge." For the last ninety-nine days it had been impossible. But happily her words proved true.

The townsfolk had been too quick to take alarm. Notwithstanding their fear of Talbot and the English of the Saint-Laurent camp, the nobles crossed the Loire in the early morning, and at Le Portereau rejoined their horses and pages who had passed the night there with the archers and train-bands. They were all there, the Bastard, the Sire de Gaucourt, and the lords of Rais, Graville, Guitry, Coarraze, Villars, Illiers, Chailly, the Admiral de Culant, the captains La Hire, and Poton. The Maid was with them. The magistrates sent them great store of engines of war: hurdles, all kinds of arrows, hammers, axes, lead, powder,

culverins, cannon, and ladders. The attack began early. What rendered it difficult was not the number of English entrenched in the bulwark and lodged in the towers: there were barely more than five hundred of them; true, they were commanded by Lord Moleyns, and under him by Lord Poynings and Captain Glasdale, who in France was called Glassidas, a man of humble birth, but the first among the English for courage. The assailants, citizens, men-at-arms and archers were ten times more numerous. That so many combatants had been assembled was greatly to the credit of the French nation; but so great an army of men could not be employed at once. Knights were not much use against earthworks; and the townsfolk although very zealous, were not very tenacious. Finally, the Bastard, who was prudent and thoughtful, was afraid of Talbot. Indeed if Talbot had known and if he had wanted he might have taken the town while the French were trying to take Les Tourelles. War is always a series of accidents, but on that day no attempt whatever was made to carry out any concerted movement. This vast army was not an irresistible force, since no one, not even the Bastard, knew how to bring it into action. In those days the issue of a battle was in the hands of a very few combatants. On the previous day everything had been decided by two or three men.

The French assembled before the entrenchments had the air of an immense crowd of idlers looking on while a few men-at-arms attempted an escalade. Notwithstanding the size of the army, for a long while the assault resolved itself into a series of single combats. Twenty times did the most zealous approach the rampart and twenty times they were forced to retreat. There were some wounded and some slain, but not many. The nobles, who had been making war all their lives, were cautious, while the soldiers of fortune were careful of their men. The townsfolk were novices in war. The Maid alone threw herself into it with heart and soul. She was continually saying: "Be of good cheer. Do not retreat. The fort will soon be yours."

At noon everyone went away to dinner. Then about one o'clock they set to work again. The Maid carried the first ladder. As she was putting it up against the rampart, she was struck on the shoulder over the right breast, by an arrow shot so straight that half a foot of the shaft pierced her flesh. She knew that she was to be wounded; she had foretold it to her King, adding that he must employ her all the same. She had announced it to the people of Orléans and spoken of it to her chaplain on the previous day; and certainly for the last five days she had been doing her best to make the prophecy come true. When the English saw that the arrow had pierced her flesh they were greatly encouraged: they believed that if blood were drawn from a witch all her power would vanish. It made the French very sad. They carried her apart. Brother Pasquerel and Mugot, the page,

were with her. Being in pain, she was afraid and wept. As was usual when combatants were wounded in battle, a group of soldiers surrounded her; some wanted to charm her. It was a custom with men-at-arms to attempt to close wounds by muttering paternosters over them. Spells were cast by means of incantations and conjurations. Certain paternosters had the power of stopping hemorrhage. Papers covered with magic characters were also used. But it meant having recourse to the power of devils and committing mortal sin. Jeanne did not wish to be charmed.

“I would rather die,” she said, “than do anything I knew to be sin or contrary to God’s will.”

Again she said: “I know that I am to die. But I do not know when or how, neither do I know the hour. If my wound may be healed without sin then am I willing to be made whole.”

Her armour was taken off. The wound was anointed with olive oil and fat, and, when it was dressed, she confessed to Brother Pasquerel, weeping and groaning. Soon she beheld coming to her her heavenly counsellors, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. They wore crowns and emitted a sweet fragrance. She was comforted. She resumed her armour and returned to the attack.

The sun was going down; and since morning the French had been wearing themselves out in a vain attack upon the palisades of the bulwark. My Lord the Bastard, seeing his men tired and night coming on, and afraid doubtless of the English of the Saint-Laurent-des-Orgerils Camp, resolved to lead the army back to Orléans. He had the retreat sounded. The trumpet was already summoning the combatants to Le Portereau. The Maid came to him and asked him to wait a little.

“In God’s name!” she said, “you will enter very soon. Be not afraid and the English shall have no more power over you.”

According to some, she added: “Wherefore, rest a little; drink and eat.”

While they were refreshing themselves, she asked for her horse and mounted it. Then, leaving her standard with a man of her company, she went alone up the hill into the vineyards, which it had been impossible to till this April, but where the tiny spring leaves were beginning to open. There, in the calm of evening, among the vine props tied together in sheaves and the lines of low vines drinking in the early warmth of the earth, she began to pray and listened for her heavenly voices. Too often tumult and noise prevented her from hearing what her angel and her saints had to say to her. She could only understand them well in solitude or when the bells were tinkling in the distance, and evening sounds soft and rhythmic were ascending from field and meadow.

During her absence Sire d'Aulon, who could not give up the idea of winning the day, devised one last expedient. He was the least of the nobles in the army; but in the battles of those days every man was a law unto himself. The Maid's standard was still waving in front of the bulwark. The man who bore it was dropping with fatigue and had passed it on to a soldier, surnamed the Basque, of the company of my Lord of Villars. It occurred to Sire d'Aulon, as he looked upon this standard blessed by priests and held to bring good luck, that if it were borne in front, the fighting men, who loved it dearly, would follow it and in order not to lose it would scale the bulwark. With this idea he went to the Basque and said: "If I were to enter there and go on foot up to the bulwark would you follow me?"

The Basque promised that he would. Straightway Sire d'Aulon went down into the ditch and protecting himself with his shield, which sheltered him from the stones fired from the cannon, advanced towards the rampart.

After a quarter of an hour, the Maid, having offered a short prayer, returned to the men-at-arms and said to them: "The English are exhausted. Bring up the ladders."

It was true. They had so little powder that their last volley fired in an insufficient charge carried no further than a stone thrown by hand. Nothing but fragments of weapons remained to them. She went towards the fort. But when she reached the ditch she suddenly beheld the standard so dear to her, a thousand times dearer than her sword, in the hands of a stranger. Thinking it was in danger, she hastened to rescue it and came up with the Basque just as he was going down into the ditch. There she seized her standard by the part known as its tail, that is the end of the flag, and pulled at it with all her might, crying:

"Ha! my standard, my standard!"

The Basque stood firm, not knowing who was pulling thus from above. And the Maid would not let it go. The nobles and captains saw the standard shake, took it for a sign and rallied. Meanwhile Sire d'Aulon had reached the rampart. He imagined that the Basque was following close behind. But, when he turned round he perceived that he had stopped on the other side of the ditch, and he cried out to him: "Eh! Basque, what did you promise me?"

At this cry the Basque pulled so hard that the Maid let go, and he bore the standard to the rampart.

Jeanne understood and was satisfied. To those near her she said: "Look and see when the flag of my standard touches the bulwark."

A knight replied: "Jeanne, the flag touches."

Then she cried: "All is yours. Enter."

Straightway nobles and citizens, men-at-arms, archers, townsfolk threw themselves wildly into the ditch and climbed up the palisades so quickly and in such numbers that they looked like a flock of birds descending on a hedge. And the French, who had now entered within the fortifications, saw retreating before them, but with their faces turned proudly towards the enemy, the Lords Moleyns and Poynings, Sir Thomas Giffart, Baillie of Mantes, and Captain Glasdale, who were covering the flight of their men to Les Tourelles. In his hand Glasdale was holding the standard of Chandos, which, after having waved over eighty years of victories, was now retreating before the standard of a child. For the Maid was there, standing upon the rampart. And the English, panic-stricken, wondered what kind of a witch this could be whose powers did not depart with the flowing of her blood, and who with charms healed her deep wounds. Meanwhile she was looking at them kindly and sadly and crying out, her voice broken with sobs:

“Glassidas! Glassidas! surrender, surrender to the King of Heaven. Thou hast called me strumpet; but I have great pity on thy soul and on the souls of thy men.”

At the same time, from the walls of the town and the bulwark of La Belle Croix cannon balls rained down upon Les Tourelles. Montargis and Riffart cast forth stones. Maître Guillaume Duisy’s new cannon, from the Chesneau postern, hurled forth balls weighing one hundred and twenty pounds. Les Tourelles were attacked from the bridge side. Across the arch broken by the English a narrow footway was thrown, and Messire Nicole de Giresme, a knight in holy orders, was the first to pass over. Those who followed him set fire to the palisade which blocked the approach to the fort on that side. Thus the six hundred English, their strength and their weapons alike exhausted, found themselves assailed both in front and in the rear. In a crafty and terrible manner they were also attacked from beneath. The people of Orléans had loaded a great barge with pitch, tow, faggots, horse-bones, old shoes, resin, sulphur, ninety-eight pounds of olive oil and such other materials as might easily take fire and smoke. They had steered it under the wooden bridge, thrown by the enemy from Les Tourelles to the bulwark: they had anchored the barge there and set fire to its cargo. The fire from the barge had caught the bridge just when the English were retreating. Through smoke and flames the six hundred passed over the burning platform. At length it came to the turn of William Glasdale, Lord Poynings and Lord Moleyns, who with thirty or forty captains, were the last to leave the lost bulwark; but when they set foot on the bridge, its beams, reduced to charcoal, crumbled beneath them, and they all with the Chandos standard were engulfed in the Loire.

Jeanne moved to pity wept over the soul of Glassidas and over the souls of those drowned with him. The captains, who were with her, likewise grieved over the death of these valiant men, reflecting that they had done the French a great wrong by being drowned, for their ransom would have brought great riches.

Having escaped from the French on the bulwark, across the burning planks the six hundred were set upon by the French on the bridge. Four hundred were slain, the others taken. The day had cost the people of Orléans a hundred men.

When in the black darkness, along the fire-reddened banks of the Loire, the last cries of the vanquished had died away, the French captains, amazed at their victory, looked anxiously towards Saint-Laurent-des Orgerils, for they were still afraid lest Sir John Talbot should sally forth from his camp to avenge those whom he had failed to succour. Throughout that long attack, which had lasted from sunrise to sunset, Talbot, the Earl of Suffolk and the English of Saint-Laurent had not left their entrenchments. Even when Les Tourelles were taken the conquerors remained on the watch, still expecting Talbot. But this Talbot, with whose name French mothers frightened their children, did not budge. He had been greatly feared that day, and he himself had feared lest, if he withdrew any of his troops to succour Les Tourelles, the French would capture his camp and his forts on the west.

The army prepared to return to the town. In three hours, the bridge, three arches of which had been broken, was rendered passable. Some hours after darkness, the Maid entered the city by the bridge as she had foretold. In like manner all her prophecies were fulfilled when their fulfilment depended on her own courage and determination. The captains accompanied her, followed by all the men-at-arms, the archers, the citizens and the prisoners who were brought in two by two. The bells of the city were ringing; the clergy and people sang the Te Deum. After God and his Blessed Mother, they gave thanks in all humility to Saint Aignan and Saint Euverte, who had been bishops in their mortal lives and were now the heavenly patrons of the city. The townsfolk believed that both before and during the siege they had given the saints so much wax and had paraded their relics in so many processions that they had deserved their powerful intercession, and that thereby they had won the victory and been delivered out of the enemy's hand. There was no doubt about the intervention of the saints because at the time of assault on Les Tourelles two bishops bright and shining had been seen in the sky, hovering over the fort.

Jeanne was brought back to Jacques Boucher's house, where a surgeon again dressed the wound she had received above the breast. She took four or five slices of bread soaked in wine and water, but neither ate nor drank anything else.

On the morrow, Sunday, the 8th of May, being the Feast of the Appearance of St. Michael, it was announced in Orléans, in the morning, that the English issuing forth from those western bastions which were all that remained to them, were ranging themselves before the town moat in battle array and with standards flying. The folk of Orléans, both the men-at-arms and the train-bands, greatly desired to fall upon them. At daybreak Marshal de Boussac and a number of captains went out and took up their positions over against the enemy.

The Maid went out into the country with the priests. Being unable to put on her cuirass because of the wound on her shoulder, she merely wore one of those light coats-of-mail called *jaserans* .

The men-at-arms inquired of her: "To-day being the Sabbath, is it wrong to fight?"

She replied: "You must hear mass."

She did not think the enemy should be attacked.

"For the sake of the holy Sabbath do not give battle. Do not attack the English, but if the English attack you, defend yourselves stoutly and bravely, and be not afraid, for you will overcome them."

In the country, at the foot of a cross, where four roads met, one of those consecrated stones, square and flat, which priests carried with them on their journeys, was placed upon a table. Very solemnly did the officiating ecclesiastics sing hymns, responses and prayers; and at this altar the Maid with all the priests and all the men-at-arms heard mass.

After the *Deo gratias* she recommended them to observe the movements of the English. "Now look whether their faces or their backs be towards you."

She was told that they had turned their backs and were going away.

Three times she had told them: "Depart from Orléans and your lives shall be saved." Now she asked that they should be allowed to go without more being required of them.

"It is not well pleasing to my Lord that they should be engaged to-day," she said. "You will have them another time. Come, let us give thanks to God."

The *Godons* were going. During the night they had held a council of war and resolved to depart. In order to put a bold front on their retreat and to prevent its being cut off, they had faced the folk of Orléans for an hour, now they marched off in good order. Captain La Hire and Sire de Loré, curious as to which way they would take and desiring to see whether they would leave anything behind them, rode three or four miles in pursuit with a hundred or a hundred and twenty horse. The English were retreating towards Meung.

A crowd of citizens, villeins and villagers rushed into the abandoned forts. The *Godons* had left their sick and their prisoners there. The townsfolk discovered also ammunition and even victuals, which were doubtless not very abundant and not very excellent. "But," says a Burgundian, "they made good cheer out of them, for they cost them little." Weapons, cannons and mortars were carried into the town. The forts were demolished so that they might henceforth be useless to the enemy.

On that day there were grand and solemn processions and a good friar preached. Clerks, nobles, captains, magistrates, men-at-arms and citizens devoutly went to church and the people cried: "Noël!"

Thus, on the 8th of May, in the morning, was the town of Orléans delivered, two hundred and nine days after the siege had been laid and nine days after the coming of the Maid.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MAID AT TOURS AND AT SELLES-EN-BERRY — THE TREATISES OF JACQUES GÉLU AND OF JEAN GERSON.

ON the morning of Sunday the 8th of May, the English departed, retreating towards Meung and Beaugency. In the afternoon of the same day, Messire Florent d'Illiers with his men-at-arms left the town and went straight to his captaincy of Châteaudun to defend it against the *Godons* who had a garrison at Marchenoir and were about to descend on Le Dunois. On the next day the other captains from La Beauce and Gâtinais returned to their towns and strongholds.

On the ninth of the same month, the combatants brought by the Sire de Rais, receiving neither pay nor entertainment, went off each man on his own account; and the Maid did not stay longer. After having taken part in the procession by which the townsfolk rendered thanks to God, she took her leave of those to whom she had come in the hour of distress and affliction and whom she now quitted in the hour of deliverance and rejoicing. They wept with joy and with gratitude and offered themselves to her for her to do with them and their goods whatever she would. And she thanked them kindly.

From Chinon the King caused to be sent to the inhabitants of the towns in his dominion and notably to those of La Rochelle and Narbonne, a letter written at three sittings, between the evening of the 9th of May and the morning of the 10th, as the tidings from Orléans were coming in. In this letter he announced the capture of the forts of Saint-Loup, Les Augustins and Les Tourelles and called upon the townsfolk to praise God and do honour to the great feats accomplished there, especially by the Maid, who "had always been present when these deeds were done." Thus did the royal power describe Jeanne's share in the victory. It was in no wise a captain's share; she held no command of any kind. But, sent by God, at least so it might be believed, her presence was a help and a consolation.

In company with a few nobles she went to Blois, stayed there two days, then went on to Tours, where the King was expected. When, on the Friday before Whitsunday, she entered the town, Charles, who had set out from Chinon, had not yet arrived. Banner in hand, she rode out to meet him and when she came to him, she took off her cap and bowed her head as far as she could over her horse. The King lifted his hood, bade her look up and kissed her. It is said that he felt glad to see her, but in reality we know not what he felt.

In this month of May, 1429, he received from Messire Jacques Gélú a treatise concerning the Maid, which he probably did not read, but which his confessor read for him. Messire Jacques Gélú, sometime Councillor to the Dauphin and now my Lord Archbishop of Embrun, had at first been afraid that the King's enemies had sent him this shepherdess to poison him, or that she was a witch possessed by demons. In the beginning he had advised her being carefully interrogated, not hastily repulsed, for appearances are deceptive and divine grace moves in a mysterious manner. Now, after having read the conclusions of the doctors of Poitiers, learnt the deliverance of Orléans, and heard the cry of the common folk, Messire Jacques Gélú no longer doubted the damsel's innocence and goodness. Seeing that the doctors were divided in their opinion of her, he drew up a brief treatise, which he sent to the King, with a very ample, a very humble, and a very worthy dedicatory epistle.

About that time, on the pavement of the cathedral of Reims a labyrinth had been traced with compass and with square. Pilgrims who were patient and painstaking followed all its winding ways. The Archbishop of Embrun's treatise is likewise a carefully planned scholastic labyrinth. Herein one advances only to retreat and retreats only to advance, but without entirely losing one's way provided one walks with sufficient patience and attention. Like all scholastics, Gélú begins by giving the reasons against his own opinion and it is not until he has followed his opponent at some length that he returns to his own argument. Into all the intricacies of his labyrinth it would take too long to follow him. But since those who were round the King consulted this theological treatise, since it was addressed to the King and since the King and his Council may have based on it their opinion of Jeanne and their conduct towards her, one is curious to know what, on so singular an occasion, they found taught and recommended therein.

Treating first of the Church's weal, Jacques Gélú holds that God raised up the Maid to confound the heretics, the number of whom, according to him, is by no means small. "To turn to confusion those who believe in God as if they believed not," he writes, "the Almighty, who hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, was pleased to succour the King of France by the hand of a child of low estate." The Archbishop of Embrun discerns five reasons why the divine succour was granted to the King; to wit: the justice of his cause, the striking merits of his predecessors, the prayers of devout souls and the sighs of the oppressed, the injustice of the enemies of the kingdom and the insatiable cruelty of the English nation.

That God should have chosen a maid to destroy armies in no way surprises him. "He created insects, such as flies and fleas, with which to humble man's

pride.” So persistently do these tiny creatures worry and weary us that they prevent our studying or acting. However strong his self-control, a man may not rest in a room infested with fleas. By the hand of a young peasant, born of poor and lowly parents, subject to menial labour, ignorant and simple beyond saying, it hath pleased Him to strike down the proud, to humble them and make His Majesty manifest unto them by the deliverance of the perishing.

That to a virgin the Most High should have revealed His designs concerning the Kingdom of the Lilies cannot astonish us; on virgins He readily bestows the gift of prophecy. To the sibyls it pleased Him to reveal mysteries hidden from all the Gentiles. On the authority of Nicanor, of Euripides, of Chrysippus, of Nennius, of Apollodorus, of Eratosthenes, of Heraclides Ponticus, of Marcus Varro and of Lactantius, Messire Jacques Gélú teaches that the sibyls were ten in number: the Persian, the Libyan, the Delphian, the Cimmerian, the Erythrean, the Samian, the Cumæan, the Hellespontine, the Phrygian and the Tiburtine. They prophesied to the Gentiles the glorious incarnation of Our Lord, the resurrection of the dead and the consummation of the ages. This example appears to him worthy of consideration.

As for Jeanne, she is in herself unknowable. Aristotle teaches: there is nothing in the intellect which hath not first been in the senses, and the senses cannot penetrate beyond experience. But what the mind cannot grasp directly it may come to comprehend by a roundabout way. When we consider her works, as far as in our human weakness we can know, we say the Maid is of God. Albeit she hath adopted the profession of arms, she never counsels cruelty; she is merciful to her enemies when they throw themselves upon her mercy and she offers peace. Finally the Archbishop of Embrun believes that this Maid is an angel sent by God, the Lord of Hosts, for the saving of the people; not that she has the nature, but that she does the work of an angel.

Concerning the conduct to be followed in circumstances so marvellous, the doctor is of opinion that in war the King should act according to human wisdom. It is written: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” In vain would an active mind have been bestowed on man were he not to make use of it in his undertakings. Long deliberation must precede prompt execution. It is not by a woman’s desires or supplications that God’s help is obtained. A prosperous issue is the fruit of action and of counsel.

But the inspiration of God must not be rejected. Wherefore the will of the Maid must be accomplished, even should that will appear doubtful and mistaken. If the words of the Maid are found to be stable, then the King must follow her and confide to her as to God the conduct of the enterprise to which she is committed. Should any doubt occur to the King, let him incline rather towards

divine than towards human wisdom, for as there is no comparing the finite with the infinite so there is no comparing the wisdom of man with the wisdom of God. Wherefore we must believe that He who sent us this child is able to impart unto her a counsel superior to man's counsel. Then from this Aristotelian reasoning the Archbishop of Embrun draws the following two-headed conclusion: "On the one hand we give it to be understood that the wisdom of this world must be consulted in the ordering of battle, the use of engines, ladders and all other implements of war, the building of bridges, the sufficient despatch of supplies, the raising of funds, and in all matters without which no enterprise can succeed save by miracle.

"But when on the other hand divine wisdom is seen to be acting in some peculiar way, then human reason must be humble and withdraw. Then it is, we observe, that the counsel of the Maid must be asked for, sought after and adopted before all else. He who gives life gives wherewithal to support life. On his workers he bestows the instruments for their work. Wherefore let us hope in the Lord. He makes the King's cause his own. Those who support it he will inspire with the wisdom necessary to make it triumphant. God leaves no work imperfect."

The Archbishop concludes his treatise by commending the Maid to the King because she inspires holy thoughts and makes manifest the works of piety. "This counsel do we give the King that every day he do such things as are well pleasing in the sight of the Lord and that he confer with the Maid concerning them. When he shall have received her advice let him practise it piously and devoutly; then shall not the Lord withdraw His hand from Him but continue His loving kindness unto him."

The great doctor Gerson, former Chancellor of the University, was then ending his days at Lyon in the monastery of Les Célestins, of which his brother was prior. His life had been full of work and weariness. In 1408 he was priest of Saint-Jean-en-Grève in Paris. In that year he delivered in his parish church the funeral oration of the Duke of Orléans, assassinated by order of the Duke of Burgundy; and he roused the passions of the mob to such a fury that he ran great danger of losing his life. At the Council of Constance, possessed by a so-called "merciful cruelty" which goaded him to send a heretic to the stake, he urged the condemnation of John Huss, regardless of the safe-conduct which the latter had received from the Emperor; for in common with all the fathers there assembled he held that according to natural law both divine and human, no promise should be kept if it were prejudicial to the Catholic Faith. With a like ardour he prosecuted in the Council the condemnation of the thesis of Jean Petit concerning the lawfulness of tyrannicide. In things temporal as well as spiritual

he advocated uniform obedience and the respect of established authority. In one of his sermons he likens the kingdom of France to the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, making the merchants and artisans the legs of the statue, “which are partly iron, partly clay, because of their labour and humility in serving and obeying....” Iron signifies labour, and clay humility. All the evil has arisen from the King and the great citizens being held in subjection by those of low estate.

Now, crushed by suffering and sorrow, he was teaching little children. “It is with them that reforms must begin,” he said.

The deliverance of the city of Orléans must have gladdened the heart of the old Orleanist partisan. The Dauphin’s Councillors, eager to set the Maid to work, had told him of the deliberations at Poitiers, and asked him, as a good servant of the house of France, for his opinion concerning them. In reply he wrote a compendious treatise on the Maid.

In this work he is careful from the first to distinguish between matters of faith and matters of devotion. In questions of faith doubt is forbidden. With regard to questions of devotion the unbeliever, to use a colloquial expression, is not necessarily damned. Three conditions are necessary if a question is to be considered as one of devotion: first, it must be edifying; second, it must be probable and attested by popular report or the testimony of the faithful; third, it must touch on nothing contrary to faith. When these conditions are fulfilled, it is fitting neither persistently to condemn nor to approve, but rather to appeal to the church.

For example, the conception of the very holy Virgin, indulgences, relics, are matters of faith and not of devotion. A relic may be worshipped in one place or another, or in several places at once. Recently the Parlement of Paris disputed concerning the head of Saint Denys, worshipped at Saint-Denys in France and likewise in the cathedral at Paris. This is a matter of devotion.

Whence it may be concluded that it is lawful to consider the question of the Maid as a matter of devotion, especially when one reflects on her motives, which are the restitution of his kingdom to her King and the very righteous expulsion or destruction of her very stubborn enemies.

And if there be those who make various statements concerning her idle talk, her frivolity, her guile, now is the time to quote the saying of Cato: “Common report is not our judge.” According to the words of the Apostle, it doth not become us to call in question the servant of God. Much better is it to abstain from judgment, as is permitted, or to submit doubtful points to ecclesiastical superiors. This is the principle followed in the canonisation of saints. The catalogue of the saints is not, strictly speaking, necessarily a matter of faith, but

of pious devotion. Nevertheless, it is not to be highly censured by any manner of man.

To come to the present case, the following circumstances are to be noted: First, the royal council and the men-at-arms were induced to believe and to obey; and they faced the risk of being put to shame by defeat under the leadership of a girl. Second, the people rejoice, and their pious faith seems to tend to the glory of God and the confounding of his enemies. Third, the enemy, even his princes, are in hiding and stricken with many terrors. They give way to weakness like a woman with child; they are overthrown like the Egyptians in the song sung by Miriam, sister of Moses, to the sound of the timbrel in the midst of the women who went out with her with timbrels and with dances: "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." And let us likewise sing the song of Miriam with the devotion which becometh our case.

Fourth, and in conclusion, this point is worthy of consideration: The Maid and her men-at-arms despise not the wisdom of men; they tempt not God. Wherefore it is plain that the Maid goes no further than what she interprets to be the instruction or inspiration received from God.

Many of the incidents of her life from childhood up have been collected in abundance and might be set forth; but these we shall not relate.

Here may be cited the examples of Deborah and of Saint Catherine who miraculously converted fifty doctors or rhetoricians, of Judith and of Judas Maccabeus. As is usually the case, there were many circumstances in their lives which were purely natural.

A first miracle is not always followed by the other miracles which men expect. Even if the Maid should be disappointed in her expectation and in ours (which God forbid) we ought not to conclude therefrom, that the first manifestation of her miraculous power proceeded from an evil spirit and not from heavenly grace; we should believe rather that our hopes have been disappointed because of our ingratitude and our blasphemy, or by some just and impenetrable judgment of God. We beseech him to turn away his anger from us and vouchsafe unto us his favour.

Herein we perceive lessons, first for the King and the Blood Royal, secondly for the King's forces and the kingdom; thirdly for the clergy and people; fourthly for the Maid. Of all these lessons the object is the same, to wit: a good life, consecrated to God, just towards others, sober, virtuous and temperate. With regard to the Maid's peculiar lesson, it is that God's grace revealed in her be employed not in caring for trifles, not in worldly advantage, nor in party hatred, nor in violent sedition, nor in avenging deeds done, nor in foolish self-

glorification, but in meekness, prayer, and thanksgiving. And let every one contribute a liberal supply of temporal goods so that peace be established and justice once more administered, and that delivered out of the hands of our enemies, God being favourable unto us, we may serve him in holiness and righteousness.

At the conclusion of his treatise, Gerson briefly examines one point of canon law which had been neglected by the doctors of Poitiers. He establishes that the Maid is not forbidden to dress as a man.

Firstly. The ancient law forbade a woman to dress as a man, and a man as a woman. This restriction, as far as strict legality is concerned, ceases to be enforced by the new law.

Secondly. In its moral bearing this law remains binding. But in such a case it is merely a matter of decency.

Thirdly. From a legal and moral standpoint this law does not refuse masculine and military attire to the Maid, whom the King of Heaven appoints His standard-bearer, in order that she may trample underfoot the enemies of justice. In the operations of divine power the end justifies the means.

Fourthly. Examples may be quoted from history alike sacred and profane, notably Camilla and the Amazons.

Jean Gerson completed this treatise on Whit-Sunday, a week after the deliverance of Orléans. It was his last work. He died in the July of that year, 1429, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

The treatise is the political testament of the great university doctor in exile. The Maid's victory gladdened the last days of his life. With his dying voice he sings the Song of Miriam. But with his rejoicings over this happy event are mingled the sad presentiments of keen-sighted old age. While in the Maid he beholds a subject for the rejoicing and edification of the people, he is afraid that the hopes she inspires may soon be disappointed. And he warns those who now exalt her in the hour of triumph not to forsake her in the day of disaster.

His dry close reasoning does not fundamentally differ from the ampler, more flowery argument of Jacques Gélú. One and the other contain the same reasons, the same proofs; and in their conclusions both doctors agree with the judges of Poitiers.

For the Poitiers doctors, for the Archbishop of Embrun, for the ex-chancellor of the University, for all the theologians of the Armagnac party the Maid's case is not a matter of faith. How could it be so before the Pope and the Council had pronounced judgment concerning it? Men are free to believe in her or not to believe in her. But it is a subject of edification; and it behoves men to meditate

upon it, not in a spirit of prejudice, persisting in doubt, but with an open mind and according to the Christian faith. Following the counsel of Gerson, kindly souls will believe that the Maid comes from God, just as they believe that the head of Saint Denys may be venerated by the faithful either in the Cathedral Church of Paris or in the abbey-church of Saint Denys in France. They will think less of literal than of spiritual truths and they will not sin by inquiring too closely.

In short neither the treatise of Jacques Gélú nor that of Jean Gerson brought much light to the King and his Council. Both treatises abounded in exhortations, but they all amounted to saying: "Be good, pious and strong, let your thoughts be humble and prudent," Concerning the most important point, the use to be made of Jeanne in the conduct of war, the Archbishop of Embrun wisely recommended: "Do what the Maid commands and prudence directs; for the rest give yourselves to works of piety and prayers of devotion." Such counsel was somewhat embarrassing to a captain like the Sire de Gaucourt and even to a man of worth like my Lord of Trèves. It appears that the clerks left the King perfect liberty of judgment and of action, and that in the end they advised him not to believe in the Maid, but to let the people and the men-at-arms believe in her.

During the ten days he spent at Tours the King kept Jeanne with him. Meanwhile the Council were deliberating as to their line of action. The royal treasury was empty. Charles could raise enough money to make gifts to the gentlemen of his household, but he had great difficulty in defraying the expenses of war. Pay was owing to the people of Orléans. They had received little and spent much. Their resources were exhausted and they demanded payment. In May and in June the King distributed among the captains, who had defended the town, sums amounting to forty-one thousand six hundred and thirty-one livres. He had gained his victory cheaply. The total cost of the defence of Orléans was one hundred and ten thousand livres. The townsfolk did the rest; they gave even their little silver spoons.

It would doubtless have been expedient to attempt to destroy that formidable army of Sir John Fastolf which had lately terrified the good folk of Orléans. But no one knew where to find it. It had disappeared somewhere between Orléans and Paris. It would have been necessary to go forth to seek it; that was impossible, and no one thought of doing such a thing. So scientific a manœuvre was never dreamed of in the warfare of those days. An expedition to Normandy was suggested; and the idea was so natural that the King was already imagined to be at Rouen. Finally it was decided to attempt the capture of the châteaux the English held on the Loire, both below and above Orléans, Jargeau, Meung, Beaugency. A useful undertaking and one which presented no very great

difficulties, unless it involved an encounter with Sir John Fastolf's army, and whether it would or no it was impossible to tell.

Without further delay my Lord the Bastard marched on Jargeau with a few knights and some of Poton's soldiers of fortune; but the Loire was high and its waters filled the trenches. Being unprovided with siege train, they retreated after having inflicted some hurt on the English and slain the commander of the town.

By the reasons of the captains the Maid set little store. She listened to her Voices alone, and they spoke to her words which were infinitely simple. Her one idea was to accomplish her mission. Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret and Saint Michael the Archangel, had sent her into France not to calculate the resources of the royal treasury, not to decree aids and taxes, not to treat with men-at-arms, with merchants and the conductors of convoys, not to draw up plans of campaign and negotiate truces, but to lead the Dauphin to his anointing. Wherefore it was to Reims that she wished to take him, not that she knew how to go there, but she believed that God would guide her. Delay, tardiness, deliberation saddened and irritated her. When with the King she urged him gently.

Many times she said to him: "I shall live a year, barely longer. During that year let as much as possible be done."

Then she enumerated the four charges which she must accomplish during that time. After having delivered Orléans she must drive the *Godons* out of France, lead the King to be crowned and anointed at Reims and rescue the Duke of Orléans from the hands of the English. One day she grew impatient and went to the King when he was in one of those closets of carved wainscot constructed in the great castle halls for intimate or family gatherings. She knocked at the door and entered almost immediately. There she found the King conversing with Maître Gérard Machet, his confessor, my Lord the Bastard, the Sire de Trèves and a favourite noble of his household, by name Messire Christophe d'Harcourt. She knelt embracing the King's knees (for she was conversant with the rules of courtesy), and said to him: "Fair Dauphin, do not so long and so frequently deliberate in council, but come straightway to Reims, there to receive your rightful anointing."

The King looked graciously upon her but answered nothing. The Lord d'Harcourt, having heard that the Maid held converse with angels and saints, was curious to know whether the idea of taking the King to Reims had really been suggested to her by her heavenly visitants. Describing them by the word she herself used, he asked: "Is it your Council who speak to you of such things?"

She replied: "Yes, in this matter I am urged forward." Straightway my Lord d'Harcourt responded: "Will you not here in the King's presence tell us the

manner of your Council when they speak to you?”

At this request Jeanne blushed.

Willing to spare her constraint and embarrassment, the King said kindly: “Jeanne, does it please you to answer this question before these persons here present?”

But Jeanne addressing my Lord d’Harcourt said: “I understand what you desire to know and I will tell you willingly.”

And straightway she gave the King to understand what agony she endured at not being understood and she told of her inward consolation: “Whenever I am sad because what I say by command of Messire is not readily believed, I go apart and to Messire I make known my complaint, saying that those to whom I speak are not willing to believe me. And when I have finished my prayer, straightway I hear a voice saying unto me: ‘Daughter of God, go, I will be thy help.’ And this voice fills me with so great a joy, that in this condition I would forever stay.”

While she was repeating the words spoken by the Voice, Jeanne raised her eyes to heaven. The nobles present were struck by the divine expression on the maiden’s face. But those eyes bathed in tears, that air of rapture, which filled my Lord the Bastard with amazement, was not an ecstasy, it was the imitation of an ecstasy. The scene was at once simple and artificial. It reveals the kindness of the King, who was incapable of wounding the child in any way, and the light-heartedness with which the nobles of the court believed or pretended to believe in the most wonderful marvels. It proves likewise that henceforth the little Saint’s dignifying the project of the coronation with the authority of a divine revelation was favourably regarded by the Royal Council.

The Maid accompanied the King to Loches and stayed with him until after the 23rd of May.

The people believed in her. As she passed through the streets of Loches they threw themselves before her horse; they kissed the Saint’s hands and feet. Maître Pierre de Versailles, a monk of Saint-Denys in France, one of her interrogators at Poitiers, seeing her receive these marks of veneration, rebuked her on theological grounds: “You do wrong,” he said, “to suffer such things to which you are not entitled. Take heed: you are leading men into idolatry.”

Then Jeanne, reflecting on the pride which might creep into her heart, said: “In truth I could not keep from it, were not Messire watching over me.”

She was displeased to see certain old wives coming to salute her; that was a kind of adoration which alarmed her. But poor folk who came to her she never repulsed. She would not hurt them, but aided them as far as she could.

With marvellous rapidity the fame of her holiness had been spread abroad throughout the whole of France. Many pious persons were wearing medals of

lead or some other metal, stamped with her portrait, according to the customary mode of honouring the memory of saints. Paintings or sculptured figures of her were placed in chapels. At mass the priest recited as a collect “the Maid’s prayer for the realm of France:”

“O God, author of peace, who without bow or arrow dost destroy those enemies who hope in themselves, we beseech thee O Lord, to protect us in our adversity; and, as Thou hast delivered Thy people by the hand of a woman, to stretch out to Charles our King, Thy conquering arm, that our enemies, who make their boast in multitudes and glory in bows and arrows, may be overcome by him at this present, and vouchsafe that at the end of his days he with his people may appear gloriously before Thee who art the way, the truth and the life. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.”

In those days the saintly, both men and women, were consulted in all the difficulties of life. The more they were deemed simple and innocent the more counsel was asked of them. For if of themselves they knew nothing then all the surer was it that the voice of God was to be heard in their words. The Maid was believed to have no intelligence of her own, wherefore she was held capable of solving the most difficult questions with infallible wisdom. It was observed that knowing nought of the arts of war, she waged war better than captains, whence it was concluded that everything, which in her holy ignorance she undertook, she would worthily accomplish. Thus at Toulouse it occurred to a *capitoul* to consult her on a financial question. In that city the indignation of the townsfolk had been aroused because the guardians of the mint had been ordered to issue coins greatly inferior to those which had been previously in circulation. From April till June the *capitouls* had been endeavouring to get this order revoked. On the 2nd of June, the *capitoul* , Pierre Flamenc, proposed that the Maid should be written to concerning the evils resulting from the corruption of the coinage and that she should be asked to suggest a remedy. Pierre Flamenc made this proposal at the Capitole because he thought that a saint was a good counsellor in all matters, especially in anything which concerned the coinage, particularly when, like the Maid, she was the friend of the King.

From Loches Jeanne sent a little gold ring to the Dame de Laval, who had doubtless asked for some object she had touched. Fifty-four years previously Jeanne Dame de Laval had married Sire Bertrand Du Guesclin whose memory the French venerated and who in the House of Orléans was known as the tenth of *Les Preux* . Dame Jeanne’s renown, however, fell short of that of Tiphaine Raguenel, astrologer and fairy, who had been Sire Bertrand’s first wife. Jeanne

was a choleric person and a miser. Driven out of her domain of Laval by the English, she lived in retirement at Vitré with her daughter Anne. Thirteen years before, the latter had incurred her mother's displeasure by secretly marrying a landless younger son of a noble house. When Dame Jeanne discovered it she imprisoned her daughter in a dungeon and welcomed the younger son by shooting at him with a cross-bow. After which the two ladies dwelt together in peace.

From Loches the Maid went to Selles-en-Berry, a considerable town on the Cher. Here, shortly before had met the three estates of the kingdom; and here the troops were now gathering.

On Saturday, the 4th of June, she received a herald sent by the people of Orléans to bring her tidings of the English. As commander in war they recognised none but her.

Meanwhile, surrounded by monks, and side by side with men-at-arms, like a nun she lived apart, a saintly life. She ate and drank little. She communicated once a week and confessed frequently. During mass at the moment of elevation, at confession and when she received the body of Our Lord she used to weep many tears. Every evening, at the hour of vespers, she would retire into a church and have the bells rung for about half an hour to summon the mendicant friars who followed the army. Then she would begin to pray while the brethren sang an anthem in honour of the Virgin Mary.

While practising as far as she was able the austerities required by extreme piety, she appeared magnificently attired, like a lord, for indeed she held her lordship from God. She wore the dress of a knight, a small hat, doublet and hose to match, a fine cloak of silk and cloth of gold well lined and shoes laced on the outer side of the foot. Such attire in no wise scandalised even the most austere members of the Dauphin's party. They read in holy Scripture that Esther and Judith, inspired by the Lord, loaded themselves with ornaments; true it was for sexual reasons and in order for the salvation of Israel to attract Ahasuerus and Holophernes. Wherefore they held that when Jeanne decked herself with masculine adornments, in order to appear before the men-at-arms as an angel giving victory to the Christian King, far from yielding to the vanities of the world, she, like Esther and Judith, had nothing in her heart but the interest of the holy nation and the glory of God. The English and Burgundian clerks on the other hand converted into scandal what was a subject of edification, and maintained that she was a woman dissolute in dress and in manners.

For seven years now Saint Michael the Archangel and the Saints Catherine and Margaret, wearing rich and precious crowns, had been visiting and conversing with her. It was when the bells were ringing, at the hour of compline

and of matins, that she could best hear their words. In those days bells of all kinds, large and small, metropolitan, parochial or conventual, sounded in peals, or, chiming harmoniously, in voices grave or gay, spoke to all men and of all things. Their song descended from the sky to mark the ecclesiastical and civic calendar. They called priests and people to church; they mourned for the dead and they praised God; they announced fairs and field work; they clashed portentous tidings through the sky, and in times of war they called to arms and sounded the alarm. Friendly to the husbandman they scattered the tempest, they warded off hail-storms and drove away pestilence. They put to flight those demons that, flying ceaselessly through the air, haunt the children of men; and to their blessed sound was attributed the power of calming violence. Saint Catharine, she who visited Jeanne every day, was the patron of bells and bell-ringers. Thus many bells bore her name. In the ringing of bells as in the rustling of leaves, Jeanne was wont to hear her Voices. She seldom heard them without seeing a light in the direction whence they came. Those Voices called her: "Jeanne, daughter of God!" Often the Archangel and the Saints appeared to her. When they came she did them reverence, bending her knee and bowing her head; she kissed their feet, knowing it to be a greater mark of respect than kissing the countenance. She was conscious of the fragrance and grateful warmth of their glorified bodies.

Saint Michael the Archangel did not come alone. There accompanied him angels so numerous and so tiny that they danced like sparks in the damsel's dazzled eyes. When the saints and the Archangel went away, she wept with grief because they had not taken her with them. In like manner an angel visited Judith in the camp of Holofernes.

One day Jeanne's equerry, Jean d'Aulon, asked her what her Council was, just as my Lord d'Harcourt had done. She replied that she had three councillors, one of whom was always with her. Another was constantly going and coming; the third was the one with whom the other two deliberated.

Sire d'Aulon, more curious than the King, besought and requested her to let him see this Council for once.

She replied: "Your virtues are not great enough and you are not worthy to behold it."

The good squire never asked again. If he had read the Bible he would have known that Elisha's servant did not see the angels beheld by the prophet (2 Kings VI, 16, 17).

And yet Jeanne imagined that her Council had appeared to the King and his court.

“My King,” she said later, “my King and many besides saw and heard the Voices that came to me. The Count of Clermont and two or three others were with him.”

She believed it was so. But in reality she never showed her Voices to anyone. Not even, despite what has been said to the contrary, to that Guy de Cailly who had been following her since Chécy.

With Brother Pasquerel Jeanne engaged in pious conversation. To him she often expressed the desire that the Church after her death should pray for her and for all the French slain in the war.

“If I were to depart from this world,” she used to say to him, “I should like the King to build chantries, where prayers should be offered to Messire for the salvation of the souls of those who died in war or for the defence of the realm.”

Such a wish was common to all devout souls. What Christian in those days did not hold the practice of saying masses for the dead to be good and salutary? Thus, in the matter of devotion, the Maid was in accord with Duke Charles of Orléans, who, in one of his complaints, recommends the saying and singing of masses for the souls of those who had suffered violent death in the service of the realm.

She said one day to the good brother: “There is succour that I am appointed to bring.”

And Pasquerel, albeit he had studied the Bible, cried out in amazement: “Such a history as yours there hath never been before in the world. Nought like unto it can be read in any book.”

Jeanne answered him even more boldly than the doctors at Poitiers: “Messire has a book in which no clerk, however perfect his learning, has ever read.”

She had received her mission from God alone, and she read in a book sealed against all the doctors of the Church.

On the reverse of her standard, sprinkled by mendicants with holy water, she had had a dove painted, holding in its beak a scroll, whereon were written the words “in the name of the King of Heaven.” These were the armorial bearings she had received from her Council. The emblem and the device seemed appropriate to her, since she proclaimed that God had sent her, and since at Orléans she had given the sign promised at Poitiers. The King, notwithstanding, changed this shield for arms representing a crown supported upon a sword between two flowers-de-luce and indicating clearly what was the aid that the Maid of God was bringing to the realm of France. It is said that she regretted having to abandon the arms communicated to her by divine revelation.

She prophesied, and, as happens to all prophets, she did not always foretell what was to come to pass. It was the fate of the prophet Jonah himself. And doctors explain how the prophecies of true prophets cannot be all fulfilled.

She had said: “Before Saint John the Baptist’s Day, in 1429, there shall not be one Englishman, howsoever strong and valiant, to be seen throughout France, either in battle or in the open field.”

The nativity of Saint John the Baptist is celebrated on the 24th of June.

CHAPTER XV

THE TAKING OF JARGEAU — THE BRIDGE OF MEUNG — BEAUGENCY

ON Monday, the 6th of June, the King lodged at Saint-Aignan near Selles-en-Berry. Among the gentlemen of his company were two sons of that Dame de Laval who, in her widowhood, had made the mistake of loving a landless cadet. André, the younger, at the age of twenty, had just passed under the cloud of a disgrace common to nearly all nobles in those days; his grandmother's second husband, Sire Bertrand Du Guesclin, had experienced it several times. Taken prisoner in the château of Laval by Sir John Talbot, he had incurred a heavy debt in order to furnish the sixteen thousand golden crowns of his ransom.

Being in great need of money, the two young nobles offered their services to the King, who received them very well, gave them not a crown, but said he would show them the Maid. And as he was going with them from Saint-Aignan to Selles, he summoned the Saint, who straightway, armed at all points save her head, and lance in hand, rode out to meet the King. She greeted the two young nobles heartily and returned with them to Selles. The eldest, Lord Guy, she received in the house where she was lodging, opposite the church, and called for wine. Such was the custom among princes. Cups of wine were brought, into which the guests dipped slices of bread called sops. When offering him the wine cup, the Maid said to Lord Guy: "I will shortly give you to drink at Paris."

She told him that, three days before, she had sent a gold ring to Dame Jeanne de Laval.

"It was a small matter," she added graciously. "I should like to have sent her something of greater value, considering her reputation."

That same day, at the hour of vespers, she set out from Selles for Romorantin with a numerous company of men-at-arms and train-bands, commanded by Marshal de Boussac. She was surrounded by mendicant friars and one of her brothers went with her. She wore white armour and a hood. Her horse was brought to her at the door of her house. It was a great black charger which resolutely refused to let her mount him. She had him led to the Cross by the roadside, opposite the church, and there she leapt into the saddle. Whereupon Lord Guy marvelled; for he saw that the charger was as still as if he had been bound. She turned her horse's head towards the church porch, and in her clear woman's voice cried: "Ye priests and churchmen, walk in processions and pray to God."

Then, gaining the highroad: "Go forward, go forward," she said.

In her hand she carried a little axe. Her page bore her standard furled.

The meeting-place was Orléans. On Thursday, the 9th of June, in the evening, Jeanne passed over the bridge she had crossed on the 8th of May. Saturday, the 11th, the army set out for Jargeau. It consisted of horse brought by the Duke of Alençon, the Count of Vendôme, the Bastard, the Marshal de Boussac, Captain La Hire, Messire Florent d'Illiers, Messire Jamet du Tillay, Messire Thudal de Kermoisan of Brittany, as well as of contingents furnished by the communes, in all, perhaps eight thousand combatants, many of whom were armed with pikes, axes, cross-bows and leaden mallets. The young Duke of Alençon was placed in command. He was not remarkable for his intelligence. But he knew how to ride, and in those days that was the only knowledge indispensable to a general. Again the people of Orléans defrayed the cost of the expedition. For the payment of the fighting men they contributed three thousand livres, for their feeding, seven hogsheads of corn. At their own request, the King imposed on them a new *taille* of three thousand livres. At their own expense they despatched workmen of all trades, — masons, carpenters, smiths. They lent their artillery. They sent culverins, cannons, La Bergère, and the large mortar to which four horses were harnessed, with the gunners Megret and Jean Boillève. They furnished ammunition, engines, arrows, ladders, pickaxes, spades, mattocks; and all were marked, for they were a methodical folk. Everything for the siege was sent to the Maid. For in this undertaking she was the one commander they recognised, not the Duke of Alençon, not even the Bastard their own lord's noble brother. For the inhabitants of Orléans, Jeanne was the leader of the siege; and to Jeanne, before the besieged town, they despatched two of their citizens, — Jean Leclerc and François Joachim. After the citizens of Orléans, the Sire de Rais contributed most to the expenses of the siege of Jargeau. This unfortunate noble spent thoughtlessly right and left, while rich burgesses made great profits by lending to him at a high rate of interest. The sorry state of his affairs was shortly to bring him to attempt their readjustment by vowing his soul to the devil.

The town of Jargeau, which was shortly to be taken after a severe siege, had surrendered to the English without resistance on the 5th of October in the previous year. The bridge leading to the town from the Beauce bank was furnished with two castlets. The town itself, surrounded by walls and towers, was not strongly fortified; but its means of defence had been improved by the English. Warned that the army of the French King was coming to besiege it, the Earl of Suffolk and his two brothers threw themselves into the town, with five hundred knights, squires, and other fighting men, as well as two hundred picked bowmen. The Duke of Alençon with six hundred horse was at the head of the

force, and with him, the Maid. The first night they slept in the woods. On the morrow, at daybreak, my Lord the Bastard, my Lord Florent d'Illiers, and several other captains joined them. They were in a great hurry to reach Jargeau. Suddenly they hear that Sir John Fastolf is at hand, coming from Paris with two thousand combatants, bringing supplies and artillery to Jargeau.

This was the army which had been the cause of Jeanne's anxiety on the 4th of May, because her saints had not told her where Fastolf was. The captains held a council of war. Many thought the siege ought to be abandoned and that the army should go to meet Fastolf. Some actually went off at once. Jeanne exhorted the men-at-arms to continue their march on Jargeau. Where Sir John Fastolf's army was, she knew no more than the others; her reasons were not of this world.

"Be not afraid of any armed host whatsoever," she said, "and make no difficulty of attacking the English, for Messire leads you."

And again she said: "Were I not assured that Messire leads, I would rather be keeping sheep than running so great a danger."

She gained a better hearing from the Duke of Alençon than from any of the Orléans leaders. Those who had gone were recalled and the march on Jargeau was continued.

The suburbs of the town appeared undefended; but, when the French King's men approached, they found the English posted in front of the outbuildings, wherefore they were compelled to retreat. When the Maid beheld this, she seized her standard and threw herself upon the enemy, calling on the fighting men to take courage. That night, the French King's men were able to encamp in the suburbs. They kept no watch, and yet from the Duke of Alençon's own avowal they would have been in great danger if the English had made a sally. The Maid's judgment was even more fully justified than she expected. Everything in her army depended upon the grace of God.

The very next day, in the morning the besiegers brought their siege train and their mortars up to the walls. The Orléans cannon fired upon the town and did great damage. Three of La Bergère's volleys wrecked the greatest tower on the fortifications.

The train-bands reached Jargeau on Saturday, the 11th. Straightway, without staying to take counsel, they hastened to the trenches and began the assault. They were too zealous; consequently, they went badly to work, received no aid from the men-at-arms and were driven back in disorder.

On Saturday night, the Maid, who was accustomed to summon the enemy before fighting, approached the entrenchments, and cried out to the English: "Surrender the town to the King of Heaven and to King Charles, and depart, or it will be the worse for you."

To this summons the English paid no heed, albeit they had a great desire to come to some understanding. The Earl of Suffolk came to my Lord the Bastard, and told him that if he would refrain from the attack, the town should be surrendered to him. The English asked for a fortnight's respite, after which time, they would undertake to withdraw immediately, they and their horses, provided, doubtless, that by that time they had not been relieved. On both sides such conditional surrenders were common. The Sire de Baudricourt had signed one at Vaucouleurs just before Jeanne's arrival there. In this case it was mere trickery to ask the French to enter into such an agreement just when Sir John Fastolf was coming with artillery and supplies. It has been asserted that the Bastard was taken in this snare; but such a thing is incredible; he was far too wily for that. Nevertheless, on the morrow, which was Sunday and the 12th of the month, the Duke of Alençon and the nobles, who were holding a council concerning the measures for the capture of the town, were told that Captain La Hire was conferring with the Earl of Suffolk. They were highly displeased. Captain La Hire, who was not a general, could not treat in his own name, and had doubtless received powers from my Lord the Bastard. The latter commanded for the Duke, a prisoner in the hands of the English, while the Duke of Alençon commanded for the King; and hence the disagreement.

The Maid, who was always ready to show mercy to prisoners when they surrendered and at the same time always ready to fight, said: "If they will, let them in their jackets of mail depart from Jargeau with their lives! If they will not, the town shall be stormed."

The Duke of Alençon, without even inquiring the terms of the capitulation, had Captain La Hire recalled.

He came, and straightway the ladders were brought. The heralds sounded the trumpets and cried: "To the assault."

The Maid unfurled her standard, and fully armed, wearing on her head one of those light helmets known as *chapelines*, she went down into the trenches with the King's men and the train-bands, well within reach of arrows and cannon-balls. She kept by the Duke of Alençon's side, saying: "Forward! fair duke, to the assault."

The Duke, who was not so courageous as she, thought that she went rather hastily to work; and this he gave her to understand.

Then she encouraged him: "Fear not. God's time is the right time. When He wills it you must open the attack. Go forward, He will prepare the way."

And seeing him lack confidence, she reminded him of the promise she had recently made concerning him in the Abbey of Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur. "Oh!

Fair Duke, can you be afraid? Do you not remember that I promised your wife to bring you back safe and sound?"

In the thick of the attack, she noticed on the wall one of those long thin mortars, which, from the manner of its charging, was called a breechloader. Seeing it hurl stones on the very spot where the King's fair cousin was standing, she realised the danger, but not for herself. "Move away," she said quickly. "That cannon will kill you."

The Duke had not moved more than a few yards, when a nobleman of Anjou, the Sire Du Lude, having taken the place he had quitted, was killed by a ball from that same cannon. The Duke of Alençon marvelled at her prophetic gift. Doubtless the Maid had been sent to save him, but she had not been sent to save the Sire Du Lude. The angels of the Lord are sent for the salvation of some, for the destruction of others. When the French King's men reached the wall, the Earl of Suffolk cried out for a parley with the Duke of Alençon. No heed was paid to him and the assault continued.

The attack had lasted four hours, when Jeanne, standard in hand, climbed up a ladder leaning against the rampart. A stone fired from a cannon struck her helmet and knocked it with its escutcheon, bearing her arms, off her head. They thought she was crushed, but she rose quickly and cried to the fighting men: "Up, friends, up! Messire has doomed the English. They are ours at this moment. Be of good cheer."

The wall was scaled and the French King's men penetrated into the town. The English fled into La Beauce and the French rushed in pursuit of them. Guillaume Regnault, a squire of Auvergne, came up with the Earl of Suffolk on the bridge and took him prisoner.

"Are you a gentleman?" asked Suffolk.

"Yes."

"Are you a knight?"

"No."

The Earl of Suffolk dubbed him a knight and surrendered to him.

Very soon the rumour ran that the Earl of Suffolk had surrendered on his knees to the Maid. It was even stated that he had asked to surrender to her as to the bravest lady in the world. But it is more likely that he would have surrendered to the lowest menial of the army rather than to a woman whom he held to be a witch possessed of the devil.

John Pole, Suffolk's brother, was likewise taken on the bridge. The Duke's third brother, Alexander Pole, was slain in the same place or drowned in the Loire.

The garrison surrendered at discretion. Now, as always, no great harm was done during the battle, but afterwards the conquerors made up for it. Five hundred English were massacred; the nobles alone were held to ransom. And over them, the French fell to quarrelling. The French nobles kept them all for themselves; the train-bands claimed their share, and, not getting it, began to destroy everything. What the nobles could save was carried off during the night, by water, to Orléans. The town was completely sacked; the old church, which had served the *Godons* as a magazine, was pillaged.

Including killed and wounded, the French had not lost twenty men.

Without disarming, the Maid and the knights returned to Orléans. To celebrate the taking of Jargeau, the magistrates organised a public procession. An eloquent sermon was preached by a Jacobin monk, Brother Robert Baignart.

The inhabitants of Orléans presented the Duke of Alençon with six casks of wine, the Maid with four, the Count of Vendôme with two.

As an acknowledgment of the good and acceptable services rendered by the holy maiden, the councillors of the captive Duke Charles of Orléans, gave her a green cloak and a robe of crimson Flemish cloth or fine Brussels purple. Jean Luillier, who furnished the stuff, asked eight crowns for two ells of fine Brussels at four crowns the ell; two crowns for the lining of the robe; two crowns for an ell of yellowish green cloth, making in all twelve golden crowns. Jean Luillier was a young woollen draper who adored the Maid and regarded her as an angel of God. He had a good heart; but fear of the English dazzled him, and where they were concerned caused him to see double. One of his kinsfolk was a member of the council elected in 1429. He himself was to be appointed magistrate a little later.

Jean Bourgeois, tailor, asked one golden crown for the making of the robe and the cloak, as well as for furnishing white satin, taffeta, and other stuffs.

The town had previously given the Maid half an ell of cloth of two shades of green worth thirty-five *sous* of Paris to make “nettles” for her gown. Nettles were the Duke of Orléans’ device, green or purple or crimson his colours. This green was no longer the bright colour of earlier days, it had gradually been growing darker as the fortunes of the house declined. It had first been a vivid green, then a brownish shade, and, finally, the tint of the faded leaf with a suggestion of black in it which signified sorrow and mourning. The Maid’s colour was *feuillemort*. She, like the officers of the duchy and the men of the train-bands, wore the Orléans livery; and thus they made of her a kind of herald-at-arms or heraldic angel.

The cloak of yellowish green and the robe embroidered with nettles, she must have been glad to wear for love of Duke Charles, whom the English had treated

with such sore despite. Having come to defend the heritage of the captive prince, she said that in Jesus' name, the good Duke of Orléans was on her mind and she was confident that she would deliver him. Her design was first to summon the English to give him up; then, if they refused, to cross the sea and with an army to seek him in England. In case such means failed her, she had thought of another course which she would adopt, with the permission of her saints. She would ask the King if he would let her take prisoners, believing that she could take enough to exchange for Duke Charles. Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret had promised her that thus his deliverance would take her less than three years and longer than one. Such were the pious dreams of a child lulled to sleep by the sound of her village bells! Deeming it just that she should labour and suffer to rescue her princes from trouble and weariness, she used to say, like a good servant: "I know that in matters of bodily ease God loves my King and the Duke of Orléans better than me; and I know it because it hath been revealed unto me."

Then, speaking of the captive duke she would say: "My Voices have revealed much to me concerning him. Duke Charles hath oftener been the subject of my revelations than any man living except my King."

In reality, all that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret had done was to tell her of the well-known misfortunes of the Prince. Valentine of Milan's son and Isabelle Romée's daughter were separated by a gulf broader and deeper than the ocean which stretched between them. They dwelt at the antipodes of the world of souls, and all the saints of Paradise would have been unable to explain one to the other.

All the same Duke Charles was a good prince and a debonair; he was kind and he was pitiful. More than any other he possessed the gift of pleasing. He charmed by his grace, albeit but ill-looking and of weak constitution. His temperament was so out of harmony with his position that he may be said to have endured his life rather than to have lived it. His father assassinated by night in the Rue Barbette in Paris by order of Duke John; his mother a perennial fount of tears, dying of anger and of grief in a Franciscan nunnery; the two S's, standing for *Soupirs* (sighs) and *Souci* (care), the emblems and devices of her mourning, revealing her ingenious mind fancifully elegant even in despair; the Armagnacs, the Burgundians, the Cabochiens, cutting each other's throats around him; these were the sights he had witnessed when little more than a child. Then he had been wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Azincourt.

Now, for fourteen years, dragged from castle to castle, from one end to the other of the island of fogs; imprisoned within thick walls, closely guarded, receiving two or three of his countrymen at long intervals, but never permitted to

converse with one except before witnesses, he felt old before his time, blighted by misfortune. "Fruit fallen in its greenness, I was put to ripen on prison straw. I am winter fruit," he said of himself. In his captivity, he suffered without hope, knowing that on his death-bed Henry V had recommended his brother not to give him up at any price.

Kind to others, kind to himself, he took refuge in his own thoughts, which were as bright and clear as his life was dark and sad. In the gloom of the stern castles of Windsor and of Bolingbroke, in the Tower of London, side by side with his gaolers, he lived and moved in the world of phantasy of the *Romance of the Rose*. Venus, Cupid, Hope, Fair-Welcome, Pleasure, Pity, Danger, Sadness, Care, Melancholy, Sweet-Looks were around the desk, on which, in the deep embrasure of a window, beneath the sun's rays, he wrote his ballads, as delicate and fresh as an illumination on the page of a manuscript. For him it was the world of allegory that really existed. He wandered in the forest of Long Expectation; he embarked on the vessel Good Tidings. He was a poet; Beauty was his lady; and courteously did he sing of her. From his verses one would say that he was but the Captive of Lord Love.

He was left in ignorance of the affairs of his duchy; and, if he ever concerned himself about it, it was when he collected the books of King Charles V which had been bought by the Duke of Bedford and resold to London merchants; or when he commanded that on the approach of the English to Blois, its fine tapestries and his father's library should be carried off to La Rochelle. After Beauty rich hangings and delicate miniatures were what he loved most in the world. The bright sunshine of France, the lovely month of May, dancing and ladies were what he longed for most. He was cured of prowess and of chivalry.

Some have wished to believe that from his duchy news reached him of the Maid's coming. They have gone so far as to imagine that a faithful servant kept him informed of the happy incidents of May and June, 1429; but nothing is less certain. On the contrary, the probability is that the English refused to let him receive any message, and that he was totally ignorant of all that was going on in the two kingdoms.

Possibly he did not care for news of the war as much as one might expect. He hoped nothing from men-at-arms; and it was not to his fair cousins of France and to feats of prowess and battles that he looked for deliverance. He knew too much about them. It was in peace that he put his trust, both for himself and for his people. Since the fathers were dead, he thought that the sons might forgive and forget. He placed his hope in his cousin of Burgundy; and he was right, for the fortunes of the English were in the hands of Duke Philip. Charles brought himself, or at any rate he was to bring himself later, to recognise the suzerainty

of the King of England. It is less important to consider the weakness of men than the force of circumstances. And the prisoner could never do enough to obtain peace: "joy's greatest treasure."

No, despite her revelations, the picture Jeanne imagined of her fair Duke was not the true one. They were never to meet; but if they had met there would have been serious misunderstandings between them, and they would have remained incomprehensible one to the other. Jeanne's elemental, straight-forward way of thinking could never have accorded with the ideas of so great a noble and so courteous a poet. They could never have understood each other because she was simple, he subtle; because she was a prophetess while he was filled with courtly knowledge and lettered grace; because she believed, and he was as one not believing; because she was a daughter of the common folk and a saint ascribing all sovereignty to God, while for him law consisted in feudal uses and customs, alliances and treaties; because, in short, they held conflicting ideas concerning life and the world. The Maid's mission, her being sent by Messire to recover his duchy for him, would never have appealed to the good Duke; and Jeanne would never have understood his behaviour towards his English and Burgundian cousins. It was better they should never meet.

The capture of Jargeau had given the French control of the upper Loire. In order to free the city of Orléans from all danger, it was necessary to make sure of the banks of the lower river. There the English still held Meung and Beaugency. On Tuesday, the 14th of June, at the hour of vespers, the army took the field.

They passed through La Sologne, and that same evening gained the Bridge of Meung, situated above the town and separated from its walls by a broad meadow. Like most bridges, it was defended by a castlet at each end; and the English had provided it with an earthen outwork, as they had done for Les Tourelles at Orléans. They defended it badly, however, and the French King's men forced their way in before nightfall. They left a garrison there, and went out to encamp in Beauce, almost under the walls. The young Duke of Alençon lodged in a church with a few men-at-arms; and, as was his wont, did not keep watch. He was surprised and ran great danger.

The town garrison, which was a small one, was commanded by Lord Scales, and "the Child of Warwick." The next day, early in the morning, the King's men, passing within a cannon shot of the town of Meung, marched straight on Beaugency, which they reached in the morning.

The ancient little town, built on the side of a hill and girt around with vineyards, gardens, and cornfields, sloped before them towards the green valley

of the Ru. Straight in front of them rose its square tower of somewhat proud aspect, although it had oftentimes been taken. The suburbs were not fortified; but the French, when they entered them, were riddled by a shower of arrows of every kind, fired by archers concealed in dwellings and outhouses. On both sides there were killed and wounded. Finally, the English retreated into the castle and the bridge bastions.

The Duke of Alençon stationed sentinels in front of the castle to watch the English. Just then, he saw coming towards him, two nobles of Brittany, the Lords of Rostrenen and of Kermoisan, who said to him: "The Constable asks the besiegers for entertainment."

Arthur of Brittany, Sire de Richemont, Constable of France, had spent the winter in Poitou waging war against the troops of the Sire de La Trémouille. Now in defiance of the King's prohibition the Constable came to join the King's men. He had crossed the Loire at Amboise and arrived before Beaugency with six hundred men-at-arms and four hundred archers. His coming caused the captains great embarrassment. Some esteemed him a man of strong will and great courage. But many were dependent upon the Sire de La Trémouille, as for example the poor squire, Jean d'Aulon. The Duke of Alençon wanted to retreat, alleging that the King had commanded him not to receive the Constable.

"If the Constable comes, I shall retire," he said to Jeanne.

To the Breton nobles he replied, that if the Constable came into the camp, the Maid, and the besiegers would fight against him.

So decided was he that he mounted his horse to ride straight up to the Bretons. The Maid, out of respect for him and for the King, was preparing to follow him. But many of the captains restrained the Duke of Alençon deeming that now was not the time to break a lance with the Constable of France.

On the morrow a loud alarm was sounded in the camp. The heralds were crying: "To arms!" The English were said to be approaching in great numbers. The young Duke still wanted to retreat in order to avoid receiving the Constable. This time Jeanne dissuaded him: "We must stand together," she said.

He listened to this counsel and went forth to meet the Constable, followed by the Maid, my Lord the Bastard, and the Lords of Laval. Near the leper's hospital at Beaugency they encountered a fine company. As they approached, a thick-lipped little man, dark and frowning, alighted from his horse. It was Arthur of Brittany. The Maid embraced his knees as she was accustomed to do when holding converse with the great ones of heaven and earth. Thus did every baron when he met one nobler than himself.

The Constable spoke to her as a good Catholic, a devout servant of God and the Church, saying: "Jeanne, I have heard that you wanted to fight against me.

Whether you are sent by God I know not. If you are I do not fear you. For God knows that my heart is right. If you are sent by the devil I fear you still less.”

He was entitled to speak thus, for he made a point of never acknowledging the devil’s power over him. His love of God he showed by seeking out wizards and witches with a greater zeal than was displayed by bishops and inquisitors. In France, in Poitou, and in Brittany he had sent more to the stake than any other man living.

The Duke of Alençon dared not either dismiss him or grant him a lodging for the night. It was the custom for new comers to keep the watch. The Constable with his company kept watch that night in front of the castle.

Without more ado the young Duke of Alençon proceeded to the attack. Here, again, those who bore the brunt of the attack and provided for the siege were the citizens of Orléans. The magistrates of the town had sent by water from Meung to Beaugency the necessary siege train, ladders, pickaxes, mattocks, and those great pent-houses beneath which the besiegers protected themselves like tortoises under their shells. They had sent also cannons and mortars. The gay gunner, Master Jean de Montesclère, was there. All these supplies were addressed to the Maid. The magistrate, Jean Boillève, brought bread and wine in a barge. Throughout Friday, the 7th, mortars and cannon hurled stones on the besieged. At the same time from the valley and from the river the attack was being made from barges. On the 17th of June, at midnight, Sir Richard Gethyn, Bailie of Évreux, who commanded the garrison, offered to capitulate. It was agreed that the English should surrender the castle and bridge, and depart on the morrow, taking with them horses and harness with each man his property to the value of not more than one silver mark. Further, they were required to swear that they would not take up arms again before the expiration of ten days. On these terms, the next day, at sunrise, to the number of five hundred, they crossed the drawbridge and retreated on Meung, where the castle, but not the bridge, remained in the hands of the English. The Constable wisely sent a few men to reinforce the garrison on the Meung Bridge. Sir Richard Gethyn and Captain Matthew Gough were detained as hostages.

The Beaugency garrison had been in too great haste to surrender. Scarce had it gone when a man-at-arms of Captain La Hire’s company came to the Duke of Alençon saying: “The English are marching upon us. We shall have them in front of us directly. They are over there, full one thousand fighting men.”

Jeanne heard him speak but did not seize his meaning.

“What is that man-at-arms saying?” she asked.

And when she knew, turning to Arthur of Brittany, who was close by, she said: “Ah! Fair Constable, it was not my will that you should come, but since

you are here, I bid you welcome.”

The force the French had to face was Sir John Talbot and Sir John Fastolf with the whole English army.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE OF PATAY — OPINIONS OF ITALIAN AND GERMAN ECCLESIASTICS — THE GIEN ARMY

HAVING left Paris on the 9th of June, Sir John Fastolf was coming through La Beauce with five thousand fighting men. To the English at Jargeau he was bringing victuals and arrows in abundance. Learning by the way that the town had surrendered, he left his stores at Étampes and marched on to Janville, where Sir John Talbot joined him with forty lances and two hundred bowmen.

There they heard that the French had taken the Meung bridge and laid siege to Beaugency. Sir John Talbot wished to march to the relief of the inhabitants of Beaugency and deliver them with the aid of God and Saint George. Sir John Fastolf counselled abandoning Sir Richard Gethyn and his garrison to their fate; for the moment he deemed it wiser not to fight. Finding his own men fearful and the French full of courage, he thought the best thing the English could do would be to establish themselves in the towns, castles, and strongholds remaining to them, there to await the reinforcements promised by the Regent.

“In comparison with the French we are but a handfull,” he said. “If luck should turn against us, then we should be in a fair way to lose all those conquests won by our late King Henry after strenuous effort and long delay.”

His advice was disregarded and the army marched on Beaugency. The force was not far from the town on Friday, the 17th of June, just when the garrison was issuing forth with horses, armour, and baggage to the amount of one silver mark’s worth for each man.

Informed of the army’s approach the French King’s men went forth to meet it. The scouts had not far to ride before they descried the standards and pennons of England waving over the plain, about two and a half miles from Patay. Then the French ascended a hill whence they could observe the enemy. Captain La Hire and the young Sire de Termes said to the Maid: “The English are coming. They are in battle array and ready to fight.”

As was her wont, she made answer: “Strike boldly and they will flee.”

And she added that the battle would not be long.

Believing that the French were offering them battle, the English took up their position. The archers planted their stakes in the ground, their points inclined towards the enemy. Thus they generally prepared to fight; they had not done otherwise at the Battle of the Herrings. The sun was already declining on the horizon.

The Duke of Alençon had by no means decided to descend into the plain. In presence of the Constable, my Lord the Bastard and the captains, he consulted the holy Maid, who gave him an enigmatical answer: "See to it that you have good spurs."

Taking her to mean the Count of Clermont's spurs, the spurs of Rouvray, the Duke of Alençon exclaimed: "What do you say? Shall we turn our backs on them?"

"Nay," she replied.

On all occasions her Voices counselled unwavering confidence. "Nay. In God's name, go down against them; for they shall flee and shall not stay and shall be utterly discomfited; and you shall lose scarce any men; wherefore you will need your spurs to pursue them."

According to the opinions of doctors and masters it was well to listen to the Maid, but at the same time to follow the course marked out by human wisdom.

The commanders of the army, either because they judged the occasion unfavourable or because, after so many defeats, they feared a pitched battle, did not come down from their hill. The two heralds sent by two English knights to offer single combat received the answer: "For to-day you may go to bed, because it grows late. But to-morrow, if it be God's will, we will come to closer quarters."

The English, assured that they would not be attacked, marched off to pass the night at Meung.

On the morrow, Saturday, the 18th, Saint Hubert's day, the French went forth against them. They were not there. The *Godons* had decamped early in the morning and gone off, with cannon, ammunition, and victuals, towards Janville, where they intended to entrench themselves.

Straightway King Charles's army of twelve thousand men set out in pursuit of them. Along the Paris road they went, over the plain of Beauce, wooded, full of game, covered with thickets and brushwood, wild, but finely to the taste of English and French riders, who praised it highly.

Gazing over the infinite plain, where the earth seems to recede before one's glance, the Maid beheld the sky in front of her, that cloudy sky of plains, suggesting marvellous adventures on the mountains of the air, and she cried: "In God's name, if they were hanging from the clouds we should have them."

Now, as on the previous evening, she prophesied: "To-day our fair King shall win a victory greater than has been his for a long time. My Council has told me that they are all ours."

She foretold that there would be few, or none of the French slain.

Captain Poton and Sire Arnault de Gugem went forth to reconnoitre. The most skilled men-of-war, and among them my Lord the Bastard and the Marshal de Boussac, mounted on the finest of war-steeds, formed the vanguard. Then under the leadership of Captain La Hire, who knew the country, came the horse of the Duke of Alençon, the Count of Vendôme, the Constable of France, with archers and cross-bowmen. Last of all came the rear-guard, commanded by the lords of Graville, Laval, Rais, and Saint-Gilles.

The Maid, ever zealous, desired to be in the vanguard; but she was kept back. She did not lead the men-at-arms, rather the men-at-arms led her. They regarded her, not as captain of war but as a bringer of good luck. Greatly saddened, she must needs take her place in the rear, in the company, doubtless, of the Sire de Rais, where she had originally been placed. The whole army pressed forward for fear the enemy should escape them.

After they had ridden twelve or thirteen miles in overpowering heat, and passed Saint-Sigismond on the left and got beyond Saint-Péravy, Captain Poton's sixty to eighty scouts reached a spot where the ground, which had been level hitherto, descends, and where the road leads down into a hollow called La Retrève. They could not actually see the hollow, but beyond it the ground rose gently; and, dimly visible, scarcely two and a half miles away was the belfry of Lignerolles on the wooded plain known as Climat-du-Camp. A league straight in front of them was the little town of Patay.

It is two o'clock in the afternoon. Poton's and Gugem's horse chance to raise a stag, which darts out of a thicket and plunges down into the hollow of La Retrève. Suddenly a clamour of voices ascends from the hollow. It proceeds from the English soldiers loudly disputing over the game which has fallen into their hands. Thus informed of the enemy's presence, the French scouts halt and straightway despatch certain of their company to go and tell the army that they have surprised the *Godons* and that it is time to set to work.

Now this is what had been happening among the English. They were retreating in good order on Janville, their vanguard commanded by a knight bearing a white standard. Then came the artillery and the victuals in waggons driven by merchants; then the main body of the army, commanded by Sir John Talbot and Sir John Fastolf. The rear-guard, which was likely to bear the brunt of the attack, consisted only of Englishmen from England. It followed at some distance from the rest. Its scouts, having seen the French without being seen by them, informed Sir John Talbot, who was then between the hamlet of Saint-Péravy and the town of Patay. On this information he called a halt and commanded the vanguard with waggons and cannon to take up its position on

the edge of the Lignerolles wood. The position was excellent: backed by the forest, the combatants were secure against being attacked in the rear, while in front they were able to entrench themselves behind their waggons. The main body did not advance so far. It halted some little distance from Lignerolles, in the hollow of La Retrève. On this spot the road was lined with quickset hedges. Sir John Talbot with five hundred picked bowmen stationed himself there to await the French who must perforce pass that way. His design was to defend the road until the rear-guard had had time to join the main body, and then, keeping close to the hedges, he would fall back upon the army.

The archers, as was their wont, were making ready to plant in the ground those pointed stakes, the spikes of which they turned against the chests of the enemy's horses, when the French, led by Poton's scouts, came down upon them like a whirlwind, overthrew them, and cut them to pieces.

At this moment, Sir John Fastolf, at the head of the main body, was preparing to join the vanguard. Feeling the French cavalry at his heels, he gave spur and at full gallop led his men on to Lignerolles. When those of the white standard saw him arriving thus in rout, they thought he had been defeated. They took fright, abandoned the edge of the wood, rushed into the thickets of Climat-du-Camp and in great disorder came out on the Paris road. With the main body of the army, Sir John Fastolf pushed on in the same direction. There was no battle. Marching over the bodies of Talbot's archers, the French threw themselves on the English, who were as dazed as a flock of sheep and fell before the foe without resistance. Thus the French slew two thousand of those common folk whom the *Godons* were accustomed to transport from their own land to be killed in France. When the main body of the French, commanded by La Hire, reached Lignerolles, they found only eight hundred foot whom they soon overthrew. Of the twelve to thirteen thousand French on the march, scarce fifteen hundred took part in the battle or rather in the massacre. Sir John Talbot, who had leapt on to his horse without staying to put on his spurs, was taken prisoner by the Captains La Hire and Poton. The Lords Scales, Hungerford and Falconbridge, Sir Thomas Guérard, Richard Spencer and Fitz Walter were taken and held to ransom. In all, there were between twelve and fifteen hundred prisoners.

Not more than two hundred men-at-arms pursued the fugitives to the gates of Janville. Except for the vanguard, which had been the first to take flight, the English army was entirely destroyed. On the French side, the Sire de Termes, who was present, states that there was only one killed; a man of his own company. Perceval de Boulainvilliers, Councillor and King's Chamberlain, says there were three.

The Maid arrived before the slaughter was ended. She saw a Frenchman, who was leading some prisoners, strike one of them such a blow on the head that he fell down as if dead. She dismounted and procured the Englishman a confessor. She held his head and comforted him as far as she could. Such was the part she played in the Battle of Patay. It was the part of a saintly maid.

The French spent the night in the town. Sir John Talbot, having been brought before the Duke of Alençon and the Constable, was thus addressed by the young Duke: "This morning you little thought what would happen to you."

Talbot replied: "It is the chance of war."

A few breathless *Godons* succeeded in reaching Janville. But the townsfolk, with whom on their departure they had deposited their money and their goods, shut the gates in their faces and swore loyalty to King Charles.

The English commanders of the two small strongholds in La Beauce, Montpipeau and Saint Sigismond, set fire to them and fled.

From Patay the victorious army marched to Orléans. The inhabitants were expecting the King. They had hung up tapestries ready for his entrance. But the King and his Chamberlain, fearing and not without reason, some aggressive movement on the part of the Constable, held themselves secure in the Château of Sully. Thence they started for Châteauneuf on the 22nd of June. That same day the Maid joined the King at Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire. He received her with his usual kindness and said: "I pity you because of the suffering you endure." And he urged her to rest.

At these words she wept. It has been said that her tears flowed because of the indifference and incredulity towards her that the King's urbanity implied. But we must beware of attributing to the tears of the enraptured and the illuminated a cause intelligible to human reason. To her Charles appeared clothed in an ineffable splendour like that of the holiest of kings. How, since she had shown him her angels, invisible to ordinary folk, could she for one moment have thought that he lacked faith in her?

"Have no doubt," she said to him, confidently, "you shall receive the whole of your kingdom and shortly shall be crowned."

True, Charles seemed in no great haste to employ his knights in the recovery of his kingdom. But his Council just then had no idea of getting rid of the Maid. On the contrary, they were determined to use her cleverly, so as to put heart into the French, to terrify the English, and to convince the world that God, Saint Michael, and Saint Catherine, were on the side of the Armagnacs. In announcing the victory of Patay to the good towns, the royal councillors said not one word of the Constable, neither did they mention my Lord the Bastard. They described as

leaders of the army, the Maid, with the two Princes of the Blood Royal, the Duke of Alençon, and the Duke of Vendôme. In such wise did they exalt her. And, indeed, she must have been worth as much and more than a great captain, since the Constable attempted to seize her. With this enterprise, he charged one of his men, Andrieu de Beaumont, who had formerly been employed to carry off the Sire de la Trémouille. But, as Andrieu de Beaumont had failed with the Chamberlain, so he failed with the Maid.

Probably she herself knew nothing of this plot. She besought the King to pardon the Constable, — a request which proves how great was her naïveté. By royal command Richemont received back his lordship of Parthenay.

Duke John of Brittany, who had married a sister of Charles of Valois, was not always pleased with his brother-in-law's counsellors. In 1420, considering him too Burgundian, they had devised for him a Bridge of Montereau. In reality, he was neither Armagnac nor Burgundian nor French nor English, but Breton. In 1423 he recognised the Treaty of Troyes; but two years later, when his brother, the Duke of Richemont, had gone over to the French King and received the Constable's sword from him, Duke John went to Charles of Valois, at Saumur, and did homage for his duchy. In short, he extricated himself cleverly from the most embarrassing situations and succeeded in remaining outside the quarrel of the two kings who were both eager to involve him in it. While France and England were cutting each other's throats, he was raising Brittany from its ruins.

The Maid filled him with curiosity and admiration. Shortly after the Battle of Patay, he sent to her, Hermine, his herald-at-arms, and Brother Yves Milbeau, his confessor, to congratulate her on her victory. The good Brother was told to question Jeanne.

He asked her whether it was God who had sent her to succour the King.

Jeanne replied that it was.

"If it be so," replied Brother Yves Milbeau, "my Lord the Duke of Brittany, our liege lord, is disposed to proffer his service to the King. He cannot come in person for he is sorely infirm. But he is to send his son with a large army."

The good Brother was speaking lightly and making a promise for his duke which would never be kept. The only truth in it was that many Breton nobles were coming in to take service with King Charles.

On hearing these words, the little Saint made a curious mistake. She thought that Brother Yves had meant that the Duke of Brittany was her liege lord as well as his, which would have been altogether senseless. Her loyalty revolted: "The Duke of Brittany is not my liege lord," she replied sharply. "The King is my liege lord."

As far as we can tell, the Duke of Brittany's caution had produced no favourable impression in France. He was censured for having set the King's war ban at nought and made a treaty with the English. Jeanne was of that opinion and to Brother Yves she said so plainly: "The Duke should not have tarried so long in sending his men to aid the King."

A few days later, the Sire de Rostrenen, who had accompanied the Constable to Beaugency and to Patay, came from Duke John to treat of the prospective marriage between his eldest son, François, and Bonne de Savoie, daughter of Duke Amédée. With him was Comment-Qu'il-Soit, herald of Richard of Brittany, Count of Étampes. The herald was commissioned to present the Maid with a dagger and horses.

At Rome, in 1428, there was a French clerk, a compiler of one of those histories of the world so common in those days and so much alike. His cosmography, like all of them, began with the creation and came down to the pontificate of Martin V who was then Pope. "Under this pontificate," wrote the author, "the realm of France, the flower and the lily of the world, opulent among the most opulent, before whom the whole universe bowed, was cast down by its invader, the tyrant Henry, who was not even the lawful lord of the realm of England." Then this churchman vows the Burgundians to eternal infamy and hurls upon them the most terrible maledictions. "May their eyes be torn out: may they perish by an evil death!" Such language indicates a good Armagnac and possibly a clerk despoiled of his goods and driven into exile by the enemies of his country. When he learns the coming of the Maid and the deliverance of Orléans, transported with joy and wonder, he re-opens his history and consigns to its pages arguments in favour of the marvellous Maid, whose deeds appear to him more divine than human, but concerning whom he knows but little. He compares her to Deborah, Judith, Esther, and Penthesilea. "In the books of the Gentiles it is written," he says, "that Penthesilea, and a thousand virgins with her, came to the succour of King Priam and fought so valiantly that they tore the Myrmidons in pieces and slew more than two thousand Greeks." According to him, both in courage and feats of prowess, the Maid far surpasses Penthesilea. Her deeds promptly refute those who maintain that she is sent by the Devil.

In a moment the fame of the French King's prophetess had been spread abroad throughout Christendom. While in temporal affairs the people were rending each other, in spiritual matters obedience to one common head made Europe one spiritual republic with one language and one doctrine, governed by councils. The spirit of the Church was all-pervading. In Italy, in Germany, the talk was all of the Sibyl of France and her prowess which was so intimately associated with the Christian faith. In those days it was sometimes the custom of

those who painted on the walls of monasteries to depict the Liberal Arts as three noble dames. Between her two sisters, Logic would be painted, seated on a lofty throne, wearing an antique turban, clothed in a sparkling robe, and bearing in one hand a scorpion, in the other a lizard, as a sign that her knowledge winds its way into the heart of the adversary's argument, and saves her from being herself entrapped. At her feet, looking up to her, would be Aristotle, disputing and reckoning up his arguments on his fingers. This austere lady formed all her disciples in the same mould. In those days nothing was more despicable than singularity. Originality of mind did not then exist. The clerks who treated of the Maid all followed the same method, advanced the same arguments, and based them on the same texts, sacred and profane. Conformity could go no further. Their minds were identical, but not their hearts; it is the mind that argues, but the heart that decides. These scholastics, dryer than their parchment, were men, notwithstanding; they were swayed by sentiment, by passion, by interests spiritual or temporal. While the Armagnac doctors were demonstrating that in the Maid's case reasons for belief were stronger than reasons for disbelief, the German or Italian masters, caring nought for the quarrel of the Dauphin of Viennois, remained in doubt, unmoved by either love or hatred.

There was a doctor of theology, one Heinrich von Gorcum, a professor at Cologne. As early as the month of June, 1429, he drew up a memorial concerning the Maid. In Germany, minds were divided as to whether the nature of the damsel were human or whether she were not rather a celestial being clothed in woman's form; as to whether her deeds proceeded from a human origin or had a supernatural source; and, if the latter, whether that source were good or bad. Meister Heinrich von Gorcum wrote his treatise to present arguments from Holy Scripture on both sides, and he abstained from drawing any conclusion.

In Italy, the same doubts and the same uncertainty prevailed concerning the deeds of the Maid. Those there were who maintained that they were mere inventions. At Milan, it was disputed whether any credence could be placed in tidings from France. To discover the truth about them, the notables of the city resolved to despatch a Franciscan friar, Brother Antonio de Rho, a good humanist and a zealous preacher of moral purity.

And Giovanni Corsini, Senator of the duchy of Arezzo, impelled by a like curiosity, consulted a learned clerk of Milan, one Cosmo Raimondi of Cremona. The following is the gist of the learned Ciceronian's reply:

"Most noble lord, they say that God's choice of a shepherdess for the restoration of a kingdom to a prince, is a new thing. And yet we know that the shepherd David was anointed king. It is told how the Maid, at the head of a small

company, defied a great army. The victory may be explained by an advantageous position and an unexpected attack. But supposing we refrain from saying that the enemy was surprised and that his courage forsook him, matters which are none the less possible, supposing we admit that there was a miracle: what is there astonishing in that? Is it not still more wonderful that Samson should have slain so many Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass?

“The Maid is said to possess the power of revealing the future. Remember the Sibyls, notably the Erythræan and the Cumæan. They were heathens. Why should not a like power be granted to a Christian? This woman is a shepherdess. Jacob, when he kept Laban’s flocks, conversed familiarly with God. To such examples and to such reasons, which incline me to give credence to the rumour, I add another reason derived from physical science. In treatises on astrology I have often read that by the favourable influence of the stars, certain men of lowly birth have become the equals of the highest princes and been regarded as men divine charged with a celestial mission. Guido da Forli, a clever astronomer, quotes a great number of such instances. Wherefore I should not deem myself to be incurring any reproach if I believed that through the influence of the stars, the Maid has undertaken what is reported of her.”

At the conclusion of his arguments the clerk of Cremona says that, while not absolutely rejecting the reports concerning her, he does not consider them to be sufficiently proved.

Jeanne maintained her resolution to go to Reims and take the King to his anointing. She did not stay to consider whether it would be better to wage war in Champagne than in Normandy. She did not know enough of the configuration of the country to decide such a question, and it is not likely that her saints and angels knew more of geography than she did. She was in haste to take the King to Reims for his anointing, because she believed it impossible for him to be king until he had been anointed. The idea of leading him to be anointed with the holy oil had come to her in her native village, long before the siege of Orléans. This inspiration was wholly of the spirit, and had nothing to do with the state of affairs created by the deliverance of Orléans and the victory of Patay.

The best course would have been to march straight on Paris after the 18th of June. The French were then only ninety miles from the great city, which at that juncture would not have thought of defending itself. Considering it as good as lost, the Regent shut himself up in the Fort of Vincennes. They had missed their opportunity. The French King’s Councillors, Princes of the Blood, were deliberating, surprised by victory, not knowing what to do with it. Certain it is that not one of them thought of conquering, and that speedily, the whole inheritance of King Charles. The forces at their disposal, and the very conditions

of the society in which they lived, rendered it impossible for them to conceive of such an undertaking. The lords of the Great Council were not like the poverty stricken monks, dreaming in their ruined cloisters of an age of peace and concord. The King's Councillors were no dreamers; they did not believe in the end of the war, neither did they desire it. But they intended to conduct it with the least possible risk and expenditure. There would always be folk enough to don the hauberk and go a-plundering they said to themselves; the taking and re-taking of towns must continue; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; to fight long one must fight gently; nine times out of ten more is gained by negotiations and treaties than by feats of prowess; truces must be concluded craftily and broken cautiously; some defeats must be expected, and some work must be left for the young. Such were the opinions of the good servants of King Charles.

Certain among them wished the war to be carried on in Normandy. The idea had occurred to them as early as the month of May, before the Loire campaign, and indeed there was much to be said for it. In Normandy they would cut the English tree at its root. It was quite possible that they might immediately recover a part of that province where the English had but few fighting men. In 1424 the Norman garrisons consisted of not more than four hundred lances and twelve hundred bowmen. Since then they had received but few reinforcements. The Regent was recruiting men everywhere and displaying marvellous activity, but he lacked money, and his soldiers were always deserting. In the conquered province, as soon as the *Coués* came out of their strongholds they found themselves in the enemy's territory. From the borders of Brittany, Maine, Perche as far as Ponthieu and Picardy, on the banks of the Mayenne, Orne, the Dive, the Touque, the Eure, the Seine, the partisans of the various factions held the country, watching the roads, robbing, ravaging, and murdering. Everywhere the French would have found these brave fellows ready to espouse their cause; the peasants and the village priests would likewise have wished them well. But the campaign would involve long sieges of towns, strongly defended, albeit held by but small garrisons. Now the men-at-arms dreaded the delays of sieges, and the royal treasury was not sufficient for such costly undertakings. Normandy was ruined, stripped of its crops, and robbed of its cattle. Were the captains and their men to go into this famine-stricken land? And why should the King reconquer so poor a province?

And these freebooters, who were willing to stretch out a hand to the French, were not very attractive. It was well known that brigands they were, and brigands would remain, and that Normandy once reconquered, they would have to be got rid of, to the last man, without honour and without profit. In which case would it not be better to leave them to be dealt with by the *Godons* ?

Other nobles clamoured for an expedition into Champagne. And in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Maid's visions had no influence whatever on this determination. The King's Councillors led Jeanne and were far from being led by her. Once before they had diverted her from the road to Reims by providing her with work on the Loire. Once again they might divert her into Normandy, without her even perceiving it, so ignorant was she of the roads and of the lie of the land. If there were certain who recommended a campaign in Champagne, it was not on the faith of saints and angels, but for purely human reasons. Is it possible to discover these reasons? There were doubtless certain lords and captains who considered the interest of the King and the kingdom, but every one found it so difficult not to confound it with his own interest, that the best way to discover who was responsible for the march on Reims is to find out who was to profit by it. It was certainly not the Duke of Alençon, who would have greatly preferred to take advantage of the Maid's help for the conquest of his own duchy. Neither was it my Lord the Bastard, nor the Sire de Gaucourt, nor the King himself, for they must have desired the securing of Berry and the Orléanais by the capture of La Charité held by the terrible Perrinet Gressart. On the other hand we may conclude that the Queen of Sicily would not be unfavourable to the march of the King, her son-in-law, in a north easterly direction. This Spanish lady was possessed by the Angevin mania. Reassured for the moment concerning the fate of her duchy of Anjou, she was pursuing eagerly, and to the great hurt of the realm of France, the establishment of her son René in the duchy of Bar and in the inheritance of Lorraine. She cannot have been displeased, therefore, when she saw the King keeping her an open road between Gien and Troyes and Châlons. But since the Constable's exile she had lost all influence over her son-in-law, and it is difficult to discover who could have watched her interests in the Council of May, 1429. Besides, without seeking further, it is obvious that there was one person, who above all others must have desired the anointing of the King, and who more than any was in a position to make his opinion prevail. That person was the man on whom devolved the duty of holding in his consecrated hands the Sacred Ampulla, my Lord Regnault de Chartres, Archbishop Duke of Reims, Chancellor of the Kingdom.

He was a man of rare intelligence, skilled in business, a very clever diplomatist, greedy of wealth, caring less for empty honours than for solid advantage, avaricious, unscrupulous, one who at the age of about fifty had lost nothing of his consuming energy; he had recently displayed it by spending himself nobly in the defence of Orléans. Thus gifted, how could he fail to exercise a powerful control over the government?

Fifteen years had passed since his elevation to the archiepiscopal see of Reims; and of his enormous revenue he had not yet received one penny. Albeit the possessor of great wealth from other sources, he pleaded poverty. To the Pope he addressed heart-rending supplications. If the Maid had found favour in the eyes of the Poitiers doctors, Monseigneur Regnault had had something to do with it. Had it not been for him, the doctors at court would never have proposed her examination. And we shall not be making too bold a hypothesis if we conclude, that when the march on Reims was decided in the royal council, it was because the Archbishop, on grounds suggested by human reason, approved of what the Maid proposed by divine inspiration.

While the coronation campaign was attended with grave drawbacks and met with serious obstacles, it nevertheless brought great gain and a certain subtle advantage to the royal cause. Unfortunately it left free from attack the rest of France occupied by the English, and it gave the latter time to recover themselves and procure aid from over sea. We shall shortly see what good use they made of their opportunities. As to the advantages of the expedition, they were many and various. First, Jeanne truly expressed the sentiments of the poor priests and the common folk when she said that the Dauphin would reap great profit from his anointing. From the oil of the holy Ampulla the King would derive a splendour, a majesty which would impress the whole of France, yea, even the whole of Christendom. In those days royalty was alike spiritual and temporal; and multitudes of men believed with Jeanne that kings only became kings by being anointed with the holy oil. Thus it would not be wrong to say that Charles of Valois would receive greater power from one drop of oil than from ten thousand lances. On a consideration like this the King's Councillors must needs set great store. They had also to take into account the time and the place. Might not the ceremony be performed in some other town than Reims? Might not the so-called "mystery" take place in that city which had been delivered by the intercession of its blessed patrons, Saint-Aignan and Saint Euverte? Two kings descended from Hugh Capet, Robert the Wise and Louis the Fat, had been crowned at Orléans. But the memory of their royal coronation was lost in the mists of antiquity, while folk still retained the memory of a long procession of most Christian kings anointed in the town where the holy oil had been brought down to Clovis by the celestial dove. Besides, the lord Archbishop and Duke of Reims would never have suffered the King to receive his anointing save at his hand and in his cathedral.

Therefore it was necessary to go to Reims. It was necessary also to anticipate the English who had resolved to conduct thither their infant King that he might receive consecration according to the ancient ceremonial. But if the French had

invaded Normandy they would have closed the young Henry's road to Paris and to Reims, a road which was already insecure for him; and it would be childish to maintain that the coronation could not have been postponed for a few weeks. If the conquest of Norman lands and Norman towns was renounced therefore, it was not merely for the sake of capturing the holy Ampulla. The Lord Archbishop of Reims had other objects at heart. He believed, for example, that, by pressing in between the Duke of Burgundy and his English allies, an excellent impression would be produced on the mind of that Prince and the edifying object-lesson presented to his consideration of Charles, son of Charles, King of France, riding at the head of a powerful army.

To attain the city of the Blessed Saint Remi two hundred and fifty miles of hostile country must be traversed. But for some time the army would be in no danger of meeting the enemy on the road. The English and Burgundians were engaged in using every means both fair and foul for the raising of troops. For the moment the French need fear no foe. The rich country of Champagne, sparsely wooded, well cultivated, teemed with corn and wine, and abounded in fat cattle. Champagne had not been devastated like Normandy. There was a likelihood of obtaining food for the men-at-arms, especially if, as was hoped, the good towns supplied victuals. They were very wealthy; their barns overflowed with corn. While owing allegiance to King Henry, no bonds of affection united them to the English or to the Burgundians. They governed themselves. They were rich merchants, who only longed for peace and who did their best to bring it about. Just now they were beginning to suspect that the Armagnacs were growing the stronger party. These folk of Champagne had a clergy and a *bourgeoisie* who might be appealed to. It was not a question of storming their towns with artillery, mines, and trenches, but of getting round them with amnesties, concessions to the merchants and elaborate engagements to respect the privileges of the clergy. In this country there was no risk of rotting in hovels or burning in bastions. The townsfolk were expected to throw open their gates and partly from love, partly from fear, to give money to their lord the King.

The campaign was already arranged, and that very skilfully. Communications had been opened with Troyes and Châlons. By letters and messages from a few notables of Reims it was made known to King Charles that if he came they would open to him the gates of their town. He even received three or four citizens, who said to him, "Go forth in confidence to our city of Reims. It shall not be our fault if you do not enter therein."

Such assurances emboldened the Royal Council; and the march into Champagne was resolved upon.

The army assembled at Gien; it increased daily. The nobles of Brittany and Poitou came in in great numbers, most of them mounted on sorry steeds and commanding but small companies of men. The poorest equipped themselves as archers, and in default of better service were ready to act as bowmen. Villeins and tradesmen came likewise. From the Loire to the Seine and from the Seine to the Somme the only cultivated land was round *châteaux* and fortresses. Most of the fields lay fallow. In many places fairs and markets had been suspended. Labourers were everywhere out of work. War, after having ruined all trades, was now the only trade. Says Eustache Deschamps, "All men will become squires. Scarce any artisans are left." At the place of meeting there assembled thirty thousand men, of whom many were on foot and many came from the villages, giving their services in return for food. There were likewise monks, valets, women and other camp-followers. And all this multitude was an hungered. The King went to Gien and summoned the Queen who was at Bourges.

His idea was to take her to Reims and have her crowned with him, following the example of Queen Blanche of Castille, of Jeanne de Valois, and of Queen Jeanne, wife of King John. But queens had not usually been crowned at Reims; Queen Ysabeau, mother of the present King, had received the crown from the hands of the Archbishop of Rouen in the Sainte-Chapelle, in Paris. Before her time, the wives of the kings, following the example set by Berthe, wife of Pepin the Short, generally came to Saint-Denys to receive the crown of gold, of sapphire and of pearls given by Jeanne of Évreux to the monks of the Abbey. Sometimes the queens were crowned with their husbands, sometimes alone and in a different place; many had never been crowned at all.

That King Charles should have thought of taking Queen Marie on this expedition proves that he did not anticipate great fatigue or great danger. Nevertheless, at the last moment the plan was changed. The Queen, who had come to Gien, was sent back to Bourges. The King set out without her.

Quand le roy s'en vint en France,
Il feit oindre ses houssiaux,
Et la royne lui demande:
Ou veult aller cest damoiseaulx?

In reality the Queen asked nothing. She was ill-favoured and weak of will. But the song says that the King on his departure had his old gaiters greased because he had no new ones. Those old jokes about the poverty of the King of Bourges still held good. The King had not grown rich. It was customary to pay

the men-at-arms a part of their wages in advance. At Gien each fighting man received three francs. It did not seem much, but they hoped to gain more on the way.

On Friday, the 24th of June, the Maid set out from Orléans for Gien. On the morrow she dictated from Gien a letter to the inhabitants of Tournai, telling them how the English had been driven from all their strongholds on the Loire and discomfited in battle. In this letter she invited them to come to the anointing of King Charles at Reims and called upon them to continue loyal Frenchmen. Here is the letter:

† Jhesus † Maria.

Fair Frenchmen and loyal, of the town of Tournay, from this place the Maid maketh known unto you these tidings: that in eight days, by assault or otherwise, she hath driven the English from all the strongholds they held on the River Loire. Know ye that the Earl of Suffort, Lapouille his brother, the Sire of Tallebord, the Sire of Scallez and my lords Jean Falscof and many knights and captains have been taken, and the brother of the Earl of Suffort and Glasdas slain. I beseech you to remain good and loyal Frenchmen; and I beseech and entreat you that ye make yourselves ready to come to the anointing of the fair King Charles at Rains, where we shall shortly be, and come ye to meet us when ye know that we draw nigh. To God I commend you. God keep you and give you his grace that ye may worthily maintain the good cause of the realm of France. Written at Gien the xxvth day of June.

Addressed “to the loyal Frenchmen of the town of Tournay.”

An epistle in the same tenor must have been sent by the Maid’s monkish scribes to all the towns which had remained true to King Charles, and the priests themselves must have drawn up the list of them. They would certainly not have forgotten that town of the royal domain, which, situated in Flanders, in the heart of Burgundian territory, still remained loyal to its liege lord. The town of Tournai, ceded to Philip the Good by the English government, in 1423, had not recognised its new master. Jean de Thoisy, its bishop, resided at Duke Philip’s court; but it remained the King’s town, and the well-known attachment of its townsfolk to the Dauphin’s fortunes was exemplary and famous. The Consuls of Albi, in a short note concerning the marvels of 1429, were careful to remark that this northern city, so remote that they did not exactly know where it was, still held out for France, though surrounded by France’s enemies. “The truth is that the English occupy the whole land of Normandy, and of Picardy, except Tournay,” they wrote.

Indeed the inhabitants of the bailiwick of Tournai, jealously guarding the liberties and privileges accorded to them by the King of France, would not have separated themselves from the Crown on any consideration. They protested their loyalty, and in honour of the King and in the hope of his recovering his kingdom they had grand processions; but their devotion stopped there; and, when their liege Lord, King Charles, urgently demanded the arrears of their contribution, of which he said he stood in great need, their magistrates deliberated and decided to ask leave to postpone payment again, and for as long as possible.

There is no doubt that the Maid herself dictated this letter. It will be noticed that therein she takes to herself the credit and the whole credit for the victory. Her candour obliged her to do so. In her opinion God had done everything, but he had done everything through her. "The Maid hath driven the English out of all their strongholds." She alone could reveal so naïve a faith in herself. Brother Pasquerel would not have written with such saintly simplicity.

It is remarkable that in this letter Sir John Fastolf should be reckoned among the prisoners. This mistake is not peculiar to Jeanne. The King announces to his good towns that three English captains have been taken, Talbot, the Lord of Scales and Fastolf. Perceval de Boulainvilliers, in his Latin epistle to the Duke of Milan, includes Fastolf, whom he calls *Fastechat*, among the thousand prisoners taken by the folk of Dauphiné. Finally, a missive despatched about the 25th of June, from one of the towns of the diocese of Luçon, shows great uncertainty concerning the fate of Talbot, Fastolf and Scales, "who are said to be either prisoners or dead." Possibly the French had laid hands on some noble who resembled Fastolf in appearance or in name; or perhaps some man-at-arms in order to be held to ransom had given himself out to be Fastolf. The Maid's letter reached Tournai on the 7th of July. On the morrow the town council resolved to send an embassy to King Charles of France.

On the 27th of June, or about then, the Maid caused letters to be despatched to the Duke of Burgundy, inviting him to come to the King's coronation. She received no reply. Duke Philip was the last man in the world to correspond with the Maid. And that she should have written to him courteously was a sign of her goodness of heart. As a child in her village she had been the enemy of the Burgundians before being the enemy of the English, but none the less she desired the good of the kingdom and a reconciliation between Burgundians and French.

The Duke of Burgundy could not lightly pardon the ambush of Montereau; but at no time of his life had he vowed an irreconcilable hatred of the French. An understanding had become possible after the year 1425, when his brother-in-law,

the Constable of France, had excluded Duke John's murderers from the Royal Council. As for the Dauphin Charles, he maintained that he had had nothing to do with the crime; but among the Burgundians he passed for an idiot. In the depths of his heart Duke Philip disliked the English. After King Henry V's death he had refused to act as their regent in France. Then there was the affair of the Countess Jacqueline which very nearly brought about an open rupture. For many years the House of Burgundy had been endeavouring to gain control over the Low Countries. At last Duke Philip attained his object by marrying his second cousin, John, Duke of Brabant to Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Hainault, Holland and Zealand, and Lady of Friesland. Jacqueline, finding her husband intolerable, fled to England, and there, having had her marriage annulled by the Antipope, Benedict XIII, married the Duke of Gloucester, the Regent's brother.

Bedford, as prudent as Gloucester was headstrong, made every effort to retain the great Duke in the English alliance; but the secret hatred he felt for the Burgundians burst forth occasionally in sudden acts of rage. Whether he planned the assassination of the Duke and the Duke knew it, is uncertain. But at any rate it is alleged that one day the courteous Bedford forgot himself so far as to say that Duke Philip might well go to England and drink more beer than was good for him. The Regent had just tactlessly offended him by refusing to let him take possession of the town of Orléans. Now Bedford was biting his fingers with rage. Regretting that he had refused the Duke the key to the Loire and the heart of France, he was at present eager to offer him the province of Champagne which the French were preparing to conquer: this was indeed just the time to present some rich gift to his powerful ally.

Meanwhile the great Duke could think of nothing but the Low Countries. Pope Martin had declared the marriage of the Countess Jacqueline and Gloucester to be invalid; and Gloucester was marrying another wife. Now the Gargantua of Dijon could once more lay hands on the broad lands of the fair Jacqueline. He remained the ally of the English, intending to make use of them but not to play into their hands, and prepared, should he find it to his advantage, to make war on the French before being reconciled to them; he saw no harm in that. After the Low Countries what he cared most about were ladies and beautiful paintings, like those of the brothers Van Eyck. He would not be likely therefore to pay much attention to a letter from the Maid of the Armagnacs.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONVENTION OF AUXERRE — FRIAR RICHARD — THE SURRENDER OF TROYES

ON the 27th of June, the vanguard, commanded by Marshal de Boussac, the Sire de Rais, the Captains La Hire and Poton, set out from Gien in the direction of Montargis with the design of pressing on to Sens, which, so they had been wrongly informed, was deemed likely to open its gates to the Dauphin. But, at the news that the town had hoisted the flag of St. Andrew, as a sign of fidelity to the English and Burgundians, the army changed its route, so little did it desire to take towns by force. The march was now directed towards Auxerre, where a more favourable reception was expected. The Maid in her impatience had not waited for the King. She rode with the company which had started first. Had she been its leader she would not have turned from a town when its cannon were directed against her.

The King set forth two days later, with the Princes of the Blood, many knights, the main battle, as it was called, and the Sire de la Trémouille, who commanded the expedition. All these troops arrived before Auxerre on the 1st of July. There on the hill-slope, encircled with vineyards and cornfields, rose the ramparts, towers, roofs, and belfries of the blessed Bishop Germain's city. That town towards which in the summer sunshine, in the company of gallant knighthood, she was now riding, fully armed like a handsome Saint Maurice, Jeanne had seen only three months before, under a dark and cloudy sky; then, clad like a stable-boy, in the company of two or three poor soldiers of fortune, she was travelling over a bad road, on her way to the Dauphin Charles.

Since 1424 the County of Auxerre had belonged to the Duke of Burgundy, upon whom it had been bestowed by the Regent. The Duke governed it through a bailie and a captain.

The lord Bishop, Messire Jean de Corbie, formerly Bishop of Mende, was thought to be on the Dauphin's side. The Chapter of the Cathedral on the other hand held to Burgundy. Twelve jurors, elected by the burgesses and other townfolk, administered the affairs of the city. One can easily imagine that fear must have been the dominant sentiment in their hearts when they saw the royal army approaching. Men-at-arms, no matter whether they wore the white cross or the red, inspired all town dwellers with a well-grounded terror. And, in order to turn from their gates these violent and murderous thieves, the townfolk were

capable of resorting to the strongest measures, even to that of putting their hands in their purses.

The royal heralds summoned the people of Auxerre to receive the King as their natural and lawful lord. Such a summons, backed by lances, placed them in a very embarrassing position. Alike by refusing and by consenting these good folk ran great risk. To transfer their allegiance was no light matter; their lives and their goods were involved. Foreseeing this danger, and conscious of their weakness, they had entered into a league with the cities of Champagne. The object of the league was to relieve its members from the burden of receiving men-at-arms and the peril of having two hostile masters. Certain of the townsfolk therefore presented themselves before King Charles and promised him such submission as should be accorded by the towns of Troyes, Châlons, and Reims.

This was not obedience, neither was it rebellion. Negotiations were begun; ambassadors went from the town to the camp and from the camp to the town. Finally the confederates, who were not lacking in intelligence, proposed an acceptable compromise, — one that princes were constantly concluding with each other, to wit, a truce.

They said to the King: “We entreat and request you to pass on, and we ask you to agree to refrain from fighting.” And, in order to secure their request being granted, they gave two thousand crowns to the Sire de la Trémouille, who, it is said, kept them without a blush. Further, the townsfolk undertook to revictual the army in return for money down; and that was worth considering, for there was famine in the camp. This truce by no means pleased the men-at-arms, who thereby lost a fine opportunity for robbery and pillage. Murmurs arose; many lords and captains said that it would not be difficult to take the town, and that its capture should have been attempted. The Maid, who was always receiving promises of victory from her Voices, never ceased calling the soldiers to arms. Unaffected by any of these things, the King concluded the proposed truce; for he cared not by force of arms to obtain more than could be compassed by peaceful methods. Had he attacked the town he might have taken it and held it in his mercy; but it would have meant certain pillage, murder, burning, and ravishing. On his heels would have come the Burgundians, and there would have been plundering, burning, ravishing, massacring over again. How many examples had there not been already of unhappy towns captured and then lost almost immediately, devastated by the French, devastated by the English and the Burgundians, when each citizen kept in his coffer a red cap and a white cap, which he wore in turns! Was there to be no end to these massacres and abominations, resentment against which caused the Armagnacs to be cursed

throughout l'Île de France, and which made it so hard for the lawful King to recover his town of Paris. The royal Council thought the time had come to put an end to these things. It was of opinion that Charles of Valois would the more easily reconquer his inheritance if, while manifesting his power, he showed himself lenient and exercised royal clemency, as in arms and yet pursuing peace, he continued his march to Reims.

After having spent three days under the walls of the town, the army being refreshed, crossed the Yonne and came to the town of Saint-Florentin, which straightway submitted to the King. On the 4th of July, they reached the village of Saint-Phal, four hours' journey from Troyes.

In this strong town there was a garrison of between five and six hundred men at the most. A bailie, Messire Jean de Dinteville, two captains, the Sires de Rochefort and de Plancy, commanded in the town for King Henry and for the Duke of Burgundy. Troyes was a manufacturing town; the source of its wealth was the cloth manufacture. True, this industry had long been declining through competition and the removal of markets; its ruin was being precipitated by the general poverty and the insecurity of the roads. Nevertheless the cloth workers' guild maintained its importance and sent a number of magistrates to the Council.

In 1420, these merchants had sworn to the treaty which promised the French crown to the House of Lancaster; they were then at the mercy of English and Burgundians. For the holding of those great fairs, to which they took their cloth, they must needs live at peace with their Burgundian neighbours, and if the *Godons* had closed the ports of the Seine against their bales, they would have died of hunger. Wherefore the notables of the town had turned English, which did not mean that they would always remain English. Within the last few weeks great changes had taken place in the kingdom; and the Gilles Laiguisés, the Hennequins, the Jouvenels did not pride themselves on remaining unchanged amidst vicissitudes of fortune which were transferring the power from one side to the other. The French victories gave them food for reflection. Along the banks of the streams, which wound through the city, there were weavers, dyers, curriers who were Burgundian at heart. As for the Churchmen, if they were thrilled by no love for the Armagnacs, they felt none the less that King Charles was sent to them by a special dispensation of divine providence.

The Bishop of Troyes was my lord Jean Laiguisé, son of Master Huet Laiguisé, one of the first to swear to the treaty of 1420. The Chapter had elected him without waiting for the permission of the Regent, who declared against the election, not that he disliked the new pontiff; Messire Jean Laiguisé had sucked hatred of the Armagnacs and respect for the Rose of Lancaster from his *alma*

mater of Paris. But my Lord of Bedford could not forgive any slighting of his sovereign rights.

Shortly afterwards he incurred the censure of the whole Church of France and was judged by the bishops worse than the cruellest tyrants of Scripture — Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Artaxerxes — who, when they chastised Israel had spared the Levites. More wicked than they and more sacrilegious, my Lord of Bedford threatened the privileges of the Gallican Church, when, on behalf of the Holy See, he robbed the bishops of their patronage, levied a double tithe on the French clergy, and commanded churchmen to surrender to him the contributions they had been receiving for forty years. That he was acting with the Pope's consent made his conduct none the less execrable in the eyes of the French bishops. The episcopal lords resolved to appeal from a Pope ill informed to one with wider knowledge; for they held the authority of the Bishop of Rome to be insignificant in comparison with the authority of the Council. They groaned: the abomination of desolation was laying waste Christian Gaul. In order to pacify the Church of France thus roused against him, my lord of Bedford convoked at Paris the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Sens, which included the dioceses of Paris, Troyes, Auxerre, Nevers, Meaux, Chartres, and Orléans.

Messire Jean Laiguisé attended this Convocation. The Synod was held at Paris, in the Priory of Saint-Eloi, under the presidency of the Archbishop, from the 1st of March till the 23rd of April, 1429. The assembled bishops represented to my Lord the Regent the sorry plight of the ecclesiastical lords: the peasants, pillaged by soldiers, no longer paid their dues; the lands of the Church were lying waste; divine service had ceased to be held because there was no money with which to support public worship. Unanimously they refused to pay the Pope and the Regent the double tithe; and they threatened to appeal from the Pope to the Council. As for despoiling the clergy of all the contributions they had received during the last forty years, that, they declared, would be impious; and with great charity they reminded my Lord of Bedford of the fate reserved by God's judgment for the impious even in this world. "The Prince," they said, "should beware of the miseries and sorrows already fallen upon a multitude of princes, who with such demands had oppressed the Church which God redeemed with his own precious blood: some had perished by the sword, some had been driven into exile, others had been despoiled of their illustrious sovereignties. Wherefore such as set themselves to enslave the Church, the Bride of God, may not hope to deserve the grace of his divine Majesty."

Jean Laiguisé's sentiments towards the English Regent were those of the Synod. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the Bishop of Troyes desired the death of the sinner, or even that he was hostile to the English. The

Church is usually capable of temporising with the powers of this world. Wide is her mercy, and great her longsuffering. She threatens oft before striking and receives the repentance of the sinner at the first sign of contrition. But we may believe that if Charles of Valois were to win the power and show the will to protect the Church of France, the Lord Bishop and the Chapter of Troyes would fear lest if they resisted him they might be resisting God himself, since all power comes from God who *deposuit potentes* .

King Charles had not ventured to enter Champagne without taking measures for his safety; he knew on what he could rely in the town of Troyes. He had received information and promises; he maintained secret relations with several burgesses of the city, and those none of the least. During the first fortnight of May, a royal notary, ten clerks and leading merchants, on their way to the king, were arrested just outside the walls, on the Paris road, by the Sire de Chateauvillain, a captain in the English service. This mission was probably fulfilled by others more fortunate. It is easy to divine what questions were discussed at these audiences. The merchants would ask whether Charles, if he became their Lord, would guarantee absolute freedom to their trade; the clerks would ask his promise to respect the goods of the Church. And the King doubtless was not sparing of his pledges.

The Maid, with one division of the army, halted before the stronghold of Saint-Phal, belonging to Philibert de Vaudrey, commander of the town of Tonnerre, in the service of the Duke of Burgundy. In that place of Saint-Phal, Jeanne beheld approaching her a Franciscan friar, who was crossing himself and sprinkling holy water, for he feared lest she were the devil, and dared not draw near without having first exorcised the evil spirit. It was Friar Richard who was coming from Troyes. It will be interesting to see who this monk was as far as we can tell.

The place of his birth is unknown. A disciple of Brother Vincent Ferrier and of Brother Bernardino of Sienna, like them, he taught the imminent coming of Antichrist and the salvation of the faithful by the adoration of the holy name of Jesus. After having been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he returned to France, and preached at Troyes, during the Advent of 1428. Advent, sometimes called Saint Martin's Lent, begins on the Sunday which falls between the 27th of November and the 3rd of December. It lasts four weeks, which Christians spend in making themselves ready to celebrate the mystery of the Nativity.

"Sow, sow your seed, my good folk," he said. "Sow beans ready for the harvest, for He who is to come will come quickly."

By beans he meant the good works to be performed before Our Lord should come in the clouds to judge the quick and the dead. Now it was important to sow

those good works quickly, for the harvest-tide was drawing nigh. The coming of Antichrist was but shortly to precede the end of the world and the consummation of the ages. In the month of April, 1429, Friar Richard went to Paris; the Synod of the Province of Sens was then holding its final session. It is possible that the good Friar was summoned to the great city by the Bishop of Troyes who was present at the Synod; but at any rate it would appear that it was not the rights of the Gallican Church the wandering monk went there to defend.

On the 16th of April, he preached his first sermon at Sainte-Geneviève; on the next and the following days, until Sunday, the 24th, he preached every morning, from five until ten or eleven o'clock, in the open air, on a platform, erected against the charnel-house of the Innocents, on the spot whereon was celebrated the dance of death. Around the platform, about nine feet high, there crowded five or six thousand persons, to whom he announced the speedy coming of Antichrist and the end of the world. "In Syria," he said, "I met bands of Jews; I asked them whither they were going, and they replied: 'We are wending in a multitude towards Babylon, for of a truth the Messiah is born among men, and he will restore unto us our inheritance, and he will bring us again to the land of promise.' Thus spake those Syrian Jews. Now Scripture teaches us that He, whom they call the Messiah, is in truth that Antichrist, of whom it is said he shall be born in Babylon, capital of the kingdom of Persia, he shall be brought up at Bethsaida and in his youth he shall dwell at Chorazin. Wherefore our Lord said: 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida.' The year 1430," added Friar Richard, "shall witness greater marvels than have ever been seen before. The time draweth nigh. He is born, the man of sin, the child of perdition, the wicked one, the beast vomited forth from the abyss, the abomination of desolation; he came out of the tribe of Dan, of whom it is written: 'Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path.' Soon shall return to the earth the prophets Elijah and Enoch, Moses, Jeremiah and Saint John the Evangelist; and soon shall dawn that day of wrath which shall grind the age in a mill and beat it in a mortar, according to the testimony of David and the Sibyl." Then the good Brother concluded by calling upon them to repent, to do penance and to renounce empty riches. In short, in the opinion of the clerks, he was a man of worship and an orator. His sermons produced more devoutness among the people, it was thought, than those of all the sermonizers who for the last century had been preaching in the town. And it was time that he came, for in those days the folk of Paris were greatly addicted to games of chance; yea, even priests unblushingly indulged in them, and seven years before, a canon of Saint-Merry, a great lover of dice was known to have gamed in his own house. Despite war

and famine, the women of Paris loaded themselves with ornaments. They troubled more about their beauty than about the salvation of their souls.

Friar Richard thundered most loudly against the draught boards of the men and the ornaments of the women. One day notably, when he was preaching at Boulogne-la-Petite, he cried down dice and *hennins*, and spoke with such power that the hearts of those who listened were changed. On returning to their homes, the citizens threw into the streets gaming-tables, draught-boards, cards, billiard cues and balls, dice and dice-boxes, and made great fires before their doors. More than one hundred of these fires continued burning in the streets for three or four hours. Women followed the good example set by the men that day, and the next they burnt in public their head-dresses, pads, ornaments, and the pieces of leather or whalebone on which they mounted the fronts of their hoods. Young misses threw off their horns and their tails, ashamed to clothe themselves in the devil's garb.

The good Brother likewise caused to be burnt the mandrake roots which many folk kept in their houses. Those roots are sometimes in the form of an ugly little man, of a curious and devilish aspect. On that account possibly, singular virtues are attributed to them. These mannikins were dressed in fine linen and silk and were kept in the belief that they would bring good luck and procure wealth. Witches made much of them; and those who believed that the Maid was a witch accused her of carrying a mandrake on her person. Friar Richard hated these magic roots all the more strongly because he believed in their power of attracting wealth, the root of all evil. Once again his word was obeyed; and many a Parisian threw away his mandrake in horror, albeit he had bought it dear from some old wife who knew more than was good for her. Friar Richard caused the Parisians to replace these evil treasures by objects of greater edification, — pewter medals, on which was stamped the name of Jesus, to the worship of whom he was especially devoted.

Having preached ten times in the town and once in the village of Boulogne, the good Brother announced his return to Burgundy and took his leave of the Parisians.

“I will pray for you,” he said; “pray for me. Amen.”

Whereupon all the folk, high and lowly, wept bitterly and copiously, as if each one were bearing to the grave his dearest friend. He wept with them and consented to delay his departure for a little.

On Sunday, the 1st of May, he was to preach to the devout Parisians for the last time. Montmartre, the very spot where Saint Denis had suffered martyrdom, was the place chosen for the meeting of the faithful. In those unhappy days the

hill was well-nigh uninhabited. But on the evening before that day more than six thousand people flocked to the mount to be certain of having good places; and there they passed the night, some in deserted hovels, but the majority in the open, under the stars. When the morning came no Friar Richard appeared, and in vain they waited for him. Disappointed and sad, at length they learnt that the Friar had been forbidden to preach. He had said nothing in his sermons to offend the English. The Parisians who had heard him believed him to be a good friend to the Regent and to the Duke of Burgundy. Perhaps he had taken flight owing to a report that the theologians of the University intended to proceed against him. His views concerning the end of the world were indeed both singular and dangerous.

Friar Richard had gone off to Auxerre. Thence he went preaching through Burgundy and Champagne. If he was on the King's side he did not let it appear. For in the month of June the folk of Champagne, and the inhabitants of Châlons especially, deemed him a worthy man and attached to the Duke of Burgundy. And we have seen that on the 4th of July he suspected the Maid of being either the devil or possessed by a devil.

She understood. When she saw the good Brother crossing himself and sprinkling holy water she knew that he took her for something evil, — for a phantom fashioned by the spirit of wickedness, or at least for a witch. However, she was by no means offended as she had been by the suspicions of Messire Jean Fournier. The priest, to whom she had confessed, could not be forgiven for having doubted whether she were a good Christian. But Friar Richard did not know her, had never seen her. Besides, she was growing accustomed to such treatment. The Constable, Brother Yves Milbeau, and many others who came to her asked whether she were from God or the devil. It was without a trace of anger, although in a slightly ironical tone, that she said to the preacher: "Approach boldly, I shall not fly away."

Meanwhile Friar Richard, by the ordeal of holy water and by the sign of the cross, had proved that the damsel was not a devil and that there was no devil in her. And when she said she had come from God he believed her with all his heart and esteemed her an angel of the Lord.

He confided to her the reason for his coming. The inhabitants of Troyes doubted whether she were of God; to resolve their doubts he had come to Saint-Phal. Now he knew she was of God, and he was not amazed; for he knew that the year 1430 would witness greater marvels than had ever been seen before, and one day or other he was expecting to behold the Prophet Elias walking and conversing with men. From that moment he threw in his lot with the party of the Maid and the Dauphin. It was not the Maid's prophecies concerning the realm of

France that attracted him to her. The world was too near its end for him to take any interest in the re-establishment of the madman's son in his inheritance. But he expected that once the kingdom of Jesus Christ had been established in the Land of the Lilies, Jeanne, the prophetess, and Charles, the temporal vicar of Jesus Christ, would lead the people of Christendom to deliver the Holy Sepulchre. That would be a meritorious work and one which must be accomplished before the consummation of the ages.

To the burgesses and inhabitants of the town of Troyes Jeanne dictated a letter. Herein, calling herself the servant of the King of Heaven and speaking in the name of God Himself, in terms gentle yet urgent, she called upon them to render obedience to King Charles of France, and warned them that whether they would or no she with the King would enter into all the towns of the holy kingdom and bring them peace. Here is the letter:

Jhesus † Maria

Good friends and beloved, an it please you, ye lords, burgesses and inhabitants of the town of Troies, Jehanne the Maid doth call upon and make known unto you on behalf of the King of Heaven, her sovereign and liege Lord, in whose service royal she is every day, that ye render true obedience and fealty to the Fair King of France. Whosoever may come against him, he shall shortly be in Reins and in Paris, and in his good towns of his holy kingdom, with the aid of King Jhesus. Ye loyal Frenchmen, come forth to King Charles and fail him not. And if ye come have no fear for your bodies nor for your goods. An if ye come not, I promise you and on your lives I maintain it, that with God's help we shall enter into all the towns of the holy kingdom and shall there establish peace, whosoever may oppose us. To God I commend you. God keep you if it be his will. Answer speedily. Before the city of Troyes, written at Saint-Fale, Tuesday the fourth day of July.

On the back:

“To the lords and burgesses of the city of Troyes.”

The Maid gave this letter to Friar Richard, who undertook to carry it to the townsfolk.

From Saint-Phal the army advanced towards Troyes along the Roman road. When they heard of the army's approach, the Council of the town assembled on Tuesday, the 5th, early in the morning, and sent the people of Reims a missive of which the following is the purport:

“This day do we expect the enemies of King Henry and the Duke of Burgundy who come to besiege us. In view of the design of these our foes and

having considered the just cause we support and the aid of our princes promised unto us, we have resolved in council, no matter what may be the strength of our enemies, to continue in our obedience waxing ever greater to King Henry and to the Duke of Burgundy, even until death. And this have we sworn on the precious body of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore we pray the citizens of Reims to take thought for us as brethren and loyal friends, and to send to my Lord the Regent and the Duke of Burgundy to beseech and entreat them to take pity on their poor subjects and come to their succour.”

On that same day, in the morning, from his lodging at Brinon-l’Archevêque, King Charles despatched his heralds bearing closed letters, signed by his hand, sealed with his seal, addressed to the members of the Council of the town of Troyes. Therein he made known unto them that by the advice of his Council, he had undertaken to go to Reims, there to receive his anointing, that his intention was to enter the city of Troyes on the morrow, wherefore he summoned and commanded them to render the obedience they owed him and prepare to receive him. He wisely made a point of reassuring them as to his intentions, which were not to avenge the past. Such was not his will, he said, but let them comport themselves towards their sovereign as they ought, and he would forget all and maintain them in his favour.

The Council refused to admit King Charles’ heralds within the town; but they received his letters, read them, deliberated over them, and made known to the heralds the result of their deliberations which was the following:

“The lords, knights and squires who are in the town, on behalf of King Henry and the Duke of Burgundy, have sworn with us, inhabitants of the city, that we will not receive into the town any who are stronger than we, without the express command of the Duke of Burgundy. Having regard to their oath, those who are in the town would not dare to admit King Charles.”

And the councillors added for their excuse:

“Whatever we the citizens may wish we must consider the men of war in the city who are stronger than we.”

The councillors had King Charles’ letter posted up and below it their reply.

In council they read the letter the Maid had dictated at Saint-Phal and entrusted to Friar Richard. The monk had not prepared them to give it a favourable reception, for they laughed at it heartily. “There is no rhyme or reason in it,” they said. “’Tis but a jest.” They threw it in the fire without sending a reply. Jeanne was a braggart, they said. And they added: “We certify her to be mad and possessed of the devil.”

That same day, at nine o’clock in the morning, the army began to march by the walls and take up its position round the town.

Those who encamped to the south west could thence admire the long walls, the strong gates, the high towers and the belfry of the city rising in the midst of a vast plain. On their right they would see above the roofs the church of Saint-Pierre, the huge structure of which was devoid of tower and steeple. It was there that eight years before had been celebrated the betrothal of King Henry V of England to the Lady Catherine of France. For in that town of Troyes, Queen Ysabeau and Duke Jean had made King Charles VI, bereft of sense and memory, sign away the Kingdom of the Lilies to the King of England and put his name to the ruin of Charles of Valois. At her daughter's betrothal, Madame Ysabeau was present wearing a robe of blue silk damask and a coat of black velvet lined with the skins of fifteen hundred minevers. After the ceremony she caused to be brought for her entertainment her singing birds, goldfinches, chaffinches, siskins and linnets.

When the French arrived, most of the townsfolk were on the ramparts looking more curious than hostile and apparently fearing nothing. They desired above all things to see the King.

The town was strongly defended. The Duke of Burgundy had long been keeping up the fortifications. In 1417 and 1419 the people of Troyes, like those of Orléans in 1428, had pulled down their suburbs and destroyed all the houses outside the town for two or three hundred paces from the ramparts. The arsenal was well furnished; the stores overflowed with victuals; but the Anglo-Burgundian garrison amounted only to between five and six hundred men.

On that day also, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the Councillors of the town of Troyes sent to inform the people of Reims of the arrival of the Armagnacs, and despatched to them copies of the letter from Charles of Valois, of their reply to it and of the Maid's letter, which they cannot therefore have burned immediately. They likewise communicated to them their resolution to resist to the death in case they should receive succour. In like manner they wrote to the people of Châlons to tell them of the Dauphin's coming; and to them they made known that the letter of Jeanne the Maid had been brought to Troyes by Friar Richard the preacher.

These writings amounted to saying: like all citizens in such circumstances, we are in danger of being hanged either by the Burgundians or by the Armagnacs, which would be very grievous. To avoid this calamity as far as in us lies, we give King Charles of Valois to understand that we do not open our gates to him because the garrison prevents us and that we are the weaker, which is true. And we make known to our Lords, the Regent and the Duke of Burgundy, that the garrison being too weak to defend us, which is true, we ask for succour, which is loyal; and we trust that the succour will not be sent, for if it were we should have

to endure a siege, and risk being taken by assault which for us merchants would be grievous. But, having asked for succour and not receiving it, we may then surrender without reproach. The important point is to cause the garrison, fortunately a small one, to make off. Five hundred men are too few for defence, but too many for surrender. As for enjoining the citizens of Reims to demand succour for themselves and for us, that is merely to prove our good-will to the Duke of Burgundy; and we risk nothing by it, for we know that our trusty comrades of Reims will take care that when they ask for succour they do not receive it, and that they will await a favourable opportunity for opening their gates to King Charles, who comes with a strong army. And now to conclude, we will resist to the death if we are succoured, which God forbid!

Such were the crafty thoughts of those dwellers in Champagne. The citizens fired a few stone bullets on to the French. The garrison skirmished awhile and returned into the town.

Meanwhile King Charles' army was stricken with famine. The Archbishop of Embrun's counsel to provide the army with victuals by means of human wisdom was easier to give than to follow. There were between six and seven thousand men in camp who had not broken bread for a week. The men-at-arms were reduced to feeding on pounded ears of corn still green and on the new beans they found in abundance. Then they called to mind how during Saint Martin's Lent Friar Richard had said to the folk of Troyes: "Sow beans broadcast: He who is to come shall come shortly." What the good brother had said of the spiritual seed-time was interpreted literally: by a curious misunderstanding, what had been uttered concerning the coming of the Messiah was applied to the coming of King Charles. Friar Richard was held to be the prophet of the Armagnacs and the men-at-arms really believed that this evangelical preacher had caused the beans they gathered to grow; thus had he provided for their nourishment by his excellence, his wisdom and his penetration into the counsels of God, who gave manna unto the people of Israel in the desert.

The King, who had been lodging at Brinon since the 4th of July, arrived before Troyes in the afternoon of Friday the 8th. That very day he held council of war with the commanders and princes of the blood to decide whether they should remain before the town until by dint of promises or threats they obtained its submission, or whether they should pass on, leaving it to itself, as they had done at Auxerre.

The discussion had lasted long when the Maid arrived and prophesied:

"Fair Dauphin," said she, "command your men to attack the town of Troyes and delay no further in councils too prolonged, for, in God's name, before three

days, I will cause you to enter the town, which shall be yours by love or by force and courage. And false Burgundy shall look right foolish.”

Wherefore had they contrary to their custom summoned her to the Council? It was merely a question of firing a few cannon balls and pretending to scale the walls, in short, of making a false attack. Such a feigned assault was due to the people of Troyes, who could not decently surrender save to some display of force; and besides the lower orders must be frightened, for they remained at heart Burgundian. Probably my Lord of Trèves or another judged that the little Saint by appearing beneath the ramparts of Troyes would strike a religious terror into the weavers of the city.

They had only to leave her to go her own way. The Council over, she mounted her horse, and lance in hand hurried to the moat, followed by a crowd of knights, squires, and craftsmen. The point of attack was to be the north west wall, between the Madeleine and the Comporté Gates. Jeanne, who firmly believed that the town would be taken by her, spent the night inciting her people to bring faggots and put the artillery in position. “To the assault,” she cried, and signed to them to throw hurdles into the trenches.

This threat had the desired effect. The lower orders, imagining the town already taken, and expecting the French to come to pillage, massacre and ravish, as was the custom, took refuge in the churches. As for the clerics and notables, this was just what they wanted.

Being assured by Charles of Valois that they might come to him in safety, the Lord Bishop Jean Laiguisé, my Lord Guillaume Andouillette, Master of the Hospital, the Dean of the Chapter, the clergy and the notables went to the King.

Jean Laiguisé was the spokesman. He came to do homage to the King and to offer excuse for the townsfolk.

It is not their fault, he said, if the King enter not according to his good pleasure. The Bailie and those of the garrison, some three or four hundred, guard the gates, and forbid their being opened. Let it please the King to have patience until I have spoken to those of the town. I trust that as soon as I have spoken to them, they will open the gates and render the King such obedience as he shall be pleased withal.

In replying to the Bishop, the King set forth the reasons for the expedition and the rights he held over the town of Troyes.

Without exception, he said, I will forgive all the deeds of past times, and, according to the example of Saint Louis, I will maintain the people of Troyes in peace and liberty.

Jean Laiguisé demanded that such revenues and patronage as had been bestowed on churchmen by the late King, Charles VI, should be retained by

them, and that those who had received the same from King Henry of England should be given charters by King Charles authorizing them to keep their benefices, even in cases where the King had bestowed them on others.

The King consented and the Lord Bishop beheld in him a new Cyrus. This conference he reported to the Council of the Town. Thereupon it deliberated and resolved to render allegiance to the King, in consideration of his legal right and provided he would grant an amnesty for all offences, would leave no garrison in the city and would abolish all aids, save the *gabelle*. Whereupon the Council sent letters to the citizens of Reims making known to them this resolution and exhorting them to take a similar one:

“Thus,” they said, “we shall have the same lord over us. You will keep your lives and your goods, as we have done. For otherwise we should all be lost. We do not regret our submission. Our only grief is that we delayed so long. You will be right glad to follow our example; for King Charles is a prince of greater discretion, understanding and valour than any who for many a long year have arisen in the noble house of France.”

Friar Richard went to find the Maid. As soon as he saw her, and when he was still afar off, he knelt before her. When she saw him, she likewise knelt before him, and they bowed low to each other. When he returned to the town, the good Friar preached to the folks at length and exhorted them to obey King Charles. “God is preparing his way,” he said. “To accompany him and to lead him to his anointing God hath sent him a holy Maid, who, as I firmly believe, is as able to penetrate the mysteries of God as any saint in Paradise, save Saint John the Evangelist.” The good Brother found himself obliged to recognise as superior to Jeanne at least one saint, — one who was the first of saints, the apostle who had lain with his head on Jesus’ breast, the prophet who was ere long to return to earth, when the ages should have been consummated.

“If she wished,” continued Friar Richard, “she could bring in all the King’s men-at-arms, over the walls or in any other manner that pleased her. And many other things can she do.”

The townsfolk had great faith and confidence in this good Brother who spoke so eloquently. What he said of the Maid appeared to them admirable, and won their obedience to a king so powerfully accompanied. With one voice they all cried aloud, “Long live King Charles of France!”

But now it was necessary to treat with the Bailie. He was not unapproachable, seeing that he had suffered this going and coming from the town to the camp and the camp to the town; and with him must be devised some honest means of getting rid of the garrison. With this object the commonalty, preceded by the

Lord Bishop, went in great numbers to the Bailie and the Captains, and called upon them to provide for the safety of the town. This demand they were incapable of granting, for to safeguard a city against its will and to drive out thirty thousand French was beyond their power.

As the townsfolk had anticipated, the Bailie was greatly embarrassed. Beholding his perplexity, the Councillors of the town said to him, "If you will not keep the treaty you have made for the public weal, then will we bring the King's men into the city, whether you will or no."

The Bailie and the Captains refused to betray their English and Burgundian masters, but they consented to go. That was all that was required of them.

The town opened its gates to Charles. On Sunday, the 10th of July, very early in the morning, the Maid entered first into Troyes and with her the common folk whom she so dearly loved. Friar Richard accompanied her. She posted archers along the streets which the procession was to follow, so that the King of France should pass through the town between a double row of those foot soldiers of his army who had so nobly aided him.

While Charles of Valois was entering by one gate, the Burgundian garrison was going out by the other. As had been agreed, the men of King Henry and Duke Philip bore away their arms and other possessions. Now, in their possessions they included such French prisoners as they were holding to ransom. And, according to the use and custom of war, it would seem that they were not altogether wrong; but pitiful it was to see King Charles's men led away captive just as their lord was arriving. The Maid heard of it, and her kind heart was touched. She hurried to the gate of the town, where with arms and baggage the fighting men were assembled. She found there the lords of Rochefort and Philibert de Moslant. She challenged them and called to them to leave the Dauphin's men. But the Captains thought otherwise.

"Thus to proceed against the treaty is fraudulent and wicked," they said to her.

Meanwhile the prisoners on their knees were entreating the Saint to keep them.

"In God's name," she cried, "they shall not go."

During this altercation there was standing apart a certain Burgundian squire, and through his mind were passing concerning the Maid of the Armagnacs certain reflections to which he was to give utterance later. "By my faith," he was thinking, "it is the simplest creature that ever I saw. There is neither rhyme nor reason in her, no more than in the greatest stupid. To so valiant a woman as Madame d'Or, I will not compare her, and the Burgundians do but jest when they appear afraid of her."

To taste the full flavour of this joke it must be explained that Madame d'Or, about as high as one's boot, held the office of fool to my Lord Philip.

The Maid failed to come to an understanding with the Lords de Rochefort and de Moslant concerning the prisoners. They had right on their side. She had only the promptings of her kind heart. This discussion afforded great entertainment to the men-at-arms of both parties. When King Charles was informed of it, he smiled and said that to settle the dispute he would pay the prisoners' ransom, which was fixed at one silver mark per head. On receiving this sum the Burgundians extolled the generosity of the King of France.

On that same Sunday, about nine o'clock in the morning, King Charles entered the city. He had put on his festive robes, gleaming with velvet, with gold, and with precious stones. The Duke of Alençon and the Maid, holding her banner in her hand, rode at his side. He was followed by all the knighthood. The townsfolk lit bonfires and danced in rings. The little children cried, "Noël!" Friar Richard preached.

The Maid prayed in the churches. In one church she held a babe over the baptismal font. Like a princess or a holy woman, she was frequently asked to be godmother to children she did not know and was never to see again. She generally named the children Charles in honour of the King, and to the girls she gave her own name of Jeanne. Sometimes she called the children by names chosen by their mothers.

On the morrow, the 11th of July, the army, which had remained outside the walls, under the command of Messire Ambroise de Loré, passed through the town. The entrance of men-at-arms was a scourge, of which the citizens were as much afraid as of the Black Death. King Charles, being careful to spare the citizens, took measures to control this scourge. By his command the heralds cried that under pain of hanging no soldier must enter the houses or take anything against the will of the townsfolk.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SURRENDER OF CHÂLONS AND OF REIMS — THE CORONATION

LEAVING Troyes, the royal army entered into the poorer part of Champagne, crossed the Aube near Arcis, and took up its quarters at Lettrée, twelve and a half miles from Châlons. From Lettrée the King sent his herald Montjoie to the people of Châlons to ask them to receive him and render him obedience.

The towns of Champagne were as closely related as the fingers of one hand. When the Dauphin was at Brinon-l'Archevêque, the people of Châlons had heard of it from their friends of Troyes. The latter had even told them that Friar Richard, the preacher, had brought them a letter from Jeanne the Maid. Whereupon the folk of Châlons wrote to those of Reims:

“We are amazed at Friar Richard. We esteemed him a man right worthy. But he has turned sorcerer. We announce unto you that the citizens of Troyes are making war against the Dauphin's men. We are resolved to resist the enemy with all our strength.”

They thought not one word of what they wrote, and they knew that the citizens of Reims would believe none of it. But it was important to display great loyalty to the Duke of Burgundy before receiving another master.

The Count Bishop of Châlons came out to Lettrée to meet the King and gave up to him the keys of the town. He was Jean de Montbéliard-Saarbrück, one of the Sires of Commercy.

On the 14th of July the King and his army entered the town of Châlons. There the Maid found four or five peasants from her village come to see her, and with them Jean Morel, who was her kinsman. By calling a husbandman, and about forty-three years of age, he had fled with the d'Arc family to Neufchâteau on the passing of the men-at-arms. Jeanne gave him a red gown which she had worn. At Châlons also she met another husbandman, younger than Morel by about ten years, Gérardin from Épinal, whom she called her *compeer*, just as she called Gérardin's wife Isabellette her *commère* because she had held their son Nicolas over the baptismal font and because a godmother is a mother in the spirit. At home in the village Jeanne mistrusted Gérardin because he was a Burgundian. At Châlons she showed more confidence in him and talked to him of the progress of the army, saying that she feared nothing except treason. Already she had dark

forebodings; doubtless she felt that henceforth the frankness of her soul and the simplicity of her mind would be hardly assailed by the wickedness of men and the confusing forces of circumstance. Already the words of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret had lost some of their primitive clearness, for they had come to treat of those French and Burgundian state secrets which were not heavenly matters.

The people of Châlons, following the example of their friends of Troyes, wrote to the inhabitants of Reims that they had received the King of France and that they counselled them to do likewise. In this letter they said they had found King Charles kind, gracious, pitiful, and merciful; and of a truth the King was dealing leniently with the towns of Champagne. The people of Châlons added that he had a great mind and a fine bearing. That was saying much.

The citizens of Reims acted with extreme caution. On the arrival of the King of France in the neighbourhood of the town, while they sent informing him that their gates should be opened to him, to their Lord Philip and likewise to the Burgundians and English captains, they sent word of the progress of the royal army as far as they knew it, and called upon them to oppose the enemy's march. But they were in no hurry to obtain succour, reckoning that, should they receive none, they could surrender to King Charles without incurring any censure from the Burgundians, and that thus they would have nothing to fear from either party. For the moment they preserved their loyalty to the two sides, which was wise in circumstances so difficult and so dangerous. While observing the craft with which these towns of Champagne practised the art of changing masters, it is well to remember that their lives and possessions depended on their knowledge of that art.

As early as the 1st of July Captain Philibert de Moslant wrote to them from Nogent-sur-Seine, where he was with his Burgundian company, that if they needed him he would come to their help like a good Christian. They feigned not to understand. After all, the Lord Philibert was not their captain. What he proposed to do was, as he said, only out of Christian charity. The notables of Reims, who did not wish for deliverance, had to beware, above all, of their natural deliverer, the Sire de Chastillon, Grand Steward of France, the commander of the town. And they must needs request help in such a manner as not to obtain their request, for fear of being like the Israelites, of whom it is written: *Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum* .

When the royal army was yet before the walls of Troyes, a herald appeared at the gates of Reims, bearing a letter given by the King, at Brinon-l'Archevêque, on Monday, the 4th of July. This letter was delivered to the Council. "You may

have heard tidings,” said the King to his good people of Reims, “of the success and victory it hath pleased God to vouchsafe unto us over our ancient enemies, the English, before the town of Orléans and since then at Jargeau, Beaugency, and Meung-sur-Loire, in each of which places our enemies have received grievous hurt; all their leaders and others to the number of four thousand have been slain or taken prisoners. Such things having happened, more by divine grace than human skill, we, according to the advice of our Princes of the Blood and the members of our Great Council, are coming to the town of Reims to receive our anointing and coronation. Wherefore we summon you, on the loyalty and obedience you owe us, to dispose yourselves to receive us in the accustomed manner as you have done for our predecessors.”

And King Charles, adopting towards the citizens of Reims that same wise benignity he had shown to the citizens of Troyes, promised them full pardon and oblivion.

“Be not deterred,” he said, “by matters that are past and the fear that we may remember them. Be assured that if now ye act towards us as ye ought, ye shall be dealt with as becometh good and loyal subjects.”

He even asked them to send notables to treat with him. “If, in order to be better informed concerning our intentions, certain citizens of Reims would come to us with the herald, whom we send, we should be well pleased. They may come in safety and in such numbers as shall seem good to them.”

On the delivery of this letter the Council was convoked, but it so befell that there were not enough aldermen to deliberate; hence the Council was relieved from a serious embarrassment. Whereupon the common folk were assembled in the various quarters of the city, and from the citizens thus consulted was obtained the following crafty declaration: “It is our intention to live and die with the Council and the Notables. According to their advice we shall act in concord and in peace, without murmuring or making answer, unless it be by the counsel and decree of the Commander of Reims and his Lieutenant.”

The Sire de Chastillon, Commander of the town, was then at Château-Thierry with his lieutenants, Jean Cauchon and Thomas de Bazoches, both of them knights. The citizens of Reims deemed it wise that he should see King Charles’s letter. Their Bailie, Guillaume Hodierne, went to the Lord Captain and showed it to him. Most faithfully did the Bailie express the sentiments of the people of Reims: he asked the Sire de Chastillon to come to their deliverance, but he asked in such a manner that he did not come. That was the all-important point; for by not appealing to him they laid themselves open to a charge of treason, while if he did come they risked having to endure a siege grievous and dangerous.

With this object the Bailie declared that the citizens of Reims, desirous to communicate with their captains, were willing to receive him if he were accompanied by no more than fifty horse. Herein they displayed their good will, being entitled to refuse to receive a garrison within their walls; this privilege notwithstanding, they consented to admit fifty horse, which meant about two hundred fighting men. As the citizens had foreseen, the Sire de Chastillon judged such a number insufficient for his safety. He demanded as the conditions of his coming, that the town should be victualled and put in a state of defence, that he should enter it with three or four hundred combatants, that the defence of the city as well as of the castle should be entrusted to him, and that there should be delivered up to him five or six notables as hostages. On these conditions he declared himself ready to live and die for them.

He marched with his company to within a short distance of the town, and then made known to the townsfolk that he had come to succour them.

The English were indeed recruiting troops wherever they could and pressing all manner of folk into their service. They were said to be arming even priests; and the Regent was certainly pressing into his service the crusaders disembarked in France, whom the Cardinal of Winchester was intending to lead against the Hussites. As we may imagine, King Henry's Council did not fail to inform the inhabitants of Reims of the armaments which were being assembled. On the 3rd of July they were told that the troops were crossing the sea, and on the 10th Colard de Mailly, Bailie of Vermandois, announced that they had landed. But these tidings failed to inspire the folk of Champagne with any great confidence in the power of the English. While the Sire de Chastillon was promising that in forty days they should have a fine large army from beyond the seas, King Charles with thirty thousand combatants was but a few miles from their gates. The Sire de Chastillon perceived, what he had previously suspected, that he was tricked. The citizens of Reims refused to admit him. Nothing remained for him but to turn round and join the English.

On the 12th of July, from my Lord Regnault de Chartres, Archbishop and Duke of Reims, the townsfolk received a letter requesting them to make ready for the King's coming.

The Council of the city having assembled on that day, the clerk proceeded to draw up an official report of its deliberations:

"... After having represented to my Lord of Chastillon that he is the Commander and that the lords and the mass of the people who...."

He wrote no more. Finding it difficult to protest their loyalty to the English while making ready King Charles's coronation, and considering it imprudent to

recognize a new prince without being forced to it, the citizens abruptly renounced the silver of speech and took refuge in the gold of silence.

On Saturday, the 16th, King Charles took up his quarters in the Castle of Sept-Saulx, ten miles from the city where he was to be crowned. This fortress had been erected two hundred years before by the warlike predecessors of my Lord Regnault. Its proud keep commanded the crossing of the Vesle. There the King received the citizens of Reims, who came in great numbers to do him homage. Then, with the Maid and his whole army, he resumed his march. Having traversed the last stage of the highroad which wound along the bank of the Vesle, he entered the great city of Champagne at nightfall. The southern gate, called Dieulimire, lowered its drawbridge and raised its two portcullises to let him pass.

According to tradition the coronation should take place on a Sunday. This rule was found mentioned in a ceremonial which was believed to have served for the coronation of Louis VIII and was considered authoritative. The citizens of Reims worked all night in order that everything might be ready on the morrow. They were urged on by their sudden affection for the King of France and likewise by their fear lest he and his army should spend many days in their city. Their horror of receiving and maintaining men-at-arms within their gates they shared with the citizens of all towns, who in their panic were incapable of distinguishing Armagnac soldiers from English and Burgundians. Wherefore in all things were they diligent, but with the firm intention of paying as little as possible. Seeing that to them the coronation brought neither profit nor honour, the aldermen were accustomed to throw the burden of it on the Archbishop, who, they said, as peer of France, would receive the emoluments.



CHARLES VII, KING OF FRANCE

From an old engraving

The royal ornaments, which, after the coronation of the late King, had been deposited in the sacristy of Saint-Denys, were in the hands of the English. The crown of Charlemagne, brilliant with rubies, sapphires and emeralds, adorned with four flowers-de-luce, which the Kings of France received on their coronation, the English wished to place on the head of their King Henry. This child King they were preparing to gird with the sword of Charlemagne, the illustrious Joyeuse, which in its sheath of violet velvet slept in the keeping of the Burgundian Abbot of Saint-Denys. In English hands likewise were the sceptre surmounted by a golden Charlemagne in imperial robes, the rod of justice terminated by a hand in horn of unicorn, the golden clasp of Saint Louis' mantle, and the golden spurs and the Pontifical, containing within its enamelled binding

of silver-gilt the ceremonial of the coronation. The French must needs make shift with a crown kept in the sacristy of the cathedral. The other signs of royalty handed down from Clovis, from Saint Charlemagne and Saint Louis must be represented as well as could be. After all, it was not unfitting that this coronation, won by a single expedition, should be expressive of the labour and suffering it had cost. It was well that the ceremony should suggest something of the heroic poverty of the men-at-arms and the common folk who had brought the Dauphin thither.

Kings were anointed with oil, because oil signifies renown, glory, and wisdom. In the morning the Sires de Rais, de Boussac, de Graille and de Culant were deputed by the King to go and fetch the Holy Ampulla.

It was a crystal flask which the Grand Prior of Saint-Remi kept in the tomb of the Apostle, behind the high altar of the Abbey Church. This flask contained the sacred chrism with which the Blessed Remi had anointed King Clovis. It was enclosed in a reliquary in the form of a dove, because the Holy Ghost in the semblance of a dove had been seen descending with the oil for the anointing of the first Christian King. Of a truth in ancient books it was written that an angel had come down from heaven with the miraculous ampulla, but men were not disturbed by such inconsistencies, and among Christian folk no one doubted that the sacred chrism was possessed of miraculous power. For example, it was known that with use the oil became no less, that the flask remained always full, as a premonition and a pledge that the kingdom of France would endure for ever. According to the observation of witnesses, at the time of the coronation of the late King Charles, the oil had not diminished after the anointing.

At nine o'clock in the morning Charles of Valois entered the church with a numerous retinue. The king-at-arms of France called by name the twelve peers of the realm to come before the high altar. Of the six lay peers not one replied. In their places came the Duke of Alençon, the Counts of Clermont and of Vendôme, the Sires de Laval, de La Trémouille, and de Maillé.

Of the six ecclesiastical peers, three replied to the summons of the king-at-arms, — the Archbishop Duke of Reims, the Bishop Count of Châlons, the Bishop Duke of Laon. For the missing bishops of Langres and Noyon were substituted those of Seez and Orléans. In the absence of Arthur of Brittany, Constable of France, the sword was held by Charles, Sire d'Albret.

In front of the altar was Charles of Valois, wearing robes open on the chest and shoulders. He swore, first, to maintain the peace and privileges of the Church; second, to preserve his people from exactions and not to burden them too heavily; third, to govern with justice and mercy.

From his cousin d'Alençon he received the arms of a knight. Then the Archbishop anointed him with the holy oil, with which the Holy Ghost makes strong priests, kings, prophets and martyrs. So this new Samuel consecrated the new Saul, making manifest that all power is of God, and that, according to the example set by David, kings are pontiffs, the ministers and the witnesses of the Lord. This pouring out of the oil, with which the Kings of Israel were anointed, had rendered the kings of most Christian France burning and shining lights since the time of Charlemagne, yea, even since the days of Clovis; for though it was baptism and confirmation rather than anointing that Clovis received at the hands of the Blessed Saint Remi, yet he was anointed Christian and King by the blessed bishop, and at the same time and with that same holy oil which God himself had sent to this prince and to his successors.

And Charles received the anointing, the sign of power and victory, for it is written in the Book of Samuel: "And Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon his head and kissed him, and said, 'Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance and to deliver his people from their enemies round about. *Ecce unxit te Dominus super hereditatem suam in principem, et liberabis populum suum de manibus inimicorum ejus, qui in circuitu ejus sunt.* '" (Reg. 1. x. 1. 6.)

During the mystery, as it was called in the old parlance, the Maid stayed by the King's side. Her white banner, before which the ancient standard of Chandos had retreated, she held for a moment unfurled. Then others in their turn held her standard, her page Louis de Coutes, who never left her, and Friar Richard the preacher, who had followed her to Châlons and to Reims. In one of her dreams she had lately given a crown to the King; she was looking for this crown to be brought into the church by heavenly messengers. Did not saints commonly receive crowns from angels' hands? To Saint Cecilia an angel offered a crown with garlands of roses and lilies. To Catherine, the Virgin, an angel gave an imperishable crown, which she placed upon the head of the Empress of Rome. But the crown curiously rich and magnificent that Jeanne looked for came not.

From the altar the Archbishop took the crown of no great value provided by the chapter, and with both hands raised it over the King's head. The twelve peers, in a circle round the prince, stretched forth their arms to hold it. The trumpets blew and the folk cried: "Noël."

Thus was anointed and crowned Charles of France issue of the royal line of Priam, great Troy's noble King.

Two hours after noon the mystery came to an end. We are told that then the Maid knelt low before the King, and, weeping said:

"Fair King, now is God's pleasure accomplished. It was His will that I should

raise the siege of Orléans and bring you to this city of Reims to receive your holy anointing, making manifest that you are the true King and he to whom the realm of France should belong.”

The King made the customary gifts. To the Chapter he presented hangings of green satin as well as ornaments of red velvet and white damask. Moreover, he placed upon the altar a silver vase with thirteen golden crowns. Regardless of the claims asserted by the canons, the Lord Archbishop took possession of it, but it profited him little, for he had to give it up. After the ceremony King Charles put the crown on his head and over his shoulders the royal mantle, blue as the sky, flowered with lilies of gold; and on his charger he passed down the streets of Reims city. The people in great joy cried, “Noël!” as they had cried when my Lord the Duke of Burgundy entered. On that day the Sire de Rais was made marshal of France and the Sire de la Trémouille count. The eldest of Madame de Laval’s two sons, he to whom the Maid had offered wine at Selles-en-Berry, was likewise made count. Captain La Hire received the county of Longueville with such parts of Normandy as he could conquer.

King Charles dined in the archiepiscopal palace in the ancient hall of Tau, and was served by the Duke of Alençon and the Count of Clermont. As was customary, the royal table extended into the street, and there was feasting throughout the town. It was a day of free drinking and fraternity. In the houses, at the doors, by the wayside, folk made good cheer, and the kitchens were busy; there were that day consumed oxen in dozens, sheep in hundreds, chicken and rabbits in thousands. Folk stuffed themselves with spices, and (for it was a thirsty day) they quaffed full many a beaker of wine of Burgundy, and especially of that wine of delicate flavour that comes from Beaune. At every coronation the ancient stag, made of bronze and hollow, which stood in the courtyard of the archiepiscopal palace was carried into the Rue du Parvis; it was filled with wine and the people drank from it as from a fountain. Finally the burgesses and all the inhabitants of Blessed Saint Remi’s city, rich and poor alike, stuffed and satiated with good wine, having howled “Noël!” till they were hoarse, fell asleep over the wine-casks and the victuals, the remains of which were to be a cause of bitter dispute between the grim aldermen and the King’s men on the morrow.

Jacques d’Arc had come to see the coronation for which his daughter had so zealously laboured. He lodged at the Sign of *L’Ane Rayé* in the Rue du Parvis in a hostelry kept by Alix, widow of Raulin Morieau. As well as his daughter, he saw once more his son Pierre. The cousin, whom Jeanne called uncle and who had accompanied her to Vaucouleurs to Sire Robert, had likewise come hither to the coronation. He spoke to the King and told him all he knew of his cousin. At Reims also Jeanne found her young fellow-countryman, Husson Le Maistre,

coppersmith of the village of Varville, about seven miles from Domremy. She did not know him; but he had heard tell of her, and he was very familiar with Jacques and Pierre d'Arc.

Jacques d'Arc was one of the notables and perhaps the best business man of his village. It was not merely to see his daughter riding through the streets in man's attire that he had come to Reims. He had come doubtless for himself and on behalf of his village to ask the King for an exemption from taxation. This request, presented to the King by the Maid, was granted. On the 31st of the month the King decreed that the inhabitants of Greux and of Domremy should be free from all *tailles*, aids, subsidies, and subventions. Out of the public funds the magistrates of the town paid Jacques d'Arc's expenses, and when he was about to depart they gave him a horse to take him home.

During the five or six days she spent at Reims the Maid appeared frequently before the townsfolk. The poor and humble came to her; good wives took her by the hand and touched their rings with hers. On her finger she wore a little ring made of a kind of brass, sometimes called electrum. Electrum was said to be the gold of the poor. In place of a stone the ring had a collet inscribed with the words "Jhesus Maria" with three crosses. Oftentimes she reverently fixed her gaze upon it, for once she had had it touched by Saint Catherine. And that the Saint should have actually touched it was not incredible, seeing that some years before, in 1413, Sister Colette, who was vowed to virginal chastity, had received from the Virgin apostle a rich golden ring, as a sign of her spiritual marriage with the King of Kings. Sister Colette permitted the nuns and monks of her order to touch this ring, and she confided it to the messengers she sent to distant lands to preserve them from perils by the way. The Maid ascribed great powers to her ring, albeit she never used it to heal the sick.

She was expected to render those trifling services which it was usual to ask from holy folk and sometimes from magicians. Before the coronation ceremony the nobles and knights had been given gloves, according to the custom. One of them lost his; he asked the Maid to find them, or others asked her for him. She did not promise to do it; notwithstanding the matter became known, and various interpretations were placed upon it.

After the King's coronation, jostled by the crowd in the Rue du Parvis, one can imagine some thoughtful clerk raising his eyes to the glorious façade of the Cathedral, that Bible in stone, already appearing ancient to men, who, knowing naught of the chronicles, measured time by the span of human existence. Such a clerk would have certainly beheld on the left of the pointed arch above the rose window the colossal image of Goliath rising proudly in his coat of mail, and that same figure repeated on the right of the arch in the attitude of a man tottering

and ready to fall. Then this clerk must have remembered what is written in the first book of Kings:

“And there went out a man base-born from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Geth, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had a helmet of brass upon his head and he was clothed with a coat of mail with scales; and the weight of his coat of mail was five thousand sicles of brass. And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel and said to them: I bring reproach unto the armies of Israel. Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand.

“Now David had gone to feed his Father’s sheep at Bethlehem. But he arose in the morning and gave the charge of the flock to the keeper. And he came to the place of Magala and to the army which was going out to fight. And, seeing Goliath, he asked: ‘Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’

“And the words which David spoke, were rehearsed before Saul; and he sent for him. David said to Saul, ‘Let not any man’s heart be dismayed in him; I, thy servant, will go and fight against this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David ‘Thou art not able to withstand this Philistine nor to fight against him; for thou art but a boy, but he is a warrior from his youth.’ And David made answer, ‘I will go against him and I will take away the reproach from Israel.’ Then Saul said to David, ‘Go and the Lord be with thee.’

“And David took his staff which he had always in his hands, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and he took a sling in his hand; and went forth against the Philistine.

“And when the Philistine looked and beheld David, he despised him. For he was a young man, and ruddy, and of a comely countenance. And the Philistine said to David: ‘Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a staff?’ Then said David to the Philistine: ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand that all the earth may know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for it is his battle, and he will deliver you into our hands.’

“And when the Philistine arose and was coming and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. And he put his hand into his scrip and took a stone, and cast it with the sling and fetching it about struck the Philistine in the forehead, and the stone was fixed in his forehead and he fell on his face upon the earth.”

Then the clerk, meditating on these words of the Book, would reflect how God, the Unchanging, who saved Israel and struck down Goliath by the sling of

a shepherd lad, had raised up the daughter of a husbandman for the deliverance of the most Christian realm and the reproach of the Leopard.

From Gien, about June the 27th, the Maid had had a letter written to the Duke of Burgundy, calling upon him to come to the King's anointing. Having received no reply, on the day of the coronation she dictated a second letter to the Duke. Here it is:

† Jhesus Maria

“High and greatly to be feared Prince, Duke of Burgundy, Jehanne the Maid, in the name of the King of Heaven, her rightful and liege lord, requires you and the King of France to make a good peace which shall long endure. Forgive one another heartily and entirely as becometh good Christians; an if it please you to make war, go ye against the Saracens. Prince of Burgundy, I pray you, I entreat you, I beseech you as humbly as lieth in my power, that ye make war no more against the holy realm of France, and that forthwith and speedily ye withdraw those your men who are in any strongholds and fortresses of the said holy kingdom; and in the name of the fair King of France, he is ready to make peace with you, saving his honour if that be necessary. And in the name of the King of Heaven, my Sovereign liege Lord, for your good, your honour and your life, I make known unto you, that ye will never win in battle against the loyal French and that all they who wage war against the holy realm of France, will be warring against King Jhesus, King of Heaven and of the world, my lawful liege lord. And with clasped hands I beseech and entreat you that ye make no battle nor wage war against us, neither you, nor your people, nor your subjects; and be assured that whatever number of folk ye bring against us, they will gain nothing, and it will be sore pity for the great battle and the blood that shall be shed of those that come against us. And three weeks past, I did write and send you letters by a herald, that ye should come to the anointing of the King, which to-day, Sunday, the 17th day of this present month, is made in the city of Reims: to which letter I have had no answer, neither news of the said herald. To God I commend you; may he keep you, if it be his will; and I pray God to establish good peace. Written from the said place of Reims, on the said seventeenth of July.”

Addressed: “to the Duke of Burgundy.”

Had Saint Catherine of Sienna been at Reims she would not have written otherwise. Albeit the Maid liked not the Burgundians, in her own way she realized forcibly how desirable was peace with the Duke of Burgundy. With clasped hands she entreats him to cease making war against France. “An it

please you to make war then go ye against the Saracens.” Already she had counselled the English to join the French and go on a crusade. The destruction of the infidel was then the dream of gentle peace-loving souls; and many pious folk believed that the son of the knight, who had been vanquished at Nicopolis, would make the Turks pay dearly for their former victory.

In this letter, the Maid, in the name of the King of Heaven, tells Duke Philip that if he fight against the King, he will be conquered. Her voices had foretold to her the victory of France over Burgundy; they had not revealed to her that at the very moment when she was dictating her letter the ambassadors of Duke Philip were at Reims; that was so, notwithstanding.

Esteeming King Charles, master of Champagne, to be a prince worthy of consideration, Duke Philip sent to Reims, David de Brimeu, Bailie of Artois, at the head of an embassy, to greet him and open negotiations for peace. The Burgundians received a hearty welcome from the Chancellor and the Council. It was hoped that peace would be concluded before their departure. The Angevin lords announced it to their queens, Yolande and Marie. By so doing they showed how little they knew the consummate old fox of Dijon. The French were not strong enough yet, neither were the English weak enough. It was agreed that in August an embassy should be sent to the Duke of Burgundy in the town of Arras. After four days negotiation, a truce for fifteen days was signed and the embassy left Reims. At the same time, the Duke at Paris solemnly renewed his complaint against Charles of Valois, his father’s assassin, and undertook to bring an army to the help of the English.

Leaving Antoine de Hellande, nephew of the Duke-Archbishop to command Reims, the King of France departed from the city on the 20th of July and went to Saint-Marcoul-de-Corbeny, where on the day after their coronation, the Kings were accustomed to touch for the evil.

Saint Marcoul cured the evil. He was of royal race, but his power, manifested long after his death, came to him especially from his name, and it was believed that Saint Marcoul was able to cure those afflicted with marks on the neck, as Saint Clare was to give sight to the blind, and Saint Fort to give strength to children. The King of France shared with him the power of healing scrofula; and as the power came to him from the holy oil brought down from heaven by a dove, it was thought that this virtue would be more effectual at the time of the anointing, all the more because by lewdness, disobedience to the Christian Church, and other irregularities, he stood in danger of losing it. That is what had happened to King Philippe I. The Kings of England touched for the evil; notably King Edward III worked wondrous cures on scrofulous folk who were covered

with scars. For these reasons scrofula was called Saint Marcoul's evil or King's evil. Virgins as well as kings could cure this royal malady.

King Charles worshipped and presented offerings at the shrine of Saint Marcoul, and there touched for the evil. At Corbeny he received the submission of the town of Laon. Then, on the morrow, the 22nd, he went off to a little stronghold in the valley of the Aisne, called Vailly, which belonged to the Archbishop Duke of Reims. At Vailly he received the submission of the town of Soissons. In the words of an Armagnac prophet of the time: "the keys of the war gates knew the hands that had forged them."

CHAPTER XIX

RISE OF THE LEGEND

IT is always difficult to ascertain what happens in war. In those days it was quite impossible to form any clear idea of how things came about. At Orléans, doubtless, there were certain who were keen enough to perceive that the numerous and ingenious engines of war, gathered together by the magistrates, had been of great service; but folk generally prefer to ascribe results to miraculous causes, and the merit of their deliverance the people of Orléans attributed first to their Blessed Patrons, Saint Aignan and Saint Euverte, and after them to Jeanne, the Divine Maid, believing that there was no easier, simpler, or more natural explanation of the deeds they had witnessed.

Guillaume Girault, former magistrate of the town and notary at the Châtelet, wrote and signed, with his own hand, a brief account of the deliverance of the city. Herein he states that on Wednesday, Ascension Eve, the bastion of Saint-Loup was stormed and taken as if by miracle, "there being present, and aiding in the fight, Jeanne the Maid, sent of God;" and that, on the following Saturday, the siege laid by the English to Les Tourelles at the end of the bridge was raised by the most obvious miracle since the Passion. And Guillaume Girault testifies that the Maid led the enterprise. When eye-witnesses, participators in the deeds themselves, had no clear idea of events, what could those more remote from the scene of action think of them?

The tidings of the French victories flew with astonishing rapidity. The brevity of authentic accounts was amply supplemented by the eloquence of loquacious clerks and the popular imagination. The Loire campaign and the coronation expedition were scarcely known at first save by fabulous reports, and the people only thought of them as supernatural events.

In the letters sent by royal secretaries to the towns of the realm and the princes of Christendom, the name of Jeanne the Maid was associated with all the deeds of prowess. Jeanne herself, by her monastic scribe, made known to all the great deeds which, it was her firm belief, she had accomplished.

It was believed that everything had been done through her, that the King had consulted her in all things, when in truth the King's counsellors and the Captains rarely asked her advice, listened to it but seldom, and brought her forth only at convenient seasons. Everything was attributed to her alone. Her personality, associated with deeds attested and seemingly marvellous, became buried in a vast cycle of astonishing fables and disappeared in a forest of heroic stories.

Contrite souls there were in those days, who, ascribing all the woes of the kingdom to the sins of the people, looked for salvation to humility, repentance, and penance. They expected the end of iniquity and the kingdom of God on earth. Jeanne, at least in the beginning, was one of those pious folk. Sometimes, speaking as a mystic reformer, she would say that Jesus is King of the holy realm of France, that King Charles is his lieutenant, and does but hold the kingdom "in fief." She uttered words which would create the impression that her mission was all charity, peace, and love, — these, for example, "I am sent to comfort the poor and needy." Such gentle penitents as dreamed of a world pure, faithful, and good, made of Jeanne their saint and their prophetess. They ascribed to her edifying words she had never uttered.

"When the Maid came to the King," they said, "she caused him to make three promises: the first was to resign his kingdom, to renounce it and give it back to God, from whom he held it; the second, to pardon all such as had turned against him and afflicted him; the third, to humiliate himself so far as to receive into favour all such as should come to him, poor and rich, friend and foe."

Or again, in apologues, simple and charming, like the following, they represented her accomplishing her mission:

"One day, the Maid asked the King to bestow a present upon her; and when he consented, she claimed as a gift the realm of France. Though astonished, the King did not withdraw his promise. Having received her present, the Maid required a deed of gift to be solemnly drawn up by four of the King's notaries and read aloud. While the King listened to the reading, she pointed him out to those that stood by, saying: 'Behold the poorest knight in the kingdom.' Then, after a short time, disposing of the realm of France, she gave it back to God. Thereafter, acting in God's name, she invested King Charles with it and commanded that this solemn act of transmission should be recorded in writing."

It was believed that Jeanne had prophesied that on Saint John the Baptist's Day, 1429, not an Englishman should be left in France. These simple folk expected their saint's promises to be fulfilled on the day she had fixed. They maintained that on the 23rd of June she had entered the city of Rouen, and that on the morrow, Saint John the Baptist's day, the inhabitants of Paris had of their own accord, opened their gates to the King of France. In the month of July these stories were being told in Avignon. Reformers, numerous it would seem in France and throughout Christendom, believed that the Maid would organise the English and French on monastic lines and make of them one nation of pious beggars, one brotherhood of penitents. According to them, the following were the intentions of the two parties and the clauses of the treaty:

“King Charles of Valois bestows universal pardon and is willing to forget all wrongs. The English and French, having turned to contrition and repentance, are endeavouring to conclude a good and binding peace. The Maid herself has imposed conditions upon them. Conforming to her will, the English and French for one year or for two will wear a grey habit, with a little cross sewn upon it; on every Friday they will live on bread and water; they will dwell in unity with their wives and will seek no other women. They promise God not to make war except for the defense of their country.”

During the coronation campaign, nothing being known of the agreement between the King's men and the people of Auxerre, towards the end of July, it was related that the town having been taken by storm, four thousand five hundred citizens had been killed and likewise fifteen hundred men-at-arms, knights as well as squires belonging to the parties of Burgundy and Savoy. Among the nobles slain were mentioned Humbert Maréchal, Lord of Varambon, and a very famous warrior, le Viau de Bar. Stories were told of treasons and massacres, horrible adventures in which the Maid was associated with that knave of hearts who was already famous. She was said to have had twelve traitors beheaded. Such tales were real romances of chivalry. Here is one of them:

About two thousand English surrounded the King's camp, watching to see if they could do him some hurt. Then the Maid called Captain La Hire and said to him: “Thou hast in thy time done great prowess, but to-day God prepares for thee a deed greater than any thou hast yet performed. Take thy men and go to such and such a wood two leagues herefrom, and there shalt thou find two thousand English, all lance in hand; them shalt thou take and slay.”

La Hire went forth to the English and all were taken and slain as the Maid had said.

Such were the fairy-stories told of Jeanne to the joy of simple primitive folk, who delighted in the idea of a maid slayer of giants and remover of mountains.

There was a rumour that after the sack of Auxerre, the Duke of Burgundy had been defeated and taken in a great battle, that the Regent was dead and that the Armagnacs had entered Paris. Prodiges were said to have attended the capitulation of Troyes. On the coming of the French, it was told how the townsfolk beheld from their ramparts a vast multitude of men-at-arms, some five or six thousand, each man holding a white pennon in his hand. On the departure of the French, they beheld them again, ranged but a bow-shot behind King Charles. These knights with white pennons vanished when the King had gone; for they were as miraculous as those white-scarfed knights, whom the Bretons had seen riding in the sky but shortly before.

All that the people of Orléans beheld when their siege was suddenly raised, all that Armagnac mendicants and the Dauphin's clerks related was greedily received, accredited, and amplified. Three months after her coming to Chinon, Jeanne had her legend, which grew and increased and extended into Italy, Flanders, and Germany. In the summer of 1429, this legend was already formed. All the scattered parts of what may be described as the gospel of her childhood existed.

At the age of seven Jeanne kept sheep; the wolves did not molest her flock; the birds of the field, when she called them, came and ate bread from her lap. The wicked had no power over her. No one beneath her roof need fear man's fraud or ill-will.

When it is a Latin poet who is writing, the miracles attending Jeanne's birth assume a Roman majesty and are clothed with the august dignity of ancient myths. Thus it is curious to find a humanist of 1429 summoning the Italian muse to the cradle of Zabillet Romée's daughter.

"The thunder rolled, the ocean shuddered, the earth shook, the heavens were on fire, the universe rejoiced visibly; a strange transport mingled with fear moved the enraptured nations. They sing sweet verses and dance in harmonious motion at the sign of the salvation prepared for the French people by this celestial birth."

Moreover an attempt was made to represent the wonders that had heralded the nativity of Jesus as having been repeated on the birth of Jeanne. It was imagined that she was born on the night of the Epiphany. The shepherds of her village, moved by an indescribable joy, the cause of which was unknown to them, hastened through the darkness towards the marvellous mystery. The cocks, heralds of this new joy, sing at an unusual season and, flapping their wings, seem to prophesy for two hours. Thus the child in her cradle had her adoration of the shepherds.

Of her coming into France there was much to tell. It was related that in the Château of Chinon she had recognised the King, whom she had never seen before, and had gone straight to him, although he was but poorly clad and surrounded by his baronage. It was said that she had given the King a sign, that she had revealed a secret to him; and that on the revelation of the secret, known to him alone, he had been illuminated with a heavenly joy. Concerning this interview at Chinon, while those present had little to say, the stories of many who were not there were interminable.

On the 7th of May, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a white dove alighted on the Maid's standard; and on the same day, during the assault, two white birds were seen to be flying over her head. Saints were commonly visited by doves.

One day when Saint Catherine of Sienna was kneeling in the fuller's house, a dove as white as snow perched on the child's head.

A tale then in circulation is interesting as showing the idea which prevailed concerning the relations of the King and the Maid; it serves, likewise, as an example of the perversions to which the story of an actual fact is subject as it passes from mouth to mouth. Here is the tale as it was gathered by a German merchant.

On a day, in a certain town, the Maid, hearing that the English were near, went into the field; and straightway all the men-at-arms, who were in the town, leapt to their steeds and followed her. Meanwhile, the King, who was at dinner, learning that all were going forth in company with the Maid, had the gates of the town closed.

The Maid was told, and she replied without concern: "Before the hour of nones, the King will have so great need of me, that he will follow me immediately, spurless, and barely staying to throw on his cloak."

And thus it came to pass. For the men-at-arms shut up in the town besought the King to open the gates forthwith or they would break them down. The gates were opened and all the fighting men hastened to the Maid, heedless of the King, who threw on his cloak and followed them.

On that day a great number of the English were slain.

Such is the story which gives a very inaccurate representation of what happened at Orléans on the 6th of May. The citizens hastened in crowds to the Burgundian Gate, resolved to cross the Loire and attack Les Tourelles. Finding the gate closed, they threw themselves furiously on the Sire de Gaucourt who was keeping it. The aged baron had the gate opened wide and said to them, "Come, I will be your captain." In the story the citizens have become men-at-arms, and it is not the Sire de Gaucourt but the King who maliciously closes the gates. But the King gained nothing by it; and it is astonishing to find that so early there had grown up in the minds of the people the idea that, far from aiding the Maid to drive out the English, the King had put obstacles in her way and was always the last to follow her.

Seen through this chaos of stories more indistinct than the clouds in a stormy sky, Jeanne appeared a wondrous marvel. She prophesied and many of her prophecies had already been fulfilled. She had foretold the deliverance of Orléans and Orléans had been delivered. She had prophesied that she would be wounded, and an arrow had pierced her above the right breast. She had prophesied that she would take the King to Reims, and the King had been crowned in that city. Other prophecies had she uttered touching the realm of France, to wit, the deliverance of the Duke of Orléans, the entering into Paris,

the driving of the English from the holy kingdom, and their fulfilment was expected.

Every day she prophesied and notably concerning divers persons who had failed in respect towards her and had come to a bad end.

At Chinon, when she was being taken to the King, a man-at-arms who was riding near the château, thinking he recognised her, asked, "Is not that the Maid? By God, an I had my way she should not be a maid long."

Then Jeanne prophesied and said "Ha, thou takest God's name in vain, and thou art so near thy death!"

Less than an hour later the man fell into the water and was drowned.

Straightway this miracle was related in Latin verse. In the poem which records this miraculous history of Jeanne up to the deliverance of Orléans, the lewd blasphemer, who like all blasphemers, came to a bad end, is noble and by name Furtivulus.

*... generoso sanguine natus,
Nomine Furtivulus, veneris moderator iniquus.*

Captain Glasdale called Jeanne strumpet and blasphemed his Maker. Jeanne prophesied that he would die without shedding blood; and Glasdale was drowned in the Loire.

Many of these tales were obvious imitations of incidents in the lives of the saints, which were widely read in those days. A woman, who was a heretic, pulled the cassock of Saint Ambrose, whereupon the blessed bishop said to her, "Take heed lest one day thou be chastised of God." On the morrow the woman died, and the Blessed Ambrose conducted her to the grave.

A nun, who was then alive and who was to die in an odour of sanctity, Sister Colette of Corbie, had met her Furtivulus and had punished him, but less severely. On a day when she was praying in a church of Corbie, a stranger drew near and spoke to her libidinous words: "May it please God," she said, "to bring home to you the hideousness of the words you have just uttered." The stranger in shame went to the door. But an invisible hand arrested him on the threshold. Then he realised the gravity of his sin; he asked pardon of the saint and was free to leave the church.

After the royal army had departed from Gien, the Maid was said to have prophesied that a great battle would be fought between Auxerre and Reims. When such predictions were not fulfilled they were forgotten. Besides, it was

admitted that true prophets might sometimes utter false prophecies. A subtle theologian distinguished between prophecies of predestination which are always fulfilled and those of condemnation, which being conditioned, may not be fulfilled and that without reflecting untruthfulness on the lips that uttered them. Folk wondered that a peasant child should be able to forecast the future, and with the Apostle they cried, "I praise thee, O Father, because thou hast hidden those things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."

The Maid's prophecies were speedily spread abroad throughout the whole of Christendom. A clerk of Spiers wrote a treatise on her, entitled *Sibylla Francica*, divided into two parts. The first part was drawn up not later than July, 1429. The second is dated the 17th of September, the same year. This clerk believes that the Maid practised the art of divination by means of astrology. He had heard a French monk of the order of the Premonstratensians say that Jeanne delighted to study the heavens by night. He observes that all her prophecies concerned the kingdom of France; and he gives the following as having been uttered by the Maid: "After having ruled for twenty years, the Dauphin will sleep with his fathers. After him, his eldest son, now a child of six, will reign more gloriously, more honourably, more powerfully than any King of France since Charlemagne."

The Maid possessed the gift of beholding events which were taking place far away.

At Vaucouleurs, on the very day of the Battle of the Herrings, she knew the Dauphin's army had suffered grievous hurt.

On a day when she was dining, seated near the King, she began to laugh quietly. The King, perceiving, asked her: "My beloved, wherefore laugh ye so merrily?"

She made answer that she would tell him when the repast was over. And, when the ewer was brought her, "Sire," she said, "this day have been drowned in the sea five hundred English, who were crossing to your land to do you hurt. Therefore did I laugh. In three days you will know that it is true."

And so it was.

Another time, when she was in a town some miles distant from the château where the King was, as she prayed before going to sleep, it was revealed to her that certain of the King's enemies wished to poison him at dinner. Straightway she called her brothers and sent them to the King to advise him to take no food until she came.

When she appeared before him, he was at table surrounded by eleven persons. "Sire," she said, "have the dishes brought."

She gave them to the dogs, who ate from them and died forthwith.

Then, pointing to a knight, who was near the King and to two other guests: "Those persons," she said, "wished to poison you."

The knight straightway confessed that it was true; and he was dealt with according to his deserts.

It was borne in upon her that a certain priest kept a concubine; and one day, meeting in the camp a woman dressed as a man, it was revealed to her that the woman was pregnant and that having already had one child she had made away with it.

She was likewise said to possess the power of discovering things hidden. She herself had claimed this power when she was at Tours. It had been revealed to her that a sword was buried in the ground in the chapel of Saint Catherine of Fierbois, and that was the sword she wore. Some deemed it to be the sword with which Charles Martel had defeated the Saracens. Others suspected it of being the sword of Alexander the Great.

In like manner it was said that before the coronation Jeanne had known of a precious crown, hidden from all eyes. And here is the story told concerning it:

A bishop kept the crown of Saint Louis. No one knew which bishop it was, but it was known that the Maid had sent him a messenger, bearing a letter in which she asked him to give up the crown. The bishop replied that the Maid was dreaming. A second time she demanded the sacred treasure, and the bishop made the same reply. Then she wrote to the citizens of the episcopal city, saying that if the crown were not given up to the King, the Lord would punish the town, and straightway there fell so heavy a storm of hail that all men marvelled. Wizards commonly caused hail storms. But this time the hail was a plague sent by the God who afflicted Egypt with ten plagues. After which the Maid despatched to the citizens a third letter in which she described the form and fashion of the crown the bishop was hiding, and warned them that if it were not given up even worse things would happen to them. The bishop, who believed that the wondrous circlet of gold was known to him alone, marvelled that the form and fashion thereof should be described in this letter. He repented of his wickedness, wept many tears, and commanded the crown to be sent to the King and the Maid.

It is not difficult to discern the origin of this story. The crown of Charlemagne, which the kings of France wore at the coronation ceremony, was at Saint-Denis in France, in the hands of the English. Jeanne boasted of having given the Dauphin at Chinon a precious crown, brought by angels. She said that this crown had been sent to Reims for the coronation, but that it did not arrive in time. As for the hiding of the crown by the bishop, that idea arose probably from

the well-known cupidity of my Lord Regnault de Chartres, Archbishop of Reims, who had appropriated the silver vase intended for the chapter and placed by the King upon the high altar after the ceremony.

There was likewise talk of gloves lost at Reims and of a cup that Jeanne had found.

Maiden, at once a warrior and a lover of peace, *béguine* , prophetess, sorceress, angel of the Lord, ogress, every man beholds her according to his own fashion, creates her according to his own image. Pious souls clothe her with an invincible charm and the divine gift of charity; simple souls make her simple too; men gross and violent figure her a giantess, burlesque and terrible. Shall we ever discern the true features of her countenance? Behold her, from the first and perhaps for ever enclosed in a flowering thicket of legends!

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I

THE ROYAL ARMY FROM SOISSONS TO COMPIÈGNE — POEM AND PROPHECY

ON the 22nd of July, King Charles, marching with his army down the valley of the Aisne, in a place called Vailly, received the keys of the town of Soissons.

This town constituted a part of the Duchy of Valois, held jointly by the Houses of Orléans and of Bar. Of its dukes, one was a prisoner in the hands of the English; the other was connected with the French party through his brother-in-law, King Charles, and with the Burgundian party through his father-in-law, the Duke of Lorraine. No wonder the fealty of the townsfolk was somewhat vacillating; downtrodden by men-at-arms, forever taken and retaken, red caps and white caps alternately ran the danger of being cast into the river. The Burgundians set fire to the houses, pillaged the churches, chastised the most notable burgesses; then came the Armagnacs, who sacked everything, made great slaughter of men, women, and children, ravished nuns, worthy wives, and honest maids. The Saracens could not have done worse. City dames had been seen making sacks in which Burgundians were to be sewn up and thrown into the Aisne.

King Charles made his entry into the city on Saturday the 23rd, in the morning. The red caps went into hiding. The bells pealed, the folk cried “Noël,” and the burgesses proffered the King two barbels, six sheep and six gallons of “*bon suret*,” begging the King to forgive its being so little, but the war had ruined them. They, like the people of Troyes, refused to open their gates to the men-at-arms, by virtue of their privileges, and because they had not food enough for their support. The army encamped in the plain of Amblény.

It would seem that at that time the leaders of the royal army had the intention of marching on Compiègne. Indeed it was important to capture this town from Duke Philip, for it was the key to l’Île-de-France and ought to be taken before the Duke had time to bring up an army. But throughout this campaign the King of France was resolved to recapture his towns rather by diplomacy and persuasion than by force. Between the 22nd and the 25th of July he three times summoned the inhabitants of Compiègne to surrender. Being desirous to gain time and to have the air of being constrained, they entered into negotiations.

Having quitted Soissons, the royal army reached Château-Thierry on the 29th. All day it waited for the town to open its gates. In the evening the King entered.

Coulommiers, Cr cy-en-Brie, and Provins submitted.

On Monday, the 1st of August, the King crossed the Marne, over the Ch teau-Thierry Bridge, and that same day took up his quarters at Montmirail. On the morrow he gained Provins and came within a short distance of the passage of the Seine and the high-roads of central France. The army was sore anhungered, finding nought to eat in these ravaged fields and pillaged cities. Through lack of victuals preparations were being made for retreat into Poitou. But this design was thwarted by the English. While ungarrisoned towns were being reduced, the English Regent had been gathering an army. It was now advancing on Corbeil and Melun. On its approach the French gained La Motte-Nangis, some twelve miles from Provins, where they took up their position on ground flat and level, such as was convenient for the fighting of a battle, as battles were fought in those days. For one whole day they remained in battle array. There was no sign of the English coming to attack them.

Meanwhile the people of Reims received tidings that King Charles was leaving Ch teau-Thierry and was about to cross the Seine. Believing that they had been abandoned, they were afraid lest the English and Burgundians should make them pay dearly for the coronation of the King of the Armagnacs; and in truth they stood in great danger. On the 3rd of August, they resolved to send a message to King Charles to entreat him not to forsake those cities which had submitted to him. The city's herald set out forthwith. On the morrow they sent word to their good friends of Ch lons and of Laon, how they had heard that King Charles was wending towards Orl ans and Bourges, and how they had sent him a message.

On the 5th of August, while the King is still at Provins or in the neighbourhood, Jeanne addresses to the townsfolk of Reims a letter dated from the camp, on the road to Paris. Herein she promises not to desert her friends faithful and beloved. She appears to have no suspicion of the projected retreat on the Loire. Wherefore it is clear that the magistrates of Reims have not written to her and that she is not admitted to the royal counsels. She has been instructed, however, that the King has concluded a fifteen days' truce with the Duke of Burgundy, and thereof she informs the citizens of Reims. This truce is displeasing to her; and she doubts whether she will observe it. If she does observe it, it will be solely on account of the King's honour; and even then she must be persuaded that there is no trickery in it. She will therefore keep the royal army together and in readiness to march at the end of the fifteen days. She closes her letter with a recommendation to the townsfolk to keep good guard and to send her word if they have need of her.

Here is the letter:

“Good friends and beloved, ye good and loyal French of the city of Rains, Jehanne the Maid lets you wit of her tidings and prays and requires you not to doubt the good cause she maintains for the Blood Royal; and I promise and assure you that I will never forsake you as long as I shall live. It is true that the King has made truce with the Duke of Burgundy for the space of fifteen days, by which he is to surrender peaceably the city of Paris at the end of fifteen days. Notwithstanding, marvel ye not if I do not straightway enter into it, for truces thus made are not pleasing unto me, and I know not whether I shall keep them; but if I keep them it will be solely to maintain the King’s honour; and further they shall not ensnare the Royal Blood, for I will keep and maintain together the King’s army that it be ready at the end of fifteen days, if they make not peace. Wherefore my beloved and perfect friends, I pray ye to be in no disquietude as long as I shall live; but I require you to keep good watch and to defend well the good city of the King; and to make known unto me if there be any traitors who would do you hurt, and, as speedily as I may, I will take them out from among you; and send me of your tidings. To God I commend you. May he have you in his keeping.”

Written this Friday, 5th day of August, near Provins, a camp in the country or on the Paris road. Addressed to: the loyal French of the town of Rains.

It cannot be doubted that the monk who acted as scribe wrote down faithfully what was dictated to him, and reproduced the Maid’s very words, even her Lorraine dialect. She had then attained to the very highest degree of heroic saintliness. Here, in this letter, she takes to herself a supernatural power, to which the King, his Councillors and his Captains must submit. She ascribes to herself alone the right of recognising or denouncing treaties; she disposes entirely of the army. And, because she commands in the name of the King of Heaven, her commands are absolute. There is happening to her what necessarily happens to all those who believe themselves entrusted with a divine mission; they constitute themselves a spiritual and temporal power superior to the established powers and inevitably hostile to them. A dangerous illusion and productive of shocks in which the illuminated are generally the worst sufferers! Every day of her life living and holding converse with saints and angels, moving in the splendour of the Church Triumphant, this young peasant girl came to believe that in her resided all strength, all prudence, all wisdom and all counsel. This does not mean that she was lacking in intelligence; on the contrary she rightly perceived that the Duke of Burgundy, with his embassies, was but playing with the King and that Charles was being tricked by a Prince, who knew how to disguise his craft in magnificence. Not that Duke Philip was an enemy of peace; on the contrary he desired it, but he was desirous not to come to an open

quarrel with the English. Jeanne knew little of the affairs of Burgundy and of France, but her judgment was none the less sound. Concerning the relative positions of the Kings of France and England, between whom there could be no agreement, since the matter in dispute was the possession of the kingdom, her ideas were very simple but very correct. Equally accurate were her views of the position of the King of France with regard to his great vassal, the Duke of Burgundy, with whom an understanding was not only possible and desirable, but necessary. She pronounced thereupon in a perfectly straightforward fashion: On the one hand there is peace with the Burgundians and on the other peace with the English; concerning the peace with the Duke of Burgundy, by letters and by ambassadors have I required him to come to terms with the King; as for the English, the only way of making peace with them is for them to go back to their country, to England.

This truce that so highly displeased her we know not when it was concluded, whether at Soissons or Château-Thierry, on the 30th or 31st of July, or at Provins between the 2nd and 5th of August. It would appear that it was to last fifteen days, at the end of which time the Duke was to undertake to surrender Paris to the King of France. The Maid had good reason for her mistrust.

When the Regent withdrew before him, King Charles eagerly returned to his plan of retreating into Poitou. From La Motte-Nangis he sent his quartermasters to Bray-sur-Seine, which had just submitted. Situated above Montereau and ten miles south of Provins, this town had a bridge over the river, across which the royal army was to pass on the 5th of August or in the morning of the 6th; but the English came by night, overcame the quartermasters and took possession of the bridge; with its retreat cut off, the royal army had to retrace its march.

Within this army, which had not fought and which was being devoured by hunger, there existed a party of zealots, led by those whom Jeanne fondly called the Royal Blood. They were the Duke of Alençon, the Duke of Bourbon, the Count of Vendôme, and likewise the Duke of Bar, who had just come from the War of the Apple Baskets. Before he took to painting pictures and writing moralities in rhyme, this young son of the Lady Yolande had been a warrior. Duke of Bar and heir of Lorraine, he had been forced to join the English and Burgundians. Brother-in-law of King Charles, he must needs rejoice when the latter was victorious, because, but for that victory, he would never have been able to range himself on the side of the Queen, his sister, for which he would have been very sorry. Jeanne knew him; not long before, she had asked the Duke of Lorraine to send him with her into France. He was said to have been one of those who of their own free will followed her to Paris. Among the others were the two sons of the Lady of Laval, Gui, the eldest to whom she had offered wine

at Selles-en-Berry, promising soon to give him to drink at Paris, and André, who afterwards became Marshal of Lohéac. This was the army of the Maid: a band of youths, scarcely more than children, who ranged their banners side by side with the banner of a girl younger than they, but more innocent and better.

On learning that the retreat had been cut off, it is said that these youthful princes were well content and glad. This was valour and zeal; but it was a curious position and a false when the knighthood wished for war while the royal council was desiring to treat, and when the knighthood actually rejoiced at the campaign being prolonged by the enemy and at the royal army being cornered by the *Godons*. Unhappily this war party could boast of no very able adherents; and the favourable opportunity had been lost, the Regent had been allowed time to collect his forces and to cope with the most pressing dangers.

Its retreat cut off, the royal army fell back on Brie. On the morning of Sunday, the 7th, it was at Coulommiers; it recrossed the Marne at Château-Thierry. King Charles received a message from the inhabitants of Reims, entreating him to draw nearer to them. He was at La Ferté on the 10th, on the 11th at Crépy in Valois.

At one stage of the march on La Ferté and Crépy, the Maid was riding in company with the King, between the Archbishop of Reims and my Lord the Bastard. Beholding the people hastening to come before the King and crying “Noël!” she exclaimed: “Good people! Never have I seen folk so glad at the coming of the fair King....”

These peasants of Valois and of l’Île de France, who cried “Noël!” on the coming of King Charles, in like manner hailed the Regent and the Duke of Burgundy when they passed. Doubtless they were not so glad as they seemed to Jeanne, and if the little Saint had listened at the doors of their poor homes, this is about what she would have heard: “What shall we do? Let us surrender our all to the devil. It matters not what shall become of us, for, through treason and bad government, we must needs forsake our wives and children and flee into the woods, like wild beasts. And it is not one year or two but fourteen or fifteen since we have been led this unhappy dance. And most of the great nobles of France have died by the sword, or unconfessed have fallen victims to poison or to treachery, or in short have perished by some manner of violent death. Better for us would it have been to serve Saracens than Christians. Whether one lives badly or well it comes to the same thing. Let us do all the evil that lieth in our power. No worse can happen to us than to be slain or taken.”

It was only in the neighbourhood of towns or close to fortresses and castles, within sight of the watchman’s eye as he looked from the top of tower or belfry, that land was cultivated. On the approach of men-at-arms, the watchman rang his

bell or sounded his horn to warn the vine-dressers or the ploughmen to flee to a place of safety. In many districts the alarm bell was so frequent that oxen, sheep, and pigs, of their own accord went into hiding, as soon as they heard it.

In the plains especially, which were easy of access, the Armagnacs and the English had destroyed everything. For some distance from Beauvais, from Senlis, from Soissons, from Laon, they had caused the fields to lie fallow, and here and there shrubs and underwood were springing up over land once cultivated.—“Noël! Noël!”

Throughout the duchy of Valois, the peasants were abandoning the open country and hiding in woods, rocks, and quarries.

Many, in order to gain a livelihood, did like Jean de Bonval, the tailor of Noyant near Soissons, who, despite wife and children, joined a Burgundian band, which went up and down the country thieving, pillaging, and, when occasion offered, smoking out the folk who had taken refuge in churches. On one day Jean and his comrades took two hogsheads of corn, on another six or seven cows; on another a goat and a cow, on another a silver belt, a pair of gloves and a pair of shoes; on another a bale of eighteen ells of cloth to make cloaks withal. And Jean de Bonval said that within his knowledge many a man of worship did as much.—“Noël! Noël!”

The Armagnacs and Burgundians had torn the coats off the peasants' backs and seized even their pots and pans. It was not far from Crépy to Meaux. Every one in that country had heard of the Tree of Vauru.

At one of the gates of the town of Meaux was a great elm, whereon the Bastard of Vauru, a Gascon noble of the Dauphin's party, used to hang the peasants he had taken, when they could not pay their ransom. When he had no executioner at hand he used to hang them himself. With him there lived a kinsman, my Lord Denis de Vauru, who was called his cousin, not that he was so in fact, but just to show that one was no better than the other. In the month of March, in the year 1420, my Lord Denis, on one of his expeditions, came across a peasant tilling the ground. He took him prisoner, held him to ransom, and, tying him to his horse's tail, dragged him back to Meaux, where, by threats and torture, he exacted from him a promise to pay three times as much as he possessed. Dragged half dead from his dungeon, the villein sent to the wife he had married that year to ask her to bring the sum demanded by the lord. She was with child, and near the time of her delivery; notwithstanding, she came because she loved her husband and hoped to soften the heart of the Lord of Vauru. She failed; and Messire Denis told her that if by a certain day he did not receive the ransom, he would hang the man from the elm-tree. The poor woman went away

in tears, fondly commending her husband to God's keeping. And her husband wept for pity of her. By a great effort, she succeeded in obtaining the sum demanded, but not by the day appointed. When she returned, her husband had been hanged from the Vauru Tree without respite or mercy. With bitter sobs she asked for him, and then fell exhausted by the side of that road, which, on the point of her delivery, she had traversed on foot. Having regained consciousness, a second time she asked for her husband. She was told that she would not see him till the ransom had been paid.

While she was before the Gascon, there in sight of her were brought forth several craftsmen, held to ransom, who, unable to pay, were straightway despatched to be hanged or drowned. At this spectacle a great fear for her husband came over her; nevertheless, her love for him gave her heart of courage and she paid the ransom. As soon as the Duke's men had counted the coins, they dismissed her saying that her husband had died like the other villeins.

At those cruel words, wild with sorrow and despair, she broke forth into curses and railing. When she refused to be silent, the Bastard of Vauru had her beaten and taken to the Elm-tree.

There she was stripped to the waist and tied to the Tree, whence hung forty to fifty men, some from the higher, some from the lower branches, so that, when the wind blew, their bodies touched her head. At nightfall she uttered shrieks so piercing that they were heard in the town. But whosoever had dared to go and unloose her would have been a dead man. Fright, fatigue, and exertion brought on her delivery. The wolves, attracted by her cries, came and consumed the fruit of her womb, and then devoured alive the body of the wretched creature.

In 1422, the town of Meaux was taken by the Burgundians. Then were the Bastard of Vauru and his cousin hanged from that Tree on which they had caused so many innocent folk to die so shameful a death.

For the poor peasants of these unhappy lands, whether Armagnac or Burgundian, it was all of a piece; they had nothing to gain by changing masters. Nevertheless, it is possible that, on beholding the King, the descendant of Saint Louis and Charles the Wise, they may have taken heart of courage and of hope, so great was the fame for justice and for mercy of the illustrious house of France.

Thus, riding by the side of the Archbishop of Reims, the Maid looked with a friendly eye on the peasants crying "Noël!" After saying that she had nowhere seen folk so joyful at the coming of the fair King, she sighed: "Would to God I were so fortunate as, when I die, to find burial in this land."

Peradventure the Lord Archbishop was curious to know whether from her Voices she had received any revelation concerning her approaching death. She

often said that she would not last long. Doubtless he was acquainted with a prophecy widely known at that time, that the maid would die in the Holy Land, after having reconquered with King Charles the sepulchre of our Lord. There were those who attributed this prophecy to the Maid herself; for she had told her Confessor that she would die in battle with the Infidel, and that after her God would send a Maid of Rome who would take her place. And it is obvious that Messire Regnault knew what store to set on such things. At any rate, for that reason or for another, he asked: "Jeanne, in what place look you for to die?"

To which she made answer: "Where it shall please God. For I am sure neither of the time nor of the place, and I know no more thereof than you."

No answer could have been more devout. My Lord the Bastard, who was present at this conversation, many years later thought he remembered that Jeanne had added: "But I would it were now God's pleasure for me to retire, leaving my arms, and to go and serve my father and mother, keeping sheep with my brethren and sister."

If she really spoke thus, it was doubtless because she was haunted by dark forebodings. For some time she had believed herself betrayed. Possibly she suspected the Lord Archbishop of Reims of wishing her ill. But it is hard to believe that he can have thought of getting rid of her now when he had employed her with such signal success; rather his intention was to make further use of her. Nevertheless he did not like her, and she felt it. He never consulted her and never told her what had been decided in council. And she suffered cruelly from the small account made of the revelations she was always receiving so abundantly. May we not interpret as a subtle and delicate reproach the utterance in his presence of this wish, this complaint? Doubtless she longed for her absent mother. And yet she was mistaken when she thought that henceforth she could endure the tranquil life of a village maiden. In her childhood at Domremy she seldom went to tend the flocks in the field; she preferred to occupy herself in household affairs; but if, after having waged war beside the King and the nobles, she had had to return to her country and keep sheep, she would not have stayed there six months. Henceforth it was impossible for her to live save with that knighthood, to whose company she believed God had called her. All her heart was there, and she had finished with the distaff.

During the march on La Ferté and Crépy, King Charles received a challenge from the Regent, then at Montereau with his baronage, calling upon him to fix a meeting at whatsoever place he should appoint. "We, who with all our hearts," said the Duke of Bedford, "desire the end of the war, summon and require you, if you have pity and compassion on the poor folk, who in your cause have so long time been cruelly treated, downtrodden, and oppressed, to appoint a place

suitable either in this land of Brie, where we both are, or in l'Île-de-France. There will we meet. And if you have any proposal of peace to make unto us, we will listen to it and as beseemeth a good Catholic prince we will take counsel thereon."

This arrogant and insulting letter had not been penned by the Regent in any desire or hope of peace, but rather, against all reason, to throw on King Charles's shoulders the responsibility for the miseries and suffering the war was causing the commonalty.

Writing to the King crowned in Reims Cathedral, from the beginning he addresses him in this disdainful manner: "You who were accustomed to call yourself Dauphin of Viennois and who now without reason take unto yourself the title of King." He declares that he wants peace and then adds forthwith: "Not a peace hollow, corrupt, feigned, violated, perjured, like that of Montereau, on which, by your fault and your consent, there followed that terrible and detestable murder, committed contrary to all law and honour of knighthood, on the person of our late dear and greatly loved Father, Jean, Duke of Burgundy."

My Lord of Bedford had married one of the daughters of that Duke Jean, who had been treacherously murdered in revenge for the assassination of the Duke of Orléans. But indeed it was not wisely to prepare the way of peace to cast the crime of Montereau in the face of Charles of Valois, who had been dragged there as a child and with whom there had remained ever after a physical trembling and a haunting fear of crossing bridges.

For the moment the Duke of Bedford's most serious grievance against Charles was that he was accompanied by the Maid and Friar Richard. "You cause the ignorant folk to be seduced and deceived," he said, "for you are supported by superstitious and reprobate persons, such as this woman of ill fame and disorderly life, wearing man's attire and dissolute in manners, and likewise by that apostate and seditious mendicant friar, they both alike being, according to Holy Scripture, abominable in the sight of God."

To strike still greater shame into the heart of the enemy, the Duke of Bedford proceeds to a second attack on the maiden and the monk. And in the most eloquent passage of the letter, when he is citing Charles of Valois to appear before him, he says ironically that he expects to see him come led by this woman of ill fame and this apostate monk.

Thus wrote the Regent of England; albeit he had a mind, subtle, moderate, and graceful, he was moreover a good Catholic and a believer in all manner of devilry and witchcraft.

His horror at the army of Charles of Valois being commanded by a witch and a heretic monk was certainly sincere, and he deemed it wise to publish the

scandal. There were doubtless only too many, who, like him, were ready to believe that the Maid of the Armagnacs was a heretic, a worshipper of idols and given to the practice of magic. In the opinion of many worthy and wise Burgundians a prince must forfeit his honour by keeping such company. And if Jeanne were in very deed a witch, what a disgrace! What an abomination! The Flowers de Luce reinstated by the devil! The Dauphin's whole camp was tainted by it. And yet when my Lord of Bedford spread abroad those ideas he was not so adroit as he thought.

Jeanne, as we know, was good-hearted and in energy untiring. By inspiring the men of her party with the idea that she brought them good luck, she gave them courage. Nevertheless King Charles's counsellors knew what she could do for them and avoided consulting her. She herself felt that she would not last long. Then who represented her as a great war leader? Who exalted her as a supernatural power? The enemy.

This letter shows how the English had transformed an innocent child into a being unnatural, terrible, redoubtable, into a spectre of hell causing the bravest to grow pale. In a voice of lamentation the Regent cries: The devil! the witch! And then he marvels that his fighting men tremble before the Maid, and desert rather than face her.

From Montereau, the English army had fallen back on Paris. Now it once again came forth to meet the French. On Saturday, the 13th of August, King Charles held the country between Crépy and Paris. Now the Maid from the heights of Dammartin could espy the summit of Montmartre with its windmills, and the light mists from the Seine veiling that great city of Paris, promised to her by those Voices which alas! she had heeded too well. On the morrow, Sunday, the King and his army encamped in a village, by name Barron, on the River Nonnette on which, five miles lower down, stands Senlis.

Senlis was subject to the English. It was said that the Regent was approaching with a great company of men-at-arms, commanded by the Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Talbot and the Bastard Saint Pol. With him were the crusaders of the Cardinal of Winchester, the late King's uncle, between three thousand five hundred and four thousand men, paid with the Pope's money to go and fight against the Hussites in Bohemia. The Cardinal judged it well to use them against the King of France, a very Christian King forsooth, but one whose hosts were commanded by a witch and an apostate. It was reported that, in the English camp, was a captain with fifteen hundred men-at-arms, clothed in white, bearing a white standard, on which was embroidered a distaff whence was suspended a spindle; and on the streamer of the banner was worked in fine letters of gold: "*Ores, vienne la Belle!*" By these words the men-at-arms wished to proclaim

that if they were to meet the Maid of the Armagnacs she would find her work cut out.

Captain Jean de Saintrailles, the Brother of Poton, observed the English first when, marching towards Senlis, they were crossing La Nonnette by a ford so narrow that two horses could barely pass abreast. But King Charles's army, which was coming down the Nonnette valley, did not arrive in time to surprise them. It passed the night opposite them, near Montepilloy.

On the morrow, Monday, the 15th of August, at daybreak, the men-at-arms heard mass in camp and, as far as might be, cleared their consciences; for great plunderers and whoremongers as they were, they had not given up hope of winning Paradise when this life should be over. That day was a solemn feast, when the Church, on the authority of St. Grégoire de Tours, commemorates the physical and spiritual exaltation to heaven of the Virgin Mary. Churchmen taught that it behoves men to keep the feasts of Our Lord and the Holy Virgin, and that to wage battle on days consecrated to them is to sin grievously against the glorious Mother of God. No one in King Charles's camp could maintain a contrary opinion, since all were Christians as they were in the camp of the Regent. And yet, immediately after the *Deo Gratias*, every man took up his post ready for battle.

According to the established rule, the army was in several divisions: the vanguard, the archers, the main body, the rear-guard and the three wings. Further, and according to the same rule, there had been formed a skirmishing company, destined if need were to succour and reinforce the other divisions. It was commanded by Captain La Hire, my Lord the Bastard, and the Sire d'Albret, La Trémouille's half-brother. With this company was the Maid. At the Battle of Patay, despite her entreaties, she had been forced to keep with the rear-guard; now she rode with the bravest and ablest, with those skirmishers or scouts, whose duty it was, says Jean de Bueil, to repulse the scouts of the opposite party and to observe the number and the ordering of the enemy. At length justice was done her; at length she was assigned the place which her skill in horsemanship and her courage in battle merited; and yet she hesitated to follow her comrades. According to the report of a Burgundian knight chronicler, there she was, "swayed to and fro, at one moment wishing to fight, at another not."

Her perplexity is easily comprehensible. The little Saint could not bring herself to decide whether to ride forth to battle on the day of our Lady's Feast or to fold her arms while fighting was going on around her. Her Voices intensified her indecision. They never instructed her what to do save when she knew herself. In the end she went with the men-at-arms, not one of whom appears to have shared her scruples. The two armies were but the space of a culverin shot

apart. She, with certain of her company, went right up to the dykes and to the carts, behind which the English were entrenched. Sundry *Godons* and men of Picardy came forth from their camp and fought, some on foot, others on horseback against an equal number of French. On both sides there were wounded, and prisoners were taken. This hand to hand fighting continued the whole day; at sunset the most serious skirmish happened, and so much dust was raised that it was impossible to see anything. On that day there befell what had happened on the 17th of June, between Beaugency and Meung. With the armaments and the customs of warfare of those days, it was very difficult to force an army to come out of its entrenched camp. Generally, if a battle was to be fought, it was necessary for the two sides to be in accord, and, after the pledge of battle had been sent and accepted, for each to level his own half of the field where the engagement was to take place.

At nightfall the skirmishing ceased, and the two armies slept at a crossbow-shot from each other. Then King Charles went off to Crépy, leaving the English free to go and relieve the town of Évreux, which had agreed to surrender on the 27th of August. With this town the Regent made sure of Normandy.

Their loss of the opportunity of conquering Normandy was the price the French had to pay for the royal coronation procession, for that march to Reims, which was at once military, civil and religious. If, after the victory of Patay, they had hastened at once to Rouen, Normandy would have been reconquered and the English cast into the sea; if, from Patay they had pushed on to Paris they would have entered the city without resistance. Yet we must not too hastily condemn that ceremonious promenading of the Lilies through Champagne. By the march to Reims the French party, those Armagnacs reviled for their cruelty and felony, that little King of Bourges compromised in an infamous ambushade, may have won advantages greater and more solid than the conquest of the county of Maine and the duchy of Normandy and than a victorious assault on the first city of the realm. By retaking his towns of Champagne and of France without bloodshed, King Charles appeared to advantage as a good and pacific lord, as a prince wise and debonair, as the friend of the townsfolk, as the true king of cities. In short, by concluding that campaign of honest and successful negotiations and by the august ceremonial of the coronation, he came forth at once as the lawful and very holy King of France.

An illustrious lady, a descendant of Bolognese nobles and the widow of a knight of Picardy, well versed in the liberal arts, was the author of a number of lays, virelays, and ballads. Christine de Pisan, noble and high-minded, wrote with distinction in prose and verse. Loyal to France and a champion of her sex,

there was nothing she more fervently desired than to see the French prosperous and their ladies honoured. In her old age she was cloistered in the Abbey of Poissy, where her daughter was a nun. There, on the 31st of July, 1429, she completed a poem of sixty-one stanzas, each containing eight lines of eight syllables, in praise of the Maid. In halting measures and affected language, these verses expressed the thoughts of the finest, the most cultured and the most pious souls touching the angel of war sent of God to the Dauphin Charles.

In this work she begins by saying that for eleven years she has spent her cloistered life in weeping. And in very truth, this noble-hearted woman wept over the misfortunes of the realm, into which she had been born, wherein she had grown up, where kings and princes had received her and learned poets had done her honour, and the language of which she spoke with the precision of a purist. After eleven years of mourning, the victories of the Dauphin were her first joy.

“At length,” she says, “the sun begins to shine once more and the fine days to bloom again. That royal child so long despised and offended, behold him coming, wearing on his head a crown and accoutred with spurs of gold. Let us cry: ‘Noël! Charles, the seventh of that great name, King of the French, thou hast recovered thy kingdom, with the help of a Maid.’”

Christine recalls a prophecy concerning a King, Charles, son of Charles, surnamed The Flying Hart, who was to be emperor. Of this prophecy we know nothing save that the escutcheon of King Charles VII was borne by two winged stags and that a letter to an Italian merchant, written in 1429, contains an obscure announcement of the coronation of the Dauphin at Rome.

“I pray God,” continued Christine, “that thou mayest be that one, that God will grant thee life to see thy children grow up, that through thee and through them, France may have joy, that serving God, thou wage not war to the utterance. My hope is that thou shalt be good, upright, a friend of justice, greater than any other, that pride sully not thy prowess, that thou be gentle, favourable to thy people and fearing God who hath chosen thee to serve him.

“And thou, Maid most happy, most honoured of God, thou hast loosened the cord with which France was bound. Canst thou be praised enough, thou who hast brought peace to this land laid low by war?

“Jeanne, born in a propitious hour, blessed be thy creator! Maid, sent of God, in whom the Holy Ghost shed abroad a ray of his grace, who hast from him received and dost keep gifts in abundance; never did he refuse thy request. Who can ever be thankful enough unto thee?”

The Maid, saviour of the realm, Dame Christine compares to Moses who delivered Israel out of the Land of Egypt.

“That a Maid should proffer her breast, whence France may suck the sweet milk of peace, behold a matter which is above nature!

“Joshua was a mighty conqueror. What is there strange in that, since he was a strong man? But now behold, a woman, a shepherdess doth appear, of greater worship than any man. But with God all things are easy.

“By Esther, Judith and Deborah, women of high esteem, he delivered his oppressed people. And well I know there have been women of great worship. But Jeanne is above all. Through her God hath worked many miracles.

“By a miracle was she sent; the angel of the Lord led her to the King.”

“Before she could be believed, to clerks and to scholars was she taken and thoroughly examined. She said she was come from God, and history proved her saying to be true, for Merlin, the Sibyl and Bede had seen her in the spirit. In their books they point to her as the saviour of France, and in their prophecies they let wit of her, saying: ‘In the French wars she shall bear the banner.’ And indeed they relate all the manner of her history.”

We are not astonished that Dame Christine should have been acquainted with the Sibylline poems; for it is known that she was well versed in the writings of the ancients. But we perceive that the obviously mutilated prophecy of Merlin the Magician and the apocryphal chronogram of the Venerable Bede had come under her notice. The predictions and verses of the Armagnac ecclesiastics were spread abroad everywhere with amazing rapidity.

Dame Christine’s views concerning the Maid accord with those of the doctors of the French party; and the poem she wrote in her convent in many passages bears resemblance to the treatise of the Archbishop of Embrun.

There it is said:

“The goodness of her life proves that Jeanne possesses the grace of God.

“It was made manifest, when at the siege of Orléans her might revealed itself. Never was miracle plainer. God did so succour his own people, that the strength of the enemy was but as that of a dead dog. They were taken or slain.

“Honour to the feminine sex, God loves it. A damsel of sixteen, who is not weighed down by armour and weapons, even though she be bred to endure hardness, is not that a matter beyond nature? The enemy flees before her. Many eyes behold it.

“She goeth forth capturing towns and castles. She is the first captain of our host. Such power had not Hector or Achilles. But God, who leads her, does all.

“And you, ye men-at-arms, who suffer durance vile and risk your lives for the right, be ye faithful: in heaven shall ye have reward and glory, for whosoever fighteth for the just cause, winneth Paradise.

“Know ye that by her the English shall be cast down, for it is the will of God, who inclineth his ear to the voice of the good folk, whom they desired to overthrow. The blood of the slain crieth against them.”

In the shadow of her convent Dame Christine shares the hope common to every noble soul; from the Maid she expects all the good things she longs for. She believes that Jeanne will restore concord to the Christian Church. The gentlest spirits of those days looked to fire and sword for the bringing in of unity and obedience; they never dreamed that Christian charity could mean charity towards the whole human race. Wherefore, on the strength of prophecy, the poetess expects the Maid to destroy the infidel and the heretic, or in other words the Turk and the Hussite.

“In her conquest of the Holy Land, she will tear up the Saracens like weeds. Thither will she lead King Charles, whom God defend! Before he dies he shall make that journey. He it is who shall conquer the land. There shall she end her life. There shall the thing come to pass.”

The good Christine would appear to have brought her poem to this conclusion when she received tidings of the King’s coronation. She then added thirteen stanzas to celebrate the mystery of Reims and to foretell the taking of Paris.

Thus in the gloom and silence of one of those convents where even the hushed noises of the world penetrated but seldom, this virtuous lady collected and expressed in rhyme all those dreams of church and state which centred round a child.

In a fairly good ballad written at the time of the coronation, in love and honour “of the beautiful garden of the noble flowers de luce,” and for the elevation of the white cross, King Charles VII is described by that mysterious name “the noble stag,” which we have first discovered in Christine’s poem. The unknown author of the ballad says that the Sibyl, daughter of King Priam, prophesied the misfortunes of this royal stag; but such a prediction need not surprise us, when we remember that Charles of Valois was of Priam’s royal line, wherefore Cassandra, when she revealed the destiny of the Flying Hart, did but prolong down the centuries the vicissitudes of her own family.

Rhymers on the French side celebrated the unexpected victories of Charles and the Maid as best they knew how, in a commonplace fashion, by some stiff poem but scantily clothing a thin and meagre muse.

Nevertheless there is a ballad, by a Dauphinois poet, beginning with this line; “Back, English *coués* , back!” which is powerful through the genuine religious spirit which prevails throughout. The author, some poor ecclesiastic, points piously to the English banner cast down, “by the will of King Jesus and of Jeanne the sweet Maid.”

The Maid had derived her influence over the common folk from the prophecies of Merlin the Magician and the Venerable Bede. As Jeanne's deeds became known, predictions foretelling them came to be discovered. For example it was found that Engélide, daughter of an old King of Hungary, had known long before of the coronation at Reims. Indeed to this royal virgin was attributed a prophecy recorded in Latin, of which the following is a literal translation:

“O Lily illustrious, watered by princes, by the sower planted in the open, in an orchard delectable, by flowers and sweet-smelling roses surrounded. But, alas! dismay of the Lily, terror of the orchard! Sundry beasts, some coming from without, others nourished within the orchard, hurtling horns against horns, have well nigh crushed the Lily, which fades for lack of water. Long do they trample upon it, destroying nearly all its roots and assaying to wither it with their poisoned breath.

“But the beasts shall be driven forth in shame from the orchard, by a virgin coming from the land whence flows the cruel venom. Behind her right ear the Virgin bears a little scarlet sign; she speaks softly, and her neck is short. To the Lily shall she give fountains of living water, and shall drive out the serpent, to all men revealing its venom. With a laurel wreath woven by no mortal hand shall she at Reims engarland happily the gardener of the Lily, named Charles, son of Charles. All around the turbulent neighbours shall submit, the waters shall surge, the folk shall cry: ‘Long live the Lily! Away with the beast! Let the orchard flower!’ He shall approach the fields of the Island, adding fleet to fleet, and there a multitude of beasts shall perish in the rout. Peace for many shall be established. The keys of a great number shall recognise the hand that had forged them. The citizens of a noble city shall be punished for perjury by defeat, groaning with many groans, and at the entrance [of Charles?] high walls shall fall low. Then the orchard of the Lily shall be ... (?) and long shall it flower.”

This prophecy attributed to the unknown daughter of a distant king would seem to us to proceed from a French ecclesiastic and an Armagnac. French royalty is portrayed in the figure of the delectable orchard, around which contend beasts nourished in the orchard as well as foreign beasts, that is Burgundians and English. King Charles of Valois is mentioned by his own name and that of his father, and the name of the coronation town occurs in full.

The reduction of certain towns by their liege lord is stated most clearly. Doubtless the prediction was made at the very time of the coronation. It explicitly mentions deeds already accomplished and dimly hints at events looked for, fulfilment of which was delayed, or happened in a manner other than what was expected, or never happened at all, such as the taking of Paris after a terrible assault, the invasion of England by the French, the conclusion of peace.

It is highly probable that when announcing that the deliverer of the orchard might be recognised by her short neck, her sweet voice and a little scarlet mark, the pseudo Engélide was carefully depicting characteristics noticeable in Jeanne herself. Moreover we know that Isabelle Romée's daughter had a sweet woman's voice. That her neck was broad and firmly set on her shoulders accords with what is known concerning her robust appearance. And doubtless the so-called daughter of the King of Hungary did not imagine the birth-mark behind her right ear.

CHAPTER II

THE MAID'S FIRST VISIT TO COMPIÈGNE — THE THREE POPES — SAINT DENYS — TRUCES

AFTER the English army had departed for Normandy, King Charles sent from Crépy to Senlis the Count of Vendôme, the Maréchal de Rais and the Maréchal de Boussac with their men-at-arms. The inhabitants gave them to wit that they inclined to favour the Flowers de Luce. Henceforth the submission of Compiègne was sure. The King summoned the citizens to receive him; on Wednesday the 18th, the keys of the town were brought to him; on the next day he entered. The Attorneys (for by that name the aldermen of the town were called) presented to him Messire Guillaume de Flavy, whom they had elected governor of their town, as being their most experienced and most faithful citizen. On his being presented they asked the King, according to their privilege, to confirm and ratify his appointment. But the sire de la Trémouille took for himself the governorship of Compiègne and appointed as his lieutenant Messire Guillaume de Flavy, whom, notwithstanding, the inhabitants regarded as their captain.

One by one, the King was recovering his good towns. He charged the folk of Beauvais to acknowledge him as their lord. When they saw the flowers-de-luce borne by the heralds, the citizens cried: "Long live Charles of France!" The clergy chanted a *Te Deum* and there was great rejoicing. Those who refused fealty to King Charles were put out of the town with permission to take away their possessions. The Bishop and Vidame of Beauvais, Messire Pierre Cauchon, who was Grand Almoner of France to King Henry, and a negotiator of important ecclesiastical business, grieved to see his city returning to the French; it was to the city's hurt, but he could not help it. He failed not to realise that part of this disgrace he owed to the Maid of the Armagnacs, who was influential with her party and had the reputation of being all powerful. As he was a good theologian he must have suspected that the devil was leading her and he wished her all possible harm.

At this time Artois, Picardy, all the Burgundian territory in the north, was slipping away from Burgundy. Had King Charles gone there the majority of the dwellers in the strong towers and castles of Picardy would have received him as their sovereign. But meanwhile his enemies would have recaptured what he had just won in Valois and the Île de France.

Having entered Compiègne with the King, Jeanne lodged at the Hôtel du Bœuf, the house of the King's proctor. She slept with the proctor's wife, Marie Le Boucher, who was a kinswoman of Jacques Boucher, Treasurer of Orléans.

She longed to march on Paris, which she was sure of taking since her Voices had promised it to her. It is related that at the end of two or three days she grew impatient, and, calling the Duke of Alençon, said to him: "My fair Duke, command your men and likewise those of the other captains to equip themselves," then she is said to have cried: "By my staff! I must to Paris." But this could not have happened: the Maid never gave orders to the men-at-arms. The truth of the matter is that the Duke of Alençon, with a goodly company of fighting men, took his leave of the King and that Jeanne was to accompany him. She was ready to mount her horse when on Monday the 22nd of August, a messenger from the Count of Armagnac brought her a letter which she caused to be read to her. The following are the contents of the missive:

"My very dear Lady, I commend myself humbly to you, and I entreat you, for God's sake, that seeing the divisions which are at present in the holy Church Universal, concerning the question of the popes (for there are three contending for the papacy: one dwells at Rome and calls himself Martin V, whom all Christian kings obey: the other dwells at Peñiscola, in the kingdom of Valentia, and calls himself Clement VIII; the third dwells no man knows where, unless it be the Cardinal de Saint-Estienne and a few folk with him, and calls himself Pope Benedict XIV; the first, who is called Pope Martin, was elected at Constance by consent of all Christian nations; he who is called Clement was elected at Peñiscola, after the death of Pope Benedict XIII, by three of his cardinals; the third who is called Pope Benedict XIV was elected secretly at Peñiscola, by that same Cardinal Saint-Estienne himself): I pray you beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ that in his infinite mercy, he declare unto us through you, which of the three aforesaid is the true pope and whom it shall be his pleasure that henceforth we obey, him who is called Martin, or him who is called Clement or him who is called Benedict; and in whom we should believe, either in secret or under reservation or by public pronouncement: for we shall all be ready to work the will and the pleasure of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in all things,
Count d'Armagnac."

He who wrote thus, calling Jeanne his very dear lady, recommending himself humbly to her, not in self-abasement, but merely, as we should say to-day, out of courtesy, was one of the greater vassals of the crown.

She had never seen this baron, and doubtless she had never heard of him. Jean IV, son of that Constable of France who had been killed in 1418, was the

cruellest man in the kingdom. At that time he was between thirty-three and thirty-four years of age. He held both Armagnacs, the Black and the White, the country of the Four Valleys, the counties of Pardiac, of Fesenzac, Astarac, La Lomagne, and l'Île-Jourdain. After the Count of Foix he was the most powerful noble of Gascony.

While his name was among those of the adherents of the King and while it was used to designate those who were hostile to the English and Burgundians, Jean IV himself was neither French nor English, but simply Gascon. He called himself count by the grace of God, but he was ever ready to acknowledge himself the King's vassal when it was a question of receiving gifts from that suzerain, who might not always be able to afford himself new gaiters, but who must perforce spend large sums on his great vassals. Meanwhile Jean IV showed consideration to the English, protected an adventurer in the Regent's pay, and gave appointments in his household to men wearing the red cross. He was as violent and treacherous as any of his retainers. Having unlawfully seized the Marshal de Séverac, he exacted from him the cession of all his goods and then had him strangled.

This murder was quite recent. And now we have the docile son of Holy Church appearing eager to discover who is his true spiritual father. It would seem, however, that his mind was already made up on the subject and that he already knew the answer to his question. In verity the long schism, which had rent Christendom asunder, had terminated twelve years earlier. It had ended when the Conclave, which had assembled at Constance in the House of the Merchants on the 8th of November, 1417, on the 11th of that month, Saint Martin's Day, proclaimed Pope, the Cardinal Deacon Otto Colonna, who assumed the title of Martin V. In the Eternal City Martin V wore that tiara which Lorenzo Ghiberti had adorned with eight figures in gold; and the wily Roman had contrived to obtain his recognition by England and even by France, who thenceforward renounced all hope of a French pontiff. While Charles VII's advisers may not have agreed with Martin V on the question of a General Council, all the rights of the Pope of Rome in the Kingdom of France had been restored to him by an edict, in 1425. Martin V was the one and only pope. Nevertheless, Alphonso of Aragon, highly incensed because Martin V supported against him the rights of Louis d'Anjou to the Kingdom of Naples, determined to oppose to the Pope of Rome a pontiff of his own making. And just ready to hand he had a canon who called himself pope, and on the following grounds: the Antipope, Benedict XIII, having fled to Peñíscola, had on his death-bed nominated four cardinals, three of whom appointed to succeed him a canon of Barcelona,

one Gil Muñoz, who assumed the title of Clement VIII. Imprisoned in the château of Peñiscola on a barren neck of land on three sides washed by the sea, this was the Clement whom the King of Aragon had chosen to be the rival of Martin V.

The Pope excommunicated the King of Aragon and then opened negotiations with him. The Count of Armagnac joined the King's party. For the baptism of his children the Count had holy water blessed by Benedict XIII brought from Peñiscola. He likewise was excommunicated. The blow had fallen upon him in this very year, 1429. Thus for some months he had been deprived of the sacraments and excluded from public worship. Hence arose all manner of secular difficulties, in addition to which he was probably afraid of the devil.

Moreover his position was becoming impossible. His powerful ally, King Alfonso, gave in, and himself called upon Clement VIII to resign. When he addressed his inquiry to the Maid of France, the Armagnac was evidently meditating the withdrawal of his allegiance from an unfortunate anti-pope, who was himself renouncing or about to renounce the tiara; for Clement VIII abdicated at Peñiscola on the 26th of July. The dictation of the Count's letter cannot have occurred long before that date and may have been after. At any rate whenever he dictated it he must have been aware of the position of the Sovereign Pontiff Clement VIII.

As for the third Pope mentioned in his missive, Benedict XIV, he had no tidings of him, and indeed he was keeping very quiet. His election to the Holy See had been singular in that it had been made by one cardinal alone. Benedict XIV's right to the papacy had been communicated to him by a cardinal created by the Anti-pope, Benedict XIII, at the time of his promotion in 1409. That Cardinal was Jean Barrère, a Frenchman, Bachelor of laws, priest and Cardinal of Saint-Étienne *in Cælio monte*. It was not to Benedict XIV that the Armagnac was thinking of giving his allegiance; obviously he was eager to submit to Martin V.

It is not easy therefore to discover why he should have asked Jeanne to indicate the true pope. Doubtless it was customary in those days to consult on all manner of questions those holy maids to whom God vouchsafed illumination. Such an one the Maid appeared, and her fame as a prophetess had been spread abroad in a very short time. She revealed hidden things, she drew the curtain from the future. We are reminded of that *capitoul* of Toulouse, who about three weeks after the deliverance of Orléans, advised her being consulted as to a remedy for the corruption of the coinage. Bona of Milan, married to a poor gentleman in the train of her cousin, Queen Ysabeau, besought the Maid's help in her endeavour to regain the duchy which she claimed through her descent

from the Visconti. It was just as appropriate to question the Maid concerning the Pope and the Anti-pope. But the most difficult point in this question is to discover what were the Count of Armagnac's reasons for consulting the Holy Maid on a matter concerning which he appears to have been sufficiently informed. The following seems the most probable.

Jean IV was prepared to recognise Martin V as Pope; but he desired his submission to appear honourable and reasonable. Wherefore he conceived the idea of ascribing his conduct to the command of Jesus Christ, speaking through the Holy Maid. But it was necessary for the command to be in accordance with his wishes. The letter provides for that. He is careful to indicate to Jeanne, and consequently to God, what reply would be suitable. He lays stress on the fact that Martin V, who had recently excommunicated him, was elected at Constance by the consent of all Christian nations, that he dwells at Rome and that he is obeyed by all Christian kings. He points out on the other hand the circumstances which invalidate the election of Clement VIII by only three cardinals, and the still more ridiculous election of that Benedict, who was chosen by a conclave consisting of only one cardinal.

After such a setting forth could there possibly remain a single doubt as to whether Pope Martin was the true pope? But such guile was lost on Jeanne; it escaped her entirely. The Count of Armagnac's letter, which she had read to her as she was mounting her horse, must have struck her as very obscure. The names of Benedict, of Clement and of Martin she had never heard. The Saints, Catherine and Margaret, with whom she was constantly holding converse, revealed to her nothing concerning the Pope. They spoke to her of nought save of the realm of France; and Jeanne's prudence generally led her to confine her prophecies to the subject of the war. This circumstance was pointed out by a German clerk as a matter extraordinary and worthy of note. But for this once she consented to reply to Jean IV, in order to maintain her reputation as a prophet and because the title of Armagnac strongly appealed to her. She told him that at that moment she was unable to instruct him concerning the true pope, but that later she would inform him in which of the three he must believe, according as God should reveal it unto her. In short, she in a measure followed the example of such soothsayers as postpone the announcement of the oracle to a future day.

Jhesus † Maria

Count of Armagnac, my good friend and beloved, Jehanne the Maid lets you to wit that your message hath come before me, the which hath told me that you have sent from where you are to know from me in which of the three popes,

whom you mention in your memorial, you ought to believe. This thing in sooth I cannot tell you truly for the present, until I be in Paris or at rest elsewhere, because for the present I am too much hindered by affairs of war; but when you hear that I am in Paris send a message to me, and I will give you to understand what you shall rightfully believe, and what I shall know by the counsel of my Righteous and Sovereign Lord, the King of all the world, and what you should do, as far as I may. To God I commend you; God keep you. Written at Compiengne, the 22nd day of August.

Jeanne before she made this reply can have consulted neither the good Brother Pasquerel nor the good Friar Richard nor indeed any of the churchmen of her company. They would have told her that the true pope was the Pope of Rome, Martin V. They might also have represented to her that she was belittling the authority of the Church by appealing to a revelation from God concerning popes and anti-popes. Sometimes, they would have told her, God confides the secrets of his Church to holy persons. But it would be rash to count upon so rare a privilege.

Jeanne exchanged a few words with the messenger who had brought her the missive; but the interview was brief. The messenger was not safe in the town, not that the soldiers would have made him pay for his master's crimes and treasons; but the Sire de la Trémouille was at Compiègne; and he knew that Count Jean, who for the nonce was in alliance with the Constable De Richemont, was meditating something against him. La Trémouille was not so malevolent as the Count of Armagnac: and yet the poor messenger only narrowly escaped being thrown into the Oise.

On the morrow, Tuesday the 23rd of August, the Maid and the Duke of Alençon took leave of the King and set out from Compiègne with a goodly company of fighting men. Before marching on Saint-Denys in France, they went to Senlis to collect a company of men-at-arms whom the King had sent there. As was her custom, the Maid rode surrounded by monks. Friar Richard, who predicted the approaching end of the world, had joined the procession. It would seem that he had superseded the others, even Brother Pasquerel, the chaplain. It was to him that the Maid confessed beneath the walls of Senlis. In that same spot, with the Dukes of Clermont and Alençon, she took the communion on two consecutive days. She must have been in the hands of monks who were in the habit of making a very frequent use of the Eucharist.

The Lord Bishop of Senlis was Jean Fouquerel. Hitherto, he had been on the side of the English and entirely devoted to the Lord Bishop of Beauvais. On the approach of the royal army, Jean Fouquerel, who was a cautious person, had

gone off to Paris to hide a large sum of money. He was careful of his possessions. Some one in the army took his nag and gave it to the Maid. By means of a draft on the receiver of taxes and the *gabelle* officer of the town, two hundred golden *saluts* were paid for it. The Lord Bishop did not approve of this transaction and demanded his hackney. Hearing of his displeasure, the Maid caused a letter to be written to him, saying that he might have back his nag if he liked; she did not want it for she found it not sufficiently hardy for men-at-arms. The horse was sent to the Sire de La Trémouille with a request that he would deliver it to the Lord Bishop, who never received it.

As for the bill on the tax receiver and *gabelle* officer, it may have been worthless; and probably the Reverend Father in God, Jean Fouquerel, never had either horse or money. Jeanne was not at fault, and yet the Lord Bishop of Beauvais and the clerks of the university were shortly to bring home to her the gravity of the sacrilege of laying hands on an ecclesiastical hackney.

To the north of Paris, about five miles distant from the great city, there rose the towers of Saint-Denys. On the 26th of August, the army of the Duke of Alençon arrived there, and entered without resistance, albeit the town was strongly fortified. The place was famous for its illustrious abbey very rich and very ancient. The following is the story of its foundation.

Dagobert, King of the French, had from childhood been a devout worshipper of Saint Denys. And whenever he trembled before the ire of King Clotaire his father, he would take refuge in the church of the holy martyr. When he died, a pious man dreamed that he saw Dagobert summoned before the tribunal of God; a great number of saints accused him of having despoiled their churches; and the demons were about to drag him into hell when Saint Denys appeared; and by his intercession, the soul of the King was delivered and escaped punishment. The story was held to be true, and it was thought that the King's soul returned to animate his body and that he did penance.

When the Maid with the army occupied Saint-Denys, the three porches, the embattled parapets, the tower of the Abbey Church, erected by the Abbot Suger, were already three centuries old. There were buried the kings of France; and thither they came to take the *oriflamme*. Fourteen years earlier the late King Charles had fetched it forth, but since then none had borne it.

Many were the wonders told touching this royal standard. And with some of those marvels the Maid must needs have been acquainted, since on her coming into France, she was said to have given the Dauphin Charles the surname of *oriflamme*, as a pledge and promise of victory. At Saint-Denys was preserved

the heart of the Constable Du Guesclin. Jeanne had heard of his high renown; she had proffered wine to Madame de Laval's eldest son; and to his grandmother, who had been Sire Bertrand's second wife, she had sent a little ring of gold, out of respect for the widow of so valiant a man, asking her to forgive the poverty of the gift.

The monks of Saint-Denys preserved precious relics, notably a piece of the wood of the true cross, the linen in which the Child Jesus had been wrapped, a fragment of the pitcher wherein the water had been changed to wine at the Cana marriage feast, a bar of Saint Lawrence's gridiron, the chin of Saint Mary Magdalen, a cup of tamarisk wood used by Saint Louis as a charm against the spleen. There likewise was to be seen the head of Saint Denys. True, at the same time one was being shown in the Cathedral church of Paris. The Chancellor, Jean Gerson, treating of Jeanne the Maid, a few days before his death, wrote that of her it might be said as of the head of Saint Denys, that belief in her was a matter of edification and not of faith, albeit in both places alike the head ought to be worshipped in order that edification should not be turned into scandal.

In this abbey everything proclaimed the dignity, the prerogatives and the high worship of the house of France. Jeanne must joyously have wondered at the insignia, the symbols and signs of the royalty of the Lilies gathered together in this spot, if indeed those eyes, occupied with celestial visions, had leisure to perceive the things of earth, and if her Voices, endlessly whispering in her ear, left her one moment's respite.

Saint Denys was a great saint, since there was no doubt of his being in very deed the Areopagite himself. But since he had permitted his abbey to be taken he was no longer invoked as the patron saint of the Kings of France. The Dauphin's followers had replaced him by the Blessed Archangel Michael, whose abbey, near the city of Avranches, had victoriously held out against the English. It was Saint Michael not Saint Denys who had appeared to Jeanne in the garden at Domremy; but she knew that Saint Denys was the war cry of France.

The monks of that rich abbey wasted by war lived there in poverty and in disorder. Armagnacs and Burgundians in turn descended upon the neighbouring fields and villages, plundering and ravaging, leaving nought that it was possible to carry off. At Saint-Denys was held the Fair of Le Lendit, one of the greatest in Christendom. But now Merchants had ceased to attend it. At the Lendit of 1418, there were but three booths, and those for the selling of shoes from Brabant, in the high street of Saint-Denys, near the Convent of Les Filles-Dieu. Since 1426, there had been no fair at all.

At the tidings that the Armagnacs were approaching Troyes, the peasants had cut their corn before it was ripe and brought it into Paris. On entering Saint-Denys, the Duke of Alençon's men-at-arms found the town deserted. The chief burgesses had taken refuge in Paris. Only a few of the poorer families were left. The Maid held two newly born infants over the baptismal font.

Hearing of these Saint-Denys baptisms, her enemies accused her of having lit candles and held them inclined over the infant's heads, in order that she might read their destinies in the melted wax. It was not the first time, it appeared, that she indulged in such practices. When she entered a town, little children were said to offer her candles kneeling, and she received them as an agreeable sacrifice. Then upon the heads of these innocents she would let fall three drops of burning wax, proclaiming that by virtue of this ceremony they could not fail to be good. In such acts Burgundian ecclesiastics discerned idolatry and witchcraft, in which was likewise involved heresy.

Here again, at Saint-Denys, she distributed banners to the men-at-arms. Churchmen on the English side strongly suspected her of charming those banners. And as everyone in those days believed in magic, such a suspicion was not without its danger.

The Maid and the Duke of Alençon lost no time. Immediately after their arrival at Saint-Denys they went forth to skirmish before the gates of Paris. Two or three times a day they engaged in this desultory warfare, notably by the wind-mill at the Saint-Denys Gate and in the village of La Chapelle. "Every day there was booty taken," says Messire Jean de Bueil. It seems hardly credible that in a country which had been plundered and ravaged over and over again, there should have been anything left to be taken; and yet the statement is made and attested by one of the nobles in the army.

Out of respect for the seventh commandment, the Maid forbade the men of her company to commit any theft whatsoever. And she always refused victuals offered her when she knew they had been stolen. In reality she, like the others, lived on pillage, but she did not know it. One day when a Scotsman gave her to wit that she had just partaken of some stolen veal, she flew into a fury and would have beaten him: saintly women are subject to such fits of passion.

Jeanne is said to have observed the walls of Paris carefully, seeking the spot most favourable for attack. The truth is that in this matter as in all others she depended on her Voices. For the rest she was far superior to all the men-at-arms in courage and in good will. From Saint-Denys she sent the King message after message, urging him to come and take Paris. But at Compiègne the King and his Council were negotiating with the ambassadors of the Duke of Burgundy, to wit:

Jean de Luxembourg, Lord of Beaurevoir, Hugues de Cayeux, Bishop of Arras, David de Brimeu and my Lord of Charny.

The fifteen days' truce had expired. Our only information concerning it is contained in Jeanne's letter to the citizens of Reims. According to Jeanne, the Duke of Burgundy had undertaken to surrender the city to the King of France on the fifteenth day. If he had so agreed it was on conditions of which we know nothing; we are not therefore in a position to say whether or no those conditions had been carried out. The Maid placed no trust in this promise, and she was quite right; but she did not know everything; and on the very day when she was complaining of the truce to the citizens of Reims, Duke Philip was receiving the command of Paris at the hands of the Regent, and was henceforth in a position to dispose of the city as he liked. Duke Philip could not bear the sight of Charles of Valois, who had been present at the murder on the Bridge of Montereau, but he detested the English and wished they would go to the devil or return to their island. The vineyards and the cloth looms of his dominions were too numerous and too important for him not to wish for peace. He had no desire to be King of France; therefore he could be treated with, despite his avarice and dissimulation. Nevertheless the fifteenth day had gone by and the city of Paris remained in the hands of the English and the Burgundians, who were not friends but allies.

On the 28th of August a truce was concluded. It was to last till Christmas and was to extend over the whole country north of the Seine, from Nogent to Harfleur, with the exception of such towns as were situated where there was a passage over the river. Concerning the city of Paris it was expressly stated that "Our Cousin of Burgundy, he and his men, may engage in the defence of the town and in resisting such as shall make war upon it or do it hurt." The Chancellor Regnault de Chartres, the Sire de la Trémouille, Christophe d'Harcourt, the Bastard of Orléans, the Bishop of Séz, and likewise certain young nobles very eager for war, such as the Counts of Clermont and of Vendôme and the Duke of Bar, in short all the Counsellors of the King and the Princes of the Blood who signed this article, were apparently giving the enemy a weapon against them and renouncing any attempt upon Paris. But they were not all fools; the Bastard of Orléans was keen witted and the Lord Archbishop of Reims was anything but an Olibrius. They doubtless knew what they were about when they recognised the Duke of Burgundy's rights over Paris. Duke Philip, as we know, had been governor of the great town since the 13th of August. The Regent had ceded it with the idea that Burgundy would keep the Parisians in order better than England, for the English were few in number and were disliked as foreigners. What did it profit King Charles to recognise his cousin's rights over Paris? We fail to see precisely; but after all this truce was no better and no

worse than others. In sooth it did not give Paris to the King, but neither did it prevent the King from taking it. Did truces ever hinder Armagnacs and Burgundians from fighting when they had a mind to fight? Was one of those frequent truces ever kept? After having signed this one, the King advanced to Senlis. The Duke of Alençon came to him there twice. Charles reached Saint-Denys on Wednesday the 7th of September.

CHAPTER III

THE ATTACK ON PARIS

IN the days when King John was a prisoner in the hands of the English, the townsfolk of Paris, beholding the enemy in the heart of the land, feared lest their city should be besieged. In all haste therefore they proceeded to put it in a state of defence; they surrounded it with trenches and counter trenches. On the side of the University the suburbs were left defenceless; small and remote, they were burned down. But on the right bank the more extensive suburbs well nigh touched the city. One part of them was enclosed by the trenches. When peace was concluded, Charles, Regent of the Realm, undertook to surround the town on the north with an embattled wall, flanked with square towers, with terraces and parapets, with a road round and steps leading up to the ramparts.

In certain places the trench was single, in others double. The work was superintended by Hugues Aubriot, Provost of Paris, to whom was entrusted also the building of the Saint-Antoine bastion, completed under King Charles VI. This new fortification began on the east, near the river, on the rising ground of Les Célestins. Within its circle it enclosed the district of Saint Paul, the Culture Sainte-Catherine, the Temple, Saint-Martin, Les Filles-Dieu, Saint Sauveur, Saint Honoré, Les Quinze Vingts, which hitherto had been in the suburbs and undefended; and it reached the river below the Louvre, which was thus united to the town. There were six gates in the circumvallation, to wit: beginning on the east, the Baudet Gate or Saint-Antoine Gate, the Saint-Avoye or Temple Gate, the Gate of the Painters or of Saint-Denis, the Saint-Martin or Montmartre Gate, the Saint-Honoré Gate and the Gate of the Seine.

The Parisians did not like the English and were sorely grieved by their occupation of the city. The folk murmured when, after the funeral of the late King, Charles VI, the Duke of Bedford had the sword of the King of France borne before him. But what cannot be helped must be endured. The Parisians may have disliked the English; they admired Duke Philip, a prince of comely countenance and the richest potentate of Christendom. As for the little King of Bourges, mean-looking and sad-faced, strongly suspected of treason at Montereau, there was nothing pleasing in him; he was despised and his followers were regarded with fear and horror. For ten years they had been ranging round the town, pillaging, taking prisoners and holding them to ransom. The English and Burgundians indeed did likewise. When, in the August of 1423, Duke Philip came to Paris, his men ravaged all the neighbouring fields, albeit they belonged to friends and allies. But they were only passing through, while the Armagnacs were for ever raiding, eternally stealing all they could lay hands on, setting fire

to barns and churches, killing women and children, ravishing maids and nuns, hanging men by the thumbs. In 1420, like devils let loose, they descended upon the village of Champigny and burned at once oats, wheat, sheep, cows, oxen, women and children. Likewise did they and worse still at Croissy. One ecclesiastic said they had caused more Christians to suffer martyrdom than Maximian and Diocletian.

And yet, in the year 1429, there might have been discovered in the city of Paris not a few followers of the Dauphin. Christine de Pisan, who was very loyal to the House of Valois, said: "In Paris there are many wicked. Good are there also and faithful to their King. But they dare not lift up their voices."

It was common knowledge that in the Parlement and even in the Chapter of Notre-Dame were to be found those who had dealings with the Armagnacs.

On the morrow of their victory at Patay, those terrible Armagnacs had only to march straight on the town to take it. They were expected to enter it one day or the other. In the mind of the Regent it was as if they had already taken it. He went off and shut himself in the Castle of Vincennes with the few men who remained to him. Three days after the discomfiture of the English there was a panic in the town. "The Armagnacs are coming to-night," they said. Meanwhile the Armagnacs were at Orléans awaiting orders to assemble at Gien and to march on Auxerre. At these tidings the Duke of Bedford must have sighed a deep sigh of relief; and straightway he set to work to provide for the defence of Paris and the safety of Normandy.

When the panic was past, the heart of the great town returned to its allegiance, not to the English cause — it had never been English — but to the Burgundian. Its Provost, Messire Simon Morhier, who had made great slaughter of the French at the Battle of the Herrings, remained loyal to the Leopard. The aldermen on the contrary were suspected of inclining a favourable ear to King Charles's proposals. On the 12th of July, the Parisians elected a new town council composed of the most zealous Burgundians they could find in commerce and on change. To be provost of the merchants they appointed the treasurer, Guillaume Sanguin, to whom the Duke of Burgundy owed more than seven thousand *livres tournois* and who had the Regent's jewels in his keeping. Such an alteration was greatly to the detriment of King Charles, who preferred to win back his good towns by peaceful means rather than by force, and who relied more on negotiations with the citizens than on cannon balls and stones.

Just in the nick of time the Regent surrendered the town to Duke Philip, not, we may be sure, without many regrets for having recently refused him Orléans. He realised that thus, by returning to its French allegiance, the chief city of the

realm would make a more energetic defense against the Dauphin's men. The Parisians' old liking for the magnificent Duke would revive, and so would their old hatred of the disinherited son of Madame Ysabeau. In the Palais de Justice the Duke read the story of his father's death, punctuated with complaints of Armagnac treason and violated treaties; he caused the blood of Montereau to cry to heaven; those who were present swore to be right loyal to him and to the Regent. On the following days the same oath was taken by the regular and secular clergy.

But the citizens were strengthened in their resistance more by their remembrance of Armagnac cruelty than by their affection for the fair Duke. A rumour ran and was believed by them that Messire Charles of Valois had abandoned to his mercenaries the city and the citizens of all ranks, high and low, men and women, and that he intended to plough up the very ground on which Paris stood. Such a rumour represented him very falsely; on all occasions he was pitiful and debonair; his Council had prudently converted the coronation campaign into an armed and peaceful procession. But the Parisians were incapable of judging sanely when the intentions of the King of France were concerned; and they knew only too well that once their town was taken there would be nothing to prevent the Armagnacs from laying it waste with fire and sword.

One other circumstance intensified their fear and their dislike. When they heard that Friar Richard, to whose sermons they had once listened so devoutly, was riding with the Dauphin's men and with his nimble tongue winning such good towns as Troyes in Champagne, they called down upon him the malediction of God and his Saints. They tore from their caps the pewter medals engraved with the holy name of Jesus, which the good Brother had given them, and in their bitter hatred towards him they returned straightway to the dice, bowls and draughts which they had renounced at his exhortation. With no less horror did the Maid inspire them. It was said that she was acting the prophetess and uttering such words as: "In very deed this or that shall come to pass." "With the Armagnacs is a creature in woman's form. What it is God only knows," they cried. They spoke of her as a woman of ill fame. Among these enemies, there were those who filled them with even greater horror than pagans and Saracens — to wit: a monk and a maid. They all took the cross of Saint Andrew.

While the Dauphin had been away at his coronation an army had come from England into France. The Regent intended it to overrun Normandy. In its march on Rouen he commanded it in person. The defence and ward of Paris he left to Louis of Luxembourg, Bishop of Thérouanne, Chancellor of France for the

English, to the Sire de l'Isle-Adam, Marshal of France, Captain of Paris, to two thousand men-at-arms and to the Parisian train-bands. To the last were entrusted the defence of the ramparts and the management of the artillery. They were commanded by twenty-four burgesses, called *quarteniers* because they represented the twenty-four quarters of the city. From the end of July all danger of a surprise had been guarded against.

On the 10th of August, on Saint-Laurence's Eve, while the Armagnacs were encamped at La Ferté-Milon, the Saint-Martin Gate, flanked by four towers and a double drawbridge, was closed; and all men were forbidden to go to Saint-Laurent, either to the procession or to the fair, as in previous years.

On the 28th of the same month, the royal army occupied Saint-Denys. Henceforth no one dared leave the city, neither for the vintage nor for the gathering of anything in the kitchen gardens, which covered the plain north of the town. Prices immediately went up.

In the early days of September, the *quarteniers*, each one in his own district, had the trenches set in order and the cannons mounted on walls, gates, and towers. At the command of the aldermen, the hewers of stone for the cannon made thousands of balls.

From My Lord, the Duke of Alençon, the magistrates received letters beginning thus: "To you, Provost of Paris and Provost of the Merchants and Aldermen...." He named them by name and greeted them in eloquent language. These letters were regarded as an artifice intended to render the townsfolk suspicious of the aldermen and to incite one class of the populace against the other. The only answer sent to the Duke was a request that he would not spoil any more paper with such malicious endeavours.

The chapter of Notre-Dame ordered masses to be said for the salvation of the people. On the 5th of September, three canons were authorised to make arrangements for the defence of the monastery. Those in charge of the sacristy took measures to hide the relics and the treasure of the cathedral from the Armagnac soldiers. For two hundred golden *saluts* they sold the body of Saint Denys; but they kept the foot, which was of silver, the head and the crown.

On Wednesday, the 7th of September, the Eve of the Virgin's Nativity, there was a procession to Sainte-Geneviève-du-Mont with the object of counteracting the evil of the times and allaying the animosity of the enemy. In it walked the canons of the Palace, bearing the True Cross.

That very day the army of the Duke of Alençon and of the Maid was skirmishing beneath the walls. It retreated in the evening; and on that night the

townsfolk slept in peace, for on the morrow Christians celebrated the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

It was a great festival and a very ancient one. Its origin is described in the following manner. There was a certain holy man, who passed his life in meditation. On a day he called to mind that for many years, on the 8th of September, he had heard marvellous angelic music in the air, and he prayed to God to reveal to him the reason for this concert of instruments and of celestial voices. He was vouchsafed the answer that it was the anniversary of the birth of the glorious Virgin Mary; and he received the command to instruct the faithful in order that they on that solemn day might join their voices to the angelic chorus. The matter was reported to the Sovereign Pontiff and the other heads of the Church, who, after having prayed, fasted and consulted the witnesses and traditions of the Church, decreed that henceforth that day, the 8th of September, should be universally consecrated to the celebration of the birth of the Virgin Mary.

That day were read at mass the words of the prophet Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

The people of Paris thought that even the Armagnacs would do no work on so high a festival and would keep the third commandment.

On this Thursday, the 8th of September, about eight o'clock in the morning, the Maid, the Dukes of Alençon and of Bourbon, the Marshals of Boussac and of Rais, the Count of Vendôme, the Lords of Laval, of Albret and of Gaucourt, who with their men, to the number of ten thousand and more, had encamped in the village of La Chapelle, half-way along the road from Saint-Denys to Paris, set out on the march. At the hour of high mass, between eleven and twelve o'clock, they reached the height of Les Moulins, at the foot of which the Swine Market was held. Here there was a gibbet. Fifty-six years earlier, a woman of saintly life according to the people, but according to the holy inquisitors, a heretic and a *Turlupine*, had been burned alive on that very market-place.

Wherefore did the King's men appear first before the northern walls, those of Charles V, which were the strongest? It is impossible to tell. A few days earlier they had thrown a bridge across the River above Paris, which looks as if they intended to attack the old fortification and get into the city from the University side. Did they mean to carry out the two attacks simultaneously? It is probable. Did they renounce the project of their own accord or against their will? We cannot tell.

Beneath the walls of Charles V they assembled a quantity of artillery, cannons, culverins, mortars; and in hand-carts they brought fagots to fill up the

trenches, hurdles to bridge them over and seven hundred ladders: very elaborate material for the siege, despite their having, as we shall see, forgotten what was most necessary. They came not therefore to skirmish nor to do great feats of arms. They came to attempt in broad daylight the escalading and the storming of the greatest, the most illustrious, and the most populous town of the realm; an undertaking of vast importance, proposed doubtless and decided in the royal council and with the knowledge of the King, who can have been neither indifferent nor hostile to it. Charles of Valois wanted to retake Paris. It remains to be seen whether for the accomplishment of his desire he depended merely on men-at-arms and ladders.

It would seem that the Maid had not been told of the resolutions taken. She was never consulted and was seldom informed of what had been decided. But she was as sure of entering the town that day as of going to Paradise when she died. For more than three years her Voices had been drumming the attack on Paris in her ears. But the astonishing point is that, saint as she was, she should have consented to arm and fight on the day of the Nativity. It was contrary to her action on the 5th of May, Ascension Day, and inconsistent with what she had said on the 8th of the same month: "As ye love and honour the Sacred Sabbath do not begin the battle."

True it is that afterwards, at Montepilloy, she had engaged in a skirmish on the Day of the Assumption, and thus scandalized the masters of the University. She acted according to the counsel of her Voices and her decisions depended on the vaguest murmurings in her ear. Nothing is more inconstant and more contradictory than the inspirations of such visionaries, who are but the playthings of their dreams. What is certain at least is that Jeanne now as always was convinced that she was doing right and committing no sin. Arrayed on the height of Les Moulins, in front of Paris with its grey fortifications, the French had immediately before them the outermost of the trenches, dry and narrow, some sixteen or seventeen feet deep, separated by a mound from the second trench, nearly one hundred feet broad, deep and filled with water which lapped the walls of the city. Quite close, on their right, the road to Roule led up to the Saint Honoré Gate, also called the Gate of the Blind because it was near the Hospital of Les Quinze Vingts. It opened beneath a castlet flanked by turrets, and for an advanced defence it had a bulwark surrounded by wooden barriers, like those of Orléans.

The Parisians did not expect to be attacked on a feast day. And yet the ramparts were by no means deserted, and on the walls standards could be seen waving, and especially a great white banner with a Saint Andrew's cross in silver gilt.

The French arrayed themselves slightly behind the Moulin hill, which was to protect them from the stream of lead and stones beginning to be discharged from the artillery on the ramparts. There they ranged their mortars, their culverins and their cannon, ready to fire on the city walls. In this position, which commanded the widest stretch of the fortifications, was the main body of the army. Led by Messire de Saint-Vallier a knight of Dauphiné, several captains and men-at-arms approached the Saint Honoré Gate and set fire to the barriers. As the garrison of the gate had withdrawn within the fortification, and as the enemy was not seen to be coming out by any other exit, the Maréchal de Rais' company advanced with fagots, bundles and ladders right up to the ramparts. The Maid rode at the head of her company. They halted between the Saint-Denys and the Saint-Honoré Gates, but nearer the latter, and went down into the first trench, which was not difficult to cross. But on the mound they found themselves exposed to bolts and arrows which rained straight down from the walls. As at Orléans, and at Les Tourelles, Jeanne had given her banner to a man of valour to hold.

When she reached the top of the mound, she cried out to the folk in Paris: "Surrender the town to the King of France."

The Burgundians heard her saying also: "In Jesus' name surrender to us speedily. For if ye yield not before nightfall, we shall enter by force, whether ye will or no, and ye shall all be put to death without mercy."

On the mound she remained, sounding the great dyke with her lance and marvelling to find it so full and so deep. And yet for eleven days she and her men-at-arms had been reconnoitring round the walls and seeking the most favourable point of attack. That she should not have known how to plan an attack was quite natural. But what is to be thought of the men-at-arms, who were there on the mound, taken by surprise, as baffled as she, and all aghast at finding so much water close to the Seine when the River was in flood? To be able to reconnoitre the defences of a fortress was surely the *a b c* of the trade of war. Captains and soldiers of fortune never risked advancing against a fortification without knowing first whether there were water, morass or briars, and arming themselves accordingly with siege train suitable to the occasion. When the water of the moat was deep they launched leather boats carried on horses' backs. The men-at-arms of the Maréchal de Rais and my Lord of Alençon were more ignorant than the meanest adventurers. What would the doughty La Hire have thought of them? Such gross ineptitude and ignorance appeared so incredible that it was supposed that those fighting men knew the depth of the moat but concealed it from the Maid, desiring her discomfiture. In such a case, while entrapping the damsel they were themselves entrapped, for there they stayed moving neither backwards nor forwards.

Certain among them idly threw fagots into the moat. Meanwhile the defenders assailed by flights of arrows, disappeared one after the other. But towards four o'clock in the afternoon, the citizens arrived in crowds. The cannon of the Saint-Denys Gate thundered. Arrows and abuse flew between those above and those below. The hours passed, the sun was sinking. The Maid never ceased sounding the moat with the staff of her lance and crying out to the Parisians to surrender.

"There, wanton! There, minx!" cried a Burgundian.

And planting his cross-bow in the ground with his foot, he shot an arrow which split one of her greaves and wounded her in the thigh. Another Burgundian took aim at the Maid's standard-bearer and wounded him in the foot. The wounded man raised his visor to see whence the arrow came and straightway received another between the eyes. The Maid and the Duke of Alençon sorely regretted the loss of this man-at-arms.

After she had been wounded, Jeanne cried all the more loudly that the walls must be reached and the city taken. She was placed out of reach of the arrows in the shelter of a breast-work. There she urged the men-at-arms to throw fagots into the water and make a bridge. About ten or eleven o'clock in the evening, the Sire de la Trémouille charged the combatants to retreat. The Maid would not leave the place. She was doubtless listening to her Saints and beholding celestial hosts around her. The Duke of Alençon sent for her. The aged Sire de Gaucourt carried her off with the aid of a captain of Picardy, one Guichard Bournel, who did not please her on that day, and who by his treachery six months later, was to please her still less. Had she not been wounded she would have resisted more strongly. She yielded regretfully, saying: "In God's name! the city might have been taken."

They put her on horseback; and thus she was able to follow the army. The rumour ran that she had been shot in both thighs; in sooth her wound was but slight.

The French returned to La Chapelle, whence they had set out in the morning. They carried their wounded on some of the carts which they had used for the transport of fagots and ladders. In the hands of the enemy they left three hundred hand-carts, six hundred and sixty ladders, four thousand hurdles and large fagots, of which they had used but a small number. Their retreat must have been somewhat hurried, seeing that, when they came to the Barn of Les Mathurins, near The Swine Market, they forsook their baggage and set fire to it. With horror it was related that, like pagans of Rome, they had cast their dead into the flames. Nevertheless the Parisians dared not pursue them. In those days men-at-arms who knew their trade never retreated without laying some snare for the enemy.

Consequently the King's men posted a considerable company in ambush by the roadside, to lie in wait for the light troops who should come in pursuit of the retreating army. It was precisely such an ambuscade that the Parisians feared; wherefore they permitted the Armagnacs to regain their camp at La Chapelle-Saint-Denys unmolested.

If we regard only the military tactics of the day, there is no doubt that the French had blundered and had lacked energy. But it was not on military tactics that the greatest reliance had been placed. Those who conducted the war, the King and his council, certainly expected to enter Paris that day. But how? As they had entered Châlons, as they had entered Reims, as they had entered all the King's good towns from Troyes to Compiègne. King Charles had shown himself determined to recover his towns by means of the townsfolk; towards Paris he acted as he had acted towards his other towns.

During the coronation march, he had entered into communication with the bishops and burgesses of the cities of Champagne; and like communications he had entered into in Paris. He had dealings with the monks and notably with the Carmelites of Melun, whose Prior, Brother Pierre d'Allée, was working in his interest. For some time paid agents had been watching for an opportunity of throwing the city into disorder and of bringing in the enemy in a moment of panic and confusion. During the assault they were working for him in the streets. In the afternoon, on both sides of the bridges, were heard cries of "Let every man look to his own safety! The enemy has entered! All is lost!" Such of the citizens as were listening to the sermon hastened to shut themselves in their houses. And others who were out of doors sought refuge in the churches. But the tumult was quelled. Wise men, like the clerk of the Parlement, believed that it was but a feigned attack, and that Charles of Valois looked to recover the town not so much by force of arms as by a movement of the populace.

Certain monks who were acting in Paris as the King's spies, went out to him at Saint-Denys and informed him that the attempt had failed. According to them it had very nearly succeeded.

The Sire de la Trémouille is said to have commanded the retreat, for fear of a massacre. Indeed, once the French had entered they were quite capable of slaughtering the townsfolk and razing the city to the ground.

On the morrow, Friday the 9th, the Maid, rising with the dawn, despite her wound, asked the Duke of Alençon to have the call to arms sounded; for she was strongly determined to return to the walls of Paris, swearing not to leave them until the city should be taken. Meanwhile the French captains sent a herald to Paris, charged to ask for a safe conduct for the removing of the bodies of the dead left behind in great numbers.

Notwithstanding that they had suffered cruel hurt, after a retreat unmolested it is true, but none the less disastrous and involving the loss of all their siege train, several of the leaders were, like the Maid, inclined to attempt a new assault. Others would not hear of it. While they were disputing, they beheld a baron coming towards them and with him fifty nobles; it was the Sire de Montmorency, the first Christian peer of France, that is the first among the ancient vassals of the bishop of Paris. He was transferring his allegiance from the Cross of St. Andrew to the Flowers-de-luce. His coming filled the King's men with courage and a desire to return to the city. The army was on its way back, when the Count of Clermont and the Duke of Bar were sent to arrest the march by order of the King, and to take the Maid back to Saint-Denys.

On Saturday the 10th, at daybreak, the Duke of Alençon, with a few knights, appeared on the bank above the city, where a bridge had been thrown over the Seine some days earlier. The Maid, always eager for danger, accompanied the venturesome warriors. But the night before, the King had prudently caused the bridge to be taken down, and the little band had to retrace its steps. It was not that the King had renounced the idea of taking Paris. He was thinking more than ever of the recovery of his great town; but he intended to regain it without an assault, by means of the compliance of certain burgesses.

At this same place of Saint-Denys there happened to Jeanne a misadventure, which would seem to have impressed her comrades and possibly to have lessened their faith in her good luck in war. As was customary, women of ill-fame followed the army in great numbers; each man had his own; they were called *amiètes*. Jeanne could not tolerate them because they caused disorder, but more especially because their sinful lives filled her with horror. At that very time, stories like the following were circulated far and wide, and spread even into Germany.

There was a certain man in the camp, who had with him his *amiète*. She rode in armour in order not to be recognised. Now the Maid said to the nobles and captains: "There is a woman with our men." They replied that they knew of none. Whereupon the Maid assembled the army, and, approaching the woman said: "This is she."

Then addressing the wench: "Thou art of Gien and thou art big with child. Were it not so I would put thee to death. Thou hast already let one child die and thou shalt not do the same for this one."

When the Maid had thus spoken, servants took the wench and conveyed her to her own home. There they kept her under watch and ward until she was delivered of her child. And she confessed that what the Maid had said was true.

After which, the Maid again said: "There are women in the camp." Whereupon two wantons, who did not belong to the army, and had already been dismissed from it, hearing these words, rode off on horseback. But the Maid hastened after them crying: "Ye foolish women, I have forbidden you to come into my company." And she drew her sword and struck one of them on the head, so sore that she died.

The tale was true; Jeanne could not suffer these wenches. Every time she met one she gave chase to her. This was precisely what she did at Gien, when she saw women of ill-fame awaiting the King's men. At Château-Thierry, she espied an *amiète* riding behind a man-at-arms, and, running after her, sword in hand, she came up with her, and without striking, bade her henceforth avoid the society of men-at-arms. "If thou wilt not," she added, "I shall do thee hurt."

At Saint-Denys, being accompanied by the Duke of Alençon, Jeanne pursued another of these wantons. This time she was not content with remonstrances and threats. She broke her sword over her. Was it Saint Catherine's sword? So it was believed, and doubtless not without reason. In those days men's minds were full of the romantic stories of Joyeuse and Durandal. It would appear that Jeanne, when she lost her sword, lost her power. A slight variation of the story was told afterwards, and it was related how the King, when he was acquainted with the matter of the broken sword, was displeased and said to the Maid: "You should have taken a stick to strike withal and should not have risked the sword you received from divine hands." It was told likewise how the sword had been given to an armourer for him to join the pieces together, and that he could not, wherein lay a proof that the sword was enchanted.

Before his departure, the King appointed the Count of Clermont commander of the district with several lieutenants: the Lords of Culant, Boussac, Loré, and Foucault. He constituted joint lieutenants-general the Counts of Clermont and of Vendôme, the lords Regnault de Chartres, Christophe d'Harcourt and Jean Tudert. Regnault de Chartres established himself in the town of Senlis, the lieutenant's headquarters. Having thus disposed, the King quitted Saint-Denys on the 13th of September. The Maid followed him against her will notwithstanding that she had the permission of her Voices to do so. She offered her armour to the image of Our Lady and to the precious body of Saint Denys. This armour was white, that is to say devoid of armorial bearings. She was thus following the custom of men-at-arms, who, after they had received a wound, if they did not die of it, offered their armour to Our Lady and the Saints as a token of thanksgiving. Wherefore, in those warlike days, chapels, like that of Notre-Dame de Fierbois, often presented the appearance of arsenals. To her armour the Maid added a sword which she had won before Paris.

CHAPTER IV

THE TAKING OF SAINT-PIERRE-LE-MOUSTIER — FRIAR RICHARD'S SPIRITUAL DAUGHTERS — THE SIEGE OF LA CHARITÉ

THE King slept at Lagny-sur-Marne on the 14th of September, then crossed the Seine at Bray, forded the Yonne near Sens and went on through Courtenay, Châteaurenard and Montargis. On the 21st of September he reached Gien. There he disbanded the army he could no longer pay, and each man went to his own home. The Duke of Alençon withdrew into his viscounty of Beaumont-sur-Oise.

Learning that the Queen was coming to meet the King, Jeanne went before her and greeted her at Selles-en-Berry. She was afterwards taken to Bourges, where my Lord d'Albret, half-brother of the Sire de la Trémouille, lodged her with Messire Régnier de Boulogny. Régnier was then Receiver General. He had been one of those whose dismissal the University had requested in 1408, as being worse than useless, for they held him responsible for many of the disorders in the kingdom. He had entered the Dauphin's service, passed from the administration of the royal domain to that of taxes and attained the highest rank in the control of the finances. His wife, who had accompanied the Queen to Selles, beheld the Maid and wondered. Jeanne seemed to her a creature sent by God for the relief of the King and those of France who were loyal to him. She remembered the days not so very long ago when she had seen the Dauphin and her Husband not knowing where to turn for money. Her name was Marguerite La Touroulde; she was damiselle, not dame; a comfortable *bourgeoise* and that was all.

Three weeks Jeanne sojourned in the Receiver General's house. She slept there, drank there, ate there. Nearly every night, Damiselle Marguerite La Touroulde slept with her; the etiquette of those days required it. No night-gowns were worn; folk slept naked in those vast beds. It would seem that Jeanne disliked sleeping with old women. Damiselle La Touroulde, although not so very old, was of matronly age; she had moreover a matron's experience, and further she claimed, as we shall see directly, to know more than most matrons knew. Several times she took Jeanne to the bath and to the sweating-room. That also was one of the rules of etiquette; a host was not considered to be making his guests good cheer unless he took them to the bath. In this point of courtesy princes set an example; when the King and Queen supped in the house of one of

their retainers or ministers, fine baths richly ornamented were prepared for them before they came to table. Mistress Marguerite doubtless did not possess what was necessary in her own house; wherefore she took Jeanne out to the bath and the sweating-room. Such are her own expressions; and they probably indicate a vapour bath not a bath of hot water.

At Bourges the sweating-rooms were in the Auron quarter, in the lower town, near the river. Jeanne was strictly devout, but she did not observe conventual rule; she, like chaste Suzannah therefore, might permit herself to bathe and she must have had great need to do so after having slept on straw. What is more remarkable is that, after having seen Jeanne in the bath, Mistress Marguerite judged her a virgin according to all appearances.

In Messire Régnier de Bouligny's house and likewise wherever she lodged, she led the life of a *béguine* but did not practise excessive austerity. She confessed frequently. Many a time she asked her hostess to come with her to matins. In the cathedral and in collegiate churches there were matins every day, between four and six, at the hour of sunset. The two women often talked together; the Receiver General's wife found Jeanne very simple and very ignorant. She was amazed to discover that the maiden knew absolutely nothing.

Among other matters, Jeanne told of her visit to the old Duke of Lorraine, and how she had rebuked him for his evil life; she spoke likewise of the interrogatory to which the doctors of Poitiers had subjected her. She was persuaded that these clerks had questioned her with extreme severity, and she firmly believed that she had triumphed over their ill-will. Alas! she was soon to know clerks even less accommodating.

Mistress Marguerite said to her one day: "If you are not afraid when you fight, it is because you know you will not be killed." Whereupon Jeanne answered: "I am no surer of that than are the other combatants."

Oftentimes women came to the Bouligny house, bringing paternosters and other trifling objects of devotion for the Maid to touch.

Jeanne used to say laughingly to her hostess: "Touch them yourself. Your touch will do them as much good as mine."

This ready repartee must have shown Mistress Marguerite that Jeanne, ignorant as she may have been, was none the less capable of displaying a good grace and common sense in her conversation.

While in many matters this good woman found the Maid but a simple creature, in military affairs she deemed her an expert. Whether, when she judged the saintly damsel's skill in wielding arms, she was giving her own opinion or merely speaking from hearsay, as would seem probable, she at any rate declared later that Jeanne rode a horse and handled a lance as well as the best of knights

and so well that the army marvelled. Indeed most captains in those days could do no better.

Probably there were dice and dice-boxes in the Boulogne house, otherwise Jeanne would have had no opportunity of displaying that horror of gaming which struck her hostess. On this matter Jeanne agreed with her comrade, Friar Richard, and indeed with everyone else of good life and good doctrine.

What money she had Jeanne distributed in alms. "I am come to succour the poor and needy," she used to say.

When the multitude heard such words they were led to believe that this Maid of God had been raised up for something more than the glorification of the Lilies, and that she was come to dispel such ills as murder, pillage and other sins grievous to God, from which the realm was suffering. Mystic souls looked to her for the reform of the Church and the reign of Jesus Christ on earth. She was invoked as a saint, and throughout the loyal provinces were to be seen carved and painted images of her which were worshipped by the faithful. Thus, even during her lifetime, she enjoyed certain of the privileges of beatification.

North of the Seine meanwhile, English and Burgundians were at their old work. The Duke of Vendôme and his company fell back on Senlis, the English descended on the town of Saint-Denis and sacked it once more. In the Abbey Church they found and carried off the Maid's armour, thus, according to the French clergy, committing undeniable sacrilege and for this reason: because they gave the monks of the Abbey nothing in exchange.

The King was then at Mehun-sur-Yèvre, quite close to Bourges, in one of the finest châteaux in the world, rising on a rock and overlooking the town. The late Duke Jean of Berry, a great builder, had erected this château with the care that he never failed to exercise in matters of art. Mehun was King Charles's favourite abode.

The Duke of Alençon, eager to reconquer his duchy, was waiting for troops to accompany him into Normandy, across the marches of Brittany and Maine. He sent to the King to know if it were his good pleasure to grant him the Maid. "Many there be," said the Duke, "who would willingly come with her, while without her they will not stir from their homes." Her discomfiture before Paris had not, therefore, entirely ruined her prestige. The Sire de la Trémouille opposed her being sent to the Duke of Alençon, whom he mistrusted, and not without cause. He gave her into the care of his half-brother, the Sire d'Albret, Lieutenant of the King in his own country of Berry.

The Royal Council deemed it necessary to recover La Charité, left in the hands of Perrinet Gressart at the time of the coronation campaign; but it was decided first to attack Saint-Pierre-le-Moustier, which commanded the

approaches to Bec-d'Allier. The garrison of this little town was composed of English and Burgundians, who were constantly plundering the villages and laying waste the fields of Berry and Bourbonnais. The army for this expedition assembled at Bourges. It was commanded by my Lord d'Albret, but popular report attributed the command to Jeanne. The common folk, the burgesses of the towns, especially the citizens of Orléans knew no other commander.

After two or three days' siege, the King's men stormed the town. But they were repulsed. Squire Jean d'Aulon, the Maid's steward, who some time before had been wounded in the heel and consequently walked on crutches, had retreated with the rest. He went back and found Jeanne who had stayed almost alone by the side of the moat. Fearing lest harm should come to her, he leapt on to his horse, spurred towards her and cried: "What are you doing, all alone? Wherefore do you not retreat like the others?"

Jeanne doffed her sallet and replied: "I am not alone. With me are fifty thousand of my folk. I will not quit this spot till I have taken the town."

Casting his eyes around, Messire Jean d'Aulon saw the Maid surrounded by but four or five men.

More loudly he cried out to her: "Depart hence and retreat like the others."

Her only reply was a request for fagots and hurdles to fill up the moat. And straightway in a loud voice she called: "To the fagots and the hurdles all of ye, and make a bridge!"

The men-at-arms rushed to the spot, the bridge was constructed forthwith and the town taken by storm with no great difficulty. At any rate that is how the good Squire, Jean d'Aulon, told the story. He was almost persuaded that the Maid's fifty thousand shadows had taken Saint-Pierre-le-Moustier.

With the little army on the Loire at that time were certain holy women who like Jeanne led a singular life and held communion with the Church Triumphant. They constituted, so to speak, a kind of flying squadron of *béguines*, which followed the men-at-arms. One of these women was called Catherine de La Rochelle; two others came from Lower Brittany.

They all had miraculous visions; Jeanne saw my Lord Saint Michael in arms and Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret wearing crowns; Pierronne beheld God in a long white robe and a purple cloak; Catherine de La Rochelle saw a white lady, clothed in cloth of gold; and, at the moment of the consecration of the host all manner of marvels of the high mystery of Our Lord were revealed unto her.

Jean Pasquerel was still with Jeanne in the capacity of chaplain. He hoped to take his penitent to fight in the Crusade against the Hussites, for it was against these heretics that he felt most bitterly. But he had been entirely supplanted by

the Franciscan, Friar Richard, who, after Troyes, had joined the mendicants of Jeanne's earlier days. Friar Richard dominated this little band of the illuminated. He was called their good Father. He it was who instructed them. His designs for these women did not greatly differ from those of Jean Pasquerel: he intended to conduct them to those wars of the Cross, which he thought were bound to precede the impending end of the world.

Meanwhile, it was his endeavour to foster a good understanding between them, which, eloquent preacher though he was, he found very difficult. Within the sisterhood there were constant suspicions and disputes. Jeanne had been on friendly terms with Catherine de la Rochelle at Montfaucon in Brie and at Jargeau; but now she began to suspect her of being a rival, and immediately she assumed an attitude of mistrust. Possibly she was right. At any moment either Catherine or the Breton women might be made use of as she had been. In those days a prophetess was useful in so many ways: in the edification of the people, the reformation of the Church, the leading of men-at-arms, the circulation of money, in war, in peace; no sooner did one appear than each party tried to get hold of her. It seems as if, after having employed the Maid Jeanne to deliver Orléans, the King's Councillors were now thinking of employing Dame Catherine to make peace with the Duke of Burgundy. Such a task was deemed fitting for a saint less chivalrous than Jeanne. Catherine was married and the mother of a family. In this circumstance there need be no cause for astonishment; for if the gift of prophecy be more especially reserved for virgins, the example of Judith proves that the Lord may raise up strong matrons for the serving of his people.

If we believe that, as her surname indicates, she came from La Rochelle, her origin must have inspired the Armagnacs with confidence. The inhabitants of La Rochelle, all pirates more or less, were too profitably engaged in preying upon English vessels to forsake the Dauphin's party. Moreover, he rewarded their loyalty by granting them valuable commercial privileges. They had sent gifts of money to the people of Orléans; and when, in the month of May, they learned the deliverance of Duke Charles's city, they instituted a public festival to commemorate so happy an event.

The first duty of a saint in the army, it would appear, was to collect money. Jeanne was always sending letters asking the good towns for money or for munitions of war; the burgesses always promised to grant her request and sometimes they kept their promise. Catherine de la Rochelle appears to have had special revelations concerning the funds of the party; her mission, therefore, was financial, while Jeanne's was martial. She announced that she was going to the Duke of Burgundy to conclude peace. If one may judge from the little that is

known of her, the inspirations of this holy dame were not very elevated, not very orderly, not very profound.

Meeting Jeanne at Montfaucon in Berry (or at Jargeau) she addressed her thus:

“There came unto me a white lady, attired in cloth of gold, who said to me: ‘Go thou through the good towns and let the King give unto thee heralds and trumpets to cry: “Whosoever has gold, silver or hidden treasure, let him bring it forth instantly.”’”

Dame Catherine added: “Such as have hidden treasure and do not thus, I shall know their treasure, and I shall go and find it.”

She deemed it necessary to fight against the English and seemed to believe that Jeanne’s mission was to drive them out of the land, since she obligingly offered her the whole of her miraculous takings.

“Wherewithal to pay your men-at-arms,” she said. But the Maid answered disdainfully:

“Go back to your husband, look after your household, and feed your children.”

Disputes between saints are usually bitter. In her rival’s missions Jeanne refused to see anything but folly and futility. Nevertheless it was not for her to deny the possibility of the white lady’s visitations; for to Jeanne herself did there not descend every day as many saints, angels and archangels as were ever painted on the pages of books or the walls of monasteries? In order to make up her mind on the subject, she adopted the most effectual measures. A learned doctor may reason concerning matter and substance, the origin and the form of ideas, the dawn of impressions in the intellect, but a shepherdess will resort to a surer method; she will appeal to her own eyesight.

Jeanne asked Catherine if the white lady came every night, and learning that she did: “I will sleep with you,” she said.

When night came, she went to bed with Catherine, watched till midnight, saw nothing and fell asleep, for she was young, and she had great need of sleep. In the morning, when she awoke, she asked: “Did she come?”

“She did,” replied Catherine; “you were asleep, so I did not like to wake you.”

“Will she not come to-morrow?”

Catherine assured her that she would come without fail.

This time Jeanne slept in the day in order that she might keep awake at night; so she lay down at night in the bed with Catherine and kept her eyes open. Often she asked: “Will she not come?”

And Catherine replied: “Yes, directly.”

But Jeanne saw nothing. She held the test to be a good one. Nevertheless she could not get the white lady attired in cloth of gold out of her head. When Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret came to her, as they delayed not to do, she spoke to them concerning this white lady and asked them what she was to think of her. The reply was such as Jeanne expected:

“This Catherine,” they said, “is naught but futility and folly.”

Then was Jeanne constrained to cry: “That is just what I thought.”

The strife between these two prophetesses was brief but bitter. Jeanne always maintained the opposite of what Catherine said. When the latter was going to make peace with the Duke of Burgundy, Jeanne said to her:

“Me seemeth that you will never find peace save at the lance’s point.”

There was one matter at any rate wherein the White Lady proved a better prophetess than the Maid’s Council, to wit, the siege of La Charité. When Jeanne wished to go and deliver that town, Catherine tried to dissuade her.

“It is too cold,” she said; “I would not go.”

Catherine’s reason was not a high one; and yet it is true Jeanne would have done better not to go to the siege of La Charité.

Taken from the Duke of Burgundy by the Dauphin in 1422, La Charité had been retaken in 1424, by Perrinet Gressart, a successful captain, who had risen from the rank of mason’s apprentice to that of pantler to the Duke of Burgundy and had been created Lord of Laigny by the King of England. On the 30th of December, 1425, Perrinet’s men arrested the Sire de La Trémouille, when he was on his way to the Duke of Burgundy, having been appointed ambassador in one of those eternal negotiations, forever in process between the King and the Duke. He was for several months kept a prisoner in the fortress which his captor commanded. He must needs pay a ransom of fourteen thousand golden crowns; and, albeit he took this sum from the royal treasury, he never ceased to bear Perrinet a grudge. Wherefore it may be concluded that when he sent men-at-arms to La Charité it was in good sooth to capture the town and not with any evil design against the Maid.

The army despatched against this Burgundian captain and this great plunder of pilgrims was composed of no mean folk. Its leaders were Louis of Bourbon, Count of Montpensier, and Charles II, Sire d’Albret, La Trémouille’s half-brother and Jeanne’s companion in arms during the coronation campaign. The army was doubtless but scantily supplied with stores and with money. That was the normal condition of armies in those days. When the King wanted to attack a stronghold of the enemy, he must needs apply to his good towns for the necessary material. The Maid, at once saint and warrior, could beg for arms with

a good grace; but possibly she overrated the resources of the towns which had already given so much.

On the 7th of November, she and my Lord d'Alençon signed a letter asking the folk of Clermont in Auvergne for powder, arrows and artillery. Churchmen, magistrates, and townsfolk sent two hundredweight of saltpetre, one hundredweight of sulphur, two cases of arrows; to these they added a sword, two poniards and a battle-axe for the Maid; and they charged Messire Robert Andrieu to present this contribution to Jeanne and to my Lord d'Albret.

On the 9th of November, the Maid was at Moulins in Bourbonnais. What was she doing there? No one knows. There was at that time in the town an abbess very holy and very greatly venerated. Her name was Colette Boilet. She had won the highest praise and incurred the grossest insults by attempting to reform the order of Saint Clare. Colette lived in the convent of the Sisters of Saint Clare, which she had recently founded in this town. It has been thought that the Maid went to Moulins on purpose to meet her. But we ought first to ascertain whether these two saints had any liking for each other. They both worked miracles and miracles which were occasionally somewhat similar; but that was no reason why they should take the slightest pleasure in each other's society. One was called *La Pucelle*, the other *La Petite Ancelle*. But these names, both equally humble, described persons widely different in fashion of attire and in manner of life. *La Petite Ancelle* wended her way on foot, clothed in rags like a beggar-woman; *La Pucelle*, wrapped in cloth of gold, rode forth with lords on horseback. That Jeanne, surrounded by Franciscans who observed no rule, felt any veneration for the reformer of the Sisters of Saint Clare, there is no reason to believe; neither is there anything to indicate that the pacific Colette, strongly attached to the Burgundian house, had any desire to hold converse with one whom the English regarded as a destroying angel.

From this town of Moulins, Jeanne dictated a letter by which she informed the inhabitants of Riom that Saint-Pierre-le-Moustier was taken, and asked them for materials of war as she had asked the folk of Clermont.

Here is the letter:

Good friends and beloved, ye wit how that the town of Saint Père le Moustier hath been taken by storm; and with God's help it is our intention to cause to be evacuated the other places contrary to the King; but for this there hath been great expending of powder, arrows and other munition of war before the said town, and the lords who are in this town are but scantily provided for to go and lay siege to La Charité, whither we wend presently; I pray you as ye love the welfare and honour of the King and likewise of all others here, that ye will straightway

help and send for the said siege powder, saltpetre, sulphur, arrows, strong cross-bows and other munition of war. And do this lest by failure of the said powder and other habiliments of war, the siege should be long and ye should be called in this matter negligent or unwilling. Good friends and beloved, may our Lord keep you. Written at Molins, the ninth day of November.

Jehanne.

Addressed to: My good friends and beloved, the churchmen, burgesses and townsfolk of the town of Rion.

The magistrates of Riom, in letters sealed with their own seal, undertook to give Jeanne the Maid and my Lord d'Albret the sum of sixty crowns; but when the masters of the siege-artillery came to demand this sum, the magistrates would not give a farthing.

The folk of Orléans, on the other hand, once more appeared both zealous and munificent; for they eagerly desired the reduction of a town commanding the Loire for seventy-five miles above their own city. They deserve to be considered the true deliverers of the kingdom; had it not been for them neither Jargeau nor Beaugency would have been taken in June. Quite in the beginning of July, when they thought the Loire campaign was to be continued, they had sent their great mortar, La Bougue, to Gien. With it they had despatched ammunition and victuals; and now, in the early days of December, at the request of the King addressed to the magistrates, they sent to La Charité all the artillery brought back from Gien; likewise eighty-nine soldiers of the municipal troops, wearing the cloak with the Duke of Orléans' colours, the white cross on the breast; with their trumpeter at their head and commanded by Captain Boiau; craftsmen of all conditions, master-masons and journeymen, carpenters, smiths; the cannoneers Fauveau, Gervaise Lefèvre and Brother Jacques, monk of the Gray friars monastery, at Orléans. What became of all this artillery and of these brave folk?

On the 24th of November, the Sire d'Albret and the Maid, being hard put to it before the walls of La Charité, likewise solicited the town of Bourges. On receipt of their letter, the burgesses decided to contribute thirteen hundred golden crowns. To raise this sum they had recourse to a measure by no means unusual; it had been employed notably by the townsfolk of Orléans when, some time previously, to furnish forth Jeanne with munition of war, they had bought from a certain citizen a quantity of salt which they had put up to auction in the city barn. The townsfolk of Bourges sold by auction the annual revenue of a thirteenth part of the wine sold retail in the town. But the money thus raised never reached its destination.

A right goodly knighthood was gathered beneath the walls of La Charité; besides Louis de Bourbon and the Sire d'Albret, there was the Maréchal de

Broussac, Jean de Bouray, Seneschal of Toulouse, and Raymon de Montremur, a Baron of Dauphiné, who was slain there. It was bitterly cold and the besiegers succeeded in nothing. At the end of a month Perrinet Gressart, who was full of craft, caused them to fall into an ambush. They raised the siege, abandoning the artillery furnished by the good towns, those fine cannon bought with the savings of thrifty citizens. Their action was the less excusable because the town which had not been relieved and could not well expect to be, must have surrendered sooner or later. They pleaded that the King had sent them no victuals and no money; but that was not considered an excuse and their action was deemed dishonourable. According to a knight well acquainted with points of honour in war: "One ought never to besiege a place without being sure of victuals and of pay beforehand. For to besiege a stronghold and then to withdraw is great disgrace for an army, especially when there is present with it a king or a king's lieutenant."

On the 13th of December there preached to the people of Périgueux a Dominican friar, Brother Hélié Boudant, Pope Martin's Penitentiary in that town. He took as his text the great miracles worked in France by the intervention of a Maid, whom God had sent to the King. On this occasion the Mayor and the magistrates heard mass sung and presented two candles. Now for two months Brother Hélié had been under order to appear before the Parlement of Poitiers. On what charge we do not know. Mendicant monks of those days were for the most part irregular in faith and in morals. The doctrine of Friar Richard himself was not altogether beyond suspicion.

At Christmas, in the year 1429, the flying squadron of *béguines* being assembled at Jargeau, this good Brother said mass and administered the communion thrice to Jeanne the Maid and twice to that Pierronne of Lower Brittany, with whom our Lord conversed as friend with friend. Such an action might well be regarded, if not as a formal violation of the Church's laws, at any rate as an unjustifiable abuse of the sacrament. A menacing theological tempest was then gathering and was about to break over the heads of Friar Richard's daughters in the spirit. A few days after the attack on Paris, the venerable University had had composed or rather transcribed a treatise, *De bono et maligno spiritu*, with a view probably to finding therein arguments against Friar Richard and his prophetess Jeanne, who had both appeared before the city with the Armagnacs.

About the same time, a clerk of the faculty of law had published a summary reply to Chancellor Gerson's memorial concerning the Maid. "It sufficeth not," he wrote, "that one simply affirm that he is sent of God; every heretic maketh such a claim; but he must prove the truth of that mysterious mission by some

miraculous work or by some special testimony in the Bible.” This Paris clerk denies that the Maid has presented any such proof, and to judge her by her acts, he believes her rather to have been sent by the Devil than by God. He reproaches her with wearing a dress forbidden to women under penalty of anathema, and he refutes the excuses for her conduct in this matter urged by Gerson. He accuses her of having excited between princes and Christian people a greater war than there had ever been before. He holds her to be an idolatress using enchantments and making false prophecies. He charges her with having induced men to slay their fellows on the two high festivals of the Holy Virgin, the Assumption and the Nativity. “Sins committed by the Enemy of Mankind, through this woman, against the Creator and his most glorious Mother. And albeit there ensued certain murders, thanks be to God they were not so many as the Enemy had intended.”

“All these things do manifestly prove error and heresy,” adds this devout son of the University. Whence he concludes that the Maid should be taken before the Bishop and the Inquisitor; and he ends by quoting this text from Saint Jérôme: “The unhealthy flesh must be cut off; the diseased sheep must be driven from the fold.”

Such was the unanimous opinion of the University of Paris concerning her in whom the French clerks beheld an Angel of the Lord. At Bruges, in November, a rumour ran and was eagerly welcomed by ecclesiastics that the University of Paris had sent an embassy to the Pope at Rome to denounce the Maid as a false prophetess and a deceiver, and likewise those who believed in her. We do not know the veritable object of this mission. But there is no doubt whatever that the doctors and masters of Paris were henceforward firmly resolved that if ever they obtained possession of the damsel they would not let her go out of their hands, and certainly would not send her to be tried at Rome, where she might escape with a mere penance, and even be enlisted as one of the Pope’s mercenaries.

In English and Burgundian lands, not only by clerks but by folk of all conditions, she was regarded as a heretic; in those countries the few who thought well of her had to conceal their opinions carefully. After the retreat from Saint-Denys, there may have remained some in Picardy, and notably at Abbeville, who were favourable to the prophetess of the French; but such persons must not be spoken of in public.

Colin Gouye, surnamed Le Sourd, and Jehannin Daix, surnamed Le Petit, a man of Abbeville, learned this to their cost. In this town about the middle of September, Le Sourd and Le Petit were near the blacksmith’s forge with divers of the burgesses and other townsfolk, among whom was a herald. They fell to

talking of the Maid who was making so great a stir throughout Christendom. To certain words the herald uttered concerning her, Le Petit replied eagerly:

“Well! well! Everything that woman does and says is nought but deception.”

Le Sourd spoke likewise: “That woman,” he said, “is not to be trusted. Those who believe in her are mad, and there is a smell of burning about them.”

By that he meant that their destiny was obvious, and that they were sure to be burned at the stake as heretics.

Then he had the misfortune to add: “In this town there be many with a smell of burning about them.”

Such words were for the dwellers in Abbeville a slander and a cause of suspicion. When the Mayor and the aldermen heard of this speech they ordered Le Sourd to be thrown into prison. Le Petit must have said something similar, for he too was imprisoned.

By saying that divers of his fellow-citizens were suspect of heresy, Le Sourd put them in danger of being sought out by the Bishop and the Inquisitor as heretics and sorcerers of notoriously evil repute. As for the Maid, she must have been suspect indeed, for a smell of burning to be caused by the mere fact of being her partisan.

While Friar Richard and his spiritual daughters were thus threatened with a bad end should they fall into the hands of the English or Burgundians, serious troubles were agitating the sisterhood. On the subject of Catherine, Jeanne entered into an open dispute with her spiritual father. Friar Richard wanted the holy dame of La Rochelle to be set to work. Fearing lest his advice should be adopted, Jeanne wrote to her King to tell him what to do with the woman, to wit that he should send her home to her husband and children.

When she came to the King the first thing she had to say to him was: “Catherine’s doings are nought but folly and futility.”

Friar Richard made no attempt to hide from the Maid his profound displeasure. He was thought much of at court, and it was doubtless with the consent of the Royal Council that he was endeavouring to compass the employment of Dame Catherine. The Maid had succeeded. Why should not another of the illuminated succeed?

Meanwhile the Council had by no means renounced the services Jeanne was rendering to the French cause. Even after the misfortunes of Paris and of La Charité, there were many who now as before held her power to be supernatural; and there is reason to believe that there was a party at Court intending still to employ her. And even if they had wished to discard her she was now too intimately associated with the royal lilies for her rejection not to involve them too in dishonour. On the 29th of December, 1429, at Mehun-sur-Yèvre, the King

gave her a charter of nobility sealed with the great seal in green wax, with a double pendant, on a strip of red and green silk.

The grant of nobility was to Jeanne, her father, mother, brothers even if they were not free, and to all their posterity, male and female. It was a singular grant corresponding to the singular services rendered by a woman.

In the title she is described as Johanna d'Ay, doubtless because her father's name was given to the King's scribes by Lorrainers who would speak with a soft drawl; but whether her name were Ay or Arc, she was seldom called by it, and was commonly spoken of as Jeanne the Maid.

CHAPTER V

LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF REIMS — LETTER TO THE HUSSITES — DEPARTURE FROM SULLY

THE folk of Orléans were grateful to the Maid for what she had done for them. Far from reproaching her with the unfortunate conclusion of the siege of La Charité, they welcomed her into their city with the same rejoicing and with as good cheer as before. On the 19th of January, 1430, they honoured her and likewise Maître Jean de Velly and Maître Jean Rabateau with a banquet, at which there was abundance of capons, partridges, hares, and even a pheasant. Who that Jean de Velly was, who was feasted with her, we do not know. As for Jean Rabateau, he was none other than the King's Councillor, who had been Attorney-General at the Parlement of Poitiers since 1427. He had been the Maid's host at Orléans. His wife had often seen Jeanne kneeling in her private oratory. The citizens of Orléans offered wine to the Attorney-General, to Jean de Velly, and to the Maid. In good sooth, 'twas a fine feast and a ceremonious. The burgesses loved and honoured Jeanne, but they cannot have observed her very closely during the repast or they would not eight years later, when an adventuress gave herself out to be the Maid, have mistaken her for Jeanne, and offered her wine in the same manner and at the hands of the same city servant, Jacques Leprestre, as now presented it.

The standard that Jeanne loved even more than her Saint Catherine's sword had been painted at Tours by one Hamish Power. He was now marrying his daughter Héliote; and when Jeanne heard of it, she sent a letter to the magistrates of Tours, asking them to give a sum of one hundred crowns for the bride's trousseau. The nuptials were fixed for the 9th of February, 1430. The magistrates assembled twice to deliberate on Jeanne's request. They described her honourably and yet not without a certain caution as "the Maid who hath come into this realm to the King, concerning the matter of the war, announcing that she is sent by the King of Heaven against the English." In the end they refused to pay anything, because, they said, it behoved them to expend municipal funds on municipal matters and not otherwise; but they decided that for the affection and honour they bore the Maid, the churchmen, burgesses, and other townsfolk should be present in the church at the wedding, and should offer prayers for the bride and present her with bread and wine. This cost them four *livres*, ten *sous*.

At a time which it is impossible to fix exactly the Maid bought a house at Orléans. To be more precise she took it on lease. A lease (*bail à vente*) was an agreement by which the proprietor of a house or other property transferred the ownership to the lessee in return for an annual payment in kind or in money. The duration of such leases was usually fifty-nine years. The house that Jeanne acquired in this manner belonged to the Chapter of the Cathedral. It was in the centre of the town, in the parish of Saint-Malo, close to the Saint-Maclou Chapel, next door to the shop of an oil-seller, one Jean Feu, in the Rue des Petits-Souliers. It was in this street that, during the siege, there had fallen into the midst of five guests seated at table a stone cannon-ball weighing one hundred and sixty-four pounds, which had done no one any harm. What price did the Maid give for this house? Apparently six crowns of fine gold (at sixty crowns to the mark), due half-yearly at Midsummer and Christmas, for fifty-nine years. In addition, she must according to custom have undertaken to keep the house in good condition and to pay out of her own purse the ecclesiastical dues as well as rates for wells and paving and all other taxes. Being obliged to have some one as surety, she chose as her guarantor a certain Guillot de Guyenne, of whom we know nothing further.

There is no reason to believe that the Maid did not herself negotiate this agreement. Saint as she was, she knew well what it was to possess property. Such knowledge ran in her family; her father was the best business man in his village. She herself was domesticated and thrifty; for she kept her old clothes, and even in the field she knew where to find them when she wanted to make presents of them to her friends. She counted up her possessions in arms and horses, valued them at twelve thousand crowns, and, apparently made a pretty accurate reckoning. But what was her idea in taking this house? Did she think of living in it? Did she intend when the war was over to return to Orléans and pass a peaceful old age in a house of her own? Or was she planning for her parents to dwell there, or some Vouthon uncle, or her brothers, one of whom was in great poverty and had got a doublet out of the citizens of Orléans?

On the third of March she followed King Charles to Sully. The château, in which she lodged near the King, belonged to the Sire de la Trémouille, who had inherited it from his mother, Marie de Sully, the daughter of Louis I of Bourbon. It had been recaptured from the English after the deliverance of Orléans. A stronghold on the Loire, on the highroad from Paris to Autun, and commanding the plain between Orléans and Briare and the ancient bridge with twenty arches, the château of Sully linked together central France and those northern provinces which Jeanne had so regretfully quitted, and whither with all her heart she longed to return to engage in fresh expeditions and fresh sieges.

During the first fortnight of March, from the townsfolk of Reims she received a message in which they confided to her fears only too well grounded. On the 8th of March the Regent had granted to the Duke of Burgundy the counties of Champagne and of Brie on condition of his reconquering them. Armagnacs and English vied with each other in offering the biggest and most tempting morsels to this Gargantuan Duke. Not being able to keep their promise and deliver to him Compiègne which refused to be delivered, the French offered him in its place Pont-Sainte-Maxence. But it was Compiègne that he wanted. The truces, which had been very imperfectly kept, were to have expired at Christmas, but first they had been prolonged till the 15th of March and then till Easter. In the year 1430 Easter fell on the 16th of April; and Duke Philip was only waiting for that date to put an army in the field.

In a manner concise and vivacious the Maid replied to the townsfolk of Reims:

“Dear friends and beloved and mightily desired. Jehenne the Maid hath received your letters making mention that ye fear a siege. Know ye that it shall not so betide, and I may but encounter them shortly. And if I do not encounter them and they do not come to you, if you shut your gates firmly, I shall shortly be with you: and if they be there, I shall make them put on their spurs so hastily that they will not know where to take them and so quickly that it shall be very soon. Other things I will not write unto you now, save that ye be always good and loyal. I pray God to have you in his keeping. Written at Sully, the 16th day of March.

I would announce unto you other tidings at which ye would mightily rejoice; but I fear lest the letters be taken on the road, and the said tidings be seen.

Signed. Jehanne.

Addressed to my dear friends and beloved, churchmen, burgesses and other citizens of the town of Reims.”

There can be no doubt that the scribe wrote this letter faithfully as it was dictated by the Maid, and that he wrote her words as they fell from her lips. In her haste she now and again forgot words and sometimes whole phrases; but the sense is clear all the same. And what confidence! “You will have no siege if I encounter the enemy.” How completely is this the language of chivalry! On the eve of Patay she had asked: “Have you good spurs?” Here she cries: “I will make them put on their spurs.” She says that soon she will be in Champagne, that she is about to start. Surely we can no longer think of her shut up in the Castle of La Trémouille as in a kind of gilded cage. In conclusion, she tells her friends at Reims that she does not write unto them all that she would like for fear

lest her letter should be captured on the road. She knew what it was to be cautious. Sometimes she affixed a cross to her letters to warn her followers to pay no heed to what she wrote, in the hope that the missive would be intercepted and the enemy deceived.

It was from Sully that on the 23rd of March Brother Pasquerel sent the Emperor Sigismund a letter intended for the Hussites of Bohemia.

The Hussites of those days were abhorred and execrated throughout Christendom. They demanded the free preaching of God's word, communion in both kinds, and the return of the Church to that evangelical life which allowed neither the wealth of priests nor the temporal power of popes. They desired the punishment of sin by the civil magistrates, a custom which could prevail only in very holy society. They were saints indeed and heretics too on every possible point. Pope Martin held the destruction of these wicked persons to be salutary, and such was the opinion of every good Catholic. But how could this armed heresy be dealt with when it routed all the forces of the Empire and the Holy See? The Hussites were too much for that worn-out ancient chivalry of Christendom, for the knighthood of France and of Germany, which was good for nothing but to be thrown on to the refuse heaps like so much old iron. And this was precisely what the towns of the realm of France did when over these knights of chivalry they placed a peasant girl.

At Tachov, in 1427, the Crusaders, blessed by the Holy Father, had fled at the mere sound of the chariot wheels of the Procops. Pope Martin knew not where to turn for defenders of Holy Church, one and indivisible. He had paid for the armament of five thousand English crusaders, which the Cardinal of Winchester was to lead against these accursed Bohemians; but in this force the Holy Father was cruelly disappointed; hardly had his five thousand crusaders landed in France, than the Regent of England diverted them from their route and sent them to Brie to occupy the attention of the Maid of the Armagnacs.

Since her coming into France Jeanne had spoken of the crusade as a work good and meritorious. In the letter dictated before the expedition to Orléans, she summoned the English to join the French and go together to fight against the Church's foe. And later, writing to the Duke of Burgundy, she invited the son of the Duke vanquished at Nicopolis to make war against the Turks. Who but the mendicants directing her can have put these crusading ideas into Jeanne's head? Immediately after the deliverance of Orléans it was said that she would lead King Charles to the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre and that she would die in the Holy Land. At the same time it was rumoured that she would make war on the Hussites. In the month of July, 1429, when the coronation campaign had barely

begun, it was proclaimed in Germany, on the faith of a prophetess of Rome, that by a prophetess of France the Bohemian kingdom should be recovered.

Already zealous for the Crusade against the Turks, the Maid was now equally eager for the Crusade against the Hussites. Turks or Bohemians, it was all alike to her. Of one and the other her only knowledge lay in the stories full of witchcraft related to her by the mendicants of her company. Touching the Hussites, stories were told, not all true, but which Jeanne must have believed; and they cannot have pleased her. It was said that they worshipped the devil, and that they called him "the wronged one." It was told that as works of piety they committed all manner of fornication. Every Bohemian was said to be possessed by a hundred demons. They were accused of killing thousands of churchmen. Again, and this time with truth, they were charged with burning churches and monasteries. The Maid believed in the God who commanded Israel to wipe out the Philistines from the face of the earth. But recently there had arisen Cathari who held the God of the Old Testament to be none other than Lucifer or Luciabelus, author of evil, liar and murderer. The Cathari abhorred war; they refused to shed blood; they were heretics; they had been massacred, and none remained. The Maid believed in good faith that the extirpation of the Hussites was a work pleasing to God. Men more learned than she, not like her addicted to chivalry, but of gentle life, clerks like the Chancellor Jean Gerson, believed it likewise. Of these Bohemian heretics she thought what every one thought: her opinions were those of the multitude; her views were modelled on public opinion. Wherefore in all the simplicity of her heart she hated the Hussites, but she feared them not, because she feared nothing and because she believed, God helping her, that she was able to overcome all the English, all the Turks, and all the Bohemians in the world. At the first trumpet call she was ready to sally forth against them. On the 23rd of March, 1430, Brother Pasquerel sent the Emperor Sigismund a letter written in the name of the Maid and intended for the Hussites of Bohemia. This letter was indited in Latin. The following is the purport of it:

Jesus † Marie

Long ago there reached me the tidings that ye from the true Christians that ye once were have become heretics, like unto the Saracens, that ye have abolished true religion and worship and have turned to a superstition corrupt and fatal, the which in your zeal to maintain and to spread abroad there be no shame nor cruelty ye do not dare to perpetrate. You defile the sacraments of the Church, tear to pieces the articles of her faith, overthrow her temples. The images which were made for similitudes you break and throw into the fire. Finally such

Christians as embrace not your faith you massacre. What fury, what folly, what rage possesses you? That religion which God the All Powerful, which the Son, which the Holy Ghost raised up, instituted, exalted and revealed in a thousand manners, by a thousand miracles, ye persecute, ye employ all arts to overturn and to exterminate.

It is you, you who are blind and not those who have not eyes nor sight. Think ye that ye will go unpunished? Do ye not know that if God prevent not your impious violence, if he suffer you to grope on in darkness and in error, it is that he is preparing for you a greater sorrow and a greater punishment? As for me, in good sooth, were I not occupied with the English wars, I would have already come against you. But in very deed if I learn not that ye have turned from your wicked ways, I will peradventure leave the English and hasten against you, in order that I may destroy by the sword your vain and violent superstition, if I can do so in no other manner, and that I may rid you either of heresy or of life. Notwithstanding, if you prefer to return to the Catholic faith and to the light of primitive days, send unto me your ambassadors and I will tell them what ye must do. If on the other hand ye will be stiff-necked and kick against the pricks, then remember all the crimes and offences ye have perpetrated and look for to see me coming unto you with all strength divine and human to render unto you again all the evil ye have done unto others.

Given at Sully, on the 23rd of March, to the Bohemian heretics.

Signed. Pasquerel.

This was the letter sent to the Emperor. How had Jeanne really expressed herself in her dialect savouring alike of the speech of Champagne and of that of l'Île de France? There can be no doubt but that her letter had been sadly embellished by the good Brother. Such Ciceronian language cannot have proceeded from the Maid. It is all very well to say that a saint of those days could do everything, could prophesy on any subject and in any tongue, so fine an epistle remains far too rhetorical to have been composed by a damsel whom even the Armagnac captains considered simple. Nevertheless, a careful examination will reveal in this missive, at any rate in the second half of it, certain of those bluntly naive passages and some of that childish assurance which are noticeable in Jeanne's genuine letters, especially in her reply to the Count of Armagnac; and more than once there occurs an expression characteristic of a village sibyl. The following, for example, is quite in Jeanne's own manner: "If you will return to the bosom of the Catholic Church, send me your ambassadors; I will tell you what you have to do." And her usual threat: "Expect me with all strength human and divine." As for the phrase: "If I hear not shortly of your conversion, of your return to the bosom of the Church, I will

peradventure leave the English and come against you," here we may suspect the mendicant friar, less interested in the affairs of Charles VII than in those of the Church, of having ascribed to the Maid greater eagerness to set forth on the Crusade than she really felt. Good and salutary as she deemed the taking of the Cross, as far as we know her, she would never have consented to take it until she had driven the English out of the realm of France. She believed this to be her mission, and the persistence, the consistency, the strength of will she evinced in its fulfilment, are truly admirable. It is quite probable that she dictated to the good Brother some phrase like: "When I have put the English out of the kingdom, I will turn against you." This would explain and excuse Brother Pasquerel's error. It is very likely that Jeanne believed she would dispose of the English in a trice and that she already saw herself distributing good buffets and sound clouts to the renegade and infidel Bohemians. The Maid's simplicity makes itself felt through the clerk's Latin. This epistle to the Bohemians recalls, alas! that fagot placed upon the stake whereon John Huss was burning, by the pious zeal of the good wife whose saintly simplicity John Huss himself teaches us to admire.

One cannot help reflecting that Jeanne and those very men against whom she hurled menace and invective had much in common; alike they were impelled by faith, chastity, simple ignorance, pious duty, resignation to God's will, and a tendency to magnify the minor matters of devotion. Zizka had established in his camp that purity of morals which the Maid was endeavouring to introduce among the Armagnacs. The peasant soldiers of Bohemia and the peasant Maid of France bearing her sword amidst mendicant monks had much in common. On the one hand and on the other, we have the religious spirit in the place of the political spirit, the fear of sin in the place of obedience to the civil law, the spiritual introduced into the temporal. Here is indeed a woeful sight and a piteous; the devout set one against the other, the innocent against the innocent, the simple against the simple, the heretic against heretics; and it is painful to think that when she is threatening with extermination the disciples of that John Huss, who had been treacherously taken and burned as a heretic, she herself is on the point of being sold to her enemies and condemned to suffer as a witch. It would have been different if this letter, at which the accomplished wits and humorists of the day looked askance, had won the approval of theologians. But they also found fault with it, an illustrious canonist, a zealous inquisitor deemed highly presumptuous this threatening of a multitude of men by a Maid.

We were right in saying that she was not prepared to leave the English immediately and hasten against the Bohemians. Five days after her appeal to the

Hussites she wrote to her friends at Reims and in mysterious words gave them to understand that she would come to them shortly.

The partisans of Duke Philip were at that time hatching plots in the towns of Champagne, notably at Troyes and at Reims. On the 22nd of February, 1430, a canon and a chaplain were arrested and brought before the chapter for having conspired to deliver the city to the English. It was well for them that they belonged to the Church, for having been condemned to perpetual imprisonment, they obtained from the King a mitigation of their sentence, and the canon a complete remittance. The aldermen and ecclesiastics of the city, fearing they would be thought badly of on the other side of the Loire, wrote to the Maid entreating her to speak well of them to the King. The following is her reply to their request:

“Very good friends and beloved, may it please you to wit that I have received your letters, the which make mention how it hath been reported to the King that within the city of Reims there be many wicked persons. Therefore I give you to wit that it is indeed true that even such things have been reported to him and that he grieves much that there be folk in alliance with the Burgundians; that they would betray the town and bring the Burgundians into it. But since then the King has known the contrary by means of the assurance ye have sent him, and he is well pleased with you. And ye may believe that ye stand well in his favour; and if ye have need, he would help you with regard to the siege; and he knows well that ye have much to suffer from the hardness of those treacherous Burgundians, your adversaries: thus may God in his pleasure deliver you shortly, that is as soon as may be. So I pray and entreat you my friends dearly beloved that ye hold well the said city for the King and that ye keep good watch. Ye will soon have good tidings of me at greater length. Other things for the present I write not unto you save that the whole of Brittany is French and that the Duke is to send to the King three thousand combatants paid for two months. To God I commend you, may he keep you.

Written at Sully, the 28th of March.

Jehanne.

Addressed to: My good friends and dearly beloved, the churchmen, aldermen, burgesses and inhabitants and masters of the good town of Reims.”

Touching the succour to be expected from the Duke of Brittany, the Maid was labouring under a delusion. Like all other prophetesses she was ignorant of what was passing around her. Despite her failures, she believed in her good fortune; she doubted herself no more than she doubted God; and she was eager to pursue the fulfilment of her mission. “Ye shall soon have tidings of me,” she said to the

townsfolk of Reims. A few days after, and she left Sully to go into France and fight, on the expiration of the truces.

It has been said that she feigned an expedition of pleasure and set out without taking leave of the King, that it was a kind of innocent stratagem, an honourable flight. But it was nothing of the sort. The Maid gathered a company of some hundred horse, sixty-eight archers and cross-bowmen, and two trumpeters, commanded by a Lombard captain, Bartolomeo Baretta. In this company were Italian men-at-arms, bearing broad shields, like some who had come to Orléans at the time of the siege; possibly they were the same. She set out at the head of this company, with her brothers and her steward, the Sire Jean d'Aulon. She was in the hands of Jean d'Aulon, and Jean d'Aulon was in the hands of the Sire de la Trémouille, to whom he owed money. The good squire would not have followed the Maid against the King's will.

The flying squadron of *béguines* had recently been divided by a schism. Friar Richard, who was then in high favour with Queen Marie, and who had preached the Lenten sermons of 1430 at Orléans, stayed behind, on the Loire, with Catherine de la Rochelle. Jeanne took with her Pierronne and the younger Breton prophetess. If she went into France, it was not without the knowledge or against the will of the King and his Council. Very probably the Chancellor of the kingdom had asked La Trémouille to send her in order that he might employ her in the approaching campaign against the Burgundians, who were threatening his government of Beauvais and his city of Reims. He was not very kindly disposed towards her, but already he had made use of her and he intended to do so again. Possibly his intention was to employ her in a fresh attack on Paris.

The King had not abandoned the idea of taking his great city by the peaceful methods he always preferred. Throughout Lent, between Sully and Paris, there had been a constant passing to and fro of certain Carmelite monks of Melun, disguised as artisans. These were the churchmen who, during the attack on the Porte Saint Honoré, on the Day of the Festival of Our Lady, had stirred up the popular rising which had spread from one bank of the Seine to the other. Now they were negotiating with certain influential citizens the entrance of the King's men into the rebel city. The Prior of the Melun Carmelites was directing the conspiracy. There is reason to believe that Jeanne had herself seen him or one of his monks. True it is that since the 22nd or the 23rd of March it was known at Sully that the conspiracy had been discovered; but perhaps the hope of success still lingered. It was to Melun that Jeanne went with her company; and it is difficult to believe that there was no connection between the conspiracy of the Carmelites and the expedition of the Maid.

Why should Charles VII's Councillors have ceased to employ her? It cannot be said that she appeared less divine to the French or less evil to the English. Her failures, either unknown, or partially known, rendered unimportant by the fame of her victories, had not dispelled the idea that within her resided invincible power. At the time when the hapless damsel with the flower of French knighthood was receiving sore treatment under the walls of La Charité at the hands of an ex-mason's apprentice, in Burgundian lands it was rumoured that she was carrying by storm a castle twelve miles from Paris. She was still considered miraculous; the burgesses, the men-at-arms of her party still believed in her. And as for the *Godons*, from the Regent to the humblest swordsman of the army, they all regarded her with a terror as great as that which had possessed them at Orléans and Patay. At this time so many English soldiers and captains refused to go to France, that a special edict was issued obliging them to do so. But they doubtless discovered reasons enough for not going into a country where henceforth they could hope only for hard knocks and nothing tempting; so that many declined, terrified by the enchantments of the Maid.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAID IN THE TRENCHES OF MELUN — LE SEIGNEUR DE L'OURS — THE CHILD OF LAGNY

IN Easter week, Jeanne, at the head of a band of mercenaries, is before the walls of Melun. She arrives just in time to fight. The truces have expired. Is it possible that the town which was subject to King Charles can have refused to admit the Maid with her company when she came to it so generously? Apparently it was so. Was Jeanne able to communicate with the Carmelites of Melun? Probably. What misfortune befell her at the gates of the town? Did she suffer ill treatment at the hands of a Burgundian band? We know not. But when she was in the trenches she heard Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret saying unto her: "Thou wilt be taken before Saint John's Day."

And she entreated them: "When I am taken, let me die immediately without suffering long." And the Voices repeated that she would be taken and thus it must be.

And they added gently: "Be not troubled, be resigned. God will help thee."

Saint John's Day was the 24th of June, in less than ten weeks. Many a time after that, Jeanne asked her saints at what hour she would be taken; but they did not tell her; and thus doubting she ceased to follow her own ideas and consulted the captains.

On her way from Melun to Lagny-sur-Marne, in the month of May, she had to pass Corbeil. It was probably then, and in her company, that the two devout women from Lower Brittany, Pierronne and her younger sister in the spirit, were taken at Corbeil by the English.

For eight months the town of Lagny had been subject to King Charles and governed by Messire Ambroise de Loré, who was energetically waging war against the English of Paris and elsewhere. For the nonce Messire Ambroise de Loré was absent; but his lieutenant, Messire Jean Foucault, commanded the garrison. Shortly after Jeanne's coming to this town, tidings were brought that a company of between three and four hundred men of Picardy and of Champagne, fighting for the Duke of Burgundy, after having ranged through l'Île de France, were now on their way back to Picardy with much booty. Their captain was a valiant man-at-arms, one Franquet d'Arras. The French determined to cut off their retreat. Under the command of Messire Jean Foucault, Messire Geoffroy de Saint-Bellin, Lord Hugh Kennedy, a Scotchman, and Captain Baretta, they sallied forth from the town.

The Maid went with them. They encountered the Burgundians near Lagny, but failed to surprise them. Messire Franquet's archers had had time to take up their position with their backs to a hedge, in the English manner. King Charles's men barely outnumbered the enemy. A certain clerk of that time, a Frenchman, writes of the engagement. His innate ingeniousness was invincible. With candid common sense he states that this very slight numerical superiority rendered the enterprise very arduous and difficult for his party. And the battle was strong indeed. The Burgundians were mightily afraid of the Maid because they believed her to be a witch and in command of armies of devils; notwithstanding, they fought right valiantly. Twice the French were repulsed; but they returned to the attack, and finally the Burgundians were all slain or taken.

The conquerors returned to Lagny, loaded with booty and taking with them their prisoners, among whom was Messire Franquet d'Arras. Of noble birth and the lord of a manor, he was entitled to expect that he would be held to ransom, according to custom. Both Jean de Troissy, Bailie of Senlis, and the Maid demanded him from the soldier who was his captor. It was to the Maid that he was finally delivered. Did she obtain him in return for money? Probably, for soldiers were not accustomed to give up noble and profitable prisoners for nothing. Nevertheless, the Maid, when questioned on this subject, replied, that being neither mistress nor steward of France, it was not for her to give out money. We must suppose, therefore, that some one paid for her. However that may be, Captain Franquet d'Arras was given up to her, and she endeavoured to exchange him for a prisoner in the hands of the English. The man whom she thus desired to deliver was a Parisian who was called Le Seigneur de l'Ours.

He was not of gentle birth and his arms were the sign of his hostelry. It was the custom in those days to give the title of Seigneur to the masters of the great Paris inns. Thus Colin, who kept the inn at the Temple Gate, was known as Seigneur du Boisseau. The hôtel de l'Ours stood in the Rue Saint-Antoine, near the Gate properly called La Porte Baudoyer, but commonly known as Porte Baudet, Baudet possessing the double advantage over Baudoyer of being shorter and more comprehensible. It was an ancient and famous inn, equal in renown to the most famous, to the inn of L'Arbre Sec, in the street of that name, to the Fleur de Lis near the Pont Neuf, to the Epée in the Rue Saint-Denis, and to the Chapeau Fétu of the Rue Croix-du-Tirouer. As early as King Charles V's reign the inn was much frequented. Before huge fires the spits were turning all day long, and there were hot bread, fresh herrings, and wine of Auxerre in plenty. But since then the plunderings of men-at-arms had laid waste the countryside, and travellers no longer ventured forth for fear of being robbed and slain. Knights and pilgrims had ceased coming into the town. Only wolves came by

night and devoured little children in the streets. There were no fagots in the grate, no dough in the kneading-trough. Armagnacs and Burgundians had drunk all the wine, laid waste all the vineyards, and nought was left in the cellar save a poor piquette of apples and of plums.

The Seigneur de l'Ours, whom the Maid demanded, was called Jaquet Guillaume. Although Jeanne, like other folk, called him Seigneur, it is not certain that he personally directed his inn, nor even that the inn was open through these years of disaster and desolation. The only ascertainable fact is that he was the proprietor of the house with the sign of the Bear (*l'Ours*). He held it by right of his wife Jeannette, and had come into possession of it in the following manner.

Fourteen years before, when King Henry with his knighthood had not yet landed in France, the host of the Bear Inn had been the King's sergeant-at-arms, one Jean Roche, a man of wealth and fair fame. He was a devoted follower of the Duke of Burgundy, and that was what ruined him. Paris was then occupied by the Armagnacs. In the year 1416, in order to turn them out of the city, Jean Roche concerted with divers burgesses. The plot was to be carried out on Easter Day, which that year fell on the 29th of April. But the Armagnacs discovered it. They threw the conspirators into prison and brought them to trial. On the first Saturday in May the Seigneur de l'Ours was carried to the market place in a tumbrel with Durand de Brie, a dyer, master of the sixty cross-bowmen of Paris, and Jean Perquin, pin-maker and brasier. All three were beheaded, and the body of the Seigneur de l'Ours was hanged at Montfaucon where it remained until the entrance of the Burgundians. Six weeks after their coming, in July, 1418, his body was taken down from gibbet and buried in consecrated ground.

Now the widow of Jean Roche had a daughter by a first marriage. Her name was Jeannette; she took for her first husband a certain Bernard le Breton; for her second, Jaquet Guillaume, who was not rich. He owed money to Maître Jean Fleury, a clerk at law and the King's secretary. His wife's affairs were not more prosperous; her father's goods had been confiscated and she had been obliged to redeem a part of her maternal inheritance. In 1424, the couple were short of money, and they sold a house, concealing the fact that it was mortgaged. Being charged by the purchaser, they were thrown into prison, where they aggravated their offence by suborning two witnesses, one a priest, the other a chambermaid. Fortunately for them, they procured a pardon.

The Jaquet Guillaume couple, therefore, were in a sorry plight. There remained to them, however, the inheritance of Jean Roche, the inn near the Place Baudet, at the sign of the Bear, the title of which Jaquet Guillaume bore. This

second Seigneur de l'Ours was to be as strongly Armagnac as the other had been Burgundian, and was to pay the same price for his opinions.

Six years had passed since his release from prison, when, in the March of 1430, there was plotted by the Carmelites of Melun and certain burgesses of Paris that conspiracy which we mentioned on the occasion of Jeanne's departure for l'Île de France. It was not the first plot into which the Carmelites had entered; they had plotted that rising which had been on the point of breaking out on the Day of the Nativity, when the Maid was leading the attack near La Porte Saint-Honoré; but never before had so many burgesses and so many notables entered into a conspiracy. A clerk of the Treasury, Maître Jean de la Chapelle, two magistrates of the Châtelet, Maître Renaud Savin and Maître Pierre Morant, a very wealthy man, named Jean de Calais, burgesses, merchants, artisans, more than one hundred and fifty persons, held the threads of this vast web, and among them, Jaquet Guillaume, Seigneur de l'Ours.

The Carmelites of Melun directed the whole. Clad as artisans, they went from King to burgesses, from burgesses to King; they kept up the communications between those within and those without, and regulated all the details of the enterprise. One of them asked the conspirators for a written undertaking to bring the King's men into the city. Such a demand looks as if the majority of the conspirators were in the pay of the Royal Council.

In exchange for this undertaking these monks brought acts of oblivion signed by the King. For the people of Paris to be induced to receive the Prince, whom they still called Dauphin, they must needs be assured of a full and complete amnesty. For more than ten years, while the English and Burgundians had been holding the town, no one had felt altogether free from the reproach of their lawful sovereign and the men of his party. And all the more desirous were they for Charles of Valois to forget the past when they recalled the cruel vengeance taken by the Armagnacs after the suppression of the Butchers.

One of the conspirators, Jaquet Perdriel, advocated the sounding of a trumpet and the reading of the acts of oblivion on Sunday at the Porte Baudet.

"I have no doubt," he said, "but that we shall be joined by the craftsmen, who, in great numbers will flock to hear the reading."

He intended leading them to the Saint Antoine Gate and opening it to the King's men who were lying in ambush close by.

Some eighty or a hundred Scotchmen, dressed as Englishmen, wearing the Saint Andrew's cross, were then to enter the town, bringing in fish and cattle.

"They will enter boldly by the Saint-Denys Gate," said Perdriel, "and take possession of it. Whereupon the King's men will enter in force by the Porte Saint Antoine."

The plan was deemed good, except that it was considered better for the King's men to come in by the Saint-Denys Gate.

On Sunday, the 12th of March, the second Sunday in Lent, Maître Jean de la Chapelle invited the magistrate Renaud Savin to come to the tavern of *La Pomme de Pin* and meet divers other conspirators in order to arrive at an understanding touching what was best to be done. They decided that on a certain day, under pretext of going to see his vines at Chapelle-Saint-Denys, Jean de Calais should join the King's men outside the walls, make himself known to them by unfurling a white standard and bring them into the town. It was further determined that Maître Morant and a goodly company of citizens with him, should hold themselves in readiness in the taverns of the Rue Saint-Denys to support the French when they came in. In one of the taverns of this street must have been the Seigneur de l'Ours, who, dwelling near by, had undertaken to bring together divers folk of the neighbourhood.

The conspirators were acting in perfect agreement. All they now awaited was to be informed of the day chosen by the Royal Council; and they believed the attempt was to be made on the following Sunday. But on the 21st of March Brother Pierre d'Allée, Prior of the Carmelites of Melun, was taken by the English. Put to the torture, he confessed the plot and named his accomplices. On the information he gave, more than one hundred and fifty persons were arrested and tried. On the 8th of April, the Eve of Palm Sunday, seven of the most important were taken to the market-place on a tumbrel. They were: Jean de la Chapelle, clerk of the Treasury; Renaud Savin and Pierre Morant, magistrates at the Châtelet; Guillaume Perdriau; Jean le François, called Baudrin; Jean le Rigueur, baker, and Jaquet Guillaume, Seigneur de l'Ours. All seven were beheaded by the executioner, who afterwards quartered the bodies of Jean de la Chapelle and of Baudrin.

Jaquet Perdriel was merely deprived of his possessions. Jean de Calais soon procured a pardon. Jeannette, the wife of Jaquet Guillaume, was banished from the kingdom and her goods confiscated.

How can the Maid have known the Seigneur de l'Ours? Possibly the Carmelites of Melun had recommended him to her, and perhaps it was on their advice that she demanded his surrender. She may have seen him in the September of 1429, at Saint-Denys or before the walls of Paris, and he may have then undertaken to work for the Dauphin and his party. Why were attempts made at Lagny to save this man alone of the one hundred and fifty Parisians arrested on the information of Brother Pierre d'Allée? Rather than Renaud Savin and Pierre Morant, magistrates at the Châtelet, rather than Jean de la Chapelle, clerk of the Treasury, why choose the meanest of the band? And how could they look

to exchange a man accused of treachery for a prisoner of war? All this seems to us mysterious and inexplicable.

In the early days of May, Jeanne did not know what had become of Jaquet Guillaume. When she heard that he had been tried and put to death she was sore grieved and vexed. None the less, she looked upon Franquet as a captive held to ransom. But the Bailie of Senlis, who for some unknown reason was determined on the captain's ruin, took advantage of the Maid's vexation at Jaquet Guillaume's execution, and persuaded her to give up her prisoner.

He represented to her that this man had committed many a murder, many a theft, that he was a traitor, and that consequently he ought to be brought to trial.

"You will be neglecting to execute justice," he said, "if you set this Franquet free."

These reasons decided her, or rather she yielded to the Bailie's entreaty.

"Since the man I wished to have is dead," she said, "do with Franquet as justice shall require you."

Thus she surrendered her prisoner. Was she right or wrong? Before deciding we must ask whether it were possible for her to do otherwise than she did. She was the Maid of God, the angel of the Lord of Hosts, that is clear. But the leaders of war, the captains, paid no great heed to what she said. As for the Bailie, he was the King's man, of noble birth and passing powerful.

Assisted by the judges of Lagny, he himself conducted the trial. The accused confessed that he was a murderer, a thief, and a traitor. We must believe him; and yet we cannot forbear a doubt as to whether he really was, any more than the majority of Armagnac or Burgundian men-at-arms, any more than a Damoiseau de Commercy or a Guillaume de Flavy, for example. He was condemned to death.

Jeanne consented that he should die, if he had deserved death, and seeing that he had confessed his crimes he was beheaded.

When they heard of the scandalous treatment of Messire Franquet, the Burgundians were loud in their sorrow and indignation. It would seem that in this matter the Bailie of Senlis and the judges of Lagny did not act according to custom. We, however, are not sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances to form an opinion. There may have been some reason, of which we are ignorant, why the King of France should have demanded this prisoner. He had a right to do so on condition that he paid the Maid the amount of the ransom. A soldier of those days, well informed in all things touching honour in war, was the author of *Le Jouvencel*. In his chivalrous romances he writes approvingly of the wise Amydas, King of Amydoine, who, learning that one of his enemies, the Sire de Morcellet, has been taken in battle and held to ransom, cries out that he is the

vilest of traitors, ransoms him with good coins of the realm, and hands him over to the provost of the town and the officers of his council that they may execute justice upon him. Such was the royal prerogative.

Whether it was that camp life was hardening her, or whether, like all mystics, she was subject to violent changes of mood, Jeanne showed at Lagny none of that gentleness she had displayed on the evening of Patay. The virgin who once had no other arm in battle than her standard, now wielded a sword found there, at Lagny, a Burgundian sword and a trusty. Those who regarded her as an angel of the Lord, good Brother Pasquerel, for example, might justify her by saying that the Archangel Saint Michael, the standard-bearer of celestial hosts, bore a flaming sword. And indeed Jeanne remained a saint.

While she was at Lagny, folk came and told her that a child had died at birth, unbaptized. Having entered into the mother at the time of her conception, the devil held the soul of this child, who, for lack of water, had died the enemy of its Creator. The greatest anxiety was felt concerning the fate of this soul. Some thought it was in limbo, banished forever from God's sight, but the more general and better founded opinion was that it was seething in hell; for has not Saint Augustine demonstrated that souls, little as well as great, are damned because of original sin. And how could it be otherwise, seeing that Eve's fall had effaced the divine likeness in this child? He was destined to eternal death. And to think that with a few drops of water this death might have been avoided! So terrible a disaster afflicted not only the poor creature's kinsfolk, but likewise the neighbours and all good Christians in the town of Lagny. The body was carried to the Church of Saint-Pierre and placed before the image of Our Lady, which had been highly venerated ever since the plague of 1128. It was called Notre-Dame-des-Ardents because it cured burns, and when there were no burns to be cured it was called Notre-Dame-des-Aidants, or rather Des Aidances, that is, Our Lady the Helper, because she granted succour to those in dire necessity.

The maidens of the town knelt before her, the little body in their midst, beseeching her to intercede with her divine Son so that this little child might have his share in the Redemption brought by our Saviour. In such cases the Holy Virgin did not always deny her powerful intervention. Here it may not be inappropriate to relate a miracle she had worked thirty-seven years before.

At Paris, in 1393, a sinful creature, finding herself with child, concealed her pregnancy, and, when her time was come, was without aid delivered. Then, having stuffed linen into the throat of the girl she had brought forth, she went and threw her on to the dust-heap outside La Porte Saint-Martin-des-Champs. But a dog scented the body, and scratching away the other refuse, discovered it. A devout woman, who happened to be passing by, took this poor little lifeless

creature, and, followed by more than four hundred people, bore it to the Church of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, there placed it on the altar of Our Lady, and kneeling down with the multitude of folk and the monks of the Abbey, with all her heart prayed the Holy Virgin not to suffer this innocent babe to be condemned eternally. The child stirred a little, opened her eyes, loosened the linen, which gagged her, and cried aloud. A priest baptized her on the altar of Our Lady, and gave her the name of Marie. A nurse was found, and she was fed from the breast. She lived three hours, then died and was carried to consecrated ground.

In those days resurrections of unbaptized children were frequent. That saintly Abbess, Colette of Corbie, who, when Jeanne was at Lagny, dwelt at Moulins with the reformed Sisters of Saint Clare, had brought back to life two of these poor creatures: a girl, who received the name of Colette at the font and afterwards became nun, then abbess at Pont-à-Mousson; a boy, who was said to have been two days buried and whom the servant of the poor declared to be one of the elect. He died at six months, thus fulfilling the prophecy made by the saint.

With this kind of miracle Jeanne was doubtless acquainted. About twenty-five miles from Domremy, in the duchy of Lorraine, near Lunéville, was the sanctuary of Notre-Dame-des-Aviots, of which she had probably heard. Notre-Dame-des-Aviots, or Our Lady of those brought back to life, was famed for restoring life to unbaptized children. By means of her intervention they lived again long enough to be made Christians.

In the duchy of Luxembourg, near Montmédy, on the hill of Avioth, multitudes of pilgrims worshipped an image of Our Lady brought there by angels. On this hill a church had been built for her, with slim pillars and elaborate stonework in trefoils, roses and light foliage. This statue worked all manner of miracles. At its feet were placed children born dead; they were restored to life and straightway baptized.

The folk, gathered in the Church of Saint-Pierre de Lagny, around the statue of Notre-Dame-des-Aidances, hoped for a like grace. The damsels of the town prayed round the child's lifeless body. The Maid was asked to come and join them in praying to Our Lord and Our Lady. She went to the church, and knelt down with the maidens and prayed. The child was black, "as black as my coat," said Jeanne. When the Maid and the damsels had prayed, it yawned three times and its colour came back. It was baptized and straightway it died; it was buried in consecrated ground. Throughout the town this resurrection was said to be the work of the Maid. According to the tales in circulation, during the three days since its birth the child had given no sign of life; but the gossips of Lagny had

doubtless extended the period of its comatose condition, like those good wives who of a single egg laid by the husband of one of them, made a hundred before the day was out.

CHAPTER VII

SOISSONS AND COMPIÈGNE — CAPTURE OF THE MAID

LEAVING Lagny, the Maid presented herself before Senlis, with her own company and with the fighting men of the French nobles whom she had joined, in all some thousand horse. And for this force she demanded entrance into the town. No misfortune was more feared by burgesses than that of receiving men-at-arms, and no privilege more jealously guarded than that of keeping them outside the walls. King Charles had experienced it during the peaceful coronation campaign. The folk of Senlis made answer to the Maid that, seeing the poverty of the town in forage, corn, oats, victuals and wine, they offered her an entrance with thirty or forty of the most notable of her company and no more.

It is said that from Senlis Jeanne went to the Castle of Borenglise in the parish of Elincourt, between Compiègne and Ressons; and, in ignorance as to what can have taken her there, it is supposed that she made a pilgrimage to the Church of Elincourt, which was dedicated to Saint Margaret; and it is possible that she wished to worship Saint Margaret there as she had worshipped Saint Catherine at Fierbois, in order to do honour to one of those heavenly ladies who visited her every day and every hour.

In those days, in the town of Angers, was a licentiate of laws, canon of the churches of Tours and Angers and Dean of Saint-Jean d'Angers. Less than ten days before Jeanne's coming to Sainte-Marguerite d'Elincourt, on April 18, about nine o'clock in the evening, he felt a pain in the head, which lasted until four o'clock in the morning, and was so severe that he thought he must die. He prayed to Saint Catherine, for whom he professed a special devotion, and straightway was cured. In thankfulness for so great a grace, he wended on foot to the sanctuary of Saint Catherine of Fierbois; and there, on Friday, the 5th of May, in a loud voice, said a mass for the King, for "the Maid divinely worthy," and for the peace and prosperity of the realm.

The Council of King Charles had made over Pont-Sainte-Maxence to the Duke of Burgundy, in lieu of Compiègne, which they were unable to deliver to him since that town absolutely refused to be delivered, and remained the King's despite the King. The Duke of Burgundy kept Pont-Sainte-Maxence which had been granted him and resolved to take Compiègne.

On the 17th of April, when the truce had expired, he took the field with a goodly knighthood and a powerful army, four thousand Burgundians, Picards

and Flemings, and fifteen hundred English, commanded by Jean de Luxembourg, Count of Ligny.

Noble pieces of artillery did the Duke bring to that siege; notably, Remeswelle, Rouge Bombarde and Houppembière, from all three of which were fired stone balls of enormous size. Mortars, which the Duke had brought and paid ready money for to Messire Jean de Luxembourg, were brought likewise; Beurevoir and Bourgogne, also a great “*couillard*” and a movable engine of war. The vast states of Burgundy sent their archers and cross-bowmen to Compiègne. The Duke provided himself with bows from Prussia and from Caffa in Georgia, and with arrows barbed and unbarbed. He engaged sappers and miners to lay powder mines round the town and to throw Greek fire into it. In short my Lord Philip, richer than a king, the most magnificent lord in Christendom and skilled in all the arts of knighthood, was resolved to make a gallant siege.



PHILIP, DUKE OF BURGUNDY

The town, then one of the largest and strongest in France, was defended by a garrison of between four and five hundred men, commanded by Guillaume de Flavy. Scion of a noble house of that province, forever in dispute with the nobles his neighbours, and perpetually picking quarrels with the poor folk, he was as wicked and cruel as any Armagnac baron. The citizens would have no other captain, and in that office they maintained him in defiance of King Charles and his chamberlains. They did wisely, for none was better able to defend the town than my Lord Guillaume, none was more set on doing his duty. When the King of France had commanded him to deliver the place he had refused point-blank; and when later the Duke promised him a good round sum and a rich inheritance in exchange for Compiègne, he made answer that the town was not his, but the King's.

The Duke of Burgundy easily took Gournay-sur-Aronde, and then laid siege to Choisy-sur-Aisne, also called Choisy-au-Bac, at the junction of the Aisne and the Oise.

The Gascon squire, Poton de Saintrailles and the men of his company crossed the Aisne between Soissons and Choisy, surprised the besiegers, and retired immediately, taking with them sundry prisoners.

On the 13th of May, the Maid entered Compiègne, where she lodged in the Rue de l'Etoile. On the morrow, the Attorneys offered her four pots of wine. They thereby intended to do her great honour, for they did no more for the Lord Archbishop of Reims, Chancellor of the realm, who was then in the town with the Count of Vendôme, the King's lieutenant and divers other leaders of war. These noble lords resolved to send artillery and other munitions to the Castle of Choisy, which could not hold out much longer; and now, as before, the Maid was made use of.

The army marched towards Soissons in order to cross the Aisne. The captain of the town was a squire of Picardy, called by the French Guichard Bournel, by the Burgundians Guichard de Thiembronne; he had served on both sides. Jeanne knew him well; he reminded her of a painful incident. He had been one of those, who finding her wounded in the trenches before Paris, had insisted on putting her on her horse against her will. On the approach of King Charles's barons and men-at-arms, Captain Guichard made the folk of Soissons believe that the whole army was coming to encamp in their town. Wherefore they resolved not to receive them. Then happened what had already befallen at Senlis: Captain Bournel received the Lord Archbishop of Reims, the Count of Vendôme and the Maid, with a small company, and the rest of the army abode that night outside the walls. On the morrow, failing to obtain command of the bridge, they

endeavoured to ford the river, but without success; for it was spring and the waters were high. The army had to turn back. When it was gone, Captain Bournel sold to the Duke of Burgundy the city he was charged to hold for the King of France; and he delivered it into the hand of Messire Jean de Luxembourg for four thousand golden *saluts* .

At the tidings of this treacherous and dishonourable action on the part of the Captain of Soissons, Jeanne cried out that if she had him, she would cut his body into four pieces, which was no empty imagining of her wrath. As the penalty of certain crimes it was the custom for the executioner, after he had beheaded the condemned, to cut his body in four pieces, which was called quartering. So that it was as if Jeanne had said that the traitor deserved quartering. The words sounded hard to Burgundian ears; certain even believed that they heard Jeanne in her wrath taking God's name in vain. They did not hear correctly. Never had Jeanne taken the name of God or of any of his saints in vain. Far from swearing when she was angered, she used to exclaim: "God's good will!" or "Saint John!" or "By Our Lady!"

Before Soissons, Jeanne and the generals separated. The latter with their men-at-arms went to Senlis and the banks of the Marne. The country between the Aisne and the Oise was no longer capable of supporting so large a number of men or such important personages. Jeanne and her company wended their way back to Compiègne. Scarcely had she entered the town when she sallied forth to ravage the neighbourhood.

For example, she took part in an expedition against Pont-l'Evêque, a stronghold, some distance from Noyon, occupied by a small English garrison, commanded by Lord Montgomery.

The Burgundians, who were besieging Compiègne, made Pont-l'Evêque their base. In the middle of May, the French numbering about a thousand, commanded by Captain Poton, by Messire Jacques de Chabannes and divers others, and accompanied by the Maid, attacked the English under Lord Montgomery, and the battle was passing fierce. But the enemy, being relieved by the Burgundians of Noyon, the French must needs beat a retreat. They had slain thirty of their adversaries and had lost as many, wherefore the combat was held to have been right sanguinary. There was no longer any question of crossing the Aisne and saving Choisy.

After returning to Compiègne, Jeanne, who never rested for a moment, hastened to Crépy-en-Valois, where were gathering the troops intended for the defence of Compiègne. Then, with these troops, she marched through the Forest of Guise, to the besieged town and entered it on the 23rd, at daybreak, without

having encountered any Burgundians. There were none in the neighbourhood of the Forest, on the left bank of the Oise.

They were all on the other side of the river. There meadowland extends for some three-quarters of a mile, while beyond rises the slope of Picardy. Because this meadow was low, damp and frequently flooded, a causeway had been built leading from the bridge to the village of Margny, which rose on the steep slope of the hill. Some two miles up the river there towered the belfry of Clairoix, at the junction of the Aronde and the Oise. On the opposite bank rose the belfry of Venette, about a mile and a quarter lower down, towards Pont-Sainte-Maxence.

A little band of Burgundians commanded by a knight, Messire Baudot de Noyelles, occupied the high ground of the village of Margny. Most renowned among the men of war of the Burgundian party was Messire Jean de Luxembourg. He with his Picards was posted at Clairoix, on the banks of the Aronde, at the foot of Mount Ganelon. The five hundred English of Lord Montgomery watched the Oise at Venette. Duke Philip occupied Coudun, a good two and a half miles from the town, towards Picardy. Such dispositions were in accordance with the precepts of the most experienced captains. It was their rule that when besieging a fortified town a large number of men-at-arms should never be concentrated in one spot, in one camp, as they said. In case of a sudden attack, it was thought that a large company, if it has but one base, will be surprised and routed just as easily as a lesser number, and the disaster will be grievous. Wherefore it is better to divide the besiegers into small companies and to place them not far apart, in order that they may aid one another. In this wise, when those of one body are discomfited those of another have time to put themselves in battle array for their succour. While the assailants are sore aghast at seeing fresh troops come down upon them, those who are being attacked take heart of grace. At any rate such was the opinion of Messire Jean de Bueil.

That same day, the 23rd of May, towards five o'clock in the evening riding a fine dapple-grey horse, Jeanne sallied forth, across the bridge, on to the causeway over the meadow. With her were her standard-bearer and her company of Lombards, Captain Baretta and his three or four hundred men, both horse and foot, who had entered Compiègne by night. She was girt with the Burgundian sword, found at Lagny, and over her armour she wore a surcoat of cloth of gold. Such attire would have better beseeemed a parade than a sortie; but in the simplicity of her rustic and religious soul she loved all the pompous show of chivalry.

The enterprise had been concerted between Captain Baretta, the other leaders of the party and Messire Guillaume de Flavy. The last-named, in order to protect the line of retreat for the French, had posted archers, cross-bowmen, and

cannoneers at the head of the bridge, while on the river he launched a number of small covered boats, intended if need were to bring back as many men as possible. Jeanne was not consulted in the matter; her advice was never asked. Without being told anything she was taken with the army as a bringer of good luck; she was exhibited to the enemy as a powerful enchantress, and they, especially if they were in mortal sin, feared lest she should cast a spell over them. Certain there were doubtless on both sides, who perceived that she did not greatly differ from other women; but they were folk who believed in nothing, and that manner of person is always outside public opinion.

This time she had not the remotest idea of what was to be done. With her head full of dreams, she imagined she was setting forth for some great and noble emprise. It is said that she had promised to discomfit the Burgundians and bring back Duke Philip prisoner. But there was no question of that; Captain Baretta and those who commanded the soldiers of fortune proposed to surprise and plunder the little Burgundian outpost, which was nearest the town and most accessible. That was Margny, and there on a steep hill, which might be reached in twenty or twenty-five minutes along the causeway, was stationed Messire Baudot de Noyelles. The attempt was worth making. The taking of outposts constituted the perquisites of men-at-arms. And, albeit the enemy's positions were very wisely chosen, the assailants if they proceeded with extreme swiftness had a chance of success. The Burgundians at Margny were very few. Having but lately arrived, they had erected neither bastion nor bulwark, and their only defences were the outbuildings of the village.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when the French set out on the march. The days being at their longest, they did not depend on the darkness for success. In those times indeed, men-at-arms were chary of venturing much in the darkness. They deemed the night treacherous, capable of serving the fool's turn as well as the wise man's, and thus ran the saw: "Night never blushes at her deed."

Having climbed up to Margny, the assailants found the Burgundians scattered and unarmed. They took them by surprise; and the French set to work to strike here and there haphazard. The Maid, for her part, overthrew everything before her.

Now just at this time Sire Jean de Luxembourg and the Sire de Créquy had ridden over from their camp at Clairoix. Wearing no armour, and accompanied by eight or ten gentlemen-at-arms, they were climbing the Margny hill. They were on their way to visit Messire Baudot de Noyelles, and all unsuspecting, they were thinking to reconnoitre the defences of the town from this elevated spot, as the Earl of Salisbury had formerly done from Les Tourelles at Orléans.

Having fallen into a regular skirmish, they sent to Clairoix in all haste for their arms and to summon their company, which would take a good half hour to reach the scene of battle. Meanwhile, all unarmed as they were, they joined Messire Baudot's little band, to help it to hold out against the enemy. Thus to surprise my Lord of Luxembourg might be a stroke of good luck and certainly could not be bad; for in any event the Margny men would have straightway summoned their comrades of Clairoix to their aid, as they did in very deed summon the English from Venette and the Burgundians from Coudun.

Having stormed the camp and pillaged it, the assailants should in all haste have fallen back on the town with their booty; but they dallied at Margny, for what reason is not difficult to guess: that reason which so often transformed the robber into the robbed. The wearers of the white cross as well as those of the red, no matter what danger threatened them, never quitted a place as long as anything remained to be carried away.

If the mercenaries of Compiègne incurred peril by their greed, the Maid on her side by her valour and prowess ran much greater risk; never would she consent to leave a battle; she must be wounded, pierced with bolts and arrows, before she would give in.

Meanwhile, having recovered from so sudden an alarm, Messire Baudot's men armed as best they might and endeavoured to win back the village. Now they drove out the French, now they themselves were forced to retreat with great loss. The Seigneur de Créquy, among others, was sorely wounded in the face. But the hope of being reinforced gave them courage. The men of Clairoix appeared. Duke Philip himself came up with the band from Coudun. The French, outnumbered, abandoned Margny, and retreated slowly. It may be that their booty impeded their march. But suddenly espying the *Godons* from Venette advancing over the meadowland, they were seized with panic; to the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" they broke into one mad rush and in utter rout reached the bank of the Oise. Some threw themselves into boats, others crowded round the bulwark of the Bridge. Thus they attracted the very misfortune they feared. For the English followed so hard on the fugitives that the defenders on the ramparts dared not fire their cannon for fear of striking the French.

The latter having forced the barrier of the bulwark, the English were about to enter on their heels, cross the bridge and pass into the town. The captain of Compiègne saw the danger and gave the command to close the town gate. The bridge was raised and the portcullis lowered.

In the meadow, Jeanne still laboured under the heroic delusion of victory. Surrounded by a little band of kinsmen and personal retainers, she was

withstanding the Burgundians, and imagining that she would overthrow everything before her.

Her comrades shouted to her: "Strive to regain the town or we are lost."

But her eyes were dazzled by the splendour of angels and archangels, and she made answer: "Hold your peace; it will be your fault if we are discomfited. Think of nought but of attacking them."

And once again she uttered those words which were forever in her mouth: "Go forward! They are ours!"

Her men took her horse by the bridle and forced her to turn towards the town. It was too late; the bulwarks commanding the bridge could not be entered: the English held the head of the causeway. The Maid with her little band was penned into the corner between the side of the bulwark and the embankment of the road. Her assailants were men of Picardy, who, striking hard and driving away her protectors, succeeded in reaching her. A bowman pulled her by her cloak of cloth of gold and threw her to the ground. They all surrounded her and together cried:

"Surrender!"

Urged to give her parole, she replied: "I have plighted my word to another, and I shall keep my oath."

One of those who pressed her said that he was of gentle birth. She surrendered to him.

He was an archer, by name Lyonnell, in the company of the Bastard of Wandomme. Deeming that his fortune was made, he appeared more joyful than if he had taken a king.

With the Maid was taken her brother, Pierre d'Arc, Jean d'Aulon, her steward, and Jean d'Aulon's brother, Poton, surnamed the Burgundian. According to the Burgundians, the French in this engagement lost four hundred fighting men, killed or drowned; but according to the French most of the foot soldiers were taken up by the boats which were moored near the bank of the Oise.

Had it not been for the archers, cross-bowmen and cannoneers posted at the bridge end by the Sire de Flavy, the bulwark would have been captured. The Burgundians had but twenty wounded and not one slain. The Maid had not been very vigorously defended.

She was disarmed and taken to Margny. At the tidings that the witch of the Armagnacs had been taken, cries and rejoicings resounded throughout the Burgundian camp. Duke Philip wished to see her. When he drew near to her, there were certain of his clergy and his knighthood who praised his piety,

extolled his courage, and wondered that this mighty Duke was not afraid of the spawn of Hell.

In this respect, his knighthood were as valiant as he, for many knights and squires flocked to satisfy this same curiosity. Among them was Messire Enguerrand de Monstrelet, a native of the County of Boulogne, a retainer of the House of Luxembourg, the author of the Chronicles. He heard the words the Duke addressed to the prisoner, and, albeit his calling required a good memory, he forgot them. Possibly he did not consider them chivalrous enough to be written in his book.

Jeanne remained in the custody of Messire Jean de Luxembourg, to whom she belonged henceforward. The bowman, her captor, had given her up to his captain, the Bastard of Wandomme, who, in his turn, had yielded her to his Master, Messire Jean.

Branches of the Luxembourg tree extended from the west to the east of Christendom, as far as Bohemia and Hungary; and it had produced six queens, an empress, four kings, and four emperors. A scion of a younger branch of this illustrious house and himself a but poorly landed cadet, Jean de Luxembourg, had with great labour won his spurs in the service of the Duke of Burgundy. When he held the Maid to ransom, he was thirty-nine years of age, covered with wounds and one-eyed.

That very evening from his quarters at Coudun the Duke of Burgundy caused letters to be written to the towns of his dominions telling of the capture of the Maid. "Of this capture shall the fame spread far and wide," is written in the letter to the people of Saint-Quentin; "and there shall be bruited abroad the error and misbelief of all such as have approved and favoured the deeds of this woman."

In like manner did the Duke send the tidings to the Duke of Brittany by his herald Lorraine; to the Duke of Savoy and to his good town of Ghent.

The survivors of the company the Maid had taken to Compiègne abandoned the siege, and on the morrow returned to their garrisons. The Lombard Captain, Bartolomeo Baretta, Jeanne's lieutenant, remained in the town with thirty-two men-at-arms, two trumpeters, two pages, forty-eight cross bowmen, and twenty archers or targeteers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAID AT BEAULIEU — THE SHEPHERD OF GÉVAUDAN

THE tidings that Jeanne was in the hands of the Burgundians reached Paris on the morning of May the 25th. On the morrow, the 26th, the University sent a summons to Duke Philip requiring him to give up his prisoner to the Vicar-General of the Grand Inquisitor of France. At the same time, the Vicar-General himself by letter required the redoubtable Duke to bring prisoner before him the young woman suspected of divers crimes savouring of heresy.

“... We beseech you in all good affection, O powerful Prince,” he said, “and we entreat your noble vassals that by them and by you Jeanne be sent unto us surely and shortly, and we hope that thus ye will do as being the true protector of the faith and the defender of God’s honour....”

The Vicar-General of the Grand Inquisitor of France, Brother Martin Billoray, Master of theology, belonged to the order of friars preachers, the members of which exercised the principal functions of the Holy office. In the days of Innocent III, when the Inquisition was exterminating Cathari and Albigenses, the sons of Dominic figured in paintings in monasteries and chapels as great white hounds spotted with black, biting at the throats of the wolves of heresy. In France in the fifteenth century the Dominicans were always the dogs of the Lord; they, jointly with the bishops, drove out the heretic. The Grand Inquisitor or his Vicar was unable of his own initiative to set on foot and prosecute any judicial action; the bishops maintained their right to judge crimes committed against the Church. In matters of faith trials were conducted by two judges, the Ordinary, who might be the bishop himself or the Official, and the Inquisitor or his Vicar. Inquisitorial forms were observed.

In the Maid’s case it was not the Bishop only who was prompting the Holy Inquisition, but the Daughter of Kings, the Mother of Learning, the Bright and Shining Sun of France and of Christendom, the University of Paris. She arrogated to herself a peculiar jurisdiction in cases of heresy or other matters of doctrine occurring in the city or its neighbourhood; her advice was asked on every hand and regarded as authoritative over the face of the whole world, wheresoever the Cross had been set up. For a year her masters and doctors, many in number and filled with sound learning, had been clamouring for the Maid to be delivered up to the Inquisition, as being good for the welfare of the Church and conducive to the interests of the faith; for they had a deep-rooted suspicion that the damsel came not from God, but was deceived and seduced by the

machinations of the Devil; that she acted not by divine power but by the aid of demons; that she was addicted to witchcraft and practised idolatry.

Such knowledge as they possessed of things divine and methods of reasoning corroborated this grave suspicion. They were Burgundians and English by necessity and by inclination; they observed faithfully the Treaty of Troyes to which they had sworn; they were devoted to the Regent who showed them great consideration; they abhorred the Armagnacs, who desolated and laid waste their city, the most beautiful in the world; they held that the Dauphin Charles had forfeited his rights to the Kingdom of the Lilies. Wherefore they inclined to believe that the Maid of the Armagnacs, the woman knight of the Dauphin Charles, was inspired by a company of loathsome demons. These scholars of the University were human; they believed what it was to their interest to believe; they were priests and they beheld the Devil everywhere, but especially in a woman. Without having devoted themselves to any profound examination of the deeds and sayings of this damsel, they knew enough to cause them to demand an immediate inquiry. She called herself the emissary of God, the daughter of God; and she appeared loquacious, vain, crafty, gorgeous in her attire. She had threatened the English that if they did not quit France she would have them all slain. She commanded armies, wherefore she was a slayer of her fellow-creatures and foolhardy. She was seditious, for are not all those seditious who support the opposite party? But recently having appeared before Paris in company with Friar Richard, a heretic, and a rebel, she had threatened to put the Parisians to death without mercy and committed the mortal sin of storming the city on the Anniversary of the Nativity of Our Lady. It was important to examine whether in all this she had been inspired by a good spirit or a bad.

Despite his strong attachment to the interests of the Church, the Duke of Burgundy did not respond to the urgent demand of the University; and Messire Jean de Luxembourg, after having kept the Maid three or four days in his quarters before Compiègne, had her taken to the Castle of Beaulieu in Vermandois, a few leagues from the camp. Like his master, he ever appeared the obedient son of Mother Church; but prudence counselled him to await the approach of English and French and to see what each of them would offer.

At Beaulieu, Jeanne was treated courteously and ceremoniously. Her steward, Messire Jean d'Aulon, waited on her in her prison; one day he said to her pitifully:

“That poor town of Compiègne, which you so dearly loved, will now be delivered into the hands of the enemies of France, whom it must needs obey.”

She made answer: “No, that shall not come to pass. For not one of those places, which the King of Heaven hath conquered through me and restored to

their allegiance to the fair King Charles, shall be recaptured by the enemy, so diligently will he guard them.”

One day she tried to escape by slipping between two planks. She had intended to shut up her guards in the tower and take to the fields, but the porter saw and stopped her. She concluded that it was not God’s will that she should escape this time. Notwithstanding she had far too much self-reliance to despair. Her Voices, like her enamoured of marvellous encounters and knightly adventures, told her that she must see the King of England. Thus did her dreams encourage and console her in her misfortune.

Great was the mourning on the Loire when the inhabitants of the towns loyal to King Charles learnt the disaster which had befallen the Maid. The people, who venerated her as a saint, who went so far as to say that she was the greatest of all God’s saints after the Blessed Virgin Mary, who erected images of her in the chapels of saints, who ordered masses to be said for her, and collects in the churches, who wore leaden medals on which she was represented as if the Church had already canonized her, did not withdraw their trust, but continued to believe in her. Such faithfulness scandalized the doctors and masters of the University, who reproached the hapless Maid herself with it. “Jeanne,” they said, “hath so seduced the Catholic people, that many have adored her as a saint in her presence, and now in her absence they adore her still.”

This was indeed true of many folk and many places. The councillors of the town of Tours ordered public prayers to be offered for the deliverance of the Maid. There was a public procession in which took part the canons of the cathedral church, the clergy of the town, secular and regular, all walking barefoot.

In the towns of Dauphiné prayers for the Maid were said at mass.

“Collect. O God, all powerful and eternal, who, in thy holy and ineffable mercy, hast commanded the Maid to restore and deliver the realm of France, and to repulse, confound and annihilate her enemies, and who hast permitted her, in the accomplishment of this holy work, ordained by thee, to fall into the hands and into the bonds of her enemies, we beseech thee, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints to deliver her out of their hands, without her having suffered any hurt, in order that she may finish the work whereto thou hast sent her.”

“For the sake of Jesus Christ, etc.”

“Secret. O God all powerful, Father of virtues, let thy holy benediction descend upon this sacrifice; let thy wondrous power be made manifest, that by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, it may deliver

the Maid from the prisons of the enemy so that she may finish the work whereto thou hast sent her. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.”

“*Post Communion.* O God all powerful, incline thine ear and listen unto the prayers of thy people: by the virtue of the Sacrament we have just received, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, burst the bonds of the Maid, who, in the fulfilment of thy commands, hath been and is still confined in the prisons of our enemy; through thy divine compassion and thy mercy, permit her, freed from peril, to accomplish the work whereto thou hast sent her. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.”

Learning that the Maid, whom he had once suspected of evil intentions and then recognised to be wholly good, had just fallen into the hands of the enemy of the realm, Messire Jacques Gélú, my Lord Archbishop of Embrun, despatched to King Charles a messenger bearing a letter touching the line of conduct to be adopted in such an unhappy conjuncture.

Addressing the Prince, whom in childhood he had directed, Messire Jacques begins by recalling what the Maid had wrought for him by God’s help and her own great courage. He beseeches him to examine his conscience and see whether he has in any wise sinned against the grace of God. For it may be that in wrath against the King the Lord hath permitted this virgin to be taken. For his own honour he urges him to strain every effort for her deliverance.

“I commend unto you,” he said, “that for the recovery of this damsel and for her ransom, ye spare neither measures nor money, nor any cost, unless ye be ready to incur the ineffaceable disgrace of an ingratitude right unworthy.”

Further he advises that prayers be ordered to be said everywhere for the deliverance of the Maid, so that if this disaster should have befallen through any misdoing of the King or of his people, it might please God to pardon it.

Such were the words, lacking neither in strength nor in charity, of this aged prelate, who was more of a hermit than of a bishop. He remembered having been the Dauphin’s Councillor in evil days and he dearly loved the King and the kingdom.

The Sire de la Trémouille and the Lord Archbishop of Reims have been suspected of desiring to get rid of the Maid and of having promoted her discomfiture. There are those who think they have discovered the treacherous methods employed to compass her defeat at Paris, at La Charité and at Compiègne. But in good sooth such methods were unnecessary. At Paris there was but little chance of her being able to cross the moat, since neither she nor her companions in arms had ascertained its depth; besides, it was not the fault of the King and his Council that the Carmelites, on whom they relied, failed to open the gates. The siege of La Charité was conducted not by the Maid, but by

the Sire d'Albret and divers valiant captains. In the sortie from Compiègne, it was certain that any dallying at Margny would cause the French to be cut off by the English from Venette and by the Burgundians from Clairoix and to be promptly overcome by the Burgundians from Coudun. They forgot themselves in the delights of pillage; and the inevitable result followed.

And why should the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Archbishop have wanted to get rid of the Maid? She did not trouble them; on the contrary they found her useful and employed her. By her prophecy that she would cause the King to be anointed at Reims, she rendered an immense service to my Lord Regnault, who more than any other profited from the Champagne expedition, more even than the King, who, while he succeeded in being crowned, failed to recover Paris and Normandy. Notwithstanding this great advantage, the Lord Archbishop felt no gratitude towards the Maid; he was a hard man and an egoist. But did he wish her harm? Had he not need of her? At Senlis he was maintaining the King's cause; and he was maintaining it well, we may be sure, since, with the towns that had returned to their liege lord, he was defending his own episcopal and ducal city, his benefices and his canonries. Did he not intend to use her against the Burgundians? We have already noted reasons for believing that towards the end of March, he had asked the Sire de la Trémouille to send her from Sully with a goodly company to wage war in l'Île-de-France. And our hypothesis is confirmed when, after they had been unhappily deprived of Jeanne's services, we find the bishop and the Chamberlain driven to replace her by someone likewise favoured with visions and claiming to be sent of God. Unable to discover a maid they had to make shift with a youth. This resolution they took a few days after Jeanne's capture and this is how it came about.

Some time before, a shepherd lad of Gévaudan, by name Guillaume, while tending his flocks at the foot of the Lozère Mountains and guarding them from wolf and lynx, had a revelation concerning the realm of France. This shepherd, like John, Our Lord's favourite disciple, was virgin. In one of the caves of the Mende Mountain, where the holy apostle Privat had prayed and fasted, his ear was struck by a heavenly voice, and thus he knew that God was sending him to the King of France. He went to Mende, just as Jeanne had gone to Vaucouleurs in order that he might be taken to the King. There he found pious folk, who, touched by his holiness and persuaded that there was power in him, provided for his equipment and for his journey, which provisions, in sooth, amounted to very little. The words he addressed to the King were much the same as those uttered by the Maid.

"Sire," he said, "I am commanded to go with your people; and without fail the English and Burgundians shall be discomfited."

The King received him kindly. The clerks who had examined the Maid must have feared lest if they repulsed this shepherd lad they might be rejecting the aid of the Holy Ghost. Amos was a shepherd, and to him God granted the gift of prophecy: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. xi, 25.

But before this shepherd could be believed he must give a sign. The clerks of Poitiers, who in those evil days languished in dire penury, did not appear exacting in their demand for proofs; they had counselled the King to employ the Maid merely on the promise that as a token of her mission she would deliver Orléans. The Gévaudan shepherd had more than promises to allege; he showed wondrous marks on his body. Like Saint Francis he had received the stigmata; and on his hands, his feet and in his side were bleeding wounds.

The mendicant monks rejoiced that their spiritual father had thus participated in the Passion of Our Lord. A like grace had been granted to the Blessed Catherine of Sienna, of the order of Saint Dominic. But if there were miraculous stigmata imprinted by Jesus Christ himself, there were also the stigmata of enchantment, which were the work of the Devil, and very important was it to distinguish between the two. It could only be done by great knowledge and great piety. It would appear that Guillaume's stigmata were not the work of the devil; for it was resolved to employ him in the same manner as Jeanne, as Catherine de la Rochelle, and as the two Breton women, the spiritual daughters of Friar Richard.

When the Maid fell into the hands of the Burgundians, the Sire de la Trémouille was with the King, on the Loire, where fighting had ceased since the disastrous siege of La Charité. He sent the shepherd youth to the banks of the Oise, to the Lord Archbishop of Reims, who was there opposing the Burgundians, commanded by Duke Philip, himself. Messire Regnault had probably asked for the boy. In any case he welcomed him willingly and kept him at Beauvais, supervising and interrogating him, ready to use him at an auspicious moment. One day, either to try him or because the rumour was really in circulation, young Guillaume was told that the English had put Jeanne to death.

"Then," said he, "it will be the worse for them."

By this time, after all the rivalries and jealousies which had torn asunder this company of the King's *béguines*, there remained to Friar Richard one only of his penitents, Dame Catherine of La Rochelle, who had the gift of discovering hidden treasure. The young shepherd approved of the Maid as little as Dame Catherine had done.

“God suffered Jeanne to be taken,” he said, “because she was puffed up with pride and because of the rich clothes she wore and because she had not done as God commanded her but according to her own will.”

Were these words suggested to him by the enemies of the Maid? That may be: but it is also possible that he derived them from inspiration. Saints are not always kind to one another.

Meanwhile Messire Regnault de Chartres believed himself possessed of a marvel far surpassing the marvel he had lost. He wrote a letter to the inhabitants of his town of Reims telling them that the Maid had been taken at Compiègne.

This misfortune had befallen her through her own fault, he added. “She would not take advice, but would follow her own will.” In her stead God had sent a shepherd, “who says neither more nor less than Jeanne.” God has strictly commanded him to discomfit the English and the Burgundians. And the Lord Archbishop neglects not to repeat the words by which the prophet of Gévaudan had represented Jeanne as proud, gorgeous in attire, rebellious of heart. The Reverend Father in God, my Lord Regnault, would never have consented to employ a heretic and a sorcerer; he believed in Guillaume as he had believed in Jeanne; he held both one and the other to have been divinely sent, in the sense that all which is not of the devil is of God. It was sufficient for him that no evil had been found in the child, and he intended to essay him, hoping that Guillaume would do what Jeanne had done. Whether the Archbishop thus acted rightly or wrongly the issue was to decide, but he might have exalted the shepherd without denying the Saint who was so near her martyrdom. Doubtless he deemed it necessary to distinguish between the fortune of the kingdom and the fortune of Jeanne. And he had the courage to do it.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAID AT BEAUREVOIR — CATHERINE DE LA ROCHELLE AT PARIS — EXECUTION OF LA PIERRONNE

THE Maid had been taken captive in the diocese of Beauvais. At that time the Bishop Count of Beauvais was Pierre Cauchon of Reims, a great and pompous clerk of the University of Paris, which had elected him rector in 1403. Messire Pierre Cauchon was not a moderate man; with great ardour he had thrown himself into the Cabochien riots. In 1414, the Duke of Burgundy had sent him on an embassy to the Council of Constance to defend the doctrines of Jean Petit; then he had appointed him Master of Requests in 1418, and finally raised him to the episcopal see of Beauvais. Standing equally high in the favour of the English, Messire Pierre was Councillor of King Henry VI, Almoner of France and Chancellor to the Queen of England. Since 1423, his usual residence had been at Rouen. By their submission to King Charles the people of Beauvais had deprived him of his episcopal revenue. And, as the English said and believed that the army of the King of France was at that time commanded by Friar Richard and the Maid, Messire Pierre Cauchon, the impoverished Bishop of Beauvais, had a personal grievance against Jeanne. It would have been better for his own reputation that he should have abstained from avenging the Church's honour on a damsel who was possibly an idolatress, a soothsayer and the invoker of devils, but who had certainly incurred his personal ill-will. He was in the Regent's pay; and the Regent was filled with bitter hatred of the Maid. Again for his reputation's sake, my Lord Bishop of Beauvais should have reflected that in prosecuting Jeanne for a matter of faith he was serving his master's wrath and furthering the temporal interests of the great of this world. On these things he did not reflect; on the contrary, this case at once temporal and spiritual, as ambiguous as his own position, excited his worst passions. He flung himself into it with all the thoughtlessness of the violent. A maiden to be denounced, a heretic and an Armagnac to boot, what a feast for the prelate, the Councillor of King Henry! After having concerted with the doctors and masters of the University of Paris, on the 14th of July, he presented himself before the camp of Compiègne and demanded the Maid as subject to his jurisdiction.

He supported his demand by letters from the *Alma Mater* to the Duke of Burgundy and the Lord Jean de Luxembourg.

The University made known to the most illustrious Prince, the Duke of Burgundy, that once before it had claimed this woman, called the Maid, and had received no reply.

“We greatly fear,” continued the doctors and masters, “that by the false and seductive power of the Hellish Enemy and by the malice and subtlety of wicked persons, your enemies and adversaries who, it is said, are making every effort to deliver this woman by crooked means, will in some manner remove her out of your power.

“Wherefore, the University hopes that so great a dishonour may be spared to the most Christian name of the house of France, and again it supplicates your Highness, the Duke of Burgundy, to deliver over this woman either to the Inquisitor of the evil of heresy or to my Lord Bishop of Beauvais within whose spiritual jurisdiction she was captured.”

Here follows the letter which the doctors and masters of the University entrusted to the Lord Bishop of Beauvais for the Lord Jean de Luxembourg:

Most noble, honoured and powerful lord, to your high nobility we very affectionately commend us. Your noble wisdom doth well know and recognise that all good Catholic knights should employ their strength and their power first in God’s service and then for the common weal. Above all, the first oath of the order of knighthood is to defend and keep the honour of God, the Catholic Faith and holy Church. This sacred oath was present to your mind when you employed your noble power and your person in the taking of the woman who calleth herself the Maid, by whom the glory of God hath been infinitely offended, the Faith deeply wounded and the Church greatly dishonoured: for through her there have arisen in this kingdom, idolatries, errors, false doctrines and other evils and misfortunes without end. And in truth all loyal Christians must give unto you hearty thanks for having rendered so great service to our holy Faith and to all the kingdom. As for us, we thank God with all our hearts, and you we thank for your noble prowess as affectionately as we may. But such a capture alone would be but a small thing were it not followed by a worthy issue whereby this woman may answer for the offences she hath committed against our merciful Creator, his faith and his holy Church, as well as for her other evil deeds which are said to be without number. The mischief would be greater than ever, the people would be wrapped in yet grosser error than before and his Divine Majesty too insufferably offended, if matters continued in their present state, or if it befell that this woman were delivered or retaken, as we are told, is wished, plotted and endeavoured by divers of our enemies, by all secret ways and by what is even worse by bribe or by ransom. But it is our hope that God will not permit so great

an evil to betide his people, and that your great and high wisdom will not suffer it so to befall but will provide against it as becometh your nobility.

For if without the retribution that behoveth she were to be delivered, irreparable would be the dishonour which should fall on your great nobility and on all those who have dealt in this matter. But your good and noble wisdom will know how to devise means whereby such scandal shall cease as soon as may be, whereof there is great need. And because all delay in this matter is very perilous and very injurious to this kingdom, very kindly and with a cordial affection do we beseech your powerful and honoured nobility to grant that for the glory of God, for the maintenance of the Holy Catholic Faith, for the good and honour of the kingdom, this woman be delivered up to justice and given over here to the Inquisitor of the Faith, who hath demanded her and doth now demand her urgently, in order that he may examine the grievous charges under which she labours, so that God may be satisfied and the folk duly edified in good and holy doctrine. Or, an it please you better, hand over this woman to the reverend Father in God, our highly honoured Lord Bishop of Beauvais, who it is said hath likewise claimed her, because she was taken within his jurisdiction. This prelate and this inquisitor are judges of this woman in matters of faith; and every Christian of whatsoever estate owes them obedience in this case under heavy penalty of the law. By so doing you will attain to the love and grace of the most High and you will be the means of exalting the holy Faith, and likewise will you glorify your own high and noble name and also that of the most high and most powerful Prince, our redoubtable Lord and yours, my Lord of Burgundy. Every man shall be required to pray God for the prosperity of your most noble worship, whom may it please God our Saviour in his grace, to guide and keep in all his affairs and finally to grant eternal joy.

Given at Paris, the 14th day of July, 1430.

At the same time that he bore these letters, the Reverend Father in God, the Bishop of Beauvais was charged to offer money. To us it seems strange indeed that just at the very time when, by the mouth of the University, he was representing to the Lord of Luxembourg that he could not sell his prisoner without committing a crime, the Bishop should himself offer to purchase her. According to these ecclesiastics, Jean would incur terrible penalties in this world and in the next, if in conformity with the laws and customs of war he surrendered a prisoner held to ransom in return for money, and he would win praise and blessing if he treacherously sold his captive to those who wished to put her to death. But at least we might expect that this Lord Bishop who had come to buy this woman for the Church, would purchase her with the Church's money. Not at all! The purchase money is furnished by the English. In the end

therefore she is delivered not to the Church but to the English. And it is a priest, acting in the interests of God and of his Church, by virtue of his episcopal jurisdiction, who concludes the bargain. He offers ten thousand golden francs, a sum in return for which, he says, according to the custom prevailing in France, the King has the right to claim any prisoner even were he of the blood royal.

There can be no doubt whatever that the high and solemn ecclesiastic, Pierre Cauchon, suspected Jeanne of witchcraft. Wishing to bring her to trial, he exercised his ecclesiastical functions. But he knew her to be the enemy of the English as well as of himself; there is no doubt on that point. So when he wished to bring her to trial he acted as the Councillor of King Henry. Was it a witch or the enemy of the English he was buying with his ten thousand gold francs? And if it were merely a witch and an idolatress that the Holy Inquisitor, that the University, that the Ordinary demanded for the glory of God, and at the price of gold, wherefore so much ado, wherefore so great an expenditure of money? Would it not be better in this matter to act in concert with the ecclesiastics of King Charles's party? The Armagnacs were neither infidels nor heretics; they were neither Turks nor Hussites; they were Catholics; they acknowledged the Pope of Rome to be the true head of Christendom. The Dauphin Charles and his clergy had not been excommunicated. Neither those who regarded the Treaty of Troyes as invalid nor those who had sworn to it had been pronounced anathema by the Pope. This was not a question of faith. In the provinces ruled over by King Charles the Holy Inquisition prosecuted heresy in a curious manner and the secular arm saw to it that the sentences pronounced by the Church did not remain a dead letter. The Armagnacs burned witches just as much as the French and the Burgundians. For the present doubtless they did not believe the Maid to be possessed by devils; most of them on the contrary were inclined to regard her as a saint. But might they not be undeceived? Would it not be good Christian charity to present them with fine canonical arguments? If the Maid's case were really a case for the ecclesiastical court why not join with Churchmen of both parties and take her before the Pope and the Council? And just at that time a Council for the reformation of the Church and the establishment of peace in the kingdom was sitting in the town of Bâle; the University was sending its delegates, who would there meet the ecclesiastics of King Charles, also Gallicans and firmly attached to the privileges of the Church of France. Why not have this Armagnac prophetess tried by the assembled Fathers? But for the sake of Henry of Lancaster and the glory of Old England matters had to take another turn. The Regent's Councillors were already accusing Jeanne of witchcraft when she summoned them in the name of the King of Heaven to depart out of France. During the siege of Orléans, they wanted to burn her heralds and said that if they

had her they would burn her also at the stake. Such in good sooth was their firm intent and their unvarying intimation. This does not look as if they would be likely to hand her over to the Church as soon as she was taken. In their own kingdom they burned as many witches and wizards as possible; but they had never suffered the Holy Inquisition to be established in their land, and they were ill acquainted with that form of justice. Informed that Jeanne was in the hands of the Sire de Luxembourg, the Great Council of England were unanimously in favour of her being purchased at any price. Divers lords recommended that as soon as they obtained possession of the Maid she should be sewn in a sack and cast into the river. But one of them (it is said to have been the Earl of Warwick) represented to them that she ought first to be tried, convicted of heresy and witchcraft by an ecclesiastical tribunal, and then solemnly degraded in order that her King might be degraded with her. What a disgrace for Charles of Valois, calling himself King of France, if the University of Paris, if the French ecclesiastical dignitaries, bishops, abbots, canons, if in short the Church Universal were to declare that a witch had sat in his Council and that a witch led his host, that one possessed had conducted him to his impious, sacrilegious and void anointing! Thus would the trial of the Maid be the trial of Charles VII, the condemnation of the Maid the condemnation of Charles VII. The idea seemed good to them and was adopted.

The Lord Bishop of Beauvais was eager to put it into execution. He, a priest and Councillor of State, was consumed with a desire, under the semblance of trying an unfortunate heretic, to sit in judgment on the descendant of Clovis, of Saint Charlemagne and of Saint Louis.

Early in August, the Sire de Luxembourg had the Maid taken from Beaulieu, which was not safe enough, to Beaurevoir, near Cambrai. There dwelt Dame Jeanne de Luxembourg and Dame Jeanne de Béthune. Jeanne de Luxembourg was the aunt of Lord Jean, whom she loved dearly. Among the great of this world she had lived as a saint, and she had never married. Formerly lady-in-waiting to Queen Ysabeau, King Charles VII's godmother, one of the most important events of her life had been to solicit from Pope Martin the canonisation of her Brother, the Cardinal of Luxembourg, who had died at Avignon in his ninetieth year. She was known as the Demoiselle de Luxembourg. She was sixty-seven years of age, infirm and near her end.

Jeanne de Béthune, widow of Lord Robert de Bar, slain at the Battle of Azincourt, had married Lord Jean in 1418. She was reputed pitiful, because, in 1424, she had obtained from her husband the pardon of a nobleman of Picardy, who had been brought prisoner to Beaurevoir and was in great danger of being beheaded and quartered.

These two ladies treated Jeanne kindly. They offered her woman's clothes or cloth with which to make them; and they urged her to abandon a dress which appeared to them unseemly. Jeanne refused, alleging that she had not received permission from Our Lord and that it was not yet time; later she admitted that had she been able to quit man's attire, she would have done so at the request of these two dames rather than for any other dame of France, the Queen excepted.

A noble of the Burgundian party, one Aimond de Macy, often came to see her and was pleased to converse with her. To him she seemed modest in word and in deed. Still Sire Aimond, who was but thirty, had found her personally attractive. If certain witnesses of her own party are to be believed, Jeanne, although beautiful, did not inspire men with desire.

This singular grace however applied to the Armagnacs only; it was not extended to the Burgundians, and Seigneur Aimond did not experience it, for one day he tried to thrust his hand into her bosom. She resisted and repulsed him with all her strength. Lord Aimond concluded as more than one would have done in his place that this was a damsel of rare virtue. He took warning.

Confined in the castle keep, Jeanne's mind was for ever running on her return to her friends at Compiègne; her one idea was to escape. Somehow there reached her evil tidings from France. She got the idea that all the inhabitants of Compiègne over seven years of age were to be massacred, "to perish by fire and sword," she said; and indeed such a fate was bound to overtake them if the town were taken.

Confiding her distress and her unconquerable desire to Saint Catherine, she asked: "How can God abandon to destruction those good folk of Compiègne who have been so loyal to their Lord?"

And in her dream, surrounded by saints, like the donors in church pictures, kneeling and in rapture, she wrestled with her heavenly counsellors for the poor folk of Compiègne.

What she had heard of their fate caused her infinite distress; she herself would rather die than continue to live after such a destruction of worthy people. For this reason she was strongly tempted to leap from the top of the keep. And because she knew all that could be said against it, she heard her Voices putting her in mind of those arguments.

Nearly every day Saint Catherine said to her: "Do not leap, God will help both you and those of Compiègne."

And Jeanne replied to her: "Since God will help those of Compiègne, I want to be there."

And once again Saint Catherine told her the marvellous story of the shepherdess and the King: "To all things must you be resigned. And you will not

be delivered until you have seen the King of the English.”

To which Jeanne made answer: “But in good sooth I do not desire to see him. I would rather die than fall into the hands of the English.”

One day she heard a rumour that the English had come to fetch her. The arrival of the Lord Bishop of Beauvais who came to offer the blood money at Beaurevoir may have given rise to the report. Straightway Jeanne became frantic and beside herself. She ceased to listen to her Voices, who forbade her the fatal leap. The keep was at least seventy feet high; she commended her soul to God and leapt.

Having fallen to the ground, she heard cries: “She is dead.”

The guards hurried to the spot. Finding her still alive, in their amazement they could only ask: “Did you leap?”

She felt sorely shaken; but Saint Catherine spoke to her and said: “Be of good courage. You will recover.” At the same time the Saint gave her good tidings of her friends. “You will recover and the people of Compiègne will receive succour.” And she added that this succour would come before Saint Martin’s Day in the winter.

Henceforth Jeanne believed that it was her saints who had helped her and guarded her from death. She knew well that she had been wrong in attempting such a leap, despite her Voices.

Saint Catherine said to her: “You must confess and ask God to forgive you for having leapt.”

Jeanne did confess and ask pardon of Our Lord. And after her confession Saint Catherine made known unto her that God had forgiven her. For three or four days she remained without eating or drinking; then she took some food and was whole.

Another story was told of the leap from Beaurevoir; it was related that she had tried to escape through a window letting herself down by a sheet or something that broke; but we must believe the Maid: she says she leapt; if she had been attached to a cord, she would not have committed sin and would not have confessed. This leap was known and the rumour spread abroad that she had escaped and joined her own party.

Meanwhile the Lenten sermons at Orléans had been delivered by that good preacher, Friar Richard, who was ill content with Jeanne, and whom Jeanne disliked and had quitted. The townsfolk as a token of regard presented him with the image of Jesus sculptured in copper by a certain Philippe, a metal-worker of the city. And the bookseller, Jean Moreau, bound him a book of hours at the town’s expense.

He brought back Queen Marie to Jargeau and succeeded in obtaining her favour. Jeanne was spared the bitterness of learning that while she was languishing in prison her friends at Orléans, her fair Dauphin and his Queen Marie, were making good cheer for the monk who had turned from her to prefer a dame Catherine whom she considered worthless. Only lately the idea of employing Dame Catherine had filled Jeanne with alarm; she wrote to her King about it, and as soon as she saw him besought him not to employ her. However the King set no store by what she had said; he agreed to Friar Richard's favourite being allowed to set forth on her mission to obtain money from the good towns and to negotiate peace with the Duke of Burgundy. But perhaps this saintly dame was not possessed of all the wisdom necessary for the performance of man's work and King's service. For immediately she became a cause of embarrassment to her friends.

Being in the town of Tours, she fell to saying: "In this town there be carpenters who work, but not at houses, and if ye have not a care, this town is in the way to a bad end and there be those in the town that know it."

This was a denunciation in the form of a parable. Dame Catherine was thereby accusing the churchmen and burgesses of Tours of working against Charles of Valois, their lord. The woman must have been held to have influence with the King, his kinsmen and his Council; for the inhabitants of Tours took fright and sent an Augustinian monk, Brother Jean Bourget, to King Charles, to the Queen of Sicily, to the Bishop of Séz, and to the Lord of Trèves, to inquire whether the words of this holy woman had been believed by them. The Queen of Sicily and the Councillors of King Charles gave the monk letters wherein they announced to the townsfolk of Tours that they had never heard of such things, and King Charles declared that he had every confidence in the churchmen, the burgesses and the other citizens of his town of Tours.

Dame Catherine had in like manner slandered the inhabitants of Angers.

Whether, following the example of the Blessed Colette of Corbie, this devout person wished to pass from one party to the other, or whether she had chanced to be taken captive by Burgundian men-at-arms, she was brought before the Official at Paris. In their interrogation of her the ecclesiastics appear to have been concerned less about her than about the Maid Jeanne, whose prosecution was then being instituted.

On the subject of the Maid, Catherine said: "Jeanne has two counsellors, whom she calls Counsellors of the Spring."

Such was the confused recollection of the conversations she had had at Jargeau and at Montfaucon. The term Council was the one Jeanne usually employed when speaking of her Voices; but Dame Catherine was confusing

Jeanne's heavenly visitants with what the Maid had told her of the Gooseberry Spring at Domremy.

If Jeanne felt unkindly towards Catherine, Catherine did not feel kindly towards Jeanne. She did not assert Jeanne's mission to be nought; but she let it be clearly understood that the hapless damsel, then a prisoner in the hands of the Burgundians, was addicted to invoking evil spirits.

"If Jeanne be not well guarded," Catherine told the Official, "she will escape from prison with the aid of the devil."

Whether Jeanne was or was not aided by the devil was a matter to be decided between herself and the doctors of the church. But it is certain that her one thought was to burst her bonds, and that she was ceaselessly imagining means of escape. Catherine de la Rochelle knew her well and wished her ill.

Catherine was released. Her ecclesiastical judges would not have treated her so leniently had she spoken well of the Maid. The La Rochelle Dame returned to King Charles.

The two religious women who had followed Jeanne on her departure from Sully and had been taken at Corbeil, Pierronne of Lower Brittany and her companion, had been confined in ecclesiastical prisons at Paris since the spring. They openly said that God had sent them to succour the Maid Jeanne. Friar Richard had been their spiritual father and they had been in the Maid's company. Wherefore they were strongly suspected of having offended against God and his Holy Religion. The Grand Inquisitor of France, Brother Jean Graverent, Prior of the Jacobins at Paris, prosecuted them according to the forms usual in that country. He proceeded in concurrence with the Ordinary, represented by the official.

Pierronne maintained and believed it to be true that Jeanne was good, and that what she did was well done and according to God's will. She admitted that on the Christmas night of that year, at Jargeau, Friar Richard had twice given her the body of Jesus Christ and had given it three times to Jeanne. Besides, the fact had been well proved by information gathered from eye-witnesses. The judges, who were authorities on this subject, held that the monk should not thus have lavished the bread of angels on such women. However, since frequent communion was not formally forbidden by canon law, Pierronne could not be censured for having received it. The informers, who were then giving evidence against Jeanne, did not remember the three communions at Jargeau.

Heavier charges weighed upon the two Breton women. They were labouring under the accusation of witchcraft and sorcery.

Pierronne stated and took her oath that God often appeared to her in human form and spoke to her as friend to friend, and that the last time she had seen him

he was clothed in a purple cloak and a long white robe.

The illustrious masters who were trying her, represented to her that to speak thus of such apparitions was to blaspheme. And these women were convicted of being possessed by evil spirits, who caused them to err in word and in deed.

On Sunday, the 3rd of September, 1430, they were taken to the Parvis Notre Dame to hear a sermon. Platforms had been erected as usual, and Sunday had been chosen as the day in order that folk might benefit from this edifying spectacle. A famous doctor addressed a charitable exhortation to both women. One of them, the youngest, as she listened to him and looked at the stake that had been erected, was filled with repentance. She confessed that she had been seduced by an angel of the devil and duly renounced her error.

Pierronne, on the contrary, refused to retract. She obstinately persisted in the belief that she saw God often, clothed as she had said. The Church could do nothing for her. Given over to the secular arm, she was straightway conducted to the stake which had been prepared for her, and burned alive by the executioner.

Thus did the Grand Inquisitor of France and the Bishop of Paris cruelly cause to perish by an ignominious death one of those women who had followed Friar Richard, one of the saints of the Dauphin Charles. But the most famous of these women and the most abounding in works was in their hands. The death of La Pierronne was an earnest of the fate reserved for the Maid.

CHAPTER X

BEAUREVOIR — ARRAS — ROUEN — THE TRIAL FOR LAPSE

IN the month of September, 1430, two inhabitants of Tournai, the chief alderman, Bietremieu Carlier, and the chief Councillor, Henri Romain, were returning from the banks of the Loire, whither their town had despatched them on a mission to the King of France. They stopped at Beaurevoir. Albeit this place lay upon their direct route and afforded them a halt between two stages of their journey, one cannot help supposing some connection to have existed between their mission to Charles of Valois and their arrival in the domain of the Sire de Luxembourg. The existence of such a connection seems all the more probable when we remember the attachment of their fellow-citizens to the Fleurs-de-Lis, and when we know the relations already existing between the Maid and these emissaries.

It has been said that the district of the provost of Tournai was loyal to the King of France, who had granted it freedom and privileges. Message after message it sent him; it organised public processions in his honour, and it was ready to grant him anything, so long as he demanded neither men nor money. The alderman, Carlier, and the Councillor, Romain, had both previously gone to Reims as representatives of their town to witness the anointing and the coronation of King Charles. There they had doubtless seen the Maid in her glory and had held her to be a very great saint. In those days, their town, attentively watching the progress of the royal army, was in regular correspondence with the warlike *béguine*, and with her confessor, Friar Richard, or more probably Friar Pasquerel. To-day they wended to the castle, wherein she was imprisoned in the hands of her cruel enemies. We know not what it was they came to say to the Sire de Luxembourg, nor even whether he received them. He cannot have refused to hear them if he thought they came to make secret offers on the part of King Charles for the ransom of the Maid, who had fought in his battles. We know not, either, whether they were able to see the prisoner. The idea that they did enter her presence is quite tenable; for in those days it was generally easy to approach captives, and passers by when they visited them were given every facility for the performance of one of the seven works of mercy.

One thing, however, is certain; that when they left Beaurevoir, they carried with them a letter which Jeanne had given them, charging them to deliver it to the magistrates of their town. In this letter she asked the folk of Tournai, for the sake of her Lord the King and in view of the good services she had rendered

him, to send unto her twenty or thirty crowns, that she might employ them for her necessities.

It was the custom in those days thus to permit prisoners to beg their bread.

It is said that the Demoiselle de Luxembourg, who had just made her will, and had but a few days longer to live, entreated her noble nephew not to give the Maid up to the English. But what power had this good dame against the Norman gold of the King of England and against the anathemas of Holy Church? For if my Lord Jean had refused to give up this damsel suspected of enchantments, of idolatries, of invoking devils and committing other crimes against religion, he would have been excommunicated. The venerable University of Paris had not neglected to make him aware that a refusal would expose him to heavy legal penalties.

The Sire de Luxembourg, meanwhile, was ill at ease; he feared that in his castle of Beaurevoir, a prisoner worth ten thousand golden livres was not sufficiently secure in case of a descent on the part of the French or of the English or of the Burgundians, or of any of those folk, who, caring nought for Burgundy or England or France, might wish to carry her off, cast her into a pit, and hold her to ransom, according to the custom of brigands in those days.

Towards the end of September, he asked his lord, the Duke of Burgundy, who ruled over fine towns and strong cities, if he would undertake the safe custody of the Maid. My Lord Philip consented and, by his command, Jeanne was taken to Arras. This town was encircled by high walls; it had two castles, one of which, La Cour-le-Comte, was in the centre of the town. It was probably in the cells of Cour-le-Comte that Jeanne was confined, under the watch and ward of my Lord David de Brimeu, Lord of Ligny, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Governor of Arras.

At that time it was rare for prisoners to be kept in isolation. At Arras, Jeanne received visitors; and among others, a Scotsman, who showed her her portrait, in which she was represented kneeling on one knee and presenting a letter to her King. This letter might be supposed to have been from the Sire de Baudricourt, or from any other clerk or captain by whom the painter may have thought Jeanne to have been sent to the Dauphin; it might have been a letter announcing to the King the deliverance of Orléans or the victory of Patay.

This was the only portrait of herself Jeanne ever saw and, for her own part, she never had any painted; but during the brief duration of her power, the inhabitants of the French towns placed images of her, carved and painted, in the chapels of the saints, and wore leaden medals on which she was represented;

thus in her case following a custom established in honour of the saints canonised by the Church.

Many Burgundian lords, and among them a knight, one Jean de Pressy, Controller of the Finances of Burgundy, offered her woman's dress, as the Luxembourg dame had done, for her own good and in order to avoid scandal; but for nothing in the world would Jeanne have cast off the garb which she had assumed according to divine command.

She also received in her prison at Arras a clerk of Tournai, one Jean Naviel, charged by the magistrates of his town to deliver to her the sum of twenty-two golden crowns. This ecclesiastic enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens, who employed him in the town's most urgent affairs. In the May of this year, 1430, he had been sent to Messire Regnault de Chartres, Chancellor of King Charles. He had been taken by the Burgundians at the same time as Jeanne and held to ransom; but out of that predicament he soon escaped and at no great cost.

He acquitted himself well of his mission to the Maid, and, it would seem, received nothing for his trouble, doubtless because he wanted the reward of this work of mercy to be placed to his account in heaven.

Neither the capture of the Maid nor the retreat of the men-at-arms she had brought, put an end to the siege of Compiègne. Guillaume de Flavy and his two brothers, Charles and Louis, and Captain Baretta with his Italians, and the five hundred of the garrison displayed skill, vigour, and untiring energy. The Burgundians conducted the siege in the same manner as the English had conducted that of Orléans; mines, trenches, bulwarks, cannonades and bastions, those gigantic and absurd erections good for nothing but for burning. The suburbs of the town Guillaume de Flavy had demolished because they were in the way of his firing; boats he had sunk in order to bar the river. To the mortars and huge *couillards* of the Burgundians he replied with his artillery, and notably with those little copper culverins which did such good service. If the gay cannoneer of Orléans and Jargeau, Maître Jean de Montesclère, were absent, there was a shoemaker of Valenciennes, an artilleryman, named Noirouffle, tall, dark, terrible to see, and terrible to hear. The townsfolk of Compiègne, like those of Orléans, made unsuccessful sallies. One day Louis de Flavy, the governor's brother, was killed by a Burgundian bullet. But none the less on that day Guillaume did as he was wont to do and made the minstrels play to keep his men-at-arms in good cheer.

In the month of June the bulwark, defending the bridge over the Oise, like les Tourelles at Orléans which defended the bridge over the Loire, was captured by

the enemy without bringing about the reduction of the town. In like manner, the capture of Les Tourelles had not occasioned the fall of the town of Duke Charles.



HENRY VI

From a portrait in the “Election Chamber” at Eton, reproduced by permission of the Provost

As for the bastions, they were just as little good on the Oise as they had been on the Loire; everything passed by them. The Burgundians were unable to invest Compiègne because its circumference was too great. They were short of money; and their men-at-arms, for lack of food and of pay, deserted with that perfect assurance which in those days characterised alike mercenaries of the red cross and of the white. To complete his misfortunes, Duke Philip was obliged to take away some of the troops engaged in the siege and send them against the inhabitants of Liège who had revolted. On the 24th of October, a relieving army, commanded by the Count of Vendôme and the Marshal de Boussac, approached Compiègne. The English and the Burgundians having turned to encounter them, the garrison and all the inhabitants of the town, even the women, fell upon the rear of the besiegers and routed them. The relieving army entered Compiègne. The flaring of the bastions was a fine sight. The Duke of Burgundy lost all his artillery. The Sire de Luxembourg, who had come to Beaurevoir, where he had received the Count Bishop of Beauvais, now appeared before Compiègne just in time to bear his share in the disaster. The same causes which had constrained the English to depart, as they put it, from Orléans, now obliged the Burgundians to leave Compiègne. But in those days the most ordinary events must needs have a supernatural cause assigned to them, wherefore the deliverance of the town was attributed to the vow of the Count of Vendôme, who, in the cathedral of Senlis, had promised an annual mass to Notre-Dame-de-la-Pierre if the place were not taken.

The Lord Treasurer of Normandy raised aids to the amount of eighty thousand *livres tournois*, ten thousand of which were to be devoted to the purchase of Jeanne. The Count Bishop of Beauvais, who was taking this matter to heart, urged the Sire de Luxembourg to come to terms, mingled threats with coaxings, and caused the Norman gold to glitter before his eyes. He seemed to fear, and his fear was shared by the masters and doctors of the University, that King Charles would likewise make an offer, that he would promise more than King Henry's ten thousand golden francs and that in the end, by dint of costly gifts, the Armagnacs would succeed in winning back their fairy-godmother. The rumour ran that King Charles, hearing that the English were about to gain possession of Jeanne for a sum of money, sent an ambassador to warn the Duke

of Burgundy not on any account to consent to such an agreement, adding that if he did, the Burgundians in the hands of the King of France would be made to pay for the fate of the Maid. Doubtless the rumour was false; albeit the fears of the Lord Bishop and the masters of the Paris University were not entirely groundless; and it is certain that from the banks of the Loire the negotiations were being attentively followed with a view to intervention at a favourable moment.

Besides, some sudden descent of the French was always to be feared. Captain La Hire was ravaging Normandy, the knight Barbazan, la Champagne, and Marshal de Boussac, the country between the Seine, the Marne and the Somme.

At length, about the middle of November, the Sire de Luxembourg consented to the bargain; Jeanne was delivered up to the English. It was decided to take her to Rouen, through Ponthieu, along the sea-shore, through the north of Normandy, where there would be less risk of falling in with the scouts of the various parties.

From Arras she was taken to the Château of Drugy, where the monks of Saint-Riquier were said to have visited her in prison. She was afterwards taken to Crotoy, where the castle walls were washed by the ocean waves. The Duke of Alençon, whom she called her fair Duke, had been imprisoned there after the Battle of Verneuil. At the time of her arrival, Maître Nicolas Gueuville, Chancellor of the Cathedral church of Notre Dame d'Amiens, was a prisoner in that castle in the hands of the English. He heard her confess and administered the Communion to her. And there on that vast Bay of the Somme, grey and monotonous, with its low sky traversed by sea-birds in their long flight, Jeanne beheld coming down to her the visitant of earlier days, the Archangel Saint Michael; and she was comforted. It was said that the damsels and burgesses of Abbeville went to see her in the castle where she was imprisoned. At the time of the coronation, these burgesses had thought of turning French; and they would have done so if King Charles had come to their town; he did not come; and perhaps it was through Christian charity that the folk of Abbeville visited Jeanne; but those among them who thought well of her did not say so, for fear they too should be suspected of heresy.

The doctors and masters of the University pursued her with a bitterness hardly credible. In November, after they had been informed of the conclusion of the bargain between Jean de Luxembourg and the English, they wrote through their rector to the Lord Bishop of Beauvais reproaching him for his delay in the matter of this woman and exhorting him to be more diligent.

“For you it is no slight matter, holding as you do so high an office in God’s Church,” ran this letter, “that the scandals committed against the Christian

religion be stamped out, especially when such scandals arise within your actual jurisdiction.”

Filled with faith and zeal for the avenging of God’s honour, these clerks were, as they said, always ready to burn witches. They feared the devil; but, perchance, though they may not have admitted it even to themselves, they feared him twenty times more when he was Armagnac.

Jeanne was taken out of Crotoy at high tide and conveyed by boat to Saint-Valery, then to Dieppe, as is supposed, and certainly in the end to Rouen.

She was conducted to the old castle, built in the time of Philippe-Auguste on the slope of the Bouvreuil hill. King Henry VI, who had come to France for his coronation, had been there since the end of August. He was a sad, serious child, harshly treated by the Earl of Warwick, who was governor of the castle. The castle was strongly fortified; it had seven towers, including the keep. Jeanne was placed in a tower looking on to the open country. Her room was on the middle storey, between the dungeon and the state apartment. Eight steps led up to it. It extended over the whole of that floor, which was forty-three feet across, including the walls. A stone staircase approached it at an angle. There was but a dim light, for some of the window slits had been filled in. From a locksmith of Rouen, one Étienne Castille, the English had ordered an iron cage, in which it was said to be impossible to stand upright. If the reports of the ecclesiastical registrars are to be believed, Jeanne was placed in it and chained by the neck, feet, and hands, and left there till the opening of the trial. At Jean Salvart’s, at *l’Écu de France*, in front of the Official’s courtyard, a mason’s apprentice saw the cage weighed. But no one ever found Jeanne in it. If this treatment were inflicted on Jeanne, it was not invented for her; when Captain La Hire, in the February of this same year, 1430, took Château Gaillard, near Rouen, he found the good knight Barbazan in an iron cage, from which he would not come out, alleging that he was a prisoner on parole. Jeanne, on the contrary, had been careful to promise nothing, or rather she had promised to escape as soon as she could. Therefore the English, who believed that she had magical powers, mistrusted her greatly. As she was being prosecuted by the Church, she ought to have been detained in an ecclesiastical prison, but the *Godons* were resolved to keep her in their custody. One among them said she was dear to them because they had paid dearly for her. On her feet they put shackles and round her waist a chain padlocked to a beam five or six feet long. At night this chain was carried over the foot of her bed and attached to the principal beam. In like manner, John Huss, in 1415, when he was delivered up to the Bishop of Constance and transferred to the fortress of Gottlieben, was chained night and day until he was taken to the stake.

Five English men-at-arms, common soldiers (*houspilleurs*), guarded the prisoner; they were not the flower of chivalry. They mocked her and she rebuked them, a circumstance they must have found consolatory. At night two of them stayed behind the door; three remained with her, and constantly troubled her by saying first that she would die, then that she would be delivered. No one could speak to her without their consent.

Nevertheless folk entered the prison as if it were a fair (*comme au moulin*); people of all ranks came to see Jeanne as they pleased. Thus Maître Laurent Guesdon, Lieutenant of the Bailie of Rouen, came, and Maître Pierre Manuel, Advocate of the King of England, who was accompanied by Maître Pierre Daron, magistrate of the city of Rouen. They found her with her feet in shackles, guarded by soldiers.

Maître Pierre Manuel felt called upon to tell her that for certain she would never have come there if she had not been brought. Sensible persons were always surprised when they saw witches and soothsayers falling into a trap like any ordinary Christian. The King's Advocate must have been a sensible person, since his surprise appeared in the questions he put to Jeanne.

"Did you know you were to be taken?" he asked her.

"I thought it likely," she replied.

"Then why," asked Maître Pierre again, "if you thought it likely, did you not take better care on the day you were captured?"

"I knew neither the day nor the hour when I should be taken, nor when it should happen."

A young fellow, one Pierre Cusquel, who worked for Jean Salvart, also called Jeanson, the master-mason of the castle, through the influence of his employer, was permitted to enter the tower. He also found Jeanne bound with a long chain attached to a beam, and with her feet in shackles. Much later, he claimed to have warned her to be careful of what she said, because her life was involved in it. It is true that she talked volubly to her guards and that all she said was reported to her judges. And it may have happened that the young Pierre, whose master was on the English side, wished to advise her and even did so. There is a suspicion, however, that like so many others he was merely boasting.

The Sire Jean de Luxembourg came to Rouen. He went to the Maid's tower accompanied by his brother, the Lord Bishop of Thérouanne, Chancellor of England; and also by Humphrey, Earl of Stafford, Constable of France for King Henry; and the Earl of Warwick, Governor of the Castle of Rouen. At this interview there was also present the young Seigneur de Macy, who held Jeanne to be of very modest bearing, since she had repulsed his attempted familiarity.

“Jeanne,” said the Sire de Luxembourg, “I have come to ransom you if you will promise never again to bear arms against us.”

These words do not accord with our knowledge of the negotiation for the purchase of the Maid. They seem to indicate that even then the contract was not complete, or at any rate that the vendor thought he could break it if he chose. But the most remarkable point about the Sire de Luxembourg’s speech is the condition on which he says he will ransom the Maid. He asks her to promise never again to fight against England and Burgundy. From these words it would seem to have been his intention to sell her to the King of France or to his representative.

There is no evidence, however, of this speech having made any impression on the English. Jeanne set no store by it.

“In God’s name, you do but jest,” she replied; “for I know well that it lieth neither within your will nor within your power.”

It is related that when he persisted in his statement, she replied:

“I know that these English will put me to death, believing that afterwards they will conquer France.”

Since she certainly did not believe it, it seems highly improbable that she should have said that the English would have put her to death. Throughout the trial she was expecting, on the faith of her Voices, to be delivered. She knew not how or when that deliverance would come to pass, but she was as certain of it as of the presence of Our Lord in the Holy Sacrament. She may have said to the Sire de Luxembourg: “I know that the English want to put me to death.” Then she repeated courageously what she had already said a thousand times:

“But were there one hundred thousand *Godons* more than at present, they would not conquer the kingdom.”

On hearing these words, the Earl of Stafford unsheathed his sword and the Earl of Warwick had to restrain his hand. That the English Constable of France should have raised his sword against a woman in chains would be incredible, did we not know that about this time this Earl of Stafford, hearing some one speak well of Jeanne, straightway wished to transfix him.

In order that the Bishop and Vidame of Beauvais might exercise jurisdiction at Rouen it was necessary that a concession of territory should be granted him. The archiepiscopal see of Rouen was vacant. For this concession, therefore, the Bishop of Beauvais applied to the chapter, with whom he had had misunderstandings. The canons of Rouen lacked neither firmness nor independence; more of them were honest than dishonest; some were highly educated, well-lettered and even kind-hearted. None of them nourished any ill will toward the English. The Regent Bedford himself was a canon of Rouen, as

Charles VII was a canon of Puy. On the 20th of October, in that same year 1430, the Regent, donning surplice and amice, had distributed the dole of bread and wine for the chapter. The canons of Rouen were not prejudiced in favour of the Maid of the Armagnacs; they agreed to the demand of the Bishop of Beauvais and granted him the formal concession of territory.

On the 3rd of January, 1431, by royal decree, King Henry ordered the Maid to be given up to the Bishop and Count of Beauvais, reserving to himself the right to bring her before him, if she should be acquitted by the ecclesiastical tribunal.

Nevertheless she was not placed in the Church prison, in one of those dungeons near the Booksellers' Porch, where in the shadow of the gigantic cathedral there rotted unhappy wretches who had erred in matters of faith. There she would have endured sufferings far more terrible than even the horrors of her military tower. The wrong the Great Council of England inflicted on Jeanne by not handing her over to the ecclesiastical powers of Rouen was far less than the indignity they thereby inflicted on her judges.

With the way thus opened before him, the Bishop of Beauvais proceeded with all the violence one might expect from a Cabochien, albeit that violence was qualified by worldly arts and canonical knowledge. As promoter in the case, that is, as the magistrate who was to conduct the prosecution, he selected one Jean d'Estivet, called Bénédictité, canon of Bayeux and of Beauvais, Promoter-General of the diocese of Beauvais. Jean d'Estivet was a friend of the Lord Bishop, and had been driven out of the diocese by the French at the same time. He was suspected of hostility to the Maid. The Lord Bishop appointed Jean de la Fontaine, master of arts, licentiate of canon law, to be "councillor commissary" of the trial. One of the clerks of the ecclesiastical court of Rouen, Guillaume Manchon, priest, he appointed first registrar.

In the course of instructing this official as to what would be expected of him, the Lord Bishop said to Messire Guillaume:

"You must do the King good service. It is our intention to institute an elaborate prosecution (*un beau procès*) against this Jeanne."

As to the King's service, the Lord Bishop did not mean that it should be rendered at the expense of justice; he was a man of some priestly pride and was not likely to reveal his own evil designs. If he spoke thus, it was because in France, for a century at least, the jurisdiction of the Inquisition had been regarded as the jurisdiction of the King. And as for the expression "an elaborate prosecution" (*un beau procès*), that meant a trial in which legal forms were observed and irregularities avoided, for it was a case in which were interested the doctors and masters of the realm of France and indeed the whole of Christendom. Messire Guillaume Manchon, well skilled in legal procedure, was

not likely to err in a matter of legal language. An elaborate trial was a strictly regular trial. It was said, for example, that “N —— and N —— had by elaborate judicial procedure found such an one to be guilty.”

Charged by the Bishop to choose another registrar to assist him, Guillaume Manchon selected as his colleague Guillaume Colles, surnamed Boisguillaume, who like him was a notary of the Church.

Jean Massieu, priest, ecclesiastical dean of Rouen, was appointed usher of the court.

In that kind of trial, which was very common in those days, there were strictly only two judges, the Ordinary and the Inquisitor. But it was the custom for the Bishop to summon as councillors and assessors persons learned in both canon and civil law. The number and the rank of those councillors varied according to the case. And it is clear that the obstinate upholder of a very pestilent heresy must needs be more particularly and more ceremoniously tried than an old wife, who had sold herself to some insignificant demon, and whose spells could harm nothing more important than cabbages. For the common wizard, for the multitude of those females, or *mulierculæ*, as they were described by one inquisitor who boasted of having burnt many, the judges were content with three or four ecclesiastical advocates and as many canons. When it was a question of a very notable personage who had set a highly pernicious example, of a king's advocate, for instance like Master Jean Segueut, who that very year, in Normandy, had spoken against the temporal power of the Church, a large assembly of doctors and prelates, English and French, were convoked, and the doctors and masters of the University of Paris were consulted in writing. Now it was fitting that the Maid of the Armagnacs should be yet more elaborately and more solemnly tried, with a yet greater concourse of doctors and of prelates; and thus it was ordained by the Lord Bishop of Beauvais. As councillors and assessors he summoned the canons of Rouen in as great a number as possible. Among those who answered his summons we may mention Raoul Roussel, treasurer of the chapter; Gilles Deschamps, who had been chaplain to the late King, Charles VI, in 1415; Pierre Maurice, doctor in theology, rector of the University of Paris in 1428; Jean Alespée, one of the sixteen who during the siege of 1418 had gone robed in black and with cheerful countenance to place at the feet of King Henry V the life and honour of the city; Pasquier de Vaux, apostolic notary at the Council of Constance, President of the Norman *Chambre des Comptes*; Nicolas de Vendères, whose candidature for the vacant see of Rouen was being advocated by a powerful party; and, lastly, Nicolas Loiseleur.

For the same purpose, the Lord Bishop summoned the abbots of the great Norman abbeys, Mont Saint-Michel-au-Péril-de-la-Mer, Fécamp, Jumièges, Præaux, Mortemer, Saint-Georges de Boscherville, la Trinité-du-mont-Sainte-Catherine, Saint-Ouen, Bec, Corneilles, the priors of Saint-Lô, of Rouen, of Sigy, of Longueville, and the abbot of Saint Corneille of Compiègne. He summoned twelve ecclesiastical advocates; likewise famous doctors and masters of the University of Paris, Jean Beaupère, rector in 1412; Thomas Fiefvé, rector in 1427; Guillaume Erart, Nicolas Midi, and that young doctor, abounding in knowledge and in modesty, the brightest star in the Christian firmament of the day, Thomas de Courcelles. The Lord Bishop is bent upon turning the tribunal, which is to try Jeanne, into a veritable synod; it is indeed a provincial council, before which she is cited. Moreover, in effect, it is not only Jeanne the Maid, but Charles of Valois, calling himself King of France, and lawful successor of Charles VI who is to be brought to justice. Wherefore are assembled so many croziered and mitred abbots, so many renowned doctors and masters.

Nevertheless, there were other bright and shining lights of the Church, whom the Bishop of Beauvais neglected to summon. He consulted the two bishops of Coutances and Lisieux; he did not consult the senior bishop of Normandy, the Bishop of Avranches, Messire Jean de Saint-Avit, whom the chapter of the cathedral had charged with the duty of ordination throughout the diocese during the vacancy of the see of Rouen. But Messire Jean de Saint-Avit was considered and rightly considered to favour King Charles. On the other hand those English doctors and masters, residing at Rouen, who had been consulted in Segueut's trial, were not consulted in that of Jeanne. The doctors and masters of the University of Paris, the abbots of Normandy, the chapter of Rouen, held firmly to the Treaty of Troyes; they were as prejudiced as the English clerks against the Maid and the Dauphin Charles, and they were less suspected; it was all to the good.

On Tuesday, the 9th of January, my Lord of Beauvais summoned eight councillors to his house: the abbots of Fécamp and of Jumièges, the prior of Longueville, the canons Roussel, Venderès, Barbier, Coppequesne and Loiseleur.

"Before entering upon the prosecution of this woman," he said to them, "we have judged it good, maturely and fully to confer with men learned and skilled in law, human and divine, of whom, thank God, there be great number in this city of Rouen."

The opinion of the doctors and masters was that information should be collected concerning the deeds and sayings publicly imputed to this woman.

The Lord Bishop informed them that already certain information had been obtained by his command, and that he had decided to order more to be collected, which would be ultimately presented to the Council.

It is certain that a tabellion of Andelot in Champagne, Nicolas Bailly, requisitioned by Messire Jean de Torcenay, Bailie of Chaumont for King Henry, went to Domremy, and with Gérard Petit, provost of Andelot, and divers mendicant monks, made inquiry touching Jeanne's life and reputation. The interrogators heard twelve or fifteen witnesses and among others Jean Hannequin of Greux and Jean Bégot, with whom they lodged. We know from Nicolas Bailly himself that they gathered not a single fact derogatory to Jeanne. And if we may believe Jean Moreau, a citizen of Rouen, Maître Nicolas, having brought my Lord of Beauvais the result of his researches, was treated as a wicked man and a traitor; and obtained no reward for his expenditure or his labour. This is possible, but it seems strange. It can in no wise be true, however, that neither at Vaucouleurs nor at Domremy, nor in the neighbouring villages was anything discovered against Jeanne. Quite on the contrary, numbers of accusations were collected against the inhabitants in general, who were addicted to evil practices, and in particular against Jeanne, who held intercourse with fairies, carried a mandrake in her bosom, and disobeyed her father and mother.

Abundant information was forthcoming, not only from Lorraine and from Paris, but from the districts loyal to King Charles, from Lagny, Beauvais, Reims, and even from so far as Touraine and Berry; which was information enough to burn ten heretics and twenty witches. Devilries were discovered which filled the priests with horror: the finding of a lost cup and gloves, the exposure of an immoral priest, the sword of Saint Catherine, the restoration of a child to life. There was also a report of a rash letter concerning the Pope and there were many other indications of witchcraft, heresy, and religious error. Such information was not to be included among the documents of the trial. It was the custom of the Holy Inquisition to keep secret the evidence and even the names of the witnesses. In this case the Bishop of Beauvais might have pleaded as an excuse for so doing the safety of the deponents, who might have suffered had he published information gathered in provinces subject to the Dauphin Charles. Even if their names were concealed, they would be identified by their evidence. For the purposes of the trial, Jeanne's own conversation in prison was the best source of information: she spoke much and without any of the reserve which prudence might have dictated.

A painter, whose name is unknown, came to see her in her tower. He asked her aloud and before her guards what arms she bore, as if he wished to represent her with her escutcheon. In those days portraits were very seldom painted from

life, except of persons of very high rank, and they were generally represented kneeling and with clasped hands in an attitude of prayer. Though in Flanders and in Burgundy there may have been a few portraits bearing no signs of devotion, they were very rare. A portrait naturally suggested a person praying to God, to the Holy Virgin, or to some saint. Wherefore the idea of painting the Maid's picture doubtless must have met with the stern disapproval of her ecclesiastical judges. All the more so because they must have feared that the painter would represent this excommunicated woman in the guise of a saint, canonised by the Church, as the Armagnacs were wont to do.

A careful consideration of this incident inclines us to think that this man was no painter but a spy. Jeanne told him of the arms which the King had granted to her brothers: an azure shield bearing a sword between two golden *fleurs de lis*. And our suspicion is confirmed when at the trial she is reproached with pomp and vanity for having caused her arms to be painted.

Sundry clerks introduced into her prison gave her to believe that they were men-at-arms of the party of Charles of Valois. In order to deceive her, the Promoter himself, Maître Jean d'Estivet, disguised himself as a poor prisoner. One of the canons of Rouen, who was summoned to the trial, by name Maître Nicolas Loiseleur, would seem to have been especially inventive of devices for the discovery of Jeanne's heresies. A native of Chartres, he was not only a master of arts, but was greatly renowned for astuteness. In 1427 and 1428 he carried through difficult negotiations, which detained him long months in Paris. In 1430 he was one of those deputed by the chapter to go to the Cardinal of Winchester in order to obtain an audience of King Henry and commend to him the church of Rouen. Maître Nicolas Loiseleur was therefore a *persona grata* with the Great Council.

Having concerted with the Bishop of Beauvais and the Earl of Warwick, he entered Jeanne's prison, wearing a short jacket like a layman. The guards had been instructed to withdraw; and Maître Nicolas, left alone with his prisoner, confided to her that he, like herself, was a native of the Lorraine Marches, a shoemaker by trade, one who held to the French party and had been taken prisoner by the English. From King Charles he brought her tidings which were the fruit of his own imagination. No one was dearer to Jeanne than her King. Thus having won her confidence, the pseudo-shoemaker asked her sundry questions concerning the angels and saints who visited her. She answered him confidingly, speaking as friend to friend, as countryman to countryman. He gave her counsel, advising her not to believe all these churchmen and not to do all that

they asked her; “For,” he said, “if thou believest in them thou shalt be destroyed.”

Many a time, we are told, did Maître Nicolas Loiseleur act the part of the Lorraine shoemaker. Afterwards he dictated to the registrars all that Jeanne had said, providing thus a valuable source of information of which a memorandum was made to be used during the examination. It would even appear that during certain of these visits the registrars were stationed at a peep-hole in an adjoining room. If we may believe the rumours current in the town, Maître Nicolas also disguised himself as Saint Catherine, and by this means brought Jeanne to say all that he wanted.

He may not have been proud of such deceptions, but at any rate he made no secret of them. Many famous masters approved him; others censured him.

The angel of the schools, Thomas de Courcelles, when Nicolas told him of his disguises, counselled him to abandon them.

Afterwards the registrars pretended that it had been extremely repugnant to them thus to overhear in hiding a conversation so craftily contrived. The golden age of inquisitorial justice must have been well over when so strict a doctor as Maître Thomas was willing thus to criticise the most solemn forms of that justice. Inquisitorial proceedings must indeed have fallen into decay when two notaries of the Church dream of eluding its most common prescriptions. The clerks who disguised themselves as soldiers, the Promoter who took on the semblance of a poor prisoner, were exercising the most regular functions of the judicial system instituted by Innocent III.

In acting the shoemaker and Saint Catherine, if he were seeking the salvation and not the destruction of the sinner, if, contrary to public report, far from inciting her to rebellion, he was reducing her to obedience, if, in short, he were but deceiving her for her own temporal and spiritual good, Maître Nicolas Loiseleur was proceeding in conformity with established rules. In the *Tractatus de Hæresi* it is written: “Let no man approach the heretic, save from time to time two persons of faith and tact, who may warn him with precaution and as having compassion upon him, to eschew death by confessing his errors, and who may promise him that by so doing he shall escape death by fire; for the fear of death, and the hope of life may peradventure soften a heart which could be touched in no other wise.”

The duty of registrars was laid down in the following manner:

“Matters shall be ordained thus, that certain persons shall be stationed in a suitable place so as to surprise the confidences of heretics and to overhear their words.”

As for the Bishop of Beauvais, who had ordained and permitted such procedure, he found his justification and approbation in the words of the Apostle Saint Paul to the Corinthians: "I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile." "*Ego vos non gravavi; sed cum essem astutus, dolo vos cepi*" (II Corinthians xii, 16).

Meanwhile, when Jeanne saw the Promoter, Jean d'Estivet, in his churchman's habit she did not recognise him. And Maître Nicolas Loiseleur also often came to her in monkish dress. In this guise he inspired her with great confidence; she confessed to him devoutly and had no other confessor. She saw him sometimes as a shoemaker and sometimes as a canon and never perceived that he was the same person. Wherefore we must indeed believe her to have been incredibly simple in certain respects; and these great theologians must have realised that it was not difficult to deceive her.

It was well known to all men versed in science, divine and human, that the Enemy never entered into dealings with a maid without depriving her of her virginity. At Poitiers the French clerks had thought of it, and when Queen Yolande assured them that Jeanne was a virgin, they ceased to fear that she was sent by the devil. The Lord Bishop of Beauvais in a different hope awaited a similar examination. The Duchess of Bedford herself went to the prison. She was assisted by Lady Anna Bavon and another matron. It has been said that the Regent was hidden meanwhile in an adjoining room and looking through a hole in the wall. This is by no means certain, but it is not impossible; he was at Rouen a fortnight after Jeanne had been brought there. Whether the charge were groundless or well founded he was seriously reproached for this curiosity. If there were many who in his place would have been equally curious, every one must judge for himself; but we must bear in mind that my Lord of Bedford believed Jeanne a witch, and that it was not the custom in those days to treat witches with the respect due to ladies. We must remember also that this was a matter in which Old England was greatly concerned, and the Regent loved his country with all his heart and all his strength.

Upon the examination of the Duchess of Bedford as upon that of the Queen of Sicily Jeanne appeared a virgin. The matrons knew various signs of virginity; but for us a more certain sign is Jeanne's own word. When she was asked wherefore she called herself the Maid, whether she were one in reality, she replied: "I may tell you that such I am." The judges, as far as we know, set no store by this favourable result of the examination. Did they believe with the wise King Solomon that in such matters all inquiry is vain, and did they reject the matrons' verdict by virtue of the saying: *Virginitatis probatio non minus*

difficilis quam custodia ? No, they knew well that she was indeed a virgin. They allowed it to be understood when they did not assert the contrary. And since they persisted in believing her a witch, it must have been because they imagined her to have given herself to devils who had left her as they found her. The morals of devils abounded in such inconsistencies, which were the despair of the most learned doctors; every day new inconsistencies were being discovered.

On Saturday, the 13th of January, the Lord Abbot of Fécamp, the doctors and masters, Nicolas de Venderès, Guillaume Haiton, Nicolas Coppequesne, Jean de la Fontaine, and Nicolas Loiseleur, met in the house of the Lord Bishop. There was read to them the information concerning the Maid gathered in Lorraine and elsewhere. And it was decided that according to this information a certain number of articles should be drawn up in due form; which was done.

On Tuesday, the 23rd of January, the doctors and masters above named considered the terms of these articles, and, finding them sufficient, they decided that they might be used for the examination. Then they resolved that the Bishop of Beauvais should order a preliminary inquiry as to the deeds and sayings of Jeanne.

On Tuesday, the 13th of February, Jean d'Estivet, called Bénédictité, Promoter, Jean de la Fontaine, Commissioner, Boisguillaume and Manchon, Registrars, and Jean Massieu, Usher, took the oath faithfully to discharge their various offices. Then straightway Maître Jean de la Fontaine, assisted by two registrars, proceeded to the preliminary inquiry.

On Monday, the 19th of February, at eight o'clock in the morning, the doctors and masters assembled, to the number of eleven, in the house of the Bishop of Beauvais; there they heard the reading of the articles and the preliminary information. Whereupon they gave it as their opinion, and, in conformity with this opinion, the Bishop decided that there was matter sufficient to justify the woman called the Maid being cited and charged touching a question of faith.

But now a fresh difficulty arose. In such a trial it was necessary for the accused to appear at once before the Ordinary and before the Inquisitor. The two judges were equally necessary for the validity of the trial. Now the Grand Inquisitor for the realm of France, Brother Jean Graverent, was then at Saint-Lô, prosecuting on a religious charge a citizen of the town, one Jean Le Couvreur. In the absence of Brother Jean Graverent, the Bishop of Beauvais had invited the Vice-Inquisitor for the diocese of Rouen to proceed against Jeanne conjointly with himself. Meanwhile the Vice-Inquisitor seemed not to understand; he made no response; and the Bishop was left in embarrassment with his lawsuit on his hands.

This Vice-Inquisitor was Brother Jean Lemaistre, Prior of the Dominicans of Rouen, bachelor of theology, a monk right prudent and scrupulous. At length in answer to a summons from the Usher, at four o'clock on the 19th of February, 1413, he appeared in the house of the Bishop of Beauvais. He declared himself ready to intervene provided that he had the right to do so, which he doubted. As the reason for his uncertainty he alleged that he was the Inquisitor of Rouen; now the Bishop of Beauvais was exercising his jurisdiction as bishop of the diocese of Beauvais, but on borrowed territory; wherefore was it not rather for the Inquisitor of Beauvais not for the Inquisitor of Rouen, to sit on the judgment seat side by side with the Bishop? He declared that he would ask the Grand Inquisitor of France for an authorisation which should hold good for the diocese of Beauvais. Meanwhile he consented to act in order to satisfy his own conscience and to prevent the proceedings from lapsing, which, in the opinion of all, must have ensued had the trial been instituted without the concurrence of the Holy Inquisition. All preliminary difficulties were now removed. The Maid was cited to appear on Wednesday, the 21st of February, 1431.

On that day, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Bishop of Beauvais, the Vicar of the Inquisitor, and forty-one Councillors and Assessors assembled in the castle chapel. Fifteen of them were doctors in theology, five doctors in civil and canon law, six bachelors in theology, eleven bachelors in canon law, four licentiates in civil law. The Bishop sat as judge. At his side were the Councillors and Assessors, clothed either in the fine camlet of canons or in the coarse cloth of mendicants, expressive, the one of sacerdotal solemnity, the other of evangelical meekness. Some glared fiercely, others cast down their eyes. Brother Jean Lemaistre, Vice-Inquisitor of the faith, was among them, silent, in the black and white livery of poverty and obedience.

Before bringing in the accused, the usher informed the Bishop that Jeanne, to whom the citation had been delivered, had replied that she would be willing to appear, but she demanded that an equal number of ecclesiastics of the French party should be added to those of the English party. She requested also the permission to hear mass. The Bishop refused both demands; and Jeanne was brought in, dressed as a man, with her feet in shackles. She was made to sit down at the table of the registrars.

And now from the very outset these theologians and this damsel regarded each other with mutual horror and hatred. Contrary to the custom of her sex, a custom which even loose women did not dare to infringe, she displayed her hair, which was brown and cut short over the ears. It was possibly the first time that some of those young monks seated behind their elders had ever seen a woman's hair. She wore hose like a youth. To them her dress appeared immodest and

abominable. She exasperated and irritated them. Had the Bishop of Beauvais insisted on her appearing in hood and gown their anger against her would have been less violent. This man's attire brought before their minds the works performed by the Maid in the camp of the Dauphin Charles, calling himself king. By the stroke of a magic wand she had deprived the English men-at-arms of all their strength, and thereby she had inflicted sore hurt on the majority of the churchmen who were to judge her. Some among them were thinking of the benefices of which she had despoiled them; others, doctors and masters of the University, recalled how she had been about to lay Paris waste with fire and sword; others again, canons and abbots, could not forgive her perchance for having struck fear into their hearts even in remote Normandy. Was it possible for them to pardon the havoc she had thus wrought in a great part of the Church of France, when they knew she had done it by sorcery, by divination and by invoking devils? "A man must be very ignorant if he will deny the reality of magic," said Sprenger. As they were very learned, they saw magicians and wizards where others would never have suspected them; they held that to doubt the power of demons over men and things was not only heretical and impious, but tending to subvert the whole natural and social order. These doctors, seated in the castle chapel, had burned each one of them ten, twenty, fifty witches, all of whom had confessed their crimes. Would it not have been madness after that to doubt the existence of witches?

To us it seems curious that beings capable of causing hail-storms and casting spells over men and animals should allow themselves to be taken, judged, tortured, and burned without making any defence; but it was constantly occurring; every ecclesiastical judge must have observed it. Very learned men were able to account for it: they explained that wizards and witches lost their power as soon as they fell into the hands of churchmen. This explanation was deemed sufficient. The hapless Maid had lost her power like the others; they feared her no longer.

At least Jeanne hated them as bitterly as they hated her. It was natural for unlettered saints, for the fair inspired, frank of mind, capricious, and enthusiastic to feel an antipathy towards doctors all inflated with knowledge and stiffened with scholasticism. Such an antipathy Jeanne had recently felt towards clerks, even when as at Poitiers they had been on the French side, and had not wished her evil and had not greatly troubled her. Wherefore we may easily imagine how intense was the repulsion with which the clerks of Rouen now inspired her. She knew that they sought to compass her death. But she feared them not; confidently she awaited from her saints and angels the fulfilment of their promise, their coming for her deliverance. She knew not when nor how her

deliverance should come; but that come it would she never once doubted. To doubt it would indeed have been to doubt Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and even Our Lord; it would have been to believe evil of her Voices. They had told her to fear nothing, and of nothing was she afraid. Fearless simplicity; whence came her confidence in her Voices if not from her own heart?

The Bishop required her to swear, according to the prescribed form with both hands on the holy Gospels, that she would reply truly to all that should be asked her.

She could not. Her Voices forbade her telling any one of the revelations they had so abundantly vouchsafed to her.

She answered: "I do not know on what you wish to question me. You might ask me things that I would not tell you."

And when the Bishop insisted on her swearing to tell the whole truth:

"Touching my father and mother and what I did after my coming into France I will willingly swear," she said; "but touching God's revelations to me, those I have neither told nor communicated to any man, save to Charles my King. And nought of them will I reveal, were I to lose my head for it."

Then, either because she wished to gain time or because she counted on receiving some new directions from her *Council*, she added that in a week she would know whether she might so reveal those things.

At length she took the oath, according to the prescribed form, on her knees, with both hands on the missal. Then she answered concerning her name, her country, her parents, her baptism, her godfathers and godmothers. She said that to the best of her knowledge she was about nineteen years of age.

Questioned concerning her education, she replied: "From my mother I learnt my Paternoster, my Ave Maria and my Credo."

But, asked to repeat her Paternoster, she refused, for, she said, she would only say it in confession. This was because she wanted the Bishop to hear her confess.

The assembly was profoundly agitated; all spoke at once. Jeanne with her soft voice had scandalised the doctors.

The Bishop forbade her to leave her prison, under pain of being convicted of the crime of heresy.

She refused to submit to this prohibition. "If I did escape," she said, "none could reproach me with having broken faith, for I never gave my word to any one."

Afterwards she complained of her chains.

The Bishop told her they were on account of her attempt to escape.

She agreed: "It is true that I wanted to escape, and I still want to, just like every other prisoner."

Such a confession was very bold, if she had rightly understood the judge when he said that by flight from prison she would incur the punishment of a heretic. To escape from an ecclesiastical prison was to commit a crime against the Church, but it was folly as well as crime; for the prisons of the Church are penitentiaries, and the prisoner who refuses salutary penance is as foolish as he is guilty; for he is like a sick man who refuses to be cured. But Jeanne was not, strictly speaking, in an ecclesiastical prison; she was in the castle of Rouen, a prisoner of war in the hands of the English. Could it be said that if she escaped she would incur excommunication and the spiritual and temporal penalties inflicted on the enemies of religion? There lay the difficulty. The Lord Bishop removed it forthwith by an elaborate legal fiction. Three English men-at-arms, John Grey, John Berwoist, and William Talbot, were appointed by the King to be Jeanne's custodians. The Bishop, acting as an ecclesiastical judge, himself delivered to them their charge, and made them swear on the holy Gospels to bind the damsel and confine her. In this wise the Maid became the prisoner of our holy Mother, the Church; and she could not burst her bonds without falling into heresy. The second sitting was appointed for the next day, the 22nd of February.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRIAL FOR LAPSE (*continued*)



WHEN a record of the proceedings came to be written down after the first sitting, a dispute arose between the ecclesiastical notaries and the two or three royal registrars who had likewise taken down the replies of the accused. As might be expected, the two records differed in several places. It was decided that on the contested points Jeanne should be further examined. The notaries of the Church complained also that they experienced great difficulty in seizing Jeanne's words on account of the constant interruptions of the bystanders.

In a trial by the Inquisition there was no place fixed for the examination any more than for the other acts of the procedure. The judges might examine the accused in a chapel, in a chapter-house, or even in a prison or a torture-chamber. According to Messire Guillaume Manchon it was in order to escape from the tumult of the first sitting, and because there was no longer any reason for proceeding with such solemn ceremony as at the opening of the trial, that the judge and his councillors met in the Robing Room, a little chamber at one end of the castle hall; and two English guards were stationed at the door. According to the rules of inquisitorial procedure, the assessors were not bound to be present at all the deliberations. This time forty-two were present, twenty-six of the original ones and six newly appointed. Among these high clerics was Brother Jean Lemaistre, Vice Inquisitor of the Faith, a humble preaching friar. No longer as in the days of Saint Dominic was the Vice Inquisitor the hunting hound of the Lord, now he was but the dog of the Bishop, a poor monk, who dared neither to do nor to abstain from doing. Such was the result of the assertion of Gallican independence against papal supremacy. Dumb and timid, Brother Jean Lemaistre was the last and the least of all the brethren in that assembly, but he was ever looking for the day when he should be sovereign judge and without appeal.

Jeanne was brought in by the Usher, Messire Jean Massieu. Again she endeavoured to avoid taking the oath to tell everything; but she had to swear on the Gospel.

She was examined by Maître Jean Beaupère, doctor in theology. In his University of Paris he was regarded as a scholar of light and leading; it had twice appointed him rector. It had charged him with the functions of chancellor in the absence of Gerson, and, in 1419, had sent him with Messire Pierre Cauchon to the town of Troyes, to give aid and counsel to King Charles VI. Three years later it had despatched him to the Queen of England and the Duke of Gloucester to enlist their support in its endeavour to obtain the confirmation of its privileges. King Henry VI had just appointed him canon of Rouen.

Maître Jean's first question to Jeanne was what was her age when she left her father's house. She was unable to say, although on the previous day she had stated her present age to be about nineteen.

Interrogated as to the occupations of her childhood, she replied that she was busy with household duties and seldom went into the fields with the cattle.

"For spinning and sewing," she said, "I am as good as any woman in Rouen."

Thus even in things domestic she displayed her ardour and her chivalrous zeal; at the spinning-wheel and with the needle she challenged all the women in a town, without knowing one of them.

Questioned as to her confessions and her communions, she answered that she confessed to her parish priest or to another priest when the former was not able to hear her. But she refused to say whether she had received the communion on other feast-days than Easter.

In order to take her unawares, Maître Jean Beaupère proceeded without method, passing abruptly from one subject to another. Suddenly he spoke of her Voices. She gave him the following reply:

"Being thirteen years of age, I heard the Voice of God, bidding me lead a good life. And the first time I was sore afraid. And the Voice came almost at the hour of noon, in summer, in my father's garden...."

She heard the Voice on the right towards the church. Rarely did she hear it without seeing a light. This light was in the direction whence the Voice came.

When Jeanne said that her Voice spoke to her from the right, a doctor more learned and more kindly disposed than Maître Jean would have interpreted this circumstance favourably; for do we not read in Ezekiel that the angels were upon the right hand of the dwelling; do we not find in the last chapter of Saint Mark, that the women beheld the Angel seated on the right, and finally does not Saint Luke expressly state that the Angel appeared unto Zacharias on the right of the altar burning with incense; whereupon the Venerable Bede observes: "he appeared on the right as a sign that he was the bringer of divine mercy." But such things never occurred to the examiner. Thinking to embarrass Jeanne, he

asked how she came to see the light if it appeared at her side. Jeanne made no reply, and as if distraught, she said:

“If I were in a wood I should easily hear the Voices coming towards me.... It seems to me to be a Voice right worthy. I believe that this Voice was sent to me by God. After having heard it three times I knew it to be the voice of an angel.”

“What instruction did this Voice give you for the salvation of your soul?”

“It taught me to live well, to go to church, and it told me to fare forth into France.”

Then Jeanne related how, by the command of her Voice, she had gone to Vaucouleurs, to Sire Robert de Baudricourt, whom she had recognised without ever having seen him before, how the Duke of Lorraine had summoned her to cure him, and how she had come into France.

Thereafter she was brought to say that she knew well that God loved the Duke of Orléans and that concerning him she had had more revelations than concerning any man living, save the King; that she had been obliged to change her woman's dress for man's attire and that her *Council* had advised her well.

The letter to the English was read before her. She admitted having dictated it in those terms, with the exception of three passages. She had not said *body for body* nor *chieftain of war* ; and she had said *surrender to the King* in the place of *surrender to the Maid* . That the judges had not tampered with the text of the letter we may assure ourselves by comparing it with other texts, which did not pass through their hands, and which contain the expressions challenged by Jeanne.

In the beginning of her career, she believed that Our Lord, the true King of France, had ordained her to deliver the government of the realm to Charles of Valois, as His deputy. The words in which she gave utterance to this idea are reported by too many persons strangers one to another for us to doubt her having spoken them. “The King shall hold the kingdom as a fief (*en commande*); the King of France is the lieutenant of the King of Heaven.” These are her own words and she did actually say to the Dauphin: “Make a gift of your realm to the King of Heaven.” But we are bound to admit that at Rouen not one of these mystic ideas persists, indeed there they seem altogether beyond her. In all her replies to her examiners, she seems incapable of any abstract reasoning whatsoever and of any speculation however simple, so that it is hard to understand how she should ever have conceived the idea of the temporal rule of Jesus Christ over the Land of the Lilies. There is nothing in her speech or in her thoughts to suggest such meditations, wherefore we are led to believe that this politico-theology had been taught her in her tender, teachable years by

ecclesiastics desiring to remove the woes of Church and kingdom, but that she had failed to seize its spirit or grasp its inner meaning. Now, in the midst of a hard life lived with men-at-arms, whose simple souls accorded better with her own than the more cultivated minds of the early directors of her meditations, she had forgotten even the phraseology in which those suggested meditations were expressed. Interrogated concerning her coming to Chinon, she replied:

“Without let or hindrance I went to my King. When I reached the town of Sainte-Catherine de Fierbois, I sent first to the town of Château-Chinon, where my King was. I arrived there about the hour of noon and lodged in an inn, and, after dinner, I went to my King who was in his castle.”

If we may believe the registrars, they never ceased wondering at her memory. They were amazed that she should recollect exactly what she had said a week before. Nevertheless her memory was sometimes curiously uncertain, and we have reason for thinking with the Bastard that she waited two days at the inn before being received by the King.

With regard to this audience in the castle of Chinon, she told her judges she had recognised the King as she had recognised the Sire de Baudricourt, by revelation.

The interrogator asked her: “When the Voice revealed your King to you, was there any light?”

This question bore upon matters which were of great moment to her judges; for they suspected the Maid of having committed a sacrilegious fraud, or rather witchcraft, with the complicity of the King of France. Indeed, they had learnt from their informers that Jeanne boasted of having given the King a sign in the form of a precious crown. The following is the actual truth of the matter:

The legend of Saint Catherine relates that on a day she received from the hand of an angel a resplendent crown and placed it on the head of the Empress of the Romans. This crown was the symbol of eternal blessedness. Jeanne, who had been brought up on this legend, said that the same thing had happened to her. In France she had told sundry marvellous stories of crowns, and in one of these stories she imagined herself to be in the great hall of the castle at Chinon, in the midst of the barons, receiving a crown from the hand of an angel to give it to her King. This was true in a spiritual sense, for she had taken Charles to his anointing and to his coronation. Jeanne was not quick to grasp the distinction between two kinds of truth. She may, nevertheless, have doubted the material reality of this vision. She may even have held it to be true in a spiritual sense only. In any case, she had of her own accord promised Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret not to speak of it to her judges.

“Saw you any angel above the King?”

She refused to reply.

This time nothing more was said of the crown. Maître Jean Beaupère asked Jeanne if she often heard the Voice.

“Not a day passes without my hearing it. And it is my stay in great need.”

She never spoke of her Voices without describing them as her refuge and relief, her consolation and her joy. Now all theologians agreed in believing that good spirits when they depart leave the soul filled with joy, with peace, and with comfort, and as proof they cited the angel’s words to Zacharias and Mary: “Be not afraid.” This reason, however, was not strong enough to persuade clerks of the English party that Voices hostile to the English were of God.

And the Maid added: “Never have I required of them any other final reward than the salvation of my soul.”

The examination ended with a capital charge: the attack on Paris on a feast day. It was in this connection possibly that Brother Jacques of Touraine, a friar of the Franciscan order, who from time to time put a question, asked Jeanne whether she had ever been in a place where Englishmen were being slain.

“In God’s name, was I ever in such a place?” Jeanne responded vehemently. “How glibly you speak. Why did they not depart from France and go into their own country?”

A nobleman of England, who was in the chamber, on hearing these words, said to his neighbours: “By my troth she is a good woman. Why is she not English?”

The third public sitting was appointed for two days thence, Saturday, the 24th of February.

It was Lent. Jeanne observed the fast very strictly.

On Friday, the 23rd, in the morning, she was awakened by her Voices themselves. She arose from her bed and remained seated, her hands clasped, giving thanks. Then she asked what she should reply to her judges, beseeching the Voices thereupon to take counsel of Our Lord. First the Voices uttered words she could not understand. That happened sometimes, in difficult circumstances especially. Then they said: “Reply boldly, God will aid thee.”

That day she heard them a second time at the hour of vespers and a third time when the bells were ringing the *Ave Maria* in the evening. In the night of Friday and Saturday they came and revealed to her many secrets for the weal of the King of France. Thereupon she received great consolation. Very probably they repeated the assurance that she would be delivered from the hands of her enemies, and that on the other hand her judges stood in great danger.

She depended absolutely on her Voices for direction. When she was in difficulty as to what to say to her judges, she prayed to Our Lord; she addressed him devoutly, saying: "Good God, for the sake of thy holy Passion, I beseech thee if thou lovest me to reveal unto me what I should reply to these churchmen. Touching my dress I know well how I was commanded to put it on; but as to leaving it I know nothing. In this may it please thee to teach me."

Then straightway the Voices came.

At the third sitting, held in the Robing Chamber, there were present sixty-two assessors, of whom twenty were new.

Jeanne showed a greater repugnance than before to swearing on the holy Gospels to reply to all that should be asked her. In charity the Bishop warned her that this obstinate refusal caused her to be suspected, and he required her to swear, under pain of being convicted upon all the charges. Such was indeed the rule in a trial by the Inquisition. In 1310 a *béguine*, one La Porète, refused to take the oath as required by the Holy Inquisitor of the Faith, Brother Guillaume of Paris. She was excommunicated forthwith, and without being further examined, after lengthy proceedings, she was handed over to the Provost of Paris, who caused her to be burned alive. Her piety at the stake drew tears from all the bystanders.

Still the Bishop failed to force an unconditional oath from the Maid; she swore to tell the truth on all she knew concerning the trial, reserving to herself the right to be silent on everything which in her opinion did not concern it. She spoke freely of the Voices she had heard the previous day, but not of the revelations touching the King. When, however, Maître Jean Beaupère appeared desirous to know them, she asked for a fortnight's delay before replying, sure that before then she would be delivered; and straightway she fell to boasting of the secrets her Voices had confided to her for the King's weal.

"I would wish him to know them at this moment," she said; "even if as the result I were to drink no wine from now till Easter."

"Drink no wine from now till Easter!" Did she thus casually use an expression common in that land of the rose-tinted wine (*vin gris*), a drop or two of which with a slice of bread sufficed the Domremy women for a meal? Or had she caught this manner of speech with the habit of dealing hard clouts and good blows from the men-at-arms of her company? Alas! what hypocras was she to drink during the five weeks before Easter! She was merely making use of a current phrase, as was frequently her custom, and attributing no precise meaning to it, unless it were that wine vaguely suggested to her mind the idea of cordiality and the hope that after her deliverance she would see the Lords of France filling a cup in her honour.

Maître Jean Beaupère asked her whether she saw anything when she heard her Voices.

She replied: "I cannot tell you everything. I am not permitted. The Voice is good and worthy.... To this question I am not bound to reply."

And she asked them to give her in writing the points concerning which she had not given an immediate reply.

What use did she intend to make of this writing? She did not know how to read; she had no counsel. Did she want to show the document to some false friend, like Loiseleur, who was deceiving her? Or was it her intent to present it to her saints?

Maître Beaupère asked whether her Voice had a face and eyes.

She refused to answer and quoted a saying frequently on the lips of children: "One is often hanged for having spoken the truth."

Maître Beaupère asked: "Do you know whether you stand in God's grace?"

This was an extremely insidious question; it placed Jeanne in the dilemma of having to avow herself sinful or of appearing unpardonably bold. One of the assessors, Maître Jean Lefèvre of the Order of the Hermit Friars, observed that she was not bound to reply. There was murmuring throughout the chamber.

But Jeanne said: "If I be not, then may God bring me into it; if I be, then may God keep me in it."

The assessors were astonished at so ready an answer. And yet no improvement ensued in their disposition towards her. They admitted that touching her King she spoke well, but for the rest she was too subtle, and with a subtlety peculiar to women.

Thereafter, Maître Jean Beaupère examined Jeanne concerning her childhood in her village. He essayed to show that she had been cruel, had displayed a homicidal tendency from her earliest years, and had been addicted to those idolatrous practices which had given the folk of Domremy a bad name.

Then he touched on a point of prime importance in elucidating the obscure origin of Jeanne's mission:

"Were you not regarded as the one who was sent from the Oak Wood?"

In this direction he might have succeeded in obtaining important revelations. False prophecies had indeed established Jeanne's reputation in France; but these clerks were incapable of discriminating amongst all these pseudo-Bedes and pseudo-Merlins.

Jeanne replied: "When I came to the King, certain asked me whether there were in my country a wood called the Oak Wood; because of prophecies saying that from the neighbourhood of this wood should come a damsel who would work wonders. But to such things I paid no heed."

This statement we must needs believe; but if she denied credence to the prophecy of Merlin touching the Virgin of the Oak Wood, she paid good heed to the prophecy foretelling the appearance of a Deliverer in the person of a Maid coming from the Lorraine Marches, since she repeated that prophecy to the two Leroyers and to her Uncle Lassois, with an emphasis which filled them with astonishment. Now we must admit that the two prophecies are as alike as two peas.

Passing abruptly from Merlin the Magician, Maître Jean Beaupère asked: "Jeanne, will you have a woman's dress?"

She answered: "Give me one; and I will accept it and depart. Otherwise I will not have it. I will be content with this one, since God is pleased for me to wear it."

On this reply, which contained two errors tending to heresy, the Lord Bishop adjourned the court.

The morrow, the 25th of February, was the first Sunday in Lent. On that day or another, but probably on that day, my Lord Bishop sent Jeanne a shad. Having partaken of this fish she had fever and was seized with vomiting. Two masters of arts of the Paris University, both doctors of medicine, Jean Tiphaine and Guillaume Delachambre, assessors in the trial, were summoned by the Earl of Warwick, who said to them:

"According to what has been told me, Jeanne is sick. I have summoned you to devise measures for her recovery. The King would not for the world have her die a natural death. She is dear to him, for he has bought her dearly; his intent is that she die not, save by the hand of justice, and that she should be burned. Do all that may be necessary, therefore, visit her attentively, and endeavour to restore her."

Conducted to Jeanne by Maître Jean d'Estivet, the doctors inquired of her the cause of her suffering.

She answered that she had eaten a carp sent her by the Lord Bishop of Beauvais, and that she believed it to be the cause of her sickness.

Did Jeanne suspect the Bishop of designing to poison her? That is what Maître Jean d'Estivet thought, for he flew into a violent rage:

"Whore!" he cried, "it is thine own doing; thou hast eaten herrings and other things which have made thee ill."

"I have not," she answered.

They exchanged insults, and Jeanne's sickness thereupon grew worse.

The doctors examined her and found that she had fever. Wherefore they decided to bleed her.

They informed the Earl of Warwick, who became anxious:

“A bleeding!” he cried; “take heed! She is artful and might kill herself.”

Nevertheless Jeanne was bled and recovered.

On Monday, the 26th, there was no examination. On the opening of the fourth sitting, Tuesday, the 27th, Maître Jean Beaupère asked her how she had been, which inquiry touched her but little. She replied drily:

“You can see for yourself. I am as well as it is possible for me to be.”

This sitting was held in the Robing Chamber in the presence of fifty-four assessors. Five of them had not been present before, and among them was Maître Nicolas Loiseleur, canon of Rouen, whose share in the proceedings had been to act the Lorraine shoemaker and Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

Maître Jean Beaupère, as on the previous Saturday, was curious to know whether Jeanne had heard her Voices. She heard them every day.

He asked her: “Is it an angel’s voice that speaketh unto you, or the voice of a woman saint or of a man saint? Or is it God speaking without an interpreter?”

Said Jeanne: “This voice is the voice of Saint Catherine and of Saint Margaret; and on their heads are beautiful crowns, right rich and right precious. I am permitted to tell you so by Messire. If you doubt it send to Poitiers, where I was examined.”

She was right in appealing to the clerks of France. The Armagnac doctors had no less authority in matters of faith than the English and Burgundian doctors. Were they not all to meet at the Council?

The examiner asked: “How know ye that they are these two saints? Know ye them one from another?”

Said Jeanne: “Well do I know who they are; and I do know one from the other.”

“How?”

“By the greeting they give me.”

Let not Jeanne be hastily taxed with error or untruth. Did not the Angel salute Gideon (Judges vi), and Raphaël salute Tobias (Tobit xii)?

Thereafter Jeanne gave another reason: “I know them because they call themselves by name.”

When she was asked whether her saints were both clothed alike, whether they were of the same age, whether they spoke at once, whether one of them appeared before the other, she refused to reply, saying she had not permission to do so.

Maître Jean Beaupère inquired which of the apparitions came to her the first when she was about thirteen.

Jeanne said: “It was Saint Michael. I beheld him with my eyes. And he was not alone, but with him were angels from heaven. It was by Messire’s command alone that I came into France.”

“Did you actually behold Saint Michael and these angels in the body?”

“I saw them with the eyes of my head as plainly as I see you; and when they went away I wept and should have liked them to take me with them.”

“In what semblance was Saint Michael?”

She was not permitted to say.

She was asked whether she had received permission from God to go into France and whether God had commanded her to put on man’s dress.

By keeping silence on this point she became liable to be suspected of heresy, and however she replied she laid herself open to serious charges, — she either took upon herself homicide and abomination, or she attributed it to God, which manifestly was to blaspheme.

Concerning her coming into France, she said: “I would rather have been dragged by the hair of my head than have come into France without permission from Messire.” Concerning her dress she added: “Dress is but a little thing, less than nothing. It was not according to the counsel of any man of this world that I put on man’s clothing. I neither wore this attire nor did anything save by the command of Messire and his angels.”

Maître Jean Beaupère asked: “When you behold this Voice coming towards you, is there any light?”

Then she replied with a jest, as at Poitiers: “Every light cometh not to you, my fair lord.”

After all it was virtually against the King of France that these doctors of Rouen were proceeding with craft and with cunning.

Maître Jean Beaupère threw out the question: “How did your King come to have faith in your sayings?”

“Because they were proved good to him by signs and also because of his clerks.”

“What revelations were made unto your King?”

“That you will not hear from me this year.”

As he listened to the damsel’s words, must not my Lord of Beauvais, who was in the counsels of King Henry, have reflected on that verse in the Book of Tobias (xii, 7): “It is good to keep close the secret of a king”?

Thereafter Jeanne was called upon to reply at length concerning the sword of Saint Catherine. The clerks suspected her of having found it by the art of divination, and by invoking the aid of demons, and of having cast a spell over it. All that she was able to say did not remove their suspicions.

Then they passed on to the sword she had captured from a Burgundian.

“I wore it at Compiègne,” she said, “because it was good for dealing sound clouts and good buffets.” The buffet was a flat blow, the clout was a side stroke.

Some moments later, on the subject of her banner, she said that, in order to avoid killing any one, she bore it herself when they charged the enemy. And she added: "I have never slain any one."

The doctors found that her replies varied. Of course they varied. But if like her every hour of the day and night the doctors had been seeing the heavens descending, if all their thoughts, all their instincts, good and bad, all their desires barely formulated, had been undergoing instant transformation into divine commands, their replies would likewise have varied, and they would have doubtless been in such a state of illusion that in their words and in their actions they would have displayed less good sense, less gentleness and less courage.

The examinations were long; they lasted between three and four hours. Before closing this one, Maître Jean Beaupère wished to know whether Jeanne had been wounded at Orléans. This was an interesting point. It was generally admitted that witches lost their power when they shed blood. Finally, the doctors quibbled over the capitulation of Jargeau, and the court adjourned.

A famous Norman clerk, Maître Jean Lohier, having come to Rouen, the Count Bishop of Beauvais commanded that he should be informed concerning the trial. On the first Saturday in Lent, the 24th of February, the Bishop summoned him to his house near Saint-Nicolas-le-Painteur, and invited him to give his opinion of the proceedings. The views of Maître Jean Lohier greatly disturbed the Bishop. Off he rushed to the doctors and masters, Jean Beaupère, Jacques de Touraine, Nicolas Midi, Pierre Maurice, Thomas de Courcelles, Nicolas Loiseleur, and said to them:

"Here's Lohier, who holds fine views concerning our trial! He wants to object to everything, and says that our proceedings are invalid. If we were to take his advice we should begin everything over again, and all we have done would be worthless! It is easy to see what he is aiming at. By Saint John, we will do nothing of the kind; we will go on with our trial now it is begun."

The next day, in the Church of Notre Dame, Guillaume Manchon met Maître Jean Lohier and asked him:

"Have you seen anything of the records of the trial?"

"I have," replied Maître Jean. "This trial is void. It is impossible to support it on many grounds: firstly, it is not in regular form."

By that he meant that proceedings should not have been taken against Jeanne without preliminary inquiries concerning the probability of her guilt; either he did not know of the inquiries instituted by my Lord of Beauvais, or he deemed them insufficient.

"Secondly," continued Maître Jean Lohier, "the judges and assessors when they are trying this case are shut up in the castle, where they are not free to utter

their opinions frankly. Thirdly, the trial involves divers persons who are not called, notably it touches the reputation of the King of France, to whose party Jeanne belonged, yet neither he nor his representative is cited. Fourthly, neither documents nor definite written charges have been produced, wherefore this woman, this simple girl, is left to reply without guidance to so many masters, to such great doctors and on such grave matters, especially those concerning her revelations. For all these reasons the trial appears to me to be invalid.” Then he added: “You see how they proceed. They will catch her if they can in her words. They take advantage of the statements in which she says, ‘I know for certain,’ concerning her apparitions. But if she were to say, ‘It seems to me,’ instead of ‘I know for certain,’ it is my opinion that no man could convict her. I perceive that the dominant sentiment which actuates them is one of hatred. Their intention is to bring her to her death. Wherefore I shall stay here no longer. I cannot witness it. What I say gives offence.”

That same day Maître Jean left Rouen.

A somewhat similar incident occurred with regard to Maître Nicolas de Houppeville, a famous cleric. In conference with certain churchmen, he expressed the opinion that to appoint as Jeanne’s judges members of the party hostile to her was not a correct method of procedure; and he added that Jeanne had already been examined by the clerks of Poitiers and by the Archbishop of Reims, the metropolitan of this very Bishop of Beauvais. Hearing of this expression of opinion, my Lord of Beauvais flew into a violent rage, and summoned Maître Nicolas to appear before him. The latter replied that the Official of Rouen was his superior, and that the Bishop of Beauvais was not his judge. If it be true, as is related, that Maître Nicolas was thereafter cast into the King’s prison, it was doubtless for a reason more strictly judicial than that of having offended the Lord Bishop of Beauvais. It is more probable, however, that this famous cleric did not wish to act as assessor, and that he left Rouen in order to avoid being summoned to take part in the trial.

Certain ecclesiastics, among others Maître Jean Pigache, Maître Pierre Minier, and Maître Richard de Grouchet, discovered long afterwards that being threatened they had given their opinions under the influence of fear. “We were present at that trial,” they said, “but throughout the proceedings we were always contemplating flight.” As a matter of fact, no violence was done to any man’s opinions, and such as refused to attend the trial were in no way molested. Threats! But why should there be any? Was it difficult to convict a witch in those days? Jeanne was no witch. But, then, neither were the others. Still, between Jeanne and the other alleged witches there was this difference, that Jeanne had cast her spells in favour of the Armagnacs, and to convict her was to

render a service to the English, who were the masters. This was a point to be taken into consideration; but there was something else which ought also to be borne in mind by thoughtful folk: such a conviction would at the same time offend the French, who were in a fair way to become the masters once more in the place of the English. These matters were very perplexing to the doctors; but the second consideration had less weight with them than the first; they had no idea that the French were so near reconquering Normandy.

The fifth session of the court took place in the usual chamber on the 1st of March, in the presence of fifty-eight assessors, of whom nine had not sat previously.

The first question the examiner put Jeanne was:

“What say you of our Lord the Pope, and whom think you to be the true pope?”

She adroitly made answer by asking another question: “Are there two?”

No, there were not two; Clement VIII’s abdication had put an end to the schism; the great rift in the Church had been closed for thirteen years and all Christian nations recognized the Pope of Rome; even France who had become resigned to the disappearance of her Avignon popes. There was something, however, which neither the accused nor her judges knew; on that 1st of March, 1431, far from there being two popes, there was not even one; the Holy See had fallen vacant by the death of Martin V on the 20th of February, and the vacancy was only to be filled on the 3rd of March, by the election of Eugenius IV.

The examiner in questioning Jeanne concerning the Holy See was not without a motive. That motive became obvious when he asked her whether she had not received a letter from the Count of Armagnac. She admitted having received the letter and having replied to it.

Copies of these two letters were included in the evidence to be used at the trial. They were read to Jeanne.

It appeared that the Count of Armagnac had asked the Maid by letter which of the three popes was the true one, and that Jeanne had replied to him, likewise by letter, that for the moment she had not time to answer, but that she would do so at her leisure when she should come to Paris.

Having heard these two letters read, Jeanne declared that the one attributed to her was only partially hers. And since she always dictated and could never read what had been taken down, it is conceivable that hasty words, uttered with her foot in the stirrup, may not have been accurately transcribed; but in a series of involved and contradictory replies she was unable to demonstrate how that which she had dictated differed from the written text; and in itself the letter

appears much more likely to have proceeded from an ignorant visionary than from a clerk who would have some knowledge, however little, of church affairs.

It contains certain words and turns of expression which are to be found in Jeanne's other letters. There can hardly be any doubt that this letter is by her; she had forgotten it. There is nothing surprising in that; her memory, as we have seen, was curiously liable to fail her.

On this document the judges based the most serious of charges; they regarded it as furnishing proof of a most blamable temerity. What arrogance on the part of this woman, so it seemed to them, to claim to have been told by God himself that which the Church alone is entitled to teach! And to undertake by means of an inner illumination to point out the true pope, was that not to commit grave sin against the Bride of Christ, and with sacrilegious hand to rend the seamless robe of our Lord?

For once Jeanne saw clearly how her judges were endeavouring to entrap her, wherefore she twice declared her belief in the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome. How bitterly she would have smiled had she known that the lights of the University of Paris, these famous doctors who held it mortal sin to believe in the wrong pope, themselves believed in his Holiness about as much as they disbelieved in him; that at that very time certain of their number, Maître Thomas de Courcelles, so great a doctor, Maître Jean Beaupère, the examiner, Maître Nicolas Loiseleur, who acted the part of Saint Catherine, were hastening to despatch her, in order that they might bestride their mules and amble away to Bâle, there in the Synagogue of Satan to hurl thunderbolts against the Holy Apostolic See, and diabolically to decree the subjection of the Pope to the Council, the confiscation of his annates, dearer to him than the apple of his eye, and finally his own deposition. Now would have been the time for her to have cried, with the voice of a simple soul, to the priests so keen to avenge upon her the Church's honour: "I am more of a Catholic than you!" And the words in her mouth would have been even more appropriate than on the lips of the Limousin clerk of old. Yet we must not reproach these clerics for having been good Gallicans at Bâle, but rather for having been cruel and hypocritical at Rouen.

In her prison the Maid prophesied before her guard, John Grey. Informed of these prophecies, the judges wished to hear them from Jeanne's own mouth.

"Before seven years have passed," she said to them, "the English shall lose a greater wager than any they lost at Orléans. They shall lose everything in France. They shall suffer greater loss than ever they have suffered in France, and that shall come to pass because God shall vouchsafe unto the French great victory."

"How do you know this?"

“I know it by revelation made unto me and that this shall befall within seven years. And greatly should I sorrow were it further delayed. I know it by revelation as surely as I know that you are before my eyes at this moment.”

“When shall this come to pass?”

“I know neither the day nor the hour.”

“But the year?”

“That ye shall not know for the present. But I should wish it to be before Saint John’s Day.”

“Did you not say that it should come to pass before Saint Martin in the winter?”

“I said that before Saint Martin in the winter many things should befall and it might be that the English would be discomfited.”

Whereupon the examiner asked Jeanne whether when Saint Michael came to her he was accompanied by Saint Gabriel.

Jeanne replied: “I do not remember.”

She did not remember whether, in the multitude of angels who visited her, was the Angel Gabriel who had saluted Our Lady and announced unto her the salvation of mankind. So many angels and archangels had she seen that this one had not particularly impressed her.

After an answer of such perfect simplicity how could these priests proceed to question her on her visions? Were they not sufficiently edified? But no! These innocent answers whetted the examiner’s zeal. With intense ardour and copious amplification, passing from angels to saints, he multiplied petty and insidious questions. Did you see the hair on their heads? Had they rings in their ears? Was there anything between their crowns and their hair? Was their hair long and hanging? Had they arms? How did they speak? What kind of voices had they?

This last question touched on an important theological point. Demons, whose voices are as rasping as a cart wheel or a winepress screw, cannot imitate the sweet tones of saints.

Jeanne replied that the Voice was beautiful, sweet, and soft, and spoke in French.

Whereupon she was asked craftily wherefore Saint Margaret did not speak English.

She replied: “How should she speak English, since she is not on the side of the English?”

Two hundred years before, a poet of Champagne had said that the French language, which Our Lord created beautiful and graceful, was the language of Paradise.

She was afterwards asked concerning her rings. This was a hard matter; in those days there were many magic rings or rings bearing amulets. They were fashioned by magicians under the influence of planets; and, by means of wonder-working herbs and stones, these rings had spells cast upon them and received miraculous virtues. Constellation rings worked miracles. Jeanne, alas! had possessed but two poor rings, one of brass, inscribed with the names Jésus and Marie, which she received from her father and mother, the other her brother had given her. The Bishop kept the latter; the other had been taken from her by the Burgundians.

An attempt was made to incriminate her in a pact made with the Devil near the Fairy Tree. She was not to be caught thus, but retorted by prophesying her deliverance and the destruction of her enemies. "Those who wish to banish me from this world may very likely leave it before me.... I know that my King will win the realm of France."

She was asked what she had done with her mandrake. She said she had never had one.

Then the examiner appeared to be seized with curiosity concerning Saint Michael. "Was he clothed?"

She replied: "Doubt ye that Messire lacks wherewithal to clothe himself?"

"Had he hair?"

"Wherefore should he have cut it off?"

"Did he hold scales?"

"I don't know."

Their object was to ascertain whether she saw Saint Michael as he was represented in the churches, with scales for weighing souls.

When she said that at the sight of the Archangel it seemed to her she was not in a state of mortal sin, the examiner fell to arguing on the subject of her conscience. She replied like a true Christian. Then he returned to the miracle of the sign, which had not been referred to since the first sitting, to the mystery of Chinon, to that wondrous crown, which Jeanne, following Saint Catherine of Alexandria, believed she had received from the hand of an angel. But she had promised Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret to say nothing about it.

"When you showed the King the sign was there any one with him?"

"I think there was no other person, albeit there were many folk not far off."

"Did you see a crown on the King's head when you gave him this sign?"

"I cannot say without committing perjury."

"Had your King a crown at Reims?"

“My King, methinketh, took with pleasure the crown he found at Reims. But afterwards a very rich crown was brought him. He did not wait for it, because he wished to hurry on the ceremony according to the request of the inhabitants of Reims who desired to rid their town of the burden of men-at-arms. If he had waited he would have had a crown a thousand times more rich.”

“Have you seen that richer crown?”

“I cannot tell you without committing perjury. If I have not seen it I have heard tell how rich and how magnificent it is.”

Jeanne suffered intensely from being deprived of the sacraments. One day when Messire Jean Massieu, performing the office of ecclesiastical usher, was taking her before her judges, she asked him whether there were not on the way some church or chapel in which was the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Messire Jean Massieu, dean of Rouen, was a cleric of manners dissolute; his inveterate lewdness had involved him in difficulties with the Chapter and with the Official. He may have been neither as brave nor as frank as he wished to make out, but he was not hard or pitiless.

He told his prisoner that there was a chapel on the way. And he pointed out to her the chapel of the castle.

Then she besought him urgently to take her into the chapel in order that she might worship Messire and pray.

Readily did Messire Jean Massieu consent; and he permitted her to kneel before the sanctuary. Devoutly bending, Jeanne offered her prayer.

The Lord Bishop, being informed of this incident, was highly displeased. He instructed the Usher that in the future such devotions must not be tolerated.

And the Promoter, Maître Jean d’Estivet, on his part, addressed many a reprimand to Messire Jean Massieu.

“Rascal,” he said, “what possesses thee to allow an excommunicated whore to approach a church without permission? If ever thou doest the like again I will imprison thee in that tower, where for a month thou wilt see neither sun nor moon.”

Messire Jean Massieu heeded not this threat. And the Promoter, perceiving this, himself took up his post at the chapel door when Jeanne went that way. Thus he prevented the hapless damsel from engaging in her devotions.

The sixth sitting was held in the same court as before, in the presence of forty-one assessors, of whom six or seven were new, and among them was Maître Guillaume Erart, doctor in theology.

In the beginning, the examiner asked Jeanne whether she had seen Saint Michael and the saints, and whether she had seen anything but their faces. He insisted: “You must say what you know.”

“Rather than say all that I know, I would have my head cut off.”

They puzzled her with questions touching the nature of angelic bodies. She was simple; with her own eyes she had seen Saint Michael; she said so and could not say otherwise.

The examiner, now as always, informed of the words she had let fall in prison, asked her whether she had heard her Voices.

“Yes, in good sooth. They told me that I should be delivered. But I know neither the day nor the hour. And they told me to have good courage, and to be of good cheer.”

Of all this the judges believed nothing, because demonologists teach that witches lose their power when an officer of Holy Church lays hands upon them.

The examiner recurred to her man’s dress. Then he endeavoured to find out whether she had cast spells over the banners of her companions in arms.

He sought out by what secret power she led the soldiers.

This power she was willing to reveal: “I said to them: ‘Go on boldly against the English;’ and at the same time I went myself.”

In this examination, which was the most diffuse and the most captious of all, the following curious question was put to the accused: “When you were before Jargeau, what was it you were wearing behind your helmet? Was there not something round?”

At the siege of Jargeau she had been struck on the head by a huge stone which had not hurt her; and this her own party deemed miraculous. Did the judges of Rouen imagine that she wore a golden halo, like the saints, and that this halo had protected her?

Later she was examined on a more ordinary subject, concerning a picture in the house of her host at Orléans, representing three women: Justice, Peace, Union.

Jeanne knew nothing about it; she was no connoisseur in tapestry and in paintings, like the Duke of Bar and the Duke of Orléans; neither were her judges, not on this occasion at any rate. And if they were concerned about a picture in the house of Maître Boucher, it was not so much on account of the painting as of the doctrine. These three women that the wealthy Maître Boucher kept in his house were doubtless nude. The painters of those days depicted on small panels allegories and bathing scenes, and they painted nude women. Full foreheads, round heads, golden hair, short figures of small build but with embonpoint, their nudity minutely represented and but thinly veiled; many such were produced in Flanders and in Italy. The illustrious masters, to whom those pictures appeared corrupt and indecent, doubtless wished to reproach Jeanne with having looked at

them in the house of the treasurer of the Duke of Orléans. It is not difficult to divine what were the doctors' suspicions when they are found asking Jeanne whether Saint Michael wore clothes, in what manner she greeted her saints, and how she gave them her rings to touch.

They also wanted to make her admit that she had caused herself to be honoured as a saint. She disconcerted them by the following reply: "The poor folk came to me readily, because I did them no hurt, but aided them to the best of my power."

Then the examination ranged over many and various subjects: Friar Richard; the children Jeanne had held over the baptismal fonts; the good wives of the town of Reims who touched rings with her; the butterflies caught in a standard at Château Thierry.

In this town, certain of the Maid's followers were said to have caught butterflies in her standard. Now doctors in theology knew for a certainty that necromancers sacrificed butterflies to the devil. A century before, at Pamiers, the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition had condemned the Carmelite Pierre Recordi, who was accused of having celebrated such a sacrifice. He had killed a butterfly and the devil had revealed his presence by a breath of wind. Jeanne's judges may have wished to involve her in similar fashion, or their design may have been quite different. In war a butterfly in the cap was a sign either of unconditional surrender or of the possession of a safe conduct. Were the judges accusing her or her followers of having feigned to surrender in order treacherously to attack the enemy? They were quite capable of making such a charge. However that may be, the examiner passed on to inquire concerning a lost glove found by Jeanne in the town of Reims. It was important to know whether it had been discovered by magic art. Then the magistrate returned to several of the capital charges of the trial: communion received in man's dress; the hackney of the Bishop of Senlis, which Jeanne had taken, thus committing a kind of sacrilege; the discoloured child she had brought back to life at Lagny; Catherine de La Rochelle, who had recently borne witness against her before the Official at Paris; the siege of La Charité which she had been obliged to raise; the leap which she had made in her despair from the keep of Beaurevoir, and, finally, certain blasphemy she was falsely accused of having uttered at Soissons concerning Captain Bournel.

Then the Lord Bishop declared the examination concluded. He added, however, that should it appear expedient to interrogate Jeanne more fully, certain doctors and masters would be appointed for that purpose.

Accordingly, on Saturday, March the 10th, Maître Jean de la Fontaine, the Bishop's commissioner, went to the prison. He was accompanied by Nicolas

Midi, Gérard Feuillet, Jean Fécard, and Jean Massieu. The first point touched upon at this inquiry was the sortie from Compiègne. The priests took great pains to prove to Jeanne that her Voices must be bad or that she must have failed to understand them since her obedience to them had brought about her destruction. Jacques Gélú and Jean Gerson had foreseen this dilemma and had met it in anticipation with elaborate theological arguments. She was examined concerning the paintings on her standard, and she replied:

“Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret bade me take the standard and bear it boldly, and have painted upon it the King of Heaven. And this, much against my will, I told to my King. Touching its meaning I know nought else.”

They tried to make her out avaricious, proud, and ostentatious because she possessed a shield and arms, a stable, chargers, demi-chargers, and hackneys, and because she had money with which to pay her household, some ten to twelve thousand livres. But the point on which they questioned her most closely was the sign which had already been twice discussed in the public examinations. On this subject the doctors displayed an insatiable curiosity. For the sign was the exact reverse of the coronation at Reims; it was an anointing, not with divine unction but with magic charm, the crowning of the King of France by a witch. Maître Jean de la Fontaine had this advantage over Jeanne, he knew what she was going to say and what she wished to conceal. “What is the sign that was given to your King?”

“It is beautiful and honourable and very credible; it is the best and the richest in the world....”

“Does it still last?”

“It is well to know that it lasts and will last for a thousand years. My sign is in the King’s treasury.”

“Is it of gold or silver, or of precious stones, or is it a crown?”

“Nothing more will I tell unto you and no man can devise anything so rich as is this sign. Nevertheless, the sign that you need is that God should deliver me out of your hands and no surer sign can he send you....”

“When the sign came to your King what reverence did you make to it?”

“I thanked Our Lord for having delivered me from the troubles caused me by the clerks of our party, who were arguing against me. And I knelt down several times. An angel from God and from none other gave the sign to my King. And many times did I give thanks to Our Lord. The clerks ceased to attack me when they had seen the said sign.”

“Did the churchmen of your party behold the sign?”

“When my King and such as were with him had seen the sign and also the angel who gave it, I asked my King whether he were pleased, and he replied that

he was. Then I departed and went into a little chapel near by. I have since heard that after my departure more than three hundred persons saw the sign. For love of me and in order that I should be questioned no further, God was pleased to permit this sign to be seen by all those of my party who did see it.”

“Did your King and you make any reverence to the angel when he brought the sign?”

“Yes, for my part, I did. I knelt and took off my hood.”

CHAPTER XII

THE TRIAL FOR LAPSE (*continued*)

ON Monday, the 12th of March, Brother Jean Lemaistre received from Brother Jean Graverent, Inquisitor of France, an order to proceed against and to pronounce the final sentence on a certain woman, named Jeanne, commonly called the Maid. On that same day, in the morning, Maître Jean de la Fontaine, in presence of the Bishop, for the second time examined Jeanne in her prison.

He first returned to the sign. "Did not the angel who brought the sign speak?"

"Yes, he told my King that he must set me to work in order that the country might soon be relieved."

"Was the angel, who brought the sign, the angel who first appeared unto you or another?"

"It was always the same and never did he fail me."

"But inasmuch as you have been taken hath not the angel failed you with regard to the good things of this life?"

"Since it is Our Lord's good pleasure, I believe it was best for me to be taken."

"In the good things of grace hath not your angel failed you?"

"How can he have failed me when he comforteth me every day?"

Maître Jean de la Fontaine then put her a subtle question and one as nearly approaching humour as was permissible in an ecclesiastical trial.

"Did Saint Denys ever appear to you?"

Saint Denys, patron of the most Christian kings, Saint Denys, the war cry of France, had allowed the English to take his abbey, that rich church, to which queens came to receive their crowns, and wherein kings had their burying. He had turned English and Burgundian, and it was not likely he would come to hold converse with the Maid of the Armagnacs.

To the question: "Were you addressing God himself when you promised to remain a virgin?" she replied:

"It sufficed to give the promise to the messengers of God, to wit, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret."

They had sought to entrap her, for a vow must be made directly to God. However, it might be argued, that it is lawful to promise a good thing to an angel or to a man; and that this good thing, thus promised, may form the substance of a vow. One vows to God what one has promised to the saints. Pierre of Tarentaise

(iv, dist: xxviii, a. 1) teaches that all vows should be made to God: either to himself directly or through the mediation of his saints.

According to a statement made during the inquiry, Jeanne had given a promise of marriage to a young peasant. Now the examiner endeavoured to prove that she had been at liberty to break her vow of virginity made in an irregular form; but Jeanne maintained that she had not promised marriage, and she added:

“The first time I heard my Voices, I vowed to remain a virgin as long as it should please God.”

But this time it was Saint Michael and not the saints who had appeared to her. She herself found it difficult to unravel the tangled web of her dreams and her ecstasies. And from these vague visions of a child the doctors were laboriously essaying to elaborate a capital charge.

Then a very grave and serious question was asked her by the examiner: “Did you speak to your priest or to any other churchman of those visions which you say were vouchsafed to you?”

“No, I spoke of them only to Robert de Baudricourt and to my King.”

The vavasour of Champagne, a man of mature years and sound sense, when in the days of King John, he, like the Maid, had heard a Voice in the fields bidding him go to his King, went straightway and told his priest. The latter commanded him to fast for three days, to do penance, and then to return to the field where the Voice had spoken to him.

The vavasour obeyed. Again the Voice was heard repeating the command it had previously given. The peasant again told his priest, who said to him: “My brother, thou and I will abstain and fast for three days, and I will pray for thee to Our Lord Jesus Christ.” This they did, and on the fourth day the good man returned to the field. After the Voice had spoken for the third time, the priest enjoined his parishioner to go forthwith and fulfil his mission, since such was the will of God.

There is no doubt that, according to all appearances, this vavasour had acted with greater wisdom than La Romée’s daughter. By concealing her visions from the priest the latter had slighted the authority of the Church Militant. Still there might be urged in her defence the words of the Apostle Paul, that where the spirit of God is there is liberty. If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law. Was she a heretic or was she a saint? Therein lay the whole trial.

Then came this remarkable question: “Have you received letters from Saint Michael or from your Voices?”

She replied: “I have not permission to tell you; but in a week I will willingly say all I know.”

Such was her manner of speaking when there was something she wanted to conceal but not to deny. The question must have been embarrassing therefore. Moreover, these interrogatories were based on a good store of facts either true or false; and in the questions addressed to the Maid we may generally discern a certain anticipation of her replies. What were those letters from Saint Michael and her other saints, the existence of which she did not deny, but which were never produced by her judges? Did certain of her party send them in the hope that she would carry out their intentions, while under the impression that she was obeying divine commands?

Without insisting further for the present, the examiner passed on to another grievance:

“Have not your Voices called you *daughter of God* , *daughter of the Church* , *great-hearted damsel* ?”

“Before the siege of Orléans and since, every day when they speak to me, many times have they called me *Jeanne the Maid, daughter of God* .”

The examination was suspended and resumed in the afternoon.

Maître Jean de la Fontaine questioned Jeanne concerning a dream of her father, of which the judges had been informed in the preliminary inquiry.

Sad it is to reflect that when Jeanne was accused of the sin of having broken God’s commandment, “Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother,” neither her mother nor any of her kin asked to be heard as witnesses. And yet there were churchmen in her family; but a trial on a question of faith struck terror into all hearts.

Again her man’s dress was reverted to, and not for the last time. We marvel at the profound meditations into which the Maid’s doublet and hose plunged these clerics. They contemplated them with gloomy terror and in the light of the precepts of Deuteronomy.

Thereafter they questioned her touching the Duke of Orléans. Their object was to show from her own replies that her Voices had deceived her when they promised the prisoner’s deliverance. Here they easily succeeded. Then she pleaded that she had not had sufficient time.

“Had I continued for three years without let or hindrance I should have delivered him.”

In her revelations there had been mentioned a term shorter than three years and longer than one.

Questioned again touching the sign vouchsafed to her King, she replied that she would take counsel with Saint Catherine.

On the morrow, Tuesday, the 13th of March, the Bishop and the Vice-Inquisitor went to her prison. For the first time the Vice-Inquisitor opened his

mouth: "Have you promised and sworn to Saint Catherine that you will not tell this sign?"

He spoke of the sign given to the King. Jeanne replied:

"I have sworn and I have promised that I will not myself reveal this sign, because I was too urgently pressed to tell it. I vow that never again will I speak of it to living man."

Then she continued forthwith: "The sign was that the Angel assured my King, when bringing him the crown, that he should have the whole realm of France, with God's help and my labours, and that he should set me to work. That is to say, he should grant me men-at-arms. Otherwise he would not be so soon crowned and anointed."

"In what manner did the Angel bring the crown? Did he place it on your King's head?"

"It was given to an archbishop, to the Archbishop of Reims, meseemeth in the King's presence. The said Archbishop received it and gave it to the King; and I myself was present; and it is put in the King's treasury."

"To what place was the crown brought?"

"To the King's chamber in the castle of Chinon."

"On what day and at what hour?"

"The day I know not, the hour was full day. No further recollection have I of the hour or of the month. But meseemeth it was the month of April or March; it will be two years this month or next April. It was after Easter."

"On the first day that you saw the sign did your King see it?"

"Yes. He had it the same day."

"Of what was the crown made?"

"It is well to know that it was of fine gold, and so rich that I cannot count its riches; and the crown meant that he would hold the realm of France."

"Were there jewels in it?"

"I have told you that I do not know."

"Did you touch it or kiss it?"

"No."

"Did the Angel who bore it come from above, or did he come from the earth?"

"He came from above. I understand that he came by Our Lord's command, and he came in by the door of the chamber."

"Did the Angel come along the ground, walking from the door of the room?"

"When he was come before the King he did him reverence, bowing low before him and uttering the words concerning the sign which I have already repeated; and thereupon the Angel recalled to the King's mind the great patience

he had had in the midst of the long tribulation that had befallen him; and as he came towards the King the Angel walked and touched the ground.”

“How far was it from the door to the King?”

“Methinketh it was a full lance’s length; and as he had come so he returned. When the Angel came, I accompanied him and went with him up the steps into the King’s chamber; and the Angel went in first. And I said to the King: ‘Sire, behold your sign; take it.’”

In a spiritual sense we may say that this fable is true. This crown, which “flowers sweetly and will flower sweetly if it be well guarded,” is the crown of victory. When the Maid beholds the Angel who brought it, it is her own image that appears before her. Had not a theologian of her own party said that she might be called an angel? Not that she had the nature of an angel, but she did the work of one.

She began to describe the angels who had come with her to the King:

“So far as I saw, certain among them were very like, the others different. Some had wings. Some wore crowns, others did not. And they were with Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, and they accompanied the Angel of whom I have spoken and the other angels also into the chamber of the King.”

And thus for a long time, as she was pressed by her interrogator, she continued to tell these marvellous stories one after another.

When she was asked for the second time whether the Angel had written her letters, she denied it. But now it was the Angel who bore the crown and not Saint Michael who was in question. And despite her having said they were one and the same, she may have distinguished between them. Therefore we shall never know whether she did receive letters from Saint Michael the Archangel, or from Saint Catherine and from Saint Margaret.

Thereafter the examiner inquired touching a cup lost at Reims and found by Jeanne as well as the gloves. Saints sometimes condescended to find things that had been lost, as is proved by the example of Saint Antony of Padua. It was always with the help of God. Necromancers imitated their powers by invoking the aid of demons and by profaning sacred things.

She was also questioned concerning the priest who had a concubine. Here again she was reproached with being possessed of a magic gift of clairvoyance. It was by magic she had known that this priest had a concubine. Many other such things were reported of her. For example, it was said that at the sight of a certain loose woman she knew that this woman had killed her child.

Then recurred the same old questions: “When you went to the attack on Paris did you receive a revelation from your Voices? Was it revealed to you that you

should go against La Charité? Was it a revelation that caused you to go to Pont-l'Evêque?"

She denied that she had then received any revelation from her Voices.

The last question was: "Did you not say before Paris, 'Surrender the town in the name of Jesus'?"

She answered that she had not spoken those words, but had said, "Surrender the town to the King of France."

The Parisians who were engaged in repelling the attack had heard her saying, "Surrender to us speedily in the name of Jesus." These words are consistent with all we know of Jeanne in the early years of her career. She believed it to be the will of Messire that the towns of the realm should surrender to her, whom he had sent to reconquer them. We have noticed already that at the time of her trial Jeanne had completely lost touch with her early illuminations and that she spoke in quite another language.

On the morrow, Wednesday, the 14th of March, there were two more examinations in the prison. The morning interrogatory turned on the leap from Beaurevoir. She confessed to having leapt without permission from her Voices, preferring to die rather than to fall into the hands of the English.

She was accused of blasphemy against God; but that was false.

The Bishop intervened: "You have said that we, the Lord Bishop, run great danger by bringing you to trial. Of what danger were you speaking? In what peril do we stand, we, your judges, and others?"

"I said to my Lord of Beauvais: 'You declare that you are my judge, I know not if you be. But take heed that ye judge not wrongly, for thus would ye run great danger; and I warn you, so that if Our Lord chastise you for it, I have done my duty by warning you.'"

"What is this peril or this danger?"

"Saint Catherine has told me that I shall have succour. I know not whether it will be my deliverance from prison, or whether, during the trial, some tumult shall arise whereby I shall be delivered. I think it will be either one or the other. My Voices most often tell me I shall be delivered by a great victory. And afterwards they say to me: 'Be thou resigned, grieve not at thy martyrdom; thou shalt come in the end to the kingdom of Paradise.' This do my Voices say unto me simply and absolutely. I mean to say without fail. And I call my martyrdom the trouble and anguish I suffer in prison. I know not whether still greater sufferings are before me, but I wait on the Lord."

It would seem that thus her Voices promised the Maid at once a spiritual and a material deliverance, but the two could hardly occur together. This reply, expressive alike of fear and of illusion, was one to call forth pity from the

hardest; and yet her judges regarded it merely as a means whereby they might entrap her. Feigning to understand that from her revelations she derived a heretical confidence in her eternal salvation, the examiner put to her an old question in a new form. She had already given it a saintly answer. He inquired whether her Voices had told her that she would finally come to the kingdom of Paradise if she continued in the assurance that she would be saved and not condemned in Hell. To this she replied with that perfect faith with which her Voices inspired her: "I believe what my Voices have told me touching my salvation as strongly as if I were already in Paradise."

Such a reply was heretical. The examiner, albeit he was not accustomed to discuss the Maid's replies, could not forbear remarking that this one was of great importance.

Accordingly in the afternoon of that same day, she was shown a consequence of her error; to wit, that if she received from her Voices the assurance of eternal salvation she needed not to confess.

On this occasion Jeanne was questioned touching the affair of Franquet d'Arras. The Bailie of Senlis had done wrong in asking the Maid for her prisoner, the Lord Franquet, in order to put him to death, and Jeanne's judges now incriminated her.

The examiner pointed out the mortal sins with which the accused might be charged: first, having attacked Paris on a feast-day; second, having stolen the hackney of the Lord Bishop of Senlis; third, having leapt from Beaufort; fourth, having worn man's dress; fifth, having consented to the death of a prisoner of war. Touching all these matters, Jeanne did not believe that she had committed mortal sin; but with regard to the leap from Beaufort she acknowledged that she was wrong, and that she had asked God to forgive her.

It was sufficiently established that the accused had fallen into religious error. The tribunal of the Inquisition, out of its abounding mercy, desired the salvation of the sinner. Wherefore on the morning of the very next day, Thursday, the 15th of March, my Lord of Beauvais exhorted Jeanne to submit to the Church, and essayed to make her understand that she ought to obey the Church Militant, for the Church Militant was one thing and the Church Triumphant another. Jeanne listened to him dubiously. On that day she was again questioned touching her flight from the château of Beaulieu and her intention to leave the tower without the permission of my Lord of Beauvais. As to the latter she was firmly resolute.

"Were I to see the door open, I would go, and it would be with the permission of Our Lord. I firmly believe that if I were to see the door open and if my guards and the other English were beyond power of resistance, I should regard it as my permission and as succour sent unto me by Our Lord. But without permission I

would not go, save that I might essay to go, in order to know whether it were Our Lord's will. The proverb says: 'Help thyself and God will help thee.' This I say so that, if I were to go, it should not be said I went without permission."

Then they reverted to the question of her wearing man's dress.

"Which would you prefer, to wear a woman's dress and hear mass, or to continue in man's dress and not to hear mass?"

"Promise me that I shall hear mass if I am in woman's dress, and then I will answer you."

"I promise you that you shall hear mass when you are in woman's dress."

"And what do you say if I have promised and sworn to our King not to put off these clothes? Nevertheless, I say unto you: 'Have me a robe made, long enough to touch the ground, but without a train. I will go to mass in it; then, when I come back, I will return to my present clothes.'"

"You must wear woman's dress altogether and without conditions."

"Send me a dress like that worn by your burgess's daughters, to wit, a long *houppelande* ; and I will take it and even a woman's hood to go and hear mass. But with all my heart I entreat you to leave me these clothes I am now wearing, and let me hear mass without changing anything."

Her aversion to putting off man's dress is not to be explained solely by the fact that this dress preserved her best against the violence of the men-at-arms; it is possible that no such objection existed. She was averse to wearing woman's dress because she had not received permission from her Voices; and we may easily divine why not. Was she not a chieftain of war? How humiliating for such an one to wear petticoats like a townsman's wife! And above all things just now, when at any moment the French might come and deliver her by some great feat of arms. Ought they not to find their Maid in man's attire, ready to put on her armour and fight with them?

Thereafter the examiner asked her whether she would submit to the Church, whether she made a reverence to her Voices, whether she believed the saints, whether she offered them lighted candles, whether she obeyed them, whether in war she had ever done anything without their permission or contrary to their command.

Then they came to the question which they held to be the most difficult of all:

"If the devil were to take upon himself the form of an angel, how would you know whether he were a good angel or a bad?"

She replied with a simplicity which appeared presumptuous: "I should easily discern whether it were Saint Michael or an imitation of him."

Two days later, on Saturday, the 17th of March, Jeanne was examined in her prison both morning and evening.

Hitherto she had been very loath to describe the countenance and the dress of the angel and the saints who had visited her in the village. Maître Jean de la Fontaine endeavoured to obtain some light on this subject.

“In what form and semblance did Saint Michael come to you? Was he tall and how was he clothed?”

“He came in the form of a true *prud’homme* .”

Jeanne was not one to believe she saw the Archangel in a long doctor’s robe or wearing a cope of gold. Moreover it was not thus that he figured in the churches. There he was represented in painting and in sculpture, clothed in glittering armour, with a golden crown on his helmet. In such guise did he appear to her “in the form of a right true *prud’homme* ,” to take a word from the *Chanson de Roland* , where a great sword thrust is called the thrust of a *prud’homme* . He came to her in the garb of a great knight, like Arthur and Charlemagne, wearing full armour.

Once again the examiner put to Jeanne that question on which her life or death depended:

“Will you submit all your deeds and sayings, good or bad, to the judgment of our mother, Holy Church?”

“As for the Church, I love her and would maintain her with all my power, for religion’s sake,” the Maid replied; “and I am not one to be kept from church and from hearing mass. But as for the good works which I have wrought, and touching my coming, for them I must give an account to the King of Heaven, who has sent me to Charles, son of Charles, King of France. And you will see that the French will shortly accomplish a great work, to which God will appoint them, in which they will shake nearly all France. I say it in order that when it shall come to pass, it may be remembered that I have said it.”

But she was unable to name the time when this great work should be accomplished; and Maître Jean de la Fontaine returned to the point on which Jeanne’s fate depended.

“Will you submit to the judgment of the Church?”

“I appeal to Our Lord, who hath sent me, to Our Lady and to all the blessed saints in Paradise. To my mind Our Lord and his Church are one, and no distinction should be made. Wherefore do you essay to make out that they are not one?”

In justice to Maître Jean de la Fontaine we are bound to admit the lucidity of his reply. "There is the Church Triumphant, in which are God, his saints, the angels and the souls that are saved," he said. "There is also the Church Militant, which is our Holy Father, the Pope, the Vicar of God on earth; the cardinals, the prelates of the Church and the clergy, with all good Christians and Catholics; and this Church in its assembly cannot err, for it is moved by the Holy Ghost. Will you appeal to the Church Militant?"

"I am come to the King of France from God, from the Virgin Mary and all the blessed saints in Paradise and from the Church Victorious above and by their command. To this Church I submit all the good deeds I have done and shall do. As to replying whether I will submit to the Church Militant, for the present, I will make no further answer."

Again she was offered a woman's dress in which to hear mass; she refused it.

"As for a woman's dress, I will not take it yet, not until it be Our Lord's will. And if it should come to pass that I be taken to judgment and there divested of my clothes, I beg my lords of the Church the favour of a woman's smock and covering for my head. I would rather die than deny what Our Lord hath caused me to do. I believe firmly that Our Lord will not let it come to pass that I should be cast so low, and that soon I shall have help from God, and that by a miracle."

Thereafter the following questions were put to her: "Do you not believe to-day that fairies are evil spirits?"

"I do not know."

"Do you know whether Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret hate the English?"

"They love what Our Lord loves and hate what God hates."

"Does God hate the English?"

"Touching the love or hatred of God for the English and what he will do for their souls I know nothing. But I do know that they will all be driven out of France, save those who die there, and that God will send victory to the French and defeat to the English."

"Was God on the side of the English when they prospered in France?"

"I know not whether God hated the French. But I believe that he permitted them to be beaten for their sins, if they were in sin."

Jeanne was asked certain questions touching the banner on which she had caused angels to be painted.

She replied that she had had angels painted as she had seen them represented in churches.

At this point the examination was adjourned. The last interrogation in the prison took place after dinner. She had now endured fifteen in twenty-five days, but her courage never flagged. This last time the subjects were more than usually

diverse and confused. First, the examiner essayed to discover by what charms and evil practices good fortune and victory had attended the standard painted with angelic figures. Then he wanted to know wherefore the clerks put on Jeanne's letters the sacred names of Jésus and Marie.

Then came the following subtle question: "Do you believe that if you were married your Voices would come to you?"

It was well known that she dearly cherished her virginity. Certain of her words might be interpreted to mean that she considered this virginity to be the cause of her good fortune; wherefore her examiners were curious to know whether if she were adroitly approached she might not be brought to cast scorn on the married state and to condemn intercourse between husbands and wives. Such a condemnation would have been a grievous error, savouring of the heresy of the Cathari.

She replied: "I know not and I appeal to Our Lord." Then there followed another question much more dangerous for one who like Jeanne loved her King with all her heart.

"Do you think and firmly believe that your King did right to kill or cause to be killed my Lord of Burgundy?"

"It was sore pity for the realm of France."

Then did the examiner put to her this grave question: "Do you hold yourself bound to answer the whole truth to the Pope, God's Vicar, on all that may be asked you touching religion and your conscience?"

"I demand to be taken before him. Then will I make unto him such answer as behoveth."

These words involved an appeal to the Pope, and such an appeal was lawful. "In doubtful matters touching on religion," said St. Thomas, "there ought always to be an appeal to the Pope or to the General Council." If Jeanne's appeal were not in regular judicial form, it was not her fault. She was ignorant of legal matters and neither guide nor counsel had been granted to her. To the best of her knowledge, and according to wont and justice, she appealed to the common father of the faithful.

The doctors and masters were silent. And thus was closed against the accused the one way of deliverance remaining to her. She was now hopelessly lost. It is not surprising that Jeanne's judges, who were partisans of England, ignored her right of appeal; but it is surprising that the doctors and masters of the French party, the clerks of the provinces loyal to King Charles, did not all and with one voice sign an appeal and demand that the Maid, who had been judged worthy by her examiners at Poitiers, should be taken before the Pope and the Council.

Instead of replying to Jeanne's request, the examiners inquired further concerning those much discussed magic rings and apparitions of demons.

"Did you ever kiss and embrace the Saints, Catherine and Margaret?"

"I embraced them both."

"Were they of a sweet savour?"

"It is well to know. Yea, their savour was sweet."

"When embracing them did you feel heat or anything else?"

"I could not have embraced them without feeling and touching them."

"What part did you kiss, face or feet?"

"It is more fitting to kiss their feet than their faces."

"Did you not give them chaplets of flowers?"

"I have often done them honour by crowning with flowers their images in churches. But to those who appeared to me never have I given flowers as far as I can remember."

"Know you aught of those who consort with fairies?"

"I have never done so nor have I known anything about them. Yet I have heard of them and that they were seen on Thursdays; but I do not believe it, and to me it seems sorcery."

Then came a question touching her standard, deemed enchanted by her judges. It elicited one of those epigrammatic replies she loved.

"Wherefore was your standard rather than those of the other captains carried into the church of Reims?"

"It had been in the contest, wherefore should it not share the prize?"

Now that the inquiries and examinations were concluded, it was announced that the preliminary trial was at an end. The so-called trial in ordinary opened on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday, the 27th of March, in a room near the great hall of the castle.

Before ordering the deed of accusation to be read, my Lord of Beauvais offered Jeanne the aid of an advocate. If this offer had been postponed till then, it was doubtless because in his opinion Jeanne had not previously needed such aid. It is well known that a heretic's advocate, if he would himself escape falling into heresy, must strictly limit his methods of defence. During the preliminary inquiry he must confine himself to discovering the names of the witnesses for the prosecution and to making them known to the accused. If the heretic pleaded guilty then it was useless to grant him an advocate. Now my Lord maintained that the accusation was founded not on the evidence of witnesses but on the avowals of the accused. And this was doubtless his reason for not offering Jeanne an advocate before the opening of the trial in ordinary, which bore upon matters of doctrine.

The Lord Bishop thus addressed the Maid: “Jeanne,” said he, “all persons here present are churchmen of consummate knowledge, whose will and intention it is to proceed against you in all piety and kindness, seeking neither vengeance nor corporal chastisement, but your instruction and your return into the way of truth and salvation. As you are neither learned nor sufficiently instructed in letters or in the difficult matters which are to be discussed, to take counsel of yourself, touching what you should do or reply, we offer you to choose as your advocate one or more of those present, as you will. If you will not choose, then one shall be appointed for you by us, in order that he may advise you touching what you may do or say....”

Considering what the method of procedure was, this was a gracious offer. And even though my Lord of Beauvais obliged the accused to choose from among the counsellors and assessors, whom he had himself summoned to the trial, he did more than he was bound to do. The choice of a counsel did not belong to the accused; it belonged to the judge, whose duty it was to appoint an honest, upright person. Moreover, it was permissible for an ecclesiastical judge to refuse to the end to grant the accused any counsel whatsoever. Nicolas Eymeric, in his *Directorium*, decides that the Bishop and the Inquisitor, acting conjointly, may constitute authority sufficient for the interpretation of the law and may proceed informally, *de plano*, dispensing with the ceremony of appointing counsel and all the paraphernalia of a trial.

We may notice that my Lord of Beauvais offered the accused an advocate on the ground of her ignorance of things divine and human, but without taking her youthfulness into account. In other courts of law proceedings against a minor — that is, a person under twenty-five — who was not assisted by an advocate, were legally void. If this rule had been binding in Inquisitorial procedure the Bishop, by his offer of legal aid, would have avoided any breach of this rule; and as the choice of an advocate lay with him, he might well have done so without running any risk. “Our justice is not like theirs,” Bernard Gui rightly said, when he was comparing inquisitorial procedure with that of the other ecclesiastical courts which conformed to the Roman law.

Jeanne did not accept the judge’s offer: “First,” she said, “touching what you admonish me for my good and in matters of religion, I thank you and the company here assembled. As for the advocate you offer me, I also thank you, but it is not my intent to depart from the counsel of Our Lord. As for the oath you wish me to take, I am ready to swear to speak the truth in all that concerns your suit.”

Thereupon Maître Thomas de Courcelles began to read in French the indictment which the Promoter had drawn up in seventy articles. This text set

forth in order the deeds with which Jeanne had already been reproached and which were groundlessly held to have been confessed by her and duly proved. There were no less than seventy distinct charges of horrible crimes committed against religion and Holy Mother Church. Questioned on each article, Jeanne with heroic candour repeated her previous replies. The tedious reading of this long accusation was continued and completed on the 28th of March, the Wednesday after Palm Sunday. As was her wont, she asked for delay in order to reply on certain points. On Easter Eve, the 31st of March, the time granted having expired, my Lord of Beauvais went to the prison, and, in the presence of the doctors and masters of the University, demanded the promised replies. They nearly all touched on the one accusation which included all the rest, the heresy in which all heresies were comprehended, — the refusal to obey the Church Militant. Jeanne finally declared her resolve to appeal to Our Lord rather than to any man; this was to set at naught the authority of the Pope and the Council.

The doctors and masters of the University of Paris advised that an epitome should be made of the Promoter's voluminous indictment, its chief points selected, and the seventy charges considerably reduced. Maître Nicolas Midi, doctor in theology, performed this task and submitted it when done to the judges and assessors. One of them proposed emendations. Brother Jacques of Touraine, a friar of the Franciscan order, who was charged to draw up the document in its final stage, admitted most of the corrections requested. In this wise the incriminating propositions, which the judges claimed, but claimed falsely, to have derived from the replies of the accused, were resolved into twelve articles.

These twelve articles were not communicated to Jeanne. On Thursday, the 12th of April, twenty-one masters and doctors met in the chapel of the Bishop's Palace, and, after having examined the articles, engaged in a conference, the result of which was unfavourable to the accused.

According to them, the apparitions and revelations of which she boasted came not from God. They were human inventions, or the work of an evil spirit. She had not received signs sufficient to warrant her believing in them. In the case of this woman these doctors and masters discovered lies; a lack of verisimilitude; faith lightly given; superstitious divinings; deeds scandalous and irreligious; sayings rash, presumptuous, full of boasting; blasphemies against God and his saints. They found her to have lacked piety in her behaviour towards father and mother; to have come short in love towards her neighbour; to have been addicted to idolatry, or at any rate to the invention of lying tales and to schismatic conversation destructive of the unity, the authority and the power of the Church; and, finally, to have been skilled in the black art and to have strongly inclined to heresy.

Had she not been sustained and comforted by her heavenly Voices, the Voices of her own heart, Jeanne would never have endured to the end of this terrible trial. Not only was she being tortured at once by the princes of the Church and the rascals of the army, but her sufferings of body and mind were such as could never have been borne by any ordinary human being. Yet she suffered them without her constancy, her faith, her divine hope, one might almost say her cheerfulness, ever being diminished. Finally she gave way; her physical strength, but not her courage, was exhausted; she fell a victim to an illness which was expected to be fatal. She seemed near her end, or rather, alas! near her release.

On Wednesday, the 18th of April, my Lord of Beauvais and the Vice-Inquisitor of the Faith went to her with divers doctors and masters to exhort her in all charity; she was still very seriously sick. My Lord of Beauvais represented to her that when on certain difficult matters she had been examined before persons of great wisdom, many things she had said had been noted as contrary to religion. Wherefore, considering that she was but an unlettered woman, he offered to provide her with men learned and upright who would instruct her. He requested the doctors present to give her salutary counsel, and he invited her herself, if any other such persons were known to her, to indicate them, promising to summon them without fail.

“The Church,” he added, “never closes her heart against those who will return to her.”

Jeanne answered that she thanked him for what he had said for her salvation, and she added: “Meseemeth, that seeing the sickness in which I lie, I am in great danger of death. If it be thus, then may God do with me according to his good pleasure. I demand that ye permit me to confess, that ye also give me the body of my Saviour and bury me in holy ground.”

My Lord of Beauvais represented to her that if she would receive the sacraments she must submit to the Church.

“If my body die in prison,” she replied, “I depend on you to have it put in holy ground; if you do not, then I appeal to Our Lord.”

Then she vehemently maintained the truth of the revelations she had received from God, Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret.

And when she was asked yet again whether she would submit herself and her acts to Holy Mother Church, she replied: “Whatever happens to me, I will never do or say aught save what I have already said at the trial.”

The doctors and masters one after the other exhorted her to submit to Holy Mother Church. They quoted numerous passages from Holy Writ. They

promised her the body of Our Lord if she would obey; but she remained resolute.

“Touching this submission,” she said, “I will reply naught save what I have said already. I love God, I serve him, I am a good Christian, and I wish with all my power to aid and support Holy Church.”

In times of great need recourse was had to processions. “Do you not wish,” she was asked, “that a fine and famous procession be ordained to restore you to a good estate if you be not therein?”

She replied, “I desire the Church and all Catholics to pray for me.”

Among the doctors consulted there were many who recommended that she should be again instructed and charitably admonished. On Wednesday, the 2nd of May, sixty-three reverend doctors and masters met in the Robing Room of the castle. She was brought in, and Maître Jean de Castillon, doctor in theology, Archdeacon of Évreux, read a document in French, in which the deeds and sayings with which Jeanne was reproached were summed up in six articles. Then many doctors and masters addressed to her in turn admonitions and charitable counsels. They exhorted her to submit to the Church Militant Universal, to the Holy Father the Pope and to the General Council. They warned her that if the Church abandoned her, her soul would stand in great peril of the penalty of eternal fire, whilst her body might be burned in an earthly fire, and that by the sentence of other judges.

Jeanne replied as before. On the morrow, Thursday, the 3rd of May, the day of the Invention of the Holy Cross, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her. She was not sure whether she had seen him before. But this time she had no doubt. Her Voices told her that it was he, and she was greatly comforted.

That same day she asked her Voices whether she should submit to the Church and obey the exhortation of the clerics.

Her Voices replied: “If thou desirest help from Our Lord, then submit to him all thy doings.”

Jeanne wanted to know from her Voices whether she would be burned.

Her Voices told her to wait upon the Lord and he would help her. This mystic aid strengthened Jeanne’s heart.

Among heretics and those possessed, such obstinacy as hers was not unparalleled. Ecclesiastical judges were well acquainted with the stiff-neckedness of women who had been deceived by the Devil. In order to force them to tell the truth, when admonitions and exhortations failed, recourse was had to torture. And even such a measure did not always succeed. Many of these wicked females (*mulierculæ*) endured the cruellest suffering with a constancy passing the ordinary strength of human nature. The doctors would not believe

such constancy to be natural; they attributed it to the machinations of the Evil One. The devil was capable of protecting his servants even when they had fallen into the hands of judges of the Church; he granted them strength to bear the torture in silence. This strength was called the gift of taciturnity.

On Wednesday, the 9th of May, Jeanne was taken to the great tower of the castle, into the torture-chamber. There my Lord of Beauvais, in the presence of the Vice Inquisitor and nine doctors and masters, read her the articles, to which she had hitherto refused to reply; and he threatened her that if she did not confess the whole truth she would be put to the torture.

The instruments were prepared; the two executioners, Mauger Leparmentier, a married clerk, and his companion, were in readiness close by her, awaiting the Bishop's orders.

Six days before Jeanne had received great comfort from her Voices. Now she replied resolutely: "Verily, if you were to tear my limbs asunder and drive my soul out of my body, naught else would I tell you, and if I did say anything unto you, I would always maintain afterwards that you had dragged it from me by force."

My Lord of Beauvais decided to defer the torture, fearing that it would do no good to so hardened a subject. On the following Saturday, he deliberated in his house, with the Vice-Inquisitor and thirteen doctors and masters; opinion was divided. Maître Raoul Roussel advised that Jeanne should not be tortured lest ground for complaint should be given against a trial so carefully conducted. It would seem that he anticipated the Devil's granting Jeanne the gift of taciturnity, whereby in diabolical silence she would be able to brave the tortures of the Holy Inquisition. On the other hand Maître Aubert Morel, licentiate in canon law, counsellor to the Official of Rouen, Canon of the Cathedral, and Maître Thomas de Courcelles, deemed it expedient to apply torture. Maître Nicolas Loiseleur, master of arts, Canon of Rouen, whose share in the proceedings had been to act Saint Catherine and the Lorraine shoemaker, had no very decided opinion on the subject, still it seemed to him by no means unprofitable that Jeanne for her soul's welfare should be tortured. The majority of doctors and masters agreed that for the present there was no need to subject her to this trial. Some gave no reasons, others alleged that it behoved them yet once again to warn her charitably. Maître Guillaume Erard, doctor in theology, held that sufficient material for the pronouncing of a sentence existed already. Thus among those, who spared Jeanne the torture, were to be found the least merciful; for the spirit of ecclesiastical tribunals was such that to refuse to torture an accused was in certain cases to refuse him mercy.

To the trial of Marguerite la Porète, the judges summoned no experts. Touching the charges held as proven, they submitted a written report to the University of Paris. The University gave its opinion on everything but the truth of the charges. This reservation was merely formal, and the decision of the University had the force of a sentence. In Jeanne's trial this precedent was cited. On the 21st of April, Maître Jean Beaupère, Maître Jacques de Touraine and Maître Nicolas Midi left Rouen, and, at the risk of being attacked on the road by men-at-arms, journeyed to Paris in order to present the twelve articles to their colleagues of the University.

On the 28th of April, the University, meeting in its general assembly at Saint-Bernard, charged the Holy Faculty of Theology and the Venerable Faculty of Decrees with the examination of the twelve articles.

On the 14th of May, the deliberations of the two Faculties were submitted to all the Faculties in solemn assembly, who ratified them and made them their own. The University then sent them to King Henry, beseeching his Royal Majesty to execute justice promptly, in order that the people, so greatly scandalised by this woman, be brought back to good doctrine and holy faith. It is worthy of notice that in a trial, in which the Pope, represented by the Vice-Inquisitor, was one judge, and the King, represented by the Bishop, another, the Eldest Daughter of Kings should have communicated directly with the King of France, the guardian of her privileges.

According to the Sacred Faculty of Theology, Jeanne's apparitions were fictitious, lying, deceptive, inspired by devils. The sign given to the King was a presumptuous and pernicious lie, derogatory to the dignity of angels. Jeanne's belief in the visitations of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret was an error rash and injurious because Jeanne placed it on the same plane as the truths of religion. Jeanne's predictions were but superstitions, idle divinations and vain boasting. Her statement that she wore man's dress by the command of God was blasphemy, a violation of divine law and ecclesiastical sanction, a contemning of the sacraments and tainted with idolatry. In the letters she had dictated, Jeanne appeared treacherous, perfidious, cruel, sanguinary, seditious, blasphemous and in favour of tyranny. In setting out for France she had broken the commandment to honour father and mother, she had given an occasion for scandal, she had committed blasphemy and had fallen from the faith. In the leap from Beaurevoir, she had displayed a pusillanimity bordering on despair and homicide; and, moreover, it had caused her to utter rash statements touching the remission of her sin and erroneous pronouncements concerning free will. By proclaiming her confidence in her salvation, she uttered presumptuous and pernicious lies; by saying that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret did not speak

English, she blasphemed these saints and violated the precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." The honours she rendered these saints were nought but idolatry and the worship of devils. Her refusal to submit her doings to the Church tended to schism, to the denial of the unity and authority of the Church and to apostasy.

The doctors of the Faculty of Theology were very learned. They knew who the three evil spirits were whom Jeanne in her delusion took for Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret. They were Belial, Satan, and Behemoth. Belial, worshipped by the people of Sidon, was sometimes represented as an angel of great beauty; he is the demon of disobedience. Satan is the Lord of Hell; and Behemoth is a dull, heavy creature, who feeds on hay like an ox.

The venerable Faculty of Decrees decided that this schismatic, this erring woman, this apostate, this liar, this soothsayer, be charitably exhorted and duly warned by competent judges, and that if notwithstanding she persisted in refusing to abjure her error, she must be given up to the secular arm to receive due chastisement. Such were the deliberations and decisions which the Venerable University of Paris submitted to the examination and to the verdict of the Holy Apostolic See and of the sacrosanct General Council.

Meanwhile, where were the clerks of France? Had they nothing to say in this matter? Had they no decision to submit to the Pope and to the Council? Why did they not urge their opinions in opposition to those of the Faculties of Paris? Why did they keep silence? Jeanne demanded the record of the Poitiers trial. Wherefore did those Poitiers doctors, who had recommended the King to employ the Maid lest, by rejecting her, he should refuse the gift of the Holy Spirit, fail to send the record to Rouen? Before the Maid espoused their waning cause, these Poitiers doctors, these magistrates, these University professors banished from Paris, advocates and counsellors of an exiled Parlement, had not a robe to their backs nor shoes for their children. Now, thanks to the Maid, they were every day regaining new hope and vigour. And yet they left her, who had so nobly served their King, to be treated as a heretic and a reprobate. Where were Brother Pasquerel, Friar Richard, and all those churchmen who but lately surrounded her in France and who looked to go with her to the Crusade against the Bohemians and the Turks? Why did they not demand a safe-conduct and come and give evidence at the trial? Or at least why did they not send their evidence? Why did not the Archbishop of Embrun, who but recently gave such noble counsels to the King, send some written statement in favour of the Maid to the judges at Rouen? My Lord of Reims, Chancellor of the Kingdom, had said that she was proud but not heretical. Wherefore now, acting contrary to his own interests and honour, did he refrain from testifying in favour of her through whom he had recovered his episcopal city? Wherefore did he not assert his right and do his duty as

metropolitan and censure and suspend his suffragan, the Bishop of Beauvais, who was guilty of prevarication in the administration of justice? Why did not the illustrious clerics, whom King Charles had appointed deputies at the Council of Bâle, undertake to bring the cause of the Maid before the Council? And finally, why did not the priests, the ecclesiastics of the realm, with one voice demand an appeal to the Holy Father?

They all with one accord, as if struck dumb with astonishment, remained passive and silent. Can they have feared that too searching a light would be cast on Jeanne's cause by that illustrious University, that Sun of the Church, which was consulted on religious matters by all Christian states? Can they have suspected that this woman, who in France had been considered a saint, might after all have been inspired by the devil? But if what they had once believed they still held to be true, if they believed that the Maid had come from God to lead their King to his glorious coronation, then what are we to think of those clerks, those ecclesiastics who denied the Daughter of God, on the eve of her passion?

CHAPTER XIII

THE ABJURATION — THE FIRST SENTENCE

ON Saturday, the 19th of May, the doctors and masters, to the number of fifty, assembled in the archiepiscopal chapel of Rouen. There they unanimously declared their agreement with the decision of the University of Paris; and my Lord of Beauvais ordained that a new charitable admonition be addressed to Jeanne. Accordingly, on Wednesday the 23rd, the Bishop, the Vice-Inquisitor, and the Promoter went to a room in the castle, near Jeanne's cell. They were accompanied by seven doctors and masters, by the Lord Bishop of Noyon and by the Lord Bishop of Thérouanne. The latter, brother to Messire Jean de Luxembourg who had sold the Maid, was held one of the most notable personages of the Great Council of England; he was Chancellor of France for King Henry, as Messire Regnault de Chartres was for King Charles.

The accused was brought in, and Maître Pierre Maurice, doctor in theology, read to her the twelve articles as they had been abridged and commented upon, in conformity with the deliberations of the University; the whole was drawn up as a discourse addressed to Jeanne directly:

Article I

First, Jeanne, thou saidst that at about the age of thirteen, thou didst receive revelations and behold apparitions of angels and of the Saints, Catherine and Margaret, that thou didst behold them frequently with thy bodily eyes, that they spoke unto thee and do still oftentimes speak unto thee, and that they have said unto thee many things that thou hast fully declared in thy trial.

The clerks of the University of Paris and others have considered the manner of these revelations and apparitions, their object, the substance of the things revealed, the person to whom they were revealed; all points touching them have they considered. And now they pronounce these revelations and apparitions to be either lying fictions, deceptive and dangerous, or superstitions, proceeding from spirits evil and devilish.

Article II

Item, thou hast said that thy King received a sign, by which he knew that thou wast sent of God: to wit that Saint Michael, accompanied by a multitude of angels, certain of whom had wings, others crowns, and with whom were Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, came to thee in the town of Château-Chinon; and that they all entered with thee and went up the staircase of the castle, into the chamber of thy King, before whom the angel who wore the crown made obeisance. And once didst thou say that this crown which thou callest a sign, was delivered to the Archbishop of Reims who gave it to thy King, in the presence of a multitude of princes and lords whom thou didst call by name.

Now concerning this sign, the aforesaid clerks declare it to lack verisimilitude, to be a presumptuous lie, deceptive, pernicious, a thing counterfeited and attacking the dignity of angels.

Article III

Item, thou hast said that thou knewest the angels and the saints by the good counsel, the comfort and the instruction they gave thee, because they told thee their names and because the saints saluted thee. Thou didst believe also that it was Saint Michael who appeared unto thee; and that the deeds and sayings of this angel and these saints are good thou didst believe as firmly as thou believest in Christ.

Now the clerks declare such signs to be insufficient for the recognition of the said saints and angels. The clerks maintain that thou hast lightly believed and rashly affirmed, and further that when thou sayst thou dost believe as firmly etc., thou dost err from the faith.

Article IV

Item, thou hast said thou art assured of certain things which are to come, that thou hast known hidden things, that thou hast also recognized men whom thou hadst never seen before, and this by the Voices of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret.

Thereupon the clerks declare that in these sayings are superstition, divination, presumptuous assertion and vain boasting.

Article V

Item, thou hast said that by God's command and according to his will, thou hast worn and dost still wear man's apparel. Because thou hast God's commandment to wear this dress thou hast donned a short tunic, jerkin, and hose with many points. Thou dost even wear thy hair cut short above the ears, without keeping about thee anything to denote the feminine sex, save what nature hath given thee. And oftentimes hast thou in this garb received the Sacrament of the Eucharist. And albeit thou hast been many times admonished to leave it, thou wouldest not, saying that thou wouldst liefer die than quit this apparel, unless it were by God's command; and that if thou wert still in this dress and with those of thine own party it would be for the great weal of France. Thou sayest also that for nothing wouldst thou take an oath not to wear this dress and bear these arms; and for all this that thou doest thou dost plead divine command.

In such matters the clerks declare that thou blasphemest against God, despising him and his Sacraments, that thou dost transgress divine law, Holy Scripture and the canons of the Church, that thou thinkest evil and dost err from the faith, that thou art full of vain boasting, that thou art addicted to idolatry and worship of thyself and thy clothes, according to the customs of the heathen.

Article VI

Item, thou hast often said, that in thy letters thou hast put these names, *Jhesus Maria* , and the sign of the cross, to warn those to whom thou didst write not to do what was indicated in the letter. In other letters thou hast boasted that thou wouldst slay all those who did not obey thee, and that by thy blows thou wouldst prove who had God on his side. Also hast thou oftentimes said that all thy deeds were by revelation and according to divine command.

Touching such affirmations the clerks declare thee to be a traitor, perfidious, cruel, desiring human bloodshed, seditious, an instigator of tyranny, a blasphemer of God's commandments and revelations.

Article VII

Item, thou sayest that according to revelations vouchsafed unto thee at the age of seventeen, thou didst leave thy parents' house against their will, driving them almost mad. Thou didst go to Robert de Baudricourt, who, at thy request, gave thee man's apparel and a sword, also men-at-arms to take thee to thy King. And being come to the King, thou didst say unto him that his enemies should be driven away, thou didst promise to bring him into a great kingdom, to make him victorious over his foes, and that for this God had sent thee. These things thou sayest thou didst accomplish in obedience to God and according to revelation.

In such things the clerks declare thee to have been irreverent to thy father and mother, thus disobeying God's command; to have given occasion for scandal, to have blasphemed, to have erred from the faith and to have made a rash and presumptuous promise.

Article VIII

Item, thou hast said, that voluntarily thou didst leap from the Tower of Beaurevoir, preferring rather to die than to be delivered into the hands of the English and to live after the destruction of Compiègne. And albeit Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret forbade thee to leap, thou couldst not restrain thyself. And despite the great sin thou hast committed in offending these saints, thou didst know by thy Voices, that after thy confession, thy sin was forgiven thee.

This deed the clerks declare thee to have committed through cowardice turning to despair and probably to suicide. In this matter likewise thou didst utter a rash and presumptuous statement in asserting that thy sin is forgiven, and thou dost err from the faith touching the doctrine of free will.

Article IX

Item, thou hast said that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret promised to lead thee to Paradise provided thou didst remain a virgin; and that thou hadst vowed and promised them to cherish thy virginity, and of that thou art as well assured as if already thou hadst entered into the glory of the Blessed. Thou believest that thou hast not committed mortal sin. And it seemeth to thee that if thou wert in mortal sin the saints would not visit thee daily as they do.

Such an assertion the clerks pronounce to be a pernicious lie, presumptuous and rash, that therein lieth a contradiction of what thou hadst previously said, and that finally thy beliefs do err from the true Christian faith.

Article X

Item, thou hast declared it to be within thy knowledge that God loveth certain living persons better than thee, and that this thou hast learnt by revelation from Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret: also that those saints speak French, not English, since they are not on the side of the English. And when thou knewest that thy Voices were for thy King, you didst fall to disliking the Burgundians.

Such matters the clerks pronounce to be a rash and presumptuous assertion, a superstitious divination, a blasphemy uttered against Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, and a transgression of the commandment to love our neighbours.

Article XI

Item, thou hast said that to those whom thou callest Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, thou didst do reverence, bending the knee, taking off thy cap, kissing the ground on which they trod, vowing to them thy virginity: that in the instruction of these saints, whom thou didst invoke and kiss and embrace, thou didst believe as soon as they appeared unto thee, and without seeking counsel from thy priest or from any other ecclesiastic. And, notwithstanding, thou believest that these Voices came from God as firmly as thou believest in the Christian religion and the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover thou hast said that did any evil spirit appear to thee in the form of Saint Michael thou wouldest know such a spirit and distinguish him from the saint. And again hast thou said, that of thine own accord, thou hast sworn not to reveal the sign thou gavest to thy King. And finally thou didst add: "Save at God's command."

Now touching these matters, the clerks affirm that supposing thou hast had the revelations and beheld the apparitions of which thou boastest and in such a manner as thou dost say, then art thou an idolatress, an invoker of demons, an apostate from the faith, a maker of rash statements, a swearer of an unlawful oath.

Article XII

Item, thou hast said that if the Church wished thee to disobey the orders thou sayest God gave thee, nothing would induce thee to do it; that thou knowest that all the deeds of which thou hast been accused in thy trial were wrought according to the command of God and that it was impossible for thee to do otherwise. Touching these deeds, thou dost refuse to submit to the judgment of the Church on earth or of any living man, and will submit therein to God alone. And moreover thou didst declare this reply itself not to be made of thine own accord but by God's command; despite the article of faith: *Unam sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam*, having been many times declared unto thee, and notwithstanding that it behoveth all Christians to submit their deeds and sayings to the Church militant especially concerning revelations and such like matters.

Wherefore the clerks declare thee to be schismatic, disbelieving in the unity and authority of the Church, apostate and obstinately erring from the faith.

Having completed the reading of the articles, Maître Pierre Maurice, on the invitation of the Bishop, proceeded to exhort Jeanne. He had been rector of the University of Paris in 1428. He was esteemed an orator. He it was who, on the 5th of June, had discoursed in the name of the chapter, before King Henry VI on the occasion of his entering Rouen. He would seem to have been distinguished by some knowledge of and taste for ancient letters, and to have been possessed of precious manuscripts, amongst which were the comedies of Terence and the *Æneid* of Virgil.

In terms of calculated simplicity did this illustrious doctor call upon Jeanne to reflect on the effects of her words and sayings, and tenderly did he exhort her to submit to the Church. After the wormwood he offered her the honey; he spoke to her in words kind and familiar. With remarkable adroitness he entered into the feelings and inclinations of the maiden's heart. Seeing her filled with knightly enthusiasm and loyalty to King Charles, whose coronation was her doing, he drew his comparisons from chivalry, thereby essaying to prove to her that she ought rather to believe in the Church Militant than in her Voices and apparitions.

"If your King," he said to her, "had appointed you to defend a fortress, forbidding you to let any one enter it, would you not refuse to admit whomsoever claiming to come from him did not present letters and some other token. Likewise, when Our Lord Jesus Christ, on his ascension into heaven, committed to the Blessed Apostle Peter and to his successors the government of his Church, he forbade them to receive such as claimed to come in his name but brought no credentials."

And, to bring home to her how grievous a sin it was to disobey the Church, he recalled the time when she waged war, and put the case of a knight who should disobey his king:

“When you were in your King’s dominion,” he said to her, “if a knight or some other owing fealty to him had arisen, saying, ‘I will not obey the King; I will not submit either to him or to his officers,’ would you not have said, ‘He is a man to be censured’? What say you then of yourself, you who, engendered in Christ’s religion, having become by baptism the daughter of the Church and the bride of Christ, dost now refuse obedience to the officers of Christ, that is, to the prelates of the Church?”

Thus did Maître Pierre Maurice endeavour to make Jeanne understand him. He did not succeed. Against the courage of this child all the reasons and all the eloquence of the world would have availed nothing. When Maître Pierre had finished speaking, Jeanne, being asked whether she did not hold herself bound to submit her deeds and sayings to the Church, replied:

“What I have always held and said in the trial that will I maintain.... If I were condemned and saw the fagots lighted, and the executioner ready to stir the fire, and I in the fire, I would say and maintain till I died nought other than what I said during the trial.”

At these words the Bishop declared the discussion at an end, and deferred the pronouncing of the sentence till the morrow.

The next day, the Thursday after Whitsuntide and the 24th day of May, early in the morning, Maître Jean Beaupère visited Jeanne in her prison and warned her that she would be shortly taken to the scaffold to hear a sermon.

“If you are a good Christian,” he said, “you will agree to submit all your deeds and sayings to Holy Mother Church, and especially to the ecclesiastical judges.”

Maître Jean Beaupère thought he heard her reply, “So I will.”

If such were her answer, then it must have been because, worn out by a flight of agony, her physical courage quailed at the thought of death by burning.

Just when he was leaving her, as she stood near a door, Maître Nicolas Loiseleur gave her the same advice, and in order to induce her to follow it, he made her a false promise:

“Jeanne, believe me,” he said. “You have your deliverance in your own hands. Wear the apparel of your sex, and do what shall be required of you. Otherwise you stand in danger of death. If you do as I tell you, good will come to you and no harm. You will be delivered into the hands of the Church.”

She was taken in a cart and with an armed guard to that part of the town called Bourg-l’Abbé, lying beneath the castle walls. And but a short distance

away the cart was stopped, in the cemetery of Saint-Ouen, also called *les aîtres Saint-Ouen*. Here a highly popular fair was held every year on the feast day of the patron saint of the Abbey. Here it was that Jeanne was to hear the sermon, as so many other unhappy creatures had done before her. Places like this, to which the folk could flock in crowds, were generally chosen for these edifying spectacles. On the border of this vast charnel-house for a hundred years there had towered a parish church, and on the south there rose the nave of the abbey. Against the magnificent edifice of the church two scaffolds had been erected, one large, the other smaller. They were west of the porch which was called *portail des Marmousets*, because of the multitudes of tiny figures carved upon it.

On the great scaffold the two judges, the Lord Bishop and the Vice-Inquisitor, took their places. They were assisted by the most reverend Cardinal of Winchester, the Lord Bishops of Thérouanne, of Noyon, and of Norwich, the Lord Abbots of Fécamp, of Jumièges, of Bec, of Corneilles, of Mont-Saint-Michel-au-Péril-de-la-Mer, of Mortemart, of Préaux, and of Saint-Ouen of Rouen, where the assembly was held, the Priors of Longueville and of Saint-Lô, also many doctors and bachelors in theology, doctors and licentiates in canon and civil law. Likewise were there many high personages of the English party. The other scaffold was a kind of pulpit. To it ascended the doctor who, according to the use and custom of the Holy Inquisition was to preach the sermon against Jeanne. He was Maître Guillaume Erard, doctor in theology, canon of the churches of Langres and of Beauvais. At this time he was very eager to go to Flanders, where he was urgently needed; and he confided to his young servitor, Brother Jean de Lenisoles, that the preaching of this sermon caused him great inconvenience. "I want to be in Flanders," he said. "This affair is very annoying for me."

From one point of view, however, he must have been pleased to perform this duty, since it afforded him the opportunity of attacking the King of France, Charles VII, and of thereby showing his devotion to the English cause, to which he was strongly attached.

Jeanne, dressed as a man, was brought up and placed at his side, before all the people.

Maître Guillaume Erard began his sermon in the following manner:

"I take as my text the words of God in the Gospel of Saint John, chapter xv: 'The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.' Thus it behoveth all Catholics to remain abiding in Holy Mother Church, the true vine, which the hand of Our Lord Jesus Christ hath planted. Now this Jeanne, whom you see before you, falling from error into error, and from crime into crime, hath

become separate from the unity of Holy Mother Church and in a thousand manners hath scandalised Christian people.”

Then he reproached her with having failed, with having sinned against royal Majesty and against God and the Catholic Faith; and all these things must she henceforth eschew under pain of death by burning.

He declaimed vehemently against the pride of this woman. He said that never had there appeared in France a monster so great as that which was manifest in Jeanne; that she was a witch, a heretic, a schismatic, and that the King, who protected her, risked the same reproach from the moment that he became willing to recover his throne with the help of such a heretic.

Towards the middle of his sermon, he cried out with a loud voice:

“Ah! right terribly hast thou been deceived, noble house of France, once the most Christian of houses! Charles, who calls himself thy head and assumes the title of King hath, like a heretic and schismatic, received the words of an infamous woman, abounding in evil works and in all dishonour. And not he alone, but all the clergy in his lordship and dominion, by whom this woman, so she sayeth, hath been examined and not rejected. Full sore is the pity of it.”

Two or three times did Maître Guillaume repeat these words concerning King Charles. Then pointing at Jeanne with his finger he said:

“It is to you, Jeanne, that I speak; and I say unto you that your King is a heretic and a schismatic.”

At these words Jeanne was deeply wounded in her love for the Lilies of France and for King Charles. She was moved with great feeling, and she heard her Voices saying unto her:

“Reply boldly to the preacher who is preaching to you.”

Then obeying them heartily, she interrupted Maître Jean:

“By my troth, Messire,” she said to him, “saving your reverence, I dare say unto you and swear at the risk of my life, that he is the noblest Christian of all Christians, that none loveth better religion and the Church, and that he is not at all what you say.”

Maître Guillaume ordered the Usher, Jean Massieu, to silence her. Then he went on with his sermon, and concluded with these words: “Jeanne, behold my Lords the Judges, who oftentimes have summoned you and required you to submit all your acts and sayings to Mother Church. In these acts and sayings were many things which, so it seemed to these clerics, were good neither to say nor to maintain.”

“I will answer you,” said Jeanne. Touching the article of submission to the Church, she recalled how she had asked for all the deeds she had wrought and the words she had uttered to be reported to Rome, to Our Holy Father the Pope,

to whom, after God, she appealed. Then she added: "And as for the sayings I have uttered and the deeds I have done, they have all been by God's command."

She declared that she had not understood that the record of her trial was being sent to Rome to be judged by the Pope.

"I will not have it thus," she said. "I know not what you will insert in the record of these proceedings. I demand to be taken to the Pope and questioned by him."

They urged her to incriminate her King. But they wasted their breath.

"For my deeds and sayings I hold no man responsible, neither my King nor another."

"Will you abjure all your deeds and sayings? Will you abjure such of your deeds and sayings as have been condemned by the clerks?"

"I appeal to God and to Our Holy Father, the Pope."

"But that is not sufficient. We cannot go so far to seek the Pope. Each Ordinary is judge in his own diocese. Wherefore it is needful for you to appeal to Our Holy Mother Church, and to hold as true all that clerks and folks well learned in the matter say and determine touching your actions and your sayings."

Admonished with yet a third admonition, Jeanne refused to recant. With confidence she awaited the deliverance promised by her Voices, certain that of a sudden there would come men-at-arms from France and that in one great tumult of fighting-men and angels she would be liberated. That was why she had insisted on retaining man's attire.

Two sentences had been prepared: one for the case in which the accused should abjure her error, the other for the case in which she should persevere. By the first there was removed from Jeanne the ban of excommunication. By the second, the tribunal, declaring that it could do nothing more for her, abandoned her to the secular arm. The Lord Bishop had them both with him.

He took the second and began to read: "In the name of the Lord, Amen. All the pastors of the Church who have it in their hearts faithfully to tend their flocks...."

Meanwhile, as he read, the clerks who were round Jeanne urged her to recant, while there was yet time. Maître Nicolas Loiseleur exhorted her to do as he had recommended, and to put on woman's dress.

Maître Guillaume Erard was saying: "Do as you are advised and you will be delivered from prison."

Then straightway came the Voices unto her and said: "Jeanne, passing sore is our pity for you! You must recant what you have said, or we abandon you to

secular justice.... Jeanne, do as you are advised. Jeanne, will you bring death upon yourself!”

The sentence was long and the Lord Bishop read slowly:

“We judges, having Christ before our eyes and also the honour of the true faith, in order that our judgment may proceed from the Lord himself, do say and decree that thou hast been a liar, an inventor of revelations and apparitions said to be divine; a deceiver, pernicious, presumptuous, light of faith, rash, superstitious, a soothsayer, a blasphemer against God and his saints. We declare thee to be a contemner of God even in his sacraments, a prevaricator of divine law, of sacred doctrine and of ecclesiastical sanction, seditious, cruel, apostate, schismatic, having committed a thousand errors against religion, and by all these tokens rashly guilty towards God and Holy Church.”

Time was passing. Already the Lord Bishop had uttered the greater part of the sentence. The executioner was there, ready to take off the condemned in his cart.

Then suddenly, with hands clasped, Jeanne cried that she was willing to obey the Church.

The judge paused in the reading of the sentence.

An uproar arose in the crowd, consisting largely of English men-at-arms and officers of King Henry. Ignorant of the customs of the Inquisition, which had not been introduced into their country, these *Godons* could not understand what was going on; all they knew was that the witch was saved. Now they held Jeanne’s death to be necessary for the welfare of England; wherefore the unaccountable actions of these doctors and the Lord Bishop threw them into a fury. In their Island witches were not treated thus; no mercy was shown them, and they were burned speedily. Angry murmurs arose; stones were thrown at the registrars of the trial. Maître Pierre Maurice, who was doing his best to strengthen Jeanne in the resolution she had taken, was threatened and the *coués* very nearly made short work with him. Neither did Maître Jean Beaupère and the delegates from the University of Paris escape their share of the insults. They were accused of favouring Jeanne’s errors. Who better than they knew the injustice of these reproaches?

Certain of the high personages sitting on the platform at the side of the judge complained to the Lord Bishop that he had not gone on to the end of the sentence but had admitted Jeanne to repentance.

He was even reproached with insults, for one was heard to cry: “You shall pay for this.”

He threatened to suspend the trial.

“I have been insulted,” he said. “I will proceed no further until honourable

amends have been done me.”

In the tumult, Maître Guillaume Erard unfolded a double sheet of paper, and read Jeanne the form of abjuration, written down according to the opinion of the masters. It was no longer than the Lord’s Prayer and consisted of six or seven lines of writing. It was in French and began with these words: “I, Jeanne....” The Maid submitted therein to the sentence, the judgment, and the commandment of the Church; she acknowledged having committed the crime of high treason and having deceived the people. She undertook never again to bear arms or to wear man’s dress or her hair cut round her ears.

When Maître Guillaume had read the document, Jeanne declared she did not understand it, and wished to be advised thereupon. She was heard to ask counsel of Saint Michael. She still believed firmly in her Voices, albeit they had not aided her in her dire necessity, neither had spared her the shame of denying them. For, simple as she was, at the bottom of her heart she knew well what the clerks were asking of her; she realised that they would not let her go until she had pronounced a great recantation. All that she said was merely in order to gain time and because she was afraid of death; yet she could not bring herself to lie.

Without losing a moment Maître Guillaume said to Messire Jean Massieu, the Usher: “Advise her touching this abjuration.”

And he passed him the document.

Messire Jean Massieu at first made excuse, but afterwards he complied and warned Jeanne of the danger she was running by her refusal to recant.

“You must know,” he said, “that if you oppose any of these articles you will be burned. I counsel you to appeal to the Church Universal as to whether you should abjure these articles or not.”

Maître Guillaume Erard asked Jean Massieu: “Well, what are you saying to her?”

Jean Massieu replied: “I make known unto Jeanne the text of the deed of abjuration and I urge her to sign it. But she declares that she knoweth not whether she will.”

At this juncture, Jeanne, who was still being pressed to sign, said aloud: “I wish the Church to deliberate on the articles. I appeal to the Church Universal as to whether I should abjure them. Let the document be read by the Church and the clerks into whose hands I am to be delivered. If it be their counsel that I ought to sign it and do what I am told, then willingly will I do it.”

Maître Guillaume Erard replied: “Do it now, or you will be burned this very day.”

And he forbade Jean Massieu to confer with her any longer.

Whereupon Jeanne said that she would liefer sign than be burned.

Then straightway Messire Jean Massieu gave her a second reading of the deed of abjuration. And she repeated the words after the Usher. As she spoke her countenance seemed to express a kind of sneer. It may have been that her features were contracted by the violent emotions which swayed her and that the horrors and tortures of an ecclesiastical trial may have overclouded her reason, subject at all times to strange vagaries, and that after such bitter suffering there may have come upon her the actual paroxysm of madness. On the other hand it may have been that with sound sense and calm mind she was mocking at the clerks of Rouen; she was quite capable of it, for she had mocked at the clerks of Poitiers. At any rate she had a jesting air, and the bystanders noticed that she pronounced the words of her abjuration with a smile. And her gaiety, whether real or apparent, roused the wrath of those burgesses, priests, artisans, and men-at-arms who desired her death.

“’Tis all a mockery. Jeanne doth but jest,” they cried.

Among the most irate was Master Lawrence Calot, Secretary to the King of England. He was seen to be in a violent rage and to approach first the judge and then the accused. A noble of Picardy who was present, the very same who had essayed familiarities with Jeanne in the Castle of Beaurevoir, thought he saw this Englishman forcing Jeanne to sign a paper. He was mistaken. In every crowd there are those who see things that never happen. The Bishop would not have permitted such a thing; he was devoted to the Regent, but on a question of form he would never have given way. Meanwhile, under this storm of insults, amidst the throwing of stones and the clashing of swords, these illustrious masters, these worthy doctors grew pale. The Prior of Longueville was awaiting an opportunity to make an apology to the Cardinal of Winchester.

On the platform a chaplain of the Cardinal violently accused the Lord Bishop. “You do wrong to accept such an abjuration. ’Tis a mere mockery,” he said.

“You lie,” retorted my Lord Pierre. “I, the judge of a religious suit, ought to seek the salvation of this woman rather than her death.”

The Cardinal silenced his chaplain.

It is said that the Earl of Warwick came up to the judges and complained of what they had done, adding: “The King is not well served, since Jeanne escapes.”

And it is stated that one of them replied: “Have no fear, my Lord. She will not escape us long.”

It is hardly credible that any one should have actually said so, but doubtless there were many at that time who thought it.

With what scorn must the Bishop of Beauvais have regarded those dull minds, incapable of understanding the service he was rendering to Old England by forcing this damsel to acknowledge that all she had declared and maintained in honour of her King was but lying and illusion.

With a pen that Massieu gave her Jeanne made a cross at the bottom of the deed.

In the midst of howls and oaths from the English, my Lord of Beauvais read the more merciful of the sentences. It relieved Jeanne from excommunication and reconciled her to Holy Mother Church. Further the sentence ran:

“... Because thou hast rashly sinned against God and Holy Church, we, thy judges, that thou mayest do salutary penance, out of our Grace and moderation, do condemn thee finally and definitely to perpetual prison, with the bread of sorrow and the water of affliction, so that there thou mayest weep over thy offences and commit no other that may be an occasion of weeping.”

This penalty, like all other penalties, save death and mutilation, lay within the power of ecclesiastical judges. They inflicted it so frequently that in the early days of the Holy Inquisition, the Fathers of the Council of Narbonne said that stones and mortar would become as scarce as money. It was a penalty doubtless, but one which in character and significance differed from the penalties inflicted by secular courts; it was a penance. According to the mercy of ecclesiastical law, prison was a place suitable for repentance, where, in one perpetual penance, the condemned might eat the bread of sorrow and drink the waters of affliction.

How foolish was he, who by refusing to enter that prison or by escaping from it, should reject the salutary healing of his soul! By so doing he was fleeing from the gentle tribunal of penance, and the Church in sadness cut him off from the communion of the faithful. By inflicting this penalty, which a good Catholic must needs regard rather as a favour than a punishment, my Lord the Bishop and my Lord the Holy Vicar of the Inquisition were conforming to the custom, whereby our Holy Mother Church became reconciled to heretics. But had they power to execute their sentence? The prison to which they condemned Jeanne, the expiatory prison, the salutary confinement, must be in a dungeon of the Church. Could they send her there?

Jeanne, turning towards them, said: “Now, you Churchmen, take me to your prison. Let me be no longer in the hands of the English.”

Many of those clerics had promised it to her. They had deceived her. They knew it was not possible; for it had been stipulated that the King of England’s men should resume possession of Jeanne after the trial.

The Lord Bishop gave the order: “Take her back to the place whence you brought her.”

He, a judge of the Church, committed the crime of surrendering the Church's daughter reconciled and penitent, to laymen. Among them she could not mourn over her sins; and they, hating her body and caring nought for her soul, were to tempt her and cause her to fall back into error.

While Jeanne was being taken back in the cart to her tower in the fields, the soldiers insulted her and their captains did not rebuke them.

Thereafter, the Vice-Inquisitor and with him divers doctors and masters, went to her prison and charitably exhorted her. She promised to wear woman's apparel, and to let her head be shaved.

The Duchess of Bedford, knowing that she was a virgin, saw to it that she was treated with respect. As the ladies of Luxembourg had done formerly, she essayed to persuade her to wear the clothing of her sex. By a certain tailor, one Jeannotin Simon, she had had made for Jeanne a gown which she had hitherto refused to wear. Jeannotin brought the garment to the prisoner, who this time did not refuse it. In putting it on, Jeannotin touched her bosom, which she resented. She boxed his ears; but she consented to wear the gown provided by the Duchess.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRIAL FOR RELAPSE — SECOND SENTENCE — DEATH OF THE MAID

ON the following Sunday, which was Trinity Sunday, there arose a rumour that Jeanne had resumed man's apparel. The report spread rapidly from the castle down the narrow streets where lived the clerks in the shadow of the cathedral. Straightway notaries and assessors hastened to the tower which looked on the fields.

In the outer court of the castle they found some hundred men-at-arms, who welcomed them with threats and curses. These fellows did not yet understand that the judges had conducted the trial so as to bring honour to old England and dishonour to the French. They did not realise what it meant when the Maid of the Armagnacs, who hitherto had obstinately persisted in her utterances, was at length brought to confess her impostures. They did not see how great was the advantage to their country when it was published abroad throughout the world that Charles of Valois had been conducted to his coronation by a heretic. But no, the only idea these brutes were capable of grasping was the burning of the girl prisoner who had struck terror into their hearts. The doctors and masters they treated as traitors, false counsellors and Armagnacs.

In the castle yard is Maître André Marguerie, bachelor in decrees, archdeacon of Petit-Caux, King's Counsellor, who is inquiring what has happened. He had displayed great assiduity in the trial. The Maid he held to be a crafty damsel. Now again he desired to give an expert's judgment touching what had just occurred.

"That Jeanne is to be seen dressed as a man is not everything," he said. "We must know what motives induced her to resume masculine attire."

Maître André Marguerie was an eloquent orator, one of the shining lights of the Council of Constance. But, when a man-at-arms raised his axe against him and called out "Traitor! Armagnac!" Maître Marguerie asked no further questions, but speedily departed, and went to bed very sick.

The next day, Monday the 25th, there came to the castle the Vice-Inquisitor, accompanied by divers doctors and masters. The Registrar, Messire Guillaume Manchon, was summoned. He was such a coward that he dared not come save under the escort of one of the Earl of Warwick's men-at-arms. They found Jeanne wearing man's apparel, jerkin and short tunic, with a hood covering her shaved head. Her face was in tears and disfigured by terrible suffering.

She was asked when and why she had assumed this attire.

She replied: "'Tis but now that I have donned man's dress and put off woman's."

"Wherefore did you put it on and who made you?"

"I put it on of my own will and without constraint. I had liefer wear man's dress than woman's."

"You promised and swore not to wear man's dress."

"I never meant to take an oath not to wear it."

"Wherefore did you return to it?"

"Because it is more seemly to take it and wear man's dress, being amongst men, than to wear woman's dress.... I returned to it because the promise made me was not kept, to wit, that I should go to mass and should receive my Saviour and be loosed from my bonds."

"Did you not abjure, and promise not to return to this dress?"

"I had liefer die than be in bonds. But if I be allowed to go to mass and taken out of my bonds and put in a prison of grace, and given a woman to be with me, I will be good and do as the Church shall command."

"Have you heard your Voices since Thursday?"

"Yes."

"What did they say unto you?"

"They told me that through Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret God gave me to wit his sore pity for the treachery, to which I consented in abjuring and recanting to save my life, and that in saving my life I was losing my soul. Before Thursday my Voices had told me what I should do and what I did do on that day. On the scaffold my Voices told me to reply boldly to the preacher. He is a false preacher.... Many things did he say that I have never done. If I were to say that God has not sent me I should be damned. It is true that God has sent me. My Voices have since told me that by confessing I committed a great wickedness which I ought never to have done. All that I said I uttered through fear of the fire."

Thus spake Jeanne in sore sorrow. And now what becomes of those monkish tales of attempted violence related long afterwards by a registrar and two churchmen? And how can Messire Massieu make us believe that Jeanne, unable to find her petticoats, put on her hose in order not to appear before her guards unclothed? The truth is very different. It is Jeanne herself who confesses bravely and simply. She repented of her abjuration, as of the greatest sin she had ever committed. She could not forgive herself for having lied through fear of death. Her Voices, who, before the sermon at Saint-Ouen had foretold that she would

deny them, now came to her and spoke of “the sore pity of her treachery.” Could they say otherwise since they were the voices of her own heart? And could Jeanne fail to listen to them since she had always listened to them whenever they had counselled her to sacrifice and self-abnegation?

It was out of obedience to her heavenly *Council* that Jeanne had returned to man’s apparel, because she would not purchase her life at the price of denying the Angel and the Saints, and because with her whole heart and soul she rebelled against her recantation.

Still the English were seriously to blame for having left her man’s clothes. It would have been more humane to have taken them from her, since if she wore them she must needs die. They had been put in a bag. Her guards may even be suspected of having tempted her by placing under her very eyes those garments which recalled to her days of happiness. They had taken away all her few possessions, even her poor brass ring, everything save that suit which meant death to her.

To blame also were her ecclesiastical judges who should not have sentenced her to imprisonment if they foresaw that they could not place her in an ecclesiastical prison, nor have commanded her a penance which they knew they were unable to enforce. Likewise to blame were the Bishop of Beauvais and the Vice-Inquisitor; because after having, for the good of her sinful soul, prescribed the bread of bitterness and the water of affliction, they gave her not this bread and this water, but delivered her in disgrace into the hands of her cruel enemies.

When she uttered the words, “God by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret hath given me to wit the sore pity of the treason to which I consented,” Jeanne consummated the sacrifice of her life.

The Bishop and the Inquisitor had now to proceed in conformity with the law. The interrogatory however lasted a few moments longer.

“Do you believe that your Voices are Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine?”

“Yes, and they come from God.”

“Tell us the truth touching the crown.”

“To the best of my knowledge I told you the truth of everything at the trial.”

“On the scaffold, at the time of your abjuration, you did acknowledge before us your judges and before many others, and in the presence of the people, that you had falsely boasted your Voices to be those of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret.”

“I did not mean thus to do or to say. I did not deny, neither did I intend to deny, my apparitions and to say that they were not Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine. All that I have said was through fear of the fire, and I recanted nothing that was not contrary to the truth. I had liefer do my penance once and

for all, to wit by dying, than endure further anguish in prison. Whatsoever abjuration I have been forced to make, I never did anything against God and religion. I did not understand what was in the deed of abjuration, wherefore I did not mean to abjure anything unless it were Our Lord's will. If the judges wish I will resume my woman's dress. But nothing else will I do."

Coming out of the prison, my Lord of Beauvais met the Earl of Warwick accompanied by many persons. He said to him: "Farewell. *Faites bonne chère.*" It is said that he added, laughing: "It is done! We have caught her." The words are his, doubtless, but we are not certain that he laughed.

On the morrow, Tuesday the 29th, he assembled the tribunal in the chapel of the Archbishop's house. The forty-two assessors present were informed of what had happened on the previous day and invited to state their opinions, the nature of which might easily be anticipated. Every heretic who retracted his confession was held a perjurer, not only impenitent but relapsed. And the relapsed were given up to the secular arm.

Maître Nicholas de Venderès, canon, archdeacon, was the first to state his opinion.

"Jeanne is and must be held a heretic. She must be delivered to the secular authority."

The Lord Abbot of Fécamp expressed his opinion in the following terms: "Jeanne has relapsed. Nevertheless it is well that the terms of her abjuration once read to her, be read a second time and explained, and that at the same time she be reminded of God's word. This done, it is for us, her judges, to declare her a heretic and to abandon her to the secular authority, entreating it to deal leniently with her."

This plea for leniency was a mere matter of form. If the Provost of Rouen had taken it into consideration he also would have been excommunicated, with a further possibility of temporal punishment. And yet there were certain counsellors who even wished to dispense with this empty show of pity, urging that there was no need for such a supplication.

Maître Guillaume Erard and sundry other assessors, among whom were Maîtres Marguerie, Loiseleur, Pierre Maurice, and Brother Martin Ladvenu, were of the opinion of my Lord Abbot of Fécamp.

Maître Thomas de Courcelles advised the woman being again charitably admonished touching the salvation of her soul.

Such likewise was the opinion of Brother Isambart de la Pierre.

The Lord Bishop, having listened to these opinions, concluded that Jeanne must be proceeded against as one having relapsed. Accordingly he summoned her to appear on the morrow, the 30th of May, in the old Market Square.

On the morning of that Wednesday, the 30th of May, by the command of my Lord of Beauvais, the two young friars preachers, bachelors in theology, Brother Martin Ladvenu and Brother Isambart de la Pierre, went to Jeanne in her prison. Brother Martin told her that she was to die that day.

At the approach of this cruel death, amidst the silence of her Voices, she understood at length that she would not be delivered. Cruelly awakened from her dream, she felt heaven and earth failing her, and fell into a deep despair.

“Alas!” she cried, “shall so terrible a fate betide me as that my body ever pure and intact shall to-day be burned and reduced to ashes? Ah me! Ah me! Liefer would I be seven times beheaded than thus be burned. Alas! had I been in the prison of the Church, to which I submitted, and guarded by ecclesiastics and not by my foes and adversaries, so woeful a misfortune as this would not have befallen me. Oh! I appeal to God, the great judge, against this violence and these sore wrongs with which I am afflicted.”

While she was lamenting, the doctors and masters, Nicolas de Venderès, Pierre Maurice and Nicolas Loiseleur, entered the prison; they came by order of my Lord of Beauvais. On the previous day thirty-nine counsellors out of forty-two, declaring that Jeanne had relapsed, had added that they deemed it well she should be reminded of the terms of her abjuration. Wherefore, according to the counsel of these clerics, the Lord Bishop had sent certain learned doctors to the relapsed heretic and had resolved to come to her himself.

She must needs submit to one last examination.

“Do you believe that your Voices and apparitions come from good or from evil spirits?”

“I know not; but I appeal to my Mother the Church.”

Maître Pierre Maurice, a reader of Terence and Virgil, was filled with pity for this hapless Maid. On the previous day he had declared her to have relapsed because his knowledge of theology forced him to it; and now he was concerned for the salvation of this soul in peril, which could not be saved except by recognising the falseness of its Voices.

“Are they indeed real?” he asked her.

She replied, “Whether they be good or bad, they appeared to me.”

She affirmed that with her eyes she had seen, with her ears heard, the Voices and apparitions which had been spoken of at the trial.

She heard them most frequently, she said, at the hour of compline and of matins, when the bells were ringing.

Maître Pierre Maurice, being the Pope’s secretary, was debarred from openly professing the Pyrrhonic philosophy. He inclined, however, to a rational

interpretation of natural phenomena, if we may judge from his remarking to Jeanne that the ringing of bells often sounded like voices.

Without describing the exact form of her apparitions, Jeanne said they came to her in a great multitude and were very tiny. She believed in them no longer, being fully persuaded that they had deceived her.

Maître Pierre Maurice asked about the Angel who had brought the crown.

She replied that there had never been a crown save that promised by her to her King, and that the Angel was herself.

At that moment the Lord Bishop of Beauvais and the Vice-Inquisitor entered the prison, accompanied by Maître Thomas de Courcelles and Maître Jacques Lecamus.

At the sight of the Judge who had brought her to such a pass she cried, "Bishop, I die through you."

He replied by piously admonishing her. "Ah! Jeanne, bear all in patience. You die because you have not kept your promise and have returned to evil-doing. Now, Jeanne," he asked her, "you have always said that your Voices promised you deliverance; you behold how they have deceived you, wherefore tell us the truth."

She replied, "Verily, I see that they have deceived me."

The Bishop and the Vice-Inquisitor withdrew. They had triumphed over a poor girl of twenty.

"If after their condemnation heretics repent, and if the signs of their repentance are manifest, the sacraments of confession and the eucharist may not be denied them, provided they demand them with humility." Thus ran the sacred decretals. But no recantation, no assurance of conformity, could save the relapsed heretic. He was permitted confession, absolution, and communion; which means that at the bar of the Sacrament the sincerity of his repentance and conversion was believed in. But at the same time it was declared judicially that his repentance was not believed in and that consequently he must die.

Brother Martin Ladvenu heard Jeanne's confession. Then he sent Messire Massieu, the Usher, to my Lord of Beauvais, to inform him that she asked to be given the body of Jesus Christ.

The Bishop assembled certain doctors to confer on this subject; and after they had deliberated, he replied to the Usher: "Tell Brother Martin to give her the communion and all that she shall ask."

Messire Massieu returned to the castle to bear this reply to Brother Martin. For a second time Brother Martin heard Jeanne in confession and gave her absolution.

A cleric, one Pierre, brought the body of Our Lord in an unceremonious fashion, on a paten covered with the cloth used to put over the chalice, without lights or procession, without surplice or stole.

This did not please Brother Martin, who sent to fetch a stole and candles.

Then, taking the consecrated host in his fingers and presenting it to Jeanne, he said: "Do you believe this to be the body of Christ?"

"Yes, and it alone is able to deliver me."

And she entreated that it should be given to her.

"Do you still believe in your Voices?" asked the officiating priest.

"I believe in God alone, and will place no trust in the Voices who have thus deceived me."

And shedding many tears she received the body of Our Lord very devoutly. Then to God, to the Virgin Mary and to the saints she offered prayers beautiful and reverent and gave such signs of repentance that those present were moved to tears.

Contrite and sorrowful she said to Maître Pierre Maurice: "Maître Pierre, where shall I be this evening?"

"Do you not trust in the Lord?" asked the canon.

"Yea, God helping me, I shall be in Paradise."

Maître Nicolas Loiseleur exhorted her to correct the error she had caused to grow up among the people.

"To this end you must openly declare that you have been deceived and have deceived the folk and that you humbly ask pardon."

Then, fearing lest she might forget when the time came for her to be publicly judged, she asked Brother Martin to put her in mind of this matter and of others touching her salvation.

Maître Loiseleur went away giving signs of violent grief. Walking through the streets like a madman, he was howled at by the *Godons*.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when Brother Martin and Messire Massieu took Jeanne out of the prison, wherein she had been in bonds one hundred and seventy-eight days. She was placed in a cart, and, escorted by eighty men-at-arms, was driven along the narrow streets to the Old Market Square, close to the River. This square was bordered on the east by a wooden market-house, the butcher's market, on the west by the cemetery of Saint-Sauveur, on the edge of which, towards the square, stood the church of Saint-Sauveur. In this place three scaffolds had been raised, one against the northern gable of the market-house; and in its erection several tiles of the roof had been broken. On this scaffold Jeanne was to be stationed, there to listen to the sermon. Another and a larger scaffold had been erected adjoining the cemetery. There the

judges and the prelates were to sit. The pronouncing of sentence in a religious trial was an act of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For the place of its pronouncement the Inquisitor and the Ordinary preferred consecrated territory, holy ground. True it is that a bull of Pope Lucius forbade such sentences to be given in churches and cemeteries; but the judges eluded this rule by recommending the secular arm to modify its sentence. The third scaffold, opposite the second, was of plaster, and stood in the middle of the square, on the spot whereon executions usually took place. On it was piled the wood for the burning. On the stake which surmounted it was a scroll bearing the words:

“Jehanne, who hath caused herself to be called the Maid, a liar, pernicious, deceiver of the people, soothsayer, superstitious, a blasphemer against God, presumptuous, miscreant, boaster, idolatress, cruel, dissolute, an invoker of devils, apostate, schismatic, and heretic.”

The square was guarded by one hundred and sixty men-at-arms. A crowd of curious folk pressed behind the guards, the windows were filled and the roofs covered with onlookers. Jeanne was brought on to the scaffold which had its back to the market-house gable. She wore a long gown and hood. Maître Nicolas Midi, doctor in theology, came up on to the same platform and began to preach to her. As the text of his sermon he took the words of the Apostle in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.” Jeanne patiently listened to the sermon.

Then my Lord of Beauvais, in his own name and that of the Vice-Inquisitor, pronounced the sentence.

He declared Jeanne to be a relapsed heretic.

“We declare that thou, Jeanne, art a corrupt member, and in order that thou mayest not infect the other members, we are resolved to sever thee from the unity of the Church, to tear thee from its body, and to deliver thee to the secular power. And we reject thee, we tear thee out, we abandon thee, beseeching this same secular power, that touching death and the mutilation of the limbs, it may be pleased to moderate its sentence....”

By this formula, the ecclesiastical judge withdrew from any share in the violent death of a fellow creature: *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*. But every one knew how much such an entreaty was worth; and all were aware that if the impossible had happened and the magistrate had granted it, he would have been subject to the same penalties as the heretic. Things had now come to such a pass that had the city of Rouen belonged to King Charles, he himself could not have saved the Maid from the stake.

When the sentence was announced Jeanne breathed heart-rending sighs. Weeping bitterly, she fell on her knees, commended her soul to God, to Our

Lady, to the blessed saints of Paradise, many of whom she mentioned by name. Very humbly did she ask for mercy from all manner of folk, of whatsoever rank or condition, of her own party and of the enemy's, entreating them to forgive the wrong she had done them and to pray for her. She asked pardon of her judges, of the English, of King Henry, of the English princes of the realm. Addressing all the priests there present she besought each one to say a mass for the salvation of her soul.

Thus for one half hour did she continue with sighs and tears to give expression to the sentiments of humiliation and contrition with which the clerics had inspired her.

And even now she did not neglect to defend the honour of the fair Dauphin, whom she had so greatly loved.

She was heard to say: "It was never my King who induced me to do anything I have done, either good or evil."

Many of the bystanders wept. A few English laughed. Certain of the captains, who could make nothing of the edifying ceremonial of ecclesiastical justice, grew impatient. Seeing Messire Massieu in the pulpit and hearing him exhort Jeanne to make a good end, they cried:

"What now, priest! Art thou going to keep us here to dinner?"

At Rouen, when a heretic was given up to the secular arm, it was customary to take him to the town hall, where the town council made known unto him his sentence. In Jeanne's case these forms were not observed. The Bailie, Messire le Bouteiller, who was present, waved his hand and said: "Take her, take her." Straightway, two of the King's sergeants dragged her to the base of the scaffold and placed her in a cart which was waiting. On her head was set a great fool's cap made of paper, on which were written the words: "*Hérétique, relapse, apostate, idolâtre* "; and she was handed over to the executioner.

A bystander heard her saying: "Ah! Rouen, sorely do I fear that thou mayest have to suffer for my death."

She evidently still regarded herself as the messenger from Heaven, the angel of the realm of France. Possibly the illusion, so cruelly reft from her, returned at last to enfold her in its beneficent veil. At any rate, she appears to have been crushed; all that remained to her was an infinite horror of death and a childlike piety.

The ecclesiastical judges had barely time to descend and flee from a spectacle which they could not have witnessed without violating the laws of clerical procedure. They were all weeping: the Lord Bishop of Thérouanne, Chancellor of England, had his eyes full of tears. The Cardinal of Winchester, who was said never to enter a church save to pray for the death of an enemy, had pity on this

damsel so woeful and so contrite. Brother Pierre Maurice, the canon who was a reader of the *Æneid*, could not keep back his tears. All the priests who had delivered her to the executioner were edified to see her make so holy an end. That is what Maître Jean Alespée meant when he sighed: “I would that my soul were where I believe the soul of that woman to be.” To himself and the hapless sufferer he applied the following lines from the *Dies iræ* :

*Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.*

But none the less he must have believed that by her heresies and her obstinacy she had brought death on herself.

The two young friars preachers and the Usher Massieu accompanied Jeanne to the stake.

She asked for a cross. An Englishman made a tiny one out of two pieces of wood, and gave it to her. She took it devoutly and put it in her bosom, on her breast. Then she besought Brother Isambart to go to the neighbouring church to fetch a cross, to bring it to her and hold it before her, so that as long as she lived, the cross on which God was crucified should be ever in her sight.

Massieu asked a priest of Saint-Sauveur for one, and it was brought. Jeanne weeping kissed it long and tenderly, and her hands held it while they were free.

As she was being bound to the stake she invoked the aid of Saint Michael; and now at length no examiner was present to ask her whether it were really he she saw in her father’s garden. She prayed also to Saint Catherine.

When she saw a light put to the stake, she cried loudly, “Jesus!” This name she repeated six times. She was also heard asking for holy water.

It was usual for the executioner, in order to cut short the sufferings of the victim, to stifle him in dense smoke before the flames had had time to ascend; but the Rouen executioner was too terrified of the prodigies worked by the Maid to do thus; and besides he would have found it difficult to reach her, because the Bailie had had the plaster scaffold made unusually high. Wherefore the executioner himself, hardened man that he was, judged her death to have been a terribly cruel one.

Once again Jeanne uttered the name of Jesus; then she bowed her head and gave up her spirit.

As soon as she was dead the Bailie commanded the executioner to scatter the flames in order to see that the prophetess of the Armagnacs had not escaped with the aid of the devil or in some other manner. Then, after the poor blackened

body had been shown to the people, the executioner, in order to reduce it to ashes, threw on to the fire coal, oil and sulphur.

In such an execution the combustion of the corpse was rarely complete. Among the ashes, when the fire was extinguished, the heart and entrails were found intact. For fear lest Jeanne's remains should be taken and used for witchcraft or other evil practices, the Bailie had them thrown into the Seine.

CHAPTER XV

AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MAID — THE END OF THE SHEPHERD — LA DAME DES ARMOISES

IN the evening, after the burning, the executioner, as was his wont, went whining and begging to the monastery of the preaching friars. The creature complained that he had found it very difficult to make an end of Jeanne. According to a legend invented afterwards, he told the monks that he feared damnation for having burned a saint. Had he actually spoken thus in the house of the Vice-Inquisitor he would have been straightway cast into the lowest dungeon, there to await a trial for heresy, which would have probably resulted in his being sentenced to suffer the death he had inflicted on her whom he had called a saint. And what could have led him to suppose that the woman condemned by good Father Lemaistre and my Lord of Beauvais was not a bad woman? The truth is that in the presence of these friars he arrogated to himself merit for having executed a witch and taken pains therein, wherefore he came to ask for his pot of wine. One of the monks, who happened to be a friar preacher, Brother Pierre Bosquier, forgot himself so far as to say that it was wrong to have condemned the Maid. These words, albeit they were heard by only a few persons, were carried to the Inquisitor General. When he was summoned to answer for them, Brother Pierre Bosquier declared very humbly that his words were altogether wrong and tainted with heresy, and that indeed he had only uttered them when he was full of wine. On his knees and with clasped hands he entreated Holy Mother Church, his judges and the most redoubtable lords to pardon him. Having regard to his repentance and in consideration of his cloth and of his having spoken in a state of intoxication, my Lord of Beauvais and the Vice-Inquisitor showed indulgence to Brother Pierre Bosquier. By a sentence pronounced on the 8th of August, 1431, they condemned him to be imprisoned in the house of the friars preachers and fed on bread and water until Easter.

On the 12th of June the judges and counsellors, who had sat in judgment on Jeanne, received letters of indemnity from the Great Council. What was the object of these letters? Was it in case the holders of them should be proceeded against by the French? But in that event the letters would have done them more harm than good.

The Lord Chancellor of England sent to the Emperor, to the Kings and to the princes of Christendom, letters in Latin; to the prelates, dukes, counts, lords, and all the towns of France, letters in French. Herein he made known unto them that

King Henry and his Counsellors had had sore pity on the Maid, and that if they had caused her death it was through their zeal for the faith and their solicitude Christian folk.

In like tenor did the University of Paris write to the Holy Father, the Emperor and the College of Cardinals.

On the 4th of July, the day of Saint-Martin-le-Bouillant, Master Jean Graverent, Prior of the Jacobins, Inquisitor of the Faith, preached at Saint-Martin-des-Champs. In his sermon he related the deeds of Jeanne, and told how for her errors and shortcomings she had been delivered to the secular judges and burned alive.

Then he added: "There were four, three of whom have been taken, to wit, this Maid, Pierronne, and her companion. One, Catherine de la Rochelle, still remaineth with the Armagnacs. Friar Richard, the Franciscan, who attracted so great a multitude of folk when he preached in Paris at the Innocents and elsewhere, directed these women; he was their spiritual father."

With Pierronne burned in Paris, her companion eating the bread of bitterness and drinking the water of affliction in the prison of the Church, and Jeanne burned at Rouen, the royal company of *béguines* was now almost entirely annihilated. There only remained to the King the holy dame of La Rochelle, who had escaped from the hands of the Paris Official; but her indiscreet talk had rendered her troublesome. While his penitents were being discredited, good Friar Richard himself had fallen on evil days. The Vicars in the diocese of Poitiers and the Inquisitor of the Faith had forbidden him to preach. The great orator, who had converted so many Christian folk, could no longer thunder against gaming-tables and dice, against women's finery, and mandrakes arrayed in magnificent attire. No longer could he declare the coming of Antichrist nor prepare souls for the terrible trials which were to herald the imminent end of the world. He was ordered to lie under arrest in the Franciscan monastery at Poitiers. And doubtless it was with no great docility that he submitted to the sentence of his superiors; for on Friday, the 23rd of March, 1431, we find the Ordinary and the Inquisitor, asking aid in the execution of the sentence from the Parliament of Poitiers, which did not refuse it. Why did Holy Church exercise such severity towards a preacher endowed with so wondrous a power of moving sinful souls? We may at any rate suspect the reason. For some time the English and Burgundian clergy had been accusing him of apostasy and magic. Now, owing to the unity of the Church in general and to that of the Gallican Church in particular, owing also to the authority of that bright sun of Christendom, the University of Paris, when a clerk was suspected of error and heresy by the doctors of the English and Burgundian party he came to be looked at askance by the clergy who were loyal

to King Charles. Especially was this so when in a matter touching the Catholic faith, the University had pronounced against him and in favour of the English. It is quite likely that the clerks of Poitiers had been prejudiced against Friar Richard by Pierronne's conviction and even by the Maid's trial. The good brother, who persisted in preaching the end of the world, was strongly suspected of dealing in the black art. Wherefore, realising the fate which was threatening him, he fled, and was never heard of again.

None the less, however, did the counsellors of King Charles continue to employ the devout in the army. At the time of the disappearance of Friar Richard and his penitents, they were making use of a young shepherd whom my Lord the Archbishop, Duke of Reims and Chancellor of the kingdom, had proclaimed to be Jeanne's miraculous successor. And it was in the following circumstance that the shepherd was permitted to display his power.

The war continued. Twenty days after Jeanne's death the English in great force marched to recapture the town of Louviers. They had delayed till then, not, as some have stated, because they despaired of succeeding in anything as long as the Maid lived, but because they needed time to collect money and engines for the siege. In the July and August of this same year, at Senlis and at Beauvais, my Lord of Reims, Chancellor of France and the Maréchal de Boussac, were upholding the French cause. And we may be sure that my Lord of Reims was upholding it with no little vigour since at the same time he was defending the benefices which were so dear to him. A Maid had reconquered them, now he intended a lad to hold them. With this object he employed the little shepherd, Guillaume, from the Lozère Mountains, who, like Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Catherine of Sienna, had received stigmata. A party of French surprised the Regent at Mantes and were on the point of taking him prisoner. The alarm was given to the army besieging Louviers; and two or three companies of men-at-arms were despatched. They hastened to Mantes, where they learnt that the Regent had succeeded in reaching Paris. Thereupon, having been reinforced by troops from Gournay and certain other English garrisons, being some two thousand strong and commanded by the Earls of Warwick, Arundel, Salisbury, and Suffolk, and by Lord Talbot and Sir Thomas Kiriell, the English made bold to march upon Beauvais. The French, informed of their approach, left the town at daybreak, and marched out to meet them in the direction of Savignies. King Charles's men, numbering between eight hundred and one thousand combatants, were commanded by the Maréchal de Boussac, the Captains La Hire, Poton, and others.

The shepherd Guillaume, whom they believed to be sent of God, was at their head, riding side-saddle and displaying the miraculous wounds in his hands, his

feet, and his left side.

When they were about two and a half miles from the town, just when they least expected it, a shower of arrows came down upon them. The English, informed by their scouts of the French approach, had lain in wait for them in a hollow of the road. Now they attacked them closely both in the van and in the rear. Each side fought valiantly. A considerable number were slain, which was not the case in most of the battles of those days, when few but the fugitives were killed. But the French, feeling themselves surrounded, were seized with panic, and thus brought about their own destruction. Most of them, with the Maréchal de Boussac and Captain La Hire, fled to the town of Beauvais. Captain Poton and the shepherd, Guillaume, remained in the hands of the English, who returned to Rouen in triumph.

Poton made sure of being ransomed in the usual manner. But the little shepherd could not hope for such a fate; he was suspected of heresy and magic; he had deceived Christian folk and accepted from them idolatrous veneration. The signs of our Saviour's passion that he bore upon him helped him not a whit; on the contrary the wounds, by the French held to have been divinely imprinted, to the English seemed the marks of the devil.

Guillaume, like the Maid, had been taken in the diocese of Beauvais. The Lord Bishop of this town, Messire Pierre Cauchon, who had claimed the right to try Jeanne, made a similar claim for Guillaume; and the shepherd was granted what the Maid had been refused, he was cast into an ecclesiastical prison. He would seem to have been less difficult to guard than Jeanne and also less important. But the English had recently learnt what was involved in a trial by the Inquisition; they now knew how lengthy and how punctilious it was. Moreover, they did not see how it would profit them if this shepherd were convicted of heresy. If the French had set their hope of success in war in Guillaume as they had done in Jeanne, then that hope was but short-lived. To put the Armagnacs to shame by proving that their shepherd lad came from the devil, that game was not worth the candle. The youth was taken to Rouen and thence to Paris.

He had been a prisoner for four months when King Henry VI, who was nine years old, came to Paris to be crowned in the church of Notre Dame with the two crowns of France and England. With high pomp and great rejoicing he made his entrance into the city on Sunday, the 16th of December. Along the route of the procession, in the Rue du Ponceau-Saint-Denys, had been constructed a fountain adorned with three sirens; and from their midst rose a tall lily stalk, from the buds and blossoms of which flowed streams of wine and milk. Folk flocked to drink of the fountain; and around its basin men disguised as savages entertained them with games and sham fights.

From the Porte Saint-Denys to the Hôtel Saint-Paul in the Marais, the child King rode beneath a great azure canopy, embroidered with flowers-de-luce in gold, borne first by the four aldermen hooded and clothed in purple, then by the corporations, drapers, grocers, money-changers, goldsmiths and hosiers. Before him went twenty-five heralds and twenty-five trumpeters; followed by nine handsome men and nine beautiful ladies, wearing magnificent armour and bearing great shields, representing the nine *preux* and the nine *preuses*, also by a number of knights and squires. In this brilliant procession appeared the little shepherd Guillaume; he no longer stretched out his arms to show the wounds of the passion, for he was strongly bound.

After the ceremony he was conducted back to prison, whence he was taken later to be sewn in a sack and thrown into the Seine. Even the French admitted that Guillaume was but a simpleton and that his mission was not of God.

In 1433, the Constable, with the assistance of the Queen of Sicily, caused the capture and planned the assassination of La Trémouille. It was the custom of the nobles of that day to appoint counsellors for King Charles and afterwards to kill them. However, the sword which was to have caused the death of La Trémouille, owing to his corpulence, failed to inflict a mortal wound. His life was saved, but his influence was dead. King Charles tolerated the Constable as he had tolerated the Sire de la Trémouille.

The latter left behind him the reputation of having been grasping and indifferent to the welfare of the kingdom. Perhaps his greatest fault was that he governed in a time of war and pillage, when friends and foes alike were devouring the realm. He was charged with the destruction of the Maid, of whom he was said to have been jealous. This accusation proceeds from the House of Alençon, with whom the Lord Chamberlain was not popular. On the contrary, it must be admitted, that after the Lord Chancellor, La Trémouille was the boldest in employing the Maid, and if later she did thwart his plans there is nothing to prove that it was his intention to have her destroyed by the English. She destroyed herself and was consumed by her own zeal.

Rightly or wrongly, the Lord Chamberlain was held to be a bad man; and, although his successor in the King's favour, the Duc de Richemont, was avaricious, hard, violent, incredibly stupid, surly, malicious, always beaten and always discontented, the exchange appeared to be no loss. The Constable came in a fortunate hour, when the Duke of Burgundy was making peace with the King of France.

In the words of a Carthusian friar, the English who had entered the kingdom by the hole made in Duke John's head on the Bridge of Montereau, only retained their hold on the kingdom by the hand of Duke Philip. They were but few in

number, and if the giant were to withdraw his hand a breath of wind would suffice to blow them away. The Regent died of sorrow and wrath, beholding the fulfilment of the horoscope of King Henry VI: "Exeter shall lose what Monmouth hath won."

On the 13th of April, 1436, the Count of Richemont entered Paris. The nursing mother of Burgundian clerks and *Cabochien* doctors, the University herself, had helped to mediate peace.

Now, one month after Paris had returned to her allegiance to King Charles, there appeared in Lorraine a certain damsel. She was about twenty-five years old. Hitherto she had been called Claude; but she now made herself known to divers lords of the town of Metz as being Jeanne the Maid.

At this time, Jeanne's father and eldest brother were dead. Isabelle Romée was alive. Her two youngest sons were in the service of the King of France, who had raised them to the rank of nobility and given them the name of Du Lys. Jean, the eldest, called Petit-Jean, had been appointed Bailie of Vermandois, then Captain of Chartres. About this year, 1436, he was provost and captain of Vaucouleurs.

The youngest, Pierre, or Pierrelot, who had fallen into the hands of the Burgundians before Compiègne at the same time as Jeanne, had just been liberated from the prison of the Bastard of Vergy.

Both brothers believed that their sister had been burned at Rouen. But when they were told that she was living and wished to see them, they appointed a meeting at La-Grange-aux-Ormes, a village in the meadows of the Sablon, between the Seille and the Moselle, about two and a half miles south of Metz. They reached this place on the 20th of May. There they saw her and recognised her immediately to be their sister; and she recognised them to be her brothers.

She was accompanied by certain lords of Metz, among whom was a man right noble, Messire Nicole Lowe, who was chamberlain to Charles VII. By divers tokens these nobles recognised her to be the Maid Jeanne who had taken King Charles to be crowned at Reims. These tokens were certain signs on the skin. Now there was a prophecy concerning Jeanne which stated her to have a little red mark beneath the ear. But this prophecy was invented after the events to which it referred. Consequently we may believe the Maid to have been thus marked. Was this the token by which the nobles of Metz recognised her?

We do not know by what means she claimed to have escaped death; but there is reason to think that she attributed her deliverance to her holiness. Did she say that an angel had saved her from the fire? It might be read in books how in the ancient amphitheatres lions licked the bare feet of virgins, how boiling oil was as soothing as balm to the bodies of holy martyrs; and how according to many of

the old stories nothing short of the sword could take the life of God's maidens. These ancient histories rested on a sure foundation. But if such tales had been related of the fifteenth century they might have appeared less credible. And this damsel does not seem to have employed them to adorn her adventure. She was probably content to say that another woman had been burned in her place.

According to a confession she made afterwards, she came from Rome, where, accoutred in harness of war, she had fought valiantly in the service of Pope Eugenius. She may even have told the Lorrainers of the feats of prowess she had there accomplished.

Now Jeanne had prophesied (at least so it was believed) that she would die in battle against the infidel and that her mantle would fall upon a maid of Rome. But such a saying, if it were known to these nobles of Metz, would be more likely to denounce this so-called Jeanne as an imposture than witness to the truth of her mission. However this might be, they believed what this woman told them.

Perhaps, like many a noble of the republic, they were more inclined to King Charles than to the Duke of Burgundy. And we may be sure that, chivalrous knights as they were, they esteemed chivalry wherever they found it; wherefore, because of her valour they admired the Maid; and they made her good cheer.

Messire Nicole Lowe gave her a charger and a pair of hose. The charger was worth thirty francs — a sum wellnigh royal — for of the two horses which at Soissons and at Senlis the King gave the Maid Jeanne, one was worth thirty-eight livres ten sous, and the other thirty-seven livres ten sous. Not more than sixteen francs had been paid for the horse with which she had been provided at Vaucouleurs.

Nicole Grognot, governor of the town, offered a sword to the sister of the Du Lys brothers; Aubert Boullay presented her with a hood.

She rode her horse with the same skill which seven years earlier, if we may believe some rather mythical stories, had filled with wonder the old Duke of Lorraine. And she spoke certain words to Messire Nicole Lowe which confirmed him in his belief that she was indeed that same Maid Jeanne who had fared forth into France. She had the ready tongue of a prophetess, and spoke in symbols and parables, revealing nought of her intent.

Her power would not come to her before Saint John the Baptist's Day, she said. Now this was the very time which the Maid, after the Battle of Patay, in 1429, had fixed for the extermination of the English in France.

This prophecy had not been fulfilled and consequently had not been mentioned again. Jeanne, if she ever uttered it, and it is quite possible that she did, must have been the first to forget it. Moreover, Saint John's Day was a term commonly cited in leases, fairs, contracts, hirings, etc., and it is quite conceivable that the calendar of a prophetess may have been the same as that of a labourer.

The day after their arrival at La Grange-aux-Ormes, Monday, the 21st of May, the Du Lys brothers took her, whom they held to be their sister, to that town of Vaucouleurs whither Isabelle Romée's daughter had gone to see Sire Robert de Baudricourt. In this town, in the year 1436, there were still living many persons of different conditions, such as the Leroyer couple and the Seigneur Aubert d'Ourches, who had seen Jeanne in February, 1429.

After a week at Vaucouleurs she went to Marville, a small town between Corny and Pont-à-Mousson. There she spent Whitsuntide and abode for three weeks in the house of one Jean Quenat. On her departure she was visited by sundry inhabitants of Metz, who gave her jewels, recognising her to be the Maid of France. Jeanne, it will be remembered, had been seen by divers knights of Metz at the time of King Charles's coronation at Reims. At Marville, Geoffroy Desch, following the example of Nicole Lowe, presented the so-called Jeanne with a horse. Geoffroy Desch belonged to one of the most influential families of the Republic of Metz. He was related to Jean Desch, municipal secretary in 1429.

From Marville, she went on a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Liance, called Lienche by the Picards and known later as Notre Dame de Liesse. At Liance was worshipped a black image of the Virgin, which, according to tradition, had been brought by the crusaders from the Holy Land. The chapel containing this image was situated between Laon and Reims. It was said, by the priests who officiated there, to be one of the halting places on the route of the coronation procession, where the kings and their retinues were accustomed to stop on their return from Reims; but this is very likely not to be true. Whether it were such a halting place or no, there is no doubt that the folk of Metz displayed a particular devotion to Our Lady of Liance; and it seemed fitting that Jeanne, who had escaped from an English prison, should go and give thanks for her marvellous deliverance to the Black Virgin of Picardy.

Thence she went on her way to Arlon, to Elisabeth of Gorlitz, Duchess of Luxembourg, an aunt by marriage of the Duke of Burgundy. She was an old woman, who had been twice a widow. By extortion and oppression she had made herself detested by her vassals. By this princess Jeanne was well received.

There was nothing strange in that. Persons living holy lives and working miracles were much sought after by princes and nobles who desired to discover secrets or to obtain the fulfilment of some wish. And the Duchess of Luxembourg might well believe this damsel to be the Maid Jeanne herself, since the brothers Du Lys, the nobles of Metz and the folk of Vaucouleurs were of that opinion.

For the generality of men, Jeanne's life and death were surrounded by marvels and mysteries. Many had from the first doubted her having perished by the hand of the executioner. Certain were curiously reticent on this point; they said: "the English had her publicly burnt at Rouen, or some other woman like her." Others confessed that they did not know what had become of her.

Thus, when throughout Germany and France the rumour spread that the Maid was alive and had been seen near Metz, the tidings were variously received. Some believed them, others did not. An ardent dispute, which arose between two citizens of Arles, gives some idea of the emotion aroused by such tidings. One maintained that the Maid was still alive; the other asserted that she was dead; each one wagered that what he said was true. This was no light wager, for it was made and registered in the presence of a notary, on the 27th of June, 1436, only five weeks after the interview at La Grange-aux-Ormes.

Meanwhile, in the beginning of August, the Maid's eldest brother, Jean du Lys, called Petit-Jean, had gone to Orléans to announce that his sister was alive. As a reward for these good tidings, he received for himself and his followers ten pints of wine, twelve hens, two goslings, and two leverets.

The birds had been purchased by two magistrates; the name of one, Pierre Baratin, is to be found in the account books of the fortress, in 1429, at the time of the expedition to Jargeau; the other was an old man of sixty-six, a burgess passing rich, Aignan de Saint-Mesmin.

Messengers were passing to and fro between the town of Duke Charles and the town of the Duchess of Luxembourg. On the 9th of August a letter from Arlon reached Orléans. About the middle of the month a pursuivant arrived at Arlon. He was called Cœur-de-Lis, in honour of the heraldic symbol of the city of Orléans, which was a lily-bud, a kind of trefoil. The magistrates of Orléans had sent him to Jeanne with a letter, the contents of which are unknown. Jeanne gave him a letter for the King, in which she probably requested an audience. He took it straight to Loches, where King Charles was negotiating the betrothal of his daughter Yolande to Prince Amedée of Savoie.

After forty-one days' journey the pursuivant returned to the magistrates, who had despatched him on the 2nd of September. The messenger complained of a great thirst, wherefore the magistrates, according to their wont, had him served

in the chamber of the town-hall with bread, wine, pears, and green walnuts. This repast cost the town two *sous* four *deniers* of Paris, while the pursuivant's travelling expenses amounted to six *livres* which were paid in the following month. The town varlet who provided the walnuts was that same Jacquet Leprestre who had served during the siege. Another letter from the Maid had been received by the magistrates on the 25th of August.

Jean du Lys proceeded just as if his miracle-working sister had in very deed been restored to him. He went to the King, to whom he announced the wonderful tidings. Charles cannot have entirely disbelieved them since he ordered Jean du Lys to be given a gratuity of one hundred francs. Whereupon Jean promptly demanded these hundred francs from the King's treasurer, who gave him twenty. The coffers of the victorious King were not full even then.

Having returned to Orléans, Jean appeared before the town-council. He gave the magistrates to wit that he had only eight francs, a sum by no means sufficient to enable him and four retainers to return to Lorraine. The magistrates gave him twelve francs.

Every year until then the anniversary of the Maid had been celebrated in the church of Saint-Sanxton on the eve of Corpus Christi and on the previous day. In 1435, eight ecclesiastics of the four mendicant orders sang a mass for the repose of Jeanne's soul. In this year, 1436, the magistrates had four candles burnt, weighing together nine and a half pounds, and pendent therefrom the Maid's escutcheon, a silver shield bearing the crown of France. But when they heard the Maid was alive they cancelled the arrangements for a funeral service in her memory.

While these things were occurring in France, Jeanne was still with the Duchess of Luxembourg. There she met the young Count Ulrich of Wurtemberg, who refused to leave her. He had a handsome cuirasse made for her and took her to Cologne. She still called herself the Maid of France sent by God.

Since the 24th of June, Saint John the Baptist's Day, her power had returned to her. Count Ulrich, recognising her supernatural gifts, entreated her to employ them on behalf of himself and his friends. Being very contentious, he had become seriously involved in the schism which was then rending asunder the diocese of Trèves. Two prelates were contending for the see; one, Udalric of Manderscheit, appointed by the chapter, the other Raban of Helmstat, Bishop of Speyer, appointed by the Pope. Udalric took the field with a small force and twice besieged and bombarded the town of which he called himself the true shepherd. These proceedings brought the greater part of the diocese on to his side. But although aged and infirm, Raban too had weapons; they were spiritual

but powerful: he pronounced an interdict against all such as should espouse the cause of his rival.

Count Ulrich of Wurtemberg, who was among the most zealous of Udalric's supporters, questioned the Maid of God concerning him. Similar cases had been submitted to the first Jeanne when she was in France. She had been asked, for example, which of the three popes, Benedict, Martin, or Clement, was the true father of the faithful, and without immediately pronouncing on the subject she had promised to designate the Pope to whom obedience was due, after she had reached Paris and rested there. The second Jeanne replied with even more assurance; she declared that she knew who was the true archbishop and boasted that she would enthrone him.

According to her, it was Udalric of Manderscheid, he whom the Chapter had appointed. But when Udalric was summoned before the Council of Bâle, he was declared an usurper; and the fathers did what it was by no means their unvarying rule to do, — they confirmed the nomination of the Pope.

Unfortunately the Maid's intervention in this dispute attracted the attention of the Inquisitor General of the city of Cologne, Heinrich Kalt Eysen, an illustrious professor of theology. He inquired into the rumours which were being circulated in the city touching the young prince's protégée; and he learnt that she wore unseemly apparel, danced with men, ate and drank more than she ought, and practised magic. He was informed notably that in a certain assembly the Maid tore a table-cloth and straightway restored it to its original condition, and that having broken a glass against the wall she with marvellous skill put all its pieces together again. Such deeds caused Kalt Eysen to suspect her strongly of heresy and witchcraft. He summoned her before his tribunal; she refused to appear. This disobedience displeased the Inquisitor General, and he sent to fetch the defaulter. But the young Count of Wurtemberg hid his Maid in his house, and afterwards contrived to get her secretly out of the town. Thus she escaped the fate of her whom she was willing only partially to imitate. As he could do nothing else, the Inquisitor excommunicated her. She took refuge at Arlon with her protectress, the Duchess of Luxembourg. There she met Robert des Armoises, Lord of Tichemont. She may have seen him before, in the spring, at Marville, where he usually resided. This nobleman was probably the son of Lord Richard, Governor of the Duchy of Bar in 1416. Nothing is known of him, save that he surrendered this territory to the foreigner without the Duke of Bar's consent, and then beheld it confiscated and granted to the Lord of Apremont on condition that he should conquer it.

It was not extraordinary that Lord Robert should be at Arlon, seeing that his château of Tichemont was near this town. He was poor, albeit of noble birth.

The so-called Maid married him, apparently with the approval of the Duchess of Luxembourg. According to the opinion of the Holy Inquisitor of Cologne, this marriage was contracted merely to protect the woman against the interdict and to save her from the sword of the Church.

Soon after her marriage she went to live at Metz in her husband's house, opposite the church of Sainte-Ségolène, over the Sainte-Barbe Gate. Henceforth she was Jeanne du Lys, the Maid of France, the Lady of Tichemont. By these names she is described in a contract dated the 7th of November, 1436, by which Robert des Armoises and his wife, authorised by him, sell to Collard de Failly, squire, dwelling at Marville, and to Poinsette, his wife, one quarter of the lordship of Haraucourt. At the request of their dear friends, Messire Robert and Dame Jeanne, Jean de Thonelet, Lord of Villette, and Saubelet de Dun, Provost of Marville, as well as the vendors, put their seals to the contract to testify to its validity.

In her dwelling, opposite the Sainte-Ségolène Church, la Dame des Armoises gave birth to two children. Somewhere in Languedoc there was an honest squire who, when he heard of these births, seriously doubted whether Jeanne the Maid and la Dame des Armoises could be one and the same person. This was Jean d'Aulon, who had once been Jeanne's steward. From information he had received from women who knew, he did not believe her to be the kind of woman likely to have children.

According to Brother Jean Nider, doctor in theology of the University of Vienne, this fruitful union turned out badly. A priest, and, as he says, a priest who might more appropriately be called a pander, seduced this witch with words of love and carried her off. But Brother Jean Nider adds that the priest secretly took la Dame des Armoises to Metz and there lived with her as his concubine. Now it is proved that her own home was in that very town; hence we may conclude that this friar preacher does not know what he is talking about.

The fact of the matter is that she did not remain longer than two years in the shadow of Sainte-Ségolène.

Although she had married, it was by no means her intention to forswear prophesying and chivalry. During her trial Jeanne had been asked by the examiner: "Jeanne, was it not revealed to you that if you lost your virginity your good fortune would cease and your Voices desert you?" She denied that such things had been revealed to her. And when he insisted, asking her whether she believed that if she were married her Voices would still come to her, she answered like a good Christian: "I know not, and I appeal to God." Jeanne des Armoises likewise held that good fortune had not forsaken her on account of her marriage. Moreover, in those days of prophecy there were both widows and

married women who, like Judith of Bethulia, acted by divine inspiration. Such had been Dame Catherine de la Rochelle, although perhaps after all she had not done anything so very great.

In the summer of 1439, la Dame des Armoises went to Orléans. The magistrates offered her wine and meat as a token of gladness and devotion. On the first of August they gave her a dinner and presented her with two hundred and ten livres of Paris as an acknowledgment of the service she had rendered to the town during the siege. These are the very terms in which this expenditure is entered in the account books of that city.

If the folk of Orléans did actually take her for the real Maid, Jeanne, then it must have been more on account of the evidence of the Du Lys brothers, than on that of their own eyes. For, when one comes to think of it, they had seen her but very seldom. During that week in May, she had only appeared before them armed and on horseback. Afterwards in June, 1429, and January, 1430, she had merely passed through the town. True it was she had been offered wine and the magistrates had sat at table with her; but that was nine years ago. And the lapse of nine years works many a change in a woman's face. They had seen her last as a young girl, now they found her a woman and the mother of two children. Moreover they were guided by the opinion of her kinsfolk. Their attitude provokes some astonishment, however, when one thinks of the conversation at the banquet, and of the awkward and inconsistent remarks the dame must have uttered. If they were not then undeceived, these burgesses must have been passing simple and strongly prejudiced in favour of their guest.

And who can say that they were not? Who can say that, after having given credence to the tidings brought by Jean du Lys, the townsfolk did not begin to discover the imposture? That the belief in the survival of Jeanne was by no means general in the city, during the visit of la Dame des Armoises, is proved by the entries in the municipal accounts of sums expended on the funeral services, which we have already mentioned. Supposing we abstract the years 1437 and 1438, the anniversary service had at any rate been held in 1439, two days before Corpus-Christi, and only about three months before the banquet on the 1st of August. Thus these grateful burgesses of Orléans were at one and the same time entertaining their benefactress at banquets and saying masses in memory of her death.

La Dame des Armoises only spent a fortnight with them. She left the city towards the end of July. Her departure would seem to have been hasty and sudden. She was invited to a supper, at which she was to have been presented with eight pints of wine, but when the wine was served she had gone, and the banquet had to be held without her. Jean Quillier and Thévanon of Bourges were

present. This Thévanon may have been that Thévenin Villedart, with whom Jeanne's brothers dwelt during the siege. In Jean Quillier we recognise the young draper who, in June, 1429, had furnished fine Brussels cloth of purple, wherewith to make a gown for the Maid.

La Dame des Armoises had gone to Tours, where she gave herself out to be the true Jeanne. She gave the Bailie of Touraine a letter for the King; and the Bailie undertook to see that it was delivered to the Prince, who was then at Orléans, having arrived there but shortly after Jeanne's departure. The Bailie of Touraine in 1439 was none other than that Guillaume Bellier who ten years before as lieutenant of Chinon had received the Maid into his house and committed her to the care of his devout wife.

To the messenger, who bore this letter, Guillaume Bellier also gave a note for the King written by himself, and "touching the deeds of la Dame des Armoises." We know nothing of its purport.

Shortly afterwards the Dame went off into Poitou. There she placed herself at the service of Seigneur Gille de Rais, Marshal of France. He it was who in his early youth had conducted the Maid to Orléans, had been with her throughout the coronation campaign, had fought at her side before the walls of Paris. During Jeanne's captivity he had occupied Louviers and pushed on boldly to Rouen. Now throughout the length and breadth of his vast domains he was kidnapping children, mingling magic with debauchery, and offering to demons the blood and the limbs of his countless victims. His monstrous doings spread terror round his castles of Tiffauges and Machecoul, and already the hand of the Church was upon him.

According to the Holy Inquisitor of Cologne, la Dame des Armoises practised magic; but it was not as an invoker of demons that the Maréchal de Rais employed her; he placed her in authority over the men-at-arms, in somewhat the same position as Jeanne had occupied at Lagny and Compiègne. Did she do great prowess? We do not know. At any rate she did not hold her office long; and after her it was bestowed on a Gascon squire, one Jean de Siquemville. In the spring of 1440 she was near Paris.

For nearly two years and a half the great town had been loyal to King Charles. He had entered the city, but had failed to restore it to prosperity. Deserted houses were everywhere falling into ruins; wolves penetrated into the suburbs and devoured little children. The townsfolk, who had so recently been Burgundian, could not all forget how the Maid in company with Friar Richard and the Armagnacs had attacked the city on the day of the Nativity of Our Lady. There were many, doubtless, who bore her ill will and believed she had been burned for her sins; but her name no longer excited universal reprobation as in

1429. Certain even among her former enemies regarded her as a martyr to the cause of her liege lord. Even in Rouen such an opinion was not unknown, and it was much more likely to be held in the city of Paris which had lately turned French. At the rumour that Jeanne was not dead, that she had been recognised by the people of Orléans and was coming to Paris, the lower orders in the city grew excited and disturbances were threatening.

Under Charles of Valois in 1440, the spirit of the University was just the same as it had been under Henry of Lancaster in 1431. It honoured and respected the King of France, the guardian of its privileges and the defender of the liberties of the Gallican Church. The illustrious masters felt no remorse at having demanded and obtained the chastisement of the rebel and heretic, Jeanne the Maid. Whosoever persists in error is a heretic; whosoever essays and fails to overthrow the powers that be is a rebel. It was God's will that in 1440 Charles of Valois should possess the city of Paris; it had not been God's will in 1429; wherefore the Maid had striven against God. With equal bitterness would the University, in 1440, have proceeded against a Maid of the English.

The magistrates who had returned to their Paris homes from their long dreary exile at Poitiers sat in the Parlement side by side with the converted Burgundians. In the days of adversity these faithful servants of King Charles had set the Maid to work, but now in 1440 it was none of their business to maintain publicly the truth of her mission and the purity of her faith. Burned by the English, that was all very well. But a trial conducted by a bishop and a vice-inquisitor with the concurrence of the University is not an English trial; it is a trial at once essentially Gallican and essentially Catholic. Jeanne's name was forever branded throughout Christendom. That ecclesiastical sentence could be reversed by the Pope alone. But the Pope had no intention of doing this. He was too much afraid of displeasing the King of Catholic England; and moreover were he once to admit that an inquisitor of the faith had pronounced a wrong sentence he would undermine all human authority. The French clerks submit and are silent. In the assemblies of the clergy no one dares to utter Jeanne's name.

Fortunately for them neither the doctors and masters of the University nor the sometime members of the Parlement of Poitiers share the popular delusion touching la Dame des Armoises. They have no doubt that the Maid was burned at Rouen. And they fear lest this woman, who gives herself out to be the deliverer of Orléans, may arouse a tumult by her entrance into the city. Wherefore the Parlement and the University send out men-at-arms to meet her. She is arrested and brought to the Palais.

She was examined, tried and sentenced to be publicly exhibited. In the Palais de Justice, leading up from the court called the Cour-de-Mai, there was a marble

slab on which malefactors were exhibited. La Dame des Armoises was put up there and shown to the people whom she had deceived. The usual sermon was preached at her and she was forced to confess publicly.

She declared that she was not the Maid, that she was married to a knight and had two sons. She told how one day, in her mother's presence, she heard a woman speak slightly of her; whereupon she proceeded to attack the slanderer, and, when her mother restrained her, she turned her blows against her parent. Had she not been in a passion she would never have struck her mother. Notwithstanding this provocation, here was a special case and one reserved for the papal jurisdiction. Whosoever had raised his hand against his father or his mother, as likewise against a priest or a clerk, must go and ask forgiveness of the Holy Father, to whom alone belonged the power of convicting or acquitting the sinner. This was what she had done. "I went to Rome," she said, "attired in man's apparel. I engaged as a soldier in the war of the Holy Father Eugenius, and in this war I twice committed homicide."

When had she journeyed to Rome? Probably before the exile of Pope Eugenius to Florence, about the year 1433, when the condottieri of the Duke of Milan were advancing to the gates of the Eternal City.

We do not find either the University, or the Ordinary, or the Grand Inquisitor demanding the trial of this woman, who was suspected of witchcraft and of homicide, and who was attired in unseemly garments. She was not prosecuted as a heretic, doubtless because she was not obstinate, and obstinacy alone constitutes heresy.

Henceforth she attracted no further attention. It is believed, but on no very trustworthy evidence, that she ended by returning to Metz, to her husband, le Chevalier des Armoises, and that she lived quietly and respectably to a good old age, dwelling in the house over the door of which were her armorial bearings, or rather those of Jeanne the Maid, the sword, the crown and the Lilies.

The success of this fraud had endured four years. After all it is not so very surprising. In every age people have been loath to believe in the final end of existences which have touched their imagination; they will not admit that great personalities can be struck down by death like ordinary folk; such an end to a noble career is repugnant to them. Impostors, like la Dame des Armoises, never fail to find some who will believe in them. And the Dame appeared at a time which was singularly favourable to such a delusion; intellects had been dulled by long suffering; communication between one district and another was rendered impossible or difficult, and what was happening in one place was unknown quite near at hand; in the minds of men there reigned dimness, ignorance, confusion.

But even then folk would not have been imposed upon so long by this pseudo-Jeanne had it not been for the support given her by the Du Lys brothers. Were they her dupes or her accomplices? Dull-witted as they may have been, it seems hardly credible that the adventuress could have imposed upon them. Admitting that she very closely resembled La Romée's daughter, the woman from La Grange-aux-Ormes cannot possibly for any length of time have deceived two men who knew Jeanne intimately, having been brought up with her and come with her into France.

If they were not imposed upon, then how can we account for their conduct? They had lost much when they lost their sister. When he arrived at La Grange-aux-Ormes, Pierre du Lys had just quitted a Burgundian prison; his ransom had been paid with his wife's dowry, and he was then absolutely destitute. Jean, Bailie of Vermandois, afterwards Governor of Chartres and about 1436 Bailie of Vaucouleurs, was hardly more prosperous. Such circumstances explained much. And yet it is unlikely that they of themselves alone and unsupported would have played a game so difficult, so risky, and so dangerous. From the little we know of their lives we should conclude that they were both too simple, too naïf, too placid, to carry on such an intrigue.

We are tempted to believe that they were urged on by some higher and greater power. Who knows? Perhaps by certain indiscreet persons in the service of the King of France. The condemnation and death of Jeanne was a serious attack upon the prestige of Charles VII. May he not have had in his household or among his counsellors certain subjects who were rashly jealous enough to invent this appearance, in order to spread abroad the belief that Jeanne the Maid had not died the death of a witch, but that by virtue of her innocence and her holiness she had escaped the flames? If this were so, then we may regard the imposture of the pseudo-Jeanne, invented at a time when it seemed impossible ever to obtain a papal revision of the trial of 1431, as an attempt, surreptitious and fraudulent and speedily abandoned, to bring about her rehabilitation.

Such a hypothesis would explain why the Du Lys brothers were not punished or even disgraced, when they had put themselves in the wrong, had deceived King and people and committed the crime of high treason. Jean continued provost of Vaucouleurs for many a long year, and then, when relieved of his office, received a sum of money in lieu of it. Pierre, as well as his mother, La Romée, was living at Orléans. In 1443 he received from Duke Charles, who had returned to France three years before, the grant of an island in the Loire, l'Île-aux-Bœufs, which was fair grazing land. Nevertheless, he remained poor, and was constantly receiving help from the Duke and the townsfolk of Orléans.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MAID (*continued*) — THE ROUEN JUDGES AT THE COUNCIL OF BÂLE AND THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION — THE REHABILITATION TRIAL — THE MAID OF SARMAIZE — THE MAID OF LE MANS

FROM year to year the Council of Bâle drew out its deliberations in a series of sessions well nigh as lengthy as the tail of the dragon in the Apocalypse. Its manner of reforming at once the Church, its members, and its head struck terror into the hearts of the sovereign Pontiff and the Sacred College. Sorrowfully did Æneus Sylvius exclaim, "There is assembled at Bâle, not the Church of God indeed, but the synagogue of Satan." But though uttered by a Roman cardinal, even such an expression can hardly be termed violent when applied to the synod which established free elections to bishoprics, suppressed the right of bestowing the pallium, of exacting annates and payments to the papal chancery, and which was endeavouring to restore the papacy to evangelical poverty. The King of France and the Emperor, on the other hand, looked favourably on the Council when it essayed to bridle the ambition and greed of the Bishop of Rome.

Now among the Fathers who displayed the greatest zeal in the reformation of the Church were the masters and doctors of the University of Paris, those who had sat in judgment on Jeanne the Maid, and notably Maître Nicolas Loiseleur and Maître Thomas de Courcelles. Charles VII convoked an assembly of the clergy of the realm in order to examine the canons of Bâle. The assembly met in the Sainte-Chapelle at Bourges, on the 1st of May, 1438. Master Thomas de Courcelles, appointed delegate by the Council, there conferred with the Lord Bishop of Castres. Now in 1438 the Bishop of Castres was that elegant humanist, that zealous counsellor of the crown, who, in style truly Ciceronian, complained in his letters that so closely was he bound to his glebe, the court, that no time remained to him to visit his spouse. He was none other than that Gérard Machet, the King's confessor, who had, in 1429, along with the clerks at Poitiers, pleaded the authority of prophecy in favour of the Maid, in whom he found nought but sincerity and goodness. Maître Thomas de Courcelles at Rouen had urged the Maid's being tortured and delivered to the secular arm. At the Bourges assembly the two churchmen agreed touching the supremacy of General Councils, the freedom of episcopal elections, the suppression of annates and the

rights of the Gallican Church. At that moment it was not likely that either one or the other remembered the poor Maid. From the deliberations of this assembly, in which Maître Thomas played an important part, there issued the solemn edict promulgated by the King on the 7th of July, 1438; the Pragmatic Sanction. By this edict the canons of Bâle became the constitution of the Church of France.

The Emperor also agreed to the reforms of Bâle. So audacious did the Fathers become that they summoned Pope Eugenius to appear before their tribunal. When he refused to obey their summons, they deposed him, declaring him to be disobedient, obstinate, rebellious, a breaker of rules, a perturber of ecclesiastical unity, a perjurer, a schismatic, a hardened heretic, a squanderer of the treasures of the Church, scandalous, simoniacal, pernicious and damnable. Such was the condemnation of the Holy Fathers pronounced among other doctors by Maître Jean Beupère, Maître Thomas de Courcelles and Maître Nicolas Loiseleur, who had all three so sternly reproached Jeanne with having refused to submit to the Pope. Maître Nicolas had been extremely energetic throughout the Maid's trial, playing alternately the parts of the Lorraine prisoner and Saint Catherine; when she was led to the stake he had run after her like a madman. This same Maître Nicolas now displayed great activity in the Council wherein he attained to some eminence. He upheld the view that the General Council canonically convoked, was superior to the Pope and in a position to depose him. And albeit this canon was a mere master of arts, he made such an impression on the Fathers at Bâle that in 1439, they despatched him to act as juris-consult at the Diet of Mainz. Meanwhile his attitude was strongly displeasing to the chapter which had sent him as deputy to the Council. The canons of Rouen sided with the Sovereign Pontiff and against the Fathers, on this point joining issue with the University of Paris. They disowned their delegate and sent to recall him on the 28th of July, 1438.

Maître Thomas de Courcelles, one of those who had declared the Pope disobedient, obstinate, rebellious and the rest, was nominated one of the commissioners to preside over the election of a new pope, and, like Loiseleur, a delegate to the Diet of Mainz. But, unlike Loiseleur, he was not disowned by those who had appointed him, for he was the deputy of the University of Paris who recognised the Pope of the Council, Felix, to be the true Father of the Faithful. In the assembly of the French clergy held at Bourges in the August of 1440, Maître Thomas spoke in the name of the Fathers of Bâle. He discoursed for two hours to the complete satisfaction of the King. Charles VII, while remaining loyal to Pope Eugenius, maintained the Pragmatic Sanction. Maître Thomas de Courcelles was henceforth one of the pillars of the French Church.

Meanwhile the English government had declared for the Pope and against the Council. My Lord Pierre Cauchon, who had become Bishop of Lisieux, was Henry VI's ambassador at the Council. And at Bâle a somewhat unpleasant experience befell him. By reason of his translation to the see of Lisieux he owed Rome annates to the amount of 400 golden florins. In Germany he was informed by the Pope's Treasurer that by his failure to pay this sum, despite the long delays granted to him, he had incurred excommunication, and that being excommunicate, by presuming to celebrate divine service he had committed irregularity. Such accusations must have caused him considerable annoyance. But after all, such occurrences were frequent and of no great consequence. On churchmen these thunderbolts fell but lightly, doing them no great hurt.

From 1444, the realm of France, disembarassed alike of adversaries and of defenders, was free to labour, to work at various trades, to engage in commerce and to grow rich. In the intervals between wars and during truces, King Charles's government, by the interchange of natural products and of merchandise, also, we may add, by the abolition of tolls and dues on the Rivers Seine, Oise, and Loire, effected the actual conquest of Normandy. Thus, when the time for nominal conquest came, the French had only to take possession of the province. So easy had this become, that in the rapid campaign of 1449, even the Constable was not beaten, neither was the Duke of Alençon. In his royal and peaceful manner Charles VII resumed possession of his town of Rouen, just as twenty years before he had taken Troyes and Reims, as the result of an understanding with the townsfolk and in return for an amnesty and the grant of rights and privileges to the burghers. He entered the city on Monday, the 10th of November, 1449.

The French government felt itself strong enough even to attempt the reconquest of that essentially English province, Aquitaine. In 1451, my Lord the Bastard, now Count of Dunois, took possession of the fortress of Blaye. Bordeaux and Bayonne surrendered in the same year. In the following manner did the Lord Bishop of Le Mans celebrate these conquests, worthy of the majesty of the most Christian King.

"Maine, Normandy, Aquitaine, these goodly provinces have returned to their allegiance to the King. Almost without the shedding of French blood hath this been accomplished. It hath not been necessary to overthrow the ramparts of many strongly walled towns, or to demolish their fortifications or for the inhabitants to suffer either pillage or murder."

Indeed Normandy and Maine were quite content at being French once more. The town of Bordeaux was alone in regretting the English, whose departure spelt

its ruin. It revolted in 1452; and then after considerable difficulty was reconquered once and for all.

King Charles, henceforth rich and victorious, now desired to efface the stain inflicted on his reputation by the sentence of 1431. He wanted to prove to the whole world that it was no witch who had conducted him to his coronation. He was now eager to appeal against the condemnation of the Maid. But this condemnation had been pronounced by the church, and the Pope alone could order it to be cancelled. The King hoped to bring the Pope to do this, although he knew it would not be easy. In the March of 1450, he proceeded to a preliminary inquiry; and matters remained in that position until the arrival in France of Cardinal d'Estouteville, the legate of the Holy See. Pope Nicolas had sent him to negotiate with the King of France a peace with England and a crusade against the Turks. Cardinal d'Estouteville, who belonged to a Norman family, was just the man to discover the weak points in Jeanne's trial. In order to curry favour with Charles, he, as legate, set on foot a new inquiry at Rouen, with the assistance of Jean Bréhal, of the order of preaching friars, the Inquisitor of the Faith in the kingdom of France. But the Pope did not approve of the legate's intervention; and for three years the revision was not proceeded with. Nicolas V would not allow it to be thought that the sacred tribunal of the most holy Inquisition was fallible and had even once pronounced an unjust sentence. And there existed at Rome a stronger reason for not interfering with the trial of 1431: the French demanded revision; the English were opposed to it; and the Pope did not wish to annoy the English, for they were then just as good and even better Catholics than the French.

In order to relieve the Pope from embarrassment and set him at his ease, the government of Charles VII invented an expedient: the King was not to appear in the suit; his place was to be taken by the family of the Maid. Jeanne's mother, Isabelle Romée de Vouthon, who lived in retirement at Orléans, and her two sons, Pierre and Jean du Lys, demanded the revision. By this legal artifice the case was converted from a political into a private suit. At this juncture Nicolas V died, on the 24th of March, 1455. His successor, Calixtus III, a Borgia, an old man of seventy-eight, by a rescript dated the 11th of June, 1455, authorised the institution of proceedings. To this end he appointed Jean Jouvenel des Ursins, Archbishop of Reims, Guillaume Chartier, Bishop of Paris, and Richard Olivier, Bishop of Coutances, who were to act conjointly with the Grand Inquisitor of France.

From the first it was agreed that certain of those concerned in the original trial were not now to be involved, "for they had been deceived." Notably it was admitted that the Daughter of Kings, the Mother of Learning, the University of

Paris, had been led into error by a fraudulent indictment consisting of twelve articles. It was agreed that the whole responsibility should be thrown on to the Bishop of Beauvais and the Promoter, Guillaume d'Estivet, who were both deceased. The precaution was necessary. Had it not been taken, certain doctors very influential with the King and very dear to the Church of France would have been greatly embarrassed.

On the 7th of November, 1455, Isabelle Romée and her two sons, followed by a long procession of innumerable ecclesiasties, laymen, and worthy women, approached the church of Notre Dame in Paris to demand justice from the prelates and papal commissioners.

Informers and accusers in the trial of the late Jeanne were summoned to appear at Rouen on the 12th of December. Not one came. The heirs of the late Messire Pierre Cauchon declined all liability for the deeds of their deceased kinsman, and touching the civil responsibility, they pleaded the amnesty granted by the King on the reconquest of Normandy. As had been expected, the proceedings went forward without any obstacle or even any discussion.

Inquiries were instituted at Domremy, at Orléans, at Paris, at Rouen. The friends of Jeannette's childhood, Hauviette, Mengette, either married or grown old; Jeannette, the wife of Thévenin; Jeannette, the widow of Estellin; Jean Morel of Greux; Gérardin of Épinal, the Burgundian, and his wife Isabellette, who had been godmother to Jacques d'Arc's daughter; Perrin, the bell-ringer; Jeanne's uncle Lassois; the Leroyer couple and a score of peasants from Domremy all appeared. Bertrand de Poulengy, then sixty-three and gentleman of the horse to the King of France, was heard; likewise Jean de Novelompont, called Jean de Metz, who had been raised to noble rank and was now living at Vaucouleurs, where he held some military office. Gentlemen and ecclesiasties of Lorraine and Champagne were examined. Burgesses of Orléans were also called, and notably Jean Luillier, the draper, who in June, 1429, had furnished fine Brussels cloth of purple for Jeanne's gown and ten years later had been present at the banquet given by the magistrates of Orléans in honour of the Maid who, as it was believed, had escaped burning. Jean Luillier was the most intelligent of the witnesses; as for the others, of whom there were about two dozen townsmen and townswomen, of between fifty and sixty years of age, they did little but repeat his evidence. He spoke well; but the fear of the English dazzled him and he saw many more of them than there had ever been.

Touching the examination at Poitiers there were called an advocate, a squire, a man of business, François Garivel, who was fifteen at the time of Jeanne's interrogation. The only cleric summoned was Brother Seguin of Limousin. The clerics of Poitiers were first as disinclined to risk themselves in this matter as

were those of Rouen; a burnt child dreads the fire. La Hire and Poton of Saintrilles were dead. The survivors of Orléans and of Patay were called; the Bastard Jean, now Count of Dunois and Longueville, who gave his evidence like a clerk; the old Sire de Gaucourt, who in his eighty-fifth year made some effort of memory, and for the rest gave the same evidence as the Count of Dunois; the Duke of Alençon, on the point of making an alliance with the English and of procuring a powder with which to dry up the King, but who was none the less talkative and vain-glorious; Jeanne's steward, Messire Jean d'Aulon, who had become a knight, a King's Counsellor and Seneschal of Beaucaire, and the little page Louis de Coutes, now a noble of forty-two. Brother Pasquerel too was called; even in his old-age he remained superficial and credulous. And there was heard also the widow of Maître René de Bouligny, Demoiselle Marguerite la Toroulde, who delicately and with a good grace related what she remembered.

Care was taken not to summon the Lord Archbishop of Rouen, Messire Raoul Roussel, as a witness of the actual incidents of the trial, albeit he had sat in judgment on the Maid, side by side with my Lord of Beauvais. As for the Vice Inquisitor of Religion, Brother Jean Lemaistre, he might have been dead, so completely was he ignored. Nevertheless, certain of the assessors were called: Jean Beaupère, canon of Paris, of Besançon and of Rouen; Jean de Mailly, Lord Bishop of Noyon; Jean Lefèvre, Bishop of Démétriade; divers canons of Rouen, sundry ecclesiastics who appeared some unctuous, others stern and frowning; and, finally, the most illustrious Thomas de Courcelles, who, after having been the most laborious and assiduous collaborator of the Bishop of Beauvais, recalled nothing when he came before the commissioners for the revision.



THE BASTARD OF ORLEANS

From an old engraving

Enlarge

Among those who had been most zealous to procure Jeanne's condemnation were those who were now most eagerly labouring for her rehabilitation. The registrars of the Lord Bishop of Beauvais, the Boisguillaumes, the Manchons, the Taquels, all those ink-pots of the Church who had been used for her death sentence, worked wonders when that sentence had to be annulled; all the zeal they had displayed in the institution of the trial they now displayed in its revision; they were prepared to discover in it every possible flaw.

And in what a poor and paltry tone did these benign fabricators of legal artifices denounce the cruel iniquity which they had themselves perpetrated in due form! Among them was the Usher, Jean Massieu, a dissolute priest, of scandalous morals, but a kindly fellow for all that, albeit somewhat crafty and the inventor of a thousand ridiculous stories against Cauchon, as if the old Bishop were not black enough already. The revision commissioners produced a couple of sorry monks, Friar Martin Ladvenu and Friar Isambart de la Pierre, from the monastery of the preaching friars at Rouen. They wept in a heart-rending manner as they told of the pious end of that poor Maid, whom they had declared a heretic, then a relapsed heretic, and had finally burned alive. There was not one of the clerks charged with the examination of Jeanne but was touched to the heart at the memory of so saintly a damsel.

Huge piles of memoranda drawn up by doctors of high repute, canonists, theologians and jurists, both French and foreign, were furnished for the trial. Their chief object was to establish by scholastic reasoning that Jeanne had submitted her deeds and sayings to the judgment of the Church and of the Holy Father. These doctors proved that the judges of 1431 had been very subtle and Jeanne very simple. Doubtless, it was the best way to make out that she had submitted to the Church; but they over-reached themselves and made her too simple. According to them she was absolutely ignorant, almost an idiot, understanding nothing, imagining that the clerics who examined her in themselves alone constituted the Church Militant. This had been the impression of the doctors on the French side in 1429. *La Pucelle*, "*une puce*," said the Lord Archbishop of Embrun.

But there was another reason for making her appear as weak and imbecile as possible. Such a representation exalted the power of God, who through her had

restored the King of France to his inheritance.

Declarations confirming this view of the Maid were obtained by the commissioners from most of the witnesses. She was simple, she was very simple, she was absolutely simple, they repeated one after the other. And they all in the same words added: "Yes, she was simple, save in deeds of war, wherein she was well skilled." Then the captains said how clever she was in placing cannon, albeit they knew well to the contrary. But how could she have failed to be well versed in deeds of war, since God himself led her against the English? And in this possession of the art of war by an unskilled girl lay the miracle.

The Grand Inquisitor of France, Jean Bréhal, in his reminiscence enumerates the reasons for believing that Jeanne came from God. One of the proofs which seems to have struck him most forcibly is that her coming is foretold in the prophecies of Merlin, the Magician.

Believing that he could prove from one of Jeanne's answers that her first apparitions were in her thirteenth year, Brother Jean Bréhal argues that the fact is all the more credible seeing that this number 13, composed of 3, which indicates the Blessed Trinity, and of 10, which expresses the perfect observation of the Decalogue, is marvellously favourable to divine visitations.

On the 16th of June, 1455, the sentence of 1431 was declared unjust, unfounded, iniquitous. It was nullified and pronounced invalid.

Thus was honour restored to the messenger of the coronation, thus was her memory reconciled with the Church. But that abundant source whence on the appearance of this child there had flowed so many pious legends and heroic fables was henceforth dried up. The rehabilitation trial added little to the popular legend. It rendered it possible to connect with Jeanne's death the usual incidents narrated of the martyrdom of virgins, such as the dove taking flight from the stake, the name of Jesus written in letters of flame, the heart intact in the ashes. The miserable deaths of the wicked judges were insisted upon. True it is that Jean d'Estivet, the Promoter, was found dead in a dove-cot, that Nicolas Midi was attacked by leprosy, that Pierre Cauchon died when he was being shaved. But, among those who aided and accompanied the Maid, more than one came to a bad end. Sire Robert de Baudricourt, who had sent Jeanne to the King, died in prison, excommunicated for having laid waste the lands of the chapter of Toul. The Maréchal de Rais was sentenced to death. The Duke of Alençon, convicted of high treason, was pardoned only to fall under a new condemnation and to die in captivity.

Two years after Charles VII had ordered the preliminary inquiry into the trial of 1431, a woman, following the example of la Dame des Armoises, passed herself off as the Maid Jeanne.

At this time there lived in the little town of Sarmaize, between the Marne and the Meuse, two cousins german of the Maid, Poirisson and Périnet, both sons of the late Jean de Vouthon, Isabelle Romée's brother, who in his lifetime had been a thatcher by trade. Now, on a day in 1452, it befell that the curé of Notre Dame de Sarmaize, Simon Fauchard, being in the market-house of the town, there came to him a woman dressed as a youth who asked him to play at tennis with her.

He consented, and when they had begun their game the woman said to him, "Say boldly that you have played tennis with the Maid." And at these words Simon Fauchard was right joyful.

The woman afterwards went to the house of Périnet, the carpenter, and said, "I am the Maid; I come to visit my Cousin Henri."

Périnet, Poirisson, and Henri de Vouthon made her good cheer and kept her in their house, where she ate and drank as she pleased.

Then, when she had had enough, she went away.

Whence came she? No one knows. Whither did she go? She may probably be recognised in an adventuress, who not long afterwards, with her hair cut short and a hood on her head, wearing doublet and hose, wandered through Anjou, calling herself Jeanne the Maid. While the doctors and masters, engaged in the revision of the trial, were gathering evidence of Jeanne's life and death from all parts of the kingdom, this false Jeanne was finding credence with many folk. But she became involved in difficulties with a certain Dame of Saumoussay, and was cast into the prison of Saumur, where she lay for three months. At the end of this time, having been banished from the dominions of the good King René, she married one Jean Douillet; and, by a document dated the 3rd day of February, 1456, she received permission to return to Saumur, on condition of living there respectably and ceasing to wear man's apparel.

About this time there came to Laval in the diocese of Le Mans, a damsel between eighteen and twenty-two, who was a native of a neighbouring place called Chassé-les-Usson. Her father's name was Jean Féron and she was commonly called Jeanne la Féronne.

She was inspired from heaven, and the names Jesus and Mary were for ever on her lips; yet the devil cruelly tormented her. The Dame de Laval, mother of the Lords André and Guy, being now very aged, marvelled at the piety and the sufferings of the holy damsel; and she sent her to Le Mans, to the Bishop.

Since 1449, the see of Le Mans had been held by Messire Martin Berruyer of Touraine. In his youth he had been professor of philosophy and rhetoric at the University of Paris. Later he had devoted himself to theology and had become one of the directors of the College of Navarre. Although he was infirm with age,

his learning was such that he was consulted by the commissioners for the rehabilitation trial, whereupon he drew up a memorandum touching the Maid. Herein he believes her to have been verily sent of God because she was abject and very poor and appeared well nigh imbecile in everything that did not concern her mission. Messire Martin argues that it was by reason of the King's virtues that God had vouchsafed to him the help of the Maid. Such an idea found favour with the theologians of the French party.

The Lord Bishop, Martin Berruyer, heard Jeanne la Férone in confession, renewed her baptism, confirmed her in the faith and gave her the name of Marie, in gratitude for the abounding grace which the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, had granted to his servant.

This maid was subject to the violent attacks of evil spirits. Many a time did my Lord of Mans behold her covered with bleeding wounds, struggling in the grasp of the enemy, and on several occasions he delivered her by means of exorcisms. Greatly was he edified by this holy damsel, who made known unto him marvellous secrets, who abounded in pious revelations and noble Christian utterances. Wherefore in praise of La Férone he wrote many letters to princes and communities of the realm.

The Queen of France, who was then very old and whose husband had long ago deserted her, heard tell of the Maid of Le Mans, and wrote to Messire Martin Berruyer, requesting him to make the damsel known unto her.

Thus there befel, what we have seen happening over and over again in this history, that when a devout person, leading a contemplative life uttered prophecies, those in places of authority grew curious concerning her and desired to submit her to the judgment of the Church that they might know whether the goodness that appeared in her were true or false. Certain officers of the King visited La Férone at Le Mans.

As revelations touching the realm of France had been vouchsafed to her, she spoke to them the following words:

“Commend me very humbly to the King and bid him recognise the grace which God granteth unto him, and lighten the burdens of his people.”

In the December of 1460, she was summoned before the Royal Council, which was then sitting at Tours, while the King, who was sick of an ulcer in the leg, was residing in the Château of Les Montils. The Maid of Le Mans was examined in like manner as the Maid Jeanne had been, but the result was unfavourable; she was found wanting in everything. Brought before the ecclesiastical court she was convicted of imposture. It appeared that she was no maid, but was living in concubinage with a cleric, that certain persons in the service of my Lord of Le Mans instructed her in what she was to say, and that

such was the origin of the revelations she made to the Reverend Father in God, Messire Martin Berruyer, under the seal of the confession. Convicted of being a hypocrite, an idolatress, an invoker of demons, a witch, a magician, lascivious, dissolute, an enchantress, a mine of falsehood, she was condemned to have a fool's cap put on her head and to be preached at in public, in the towns of Le Mans, Tours and Laval. On the 2nd of May, 1461, she was exhibited to the folk at Tours, wearing a paper cap and over her head a scroll on which her deeds were set forth in lines of Latin and of French. Maître Guillaume de Châteaufort, Grand Master of the Royal College of Navarre, preached to her. Then she was cast into close confinement in a prison, there to weep over her sins for the space of seven years, eating the bread of sorrow and drinking the water of affliction; at the end of which time she rented a house of ill fame.

On Wednesday, the 22nd of July, 1461, covered with ulcers internal and external, believing himself poisoned and perhaps not without reason, Charles VII died, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, in his Château of Mehun-sur-Yèvre.

On Thursday, the 6th of August, his body was borne to the Church of Saint-Denis in France and placed in a chapel hung with velvet; the nave was draped with black satin, the vault was covered with blue cloth embroidered with flowers-de-luce. During the ceremony, which took place on the following day, a funeral oration was delivered on Charles VII. The preacher was no less a personage than the most highly renowned professor at the University of Paris, the doctor, who according to the Princes of the Roman Church was ever aimable and modest, he who had been the stoutest defender of the liberties of the Gallican Church, the ecclesiastic who, having declined a Cardinal's hat, bore to the threshold of an illustrious old age none other title than that of Dean of the Canons of Notre Dame de Paris, Maître Thomas de Courcelles. Thus it befell that the assessor of Rouen, who had been the most bitterly bent on procuring Jeanne's cruel condemnation, celebrated the memory of the victorious King whom the Maid had conducted to his solemn coronation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM DOCTOR G. DUMAS

MY DEAR MASTER, — You ask for my medical opinion in the case of Jeanne d'Arc. Had I been able to examine it at my leisure with the Doctors Tiphaine and Delachambre, who were summoned before the tribunal at Rouen, I might have found it difficult to come to any definite conclusion. And even more difficult do I find it now, when my diagnosis must necessarily be retrospective and based upon examinations conducted by persons who never dreamed of attempting to discover the existence of any nervous disease. However since they ascribed what we now call disease to the influence of the devil, their questions are not without significance for us. Therefore with many reservations I will endeavour to answer your question.

Of Jeanne's inherited constitution we know nothing; and of her personal antecedents we are almost entirely ignorant. Our only information concerning such matters comes from Jean d'Aulon, who, on the evidence of several women, states that she was never fully developed, a condition which frequently occurs in neurotic subjects.

We should, however, be unable to arrive at any conclusion concerning Jeanne's nervous constitution had not her judges, and in particular Maître Jean Beaupère, in the numerous examinations to which they subjected her, elicited certain significant details on the subject of her hallucinations.

Maître Beaupère begins by inquiring very judiciously whether Jeanne had fasted the day before she first heard her voices. Whence we infer that the interdependence of inanition and hallucinations was recognised by this illustrious professor of theology. Before condemning Jeanne as a witch he wanted to make sure that she was not merely suffering from weakness. Some time later we find Saint Theresa suspecting that the visions said to have been seen by a certain nun were merely the result of long fasting. Saint Theresa insisted on the nun's partaking of food, and the visions ceased.

Jeanne replies that she had only fasted since the morning, and Maître Beaupère proceeds to ask:

Q. "In what direction did you hear the voice?"

A. "I heard it on the right, towards the church."

Q. "Was the voice accompanied by any light?"

A. "I seldom heard it without there being a light. This light appeared in the direction whence the voice came."

We might wonder whether by the expression “à droite ” (*a latere dextro*) Jeanne meant her own right side or the position of the church in relation to her; and in the latter case, the information would have no clinical significance; but the context leaves no doubt as to the veritable meaning of her words.

“How can you,” urges Jean Beaupère, “see this light which you say appears to you, if it is on your right?”

If it had been merely a question of the situation of the church and not of Jeanne’s own right side, she would only have had to turn her face to see the light in front of her, and Jean Beaupère’s objection would have been pointless.

Consequently at about the age of thirteen, at the period of puberty, which for her never came, Jeanne would appear to have been subject on her right side to unilateral hallucinations of sight and hearing. Now Charcot considered unilateral hallucinations of sight to be common in cases of hysteria. He even thought that in hysterical subjects they are allied to a hemianæsthesia situated on the same side of the body, and which in Jeanne would be on the right side. Jeanne’s trial might have proved the existence of this hemianæsthesia, an extremely significant symptom in the diagnosis of hysteria, if the judges had applied torture or merely had examined the skin of the subject in order to discover anæsthesia patches which were called marks of the devil. But from the merely oral examination which took place we can only draw inferences concerning Jeanne’s general physical condition. In case excessive importance should be attached to such inferences I should add that in the diagnosis of hysteria contemporary neurologists pay less attention than did Charcot to unilateral hallucinations of sight.

The other characteristics of Jeanne’s hallucinations revealed by her examinations during the trial are no less interesting than these, although they do not lead to any more certain conclusions.

Those visions and voices, which the subject refers to an external source and which are so characteristic of hysterical hallucinations, proceed suddenly from the subconscious self. Jeanne’s conscious self was so far from being prepared for her voices that she declares she was very much afraid when she first heard them: “I was thirteen when I heard a voice coming from God telling me to lead a good life. And the first time I was very much afraid. This voice came to me about noon; it was in the summer, in my father’s garden.”

And then straightway the voice becomes imperative. It demands an obedience which is not refused: “It said to me: ‘Go forth into France,’ and I could no longer stay where I was.”

Her visions all occur in the same manner. They appeal to the senses in exactly the same way and are received by the Maid with equal credulity.

Finally, these hallucinations of hearing and of sight are soon associated with similar hallucinations of smell and touch, which serve to confirm Jeanne's belief in their reality.

Q. "Which part of Saint Catherine did you touch?"

A. "You will hear nothing more."

Q. "Did you kiss or embrace Saint Catherine or Saint Margaret?"

A. "I embraced them both."

Q. "In embracing them did you feel heat or anything?"

A. "I could not embrace them without feeling and touching them."

Because they thus appeal to the senses and seem to possess a certain material reality, hysterical hallucinations make a profound and ineffaceable impression on those who experience them. The subjects speak of them as being actual and very striking facts. When they become accusers, as so many women do who claim to have been the victims of imaginary assaults, they support their assertions in the most energetic fashion.

Not only does Jeanne see, hear, smell and touch her saints, she joins the procession of angels they bring in their train. With them she performs actual deeds, as if there were perfect unity between her life and her hallucinations.

"I was in my lodging, in the house of a good woman, near the *château* of Chinon, when the angel came. And then he and I went together to the King."

Q. "Was this angel alone?"

A. "This angel was with a goodly company of other angels. They were with him, but not every one saw them.... Some were very much alike; others were not, or at any rate not as I saw them. Some had wings. Certain even wore crowns, and in their company were Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. With the angel aforesaid and with the other angels they went right into the King's chamber."

Q. "Tell us how the angel left you."

A. "He left me in a little chapel, and at his departure I was very sorrowful, and I even wept. Willingly would I have gone away with him; I mean my soul would have gone."

In all these hallucinations there is the same objective clearness, the same subjective certitude as in toxic hallucinations; and this clearness, this certitude, may in Jeanne's case suggest hysteria.

But if in certain respects Jeanne resembles hysterical subjects, in others she differs from them. She seems early to have acquired an independence of her visions and an authority over them.

Without ever doubting their reality, she resists them and sometimes disobeys them, when, for example, in defiance of Saint Catherine, she leaps from her

prison of Beaurevoir: “Well nigh every day Saint Catherine told me not to leap and that God would come to my aid, and also would succour those of Compiègne. And I said to Saint Catherine: ‘Since God is to help those of Compiègne, I want to be with them.’”

On another occasion she assumes such authority over her visions that she can make the two saints come at her bidding when they do not come of themselves.

Q. “Do you call these saints, or do they come without being called?”

A. “They often come without being called, and sometimes when they did not come I asked God to send them speedily.”

All this is not in the accepted manner of the hysterical, who are usually somewhat passive with regard to their nervous fits and hallucinations. But Jeanne’s dominance over her visions is a characteristic I have noted in many of the higher mystics and in those who have attained notoriety. This kind of subject, after having at first passively submitted to his hysteria, afterwards uses it rather than submits to it, and finally by means of it attains in his ecstasy to that divine union after which he strives.

If Jeanne were hysterical, such a characteristic would help us to determine the part played by the neurotic side of her nature in the development of her character and in her life.

If there were any hysterical strain in her nature, then it was by means of this hysterical strain that the most secret sentiments of her heart took shape in the form of visions and celestial voices. Her hysteria became the open door by which the divine — or what Jeanne deemed the divine — entered into her life. It strengthened her faith and consecrated her mission; but in her intellect and in her will Jeanne remains healthy and normal. Nervous pathology can therefore cast but a feeble light on Jeanne’s nature. It can reveal only one part of that spirit which your book resuscitates in its entirety. With the expression of my respectful admiration, believe me, my dear master,

Doctor G. Dumas.

APPENDIX II

THE FARRIER OF SALON

TOWARDS the end of the seventeenth century, there lived at Salon-en-Crau, near Aix, a farrier, one François Michel. He came of a respectable family. He himself had served in the cavalry regiment of the Chevalier de Grignan. He was held to be a sensible man, honest and devout. He was close on forty when, in February, 1697, he had a vision.

Returning to his home one evening, he beheld a spectre, holding a torch in its hand. This spectre said to him:

“Fear nothing. Go to Paris and speak to the King. If thou dost not obey this command thou shalt die. When thou shalt approach to within a league of Versailles, I will not fail to make known unto thee what things thou shalt say to his Majesty. Go to the Governor of thy province, who will order all that is necessary for thy journey.”

The figure which thus addressed him was in the form of a woman. She wore a royal crown and a mantle embroidered with flowers-de-luce of gold, like the late Queen, Marie-Thérèse, who had died a holy death full fourteen years before.

The poor farrier was greatly afraid. He fell down at the foot of a tree, knowing not whether he dreamed or was awake. Then he went back to his house, and told no man of what he had seen.

Two days afterwards he passed the same spot. There again he beheld the same spectre, who repeated the same orders and the same threats. The farrier could no longer doubt the reality of what he saw; but as yet he could not make up his mind what to do.

A third apparition, more imperious and more importunate than the first, reduced him to obedience. He went to Aix, to the Governor of the province; he saw him and told him how he had been given a mission to speak to the King. The Governor at first paid no great heed to him. But the visionary's patient persistence could not fail to impress him. Moreover, since the King was personally concerned in the matter, it ought not to be entirely neglected. These considerations led the Governor to inquire from the magistrates of Salon touching the farrier's family and manner of life. The result of these inquiries was very favourable. Accordingly the Governor deemed it fitting to proceed forthwith to action. In those days no one was quite sure whether advice, very useful to the most Christian of Kings, might not be sent by some member of the

Church Triumphant through the medium of a common artisan. Still less were they sure that some plot in which the welfare of the State was concerned might not be hatched under colour of an apparition. In both contingencies, the second of which was quite probable, it would be advisable to send François Michel to Versailles. And this was the decision arrived at by the Governor.

For the transport of François Michel he adopted measures at once sure and inexpensive. He confided him to an officer who was taking recruits in that direction. After having received the communion in the church of the Franciscans, who were edified by his pious bearing, the farrier set out on February 25 with his Majesty's young soldiers, with whom he travelled as far as La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. On his arrival at Versailles, he asked to see the King or at least one of his Ministers of State. He was directed to M. de Barbezieux, who, when he was still very young, had succeeded his father, M. de Louvois, and in that position had displayed some talent. But the good farrier declined to tell him anything, because he was not a Minister of State.

And it was true that Barbezieux, although a Minister, was not a Minister of State. But that a farrier from Provence should be capable of drawing such a distinction occasioned considerable surprise.

M. de Barbezieux doubtless did not evince such scorn for this compatriot of Nostradamus as would have been shown in his place by a man of broader mind. For he, like his father, was addicted to the practice of astrology, and he was always inquiring concerning his horoscope of a certain Franciscan friar who had predicted the hour of his death.

We do not know whether he gave the King a favourable report of the farrier, or whether the latter was admitted to the presence of M. de Pomponne, who was then at the head of the administration of Provence. But we do know that Louis XIV consented to see the man. He had him brought up the steps leading to the marble courtyard, and then granted him a lengthy audience in his private apartments.

On the morrow, as the King was coming down his private staircase on his way out hunting, he met Marshal de Duras, who was Captain of the King's bodyguard for the day. With his usual freedom of speech the Marshal spoke to the King of the farrier, using a common saying:

"Either the man is mad, or the King is not noble."

At these words the King, contrary to his usual habit, paused and turned to the Marshal de Duras:

"Then I am not noble," he said, "for I talked to him for a long time, and he spoke very sensibly; I assure you he is far from being mad."

The last words he uttered with so solemn a gravity that those who were present were astonished.

Persons who claim to be inspired are expected to show some sign of their mission. In a second interview, François Michel showed the King a sign in fulfilment of a promise he had given. He reminded him of an extraordinary circumstance which the son of Anne of Austria believed known to himself alone. Louis XIV himself admitted it, but for the rest preserved a profound silence touching this interview.

Saint Simon, always eager to collect every court rumour, believed it was a question of some phantom, which more than twenty years before had appeared to Louis XIV in the Forest of Saint-Germain.

For the third and last time the King received the farrier of Salon.

The courtiers displayed so much curiosity in this visionary that he had to be shut up in the monastery of Des Rêcollets. There the little Princess of Savoy, who was shortly to marry the Duke of Burgundy, came to see him with several lords and ladies of the court.

He appeared slow to speak, good, simple, and humble. The King ordered him to be furnished with a fine horse, clothes, and money; then he sent him back to Provence.

Public opinion was divided on the subject of the apparition which had appeared to the farrier and the mission he had received from it. Most people believed that he had seen the spirit of Marie-Thérèse; but some said it was Nostradamus.

It was only at Salon, where he slept in the church of the Franciscans, that this astrologer was absolutely believed in. His “Centuries,” which appeared at Paris and at Lyon in no less than ten editions in the course of one century, entertained the credulous throughout the kingdom. In 1693, there had just been published a book of the prophecies of Nostradamus showing how they had been fulfilled in history from the reign of Henry II down to that of Louis the Great.

It came to be believed that in the following mysterious quatrain the farrier’s coming had been prophesied:

“Le penultiesme du surnom du Prophète,
Prendra Diane pour son iour et repos:
Loing vaguera par frénétique teste,
En délivrant un grand peuple d’impos.”

An attempt was made to apply these obscure lines to the poor prophet of Salon. In the first line he is said to figure as one of the twelve minor prophets, Micah, which name is closely allied to Michel. In the second line Diane was said to be the mother of the farrier, who was certainly called by that name. But if the line means anything at all, it is more likely to refer to the day of the moon, Monday. It was carefully pointed out that in the third line *frénétique* means not *mad* but *inspired*. The fourth and only intelligible line would suggest that the spectre bade Michel ask the King to lessen the taxes and dues which then weighed so heavily on the good folk of town and country:

En délivrant un grand peuple d'impos. This was enough to make the farrier popular and to cause those unhappy sufferers to centre in this poor windbag their hopes for a better future. His portrait was engraved in copper-plate, and below it was written the quatrain of Nostradamus. M. d'Argenson, who was at the head of the police department, had these portraits seized. They were suppressed, so says the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, on account of the last line of the quatrain written beneath the portrait, the line which runs: *En délivrant un grand peuple d'impos*. Such an expression was hardly likely to please the court.

No one ever knew exactly what was the mission the farrier received from his spectre. Subtle folk suspected one of Madame de Maintenon's intrigues. She had a friend at Marseille, a Madame Arnoul, who was as ugly as sin, it was said, and yet who managed to make men fall in love with her. They thought that this Madame Arnoul had shown Marie-Thérèse to the good man of Salon in order to induce the King to live honourably with widow Scarron. But in 1697 widow Scarron had been married to Louis for twelve years at least; and one cannot see why ghostly aid should have been necessary to attach the old King to her.

On his return to his native town, François Michel shoed horses as before.

He died at Lançon, near Salon, on December 10, 1726.

APPENDIX III

MARTIN DE GALLARDON

IGNACE THOMAS MARTIN was by calling a husbandman. A native of Gallardon in Eure-et-Loir, he dwelt there with his wife and four children in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Those who knew him tell us that he was of average height, with brown straight hair, a calm glance, a thin countenance and an air of quiet and assurance. A pencil portrait, which his son, M. le Docteur Martin, has kindly sent me, gives a more exact idea of the visionary. The portrait, which is in profile, presents a forehead curiously high and straight, a long narrow head, round eyes, broad nostrils, a compressed mouth, a protruding chin, hollow cheeks and an air of austerity. He is dressed as a *bourgeois*, with a collar and white cravat.

According to the evidence of his brother, a man both physically and mentally sound, his was the gentlest of natures; he never sought to attract attention; in his regular piety there was nothing ecstatic. Both the mayor and the priest of Gallardon confirmed this description. They agreed in representing him to have been a good simple creature, with an intellect well-balanced although not very active.

In 1816 he was thirty-three. On January 15 in this year he was alone in his field, over which he was spreading manure, when in his ear he heard a voice which had not been preceded by footsteps. Then he turned his head in the direction of the voice and saw a figure which alarmed him. In comparison with human size it was but slight; its countenance, which was very thin, dazzled by its unnatural whiteness. It was wearing a high hat and a frock-coat of a light colour, with laced shoes.

It said in a kindly tone: "You must go to the King; you must warn him that his person is in danger, that wicked people are seeking to overthrow his Government."

It added further recommendations to Louis XVIII touching the necessity of having an efficient police, of keeping holy the Sabbath, of ordering public prayers and of suppressing the disorders of the Carnival. If such measures be neglected, it said, "France will fall into yet greater misfortunes." All this was doubtless nothing more or less than what M. La Perruque, Priest of Gallardon, had a hundred times repeated from the pulpit on Sunday.

Martin replied:

“Since you know so much about it, why don’t you perform your errand yourself? Why do you appeal to a poor man like me who knows not how to express himself?”

Then the unknown replied to Martin:

“It is not I who will go, but you; do as I command you.”

As soon as he had uttered these words, his feet rose from the ground, his body bent, and with this double movement he vanished.

From this time onwards, Martin was haunted by the mysterious being. One day, having gone down into his cellar, he found him there. On another occasion, during vespers, he saw him in church, near the holy water stoup, in a devout attitude. When the service was over, the unknown accompanied Martin on his way home and again commanded him to go and see the King. The farmer told his relatives who were with him, but neither of them had seen or heard anything.

Tormented by these apparitions, Martin communicated them to his priest, M. La Perruque. He, being certain of the good faith of his parishioner and deeming that the case ought to be submitted to the diocesan authority, sent the visionary to the Bishop of Versailles. The Bishop was then M. Louis Charrier de la Roche, a priest who in the days of the Revolution had taken the oath to the Republic. He resolved to subject Martin to a thorough examination; and from the first he told him to ask the unknown what was his name, and who it was who sent him.

But when the messenger in the light-coloured frock-coat appeared again, he declared that his name must remain unknown.

“I come,” he added, “from him who has sent me, and he who has sent me is above me.”

He may have wished to conceal his name; but at least he did not conceal his views; the vexation he displayed on the escape of La Valette proved that in politics he was an ultra Royalist of the most violent type.

Meanwhile the Comte de Bréteuil, Prefect of Eure-et-Loir, had been told of the visionary at the same time as the Bishop. He also questioned Martin. He expected to find him a nervous, agitated person; but when he found him tranquil, speaking simply, but with logical sequence and precision, he was very astonished.

Like M. l’Abbé La Perruque he deemed the matter sufficiently important to bring before the higher authorities. Accordingly he sent Martin, under the escort of a lieutenant of *gendarmerie*, to the Ministre de la Police Générale.

Having reached Paris on March 8, Martin lodged with the *gendarme* at the Hôtel de Calais, in the Rue Montmartre. They occupied a double-bedded room. One morning, when Martin was in bed, he beheld an apparition and told Lieutenant André, who could see nothing, although it was broad daylight.

Indeed, Martin's visitations became so frequent that they ceased to cause him either surprise or concern. It was only to the abrupt disappearance of the unknown that he could never grow accustomed. The voice continued to give the same command. One day it told him that if it were not obeyed France would not know peace until 1840.

In 1816 the Ministre de la Police Générale was the Comte Decazes who was afterwards created a duke. He was in the King's confidence. But he knew that the extreme Royalists were hatching plots against his royal master. Decazes wished to see the good man from Gallardon, suspecting doubtless, that he was but a tool in the hands of the Extremists. Martin was brought to the Minister, who questioned him and at once perceived that the poor creature was in no way dangerous. He spoke to him as he would to a madman, endeavouring to regard the subject of his mania as if it were real, and so he said:

"Don't be agitated; the man who has been troubling you is arrested; you will have nothing more to fear from him."

But these words did not produce the desired effect. Three or four hours after this interview, Martin again beheld the unknown, who, after speaking to him in his usual manner, said: "When you were told that I had been arrested, you were told a lie; he who said so has no power over me."

On Sunday, March 10, the unknown returned; and on that day he disclosed the matter concerning which the Bishop of Versailles had inquired, and which he had said at first he would never reveal.

"I am," he declared, "the Archangel Raphaël, an angel of great renown in the presence of God, and I have received power to afflict France with all manner of suffering."

Three days later, Martin was shut up in Charenton on the certificate of Doctor Pinel, who stated him to be suffering from intermittent mania with alienation of mind.

He was treated in the kindest manner and was even permitted to enjoy some appearance of liberty. Pinel himself originated the humane treatment of the insane. Martin in the asylum was not forsaken by the blessed Raphaël. On Friday, the 15th, as the peasant was tying his shoe laces, the Archangel in his frock-coat of a light colour, spoke to him these words:

"Have faith in God. If France persists in her incredulity, the misfortunes I have predicted will happen. Moreover, if they doubt the truth of your visions, they have but to cause you to be examined by doctors in theology."

These words Martin repeated to M. Legros; Director of the Royal Institution of Charenton, and asked him what a doctor in theology was. He did not know the meaning of the term. In the same manner, when he was at Gallardon he had

asked the priest, M. La Perruque, the meaning of certain expressions the voice had used. For example, he did not understand the wild frenzy of France [*le délire de la France*] nor the evils to which she would fall a victim [*elle serait en proie*]. But there is nothing that need puzzle us in such ignorance, if it really existed. Martin may well have remembered the words he did not understand and which he afterwards attributed to his Archangel still without understanding them.

The visions recurred at brief intervals. On Sunday, March 31, the Archangel appeared to him in the garden, took his hand, which he pressed affectionately, opened his coat and displayed a bosom of so dazzling a whiteness that Martin could not bear to gaze on it. Then he took off his hat.

“Behold my forehead,” he said, “and give heed that it beareth not the mark of the beast whereby the fallen angels were sealed.”

Louis XVIII expressed a desire to see Martin and to question him. The King, like his favourite Minister, believed the visionary to be a tool in the hands of the extreme party.

On Tuesday, April 2, Martin was taken to the Tuileries and brought into the King’s closet, where was also M. Decazes. As soon as the King saw the farmer, he said to him: “Martin, I salute you.”

Then he signed to his Minister to withdraw. Thereupon Martin, according to his own telling, repeated to the King all that the Archangel had revealed to him, and disclosed to Louis XVIII sundry secret matters concerning the years he had spent in exile; finally he made known to him certain plots which had been formed against his person. Then the King, profoundly agitated and in tears, raised his hands and his eyes to heaven and said to Martin:

“Martin, these are things which must never be known save to you and to me.”

The visionary promised him absolute secrecy.

Such was the interview of April 2, according to the account given of it by Martin, who then, under the influence of M. La Perruque’s sermons, was an infatuated Royalist. It would be interesting to know more of this priest whose inspiration is obvious throughout the whole story. Louis XVIII agreed with M. Decazes that the man was quite harmless; and he was sent back to his plough.

Later, the agents of one of those false dauphins so numerous under the Restoration, got hold of Martin and made use of him in their own interest. After Louis XVIII’s death, under the influence of these adventurers, the poor man, reconstituting the story of his interview with the late King, introduced into it other revelations he claimed to have received and completely changed the whole character of the incident. In this second version the passionate Royalist of 1816 was transformed into an accusing prophet, who came to the King’s own palace

to denounce him as a usurper and a regicide, forbidding him in God's name to be crowned at Reims.

Such ramblings I cannot relate at length. They are to be found fully detailed in the book of M. Paul Marin. The author of this work would have done well to indicate that these follies were suggested to the unhappy man by the partisans of Naundorf, who was passing himself off as the Duke of Normandy, who had escaped from the Temple.

Thomas Ignace Martin died at Chartres in 1834. It is alleged, but it has never been proved, that he was poisoned.

APPENDIX IV

ICONOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THERE is no authentic picture of Jeanne. From her we know that at Arras she saw in the hands of a Scotsman a picture in which she was represented on her knees presenting a letter to her King. From her we know also that she never caused to be made either image or painting of herself, and that she was not aware of the existence of any such image or painting. The portrait painted by the Scotsman, which was doubtless very small, is unfortunately lost and no copy of it is known. The slight pen-and-ink figure, drawn on a register of May 10, 1429, by a clerk of the Parlement of Paris, who had never seen the Maid, must be regarded as the mere scribbling of a scribe who was incapable of even designing a good initial letter. I shall not attempt to reconstruct the iconography of the Maid. The bronze equestrian statue in the Cluny Museum produces a grotesque effect that one is tempted to believe deliberate, if one may ascribe such an intention to an old sculptor. It dates from the reign of Charles VIII. It is a Saint George or a Saint Maurice, which, at a time doubtless quite recent, was taken to represent the Maid. Between the legs of the miserable jade, on which the figure is mounted, was engraved the inscription: *La pucelle dorlians*, a description which would not have been employed in the fifteenth century. About 1875, the Cluny Museum exhibited another statuette, slightly larger, in painted wood, which was also believed to be fifteenth century, and to represent Jeanne d'Arc. It was relegated to the store-room, when it turned out to be a bad seventeenth-century Saint Maurice from a church at Montargis. Any saint in armour is frequently described as a Jeanne d'Arc. This is what happened to a small fifteenth-century head wearing a helmet, found buried in the ground at Orléans, broken off from a statue and still bearing traces of painting: a work in good style and with a charming expression. I have not patience to relate how many initial letters of antiphonaries and sixteenth-, seventeenth- and even eighteenth-century miniatures have been touched up or repainted and passed off as true and ancient representations of Jeanne. Many of them I have had the opportunity of seeing. On the other hand, if they were not so well known, it would give me pleasure to recall certain manuscripts of the fifteenth century, which, like *Le Champion des Dames* and *Les Vigiles de Charles VII*, contain miniatures in which the Maid is portrayed according to the fancy of the illuminator. Such pictures are interesting because they reveal her as she was imagined by those who lived during her

lifetime or shortly afterwards. It is not their merit that appeals to us; they possess none; and in no way do they suggest Jean Foucquet.

While the Maid lived, and especially while she was in captivity, the French hung her picture in churches. In the Museum of Versailles there is a little painting on wood which is said to be one of those votive pictures. It represents the Virgin with the Child Jesus, having Saint Michael on her right and Jeanne d'Arc on her left. It is of Italian workmanship and very roughly executed. Jeanne's head, which has disappeared beneath the blows of some hard-pointed instrument, must have been execrably drawn, if we may judge from the others remaining on this panel. All four figures are represented with a scrolled and beaded nimbus, which would have certainly been condemned by the clerics of Paris and Rouen. And indeed others less strict might accuse the painter of idolatry when he exalted to the left hand of the Virgin, to be equal with the Prince of Heavenly Hosts, a mere creature of the Church Militant.

Standing, her head, neck, and shoulders covered with a kind of furred hood and tippet fringed with black, her gauntlets and shoes of mail, girt above her red tunic with a belt of gold, Jeanne may be recognised by her name inscribed over her head, and also by the white banner, embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis*, which she raises in her right hand, and by her silver shield, embossed in the German style; on the shield is a sword bearing on its point a crown. A three-lined inscription in French is on the steps of the throne, whereon sits the Virgin Mary. Although the inscription is three parts effaced and almost unintelligible, with the aid of my learned friend, M. Pierre de Nolhac, Director of the Museum of Versailles, I have succeeded in deciphering a few words. These would convey the idea that the inscription consisted of prayers and wishes for the salvation of Jeanne, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. It would appear therefore that we have here one of those *ex voto* hung in the churches of France during the captivity of the Maid. In such a case the nimbus round the head of a living person and the isolated position of Jeanne would be easily explained; it is possible that certain excellent Frenchmen, thinking no evil, adapted to their own use some picture which originally represented the Virgin between two personages of the Church Triumphant. By a few touches they transformed one of these personages into the Maid of God. In so small a panel they could find no place more suitable to her mortal state, none like those generally occupied at the feet of the Virgin and saints by the kneeling donors of pictures. This too might explain perhaps why Saint Michael, the Virgin and the Maid have their names inscribed above them. Over the head of the Maid we read *ane darc*. This form

Darc may have been used in 1430. In the inscription on the steps of the throne I discern *Jehane dArc* , with a small *d* and a capital *A* for *dArc* , which is very curious. This causes me to doubt the genuineness of the inscription.

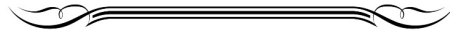
The *bestion* tapestry in the Orléans Museum, which represents Jeanne's arrival before the King at Chinon, is of German fifteenth-century workmanship. Coarse of tissue, barbarous in design, and monotonous in colour, it evinces a certain taste for sumptuous adornment but also an absolute disregard for literal truth.

Another German work was exhibited at Ratisbonne in 1429. It represented the Maid fighting in France. But this painting is lost.

The Criticism



ANATOLE FRANCE — 1904 by Joseph Conrad



I.—“CRAINQUEBILLE”

The latest volume of M. Anatole France purports, by the declaration of its title-page, to contain several profitable narratives. The story of Crainquebille's encounter with human justice stands at the head of them; a tale of a well-bestowed charity closes the book with the touch of playful irony characteristic of the writer on whom the most distinguished amongst his literary countrymen have conferred the rank of Prince of Prose.

Never has a dignity been better borne. M. Anatole France is a good prince. He knows nothing of tyranny but much of compassion. The detachment of his mind from common errors and current superstitions befits the exalted rank he holds in the Commonwealth of Literature. It is just to suppose that the clamour of the tribes in the forum had little to do with his elevation. Their elect are of another stamp. They are such as their need of precipitate action requires. He is the Elect of the Senate — the Senate of Letters — whose Conscript Fathers have recognised him as *primus inter pares* ; a post of pure honour and of no privilege.

It is a good choice. First, because it is just, and next, because it is safe. The dignity will suffer no diminution in M. Anatole France's hands. He is worthy of a great tradition, learned in the lessons of the past, concerned with the present, and as earnest as to the future as a good prince should be in his public action. It is a Republican dignity. And M. Anatole France, with his sceptical insight into all forms of government, is a good Republican. He is indulgent to the weaknesses of the people, and perceives that political institutions, whether contrived by the wisdom of the few or the ignorance of the many, are incapable of securing the happiness of mankind. He perceives this truth in the serenity of his soul and in the elevation of his mind. He expresses his convictions with measure, restraint and harmony, which are indeed princely qualities. He is a great analyst of illusions. He searches and probes their innermost recesses as if they were realities made of an eternal substance. And therein consists his humanity; this is the expression of his profound and unalterable compassion. He will flatter no tribe no section in the forum or in the market-place. His lucid thought is not beguiled into false pity or into the common weakness of affection. He feels that men born in ignorance as in the house of an enemy, and condemned to struggle with error and passions through endless centuries, should be spared the supreme cruelty of a hope for ever deferred. He knows that our

best hopes are irrealisable; that it is the almost incredible misfortune of mankind, but also its highest privilege, to aspire towards the impossible; that men have never failed to defeat their highest aims by the very strength of their humanity which can conceive the most gigantic tasks but leaves them disarmed before their irremediable littleness. He knows this well because he is an artist and a master; but he knows, too, that only in the continuity of effort there is a refuge from despair for minds less clear-seeing and philosophic than his own. Therefore he wishes us to believe and to hope, preserving in our activity the consoling illusion of power and intelligent purpose. He is a good and politic prince.

“The majesty of justice is contained entire in each sentence pronounced by the judge in the name of the sovereign people. Jérôme Crainquebille, hawker of vegetables, became aware of the august aspect of the law as he stood indicted before the tribunal of the higher Police Court on a charge of insulting a constable of the force.” With this exposition begins the first tale of M. Anatole France’s latest volume.

The bust of the Republic and the image of the Crucified Christ appear side by side above the bench occupied by the President Bourriche and his two Assessors; all the laws divine and human are suspended over the head of Crainquebille.

From the first visual impression of the accused and of the court the author passes by a characteristic and natural turn to the historical and moral significance of those two emblems of State and Religion whose accord is only possible to the confused reasoning of an average man. But the reasoning of M. Anatole France is never confused. His reasoning is clear and informed by a profound erudition. Such is not the case of Crainquebille, a street hawker, charged with insulting the constituted power of society in the person of a policeman. The charge is not true, nothing was further from his thoughts; but, amazed by the novelty of his position, he does not reflect that the Cross on the wall perpetuates the memory of a sentence which for nineteen hundred years all the Christian peoples have looked upon as a grave miscarriage of justice. He might well have challenged the President to pronounce any sort of sentence, if it were merely to forty-eight hours of simple imprisonment, in the name of the Crucified Redeemer.

He might have done so. But Crainquebille, who has lived pushing every day for half a century his hand-barrow loaded with vegetables through the streets of Paris, has not a philosophic mind. Truth to say he has nothing. He is one of the disinherited. Properly speaking, he has no existence at all, or, to be strictly truthful, he had no existence till M. Anatole France’s philosophic mind and human sympathy have called him up from his nothingness for our pleasure, and, as the title-page of the book has it, no doubt for our profit also.

Therefore we behold him in the dock, a stranger to all historical, political or social considerations which can be brought to bear upon his case. He remains lost in astonishment. Penetrated with respect, overwhelmed with awe, he is ready to trust the judge upon the question of his transgression. In his conscience he does not think himself culpable; but M. Anatole France's philosophical mind discovers for us that he feels all the insignificance of such a thing as the conscience of a mere street-hawker in the face of the symbols of the law and before the ministers of social repression. Crainquebille is innocent; but already the young advocate, his defender, has half persuaded him of his guilt.

On this phrase practically ends the introductory chapter of the story which, as the author's dedication states, has inspired an admirable draughtsman and a skilful dramatist, each in his art, to a vision of tragic grandeur. And this opening chapter without a name — consisting of two and a half pages, some four hundred words at most — is a masterpiece of insight and simplicity, resumed in M. Anatole France's distinction of thought and in his princely command of words.

It is followed by six more short chapters, concise and full, delicate and complete like the petals of a flower, presenting to us the Adventure of Crainquebille — Crainquebille before the justice — An Apology for the President of the Tribunal — Of the Submission of Crainquebille to the Laws of the Republic — Of his Attitude before the Public Opinion, and so on to the chapter of the Last Consequences. We see, created for us in his outward form and innermost perplexity, the old man degraded from his high estate of a law-abiding street-hawker and driven to insult, really this time, the majesty of the social order in the person of another police-constable. It is not an act of revolt, and still less of revenge. Crainquebille is too old, too resigned, too weary, too guileless to raise the black standard of insurrection. He is cold and homeless and starving. He remembers the warmth and the food of the prison. He perceives the means to get back there. Since he has been locked up, he argues with himself, for uttering words which, as a matter of fact he did not say, he will go forth now, and to the first policeman he meets will say those very words in order to be imprisoned again. Thus reasons Crainquebille with simplicity and confidence. He accepts facts. Nothing surprises him. But all the phenomena of social organisation and of his own life remain for him mysterious to the end. The description of the policeman in his short cape and hood, who stands quite still, under the light of a street lamp at the edge of the pavement shining with the wet of a rainy autumn evening along the whole extent of a long and deserted thoroughfare, is a perfect piece of imaginative precision. From under the edge of the hood his eyes look upon Crainquebille, who has just uttered in an

uncertain voice the sacramental, insulting phrase of the popular slang — *Mort aux vaches* ! They look upon him shining in the deep shadow of the hood with an expression of sadness, vigilance, and contempt.

He does not move. Crainquebille, in a feeble and hesitating voice, repeats once more the insulting words. But this policeman is full of philosophic superiority, disdain, and indulgence. He refuses to take in charge the old and miserable vagabond who stands before him shivering and ragged in the drizzle. And the ruined Crainquebille, victim of a ridiculous miscarriage of justice, appalled at this magnanimity, passes on hopelessly down the street full of shadows where the lamps gleam each in a ruddy halo of falling mist.

M. Anatole France can speak for the people. This prince of the Senate is invested with the tribunitian power. M. Anatole France is something of a Socialist; and in that respect he seems to depart from his sceptical philosophy. But as an illustrious statesman, now no more, a great prince too, with an ironic mind and a literary gift, has sarcastically remarked in one of his public speeches: "We are all Socialists now." And in the sense in which it may be said that we all in Europe are Christians that is true enough. To many of us Socialism is merely an emotion. An emotion is much and is also less than nothing. It is the initial impulse. The real Socialism of to-day is a religion. It has its dogmas. The value of the dogma does not consist in its truthfulness, and M. Anatole France, who loves truth, does not love dogma. Only, unlike religion, the cohesive strength of Socialism lies not in its dogmas but in its ideal. It is perhaps a too materialistic ideal, and the mind of M. Anatole France may not find in it either comfort or consolation. It is not to be doubted that he suspects this himself; but there is something reposeful in the finality of popular conceptions. M. Anatole France, a good prince and a good Republican, will succeed no doubt in being a good Socialist. He will disregard the stupidity of the dogma and the unlovely form of the ideal. His art will find its own beauty in the imaginative presentation of wrongs, of errors, and miseries that call aloud for redress. M. Anatole France is humane. He is also human. He may be able to discard his philosophy; to forget that the evils are many and the remedies are few, that there is no universal panacea, that fatality is invincible, that there is an implacable menace of death in the triumph of the humanitarian idea. He may forget all that because love is stronger than truth.

Besides "Crainquebille" this volume contains sixteen other stories and sketches. To define them it is enough to say that they are written in M. Anatole France's prose. One sketch entitled "Riquet" may be found incorporated in the volume of *Monsieur Bergeret à Paris* . "Putois" is a remarkable little tale, significant, humorous, amusing, and symbolic. It concerns the career of a man

born in the utterance of a hasty and untruthful excuse made by a lady at a loss how to decline without offence a very pressing invitation to dinner from a very tyrannical aunt. This happens in a provincial town, and the lady says in effect: "Impossible, my dear aunt. To-morrow I am expecting the gardener." And the garden she glances at is a poor garden; it is a wild garden; its extent is insignificant and its neglect seems beyond remedy. "A gardener! What for?" asks the aunt. "To work in the garden." And the poor lady is abashed at the transparency of her evasion. But the lie is told, it is believed, and she sticks to it. When the masterful old aunt inquires, "What is the man's name, my dear?" she answers brazenly, "His name is Putois." "Where does he live?" "Oh, I don't know; anywhere. He won't give his address. One leaves a message for him here and there." "Oh! I see," says the other; "he is a sort of ne'er do well, an idler, a vagabond. I advise you, my dear, to be careful how you let such a creature into your grounds; but I have a large garden, and when you do not want his services I shall find him some work to do, and see he does it too. Tell your Putois to come and see me." And thereupon Putois is born; he stalks abroad, invisible, upon his career of vagabondage and crime, stealing melons from gardens and tea-spoons from pantries, indulging his licentious proclivities; becoming the talk of the town and of the countryside; seen simultaneously in far-distant places; pursued by gendarmes, whose brigadier assures the uneasy householders that he "knows that scamp very well, and won't be long in laying his hands upon him." A detailed description of his person collected from the information furnished by various people appears in the columns of a local newspaper. Putois lives in his strength and malevolence. He lives after the manner of legendary heroes, of the gods of Olympus. He is the creation of the popular mind. There comes a time when even the innocent originator of that mysterious and potent evil-doer is induced to believe for a moment that he may have a real and tangible presence. All this is told with the wit and the art and the philosophy which is familiar to M. Anatole France's readers and admirers. For it is difficult to read M. Anatole France without admiring him. He has the princely gift of arousing a spontaneous loyalty, but with this difference, that the consent of our reason has its place by the side of our enthusiasm. He is an artist. As an artist he awakens emotion. The quality of his art remains, as an inspiration, fascinating and inscrutable; but the proceedings of his thought compel our intellectual admiration.

In this volume the trifle called "The Military Manoeuvres at Montil," apart from its far-reaching irony, embodies incidentally the very spirit of automobilism. Somehow or other, how you cannot tell, the flight over the country in a motor-car, its sensations, its fatigue, its vast topographical range, its incidents down to the bursting of a tyre, are brought home to you with all the

force of high imaginative perception. It would be out of place to analyse here the means by which the true impression is conveyed so that the absurd rushing about of General Decuir, in a 30-horse-power car, in search of his cavalry brigade, becomes to you a more real experience than any day-and-night run you may ever have taken yourself. Suffice it to say that M. Anatole France had thought the thing worth doing and that it becomes, in virtue of his art, a distinct achievement. And there are other sketches in this book, more or less slight, but all worthy of regard — the childhood's recollections of Professor Bergeret and his sister Zoé; the dialogue of the two upright judges and the conversation of their horses; the dream of M. Jean Marteau, aimless, extravagant, apocalyptic, and of all the dreams one ever dreamt, the most essentially dreamlike. The vision of M. Anatole France, the Prince of Prose, ranges over all the extent of his realm, indulgent and penetrating, disillusioned and curious, finding treasures of truth and beauty concealed from less gifted magicians. Contemplating the exactness of his images and the justice of his judgment, the freedom of his fancy and the fidelity of his purpose, one becomes aware of the futility of literary watchwords and the vanity of all the schools of fiction. Not that M. Anatole France is a wild and untrammelled genius. He is not that. Issued legitimately from the past, he is mindful of his high descent. He has a critical temperament joined to creative power. He surveys his vast domain in a spirit of princely moderation that knows nothing of excesses but much of restraint.

II.—“L'ÎLE DES PINGOUINS”

M. Anatole France, historian and adventurer, has given us many profitable histories of saints and sinners, of Roman procurators and of officials of the Third Republic, of *grandes dames* and of dames not so very grand, of ornate Latinists and of inarticulate street hawkers, of priests and generals — in fact, the history of all humanity as it appears to his penetrating eye, serving a mind marvellously incisive in its scepticism, and a heart that, of all contemporary hearts gifted with a voice, contains the greatest treasure of charitable irony. As to M. Anatole France's adventures, these are well-known. They lie open to this prodigal world in the four volumes of the *Vie Littéraire*, describing the adventures of a choice soul amongst masterpieces. For such is the romantic view M. Anatole France takes of the life of a literary critic. History and adventure, then, seem to be the chosen fields for the magnificent evolutions of M. Anatole France's prose; but no material limits can stand in the way of a genius. The latest book from his pen — which may be called golden, as the lips of an eloquent saint once upon a time

were acclaimed golden by the faithful — this latest book is, up to a certain point, a book of travel.

I would not mislead a public whose confidence I court. The book is not a record of globe-trotting. I regret it. It would have been a joy to watch M. Anatole France pouring the clear elixir compounded of his Pyrrhonic philosophy, his Benedictine erudition, his gentle wit and most humane irony into such an unpromising and opaque vessel. He would have attempted it in a spirit of benevolence towards his fellow men and of compassion for that life of the earth which is but a vain and transitory illusion. M. Anatole France is a great magician, yet there seem to be tasks which he dare not face. For he is also a sage.

It is a book of ocean travel — not, however, as understood by Herr Ballin of Hamburg, the Machiavel of the Atlantic. It is a book of exploration and discovery — not, however, as conceived by an enterprising journal and a shrewdly philanthropic king of the nineteenth century. It is nothing so recent as that. It dates much further back; long, long before the dark age when Krupp of Essen wrought at his steel plates and a German Emperor condescendingly suggested the last improvements in ships' dining-tables. The best idea of the inconceivable antiquity of that enterprise I can give you is by stating the nature of the explorer's ship. It was a trough of stone, a vessel of hollowed granite.

The explorer was St. Maël, a saint of Armorica. I had never heard of him before, but I believe now in his arduous existence with a faith which is a tribute to M. Anatole France's pious earnestness and delicate irony. St. Maël existed. It is distinctly stated of him that his life was a progress in virtue. Thus it seems that there may be saints that are not progressively virtuous. St. Maël was not of that kind. He was industrious. He evangelised the heathen. He erected two hundred and eighteen chapels and seventy-four abbeys. Indefatigable navigator of the faith, he drifted casually in the miraculous trough of stone from coast to coast and from island to island along the northern seas. At the age of eighty-four his high stature was bowed by his long labours, but his sinewy arms preserved their vigour and his rude eloquence had lost nothing of its force.

A nautical devil tempting him by the worldly suggestion of fitting out his desultory, miraculous trough with mast, sail, and rudder for swifter progression (the idea of haste has sprung from the pride of Satan), the simple old saint lent his ear to the subtle arguments of the progressive enemy of mankind.

The venerable St. Maël fell away from grace by not perceiving at once that a gift of heaven cannot be improved by the contrivances of human ingenuity. His punishment was adequate. A terrific tempest snatched the rigged ship of stone in

its whirlwinds, and, to be brief, the dazed St. Maël was stranded violently on the Island of Penguins.

The saint wandered away from the shore. It was a flat, round island whence rose in the centre a conical mountain capped with clouds. The rain was falling incessantly — a gentle, soft rain which caused the simple saint to exclaim in great delight: “This is the island of tears, the island of contrition!”

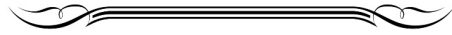
Meantime the inhabitants had flocked in their tens of thousands to an amphitheatre of rocks; they were penguins; but the holy man, rendered deaf and purblind by his years, mistook excusably the multitude of silly, erect, and self-important birds for a human crowd. At once he began to preach to them the doctrine of salvation. Having finished his discourse he lost no time in administering to his interesting congregation the sacrament of baptism.

If you are at all a theologian you will see that it was no mean adventure to happen to a well-meaning and zealous saint. Pray reflect on the magnitude of the issues! It is easy to believe what M. Anatole France says, that, when the baptism of the Penguins became known in Paradise, it caused there neither joy nor sorrow, but a profound sensation.

M. Anatole France is no mean theologian himself. He reports with great casuistical erudition the debates in the saintly council assembled in Heaven for the consideration of an event so disturbing to the economy of religious mysteries. Ultimately the baptised Penguins had to be turned into human beings; and together with the privilege of sublime hopes these innocent birds received the curse of original sin, with the labours, the miseries, the passions, and the weaknesses attached to the fallen condition of humanity.

At this point M. Anatole France is again an historian. From being the Hakluyt of a saintly adventurer he turns (but more concisely) into the Gibbon of Imperial Penguins. Tracing the development of their civilisation, the absurdity of their desires, the pathos of their folly and the ridiculous littleness of their quarrels, his golden pen lightens by relevant but unpuritanical anecdotes the austerity of a work devoted to a subject so grave as the Polity of Penguins. It is a very admirable treatment, and I hasten to congratulate all men of receptive mind on the feast of wisdom which is theirs for the mere plucking of a book from a shelf.

ANATOLE FRANCE by Arnold Bennett



29 Oct. '08

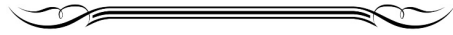
I obtained the new book of Anatole France, "*L'Ile des Pingouins*," the day after publication, and my copy was marked "eighteenth edition." But in French publishing the word "edition" may mean anything. There is a sort of legend among the simple that it means five hundred copies. The better informed, however, are aware that it often means less. Thus, in the case of the later novels of Emile Zola, an edition meant two hundred copies. This was chiefly to save the self-love of his publishers, who did not care to admit that the idol of a capricious populace had fallen off its pedestal. The vast fiction was created that Zola sold as well as ever! One Paris firm, the "*Société du Mercure de France*," which in the domain of pure letters has probably issued in the last dozen years more good books than any other house in the world, has, with astounding courage, adopted the practice of numbering every copy of a book. Thus my copy of its "*L'Esprit de Barbey d'Aurévilly*" (an exceedingly diverting volume) is numbered 1424. I prefer this to advertisements of "second large edition," etc. One knows where one is. But I fear the example of the *Mercure de France* is not likely to be honestly imitated.

If Anatole France's "editions" consist of five hundred copies I am glad. For an immediate sale of nine thousand copies is fairly remarkable when the article sold consists of nothing more solid than irony. But I am inclined to think that they do not consist of five hundred copies. There is less enthusiasm — that is to say, less genuine enthusiasm — for Anatole France than there used to be. The majority, of course, could never appreciate him, and would only buy him under the threat of being disdained by the minority, whose sole weapon is scorn. And the minority has been seriously thinking about Anatole France, and coming to the conclusion that, though a genius, he is not the only genius that ever existed. (Stendhal is at present the god of the minority of the race which the *Westminister Gazette* will persist in referring to as "our French neighbours." In some circles it is now a lapse from taste to read anything but Stendhal.) Anatole France's last two works of imagination did not brilliantly impose themselves on the intellect of his country. "*L'Histoire Comique*" showed once again his complete inability to construct a novel, and it appeared to be irresponsibly extravagant in its sensuality. And "*Sur la Pierre Blanche*" was inferior Wells. The minority has waited a long time for something large, original, and arresting; and it has not had

it. The author was under no compulsion to write his history of Joan of Arc, which bears little relation to his epoch, and which one is justified in dismissing as the elegant pastime of a savant. If in Anatole France the savant has not lately flourished to the detriment of the fighting philosopher, why should he have spent years on the “Joan of Arc” at a period when Jaurès urgently needed intellectual aid against the doctrinarianism of the International Congress? Jaurès was beaten, and he yielded, with the result that Clemenceau, a man far too intelligent not to be a practical Socialist at heart, has become semi-reactionary for want of support. This has not much to do with literature. Neither has the history of Joan of Arc. To return to literature, it is indubitable that Anatole France is slightly acquiring the reputation of a dilettante.

In “L’Ile des Pingouins” he returns, in a parable, to his epoch. For this book is the history of France “from the earliest time to the present day,” seen in the mirror of the writer’s ironical temperament. It is very good. It is inimitable. It is sheer genius. One cannot reasonably find fault with its amazing finesse. But then one is so damnably *un* reasonable! One had expected — one does not know what one had expected — but anyhow something with a more soaring flight, something more passionate, something a little less gently “tired” in its attitude towards the criminal frailties of mankind! When an A.B. Walkley yawns in print before the spectacle of the modern English theatre, it really doesn’t matter. But when an Anatole France grows wearily indulgent before the spectacle of life, one is inclined to wake him by throwing “Leaves of Grass” or “Ecce Homo” (Nietzsche’s) at his head. For my part, I am ready to hazard that what is wrong with Anatole France is just spiritual anæmia. Yet only a little while, and he was as great a force for pushing forward as H.G. Wells himself!

HOMAGE TO ANATOLE FRANCE by John Galsworthy



ANATOLE FRANCE is gone, the greatest writer of our time.

He was the supreme example of what can be achieved by one whose gift of expression has been trained and tempered to the perfect service of an unique mind. His pen was a sword-blade, ever drawn, so lambent and so fine that it played, invisible, like a wind, through the ribs of "Civilisation."

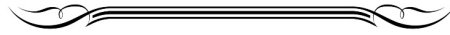
He was never in a pose, yet he was always at an angle. Blandest, yet most genuine and poignant of ironists, he was the destroying angel of all that is crude and vulgar, brutal, narrow and insensitive.

Among English writers his influence was great. Flaubert, de Maupassant, Anatole France — of the three he was most potent. The power of such a writer is proportioned by the value of his temperament to the Age he lives in. There has never been an age that so needed an Anatole France. Deep learning, wide and humane thinking, self-sacrificing craftsmanship, and an exquisite sense of balance, he had all that the age has not.

His country may restore her devastated areas, our country may regain her markets, the car of material Progress may once more exceed the speed limit, but that living spiritual protest, that fine quivering flame, whom we called Anatole France, has burned out, and we shall not see its like again.

1924.

ANATOLE FRANCE by John Cowper Powys



Anatole France is probably the most disillusioned human intelligence which has ever appeared on the surface of this planet.

All the great civilised races tend to disillusion. Disillusion is the mark of civilised eras as opposed to barbaric ones and if the dream of the poets is ever realised and the Golden Age returns, such an age will be the supreme age of happy, triumphant disillusion.

This was seen long ago by Lucretius, who regarded the fear of the gods as the last illusion of the human race, and looked for its removal as the race's entrance into the earthly paradise.

Nietzsche's noble and austere call to seriousness and spiritual conflict is the sign of a temper quite opposite from this. Zarathustra frees himself from all other illusions, but he does not free himself from the most deadly one of all — the illusion namely, that the freeing oneself from illusion is a high and terrible duty.

The real disillusioned spirit is not the fierce Nietzschean one whose glacial laughter is an iconoclastic battle-cry and whose freedom is a freedom achieved anew every day by a strenuous and desperate struggle. The real disillusioned spirit plays with illusions, puts them on and takes them off, lightly, gaily, indifferently, just as it happens, just as the moment demands.

One feels that in spite of his cosmic persiflage and radiant attempt to Mediterraneanise into "sun-burnt mirth" the souls of the northern nations, Nietzsche was still at heart an ingrained hyperborean, still at heart a splendid and savage Goth.

As in every other instance, we may take it for granted that any popular idea which runs the gamut of the idealistic lecture-halls and pulpits of a modern democracy is false through and through. Among such false ideas is the almost universal one that what is called the decadence of a nation is a sign of something regrettable and deplorable. On the contrary, it is a sign of something admirable and excellent. Such "weakness," in a deeper than a popular sense, is "strength"; such decadence is simply wisdom.

The new cult of the "will to power" which Nietzsche originated is nothing more than the old demiurgic life-illusion breaking loose again, as it broke loose in the grave ecstasies of the early Christians and in the Lutheran reformation. Nietzsche rent and tore at the morality of Christendom, but he did so with the full intention of substituting a morality of his own. One illusion for another illusion. A Roland for an Oliver!

Nietzsche praised with desperate laudation a classical equanimity which he was never able to reach. He would have us love fate and laugh and dance; but there were drops of scorching tears upon the page of his prophecy and the motif of his challenge was the terrible gravity of his own nature; though the conclusion of his seriousness was that we must renounce all seriousness. It is Nietzsche himself who teaches us that in estimating the value of a philosopher we have to consider the psychology of the motive-force which drove him.

The motive-force that drove Nietzsche was the old savage life-instinct, penetrated with illusion through and through, and praise as he might the classical urbanity, no temper that has ever existed was less urbane than his own.

The history of the human race upon this planet may be regarded — in so far as its spiritual eruptions are concerned — as the pressure upwards, from the abysmal depths, of one scoriae tempest after another, rending and tearing their way from the dark centre fires where Demogorgon turns himself over in his sleep, and becoming as soon as they reach the surface and harden into rock, the great monumental systems of human thought, the huge fetters of our imaginations. The central life-fire which thus forces its path at cataclysmic intervals to the devastated surface is certainly no illusion. It is the one terrific cosmic fact.

Where illusion enters is where we, poor slaves of traditional ratiocination, seek to turn these explosions of eternal lava into eternal systems. The lava of life pours forth forever, but the systems break and crumble; each one overwhelmed in its allotted time by a new outrushing of abysmal energy.

The reiterated eruptions from the fathomless depths make up the shifting material with which human civilisations build themselves their illusive homes; but the wisest civilisations are the ones that erect a hard, clear, bright wall of sceptical “suspension of judgment,” from the face of which the raging flood of primordial energy may be flung back before it can petrify into any further mischief.

Such a protective wall from the eruptive madness of primordial barbarism, the scepticism of classical civilisation is forever polishing and fortifying. Through the pearl-like glass of its inviolable security we are able to mock the tempest-driven eagles and the swirling glacial storms. We can amuse ourselves with the illusions from which we are free. We can give the imagination unbounded scope and the fancy unrestricted licence. We have become happy children of our own self-created kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of heaven which is the kingdom of disillusion.

And of this kingdom, Anatole France is surely the reigning king. From the Olympian disenchantment of his tolerant urbanity, all eruptive seriousness foams

back spray-tossed and scattered. And yet such a master of the art of “suspended judgment” was he, that he permits himself to dally very pleasantly with the most passionate illusions of the human race. He is too deep a sceptic even to remain at the point of taking seriously his own aesthetic epicureanism.

This is where he differs from Oscar Wilde, from Walter Pater, from Stendhal, from Remy de Gourmont, from Gabriele d’Annunzio. This is where he differs from Montaigne. These great men build up an egoism of grave subjectivity out of their suspicion of other people’s cults. They laugh at humanity but they do not laugh at themselves. With the help of metaphysic they destroy metaphysic; only to substitute for the gravity of idealism the gravity of Epicureanism.

But Anatole France has no gravity. He respects nothing; least of all himself. That is why there is something singularly winning about him which we miss in these others. There is something which palls upon us and grows heavy and tiresome after a while about this massive gravity in the cult of one’s own sensations.

Sensations? Well! We all know how subtle and pleasant they can be; but this perpetual religion of them, this ponderous worship of them, becomes at last something monstrous and inhuman, something which makes us cry aloud for air and space. Not only does it become inhuman and heavy — it becomes comic.

Every religion, even the religion of sensation, becomes comic when the sharp salt breath of intellectual sanity ceases to blow upon it. Its votaries seem to be going to and fro wrapped in sheep’s wool. The wool may be stained in Tyrian dyes; but it is wool for all that, and it tends ultimately to impede the steps of the wearer and to dull not a few of his natural perceptions.

If one imagines a symposium in the Elysian fields between Wilde and Pater and d’Annunzio, and the sudden entrance upon them of the great Voltaire, one cannot but believe that after a very short time this religion of aestheticism would prove as tiresome to the old ribald champion of a free humanity as any other ritual.

And in this respect Anatole France is with Voltaire. He has too humorous a soul to endure the solemnity of the cultivated senses. He would desert such a group of pious subjectivists to chat with Horace about the scandals of the imperial court or with Rabelais about the price of sausages.

Sceptical in other matters, egoists of the type I have mentioned are inclined to grow unconscionably grave when questions of sex are brought forward. This illusion at any rate — the illusion of sexual attraction — they would be most loth to destroy.

But Anatole France fools sex without stint. It affords him, just as it did Voltaire and Rabelais, his finest opportunities. He fools it up hill and down dale.

He shakes it, he trundles it, he rattles it, he bangs it, he thumps it, he tumbles it in the mud, in the sand, in the earth — just as Diogenes did with his most noble tub. Fooling sex is the grand game of Anatole France's classic wit. The sport never wearies him. It seems an eternal perennial entertainment. Hardly one of his books but has this sex fooling as its principal theme.

It seems to his detached and speculative mind the most amusing and irresistible jest in the world that men and women should behave as they do; that matters should be arranged in just this manner.

What we arrive at once more in Anatole France is that humorous drawing back from the world, back into some high pitched observation-tower of the mind, from the philosophic seclusion of which the world scene can be easily imagined as different from what it is. Nothing is more salutary in the midst of the mad confusion of the world than these retirements. It is to no mere "ivory tower" of aesthetic superiority that we retreat. It is to a much higher and more spacious eminence. So high indeed do we withdraw that all the ivory towers of the world seem far beneath us; beneath us, and not more or less sacred than other secular erections.

It is from this point of observation that our humour is suddenly made aware of the startling absurdity of human institution; and not only of *human* institution; for it is made aware also of the absurdity of the whole fantastic scheme of this portentous universe. We regard the world in these high speculative moods much as children do when they suddenly enquire of their bewildered parents why it is that human beings have two legs and why it is that little girls are different from little boys.

It is one result of these withdrawals to the translunar empyrean that the life of a man of action upon this earth does not appear any more or any less remarkable or important than the life of a man of letters. All human activities from that celestial height are equal; and whether we plunge into politics or into pleasure, into science or into theology, seems a mere incidental chance, as indifferent in the great uncaring solar system as the movements of gnats around a lamp or midges around a candle.

The great historic revolutions, the great social reformations, ancient or modern, present themselves from this height as just as important — as just as unimportant — as the visions of saintly fanatics or the amours of besotted rakes.

Nothing is important and anything may be important. It is all a matter of the human point of view. It is all a matter of taste. Looking at the whole mad stream of things from this altitude, we see the world as if we were peering through an inverted telescope; or rather, shall we say, through an instrument called an "equi-

scope” — whose peculiarity it is to make all things upon which it is turned *little and equal*.

The mental temper of Anatole France is essentially one which is interested in historic and contemporary events; interested in the outward actions and movements of men and in the fluctuations of political life. But it is interested in these things with a certain spacious reservation. It is interested in them simply because they are there, simply because they illustrate so ironically the weaknesses and caprices of human nature and the dramatic chances of ineluctable fate. It is not interested in them because they are inherently and absolutely important, but because they are important relatively and humorously as indicative of the absurd lengths to which human folly will go. It is interested in these things, as I have said, with an ample reservation, but it must emphatically be noted that it is a great deal more interested in them than in any works of art or letters or in any achievement of philosophy.

Anatole France seems indeed to take a certain delight in putting human thought into its place as essentially secondary and subordinate to human will. He delights to indicate, just as Montaigne used to do, the pathetic and laughable discrepancies between human thoughts and human actions.

He is more concerned with men and women as they actually live and move in the commerce of the world than in the wayward play of their speculative fancies, and it gives him an ironic satisfaction to show how the most heroic and ideal thoughts are affected by the little wanton tricks of circumstances and character.

This predominant concern with the natural humours and normal animal instincts of the human race, this refusal ever to leave the broad and beaten path of human frailty, gives a tone to his writings, even when he is dealing with art and literature, quite different from other aesthetes’.

He is not really an aesthete at all; he is too Voltairian for that. As a critic he is learned, scholarly, clear-sighted and acute; but his sense of the humorous inconsistencies of normal flesh and blood is too habitually present with him to admit of that complete abandonment to the spirit of his author, which, accompanied by interpretative subtlety, secures the most striking results.

His criticisms are wise and interesting, but they necessarily miss the sinuous clairvoyance of a writer like Remy de Gourmont who is able to give himself up completely and with no ironic reservation to the abnormalities of the temperament he is discussing. Remy de Gourmont’s own temperament has something in it more receptive, more psychological, more supple than Anatole France’s. He is in himself a far less original genius and for that very reason he can slide more reservedly into the bizarre nooks and crannies of abnormal minds.

Anatole France is one of those great men of genius to whom the gods have permitted an un-blurred vision of the eternal normalities of human weakness. This vision he can never forget. He takes his stand upon the ground which it covers, and from that ground he never deviates.

Man for him is always an amorous and fantastic animal, using his reason to justify his passions, and his imagination to justify his illusions. He is always the animal who can laugh, the animal who can cry, the animal who can beget or bear children. He is only in a quite secondary sense the animal who can philosophise.

It is because of his constant preoccupation with the normal eccentricities and pathetic follies of our race that he lays so much stress upon outward action.

The normal man is rather an animal who wills and acts than an animal who dreams and thinks; and it is with willing and acting, rather than with dreaming and thinking, that Anatole France is concerned. One of the main ironic devices of his humour is to show the active animal led astray by his illusions, and the contemplative animal driven into absurdity by his will.

With his outward-looking gaze fixed upon the eternal and pathetic normalities of the human situation, Anatole France has himself, like Voltaire, a constant tendency to gravitate towards politics and public affairs.

In this respect his temperament is most obstinately classical. Like Horace and all the ancient satirists, he feels himself invincibly attracted to "affairs of state," even while they excite his derision. One cannot read a page of his writing without becoming aware that one is in the presence of a mind cast in the true classic mould.

In the manner of the great classical writers of Athens and Rome he holds himself back from any emotional betrayal of his own feelings. He is the type of character most entirely opposite to what might be called the Rousseau-type.

He is un-modern in this and quite alone; for, in one form or another, the Rousseau-type with its enthusiastic neurotic mania for self-revelation dominates the entire literary field. One gets the impression of something massive and self-possessed, something serenely and almost inhumanly sane about him. One feels always that he is the "Grand Gentleman" of literature with whom no liberties may be taken. His tone is quiet, his manner equable, his air smiling, urbane, superior. His reserve is the reserve of the great races of antiquity. With a calm, inscrutable, benevolent malice, he looks out upon the world. There is a sense of much withheld, much unsaid, much that nothing would ever induce him to say.

His point of view is always objective. It might be maintained, though the thing sounds like a paradox, that his very temperament is objective. Certainly it is a temperament averse to any outbursts of unbalanced enthusiasm.

His attitude toward what we call Nature is more classical than the classics. Virgil shows more vibrant emotion in the presence of the sublimities of the natural elements. His manner when dealing with the inanimate world is the manner of the Eighteenth Century touched with a certain airiness and charm that is perhaps more Hellenic than Latin. As one reads him one almost feels as though the human race detached itself from its surroundings and put between itself and Nature a certain clear and airy space, untroubled by any magnetic currents of spiritual reciprocity. One feels as though Nature were kept decisively and formally in her place and not permitted to obtrude herself upon the consciousness of civilised people except when they require some pleasant lawn or noble trees or smiling garden of roses to serve as a background for their metaphysical discussions or their wanton amorous play. What we have come to call the “magic” of Nature is never for a moment allowed to interrupt these self-possessed epicurean arguments of statesmen, politicians, amorists, theologians, philosophers and proconsuls.

Individual objects in Nature — a tree, a brook, the seashore, a bunch of flowers, a glade in the forest, a terrace in a garden, — are described in that clear, laconic, objective manner, which gives one the impression of being able to touch the thing in question with one’s bare hand.

The plastic and tactile value of things is always indicated in Anatole France’s writings with brief, clear cut, decisive touches, but “the murmurs and scents” of the great waters, the silences of the shadowy forests are not allowed to cross the threshold of his garden of Epicurus. Each single petal of a rose will have its curves, its colours, its tints; but the mysterious forces of subterranean life which bring the thing to birth are pushed back into the darkness. The marble-cold resistance of Anatole France’s classical mind offers a hard polished surface against which the vague elemental energies of the world beat in vain. He walks smilingly and pensively among the olive-trees of the Academia, plucking a rose here and an oleander there; but for the rest, the solemn wizardries of Nature are regarded with an urbane contempt.

His style is a thing over which the fastidious lovers of human language may ponder long and deep. The art of it is so restrained, so aristocratic, so exclusive, that even the smallest, simplest, most unimportant words take to themselves an emphatic significance.

Anatole France is able to tell us that Monsieur Bergeret made some naive remark, or the Abbé Jérôme Coignard uttered some unctuous sally, in so large and deliberate and courtly a way that the mere “he said” or “he began” falls upon us like a papal benediction or like the gesture of a benignant monarch.

There is no style in the world so deeply penetrated with the odour and savour of its author's philosophy. And this philosophy, this atmosphere of mind, is so entirely French that every least idiomatic peculiarity in his native tongue seems willing to lend itself, to the last generous drop of the wine of its essential soul, to the tone and manner of his speech. All the refinements of the most consummate civilisation in the world, all its airy cynicism, all its laughing urbanity, all its whimsical friendliness, seem to concentrate themselves and reach their climax on every page of his books.

A delicate odour of incense and mockery, an odour of consecrated wine and a savour of heathen wit, rise up together from every sentence and disarm us with the insidiousness of their pleasant contrast. His style is so beautiful and characteristic that one cannot read the simplest passage of easy narration from his pen without becoming penetrated with his spirit, without feeling saner, wiser, kindlier, and more disenchanted and more humane.

I cannot resist quoting from the prologue to "Le Puits de Sainte Claire," a certain passage which seems to me peculiarly adapted to the illustration of what I have just said. The writer is, or imagines himself to be, in the city of Siena.

"Sur la voie blanche, dans ces nuits transparentes, la seule recontre que je faisais était celle du R. P. Adone Doni, qui alors travaillait comme moi tout le jour dans l'ancienne académie *degli Intronati*. J'avais tout de suite aimé ce cordelier qui, blanchi dans l'étude, gardait l'humeur riante et facile d'un ignorant.

"Il causait volontiers. Je goûtais son parler suave, son beau langage, sa pensée docte et naïve, son air de vieux Silène purifié par les eaux baptismales, son instinct de mime accompli, le jeu de ses passions vives et fines, le génie étrange et charmant dont il était possédé.

"Assidu à la bibliothèque, il fréquentait aussi le marché, s'arrêtant de préférence devant les contadines, qui vendent des pommes d'or, et prêtant l'oreille à leur libres propos.

Il apprenait d'elles, disait-il, la belle langue toscane. . . . Je crus m'apercevoir en effet qu'il inclinait aux opinions singulières. Il avait de la religion et de la science, mais non sans bizarreries. . . . C'est sur le diable qu'il professait des opinions singulières. Il pensait que le diable était mauvais sans l'être absolument et que son imperfection naturelle l'empêcherait toujours d'atteindre à la perfection du mal. Il croyait apercevoir quelques signes de bonté dans les actions obscures de Satan, et, sans trop l'oser dire, il en augurait la rédemption finale de l'archange méditatif, après la consommation des siècles. . . . Assis sur la margelle, les mains dans les manches de sa robe, il contemplait avec un paisible étonnement les choses de la nuit.

“Et l’ombre qui l’enveloppait laissait deviner encore dans ses yeux clairs et sur sa face camuse l’expressions d’audace craintive et de grâce moqueuse qui y était profondément empreinte. Nous échangeons d’abord des souhaits solennels de bonne santé, de paix et de contentement. . . .

“Tandis qu’il parlait, la lumière de la lune coulait sur sa barbe en ruisseau d’argent. Le grillon accompagnait du bruissement de ses élytres la voix du conteur, et parfois, aux sons de cette bouche, d’où sortait le plus doux des langages humains, répondait la plainte flûtée du crapaud, qui, de l’autre côté de la route, écoutait, amical et craintif.”

The beautiful delicacy of that single touch “sur la voie blanche, dans ces nuits transparentes” is characteristic of a thousand others of a similar kind sprinkled among his books, where gentle and whimsical spirits discourse upon God and the Universe.

He has a most exquisite genius for these little chance-accompaniments of such human scenes. “L’Orme du Mail” is full of them; and so is “Les Opinions de M. Jérôme Coignard.”

In “Sur la Pierre Blanche” the impish humour of accidental encounter brings forward nothing less than the death of Stephen the Proto-Martyr, as an irrelevant interruption to the amorous pleasures of one of his least attractive philosophers.

Full of malicious interest as he is in all the outward events of nations and societies, it is always evident that what Anatole France really regards as worthy of tender consideration is the conversation of quaint minds and the “Humeur riante et facile” of wayward and fantastic souls.

His sense of the fundamental futility of the whole scheme of things is so absolute that what most modern writers would regard as the illogical dreams of superannuated eccentrics he is inclined to treat with smiling reverence and infinite sympathy. Where the whole terrestrial business is only a meaningless blur upon the face of nothingness, why should we not linger by the way, under elm trees, or upon broken fragments of old temples, or on sunny benches in cloistered gardens, and listen to the arbitrary fancies of unpractical and incompetent persons whose countenances express an “audace craintive” and a “grâce moqueuse,” and who look with mild wonder and peaceful astonishment at “les choses de la nuit”?

After perusing many volumes of Anatole France, one after another, we come to feel as though nothing in the world were important except the reading of unusual books, the conversation of unusual people, and the enjoyment of such philosophical pleasures as may be permitted by the gods and encouraged by the approbation of a friendly and tolerant conscience.

One always rises from the savouring of his excellent genius with a conviction that it is only the conversation of one's friends, varied by such innocent pleasures of the senses as may be in harmony with the custom of one's country, which renders in the last resort the madness of the world endurable.

He alone, of all modern writers, creates that leisurely atmosphere of noble and humorous dignity — familiar enough to lovers of the old masters — according to which every gesture and word of the most simple human being comes to be endowed with a kind of royal distinction. By the very presence in his thought of the essential meaninglessness of the world, he is enabled to throw into stronger relief the “quips and cranks and wanton wiles” of our pathetic humanity.

Human words — the words of the most crack-brained among us — take to themselves a weight and dignity from the presence behind them of this cosmic purposelessness. The less the universe matters, the more humanity matters. The less meaning there is in the macrocosm the more tenderly and humorously must every microcosm be treated.

It thus comes about that Anatole France, the most disillusioned and sceptical of writers, is also the writer whose books throw over the fancies and caprices of humanity the most large and liberal benediction.

To realise how essentially provincial English and American writers are, one has only to consider for a moment the absolute impossibility of such books as “L'Orme du Mail,” “Le Mannequin” or “Monsieur Bergeret à Paris” appearing in either of these countries.

This amiable and smiling scepticism, this profound scholarship, this subtle interest in theological problems, this ironical interest in political problems, this detachment of tone, this urbane humanism, make up an “ensemble” which one feels could only possibly appear in the land of Rabelais and Voltaire.

Think of the emergence of a book in London or New York bearing such quotations at the heads of the chapters as those which are to be found in “Le Puits de Sainte Claire”! The mere look of the first page of the volume, with its beautifully printed Greek sentence about τὰ φυσικά καὶ τὰ ηθικά καὶ τὰ μαθηματικά, lifts one suddenly and with a delicious thrill of pleasure, as if from the touch of a cool, strong, youthful hand, into that serene atmosphere of large speculations and unbounded vistas which is the inheritance of the great humane tradition: the tradition, older than all the dust of modern argument, and making every other mental temper seem, in comparison, vulgar, common, bourgeois and provincial.

The chapter headed “Saint Satyre” is prefaced by a beautiful hymn from the “Breviarum Romanum”; while the story named “Guido Cavalcanti” begins with

a long quotation from “Il Decameron di Messer Giovanni Boccaccio.” I take the first instance that comes to my hand; but all his books are the same. And one who reads Anatole France for the sake of an exciting narrative, or for the sake of illuminating psychology, or for the sake of some proselytising theory, will be hugely disappointed. None of these things will he find; nor, indeed, anything else that is tiresomely and absurdly modern.

What he will find will be the old, sweet, laughing, mellow world of rich antique wisdom; a world where the poetry of the ancients blends harmoniously with the mystical learning of the fathers of the church; a world where books are loved better than theories and persons better than books; a world where the humours of the pathetic flesh and blood of the human race are given their true value, as more amusing than any philosophy and as the cause and origin of all the philosophies that have ever been!

Anatole France is incorrigibly pagan. The pleasures of the senses are described in all his books with a calm smiling assurance that ultimately these are the only things that matter!

I suppose that no author that ever lived is so irritating to strong-minded idealists. He does not give these people “the ghost of a chance.” He serenely assumes that all ideals are of human, too human, origin, and that no ideals can stand up long against the shocks of life’s ironic caprices.

And yet while so maliciously introducing, with laconic Voltairian gibes, the wanton pricking of human sensuality, he never forgets the church. In nothing is he more French; in nothing is he more civilised, than in his perpetual preoccupation with two things — the beauty and frailty of women and the beauty and inconsistency of Christianity.

The clever young men who write books in England and America seem possessed by a precisely opposite purpose; the purpose of showing that Christianity is played out and the purpose of showing that women are no longer frail.

That sort of earnest-minded attempt to establish some kind of mystical substitute for the religion of our fathers, which one is continually meeting in modern books and which has so withering an effect both upon imagination and humour, is never encountered in Anatole France. He is interested in old tradition and he loves to mock at it. He is interested in human sensuality and he loves to mock at it; but apart from traditional piety struggling with natural passion, he finds nothing in the human soul that arrests him very deeply.

Man, to Anatole France, is a heathen animal who has been baptised; and the humour of his whole method depends upon our keeping a firm hold upon both these aspects of our mortal life.

In a world where men propagated themselves like plants or trees and where there was no organised religious tradition, the humour of Anatole France would beat its wings in the void in vain. He requires the sting of sensual desire and he requires an elaborate ecclesiastical system whose object is the restraint of sensual desire. With these two chords to play upon he can make sweet music. Take them both away and there could be no Anatole France.

The root of this great writer's genius is *irony*. His whole philosophy is summed up in that word, and all the magic of his unequalled style depends upon it.

Sometimes as we read him, we are stirred by a dim sense of indignation against his perpetual tone of smiling, patronising, disenchanted, Olympian pity. The word "pity" is one of his favourite words, and a certain kind of pity is certainly a profound element in his mocking heart.

But it is the pity of an Olympian god, a pity that cares little for what we call justice, a pity that refuses to take seriously the objects of his commiseration. His clear-sighted intelligence is often pleased to toy very plausibly with a certain species of revolutionary socialism. But, I suppose few socialists derive much satisfaction from that devastating piece of irony, the Isle of the Penguins; where everything moves in circles and all ends as it began.

The glacial smile of the yawning gulf of eternal futility flickers through all his pages. Everything is amusing. Nothing is important. Let us eat and drink; let us be urbane and tolerant; let us walk on the sunny side of the road; let us smell the roses on the sepulchres of the dead gods; let us pluck the violets from the sepulchres of our dead loves. All is equal — nothing matters. The wisest are they who play with illusions which no longer deceive them and with the pity that no longer hurts them. The wisest are they who answer the brutality of Nature with the irony of Humanity. The wisest are they who read old books, drink old wine, converse with old friends, and let the rest go.

And yet — and yet —

There is a poem of Paul Verlaine dedicated to Anatole France which speaks like one wounded well nigh past enduring by the voices of the scoffers.

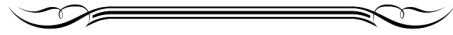
Ah, les Voix, mourez done, mourantes que vous êtes
Sentences, mots en vain, métaphores mal faites,
Toute la rhétorique en fuite des péchés,
Ah, les Voix, mourez done, mourantes que vous êtes!

....

Mourez parmi la voix terrible de l'Amour!

....

ANATOLE FRANCE by Robert Lynd



There does not at first glance seem to be any great similarity between Mr Thomas Hardy and M. Anatole France, the latter of whom has come to London to see how enthusiastically Englishmen can dine when they wish to express their feelings about literature. Yet both writers are extraordinarily alike. Each of them is an incarnation of the spirit of pity, of the spirit of irony. Mr Hardy may have more pity than irony and Anatole France may have more irony than pity. I might put it another way and say that Mr Hardy has the tragic spirit of pity while Anatole France has the comic spirit of pity. But each of them is, in his own way, the last word of the nineteenth century on the universe — the century that extinguished the noon of faith and gave us the little star of pity to light up the darkness instead. Each of them is, therefore, a pessimist — Mr Hardy typically British, Anatole France typically French, in his distress. It is as though Mr Hardy spoke out of a rain-cloud; Anatole France out of a cloud of irresponsible lightnings. There, perhaps, you have an eternal symbol of the difference between the Englishman, who takes his irreligion as seriously as his religion, and the Frenchman, who takes his irreligion as smilingly as his *apéritif*.

It is just because he sums up the end of the nineteenth century so well that Anatole France is already in some quarters a declining fashion. He is the victim of a reaction against his century, not of a reaction against his style. He is the last of the true mockers: the twentieth century demands that even its mockers shall be partisans of the coming race. Anatole France does not believe in the coming race. He is willing to join a society for bringing it into existence — he is even a Socialist — but his vision of the world shows him no prospect of Utopias. He is as sure as the writer of *Ecclesiastes* that every blessed — or, rather, cursed — thing is going to happen over and over again. Life is mainly a procession of absurdities in which lovers and theologians and philosophers and collectors of bric-à-brac are the most amusing figures. It is one of the happy paradoxes of human conduct that, in spite of this vision of futilities, Anatole France came forward at the Dreyfus crisis as a man of action, a man who believed that the procession of absurdities could be diverted into a juster road. “Suddenly,” as Brandes has said, “he stripped himself of all his scepticism and stood forth, with Voltaire’s old blade gleaming in his hand — like Voltaire irresistible by reason of his wit, like him the terrible enemy of the Church, like him the champion of innocence. But, taking a step in advance of Voltaire, France proclaimed himself the friend of the poor in the great political struggle.” He even did his best to

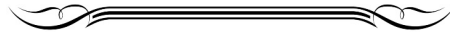
become a mob-orator for his faith. Since that time he has given his name willingly to the cause of every oppressed class and nation. It is as though he had no hope and only an intermittent spark of faith; but his heart is full of charity.

That somewhere or other a preacher lay hidden in Anatole France might have all along been suspected by observant readers of his works. He is a born fabulist. He drifts readily into fable in everything he writes. And, if his fables do not always walk straight to their moral in their Sunday clothes, that is not because he is not a very earnest moralist at heart, but because his wit and humour continually entice him down by-paths. It is sometimes as though he set out to serve morality and ended by telling an indecent story — as though he knelt down to pray and found himself addressing God in a series of blasphemies. This is the contradiction in his nature which makes him so ineffectual as a propagandist, so effectual as an artist. Ineffectual, one ought to say, perhaps, not as a propagandist so much as a partisan. For he does propagate with the most infectious charm his view of the animal called man, and the need for being tender and not too serious in dealing with him. If he has not preached the brotherhood of man with the missionary fervour of the idealists, he has at least, in accordance with an idealism of his own, preached a brotherhood of the beasts. He never lets himself savagely loose upon his brother-beasts as Swift does. Even in *Penguin Island*, with all its bitterness, he shakes his head rather than his stick at the vicious kennels of men. The truth is, Epicureanism is in his blood. If he could, he would watch the stream of circumstance, as it went by, with the appreciative indifference of the gods. It is only the preacher in his heart that prevents this. Like his own Abbé Coignard, he shares his loyalty between Epicurus and Christ. Henley once described Stevenson as something of the sensualist, and something of the Shorter Catechist. Translated into French, that might serve as a character-sketch of Anatole France.

Originality has been denied to him in some quarters, but, it seems to me, unjustly. One may find something very like this or that aspect of him in Sterne, or Voltaire, or Heine. But in none of them does one find the complete Anatole France, ironist, fabulist, critic, theologian, artist, connoisseur, politician, philosopher, and creator of character. As artist, he is at many points comparable to Sterne. He has the same sentimental background to his wit, the same tenderness in his ridicule, the same incapacity for keeping his jests from scrambling about the very altar, the same almost Christian sensuality. Sterne, of course, is the more innocent writer, because his intellect was not nearly so covetous of experience. Sterne, though in his humanitarianism he occasionally stood in a pulpit above his time, was content for the most part to work as an artist. He could do all the preaching he wanted on Sundays. On week-days my

Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim were the only minor prophets he troubled about. Anatole France, on the other hand, is not a preacher by trade. He has no safety-valve of that kind for his moralisings. The consequence is that he has again and again felt himself compelled to ease his mind by adopting the part of the lay preacher we call the journalist. He is in much of his work a Sterne turned journalist — a Sterne flashingly interested in leaving the world better than he found it and other things that grieve the artistic. He might even be described as the greatest living journalist. The Bergeret series of novels are, apart from their artistic excellence, the most supremely delightful examples of modern European journalism. Similarly, when he turned for a too brief space to literary criticism, he proved himself the master of all living men in the art of the literary causerie. The four volumes of *La Vie Littéraire* will, I imagine, survive all but a few of the literary essays of the nineteenth century. They are in a sense only trifles, but what irresistible trifles!

THE WISDOM OF ANATOLE FRANCE by John Middleton Murry



How few are the wise writers who remain to us? They are so few that it seems, at moments, that wisdom, like justice of old, is withdrawing from the world, and that when their fullness of years is accomplished, as, alas! it soon must be, the wise men who will leave us will have been the last of their kind. It is true that something akin to wisdom, or rather a quality whose outward resemblance to wisdom can deceive all but the elect, will emerge from the ruins of war; but true wisdom is not created out of the catastrophic shock of disillusionment. An unexpected disaster is always held to be in some sort undeserved. Yet the impulse to rail at destiny, be it never so human, is not wise. Wisdom is not bitter; at worst it is bitter-sweet, and bitter-sweet is the most subtle and lingering savour of all.

Let us not say in our haste, that without wisdom we are lost. Wisdom is, after all, but one attitude to life among many. It happens to be the one which will stand the hardest wear, because it is prepared for all ill-usage. But hard wear is not the only purpose which an attitude may serve. We may demand of an attitude that it should enable us to exact the utmost from ourselves. To refuse to accommodate oneself to the angularities of life or to make provision beforehand for its catastrophes is, indeed, folly; but it may be a divine folly. It is, at all events, a folly to which poets incline. But poets are not wise; indeed, the poetry of true wisdom is a creation which can, at the best, be but dimly imagined. Perhaps, of them all, Lucretius had the largest inkling of what such poetry might be; but he disqualified himself by an aptitude for ecstasy, which made his poetry superb and his wisdom of no account. To acquiesce is wise; to be ecstatic in acquiescence is not to have acquiesced at all. It is to have identified oneself with an imagined power against whose manifestations, in those moments when no ecstasy remains, one rebels. It is a megalomania, a sublime self-deception, a heroic attempt to project the soul on to the side of destiny, and to believe ourselves the masters of those very powers which have overwhelmed us.

Whether the present generation will produce great poetry, we do not know. We are tolerably certain that it will not produce wise men. It is too conscious of defeat and too embittered to be wise. Some may seek that ecstasy of seeming acquiescence of which we have spoken; others, who do not endeavour to escape the pain by plunging the barb deeper, may try to shake the dust of life from off their feet. Neither will be wise. But precisely because they are not wise, they will

seek the company of wise men. Their own attitude will not wear. The ecstasy will fail, the will to renunciation falter; the gray reality which permits no one to escape it altogether will filter like a mist into the vision and the cell. Then they will turn to the wise men. They will find comfort in the smile to which they could not frame their own lips, and discover in it more sympathy than they could hope for.

Among the wise men whom they will surely most frequent will be Anatole France. His company is constant; his attitude durable. There is no undertone of anguish in his work like that which gives such poignant and haunting beauty to Tchekhov. He has never suffered himself to be so involved in life as to be maimed by it. But the price he has paid for his safety has been a renunciation of experience. Only by being involved in life, perhaps only by being maimed by it, could he have gained that bitterness of knowledge which is the enemy of wisdom. Not that Anatole France made a deliberate renunciation: no man of his humanity would of his own will turn aside. It was instinct which guided him into a sequestered path, which ran equably by the side of the road of alternate exaltation and catastrophe which other men of equal genius must travel. Therefore he has seen men as it were in profile against the sky, but never face to face. Their runnings, their stumblings and their gesticulations are a tumultuous portion of the landscape rather than symbols of an intimate and personal possibility. They lend a baroque enchantment to the scene.

So it is that in all the characters of Anatole France's work which are not closely modelled upon his own idiosyncrasy there is something of the marionette. They are not the less charming for that; nor do they lack a certain logic, but it is not the logic of personality. They are embodied comments upon life, but they do not live. And there is for Anatole France, while he creates them, and for us, while we read about them, no reason why they should live. For living, in the accepted sense, is an activity impossible without indulging many illusions; and fervently to sympathise with characters engaged in the activity demands that their author should participate in the illusions. He, too, must be surprised at the disaster which he himself has proved inevitable. It is not enough that he should pity them; he must share in their effort, and be discomfited at their discomfiture.

Such exercises of the soul are impossible to a real acquiescence, which cannot even permit itself the inspiration of the final illusion that the wreck of human hopes, being ordained, is beautiful. The man who acquiesces is condemned to stand apart and contemplate a puppet-show with which he can never really sympathise.

‘De toutes les définitions de l’homme la plus mauvaise me paraît celle qui en fait un animal raisonnable. Je ne me vante pas excessivement en me donnant pour doué de plus de raison que la plupart de ceux de mes semblables que j’ai vus de près ou dont j’ai connu l’histoire. La raison habite rarement les âmes communes, et bien plus rarement encore les grands esprits.... J’appelle raisonnable celui qui accorde sa raison particulière avec la raison universelle, de manière à n’être jamais trop surpris de ce qui arrive et à s’y accommoder tant bien que mal; j’appelle raisonnable celui qui, observant le désordre de la nature et la folie humaine, ne s’obstine point à y voir de l’ordre et de la sagesse; j’appelle raisonnable enfin celui qui ne s’efforce pas de l’être.’

The chasm between living and being wise (which is to be *raisonnable*) is manifest. The condition of living is to be perpetually surprised, incessantly indignant or exultant, at what happens. To bridge the chasm there is for the wise man only one way. He must cast back in his memory to the time when he, too, was surprised and indignant. No man is, after all, born wise, though he may be born with an instinct for wisdom. Thus Anatole France touches us most nearly when he describes his childhood. The innocent, wayward, positive, romantic little Pierre Nozière is a human being to a degree to which no other figures in the master’s comedy of unreason are. And it is evident that Anatole France himself finds him by far the most attractive of them all. He can almost persuade himself, at moments, that he still is the child he was, as in the exquisite story of how, when he had been to a truly royal chocolate shop, he attempted to reproduce its splendours in play. At one point his invention and his memory failed him, and he turned to his mother to ask: ‘Est-ce celui qui vend ou celui qui achète qui donne de l’argent?’

‘Je ne devais jamais connaître le prix de l’argent. Tel j’étais à trois ans ou trois ans et demi dans le cabinet tapissé de boutons de roses, tel je restai jusqu’à la vieillesse, qui m’est légère, comme elle l’est à toutes les âmes exemptes d’avarice et d’orgueil. Non, maman, je n’ai jamais connu le prix de l’argent. Je ne le connais pas encore, ou plutôt je le connais trop bien.’

[Footnote 4: *Le Petit Pierre* . Par Anatole France. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy.)]

To know a thing too well is by worlds removed from not to know it at all, and Anatole France does not elsewhere similarly attempt to indulge the illusion of unbroken innocence. He who refused to put a mark of interrogation after ‘What is God,’ in defiance of his mother, because he knew, now has to restrain himself from putting one after everything he writes or thinks. ‘Ma pauvre mère, si elle

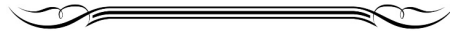
vivait, me dirait peut-être que maintenant j'en mets trop.' Yes, Anatole France is wise, and far removed from childish follies. And, perhaps, it is precisely because of his wisdom that he can so exactly discern the enchantment of his childhood. So few men grow up. The majority remain hobbledehoy throughout life; all the disabilities and none of the unique capacities of childhood remain. There are a few who, in spite of all experience, retain both; they are the poets and the *grands esprits*. There are fewer still who learn utterly to renounce childish things; and they are the wise men.

'Je suis une autre personne que l'enfant dont je parle. Nous n'avons plus en commun, lui et moi, un atome de substance ni de pensée. Maintenant qu'il m'est devenu tout à fait étranger, je puis en sa compagnie me distraire de la mienne. Je l'aime, moi qui ne m'aime ni ne me haïs. Il m'est doux de vivre en pensée les jours qu'il vivait et je souffre de respirer l'air du temps où nous sommes.'

Not otherwise is it with us and Anatole France. We may have little in common with his thought — the community we often imagine comes of self-deception — but it is sweet for us to inhabit his mind for a while. His touch is potent to soothe our fitful fevers.

APRIL, 1919.

ANATOLE FRANCE by George Brandes



The true author is recognisable by the existence on every page of his works of at least one sentence or one phrase which none but he could have written.

Take the following sentence: "If we may believe this amiable shepherd of souls, it is impossible for us to elude divine mercy, and we shall all enter Paradise — unless, indeed, there be no Paradise, which is exceedingly probable." It treats of Renan. It must be written by a disciple of Renan's, whose humour perhaps allows itself a little more licence than the master's. More we cannot say.

But take this: "She was the widow of four husbands, a dreadful woman, suspected of everything except of having loved — consequently honoured and respected." There is only one man who can have written this. It jestingly indicates the fact that society forgives woman everything except a passion, and communicates this observation to the reader, as it were with a gentle nudge.

Or take the following: "We should not love nature, for she is not lovable; but neither should we hate her, for she is not deserving of hatred. She is everything. It is very difficult to be everything. It results in terrible heavy-handedness and awkwardness."

There is only one man who would excuse Nature for her indifference to us human beings in these words: "It is very difficult to be everything."

Read this passage: "It is a great infirmity to think. God preserve you from it, my son, as He has preserved His greatest saints and the souls whom He loves with especial tenderness and destines to eternal felicity."

It is an Abbé who speaks thus, and who speaks without a trace of irony. One is conscious of the author's smile behind the Abbe's seriousness.

Few are so pithy in their irony as France. He says: "Cicero was in politics a Moderate of the most violent description."

Few are so picturesque in their satire as he. Others have used the phrase: Equality before the law — that means equality before the laws which the well-to-do have made for the poor, and men for women. Others have maintained that the ideal of justice would be an inequality before the law adjusted to the differences between individuals. Others have said: If there is inequality in law itself, where is equality to be found?

But there is only one man who can have written: "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

This one man is Anatole France. Most noticeable in this style is its irony; it stamps him as a spiritual descendant of Renan. But in spite of the relationship, France's irony is of a very different description from Renan's. Renan, as historian or critic, always speaks in his own name, and we are directly conscious of himself in the fictitious personages of his philosophic dramas, and even more so in those of his philosophic dialogues. France's irony conceals itself beneath naïveté. Renan disguises himself, France transforms himself. He writes from standpoints which are directly the opposite of his own — primitive Christian, or mediæval Catholic — and through what is said we apprehend what he means. Other writers may be as witty, may be or appear as delicately ironical — they still do not resemble him. If we enter the dépôt of some famous china manufactory with a piece of china from some other factory, as faultless and as beautiful in colour as those by which we are surrounded, the saleswoman takes it into her hand, looks at it, and says: "The paste is different."

In France's case we may search long for paste of the same quality as that which he has succeeded in producing after thirty-six years of labour.

Anatole France is no longer young, but his celebrity is of comparatively recent date. On April 16, 1904, he completed his sixtieth year, but only for the last eleven years has he really been famous.

He began as quite a young man to write literary and historical essays and tasteful poems, but he was thirty-seven when he first attracted attention by his simple tale, *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*, and it was not until 1892-93 that he gave proof of his originality.

His remaining so long in the shade is attributable in the first place to the tardy development of his complete individuality. He had not the courage to be completely himself; encouragement from without was necessary to him.

Another reason for it was the occupation of the foreground by great novelists who have now disappeared, story-tellers like Maupassant, Daudet, Zola; and yet another, that men of talent such as Bourget and Huysmans had not yet gone over to clericalism, or Jules Lemaître to nationalism, or Hervieu to the theatre. Moreover — and this of prime importance — the great artist in style whose heir he is, Ernest Renan, was still with us.

Not until the acute sceptic and enthusiastically pious thinker in whose footsteps he trod, and those luxuriantly fertile authors whose books excited most attention had passed away, was the space round that tree of knowledge which Anatole France had planted sufficiently cleared to allow the sunlight to fall upon it and the tree to become visible from every side.

Those other Frenchmen were all born in the provinces — Daudet and Zola in Provence, Maupassant in Normandy, Renan in Brittany, Hervieu at Neuilly,

Bourget at Amiens; Huysmans is of Flemish descent. France, who is cast in softer mould, and from the very beginning showed himself to be less sturdy than the Provençals and Normans, is a Parisian born, and bears the genuine Parisian stamp.

His master, Renan, did not become a Parisian until towards the close of his life, until he had lost the Breton stamp, and ceased to be a pupil of the Germans. France was a Parisian from the beginning.

The light and air of Paris were his native atmosphere, the Luxembourg Gardens were to him French nature, and the street was his school. As a child he watched the dairy-girls carrying milk and the coal-heavers coals into all the houses of the Quartier Latin. He knows the Parisian artisan and small shopkeeper well.

The windows of the stationers' shops riveted his attention with their pictures, and his first instruction was received in turning over the leaves of the books in the boxes of the poor salesmen on the Seine quays.

He himself was the son of a poor bookseller, or rather bookseller's assistant. He was born in a book-shop, and brought up amongst old, wise books, mysterious reminders of a life which was no more. From them he learned how ephemeral existence is, how little of the work of any generation survives; and this has inspired him with a fund of sadness, gentleness, and compassion.

It is extraordinary how many small book-shops he has described, in Paris and elsewhere — their books, their frequenters, the conversations held in them. Again and ever again does he occupy himself with these worthy booksellers on the banks of the Seine (who now look upon him as their guardian spirit), with their wretched life, as they stand there in the cold and rain, seldom selling anything.

We, to whom not one of the Frenchmen of to-day seems so French as Anatole France — for he embodies in himself the whole national tradition, descending from the romance-writers of the Middle Ages through Montaigne to Voltaire — we are not surprised that he should have boldly assumed the name of his country in place of his own. France, however, was also the Christian name of his unassuming father — he was France Thibaut. But to the humble people of the street in which he lives, the little Allée Villa Said, the author is not France; they call him Monsieur Anatole.

The streets by the Seine are always in his mind. He says somewhere: "I was brought up on this Quai, amongst books, by humble, simple people, whom I alone remember. When I am no more it will be as if they had never existed."

Elsewhere he calls these river-side streets the adopted country of all men of intellect and taste.

And in a third place he writes: "I was brought up on the quays, where the old books form part of the landscape. The Seine was my delight.... I admired the river, which by day mirrored the sky and bore boats on its breast, by night decked itself with jewels and sparkling flowers."

A book-lover he was and is.

One of the first characteristics which strikes the reader of France's works is this literary culture, unusual in a novelist and story-writer, and also its nature. Amongst French authors as a class we are accustomed to the unlearned, whose culture is restrictedly French, to the pupils of the Normal School, whose culture is one-sidedly classical, and to the learned, whose culture is European. But France's is a wide, ample culture, gained in a Europe from which the Germanic nations are excluded. He knows neither English nor German. This is the chief difference between his culture and Renan's. But the want is less felt in him than in others. Renan was the Oriental philologist. The Semitic languages were his field; his intellect had been nourished upon German science. What France is thoroughly at home in is Latin and Greek antiquity; but he is also well versed in the Latin and Italian literatures of the Middle Ages. Therefore he is, be it noted in passing, a keen supporter of classical school education. "I have," he says somewhere, "a desperate attachment to Latin studies. Without them the beauty of the French genius would be gone. We are Latins. The milk of the she-wolf is the best part of our blood."

He has made himself specially familiar with the age of ferment when Christianity was struggling with paganism in the ancient mind, with the Christian legends, which he retails with naïveté and well-concealed irony, and with Italian and even more particularly French history, from the days of Cæsar to the eighteenth century, the beginning of which lives in his *Reine Pédaque*.

His art occupies itself very frequently with religious feelings and situations. And here the contrast with Renan is strongest. For whereas Renan's mind was always religiously disposed and his language often unctuous, France, in treating of religious subjects, in spite of apparent reverence, is as callous in his inmost soul as Voltaire.

To his pictures of the past have been added in the last stage of his development pictures drawn from the France of to-day, and portraits of personages who have as lately formed the subjects of conversation as Verlaine and Esterhazy.

It is not modern life, however, which he favours as author or man. One day, when a visitor to whom he was showing his books expressed surprise that there were so few, and apparently no modern works among them, France said: "I have no new books. I do not keep those which are sent me; I send them on to a friend

in the country.” (The “friend in the country” was very probably a French euphemism for one of those booksellers on the Seine quays whom France knows so well.) “But do you not care to make acquaintance with them?” “My contemporaries No! What they can tell me I know quite as well myself. I learn more from Petronius than from Mendès.” It was, therefore, doubtless half unwillingly that France for several years undertook to discourse critically, in the feuilleton of the Temps, on the productions of his contemporaries. The four volumes in which he has collected his articles are, nevertheless, extremely interesting. In them, from beginning to end, he maintains that such a thing as pure, impersonal criticism is impossible, that the critic can never do anything but represent himself — that, consequently, when he speaks of Horace or Shakespeare it simply means that he is speaking, in connection with Horace or Shakespeare, of himself.

France, then, spoke always of himself. “I hope that when I speak of myself every one will think of himself.” As critic he communicated his personal impressions, and often related anecdotes, chiefly of occurrences during his own childhood and early youth, which elucidated and explained these impressions. A critic in the strict sense of the word he was not, and when his books began to sell better he gave up criticism. His utterances in the four volumes referred to are most characteristic of his personality, revealing, as they do, its spirit, its limitations, and its prejudices — prejudices which he has gradually outgrown.

The friend to whom France replied, “I have no modern books in my house,” asked, smiling: “Not even your own?” “No,” answered France; “what a man has built himself — even supposing it to be a palace — he knows so well that he cannot endure the sight of it. I could not bear to have my own books in my hands. Why should I look at them?”

“To avoid repetition.”

“I certainly do perpetually repeat myself.”

This is unfortunately true — it is one of the besetting sins of the author. Too often does the same thought recur in his pages, expressed almost in the same words. At times he repeats in one book, page for page, what he has written in another.

We can see what a faithful portrait of himself France has given us in the person of the sculptor in *Le Lys Rouge* by comparing the above answer with the following passage.

Madame Martin-Bellême says: “I see none of your own works, not a single statue or relief.”

Dechartre replies: “Do you imagine that it would be a pleasure to me to live among my own works? I know them far too well ... they bore me.”

That Dechartre is only a mask for France is almost acknowledged in what follows: "Even though I have modelled a few bad figures, I am no sculptor — rather a bit of a poet and philosopher."

In France's literary life, after a preparatory stage which lasted fifteen years, there are two periods, which differ so much from each other that one might almost say: There are two Frances.

In the first of these periods he is the refined satirist, who, from a station high above the human crowd, observes its endeavours and struggles with a superior, compassionate smile. In the second he appears as the combatant. He not only attaches himself to a party, but affirms as he does so his belief in the very things at which he has jested and scoffed — the sound instinct of the people, the significance of the majority, the increasing reality of progress — in the doctrines which as a thinker he had declined to accept, those of democracy and socialism.

When a friend once politely but plainly reproached him with this attitude as not perfectly honourable, France answered in a manner which avoided the real point by asking: "Do you know any other power capable of opposing that of the Church and Nationalism in combination except the Socialist Labour party?"

He turned the theoretical into a practical question.

When the friend remarked that he himself, under similar circumstances, had plainly announced his practical adherence to a party, but at the same time his dissent from its doctrine, France turned to some ladies who were present, and said, laughing: "Is he not impossible? As honest and obstinate as a donkey!"

For more than half of his life France undoubtedly agreed with his Abbé Coignard, who had an affectionate contempt for mankind, and who would not have signed the Declaration of the Rights of Man, not a line of it, "because of the sharply defined and unjust distinction made in it between man and the gorilla." He in those days inclined, like Coignard, to the belief that men are mischievous animals who can be kept under control only by force or cunning.

Even many years later, after he has proclaimed himself a democrat, he makes his mouthpiece, Bergeret, say to his dog: "To-morrow you will be in Paris. It is an illustrious and noble city. The nobility, to tell the truth, is not common to all its inhabitants. It is, on the contrary, to be found in only a very small number of the citizens. But a whole town, a whole nation, exists in a few individuals who think with more power and more justice than the rest." And later, in the same book, when Biquet, with gaping jaws and flaming eyes, has flown at the heels of the clever workman who has been setting up Bergeret's book-shelves, his master explains to him that what exalts a nation is not the foolish cry that resounds in the streets, but the silent thought which is conceived in a garret, and one day changes the face of the earth.

France does not share the reactionary's fear of the power of the masses. But if he does not fear it, it is not because of their wisdom. It is because of their caution. He knows that fear of the unknown renders universal suffrage a perfectly safe institution. He has made too good use of his eyes and his reasoning powers to have more reverence for the sovereign people than for any of the other sovereigns to whom men throughout the ages have offered homage and flattery. He knows that knowledge is sovereign, not the people. He knows that a foolish cry, though taken up by thirty-six millions of voices, does not cease to be foolish, and that truth is irresistible and will make itself ruler of the earth, though it may be perceived and proclaimed only by a single man, and though millions may unite and shout in chorus against his "individualism."

France is no optimist. He has seen too much declension and apostasy around him in France and Europe generally, to believe in the fable of uninterrupted progress. He has lived through times of universal indifference and apathy, when no sting was sharp enough to stir men to think, much less to act. When men's souls are hungering and thirsting after unrighteousness, it is of little use offering them a refreshing draught of culture. As is said of the "people" in Bergeret: "It is not easy to make an ass which is not thirsty drink." France knows, too, what popularity means. He has good reasons for making one of his principal characters say: "If the crowd ever takes you lovingly into its arms, you will soon discover the vastness of its impotence and of its cowardice." And we have elsewhere his quiet, witty explanation of the election of a Nationalist candidate for the Municipal Council and the defeat of the Republican. The Nationalist candidate was entirely ignorant of all the subjects connected with the office, and this ignorance stood him in good stead; it rendered his oratory more spontaneous and eloquent. The Republican, on the contrary, lost himself in technical questions and details. Although he knew his public, he harboured some illusions regarding the intelligence of the electors who had nominated him. From a certain respect for them, he dared not venture on too much humbug, and entered into explanations. Consequently he seemed cold, obscure, tiresome — and all support was withdrawn.

But, on the other hand, France is no pessimist. He knows and says of the France of to-day: "The weak are in the wrong. That is the sum of our morality, my friend. Do you suppose that we are on the side of Poland or Finland? No, no! That is not the way the wind blows at present!" But he also knows that the earth will not finally belong to armed barbarity. Alone, unarmed, naked, truth is stronger than everything. Might and violence oppose it in vain. It strikes at injustice and annihilates it. The word of man changes the world. The alliance of strong reasons and noble thoughts is an indissoluble alliance, and against its

onslaught nothing can stand. Bergeret, the tranquil philosopher, is absolutely certain of the final victory of reason. "The visions of the philosopher have in all ages aroused men of action, who have set to work to realise them. Our thoughts create the future. Statesmen work after the plans which we leave behind us."

Certain it is that the future is hidden from us. But we must, as France says, work at it as the weavers work who produce the Gobelin tapestry without seeing the pictures which they are weaving. Nor is it altogether true that the future is hidden. Or, granting it to be so to us, "we can conceive of more developed beings to whom to-morrow is realised as yesterday and to-day are. It makes it the easier to imagine beings who perceive simultaneously phenomena which appear to us separated by a long interval of time, when we remember that our own eyes, looking up to the night sky, receive, mingled beams of light which have left different stars at intervals of centuries, and centuries of centuries."

A man holding such views as these may be claimed as an adherent by both the Radical and the Conservative party, as Ibsen was for a time in Scandinavia. France actually was incorporated in the Conservative party. As late as 1897 he was the candidate for the Academy whom the Conservative party, the Dukes, opposed to Ferdinand Fabre, an author hostile to the power of the Church.

Highly valuing moderation and tact, he at that time detested his future companion in arms, Zola — detested him, indeed, without moderation — wrote: "I do not envy him his disgusting celebrity. Never has a man so exerted himself to abase humanity and to deny everything that is good and right. Never has any one so entirely misunderstood the human ideal." There is more love of good taste here than appreciation of genius. It must be remembered that France afterwards publicly recanted this and many similar utterances. He did so in the beautiful and heartfelt speech which he made at Emile Zola's grave; but he had done it long before.

He overlooked the genius of the man who was to become his best comrade in arms because of that man's bad taste and exaggerations, and himself exaggeratedly praised the men with whom he was afterwards compelled to engage in mortal combat, and of whose narrowness and weaknesses he afterwards had ample experience.

He wrote in serious earnest: "I do not believe that more intelligent men than Paul Bourget and Jules Lemaître can ever have existed."

He had no perception then of Bourget's fear of hell, or of Lemaître's want of moral equilibrium. Here is his testimonial to the latter, the future Nationalist fanatic: "He is one of the men who bear ill-will to none, but are long-suffering and benevolent. His is a fearless spirit, a smiling soul; he is all tolerance."

When this was written Jules Lemaître was already malicious and ungenerous, though perhaps not yet base. A few years later he was, as Vice-President of the Patrie Française, leader of the band which kept Dreyfus prisoner in the île du Diable and advocated the *coup d'état* against Loubet. A few years later Paul Bourget had returned to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, and was attacking with the utmost violence every progressive movement, even the enlightenment of the people and instruction for the working man. These were France's models of intelligence.

Compared with the attitude of these men, France's own attitude during the past six years may almost be termed exemplary.

It may be that as the popular orator — a career for which he was not intended by nature — he has proclaimed himself rather more strongly convinced than he is in his inmost soul; this does not prevent its being the real man who has come to light during the last decade — the man who was concealed behind the thinker's play of thought and the poet's metamorphoses.

Suddenly he stripped himself of all his scepticism and stood forth, with Voltaire's old blade gleaming in his hand — like Voltaire irresistible by reason of his wit, like him the terrible enemy of the power of the Church, like him the champion of innocence. But, taking a step in advance of Voltaire, France proclaimed himself the friend of the poor in the great political struggle.

That he did thus come forth was undoubtedly a consequence of the circumstance that the whole civilisation of France and her old position as protector of justice appeared to him to be endangered during a crisis in public morality; but, in the absence of some instigation from without, he might quite possibly have remained inactive. The person who influenced him more than any other at this time was a lady in whose house he has for years been the most welcome of daily visitors — whose house is, indeed, his second home.

France did not hesitate to bring the whole weight of his influence publicly to bear when it came in France to a trial of strength between a few chosen spirits on the one side, and the army, the Church, those in authority, and the misled masses on the other.

In his capacity as combatant France has written the last two volumes of his *Histoire Contemporaine*, published his speeches in the *Cahier de la Quinzaine*, spoken at the unveiling of Renan's statue and at Zola's grave, and written the Introduction to Combe's collected speeches. It is one of the signs of the times that he should now be the man to whom the Prime Minister of France applies to have his utterances placed before the French reading public. It shows what a degree of influence is ascribed to him, and how definitely he has espoused a cause.

France has at times introduced himself into his books. He takes the retiring and wise element in his nature, and out of it creates Monsieur Bergeret. He takes the serene sensualism, and of it constructs Trublet, the doctor of the *Histoire Comique*. He takes his intensely beauty-loving ego, and we have the sculptor Dechartre in *Le Lys Rouge*. He introduces himself into this same novel in the person of the author Paul Vence, almost with the mention of his name — this, of course, to prevent its being observed that Anatole France is also the principal character, the sculptor; just as Mary Robinson is named in the book to conceal her identity with Miss Bell, the English authoress in it, and Oppert is referred to to prevent its being said that he is Schmoll, the antiquarian, as he undoubtedly is.

When Vence is introduced to us in the heroine's drawing-room we are told: "She considered Paul Vence to be the one really clever man who came to her house. She had appreciated him before his books had made him famous. She admired his profound irony, his sensitive pride, his talent, ripened in solitude."

And to such an extent is Paul Vence France himself that when, towards the end of the book, he remarks: "He was a wise man who said, 'Let us give to men for their witnesses and judges Irony and Compassion'" — an utterance to be found in more than one of France's books — Madame Martin-Bellême answers: "But, Monsieur Vence, it was yourself who wrote that."

Profound irony is, then, the first quality which he attributes to himself.

We have seen how this irony, unlike Renan's, is indirect; we only catch a glimpse of it through the naïveté of another person.

We are told, for instance, in *Thaïs*, of the heroine, a Grecian courtesan: "This woman showed herself at the festival games, and did not hesitate to dance publicly in such a manner that her excessively agile and artful movements suggested the most dreadful passions and excited to them." This is felt and spoken from the standpoint of a monk.

Pafnucius, in the same book, sees the devil torturing souls. The narrator of the occurrence expresses no doubt or incredulity; it is nowhere remarked that this was a vision, not reality. No! "Small green devils pierced his lips and his throat with red-hot irons."

This naïveté is a rare quality in French literature, the literary art of the French being (in spite of Lafontaine) as a rule not naïve, but even in Molière, and throughout his whole century, as well as the next, perfectly self-conscious. Yet naïveté is a powerful means of producing artistic effects — the indirect process which requires the reader's own co-operation being undoubtedly always more effective than the direct communication, which does not impart the useful little impetus to the intellect.

France, in his historical tales, writes ingenuously, as a contemporary would

have spoken and thought. We are most conscious of this in the series collected and published under the title of *Clio*. Simple tales they are, yet this book, which bears the name of the goddess of history, concerns itself with some of the greatest historical personages — Homer, Cæsar, Dante, Joan of Arc, Napoleon. Of these only Homer and Napoleon are directly presented to us.

When the tale, *The Singer of Kyme*, first appeared, its seemingly arbitrary invention displeased many. Why take up this legend of the blind or half-blind old man? Why give this insignificant figure, this poor creature going from place to place earning his bread by his songs, the awe-inspiring name of Homer? But upon maturer reflection we acknowledge how correctly France has seen, and what wisdom there is in his view of the matter. The singer of his tale is unmistakably akin to the bards described in the Homeric poems; and it is only natural that his house should have been cramped and low in comparison with that of his neighbour, the wealthy soothsayer.

The secret of the art of France's historical style is, as already said, that he thinks and speaks in the spirit of the age which he is portraying, seems to share its views, to accept its beliefs and superstitions, its prejudices and ideas, without a trace of irony or of fatuity, but with an artistic skill which forcibly brings out the contrast between the spirit of those ages or countries and ours.

Take, for instance, in the story just mentioned, the way in which he communicates to the reader, by means of his description of the old singer's methods, his own conception of the genesis of the Homeric poems. When a king requests the old man to sing, but to let it be the truth that he sings, he answers: "What I know of the heroes I have from my father, who learned it from the Muses themselves; for of old the Muses were wont to visit the divine singers in caves and woods. I shall mingle no lies with the old histories." And the author adds: "He spoke thus from prudence. For to the songs which he had learned in his childhood he was in the habit of adding verses which he had taken from other songs or found within himself. *But he did not confess this, fearing Jest he should be blamed for it*. The chieftains almost always asked for the old tales, which they believed to have been dictated by a divinity, and mistrusted the new songs. Therefore he carefully concealed the origin of those which he had composed himself. *And as he was a very good poet, and carefully observed the established customs, his verses were in no wise distinguishable from those of his forefathers*; they resembled them in form and beauty, and from the moment of their conception were worthy of immortal fame." The singer is, we observe, praised, in the spirit of the age, for the quality which, according to modern ideas, detracts from his worth.

In precisely the same manner is the dialogue entitled *Farinata degli Uberti* thrown into relief. With his unerring critical instinct France has selected the most interesting of all the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. And this figure has for us one element of interest in addition to those which it possessed for Dante? namely, the diametrical opposition between Farinata's views and ours. In our days it is a very honourable thing to fight for one's countrymen against foreign troops, and an abominable thing to stir up civil war. When Farinata is justifying himself for having fought on the side of Siena against his Florentine fellow countrymen, he says: "Undoubtedly it would have been better for us Florentines to have fought out the quarrel amongst ourselves. Civil war is such a fine and noble thing, a thing of such delicacy, that the implication of foreigners in it ought, if possible, to be avoided.... I do not maintain the same of wars with other States. They are useful, at times necessary, enterprises, undertaken to defend or to extend the frontiers of a country or to further its commerce. But as a rule there is neither much advantage nor much honour to be gained by fighting in these vulgar wars. For them a sensible people prefers to employ mercenary troops, under experienced leaders, who can do a great deal with a small force."

To appreciate the characteristic qualities of this dialogue the reader should compare it with the corresponding versified dialogue by Robert Browning, in which the old Italian passionateness finds expression. Browning's language is more vehement than France's, more spasmodic and more spontaneous.

France, as a rule, produces his effect entirely by the contrast between the inner logic of men's feelings in these old days and in ours.

The most fully elaborated of the tales is that entitled *Commius, the Atrebate*, which describes the career of a Gallic chieftain in the time of Cæsar. Although the author appears to have drawn as freely on his imagination here as in *The Singer of Kyme*, he has in this case built upon a sound historical foundation. The reader with Cæsar's *Commentaries* fresh in his memory will remember what they tell about the Atrebate chief, Commius. To France it has been a congenial task to probe the mind of a barbarian of those days — to describe Commius's care-free life as the chief of his tribe, to show how he is won over by the Romans and feels flattered by being called Cæsar's friend, but is gradually led to regard the loss of freedom as a disgrace, until his feeling towards the Romans becomes the barbarian's fierce hatred. Most readers will feel that not until they made acquaintance with this story had they a thorough understanding of the difference between the Roman methods of warfare and those of the barbarians, and in especial of the skill in engineering which had been acquired by the little dark soldiers who made war more with the pickaxe and the spade than with the

javelin and the sword. Very masterly is the description of the barbarian king's astonishment and affright when, after an absence of a few years, he returns to his poor capital, Nemetoenna (the Arras of to-day), and finds it transformed by the Romans into a magnificent town, with temples and colonnades. He cannot but believe them possessed of magic power. We follow him with keen interest as he wanders through the town disguised as a beggar; we watch his surprise at the paintings on the houses, of the subjects of which he understands nothing; we see him murder a young Roman who is sitting in the amphitheatre composing Latin verses in a Greek metre to his Phoebe. Here again France produces his effect by the silent throwing into relief of the difference between men's ideas in those days and in ours. He writes as follows, for instance, of the prefect of the Roman horse, Caius Volucenus Quadratus, who resolves to invite Commius to a friendly conference, and to have a deadly blow dealt him from behind whilst he himself is taking him by the hand.

"He was a good general, learned in mathematics and mechanics. In times of peace, under the terebinth trees of his Campanian villa, he conversed with other high officials upon the laws, manners, and customs of different races. He lauded the virtues of olden days, extolled liberty, read Greek history and philosophy. He was distinguished for nobility and refinement of mind. And as Commius the Atrabate was a barbarian, hostile to Rome and the Roman cause, he considered it right and wise to have him assassinated."

Although it is only in faint silhouette that Cæsar is presented to us, we are conscious here, as elsewhere, that Anatole France is deeply interested in him. He admires him without any cordial sympathy. His Abbé Coignard, who muses upon Cæsar, is repelled by his cruelty. The cutting off of the Gauls' hands at Uxellodunum is, of course, not forgotten. Yet Cæsar was more merciful than any other Roman general. But France, following his usual custom, puts into one book all that tells in favour of Cæsar, and into another what tells against him.

He has done the same with Napoleon. In *Le Lys Rouge* the shallowness of Napoleon's character is dwelt upon — nay, insisted upon to such an extent that poor Napoleon III. is actually maintained to be a more interesting figure. In the short story, *La Muiron* (the ship which conveyed Bonaparte from Egypt to France), we are, on the other hand, told of the young commander's inclination to mysticism, of his mysterious belief in his own future. And France puts into his mouth the following profound words: "No man escapes his fate. Brutus, who was a mediocrity, believed in the power of the human will. A greater man does not harbour that illusion. He sees the necessity which limits him.... Children are rebellious. A great man is not. What is a human life? The curve traced by a projectile." Bonaparte says this at the very moment when, with implicit faith in

his own luck, he is venturing out on the Mediterranean among the English cruisers. The whole short story is based, as it were, upon his premonition of coming greatness.

But here, as always, France, with the unerring taste of the really great writer, avoids cheap effect. India-rubber in hand, he goes over all the outlines, erasing, toning down.

It is characteristic, and in harmony with the naïveté of the style, that naïveté should form a distinguishing quality of the most lifelike characters which France has produced. Another of their qualities is often strongly developed, sometimes very shameless sensuality, which is not repugnant to him, and which it amuses him to delineate.

Take Abbé Coignard in *La Reine Pédaque*, a man with an astoundingly able mind, a childlike soul, and a shameless body. Take Choulette in *Le Lys Rouge*, a childlike, drunken, shameless genius. This portrait of Verlaine we find again, with variations, in the Gestas of *L'Étui de Nacre*. In all three there is a mixture of simplicity and cynic voluptuousness — a half-childlike absence of shame.

Abbé Coignard undermines everything established with his doubts and leads an exceedingly loose life, but remains faithful in the very smallest particular to the Catholic religion. Even more childlike than he himself is his disciple, Tourne-broche. Choulette is the old, ruined Bohemian, eternally young as the poet, melting with drunken compassion for the poor and the mean — as is said of Coignard, “half a St. Francis of Assisi, half an Epicurean, a big, believing, shameless child.”

It is in virtue of this combination — naïveté and shamelessness — that Riquet the dog becomes one of France's best characters. No man is as devoid of shame as a dog, and no child is more childlike.

Biquet has great difficulty in seeing things from Monsieur Bergeret's point of view. He flies at the heels of the worthy carpenter, merely because that workman wears a blouse and carries tools; he is steeped in all the old prejudices of the feudal age.

But his “Thoughts” are a little masterpiece of canine innocence and compressed irony. Let me give a few examples.

“Men, animals, and stones grow larger as they approach me, and become enormous when they are quite close. It is not so with me. I remain the same size wherever I am.”

“The smell of a dog is a delicious smell.”

“My master keeps me warm when I lie behind him in his arm-chair. That is because he is a god. In front of the fire there is a warm hearthstone. The hearthstone is divine.”

“I speak when I choose. From my master’s mouth, too, issue sounds which have a kind of meaning. But their meaning is less plain than that which I express with my voice. Everything uttered by my voice means something. But from my master’s mouth comes much senseless noise.”

“There are carriages which horses draw in the streets. They are terrible. There are carriages which move of themselves, puffing loudly. These, too, are full of malice.”

“People in rags deserve to be hated, and also those who carry baskets on their heads or roll casks. Children who run about the streets, chasing each other and screaming, are hateful too.”

“I love my master because he is powerful and terrible.”

“An action for which one is thrashed is a bad action. An action for which one is caressed or given something to eat is a good action.”

“Prayer . — O Bergeret, my master, god of carnage, I adore thee. Praised be thou when thou art terrible, praised when thou art gracious! I crawl to thy feet, I lick thy hands. Great art thou and beautiful when, seated at thy spread table, thou devourest quantities of food. Great art thou and beautiful when, bringing forth fire from a little chip of wood, thou changest night into day. Keep me, I pray thee, in thy house, and keep out every other dog!” This is a parody of human religion, good-natured and yet trenchant.

When, in his turn, Monsieur Bergeret addresses the dog, he addresses in him the whole undeveloped portion of the human race.

“You too, poor little black being, so feeble in spite of your sharp teeth and your gaping jaws, you too adore outward appearances, and your worship is the ancient worship of injustice. You too allow yourself to be seduced by lies. You too have race hatreds.

“I know that there is an obscure goodness in you, the goodness of Caliban. You are pious; you have your theology and your morality. And you know no better. You guard the house, guard it even against those who are its protection and ornament. That workman whom you tried to drive away has, plain man though he be, most admirable ideas. You would not listen to him.

“Your hairy ears hear, not him who speaks best, but him who shouts loudest. And fear, that natural fear which was the counsellor of your ancestors and mine when they were cave-dwellers, the fear which created gods and crimes, makes you the enemy of the unfortunate and deprives you of pity.”

The irony gains in power by being veiled in the innocence of the dog. The irony in France’s writings is generally veiled in some such manner. In Monsieur Bergeret à Paris, for instance, the standpoint of the author’s opponents is presented to us in two chapters which are read aloud by Monsieur Bergeret from

a supposed work of the year 1538, in which France, with extraordinary skill, has imitated the language, style, and reasoning of the Trublions, the Nationalists of that age.

Just as something in France's intellectual qualities generally, reminds us of Voltaire as the narrator, so something in his principal characters and in the spirit of his novels recalls *Candide*. Candide, too, was naïve. France has read Voltaire again and again, and assimilated much of him. How often, for instance, does the story of Cosru's widow in *Zadig* crop up in France's pages! A Voltairean sentence such as: "The belief in the immortality of the soul is spreading in Africa along with cotton goods," sounds as if it might have been written by France. The naïveté of the modern writer is certainly the more genuine, though in greatness as an author he, of course, falls far short of his predecessor.

The four volumes of the *Histoire Contemporaine*, the last two of which, with their witty tirades oil the Dreyfus affair, were of no small assistance to the opponents of the Nationalists, are, though of unequal value, a very remarkable product of ripe experience and Olympian superiority. The principal character, the gentle and wise Monsieur Bergeret, unfortunate as a husband, fortunate in that he was able to obtain a divorce, is, as a type, in no respect inferior to the personages in whom other great French authors have embodied themselves. He is a worthy brother of Alceste, Figaro, and Mercadet.

More artistically perfect than this lengthy four-volume novel are the short modern stories published under the title of *Crainquebille*. The first of these, which gives its name to the book, is told placidly, simply, cuttingly, bitterly. The plot is so simple that it can be compressed into a few lines. A decent old man, a street vendor of vegetables, has stopped with his barrow in front of a shop in a very busy thoroughfare. He is waiting for payment for some leeks which he has sold. A policeman orders him to move on, and, heedless of the old man's muttered, "I'm waiting for my money," repeats the order twice in the course of a few moments, and then, enraged by Crainquebille's "resistance to authority," arrests him and accuses him before the magistrate of having made use of the insulting expression in which the common people give vent to their dislike of the police — a thing which the old man has certainly not done. The magistrate, who places more faith in the assertion of the policeman than in the denial of the poor man, sentences the latter to a fortnight's imprisonment and a fine of fifty francs.

When he comes out of prison Crainquebille finds that his customers have deserted him for another hawker, and will have nothing more to do with him because of his disgrace. He sinks deeper and deeper into poverty and misery, until at last he feels that the only way left him to provide himself with a shelter is

to rush at a policeman shouting the offensive expression which he had before been unjustly accused of using. This policeman, however, leaning stoically against a lamp-post in pouring rain, despises the insult, and takes not the slightest notice of it, so that the poor man's last resort fails him.

Crainquebille is painfully touching; the next little story, *Putois*, is both witty and pregnant with meaning.

"Lucien," says Zoé to her brother, Monsieur Bergeret, "you remember Putois?"

"I should say so. Of all the familiar figures of our childhood, no other is still so vividly before my eyes. He had a peculiarly high head."

"And low forehead," adds Mademoiselle Zoé.

And now brother and sister intone in turn, with perfect seriousness, as if they were giving a description for legal purposes: "Low forehead," "Wall-eyed," "Unable to look one in the face," "Wrinkles at the corner of the eyes," "Thin," "Rather round-shouldered," "Feeble in appearance, but in reality extraordinarily strong — able to bend a five-franc piece between his first finger and thumb," "Thumb enormous," and many other particulars.

Monsieur Bergeret's daughter Pauline asks: "What was Putois?" and is told that he was a gardener, the son of respectable country people; that he started a nursery at Saint-Omer, but, proving unsuccessful with it, had to take work where he could find it; and that his character was none of the best. When Monsieur Bergeret the elder missed anything from his writing-table he always said: "I have a suspicion that Putois has been here."

"Is that all?" asks Pauline.

"No, my child, that is not all. The remarkable thing about Putois was that, well as we knew him, he nevertheless...."

"Did not exist," said Zoé.

"How can you say such a thing!" cried Monsieur Bergeret. "Are you prepared to answer for your words, Zoé? Have you sufficiently reflected upon the conditions of existence and all the modes of being?"

Then Monsieur Bergeret explains to his daughter that Putois was born as a full-grown man in the days when he himself and his sister were boy and girl. The Bergerets inhabited a small house in Saint-Omer, where they led a quiet, retired life, until they were discovered by a rich old grand-aunt of Madame's, Madame Cornouiller, the owner of a small property in the neighbourhood, who took advantage of the relationship to insist upon their dining with her every Sunday — a Sunday family dinner being, according to her, imperative among people of their position.

As Monsieur Bergeret was bored to death by these entertainments, he in time rebelled, refused to go, and left it to his wife to invent excuses for declining the invitations. And thus it came about that the usually truthful woman said one day: "We cannot come this week. I expect the gardener on Sunday." Putois had received his first attribute.

Glancing at the scrap of ground belonging to the house, Madame Cornouiller asked with astonishment if this were the garden in which he was to work, and on being told that it was, very naturally remarked that he might just as well do it on a weekday. This speech in its turn necessitated the reply that the man could only come on Sunday, as he was occupied all the week. Second qualification.

"What is your gardener's name, my dear?" "Putois" replied Madame Bergeret without hesitation. From the moment in which he received a name, Putois began to lead a kind of existence. When the old lady inquired where he lived, he necessarily became a species of itinerant workman — a vagrant, in fact. So now to existence had been added status.

When Madame Cornouiller decided that he should work for her too, he immediately proved to be undiscoverable. She made inquiries about him of all and sundry, to find that most of those she asked thought they had seen him, and others knew him, but were not certain where he was at the moment. The tax-collector was able to say with certainty that Putois had chopped firewood for him between the 19th and 23rd of October of the comet year.

The day came, however, when Madame Cornouiller was able to tell the Bergerets that she herself had seen him — a man of fifty or thereabouts, thin, round-shouldered, with a dirty blouse and the general appearance of a tramp. She had called "Putois!" in a loud voice, and he had turned round.

From this day onward Putois became ever more and more of a reality. Three melons were stolen from Madame Cornouiller. She suspected Putois. The police, too, believed him to be the culprit, and searched the neighbourhood for him. The *Journal de Saint-Omer* published a description of him, from which it appeared that he had the face of a habitual criminal. Ere long there was another theft on Madame Cornouiller's premises; three small silver spoons were stolen. She recognised Putois's handiwork. Henceforward he was the terror of the town.

When Gudule, her cook, was discovered to be *enceinte*, Madame Cornouiller jumped to the conclusion that she had been seduced by Putois, and was confirmed in her belief by the fact of the woman's weeping and refusing to answer her questions. As Gudule was ugly and bearded, the story occasioned much amusement, and in popular fancy Putois became a perfect satyr. Another servant in the town and a poor hump-backed girl being brought to bed that same

year with children whose paternity was mysteriously concealed, Putois attained the reputation of a veritable monster.

Children caught glimpses of him everywhere. They saw him passing the door in the dusk, or climbing the garden wall; it was he who had inked the faces of Zoé's dolls; he howled at nights with the dogs and caterwauled with the cats; he stole into the bedroom; he became something between a hobgoblin, a brownie, and the dustman who closes little children's eyes. Monsieur Bergeret was interested in him as typical of all human beliefs; and, since all Saint-Omer was firmly convinced of Putois' existence, he, as a good citizen, would do nothing to shake their belief.

As to Madame Bergeret, she reproached herself sometimes for the birth of Putois; but, after all, she had done nothing worse than Shakespeare when he created Caliban. Nevertheless she turned quite pale one day when the maid came in and said that a man like a country labourer wished to speak to madame. "Did he give his name?" "Yes — Putois." "What?" "Putois, madame. He is waiting in the kitchen." "What does he want?" "He will tell no one but yourself, madame." "Go and ask him again." When the maid returned to the kitchen Putois was gone. But from that day Madame Bergeret herself began to have a kind of belief in his existence.

The story is both clever and of deep significance, it turns on the question of what an imaginary existence is. Putois' generation is the generation of a myth, and he exerts the influence which mythical characters do. No one can deny the rule of mythical beings over the minds of men, their influence on human souls. Gods and goddesses, spirits and saints, have inspired enthusiasm and terror, have had their altars, have counselled crimes, have, originated customs and laws. Satyrs and Silenuses have occupied the human imagination, have set chisels and brushes to work century after century. The Devil has his history, extending back for thousands of years — has been terrible, witty, foolish, cruel; has demanded human sacrifices; and has not only been worshipped by magicians and witches, but has, up to our own days, had his priests. France, however, has not the Devil alone in his mind; his thoughts range higher.

And he not only throws light in a bantering way on the formation of a myth, but also, and still more vividly, upon human verdicts. When Madame Cornouiller suspects Madame Bergeret of wishing to keep the vagrant gardener for herself, of not allowing other people to have any share in Putois, the writer remarks, as it were with a smile, that many historical conclusions which are accepted by every one are as well founded as this conclusion of Madame Cornouillers. Here, as elsewhere, France asserts that it is foolish to believe in the just judgment of posterity.

He has always thought it strange that Madame Roland should have appealed to “impartial posterity,” without reflecting that if her contemporaries, who guillotined her, were cruel apes, there was every probability of their descendants being the same.

The world’s history is the world’s verdict, wrote Schiller. He is a naïve man who believes this. Posterity is just only to this extent, that the questions are of indifference to it; and as it is with the greatest difficulty that it can examine the dead, and as, moreover, it is itself not an impersonal thing, but an aggregate of more or less prejudiced human beings, the verdict takes shape accordingly. Historic justice is a Putois.

Fame is a Putois, an imaginary, impalpable being, that is pursued by thousands, and that melts into nothing just when it should display itself in full vigour — namely, after their death.

Everywhere we have imaginary, artificial existence, proclaimed to be real, and accepted as such. It is not at all necessary to confine ourselves to religion, where it is only too easy to discover Putois, whose huge shadow darkens theology in its entirety. Let us think of the illusions in politics, of the part played by titles in social life. Or let us remember the place occupied by imaginary existences in our own emotional life. Suppose that we could transfer to canvas the image of the beloved one which forms itself in the imagination of the lover at the moment when he sees all her supposed perfections, and afterwards place alongside of it the image of her which remains when love has evaporated and he has stripped her, one by one, of all the qualities which enchanted him — the description of the first picture would not seem less unreal than the description of Putois.

The reader who muses over the little story will feel how many ideas it sets in motion, and will, like the inhabitants of Saint-Omer, find traces of Putois everywhere.

The fault in most historical descriptions is that the pictures of the past are distorted in accordance with the significance which they have acquired for a later age. Gobineau makes Michael Angelo talk of Raphael as people did in the nineteenth century when they named them together. Wilde makes John the Baptist speak as he does in the Gospels, which were written, with an aim which led to distortion, long after his death. Wherever in modern poetry or art the figure of Jesus is treated, no matter in what spirit — let it be by Paul Heyse, by Sadakichi Hartmann the Japanese, or Edward Söderberg the Dane — He is the principal figure of His day, occupying the thoughts of all.

France, in his story, *Judæas Procurator*, has, in an extremely clever manner, indicated the place occupied by Jesus in the consciousness of a contemporary

Roman. To any one who can read, the fact that the life and death of Jesus interested only a little band of humble people in Jerusalem, is sufficiently established by the circumstance that Josephus, who knows everything that happens in the Palestine of his day, does not so much as name Him. The man who argues that such an event as the Crucifixion must have made some impression forgets what a common and unheeded incident a crucifixion was in troublous times. During the Jewish war of the year 70, in the course of which 13.000 Jews were killed at Skythopolis, 50.000 in Alexandria, 40,000 at Jotapata — 1,100,000 in all — Titus crucified on an average 500 Jews every day. When, impelled by hunger, they crept under the walls of Jerusalem, they were captured, tortured, and crucified. At last there was no more wood for crosses left in Palestine.

As his principal character, France has taken the Titus Ælius Lamia to whom the seventeenth ode of Horace's Third Book is addressed — a gay young Roman who, according to France, is banished by Tiberius for a flagrant love-affair with a consuls wife, goes to Palestine, and meets with a friendly reception in the house of Pontius Pilate. Forty years pass; Ælius Lamia has long been back in Italy; he is at Baïæ, taking the baths, and is sitting one day by a path upon a height reading Lucretius, when, in the occupant of a litter borne past by slaves, it seems to him that he recognises his old host, Pilate.

And it really is Pilate, who has come, accompanied by his eldest daughter, now a widow, to take the baths. They talk of old days — of all the trouble Pontius had with those wretched Jews, who refused to do homage to the image of the Emperor on the banners, and allowed themselves to be flogged to death rather than worship it. They continually came to him, too, demanding a sentence of death on some unfortunate creature whose crime he was unable to discover, and who appeared to him to be as mad as his accusers. Lamia declares that Pontius lacked appreciation of the Jews' good qualities, but confesses that his own predilection was in favour of the Jewesses. He recalls an evening on which he saw one of them dancing with uplifted arms to the clang of cymbals, on a ragged carpet in a miserably lighted, wretched drinking-booth. The dance was barbaric, the voice hoarse, but in the motion of the limbs there was sorcery, and the eyes were Cleopatra's. She had heavy red hair, this girl, whose charms enticed the young Roman to follow her everywhere. "But she ran away from me," he continued, when the young lay preacher and miracle-worker came from Galilee to Jerusalem. She became inseparable from him, and joined the little band of men and women who were always with him. "You remember him, of course?" "No," replies Pilate. "His name was Jesus, I think; he was from Nazareth" "I do not remember him," reaffirms Pilate. "You were obliged to have

him crucified.” “Jesus—” mutters Pilate, “from Nazareth — I have no recollection of it.”

Here we have a characteristic example of Frances manner of producing his effects, and of his art in its profound truth.

So far is he from seeing Pilate’s connection with Jesus in the light of later times that he represents him as completely forgetting the whole occurrence, which was an everyday one to him — whilst Lamia only remembers it because of Magdalene.

France has drawn Magdalene again in the tale of *Læta Acilia*, one of those composing the volume entitled *Balthasar*. Here he represents her as driven from Judæa, and arriving by ship at Marseilles, where she tries to convert her protectress, a Roman knight’s wife. The Roman lady desires a child. Magdalene promises to pray for her. The next time she comes to the house *Læta Acilia* is pregnant. And now Magdalene tells her that she herself was a sinner when she first beheld the fairest of men, the Son of Man; that He drove seven devils out of her; and that she fell on her knees before Him in the house of one Simon and poured precious ointment from an alabaster box over His sacred feet. She repeats the words which the gentle Rabbi uttered in her defence when His disciples, with coarse taunts, would have driven her away. Since then she has lived in the shadow of the Master as in a new Paradise. And to her it was that He appeared first after His resurrection.

It seems to the Roman lady that Magdalene is endeavouring to impart to her a distaste for the pleasures of her placid life. Until now she has had no idea of there being any other happiness in the world except that which she knows.

“I have no desire to know your God. You have loved him too supremely. To please him one is to fall at his feet with unloosened hair! That is no posture for the wife of a Roman knight. Go, Jewess! Your God can never be mine. I have not lived the life of a sinner, and I have not been possessed with seven devils. I have not wandered in ways of error; I am a woman deserving of respect. Go!”

What attracts France in these characters is the contrast between the emotional life of the two women, between the religiously erotic rapture of the Asiatic and the tradition-sanctioned conjugal love of the Roman matron.

It is always as the creative writer that he touches history.

Among the many things in which France does not believe is history as a science. History, he says, is a representation of the events of the past. But what is an event? A remarkable fact. Who decides whether a fact is remarkable or not? The historian decides it, arbitrarily, according to his taste. A fact is, moreover, an exceedingly composite thing. Does the historian represent it in all its compositeness? That would be impossible. Hence he gives us it cropped and

pruned. And yet again, the historic fact is the final consequence of unhistoric or unknown facts. How can the historian demonstrate their concatenation?

This line of argument appeals so forcibly to France that he sets it forth no fewer than three times — in the preface to *La Vie Littéraire*, in *Les Opinions de M. Jérôme Coignard*, and in *Le Jardin d'Épicure*. As the creative writer he chills the ardour of the investigator by his scepticism. It is, he says, impossible to know the past; no one is able to read everything that would require to be read. Twice he relates the same fable in illustration of his argument:

When young Prince Zemire succeeded his father on the throne of Persia, he summoned a convocation of all the learned men of his kingdom, and addressed them thus:

“My revered teacher has impressed upon me that kings would be less liable to error if they were acquainted with the history of the past. Write me a history of the world, and make certain that it is complete.”

After the lapse of twenty years the learned men reappeared before the king, followed by a caravan composed of twelve camels, each bearing 500 volumes.

The secretary of the society made a short speech and presented the 6000 volumes.

The king, whose time was fully occupied with the affairs of the State, expressed his gratitude for the trouble taken, but added: “I am now middle-aged, and even if I live to be old I shall not have time to read such a long history. Abridge it!” After labouring twenty years longer the learned men returned, followed by three camels bearing 1500 volumes, and said: “Here is our new work; we believe that nothing essential is omitted.”

“That may be; but I am an old man now. Abridge still further, and with all possible speed!”

After the lapse of only ten years they reappeared, followed by a young elephant, bearing only 500 volumes. “This time we have been exceedingly brief.”

“Not yet sufficiently so,” replied the king. “My life is almost over. Abridge again!”

Five years passed, and the secretary returned alone, walking with crutches, and leading a small ass, whose load was one large book.

“Hurry!” called an officer. “The king is at the point of death.”

“I die,” said the king, “without knowing the history of mankind.”

“Not so, sire,” answered the aged man of learning; “I can compress it for you into three words: They were born, suffered, and died.”

We see how it is that France, in spite of his great gifts as an investigator, has not become a historian, but a novelist and story-writer.

He is not, however, so pessimistic as we might conclude from the closing words of his fable. The human beings whom he describes have pleasures as well as pains, and he invariably advocates pleasure as superior to every kind of abnegation of nature, and combats the theory that there is good in suffering.

But this scepticism with regard to history is typical of his sceptical spirit generally.

The danger of extreme intellectual refinement is that it disposes to doubt. The interest in humanity of the man who sees the many-sidedness of everything is apt to be swallowed up in contempt for humanity. And once this has happened he is quite likely, from sheer pessimistic reasonableness, to become the supporter of high-handed tyranny.

France has run this danger. Ten years ago it seemed as if the course of his development were quite as likely to lead him, practically, to reaction as to Radicalism.

When Abel Herman's book, *Le Cavalier Miserey*, a military novel of some ability which criticised the army, was forbidden to soldiers, France wrote: "I know only a few lines of the famous order of the day published by the colonel of the Twelfth Regiment of Chasseurs at Rouen. They are as follows: 'Every copy of *Le Cavalier Miserey* which is confiscated shall be burned on the dunghill, and every soldier in whose possession a copy is found shall be punished with imprisonment.' It is not a particularly elegant sentence, and yet I would rather have written it than the four hundred pages of the novel."

It was a crime in those days to utter a word against the army. Those who know what France has written about it since, know what a change has taken place in his views.

When the crisis came, it showed that in this man dwelt not merely, as in certain others, intellect and ability, but a determined will, and that in his inmost soul he was not such a doubter but that he had preserved one belief and one enthusiasm — belief in the justification of the great spiritual revolt of the eighteenth century, and enthusiasm for it.

As author he owns two main elements of effectiveness. The first is the ingenuousness which prevents his characters ever being — what Voltaire's often are — marionettes; they move freely on their own legs, and lead a life independent of their author and undisturbed by him. Their naïveté makes them natural.

The second element is art. France has what he himself calls the French writer's three great qualities — in the first place, lucidity; in the second, lucidity; in the third and last, lucidity. But this is only one fundamental quality of his art. He has proved himself possessed of moderation and tact, in which for him, as the

true Frenchman (and to use his own words), “all art consists.” His detestation of Zola as a novelist was due to that Italian’s utter lack of moderation as an artist. He himself as narrator is always subdued.

He lacks passion, and he is never wanton; his eroticism is only Epicureanism. There is sensuality in his writing, and there is intellectuality — a good deal of the former, an overpowering amount of the latter.

He is, taken all in all, more the artistic and philosophic than the creative author. Delacroix has said that art is exaggeration in the right place. France’s exaggeration lies in the wealth of ideas with which he endows his characters, a wealth which the books can hardly contain (*vide Thaïs* and *Balthazar*), and for which place must be made in whole additional volumes, such as *Les Opinions de M. Jérôme Coignard*, *Le Jardin d’Épicure* , and a part of *Pierre Nozière* . He has more ideas than feelings. He has ideas upon every subject, criticises everything — not only human prejudices and institutions, but nature herself.

He reproaches her, for instance, with giving us youth so early, and letting us live the rest of our life without it; it ought to come last, as the crown of life, like the butterfly stage, which in insects comes after the larva and cocoon stage, and ought, as the last, highest phase of development, to be directly followed by death.

France’s own highest stage of development has come last. For in his latest phase, as combatant, he is far from having lost any of his satirical power, or of the artistic superiority which it confers. Never has his irony been so effective as in his most distinctly polemical work, *L’Anneau d’Améthyste* , where the most immoral actions, one breach of the Seventh Commandment after the other, become links in the cleverly woven chain of intrigues which, aiming at gratifying an ambitious young *parvenu* baron’s desire to become member of an ultra-Conservative aristocrat’s hunt, result in procuring the episcopal ring for a crafty, submissive priest. This priest has cringed to every one, and by his humility has prevailed on men and women to act. Hardly is he appointed before he reveals himself as the most warlike son of the Church, the irreconcilable enemy of the State.

As an artist, France, even when he is most combative, is Olympian and passionless.

That he is not lacking in passion, behind his art and apart from it, was revealed on the day when the serene sceptic suddenly faced round and as polemist adopted a party, as popular orator proclaimed himself a radical Socialist.

He was no born orator; according to French custom, he read his speeches. But his greatness as a writer stood him in good stead. He generally began by riveting the attention of the crowd by something graphic and tangible — perhaps some old fairy-tale. One day he told the story of the wonderful wrestler who could transform himself into a fire-breathing dragon, and when the dragon was overcome, into an inoffensive duck. “I could not help thinking of this wrestler the other day,” he said, “when I read the programme which the Nationalists have affixed to the walls. We have seen them on our streets and boulevards ejecting fire from their eyes, their mouths, and their nostrils. Like the most frightful dragons, they flapped their wings and showed their terror-inspiring claws. They were, nevertheless, overcome; and now they have come to life again, to make a fresh trial of strength, with smooth feathers, with an appearance of belonging to our household, with a domestic animal’s mild voice. What a remarkable transformation!”

The introduction was so amusing and popular that the audience, bursting into prolonged laughter and merry acclamation, was won at once.

One November evening in Paris, in the year 1904, when the delegates of the Scandinavian Parliaments were invited to an entertainment at the residence of M. Delcassé, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, where an opportunity was given them to see something of upper-class society, including the Diplomatic Corps, with its elegant and beautifully dressed ladies, I went, instead of accompanying them to this attractive sight, to the Trocadéro, where on the same evening, at the invitation of the Socialist party, three of the foremost men of France were to address a large meeting.

The hall had long been filled; but a seat had been kindly reserved for me, which, being on the platform beside the speakers, enabled me at a glance to view the 6000 human beings who crowded the floor of the enormous and beautiful building, and its galleries to the very roof. The hall is built like a huge theatre with the stage on a level with the dress circle. The audience, which had arrived early, sat in eager expectation.

The three speakers were Francis de Pressensé, Jean Jaurès, and Anatole France — the most strictly upright politician, the most eloquent orator, and the greatest writer of the France of to-day.

Francis de Pressensé’s speech was distinguished by its simple, noble power. It was Huguenot oratory. He holds himself straight and still, speaks without a gesture, without an appeal to his audience, except that of his assertions to their sense of right. He communicates fact after fact and explains them. His command of language is so great that he has never to search for words, however quickly he speaks, and never mutilates a sentence, however hurriedly he flings it from him.

In contrast to the usual custom of French orators, he makes not the slightest pause when he has said something particularly effective and applause breaks forth. He allows no time for the applause, but speaks on without a movement or a break, seemingly unconscious of it.

When the time came for Jaurès to speak, part of the platform was cleared, because he required its full length. The eloquence of the great Socialist is genuine Catholic eloquence. He recalls the most remarkable of the preachers in the churches of Naples. He, like them, is a Southern. And like them he requires a roomy stage, on which, whilst speaking, he can walk up and down, halt, and turn in all directions.

He has a voice like the trumpet of the Last Judgment. As soon as he opened his mouth its metallic clang made the windows in the roof of the hall ring. He does not use it with much skill, does not even moderate it to begin with, employs no crescendo or diminuendo, but is from the first to the last moment all ardour and passion. Hence even in a hall which holds 6000 persons his voice seems too strong, and not unfrequently produces a disturbing resonance. He would be heard better if he spared himself more.

He has the instincts of the actor. He charges, like a fighting ram, with bent head at an invisible enemy. Or he bends forwards with outstretched arms, and then with a jerk is erect again. Or he makes himself small, crouches down till he is almost sitting, and then suddenly starts up. He talks himself into a heat; in the end is bathed in perspiration. His style is emotional — the militant pathos of a man who loves his fellow men.

In his improvisations he is unable to keep himself in check. He goes on too long. Up and down, up and down in front of one marches the short, broadshouldered, strongly-built figure, large-limbed, thick-necked, with a round head and handsome bearded face. Beside him France and Pressensé looked like stag and horse beside a bull.

France did not really speak, but read, as he always does — perhaps because, as writer, he has too much tenderness for each sentence he has composed to deliver it up to the chance of the moment. His style, which does not permit of a word being omitted or transposed, is ironical; but the irony every here and there gives way to earnestness, which is the more effective from its rarity. And this style meets with approval; in all its subduedness it provokes laughter and carries conviction. He relates what has happened, interjects a point of interrogation — and his hearers smile; a point of exclamation — and they are compelled to reflect. He inserts a parenthesis, and between its curves one catches a glimpse of all the stupidity and insolence standing outside of them.

France spoke first of the state of matters produced by Bonaparte's Concordat, of the fact that the State pays the clergy of three creeds, the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, but only of these three, although during the course of the nineteenth century the country has acquired far more Mohammedan subjects than it has Protestant or Jewish.

He said, with a playful allusion to the old story of the three rings, told by Boccaccio and employed by Lessing in *Nathan der Weise* :

"With us the Minister of Public Worship, like the father in the old Jewish parable, has three rings. He does not tell us which is the true one, and in this he is wise. But if he is to have more than one, why limit the number to three? Our Heavenly Father has given His sons more than three rings, and they are not able to discern which is the original, the true ring. Monsieur le Ministre, why have you not all your Heavenly Father's rings? You pay the clergy of certain creeds and not those of others. You surely do not make yourself the judge of religious truth? You cannot maintain that the three religions are in possession of the truth, seeing that each of them vigorously condemns both the others?"

As every one is aware, the encroachments of the Roman Catholic Church have led to the urgent demand by the Republican party for separation of Church and State. France maintained that this separation must take place at once. But what are to be its conditions? He scoffed at the old cry: A free Church in a free State. This would be equivalent to an armed Church in a disarmed State. "We undoubtedly owe the Church liberty," he said; "only not an absolute, theoretical liberty, which does not exist, but real liberty, a liberty which is bounded by all other liberties. You may be perfectly certain, however, that the Church will not be the least grateful to us for this. It will receive this liberty as an insult and mockery."

France then proceeded to speak of the relations between Europe and Eastern Asia, and in doing so said: "The European Powers have accustomed themselves, whenever any breach of order occurs in the great Empire of China, to send out troops — either one Power independently or several in combination — which troops restore order by means of theft, violence, plunder, slaughter, and incendiarism, and pacify the country with guns and cannons.

"The unarmed Chinese do not defend themselves, or defend themselves badly. They are slaughtered with agreeable facility. They are polite and ceremonious, but we reproach them with a want of goodwill towards Europeans. Our complaint against them is of the same nature as Monsieur Duchailu's complaint of the gorilla.

"That gentleman shot a female gorilla. She died clasping her young one to her breast. He tore the young animal from its mother's arms, and dragged it after

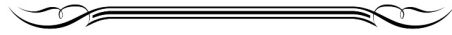
him across Africa to sell it in Europe. But it gave him just cause of complaint. It was unsociable. It preferred dying of hunger to living in his society, and refused to take food. 'I was,' he writes, 'unable to overcome its bad disposition.'

"We complain of the Chinese with as much right as M. Duchailu complained of his gorilla."

France went on to speak of the yellow danger for Europe, and demonstrated that it was not to be compared with the white danger for Asia. The yellow men have not sent Buddhist missionaries to Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. Neither has any yellow military expedition landed in France and demanded a strip of territory within which the yellow men are not to be subject to the laws of the country, but to a court composed of Mandarins have come to the conclusion that, things being bad at the best, the existing state of matters was probably as good as the untried — that this man should proclaim himself a son of the Revolution, side with the working man, acknowledge his belief in liberty, throw away his load and draw his sword — this is what moves a popular audience, this is what plain people can understand and can prize.

It has shown them that behind the author there dwelt a man — behind the great author a brave man.

ANATOLE FRANCE by Winifred Stephens



FOR nearly half a century the name of Anatole France has stood in the estimation of the world for all that the most exquisite and most refined in the French language; he has exerted over the minds of his own and succeeding generations an intellectual influence second to none, and he has enjoyed a prestige comparable only to that of Voltaire. He is a devoted lover of the Muses, and if he professes no philosophy, no creed, it is because he has tried them all and discovered none that will unravel the master-knot of human fate. Nevertheless, in the course of this journey we call Life, this pilgrimage, the *whence* and *whither* of which are enveloped in obscurity, we shall find him a highly agreeable companion. He is never dictatorial and never in a hurry. He is, in fact, much given to loitering, and if a by-way tempts him, he will readily leave the high road to explore it. He will tell many a diverting story of saint and sinner, and many of folk who were neither the one nor the other, but a blend of both, like the majority of us. His polished, urbane discourse, rich with the spoils of Time, though always amusing and profitable, is not invariably what pious folk call "edifying." In that respect he resembles Shakespeare, Rabelais and Sterne. He is prodigiously learned, but he will never bore you with a display of erudition. He is too great to be merely clever, too wise to be dogmatic. He is indulgent to all men, save the fanatics. Fanatics he detests, because they are the sworn enemies of Beauty, and in his eyes the only unpardonable sins are the sins against Beauty.

Anatole France sees life steadily, and sees it whole. With the insight of genius he can enter into the state of mind and speak with the tongue appropriate to all his characters, from the highest to the lowest — scholar, politician, priest, soldier, voluptuary, wanton, all the motley *dramatis personæ* that move across the stage of life.

Those who have come under the spell of Anatole France and are conscious of his peculiar charm, know instinctively that, when his voice is hushed, such accents will never fall upon their ears again. There will doubtless be born other writers whose work will be no less illumined by grace and beauty, but it will be a different grace, a different beauty. And the reason perhaps is that, in nearly all his writings, certainly in all those by which he will be chiefly held in memory, he gives utterance not so much to the mere results of some intellectual process, but rather to the dictates of his whole nature, heart and mind indissolubly

interwoven, and, if the language he employs is the language of France, his voice is the voice of all humanity.

In an illuminating article recently published in the *Quarterly Review*, Mr. George Saintsbury, the greatest living English authority on French literature, says that to him "M. France has continued to appear as a new embodiment, Avatar, exponent, or anything else you please, of French style — as giving the quintessence thereof." He adds that "almost always he is a Master of the Laugh; and Heaven only knows what Earth would do without Laughter."

Looking back over the progress of Anatole France's popularity with English-speaking readers, it is an interesting fact that from the outset The Bodley Head has stood sponsor to him in this country. His work was known only to comparatively few here till Maurice Baring published his fine survey of it in Volume V of the *Yellow Book* (April, 1895), and it was this same volume which contained a contribution from Anatole France's own pen. Then followed various translations, culminating in the splendid Library Edition issued from The Bodley Head under the editorship first of the late Frederic Chapman and then of James Lewis May. The first volumes of this edition were issued in 1908, and the editors were fortunate in securing the services of an exceptionally brilliant group of translators, who succeeded so remarkably in rendering the spirit as well as the letter of their original that this series gradually established the reputation of Anatole France among English readers.

In 1923, encouraged by the success of the Library Edition, and feeling that there was still a wide public to whom that edition was inaccessible at seven shillings and sixpence, the publisher decided to embark upon a new and cheaper edition, at half a crown in cloth binding and five shillings in leather binding, and during that year several volumes at the lower prices were issued. This new edition has been an unqualified success. It is everywhere spoken of as a real service to the cause of literature, and it is introducing Anatole France's work to thousands of new readers. Its attractive page, binding and appearance are earning it especial praise; and new volumes are being added regularly and will continue till the edition is complete.

On October 12th, 1924, Anatole France passed away in his 81st year. So numerous were the tributes which appeared in the English press that it is difficult to give an adequate idea of the impression Anatole France's work has made upon the best literary minds of this country, but perhaps the following sentence from an article in the *Evening Standard* is the most apposite summing-up of Anatole France's position: "He was not only the greatest name in French literature in our time, but he was perhaps the greatest name in European

literature, for though other authors have been more widely read during the last generation, none has been more admired than he.”

The works of Anatole France are a liberal education; not to have read them is to be ignorant of a great figure, not only in modern letters, but in the whole history of literature.



The cemetery at Neuilly-sur-Seine, Île-de-France — France's final resting place



France's grave